

Stereo Review

APRIL 1971 • 60 CENTS

**MULTI-CHANNEL SOUND: TWO (INEXPENSIVE) METHODS
TROUBADOUR KRIS KRISTOFFERSON * SCOTT JOPLIN'S
HIGH-CLASS RAGS * A BANQUET FOR THE OPERAPHILE**



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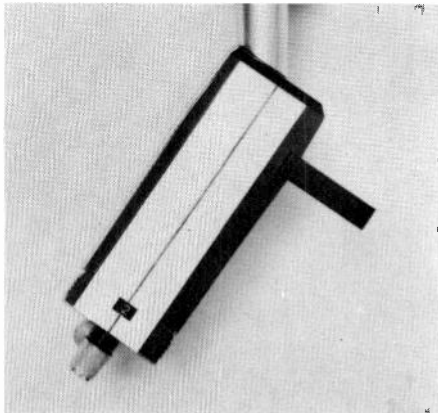
King of automatic turntables under the Fisher name.

Automatic repeat.

This is a nice feature, and one that's unique. By unlocking the center spindle the record will cycle and recycle until you stop it. You can do this with single records, or any record in a stack.

The world's finest automatic turntable, the Fisher 502. \$149.95.

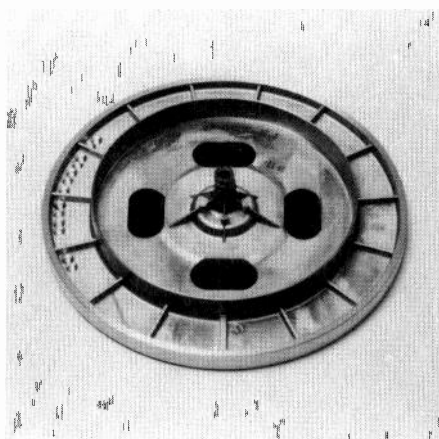
The Fisher 502 is the top of the Fisher automatic turntable line, and is, in our opinion, the finest turntable money can buy. Not only does it have the features we've already mentioned, but it has a lot of exclusives as well. One of the most important is the adjustment for the vertical tracking angle. As you probably know, the cutter stylus, with which the grooves in the original masters are cut, is not perpendicular to the plane of the record. It's at an exact fifteen-degree angle to the perpendicular. So your stylus should also be at the same fifteen-degree angle. The 502 has



an adjustment that lets you keep it that way, whether you set it for one record or for any one in a stack. Or you can leave it at an optimum setting for the stack as a whole. Not many automatic turntables have this feature.

The extra-heavy platter.

The Fisher 502 has a platter that weighs 7.1 pounds. The extra-heavy



platter, together with a heavy-duty 4-pole motor, keeps the 502 running at a constant speed. Wow and flutter are less than 0.1% (that's really low).

The Fisher 402. The finest automatic turntable under \$130.00.

The Fisher 402, if the truth be known, is a bargain. It has most of the features of the 502, and it costs less. Of course, if you insist on owning the best, there's only one turntable for you. But if you'll be satisfied with very good indeed, then consider the 402. The main difference between the machines are the platter weight and the stylus adjustment. The 402's platter weighs 4 pounds. That's massive enough to keep wow and flutter well below professional standards, but not as massive as the 502's platter. And, in the 402, the stylus angle has been preset to a statistically determined optimum. So you lose the versatility of being able to adjust it yourself. Other than those two points, the 402 performs, looks and sounds like the

502, the world's finest automatic turntable. Not bad for \$129.95.

The Fisher 302. The finest automatic turntable under \$100.00.

There are many more similarities between the 302 and its higher-priced brothers than there are differences.

Wow, flutter and rumble are marginally higher in the Fisher 302, but they're still completely inaudible.

The tonearm is of the girder-beam type instead of the tubular type (as in the 402 and 502). But the 302's tonearm is low in mass, and perfectly capable of tracking with a force of one gram.

And the other Fisher automatic turntable exclusives we mentioned earlier for the 502 and 402 are all present in the 302.

As a matter of fact, with these features, at \$99.95, the Fisher 302 would be pretty tough competition for the 402 and 502.

If the 302 weren't ours.

Accessories.

There are a number of accessories for the Fisher automatic turntable which are optional (at extra cost).

You can have a standard base (the B-4 for the 302 and 402, the B-5 for the 502). You can have a separate dust cover (the PC-4).

Or you can purchase the deluxe base which comes complete with dust cover (B-404 for the 302 and 402, B-504 for the 502).

And there are 45 rpm spindles to fit all the models.

The Fisher 
We invented high fidelity.

Ou

Introducing the first line good enough to be

■ Until now, when you bought Fisher components, you had to settle for someone else's automatic turntable.

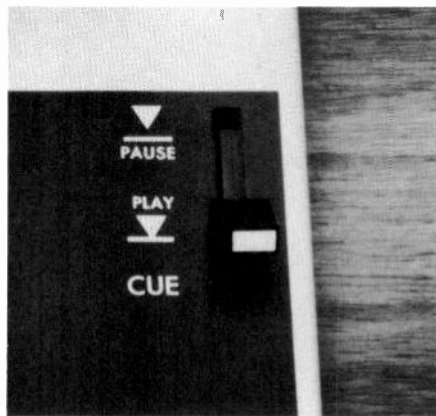
Not that that was bad. There were several good models to choose from.

But now there's something better.

A line of automatic turntables Fisher is proud to call its own. With a combination of features you won't find on any other automatic in their respective price ranges.

You can take faultless performance for granted.

Since the new automatic turntables are Fisher's, they perform like Fishers. So it goes practically without saying that wow, flutter and rumble equal recording studio and broadcasting standards, and are inaudible. The tonearms on all three turntables will accept a full range of the finest cartridges available, and will track flawlessly with a stylus pressure as low as one gram or less. All three turntables have variable



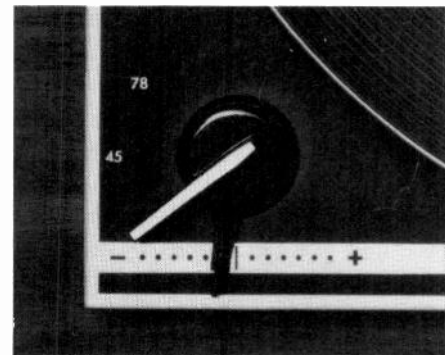
anti-skating compensation. They all have a cue control that gently sets the stylus down on the precise groove you select. In all three, the operating functions (start, stop, reject) are controlled with a single, easy-to-use lever. And the turntables all have three speeds: 33 $\frac{1}{3}$, 45 and 78 rpm. But there's more.

The new Fisher automatic turntables are the world's most convenient.

If you've ever owned a piece of Fisher equipment, no matter which one, you know that it's a pleasure to operate. There are always those little Fisher exclusives that make the difference between an adequate piece of machinery and a great one.

The turntables are no exception.

For example, all three, even the inexpensive 302, have a pitch control



that lets you vary the speed of your records plus or minus three per cent. Which means you can tune your records to your piano (the reverse would be extremely difficult, right?).

We spoke earlier about the cue control. But we didn't mention that it's viscous damped. Which means that when the arm descends on a record, it descends with record-conserving gentleness.

And there's a safety feature in the new Fisher automatic turntables which is absolutely error-proof. It's a sensing device that not only senses the size of a record (or stack of records), but prevents the stylus from descending if there's no record on the platter. (It sounds like a small point, but it may some day save the life of your stylus.)

Only 25¢! \$2 value! Send for your copy of The Fisher Handbook, a fact-filled 80-page guide to high fidelity. This full-color reference book also includes complete information on all Fisher stereo components, plus a special insert on the new Fisher automatic turntables. Enclose 25¢ for handling and postage.*



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**Guess
whose.**



THE 302.

THE 402.

THE 502.

You'll like the way they sound because they sound the way it is.

When you come right down to it, you buy a speaker system because you like the way it sounds. And if you're like most people you want to hear music that sounds like the original performance. The full natural sound. Uncolored. Unadulterated. You don't want the bass to blast you out of your armchair or highs that sound like chalk squealing on a blackboard. You want proper balance and a distinct separation of lows, midrange and highs. And that's precisely what

you get with Pioneer's speaker systems.

Employing Pioneer's newly developed Free Beating cone, both the CS-A500 and CS-A700 recreate music that sounds as clear and natural as the moment it was born. To keep it that way Pioneer has added a refinement. An easy-to-use level control on both models enables you to adjust the tone of the middle and high frequencies to match the acoustics of any room.

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The CS-A500 and CS-A700, housed in hand rubbed walnut

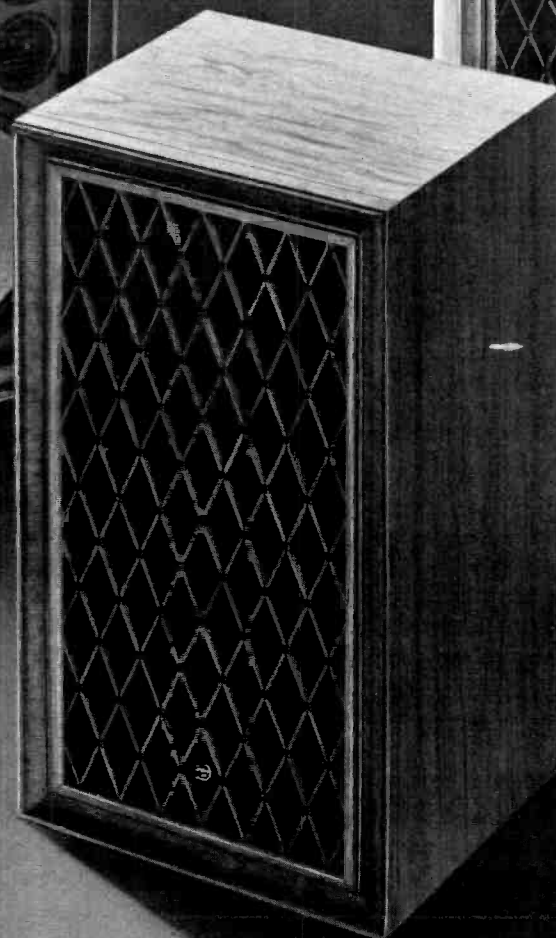
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CS-A700



CS-A500

FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW

Stereo Review

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COVER: "THE GUITAR PLAYER" BY HONORE DAUMIER, FROM THE OSKAR REINHART COLLECTION, WINTERTHUR, SWITZERLAND; PHOTO BY PETER ADELBERG, EUROPEAN ART COLOR SLIDE INC.

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EDITORIALY SPEAKING

By WILLIAM ANDERSON

THE NEW TROUBADOURS

"I COMPOSE," said Joni Mitchell, "by discovery." Miss Mitchell was being interviewed on a radio broadcast I overheard some time ago, and I listened as the interviewer probed further into her method of composition. It seems that early on, before she knew enough about music even to tune her guitar properly, she would strike accidental chords and random combinations until she found one that pleased her, one she could "work in" with a developing idea—and so on until she had finished a song. Even for naïve, folk-style music-making, this is an unusually fundamental working procedure, but Joni Mitchell, "discoverer" and "finder," is certainly operating on music's ground floor.

Formal training, as the biographies of many famous musicians will attest, is not an absolute necessity for a composer, though it can certainly save a lot of time and perhaps even increase his chances of producing something musically worthwhile. But composing is, at bottom, not so much a question of manipulating materials (after all, a computer can do that) as of finding them, a simple truth that the Romance languages seem to recognize: *troubadour*, *trouvère*, *trovador*, and, yes, *Il Trovatore* all sprang, obscurely but probably, from an ancient word meaning to find or to invent.

The original troubadours flourished in France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Cultured aristocrats rather than professional musicians, they wrote both lyrics and music for their songs. Morality, politics, domestic comedy, and sacred subjects were treated, but the principal preoccupation of the troubadours was, of course, love. It has been claimed that the Middle Ages "invented" the idea of romantic love, and, in truth, nobody had ever before heard love songs of the kind the troubadours produced. We certainly have since; productions as varied as *Die schöne Müllerin* and *Dinah* can claim legitimate descent.

Many of the troubadours performed their songs as well as composing them, but in time they were given broader currency by professional performers. This division of labor has persisted, with some exceptions, up to the present. We have for some time accepted as natural the idea that one person will write music and/or lyrics and another will perform them: Cole Porter composes, Frank Sinatra sings. The notions that Porter might have performed what he wrote and that Sinatra might write what he performs are a little startling. But it was not so with the early troubadours, nor was it when Mozart and Beethoven both composed and performed. We should not then be startled when we find ourselves, as we do, up to our ears in a whole new generation of troubadours (or, remembering Miss Mitchell, troubadettes) who have not sprung without precedent across centuries of musical history, but have taken their inspiration from one of the few places where the troubadour tradition has been kept alive—country music. Bob Dylan may likely have been the first of the new breed, and Kris Kristofferson (see interview in this issue) is certainly one of the latest, but if we find their music easy to listen to, a few older boys such as Hank Williams must get part of the credit.



The 100% MUSIC POWER Cartridge.

What good is a cartridge that tracks at 3/4 of a gram but delivers less than 3/4 of the music?

Great. For tracking—but not for listening. To provide great sound, a cartridge should be able to deliver 100% music power, especially at higher frequencies. Like Pickering XV-15 cartridges do. Because our XV-15's give you 100% music power, you enjoy complete instrumental definition in those critical ranges as well as throughout the entire audio spectrum.

And Pickering XV-15 cartridges give you two other extra features. The exclusive DustaMatic brush that cleans record grooves. Plus a Dynamic Coupling Factor (DCF) rating system that helps you select the right XV-15 model for your record player.

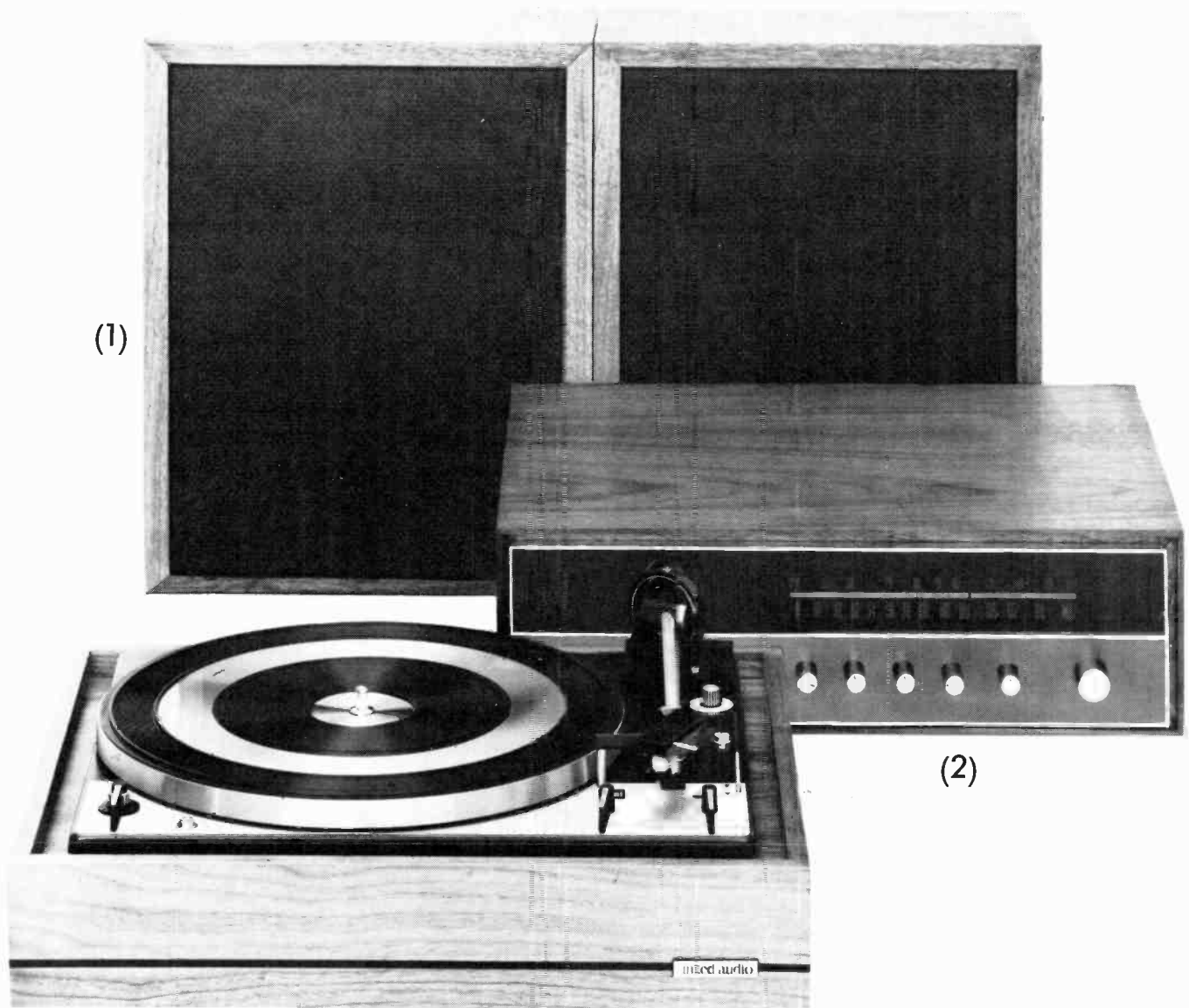
Improve your high fidelity music system with a Pickering XV-15 cartridge—priced from \$29.95 to \$65.00. Write for free catalog and DCF rating chart to Pickering & Co., 101 Sunnyside Blvd., Plainview, New York 11803.

PICKERING

"The 100% Music Power Cartridge for those who can hear the difference."

CIRCLE NO. 41 ON READER SERVICE CARD

What is the most expensive component in your stereo system?



(1)

(2)

(3)

Wrong.

Assuming that you picked one of the component types pictured here.

Although these three components form the typical stereo system, no system is actually complete without number four: records.

And no matter what you may have paid for your receiver, speakers, or turntable, chances are you've spent even more for your records. Or will before long.

Your records are not only your biggest investment, but the most vulnerable as well. They can remain as good as new for years or begin to wear the first time they're played. In which case they become even more expensive.

How to protect your investment.

Which brings us to the turntable, the one component that actually contacts your records and tracks their impressionable grooves with the unyielding hardness of a diamond.

What happens then is up to the tonearm. It must apply just the right amount of pressure to the stylus, keep this pressure equal on both walls of the groove, and follow the stylus without resistance as the groove spirals inward.

Then the stylus will be able to respond freely to all the twists and turns in the record groove, without digging in or chopping away.

How the Dual does it.

Dual tonearms are designed with great ingenuity and engineered to perfection. For example, the tonearm of the 1219 pivots exactly like a gyroscope: up and down within one ring, left and right within another. All four pivot points are identical, and nothing moves with the tonearm except the inner ring. If you can imagine 0.015 gram, that's the maximum resistance this tonearm offers to the stylus. This suspension system is called a gimbal, and no other automatic arm has it.

Another unique feature of the 1219 tonearm is the Mode Selector, which shifts the entire arm to set the correct stylus angle in either single or multiple play.

Also, the longer the tonearm, the lower the tracking error. The 1219's arm is 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " from pivot to stylus.

Other things to consider.

In addition to preserving records, a turntable must also bring out the best in them.

The record must rotate at precisely the right speed, or pitch will be off. The motor must be free of vibration, or rumble will be added to the music. The platter must weigh enough to provide effective flywheel action to smooth out speed fluctuations. And, of course, the stylus must get to and from the groove as gently as possible.

The professionals' choice.

All this is something to think about the next time you buy a record or play your favorite one. It's why Dual turntables have been the choice of professionals for so many years.

Not only for the way Duals get the most out of records (without taking anything away) but for their ruggedness, reliability and simplicity of operation.

If you'd like to know what independent labs say about Dual, we'll send you complete reprints of their test reports. Plus an article on what to look for in record playing equipment, reprinted from a leading music magazine.

But if you're already convinced and can't wait, just visit your authorized United Audio dealer and ask for a demonstration.

You'll find Dual turntables priced from \$99.50. It's not the least you can spend. But when you consider your investment in records, you may agree that it's the least you should spend.

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R. Strauss: ELEKTRA— Scenes

Birgit Nilsson, Regina Resnik, Marie Collier, Tom Krause, Gerhard Stolze—The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra—Georg Solti
OS-25171

Bellini: NORMA—Highlights

Elena Soultis, Fiorenza Cossotto, Mario del Monaco, Carlo Cava—Orchestra of L'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Rome—Silvio Varviso
OS-26170



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The "Classical" Crisis

● Many thanks for STEREO REVIEW's February survey, "Crisis in American Classical Music Recording." And special thanks for James Goodfriend's suggestions. I hope copies will be sent to every important official in all the American classical record companies. I particularly liked the ideas of a clearing house for "cutout" material, of distribution to radio stations, and of helping schools bring classical music to children.

BURMAN S. TIMBERLAKE
Lompoc, Cal.

● Out here in the provinces classical music is alive and not just well but thriving. Not only do we have two superb record shops in Seattle which offer all the services STEREO REVIEW says are now rarely available, but we also have two classical FM stations which offer classical programming from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., plus two other FM stations which offer morning and evening classical programs. In addition to these riches we have one AM station programming one daily three-hour session of classical music plus two hours on Sundays.

Concerts by our excellent professional symphony orchestra are nearly always filled, and several non-professional suburban symphonies and innumerable smaller groups specializing in chamber music and ancient instruments are also available. A thriving organization called Classical Music Supporters actively works for the sustenance of classical music on radio in the Seattle area. Supplementing this organization is a monthly magazine called *Soundings Northwest*, which lists program selections a full month at a time for all classical stations. It also contains listings for new classical record releases, stage productions, art galleries and all live musical productions for the current month. I can say without fear of contradiction that Seattle has the best musical climate north of San Francisco, and the people who live here are proud of it.

Laurie J. Stone
Seattle, Wash.

● The discussion of the "classical crisis" in your February issue was most interesting. Having been associated with FM programming for some time, I was intrigued by "The Fading Signal." The classical-music station in large city markets will survive because more and more cable-TV systems will import the signals into areas that they do not reach at this moment.

Yet, as STEREO REVIEW points out, most medium-size markets will drop out. While lack of advertising has been the major problem, the classical music listener has also become too demanding. He usually has the best home reproduction equipment of all radio listeners and expects his radio station to employ the best equipment regardless of cost. And he demands that a program guide be printed. This involves time and money that must be written off by large circulation, which doesn't exist outside the large cities. The program guide aids the listener who owns a tape recorder. It costs less to buy tape than records, so he tapes material he should be buying. This means that record companies' sales go down, so they stop making classical discs, and we have a crisis.

Maybe the solution to this problem will come about when classical music is finally forced off the radio, and those who want to hear it will turn back to the concert hall and to the record shops as paying customers.

RICHARD E. THOMAS
Whitesboro, N.Y.

● Nowhere in your February issue did I find anyone asking the leading question, "If they're not listening to classical music as they used to, what are they doing with their time?" I suggest that they are glued to the tube, like everyone else, watching the Least Objectionable Program. And God help the classical record companies if TV should ever start programming good classical music; that will destroy what's left of the classical record-buying audience.

JAMES HARRIS
New York, N.Y.

● I have read with pleasure the issue dealing with the classical record industry. I was particularly interested in the article "The Fading Signal," which accurately dealt with the problems of the classical FM broadcaster.

There are two points I would like to raise. One deals with the size of staff a radio station needs. It is true that the classical station can make the announcer double up on answering telephones and so forth, but there are time-consuming aspects that other stations don't have. One of these is the problem of accurate advance programming and the preparation and editing of a program guide. A guide of this sort is an absolute must for a station, as its circulation helps to prove the size of the audience to prospective advertisers. And yet, at best, it is

(Continued on page 10)

**A five minute experiment
by which you can prove . . .**

THE SPEAKERS

more than any other component in your stereo system,

DETERMINE THE QUALITY OF THE SOUND.

EXPERIMENT

Ask your dealer to let you compare the following two stereo systems in an A-B listening test:

1. Any moderately priced turntable and receiver connected to BOSE 901 speakers.
2. The most expensive turntable and receiver connected to any other speakers.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion is yours to draw. We think that you'll have time left over to enjoy just listening to the 901.

THEN YOU WILL KNOW

why people just starting in stereo as well as those who have owned the most expensive speakers are selecting the BOSE 901 DIRECT/REFLECTING® Speaker System — THE MOST HIGHLY REVIEWED SPEAKER REGARDLESS OF SIZE OR PRICE.

For literature and reprints of the rave reviews circle the number at the bottom of this page on your reader service card.

For those interested in the twelve years of research that led to the design of the 901, copies of the Audio Engineering Society paper 'ON THE DESIGN, MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION OF LOUDSPEAKERS', by Dr. A. G. Bose, are available from BOSE Corporation for fifty cents.



You can hear the difference now.

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BOSE 901 DIRECT/REFLECTING® Speaker System \$476 the stereo pair including Active Equalizer. Slightly higher south and west. Pedestal bases and walnut facings optional extra.

Covered by patent rights issued and pending.

THE RABCO ST-4 straight-line turntable



The Correct Record Player

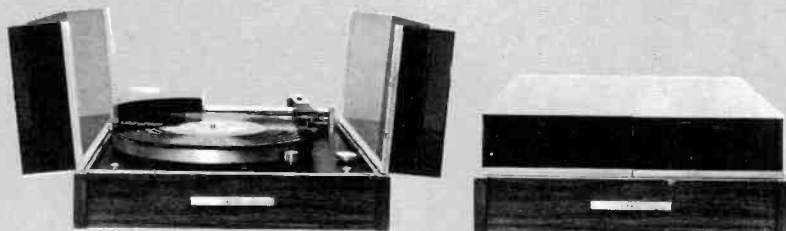
By Combining a Synchronous Motor Driven Turntable with a Simple Servo Arm, Rabco is Able to Offer the ST-4 at a Price Within the Reach of All Audiophiles.

A synchronous motor drives both the turntable and the servo system of the arm.

The cartridge travels in a straight line across the record by a "steering" mechanism that is analogous to the action of the front wheels of your car. The arm is supported by a rubber-tired wheel that rides on a slowly and constantly rotating stainless steel shaft. When the arm deviates from tangency with the groove of the record, the resulting angle between the wheel and the shaft causes the arm to move along the shaft and to re-establish tangency.

The ST-4 is provided with gentle pushbutton cueing, automatic photo-electric end-of-record-lift, 2 speeds, (33 and 45) and optional two-piece hinged and removeable dust cover.

PRICE IN USA \$159.00 COVER \$15.00



MAKERS OF THE ONLY SERVO-CONTROLLED STRAIGHT LINE ARMS

RABCO 11937 TECH ROAD
SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND 20904

CIRCLE NO. 34 ON READER SERVICE CARD

usually a break-even proposition that requires many man-hours per month. If listeners are really serious about helping a station survive in the classical market, the two most effective things they can do is subscribe to its program guide, not for the money it gives the station, but for the increased circulation the station can show advertisers, and give guide subscriptions to their friends. They should also patronize the stations' advertisers and make them aware that they are there as a result of that advertising.

One other problem faced by classical stations not mentioned in the article is the type and format of advertising. Many classical stations are having to abandon their policies regarding ads of a nature that they consider offensive to their listeners—*i.e.*, jingles, singing, loud sound effects, *etc.* The agency often gives the station a "take-it-or-leave-it" choice. The result is that the station carries it as produced or comes one step closer to financial disaster. Many stations then find themselves with listener complaints.

CARL BAUMAN
Music Director, WCLV-FM
Cleveland, Ohio

● Real challenges are presented for everyone involved with great music in STEREO REVIEW's comprehensive series of articles on "the classical crisis." Everyone should thank his FM stations for good programming, or ask for some if there is none. Support of school musical events is another way in which everyone can help. In my home community the support of the school organizations is exceptional, and the results are very rewarding. This builds a demand for good music.

Of the several suggestions in "Can the Patient Be Saved?" the one that seemed most exciting is the traveling complete catalog of records. Record buyers would surely look forward to such an event and support it. I hope some record company gives this idea a trial.

JAMES W. YORK
Clarence Concert Association
Clarence, N.Y.

● I must disagree with Mr. Thomas Frost, who, in his article about "What's wrong," *etc.*, says "The classical record buyer is simply not serviced properly anymore." In my experience, he certainly is—at least in the old-fashioned barnyard sense.

EDWARD SANBORN
Chicago, Ill.

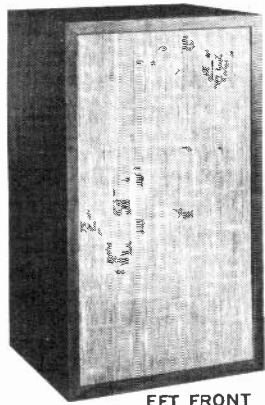
● It is ridiculous to think of us Americans as a bunch of tasteless musical illiterates. We are pumping more money into the whole area of classical-music sound reproduction than ever before but it does not, will not, and cannot show up in either disc or prerecorded tape sales figures. This is because a great deal of interest in good music lives on the campus and within the broadcasting area of citizen-owned college FM stations. Your articles calling for a resurgence of interest amongst the younger generation in classical music betray an amazing provincialism as to what is actually happening out beyond the Hudson River.

STEREO REVIEW should make an effort to secure, from all the college FM stations in this country, copies of their monthly published programs. You will see that the ideal of music of quality disseminated freely among the general populace which you say prevails only in Europe is an established fact within listening range of any decent college FM station in this country. And even a commercial FM operation

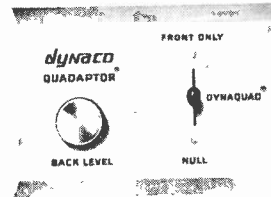
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STEREO REVIEW

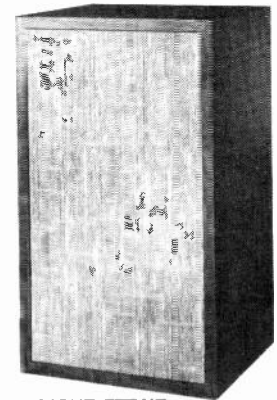
NEW DYNACO QUADAPTOR®



LEFT FRONT



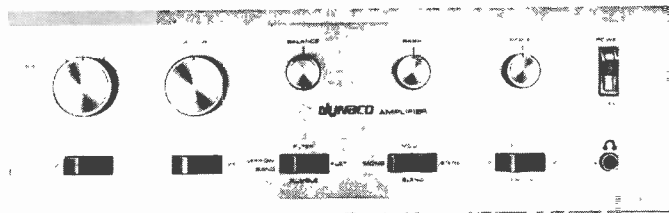
Only
\$19.95
KIT
\$29.95 factory-
assembled



RIGHT FRONT

AND
TWO MORE SPEAKERS
CREATES

FOUR-DIMENSIONAL



SCA-80 (\$169.95 kit; \$249.95 assembled)

DYNAQUAD® STEREO

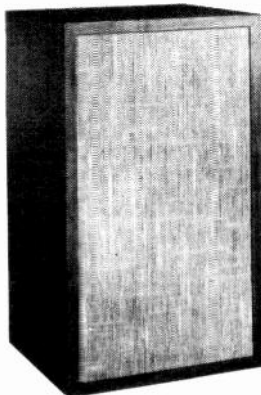
The new Dynaco Quadaptor® can be used with virtually any existing stereo receiver or amplifier. Dynaquad® four-dimensional stereo does not require an additional stereo amplifier . . . just two matched,

eight ohm speakers in back of the room. The four speakers are connected to the Quadaptor® which in turn is connected to the amplifier.

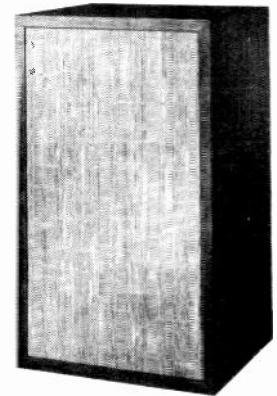
The Quadaptor® is not a synthesizer. Rather it reveals depth and concert-hall sound already on many of your present stereo recordings but not enjoyed due to the limitations of the conventional two-speaker stereo system. The manner in which the new two back speakers are

connected unmasks this hitherto hidden information to fully utilize everything that has been included on your recordings all along. Not only will the Quadaptor® give you four-dimensional stereo from your present recordings, but you can enjoy the same Dynaquad® stereo from your present FM stereo tuner too.

Best results are realized when the back eight ohm speakers have as constant an impedance as possible. The Dynaco A-25 (\$79.95 each) speakers were designed specifically to provide constant impedance. The Sterophile Magazine calls them "probably the best buy in high fidelity today."



LEFT REAR



RIGHT REAR

Dynaco A-25 speakers (\$79.95 each—assembled only)

Send for literature or pick some up at your dealer where you can see and hear Dynaco equipment.

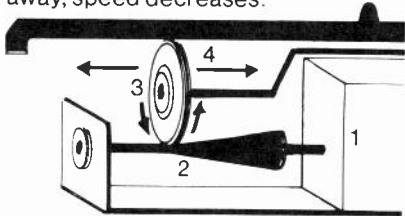
dynaco inc.

3060 JEFFERSON ST., PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19121
IN EUROPE WRITE: DYNACO A/S, HUMLUM, STRUER, DENMARK

The turntables with an infinite choice of speeds.

The variable control Lenco manual turntables offer an infinite selection of speed—a continuous sweep from 30 to 86 rpm. At the standard 16-2/3, 33-1/3, 45 and 78.26 rpm, there are click stops that can be precisely set or adjusted at any time.

Infinitely variable speed control from 30 to 86 rpm is accomplished by a unique motor and drive system. The 4-pole constant velocity motor (1) has conically shaped shaft (2) which contacts a rubber drive wheel (3). The speed control on the deck moves the drive wheel along the tapered shaft. The rim of the wheel makes contact with the underside of the turntable (4). As the wheel moves toward the center of the turntable, speed increases; as the wheel moves away, speed decreases.



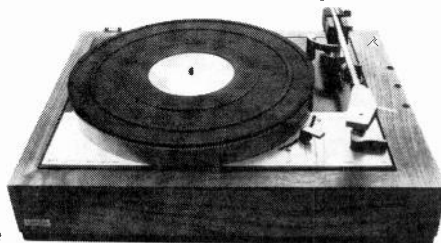
With this, you can slow down a complex rush of notes, the better to appreciate the inner voices when you listen next at normal speeds. You can tune a recorded orchestra to match the instrument you play, and join in. Your tuning is not restricted to a paltry fraction of a note, either. You can exercise your urge to conduct, choosing whatever tempo suits you. And you can use it to extend your knowledge of the dance or language, or to accompany slide or movie shows.

And at every one of these speeds, Swiss precision takes over. For example, the Lenco L-75's sleekly polished transcription tonearm shares

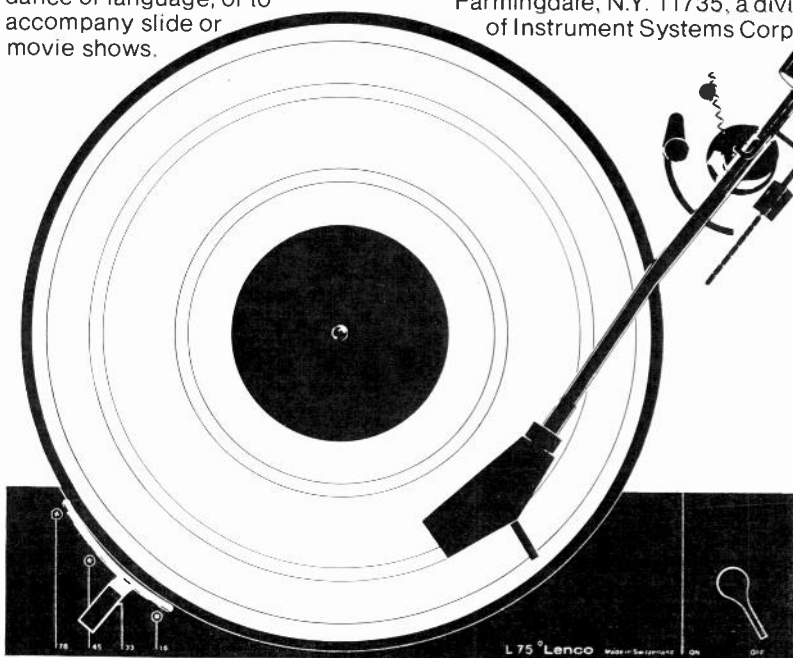


many design concepts (such as gravity-controlled anti-skating, hydraulic bearings) with arms costing more alone than the entire L-75 arm and turntable unit. And the dynamically balanced 8.8 lb. turntable reduces rumble, wow and flutter to inaudibility.

The L-75 complete with handsome walnut base at \$99.50 offers professional quality and versatility but at



far less than studio-equipment prices. The B55 (lighter platter and an arm of almost equal specification) is only \$85.00 with base. Both are available now at your Benjamin/Lenco dealer. Benjamin Electronic Sound Corp. Farmingdale, N.Y. 11735, a division of Instrument Systems Corp.



Lenco turntables from Benjamin

does not have to be dedicated to the sale of deodorants and bananas. Get a copy of the program from WFMT-FM in Chicago for an eye-opener.

How do you revive the disc market? You don't, for it is no use beating a dead horse. Look instead to the future of the new distribution network for fine music: the tape recorder and the FM broadcast.

KENNETH O'MEARA
Holland, Mich.

There may be truth in Mr. O'Meara's grim prophecy, but when that dead horse is finally buried, just what will they be playing on all those tape recorders and FM broadcasts?

● Your February issue read like *True Confessions*. So the record companies don't know how to sell records! It doesn't surprise me. They've forgotten how, after a decade of taking money from teenagers. Not much effort needed for that.

I was disappointed that you didn't mention record clubs. I belong to a major-company record club which includes, among its "benefits," same-month service on orders, two out of three ordered records actually delivered, surprise packages containing records I've never ordered by people I've never heard of, which I automatically return, letters asking me to please not return so many records, and invitations to rejoin the club, which I refuse to do because I've never quit.

TOM FONTE
Kenosha, Wis.

● Statistics show that much of youth is turning to movies for entertainment, instead of television. This is just one of the reasons I think movies can bring classical music to us. The soundtrack for *2001: A Space Odyssey* was the first classical record I ever bought, and is the main reason for my present interest in the classics. Many of my friends tell the same story.

JOHN SADLER
Vincennes, Ind.

● James Goodfriend ("Can the Patient Be Saved?") suggests that attempts be made to introduce young children to classical music. He is certainly right that early conditioning would help increase the future audience, but it is probably quixotic to expect the record companies to supply records and equipment to the tens of thousands of elementary schools in this country. However, there is something simple they could do immediately which would start to show results in a few years rather than in decades. They could start giving records without charge to college and university libraries and radio stations. Even with the nominal charge of from \$1 to \$2 per record, it takes several thousand dollars to build up a library or radio-station collection that would be decently representative of serious music. Whereas an elementary school might be able to scrape up \$50 or \$100 to buy a starting set for the toddlers, finding \$5,000 to \$10,000 in a library or a radio-station budget is usually impossible.

The effect of a well-stocked college record library or of a university radio station with strong programming in classical music cannot be measured merely in its effects on the sales of new releases. By getting people interested in the music as such, and by helping people who are already interested to widen their knowledge and appreciation of the field, the whole

(Continued on page 16)



Look What's Behind **KENWOOD'S** **NEWEST** Most Advanced Stereo Amplifier—**KA-7002**

The new KA-7002 incorporates such sophisticated circuitry as direct coupling with complementary-symmetry driver stage for minimum distortion and cleaner, purer sound.

It also features provision for 4-channel stereo, Phono 1 impedance selector switch, outputs for three sets of stereo speakers, terminals for two tape decks, and inputs for two phonos, two auxiliaries, plus tuner. And that's not all. If you really want to know what's behind the KA-7002, check these important specs!

Power Output: (IHF) 196 watts @ 4 ohms, 170 watts @ 8 ohms; 100 watts RMS Continuous Power, 50 watts per channel with both channels operating simultaneously with 8 ohms load at any frequency from 20-20k Hz ■ Harmonic Distortion: less than 0.5%, rated output from 20-20k Hz ■ IM Distortion: less than 0.3%, rated output or any level less ■ Frequency Response: 20-50k Hz ± 1 dB ■ Sensitivity: Phonos 1-2/Mic, 2.5 mV; Aux 1-2/Tape Play A-B, 200 mV ■ Main Amp Input: 1V ■ Signal-to-Noise Ratio (below rated output): Phono 1-2 (2.5 mV), 65 dB; Mic, 67 dB; Aux/Tuner/Tape Play, 77 dB ■ Damping Factor: 45 @ 8 ohms ■ Bass Control: ± 10 dB @ 100 Hz w/2 dB Step Switch (Tone Control Switch @ 300 Hz) ■ Treble Control: ± 10 dB @ 10k Hz w/2 dB Step Switch (Tone Control Switch @ 2k Hz) ■ Low & High Filter: 18 dB per octave ■ Dimensions: 16-5/16"W, 5-5/32"H, 11-1/32"D ■ Weight: 22 lbs. ■ Price: \$299.95 ■

For complete specifications write:

the sound approach to quality
 **KENWOOD**
 15711 So. Broadway, Gardena, Calif. 90247
 72-02 Fifty-first Ave., Woodside, N. Y. 11377

Alas. A lot of people are concerned with two things when they shop for an automatic turntable. How it performs (which is good) and what-will-of-Harry-think-of-this-baby? (which is bad).

The BSR McDonald 610/X is really a great turntable. It's got a synchronous motor, dual-range anti-skate control, viscous damped cue and pause, and more.

What's more, it's what we call a Total Turntable. That means you get a Decomatic power base (a \$15 option elsewhere), our deluxe dust cover (likewise for \$7.50) and a Shure M-93E elliptical magnetic cartridge (it lists for \$40) all included in one low price. So while our price may seem the same as their price, it's not.

BSR
McDONALD

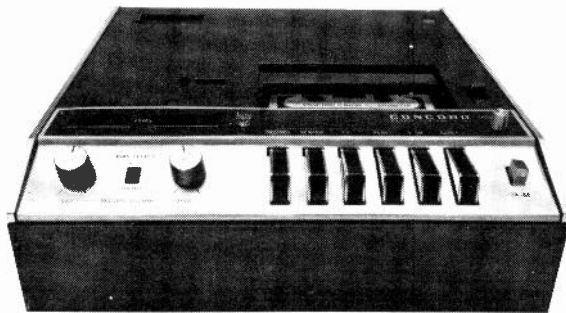


Send for free full color catalog on all our automatic turntables. BSR(USA)Ltd.,Blauvelt,N.Y.10913

CIRCLE NO. 7 ON READER SERVICE CARD

BIASED


IN THE INTEREST OF BETTER SOUND



The new premium cassette tapes make any cassette recorder sound better. And the Concord F-106 stereo cassette deck makes new tapes sound better. It's the first cassette deck to make true high fidelity recordings.

The secret is a little switch and a unique circuit that adjusts the record bias from the normal value used for standard tapes to the higher levels that let premium cassettes just open up and sing.

And there's more: Separate record level meters and controls; remote control switch; automatic motor shut-off and end-of-reel indicator, etc.

At your Concord dealer, \$119.79 (includes quality dynamic microphone, remote control, super dynamic cassette). Concord Electronics Corporation, 1935 Armacost Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90025/ a subsidiary of Ehrenreich Photo-Optical Industries, Inc. 

CONCORD F-106 CASSETTE DECK

CIRCLE NO. 11 ON READER SERVICE CARD

**If your 610/X
doesn't impress
your friends,
maybe you need
new friends.**

audience for classical music of all kinds would be widened and deepened.

M. DAVID STEIN
Evanston, Ill.

"JC—Superstar"

● I am angered and disturbed by Carl Belz's review of "Jesus Christ—Superstar" (February). If he were truly interested in listening to it as rock opera, he would have found it an excellent piece. There were many Beatle-style sections, not to mention some resembling Mozart and Wagner. "Superstar" may not match his description of an opera, but nonetheless it is still spectacular, and far better than many operas I have heard. Judging by what others have said and the number of artists who have recorded selections, *somebody* must like it.

GREG BADGER
Tacoma, Wash.

"Beyond the Basic Repertoire"

● The new series, "Beyond the Basic Repertoire," is one of the most exciting ideas I've encountered in any magazine. It set me thinking about pieces in my own collection or those I may have wished for. I would like to suggest a few works for Mr. Clark's consideration. How about Tchaikovsky's Sonata in G or his Second Piano Concerto, the *Hexameron* Variations of Liszt, or some of Haydn's earlier symphonies? Since opera and vocal music have not been dealt with in Martin Bookspan's series, perhaps some columns could be devoted to these. I look forward to each installment and encourage Mr. Clark to make his contributions as frequently as possible.

FREDERICK KOZMA
Norristown, Pa.

Lieder Discographies

● I have made discographies of the lieder of Schubert, Wolf, Schumann, Brahms, Mendelssohn, and Strauss, and one of the Schubert-Schumann-Brahms part songs and choral music. The first two are \$2 and the other five \$1 from the address below.

J. F. WEBER
1 Jewett Place
Utica, N. Y., 13501

Percy Grainger

● May I thank James Goodfriend for his marvelous review of the new London recording of Percy Grainger's music (January)? As a music major at the University of Texas at Austin, I have had the privilege of performing much of his instrumental music and have grown to adore his music as much as any other composer's. It was thrilling to see someone finally give Grainger the credit he is due in a widely read publication.

I would imagine that anyone interested in further Grainger listening would find the recordings by the Eastman Wind Ensemble most satisfying, especially their rendition of the *Hill Song No. 2* led by Frederick Fennell.

PHIL M. JOHNSON
Austin, Texas

The American Gramophone Society

● The American Gramophone Society, which is affiliated with the National Federation of Gramophone Societies, London, England, would appreciate hearing from readers interested in English music.

M. M. MADORSKY
Corresponding Secretary
23241 Berkley
Oak Park, Mich. 48237

STEREO REVIEW

PARTNERS IN EXCELLENCE:

KENWOOD KR-5150 fm-am stereo receiver / **KL-5060** 3-way speaker system

Choose a quality stereo receiver like KENWOOD's KR-5150 that delivers 150 watts of dynamic power, excellent broadcast reception, and unlimited potential to expand your stereo system! Then team it with the finest of stereo speakers . . . KENWOOD's KL-5060 3-way Speaker System with 12" woofer, 6½" midrange and 2 horn-type tweeters . . . for smooth-as-silk crossover and minimum distortion. It's a partnership that assures you of optimum quality and dependable performance year in and year out.

KENWOOD offers you a choice of seven excellent stereo receivers and four fine speaker systems—partners in excellence to meet your personal stereo requirements—and gives you stereo at its exciting best!



KR-5150, 150-Watt (IHF),
FET, IC, FM/AM Stereo Receiver
\$319.95 (Walnut Cabinet, optional)

KL-5060, 3-Way Speaker
System with 12" Woofer, 6½"
Midrange, 2-Horn-type Tweeters,
Metal Grille . . . \$279.95/pr

For complete specifications on KENWOOD
Stereo Receivers and Speaker Systems, write . . .



the sound approach to quality

KENWOOD

15777 So. Broadway, Gardena, Calif. 90247
72-02 Fifty-first Ave., Woodside, N. Y. 11377

How new Memorex Recording Tape shattered glass and why it will make your favorite music sound better.

To shatter glass with the human voice, a singer must reach and hold the pitch it takes to make a given glass vibrate. That pitch must then be projected with enough volume to vibrate the glass to its shatter point.

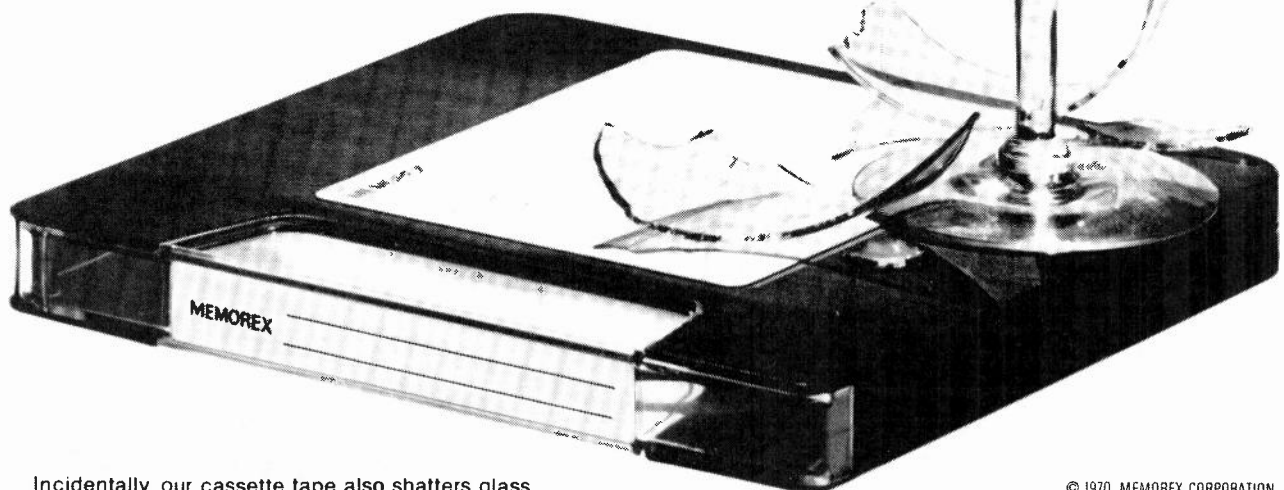
We figured if we could capture that precise pitch on our new Memorex Recording Tape and play it back at the same volume, we'd dramatically demonstrate the exactness with which our tape can reproduce music.

So that's exactly what we did.

Memorex has increased tape sensitivity, increased high-frequency response, and improved signal-to-noise ratio; so much, that now you can record your favorite music, then play it back the same way it sounded live.

You should hear us.

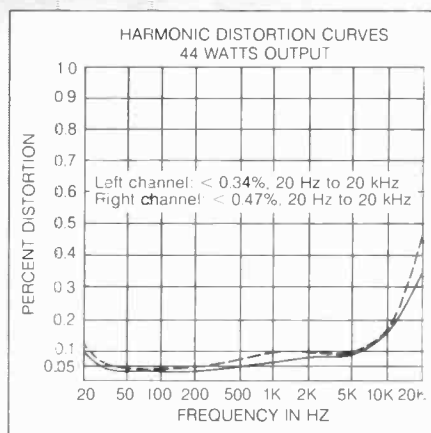
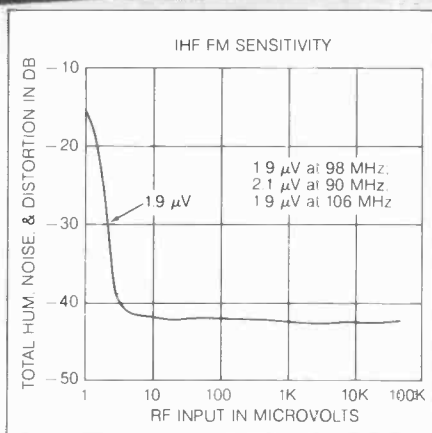
MEMOREX Recording Tape
Reproduction so true it can shatter glass.



Incidentally, our cassette tape also shatters glass.

© 1970, MEMOREX CORPORATION

Until now, you had to buy your components separately to get this kind of quality.



You get Altec's new 44/44 watt RMS receiver, Garrard's best turntable and Shure's high-track cartridge. These components come all put together in the new Altec 911A stereo AM/FM music center. The high-performance receiver section is actually an Altec 714A receiver on a different chassis. It delivers 44 watts RMS power per channel — both channels driven at 8 ohms — with less than 0.5% harmonic distortion. (For comparison purposes the IHF music power is 180 watts.) It includes 2 crystal filters for better selectivity and 3 FET's for better sensitivity. The Garrard automatic transcription turntable is the SL95B. And the Shure elliptical high-track cartridge is the M93E. For the first time, 3 separate top-of-the-line stereo components are built into a single, convenient package. So the new Altec 911A music center will save you space and save you money and truly give you component quality.

When HIGH FIDELITY tested the 714A receiver which is the same receiver component in the new Altec 911A music center, they reported "FM performance either met or exceeded manufacturer's specifications." "IHF sensitivity came in right on the nose at 1.9 microvolts. Capture ratio was outstanding at 1.1 dB." They went on to report, "in our cable-FM test the 714A easily climbed into the champion class by logging a total of 60 stations, of which 45 were judged suitable for critical listening or for off-the-air taping. Even without the cable antenna hookup, the 714A — fed only by an indoor folded dipole in a different reception area — pulled in no less than 34 FM stations, of which 22 were in the 'good to excellent' class. Our past data tells us that this is a new record."

HIGH FIDELITY also reported on the amplifier section; "...offers high power, linear response, accurate equalization, very low distortion." "The unit's specifications were either met or exceeded in CBS Labs' tests. With both channels driven simultaneously the 714A furnished better than 44 watts on each channel; its bandwidth response for this power level at rated distortion of 0.5% ran from below 10 Hz to 30 kHz. Frequency response at a 1-watt level extended within 0.75 dB from 20 Hz to 20 kHz."

The new Altec 911A stereo AM/FM music center is at your local Altec dealer's right now. It sells for \$499.00 and includes an oiled walnut base and molded dust cover. Check it out for yourself. Or, write us directly for a copy of HIGH FIDELITY's test report and a complete Altec catalog. Altec Lansing, 1515 S. Manchester Ave., Anaheim, CA 92803.

Built a little better.



ALTEC
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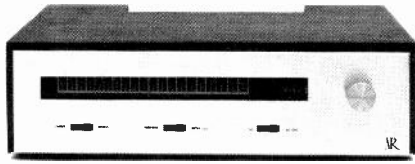
Test report excerpts courtesy of HIGH FIDELITY magazine.

CIRCLE NO. 3 ON READER SERVICE CARD

NEW PRODUCTS

THE LATEST IN
HIGH-FIDELITY
EQUIPMENT

Acoustic Research Stereo FM Tuner

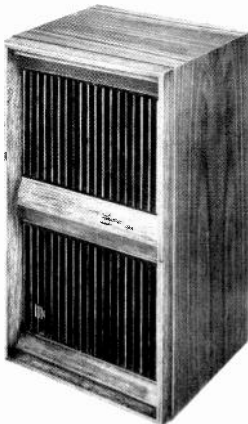


● ACOUSTIC RESEARCH has announced availability of its stereo FM tuner, which has an FET front end and integrated-circuit i.f. amplifiers. FM sensitivity is 2 microvolts (IHF) or better, harmonic and intermodulation distortion are under 0.5 per cent for both mono and stereo operation, and frequency response is 20 to 15,000 Hz ± 1 dB, mono or stereo. Other specifications include a capture ratio of 2 dB or better, at least 55 dB selectivity, and image and i.f. rejection of better than 70 and 100 dB, respectively. Stereo separation is a minimum of 35 dB at 50 Hz, 40 dB at 400 Hz, and 30 dB at 10,000

Hz. Controls in addition to the tuning knob are three rocker switches—on/off, interstation-noise muting (hush), and stereo/mono—below the linear tuning dial, and a rear-panel output-level control that affects both pairs of stereo outputs. Minimum output for 100 per cent modulation is 1 volt into loads of 10,000 ohms or higher. The AR tuner measures approximately $5\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{7}{8}$ inches exclusive of the control knobs, and its suggested price of \$210 includes a black aluminum cover. An optional oiled-walnut enclosure costs \$15 additional.

Circle 144 on reader service card

McIntosh Speaker Systems



● MCINTOSH has introduced five different wide-dispersion four-way speaker systems in contemporary and Mediterranean cabinet styles. The four drivers, which are used in various arrangements in the systems, are a 12-inch woofer, 8-inch cone mid-range, 1½-inch dome upper mid-range, and a cone tweeter with a ½-inch center dome. These cover the ranges from 20 to 250 Hz, 250 to 1,500 Hz, 1,500 to 7,000 Hz, and 7,000 to beyond 20,000 Hz, respectively. The low-frequency speaker is highly damped and designed to operate in conjunction with either of two McIntosh equalizers, intended to be connected between preamplifier and amplifier or in the tape-monitor loop of an integrated amplifier or receiver. (Both equalizers have their own tape-monitoring switching facilities to replace those they take up.)

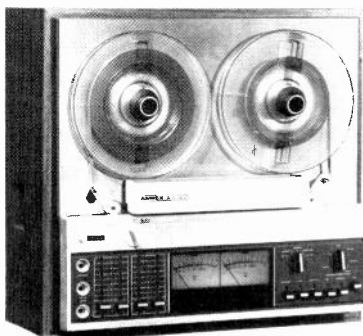
All speaker systems are of 8-ohm impedance. They range from the ML 1 C (shown) in a contemporary walnut cabinet (26 x 15 x 13½ inches), which con-

tains one of each type of driver, to the ML 4 C (ML 4 M in Mediterranean styling), which measures 41 x 29 x 21½ inches and has four woofers, one cone mid-range, four dome upper mid-ranges, and two tweeters. Power-handling capability of the ML 1 C is 100 watts continuous at 20 Hz; an amplifier with an output of at least 40 watts continuous is recommended. Prices of the systems are from \$312 (ML 1 C) to \$1,012 (ML 4 C and 4 M).

Of the two McIntosh Environmental Equalizers, one, the MQ 102 (\$74) has separate low-frequency controls for each channel to correct for room acoustics as well as the bass rolloff of the speaker systems. Up to about 20 dB of boost are available at 20 Hz. The second, the MQ 101 (\$250), has, in addition to the low-frequency controls, mid-range and treble controls that affect both channels simultaneously. These provide between ± 4 and ± 5 dB of adjustment at 4,000 and 20,000 Hz, respectively.

Circle 145 on reader service card

Ampex AX-300 Stereo Tape Deck



● AMPEX has introduced its AX series of stereo tape decks, the top model of which is the AX-300, a six-head auto-reversing machine with a three-motor transport and three operating speeds (7½, 3¾, and 1⅞ ips). The heads (erase, record, and playback for each direction) are grouped symmetrically on either side of the centrally located capstan. The transport controls, which are solenoid activated, include a PAUSE function. Built-in logic circuits control tape tension and coordinate switching between speeds and operating modes.

The AX-300 records and plays back in either direction, and is equipped with automatic end-of-tape shutoff. Its automatic-reversing mechanism is triggered by a 20-Hz tone that can be recorded on the tape by the user by means of a built-in oscillator. (Ampex prerecorded tapes come

with these tones already recorded.) If tones are placed at both the beginning and the end of a tape, the AX-300 will play both sides in sequence continually when the transport's REPEAT switch is in the "on" position. Inputs, which can be adjusted and mixed through their four associated slider controls, consist of two for line sources and two more that will accept line or microphone signals. The slider controls also set levels for sound-on-sound and echo operation, functions which (along with source-tape monitoring) are introduced by lever switches and a five-position mode selector. There is also a continuously variable noise-reduction filter which can be used to introduce a 12-dB-per-octave high-frequency rolloff anywhere between 3,000 and 16,000 Hz. Two large recording-level meters with

(Continued on page 22)



Wait till you get your pause on a TEAC A-1230

You'll be making the cleanest tapes on the new TEAC A-1230. Thanks to TEAC's unique symmetrical control system with Edi-Q. This advanced system allows you to edit while recording – instantaneously. In a flash, before that unwanted FM commercial is upon you, flick – and you're in PAUSE mode. Your tape stops silently, instantaneously. Record amps are fully fired and at standby for the first note of your recording restart. End of commercial and you toggle deftly back to "PLAY." You are off to a clean new recording start.

But Edi-Q is only one of a whole host of professional features on the A-1230. It also incorporates the same kind of advanced design and new-features engineering philosophy that established TEAC's famous Model A-1200 as the best value in various consumer tests.

There's a record bias switch for both high-output, low-noise tape and standard tape alike. So you get the fullest dynamic range with any type of tape. It also ensures the TEAC A-1230's high-performance characteristics.

So much for new refinements. Remember those other advanced A-1230 features: three-motor solenoid operation, three heads; tape/source monitoring, mic and line mixing, independent record mode switches for 1/4-track

stereo/mono operation, independent stereo headphone monitor, tape tension and spring-loaded automatic shutoff arms.

And the price, too, will give you pause; it's sensible.



Dust cover optional

TEAC®

TEAC Corporation of America 2000 Colorado Avenue Santa Monica, California 90404
CIRCLE NO. 47 ON READER SERVICE CARD



NEW PRODUCTS

THE LATEST IN
HIGH-FIDELITY
EQUIPMENT

VU characteristics can be calibrated by means of external adjustments for different tape types, as can the bias-signal strength (bias-oscillator frequency is 100 kHz). The front-panel headphone jack will drive 8-ohm phones.

Frequency-response specifications for the AX-300 are 40 to 16,000 Hz ± 3 dB at $7\frac{1}{2}$ ips and 80 to 12,000 Hz ± 4 dB at $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips. Wow and flutter for the two speeds are under 0.09 per cent ($7\frac{1}{2}$ ips) and 0.15 per cent ($3\frac{3}{4}$ ips), and the sig-

nal-to-noise ratio is 55 dB. Operating speeds are accurate within tolerances of ± 1 per cent ($7\frac{1}{2}$ ips) and ± 2 per cent ($3\frac{3}{4}$ ips). Fast-wind time for 1,200 feet of tape: 55 seconds. On its walnut base the AX-300 has overall dimensions of $16\frac{1}{2} \times 14\frac{1}{2} \times 8$ inches, and can be operated horizontally or vertically. Price: \$649.95. The AX-50, the second model in the AX series, is a single-motor, three-head deck that sells for \$279.95.

Circle 146 on reader service card

CTS Unmounted Speakers



● CTS' free four-page pamphlet describes five speaker-system combinations for the CTS line of unmounted speakers and crossover-network components. The suggested systems range from a single $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch full-range driver (\$7.75 plus shipping) intended for an enclosure volume of less than $\frac{1}{8}$ cubic foot to a three-way system (12-inch woofer, $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mid-range, and 3-inch tweeter as shown, plus crossover networks and two level

controls) for approximately 2-cubic-foot installation. The latter costs \$63.91 plus shipping. All drivers are designed for acoustic-suspension operation and are rated at 8 ohms nominal impedance. Power-handling capabilities range from 2 to 50 watts. The systems come with enclosure dimensions and wiring diagrams for the crossover networks and level controls. They are available by mail order only.

Circle 147 on reader service card

Fisher 701 Four-Channel Receiver



● FISHER's new 701 four-channel-stereo receiver is said to be potentially compatible with all four-channel systems currently in use or under consideration. It consists of four power amplifiers (40 watts continuous power each into 8 ohms at 0.5 per cent harmonic and 0.8 per cent intermodulation distortion) with bass, treble, balance, and volume (slider-type) controls for the front and rear channels. There is an AM/stereo FM tuner section that Fisher will modify at cost to conform to any quadrasonic FM broadcasting system that may be adopted. Inputs are provided for magnetic phono, two auxiliary sources, and tape deck (one four-channel deck or two two-channel decks). A tape-monitor switch with three active positions permits the front and rear tape inputs to be monitored separately or simultaneously. There are two stereo-headphone jacks—one for the front and the other for the rear channels.

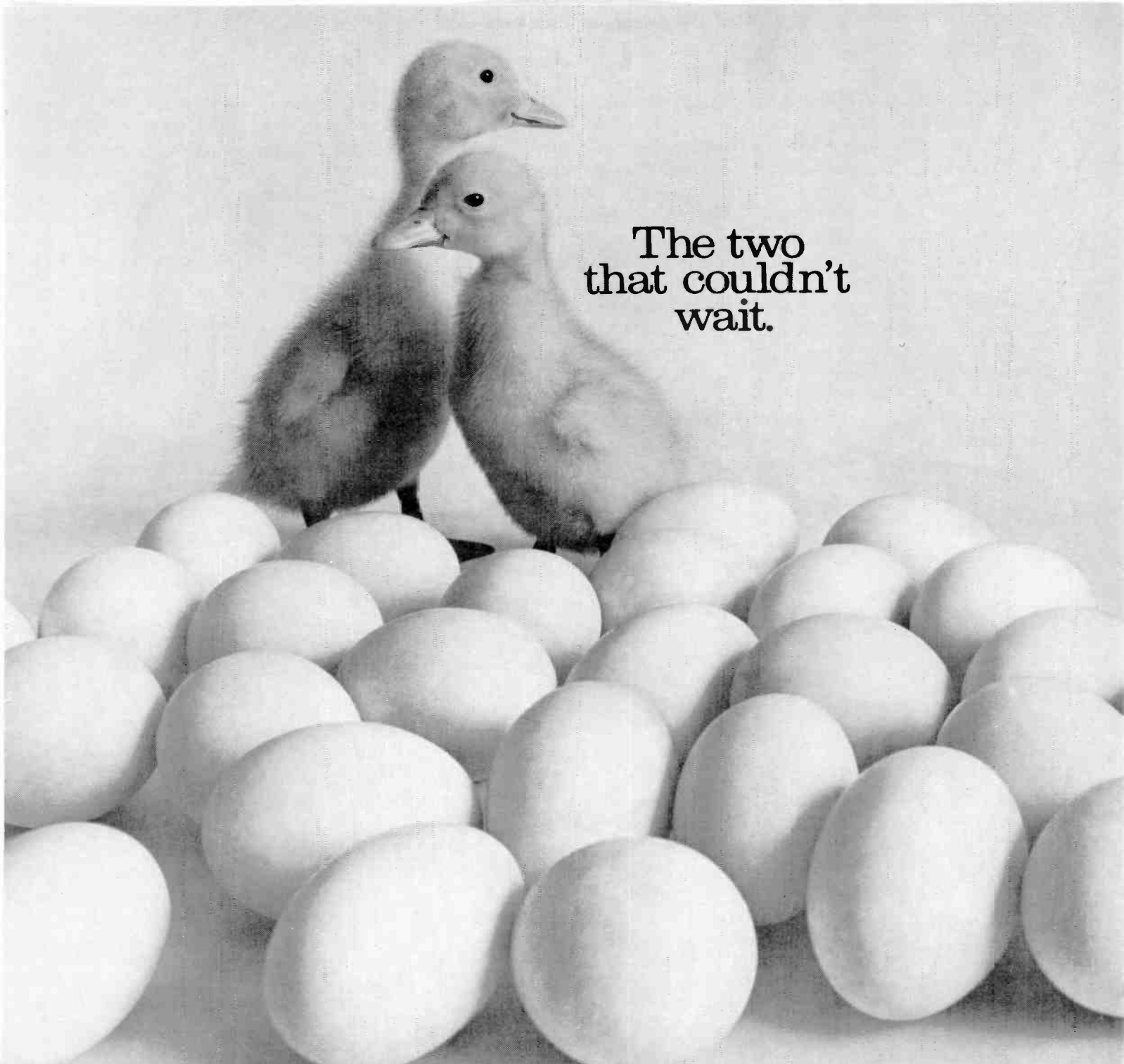
The Fisher 701 has special facilities to provide a simulated four-channel effect by routing a modified version of the front-channel signals to the rear channels. The four signals thus derived can also be recorded on a four-channel tape deck via the tape-output jacks. Mode switching permits selection of mono, stereo, real or simulated four-channel stereo, and four-channel reverse (front channels to rear and rear to front). The receiver will han-

dle up to eight speakers with switching provided for the main four, remote four, both, or headphones. There are high-cut filter and loudness-compensation push-buttons for the front and rear channels.

Pushbuttons also control switchable interstation-noise muting and AFC. Additional specifications for the amplifier section include a frequency response of 20 to 25,000 Hz ± 1.5 dB, power bandwidth of 20 to 25,000 Hz, and signal-to-noise ratios of 60 dB (phono input) and 65 dB (high-level inputs). IHF sensitivity for the FM section is 1.7 microvolts. The capture ratio is 1.5 dB, selectivity is 65 dB, and stereo separation at 400 Hz is 36 dB.

The 701 employs Fisher's "Autoscan" electronic tuning system as well as manual tuning. The Autoscan function can be used to continuously sweep the FM dial automatically or to proceed from station to station. A meter at the left of the tuning dial reads the frequency of each station. (This meter also serves as a signal-strength indicator for manual tuning.) Colored lights above the meter come on to indicate stereo broadcasts and the receiver's mode of operation. Overall dimensions for the 701 are approximately $17 \times 5\frac{1}{4} \times 14\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Price: \$699.95. A walnut cabinet is \$22.95 more, and an optional remote control for the Autoscan function costs \$9.95.

Circle 148 on reader service card



The two
that couldn't
wait.

Every so often, an idea just won't wait until its time has come. So it arrives ahead of schedule. And begins a trend.

Take the new Sony 6065 receiver, for instance. It takes direct-coupled circuitry into a new dimension. Which means there is nothing to come between you and the sound—no coupling capacitors, and no interstage transformers.

Those capacitors and transformers could cause phase shift or low-end roll-off, or diminish the damping factor at the low frequencies where you need it most.

So, instead we use Darlington-type coupling, a complementary-symmetry driver stage, and an output stage that needs no coupling capacitor between itself and the speaker because it's supplied with both positive *and* negative voltages (not just positive and ground).

The results speak for themselves. The amplifier section puts out 255 watts* with less than 0.2% distortion, and a cleaner, purer sound than you've heard before in the 6065's price

range (or, quite probably, above it).

And the FM section has not only high sensitivity and selectivity (2.2 μ V IHF and 80dB respectively) but lower noise and better interference rejection, to help you discover stations that you've never heard before—re-discover stations that were barely listenable before.

You'll discover new flexibility, too, in the control functions. Sony's famous two-way function selector lets you switch quickly to the most used sources—or dial conventionally to such extras as a front-panel AUX input jack, or a second phono input. There's a center channel output, too, to fill the hole-in-the-middle in large rooms, or feed mono signals to tape recorders or a remote sound system. The Sony 6065. \$399.50

Another "impatient" receiver also featuring the new Sony approach to direct coupling, the 6055 delivers 145 watts*. Moderately priced, this receiver is a remarkable value at \$299.50.

So, there they are, months ahead of schedule
CIRCLE NO. 42 ON READER SERVICE CARD

and way ahead of their time. Don't wait to enjoy them at your dealer. Sony Corporation of America, 47-47 Van Dam Street, Long Island City, New York 11101.

*IHF Constant power supply method at 4 ohms



TWO NEW RECEIVERS FROM
SONY®

With and without Dolby, that is.

The new CAD5 comes with. The original CAD4 without. Which leaves you with the logical question of whether you want to be with or without.

Unless you've recently arrived on this planet, you know that Dolby is special circuitry that reduces tape hiss to the point where it's virtually eliminated.

At the moment, only Harman-Kardon and two others offer Dolbyized cassette decks. We're sure you'll consider all three. That is, if you consider the advantages of Dolby worth the extra cost in the first place.

The choice among non-Dolbyized cassette decks is either

tougher or easier to make, depending on how you look at it. It's tougher because there are so many brands available. It's easier, because none of them can match the track record of Harman-Kardon's CAD4.

Electronics World, in comparing the CAD4 to several other top quality cassette machines, summed up their findings by saying: "The Harman-Kardon CAD4 is the best of the group in performance..."

More recently, Julian Hirsch, reporting in Stereo Review on his tests of 17 decks, paid this tribute to the CAD4: "The time-tested Harman-Kardon CAD4 was well able to hold

its own among comparably priced contemporary designs...a tribute to its basically sound design and construction."

If you've had any experience at all with tape recorders, you know that reliability is as important as electronic performance. And when you can have both in the same unit, the choice is clear.

Now back to the CAD5, which took "the best" and made it even better. Not just by adding Dolby, but by incorporating other advances as well. Such as equalization and bias adjustments for the new chromium dioxide low noise tape. And even more extended high frequency response.

We realize that you have a lot to think about. And we'll be pleased to send you detailed literature on both of our cassette decks. Then you can have the last word.

Harman-Kardon, Inc., 55 Ames Court, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.



CAD5
(with Dolby)
\$229.95
CAD4
(without Dolby)
\$159.95

harman kardon

A subsidiary of Jervis Corporation

Now the last word in cassette decks comes with and without.



TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **LOUDNESS COMPENSATION:** The so-called "loudness control" has been a feature of practically every component amplifier, preamplifier, and receiver sold here in the past two decades. Years ago, there was considerable controversy as to the validity of the concept of "loudness compensation." I don't propose to renew the argument, but it seems likely that many recent converts to components may be unaware of the history of the control or switch marked **LOUDNESS** on their amplifiers and receivers. The rationale for its existence stems from psychoacoustic studies made several decades ago by Messrs. Fletcher and Munson of Bell Telephone Laboratories.

Their researches indicated that the human ear responds in a reasonably uniform manner to a wide range of frequencies, but only at high volume levels. As the sound level is reduced, the ear becomes less sensitive to low frequencies and, to a much lesser degree, to high frequencies. Their findings are summarized in a family of curves—"equal-loudness contours"—that show the relative sound pressure required at various frequencies and listening levels to produce the same *subjective* loudness at all frequencies. Subsequent tests by other workers in the field developed equal-loudness contours differing in detail from the Fletcher-Munson curves, but generally similar in appearance.

Long after the initial tests by Fletcher and Munson, when high-fidelity reproduction was available in a home setting, people found that music tended to sound best (from the standpoint of frequency balance) at high levels. It lost bass and sounded "thin" when played at reduced volume. This could clearly be attributed to the Fletcher-Munson effect.

The "solution" was to use a compensated volume control, called a "loudness control," which reduced the bass frequencies less than the middle- and high-frequency levels as the volume was turned down. The goal of this relative bass boost was to shape the

amplifier frequency response in accordance with the Fletcher-Munson equal-loudness contours, so that the *relative* audibility of all frequencies in the sonic spectrum would remain fairly constant over a wide range of listening levels.

To many, this seemed a great idea. True, some of the lower bass sounds, formerly inaudible at low levels, could now be heard at moderate or even "background" listening levels. However, and unfortunately, a more "natural" sound seldom resulted from this technique. After all, the ear's response to *live* music also exhibits a loss of bass at low levels, so that restoring it to reproduced music certainly could not improve the faithfulness to the original sound. And remember, the Fletcher-Munson curves were derived from testing perhaps hundreds of people, and represent the *average* results of the tests. The odds are against any exact match between the average curves and the hearing of any one individual.

Technical objections aside, my ears tell me that most music, when modified by a loudness-compensation circuit, simply does not sound very good. In many cases it becomes undesirably bassy or "tubby." Most of the explanation for this lies in the relationship between the setting of the volume-control knob (which determines the amount of bass boost) and the acoustic sound pressure at the listener's ear.

In other words, the physical setting of the volume/loudness control knob establishes a certain amplifier frequency-response curve, but the circuit designer has no way of knowing the level of the input signal, which is what ultimately determines the setting of the control. The wide variations possible in program level make the achievement of the "correct" loudness an unlikely occurrence. The relationship between power-amplifier gain, power output, and speaker efficiency, to say nothing of listening-room acoustics, is quite unpredictable. With the factor of varying program levels, we have a situation

TESTED THIS MONTH

●
BSR 610/X Automatic Turntable
Kenwood KL-5060 Speaker System
Tandberg 3000X Stereo Tape Deck
Cassette Decks Revisited

with many unknowns and no general solution. There have been some amplifiers with two volume controls—one "flat" and the other compensated. The relative settings of the two controls permitted the user to establish almost any degree of compensation for any acoustical loudness level. This, or the use of separate input-level controls for each program source, was the most practical method of achieving the claimed benefits of loudness compensation (if, indeed, they can be achieved at all). However, these facilities are not at all common today, and most people did not use them correctly even when they were present.

Since almost all loudness-compensation circuits can be switched out, you can easily determine for yourself whether you are satisfied with their effects. (A few amplifiers and receivers have been made with non-defeatable compensation, which I consider a grievous mistake, but they are now fortunately very rare.) If you find the sound of your system too muddy with the loudness compensation switched on, try leaving it off and use your bass tone control to

achieve the desired result. Many tone controls can lift the low bass without adding undesirable heaviness to the sound. In fact, one manufacturer (Acoustic Research) deliberately omits loudness compensation from their amplifier and receiver and recommends using the tone controls for the purpose. Their tone-control characteristics are especially well chosen, and I have found the results very agreeable. However, the best-sounding loudness compensation for any one individual's ears will probably be "produced" by correct adjustment of one of the five-band (or more) equalizers discussed last month.

Some loudness-compensation circuits boost the high frequencies as well as the lows as volume is reduced. The theoretical basis for this has been argued, pro and con, at some length. Since, in my estimation, the whole concept of loudness compensation is already on very shaky theoretical ground, I suggest a pragmatic approach. If you like the way bass boost alone affects the sound, the argument is ended. If not, you have the option of using the treble as well as the bass tone control. That's what they are there for.

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

BSR 610/X AUTOMATIC TURNTABLE



● THE BSR McDonald 610/X is described by its manufacturer as a "total turntable package." The name is well chosen, for it consists of a ready-to-use automatic record player on a base (with dust cover), and a Shure M93E elliptical-stylus cartridge installed in the tone arm. On the front of the base is an illuminated switch that, if desired, enables the record player to shut off the power to the associated amplifier or receiver automatically when the record player itself shuts off.

The BSR 610/X is a four-speed (78, 45, 33 $\frac{1}{3}$, and 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ rpm) unit with an 11-inch, cast nonferrous platter weighing 3 pounds, 7 ounces. The counterweighted arm has an easily removable phono-cartridge slide and a short straight finger lift. A single lever with STOP, START, and AUTO positions controls the operation. Another lever selects the playing speed, and a third lever sets the arm indexing for records of 7-, 10-, or 12-inch diameter. Two spindles are supplied: a short one for manual or single-play operation, and an automatic-changer spindle. A swing-away "control arm" rests on the record stack in automatic operation.

The BSR 610/X has three modes of operation, controlled by the spindle used and the position of the swing-

away record-stabilizing control arm. For automatic play, the long spindle is inserted, discs are placed on it, and then the control arm is lowered onto the stack of records. Pushing the operating lever to AUTO places the unit in operation, and it shuts off (together with the amplifier or receiver, if the "power-control" feature of the turntable base is activated) when the last record has been played. The record-change cycle takes 9 seconds—a relatively short time.

For semi-automatic play of a single record, the short spindle is used and the control arm is swung out of the way to the right. Pushing the operating lever to AUTO starts the turntable and causes the arm to index to the selected record diameter. The record plays repeatedly until the operating lever is moved to STOP. For purely manual operation, the overhead control arm is swung to the rear and a record is placed on the turntable. Pushing the operating lever to START turns on the turntable and releases the arm restraint. The pickup must be placed on the record manually, but after playing, it returns to the rest automatically and the unit shuts off. When the arm returns to its rest, an automatic locking device is activated, which provides an effective safeguard against the arm's being accidentally dislodged.

After the arm is balanced, any tracking force from 0 to 6 grams can be dialed in with a calibrated control. An adjustable anti-skating control near the tone-arm base has separate calibration scales for conical and elliptical styli, with a range of 2 to 6 grams for the former and 2 to 4 grams for the latter. A damped cueing lever can raise or lower the pickup at any time during play. The BSR McDonald 610/X Total Turntable Package, with base, dust cover, and cartridge, ready to play, has a minimum advertised price of \$99.95.

● *Use Tests and Measurements.* The recommended range of tracking forces for the Shure M93E cartridge that
(Continued on page 28)

THE CRITICS HAVE PUT THE COMPETITION IN THEIR PLACE

Specifically, the leading consumer testing publications have continually top-rated Sherwood receivers over all others. Our S-8900 shown here leading the pack is no exception.

Of course, we worked hard to get those ratings.

The S-8900 has a powerful 225 watt (± 1 dB) amplifier (48 watts RMS per channel at 8 OHMS). FM distortion is the lowest in the industry—0.15%. There's an impressive 3 year parts warranty, plus 1 year labor, too.

The S-8900 features solid-state ceramic FM IF filtering. Exclusive FET FM interchannel hush control. A zero-center tuning meter.

There's an extra front panel tape record/dubbing jack. And six pushbuttons for every effect you could possibly want.

At \$399.95, our S-8900

gives more top-rated quality than any comparable or lower priced model.

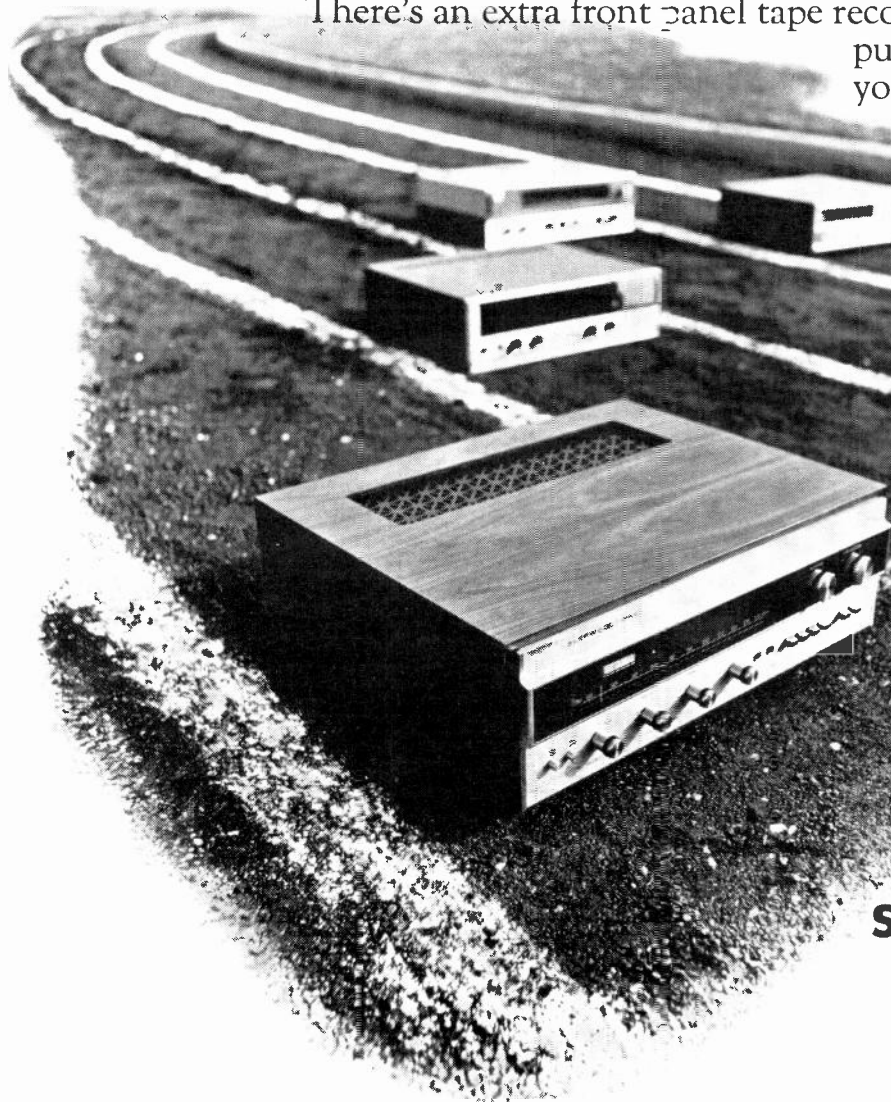
That's what we've always said.

Only now you don't have to take our word for it.

For more information and complete specifications, write us today. Sherwood

Electronic Laboratories, Inc., Dept. A, 4300 North California Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60618.

**SHERWOOD
SOUNDS EXPENSIVE**



Stylus-force and anti-skating adjustments for the 610/X are located near the tone-arm pivot. Also visible are the cueing lever (left) and control arm (top).



comes with the 610/X is $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 grams. We found that the cartridge when mounted in the 610/X arm was able to track the highest velocities on our test records with negligible waveform distortion at 2 grams, and this force was used throughout our tests. With the tracking-force dial set to 2 grams, the actual measured force was 2.25 grams; at a 3-gram setting it was 3.3 grams. The force increased by an insignificant 0.3 gram at the top of a $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch stack of records. Like most anti-skating devices we have tested, this one had to be set about 1 gram higher than the suggested value for best compensation. The cueing lever worked very smoothly, with slight damping on the lift and a well-damped lowering action. It returned the stylus accurately to the groove from which it was lifted.

The arm tracking error was nearly zero at radii of 2 and 6 inches, and it was always under 0.7 degree per inch elsewhere, which is quite satisfactory. A slight cartridge-tone arm resonance of about 1.5 dB was found at 10 Hz. The turntable speed was almost exact (very slightly fast), and did not change with an increase in record load or changes in line voltage from 90 to 135 volts.

The wow and flutter were 0.15 and 0.035 per cent at $33\frac{1}{3}$ rpm, 0.2 and 0.05 per cent at 45 rpm, and 0.12 and

0.04 per cent at 78 rpm. Combined vertical and lateral rumble was -25 dB, and lateral rumble alone was -27 dB (NAB unweighted measurements). A measurement using a wave analyzer indicated that the rumble was almost entirely at a frequency of 30 Hz.

● *Comments.* The BSR McDonald 610/X operated smoothly and flawlessly at all times, and we experienced no difficulty from external shock and vibration. From the range of antiskating adjustments, it appears that the machine was not designed for operation at tracking forces under 2 grams, but at that force it had no difficulty. The Shure M93E cartridge is an excellent choice for 2-gram operation, and its overall sound quality when installed in the 610/X left little to be desired.

The measured wow was slightly higher than we have found in some of the more expensive automatic turntables, but well within hi-fi standards. It was never audible during our use of the system. The rumble figures were also higher than we would have expected from the construction and general design of the 610/X. However, try as we might, we could not induce any serious audible unpleasantness—even when we applied heavy bass boost with the amplifier tone controls. The wave analyzer provided a clue to the reason for this—the rumble is almost pure 30 Hz, with little or no energy below or above that frequency. (Rumble frequencies below 30 Hz could cause excessive speaker-cone flutter, whereas rumble frequencies much above 30 Hz would be quite audible.) Even with speakers having appreciable response at 30 Hz, there was little audible rumble. To be sure, at very high playing levels, it could be heard, but it really had to be listened for.

The concept of a "total turntable package" is not a new one, but it has considerable merit. And BSR has certainly produced an easy-to-operate, fine-sounding record player in the 610/X.

For more information, circle 156 on reader service card

KENWOOD KL-5060 SPEAKER SYSTEM



● THE Kenwood KL-5060 is a three-way, 8-ohm speaker system in a ported walnut enclosure with a handsome metal grille. It measures $25\frac{1}{2}$ x 15 x $11\frac{1}{4}$ inches and weighs 44 pounds. A 12-inch woofer operates up to 600 Hz. A $6\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mid-range cone driver operates from 600 to 5,000 Hz, where it crosses over to a pair of circular horn-loaded tweeters. Separate level controls are provided for the mid-range and tweeters. Although the size and weight of the Kenwood KL-5060 would permit its use on a sturdy bookshelf, it should serve as well standing on the floor. Kenwood's power recommendation for the speaker is 60 watts. It sells for \$139.95.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* Listening to the KL-5060 before making any tests, we were struck by its smooth, unstrained sound quality. The indicated "normal" positions of the level controls seemed to provide a satisfactory tonal balance on most program material, although we felt that the bass sounded somewhat heavy compared with that of a number of other speaker systems we have tested.

To check the KL-5060's frequency response we averaged the outputs of eight microphones in our "live" test room to obtain a response curve from 300 to 15,000 Hz. Below 300 Hz the output of the KL-5060 was compared with that of a calibrated reference speaker to obtain a response curve close to what would be measured in an anechoic environment. Other measurements were made of the polar response, tone-burst response, low-frequency distortion, impedance variation with frequency, and the effect of the level controls on the system's frequency response.

The final composite response curve was unusually smooth and free of holes or peaks. It had a gradual, fairly uniform downward slope with increasing frequency, with the 10,000-Hz output being about 8 to 10 dB below the maximum output, which occurred at about 80 Hz. The measured flatness of the response curve was considerably improved when both level controls were set to maximum, which resulted in a response of ± 3 dB from 100 to 12,000 Hz (very good for a speaker system). The bass output rose 3 dB at 80 Hz, and was down 3 dB from the mid-range level at 50 Hz. This curve confirmed our listening impres-

(Continued on page 30)

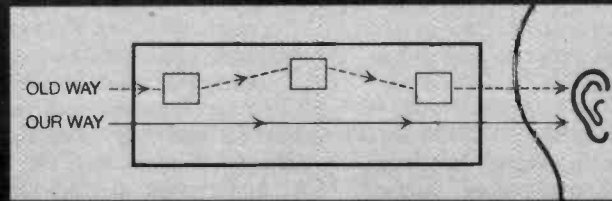
We've shortened the distance between you and the music.

Now you can really snuggle up to Schumann. When you get next to our new stereo receiver, the SA-6500.

Because we cut down the distortion. By cutting out the input transformer, the output transformer and the output capacitor. So instead of putting your music through a whole electronic maze, we put it right through. Via direct coupling. With less than 0.5% distortion. And an amplifier frequency response of 10 to 100,000 Hz -1dB.

And because the signal doesn't get capacited and transformer to death, you get something else. Full 200 watts of power (IHF) all the time.

The music is more than just



close, it's sharp. Because we've got 1.8 μ V sensitivity on FM from two 4-pole MOS FET's that can pull in your favorite station. So it sounds like it's being broadcast next door. Even if it's coming from the next state.

We also have selectivity. Because of two RF stages, a four-section tuning capacitor, four tuned circuits and an IF stage with a crystal filter and integrated circuit.

Having brought you closer to the music, we also bring you closer to absolute control. With linear sliding controls for bass and treble. Low Filter, High

Filter, and Loudness switches to shape the sound. An FM Muting switch to eliminate annoying inter-station noise. And pushbutton audio controls.

There's even more. Like a linear FM dial scale with maximum station separation, for easier tuning. And dual tuning meters to measure FM/AM signal strength and pinpoint FM stations. Plus Lumina-Band tuning to light them up. A full range of input and output jacks. Even a rich walnut cabinet.

Now that our SA-6500 has shortened the distance between you and the music, all you have to do is shorten the distance between you and your nearest Panasonic Hi-Fi dealer.

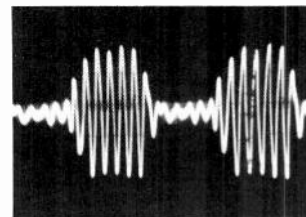
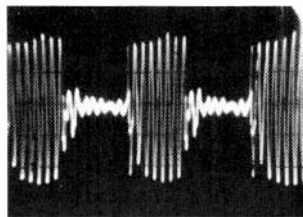
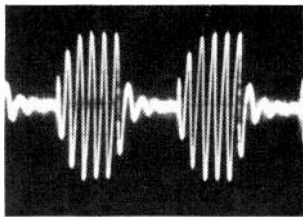


PANASONIC
just slightly ahead of our time.

200 Park Avenue, N.Y. 10017. For your nearest Panasonic Hi-Fi dealer, call 800 631-4299. In N.J., 800 962-2803. We pay for the call. Ask about Model SA-6500.

CIRCLE NO. 26 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The tone-burst performance of the KL-5060 was quite good. Shown are oscilloscope photos taken at (left to right) 80, 1,500, and 7,100 Hz.



sions, since the bass heaviness we had noted did not have a "tubby" quality (the usual result of a rise in output between 100 and 300 Hz), but rather a more solid bass produced by the elevated output in the 60- to 80-Hz region.

The polar response (dispersion) of the KL-5060 was quite good, as was the speaker's response to tone-burst test signals throughout the speaker's frequency range. System impedance was very uniform; it varied between 6.5 and 10 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz, except at the low-frequency system resonance (65 Hz), where it rose to 20 ohms. At a 1-watt test-signal drive level, the low-frequency distortion began to rise rapidly below 50 Hz, where it was 5 per cent. Increasing the drive to 10 watts had only a slight effect on the distortion above 60 Hz, and 5 per cent distortion was measured at 55 Hz.

We found the KL-5060 to be 5 to 8 dB more efficient than the usual acoustic-suspension system. This would permit it to be used to good advantage with the less expensive, modestly powered receivers and amplifiers (10 to 20 watts per channel) that are rather underpowered for driving acoustic-suspension systems.

● **Listening Tests.** The Kenwood KL-5060 is one of the smoothest and most listenable speakers we have heard in some time, especially if you like a solid bass "feel" in your sound. Although it is not strong in the very lowest bass octave (there is not much musical content down there anyway), the speaker certainly has no subjective lack of bass. On the other hand, in a room whose resonances tend to reinforce bass response, this speaker might be undesirably heavy-sounding. This risk exists with any speaker, of course, but not all speakers begin with an enhanced output in that frequency range.

The simulated live-vs.-recorded listening comparison completely confirmed our initial subjective impressions and subsequent measurements. The most accurate reproduction was obtained with both level controls set to their maximum positions, resulting in outstandingly fine mid- and high-frequency response. The KL-5060 ranks with the four or five best speakers we have tested with this very



The Kenwood KL-5060 employs four drivers—a cone woofer, cone mid-range, and two tweeters loaded by circular horns—in a three-way configuration.

revealing technique. Since the test excludes frequencies below 200 Hz, the low-frequency characteristics of the speaker did not affect the results.

Above and beyond its audible merits, the KL-5060 is a very attractive piece of furniture (a personal opinion, of course), especially when you consider the limited amount of styling possible in a simple rectangular-box format.

For more information, circle 157 on reader service card

TANDBERG 3000X STEREO TAPE DECK



● TANDBERG's Model 3000X is a moderately priced (\$299) stereo tape deck that closely resembles in design and performance the more expensive Model 6000X. The 3000X is a three-speed (1/8, 3/4, and 7 1/2 ips) single-motor machine, with separate playback head for off-the-tape mon-

itoring. A cross-field recording-bias head is used to achieve exceptionally wide frequency response at low tape speeds.

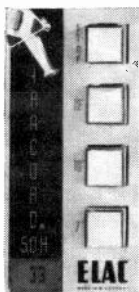
The Tandberg 3000X measures 15 1/2 x 6 1/2 x 12 3/8 inches and weighs 20 pounds. It can be operated in an upright or horizontal position. Its two fast-responding recording-level meters are illuminated while recording, but do not indicate playback-output level, which is fixed. Recording gain is set by two controls, and inputs are provided for low- and high-level sources and for low-impedance (200 to 700 ohms) dynamic microphones. Plugging a microphone into one of the front-panel jacks disconnects the associated line input; thus microphone and line sources cannot be mixed. The stereo-headphone jack is intended for headphones of 200 ohms or higher impedance.

The tape-transport control has the familiar Tandberg single-knob cross-shaped pattern. It can select fast speeds in either direction, play/record, and a free position in which the reel brakes are released for easy tape loading. A cueing lever serves to press the tape lightly against the playback head during fast wind or rewind to assist in locating a recorded portion of the tape. There is also a four-digit pushbutton-reset index counter.

Each channel has its own recording interlock button.

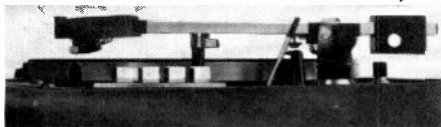
(Continued on page 32)

Lift this page and drop it... you'll see how gently the Miracord 50H treats your records.



A gentle touch of the push-buttons brings forth a gentle reaction from the Miracord 50H. The dynamically balanced arm responds gently with its frictionless bearing system, faithfully and flawlessly tracking the intricate record grooves. Gentleness, however, is just one attribute of the 50H, a clue to its superior performance is found in its features.

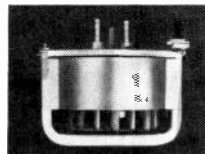
Stylus overhang adjustment is essential for optimum tracking. Another automatic turntable does feature this adjust-



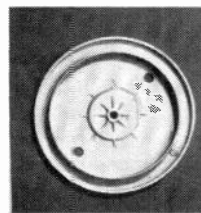
ment, but it's internal and difficult to set. The Miracord 50H offers external overhang adjustment with built-in gauge

no shifting, no guesswork, no templates.

Other turntables offer a kind of synchronous motor. The 50H uses a *Papst hysteresis synchronous* motor with outer rotor for unvarying speed accuracy regardless of the voltage fluctuation or loads. The Papst motor is usually found in professional studios.



Consider cueing: in one leading automatic turntable, cueing does not operate in the automatic mode. In automatic, cueing is the ideal way to interrupt play for a moment when there is a stack of records on the spindle. The 50H provides silicone-damped cueing in both automatic and manual modes.



Another important feature is the 50H turntable. It is a heavy, one-piece, non-ferrous metal casting, lathe-turned to precise dimensions and then individually dynamically balanced. This contributes to the smooth, steady motion of the turntable, free of rumble, wow and flutter.

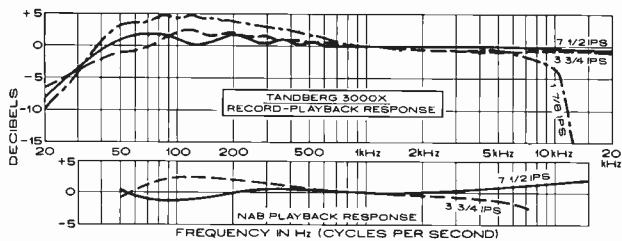
Nothing we can say short of experiencing it yourself can better describe the gentle way in which the Miracord responds and preserves the best in your records. Find out for yourself. Miracord 50H, \$175 less cartridge and base. Miracord feathertouch automatic turntables start at less than \$100. Benjamin

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Miracord 50H

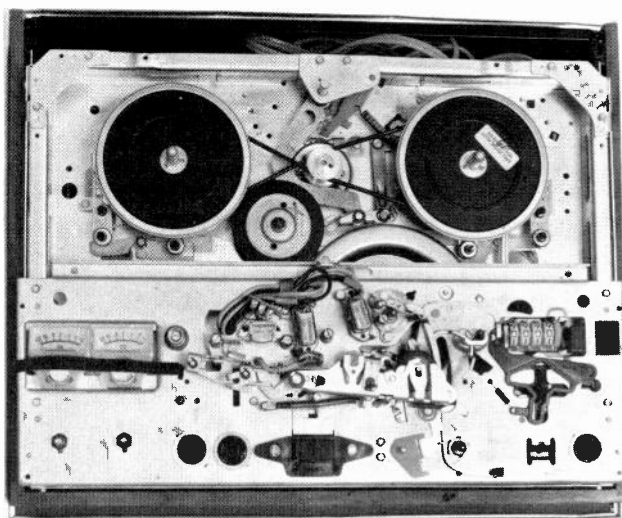




The output selector switch feeds the original program source, the stereo signal from the playback preamplifiers, or a mono signal from either playback channel to both output jacks. In the rear of the recorder, in addition to the input and output jacks, there is a three-position slide switch that connects either the left- or right-channel playback-preamplifier output to the line input of the left channel for special effects such as sound-on-sound and echo. An instantaneous start/stop switch functions as an effective "pause" control.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Since the heads, electronics, and basic transport mechanism of the Tandberg 3000X are essentially identical to those of the 6000X, it was not surprising to find that this machine duplicated the remarkable performance of its de luxe relative. With the recommended 3M Type 203 low-noise tape, we measured the 7½-ips record-playback frequency response at an astonishing ± 2 dB from 35 to 26,000 Hz (rated ± 2 dB from 40 to 20,000 Hz). Equally impressive was the performance at 3¾ ips, where the frequency response was within ± 2.5 dB from 35 to 21,000 Hz (rated ± 2 dB from 50 to 16,000 Hz). The response at 1⅞ ips was not quite as wide as we measured previously on the 6000X, probably because of normal production tolerances in heads and equalization. Nevertheless, it was essentially within ± 3 dB from 35 to 10,000 Hz (rated ± 2 dB from 50 to 9,000 Hz), which surpasses the performance of any other reel-to-reel recorder we have tested at this speed—except, of course, that of the Tandberg 6000X.

Over the range checked by the Ampex quarter-track test tapes, the playback frequency response of the 3000X was similar to that of the 6000X (± 1.5 dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz at 7½ ips, and ± 2.5 dB from 50 to 7,500 Hz at 3¾ ips). Wow and flutter were 0.025 and 0.13 per cent at 3¾ ips. At 7½ ips, they were 0.02 and 0.12 per cent. Since there is no standard low-speed flutter test tape, we measured the *combined* record-playback wow and flutter at 1⅞ ips. They were 0.07 and 0.20 per cent, respectively.



Removal of the 3000X's top plate exposes the various internal transport and head adjustments. The crossfield head (below the recording head) is attached to the pivoting capstan-roller assembly.

Although the signal-to-noise ratio of the 3000X is rated by Tandberg at 3 to 4 dB poorer than that of the 6000X (which has established a reputation as one of the quietest home tape recorders available), in our measurements the two were identical. The unweighted signal-to-noise ratio was 50 dB at 1⅞ ips and 53 dB at the other speeds, referred to the 0-dB recording level indicated on the meters. The distortion at this level was 2.6 per cent at the slowest speed, and 1.5 per cent at the other speeds. If the signal-to-noise ratio is referred to the customary reference level corresponding to 3 per cent distortion, it becomes 51 dB at 1⅞, 55 dB at 3¾, and 57 dB at 7½ ips. The signal-to-noise ratios were the same for the microphone and line inputs. Crosstalk between channels at 1,000 Hz was -52 dB.

To develop a 0-dB recording level, an input of 95 millivolts was required on the high-level line inputs, and only 5 millivolts was required on the low-level line inputs. The microphone input required 0.2 millivolt for a 0-dB level. The playback output corresponding to a 0-dB recording level changed with the tape speed. At 7½, 3¾, and 1⅞ ips, it was 0.75, 0.63, and 0.41 volt, respectively. The operating tape speeds were exact, and fast wind and rewind handled 1,800 feet of tape in 2 minutes, 8 seconds.

● **Comments.** When we reviewed the Tandberg 6000X (STEREO REVIEW, June 1970), we commented that it was hard to see how its performance could be significantly improved. Evidently Tandberg's engineers came to the same conclusion, but elected to bring the *same* performance into a lower price range. They have succeeded admirably.

It is fair to ask why there should be a \$200 price difference between the 3000X and the 6000X, since they are almost exactly alike, both in sound and measured performance. A comparison of their features answers the question. The 3000X has an induction motor, as compared with the hysteresis-synchronous motor of the 6000X. This may give it slightly less constant speed under a variety of tape-loading conditions, but we couldn't measure any difference on our sample. The special-effects switch (for sound-on-sound, echo, etc.) of the 3000X is in the rear instead of on the control panel—hardly an important consideration. Instead of a solenoid-operated instantaneous stop/start switch, affording the optional possibility of remote control, the 3000X has a simple, manually operated knob. We could hear the not-quite-instantaneous start as a slight "chirp" when the tape was put into motion.

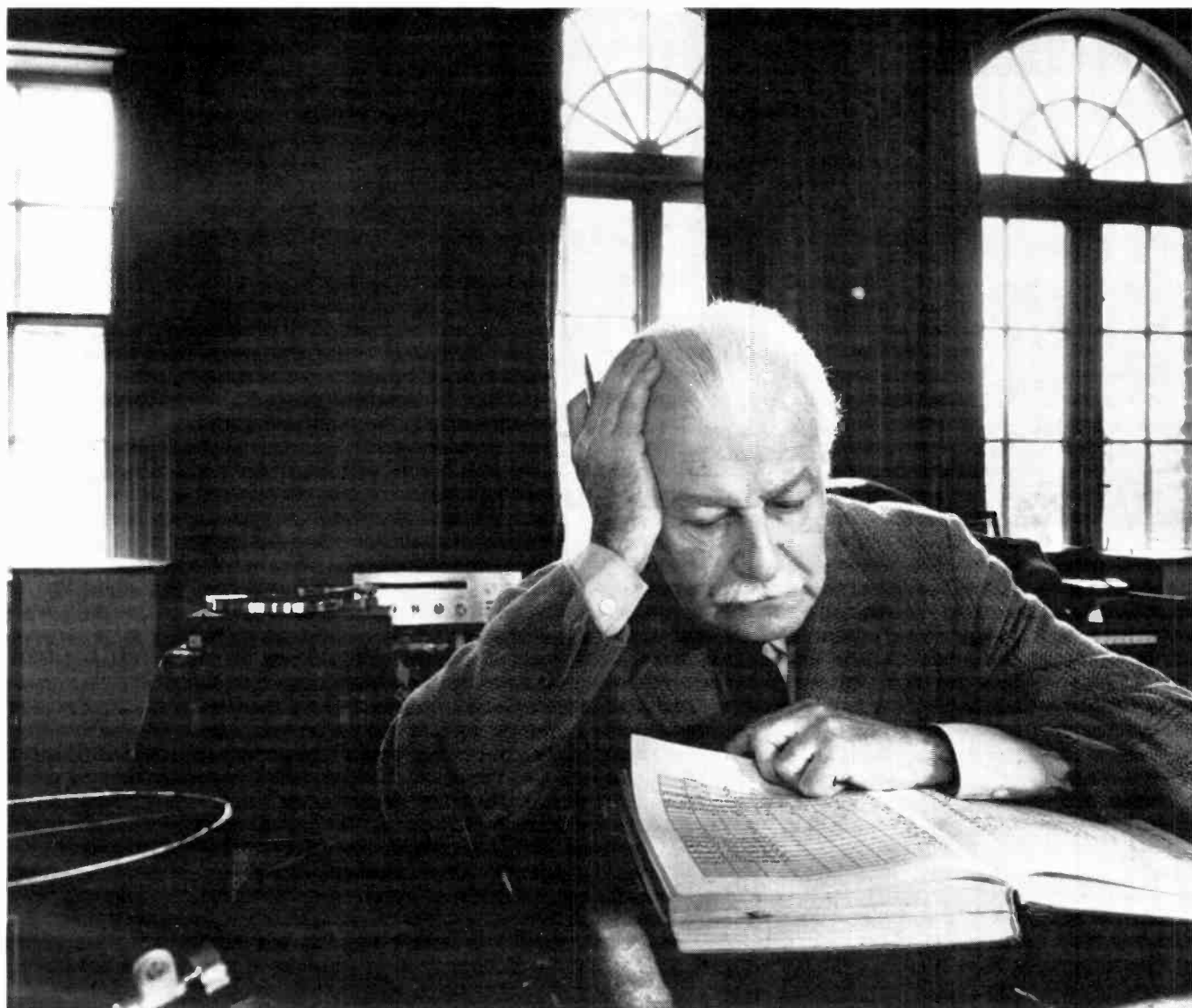
The 3000X does not have an RIAA-equalized phono input, which few will miss, nor does it have separate microphone inputs with mixing capability (a disadvantage in many cases). The absence of playback-level controls and meter indication on playback might be considered a minor disadvantage. Finally, the excellent peak-limiting circuit of the 6000X has been omitted from the 3000X. It may not be missed by the average home recordist, but only because he has never enjoyed the convenience of using a tape recorder such as the 6000X that *cannot* be driven into distortion. The headphone output of the 3000X will drive most 8-ohm phones to a satisfactory, but not adjustable, level.

As for listening quality, everything we said about the 6000X applies equally well to the 3000X. At 7½ ips, white noise emerged from the record-playback process absolutely unaltered in sound; at 3¾ ips, a very slight change could be heard. At either speed, no program originating from records or FM radio was changed in any audible way—including the background noise—because of the outstanding signal-to-noise ratio of the Tandberg 3000X.

At 1⅞ ips a slight loss of highs could be perceived, and at moderately high playback levels some hiss could be heard during low-level passages. In this respect the 3000X was comparable to a good Dolbyized cassette deck. (It could, of course, be made even better by the addition of an external Dolby unit.) At the higher speeds, it is doubtful if


(Continued on page 34)

Arthur Fiedler has chosen AR-5 speaker systems for use in his home.



For over 40 years, Arthur Fiedler has been conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra. His recordings with the Pops have made him known to music lovers all over the world. Mr. Fiedler has chosen AR-5 speaker systems because their advanced design contributes to accurate reproduction of the original program

material. Here, in his Brockline, Massachusetts, home, he auditions his latest Polydor recordings over an AR music system consisting of two AR-5 speakers, an AR FM receiver, and an AR turntable with Shure V-15 type II cartridge.

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the Dolby would help much, since the background-noise level of most program sources exceeds the noise introduced by the recorder. Even if the slow-speed frequency response of the 3000X is not quite the equal of that of the best of the cassette recorders, it comes very close. In addition, the 3000X retains all the advantages of the open-reel format, such as ease of editing and splicing, and very long playing time at the excellently performing slower speeds.

And, as we have said, a better-sounding recorder would be hard to find at any price. You will have to decide for yourself whether the absence of some of the flexibility and operating niceties found in a few competitively priced machines is a justifiable trade-off against the really exceptional record-playback performance of the impressive Tandberg 3000X.

For more information, circle 158 on reader service card

CASSETTE DECKS REVISITED

● IN our recent fourteen-page survey of seventeen cassette decks (STEREO REVIEW, November, 1970), we pointed out that several of the test samples were prototypes or early production units that might differ in some respects from later production models. Regular production units of the Harman-Kardon CAD-5 and Teac A-24 decks were subsequently submitted and retested, and our findings are given in brief below. For a full analysis of the features and functioning of *all* the decks, readers are referred to the original article. (The November 1970 issue is available for 75¢ postpaid from the Ziff-Davis Service Division, Department BCSR, 595 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012.)

● **Harman-Kardon CAD-5.** The original CAD-5 sample had apparently been factory adjusted for standard tape formulations; current-production decks are biased for high-density tape (specifically TDK SD). We found the record-playback frequency response of the second CAD-5 to be slightly improved over the already excellent performance of the first sample. With TDK SD tape it measured ± 1.5 dB from 45 to 15,000 Hz on one channel and ± 1.5 dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz on the other channel. With the Dolby circuits operative, there was approximately 1 dB more output in the range above 2,000 Hz, but the general shape of the response curve was not affected.

Our second unit had slightly more wow and flutter (0.1 and 0.24 per cent, respectively) than the first, but in this respect it was still very satisfactory. Like a number of the previously tested decks, it could not tolerate high recording levels without distortion. (Incidentally, this is *not* a problem with the Dolby circuitry *per se*.) Harman-Kardon recommends a maximum recording-level meter reading of -2 dB. The measured 1,000-Hz harmonic distortion at -3 dB was about 3 per cent, dropping to 2.2 per cent at -6 dB and increasing to over 5 per cent at 0 dB on the meters.



Considerable caution was required in setting recording levels, and we found it best to err on the low side (-3 dB to -5 dB for most program peaks) to avoid distortion.

The signal-to-noise ratio, *without* the Dolby circuits switched in, was 47 dB for both units, referred to 0 dB. However, because of limitation in the maximum recording

level, the effective signal-to-noise ratio was more nearly 45 dB—which is still quite respectable for a cassette deck operating without Dolby noise reduction.

Switching on the Dolby circuits improved the measured signal-to-noise ratio only slightly—to 50 dB. The noise, however, was not hiss, but hum, induced in the playback head by the CAD-5's power transformer. The transformer orientation is adjustable for minimum hum, but was evidently not set correctly on the second sample (and possibly not on the first, either). With repositioning of the transformer, the hum level dropped substantially. At that point, we were able to measure the actual hiss reduction achieved by the Dolby circuits as a significant 8 dB.

Subjectively, the second CAD-5 was typical of the state of the art in cassette recorders. It could copy disc records with only the faintest increase in hiss to distinguish the copy from the original. In the case of FM broadcasts, the original program came through unmodified in any way we could detect by ear.

● **Teac A-24.** The production-model Teac A-24 had an appreciably different record-playback frequency response (and sound) from the first unit we tested. The original pre-production model had a strongly accentuated high-end



response, with a definitely bright, hard sound. The response of the second unit was very smooth with TDK SD tape—within ± 3 dB from 30 to 10,500 Hz. The harmonic distortion at all levels was appreciably lower than we had previously measured—2.2 per cent at 0 dB, 4.1 per cent at +3 dB, and 1.7 per cent at -3 dB on the record-level meters. All other characteristics were essentially the same on both units.

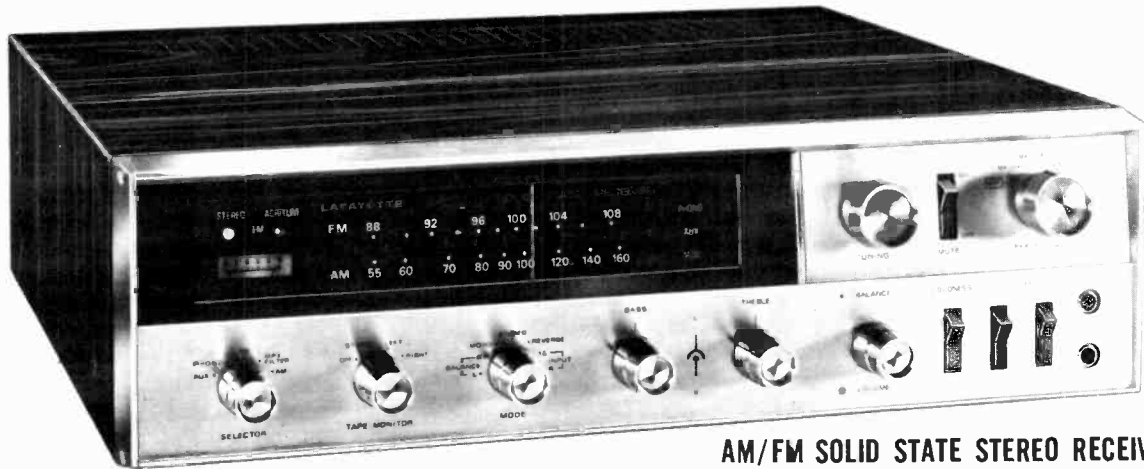
The listening quality of the newer A-24 was much improved. It had very low noise, and a clean, undistorted sound. In a playback comparison with a high-quality disc recording which we copied on the A-24, the cassette sound had a minute dulling of the extreme high frequencies, detectable only by an A-B comparison with the original program. Teac reports that the price of the A-24 has been reduced to \$179.50.

● **Bogen CRP.** It has been called to our attention that production models of the Bogen CRP cassette deck have illuminated and calibrated level meters. On the unit that was tested, a pre-production model, a different meter was used.

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The LT-725A, a solid-state AM/FM stereo tuner with its distinctive styling will complement the LA-125B stereo amplifier. The LT-725A is priced within the budget of the music lover. Buy it now or add it to your music system later. High (1.7 μ V) sensitivity and 1.5db capture ratio assures pulling in stations near and far. Includes: front and rear panel tape output jacks, illuminated signal strength tuning meter, automatic stereo switching and stereo indicator light. Stock No. 99-022907W \$99.95

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AUDIO QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

By LARRY KLEIN *Technical Editor*



any area where the acuity of one expert's ears is pitted against that of another, you'll find disagreements. The mathematically calculated distortion for a recorded signal of normal level and a tracking error of, say, 0.7 degree per inch is about 3 per cent. Admittedly that figure seems quite high, but the situation is alleviated somewhat by the fact that the distortion is basically second-harmonic, which lacks the high irritation quotient of higher-order distortions. And in addition, the other distortions inherent in the recording/playback process probably have a masking effect.

In any case, any adjustment that can help reduce even theoretical distortion is worth considering, and so we have prepared the template shown below. Mount the template on thin cardboard using rubber cement. Carefully cut out hole A so that it fits tightly over the spindle of your turntable. If in cutting the hole you make it slightly oversize, the concentric circles will nevertheless enable you to align the template properly. Make a pin hole through the template at the 2.5-inch radius point (along line A-B) indicated by the four arrows. Make sure that the cartridge is installed in the tone-arm shell in such a way that it is as nearly parallel to—and equidistant from—the sides of the shell as possible.

Place the template over the spindle and position it so that the stylus tip enters the pin hole. Depending upon the design of the tone arm, adjust its length, base-mounting assembly, or cartridge position so that, when viewed from above, the sides of the tone-arm shell are parallel to (or at least positioned symmetrically between) the parallel lines. By thus setting the arm for zero tracking error at this inner radius point, you will ensure minimum tracking-error distortion over the playing area of the disc.

Tone-Arm Adjustment

Q. *I understand the importance of correct tone-arm tracking, but I don't know how to check its accuracy on my own record player. Is there a way?*

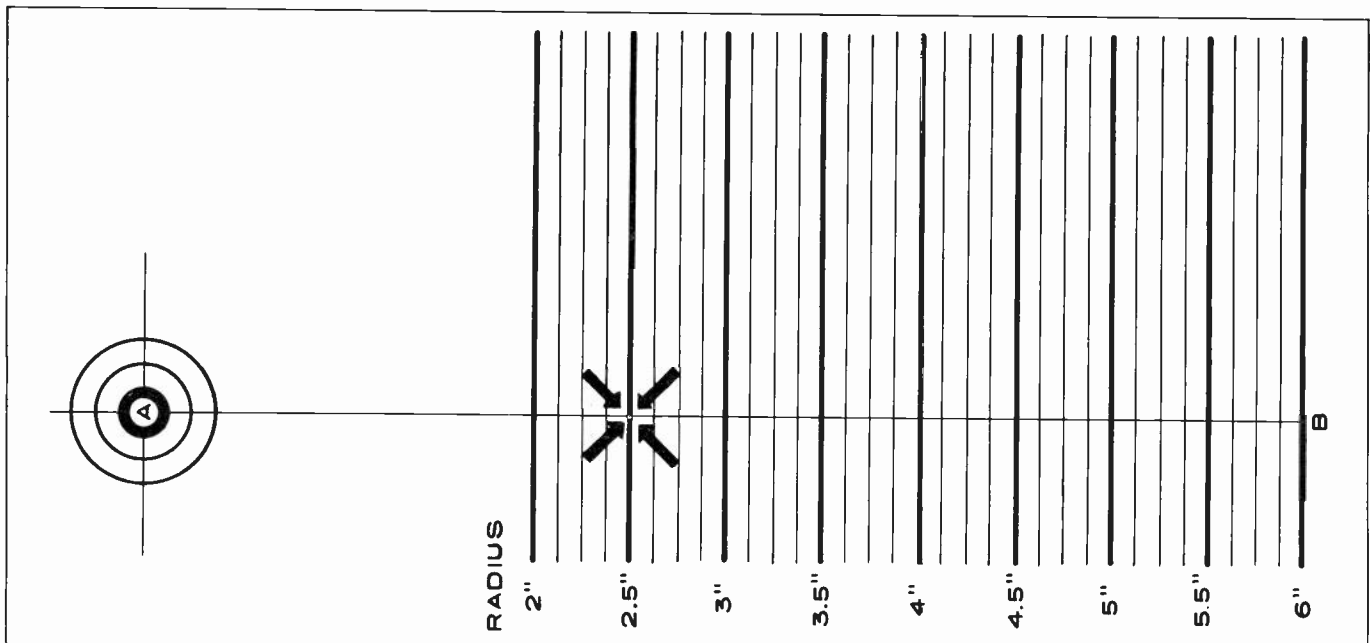
ROBERT KASSELL
Huntington, L.I., N.Y.

A. There is, but first, for those readers who are not familiar with the problem and its solutions, here's a brief recapitulation. Initially we have to look at the record-cutting lathe, which is the device that engraves the groove in the lacquer master disc. This master disc serves as a prototype, and if things go right, all the subsequent commercial vinyl discs are exact copies of it.

The "tone-arm" part of the cutting lathe is a massive structure that mechanically drives the cutting head radially across the rotating blank lacquer disc. That means the cutter at all times maintains exact tangency to a circle whose center is the spindle hole. In that fact lies the source of tone-arm tracking error in playback. With but few exceptions, all tone

arms are pivoted at one end, and therefore in tracing the record groove they do not follow a true radial path, but rather ascribe a shallow arc. The deviation from a radial path—or from true tangency, whichever way you care to look at it—is the source of tracking error, which is logically measured in degrees of deviation. Insofar as the playback stylus does *not* have the same physical relationship to both groove walls as the cutting stylus did, its motion will not accurately reflect the actual groove undulations; in other words, it will distort the signal. The question is complicated by the fact that the tighter the arc of the groove, the greater the distortion for a given degree of tracking error. It works out that distortion is directly proportional to the tracking-angle error in degrees per inch of record radius. Therefore, a 3-degree error at a 6-inch radius (the outer edge of a record) produces the same amount of distortion that a 1.5-degree tracking error produces at a radius of 3 inches.

How important is tracking-error distortion from a listening standpoint? As in



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It may sound like the fabrication of a Hollywood or Madison Avenue writer, but the substance of the story has been repeatedly validated by the equipment reviewers of leading hi-fi and other technical publications. (Reprints on request.)

The original **Rectilinear III**, at \$279, has only one small draw-

back from our hero's point of view. Its upright walnut cabinet looks handsome but simple, one might almost say austere. Its visual appeal is to the classicist rather than the romantic. And some of the richest audiophiles are incurable romantics.

So, for an extra \$20, we turned the **Rectilinear III** into a stunning lowboy and added a magnificent fretwork grille. In this \$299 version it has true visceral appeal, more like a luscious mistress than a handsome wife.

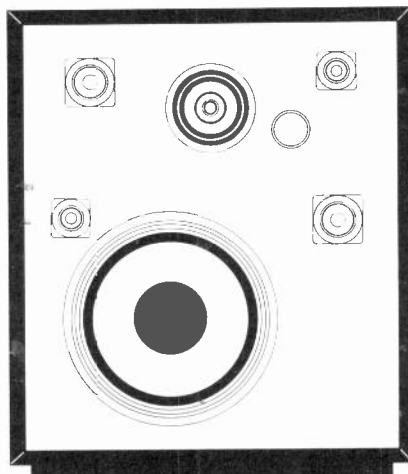
Of course, both versions are identical acoustically and electronically. Both are built around the same 12" woofer, 5" dual-cone midrange driver, two 2½"

tweeters and two 2" tweeters, and the same ingenious crossover network. Therefore, necessarily, both sound the same.

But the look of the \$299 lowboy makes it easier to forgive yourself that you didn't spend over \$1000.

(For more information, including detailed literature, see your audio dealer or write to Rectilinear Research Corp., 107 Bruckner Blvd., Bronx, New York 10454. Canada: H. Roy Gray Co. Ltd., Markham, Ont. Overseas: Royal Scund Co., 409 N. Main Street, Freeport, New York 11520.)

Rectilinear III Lowboy



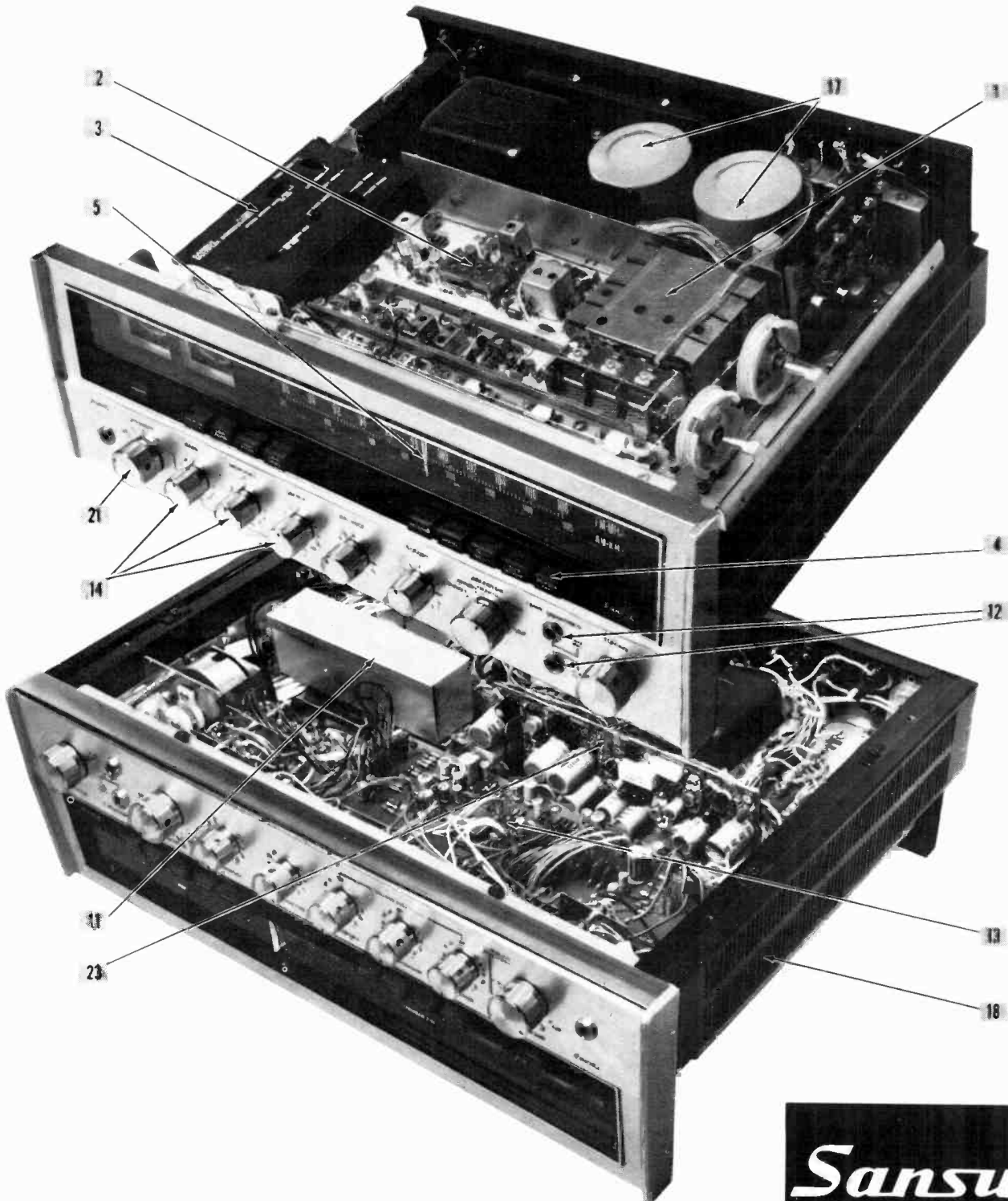
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STEREO REVIEW

SANSUI EIGHT:



1 Ultrasensitive FM Front End Two RF amplifiers and one mixer amplifier use three costly, low-noise, dual-gated metal-oxide silicon field-effect transistors (3 MOSFET's) and a 4-gang frequency-linear tuning capacitor. These combine to give the EIGHT its great edge in such areas as FM intermodulation distortion, sensitivity (1.7 microvolts IHF), signal-to-noise (better than 65 db) and image-frequency, IF and spurious-response rejection (all better than 100 db).

2 Three-IC IF Amplifier with Crystal/Block Filter A three-stage differential amplifier, executed with integrated circuits, is combined with a sharply selective crystal filter and a block filter to give steep-sided response. This helps keep distortion very low (FM harmonic distortion is less than 0.5%), improves capture ratio (1.5 db) and stereo separation (better than 35 db at 400 Hz) and minimizes phase shift.

3 Sharp-Cut Multiplex Carrier Filter A two-stage LC sharp-cutoff filter really keeps the subcarrier out of the audio circuits. Where some leaks through, as in most FM receivers, you get increased intermodulation distortion and interference with the bias oscillator of tape recorders, which then mars all off-the-air home recordings.

4 FM Muting Switch and Adjuster The switch cuts off all interstation hiss during tuning, if you wish. The level adjuster permits precise setting to cut off (or avoid cutting off) weak stations, as desired.

5 FM Linear-Scale Wide-Dial Design The linear scale is uniformly graduated in 250-kHz steps. The blackout design features a smoked glass through which the dial shows only when the tuner is in use. The illuminated dial pointer also blacks out during non-use of the tuner.



6 Large Tuning Meters For pinpoint accuracy, one meter indicates signal strength (on FM or AM) while the other indicates exact FM center channel for minimum distortion and noise.

7 Dual Impedance Antenna Terminals The usual 300-ohm balanced antenna input, plus a 75-ohm unbalanced input for the coaxial cables used in remote or noisy areas, or in master-antenna distribution systems.

8 FET AM Tuner Most receiver designs ignore AM capability. The EIGHT uses two FET's along with a 3-gang tuning capacitor for high sensitivity and selectivity. A high-impedance antenna circuit also helps reduce interstation interference.



9 Unique Pantograph Antenna A dual swivel-arm mount, exclusive with Sansui, lets you draw the large AM bar antenna away from the chassis and orient for best reception, or fold it into the back panel to protect it against mishandling.

10 Smooth-Tuning Dial Pointer A large fly-wheel plus a precision nylon gear permit accu-

rate, velvet-smooth tuning action and prevent slipping or jamming.

11 Three-Stage Equalizer Amplifier Emitter-to-emitter negative feedback is used in a three-stage amplifier realized with silicon transistors chosen for their low noise. The results: improved stability, excellent signal-to-noise ratio, negligible distortion, high stability and extremely large dynamic range—it will handle cartridges with very high and very low output levels.

12 Multi-Deck Tape Capability Two tape monitor circuits are brought out to a choice of pin-jack and 3-contact phone-type terminals on the front and rear panels. Play, record and monitor on either circuit. Or copy from one deck to the other via the Tape Monitor Switch.

13 Negative-Feedback Control Amplifier To minimize distortion, the tone-control circuit is driven by a two-stage circuit using both AC and DC negative feedback.

14 Triple Tone Controls Separate controls for bass, treble and midrange. And they're not the regular continuous controls. Each is an 11-position switch carefully calibrated in db steps of boost and cut for the same adjustment precision used in studio work.

15 Sharp-Cut High and Low Filters Both high- and low-frequency filters use special transistors in emitter-follower negative-feedback circuits to provide sharp cutoff (12 db/octave)

16 Direct-Coupled Power Amplifier A two-stage differential amplifier is directly coupled to a complementary Darlington amplifier that uses no output capacitors and is driven by two power supplies, positive and negative. Negative feedback is uniformly effective at all frequencies, beyond the upper limits of audibility and down into the DC range—and the damping factor holds up very steadily down into the extremely low frequencies. The result: drastic reduction of intermodulation distortion not only in the amplifier itself, but in any speaker system connected to it.

17 Jumbo Filter Capacitors Two enormous power-supply capacitors — 8000 microfarads each — contribute to the extraordinary specifications of the EIGHT: 200 watts of IHF music power. 80 watts continuous power per channel. Distortion factor of 0.3% at rated output. Power bandwidth of 10 to 40,000 Hz (at levels of normal use, way down to 5 Hz and up to 50,000 Hz, ± 1 db). Even when driven to maximum output, the EIGHT will deliver the cleanest, most distortionless sound you have ever heard.

18 King-Size Heat Sink No overheating transistors even with continuous drive to maximum output.

19 Total Protection Extra transistors are used in a sophisticated circuit especially for temperature compensation. A special stabilizing circuit polices the differential amplifier. A power-limiting circuit and six quick-acting fuses protect the power transistors against overcurrent. And a completely separate circuit, using a silicon-controlled rectifier (SCR), safeguards your speakers against any possible damage.

20 Separable Pre- and Power Amplifiers Not only can the preamp and power amplifier be electrically separated, but the option can be used simply by flicking a front-panel switch. Use them separately to connect electronic crossovers for speaker systems. Or separate them to use the preamp as a versatile control amplifier for tape recording or studio-type

work while the power amplifier acts as a line or main amplifier.

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Technical Editor
Larry Klein
Examines
**The New
Skinny Disc**

"They're better *because* they're thinner," says RCA



IN A TIME of tight money, concern for the consumer, and semi-serious proposals that Ralph Nader might make a good presidential candidate for '72, product innovation is a chancier-than-usual procedure. Normal business risks are particularly compounded by the public's developing paranoia about the products they drive, swallow, and—judging from our mail—listen to. No one has yet suggested that a defective phonograph record exposes its user to physical danger, but that fact doesn't appear to have lessened public concern about it.

Given this situation, it appeared to some observers that RCA's decision to produce and market at this time a phonograph record that has $\frac{1}{3}$ the thickness of the normal product was perhaps a little risky. Further, to take such a step without some effort to persuade the record-buying public of the virtues (real, exaggerated, or invented) of the skinny disc seemed at the very least unusually thoughtless of the jolly corporate giant (see the Editor's column in the January issue).

Nonetheless, RCA executives apparently decided that their purposes would best be served by releasing their new Dynaflex discs in large numbers (about 12 million so far), then sitting back and monitoring (with bated breath, I would imagine) the public's reaction. According to RCA spokesmen at a mid-January press conference, reaction to this "test marketing" was not only not adverse, it could even be interpreted as favorable. RCA's evaluation was based on an analysis of the number and the content of complaint letters received after the release of several million of the thinner discs. There were fewer letters of complaint than would have been expected on "normal" product during a comparable period, and by far the greater proportion of the letters were of an aesthetic nature (a reaction to the "flimsiness" of the discs) rather than a technical one (faulty reproduction of sound).

These socio-psychological considerations aside, what is it that RCA hopes the new Dynaflex format will achieve for them and for the record-buying public? The thin record, according to RCA, has numerous technical virtues, some that will directly benefit the consumer, others that will make possible a

more efficient record-manufacturing process, and these virtues (states RCA) are most evident in the area of surface noise.

What most listeners lump under the term "record-surface noise" may be one or all of the following: (1) Hiss carried over from a noisy master tape. (2) Snaps and pops caused by the dust attracted by static electricity arising during handling and playing. (3) Ticks and pops caused by extraneous matter—dirt—introduced at the factory. (4) Ticks and pops caused by microscopic, usually sub-surface, flaws in the groove. These blisters, when they appear on the surface, will usually cause the disc to be rejected during visual inspection. However, as a sub-surface phenomenon, they may be audible even when they are not visible. (5) Noise and high-frequency distortion caused either by inadequate flow of the vinyl into the microscopic groove surfaces of the stamper (known as "non-fill"), or by lack of homogeneity in the vinyl compound at the time of its pressing. (6) Miscellaneous noises arising from defects embodied in the stampers or in the vinyl compound itself.

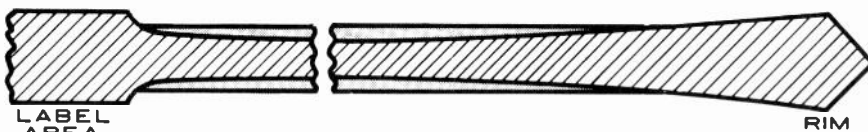
It should be clear from the above not only that there are many factors that produce noise, but that a single solution will not suffice for all of them. It is evident, for example, that the new Dynaflex record can have no effect on items (1), (2), and (3) above, but that it could enter the picture strongly at (4) and (5). The blisters that cause ticks and pops are actually gas bubbles buried in the vinyl beneath the groove surface, or they are craters left by the bubbles as they broke through the surface while the vinyl was still soft. The

best cure for these, all record companies agree, is to get rid of the gas trapped in the vinyl "biscuit" before the molding of the record in the stamper takes place. But since, in RCA's view, it is not possible to render the vinyl absolutely gas-free, the next best thing is to make it as easy as possible for the gas to escape during the pressing process. This the thin-disc process accomplishes by encouraging increased turbulence of the vinyl during the pressing. Increased turbulence, a by-product of the thin-disc pressing technique, can be demonstrated easily, if a trifle inelegantly: take two buckets, one with an inch or so of water in it, the other half full. With the same amount of movement applied to each bucket, you will find that the sloshing about (turbulence) is greater in the one containing less liquid. (The analogy is not a perfect one, since the vinyl compound does not get "sloshed about" in the press, but pressure causes turbulence too.)

The Dynaflex process also makes possible better flow of vinyl compound in the press. This is fairly easy to understand if one imagines taking two fairly firm blobs of modeling clay, one weighing a pound or so and the other weighing 2 or 3 ounces. If each blob is sandwiched between a pair of records and pressed, all other things being equal, the thin blob should spread easier and conform better to the grooves of the top and bottom discs (which are simulating the two halves of a stamper) than the thick one. Further, let's say you want to make the stamping job easier by softening the clay with heat. The smaller blob will not only heat much faster than the larger one, but will lose its heat far more rapidly afterward. Both factors are advantageous for an automated time/temperature controlled record press.

The Dynaflex approach obviously can't do anything about the stamper defects in item (6), but RCA claims that with 45 grams less vinyl per disc, it will now be possible to use the finest compound for *all* record product where it used to be reserved for premium pressings alone.

ASIDE from noise, perhaps the most common complaint about records is warpage, part being caused by bad storage conditions, part being pressed into the disc at the time of manufacture. Dynaflex should be somewhat helpful with both of these, but to what degree it is difficult to judge at this time. The thinness of a Dynaflex record means that it can be bent, without damage, to a degree that would permanently deform or crack a disc of standard thickness. This factor has a bearing on record warpage originating through bad storage conditions. This "cold-flow" warpage can often be corrected simply by putting the warped record on a flat sur-



The shaded area in the truncated disc cross-section above shows the relative reduction in groove-area thickness (from 0.05 to 0.03 inch) made possible by the Dynaflex process. The thinner disc uses 45 grams less vinyl, so a Dynaflex pressing weighs 90 grams as compared to the more or less standard 135 grams of a conventional record. The thickness of the outer rim and the label area is standardized by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) in order to insure the proper operation of changer mechanisms and to keep the edges of a disc from drooping when placed on the small turntable platters found in cheap players.

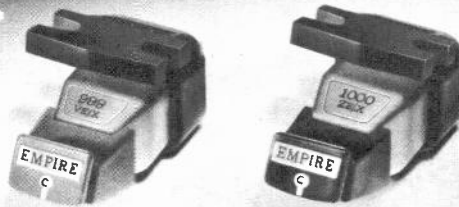
face and weighting it down for a while with an unabridged dictionary or two. But warpage that is "built-in" to the disc by improper temperatures during the pressing and curing cycle is not susceptible of correction, and I cannot, off-hand, see any reason why a Dynaflex disc should be any better in this respect than a thicker one—though it certainly should not be any worse.

FROM a technical standpoint, RCA's new Dynaflex disc does not seem to be objectionable. But is there, several of our consumerist correspondents have asked, some corner-cutting on the cost side that is somehow going to give the buyer less than his accustomed money's worth? First, there is no reason under God's heaven why steps taken as an economic necessity *must* result in technical reverses—or that they can *not* result in technical advances. Second, since there is no virtue in record thickness *per se*, the buyer is not necessarily being "robbed" of any vinyl he really needs. Discs have been getting thinner ever since they were first invented; they have also been getting better in sound quality, though there are undoubtedly a few 78-era diehards who would dispute even this. Third, though RCA will now be using less vinyl per record, they will also be using better-quality material on *all* their product. Also, research and development costs on Dynaflex have been considerable, and must be written off against any economic gains resulting from the process—in other words, no enormous profits.

Record prices were at the same level ten years ago as they are today, something that probably cannot be said of any other product. As an alternative to raising prices, finding a way to make something at lower cost without degrading its quality can hardly be beat. Moreover, there is more involved in Dynaflex than the immediate present. RCA's new process is one that will lend itself to completely automated operation in time; this should not only present fewer quality-control problems and remove the specter of possible labor shortages (record pressing plants are hot, noisy, dirty, and unpopular in times of full employment), but be some insurance against possible price increases in the future. Further, it can readily be seen that a lighter disc will be a useful hedge against the threatened increase in the postal rate for mail-order records.

AT the Dynaflex press conference, RCA supplied two discs, identical except for the pressing process used, for purposes of direct comparison. Though "The Best of Jim Reeves" would not have been my first choice of program material for comparing Dynaflex against a conventional disc, I was able to reach a few conclusions. Both discs had severe distortion in the opening moments of one side (which helped mask the tape hiss audible throughout), but I found the Dynaflex disc in no way audibly inferior to the conventional pressing. On the other hand, I cannot honestly say that it sounded any better. Which brings us back to the point made previously, that Dynaflex is no panacea for all noise problems. But perhaps, with the Dynaflex hurdle behind them, RCA will now begin to zero in on those other noise sources that continue to plague lovers of clean high-fidelity sound.

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AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES



THE SPEAKER AND THE ROOM

LAST MONTH I touched on how a speaker's acoustical surroundings and location will affect its sound in the dealer's showroom. Obviously, the same factors influence speaker performance at home. Some rooms are better for sound reproduction than others, and different rooms may produce different effects. In the end, the listening room can legitimately be considered as much a part of the playback system as any other component; and like many other components it can be adjusted (within limits)—by means of speaker positioning and the choice and arrangement of furnishings—to help or hinder the final result.

As noted last month, a speaker located in a corner will sound "bassier" than an identical speaker in a mid-wall position. A speaker producing a low-frequency tone will try to radiate it in a spherical pattern with itself at the center of the sphere. Suspend it in the geometric center of a large room away from floor, ceiling, and walls and it will do just that. But hung on the wall it has only half a sphere to radiate into, so that if we neglect absorption by the wall, the same amount of energy as in the previous case is now concentrated into half the space. At the junction of two walls (or the floor and a wall) the speaker "sees" one quarter of a sphere, and on the floor in a corner (three surfaces) one-eighth of a sphere. If you like, you can think of the intersecting surfaces of a corner as forming a sort of three-sided megaphone, which also helps "couple" the energy to the air. Since the "megaphone" phenomenon has its greatest influence on low-frequency performance, it can be used to increase or decrease the bass reaching the listener without resort to tone controls, which may introduce other effects. To increase bass, move the speaker toward a junction of wall and floor surfaces; to decrease bass, move it away from such junctions, or place it in a mid-wall or mid-floor location.

Speaker location has its effect upon high-frequency response also. High frequencies are directional, and increasingly so as the frequency goes up. This means that, unless design steps are taken, it is the natural tendency of a normal speaker cone to project the highs straight forward in a tight beam rather than a wide arc. The problem—and problem it is when a listener directly in front of a speaker gets too many highs and a listener to the side too few—has largely been solved by various engineering solutions. And as a bonus, an improvement in dispersion encourages room reflections that contribute greatly to a feeling of openness and space in the reproduced sound. However, soft or porous surfaces *absorb* rather than reflect high frequencies. When the highs are well dispersed, that much more of them may be soaked up before reaching the listener by, say, a deep-pile carpet beneath a floor-mounted speaker, or an upholstered chair and heavy drapes near a speaker in a corner. Speaker placement must clearly strike a balance—even a compromise—between low- and high-frequency performance. Whatever aberrations then remain can often be corrected by judicious use of the speaker's high-frequency level controls and the amplifier's tone controls.



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Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto

SERGE PROKOFIEV'S Third Piano Concerto, as we know it, seems a remarkably unified work of art. From a modest, almost reticent, beginning—a brief, quiet introduction marked *andante*—the music quickly develops the explosive propulsion that characterizes the first movement. The second movement consists of a theme and five variations, some of them fanciful, some grotesque and sardonic. The third movement is a remarkable tug-of-war between the solo piano and the orchestra, with each determined to prevail over the other; finally, in a brilliant coda, it is the piano that leads the way to a breakneck finish. The concerto is an extraordinary tour de force of virtuosity and sheer exuberance, and it conveys the impression of having sprung full-blown, all at once, from its creator's imagination.

All the more remarkable, then, is the fact that the Third Concerto is something of a musical paste-up job. It was during the course of a summer holiday in France in 1921 that Prokofiev put the work together. Three years had elapsed since he had left Russia to wander across Europe and the United States. His reputation as an *enfant terrible* of modern music was pretty well established, and the creation of a piano concerto at this time was probably prompted by the same impulse that brought Beethoven's piano concertos and so many of Mozart's into being: the need for the composer to have a vehicle for his own performing talents. Prokofiev gathered together from his notebook themes and fragments of themes that he had left unused, some of them dating back as much as ten years: material in the first movement came from sketches of 1911 and 1916; the subject of the second movement's theme and variations dated from 1913; and the last movement contains material originally intended for a string quartet begun in 1918 but then discarded. Prokofiev himself has written: ". . . When I began working on the concerto in Brittany, I already had all the thematic material I needed except for the third theme of the finale and the subordinate theme of the first movement."

In the late fall of 1921, Prokofiev was in Chicago supervising the rehearsals for the premiere of his opera, *The Love for Three Oranges*, and it was there, on December 16, that the Third Piano Concerto was given its world premiere performance, with Prokofiev as soloist and Frederick Stock conducting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Five weeks later Prokofiev introduced the score to New York, as soloist

with the Philharmonic-Symphony Society, and he was also the soloist four years later when the concerto entered the repertoire of the Boston Symphony.

The first recording ever made of the concerto is its most authentic: the British recording firm EMI, in June, 1932, recorded the score with Prokofiev as soloist and Piero Coppola conducting the London Symphony Orchestra. This truly legendary performance was reissued some years ago in Angel's Great Recordings of the Century series (COLH 34); the performance is a headlong rush of impetuosity, wit, and keyboard fireworks, and the four-decade-old sound is still amazingly lifelike. Now that the Great Recordings series is defunct, the performance is not, alas, currently available; clearly it should be added immediately to the Seraphim line as others of the COLH series already have been.

GIVEN the documentary evidence of Prokofiev's own way with the score, I rather naturally gravitate toward those recorded performances, among the dozen currently available, that most closely recall Prokofiev's own. Half a dozen do: Martha Argerich and Claudio Abbado (Deutsche Grammophon 139349); Emil Gilels and Kiril Kondrashin (Monitor S 2061); Gary Graffman and George Szell (Columbia MS 6925); Byron Janis and Kondrashin (Mercury SR 90300); William Kapell and Antal Dorati (RCA Victrola VIC 1520); and Julius Katchen and István Kertész (London CS 6633). Kapell's 1949 performance, recently reissued, has the dimmest sonics among these recordings, but it is a treasurable memento of the searing intensity and passionate conviction that characterized the art of this pianist, whose tragic death in a 1953 plane crash at the age of thirty-one robbed us of an artist of major stature.

I must single out for particularly favorable mention the recording by Byron Janis. This was a product of the first recording sessions within the Soviet Union to be undertaken by Western technicians and equipment. At the time (June 1962) the atmosphere both within Russia and between East and West was far happier than has been the case in recent years; Janis' reading has special electric tension and spontaneity, the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra sounds far better here than on any other recording I know, and the whole is captured in spectacularly vivid sound. Fortunately, it is also available on a splendid reel-to-reel tape (Mercury C 90300).

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Banquet

By MARTHA STILES

raised to enduring fame by their illustrious vocal patrons



Champagne
Timbales à la Rossini
Consommé Bizet
Macaroni à la Rossini
Sole à la Sutherland
Chicken Nordica
Boeuf Tartare Alda
Garniture Massenet, Eggplant Opera
Verdi Salad with Mascagni Dressing
Fromage à la Musetta
Délice Callas
Caffe à la Barbaja ou Otello

DIVAS who change their names from Davies to Alda, from Kalogeropoulos to Callas, understand the importance of a name as well as the restaurateurs who name dishes after them. Who wants a "peach-raspberry"? But after Mme. Nellie Melba (*née Mitchell*) triumphed in *Lohengrin* and her hotel's chef served her his newest dessert between the wings of a swan carved out of ice, everybody wanted to try "*Pêche Melba*."

The custom of honoring divas with diverse dishes was not new when Escoffier came to the Savoy, and it has not withered since. Opera singers, with their large appetites and their large followings, are still prime choices for chefs' tributes. Nothing has diminished but the singers' freedom to enjoy these tributes themselves.

Luisa Tetrazzini could be simultaneously "one of the most prodigious trencherwomen of all human history" and the stage's most acclaimed consumptive. Furthermore, she and her contemporaries considered this quite logical. Singing the role of Violetta, they

agreed, *requires* the kind of strength provided by a dish composed of white sauce, Parmesan cheese, mushrooms cooked in butter and sherry, diced chicken, heavy cream, and quantities of spaghetti. Tetrizzini unblushingly spent an average of four hours at each meal, and grew stouter with each year. Two decades after *Chicken Tetrizzini* was established on New York menus, Frances Alda could still write "The more pounds the more power," and boast that she had always planned her meals accordingly. For today's opera stars, however, f-a-m-e spells hunger.

"If music be the food of love," the Duke of Illyria begins—at which the modern Desdemona might well cut him off with "I do perceive here a divided duty." If music is to be the food of love for a modern audience, the singer must go *moderato* (*senza espansione*) at table. No longer is there much applause for amorous duets in which a head on a shoulder is the closest the tenor and soprano are physically able to get to each other. Only the voices may be rotund. Gone is the time (mid-nineteenth century) when a Marietta Alboni so fat she could not walk alone might sing Juliette's aria at the Paris Opera and draw more applause than any other singer. By the turn of the century, in Mario Ancona's day, contracts were being renewed conditional on weight loss. "That is not fat," growled said baritone when Oscar Hammerstein I prodded the thirty pounds of belly that had to come off, "that is my chest!" Hammerstein, who claimed to "eat little, drink nothing, and smoke only twenty-five cigars a day," was not sympathetic, and managers have if anything grown even more blunt since. Hammerstein's demand was verbal and private, but when the Metropolitan wanted Zinka Milanov to lose twenty-five pounds, they wrote it right into her contract.

Modern chefs are as prone as ever to use butter, both figurative and literal, but when the modern audience protests "Thou com'st in such a questionable shape," modern singers must give heed: dishes named for them these days are more honored in the breach than in the observance. "No spaghetti, no butter, no *chianti*," sighs Renata Tebaldi: "I keep in training as for sport." "After *my* childhood you don't throw stale bread away without kissing it," says Robert Merrill—but gone nonetheless is Fatso the Human Knish, gone with the tumbler of cream he used to drink instead of milk. When Merrill won a Celebrity Recipe Contest it was for a combination of lean beef and greens. "I like all types of pasta, and they're bad for me figger," mourns Joan Sutherland, who has resolutely put out of her mind the recipes for *Chicken Stupenda*, *Sole à la Sutherland*, and even the names of a couple of others created for her. (In one case, the restaurateur had to go down on his

knees even to induce her to *taste* it.) "On the whole they were rather elaborate," is the apologetic explanation, "more for 'special' occasions." Sutherland is right, of course, and the menu I am about to examine should indeed be considered only for a special occasion—say, a Bel Canto Banquet.

When it comes to an aperitif, opera singers have traditionally not cared to numb their tongues with hard liquor before fine food. Though a Chicago restaurant named a cocktail for Renata Tebaldi, the lady herself prefers champagne. Caruso's choice was *chianti*, though on tour he was philosophical and enjoyed, for instance, tequila.

A toast to Henrietta Sonntag was allegedly the first champagne drunk from an honored lady's slipper, and champagne has continued to be the preference of *prime donne* from Adelina Patti, who slapped her tour manager when he would not give her any (she was eight), through today. And then, comparing Maria Callas with Tebaldi, Callas has said, "is like comparing champagne with cognac. No, champagne with Coca-Cola." The champagne—as well as the *prima donna*—tradition appears to be unbroken: our aperitif is champagne.

IN the center of a panoply of musical instruments on his study wall, Rossini hung a stomach pump, maintaining that it was the best of all instruments. "I know of no more delightful occupation than that of eating," he wrote. In addition to the *Castor Oil Waltz*, Rossini composed a series for piano with the titles of various *hors-d'oeuvres*, all except *The Radishes* appropriately consisting of themes and variations. Rossini's own theme emerges as truffles, of which, Alice B. Toklas has disdainfully recorded, "he was inordinately fond."

"What is going to interest you much more than my opera," the composer wrote a friend, "is the discovery I have just made of a new salad, for which I hasten to send you the recipe." The ingredients *must* conclude with "a few truffles, which you have taken care to cut in tiny pieces. The truffles give to this seasoning a kind of nimbus to plunge the gourmand into an ecstasy." Said Toklas coldly, "Dumas' salad was better."

Timbales à la Rossini

Dumas, however, has no entries in *Larousse Gastronomique*, while Rossini has twelve—each absolutely requiring truffles. To make *Timbales à la Rossini*, decorate buttered molds with truffles. Line them with fine veal forcemeat and fill with a salpicon of *foie gras* and truffles blended with a rich *demi-glace* sauce. Serve with a *demi-glace* sauce flavored with truffle essence.

Consommé Bizet

Soups are a boon to singers because they are generally easy on the throat and figure. Robert Merrill, after doing an ad for Campbell's Soup, stacked the thousand cans they sent him in designs in his small apartment and supped on one flavor nightly until he had room to walk again. Merrill, who confesses that assigning him to the role of Falstaff would be type-casting, was rehearsing *Carmen* at the time, and no doubt the production benefited visually from his perseverance. Plump Bizet, who used to empty a bon-bon dish in two minutes, would have appreciated Merrill's self-denial. To make *Consommé Bizet*, thicken chicken consommé with tapioca and garnish with chicken *quennelles* mixed with chopped tarragon. Sprinkle with chervil leaves.



Macaroni à la Rossini

To paraphrase Dizzy Dean on the relative merits of ball players, as much as opera singers like soup, that's how much more they like pasta. The association is traditional but not always tranquil. When a Roman firm claimed that a diet of its "psychological macaroni" was responsible for Callas' plunge from 202 to 117 pounds, the lady sued. Caruso, who routinely ate three kinds of spaghetti at lunch alone (in addition to *antipasto*, soup, meat, vegetables, salad, fruit, wine, and coffee), caused an uproar when he spent his entire operatic debut fee, costume money and all, on four suppers. The management came up with enough of a raise just before dress rehearsal to prevent a scandal of nudity, but Caruso's appetite was soon famous.

Singing is hard work, of course, and any soprano may expect to be famished by mid-*Aïda*. A singer can lose five pounds in three acts—more, if he/she dies in the third. (Death scenes, thanks to their traditional length, require enormous strength.) Naturally there is some eating between arias, and even more rumors of it. *La Sonnambula's* first Amina was, like Caruso, popularly supposed to fortify herself with spaghetti backstage. "One swallow does not make a slumberer," she is sworn to have observed, between gulps, just before setting out on her longest walk—to which it might be added that it takes a lot of pasta to make a Giuditta.

Many composers have shared their singers' addiction to pasta. Wagner once stood up an orchestral performance which had been arranged just for him, at his own request, because he smelled spaghetti on his way to the concert hall. When he had eaten (the musicians riffling their scores the while) he confessed that, after such a meal, listening to classical music would be "inopportune"; in other words, he had to go back to the hotel and sleep it off. The musicians were dismissed, the future composer of *Andrea Chénier* among them, and shouts of "Abbaso Wagner! *Evviva Rossini!*" filled their conservatory. The student-musicians, it appears, had a lot to learn about Rossini. "I wrote the overture to *Otello*," Rossini relates, "in a small room in [Domenico] Barbaja's palace in Naples, where that fiercest and baldest of impresarios locked me in by force with a plate of boiled macaroni swimming in water with no seasoning, threatening that I should not leave the room alive until I had finished the last note of the overture." This probably was the most effective way of dealing with a composer who declared that "The stomach is the conductor who leads the great orchestra of our passions; an empty stomach represents to my mind the bassoon or piccolo, grunting out discontent, or squeaking forth envy; a full stomach, on the contrary, is the triangle of pleasure and the kettle-drum of joy."

Rossini, his wife (Isabella Colbran), and his "fiercest of impresarios" (Barbaja) made an interesting triangle of pleasure themselves, for the soprano had been Barbaja's mistress before she became Rossini's. To Barbaja's macaroni, however, Rossini preferred his own, as follows: Cook two cups of macaroni in salted water; drain and put into a stew pan with a little gravy. Simmer until the gravy is absorbed. Put a layer of the macaroni in a baking dish, sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese and sliced truffles mixed with a little *sauce espagnole*. Fill the dish with these, alternating layers, and on the top layer put truffles. Place in a hot oven for a few minutes.



Sole à la Sutherland

According to the head chef of Longchamps Restaurants in New York, *Sole à la Sutherland* is something less than a snap. Marinate twelve filets of English sole thirty minutes in a tablespoon of lemon juice

and half a glass of cognac. Add three chopped shallots, six mushroom caps cut julienne style, 1 ounce fish stock, and 2 ounces of dry white wine; bring to a boil, cover, and cook 10 minutes. Remove the filets, place them on a bed of wild rice, and keep them warm. Reduce the liquid by two thirds, bind with a mixture of 1 tablespoon butter and one of flour. Salt to taste. Add ½ cup of heavy cream and boil 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and add an ounce of butter, 2 tablespoons Hollandaise sauce, and a tablespoon of whipped cream. Arrange the julienned mushrooms on top of the sole and pour the sauce thereover. Bake at 375° until browned.



Chicken Nordica

It has been said that "chicken is a canvas on which the greatest chefs may paint their masterpieces." Escoffier created three chicken recipes for Adelina Patti alone (who nonetheless, his biographers say, felt slighted: she took to wearing far more jewels at his hotel after that raspberry peach moved in). New York's Quo Vadis Restaurant serves both *Capon Trazzini* and *Crêpes Corelli*. The host-owners invented the latter, French pancakes stuffed with curried chicken and covered with *sauce béchamel*, to signalize Franco Corelli's success in *Turandot*. *Chicken Nordica* was named for Lillian Norton at a time when her earnings were so great that her faithless husband fainted at the news she was divorcing him.

A traditional recipe for *Chicken Nordica* takes pages to relate, all day to prepare, and weeks to atone for. To make the easiest and most austere *Chicken Nordica* still worthy of the name, sauté for 5 minutes ½ lb. chicken livers, ¼ lb. ground veal, 3 tablespoons chopped onion, ½ cup chopped parsley, salt and pepper, in 3 tablespoons butter. Bind together with 4 beaten egg yolks and ¼ cup soft bread-crumbs. Stuff a 4 lb. roasting chicken with this mixture. Place a thin slice of prosciutto ham over each side of the chicken's breast. Roast 35 minutes per pound at 300°, basting occasionally with 2 tablespoons butter melted in ½ cup of Madeira.

Nearly all singers begin a performance hungry and finish it ravenous. The phrase *in bocca di lupo*, muttered before the first cue so as to ward off the evil eye during the performance, takes on new meaning after the footlights fade, for into the mouths of oper-

atic wolves go the most astonishing portions.

"I'd rather keep my voice than my figure," Frances Alda replied sweetly to Rosa Ponselle's boast of having reduced, and her schedule bore her out. Between hearty breakfast and robust lunch, she never missed a mid-morning snack (admittedly the pause that refreshes), especially if, as in Alda's case, it consists of a dozen oysters and a whole bottle of stout. She was not atypical. The ideal operatic soprano has been defined as the offspring of a canary and a steam boiler, and Alda would have been the first to point out that the *prima donna* eats like an athlete in training because she is one. Joan Sutherland, for instance, lost 50 pounds merely rehearsing for her 1963 season. Fortunately that left her with 170. The advantage of starting out with a certain heftiness can be seen.

There is, indeed, more than one advantage. Think of Caterina Gabrielli, better known in her youth as La Cuochetina (because, recorded her nineteenth-century biographer, "she was, sad to relate, the daughter of a cook"). Nothing was humble about Gabrielli but her birth, and certainly not her appetite. None of them, in fact; but the license of one saved her from the consequences of another. On the occasion when a French lover hid himself in her house to be sure of her fidelity, and assured himself of precisely the opposite, the "light" soprano owed her life to her *embonpoint*, for his sword point was stopped by her whalebone stays.

Robert Merrill once took first prize in a Belgian Endive Association recipe contest by suggesting that endive leaves be stuffed with beef tartare, but these instructions come straight! from the memoirs!! of Frances Alda!!!

Boeuf Tartare Alda

"The dish which the Tartars partook of and which gave them strength to ravage Asia and Eastern Europe. To make it, you chop a raw onion very fine! On a nest of this you mound half a pound of raw chopped beef!! In a little hollow of the beef you drop a raw egg!!! The whole is garnished with capers, and is eaten with three or four generous tablespoonfuls of olive oil poured over all!!!! After that, if you can't make your voice heard to the topmost seat in the gallery and out into the square before the Opera House, you'd better stick to the radio. . . ."

Garniture Massenet, Eggplant Opera

The *Boeuf Tartare* is dressed up with Anna potatoes baked in individual molds and turned out, small artichokes filled with a salpicon of bone-marrow, and string beans in butter. And *Eggplant Opera*: soak peeled eggplant slices in salt water, drain, wipe be-

tween towels, dredge in peppered flour, cook in butter and oil, and arrange in a buttered gratin dish. Peel and cut up 4 tomatoes; discard the seeds. Cook 3 minutes in 2 tablespoons of butter, one of oil. Remove from heat, stir in a tablespoon of grated cheese, sprinkle with $\frac{2}{3}$ teaspoon salt, a dash of paprika, and pepper, and spread over the eggplant. Sprinkle with grated cheese and buttered crumbs and bake till amber.

Verdi Salad with Mascagni Dressing

Greens, of course, with oil and lemon juice. "What is vinegar but wine gone sour?" demanded Mascagni, and compared it to music critics: "Music critics are musicians who have gone sour, too. I cannot stand the former at the table, nor the latter at the concert hall."

Fromage à la Musetta

This tart is easy to make. Line a 9-inch pan with pastry. Combine 4 beaten eggs with $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups cream, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. grated cheese, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, and a dash of red pepper. Bake it in the pie shell for 15 minutes at 400° and another 30 minutes at 325°.



Délice Callas

Escoffier in time added *Pears Melba*, *Strawberries Melba*, and *Coupe Melba* to his peach sensation, and did almost as well with *Coupe Adelina Patti*, *Coupe Emma Calvé*, and (inexplicably not a salad) *Poires Mary Garden*: vanilla ice cream, syrup-cooked pears, cherry compote, and raspberry sauce. "My success," said the world's most famous chef, "comes from the fact that my best dishes were created for ladies."

Ladies Melba and Garden were served *Peach Melba* and *Pears Mary Garden* by Edward VII after singing at Windsor Castle, but all that cream and sugar neither smoothed nor sweetened the affair. "What a dreadful concert that would have been if I had not sung," Dame Nellie observed, in the voice that could fill Covent Garden. When Calvé was invited—by Oscar Hammerstein I—to share *Pêches Melba* with their namesake, she prudently declined.

Some divas are not much different today, but chefs are still undaunted by their temperament and honor sopranos with such productions as the Colony Restaurant's *Beignets Soufflés* with *Sauce Callas*. (This

sauce is basically *Sabayon*, to which has been added a little white port. In a pinch, red may be substituted.) Miss Callas, who now largely eschews the fried eggs topped with cheese and fried potatoes said to have been her favorite girlhood refreshment, is reported to relish *Beignets*, and in fact any dessert except one involving Bing cherries. Whether she has ever enjoyed the *Délice Callas* originated for her 1959 Kansas City reception, however, is a question. A "courtly" Callas "attended a post-concert party at the River Club where she danced with local millionaires and nibbled . . . 'Delice Callas'," said *Time*. "Callas lived up to her reputation for capriciousness last night by standing up the Governor of Missouri," said (of the same fête) the *New York Journal American*, ". . . just too tired to attend a champagne reception in her honor."

To make a *Délice Callas*, put peppermint ice cream in a meringue nest, cover it with brandied bitter-chocolate sauce and chopped pistachio nuts, decorate with whipped cream, and garnish with crystallized rose petals, violets, and mint leaves. Maybe it would be easier to join Kansas City's River Club, where, though *Délice Callas* has never been listed on the menu, it is available to members on request.

Caffè à la Barbaja ou Otello

Those who have omitted two or more of the foregoing courses might like to conclude with *Caffè à la Barbaja*. The wet macaroni which produced *Otello's* overture was not the product of culinary ineptitude, but of a caustic wit. As to music, it is recorded that Barbaja once interrupted the "Do, re, mi" of an auditioner to say that it would be useless for her to sing in that language, and he could not engage her. It is also said that he once ordered a piano's legs shortened to appease a singer who had complained that the instrument was too high, a *gaffe* which has been variously attributed these past hundred years, but it must be true of *someone*. As to the kitchen, however, Barbaja was the inventor of *Schlagobers*, the flourish of whipped cream served on coffee to this day in Vienna, where Barbaja was a waiter, until the profits of his sweet invention freed him to gamble and speculate, and at last to manage opera houses, which is much the same thing. However, for those who have proceeded *allegro giusto* through every entry thus far, we earnestly recommended *Caffè Otello*. After this cream-drenched menu, black will be beautiful.

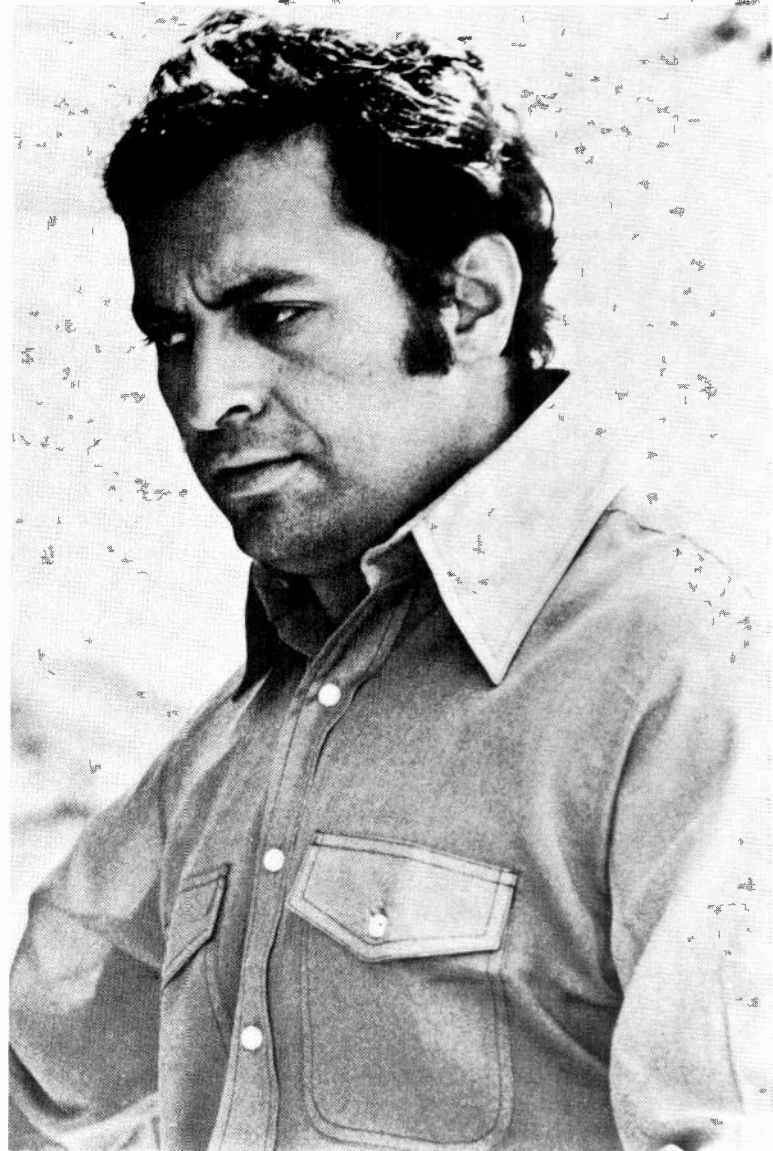
Martha Bennett Stiles is a novelist and a prolific author of nonfiction for periodicals. Her latest work, *Dougal Looks for Birds*, a children's book, will be published by Four Winds Press.

ZUBIN MEHTA

"I consider myself a growing organization."

By Robert Windeler

ON STAGE at the Hollywood Bowl, Zubin Mehta stands in rehearsal clothes: trendy, tailored tan cords, a brown turtleneck, and hardware Guccis. More than three years after he said flatly that his Los Angeles Philharmonic was better than the New York Philharmonic and thus wiped himself out of the running to head the older orchestra, Mehta leads his 101-piece L.A. group through a final rehearsal of Beethoven's Ninth in the mid-Saturday sun with some of the conductorial flamboyance of the "Zubie-baby" years, 1966-1967, and with far less arrogance and much more confidence. He is also distinctly thicker through the middle, and the jet-black hair of his matinee-idol period is thinner and duller. Yet some things haven't changed. Tonight he will conduct the familiar Beethoven symphony for seven thousand paying customers at the Bowl, tomorrow morning leave for Israel to conduct the Israel Philharmonic, return to London in two weeks for recording, and then tour the eastern United States with the L. A. orchestra, winding up performing a new Penderecki work (*Cosmogony*) at the United Nations. All along the way he will avoid most



journalists ("If I say 'the,' they manage to misquote me") and any chat about the New York Philharmonic, his play-boy image, or his presumed sexual prowess.

In Mehta's dressing room backstage at the Bowl, the first impression of less arrogance but more confidence is confirmed. The arrogance is tempered by a new humility that seems at least half-felt ("The Beethoven Ninth I play tonight has to be better than one I did three years ago; I'm growing and learning as a conductor and my orchestra is growing and learning with me"). And the confidence is partly musical and partly because the New York incident assured his tenure in Los Angeles for as long as he wants it. "That was the last time Mrs. Chandler ever interfered," Mehta says. "She has left me alone ever since, and even compliments me on the modern works." Since Mrs. Dorothy Buffum Chandler is not only vice-chairman of the Board of Regents of the University of California but also the reigning power at the Los Angeles *Times*, the Los Angeles Music Center, and the Hollywood Bowl, her support means more than merely having a local booster in your corner. (At the Music Center the large pavilion in

which the L.A. Philharmonic plays is named for her.) As for the moderns, Mrs. Chandler didn't use to like them, and Mehta himself, a romantic by inclination, is by his own admission weakest with them.

Mehta's and the orchestra's London-label recording contract calls for four records a year, one of the four a modern work, and Mehta, who does additional records on London with the Israelis and guest conducts on RCA and other labels, dislikes the quotas. "It's against my principles to record that much and to record a work I am not completely ready with because I haven't done it enough times 'live'."

Among his recent record releases, Mehta is happiest with an old chestnut, Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*, complete with sixteen shots from a real cannon recorded in a tunnel on the San Bernardino Freeway at 5 a.m. It sold 13,000 copies the first day of its release, 1,500 in Los Angeles alone. "For a pop record that's a bad day, but we have a hit on our hands."

AT only thirty-five, Mehta is still very much in the boy-wonder-on-the-way-up category, and he's learned to hold his tongue despite some strongly held and virulently expressed opinions. Now his juiciest utterances in interviews are often followed by "Don't use that." He disclaims any interest in the Bel-Air Circuit, what's left of Hollywood society, but he is considered a big catch at any dinner party. His recent second marriage to the stunning but barely successful actress Nancy Kovack (Elvis Presley pictures, some TV guest shots) has taken him out of the ranks of most-eligible men, but it has not lessened the enthusiasm of his female fans, Mehta's own older and slightly more refined kind of groupie.

Asked if he was taking advantage of his undeniable charisma and sex appeal to draw non-musically inclined audiences to his concerts, Mehta said that apart from the obvious groupies and little old ladies from Pasadena (whom he claims he doesn't encourage) he most certainly was not. "Any artist who gets on stage to do anything—whether he's good-looking or not—has a certain 'charisma' and uses it to some degree. You might get someone in to see you once because they've heard something about you or seen your picture, but you can't make them like or understand music just by your being there. Something else has to happen or they won't come back. Los Angeles audiences are genuinely becoming more sophisticated about their orchestra and more appreciative of the music we play."

It is true that the size and enthusiasm of the audience for the Los Angeles Philharmonic have increased. And this increase is certainly due in some part to Mehta's flamboyant reputation, but he chooses to say it is not to any significant degree. "I'm so tired of this 'Zubie' business—nobody calls me that; *Newsweek* magazine invented it. I enjoy myself as any young man would, and I enjoy

myself with women—the new generation of conductors are all normal in that respect," he says with a swipe at a slightly older generation.

Politically outspoken, he eschews categories. "When I was a boy in India, Nehru was always in jail. Why should I look down on Cleaver because he is? Kenyatta was jailed, now he is head of his country. We always find out ten years later. Lumumba was never a Communist." In spite of his work with the Israel Philharmonic, Mehta says, "I'm not one hundred per cent Israel-biased; I don't love every cactus in the land. But I do think U Thant is scared to death of the Arabs." He's anti-Reagan and the State of California for not giving a cent to his orchestra. "This is a rich state, not a broke state, and who do you think the orchestra does honor to? Even San Francisco couldn't argue with that." The Los Angeles Philharmonic needs one million dollars a year to run on, plus four million for matching a Ford Foundation grant, and Mehta is not one to stay aloof from that worry. "The Ford Foundation is the savior of all culture in America," he says.

Mehta counts among his weaknesses yet to conquer a lack of experience in the works of Bach ("I still think I have a long way to go"). He will not venture soon again into the pop world, after a disastrous in-concert collaboration with Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention. The piece he did with them which so displeased him in performance (but not in musical quality) was *200 Motels* (Zappa and the Mothers are now making a movie based on it and using the same title). "Trying to shock the public with rubber animals and by saying obscene things has nothing to do with the music—either you like it or you don't. Some of it I like, but let it speak for itself." Mehta thinks the one time he reached a young audience was when he did an impromptu concert with his orchestra and members of the Roger Wagner Chorale at U.C.L.A. after the tragedy at Kent State. It ended with the Hallelujah Chorus, and the hands of participants and audience were upraised in "V" peace signs.

HE reckons that he spends five months a year in Los Angeles, three in Israel, one at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and two traveling, with one left for his vacation. But L.A. is more and more home base. "The orchestra is constantly gaining greater acceptance here, and Los Angeles is becoming increasingly music-minded." Outlying towns where he tours with the orchestra are another matter, says Mehta. "I have to have receivers in the audience—people who know what I'm trying to do and whether I do it. Here I have receivers; in some places I don't." As for moving on, "I would much rather stay here in Los Angeles for the moment. I want to be with a growing organization rather than an arrived, establishment one. I consider *myself* a growing organization rather than an arrived, establishment one."

MUCH IN DEMAND:
KRIS KRISTOFFERSON
Odysseus in Levis



Also known as:
Helicopter Pilot, Singer, Actor, Rhodes Scholar, Army Officer,
and Songwriter of the Year

Description by: J Marks
Photographed by: Baron Wolman

THE SCENE: Slow fade-in. Los Angeles. A boy and a girl come into focus. They hunch against a cigarette machine near the entrance of the Troubadour, a successfully seedy hang-out on Santa Monica Boulevard. The boy is attractively derelict-looking in a hustler's rumpled midnight-cowboy gear. The girl is perfectly tubular, except for evidence of a seven-month pregnancy. Her art-nouveau body looks drenched in a torrent of stringy white fur trying to be a cape, and under it she wears a Moroccan sheath fastened with a row of seventy tiny buttons running from her breast, across the ominous abundance of her belly, down to her fragile ankles and large feet. A cloud of freaked-out hair surrounds her emaciated face, from which two almond-shaped eyes are sending hysterically casual messages. Her narrow mouth is fixed in an expression of pure indifference as she slowly clamps her long, thin fingers around the hustler's belt buckle and pulls him into the steaming crush of the bar. The boy, totally stoned, follows like a dreamer . . . until the director yells "CUT!"

COULD this be Kris Kristofferson? Yes . . . but he's not a hustler, nor is he a movie star. Not yet, anyway. He's a troubadour, a songwriter-singer whose abrupt rise to fame has resulted in his starring in a Hollywood movie called *Dealer* with co-stars Viva (no last name) and Karen (*Five Easy Pieces*) Black. It is Viva with whom he's just completed the sixteenth attempt to capture an entrance on film.

"Jeez," Kris tells me later in his Texas drawl while he and Viva sit over dinner at the Aware Inn on Sunset Boulevard, "we spend all day filming something puny like that and then we have to get right to it and finish off a really good scene where we get to do some talking in less than half an hour. Lord, it's worse than the pressure of a recording session!"

When he gets up from the table to make a phone call I ask Viva, "What do you think of Kris?"

"Fab-U-lous," she intones in that very flat voice I have learned to recognize from too many Andy Warhol films.

"And what do you think of him as an actor?"

She flashes a mannequin-like grimace and arches her long neck. "Fab-U-lous," she says again.

Kristofferson ambles back to the table from the phone, lights up a Bull Durham cigarette from his fourth pack of the day, and slouches in the chair. "That guy is a real whimp," he complains of the businessman he's just been talking to on the phone. "He's the type of cat who keeps telling you how much more he knows about music than you do and all about his thirty-five years of experience. You know the kind I mean. I finally got good and fed up and I told him, 'Man, you ain't got no thirty-five

years of experience behind you. What you got is one year of experience thirty-five times!' "

Kristofferson can get away with talking that way to executives—now. He's the hottest thing going in Nashville. At the annual Country Music Association awards show he walked off with the "Song of the Year" award for his *Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down*, and he has just been named Songwriter of the Year by the Nashville Songwriters' Association. That leaves the conservative folks up and down Nashville's famous Music Row in something of a stew. There are lots down there who aren't at all happy about his success.

To them Kristofferson is some kind of weirdo. Here he comes, this long-haired outsider with a college education, in his suede bell-bottoms, stumbling around probably from drugs or something, climbing right up there onto the stage of the venerable Grand Ole Opry to accept the highest award in the field of country music, and he doesn't even have the decency to wear a proper suit and tie! *LAND O' GOSHEN!*

"Anyway, my music isn't exactly country," Kris is saying as we drive toward the hotel where he can clean up after a long day in front of the cameras. "I think it started down in Brownsville, Texas. Of course, I've been influenced by a lot of things since I was a kid, but what got deepest down into my gut was that border Mexican music—basically simple melodies where the emotion in the song is up front . . . and Mexican harmonies . . . simple two-part things . . . with feeling."

"By the time I was in high school—this was Fifty of Fifty-four—I was out in California. Of course I knew who all the country singers were, but Hank Williams was my big hero then, and he was pretty unknown out here, except for country fans. And there weren't many country fans in those days. But what I dug about the country music (and still do about the good stuff) is that they're honest lyrics and that there is more of an honest expression of emotion—like in the voice of Hank Williams, or today George Jones and Merle Haggard and those guys—than you find in the pop guys. Whenever you heard somebody else trying to record a Hank Williams song he really sucked. I think the first guy that ever sang them successfully was Ray Charles. You know, 'cause he's so sad and they're so soul."

Just under six feet tall, and thirty-four years old, Kris hunches down over his memories and his twelve-string guitar, squeezing his soft blue eyes closed, as his voice—battered by booze and Bull Durham into a raspy baritone—talks and sings lyrics that already seem yellowed and wrinkled by adventures and time.

"*Casey's Last Ride* started out as nothing more



Baron Wolman Photo

than a line and an idea, an image of subways in London. 'Casey joins the hollow sounds/of silent people walking down/the stairway to the subways/and the shadows down below.' You know, something like that. And then it just laid in my head. I didn't finish the thing or nothin'. But I was always thinking about those lines until one night when I'm driving from New Orleans to Morgan City where I was gonna go out in the Gulf on one of those offshore oil rigs. And tired? Like three A.M. in a bad rainstorm and I had three flat tires. It's not the time to be writing songs. And that damned song came to me. All of it—even with that middle section that I really like: 'Oh, she said, Casey, it's been so long since I've seen you./ Here, she said, just a kiss to make a body smile./ See, she said, I've put on new stockings just to please you./ Lord, she said, Casey, can you only stay a while?' It came out of nowhere. When you're writin' you're just holdin' up the pen."

Kristofferson admits that his songs are autobiographical, a natural enough thing for a troubadour. "The tune I wrote that first hit people hard was *Jody and the Kid*. I wrote it back when I was splitting up with my old lady, and I was taking my little girl around to the places I worked at—like this Tally Ho

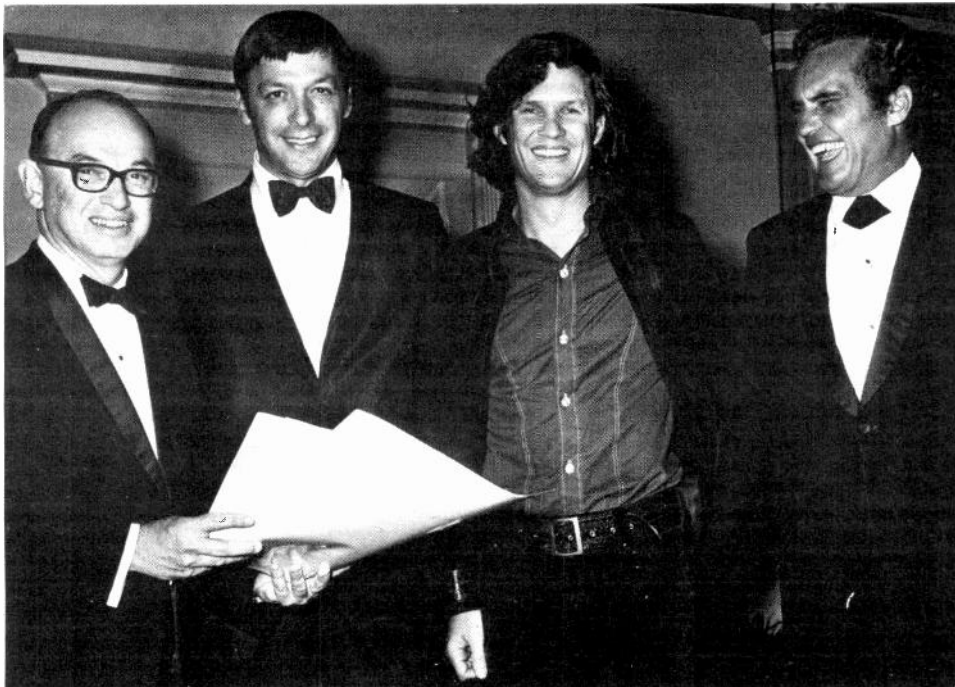
Tavern where I used to tend bar. It's a kind of a pub-like old place over on Sixteenth Avenue South in Nashville and it's really old—sort of like the barn in my song *Beat the Devil*. Some old guy, one of the regulars, saw the little girl and me comin' in. And he said, 'Hey, looka yonder. There comes critter and the kid.' Well, I didn't think 'Flash! There's a song!' But it kinda stuck in my head, I guess, 'cause it was a real sad time for me. I hated losing the kids, especially the little girl, 'cause she's my faithful fan. Later, when I went down to work on the Gulf, I finished the song."

THOUGH Kristofferson admits that Hank Williams was his hero back when he was eight, he has more in common with the great folk troubadours of the past, such as Woody Guthrie, or contemporary songwriter-singers like Tom Rapp and Tom Rush. He's more poet than musician, more concerned with the power than the beauty of expression. This intent is evident in his voice as well as his songs. He sings in a rough, personal, and imperfect voice. As a performer he is paradoxically commonplace at the same time he is mystical. He appeals strongly to rock fans who have been guided into a new kind of "country" mu-

sic by people like Dylan, and to sophisticates who discover in his lyrics the perfect economy and balance of a short story.

"To me," Kris drawls quietly in the hotel room as he strips off his black turtleneck, "the purpose of any kind of writing or any kind of art form is to move people—to laughter or to crying or to anger or to something. But you've gotta move them . . . emotionally and not intellectually." At thirty-plus, Kris is starting to show signs of a narrow spare tire—a trophy, no doubt, from countless nights on the town with drinking buddies. His handsome face is also beginning to show the unmistakable puffiness of a drinker. "Maybe I'm into booze," he confesses, "because I'm older than most of the kids in the music business." But he is still as wiry and smooth and hairless as an athletic youngster. "Grass is just fine, but booze and me are old friends." He smiles as he orders two vodkas and ginger-ale from room service, then disappears into the bathroom, from which he shouts over the sound of the shower. "Don't get me wrong. I'm not a political man, but I'm also not a bigot. When I wrote *Blame It on the Stones*, I was mad 'cause Jagger was given those inordinate sentences just for having something like two pep pills and one joint in his pocket. Kids protested in London and even the conservatives got hot over the whole affair. As for me, well, I identified with the Rolling Stones because the people in my own family were always putting down musicians. Yet people that I saw in every walk of life—you know, doctors, lawyers, students, members of bridge clubs—they were on some kind of escape trip too. Whether it was booze, uppers, downers, or grass. And so why nail the Stones? That's all it was about—nothing political."

BMI Archives



On October 13 last year Kristofferson won the Country Music Association's Song of the Year award for his Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down, and in January he was named Songwriter of the Year by the Nashville Songwriters Association. At left, at the October awards presentation at the Grand Ole Opry, are Edward M. Cramer, president of Broadcast Music, Inc., Fred Foster, president of Monument Records, Kris, and MC Bob Beckham.

Kris is the son of an ex-military man (later an air-operations manager for Aramco) who died last Christmas as this was being written. From Brownsville, Texas, where he was born, he moved with his family to California where he later attended Pomona College. "I wasn't a rebel when I was eight, but I was a rebel when I was in California. Maybe that's just because I was a different age. But I think I went back more to what I really dug. When I was in California, I was embarrassed to say I liked country music, and I'd roll the windows up in my car and listen to Hank Williams.

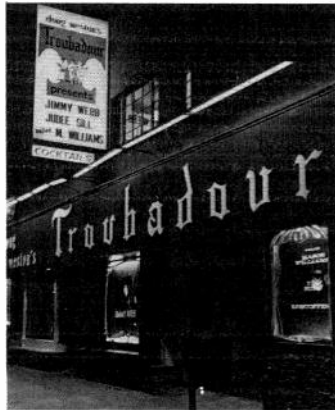
"But I was a creative writing major in my undergraduate years, and I was getting some good stuff written." As a matter of fact, he won four out of twenty prizes in *The Atlantic's* collegiate short-story contest and was subsequently awarded a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University.

"When I got to England," he says as he climbs into a beautiful black suede and leather outfit (he had it made in Peru while working on the Dennis Hopper film called *The Last Movie*), "I really got involved in literature. I was excited about Blake and Shakespeare and Donne. My old man, he was in the Army, so he thought I was doing just fine, but I really wasn't sure why I was at Oxford. I can remember consciously compromising myself and saying that I was going to play according to the rules and if some idiot was up in front of the class saying something stupid and he was on some kind of an ego trip, I was not going to cut him down or anything. I was going to agree with him and I was gonna study, and I was going to give him back what he wanted, regardless of whether it was right or not.

"And I did it. But I really didn't like school work. And, man, I never wanted to be a schoolteacher.

They kept correcting my accent and my grammar and kept tellin' me I sounded like a hick and I kept right on talking my own way. But that's not much resistance. Today kids stand up for their ideals, but back then most of us were just so damned glad to be in college that we kept our mouths shut. What I was doing at Oxford was what somebody else wanted me to do. And it took a complete tearing loose to get free of it and of my family. I had to drop straight to the bottom.

"Let's see . . . yeah, that's right: when I left Oxford, I got married and went into the Army. I was an officer when I went in and went through jump



Los Angeles' Troubadour, where Kristofferson made his club debut last year, figures in his new Columbia picture Dealer as well.

Eric Skipsey Photo

school and on to flight school. When I got out I was a captain. And I was on the way to teachin' English Lit. up at West Point, which was, as far as the family was concerned, a nice place to be. And I knew I didn't want to, and I was foolin' myself into thinkin' I might dig it 'cause I went up there and visited the place, and it was graduation time and it was beautiful up there and there were all those pretty girls out seein' their beaux, and I went around with a major who showed me the stuff and he started talkin' about lesson plans and gave me these books that I had to read ahead of time, and this vague feelin' of despair began creeping over my body, and I remember I rode back on the bus . . . I still didn't know that I wasn't gonna do it . . . didn't know till I got to Nashville and all of a sudden I saw people—man, they were crazy!—they were alive and they were creatin' things that . . . writing songs. They were all up where I hadn't been for years, 'cause I mean you're really *dead* in the Army.

"Well, it was the roughest thing I'd ever done in my life. I just turned my back on the whole thing: education, family, past, and position. For a year and a half I worked at Columbia Recording Studios in Nashville, cleaning ashtrays and doing things like that. I got offers to work for music publishing companies, but I knew I would never do the writing I wanted to do if I got involved in a job with responsi-

bilities. Then I got a job bartending at the Tally Ho—the kind of bar that's in my song *Beat the Devil*. And right about the time my old lady and I were about to split up, well, she got pregnant. I knew I was going to need more money than the sixty bucks a week I was makin', so I went down to the Gulf to fly the helicopters on the offshore oil rigs, and I did that for about twenty months.

"I just quit that a year ago. I really panicked, because I had five-hundred-a-month in child support to pay, and I had the remainder of a \$10,000 hospital bill that I was payin' on 'cause my boy had to have an operation. And I thought 'Oh God, I'm gonna be thrown in jail.' And I came back to Nashville. They were doing the Johnny Cash Show—the TV thing—and a friend of mine, Mickey Newberry, was stayin' in the hotel where they were runnin' the thing. He had a chance to meet all these people that we never had a chance to pitch songs to before. And we were doin' this and gettin' to meet people. So a publisher agreed to pay me enough money to meet my commitment until the show was over, as long as I was pitchin' songs and I was gettin' stuff cut. Out of that I met Roger Miller, and he cut three of my songs.

"He cut *Bobby McGee* first. A year ago last June. And then Fred Foster of Monument Records—he also owns Carmine Publishing Co.—he came up one time during the session when Roger was cuttin' the third song, and said 'I understand you're having some financial problems,' and I said, 'Well, a little bit.' You know, he bailed me out. Gave me a loan that paid off the whole hospital bill, kept me solvent, and then I got a job working out here on a TV special for John Hartford with Mickey Newberry that gave me some more money, and I haven't had to work a lick since."

Work, to Kristofferson, is something other than writing songs. If you can make money writing songs, you don't have to work, and now, as a matter of fact, Kristofferson songs are some of the most sought-after in the business. There are already fifty recorded versions of his *Me and Bobby McGee* alone.

"Cheers," he says as he downs the last of the vodka. "Want to hear a new one I'm just finishing?" And he pulls his twelve-string guitar comfortably into his lap and picks out a song:

*Around the honky tonks
searchin' for a sign
Gettin' by on gettin' high
on women, words and wine.*

"That sounds like a pretty accurate description of Kristofferson," I said. "It's a really nice tune too."

"Maybe Johnny Cash is going to cut it." Kris said, smiling brightly.

"He put me on his show at the Newport Folk Fes-

tival, which was the first time I had ever performed publicly. I was scared to death and I think maybe Johnny was too. But I got pretty good reviews and that got him interested in recording some of my stuff. It was so incredible: Johnny Cash singing *Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down*. He was the one guy in the world I really wanted to meet in Nashville. He and his wife June Carter got to be like my mom and dad. They took me in when I was still emptying ashtrays, and Johnny put me on his TV show and he wrote the notes on the back of my first album.

Kris and I walked out into the warm Los Angeles night. We got into the car and drove through Laurel Canyon to the San Fernando Valley where Kris had promised to meet an old girl friend who, like most of his girls, felt thoroughly neglected. Sailing over the dark hills and peering down at the sea of lights stretching limitlessly across the valley floor, I asked Kris about his new career in the movies.

"My first movie," he grinned, "was *The Last Movie*." That's where he met the beauty we were en route to visit. The film was the project of Dennis Hopper, whose phenomenal success with *Easy Rider* won him a huge budget and total artistic freedom to make another film. He assembled his cast in a village outside Lima, Peru, and went to work with the semblance of an idea but without a script.

"I'd really lucked into that, because a friend of mine, Jim Baker, a Texan who knows Dennis through his art work, has kept in touch ever since I met him back when I was at Oxford. And he was the art critic for the Forth Worth-Dallas area. A groovy cat, and at various times in between my separations from my old lady and Nashville and everything I'd stop by and visit all those people. Anyway, they were all really friendly and really interested in what I was doing, and tried to keep me up, and push me, and he happened to be talking to Dennis about me or something and Dennis told him he really dug *Me and Bobby McGee*. So he calls me up and says, 'Dennis is out here gettin' ready to make another movie. Will you come out and lay some songs on him?'"

"So I just packed my bags and flew to California out here, and went to some place in Malibu, and sang or made some tapes, I can't remember which. Anyway, we were all a little wasted at the end of the night. You know, we got along real good, he seemed so much like Ramblin' Jack Elliott that I kept callin' him Jack. Finally, I passed out on the floor. He called up the next day and asked if I wanted to go to Peru and make a movie. And I said 'Of course.'"

We had rolled up to the posh and very conservative Tail of the Cock on Ventura Boulevard where the attendant gave both Kris and me an incredulous look and reluctantly drove off to park our car. We

Columbia Records



Johnny Cash, whom Kris acknowledges as his guru, says of his protégé: "He's going to be one of the biggest."

Columbia Records



"Just made love to 25,000 people and I'm goin' home alone. . . ." The late Janis Joplin was a friend with whom Kris could share a performer's sympathetic understanding.



Country-oriented singer Linda Ronstadt (once the prettiest of the Stone Poneys) is another of Kris' friends: she has appeared on the bill with him at the Troubadour.

Capitol Records



Viva, together with such luminaries as Ultra Violet and Holly Woodlawn, is a product of the Andy Warhol film factory, and will appear with Kris in *Dealer*.

Baron Wolman Photo

A KRIS KRISTOFFERSON SAMPLER

THROUGH the kind cooperation of Fred Foster and Monument Records, STEREO REVIEW is able to offer its readers a seven-inch, 45-rpm disc containing four songs by Kris Kristofferson. No story on Kristofferson is complete until you have heard him yourself, and to make that experience possible, send 25c to E. Maldonado, STEREO REVIEW, 1 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10016 for your copy of this special disc.

headed into the bar. "How about the new film?" I asked him as we peered around looking for Kris' girl.

"Well," he laughs, "I lucked into that one too. The guy who cast *Five Easy Pieces* had seen me at the Troubadour and liked me. [Last summer, when Kris made his first appearance in Los Angeles at the Troubadour with Linda Ronstadt, he sent the critics back to their typewriters searching for superlatives. That success brought him all kinds of touring offers and stacks of movie scripts.] I got to know him out at Jack Nicholson's house. You see, I had come to L.A. 'cause Janis Joplin died, and I was pretty broken up about it. I didn't want to go to her funeral or anything, I just wanted to know if anybody knew what had actually happened.

"Well, anyway, I was in Los Angeles so they asked me to read for the part. Next day they made a screen test of me and then I split for Nashville. About a day or so later they called and said I got the part, so I came back out to California. A young director named Bill Norton wrote the script. Karen Black plays my old lady and Viva plays this wealthy chick who picks me up. I play a cat who used to be a musician but who got into dealing to make a living."

It could be another Kristofferson story/song:

*He's a poet, he's a picker, he's
a prophet, he's a pusher,
He's a pilgrim and a preacher and
a problem when he's stoned,
He's a walking contradiction, partly
truth and partly fiction
Taking every wrong direction on
his lonely way back home.*

After searching the entire bar we find Kris' date waiting impatiently for us at a table in the restaurant. She's gorgeous. And I feel just a little bit dumfounded by the array of spectacular women who have made contact with Kristofferson during the four days of our conversations. "I'm just a lucky guy with chicks. It gets really lonely being on the road all the time. All performers need company."

Kris used to give some of his company to Janis Joplin, whom he remembers with deep affection. One night he was walking her home from a crummy little bar across the tracks from the shabby Tropicana Motel on Santa Monica Boulevard where many rock stars stay. "She was miserable. I tried to cheer her

up, but it wasn't much use. Janis was sort of meant for the blues. 'I'm writin' a tune,' she told me that night. 'It's called *Just Made Love to 25,000 People and I'm Goin' Home Alone*.' That was the last time I ever saw ol' Janis," Kris murmured.

For Kristofferson, women are an inspiration—and *vice versa*, apparently. The list of his lady admirers includes many of the famous and a few of the notorious. The newspapers provide a constant flow of questionable gossip about his relationships, some awkwardly funny, some downright embarrassing, some scandalous. "He's a poetic truck driver," one illustrious lady of song once confided to me. "He has had most of us and he's had most of us more than once. There's the great lady of song who made him park his car a block down the street when he stayed over, and there's the diva who was mad for both Kris and her jailed husband. Mature, sophisticated women who scoff at rock stars look at Kris as if he were the ultimate man. His sincerity is his best weapon."

By now it's late. We have walked the young lady to her car and Kris says good night. We drive back to the hotel. "Do you ever feel that you're standing between two worlds?" I ask the guy who can talk about Blake and Donne and Michelangelo on the one hand and Jimmy Rodgers and Hank Williams on the other.

As he drops me at the curb, he replies a bit sadly. "I've felt that way all my damned life. I really have the feeling that I'm an outsider. Everyplace I go. I've never been a part of any group or any party or hung around with any one cat or anything like that. The women I know today won't be the ones I'll know tomorrow. I'm friends with a lot of people but not anybody's only friend. I got to keep moving and living if I'm going to keep on writing. I'm a scared writer. I never know if I'm gonna write another song."

FINAL SCENE: Medium long shot. Music in the background.

*Around the honky tonks,
Searching for a sign. . . .*

There he goes, off into the sunset, a little older, a little more roll around the middle, his dog running behind, his guitar under one arm and a girl hanging off the other. There's a bottle of booze in his back pocket.

Kris Kristofferson:

*Gettin' by on gettin' high
On women, words and wine.*

Slow fade-out. . . .

J Marks, writer and recording artist, performs with the *First National Nothing*. Author of *Rock and Other Four Letter Words*, he has been described as the rock generation's main historian.



THE SOUND OF KRISTOFFERSON

By Noel Coppage



IF Kris Kristofferson had been incorruptible, he might not have been noticed in the crowd of new-style troubadours. Most of his contemporary singer-songwriters are young, innocent, and astringently idealistic, and are, when you come down to it, variations on the style of Tim Hardin—though usually without Tim's humility. Kristofferson is different. He has been corrupted. Hard times have fractured his idealism as whiskey and tobacco have aged his voice. His songs deal with how it is to feel inadequate. The world is a mess, all right, he concludes, but then so am I. The hero winds up in jail only partly because of his life style and politics—there also was the matter of his being roaring drunk and raising hell. The South, being so conservative, has always been a tough place for rebels, and Kristofferson has been able to construct a stable of Southern characters—mostly shades of himself—to personify actions and reactions that anyone anywhere can identify. Hank Williams, his boyhood hero, knew what it was like to be poor and scrambling in the South (which is pretty much like what it's like anywhere else, only more so) and it got into his songs, too. Like Williams, Kristofferson looks at it with a mixture of sympathy, objectivity, and hope. There used to be some Southern-born novelists attuned to such common-man heroism, but they mostly died or turned to writing about sex for money.

Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down was probably the most startling song heard in 1970. It left me almost gasping when I first heard the Johnny Cash version. Kristofferson's version on this record seems a little overcooked, sounding as if he was afraid to really let us have it. Nevertheless, it is his ultimate statement to date about loneliness, and Kris has made a lot

of statements about loneliness. The lament for lost or never-had companions or loves dogs his songs with the quiet efficiency of a small-town bookkeeper. Many songs also mention being broke and hung over.

We often read in liner notes how this or that songwriter uses melodies merely as vehicles for putting his words across—and we usually find little evidence of any real care in matching words and melody. It can truly be said of Kristofferson, however. Either he uses great care in putting the two elements together or has a sure instinct for what kind of melody is needed, for he invariably finds a tune that fits his lyrics in tone and mood. Most of his melodies are simple and follow folk and country lines. *Sunday Mornin'* sounds more like something from the cello school of rock composers, and so it stands out among Kristofferson songs just as it stands out generally. Still, it curves around to better serve the words, and delivers them with maximum impact, and that was his reason for inventing it. In *Blame It on the Stones*, Kristofferson fashioned a bridge from the tune of the old hymn *Bringing in the Sheaves*. A wry twist, that, using the hippie-hating redneck's theme music against him. Religion, as it is sometimes misused to nurture a clot of far-fetched fears, really is the opiate of some people, Kristofferson knows, and he uses a Southern stratagem to slap at rednecks everywhere.

Kristofferson is more nearly a country singer than the other singers who have lately embraced country music. His accent is genuine. He's older and was exposed to country music naturally, as a matter of geography. Most of the others were exposed first to rock-and-roll and had to work backwards along one of its branches to find country. The phrasing and pronun-

ciation Kris uses in *Me and Bobby McGee* are not terribly different from what you might hear in the voices of Ferlin Husky, Roy Drusky, or several other unpop-ed country singers. The arrangements in this recording are of the in-between variety so popular these days, using rock but not twangy sounds and using country but not raspy fiddle sounds. But these arrangements are scrupulously subdued; they support Kristofferson without making any bid to become the whole show. They are, in fact, a little light in the support department in a few spots. However, they do more good than harm, and that's rare, and we can thank producer Fred Foster for it. Kristofferson's archetypical whiskey voice—if you could touch it, you might find its texture like that of a turkish towel—is what the record is about, and he isn't so much singing to you as surrounding you with images that tell tales of hoboes without trains. *Beat the Devil, Me and Bobby McGee, Best of All Possible Worlds, Casey's Last Ride, Just the Other Side of Nowhere, and Sunday Mornin'* are spun out to the listener with the assumption that he knows what it's like to be on the bum—but anyone who has been broke, thirsty, or lonely knows what it is like.

KRISTOFFERSON tosses out a better-than-average adage occasionally: "The devil haunts a hungry man," "Yesterday is dead and gone and tomorrow's out of sight," "There's nothing like a woman with her spell of make-believe to make a new believer of a man." But his lyrics don't have the gloss of self-conscious surrealism that so many other songwriters picked up by listening to Bob Dylan. Kristofferson's lyrics are straightforward and, in their way, generally graceful. Compare his songs with those of writers ten years his junior, those who are trying to say the same things, and you can see how experience—and even an Oxford education—can be helpful.

Kristofferson says he wants to affect people emotionally rather than intellectually—but any songwriter interested in survival wants to do that. The thing is that in order to write well for the viscera, one must have his own cerebrum in order, otherwise he won't know how thick to pour it on. Kristofferson, in this album, poured it on just about right.

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON. Kris Kristofferson (vocals, guitar); Jerry Kennedy (guitar); other accompanying musicians. *Blame It on the Stones; To Beat the Devil; Me and Bobby McGee; The Best of All Possible Worlds; Help Me Make It Through the Night; The Law Is for Protection of the People; Casey's Last Ride; Just the Other Side of Nowhere; Darby's Castle; For the Good Times; Duvalier's Dream; Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down.* MONUMENT SLP 18139 \$4.98.

The home experimenter's guide to **MULTI-CHANNEL LISTENING**

Assistant Technical Editor Ralph Hodges describes two methods of getting more sound out of your tapes and records

REGULAR readers of STEREO REVIEW's technical pages have been following the somewhat stumbling progress of four-channel stereo for over a year now. Most recently, Technical Editor Larry Klein's September 1970 article "The Four-Channel Follies" brought this progress up to date with discussion of the theories behind the various proposed systems, their prospects for general acceptance, and—most important—how they sounded. Few readers have had the opportunity to attend any of the public demonstrations of these systems, however, and even fewer have heard quadrasonic reproduction in their homes. For most people, then, any impression of the virtues of quadrasonic reproduction can derive only from whatever can be communicated about aural events in print, plus some amplification and/or distortion contributed by their imaginations.

Though I have hardly been as much in the dark about four-channel developments as most audiophiles, I was eager to try it for myself, and late last year I began experimenting with a multi-channel stereo setup at home. It works well within its limitations, it requires no special equipment or program material, and, as a listening experience, it is the closest thing to a "free" quadrasonic preview possible in this transition period.

The approach I have used is based on the work of David Hafler, president of Dynaco, Inc., and is certainly not a secret. For some time, Dynaco advertisements have featured "Four-Dimensional Stereo," the most recently evolved form of the Hafler system. (Interested readers can secure full particulars from Dynaco, 3060 Jefferson St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19121.) Most of my own experience has been with Hafler's original configuration, however, which requires only the addition of one or two extra speakers to a conventional stereo system, these being driven with a signal that is the *difference* between the two

channels of a normal stereo recording.

To understand what this "difference" signal is (it is also referred to as an "A minus B" or "L minus R" signal) and where it comes from, it will be helpful to resort to a hypothetical recording situation. Imagine that you are looking downward onto a stage, as in Figure 1, where a solo clarinetist is playing (a clarinet's symmetrical radiation pattern makes it ideal for our example). Two microphones have been so placed that they are equally distant from the performer as well as off center by the same angle. Under these circumstances, the signals that come directly from the clarinet (and are picked up by the microphones) are very similar, if not identical, in phase, strength, and frequency. But the clarinet is radiating sound in many directions, not just straight into the microphones, and much of this sound ultimately reaches the microphones only after being reflected back by the interior surfaces of the hall. For example, one part of the sound, after leaving the clarinet, goes toward the left of the stage, bounces off the wall, and is reflected back toward the microphones. Obviously it will reach the left microphone an instant before it does the right one, and for that instant there will be a signal in the left channel that is not present in the right. Further, when the reflected sound does reach the right microphone, it might well arrive with a phase difference (for example, the right mike might be receiving a compression phase of the sound wave at the same moment the left microphone is receiving an expansion phase). The result would be an out-of-phase condition between the two channels for that particular part of the reflected sound. Finally, since the left mike is closer to the left wall than the right mike, the signal it picks up will be minutely stronger.

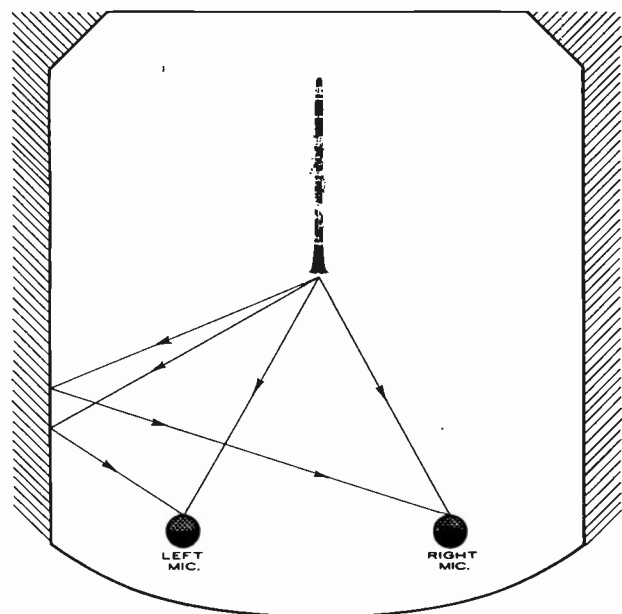
Thus, in our hypothetical example, the sound coming directly from the clarinet to the two microphones is the same for both, and it will be recorded in the

two stereo channels as identical signals—in effect, a mono signal. Any differences between the composite signals in the two channels—differences in arrival time, phase, and amplitude (signal strength)—will be caused by reflected sound. And it is precisely these differences that produce the stereo effect—the sense of “air” or hall acoustics around the performer. To appreciate what this feeling of space adds to the listening experience, simply switch your amplifier into the mono mode while playing a good stereo recording of a solo instrument; the “space” will disappear.

Unfortunately, even under the best of circumstances, the hall acoustics cannot extend much beyond the boundaries of the two speakers, although a good listening room and speakers may contribute, through their own properties, some little feeling of “openness” to reproduced sound. Suppose, however, that it were possible to extract from the two stereo channels a signal that represented the difference between them, and suppose that signal were fed to an additional speaker (or speakers). Such a difference signal would, in our clarinet example, be composed *entirely* of reflected or reverberant sound (some reflected sound would still be present in the regular stereo speaker, of course). The speakers reproducing the difference signal could then be placed somewhere behind or to the side of the listener, thereby achieving an extension of the stereo effect by reproducing part of the hall ambiance in a way not heard with conventional setups. This, incidentally, is the same goal that is aspired to by “classical” quadrasonic recordings in which the third and fourth channels handle mostly reverberant sound.

The sophisticated reader will immediately realize that modern recording techniques seldom conform exactly to our simple clarinet example. Also, because

Fig. 1. Two direct and two (out of many) reflected sound paths from a musical instrument are shown being picked up by two microphones equally distant from it as well as equally off its axis.



this example gives us only one “rear” signal to work with, we cannot have true four-channel stereo, in which all four speakers receive their own discrete signals. But for the many recordings in which the difference signal does embody a significant amount of reverberant sound, the setup I am about to describe provides a very worthwhile enhancement of the listening experience.

By now it should be clear that the difference signal on recordings is not a “gimmick,” but constitutes a legitimate source of sound appropriate for reproduction through a rear channel. (Note that the term “recordings” also includes stereo broadcasts and tapes.) What then, can one expect to hear as a result of exploiting the difference signal in ordinary recordings?

(1). With mono recordings, nothing should be heard because, in theory, there is no signal to reach the rear speakers. However, if there is a slight difference in gain or frequency response between your two stereo channels, you may hear that when you put your ear close to a rear speaker. Any record scratches and surface noise will also come through, as will vertical turntable rumble and the vertical stylus motion caused by record pinch effect when present. In other words, nothing worth listening to.

(2). With stereo recordings of classical music you will find a great deal of variation in the rear-channel information from record to record. But even with those that are the least enhanced, there should be noticeable added fullness and body. The improvement could probably not be well demonstrated in an audio salon, but with familiar recordings being played in your living room it will be easily noticeable. Most recordings seem to be augmented in spread, depth, and brilliance—perhaps the result of more and better-distributed high frequencies. The bass gives the impression of rolling and surging through the listening area, and irregularities in bass response caused by listening-room acoustics are often less apparent. There is also a sense of increased loudness (some of which could be subjective) that is particularly evident during such musical events as heavy brass crescendos. As one would expect, organ music is almost always improved (most spectacularly in the bass), but I was unprepared for the “presence” imparted to many piano recordings that had previously seemed remote and somewhat bass-shy.

Listed below are a number of records that I and others have found particularly good for demonstration purposes. I also urge the reader to explore his present record collection for suitable material. He will almost certainly discover some recordings that work well, and the effect will be that much more dramatic because of his familiarity with their sound in normal two-channel stereo.

HANDEL: *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* (Argo ZRG 563). This recording was made in King's College Chapel, Cambridge; the chapel's proportions are actually those of a small cathedral. Note especially the reverberation of the tenor voice in the opening recitative.

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 2* (Philips 802884/5 LY). The fullness imparted to the chorus in the last movement and the "slap-back" from the brass playing staccato in the first movement reveal a warm, spacious acoustic. The loudest of the brass passages occurs two-thirds of the way through side one at the closing of the development section.

VERDI: *Requiem* (Columbia M2-30060). London's

Royal Albert Hall has been used for recording purposes since its recent acoustic renovation. The vast interior dimensions are dramatically revealed during the *Dies Irae*.

(3). With stereo recordings of popular music (particularly rock), you may expect almost anything. Many pop recordings have never existed in a real acoustic environment as actual musical performances, but have been assembled in the studio from separate, essentially mono recordings of individual voices and instruments. These are then electronically "reverberated" and distributed between the two

HOW TO CONNECT THE REAR SPEAKERS

THE least complicated method of deriving the difference signal from the regular stereo information requires only the addition of a speaker or two. Two series-connected speakers are to be preferred, not only because of the reduced amplifier loading they impose, but because it is often possible, if they are placed carefully, to achieve an illusion of stereo spread behind as well as in front of the listener. (It might be well at this point to interject a point of information: "stereo" means "solid," or *three* dimensions in space, though we owe our stereo sense perceptions to two eyes and two ears.)

The additional speakers are connected to the terminals of your present amplifier or receiver along with the front speakers as shown in Figure (a). The front speakers retain their normal mode of wiring; the rear speakers are connected in series, but out of phase with each other (minus to minus), across the two "hot" (+) terminals of the amplifier. In this configuration, each rear speaker will be *in* phase with its corresponding front speaker. (For a single rear speaker, phasing need not be considered.)

There will be a difference in voltage between the two hot terminals whenever the signals differ between the two stereo channels. This difference will cause a current to flow through the voice coils of the rear speakers, and they will therefore reproduce the difference signal.

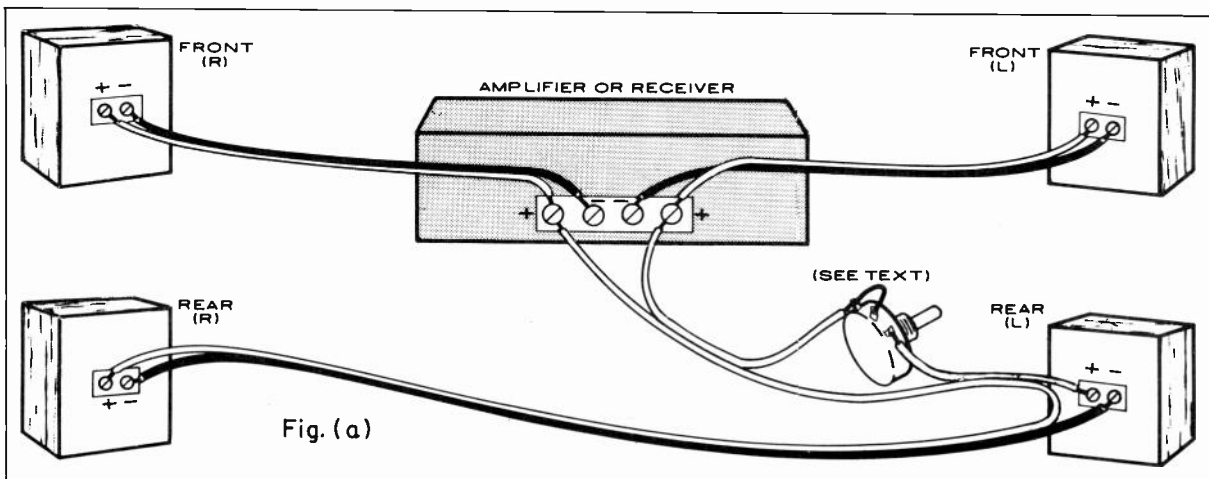
If your present front speakers have an 8- or 16-ohm impedance rating, you should be able to connect addi-

tional speakers directly (and safely) to your present amplifier or receiver to derive the difference signal. If you have 4-ohm speakers, the alternative procedure described below should be used unless you are sure your amplifier will tolerate speaker loads under 4 ohms.

A single rear speaker may serve to produce a good multi-channel effect if it can be placed far enough behind or above your usual listening position. (Dynaco suggests that a single speaker attached to the ceiling above the listener's head works well.) If you use two speakers, place them at the wall behind and to either side of you and far enough away that you are not conscious of them as direct-sound sources.

Next, play a mono recording with the amplifier's mode switch set for stereo, and set the stereo-balance control so that there is no sound coming through the rear speakers (this should occur at about the center of the control's rotation). Now play a stereo recording. With all four speakers operating simultaneously, proper balance between the front and rear exists when the rear speakers are playing at a level just below the point at which you are conscious of instruments and voices originating from them when you are in your usual listening location. If they are too loud, connect in series with them a 25- or 50-ohm, 4- or 5-watt wirewound potentiometer (available in any electronics store for under \$2.50) as a volume control.

An alternative method of setting up the rear speakers may prove more convenient in some cases. You will



channels by means of a mixing console. An instrument that seems to come directly from between the two front speakers could therefore be a mono signal present in equal amounts in both channels. If so, no hint of it will be heard from the rear speakers. On the other hand, an instrument present only in the left channel would be *pure* difference signal, and it would therefore come quite loudly through the left front speaker *and* the rear speakers. If you were seated close to the rear speakers and far enough away from the left front speaker, you might experience the

instrument as coming from behind you or from some point between the left front and left rear. Such "special effects" will vary from record to record.

According to David Hafler, the following pop recordings have out-of-phase information that will definitely place certain sounds in the rear: "Blood, Sweat, and Tears," Columbia CS-9720—voices in front, instruments all around in *Spinning Wheel*, side two; "Evening at the Boston Pops," RCA LSC 2827—applause in rear on side one; "Lee Michaels," A & M 4199—audience in rear on *Heighy Hi*.

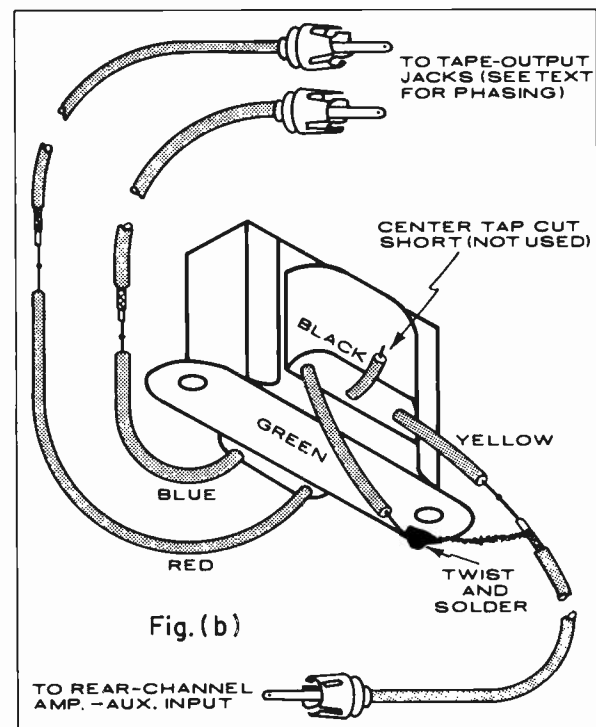
have to borrow a second integrated amplifier, receiver, or power amplifier with input-level controls to drive the rear speakers. (A mono amplifier will also serve, though it involves a small sacrifice in control flexibility.) The amplifier setup has the advantage that its volume, balance, and tone controls permit convenient adjustment of the rear speakers. Since there will usually be a good deal of direct sound present in the difference signal, careful adjustment of front-to-back levels and rear tonal balances may be necessary to prevent confusion of or interference with the front stereo image.

SOME of the problems encountered in working with the first method can be avoided by using two amplifiers. First is the question of speaker impedance mentioned earlier. Second, if you normally operate your amplifier with its balance control off center for some reason, the amplitude difference between the two channels may permit too much of the favored channel's signal to get into the rear speakers. Finally, if the front speakers are of the sort designed to accept an electronically equalized signal from the amplifier and your rear speakers are not, a second amplifier will have to be used to bypass the equalization.

In addition to another amplifier, the second method requires a small, inexpensive transformer. (I used Lafayette's Argonne No. AR-173, \$2.90, though any driver transformer with similar impedance ratings—primary 5,000 ohms, secondary 3,000 ohms, CT—that come reasonably close to having a 1-to-1 ratio should work as well.) Solder each of the primary leads to the inner "hot" lead of a shielded cable terminating in a standard phono plug as in Figure (b). The shielding braids are *not* connected at the transformer ends, and should be taped so they do not protrude from the insulation. Only one shielded lead is connected to the transformer's secondary leads—the inner-conductor lead to one and the shield to the other (it does not matter which is which). The transformer secondary's center tap, if there is one, is not used.

Plug the two cables from the primary leads into the tape-output jacks of your present amplifier or receiver; the single cable for the secondary goes to an auxiliary or tuner input of the second amplifier. (If you have a stereo amplifier, use a left- or right-channel input and switch the amplifier into mono, or connect the cable to the inputs for both channels by means of an ordinary "Y" connector).

The rear speakers are connected to the second amplifier in the normal fashion, except that they should be



wired out of phase with each other. Phasing between the front and rear speakers can be checked for correctness by ear. Low-frequency musical material is the most useful test signal for this purpose. Select a stereo recording that has a powerful, sustained bass section. Set the balance controls on the two amplifiers fully to the right (clockwise) so that only the right speakers are playing, and place the right rear speaker close to and facing the right front. Play the recording and listen for the bass level. Now interchange the two cables (right channel to left and left to right) leading from the tape-output jacks of the main amplifier to the transformer (remembering to shut everything off before doing so), and listen again. Retain the mode of connection that yields the strongest bass performance, and return the right rear speaker to its original position. If you want to be doubly sure of your connections, you can go through the same process for the left speakers, but this time interchange only the two leads going to the left-rear speaker terminals. The volume and balance controls on the two amplifiers can now be used to balance the front-to-back and left-to-right levels as necessary.

In working with the difference-signal system, I quickly came to the conclusion that it shared some of the audible faults as well as the virtues of the discrete-four-channel demonstrations I have heard. For example, proper front-to-rear balance depends rather critically on the listener's position with respect to the speakers; and any noise (especially hiss) through the rear speakers quickly becomes distracting, probably because it originates from a direction other than that toward which one's primary attentions are directed. Also, current psychoacoustical theory has it that much of our ability to localize a sound source is based on the first instant of that sound to reach our ears. When high-frequency onset transients—particularly those of cymbals, tambourines, and similar percussion instruments—are heard through rear as well as front speakers, the result is confusion about the location of the sound.

Early in my experiments with the Hafler system I determined that the rear speakers, though they should have relatively smooth mid-range response, need not be large or expensive. In fact, the high-frequency output of full-range speakers can at times cause the kind of sound-source dislocation described in the preceding paragraph. As for low frequencies, if the bass performance of the front speakers is adequate for a given room, the additional contribution of large woofers in the rear sometimes proves to be too much, especially in the mid-bass region. At present I am using as rear speakers a pair of 5-inch mid-range drivers mounted in small sealed boxes. These are located in the rear corners of the listening room, facing upward from the floor so that the reflective properties of the intersecting walls direct the sound up and out. Thus installed, they are far enough from the listening location to be unobtrusive as direct sound sources, and the corner placement makes the most of their limited bass output. Other audio enthusiasts have achieved good results with small speakers positioned at the rear corners of the ceiling. In any case, since each listening room will present a slightly different set of circumstances, experimentation with both speakers and placement is in order.

Small inexpensive speakers with acceptable mid-range quality are available from a number of sources at under \$15 each. Your local Lafayette, Olson, or Allied Radio Shack outlets probably have suitable house-brand systems that would be well worth trying. (I have heard a pair of \$9.95 Realistic Minimus 0.5 speaker systems used with good results.) In general, the inexpensive speakers referred to as "air-suspension" or "acoustic suspension" seem to work best. When one considers that the rear amplifier (if you use one) can be correspondingly inexpensive—both because small speakers will tend to be relatively

efficient and because they will not have to play as loud as the front speakers—it becomes clear that the cost of simulating a quadrasonic ambiance can be quite modest.

The object of the Hafler system is not, of course, to locate the listener in the midst of the performers (although a recording miked especially for the medium can do just that). For the most part, it leaves the orchestra on the stage up front, and the rear speakers merely contribute the "hall sound." Informed sources seem to feel that this is the treatment most classical music will get from discrete-four-channel stereo when it finally arrives. Pop recordings, on the other hand, will have voices and instruments coming at you from all directions. If you are a pop enthusiast, or if you like your music with kinetic effects, you will ultimately have to think in terms of rear speakers (and amplifiers) that are able to handle anything the front ones can. But for classical music, even speakers as modest as the ones I have described should serve most of the time. Already, however, there are some classical releases with antiphonal front-to-rear effects, and more are probably forthcoming—perhaps for lovers of Gabrieli.

WHILE experimenting with the difference-signal system I also sampled some of Vanguard's quadrasonic classical releases now available on tape. In general, the aural perspective of the rear signals on the tapes (as reproduced by a four-channel tape deck) was quite different from that of the front signals. This made comparison with the Hafler effect difficult, but when only impact and "subjective realism" were considered, the difference-signal approach did not always come off second best. And even with genuine four-channel material of the ambiance type, the rear speakers seemed to do as well as larger units in virtually all cases. This might not be the case, of course, in another, perhaps larger, room. For example, some organ buffs maintain that full-size woofers in the rear channels are necessary to do justice to the near subsonic pedal notes.

In this rather free-form discussion of the Hafler difference-signal quadrasonic technique I have neglected a number of other "systems" that are being developed and demonstrated even as this is written. This is not because I feel that they lack merit, but simply that they all require some form of specialized hardware that cannot easily be borrowed from a friend, relative, or cooperative audiophile. In contrast, the Hafler system comes to you on close to a "free home-trial" basis, with no obligation to buy. If your experiences with it are as positive as mine have been, then you too will probably make the rear speakers a part of your permanent setup.

STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT BEST OF THE MONTH



CLASSICAL

KARL LOEWE: DO TWO RELEASES EQUAL ONE REVIVAL?

Telefunken and DGG offer recital programs that will be welcomed by art-song connoisseurs

THE unjustly neglected German composer Johann Karl Gottfried Loewe (1796-1869) has never had it so good. His ballads (he wrote over 150 of them) have always enjoyed some circulation, particularly in the hands of such recitalists as Bender, Bohnen, Schlusnus, Hotter, and, more recently, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Hermann Prey. But just now we not only have two recorded collections appearing simultaneously, but—miracle of miracles—there is not a single duplication between them. Whether this windfall will lead to a Loewe “revival” is questionable; he is rather more likely to remain a respected minor master whose art is too “German” and too narrowly specialized to create mass audiences or to attract any kind of lasting attention in recording studios.

The first disc, on the Telefunken label, marks Theo Adam's record debut as a recitalist. His program consists of nine relatively familiar Loewe ballads and, as might be expected of this experienced interpreter of such Wagnerian roles as the Flying Dutchman and Hans Sachs, he brings a lively dramatic presence to every one of them. The Romantic mood and content are convincingly captured, and Adam's dark bass-baritone proves a distinct asset in several songs. At times, though, his delivery is a bit heavy: the charming *Heinrich der Vogler* calls for a lighter touch and a brighter tempo, *Der Nöck* (which has been so engagingly realized by both

Heinrich Schlusnus and Hermann Prey) for more delicacy. On the other hand, Adam has the dramatic skills to make the rather lengthy *Goldschmieds Töchterlein* interesting, and he makes a remarkable thing of *Erlkönig*, which is almost as good a song as Schubert's. Adam's vocal endowments are sturdy rather than spellbinding, and it all adds up to a praiseworthy and enjoyable disc graced with touches of excellence.

Excellence surfaces more frequently in Deutsche Grammophon's Loewe collection—hardly a surprising matter wherever Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau is concerned. The collection itself is unconventional, for it mixes narrative ballads with lyric songs, demonstrating that the art of Loewe was more diversified than

his heretofore limited discography would have led us to believe. Only two of the selections (*Der getreue Eckhart* and *Die wandelnde Glocke*) are recalled from previous recordings; the others are new to me. All the songs in this album are to texts by Goethe, several of them in the poet's humorous vein, which ranges from the playful to the macabre; Loewe never seemed to lack the right musical response to Goethe's various moods.

Fischer-Dieskau and Demus take *Der getreue Eckhart* at a breathtaking pace and bring it off with dazzling virtuosity. *Canzonetta* and *Wenn der Blüten* are light, florid, Italianate songs; *Frühzeitiger Frühling* is almost Schubertian.



KARL LOEWE
Minor master of the ballad

The clever *Ich denke dein* is virtually irresistible; that such an ingratiating song could so long remain obscure is to me a mystery. *Der Zauberlehrling* is, of course, the Sorcerer's Apprentice, and it tells the story immortalized by Paul Dukas—and Walt Disney.

Fischer-Dieskau lavishes his familiar interpretive mastery on these songs, all rewardingly written for both voice and piano. *Der Totentanz* and *Turmwächter Lynceus* give him passing problems with the *tessitura*, but, a few mannerisms aside, he handles all vocal challenges with distinction. In the lyrical songs such as *Canzonetta* and *Wandrer's Nachtlied* (also known in the Schubert setting) he is probably unsurpassable.

Both pianists are admirable, but Jörg Demus gets the benefit of brighter and more complimentary reproduction from DGG. George Jellinek

LOEWE: *Ballads. Der Wirtin Töchterlein; Süßes Begräbnis; Prinz Eugen; Der Nöck; Heinrich der Vogler; Erlkönig; Goldschmieds Töchterlein; Tom der Reimer; Die Uhr.* Theo Adam (bass); Rudolf Dunckel (piano). TELEFUNKEN SLT 43108-B \$5.95.

LOEWE: *Songs and Ballads Based on Goethe Texts. Der Totentanz; Wandrer's Nachtlied; Im Vorübergehen; Canzonetta; Frühzeitiger Frühling; Ich denke dein; Freibeuter; Der Zauberlehrling; Der getreue Eckhart; Gutmann und Gutweib; Turmwächter Lynceus; Lynceus der Türmer; Wenn der Blüten Frühlingsregen; Die wandelnde Glocke; Gottes ist der Orient.* Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Jörg Demus (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530052 \$5.98.

TWO JANÁČEK WORKS TRIUMPHANTLY REALIZED

Conductor Rafael Kubelik demonstrates insight and mastery in his countryman's difficult music

WITH his new recording for Deutsche Grammophon of Leoš Janáček's large-scale orchestral works *Taras Bulba* and *Sinfonietta*, conductor Rafael Kubelik has again risen to the extraordinary heights he scaled with his 1964 recording of the same composer's Glagolitic Mass. The orchestral works are both products of the Moravian composer's later years, when the combination of recognition in his own country and beyond and a late-realized love relationship sparked an extraordinary production: six operas, the Mass, the two orchestral works, and a half-dozen major chamber works.

The brilliant five-movement *Sinfonietta* with its multi-trumpet (twelve) finale has had more than half a dozen recorded performances since Kubelik's first

Deutsche Grammophon



RAFAEL KUBELIK: scales extraordinary heights

with the Czech Philharmonic just after World War II. A subsequent Kubelik recording done in 1956 with the Vienna Philharmonic for English Decca was never officially issued by London in the U.S. (a few copies were to be found, however). Now, in this new effort, Kubelik has surpassed not only all his own previous readings, but those of his very strong competitors as well: Claudio Abbado on London, George Szell on Columbia, and his fellow Czech Karel Ančerl on Parliament or Turnabout. The Kubelik reading here is taut and blazing in the same manner as his reading of the Glagolitic Mass; and the sound quality is so magnificently sizzling that at times I almost expected my speakers to go up in smoke.

Surprisingly, however, the *Sinfonietta* performance is as nothing compared to that of the far more difficult and complex three-movement *Taras Bulba*, a work based on Gogol's account of the fifteenth-century Cossack leader and his running battles with his Polish and other adversaries. Kubelik's 1959 performance on Capitol-EMI, not to mention the four or five other subsequent recorded versions, pale into insignificance beside the astounding evocation realized here. Janáček's score is divided into three tragic episodes—the Death of Andriy, the Death of Ostap, and the Prophecy and Death of Taras Bulba—and the musical language in which he depicts these is one of extraordinary thematic economy, rhythmic complexity, and compressed expressionism that at times

suggest the montage technique of our Charles Ives.

The orchestral coloration is wholly individual, with highly unusual and effective use of percussion, organ, and bells. As with the later Janáček operas, only a conductor of the greatest skill, one with an insight into Janáček's special mode of musical speech, plus a highly cooperative virtuoso orchestra, can bring a piece like *Taras Bulba* to such vivid and pulsating life. Certainly none of the other recordings, not even those by Vaclav Talich and Karel Ančerl, have succeeded, though they might have with the kind of recording quality Deutsche Grammophon has given Kubelik.

In sum, *Taras Bulba* displays conductor and orchestra with a difficult and complex work completely in hand and recorded sound of a quality that will demand the best of even the very finest playback equipment. It is splendid proof, if proof were needed, of Rafael Kubelik's standing as a major performing artist.

David Hall

JANÁČEK: *Taras Bulba—Rhapsody (1915-1918); Sinfonietta (1926)*. Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Rafael Kubelik cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530075 \$5.98.

ENTERTAINMENT

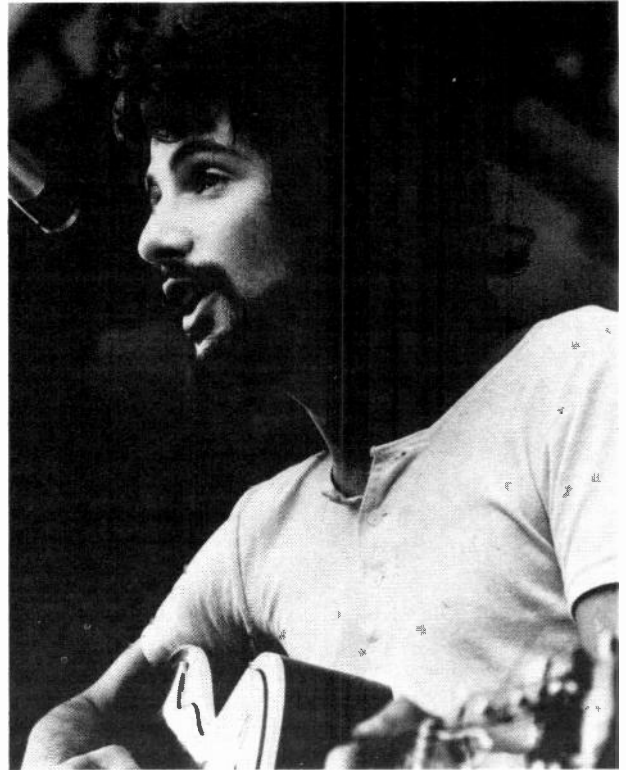
CAT STEVENS: GOOD, VERY GOOD, EXCELLENT

Folk and rock in a vocal style located somewhere between Jethro Tull and Neil Young

CAT STEVENS' new album "Tea for the Tillerman" may not make him the rage of two or more continents, but that's mostly because even poetic justice is so elusive these days. My reference list of slightly battered hip phrases defines "monster" as "fantastic, tremendous, etc." This album is a monster. For it, Cat Stevens wrote three kinds of songs—good, very good, and excellent. In it he plays guitar with economy and drive and sings—to put it quite simply—better than any male solo vocalist now active in pop music. If that isn't enough, he also did the drawing for the cover of the jacket and did it well enough to convince me he could make a good living as a commercial artist.

Truly good vocalists—those who can hit the right note, have genuinely pleasant-sounding voices, and can convey delicate emotional nuances—are so rare I cannot think of anyone to compare Cat Stevens to. The best I can come up with is that he sounds a bit like a one-man Jethro Tull while sounding like a deeper-voiced Neil Young—and, yes, I'm aware of

A & M Records



CAT STEVENS: avoids the easy clichés

the great distance between those guideposts.

Two of the songs are truly outstanding: arty little *Sad Lisa* and the calypso-styled *Longer Boats*. The latter has the stuff to become a classic that will be sung forty years hence—if there *is* a forty years hence. The song *Father and Son*, in which Stevens sings the father's part in his rich, sonorous baritone, and then sings the son's part in a high-tension tenor he affects with no apparent strain, also deserves special mention. As a lyricist dealing with the so-called generation gap, Stevens avoids the simplistic viewpoints and verbal clichés we hear every day. He does not nail the father's hide to the wall for urging the son to take it slow ("you will still be here tomorrow, but your dreams may not"), nor does he portray the son as an impudent neurotic. The writer, the singer, cares about both of them.

The album doesn't fit any category, although it is both folky and rock-like. It *does* require attention, but if your taste is anything like mine, you can give that readily, knowing that not a second of your time will be wasted.

Noel Coppage

CAT STEVENS: *Tea for the Tillerman*. Cat Stevens (vocals, guitar, piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Where Do the Children Play; Hard Headed Woman; Wild World; Sad Lisa; Miles from Nowhere; But I Might Die Tonight; Longer Boats; Into White; On the Road to Find Out; Father and Son; Tea for the Tillerman*. A & M SP 4280 \$4.98.



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CLASSICAL

Reviewed by DAVID HALL • BERNARD JACOBSON • GEORGE JELLINEK • IGOR KIPNIS
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RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BACH, J. S.: *Cantata No. 21, "Ich hatte viel Bekummernis."* Edith Mathis (soprano); Ernst Haefliger (tenor); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Munich Bach Choir and Orchestra, Karl Richter cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIVE 2533049 \$5.98.

BACH, J. S.: *Cantata No. 36, "Schwingt freudig euch empor"; Cantata No. 64, "Sehet, welch eine Liebe."* Maria Friesenhausen (soprano); Andrea von Ramm (alto, in No. 36); Eva Bornemann (alto, in No. 64); Johannes Feyerabend (tenor, in No. 36); Hartmut Ochs (bass); Instrumental Ensemble and Westphalian Choir, Wilhelm Ehmann cond. VANGUARD EVERYMAN SRV 251 SD \$2.98.

BACH, J. S.: *Cantata No. 56, "Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen"; Cantata No. 82, "Ich habe genug."* Gérard Souzay (baritone); Berlin Capella (choir, in No. 56); German Bach Soloists, Helmut Winschermann cond. PHILIPS 839762 \$5.98.

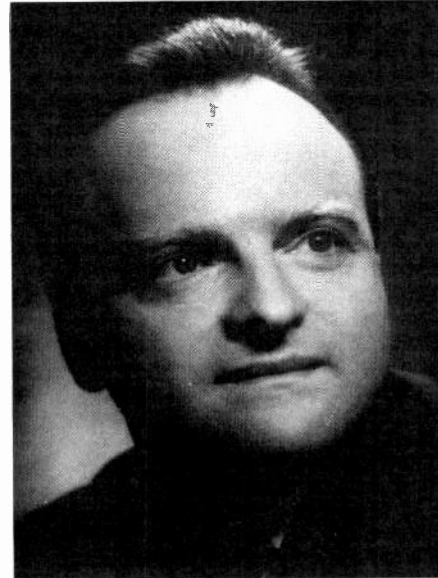
Performance: All first-rate
Recording: DGG and Philips excellent,
Everyman good

There are three out-and-out masterpieces here: the two bass cantatas, Nos. 56 and 82, and the relatively early No. 21, all of which are peaks of Bach's accomplishment in sacred music. They have also been recorded many times previously. In the case of No. 21, Richter's performance is a clear standout; the singing is superb (the two tenor arias alone would be worth the price), and the orchestral playing and choral work are among Richter's best efforts.

With the two bass cantatas, the alternate choices are more formidable. Yet, if Souzay's voice is a little dry and spread at this stage of his career, the singer's wonderfully expressive and sensitive interpretation is enough to place this disc among the very best of these two cantatas. The accompaniment, too, is first-class. If you don't already own these works, give this particular performance your most careful consideration—it is simply splendid.

The lesser-known Cantatas 36 and 64 deal with the Christmas season, and these are their

only available recordings. Perhaps No. 64, with its ambitious opening chorus, is the more impressive of the two, but both cantatas are well worth knowing. The performances here have superb religious sentiment (as one always expects from their conductor, Wilhelm Ehmann); none of the vocal soloists are of real star quality, but they sing with expression and sympathy. The orchestral playing is not the last word in precision (this is definitely not the blockbuster virtuoso approach to Bach), but



KARL RICHTER
A standout Bach cantata performance

the overall feeling is quite lovely. The recording, originally made by Cantate in 1962, is satisfactory, if not outstanding by today's standards. There were, however, a few pressing faults on my copy. The DGG and Philips discs are both of the highest physical quality, and all three have texts and translations. I.K.

BEETHOVEN: *various works by various artists* (see "Going on Record," page 88)

BEETHOVEN: *Concerto for Piano, Violin, Cello, and Orchestra, in C Major, Op. 56.* Sviatoslav Richter (piano); David Oistrakh (violin); Mstislav Rostropovich (cello); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL S 36727 \$5.98.

Performance: Lyrical refinement plus
Recording: Good

Among Beethoven's concerted works with orchestra, the Triple Concerto is atypical, not only because of its challenging solo combina-

tion but also because of its curious "formality" (as the annotator here, Deryck Cooke, points out) compared to the overt drama and uninhibited lyricism characteristic of the composer's middle-period masterpieces. Only the late *Consecration of the House* Overture embodies in comparable fashion the type of "formality" of which Mr. Cooke speaks.

Of course, it's a wonder that Beethoven was able to bring off the Triple Concerto at all, and it takes either a "dream line-up"—as represented in this recording—or musicians who have played chamber music under ideal conditions over a long period of time to put across the music in recorded form—not to mention a first-rate engineering staff. The version by the redoubtable Marlboro Festival combination of Rudolf Serkin, Jaime Laredo, and Leslie Parnas with Alexander Schneider conducting on Columbia MS 6564 makes interesting comparative listening.

Karajan's tendency toward ultra-refinement of phrasing and dynamics stands him in good stead here, if only to minimize some of the "square" and lumpy aspects of the end movements. It is in the brief but very lovely slow movement that the eminent soloists, with Rostropovich in the lead, really shine for me. The end movements are beautifully played, but I prefer the slightly more muscular and rhythmically pointed way Schneider handles them.

There are decided differences in recording balances between the two: Karajan and his soloists are very much of a piece; the Marlboro soloists are engineered in an almost "concerto grosso" style, yet without any loss of orchestral presence, and the room ambiance is decidedly more intimate than the largish hall sound of the Berlin recording. D.H.

BEETHOVEN: *Missa Solemnis, in D Major, Op. 123.* Martina Arroyo (soprano); Maureen Forrester (contralto); Richard Lewis (tenor); Cesare Siepi (bass-baritone); Singing City Choirs; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. COLUMBIA M2 30083 two discs \$11.98.

Performance: Good
Recording: Good

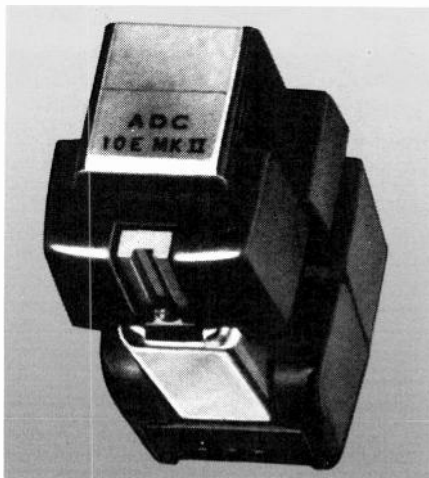
With the choice already before the prospective buyer of the monumentality of Otto Klemperer (Angel), the remarkable nuancing of Herbert von Karajan (DGG), and the raw emotionality of Leonard Bernstein (Columbia), one wonders what yet another recorded performance of Beethoven's heaven-storming *Missa Solemnis* has to add to anyone's totality of experience of this unique masterpiece. My first impressions of Eugene Ormandy's new version, from the meditative opening of the *Kyrie* through the jubilant conclusion of the

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel tape
- Ⓢ = four-track cartridge
- Ⓣ = eight-track cartridge
- ⓐ = cassette

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Gloria, were very good indeed. The well-matched team of soloists acquits itself splendidly; Elaine Brown's Singing City Choirs are a marvel of discipline, precision, clarity, and tonal body; and the Philadelphia Orchestra is in top form. Above all, the recording itself exposes the total texture of Beethoven's polyphony to better advantage than any other I have heard. The combination of perfect microphoning and Ormandy's insistence on clarity of line and rhythm make this recording almost ideal for purposes of study and analysis.

But when it comes to probing the extremes of exaltation and tragedy to be encountered in the *Credo* and *Agnus Dei*, I find myself turning elsewhere. In the celebrated martial sections of the *Agnus Dei*, there is, in Ormandy's performance, neither the sense of supplication conveyed by Karajan nor the sheer terror evoked by Bernstein. And Bernstein's handling of the unaccompanied *Et resurrexit* outburst by the chorus gives one the sense of actually being present at the event. Overall, in fact, Bernstein sets the short hair rising on the back of my neck, while Ormandy leaves me admiring but essentially unmoved. This is not to say that Ormandy's is a cool reading. Rather, one might make an analogy of the two to the mountain climber who chooses the safe trail to the summit as against one who dares all with the most dangerous and challenging route.

D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BERLIOZ: *Harold in Italy*. Joseph de Pasquale (viola); Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. COLUMBIA M 30116 \$5.98.

Performance: Excellent
 Recording: Excellent

Justly prizing what it still retains of its once exclusive property, the Philadelphia Orchestra, Columbia Records is strutting a "Fabulous Philadelphia Sound Series," for which this recording is a handsome entry. It is a cultivated achievement, obviously the result of meticulous, thoughtful approaches both to the music and to the character of recorded sound.

Harold in Italy is, of course, a perfect vehicle for the expansive talents of Eugene Ormandy and Joseph de Pasquale. Both musicians are warm-spirited and have an innate sympathy for the luscious (not lush) music Berlioz produced in his Byronic travelogue. As performers, they give it tender treatment indeed, and the engineers do not lag behind. Among many other felicities, they manage to project the solo viola into the foreground at every possible moment, without making it seem unnatural or strident.

I have not been very fond of the extremely bright, dry, highlighted sound of many recent Columbia recordings. But on this one, it seems even to my recalcitrant ears that the company's conception of stereo sonics is made persuasive. True, you would hardly recognize the Philadelphia Orchestra as the same ensemble that recorded the Shostakovich Thirteenth Symphony for RCA. Despite the fact that *Harold in Italy* was also taped in Philadelphia's Town Hall, Columbia's sonic conception produces a much cooler result than RCA, with a shallow spatial illusion and, to compensate, an extraordinary degree of delicately adjusted "mixing" balances. Some listeners will probably prefer Columbia's approach to the elegant artifice of stereo recording, and some will hear RCA's with more pleasure. Objectively, however, speaking for this particular recording, I don't really think there's a choice. It is as splendid as

one could desire. The Philadelphia Orchestra and the Town Hall acoustics obviously provide equal inspiration to both RCA and Columbia teams of producers and engineers. L.T.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 4, in E-flat Major ("Romantic")*. Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON CS 6695 \$5.98.

Performance: Superb
 Recording: Superb

Zubin Mehta has come along way since his first Bruckner recording back in 1965, when he led the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra through the slowest and fussiest slow movement of the Ninth Symphony on record. Here, in this latest recording of the most accessible and charming of the Bruckner symphonies, the "Romantic," he is no less loving of and attentive to detail; but this tendency is subordinated to an absolute control over the architecture of the work and to an unflagging yet unobtrusive rhythmic pulse that keeps the music moving. The performance is enhanced by some of the most gorgeous recorded sound ever accorded any work by the great Austrian symphonist. I would criticize (only mildly) a certain tendency toward overbalancing in favor of low strings and brass in the early parts of the opening movement, but this is of small moment compared to the sense of the whole that Mehta manages to conjure from this often episodic score. I have in mind the ruminative interludes of the cortège-like slow movement and the trio sections of the famous "hunting" scherzo, in which Mehta's careful phrasing, dynamic nuance, and tonal coloration makes these bits of genuine interest relative to the more spectacular pages that surround them, rather than dull moments to be gotten through as best one can.

I have always had special affection for Bruno Walter's somewhat more expansive treatment of the Bruckner "Romantic," despite a somewhat shallow recorded sound, but the sheer excitement and the magnificent recorded sound of this disc have turned my head. D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BYRD/TALLIS: *Cantiones Sacrae 1575 (complete)*. Cantores in Ecclesia, Michael Howard cond. L'OISEAU-LYRE SOL 311/2/3 three discs \$17.85.

Performance: Superior
 Recording: Excellent

In 1575, Queen Elizabeth granted an extraordinary favor to the two joint organists of her Chapel Royal, Thomas Tallis and William Byrd: a twenty-one-year monopoly "to imprint any and so many as they will of set songs or songs in partes, either in English, Latin, Frenche, Italian or other tongue that may serve for musicke either in Churche or chamber, or otherwise be plaid or soonge." The immediate result of this decree was the publication (their

CORRECTION

In "Best of the Month" for February, the review of the new Nonesuch recording of Elliott Carter's String Quartets was erroneously attributed to Lester Trimble. The author of the review was actually Eric Salzman, to whom the editors offer their apologies.

only joint one) of thirty-four motets, hymns, and responsories under the title of *Cantiones Sacrae*, each composer providing seventeen works in honor of the seventeen years Elizabeth had reigned up to that time.

Hearing this first complete recording, one is struck by both the similarities and the differences between the two composers. Tallis, who was about seventy at the time of publication, probably wrote his share many years earlier. He is inclined to be austere in the more penitential pieces, but there are moments, as in the five-voice *Virtus honor et potestas*, when he reaches ecstatic heights. He is as fond as his pupil Byrd of wonderful cross-relation effects (a C natural in one voice, for instance, clashing with a C-sharp in another voice): try his *Candidi facti sunt* at the end of the second record for a good sample. The younger Byrd tends to be less cerebral, and he is more flamboyant in most of his contributions: listen to the joyful spirit of his *Laudate Pueri Dominum*. This is a grand and important collection, and the performances by a British choral group under the direction of Michael Howard, who recorded a good bit of Byrd on Argo quite a number of years ago with the Renaissance Singers, is splendid. The music is beautifully set forth, the voices are clear and accurate, and the recording, with only a few minor exceptions, is unconstricted. Partial English texts are provided.

I.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

COPLAND: *Billy the Kid*; *Appalachian Spring*. Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA LSC 3184 \$5.98.

Performance: Stunning
Recording: Splendid

This is a beautiful recording. Ormandy competes with Ormandy, since the Philadelphia Orchestra's Columbia recording of *Billy the Kid* and *Appalachian Spring* is still in the Schwann catalog. But, without arguing how many duplications any person may want in his home library, I can advise that this is real, pithy, big-scale Copland, meant for the concert hall and not for the ballet stage. Loose passages (deliberately so, for dancing) are tightened up, and big passages are right there with all the sound. The orchestral precision is wonderful, and so is the sense of generous self-assurance. Familiarity and the passage of years sometimes really *do* help. This is a case in point.

L.T.

DODGE: "Earth's Magnetic Field" (*Realizations in Computed Electronic Sound*). Bruce R. Boller, Carl Frederick, Stephen G. Ungar, Scientific Associates. NONESUCH H 71250 \$2.98.

Performance: Computed
Recording: Presumably perfect

In a real sense, this recording lies outside the realm of anything susceptible to music criticism—indeed, far out in solar space. Called "Realizations in Computed Electronic Sound," it is the product of an obviously complex process in which a computer was made to produce a succession of sounds said to bear some relationship to electro-magnetic events that took place between the sun and the earth in the year 1961. I won't pretend to understand the process whereby the sounds were created. However, using the primitive receptor instruments commonly referred to as ears, I'll try to describe the sounds. First off, they are pretty, mostly simple and diatonic, clustering occa-

APRIL 1971

sionally into reverberant bursts which remind one more than a little of hearing random fragments of Messiaen's organ music being practiced in a cathedral. Of "musical" continuity, there is not a great deal, except for a couple of little diatonic phrases which constantly recur. One's attention focuses, therefore, on a succession of textures. Not surprisingly, these cannot sustain full interest over the record's half-hour span. But it is exceedingly pleasant to learn that things were so gracious and unwarlike between the sun and the earth in 1961.

L.T.

ERKEL: *Bank Ban*. Jozsef Simándy (tenor), Bánk Bán; Karola Ágay (soprano), Melinda; Erzsébet Komlóssy (mezzo-soprano), The Queen; András Faragó (baritone), Petúr; József Réti (tenor), Otto; György Melis (baritone), Tiborc; others. Chorus of the Hungari-

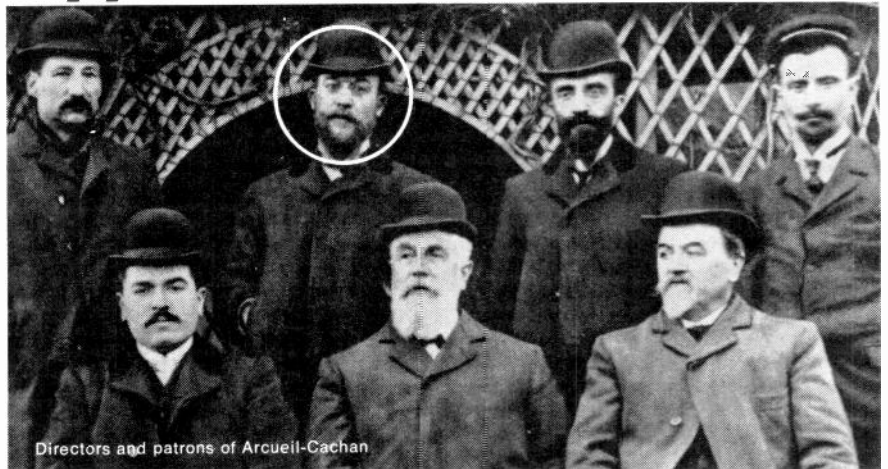
an State Opera; Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra, János Ferencsik cond. HUNGAROTON LPX 11376/7/8 three discs \$17.94.

Performance: Very good
Recording: Very good

This is the second complete recording of *Bánk Bán*, the Hungarian national opera. Its predecessor, a not too satisfying mono version, was reviewed here in September 1961. Since the work is so little known, some background information may be useful to the reader.

The opera deals with an episode taken from Hungary's turbulent history. In this particular instance (thirteenth century), the King is away leading his armies on a military mission. Courtiers grouped about the foreign-born Queen oppress and exploit the people, and soon the country is in the throes of an uprising. Bánk

It took the Class of '72 to appreciate this rebel of 1888.



He wrote his scores in red ink without bar lines. Then he named them "Chapters Turned Every Which Way." "Mysterious Kiss in the Eye." "Truly Limp Preludes for a Dog." "Pieces in the Shape of a Pear." No wonder Paris called Erik Satie odd!

Yet beyond his eccentricity, his music lives in crystalline beauty. Its biting spirit and economy marked the first real break with Romanticism. Nor was his influence limited to music. He became a key figure in the *avant garde* of Cocteau, Picasso, Diaghilev, Debussy, Milhaud, and Ravel—a group that reshaped all the arts.

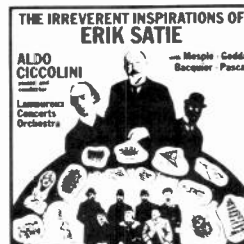
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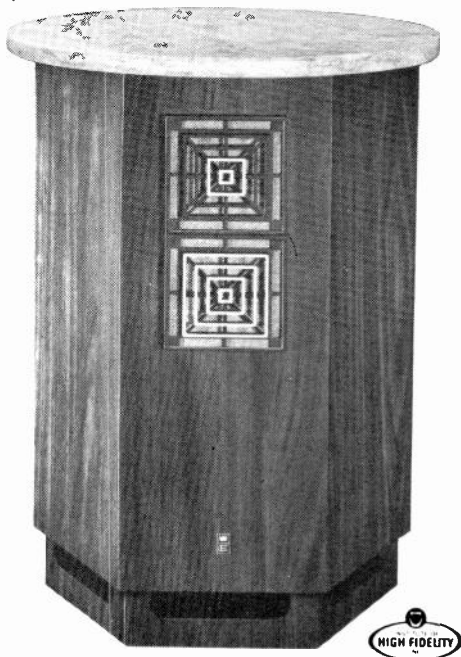
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Bán (Lord Bánk) is loyal to the Crown but, when his wife is seduced by the Queen's brother, he is overcome by rage and murders the Queen. Convinced of the justice of his cause, he is ready to draw his sword against the returning King when news about the violent death of his wife and infant son destroy him.

Erkel wrote his opera around 1852, but its explosive subject matter could not be brought to the stage in Habsburg-dominated Hungary until 1861. It has remained in the repertoire ever since, lately in a version in which the pedestrian language of the original libretto has been updated. Though it is an intensely national work, performances in Germany, Russia, and Belgium in the last two decades testify to its appeal elsewhere.

In forging a national operatic style, Ferenc Erkel (1810-1893) had to rely heavily on Italian models, as did his contemporaries Glinka and Moniuszko. The influence of early Verdi is evident, and yet the opera's most successful pages are those where the composer's originality is manifest through the emerging style of the Hungarian *Verbunkos*. The opera has its weaknesses: there is a certain predictability of musical devices, and Erkel's music does not always faithfully mirror the tragic emotions of the story—a result of the composer's tendency toward excessive sentimentality. He was an extraordinary melodist, however, and the score yields many pages of appealing arias and concerted numbers, as well as strong choral passages enlivened by deft touches of orchestration. The latter include a scene in which the soprano aria unfolds against the accompaniment of viola d'amore, English horn, and the cimbalom.

This recording was made following the opera's 1969 revival, and it offers the current front line of Hungarian singers. The weakest link, unfortunately, is tenor József Simándy in the all-important title role, but even he occasionally triumphs over his fading vocal resources and reaches heights of impressive intensity. In the role of his unhappy wife Melinda, on the other hand, Karola Ágay (who sang Lucia at the Met two seasons ago) excels. This is a role that demands coloratura agility of the most virtuosic kind, and she meets the challenge superbly. All the other principals are satisfactory or better, and Sándor Nagy, in his brief role as the King, is outstanding. Orchestra and chorus perform extremely well; the entire recording benefits from a fresh restudy and shipshape discipline under the veteran János Ferencsik. I have known and admired this opera all my life. Now that it is available in this fine performance, very attractively presented with a multi-lingual libretto, perhaps its appeal will reach out into broader territory. G.J.

HANDEL: *Alceste: Grand Entrée (Act I)*. *Semele: Where'er you walk*. *Solomon: Sinfonia (Act III)—Arrival of the Queen of Sheba*. *Samson: Menuetto (from Overture)*. *Forest Music*. *Hercules: March*. *Concertos, in F Major and B-flat Major, for Two Wind Choirs, Strings, and Continuo*. *The Triumph of Time and Truth: Sonata*. E. Power Biggs (organ of the Parish Church of Great Packington, England); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Groves cond. COLUMBIA M 30058 \$5.98.

Performance: Disappointing
Recording: Fair

This collection of partly familiar (*Where'er you walk*, the double wind concertos) and partly unfamiliar (the *Forest Music*, the *Triumph*

of *Time and Truth* Sonata) repertoire is entitled "The Magnificent Mr. Handel, Vol. 1." Magnificent, undeniably—but is he also always so consistently loud, so unvaryingly graceless, so opaque and heavy-footed? I think not, but that indeed is the impression given by these performances. Those expecting the collection to be another one of E. Power Biggs' usually stimulating explorations of organ repertoire are due for disappointment; his role here is mainly continuo, and even that gets buried all too often below the playing of the weighty orchestra (weighty perhaps not in size but certainly in texture). The editions used are not at fault; there are even some very stylish touches added by Daniel Pinkham, who orchestrated the *Forest Music* (it was originally a minor harpsichord piece with which Handel thanked an Irish hostess for her hospitality to him around the time he first performed *Messiah*; my own edition of it has just been published in a small harpsichord anthology by Oxford University Press). Pinkham also added some nice *da capo* embellishments for the solo oboe that plays the vocal line in the *Semele* aria. What is mainly wrong here is the conducting, which is insensitive to the Handel style. Compare this sound with that of the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields or Raymond Leppard's orchestra. The recording is too high-level, and not all of it is clean. I.K.

HANDEL: *Messiah*. Joan Sutherland (soprano); Huguette Tourangeau (mezzo-soprano); Werner Krenn (tenor); Tom Krause (bass); Dermot Coleman (boy soprano); Valda Aveling and Brian Rungett (harpsichords and organ); Ambrosian Singers and English Chamber Orchestra, Richard Bonyng cond. LONDON OSA 1396 three discs \$17.94.

Performance: Absurd
Recording: Adequate

If the notion of Handel's *Messiah* as the laughriot of the year grabs you, this set should give ample satisfaction. The performance Richard Bonyng directs has a strong claim to being the funniest ever recorded of this deeply spiritual work. In its quite different way, it is just as ludicrous as the caricatures that used to be turned out by such masters of Victorian Baroque as Sir Thomas Beecham and Sir Malcolm Sargent.

Here, instead of the monumental gone mad, we have the trivial gone mad. Copious embellishment and appropriate chamber-sized forces replace the puritanically bare line and the massive Crystal-Palace performing apparatus of the earlier English worthies. But the trappings of authenticity are applied without any true appreciation of their nature and purpose.

I thought I yielded to no one in my enthusiasm for ornamentation in Baroque performance, but I find I yield to Bonyng by a wide margin. He embellishes to such a degree that you can rarely discern the original line of the music under all the incrustations. The ornaments themselves, moreover, range from the perfectly tasteful to the absolutely impossible, often within a single phrase, partly because the conductor has aimed at a variety of articulation in parallel circumstances that is totally foreign to the Baroque mind. And the lack of spontaneity is underlined by the fact that the ornaments are almost as abundant in orchestral and choral lines—where they have no historical justification—as in solo passages.

The general character of the interpretation is robbed of any remaining validity both by Bonyng (Continued on page 76)



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nyng's predilection for ridiculously fast tempos and, despite the size of his forces, by the unsuitably soft-edged, romantic tone he draws from them. The latter fault is accentuated by the over-resonant acoustic of the recording, from which even the excellent choral contribution of John McCarthy's Ambrosian Singers emerges as through a dim pious haze.

Then there is the solo singing, which sounds as if it is going on in four different languages. You will realize the extent of the problem when I say that the best diction comes from Joan Sutherland, who floats an appealing phrase from time to time within the context of her droopily romantic conception of the music. Her purely musical articulation, however, is so slack that it is often hard to tell whether she is singing a true Baroque slide or a mere lazy scoop. (The former has three distinct notes; the latter is exactly what its name suggests.) The other three principals all have various linguistic problems with the English text. The Canadian mezzo Huguette Tourangeau has only one vowel, a sort of "aw" sound, and hardly any consonants. Furthermore, her persistent scooping and her constant alternation between two seemingly unrelated voices (a hooty quasi-English tone and a throaty Azucena roar) are grotesquely out of place in this music.

The tenor and bass are much better artists, but they too have their troubles with diction. Tom Krause seems content, whenever he comes to "sh" and "ch" sounds, to hint vaguely at them instead of actually pronouncing them, so that what we hear as threats to "hake the heavens and the earth" and unimpressive asseverations of the belief that "we hall be hanged." And it should have been a relatively simple matter for conductor or producer to in-

form both him and Werner Krenn that "saith" is pronounced "seth," not "sayth," and Krenn in particular that the English verb "is" should be rendered "izz," not "iss."

For some reason that escapes me, Bonyng allot about a line and a half out of the soprano recitative that precedes "Glory to God" to a boy soprano, Dermot Coleman. I do not know what the boy is doing there, but at least he knows the language, and his tiny contribution is probably the best piece of solo singing in the entire set.

For what, after all this, the fact is worth, Bonyng's is the standard modern "complete version" except in three small particulars: he takes the short, eleven-measure version of the *Pifa* (or *Pastoral Symphony*), which is reasonable since Handel himself seems to have reverted to it in later life; he gives the opening vocal line of the duet "He shall feed His flock" three times instead of twice, which may be a tape-editing error; and he makes a hair-raising cut of sixty-three measures in the *da capo* (or rather, in this version, *dal segno*) of "The trumpet shall sound."

In making comparisons, I went back to Colin Davis' Philips recording with some trepidation after two years away from it, fearing my former enthusiasm would have evaporated. On the contrary, Davis' performance now seems even better than I remembered it, and it remains easily my first choice. Charles Mackerras for Angel is the closest rival, and the recent Vanguard recording by Johannes Somary (which, as Igor Kipnis said in his December review, has some fine solo and ensemble work, but which suffers from a milder case of Bonyng's unscholarly penchant for choral and orchestral embellishment) goes easily, for my

taste, into third place. The Bonyng performance, on the other hand, belongs at the bottom of any conceivable pile. *B.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HANDEL: *Tamerlano*. Gwendolyn Killebrew (mezzo-soprano), Tamerlano; Alexander Young (tenor), Bajazete; Carole Bogard (soprano), Asteria; Sophia Steffan (mezzo-soprano), Andronico; Joanna Simon (mezzo-soprano), Irene; Marius Rintzler (bass), Leone; Albert Fuller (harpisichord); Lars Holm Johansen (cello); Chamber Orchestra of Copenhagen, John Moriarty cond. CAMBRIDGE CRS B2902 four discs \$23.92.

Performance: Enthralling

Recording: Very good

Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*, in the London Old Vic production with Donald Wolfit, is one of the most vivid theatrical memories of my youth. Handel's *Tamerlano* is literally a different story, concentrating on the captive emperor Bajazete and his proud devotion to his daughter Asteria in place of Marlowe's more martial preoccupations; and it is, besides, a representative of that maligned genre *opera seria*, which is popularly supposed to submerge the loftiest situations in an ocean of interminable recitative and formalistic aria.

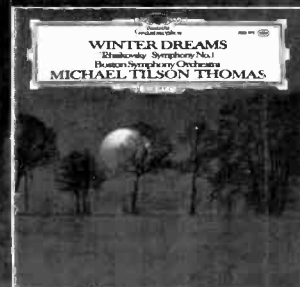
But even my scenically enhanced memories of the effect of Marlowe's mighty line pale beside the impact of this superb new recording. The credit must, of course, go first to Handel and to his uncommonly skilled librettist Nicola Haym. *Tamerlano*, composed in 1724, between *Giulio Cesare* and *Rodelinda*, is a masterpiece of profound dramatic force and ex-

dreams of winter.

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traordinarily sustained musical inspiration fully comparable to those better-known works.

Yet a fair proportion of the praise must also be reserved for Cambridge's producer, Charles Fisher, and his excellent body of artists. Here, at last, is a Handel opera recording that can be counted an almost unqualified success.

Its defects are all minor and can be disposed of briefly. The orchestral playing is serviceable rather than brilliant, and the singers of the two smallest roles, Irene and Leone, are admirable artists whose voices are not really suited to this kind of music. There are one or two tiny hiatuses in the performance that sound like the results of imperfect tape-editing. Cadential trills are sometimes missing, and just now and then a rhythm may be unidiomatically interpreted, or an embellished line may depart too radically from its basis in the score.

But in all the major areas of performance practice and of musical and dramatic approach, conductor John Moriarty's conception is boldly and triumphantly right. With the above small reservations, he has demanded exactly the appropriate amount of ornamentation from his singers, and the ornaments themselves are admirably stylish (though in a purely negative sense the neglect of that important Baroque embellishment, the slide, is surprising). His choice of tempos for the arias and other set pieces is unfailingly judicious. And in the recitatives he has insisted on truly dramatic pacing and inflection—there is none of that pious mooning about that is unsuitable enough in Handel oratorio and quite unconscionable in opera. Instead we are swept along, as we should be, by the passionate intensity of the action.

This is a superbly committed and engrossing

Herbert Barrett



GWENDOLYN KILLEBREW
Force and authority as Tamerlano

interpretation. I am all the more delighted that the pernicious practice of assigning what were originally *castrato* parts to baritones has been avoided, and that the opera is given virtually uncut, with the few small excisions clearly indicated in the libretto and translation booklet. The total timing falls only about twenty minutes short of the four-hour duration of the recent Deutsche Grammophon *Giulio Cesare*, but the stylistic conviction of Moriarty's direction produces results far different from the te-

dium engendered by Karl Richter's lily-livered and utterly unauthentic literalism in the DGG effort.

All of these virtues, along with the exciting continuo playing contributed by Albert Fuller and Lars Holm Johansen, would have been wasted without first-rate solo singing. Happily, the four biggest roles are all magnificently taken. Bajazete is, in all but name, the hero of the piece, and Alexander Young gives the latest and one of the best in his long line of splendid Handel performances, making his noble death scene the dramatic focal point it should be. Carole Bogard covers the full range of Astoria's character, from the pathos of "*Se potessi un di placare*" to the deliberate nastiness of "*Non è più tempo, no*," and floats some admirably pure lines, as does Sophia Steffan in her likably modest interpretation of Andronico.

Perhaps the most remarkable achievement of all is the proud, petulant, ultimately thwarted Tamerlano of Gwendolyn Killebrew, a young American mezzo whose voice and technique I have admired on a number of occasions over the past four years. In this performance she reveals a force and authority of expression that are new to her work—the bite of her diction and the clarity of her articulation suggest that she has outgrown the prodigy stage and is now in the process of becoming an artist of real substance. Her stride forward could not have come at a better juncture than in this Cambridge *Tamerlano*, the best Handel opera recording I have ever heard. *B.J.*

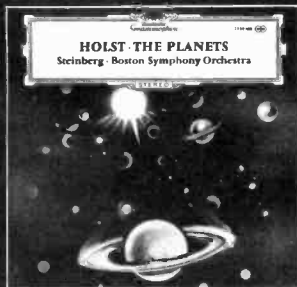
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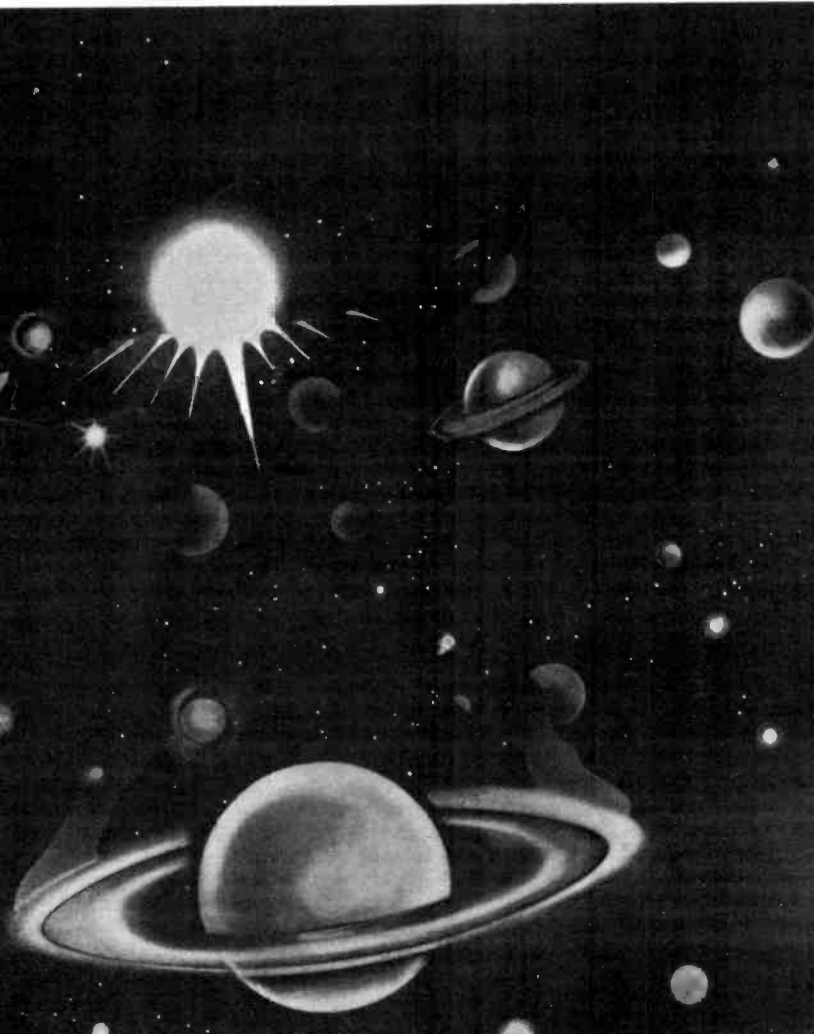
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CIRCLE NO. 35 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Bernard Haitink cond. PHILIPS 6500072 \$5.98.

Performance: Brilliant
Recording: Superb

It's a close race between Bernard Haitink and Sir Adrian Boult (who gave the 1918 premiere) for the honor of giving us the best recorded performance of Gustav Holst's picturesque astrological suite. *Mars, the Bringer of War* takes on a far more menacing and steam-roller-like aspect at Haitink's more deliberate tempo and with the greater presence accorded by the Philips recording staff. Boult's Angel engineers also seem to favor a greater mid-range emphasis in their recorded sound, with a resulting thinness of bass texture compared with Haitink's recording. *Venus, the Bringer of Peace* fares beautifully under both conductors: Boult's is warmer in sonic texture, Haitink's more rarefied. As for *Mercury*, both performances are of the greatest brilliance and delicacy, and superbly recorded. Boult's *Jupiter* comes forth with more spontaneity in both his exuberant and solemn aspects; and though both conductors are equally eloquent in *Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age*, it is sonic impact that gives the edge to Haitink, especially in the great outcry for brass that marks the climax of the movement and the turning point toward serene acceptance.

Uranus is Haitink's all the way. His more urgent rhythmic pulse creates terrific tension, and the whole movement has just the right mix of *grotesquerie*, fun, and terror. For the first time in any recording, the great organ *glissando* at the climactic movement is fully audible and wonderfully effective. *Neptune*, with its offstage wordless choir, is the great test-piece in *The Planets*. Like the final pages of the Vaughan Williams Sixth Symphony, of which it is a forebear, flawless nonvibrato playing and absolute control of *pianissimo* dynamics are the *sine qua non*, along with perfect internal balances and intonation. Given equally accurate and sensitive performances, and I think Boult and Haitink do, the outcome rests with the recording engineers; and save for one flaw, the Philips crew comes out ahead. Boult's choir, compared with Haitink's, is too close, thereby losing the all-important disembodied, ethereal quality needed in the closing pages. However, it is Boult's engineer who has the finer hand with the fader at the point where the wordless voices disappear into infinity. It is wholly natural and inevitable, whereas the engineer's touch is evident on the Philips disc.

I shall be holding onto both for musical reasons, but for equipment demonstration, it would be Haitink I would reach for. D.H.

JANÁČEK: *Taras Bulba—Rhapsody; Sinfonietta* (see Best of the Month, page 68)

KOKKONEN: *Sinfonia* (see NORDHEIM)

LOEWE: *Ballads; Songs and Ballads Based on Goethe Texts* (see Best of the Month, page 67)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: *Divertimenti: in E-flat Major (K. 166); in B-flat Major (K. 240); in F Major (K. 213); in E-flat Major (K. 252)*. Netherlands Wind Ensemble, Edo de Waart cond. PHILIPS 6500 002 \$5.98.

Performance: First-class
Recording: Excellent

This music certainly does divert in these crisp, beautiful performances by first-class Dutch wind musicians. I won't say the playing is perfect, but it is just about as close to it as we have any right to expect. The recording is pretty good, too. All I want to add is—enjoy. E.S.

MOZART: *Exsultate, jubilate (K. 165); Dulcissimum convivium (K. 243); Laudate Dominum (K. 321); Voi avete un cor fedele (K. 217); Ah non lasciarmi, no, bell' idolo mio! (K. 486a); Or che il cielo a me ti rende (K. 374)*. Elly Ameling (soprano); Leslie Pearson (organ and harpsichord); English Chamber Orchestra, Raymond Leppard cond. PHILIPS 6500 006 \$5.98.

Performance: Neat and enjoyable
Recording: Excellent

Mozart wrote the first three of these pieces to religious texts, and the last three to theatrical ones by Goldoni, Metastasio, and Gamerra. Musically, however, there is little difference between them, for the "religious" works are, if not exactly "operatic," distinctly nonecclesiastical to our ears. All six are topnotch examples of vocal writing set in a skillful orchestral framework. With the exception of the familiar motet (K. 165), they are rarely recorded, and Elly Ameling puts Mozartians in her debt with this well-planned, gap-filling recital.

The singing is attractive but falls short of the exceptional. Miss Ameling is a fine Mozart stylist, with a bright and clear voice under good control. Her intonation is also above reproach. In the lyrical, poignant passages, like the slow movement of K. 165 or the K. 486a aria, she proves herself a worthy successor to such specialists as Maria Stader or Teresa Stich-Randall. But she does not display the temperament that would make the lighter moments, like the *Alleluia* in K. 165 or the exquisite *Rondo*, K. 374, take fire, nor the abandon for the florid passages in which both the "religious" and the secular works abound.

Apart from his rather tame pacing of the *Alleluia*, I find the work of Leppard and the orchestra admirable, the recorded sound warm and well-balanced, and the organ continuo for K. 165 refreshing and effective. G.J.

NORDHEIM: *Eco, for Soprano, Children's Choir, Mixed Choir, and Orchestra*. Taru Valjakka (soprano); Swedish Radio Chorus; Children's Choir from Stockholm music classes; Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Herbert Blomstedt cond. KOKKONEN: *Sinfonia III*. Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Sergiu Commissiona cond. ODEON CSDS 1086 \$5.98.

Performance: Presumably authentic
Recording: Very good

This is the first of four volumes of Scandinavian music derived from performances at the 1968 Nordic Music Days and recorded by the Nordic Composers' Council with grants from the Nordic Cultural Fund. The wide range of music performed at these events is well represented by the two extremes placed back to back on this disc: a Finnish symphony right out of Sibelius and an "avant-garde" canata in the Polish-Italian manner. Actually it would be misleading to overemphasize the derivative aspects of these works, since both have individuality within their highly distinct romantic and contemporary idioms. The Nordheim, written in a dense kind of post-Expressionism, uses a whole arsenal of instrumental, choral, and solo

(Continued on page 80)

STEREO REVIEW

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High Fidelity, September 1970 —

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Elementary Electronics, September-October 1970 —

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Stereo, Winter 1971 —

"An exceptionally good value for the kit builder; set meets or exceeds specifications without need for professional alignment or adjustments; one of the best performing receivers available in any form."

Audio, August 1970 — C. G. McProud on the AR-29:

"The Heathkit AR-29 is a worthy companion to the famous AR-15 — somewhat easier to build, somewhat lower in power, somewhat less expensive — but nevertheless a superb receiver in its own right."

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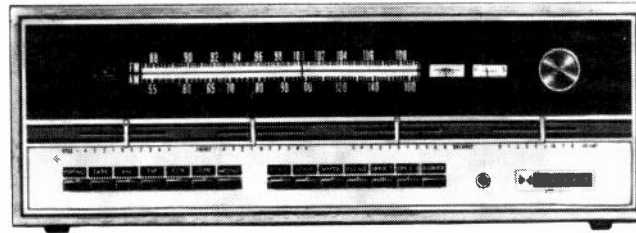
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Popular Electronics, April 1970 —

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Stereo Review, April 1970 — Julian Hirsch on the AR-29:

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vocal techniques to set two Salvatore Quasimodo poems into an intensely dramatic form. A powerful, effective work. The performances and recordings are excellent. Part of the liner notes are in English, but there are no texts.

E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PUCCHINI: *Turandot: Signore, ascolta! Tu, che di gel sei cinta. Madama Butterfly: Un bel di vedremo; Tu, tu, piccolo iddio! Manon Lescaut: In quelle trine morbide; Sola, perduta, abbandonata. Gianni Schicchi: O mio babbino caro. Tosca: Vissi d'arte. La Bohème: Mi chiamano Mimi; Donde lieta usci. Le Villi: Se come voi piccina. La Rondine: Che il bel sogno di Doretta.* Montserrat Caballé (soprano); London Symphony Orchestra, Charles Mackerras cond. ANGEL S 36711 \$5.98.

Performance: Good to outstanding
Recording: Excellent

No other soprano before the public today can match the combination of vocal beauty, emotional involvement, and artistic control that characterize the work of Montserrat Caballé when she is in good form. The present recital does not represent her at her consistent best, but the peaks are beautiful, and the valleys are higher than most sopranos' peaks. She is an unmannered singer, singing the notes as the composer wrote them, imparting eloquence and lyricism when needed, always clothing her utterance in a luscious sound. Color and dynamics are artistically employed in her singing; her scale is even, and, if high and loud passages reveal an occasional shrillness, her heavenly *piano* passages are a disarming compensation for them.

The tragic arias here—"Vissi d'arte," "Un bel di," "Sola, perduta, abbandonata"—are particularly effective. I feel that "O mio babbino caro," though well vocalized, fails to catch Lauretta's youthful radiance, and the conductor's slow pacing is no help. Liù's two arias are likewise not fully convincing. Her vocal velvet is always in evidence, but the phrases are not really caressed, and, though "Signore, ascolta" ends on a ravishing soft B-flat, the phrase that precedes it ("Liù non regge più") is imperfect in intonation.

These relatively minor blemishes do not detract from the great overall appeal of this recital. I do not see why the music of "Tu, tu, piccolo iddio" should not have continued right up to the end of the opera instead of being given the concert ending it has here, but the unfamiliar *Le Villi* excerpt may make me think twice about that reservation too. The orchestral accompaniments are good, and the recorded sound is sumptuous.

G.J.

SATIE: *Parade; Relâche; Gymnopédies Nos. 1 and 3 (orch. Debussy).* Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Philippe Entremont cond. COLUMBIA M 30294 \$5.98.

Performance: Rich
Recording: Excellent

Parade is the "realist ballet" that Erik Satie wrote with Jean Cocteau; it is one of the first European works to use American jazz or ragtime and unquestionably the first to feature typewriters, sirens, and pistol shots as part of the score. *Relâche*, with a scenario and decor by Francis Picabia, is described as an "instantaneist ballet in two acts, film intermezzo, and the tail of a dog." Between these two ballets,

the history of Dada music theater is about covered—*Relâche* is the word used in French theater bills to mean "no performance tonight" (thus, any time nothing else is being performed in a French theater, *Relâche* is automatically featured). The original included a cinematic interlude in which almost all the famous Parisian artists and poets of the day can be seen and which is, without a doubt, one of the funniest bits of film ever made. The music itself consists of a series of pleasant, smallish bits, mostly of a quiet lyrical character that seems hardly related to the Dada or proto-surrealist character of the whole—but then that's probably part of the Dada. *Parade*, the earlier work by seven or eight years and much better-known, is also much the better music—schmaltzier, campier, jazzier, more inventive, more amusing, and more together. I would have preferred a more incisive, drier, wittier performance of this music. But Entremont in his new role as a conductor and the English

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musicians make a rich, attractive sound, and their versions of the *Gymnopédies*—these are the familiar piano pieces orchestrated by Debussy—are gorgeous. Lots of extraneous noises on the test pressings I heard but otherwise excellent sound.

E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

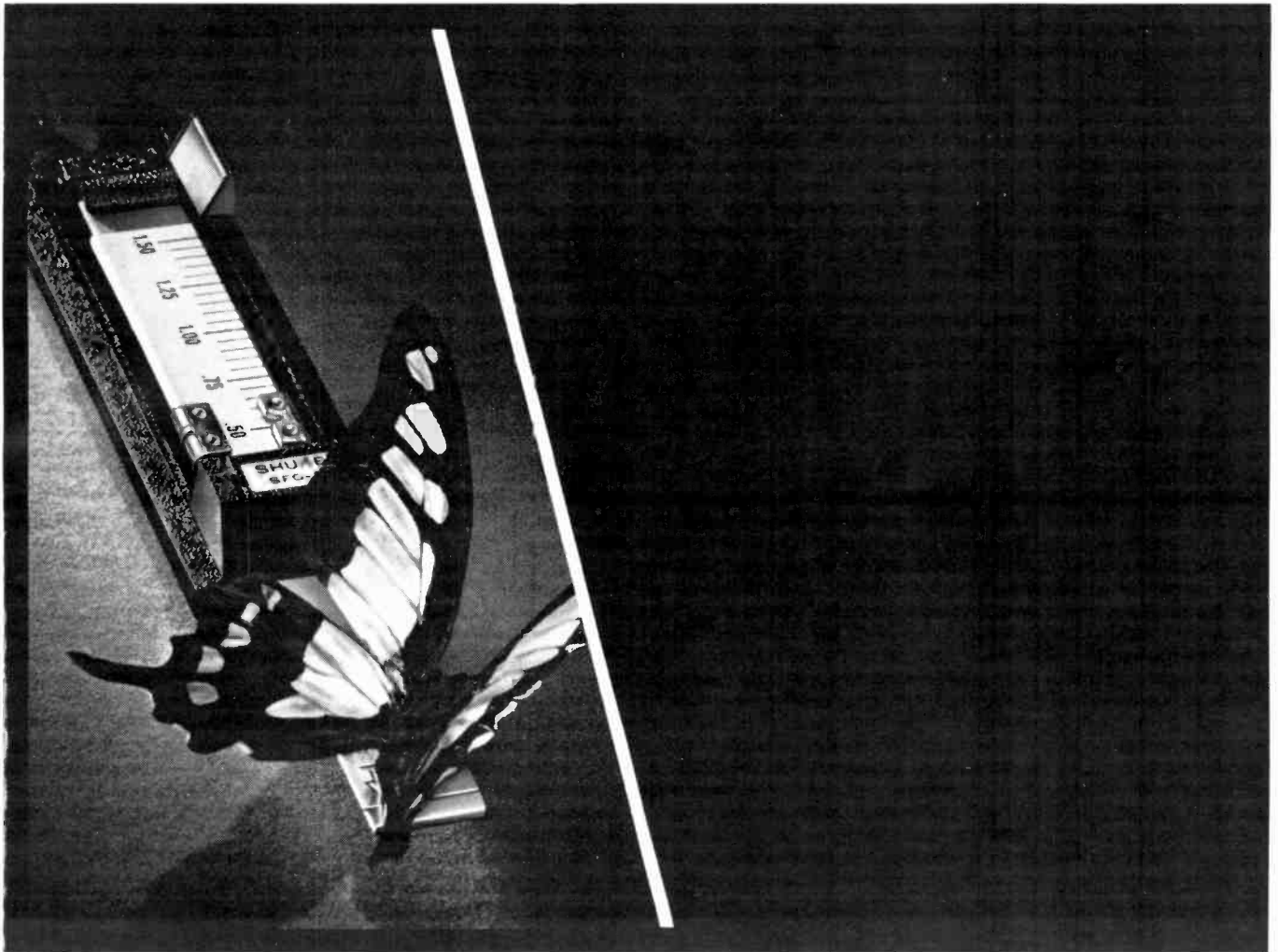
SIBELIUS: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D Minor, Op. 47.* **TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D Major, Op. 35.* Kyung Wha Chung (violin); London Symphony Orchestra, André Previn cond. LONDON CS 6710 \$5.98.

Performance: Elegant yet strong
Recording: Excellent

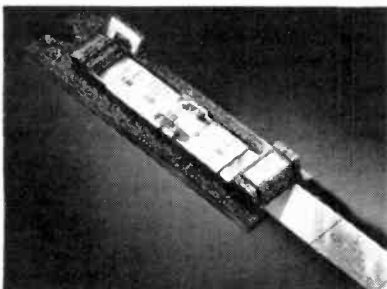
The Korean violinist Kyung Wha Chung was co-winner with Pinchas Zukerman of the Leventritt Award, and in these performances of two of the most virtuosic but abused violin concertos she shows herself a deserving prize recipient and a finely perceptive musician. The Tchaikovsky is performed by both Miss Chung and Mr. Previn, leading the splendid London Symphony Orchestra, with an eye to realizing a proper balance between lyrical and dynamic-rhythmic elements. This is achieved in flawless

(Continued on page 82)

STEREO REVIEW



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fashion, most notably in the slow movement and in the finale—which for once is not played as an assault on the senses and sensibilities. Miss Chung's tone is warm, her intonation impeccable, her rhythmic sense accurate without being rigid.

The same characteristics hold for her performance of the Sibelius Concerto, and here Previn makes a major contribution—in collaboration with the recording engineers—in paying the utmost attention to details of rhythm, texture, and inner voicing. The last movement, played with a naturally swinging rather than a hard-pushed pulse, profits especially thereby. To hear normally obscured bits of inner rhythmic figuration and instrumental color as a foil to the movement's rather relentless rhythmic pattern adds in no uncertain terms to its overall musical interest. Special kudos must go to the London engineers for a fine job of balancing soloist and orchestra so that everything sounds the right relative "size." *D.H.*

TALLIS: *Cantiones Sacrae* (see BYRD)

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* (see SIBELIUS)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Overture 1812, Op. 49; Romeo and Juliet—Fantasy Overture*. Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON CS 6670 \$5.98.

Performance: Triumphant
Recording: Superb

The record companies have been waging the War of 1812 with ever bigger bells and louder cannon since I can remember, and they're still at it. I counted twenty-five earlier versions of the work listed in the Schwann catalog the day this latest entry arrived—including two by Antal Dorati, three by Leonard Bernstein, and four by Herbert von Karajan in various combinations with other pieces. In terms of sheer decibels and military prowess, however, the victory would seem for the moment to be Mr. Mehta's. He does not count a chorus among his forces as Karajan does, but his hushed opening of violas and cellos sets the mood perfectly, and the work never stops building until the big artillery pounds out the climax. The cannons in this case are billed as veterans of the Civil War, the bells and carillon are courtesy of Maas-Row Carillons, and the whole affair, recorded in Royce Hall at the University of California in Los Angeles, is an impressive feat as brought off by London's engineers. Tchaikovsky hated this work so much he turned in the score two years before the commission deadline to get it out of his life, but even he might have been stirred by the way it sounds here.

Mehta, in fact, is proving himself to be the best interpreter of Tchaikovsky in the business these days. His version of the Fifth Symphony with the Israel Philharmonic on the same label is a revelation, and so, on the reverse side of this disc, is his broad, ecstatic, rousing treatment of the *Romeo and Juliet Overture*. This piece was hissed by audiences in Vienna and Paris at early performances in the 1870's and the composer couldn't get it published for years. Schwann lists a mere twenty-two earlier versions currently on sale. You might think you're weary of this one too, but wait until you hear all the fervor and passion Mehta gets into it! Queen Mab rides the strings in an entirely fresh gleam of musical moonlight, and rich de-

tails emerge that are usually smothered in orchestral broth. One disc, two triumphs. *P.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

VERDI: *Four Sacred Pieces: Ave Maria; Stabat Mater; Laudi alla Vergine; Te Deum*. Yvonne Minton (mezzo-soprano); Los Angeles Master Chorale (Roger Wagner director); Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON OS 26176 \$5.98.

Performance: First-rate
Recording: Excellent

Faced with a good performance of these miraculous creations of Verdi's final years, the listener finds his spirit uplifted and his senses utterly gratified; the thought that such results can come only from a painstaking and dedicated effort may not even occur to him. The fact is, however, that the rich and subtly interlaced choral and orchestral textures pose great interpretive demands. The Messrs. Mehta and Wagner have risen to the challenge admirably. The tension and emotionalism of the music—Verdi past eighty was still Verdi—bring out Mehta's best qualities, and the orchestra and chorus respond to his leadership with evident commitment. The choral intonation in the unaccompanied *Laudi* is remarkable, and the tricky balances in the *Ave Maria*—the "enigmatic scale" on which it is based must be clarified, but without obscuring the harmonies around its component notes—are very well observed.

In both major works (*Stabat Mater* and *Te Deum*) Mehta has a tendency to exaggerate dynamics, but not to a really disturbing degree. Still, Giulini's earlier account (Angel S 36125) demonstrates a more satisfying solution in this respect and also reveals more textural transparency and a shade more eloquence. But the margin is small, and it may be offset for some listeners by London's more vivid and larger-scaled recorded sound. *G.J.*

WAGNER: *Tristan und Isolde (highlights)*. Kirsten Flagstad (soprano), Isolde; Ludwig Suthaus (tenor), Tristan; Blanche Thebom (mezzo-soprano), Brangäne; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone), Kurwenal; Philharmonia Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler cond. SERAPHIM Ⓜ 60145 \$2.98.

WAGNER: *Götterdämmerung: Brunnhilde's Immolation. Die Walküre: Du bist der Lenz. Lohegrin: Euch Lüften, die mein Klagen*. Beethoven: *Ah, perfido!* Weber: *Oberon: Ozean, du Ungeheuer*. Kirsten Flagstad (soprano); Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA Ⓜ VIC 1517 \$2.98.

Performance: Good to superb
Recording: Seraphim far superior

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STEREO REVIEW

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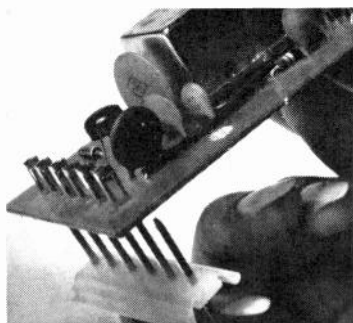
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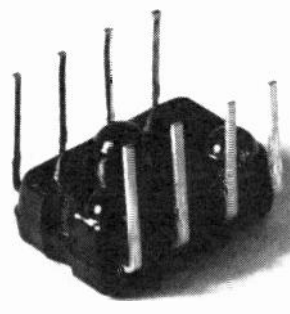
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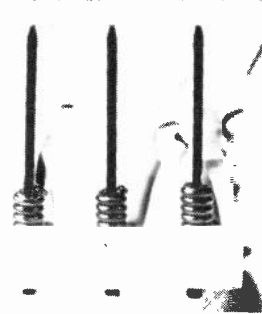
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CIRCLE NO. 100 ON READER SERVICE CARD



“RAGTIME OF THE HIGHER CLASS”

Scott Joplin's elegant and infectious piano rags are revived on a new Nonesuch disc

By H. Wiley Hitchcock

RAGTIME had probably existed for a long time before it rose to public consciousness and became a national mania in the 1890's. Then associated primarily with the solo piano and especially the increasingly popular player pianos, it was taken over by dance bands as well (along with blues, it was the staple of early jazz), and, in the diluted form of the cakewalk march, by such concert bands as Sousa's. After a short, happy life as vehicle for the most popular dances of the early part of the century, it faded during the 1920's as other kinds of dances and music became popular.

Ragtime's most characteristic feature was its double plane of rhythmic life: a regularly accented, even bass and a strongly cross-accented treble. Against the bass, which normally stomped along in a heavy two-beat or pranced in a brass-brand-like oom-pah pattern, the treble was “ragg'd” by throwing accents onto sub-beats. This kind of rhythmic interplay was rooted in black music: it has been traced back to the “patting Juba” of Southern blacks before the Civil War, and ultimately to Afro-Caribbean dances and West African drumming. On the other hand, the form and the basic meter and tempo of rags came from Euro-American dances (quadrilles, polkas, schottisches) and especially from post-Civil War marches, with their heavy two-beat meter and their easygoing tempo. The best-known early piano rag to be published, Scott Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag*, is marked “Tempo di Marcia”; Joplin elsewhere indicated “Slow March Tempo” and even cautioned performers, “Notice! Don't play this piece fast, it is never right to play ‘Ragtime’ fast.”

Although its musical sources were both black and white, ragtime itself was the product of blacks, especially of itinerant piano players in the Middle West. Scott Joplin began his career as one. Born in Texarkana, Texas, on November 24, 1868, he learned to play the piano as a boy. By 1885 he was in St. Louis, playing in honky-tonks and sporting houses. He stayed there until 1893, then went to Chicago briefly to try his luck in the entertainment halls that had sprung up around the World's Fair. In 1894 he went to Sedalia, Missouri, to stay until the turn of the century. His first published piano rag, *Original Rags*, came out in March, 1899; later the same year, a Sedalia music dealer issued *Ma-*

ple Leaf Rag, named for a saloon and dance hall in the town. The work was an instant and resounding success; Joplin's career as a composer took wing, and before his death in 1917 he was to publish more than thirty original rags, and other piano pieces, songs, and arrangements as well, with such success that he could claim to be “King of Ragtime.” He had even grander aims: in 1902 he finished a ballet score called *Rag Time Dance*, and in 1903 the opera *A Guest of Honor*, unpublished and now lost; in 1911 came another opera, *Treemonisha*. None of these larger works were successful. Like other American composers of popular music both before and after him (William Billings, Stephen Foster, and George Gershwin come to mind), Joplin's talent was greater than his training, and his craft as a composer was simply not up to full-evening works.

Joplin's piano rags are a different story. Within their relatively narrow confines—each is made up of four or five contrasting strains and lasts about four or five minutes—they are just about perfect music by any standard. Joplin himself was annoyed by the condescending attitude toward ragtime displayed by many of his compatriots, although he was well aware of the musical poverty of some of the rags thrown up by the wave of popularity for the genre around the turn of the century. In a brief manual of ragtime exercises published in 1908, he wrote: “That all publications masquerading under the name of ragtime are not the genuine article will be better known when these exercises are studied. That real ragtime of the higher class is rather difficult to play is a painful truth which most pianists have discovered. Syncopations are no indication of light and trashy music. . . .”

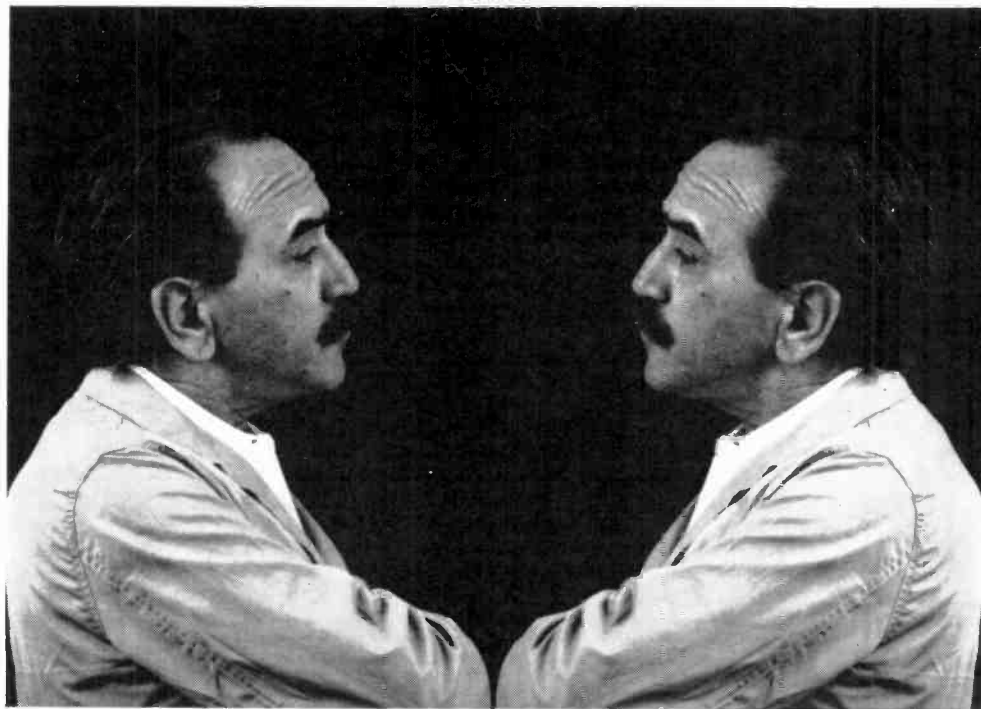
INDEED they were not. His own rags can only be described as elegant, varied, often subtle, and as sharply incised as a cameo. They are the precise American equivalent, in terms of a native style of dance music, of minuets by Mozart, mazurkas by Chopin, or waltzes by Brahms. They can be both lovely and powerful, infectious and moving.

For a new Nonesuch release, pianist Joshua Rifkin has chosen to record eight rags spanning Joplin's published career, from his earliest great success, *Maple Leaf Rag*, to his last completed composition, *Magnetic Rag*.

The increasing sophistication of Joplin's musical thought through the years is fascinating to follow on the disc. (With one exception, Rifkin presents the pieces in chronological order.) *Maple Leaf* is an infectiously straightforward, “happy,” march-based piece. *The Entertainer* (1902) surprises one with its . . . well, *tenderness*, and also with its contrapuntal interest. *The Ragtime Dance* (1906) was pieced together by Joplin from his ballet score; schottische and polka lie behind several of its strains. *Gladiolus Rag* (1907) is a minor masterpiece and one of the few rags which grow cumulatively, from quiet start to thunderous close. *Fig Leaf Rag* (1908) is remarkable for its varied textural and registral interest—Joplin wrote all over the keyboard in this one—and for the harmonic adventures in its last strain. But the peak of Joplin's development as an exploiter of keyboard textures, of far-ranging harmonies, and of concise, cogent, unstereotyped forms is reached in the last three rags offered here: *Scott Joplin's New Rag* (1912), *Euphonic Sounds* (1909), and *Magnetic Rag* (1914). The last, Joplin's valedictory, is a dark, dense-textured work that projects an extraordinary sense of power and pride but ends somewhat surprisingly (and prophetically?) with a tiny, poignant coda—not a bang but a whimper.

FOR those whose image of ragtime piano playing is a beery pianist whacking away at an out-of-tune upright, colorlessly ringing the changes on a few mechanical, ricky-ticky rhythms, Rifkin's performances will come as a shock and a revelation. He plays all of these works with great stylishness, not only with the appropriate stomping, driving, or sometimes just teasing rhythms but with the broad range of expressivity the composer demands. Some may claim his playing is unauthentic, too “pretty,” or too “classical,” but they will be confusing the music as Joplin wrote it either with their experience of piano-roll rags, in which everything is by definition helplessly monochromatic, because the air pressure which activates the keys is unvarying, or of barroom pianists trying to compete with chit-chat and clinking glasses. In fact, Joplin wrote into his music many changes of dynamic level and other indications of expression, and Rifkin is faithful to these. He treats the music with both affection and respect; his is no player-piano approach, and I think Scott Joplin, who considered his works not “light and trashy” music but “ragtime of the higher class,” would definitely approve. Moreover, for this recording, whose sound has remarkable presence to begin with, Rifkin must have found the kind of piano the American virtuoso Louis Moreau Gottschalk once spoke of in his journal, a “monster” with a tail three feet in width and ten feet long: the piano sound, from deepest bass to highest treble, is marvelously rich. Finally, the jacket notes, written by Rifkin himself—he is, among other things, a brilliant young musicologist—are exemplary: broadly informative, impeccably precise, and gracefully written.

SCOTT JOPLIN: *Piano Rags*. Joshua Rifkin (piano). *Maple Leaf Rag*; *The Entertainer*; *The Ragtime Dance*; *Gladiolus Rag*; *Fig Leaf Rag*; *Scott Joplin's New Rag*; *Euphonic Sounds*; *Magnetic Rag*. NONESUCH H 71248 \$2.98.



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CIRCLE NO. 103 ON READER SERVICE CARD

GOING ON RECORD

By JAMES GOODFRIEND
Music Editor



SOME SIZE-TWELVE FOOTNOTES

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN was born on December 15 or 16, 1770. On or about December 15 or 16, 1970, there descended upon this office such a raft of complete recorded this and that of Beethoven that it would take until the end of 1971 to have it reviewed in the usual manner. A few of these packages are completely new; most are simply repackagings of material already issued either as single records or in smaller, less comprehensive albums. Some of the material is making its third or fourth recorded go-around, merely changing its outer costume and its serial number. I find it doubtful that all these records rolled in here at the time they did just to celebrate Beethoven's birthday in its proper month of the year. I think it much more likely that companies were honoring Beethoven's foresight in coming into this world at the height of the Christmas shopping season.

I have listened, in recent weeks, to four complete sets of the piano sonatas: Paul Badura-Skoda (Musical Heritage Society OR B-375/385, eleven discs, \$32.89); Artur Schnabel (Seraphim 1D-6063 and 1C 6064/6067, sixteen discs in five albums, one of variations and miscellaneous pieces, \$47.68); Wilhelm Backhaus (London CSP-2, ten discs, \$50); and, finally, Claude Frank (Victrola VICS-9000, twelve discs, \$35.76). I have some comments to make about each of these sets.

The Badura-Skoda set I can pass over quickly, for I haven't very much that is nice to say about it. I tend to hear in it the different takes of a performance even though I cannot hear the splices. The interpretations, for the most part, seem less interpretations than assemblages, patchings together of the right notes with little of an overall conception to support them. Occasionally, one hears a sonata for which the pianist has a special affection or affinity—but all too seldom. The tone is relatively percussive, the recording clear

enough to bring out the worst elements, and I find the set one of the least attractive integral sets of the sonatas I have yet encountered.

The Claude Frank set is another matter. Frank, in spite of his experience and his teachers (he studied for a time with Schnabel), does not have a big reputation. In my opinion a completely satisfying Beethoven cycle is still beyond him, but there is no question that he makes a noble attempt. His performances, when they are bad, are simply superficial; there is just too much note spinning. And he has a relatively consistent habit, when he cannot provide the musical depth, power, or sustained excitement that a movement needs, of simply playing it fast. All the more surprising, then, that, quite in addition to his success with the lighter sonatas, he reaches one of his high points with his performance of the "Hammerklavier." It may not go down as one of the great "Hammerklaviers" in the history of recorded music, but it is no mean accomplishment. I find Frank generally a little weak in the left hand in terms of balancing his material; the right-hand melody predominates even when the real interest of the moment lies elsewhere, and this is intensified by the recording which—virtually typical of RCA—is deficient in bass. In spite of the drawbacks, this is a worthy set, if not an outstanding one, and the price is low.

BACKHAUS, in his recording (all performances but that of the "Hammerklavier" are new; the artist died before he could remake his previous rendition of that sonata), offers something that neither of the previous sets does: personality. Backhaus, of course, was a pianist of a much older school; he made his debut long before either Frank or Badura-Skoda was born. The difference is apparent immediately. The musical line breathes far more freely; there are little expressive moments, perhaps not as written in the

music, but convincing in the context of performance; there is less attention to the letter of the score (though both Frank and Badura-Skoda present moments that are decidedly not what Beethoven wrote).

But Backhaus' Beethoven style was of a very specific sort, and one that is certainly not to everyone's liking. It is a relatively soft-shouldered Beethoven, with a peasant gruffness under the sophisticated phrasing, but shying away from too great an incisiveness and tending to make fast movements a little slower and slow movements a little faster. Magic, as one would want in some of the late sonatas, is virtually absent, and one is always conscious that this is very human playing. Of course, by the time he made these recordings Backhaus had lost something in sheer pianistic technique—but that is not the whole story. He was, very simply, a pianist who could be graceful at one moment and awkward at the next, and what is most endearing about his Beethoven is that it was *his* Beethoven. London's recording is somewhat variable, but the range is from good to really excellent.

COMING back to Schnabel after such varied adventures is both an exciting and a comforting thing. Yes, the F-sharp Sonata really *is* a marvelous piece, and the G Major, Op. 79, likewise, and there most certainly *is* magic in the Op. 111 *Arietta*. It is almost an unfair comparison. There are few, very few, pianists whose regular repertoire encompasses *all* the Beethoven sonatas. They play four or five regularly, another few occasionally, and to have them merely "work up" the rest for a recording project is not calculated to produce great performances. Schnabel, on the other hand, lived the sonatas, all of them. What resides in his performances, and only occasionally in those of the others, is the sense of a real encounter between music and interpreter. It is just so continuously evident that Schnabel, through intellect, intuition, labor, and experience, divined the musical point of every pianistic note, that listening to his Beethoven, even through clouded monophonic sound, is a continual revelation and pleasure—which is not to say that I or anyone else would automatically prefer his performance of a given sonata to another pianist's. But it is strongly apparent that Schnabel's interpretation is one that has been chosen after all the legitimate alternatives are known, and that sort of intellectual expertise I have heard from very few musicians in my life. I consider the Schnabel Beethoven set to be indispensable to a record library. I think I regard it in almost the same way I do the King James version of the Bible.

I have also received four sets of the complete Beethoven symphonies: Erich Leinsdorf and the Boston Symphony (RCA VCS 6903, \$21.98); Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt and the Vienna Philharmonic (London CSP-1, three over-

tures included, \$35.00); Bruno Walter and the Columbia Symphony Orchestra (Odyssey Y7 30051, \$20.98); and George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra (Columbia M7X 30281, \$23.98). All sets are seven discs.

All of these records have been on the market before, but several sets are currently being offered at prices considerably lower than they were. Since they are well known, it is a little gratuitous of me to offer opinions on them, but I cannot resist a few quick personal observations. The Szell performances are, unfortunately, typical of his recorded work: chilly. Szell's deservedly fine reputation is based on the memories of those who heard him in the concert hall, rather than on recorded evidence, for there is only a little of his best on discs. The fault is no one's but his. He was a great conductor, no doubt, but inexplicably he took most of the blood out of the music before the microphone was turned on.

The Schmidt-Isserstedt set is something of a parallel to Backhaus' set of the sonatas; that is, it is relatively easygoing, not too slow, not too fast, not very incisive. But it is quite sufficiently powerful, and the orchestral playing and the singing are really sensational. I have the feeling that it would be easier to live with this set than with others that are more highly spiced. Walter's was his second LP cycle of the symphonies; the first with the New York Philharmonic, and in mono only, is still available on the same label. I remember the second set particularly for its "Pastoral," which has always been, for me, one of the great recorded Beethoven performances. But there is a lot of genial greatness in the album, if also occasional disappointments. Leinsdorf's cycle has never really pleased me. He seems to me at his best when he is academic; when he interprets, things fly off in different directions. And his Ninth has some off-pitch singing—whether it is the fault of the chorus, soloists, tape editor, or all three I cannot quite pin down.

I also cannot get very excited about Arturo Rubinstein's set of the five piano concertos, with Leinsdorf and the Boston Symphony (RCA VCS 6417, four discs, \$12.98). Rubinstein, as always, is out to charm the pants off everyone, and that is not the sort of Beethoven I like. There is grace aplenty, but not much in the way of intellect, and the pianist gives the strange impression of continually accenting the wrong notes or beats. There are beautiful moments, though (as always with Rubinstein), and Leinsdorf's accompaniments strike me here as not academic but rather elegantly straightforward. Despite my personal lack of enchantment with the set, I can well see that others might like it very much. All but the Second Concerto have been issued previously, so you get four concertos on four discs if you buy them singly, and five concertos on four discs at almost the price of two if you buy

the album. A funny business, records.

Two complete sets of the string quartets have also been included in my recent listening, one by the Guarneri Quartet (RCA VCS 11-100, eleven discs, \$33.98), and one by the Melos Quartet of Stuttgart (Musical Heritage Society OR-B-386/97, twelve discs in three albums, \$35.88). The latter set includes the Quartet in F, arranged by Beethoven from the Piano Sonata, Op. 14, No. 1. The Guarneris, among them, can probably boast more sheer technical brilliance than any other quartet in the world today, and there is no lack of musicality in their work. However, there is a certain characteristic hardness to their playing which may not be to everyone's taste or be equally congenial to all music. I find the group exceedingly good in the early quartets, even better in the middle quartets, and rather disappointing in the late works. My disappointment, though, is not shared by several of my colleagues.

The Melos Quartet is a group new to me (they are not related to the Melos Ensemble of London), and it has, apparently, been concertizing regularly for only a few years. I don't think I have ever heard a more suave quartet. Their technique is ample rather than virtuosic (they come apart considerably more in the *Grosse Fuge* than the Guarneris do), but it is up to all but the most extreme demands made upon it. And Lord, what a lovely warm sheen there is to their playing, what grace, what comfortable elegance—and without the mannered quality that one finds in the superficially similar Quartetto Italiano. The Melos Quartet is accorded quite reasonable reproduction, and apart from one bit of sloppy production (the last few measures of the second movement of Op. 59, No. 1, which closes the first side of the disc, are repeated at the beginning of the third movement on the second side), this is, in my opinion, one of the very best sets of the Beethoven Quartets on the market today.

FINALLY, I have received from the Arturo Toscanini Society (P.O. Box 1746, Amarillo, Texas 79105) a nine-record set (ATS 1016-1024) which contains six symphonies, the *Missa Solemnis*, the Triple Concerto, the Piano Concerto No. 3, the Choral Fantasy, and other shorter works. Recordings of the Society are not on sale to the general public but are sent to all members. Interested parties should write to the above address. I confess to being somewhat half-hearted, myself, in my admiration for the late Italian maestro, but I must point out to those who feel similarly that the performance of the Third Concerto by Myra Hess in this set is an altogether splendid example of the musical genius of that lady. Toscanini lovers will find much else to admire.

So concludes a brief rundown of some 113 records brought into this world by Beethoven's two-hundredth birthday.



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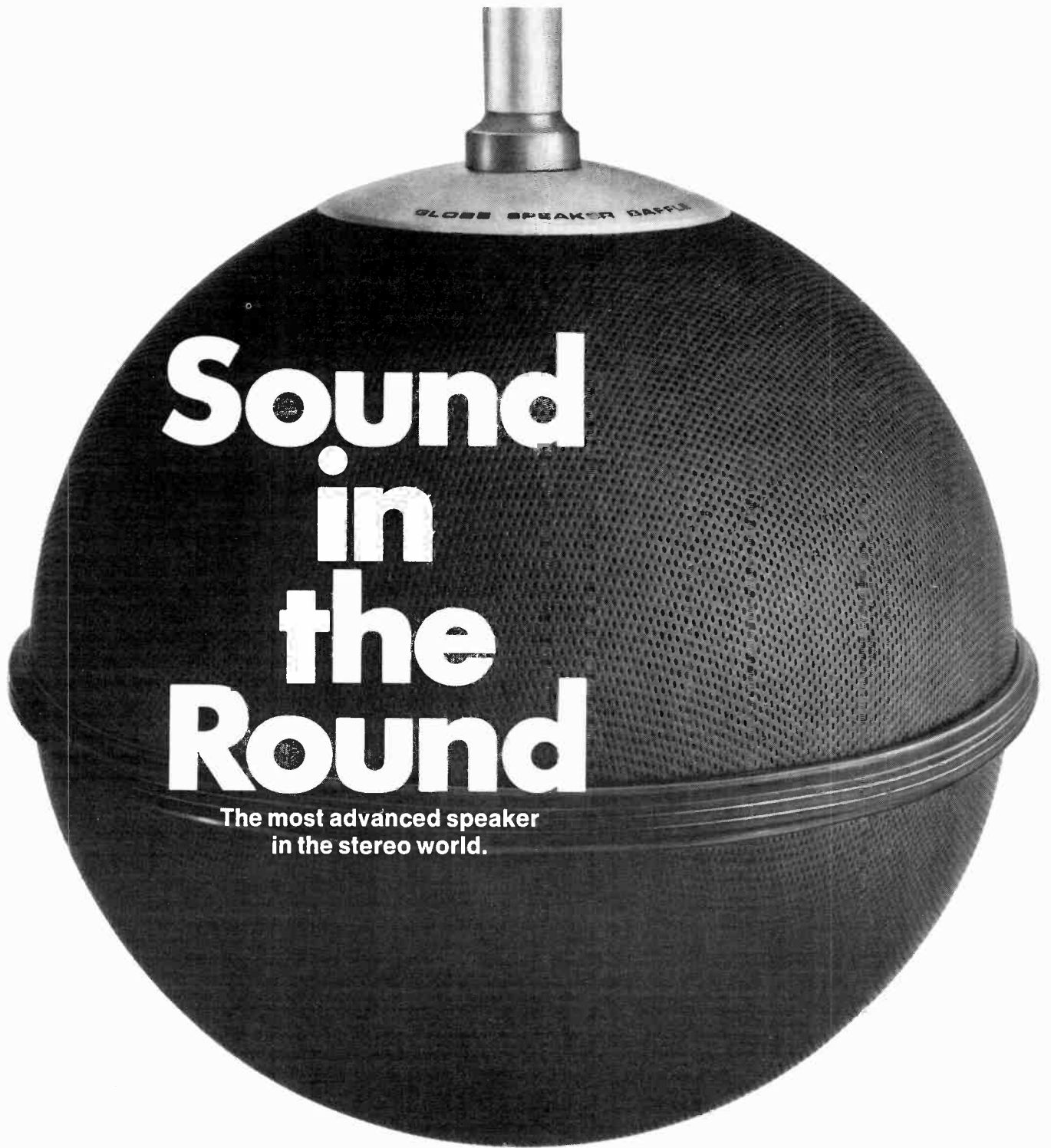
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CIRCLE NO. 25 ON READER SERVICE CARD

STEREO REVIEW



ENTERTAINMENT

POPS • JAZZ • FILMS • THEATER • FOLK • SPOKEN WORD

Reviewed by NOEL COPPAGE • DON HECKMAN • PAUL KRESH
REX REED • PETER REILLY

THE BYRDS: (*Untitled*). The Byrds (vocals and instrumentals). *Take a Whiff; All Things; Yesterday's Train; Hungry Planet; Eight Miles High*; and eleven others. COLUMBIA G 30127 two discs \$5.98.

Performance: Good
Recording: Good

This one is a nostalgic trip back with one of the earlier California groups. The best thing here is a "live"-performance set in which the Byrds give some of their early hits, such as *Mr. Tambourine Man* (was that the first of the drug-message songs?) and *Positively 4th Street* the once-over. The second side of that record features a sixteen-minute *Eight Miles High* which is very good indeed, and is helped a great deal by an enthusiastic audience. The other record is all studio stuff and shows that the Byrds molted at an alarming rate—they just don't sound very interested. As a consequence, neither was I. It did set me to wondering about something, though: is there anything more ephemeral than a rock group? (I know, I know—the people who write about them). P.R.

MERRY CLAYTON: *Gimme Shelter*. Merry Clayton (vocals); instrumental accompaniment, Gene Page, arr. *Country Road; Tell All the People; Bridge over Troubled Water; Gimme Shelter; I've Got Life; Here Come Those Heartaches Again*; and four others. ODE SP 77001 \$4.98, © 77001 \$6.98, © 77001 \$6.98.

Performance: Loud
Recording: Good

Merry Clayton is one of the many bastard musical children of Aretha Franklin. Miss Clayton shouts and stomps and flays the smoky air (of the isolation booth) with her expressive arms. She would be a knockout at a Baptist revival or in a rock version of *Elmer Gantry*. But on records, she is too much for my speakers. She is also too repetitious. Her grab-it-in-the-bowels approach to her material wears on my nerves after one or two cuts. Her backing is first-rate, and the brisk, masculine organ work by Joe Sample and Billy Preston is remarkable. But Miss Preston strangles the life out of *Bridge over Troubled Water*, stomps the hell out of James Taylor's *Country Road*, and crucifies everything else on this noisy collection. I have no

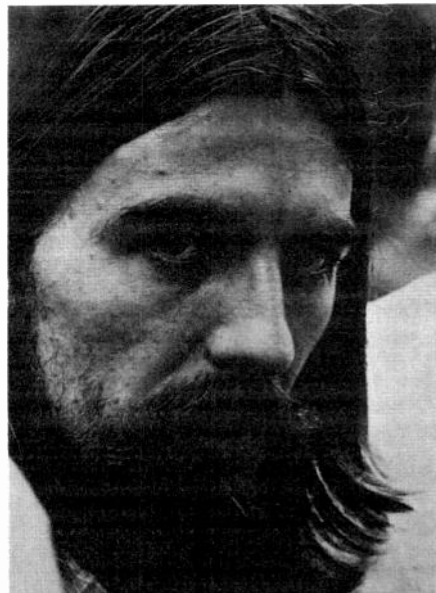
fondness for Aretha Franklin either, but if we've gotta have one hysteric on our hands, we certainly don't need any second-rate imitators.

R.R.

FAIRPORT CONVENTION: *Full House*. Fairport Convention (vocals and instrumentals). *Walk Awhile; Dirty Linea; Sloth; Sir Patrick Spens; Flatback Caper*; and two others. A & M SP 4265 \$4.98.

Performance: More English folk-rock
Recording: Very good

Fairport Convention had the original hit on an Apple Records



GEORGE HARRISON
On his own—where to now?

extremely popular tune from a few years back called *Who Knows Where the Time Goes*. Well, it isn't only time that has gone, since vocalist Sandy Denny, composer of the song, has left the group, taking with her (to Fotheringay) much of its special appeal. What remains is a highly polished English folk-rock group whose style traces to a spot somewhere between the Incredible String Band and the Pentangle. Like Pentangle, Fairport is particularly fond of starting with traditional English songs and literally electrifying them with modern instruments and complex rhythms; and, like the Incredible String Band, Fairport retains a sense of humor and an awareness that the music, after all, is from another time and place.

I like the group in small doses. Overexposure to Dave Swarbrick's fiddle playing, adept though he may be, recalls unpleasant memories of country hoedowns. But when the group

moves into the more mystical English folk material, they can be undeniably appealing. I suppose it simply comes down to the fact that Fairport Convention hasn't found an adequate musical replacement for the gifted Miss Denny.

D.H.

GEORGE HARRISON: *All Things Must Pass*. George Harrison (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *What Is Life; Let It Down; Run of the Mill*; and nineteen others. APPLE STCH 639 three discs \$9.96, © 8XWB 639 \$13.98, © 4XWB 639 \$13.98.

Performance: Endless
Recording: Good

The Beatles at their height were a blend of personalities and talents that was unique. Now, each on his own, they must settle as perhaps talented individuals but no longer inimitable each by himself. John is the hostile intellectual, Paul the mod Sinatra, Ringo a purveyor of schmalz, and George the pop transcendentalist. (In an era when the cult of "doing your own thing" was born, it seems incongruous that its most popular symbols were musicians who fed creatively on each other.) Hurt most by the breakup of the group, I think, will be Ringo. Least affected will be Paul, who eventually will make his way to the money vaults of Las Vegas. Lennon remains the biggest question mark. Obviously a gifted, articulate, and creative man, he seems so strongly self-directed that he may just be able to shake the caul of being an ex-Beatle. And Harrison? Judging from this three-record album, he seems headed for an unspectacular but successful career as a first-rank musician of second-string stardom—as an ex-Beatle.

There is a tremendous amount of material here, all of it, with the exception of Dylan's *It's Not for You*, Harrison's own. Sides five and six are given the title "Apple Jam," and here, oddly enough, performing with a group of other good musicians in *I Remember Jeep* or *Plug Me In*, he seems freer and more involved than when he goes it alone. A lot of the songs are very good—*Beware of Darkness* and *Let It Roll*—but the two that seemed to me indicative of the way Harrison is going are *Hear Me Lord* and *Awaiting on You All*. Both of these have the same fundamentalist religious strain that I have noticed lately in the work of Jim Webb, among others. Harrison can't quite make it work for him in the same way that Webb is able to, but it is nonetheless effective. The album has quirky, self-indulgent things in it, along with some fine things, but its essential failure is that it is somehow unconvincing.

P.R.

DICK HOLLER: *Someday Soon*. Dick Holler (vocals); orchestra. *Walk With Me, My*

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel tape
- Ⓢ = four-track cartridge
- Ⓣ = eight-track cartridge
- ⓐ = cassette

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ; all others are stereo.

Friend; Alice; My Friend Joe; Fat Daddy; Hey-Hey-Ho; and five others. ATLANTIC SD 8268 \$4.98.

Performance: Nice
Recording: Good

This is an examination of "the tragic failures of the American social system" from the author of *Abraham, Martin and John*, a song which Mahalia Jackson was able to make into a three act soap-opera not long ago. I had always been under the impression that Mahalia had gotten the song from the estate of Fannie Hurst, but then I don't keep up on these things. Dick Holler does keep up on things and he'll tell you just how bad things are at the drop of a slogan.

P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JEFFERSON AIRPLANE: *The Worst of the Jefferson Airplane.* Jefferson Airplane (vocals and instrumentals). *It's No Secret; Today; White Rabbit; Good Shepherd; Volunteers;* and ten others. RCA LSP 4459 \$4.98, © P8S 1653 \$6.95, © PK 1653 \$6.95.

Performance: Excellent
Recording: Excellent

Here is a collection of tracks from previously issued Airplane albums, and they are certainly not the worst, although some of your particular favorites may be missing. What a consistently good group this is! The four-year period represented here shows a consistent level of creative musicianship that few other groups can boast. My own favorite is included—*White Rabbit*, Grace Slick's eerie little excursion into Wonderland. Next on my list would have to be

Volunteers, which almost makes me want to (volunteer, that is). If you are a fan, you probably have everything here, but if not, I can't imagine a better introduction.

P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PAUL KANTNER AND THE JEFFERSON STARSHIP: *Blows Against the Empire.* Jefferson Starship (vocals and instrumentals). *Mau Mau (Amerikon); The Baby Tree; Let's Go Together; A Child Is Coming; Sunrise; Hijack; Home; Have You Seen the Stars Tonight; X-M; Starship.* RCA LSP 4448 \$4.98, © TP3 1064 \$6.95, © P8S 1654 \$6.95, © PK 1654 \$6.95.

Performance: Loose and luxurious
Recording: Excellent

This is a powerhouse from another offspring of the Jefferson Airplane. The crew of the Jefferson Starship is huge, and practically a Who's Who among young American musicians: it includes Jerry Garcia, Bill Kreutzmann, Mickey Hart, Joey Covington, David Crosby, and Graham Nash, to name a few. But at the helm are those old Airplane pilots, Paul Kantner and his woman Grace Slick, and musically the Starship is a child of the Airplane.

The Starship's sound is loose, like that of the Airplane, with each performer having ample room in which to flap elbows, flail instruments, and jump up and down, all of which really seem to happen. And the Starship has the Airplane's genius for taking a song with a Neanderthal melody and puerile lyrics and, by seeming to do no more than hammer away at it, turn it into an experience.

The album's theme seems to be an extension

of ideas in *Wooden Ships*, the song by Crosby and Stephen Stills (recorded by the Airplane) about sailing off in nonradioactive wooden vessels after the holocaust. Here the fantasy is that several thousand crazies, convinced "Amerika" despises them, blast off in a hijacked starship, "reachin' for tomorrow."

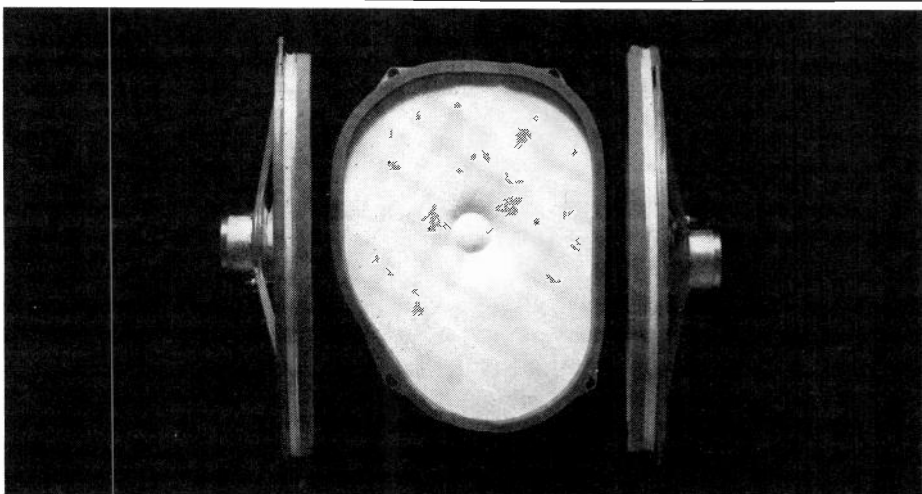
The intricate vocal blendings that make both Grace and Paul so important to the Airplane and the sheer brilliance of the musicians playing the instruments carry the Starship along nicely. Don't look for any outstanding songs here; do look for a whole album of solid music.

N.C.

THE KINKS: *Lola Versus Powerman and the Moneygoround.* The Kinks (vocals and instrumentals). *The Contenders; Denmark Street; Get Back in Line; Rats; Apeman; Powerman;* and seven others. REPRIS RS 6423 \$4.98, © B 6423 \$6.95, © M 86423 \$6.95, © M 56423 \$5.95.

Performance: Assured
Recording: Very good

A corrosively bitter tone is common to almost every song in this album, whether the subject be pop fame (as in *Top of the Pops*—"It's strange how people want you when your record's high/'Cos when it drops down they just pass you by"), the shady business dealings of managers (*The Moneygoround*—"But if I ever get my money I'll be too old and grey to spend it"), or the mysterious *Powerman*—"He's got my money and my publishing rights." So much of the content is devoted to disillusionment with fame, money, and success that listening to the album is like reading one of those Hollywood novels, something written, in his later



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STEREO REVIEW

years, by a one-book novelist on his estate in untaxed Switzerland (purchased with his twenty-year Hollywood paychecks as a screen writer) about the cruelty and venality of Hollywood life at the top. It is a very American complaint, and it sounds just as phony and self-pitying a view as ever, even when it issues from the English pop world.

Most of the indignation seems to center around the fact that you can't have it both ways, *i.e.*, money-fame-success and artistic self-respect. It *can* happen, but generally to the great innovators, such as the Beatles, or Picasso, or Hemingway. They are people of great courage or of strong artistic conviction who would never be content to mine the vein of gold that runs through the pop entertainment world. Therefore, the Shavian (Irwin) indignation of those who have conscientiously extracted the ore seems like just crocodile tears.

I hope the Kinks have gotten all this Mr.-Bright-Lights-Asks-What-It's-All-About bunk out of their system with this album and will go back to being the intelligent, perceptive, and highly entertaining group that they have always been. P.R.

LED ZEPPLIN: *Led Zeppelin III*. Led Zeppelin (vocals and instrumentals). *Immigrant Song; Friends; Celebration Day; Since I've Been Loving You; Out on the Tiles; and five others.* ATLANTIC SD 7201 \$4.98, (L) 7201 \$7.95, (M) 47201 \$6.95, (M) 87201 \$6.95, (M) 57201 \$6.95.

Performance: Overweight rock
Recording: Very good

It took Led Zeppelin no more than three or four weeks to hit the top of the pop charts with

their third, and latest, outing. The record may still be cresting by the time you read this review. The formula is familiar enough: whip up a batch of miscellaneous blues fragments; blend with high-decibel electronic amplification and distortion; add an undercurrent of heavy bass; top with nasal vocals by Robert Plant and slippery-slidy guitar playing by Jimmy Page.

And it works—commercially, that is. That it results in dull music is less important than the fact that Led Zeppelin is good theater, as all successful rock almost has to be. The group has toured widely, and the image of Plant singing ecstatically, whipping his long, curly blond locks around his head, is a picture that has been indelibly recorded in the minds and hearts of countless teeny- (and some *not* so teeny-) boppers.

To my ears the group is a bummer. Like Grand Funk Railroad, Led Zeppelin is a symbol of the unremittingly adolescent qualities which are always active in popular music. If that's where your head is at, then groovy. I'd rather listen to those singing whales. D.H.

JOHN LENNON: *Plastic Ono Band*. John Lennon (vocals, guitar, piano); Ringo Starr (drums); Klaus Voorman (bass). *Mother; Hold On John; I Found Out; Working Class Hero; Isolation; Remember; Love; Well, Well, Well; Look at Me; My Mummy's Dead.* APPLE SW3372 \$4.98, (4) 4XW3372 \$6.98, (8) 8XW \$6.98.

Performance: Very good
Recording: Good

John easily wins the first round in the Solo Albums by Former Beatles competition, as I see

it, and yet this record is almost as disappointing in some ways as the first post-Beatles stabs by Paul McCartney and George Harrison. The thing that bothers me most is the general theme that runs through most of the lyrics—about how it's John and Yoko against the cold, insensitive world. If he's been quoted correctly, John has of late set himself up as the iconoclast who will blast the legend of the Beatles to smithereens. That's all right, but consider that at the same time he's doing a job that seven PR men with three ditto machines each couldn't do of *creating* the legend of John and Yoko.

In addition to becoming a bit tired of hearing John sing about himself and his wife, I find that some of these songs (*Isolation, I Found Out*) are too damned preachy, and some, especially *Remember* and *Well, Well, Well*, amount to practically nothing musically. Nevertheless, it *is* a strong album. It has a lovely ballad in *Love*, an effective think piece in *God*, and two blockbusters in *Mother* and *Working Class Hero*. *Mother* is extremely personal, ending with John screaming, "Mama don't go, Daddy come home" over and over; it's mawkish but it will touch most of us. *Working Class Hero* is compelling as a ballad and powerful (if not altogether original) as a poem—and will be controversial because of some four-letter words.

As a vocalist John is no Paul McCartney, and as a guitarist John is no George Harrison, but as an artist he is quite well equipped and almost makes a habit of transcending technical limitations. And anyway, his instinct for timing and inflection, especially with hard rock, is as sharp as ever. And even when Lennon is all but swept away by a tide of paranoia, his sense of humor digs in and holds. In the middle of

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some chauvinistic lyrics in *Hold On John*, there is a dandy imitation of the Sesame Street Cookie Monster saying "Cookie!" The album, though good, should have been better, but how can you be very upset with a fellow like this? N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TONY McCASHEN & DON DUNN: *Dunn & McCashen*. Tony McCashen and Don Dunn (vocals); instrumental accompaniment, Toxey French arr. *Alright in the City; Don't Be Late, Be Friends; I Was High (on Something); The Cowboy; Just One Good Woman; Man on the Corner; So Long Rosie Plum; See the Lady Waiting; I Am; Live Till You Love/First Time I Saw Your Face*. CAPITOL ST-565 \$4.98.

Performance: Smiling faces
Recording: Very good

Dunn and McCashen are composer and lyricist for this release, and from what I can gather, do not participate in the actual playing of their songs. Jazz/rock is the musical medium chosen by these affectionate kooks to express their highs, and musical parody is used to great advantage on the lows. The result is a highly original creation, with faint reminders of Blood, Sweat & Tears and Harry Nilsson. The group carves its signature deftly with the sharply honed arrangements of Toxey French and excellent cohesive ensemble playing in which the accents are largely given to two trumpets and a trombone. The tempo is often driving, with the horns pushing you to the wall and the vocals are searing, but just when my brain waves were about to become overextended, good musical taste prevailed and calm followed every time. R.R.

CLYDE McPHATTER: *Welcome Home*. Clyde McPhatter (vocals); orchestra. *I'll Be Long to You; Book of Memories; If You Only Knew; The Mixed-up Cup; A Mother's Love*; and seven others. DECCA DL 75231 \$4.98.

Performance: Good
Recording: Good

Clyde McPhatter has been working in Europe for the past three years, and this album is meant to re-introduce him, since, as the notes so accurately point out, "When you're away three years from this scene . . . it's like thirty years." I wish that the news could be a little more positive, but McPhatter seems to have lost some of the brio and guts that I used to enjoy in his work. True, he has a more currently fashionable soul sound, but his delivery seems fuzzy and unshaded. *Anyone Can Tell* is the only track that caught fire for me. Maybe the next album will show us a less uptight McPhatter. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SERGIO MENDES & BRASIL '66: *Stillness*. Sergio Mendes & Brasil '66 (vocals and instrumentals); Dick Hazard and Thomas W. Scott arrs. *Stillness; Righteous Life; Chelsea Morning; Cancao Do Nosso Amor (Far away Today); Viramundo; Lost in Paradise; For What It's Worth; Sometimes in Winter; Celebration of the Sunrise; Stillness*. A & M SP 4284 \$4.98, © 4284 \$6.98, © 4284 \$6.98.

Performance: Radically chic
Recording: Very good

Their music is svelte, chic, *soigné*, and sensual. They are the hip cats who still prow through

the musical jungle on little cat-paws of bossanova. They are so smooth they have become the elite. Only Sergio Mendes and his group, known as Brasil '66, could take Stephen Sills' song *For What It's Worth* and make it sound amusingly like *Hernando's Hideaway* (from the Broadway musical *The Pajama Game*). With this new album, Sergio Mendes and Brasil '66 become the radical chic of the music world. Not that the group ignores the traditional Brazilian love song, no, no—two lovely songs, *Cancao Do Nosso Amor* and *Viramundo* end side one with the master Sergio himself singing.

The title of the album is taken from a lovely song by Paula Stone; it is haunting. It's the first band and the last on the album, and what comes in between is either as quiet and poignant as a walk in the spring rain or as rump-spiced and bouncy as a memory of pre-Castro Havana. I passed on the last two Mendes albums because they were getting repetitious.

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"Stillness" is a slightly different Mendes. And it takes only that little bit for Mendes to be great. You can really enjoy this one. R.R.

J. F. MURPHY & FREE FLOWING SALT: *Almost Home*. J. F. Murphy (vocals, piano, bass, guitar); Free Flowing Salt (instrumental accompaniment and backing vocals, Murphy arr.). *Rock 'n' Roll Band (I and II); Sing Your Song; Waiting Hymn of the Republic; Northbound Train; First Born; Almost Home*; and four others. MGM SE 4708 \$4.98.

Performance: Promising
Recording: Very good

J. F. Murphy is a triple-threat man and if he doesn't make it as a singer, well, he's a better songwriter . . . and if he doesn't make it as a songwriter, well, he's a better arranger anyway. In fact, he's an extraordinary arranger; he only goes overboard occasionally at a time when arrangers all about him are diving into the deep with every song. I shudder to think what some of the hacks running around loose now would do with such a diversified and talented band as this one. The work of reedman Ron Allard would be massacred, for one thing, but Murphy uses it very nicely.

This one isn't as bluesy as Murphy's first re-

coding, and I still think he's a better singer of bluesy pieces than of anything else—his voice doesn't sound natural unless it's tense. Nevertheless, this is a better recording than his first, with generally better songs, and Murphy shows more maturity as a performer. As a songwriter, he sometimes seems on the point of exploding in a fit of talent big enough to upset the balance of payments or something, but he never quite does it. He comes closest with the title song (but does an even better job of arranging it). *Northbound Train* is a good illustration of his problems as a writer; it has a good, driving rock melody but it has some cliché-bogged lyrics about feeling like Easy Rider in a one-horse town who is "goin' where no one will care how I wear my hair."

Well, it isn't the greatest of records, but Murphy is coming along nicely. It makes you feel his next one will be much better. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ODETTA: *Sings Paul McCartney, Randy Newman, James Taylor, Elton John, Keith Richard, Mick Jagger, Don Cooper, John Buckley Wilkin, Bernie Taupin, and Odetta*. Odetta (vocals); orchestra, Odetta and Elton John arr. *Take Me to the Pilot; Mama Told Me Not to Come; Every Night; Hit or Miss; Give a Damn; My God and I; Lo and Behold; Bless the Children; No Expectations; Movin' it On*. POLYDOR 24 4048 \$4.98.

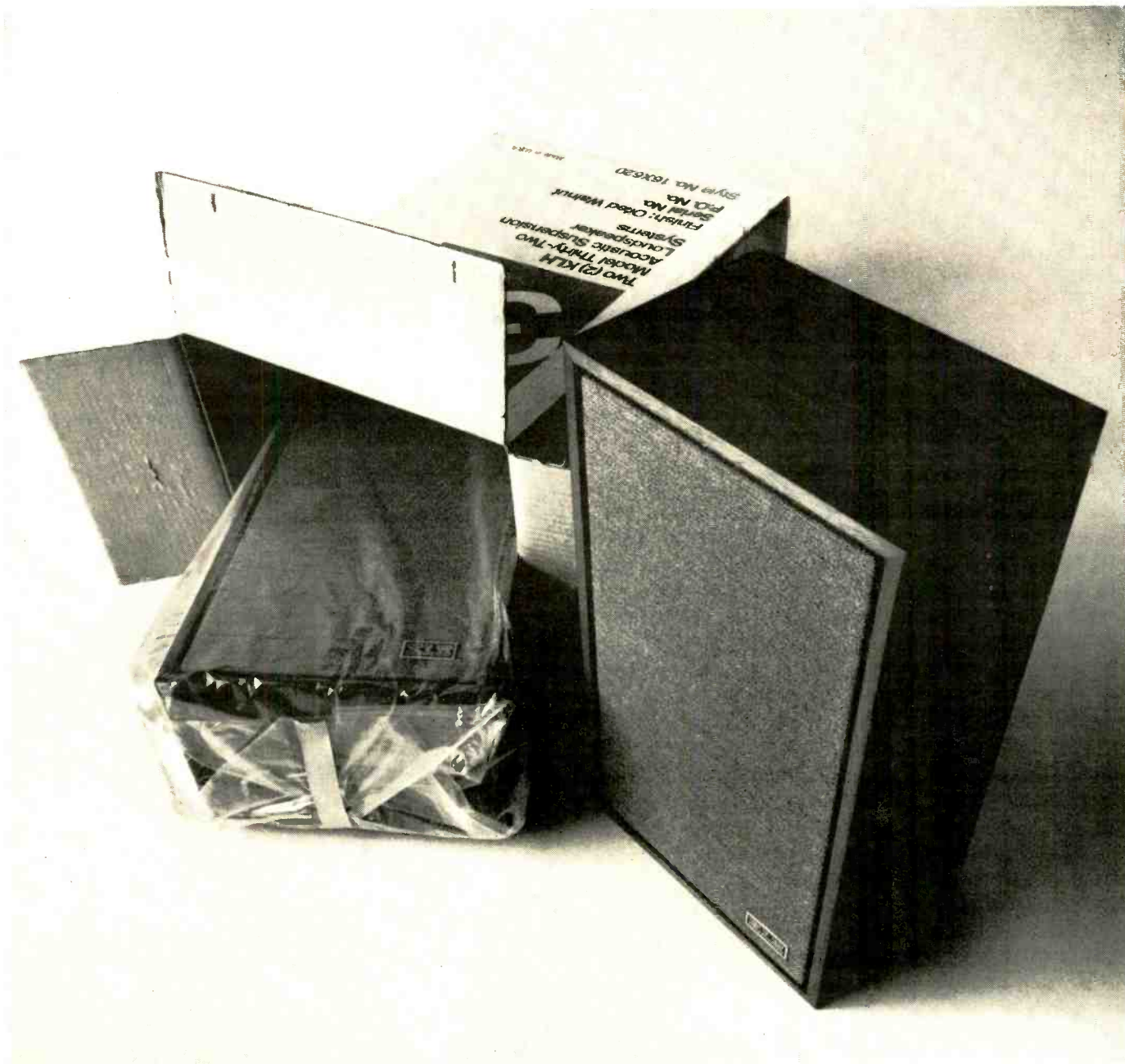
Performance: Superlative Odetta
Recording: Good

If someone could pass a law that all movements, protests, revolutions, minority groups, and smarting lovers *had* to have Odetta, the most luminous folksinger of them all, singing their theme songs, oh, what glorious uprisings we would have! I mean, have you ever thought of doing the rumba to the New York Urban Coalition League's theme song, *Give a Damn*? "If you take the train with me/Uptown through the misery/Of ghetto streets in morning light/They're always night"—cha, cha, cha! I'm not being facetious. I'm as dead serious as I know Odetta must be. She also takes white composers' songs and makes them black . . . right down to their souls. James Taylor, Paul McCartney, Mick Jagger, Randy Newman, and Elton John. . . . Believe me, the color change is most flattering to these talented gentlemen. I suspect that super-arrogant sex symbol Mick Jagger never knew such paths existed in his work. Odetta takes the snarly Elton John hit *Take Me to the Pilot* and shakes it into a shaggy-dog love song I could almost learn to have around the house (not as Elton sings it, however). And she teases the whine out of Randy Newman's *Mama Told Me Not to Come* and makes me laugh. Odetta, since she first spun into earshot in 1956, has always kept her style moving forward. She hasn't stopped now. She's just more determined to get things right on! R.R.

SAVOY BROWN: *Looking In*. Savoy Brown (vocals and instrumentals). *Gypsy; Poor Girl; Money Can't Save Your Soul; Sunday Night; Looking In*; and four others. PARROT PAS 71042 \$4.98.

Performance: Lame English blues/rock
Recording: Very good

Nope, I don't dig Savoy Brown. They have generally impressed me as one of the less competent of the imitative English blues-rock
(Continued on page 96)



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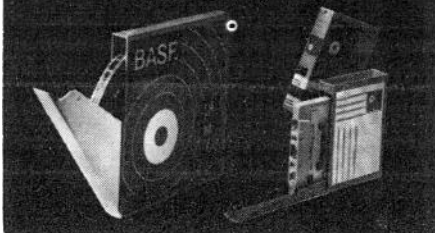
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groups, and nothing occurs in this new release to change my mind. That they have managed to survive this long in the maelstrom of the pop business is a wonder to me, but I really should know better. Lame English blues bands always do well here, especially if they keep the tunes simple and the dialect funky (and the bass loud). Given those requisites, Savoy Brown will probably be around for years. Aargh. . . . D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

KATHLEEN SMITH: *Kathy Smith*. Kathleen Smith (vocals); instrumental accompaniment, Bill Shepard arr. *Topanga; What Nancy Knows; A Vision of Two Saints; End of World; Same Old Lady; Blackbird and the Pearl; Russell: Gemini II; If I Could Touch You; Circles of Love*. STORMY FOREST SFS 6003 \$4.98.

Performance: Fascinating folk-pop

Recording: Very good

Once upon a time, Kathy Smith would have been called a folk singer. Now this charming balladeer is aptly representative of the music of today. Just as Judy Collins bridged that musical generation gap from straight-folk to "pop" singer, so now Kathy steps right across it. No longer do these ladies (and gents) tune up their trusty guitars and winsomely wail about *John Riley*. Like Miss Smith, today's folk-pop artists are more likely to be singing their own music, which, in Kathy's case, is lyrically and romantically excellent. Surrounding Kathy's charming, strong, and reflective voice are extremely talented musicians like Jeremy Steig on flute, Monte Dunn on lead guitar, Jim Fielder and Chuck Ramey on bass, and Bill La Vorgna on drums, among others.

The album has its own particular and unusual style—a kind of neo-Classicism, with a preference for small instrumental groups used in the concerto style, one instrument taking the part of the *concertino* against the *ripieno* of five or six instruments. I've just laid some very heavy responsibilities on this young lady's frail shoulders, and I don't mean to make her sound dull and cloddish or inside and cultish. On the contrary, for all of the classical roots the group has, it still has a very sensual rock beat that can run hot and cool. One of the most fantasy-filled and most beautiful songs on the album is titled *End of World*, and it is written by Miss Smith. There are shadings of jazz and Villa-Lobos, with Jeremy Steig's flute illuminating the tropical landscape. Some intros reminded me of Judy Collins singing *Bird on a Wire* or Nina Simone singing *Suzanne*. But Kathy swings immediately into her very own song and her very own styling. *What Nancy Knows* is one of the best examples. I'm impressed too with the sheer professionalism of the arrangements and instrumentalists, and Kathy herself is up to matching both elements. She is perfectly willing to use her voice as another instrumental thread to be woven in and out of this honest American musical fabric. Kathy and company are to be paid serious attention. R. R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CAT STEVENS: *Mona Bone Jakon*. Cat Stevens (vocals and instrumentals). *Lady D'Arbanville; Maybe You're Right; Pop Star; I Think I See the Light; Trouble*, and six others. A&M RECORDS SP 4260 \$4.98.

Performance: Gentle

Recording: Good

Seated at my stereo, headphones in place, I split the cellophane of this horrid-looking album, thinking: Lord preserve me from another trashy rock missive to assault my tired ears. To my delight, "Mona Bone Jakon" is neither trashy nor rock. The opening song instantly put a smile on my face. It was familiar to me, for it had been very popular in Spain when I was there last year. It was lovely, and now I could know its elusive name: *Lady D'Arbanville*. This hauntingly beautiful ballad was written by Cat Stevens, who also owns every other song on this album. The opening words are a nasally whining plea to his lady asking why she sleeps so still. A gentle rhythm of guitar and percussion, reminiscent of islands in the sun, takes up his plea and carries this eerie ballad from crest to crest. From then on every song was a pleasant adventure, gentle thoughts plainly spoken by an artist who is naturally free of kitsch.

Musically, Cat Stevens' sound is small, employing two guitars, percussion, piano, flute, and bass. His patterns are intricate, in a classical manner, and his personal style is so perfect that every sound seems to be telling you some small secret. The most intriguing part of this serendipitous musical trip is the mystery surrounding Cat Stevens. I got no information from the liner notes, because there are none. Who is he? Of course it is simple to find out, but I'm having such a good time listening to this record and enjoying my secret musical garden of verses that I don't really have to know. In the song *Time* there is a line that spins around in my head, borne on a bit of breezy melody: "I'm just a Coaster but my wheels won't go." No matter how I try I can't get it out of my mind. If you listen long enough to Cat Stevens I guarantee he'll have the same effect on you. R.R.

CAT STEVENS: *Tea for the Tillerman* (see Best of the Month, page 69)

DORIS TROY: Doris Troy (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Ain't that Cute; Special Care; Give Me Back My Dynamite; You Tore Me Up Inside; Games People Play*, and eight others. APPLE ST 3371 \$4.98, © 8XT 3371 \$6.98, © 4XT 3371 \$6.98.

Performance: Hammering soul

Recording: Very good

Miss Troy is petite, pretty, and more than talented, with a musical drive so persistent she creates an impact like an air hammer. Every now and again Doris' capable voice soars above the din, and she sounds fascinatingly like Roberta Flack. But these moments are too fleeting to give the album some desperately needed pacing. There are no shadows, no sweetness, no breathtaking moments.

Miss Troy is credited with composing the lyrics and the music on many of the songs included here, with assists from George Harrison, Steve Stills, Klaus Voorsman, and a few others. But even with a little help from these friends, the overall effect of Doris Troy and her album is that of a drill sergeant ordering his men to double time and then absent-mindedly forgetting about them. There's not one 'at ease' in the bunch. Pity. R.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

IKE & TINA TURNER: *Workin' Together*. Ike & Tina Turner (vocals); orchestra. *Workin' Together; (As Long As I Can) Get* (Continued on page 98)

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You When I Want You; The Way You Love Me; You Can Have It; Game of Love; and five others. LIBERTY LST 7650 \$4.98, ® B 7650 \$6.95, © LTR 9112 \$6.98, © C 1112 \$6.95.

Performance: Super
Recording: Very good

Superlatives seem to come as easily in describing this winning duo as the two of them seem able to make albums. The tone of this current gathering is typical Turner turn-on, guaranteed to keep you moving, and if you've been lucky enough to see Tina doing her thing in person, well . . . what can I say, except she has to be seen to be believed and appreciated. But Tina's a star even when audio is her only medium. She's the fastest, least inhibited, and most passionate performer of soul-rock-blues this side of camp. She sexily soul-screams her lyrics with all the fickleness of a truly liberated woman. But it's side two that deserves the most superlatives. For it's here that Ike and Tina get basic, black, and beautiful. *Funkier Than a Mosquito's Tweeter* is as rich as a plate of smothered pork chops and collard greens, with an arrangement that steals some of Sly and the Family Stone's black magic. If *Ooh Poo Pah Doo* starts off sounding like the flight of a bumblebee, rest assured that any bee would be stoned by the end of the song. *Let It Be* ends it all, and what can I do but patiently wait until the next time Ike & Tina decide to work together. I hope it's next week. R. R.

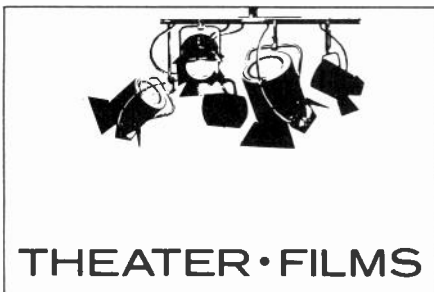
NANCY WILSON: *Now I'm a Woman.* Nancy Wilson (vocals); orchestra, Bobby Martin, Thom Bell, and Lenny Pakula arr. and cond. *Now I'm a Woman; Joe; (They Long to Be) Close to You; Make It with You; The Real Me;* and five others. CAPITOL ST 541 \$4.98, ® M 541 \$6.98, © 8XT 541 \$6.98, © 4XT 541 \$6.98.

Performance: Another Wilson for the collection
Recording: Okay

I don't know why Nancy Wilson felt the need to title her new release "Now I'm a Woman." I never doubted it for a moment. It's hard to imagine sexy, loving Nancy as a little brat, even though there is a touched-up photo of Nancy as a child on the backside of the cover. But then Nancy's photos have adorned so many jackets by now that art directors must be frantic trying to find a new way to present her. Don't get me wrong. I love Nancy Wilson and look forward to each new photograph with the same anticipation as a skeet shooter waiting for the next clay pigeon. But I do have a suggestion. Next time all those heads of departments have to pow-wow over Miss Wilson's album design, why doesn't someone suggest that fabulous photographer Skrebneski who loves to picture elegant ladies nude?

Let's attend to Miss Wilson's main vocation, music. She hasn't failed us. She's as good as ever. That is, if you like last year's hits warmed over. *(They Long to Be) Close To You, The Long and Winding Road, and Bridge Over Troubled Water* are all nice songs, but I am sick of them. So once more, I'm forced to take refuge in the less-known selections of side two. *Let's Fall in Love All Over Again* is a wildly gushy old-fashioned love song, and I'm wild about it. *Make It with You* is my favorite and for me the flirt song of the year. Next time I wish she'd try *How Little We Know*. With that song and the Skrebneski photograph Nancy could make 1971 a very happy year. R. R.

98



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STORY THEATRE. Original-cast recording. Peter Bonerz, Hamid Hamilton Camp, Melinda Dillon, Mary Frann, Valerie Harper, Richard Libertini, Paul Sand, and Richard Schall (performers); the True Brethren, accompaniments; Paul Sills, director. *Henny Penny; Two Crows; The Little Peasant; The Bremen Town Musicians; The Robber Bridegroom; Is He Fat?; Venus and the Car; The*

John Springer Associates



Story Theatre:
Richard Schaal,
Valerie Harper, and
Hamid Hamilton Camp in
"The Little Peasant"

Master Thief; The Fisherman and His Wife; and *The Golden Goose.* COLUMBIA SG 30415 two discs \$6.98, © SGA 30415 \$6.98.

Performance: Meticulously right
Recording: Exemplary

A high-spirited, stylized, urbane kind of humor has been applied to the fairy tales of the brothers Grimm in Paul Sills' *Story Theatre* with a precision and spaciousness that transform entertainment into art. When the show is seen on stage (or on educational television, where it was also performed last Christmas) there is only a pretty pattern on a raked floor, a blank screen on which colored projections appear to evoke moods and weather, and a rock group called the True Brethren to aid the imagination of the adult or child lucky enough to be in the audience. The characters appear in costume but use no props or sets, just their voices and a kind of exuberant choreography to transform themselves into the peasants, parsons, animals, thieves, kings, and simpletons who figure in the tales, which they act out with ingenuity and charm but entirely without the archness that is the plague of children's theater.

By and large, the soundtrack alone, in this stunning stereo album, is surprisingly effective in conveying the spirit as well as the letter of the performance. When Henny Penny and her alarmist friends go off to warn the king that the sky is falling, Joe McDonald's *I'm Fixin' to Die*

Rag, with its wry musical commentary on the folly of the American presence in Vietnam, provides an apt counterpoint to the action. Melinda Dillon puts all her art into the kind of sly caricature that made her memorable as the biology teacher's wife in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*—and it's there for the relishing in her voice alone. Linda Lavin, as the high-strung Henny Penny and in other outlandish portraits, is exquisitely mad. Hamid Hamilton Camp is masterfully everywhere—singing Bob Dylan's *Dear Landlord* to underline the mood of "The Master Thief" and *I'll Be Your Baby Tonight* for an up-to-date slant on "The Robber Bridegroom," making a properly oafish *paisano* in "The Little Peasant," and leaping out of the sea as a droll but solemn flounder with the power to grant wishes in "The Fisherman and His Wife." The rest of the cast is meticulously right from start to finish. And Mr. Sills' stylish direction keeps up the same *allegro* yet undriven pace that it does on the stage.

Especially deserving of mention is the exemplary engineering job that has been done on

these records—the absolute clarity of voice recording, the resourceful use of stereo, the full, vibrant presence of the music, the never obtrusive sound effects. With both records going for the price of one in a brightly designed package, *Story Theatre* in every way is both a boon and a bargain. P.K.

THE STRAWBERRY STATEMENT. Original-soundtrack recording. Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young; Buffy Sainte-Marie; The Red Mountain Jug Band and Thunderclap Newman (vocals and instrumentals). Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm cond.; MGM Studio Orchestra, Ian Freebairn-Smith cond. *The Circle Game; Market Basket; Down by the River; Long Time Gone; Cyclatron; Something in the Air; Also Sprach Zarathustra (excerpt); The Loner; Coit Tower; Fishin' Blues; Marcello; Concerto in D Minor (excerpts); Helpless; Pocket Band;* and *Give Peace a Chance.* MGM 25E 14 ST two discs \$7.98.

Performance: Overstylish and overlong
Recording: Excellent

The Strawberry Statement is another in that seemingly endless onslaught of high-strung movies about the campus scene—this time the story of an incredibly blameless, agreeable member of the college crew team who gets involved in a student strike that winds up with an orgy of police brutality enacted in excruciating

STEREO REVIEW

detail and in full color before your bleary eyes. As in *Zabriskie Point*, the score is supplied by a variety of rock groups, but while in Antonioni's film the music is overheard rather than heard—an ironical background commentary—the music here is aggressively “relevant” and interwoven with the scenes as elaborately as the restless and over-ingenious “with-it” photography that is making it impossible to tell the difference these days between a feature film and a TV commercial. MGM, whose young president, Mike Curb, is notoriously eager to keep his company young, provides two full discs of the stuff, with Buffy Sainte-Marie giving her all to the key title song, *The Circle Game*, and Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young on hand together and separately for long, long workouts of songs like *Down by the River* and *The Loner*. These offer humorously macabre comments on the action, and moments of bucolic escape from it, as when the Red Mountain Jug Band does *Fishin' Blues*. Since MGM owns the rights to it, perhaps, the introductory measures of Strauss' *Also Sprach Zarathustra* are dragged in (an encore for 2001), and passages from Marcello's Concerto in D Minor provide an affecting interlude in a record store for the lovers in the movie. I'm inclined to suspect that one record of all this might just have been enough. P. K.

TWO BY TWO (Rodgers - Charnin). Original-cast recording. Danny Kaye, Walter Willison, Madeline Kahn, Marilyn Cooper (vocals); orchestra, Jay Blackton cond. COLUMBIA S 30338 \$5.98, © SR 30338 \$9.98, © SA 30338 \$6.98, © ST 30338 \$6.98.

Performance: Bravura
Recording: Excellent

Oscar Straus wrote one of the immortal melodies of this century when he was well past eighty—for the film *La Ronde*. I have no idea how old Richard Rodgers is (probably younger than he looks—those annual tributes from Ed Sullivan can take their toll), but he too has written one of the loveliest songs of his career for *Two By Two*. Since it is among Rodgers' best, it automatically becomes an adornment of the American musical theater. It is called *I Do Not Know a Day I Did Not Love You*; it is sung at the beginning of side two of this disc by Walter Willison, and reprised a little later by him and Tricia O'Neil. It is one of those magical waltz-like ballads, starting on a simple chord, that Rodgers has made so extraordinarily and uniquely his own. For approximately five minutes or so, during the playing of these two bands, one feels the magnificence of Rodgers' talent, and is reminded that he is one of the geniuses of the golden age of American musical comedy. And since musical comedy is one of only two arts that America can lay claim to originating (the other is film), I can't imagine anyone not taking some pride in the best achievements of this genre.

The rest of the album is pretty much a trial, however—unless you are a fan of the talents of Danny Kaye. Kaye's performing personality, a maudlin mixture of Harpo Marx and Charles Trénet, is overpoweringly apparent throughout the album: he is heard on almost every band. He makes the show sound almost as stultifyingly dull as it is rumored to be in the theater. The only other bright spot is the performance of Madeline Kahn. Here she is given something to sing called *The Golden Ram*, and even after hearing it twice I still cannot believe it. So *Two By Two* may be a one-song show. But what a song! P.R.

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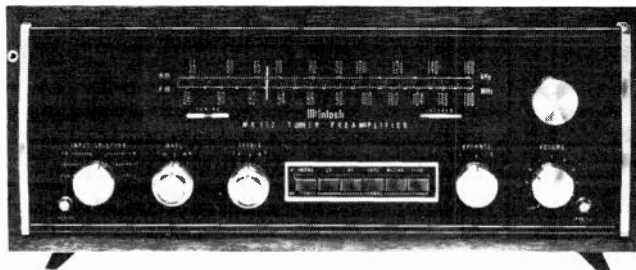
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BESSIE SMITH

World's Greatest Blues Singer

Columbia is reissuing
160 songs by the
Empress of the Blues
in a five-volume series

By Henry Pleasants



BESSIE SMITH is at last coming into her own. Her grave in the Mount Lawn Cemetery at Sharon Hill, Pennsylvania, unmarked since her death in 1937, has finally received a headstone, thanks to the late Janis Joplin and a Philadelphia nurse, Juanita Green. More importantly, for an appreciation of what she meant to American music, Columbia is reissuing all the 160 records surviving from the 180 she made for them between 1923 and 1933.

Not that CBS has hitherto been remiss in its stewardship of the Bessie Smith legacy. They continued to record her in the late Twenties when sales of her records were declining. John Hammond brought her back from premature obscurity in 1933 to make four sides for the British market. And in 1951 CBS issued an admirable four-volume set, "The Bessie Smith Story," comprising a representative cross-section of her art and her recording career.

The new project will offer ten discs, to be released in five volumes, each priced at \$5.98, and arranged sequentially in such a way as to permit the entire series to be played through chronologically with only one turnover at the conclusion of ten sides. Thus, the first volume of the series to be released gives us the first sixteen and the last sixteen of Bessie's records. "Any Woman's Blues," the second volume, also just released, contains her second sixteen and next-to-last sixteen recordings.

Volume one of the series is titled "Bessie Smith, the World's Greatest Blues Singer," and there can be but few who will quarrel with that. She is more familiarly remembered as the Empress of the Blues, and she was an empress, all right, imperial and imperious in her singing, in her appearance, in her demeanor—and in her cups. As is true of all great rulers, she not only dominated her own time, but also influenced decisively the times that came after her. So much that we treasure in American music either stems from her or was illuminated by her genius.

Louis Armstrong, Mildred Bailey, Billie Holiday, Ethel Waters, Mahalia Jackson, Jack Teagarden, and many more—they all heard her or heard her records, and they never forgot what they heard. And she was not inspiring and influential as a singer only. Jazz instrumentalists worked closely with singers in the Twenties, as they would again in the swing era. Among those who can be heard backing Bessie on records are Louis Armstrong, Tommy Ladnier, Red Allen, James P. Johnson, Coleman Hawkins, Jimmy Harrison, and Fletcher Henderson. Many others, including Sidney Bechet, worked with her on the road, and countless more were among her devoted admirers. How much she owed to the instrumentalists—and how much they owed to her—is impossible to determine. There was give and take, and we are all the richer for it.

Her influence was not acknowledged immediately, nor is it fully appreciated to this day, probably because it was the devices of her art that survived rather than the material that they ennobled. The material most congenial to her was too rough, too uncompromising—and too homespun. She was, in many respects, an anachronism, defiantly black—or bronze—not only in a white world, but in a black community which was, at that time, aspiring to white respectability and sophistica-

tion. She was a rural Southerner in a black entertainment business dominated by urban Northerners. She was not too late on the scene to address her own people in their own language, and to achieve both fame and fortune. But she was late enough to learn what it means to go out of fashion without resources capable of being adapted to new styles.

Bessie Smith made her first recording on February 16, 1923, and the progress of her career thereafter can be traced with generally satisfactory accuracy, her recording career precisely. Where she was, or when, prior to 1923, is something else again, including the date, if not the place, of her birth. The place was Chattanooga, Tennessee. The date is given variously as 1894, 1897, 1898, and 1900.

A traditional story that she learned her art as an apprentice to Ma Rainey ("Mother of the Blues") touring with a company of F.S. Wolcott's Rabbit Foot Minstrels is now generally discounted. Certainly, from a very early age, she worked the Negro tent show and Southern theater circuit. Frank Walker, later to supervise her recordings for Columbia and to be her personal manager, heard her in a Selma, Alabama, gin mill in 1917. Ethel Waters appeared on the same bill with her at a theater in Atlanta, Georgia, probably in 1918. Bessie was already star of the show, and Ethel, who was born in Chester, Pennsylvania, remembers hearing her complaining to the manager about "these Northern bitches" and telling Ethel herself: "You know damn well that you can't sing worth a -----!" Bessie came north in 1920, worked for a time in Atlantic City, and later settled in Philadelphia.

She wasn't the first black singer to record. Mamie Smith (no relation) was the first, with Perry Bradford's *That Thing Called Love and You Can't Keep a Good Man Down* for Okeh in February, 1920. The enormous sale of her *Crazy Blues* shortly afterwards revealed the existence of a black market for black artists. "Race records," as they came to be called, were already a prospering industry when Bessie came along, and she had a hard time breaking in. She auditioned several times, and was turned down even by Harry Pace, an early black entrepreneur and partner of W.C. Handy, the star of whose Black Swan Label was Ethel Waters. To Northern ears Bessie sounded too crude. Her behavior was pretty crude, too. One story has it that she disgusted Pace when she held up a take, hollering, "Hold on, let me spit!"—and spat!

Her break came when Frank Walker took over race records at Columbia. His first directive to pianist Clarence Williams, already installed as Judge of Race Records, was to get that Bessie Smith he had heard six years earlier in Selma. Williams told him about the previous tests and the verdict that Bessie's voice was too rough. Walker replied: "You just get her here." Williams went to Philadelphia and got her.

THE first record was *Tain't Nobody's Business If I Do*, and the second was *Down Hearted Blues*, a twelve-bar blues by Alberta Hunter and Lovie Austin, which, as sung by Miss Hunter, had already been a best seller in the Paramount race series. Bessie's record sold some 750,000 copies. She returned to Philadelphia with \$125 for each record side in her pocket, married a Philadelphia police-

man, Jack Gee, and set up housekeeping at 1226 Webster Street.

Down Hearted Blues included the line: "Got the world in a jug, the stopper in my hand." And that's about how it was. In the next six years Bessie's records sold somewhere between five and ten million copies, and she toured the country as one of the highest-paid stars of the black entertainment world. There was just one flaw in the picture. The world in her jug was spelled G-I-N. As George Avakian put it, wryly, in his liner notes to volume one of the 1951 release, "she drank to excess in her youth and increased her capacity as she rose to fame." Standing 5'9" and weighing in at 210 pounds, she was a formidable drunk.

THOSE who heard Bessie Smith in her prime have their memories, and those memories are vivid. She was obviously a tremendous performer. For the rest of us there are only these records. They tell us little about the live performer before a live audience, but a great deal about what she sang and how. They tell us a lot, too, about the singers who came after her. And they raise some pertinent questions. The most fundamental of these is how to reconcile what we hear with the description of Bessie by Ethel Waters and others as a "shouter," for there is nothing on any record she ever made that sounds like shouting. Indeed, she seems, on the recorded evidence, to have been incapable of making a strident or otherwise undisciplined sound. Her contemporaries made many. Bessie's tone is always rich and full and round and warm. The placement is wonderfully forward, and the production is natural, easy, and fluent.

The explanation lies, I suspect, in the fact that what we hear rarely sounds like singing, either, in any conventional or traditional sense of the term. It is more like an ultimately lyrical kind of speech, and pretty loud, forceful, and forthright, as would be required of one accustomed to addressing large congregations before the days of amplification. Her breath was heavy on the vocal cords. The refinements of her vocal art—and there were many—were not dynamic. They were melodic and rhythmic. And within a limited range from top to bottom they called upon a limitless variety of pitch, color, emphasis, and rubato.

Compared with the great black singers of a later time, she was handicapped by an astonishingly short vocal compass. This may well be why she was at her best in custom-made or traditional material. When she sang popular songs she altered tune and time to suit herself—and her range. She rarely ventured outside the single octave c'-c'', and when she did she had little to show for the exertion. Above the upper C the voice became thin and uncharacteristic. Below the lower C it trailed off in barely audible cadences on barely identifiable pitches. Only the exceptional number, on records, covers the full octave, barring the occasional higher or lower pitch just touched in a trail-off or appoggiatura. Mostly she remained within the span of a fifth or a sixth.

Her art lay not in the seamless movement from one pitch to another in the diatonic major or minor modes, but in her exploration and exploitation of the uncharted areas between the pitches. In terms of what she was

communicating, and how, she had all the range she needed.

What has been said of her dealing with pitch applies equally to her handling of rhythm. She accepted the 2/4 and 4/4 of European music, just as she and other black artists accepted the basic pitches of the European scales, but she refused to be bound by them. Like most jazz musicians of the Twenties, she sang pretty much on the beat; but, more than with most musicians excepting Armstrong and Sidney Bechet, it was a beat of her own making. On only one of her scores of sessions for Columbia did she use drums, and in the theater she insisted on the drummer's restricting himself to brushes. She did not, apparently, want to be dominated rhythmically by any drummer. And it should be remembered that jazz drummers in those days were less sophisticated, less swinging, than the best of them are today. Bessie was a swinger, even at the very slow tempos she favored.

Her approach to diction, or enunciation, was all of a piece with her approach to melody and rhythm. She was always a talker—or moaner—and as such she took pains to make herself understood. The vocabulary may be strange, even incomprehensible, at times, to the uninitiated, but the enunciation is usually distinct. At the same time it is free. Like Mahalia Jackson, she had no inhibitions about changing vowels to suit the melodic context. She added syllables and left syllables out, added or repeated a word here and there, and so on. Unlike the classical singer, she sang on and through the consonants, as the best popular singers, both black and white, have done ever since.

Appreciating her on records has its problems. Played one after another, the tracks may seem almost identical in melodic substance and delivery, one blues sounding very like another. But so, also, to the uninitiated and the inattentive, do Bach's fugues. As with the fugues, it is better to take Bessie Smith's tracks one at a time, playing each one over and over again, first memorizing the words, then concentrating on one specific aspect of the performance: the pattern of the pitches, the rubato, the embellishments, the slurs, the cadences, the accompanying instrumentalists, and so forth. To play any side right through, one track after another, except as an initial reconnaissance of the terrain, is no way of getting to know Bessie Smith.

The new Columbia series is ideally suited to this kind of concentrated listening. It's all mono, of course, and the earlier records are acoustic, but Larry Hiller's engineering is superb. Surface noise has been almost totally eliminated without loss of essential tone quality, and there are no artificial stereo or echo-reinforcement gimmicks. The fact that we now hear the less successful as well as the best of her records helps, too. One can often learn more about great singers from their failures than from their triumphs. The liner notes by Chris Albertson, co-producer with John Hammond of the whole issue, are exemplary, offering all that might be desired in the way of biographical information and details of recording and editing procedures.

In view of all that has been said of the greatness, the uniqueness of Bessie Smith's art, one wonders, inevitably, how to explain her decline after 1929 or 1930. My own proposition is that it was not so much a de-

cline as a disorientation. Her drinking was no help, of course, and there was the Depression and the fact that Bessie was never a radio artist and never played what her black colleagues called "white time." But there was something more fundamental than any of those factors. A clue is offered by a quotation from the *Savannah Tribune*, a colored newspaper, in the June 10, 1922, issue of *Billboard*. Ethel Waters had just finished an engagement there, and the *Tribune* commented: "Her departure from the shouting, bellying sort of blues singers we have been accustomed to hearing was a source of much pleasure to local music lovers. . . . Her interpretation of blues singing was, indeed, refreshing."

There was no reference here to Bessie Smith specifically, to be sure; but one remembers how Miss Waters and others consistently referred to Bessie's "shouting." The term, as they used it, did not mean what is normally understood when any of us talks about another person's "shouting." As Bessie's black contemporaries used it, "shouting" was associated with a category of performer, and in their eyes it was a low one.

Bessie Smith was a primitive, both as a person and a performer. She came north in the wake of a migration that brought hundreds of thousands of "her own people" to the big industrial and cultural centers. To them she was a voice from back home, and a great voice, but to a younger generation unrooted in the rural South, or only too anxious to forsake its roots, she must have begun to seem old-fashioned, even embarrassing.

BESSIE sensed it. When John Hammond brought her back to New York for her last recordings in 1933, she refused categorically to sing any blues, arguing that they had gone out of fashion. Even on the sides made in 1930 and 1931, she was beginning to shy away from the very material that, in the mid-Twenties, had brought out the greatness in her.

The finest of the late records on this new issue is *Long Old Road*, dating from June 11, 1931. Here you have the old Bessie singing: "You can't trust nobody. You might as well be alone." Only four hundred copies were pressed.

She knew what she was singing about. She was alone—she who, in 1925, had sung so exuberantly: "I ain't gonna play no second fiddle; I'm used to playing lead!" Her partner on that recording was Louis Armstrong.

BESSIE SMITH: *The World's Greatest Blues Singer.* Bessie Smith (vocals), Clarence Williams (piano), Fletcher Henderson (piano), and other accompanists. *Down Hearted Blues; Baby Won't You Please Come Home; Nobody in Town Can Bake a Sweet Jelly Roll Like Mine; Moan, You Mourners; Need a Little Sugar in My Bowl;* and twenty-seven others. COLUMBIA GP 33 two discs \$5.98.

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STEREO TAPE

Reviewed by NOEL COPPAGE • DAVID HALL • PAUL KRESH

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BELLINI: *Norma: Oh! Rimembranza; Oh, non tremare; Deh! con te; Mira, o Norma; Sì, fino all'ore estreme.* **ROSSINI:** *Semiramide: Mitrane . . . Serbami ognor si fido; No! no ti lascio; Ebben . . . a te; Ferisci . . .* *Giorno d'orrore.* Joan Sutherland (soprano); Marilyn Horne (mezzo-soprano); London Symphony Orchestra, Richard Bonyngue cond. LONDON © M 31171 \$7.95.

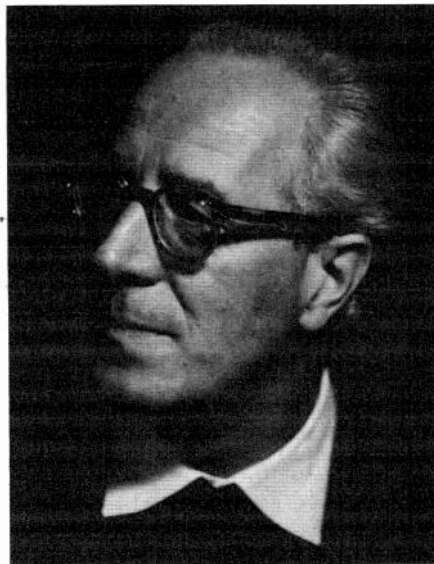
Performance: *Bellissima*
Recording: Excellent
Playing Time: 57'40"

Norma takes place in pre-Christian Gaul and has to do with a love triangle involving a Druid priestess, a Roman proconsul, and a temple virgin. In the end, the unchaste priestess and the proconsul who once rejected her climb up onto a funeral pyre for a blazing finale. But it isn't to see old Gaul that the customers come flocking. It's to hear the princess and the virgin sing some of the most spectacular *bel canto* arias ever penned for the human voice. A program offering the duets between them, therefore, may be just what the customers want in this case, since it dispenses with the story altogether, and almost entirely with the proconsul, leaving the field to the warbling ladies. The present cassette was culled from the complete recording first reviewed in these pages when it was released in 1965 by RCA, and again only a couple of months ago when London reissued the same set. Both reviewers faulted Miss Sutherland's husband, Richard Bonyngue, for his weak conducting, but that aspect of things is not so greatly in evidence in the highlights. What does stop you in your tracks is the way Miss Sutherland, whose *bel canto* is about as *bel* as the style can get, combines her skill with the dramatic and vocal flair of Marilyn Horne for a series of great operatic moments; they certainly bring out the best in each other.

As for *Semiramide*, it too tells a silly tale—this time about a Babylonian princess who led a violent and melodramatic life around 800 B.C. All that usually is performed today is its exhilarating extended overture, but here, as in *Norma*, there are rich and flamboyant duet

passages in Rossini's most extravagant manner. Miss Horne and Miss Sutherland make the most of them, and those dazzling passages familiar from the overture provide stunning accompaniments. The sound is top-drawer Ampex, but if you want to know anything about the operas beyond what I've just told, you'll have to turn to the encyclopedias. Nothing ac-

Decca



EUGEN JOCHUM
Spirited performance of Bruckner's First

companies the cassette by way of reading material—indeed, you can scarcely make out the credits. P.K.

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 1, in C Minor.* Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Eugen Jochum cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON © 923123 \$6.98.

Performance: Forceful, dramatic
Recording: Good
Playing Time: 47'

As of this writing, the 1966 Eugen Jochum recording of the Bruckner First Symphony is the only version listed in the Schwann and Harrison catalogs, though it will probably not be long before the Bernard Haitink-Amsterdam Concertgebouw performance on Philips becomes available.

The Bruckner First is no gigantic "cathedral in tones," like Nos. 5, 7, 8, and 9, but rather a relatively terse and forceful "*Sturm und Drang*" piece, and really daring for its time—1866, a decade before Brahms' First Symphony had its premiere.

Jochum, as is his wont, stresses the sharp

contrasts between lyrical and dramatic elements in both dynamics and tempo, and the performance as a whole is a fine and spirited one. The recorded sound is excellent, the tape hiss at a tolerable minimum. D.H.

DUKAS: *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (see ROSSINI-RESPIGHI)

LISZT: *Hungarian Rhapsodies: Nos. 2, 4, 5; Hungarian Fantasia for Piano and Orchestra.* Shura Cherkassky (piano); Berlin Philharmonic, Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON © 3300022 \$6.98.

Performance: Glittery
Recording: Good
Playing Time: 53'40"

The original tapings of these performances were done in 1961 (*Rhapsody No. 5, Hungarian Fantasia*) and 1968 (*Rhapsodies Nos. 2 and 4*), and have appeared in various combinations on both disc and cassette. The veteran pianist Shura Cherkassky brings a fine, airy glitter to the solo part of the *Hungarian Fantasia*, and Karajan throughout strives with notable success to bring out the color and folkish freshness of this and the all-too-familiar *Second Rhapsody*. Musically, the most interesting piece in this package is the *Rhapsody No. 5*, a somber and highly effective "Heroic Elegy." The orchestral performance is splendid, and the sound is good. D. H.

ROSSINI: *Semiramide—excerpts* (see BELLINI)

ROSSINI-RESPIGHI: *La Boutique fantasque.* **DUKAS:** *The Sorcerer's Apprentice.* Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti cond. LONDON © A 30605 \$4.95.

Performance: Tasty musical snacks
Recording: Excellent
Playing Time: 49' 20"

Profundities were not Rossini's long suite, but wit and melody were. Throughout his life, when he wasn't baking ambitious operas, he cooked up dozens of tiny musical hors-d'oeuvres. In fact, he called one of them "Radishes, Anchovies, Pickles and Butter Themes in Variations." During World War I, Sergei Diaghilev ran across a volume of these delicious trifles (together called *Péchés de Vieillesse*, "Sins of Old Age"), and asked Ottorino Respighi to put them together into a ballet score. The result was *La Boutique fantasque*, and the choreography by Massine is all about a toy shop in which the toys turn on the customers when they find out they are going to be sold. Respighi's sparkling score, a singularly light-handed effort for so heavy an orchestra-

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel tape
- Ⓛ = four-track cartridge
- Ⓢ = eight-track cartridge
- ⓐ = cassette

The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats (if available) follow it.

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ; all others are stereo.

tor, is like one of those hats from which a magician pulls an endless series of brightly colored scarves. It spills out in unexpected bursts of continuously grateful melody. Above all, it dances in the air, and to keep it in the air requires a conductor who does not push too hard to underline the obvious. Solti is just the man for the assignment, allowing the gaiety to speak for itself in a straightforward but never lackadaisical fashion, letting the musical jokes make their little points without pulling at your lapel to make sure they're going over. The Israel Philharmonic responds with glorious tone and sharp precision in this tape of the entire score. *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, relying as it does more on atmosphere and less on pulse, has received more interesting treatments elsewhere, but it is played on this tape with a punctilious respect for rhythmic values too often exaggerated for the sake of color, and it rounds out a joyful program satisfactorily. Notes are included. P.K.

ENTERTAINMENT

DOLGRU YOL TURKISH ENSEMBLE: *Turkish Delight*. Dolgru Yol Turkish Ensemble (vocals and instrumentals). *Come to Me; Unhappy Love; There Is Fire; Untruthful World; Bottles, Bottles; Green Meadows; I Cut a Watermelon*; and seven others. MONITOR © M 51481 \$6.95.

Performance: Lives up to its name
Recording: Good
Playing Time: 38' 40"

Close your eyes and pouf! . . . you're in Turkey, land of veiled ladies, hookah pipes, and shadowy mosques, with one foot in Asia, the other in Europe, and you're loose in a world of belly dancers and bargains in sheepskin coats. The music of Turkey is exotic and seductive—as anyone who has seen movies like *Topkapi* knew all along—and can be ordered in two flavors: Turkish Traditional and Gypsy Modern. This Ampex cassette comes, as so many of them do, accompanied by no information at all. At first I thought I had been sent a little box of *halvah*. They play their cards pretty close to their vest at Ampex. A little sleuthing turned up the names of the performers, though, the Dolgru Yol Turkish Ensemble, and a spy little group they are. What we think of as really Turkish music turns up promptly on side one. Here the characteristic melismas of the vocalists and those hootchie-kootchie undulations can be heard in their full allure. The proceedings open, in fact, with an invitation by a dark-throated girl to "come here, embrace me, and love me." The mood then turns gloomy with a sad ballad about a young man who thinks he's coming down with tuberculosis because the girl of his dreams *doesn't* love him, followed by three more songs of unrequited love. On side two the Turks show their gypsy profile, with songs about fickle girls who drive their lovers mad with jealousy, the joys of exchanging wedding presents, and a father who runs through a whole list of prospective husbands for his daughter, Kirosh. She turns down every one of them until the last. How about Sosliah? Would she like to marry Sosliah? Yes, she will marry Sosliah. A happy ending, Allah be praised. There's also a song in homage to shoeshine boys, an instrumental dance, and an item about a gypsy chieftain with beautiful daughters. I tell you all this because there won't be much chance of your finding it out from the package. Otherwise, "Turkish Delight" lives up to its name. P. K.

APRIL 1971

THE INK SPOTS: *The Best of the Ink Spots*. The Ink Spots (vocals and instrumentals). *If I Didn't Care; My Prayer; Whispering Grass; It's Funny to Everyone but Me; We'll Meet Again; To Each His Own; Do I Worry? Address Unknown; Someone's Rocking My Dream Boat; Street of Dreams; Until the Real Thing Comes Along*; and thirteen others. DECCA © 73-1010 \$9.95.

Performance: Black lavender
Recording: Good transfer job
Playing Time: 73'36"

It's more than a quarter of a century since the bland Ink Spot "sound" began to invade the American airwaves, and for many years it seemed to us who were growing old with them that this quartet would be with us always. The first Ink Spots were Bill Kenny, Charlie Fuqua, Ivory Watson, and Orville "Hoppy" Jones. (Later Watson and Jones were replaced by Bill Bowen and Herb Kenny). At first the group took what used to be known as a "jive" approach to a tune, but then they invented the honeyed Harlem sound that made them famous in a record of *If I Didn't Care*, and

Buddah



MELANIE
An American Piaf

people started lining up at nightclubs and outside the old New York Paramount to bask in their glow. This cassette, which plays for nearly an hour and a quarter, seems to contain all the hits they ever sang: *If I Didn't Care, We Three, To Each His Own, Address Unknown, I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire*—a whole anthology of musical artifacts from the days when what came out of a jukebox was more likely to be dreamy, creamy, and smoooth than raucous, relentless, and relevant. The program offers perhaps more of the Ink Spots, therefore, than all but the most insatiable would be likely to hunger for at a single playing; after a while you begin to guess exactly where Charlie Fuqua's guitar will bring in the beat, when Bill Kenny (the one with the high voice) is going to come in for a falsetto riff, when "Hoppy" Jones (the one with the bass growl) will recite another of his "talking choruses." But the Ink Spots eventually became rather expert at kidding their own predictable manner in stints like *Java Jive* and *Please Take a Letter, Miss Brown*, thus removing the wind from the sails of would-be parodists with disarming skill. In any case, here they are, with nary a shout or a shriek to break

the tranquil spell, singing practically everything I can remember them doing. Except for an occasional residue of oldie needle-scratch, the dubbing is excellent. No notes. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MELANIE: *Candles in the Rain*. Melanie (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Candles in the Rain; Lay Down (Candles in the Rain); Carolina in My Mind; Citiest People; What Have They Done to My Song, Ma; Alexander Beetle; The Good Guys; Lovin' Baby Girl; Ruby Tuesday; Leftover Wine*. BUDDAH © X 5060 (3/4) \$5.95.

Performance: Excellent
Recording: Excellent
Playing time: 38'24"

If you like Melanie, it's difficult for you to understand how anyone could feel otherwise, but people do seem to go to extremes on the subject. To me, she is about the closest we have come to producing an Edith Piaf, and even sounds a little like Piaf, especially in the French-y *What Have They Done to My Song, Ma*. She is a triumph of personality over technique, the kind of singer Tim Hardin is—voice cracking, faltering, squeaking, showing signs of letting go altogether, but remaining a pleasant voice for all that, and, beyond all else, an effective one. The disc version of this tape has been around so long that anyone who is interested must have heard most of the selections many times by now. It was a whiz-bang commercial success, and deserved to be. If you've been waiting for a beautifully recorded tape version of it, this is it. N. C.

THE WHO: *Magic Bus*. The Who (vocals and instrumentals); *Disguises; Our Love Was Is; Bucket T.; Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde; I Can't Reach You; Doctor, Doctor; Magic Bus; Someone's Coming*; and four others. DECCA © 735064 \$6.95.

Performance: Oldies but goodies
Recording: Poor
Playing Time: 34'41"

Decca never cared much for the Who, the story goes, until *Tommy* started raking in the bread. It isn't difficult to believe such stories when you listen to cassettes like this. The disc version of "Magic Bus" came out late in 1968, before *Tommy*; I don't have one handy for sound comparisons, but this is one of the muddiest-sounding cassettes I have ever heard. If the disc doesn't sound *considerably* better, it's a wonder anyone ever found out what the Who sounded like.

Musically, the album is good hard rock, sounding a bit dated, as any hard rock does these days, but offering a good sampling of the Who's work back in their guitar-breaking days. Such songs as *Disguises, Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde, and I Can't Reach You* show the kind of songwriting talent that was to flower in *Tommy*—and the vocal and instrumental skills of Pete Townshend, Roger Daltrey, and Keith Moon were established long before "Magic Bus" was produced. If you're a new Who fan, chuckling over their parody of Led Zeppelin in the "Live at Leeds" album, you'll be interested to know they did a parody of another well-known group in this set's *Bucket T*. The public taste for three-chord melodies may be fickle, but when a thing is done well it stays alive longer, and the Who does things well. If only Decca's engineering staff had done *their* thing well. . . . N. C.

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CIRCLE NO. 52 ON READER SERVICE CARD

TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK



HOW HISS HAPPENS

THE NOISE we hear as hiss when we listen to a tape originates not only in the tape itself, but in every stage of the record-playback process. Resistors, semiconductors, and other parts produce hissing, frying, and sputtering noises of differing strengths and in different frequency areas, but the audible result can usually be described simply as hiss.

A major cause of noise pollution on tape is the bias signal used during recording by every home and professional machine. Recording bias is a high-frequency alternating current (the frequency is usually somewhere between 50,000 and 200,000 Hz) that is fed to the record head along with the audio signal. (A few machines employ a separate "cross-field" head to apply bias to the tape during recording, but the principle remains the same.) Without it tapes would be recorded with so much distortion as to be unlistenable. The adjustment of bias current for optimum recording is extremely critical, and—on a given machine—varies from one type or brand of tape to another.

The bias-oscillator circuit contributes to noise in several ways. First, if the bias current is slightly too weak for a given tape, exaggerated treble response (and hiss) is the recorded result. Second, even if the amount of bias is correct, the bias-signal waveform may not have the optimum shape, which is that of a sine wave. Distortion of the bias-current waveform, like distortion in an amplifier, produces spurious "harmonics" (exact multiples of the bias frequency). The second harmonic is an especially potent source of noise. For this reason, high-quality recorders use "push-pull" bias-oscillator circuitry to minimize even-numbered harmonics, and incorporate a special internal adjustment to optimize the bias waveform. Third, any sudden surge of bias current in the record head tends to put a small fixed magnetic "charge" on the head gap, and a magnetized head contributes hiss to the recording. If your machine leaves an audible click on the tape when you go into or out of the record mode, there's a good chance that it also tends to magnetize its heads. The cure is simple: demagnetize your tape heads regularly, as I have advised in this column before. You also might check with the manufacturer of your machine to find out whether its "click" proclivity is normal for the model you have.

Finally, the lower the recording speed, the greater the need for treble boost of the signal in the record-equalization circuit. Boosting the high-frequency part of the signal unfortunately also amplifies the high-frequency noise present at the equalizer circuits. That is why one of the chief advantages of "low-noise" tapes is that they require less treble boost during recording than tapes with "standard" oxide formulations.

As these discussions have indicated, not even Dolby processing will ever give us completely noise-free recordings. But even for non-Dolbyized recordings you can minimize hiss by using the tape type specified for your machine, and making sure the proper maintenance and adjustments are performed regularly. Only then will your recording equipment continue to deliver tapes that have the silence which is golden.

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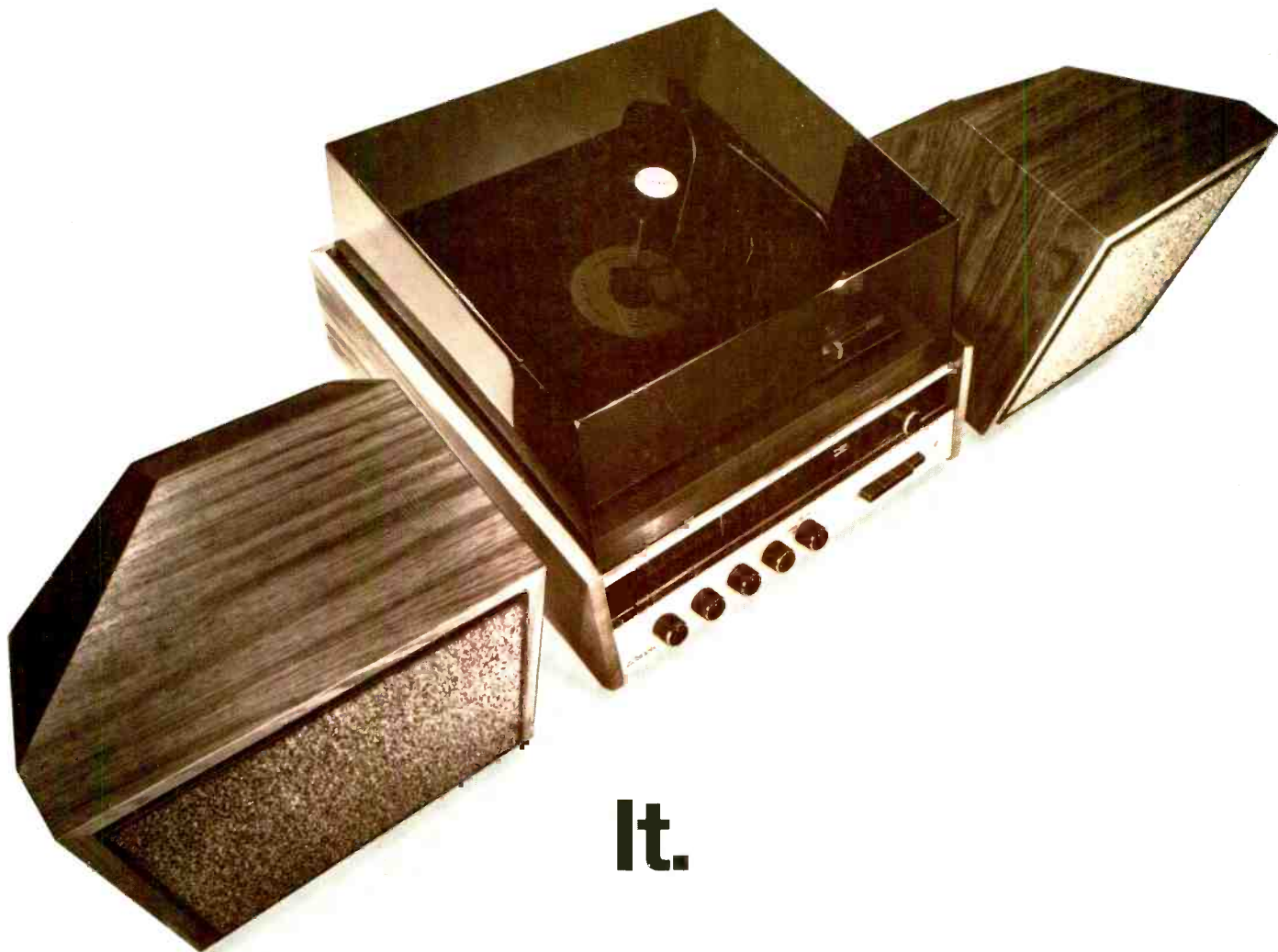
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