Stereo Review

JANUARY 1973 • 60 CENTS

Metropolitan Opera on the Air

18061


DYNAQUAD RECEIVER
TUNING
LOUDNESS
92 94 96 98 100 102 104 106 108 MHz
70 80 100 120 140 160 KHz
POWER OFF
TREBLE
LEFT — RIGHT
BALANCE
TONE
TAPE DUBBING
STEREO PHONES
4-CH
TAPE MONTR
HIGH FILTER
FM HUSH
LOUD OFF
MAIN (FRONT)
REMOTE (REAR)
IN
OUT
NORM
NORM
FLAT
OFF
ON
SPEAKERS (DYNAQUAD)


SHERWOOD
S-7900A STEREO/
TUNING
STEREO
FM 88 90
AM 55 60
STEREO
LEFT
REV
RIGHT
MONO
MODE
FM
AM
PH
AUX
SELECTOR
BASS
0
2
2
4
6
8
10

The state of the art now costs $150 less.

Sherwood Excitement

You used to have to spend more than $600 to get excellent performance from a receiver.

To get performance that would rival the finest separate tuners and amplifiers.

Power adequate for *any* speaker system.

Flexibility and features that provide for practically any addition to your system.

FM sensitivity that could bring in the weakest station clearly, quietly.

Selectivity that rejects strong adjacent stations even on crowded dials.

And do it with virtually unmeasurable distortion.

A new standard has been introduced.

The Sherwood S8900A [FM] and S7900A [AM/FM] receivers. Priced in the $400 range.

We're not calling them a breakthrough. But definitely a milestone.

The risk involved.

It was a difficult decision to attempt to improve on the S8900, which had already received the top ratings from the critics and testing services.

Yet, inconceivable that we wouldn't.

Sherwood Electronics is primarily a research and development company. Dedicated to the orderly advance of sophisticated consumer electronics.

The new S8900A and S7900A incorporate the latest devices and circuitry known to be reliable.

The result is not just new hardware. But, dollar for dollar, the finest receiver you can buy.

For instance, these features are included:

Direct-coupled output circuitry with Electronic Relay Protection. It guards your speakers from damage due to overloads, surges, and device failures.

Built-in Dynaquad 4-channel matrixing circuit-enhances your present stereo records, tapes and FM programs to 4-channel ambience.

Four-gang tuning capacitor and solid-state Ceramic filtering give you an outstanding FM section.

Complementary Darlington integrated output transistors with very high gain, resulting in lower distortion.

Exclusive Polycarbonate capacitors used throughout the circuit produce a higher «Q», better tolerance, and much improved temperature stability over ordinary mylar and paper mylar capacitors.

Metal oxide gate-protected Field Effect Transistors yield superior crossmodulation and spurious response characteristics.

Consistently low FM mono and stereo distortion, the result of a phase linear IF bandpass design which can only come out of (a) an experienced engineering department, and (b) the fact that we manufacture our own coils.

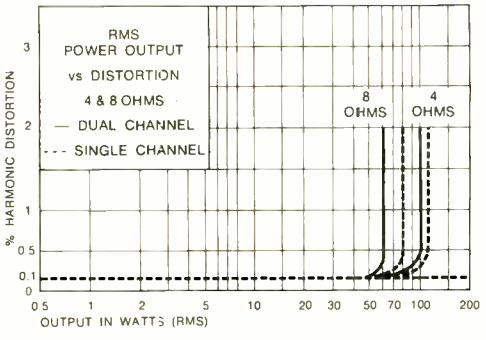
Front panel control of a four-channel decoder [can double as a second tape monitor].

All Sherwood receivers are, of course, completely compatible with any existing or contemplated four-channel system.

The Amplifier Section

Power output [IHF] is 280 watts total. RMS power with both channels driven: 90 watts x 2 @ 4 ohms, 1KHz; 65 watts x 2 @ 8 ohms, 1KHz; 60 watts x 2 @ 8 ohms, 20-20,000Hz.

Harmonic distortion: 0.3% @ 8 ohms, rated output; 0.10% @ 50 watts or less.



Intermodulation distortion: 0.3% 8 ohms, rated output; 0.10% @ 10 watts.

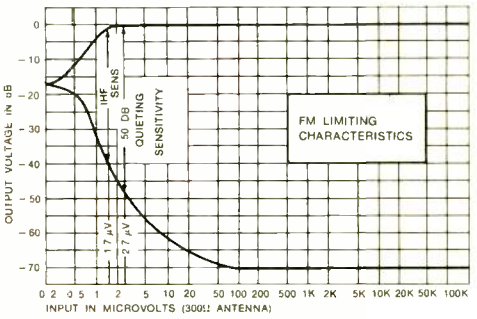
Power bandwidth, 7-60KHz 0.5% dist.

Input Sensitivity [for rated output] Phono: 1.5 mv, 3.8 mv, 8.0 mv, [switchable].

The Tuner Section

FM Sensitivity [IHF] is 1.7 uv [−30dB noise & dist.]

Signal-to-noise ratio: −70dB.



Distortion . . . 0.15% @ 100% modulation (mono).

Capture ratio: 1.9dB.

Spurious response rejection: −95dB.

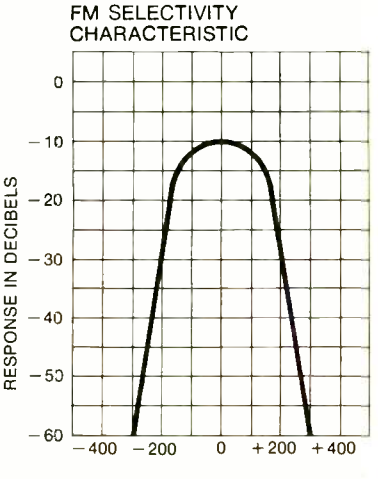
Image Rejection: −80dB.

IF Rejection: −90dB.

Alternate channel selectivity: 65dB.

Stereo Separation: 40dB @ 1KHz.

Frequency Response: Mono, 20-20KHz ± 1dB. Stereo, 20,15KHz ± 1dB.



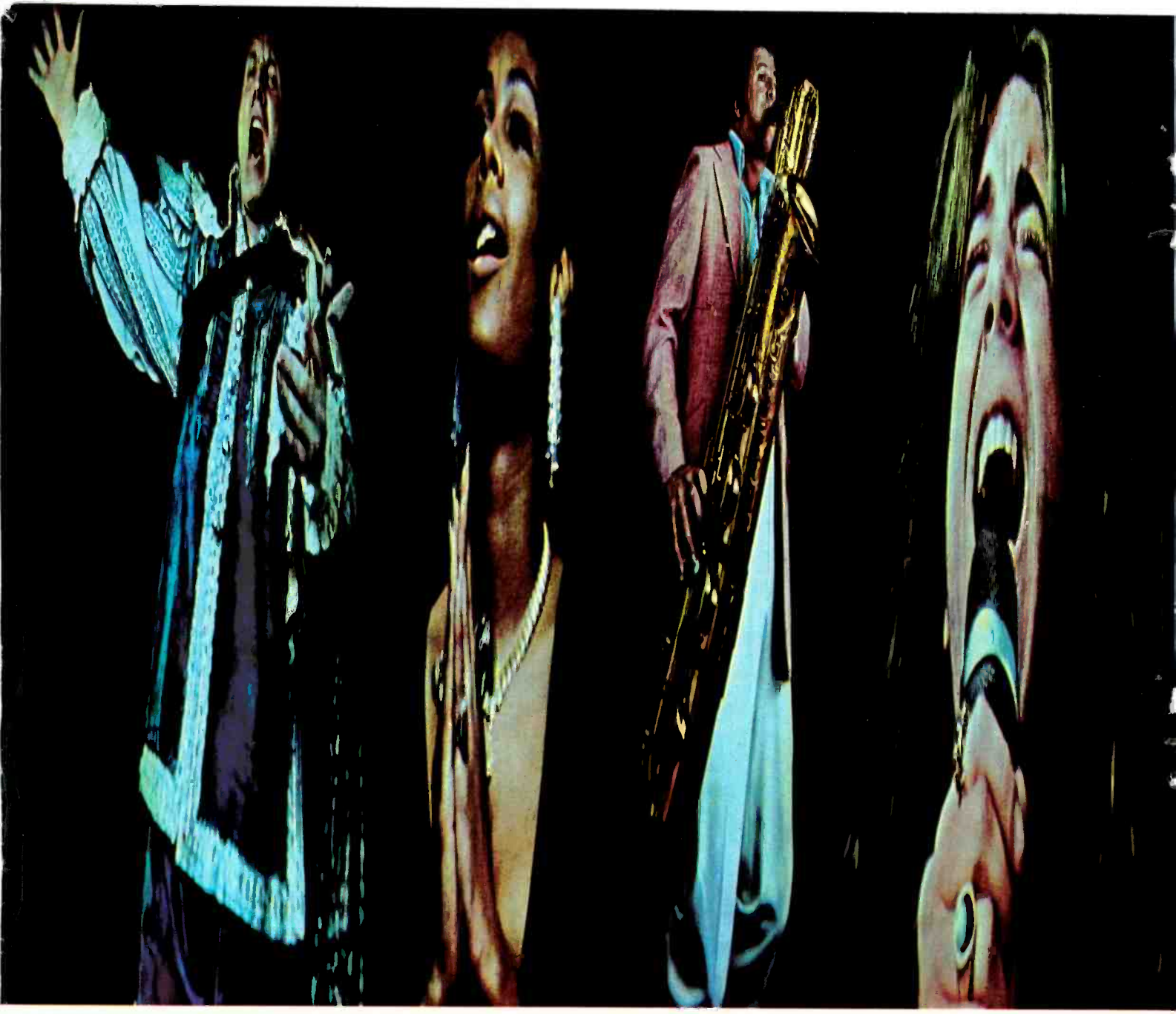
The S8900A [with FM] sells for $429.95. The S7900A [AM/FM] for $459.95.

If you've been saving for the best, you can afford it sooner than you think.

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

The Sherwood Experience

CIRCLE NO. 47 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Don Giovanni, Eleanor Rigby & Bill Bailey make a poor medley

There are 57 FM stations in New York, 73 in Los Angeles and 37 in Chicago—all crammed between 88 and 108MHz. With so many stations, and so little space, there's bound to be a bit of pushing and shoving. Now and again, an unfortunate overlap. A receiver with ordinary sensitivity and selectivity just won't cut it.

But, Sony doesn't make ordinary receivers. We give you a choice of six models that bring in even the weakest stations with an unusual immunity to intrusion from strong ones. And a choice of power and features from $699.50 to $199.50*. Our new SQR-6650, 4-channel receiver pours out 50 watts in stereo (25+25W RMS at 8 ohms) and costs hardly more than a stereo receiver of comparable features and specs. $329.50*. Visit your dealer for a demonstration. Sony Corporation of America, 47-47 Van Dam Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

*Suggested retail price

SONY® keeps them separate and beautiful

CIRCLE NO. 49 ON READER SERVICE CARD

FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW

Stereo Review

JANUARY 1973 • VOLUME 30 • NUMBER 1

THE MUSIC

THE EQUIPMENT

THE REVIEWS

THE REGULARS

COVER: TEMPERA BY FREDERIC MARVIN

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TONE CONTROLS
MASTER BALANCE

AT LAST, THE BEST DOESN'T COST THE MOST.

Traditionally, there has been a distinct difference between "quality" components for the demanding music lover and "state-of-the-art" components for the engineering-oriented perfectionist.

The difference has been not only measurable in the laboratory and audible to the educated ear, but also quite discernible on the price tag.

We at Fisher believe that the new Studio-Standard receivers and speakers mark the end of that tradition.

The fact is that the latest technology and production management have made the limited-edition component just about obsolete. The ultimate quality can now be achieved in a much broader, upper-middle-priced category.

Specifically, we offer the new Fisher 504 as a state-of-the-art 4-channel receiver and the new Fisher ST-550 as a state-of-the-art speaker system, at only $529.95* and $349.95* respectively.

Other Studio-Standard components are available at even lower prices with minimal changes in features and performance.

The conservative specifications shown here are only a sampling. For the full Studio-Standard story, write Fisher Radio, Dept. SR-1, 11-40 45th Road, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

Fisher 504 Studio-Standard 4-Channel Receiver

Continuous sine-wave power, 20 Hz to 20 kHz	40/40/40/40 watts at 4 ohms
4-channel matrix decoder	SQ
FM sensitivity (IHF)	1.8 μV
FM front end	Dual-gate MOSFET with AGC
FM input	Up to 3,000,000 μV (3 V)
MPX decoder	PLL (phase-locked loop)

Fisher ST-550 Studio-Standard Speaker System

Drivers	15" woofer, two 1½" midrange domes, two 2" cone tweeters, two 1½" side-dispersion domes (total of 7)
Dispersion	"Controlled" type (neither omni nor directional)
Power-handling capacity, rms	300 watts for 2 sec. 100 watts for 60 sec. 50 watts long-term

*Fair trade prices where applicable.
Prices slightly higher in the Far West and Southwest.

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Stereo Review

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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

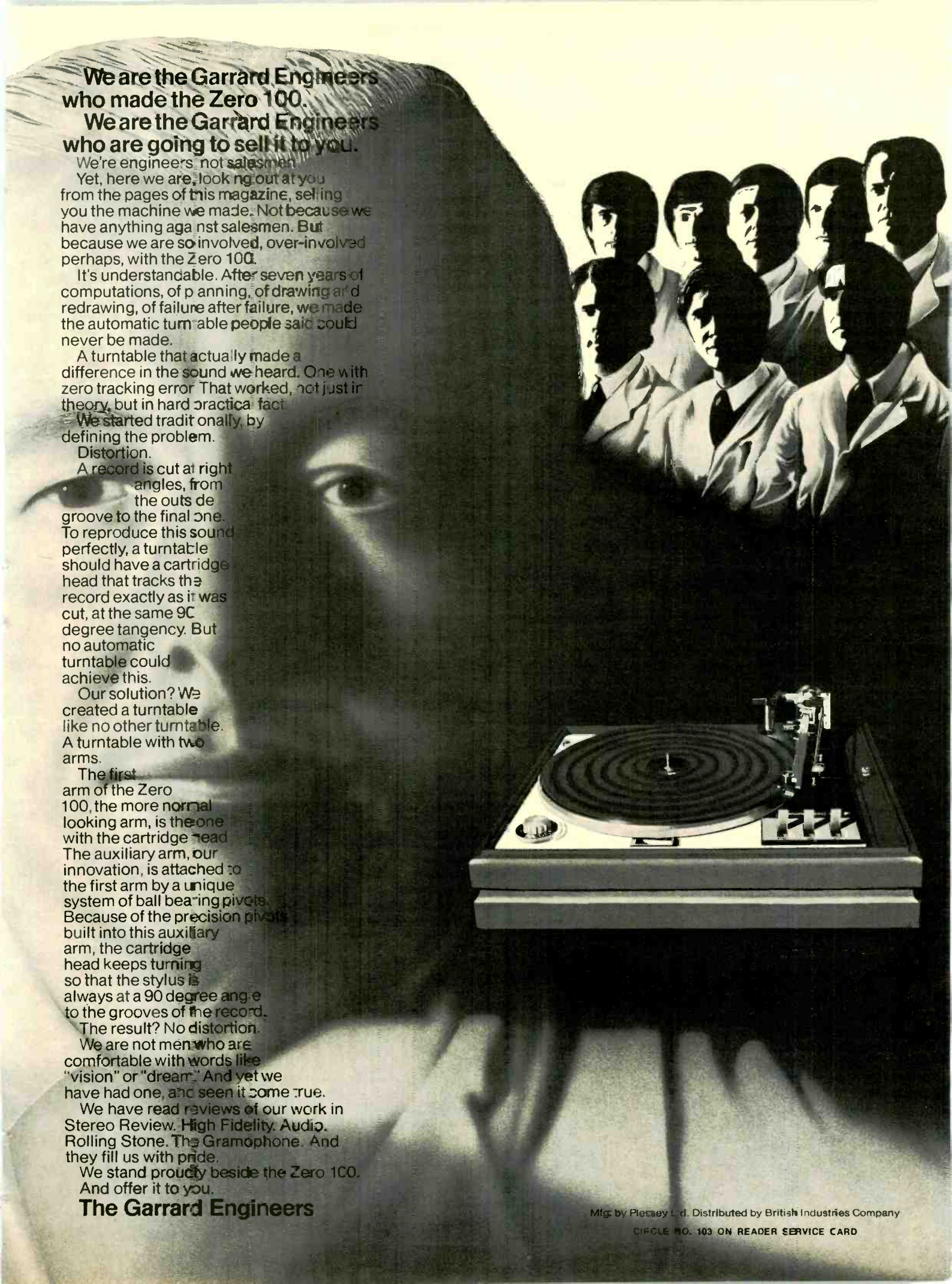
By WILLIAM ANDERSON

"CLASSICAL HAS NO VOCAL"

IN A friendly discussion not long ago about the differences between popular and classical music (there are many), I was reminded (forgive me, ladies) of an apropos, dumb-blonde remark that sticks in my mind, perhaps from some old show-biz movie: the difference, says Dumb Blonde, is that "classical has no vocal." The humor classification here is cultural condescension, and not a very high level of it at that—symptomatic, perhaps, of Hollywood's always rather slippery grasp of anything having to do with "art." In this case, however, I find the clean and concise differentiation it presents between vocal and instrumental music at least temporarily tempting. But what, then, about opera? Isn't it "classical" music? Not really. An Italian invention, it has been a popular art in Italy since it first "went public" in Venice (that city saw the opening of at least sixteen opera houses in the period 1639-1699) to today, when the government safeguards the country's musical patrimony by presenting a constant flow of operatic performances on both radio and television. This is not to say that all Italians are mad about opera, but its place in their cultural hierarchy can be measured by the facts that it is taken completely for granted, that its stars can be *popular* heroes and heroines, and that taxpayers do not begrudge the spending of public money on it. Opera is expensive, of course, with the result that wherever it is found—even in Italy—its care, feeding, and better seats have always attracted a deceptive aristocratic patronage. But this should not be permitted to obscure the fact that the *real* opera lovers are to be found among the ranks of the world's barbers, taxi drivers, opera-house standees, and, closer to home, the millions of listeners to the Saturday afternoon broadcasts from the stage of New York's Metropolitan Opera House.

As a teenager in our Midwestern hinterlands, I numbered myself among them. Suckled upon, if not exactly encouraged by, a handful of 78's by McCormack, Caruso, and Melba, I had already had the doors of the classical music world blasted open for me by hearing Sibelius' *Finlandia* in a high-school physics lecture on sound. When the appetite thus unleashed outgrew the Sunday Symphony, I quickly discovered the Saturday Opera. This in turn opened up the then rather limited but still breathtaking vistas down the columns of the record catalog. Thanks to the informal turntable tutelage of Jussi Bjoerling, Aksel Schiøtz, Ferruccio Tagliavini, and others, I soon had a nice little bag of tenor arias in my repertoire—*Che gelida manina (La Bohème), La Fleur que tu m'avais jetée (Carmen), Celeste Aïda, Salut, demeure chaste et pure (Faust), Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön (Magic Flute),* and *Lamento di Federico* (Cilea's *L'Arlesiana).* I can still perform these questionable parlor tricks at the drop of a cue, but that is not the point. My attitude toward them then, as it is now, was that they were little different from popular songs; the language might not be English, but I knew what they meant, I was familiar with the dramatic context out of which they sprang, and they were, above all, singable.

It was a long time before I got around to seeing a real, live opera—a performance of *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the old Met. There I sat, in my army uniform, so far to the right in the top balcony that I had the sensation of being *behind* the proscenium, while Lawrence Tibbett tried to get Bidú Sayão to confess to what she had been up to with Pelléas. It was a matinee, the theater was musty, the stage dusty, Tibbett (I think) tight, and I was disappointed. But the experience taught me something that has been underlined by every performance I have seen since: the only adequate operas are those presented in the theater of the mind. The sad truth is that I, and perhaps millions like me, have been spoiled by radio opera, over-habituated to supplying the missing visual elements with unrealizable idealization. Perhaps this aesthetic distance is a boon, and we don't really need opera on TV after all.


We are the Garrard Engineers who made the Zero 100.
We are the Garrard Engineers who are going to sell it to you.
We're engineers, not salesmen.
Yet, here we are, looking out at you from the pages of this magazine, selling you the machine we made. Not because we have anything against salesmen. But because we are so involved, over-involved perhaps, with the Zero 100.
It's understandable. After seven years of computations, of planning, of drawing and redrawing, of failure after failure, we made the automatic turntable people said could never be made.
A turntable that actually made a difference in the sound we heard. One with zero tracking error. That worked, not just in theory, but in hard practical fact.
We started traditionally, by defining the problem.
Distortion.
A record is cut at right angles, from the outside groove to the final one. To reproduce this sound perfectly, a turntable should have a cartridge head that tracks the record exactly as it was cut, at the same 90 degree tangency. But no automatic turntable could achieve this.
Our solution? We created a turntable like no other turntable. A turntable with two arms.
The first arm of the Zero 100, the more normal looking arm, is the one with the cartridge head. The auxiliary arm, our innovation, is attached to the first arm by a unique system of ball bearing pivots. Because of the precision pivots built into this auxiliary arm, the cartridge head keeps turning so that the stylus is always at a 90 degree angle to the grooves of the record.
The result? No distortion.
We are not men who are comfortable with words like "vision" or "dream." And yet we have had one, and seen it come true.
We have read reviews of our work in Stereo Review. High Fidelity. Audio. Rolling Stone. The Gramophone. And they fill us with pride.
We stand proudly beside the Zero 100.
And offer it to you.
The Garrard Engineers
Mfg. by Plessey Ltd. Distributed by British Industries Company
CIRCLE NO. 103 ON READER SERVICE CARD

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RFI

● Peter Sutheim's November article on Radio Frequency Interference was a definite help. I live near an AM station whose rock-and-roll programs polluted all my long-hair listening constantly on all modes of play. By connecting a ground wire from one channel to my preamp I stopped the noise—I should say the AM—pollution.

MILTON BERMAN
Merrick, N. Y.

● As an audiophile, serious musician, and amateur radio operator, I read Peter Sutheim's "Radio Frequency Bugs" (November) with mixed feelings. The article presents a concise, accurate summary of technical cures for RFI. However, it also includes several misconceptions about amateur radio which deserve clarification.

Hams are not "casual" users of the airwaves. Amateur radio occupies the airwaves as a public-service communications facility. Our dedication and effectiveness in this role are constantly demonstrated by the innumerable third-party messages that we handle daily as well as the life-saving emergency and disaster communications that we constantly provide. Consequently, almost all hams (we're not 100 per cent perfect) are willing to do whatever they can to maintain responsible relations with their neighbors. When RFI involving a ham station does occur, it is more productive to contact the ham operator than to run immediately to the FCC.

Mr. Sutheim has actually made my point for me: legally operating amateurs are "entitled legally to the unmolested use of their equipment." At the same time, we are acutely aware of the "legitimate and unavoidable conflict of rights" which RFI presents, and have no desire to be portrayed as heavies.

WILLIAM M. KLYKYLO (WA8FOZ)
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Technical Editor Larry Klein (ex-W2CFJ) replies: "Mr. Klykylo quarrels with author Sutheim's use of the word 'casual.' We certainly didn't mean to denigrate past civil services performed by radio amateurs, but in the absence of some kind of emergency, perhaps ninety-five per cent of the talk heard on the ham band certainly does fall into the 'casual' category, unless rag-chewing (a ham term) about antenna and transmitter design is not deemed 'casual' by Mr. Klykylo. There's nothing illegal or immoral about casual chatter on the ham bands, since the FCC does not *define amateur radio as a 'public service communications facility.' (However, the CB frequencies* are *intended for public service, and it* is *illegal to use them for such chatting.) The amateur bands are intended for personal, noncommercial use flowing from an interest in radio techniques.*

"Incidentally, most people will have no way of getting in touch with the interfering amateur broadcaster except through the FCC, since an amateur's call letters do not include his name, address, or phone number."

The Sky Is Not Falling

● The animosity between the classical and popular musical camps has always existed in this country, but the Editor's short essay on the subject ("The Sky Is Not Falling," November) is undoubtedly the most concise appraisal of this situation and, in general, of the state of music in America I have ever read—without, thank God, all the short-tempered snobbery and bias that usually accompany such treatises! Many thanks for this interesting perspective and fresh insight.

ALLEN G. BIESTER
Lexington, Va.

● Your November editorial infuriated me. Yes, the letters in that issue had a self-conscious tone to them. Yes, both classical and popular music are important. But should you not present the best of both? I have watched your magazine degenerate over the years to ensnare the higher circulation and the lower taste. I believe this is behind the angry letters you received over the change of order of reviews. We used to get articles on Piaf, Galli-Curci, Michelangeli, and Toscanini. Now we get Charlie Pride, Paul Anka, and Richard Bonynge. What coup do you have planned next? Brenda Lee, maybe? These past years I have stood by you through thin [sic] and thin, but now you go too far!

WAYNE K. FRANK
McKeesport, Pa.

The Editor replies: "Like Mr. Frank, I lament the passing of Piaf, Galli-Curci, and Toscanini. I also lament the fact that they seem not to have been replaced. But if our musical lives—both classical and popular—do not touch some of those same peaks that thrilled us a quarter-century and more ago (Galli-Curci left the Met in 1930!), should we not teach ourselves to appreciate others? Or, from another point of view: Piaf, Galli-Curci, and Toscanini exert little or no influence on contemporary musical life; Pride, Anka, and Bonynge, in their various ways, do. Mr. Frank can choose to overlook this fact if he will, but he will then not even know the cause of his discontent. And finally, do I detect in Mr. Frank's list of heroes and heroines some of that conventional colonial snobbery that has sent us scurrying back to Europe recently for a new general manager for the Met, a new conductor for the New York Philharmonic, and a 'visiting' critic for The New Yorker*?"*

Jimmy Webb

● As a long-time fan of Jimmy Webb, I was overjoyed to see the article about him by Robert Windeler in the November issue of STEREO REVIEW. Actually, Webb has released four albums, not three as intimated in the story. His first, titled "Jim Webb Sings Jim Webb," was on the Epic label before his switch to Reprise. The album was released in 1968 and the songs (some in the *Galveston* vein) are quite good, although not as refined as Webb's recent compositions.

Webb also cut a single called *Lost Generation* on the Bell label, and *P. F. Sloan* from his "Words and Music" album was also released as a single. To my knowledge, neither was a commercial success.

Webb's excellence is a result not only of his writing and composing talents, but also of his abilities as a producer and arranger. He has also made excellent choices in his backup musicians, for example Larry Coryell, a fine guitarist in his own right.

FRANCIS G. PIVAR
New Kensington, Pa.

Deanna Durbin Devotee

● I would like to thank Robert Connolly for his review "Deanna Durbin Sings Again" (November). It was excellent, and I am in agreement with his opinions. I was one of her millions of fans, and I still have my membership card for the Deanna Durbin Devotees, her official fan club back in the late Thirties and early Forties. The DDD fan-club card has a lovely picture of Deanna on it. I also have a copy of *Deanna's Diary*, her official fan-club publication, among my souvenirs. It is a special edition celebrating her fifth anniversary as a great actress and a fine singer, and contains photographs of Deanna from the *Three Smart Girls* days, plus photos and articles about Joe Pasternak, Nan Grey, Leopold Stokowski, Eddie Cantor, and Herbert Marshall, among many others.

I especially remember her first five movies, and enjoyed her beautiful voice and naturalistic acting, and the lovely musical scores. Like Mr. Connolly, I too hope that Decca issues more of Deanna's wonderful singing.

K. NAKADATE
Monterey Park, Cal.

Home Sweet *Heimat*

● In response to the October editorial ("Home Sweet Home") I can only add a hearty "Amen!" It sums up precisely what is and has been the greatest problem of serious music in America. Not only have we attempted to impose a European model on our own musical culture, but we have often

(Continued on page 10)

Our amazing low-cost speaker is made with a revolutionary substitute for money: brains.

Two facts stand out about the Rectilinear Xla bookshelf speaker:

Its price is $79.50*

And its sound is beautiful.

In fact, it sounds quite respectable even in comparison with our top speakers, which cost up to three and a half times as much and have been called the best in the world. We wouldn't be ashamed to match the **Rectilinear Xla** against heavily advertised competitors at twice the price.

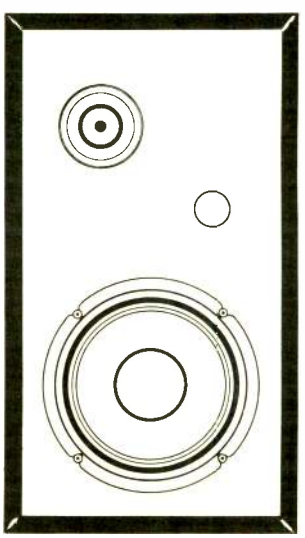
The secret of our design? Merely some vigorous thought processes.

We could never see why inexpensive speakers had to sound mediocre, just because nobody bothered to make them any other way. Our engineering logic led us to the startling conclusion that a correct crossover frequency costs no more than an incorrect one. The right distance between the drivers no more than the wrong one. Proper cone material and magnetic structure no more than the wrong ones. And so on, down the line.

When you get right down to it, we reasoned, at least seventy-five percent of speaker design is knowledge, not money.

So we specified a 10-inch woofer that will handle 50 watts RMS at 1000 HZ, a 3½ inch tweeter and a network that crosses over at 1000 HZ, a lower crossover point than some "highly regarded" three way systems. We put these into a 23" by 12" by 10½" cabinet and fussed and fussed. Without any preconceived notions as to how good or bad such an austere design should sound. We stopped only when we could no longer improve the performance.

The result was a $79.50* speaker that not only covers the range from 45 to 20,000 HZ without peaks or harmonics but also has extremely low *time delay distortion*, which is **Rectilinear's** chief criterion of speaker quality.



What's more, the **Rectilinear Xla** is a high-efficiency speaker. Unlike some other designs that claim accurate reproduction at a moderate price, it doesn't defeat its purpose by requiring an expensive, high-powered amplifier or receiver for good results. It can be driven to window-rattling levels with a puny 10 watts.

A triumph of brain over brawn, you might say.

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

*Optional fretwork grille $10.00 each.

Rectilinear® Xla

Engineering Excellence

tried to do so in a manner in which the results could be orderly and fitted sequentially into the music history books by the musicologists.

The segment of our population devoted to classical music has always had an ambivalent attitude toward the larger potential audience: on one hand, we have the "music appreciation" courses and packages designed to attract new listeners (not to mention the continual anguish expressed because of classical music's low status in American culture); on the other hand, we maintain our defenses in constant fear that any attempt to appeal to a broader portion of the population will contaminate our high and noble standards.

As an organist, I frequently attend organ recitals. It is not uncommon to find that, unless one has a working knowledge of German and French, he will be unable to read the titles of the pieces being played. Though this is no problem to me, I wonder what reaction it produces in the more casual concertgoer. It is not without some grain of truth that classical music is often considered by the general public as the exclusive province of eggheads and intellectuals.

LEONARD HOLLMANN
Lawrence, Kan.

"Grease"

● Bravo to Rex Reed for telling it like it was in his review of the original-cast recording of "Grease" (October). I was a teenager in the Fifties and can vouch that things then weren't the way they are remembered now. The youth of today is a lot smarter and more mature than that of the Fifties.

CAROL FOWLKES
Lincoln, Neb.

"Sonic Seasonings"

● Having been involved in Walter Carlos' "Sonic Seasonings" project from its conception to its realization, perhaps I will be permitted a few comments concerning Paul Kresh's review of the recent Columbia recording (September). I can sympathize with Mr. Kresh's "disillusionment" with "Sonic Seasonings," particularly from the point of view of its somehow being a musical entity in competition with glories of seasons past by Vivaldi, Haydn, and Glazounov. It is certainly an exasperating, even maddening, experience to attempt to listen to Carlos' offering as one would to those composers, with a musician's ear for conventional thematic development, conventional formal continuity, and, especially, conventional timespans. This approach simply will not do. "Sonic Seasonings" cannot be judged or appreciated from such a premise because, as Mr. Kresh is well aware, it is not a conventionally composed score.

However, it is inaccurate to describe "Sonic Seasonings" as improvisation, much less "undisciplined improvisation," for a considerable amount of it was meticulously notated as to pitch, rhythm, and registration before being synthesized. In addition, each movement had an overall plan or program (often, in fact, related to rondo form) and revision was not uncommon before and occasionally during the electronic realization.

As I tried to suggest in my biographical essay in the album, although Carlos has a decidedly nonacademic approach to musical composition, he is nonetheless a well-trained traditional musician. In other words, he knows what he is up to compositionally. He also knows what he is up to electronically, and I think that few listeners who are familar with his previous records ("Switched-On Bach," "The Well-Tempered Synthesizer," "A Clockwork Orange") would dispute that he is presently the foremost virtuoso of the Moog.

What, then, was Carlos up to with "Sonic Seasonings?" Something which is probably unique: the blending of certain standard compositional devices, improvisatory elements, and a strong sense of color into an aural experience which, he hopes (in the words of producer Rachel Elkind), "enhances the listener's total environment"—a kind of high-class background music (or Muzak, if you will), a veritable mixed bag of electronically generated music and effects and natural sounds such as human voices, bird songs, bells, surf, fire, rain. May I, as a composer myself, suggest that anything so singular, compositionally and in numerous other ways, must be approached on its own terms—not those of traditional or even contemporary serious music—or not approached at all.

I can well imagine that "Sonic Seasonings" will not be to everyone's taste. In fact I confess that I, for one, can do very well without it—and without *all* background music, for that matter. But I venture the opinion that no one other than Walter Carlos could have conceived and executed an enterprise of this nature with such a wealth of imagination and expertise.

PHILLIP RAMEY
New York, N.Y.

Mr. Kresh replies: "Mr. Ramey must have some secret way of listening to music that is unknown to me. The only way I know is to listen with my ears, whether the piece is played on conventional instruments or electronic ones, and judge on the basis of what I have heard. Mr. Carlos' 'high-class background music' simply got on my nerves, as Mr. Ramey apparently acknowledges that it did on his, and led nowhere. As for the score of 'A Clockwork Orange' and Carlos' earlier records, they were mentioned respectfully and given their due. And if even the partisan Mr. Ramey can 'do very well without' 'Sonic Seasonings,' then where does that leave the rest of us?"

More Kern on Discs

● I would like to make several additions (all, unfortunately, now out of print) to the discography at the end of Alfred Simon's excellent piece on Jerome Kern in the July issue. The two-volume "Melodies of Jerome Kern" (with liner notes by Mr. Simon) on Walden Records, and "Premiere Performance: George Byron Sings Jerome Kern" on Atlantic, both recorded in the Fifties, are rather square in conception and execution, but the albums feature some breathtakingly lovely and otherwise unavailable Kern material. The Byron album, arranged by André Previn, is particularly interesting in that it features three songs that were discovered in Kern's unpublished manuscripts and, long after the composer's death, were turned over to Dorothy Fields, who provided very sensitive lyrics. Another album, "David Allen Sings the Music of Jerome Kern" on World Pacific, dating from the late Fifties, offers mostly familiar Kern material, but the singing is fine and is backed by sympathetic arrangements by Johnny Mandel.

JOEL E. SIEGEL
Washington, D.C.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Compiled by Susan Larabee

● *5,000 Nights at the Opera*, Sir Rudolf Bing, Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1972, $10.00, 360 pp.

Sir Rudolf's memoirs cover his youth in Vienna and his work at Glyndebourne and Edinburgh as well as his twenty-three years as general manager of the Metropolitan Opera. His defense of his administration and his version of some celebrated feuds will bring new understanding and probably sympathy from even his severest critics. Candid at times and occasionally spiteful, the book is easy and entertaining to read—but there's no index!

● *Debuts & Farewells, a Two-Decade Photographic Chronicle of the Metropolitan Opera*, Paul Seligman. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1972, $15.00, 180 pp.

Great moments during the last twenty years at the Met are captured in intimate glimpses by an opera-loving graphic journalist. Many of the pictures are blurred or grainy because they were taken during performances or in poorly lighted dressing rooms, but they convey a great deal of excitement. A must for any opera fan.

● *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Opera*, by Harold Rosenthal and John Warrack, Oxford University Press, London, 1972, $3.50, 446 pp.

Contains brief biographies of composers and performers, plot synopses of many operas, and short entries identifying operatic arias and characters, plus definitions of many vocal terms. This is not a complete revision of the book originally published in 1964, but some errors were corrected in a subsequent printing, and a certain amount of updating has been done for the present reprinting. Still not entirely free of errors, the book is useful for ready reference, and it is a bargain at this price.

● *Music in the Cultured Generation*, Joseph A. Mussulman. Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Ill., 1971, $9.75, 298 pp.

Mussulman's work examines in some detail the musical climate of America during the years 1870-1900. Seeing music as a social act, he uses articles in the four major intellectual magazines of the era—*Atlantic*, *Century*, *Harper's*, and *Scribner's*—as evidence to indicate how the "cultured generation" strove to integrate the art of music with American life. An appendix lists all articles pertinent to music which appeared in the periodicals cited during that thirty-year period.

● *Music & Lyrics by Cole Porter: A Treasury of Cole Porter*, with introduction by Robert Kimball. Random House, New York, 1972, $5.95, 288 pp.

Although a paperback, this is a large, handsome book. Words and music for fifty-eight of Porter's show/film songs are included and there are cast photos, sheet-music covers, and additional lyrics scattered throughout the book. Kimball's introduction sketches Porter's career and is well documented with photographs. Included is a listing of the artists who introduced each of the songs.

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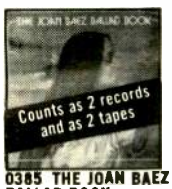

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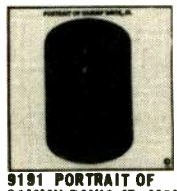

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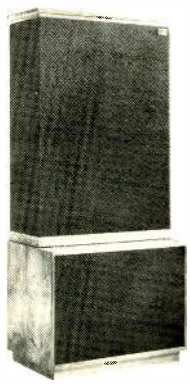
Crown "Auralinear" Speaker Systems



● CROWN's four new speaker systems, the company's first such offerings, are hybrid electrostatic-dynamic designs that combine 10-inch cone woofers and 5 x 5-inch electrostatic panels in several configurations. The largest of the systems, the ES-224 (shown), has twenty-four of the panels arranged in a convex arc within the tall (39 x 26 x 12 inches) upper enclosure, which is acoustically open on its four sides. These all operate over the full range of audio frequencies above 350 Hz, with the upper limit of usable response specified as 30,000 Hz. Two 10-inch woofers in the lower (sealed) cabinet extend response down to 22 Hz. The similar ES-212, with the same frequency response, has a shorter electrostatic chamber (21 x 26 x 12 inches) containing twelve panels. Crossover between the woofers and electrostatic drivers is at 375 Hz. The rated power-handling capabilities of the two systems are 150 and 75 watts per channel continuous, respectively, referred to an 8-ohm load impedance. The lower bass enclosures of the speakers are 26 x 21 x 16 inches.

The Models ES-26 and ES-14 are front-radiating floor-standing systems of more conventional appearance. They contain, respectively, six electrostatic panels and two woofers, and four electrostatics and one woofer. Their respective power-handling capabilities are 75 and 40 watts continuous (at 8 ohms), and frequency responses are 25 and 30 to 30,000 Hz. Crossover frequencies between the woofers and electrostatic elements are 1,500 Hz. To protect against overloads from the amplifier, the Crown systems have solid-state protective circuits for both woofers and electrostatic panels, with resettable circuit breakers and visual indicators to show when they have tripped. All models have nominal impedances of 4 ohms except the ES-14, which is 8 ohms, and all models (except the ES-14) are suitable for bi-amp operation. Rear-mounted level controls for the electrostatic drivers are provided. Dimensions of the ES-26 and ES-14 are 24 x 27½ x 12 inches and 18 x 27½ x 12 inches. All four systems are finished in oiled walnut with black grille cloth; their weights range from 60 to 135 pounds. Prices: ES-224, $1,165; ES-212, $795; ES-26, $495; ES-14, $335.

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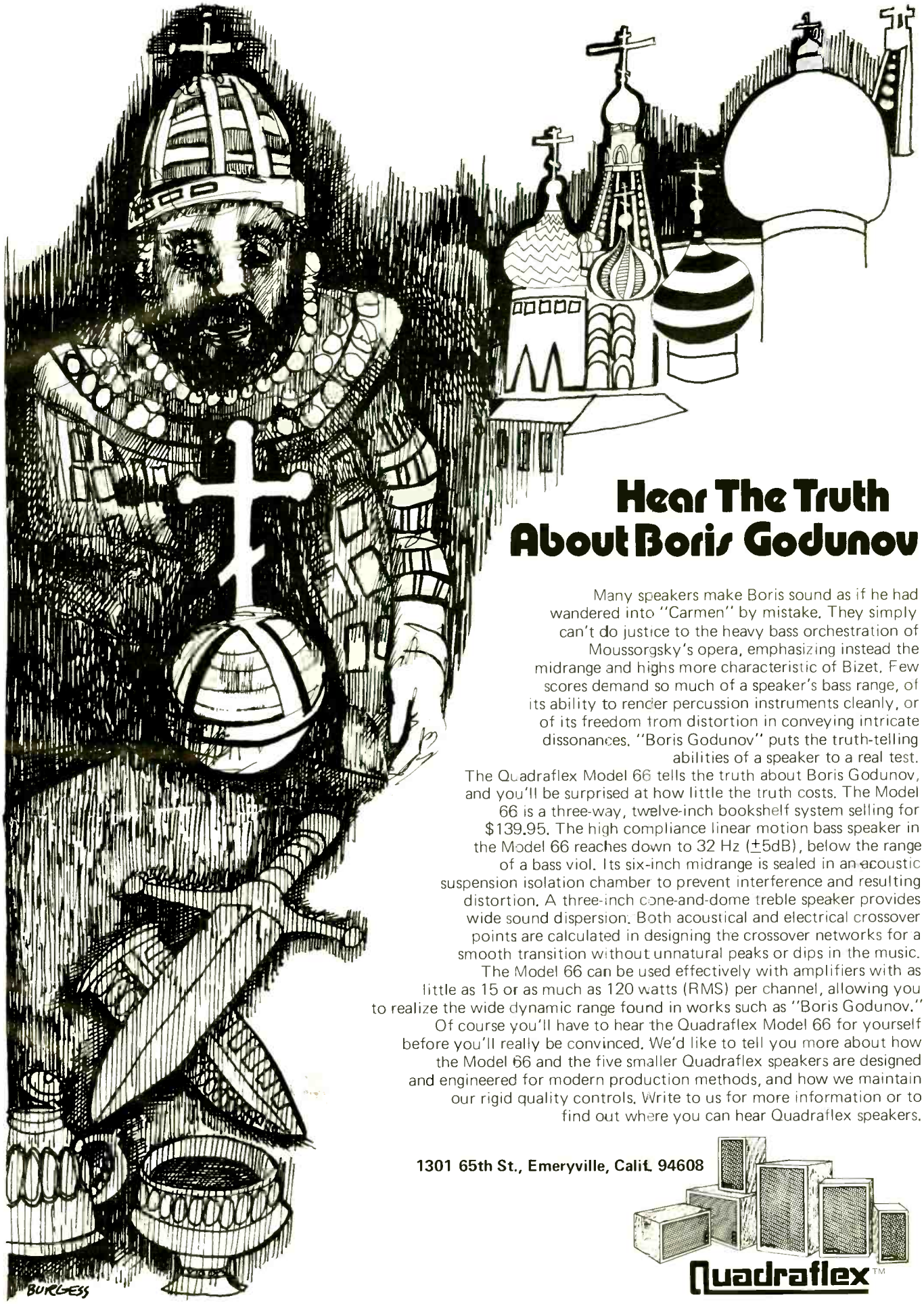
Thorens TD-125 Mk II Turntable

● THORENS' latest version of the TD-125 turntable, the TD-125AB Mk II, has acquired a new tone arm, the Thorens TP-16, and an improved drive system. The sixteen-pole synchronous motor, linked to the platter by a continuous belt, obtains its drive signal from operational amplifiers modulated by a built-in oscillator. Changing the frequency of the oscillator switches the turntable speed from 33⅓ rpm to 45 or 16⅔ rpm. A fine-tuning speed control provides an adjustment range of ±2 per cent, with an illuminated stroboscopic indicator on the motorboard to serve as an indicator of on-speed condition. The tone arm is a low-mass design with a lightweight cartridge shell. Stylus force and antiskating compensation are applied by calibrated knobs after the arm has been balanced by means of the sliding counterweight at its rear. The antiskating system is magnetic, and several sets of calibrations are provided for styli of different size and shape. A tone-arm cueing mechanism damped in both directions of travel is built into the turntable; it is operated by one of the three sliding switches that make up the turntable's major controls. The 12-inch, 7-pound platter is made of a non-magnetic

(Continued on page 16)



Hear The Truth About Boris Godunov

Many speakers make Boris sound as if he had wandered into "Carmen" by mistake. They simply can't do justice to the heavy bass orchestration of Moussorgsky's opera, emphasizing instead the midrange and highs more characteristic of Bizet. Few scores demand so much of a speaker's bass range, of its ability to render percussion instruments cleanly, or of its freedom from distortion in conveying intricate dissonances. "Boris Godunov" puts the truth-telling abilities of a speaker to a real test.

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The Model 66 can be used effectively with amplifiers with as little as 15 or as much as 120 watts (RMS) per channel, allowing you to realize the wide dynamic range found in works such as "Boris Godunov."

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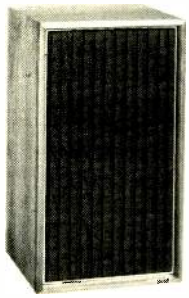
alloy. Specifications for the TD-125AB Mk II include wow and flutter of 0.06 per cent (DIN weighted) and a rumble level of −48 dB (unweighted). The entire motorboard assembly is floated on damped springs to isolate the platter and arm from vibration. Dimensions, including the wood base, are 18 x 14 x 5 inches (the length is 2 inches greater for the version that accommodates a 12-inch tone arm to play 16-inch transcription discs). Price: $310. Dust covers are available hinged ($30) or unhinged ($15).

Circle 117 on reader service card

Sylvania AS85W Speaker System

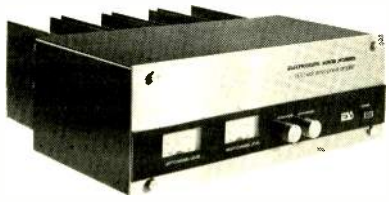


● SYLVANIA has a new speaker system, the AS85W, an air-suspension design with an 8-inch woofer and a 1½-inch dome tweeter. Its frequency response is rated at 40 to 20,000 Hz. The crossover frequency is 3,000 Hz, and the system resonance is 55 Hz. The AS85W will tolerate amplifier power outputs of up to 50 watts continuous per channel. Its nominal impedance is 8 ohms. A two-position switch on the back of the enclosure varies the tweeter output from flat response to a 2-dB boost. The input connectors will accept stripped wires or plugs. The enclosure, which measures about 18¾ x 10¾ x 10½ inches, is finished with walnut veneers and fitted with a dark, pleated grille-cloth panel. The suggested list price is $69.95.

A second new speaker system introduced by Sylvania is the Model AS105W, a three-way system with a 10-inch air-suspension woofer that extends low-frequency response down to 30 Hz, and dome-type mid-range and tweeter units of 1½ and 1 inch, respectively. Crossover frequencies are 600 and 10,000 Hz, and a two-position switch changes the output of the mid-range driver over a 2-dB range. Power-handling capability is 65 watts continuous per channel; the system's nominal impedance is also 8 ohms. Approximate dimensions are 24¼ x 13¾ x 11¾ inches, and appearance is identical to that of the AS85W except for enclosure size. Price: $109.95.

Circle 118 on reader service card

ESS Stereo Preamplifier and Stereo Power Amplifier



● ELECTROSTATIC SOUND SYSTEMS has announced its first electronic products, a stereo preamplifier and a 500-watt stereo power amplifier. The preamplifier (top), which has inputs for magnetic phono, tuner, and three high-level sources (one of which is labeled CASSETTE), has a rated output of 2.5 volts and a signal-to-noise ratio of 100 dB for the high-level inputs referred to that output level. Harmonic distortion is 0.0075 per cent throughout the audio band; intermodulation distortion is 0.005 per cent. The phono-input signal-to-noise ratio is 80 dB referred to a 10-millivolt, 1,000-Hz input signal. The frequency response of the high-level inputs is 10 to 30,000 Hz ±0.025 dB. Besides its input selector, the preamplifier has knobs for volume, balance, bass, and treble, plus pushbuttons for a.c. power, tone-control bypass, high- and low-cut filters, mono/stereo mode, and tape monitoring. There are two sets of outputs and a front-panel stereo headphone jack that will drive low-impedance phones. The dimensions of the unit are approximately 16½ x 6 x 9 inches, excluding the controls. Price: $395.

The ESS power amplifier is rated at 250 watts continuous per channel (8-ohm loads, both channels driven) across the entire audio range, with less than 0.1 per cent harmonic distortion and 0.05 per cent intermodulation distortion. Its signal-to-noise ratio is 100 dB, and the damping factor is 1,000 at 20 Hz. A 1.75-volt input drives the amplifier to rated output. The power bandwidth is 1 to 100,000 Hz. The Model 500 amplifier measures approximately 16½ x 6 x 15 inches. Price: $595. A more elaborate version, the Model 500M (shown at bottom), has illuminated front-panel level meters and separate gain controls for each channel. Price: $675.

Circle 119 on reader service card

Wollensak Stereo Cassette Decks

● WOLLENSAK has two new stereo cassette decks, the Models 4780 (shown) and 4770. The 4780 has built-in Dolby B noise-reduction circuitry and a tape-type switch that selects the proper recording characteristics for chromium-dioxide or standard tape formulations. The Model 4770 has the DNS dynamic noise-suppression system that operates during playback to reduce the hiss frequencies when no significant musical information is present in the output signal. Both machines incorporate "memory wind" features that automatically return the tape at fast speed to a preselected point when activated, and automatic-shutoff devices that disengage the drive mechanism at the end of a cassette. The frequency response of the 4780 is 30 to 15,000 Hz ±3 dB for high-performance tapes and 30 to 14,000 Hz ±3 dB for "regular" tape. The corresponding figures for the 4770 are 50 to 15,000 Hz and 50 to 12,000 Hz, both ±3 dB. The signal-to-noise ratios are approximately 49 dB for both, with improvements ranging from 3 to 10 dB provided by their respective noise-reduction systems. Prices: Model 4780, $259.95; Model 4770, $199.95.

Circle 120 on reader service card

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AUDIO QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

By LARRY KLEIN *Technical Editor*

Record Noise

Q. *Although most of my discs are new, I hear a lot of pops and clicks when playing them. I know that they are all clean since I use one of the recommended cloths for taking off dust and static electricity. Would it help to upgrade to a better cartridge than the $40 unit that I am now using?*

KENNETH KOESTER
APO, N.Y.

A. No, but it might help if you would stop "cleaning" your records with the cloth. Such cloths are usually impregnated with some type of anti-static solution that can cause dust to adhere to the record surface and thereby worsen the noise problem. If your player is tracking at one gram or so, the only fluid that you should use on the disc surface is distilled water in minute amounts, applied by one of the brush/felt pad cleaners that look like miniature metal or plastic tone arms and are designed to track a disc as it plays.

Impedance and Amplifier Power

Q. *We know that most speaker systems do not stay at the same impedance throughout their frequency range. And since the power output of a solid-state amplifier varies with the load it feeds, wouldn't most amplifiers have a rather erratic frequency response when used with a speaker system whose impedance varies with frequency?*

JOHN GAYLORD
San Francisco, Cal.

A. The variation of speaker impedance with signal frequency described by Mr. Gaylord does occur, but, for several reasons, the consequences are not as severe as he imagines. As far as the amplifier is concerned, the only significant impedance variation takes place at the speaker system's low-frequency resonance—usually somewhere between 35 and 50 Hz. At that point, the impedance may rise to perhaps five times normal.

Almost all of today's amplifiers are designed to act as low-impedance sources. This means that an amplifier driving a speaker with a nominal 8-ohm impedance may itself have an output impedance of 0.08 ohm or lower—or a damping factor of 100. This very low output impedance results in the amplifier's acting as a *constant-voltage* source. In other words, if, with a given input signal, the amplifier puts 10 volts into the speaker, it will deliver the 10 volts regardless of whether the speaker impedance is 4, 8, or 30 ohms. But while the voltage to the speaker remains unaffected by the speaker's impedance variations, the *current* fed to the speaker by the amplifier must obey Ohm's law and it therefore varies with the speaker's impedance. If the speaker impedance doubles, you'll have half the current; if the impedance is halved, you'll have double the current. Or, to look at it from another direction, with a given signal level, if you halve the impedance of the speaker you double the power fed to it, and if you double the impedance of the speaker you halve the power going to it.

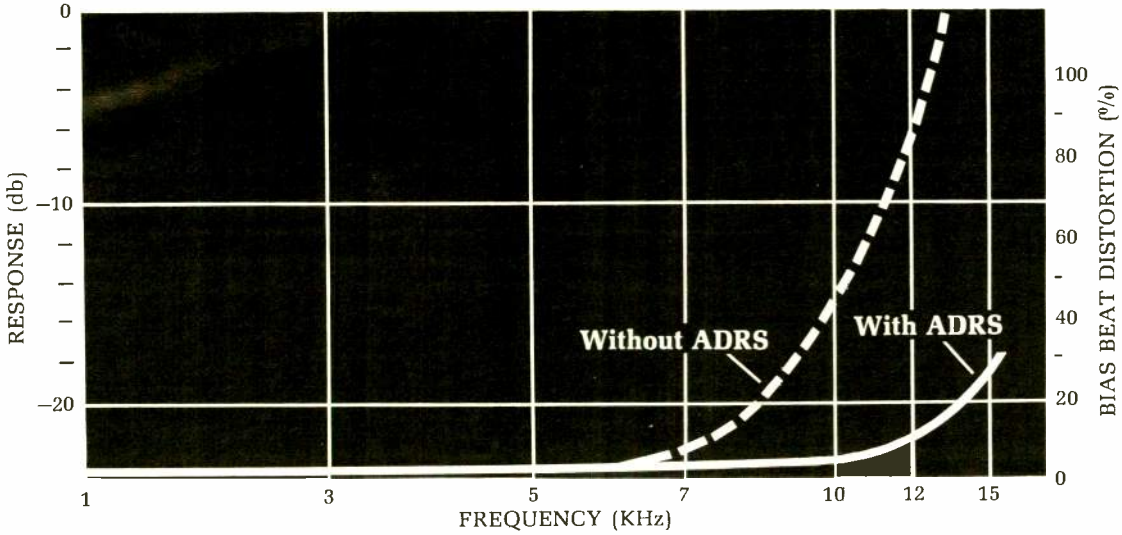
So where does that leave us? Remember that we usually find peaks rather than dips in a speaker's impedance curve. This means that there is a *reduction* in amplifier power output at, say, the system's resonant frequency—which happens to be the frequency at which the speaker is most efficient. By proper use of damping and other techniques, a designer can adjust the "Q" of the speaker's resonant peak so that the speaker's rise in efficiency neatly cancels the dip in amplifier power fed to it; the result is a flat acoustic output. The knowledgeable speaker-system designer also adjusts the parameters of the crossover network—its slopes and so forth—to compensate for whatever variations in acoustic output may be introduced by variations in impedance at other frequencies.

Many speakers also have mild dips below their nominal impedance at certain frequencies. The dips seldom fall to even half the rated impedance, which means that while the current, and hence

(Continued on page 20)

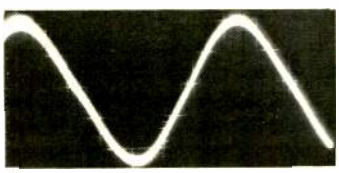
ADRS*

The curve that bent the Cassette Market out of shape.



You are looking at a distortion measurement curve. It compares high-frequency distortion found in other cassette decks to the exclusive new AKAI cassette line equipped with ADRS. The results are extraordinary. ADRS eliminates almost all distortion above 8,000 Hz. And only AKAI combines ADRS and GX** Heads with Dolby to give you the most perfect cassette recording in the world today.

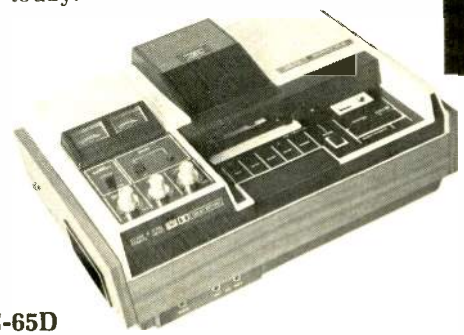
Without ADR System



ADR System

Illustrated at left are the actual output curves of a 13KHz signal from a Dolby equipped cassette deck without ADRS, and a comparable curve from a new AKAI GXC-46D cassette deck with ADRS, GX Head and Dolby. The clear, undistorted signal is a pleasure to behold. And an even greater pleasure to hear.

*Automatic Distortion Reduction System
**Glass and Crystal Ferrite Head



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GXC-46D

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power, fed to the speaker (*assuming the amplifier can provide it*) might be doubled, the audio output is increased by only 3 dB. In most environments, the normal output variation of any speaker is much greater than this because of room-acoustics effects. Of course, if the speaker impedance falls too low, then the amplifier can run into trouble while straining to deliver greater power than it was designed for. But most of today's speaker engineers are aware of the problem and compensate for it.

The preceding does not contradict the fact that our laboratory measurements on solid-state amplifiers show an increase in maximum power of 40 per cent or so (rather than 100 per cent) when the test load is lowered from 8 to 4 ohms. Remember that those lab measurements are made with the amplifier operating at its *maximum* power output. Obviously you are not going to get a doubling of the 8-ohm maximum power (before clipping) when the output transistors are already delivering close to their maximum current potential.

Mis-Tracking Cymbals

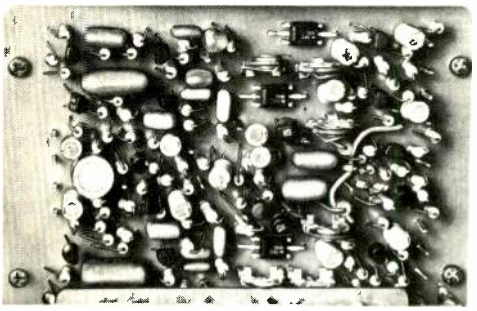
Q. *I recently purchased a new phono cartridge not yet tested by your magazine. It sounds much better than the five-year-old model that it replaced. However, I find that on one particular pop record in my collection, the loud cymbals do not sound natural until I apply about 2 grams—twice the tracking force recommended by the cartridge manufacturer. What do you suppose is at fault here?*

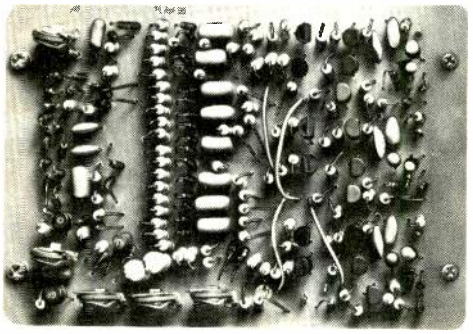
PHILIP CROSLY
Patterson, N.J.

A. To begin with, the fact that your cartridge can track the cymbals when you increase tracking force indicates that the problem is *not* a physical flaw in the record groove. Using an external stylus-force gauge, check the accuracy of your turntable's built-in tracking-force gauge. If you find it off calibration and, as a result, your arm is set to track substantially lighter than its calibrated scale indicates, that could be the source of your trouble. A second—and more likely—possibility is that the cymbal crashes have been cut into the record groove at such a high velocity (*i.e.*, very loud) that practically *no* cartridge operating at a normally low tracking force will be able to follow the fantastically rapid groove undulations. In that case, I suspect that you can learn to live with the problem presented by the distorted cymbals on one band of one disc.

Because the number of questions we receive each month is greater than we can reply to individually, only those questions selected for this column can be answered. Sorry!

What Makes the LAFAYETTE LR-4000 the Most Sophisticated Hi-Fi 4-Channel SQ Receiver...





Among other things is the exclusive "wave matching full logic" SQ decoder

Quite frankly, the LR-4000 4-Channel SQ Stereo Receiver represents the culmination of an "all out" design philosophy on the part of Lafayette's engineering team. One of the LR-4000's many advanced features is a "wave matching full logic" SQ decoder. This type of SQ decoder provides a highly sophisticated level of performance by employing **two** electronic systems: front/back logic and wave matching logic. This results in a performance capability in excess of 20db of precise channel separation of any SQ program source. 4-Channel SQ . . . like you never heard it before!

Our "all out" design philosophy brings you an FM stereo tuner section which has a "phase locking" multiplex decoder section providing optimum stereo separation (40db at 400 Hz) at minimum distortion (0.3% H.D. at 100% Modulation). Four channels of amplification at 57-watts/channel RMS "feeds" even power hungry speakers! We've also incorporated two additional "matrix" decoder circuits in the LR-4000 which enables you to enjoy "derived" 4-channel sound from your regular 2-channel stereo records, stereo tapes, and FM stereo broadcasts as well as any other specially "encoded" 4-channel stereo program source. And there's lots more innovative features, but we're out of space!

The LR-4000 is Lafayette's answer to an "all out" extraordinary 4-Channel SQ Receiver in all areas **but** one—the price! Only $499.95 . . . and waiting for you at your nearest Lafayette Electronics Center. Hope to see you soon . . .

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AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES

FM MULTIPATH DISTORTION

MULTIPATH RECEPTION of FM broadcasts plagues the urban dweller, and sometimes the surburbanite, if he lives close enough to a large natural or man-made structure (a hill, water tower, building, *etc.*). Multipath comes about because FM broadcast signals, like radar, are susceptible to being reflected from such substantial objects as tall buildings and mountains. If the listener is located in the path of any of these reflections, he may find himself receiving an FM broadcast directly from the transmitting antenna *plus* the same, but slightly delayed, signal bounced off one or more of these reflecting surfaces. In other words, the FM signal reaches the antenna through *multiple paths*. Audibly, the delayed signal, in interacting with the direct signal, produces not an echo but a garble that is equally disturbing. Since the signals arriving at the antenna from the reflecting source(s) are random in phase not only with each other but with the main direct signal, they interfere in a complicated and ever-changing fashion. When the tuner tries to process this mixture of signals, the result is a raspy or whiny distortion of the audio signal, sometimes with moments of complete shattering and ripping apart of the sound when there are abrupt changes in the program dynamics.

In a good tuner, it takes a pretty strong reflected signal to do much damage. However, city dwellers are frequently bombarded by numerous reflections, while tall buildings are effectively blocking the direct signal. For many FM listeners multipath can be such a problem that some manufacturers have designed special multipath indicators for their tuners and receivers. As a rule, these come in two configurations. One design approach is to set up the signal-strength meter (by means of a front-panel switch) to respond to amplitude modulation (AM) of the incoming signal (FM radio signals are *not* supposed to vary in amplitude, so if significant AM shows up—indicated by a rapid fluctuation and jerking of the meter needle—multipath or some other serious form of interference is present). The second type of indicator uses an oscilloscope—built into a few deluxe tuners and receivers, and available as an accessory (to be plugged into the appropriate jacks on a tuner when they are present) from several companies. The scopes show a horizontal line that stretches and collapses in response to the FM audio program levels. Small amounts of multipath create vertical undulations in the line; severe cases may utterly craze and frazzle it, in synchronization with the audible distortion effects. Although the multipath indicators can't do a thing for you by themselves, they can guide you in orienting an FM antenna for the least multipath interference. Even a simple TV-type rabbit-ears antenna can frequently have its two arms adjusted to achieve the best compromise between signal pickup and multipath pickup. However, severe cases of multipath may require better directional properties than the rabbit-ears can provide. In that case, you may have to consider a large outdoor antenna designed especially for highly directional pickup properties, or possibly cable FM if it is available in your area.

A love letter.

As you probably know, Revox has always received the highest praise from the experts. And by now, we almost take it for granted.

But even we were bowled over by the unabashed declaration of love we received from audio editor Michael Marcus writing in Rolling Stone. In fact, we were so pleased that we'd like to share our pleasure with you. Herewith, Mr. Marcus' comments in their entirety.

The Top "Semi-Pro" Tape Deck

If you get turned on by big bridges, German cars, Swiss watches, Leica cameras, and computers; if you had three Erector sets at the *same* time as a kid; if you shadowed the TV repairman and the plumber when they worked in your house; if you just know they're going to bury you with a screwdriver tucked into your shroud, a Revox tape deck would make you very, very happy.

And if you are a music maker or music listener besides, a Revox would make you *** ecstatic!

The Revox A77 Dolbyized deck sells for $969, and can make recordings with sound equal to million-dollar studios. It is compact enough to strap on the back of a motorcycle, and rugged enough to survive a crash. It either contains or may be combined with every imaginable feature and accessory, and is as fool-proof and easy to operate as any recorder I know of.

My tests, and reports in the hi-fi mags, back up Revox's claim that this is truly the top performing "semi-pro" tape deck available. Technical performance characteristics have seldom, if ever, been bettered by any other home machine: wide, flat frequency response; extremely low distortion; perfect speed; imperceptible wow and flutter; and noise level, even without the Dolby circuits, that matches the best studio equipment.

With the Dolby noise reduction circuits operating, the A77 is so quiet it's scary. This machine really provides sound reproduction! No person for whom I demonstrated the recorder could distinguish between live and recorded sound in A-B tests. For decades hi-fi ads have been bullshitting about "concert hall realism." The Revox really achieves it.

From across the room you could mistake it for an old $199 Radio Shack clunker: It has none of the carefully cultivated "professional" look found on current popular Japanese tape machines. But it has everything: ten-inch professional size reel capacity for hours of taping without flipping over the reels; Dolby circuits so you can use low tape speeds without sacrificing quality, saving tape expense and further reel-flipping; three-motor transport with electronic speed control; push-button solenoid operation with provision for remote control; spring clips built into the reel spindles to hold the tape on in any position without bothering with rubber clamps; different tape tension for each speed and reel size; safety record buttons with red signal lights for each channel; and automatic shutoff.

And individual input selection for each channel; internal track transfer; front and rear panel jacks for either high or low impedance mikes; stereo, single-channel, or merged mono output modes; output volume and balance controls; and a Dolby calibration tone generator that lets you get the noise reduction circuitry working in two seconds.

And there's a lever that pushes the tape against the heads with the motors off for editing; a high frequency filter to prevent interference from FM station multiplex signals, and a headphone jack.

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

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

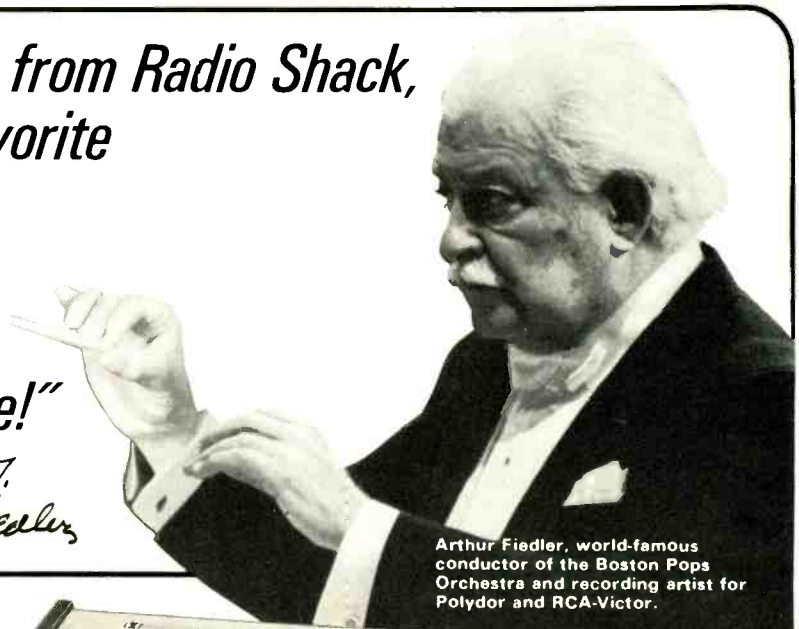
I have a few bitches about the machine: the braking is slow; the meters are a bit small; and the photocell tape shutoff can be annoyingly activated by white leader tape spliced between tape sections; but I manage. I have really gotten to love the Revox A77 Dolby B. I know of nothing better.

Once again, Revox delivers what all the rest only promise.

Revox Corporation, 155 Michael Drive, Syosset, New York 11791;
California: 3637 Cahuenga Blvd. West, Hollywood 90068; Canada: Revox Sales and Service, Montreal

"With this cassette pair from Radio Shack, you can record your favorite music at home, then play it back in your car. That's the kind of convenience I appreciate!"

Arthur Fiedler



Arthur Fiedler, world-famous conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra and recording artist for Polydor and RCA-Victor.

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Our Realistic® SCT-6 features advanced Dolby* Circuitry that makes hiss a thing of the past! Your recordings pop out of a starkly silent background with fidelity that rivals expensive reel-to-reel equipment. "Pro performance" specs too—30-15,000 Hz (± 2 dB) with chromium dioxide cassettes. 0.14% wow & flutter. 56 dB S/N ratio with Dolby "on." Has separate VU meter and record level control for each channel, master volume for both, pushbutton controls including pause for easy editing as-you-go, mixing, end of tape shutoff, more. Oiled walnut wood case and brushed aluminum panel make it a stylish addition to any stereo setup. **199.95**

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TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **THE NEW TECHNOLOGY:** Have you ever wondered how audio-equipment manufacturers manage, year after year, to develop new models with genuinely improved performance? In addition to the enhanced specifications we often find innovative features (such as digital FM tuners, various quadraphonic techniques, Dolby and other noise-reducing systems, and so forth) with little or no increase in price over the cost of earlier, less sophisticated equipment. Having spent more than twenty-five years in the design and development of commercial and military laboratory test equipment, I am especially impressed with the sophisticated circuits and components now becoming almost commonplace in consumer products. To some extent, these advances can be attributed to the advent of the transistor, but the causes go somewhat deeper than that.

The initial transition from vacuum tubes to transistors actually provided little, if any, improvement in performance. Early transistor-circuit designers fought a frustrating battle against noisy, unstable, low-level amplifiers with limited dynamic range and frequency response. Power amplifiers were notable for their low output, high distortion, and discouragingly short life. Perhaps the only clear advantage of those early transistorized products was their relatively cool operation. This was fortunate, since internal heating was the nemesis of the germanium power transistors—which were the only kind available at a reasonable price in those days.

The same technical problems faced the designers of commercial and military equipment, except that reliability was a paramount consideration. The solution was an expensive one, but not prohibitive for that market. They used silicon transistors. The small-signal types that could withstand high temperatures cost $25 to $30, and silicon power transistors, when they became available, were several times as costly. Fortunately, a rapidly expanding market soon lowered the prices of silicon transistors drastically. In a few years, epoxy-encapsulated silicon transistors (similar to those used in today's audio equipment), with characteristics technically superior to those of the early devices, were selling for as little as 25 cents. Similar advances in silicon power transistors made possible the modern stereo receiver, which has now surpassed in every respect the best vacuum-tube equipment.

In many cases it has been necessary to use two or three transistors to duplicate the function of a single tube, and a receiver that would have used perhaps twenty tubes in pre-transistor times might contain forty to fifty transistors. However, the savings in size and power consumption still encouraged designers to use large numbers of transistors to achieve results that would not have justified the use of an equal number of tubes.

The real "breakthrough" came with the development of the integrated circuit. An IC contains a number of transistors and diodes, plus the associated resistors (and often capacitors as well), on a single silicon "chip" about the size of a transistor. (In its packaged form, the IC is somewhat larger than a transistor, since it typically has about fourteen connecting leads instead of three, but it nevertheless occupies a small fraction of the space required by an equivalent number of individual components.) Although many IC's contain only ten to twenty transistor elements, it is now possible to make a single IC with hundreds of transistors on its small chip, and its cost will be only slightly more than that of a single transistor.

We have all seen the impact of these complex IC's in the electronic "pocket" calculators now selling for less than $100. It is perhaps not so clear how they affect the audio industry. But consider the "digital FM tuner," now available from several manufacturers. In its most advanced form, a digital

TESTED THIS MONTH

●

Design Acoustics D-12 Speaker
Tandberg TR-1020 AM/FM Receiver
Philips 212 Record Player
Ortofon M 15E Super Cartridge

tuner replaces the conventional tunable "local oscillator" with a frequency synthesizer whose frequency (corrected for the 10.7 MHz i.f. frequency) is displayed on a four-digit readout of some kind.

Frequency synthesizers are not new. They have been used for years in communications and laboratory equipment, but, at prices ranging from $2,000 to $15,000, they have obviously not appealed to audio-component manufacturers. The development of suitable IC's, manufactured in large quantities for industrial and military users, has completely changed this situation. Furthermore, the prices of numerical displays and their associated IC drivers and decoders have plummeted because of the huge market for small electronic calculators. As a result, a digital tuner, which would have cost thousands of dollars only a few years ago and would have been virtually impossible shortly before that, now costs little more than the better conventional tuners.

Actually, the advances in linear IC's, rather than the on/off digital variety, have had an even greater impact on the industry. The earliest use of IC's in FM tuners was in the i.f. amplifiers, where they offered advantages in gain, stability, and limiting effectiveness. Next, the FM multiplex (stereo) demodulator, with its four to twelve transistors, was replaced by a single IC that out-performed the discrete components it replaced. Most recently, the phase-locked-loop (PLL) IC has been used in some tuners and receivers for superior low-distortion FM detection. The PLL, incidentally, is a basic component of most frequency synthesizers and was in fact originally developed largely for that application.

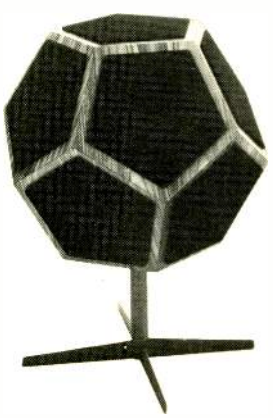
The well-known Dolby "B" noise-reduction system requires the use of a considerable number of transistors and other components, and this is reflected in the relatively high prices of a Dolby-equipped cassette recorder or FM tuner. An IC now in development will contain most of the Dolby circuitry, and should appear shortly in a number of moderately priced FM tuners and tape recorders. The original Electro-Voice quadraphonic decoding matrix was conceived and manufactured as a single IC. The latest full-logic SQ decoders, now made with discrete components, contain more than one hundred semiconductor devices and are therefore rather expensive. New IC's have now been developed that will permit the same job to be done with only three IC's at a correspondingly lower cost. The CD-4 quadraphonic discrete disc system now requires a rather complex demodulator, even with the use of several general-purpose IC's. As the market for these devices grows, we would expect to find them made up entirely of specialized IC's.

Developing a new IC can be so expensive ($50,000 to $100,000 is not uncommon) that only the existence or the potential of a mass market can justify it for a consumer application. Some old-time audiophiles tend to bemoan the growing popularity and watering down (as they see it) of their once-exclusive hobby. But it is only the entrance of components into the mass market that has enabled high-fidelity reproduction to reach its present state of technical sophistication.

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

Design Acoustics D-12 Speaker System



● THE Design Acoustics D-12 is a true omnidirectional speaker system—one of the very few we have seen, and perhaps the only one to cover so effectively the full audio-frequency range. Physically, it is a dodecahedron—a twelve-sided enclosure—containing eleven drivers serving as a three-way system. The 10-inch woofer, operating in a volume of about 2½ cubic feet, faces downward and covers a frequency range up to approximately 750 Hz. About an octave of mid-range is handled by an upward-facing 5-inch cone driver. Above 1,600 Hz, nine 2½-inch cone tweeters are arranged to radiate in such a manner that none of them is likely to point directly at a listener. The twelfth surface of the dodecahedron has a vent opening for the woofer cavity.

The D-12 has been designed to radiate a uniform acoustic-power output, integrated over a 360-degree solid angle, over its operating frequency range. With any loudspeaker in a typical home listening environment, most of the sound reaches a normally located listener indirectly after being reflected from one or more room surfaces. In the case of the D-12, practically none of the sound reaches the listener directly. Depending on room dimensions and furnishings, it may be desirable to reduce the high-frequency energy output, and this can be done by removing a jumper wire installed across two terminals near the

(Continued on page 30)

JENSEN'S TOTAL ENERGY RESPONSE

At Jensen Sound Laboratories, we have a reputation for building great speaker systems.

Our newest design, for the new line of Jensen Speaker Systems, gives an even fuller, richer sound than ever before.

We call it Total Energy Response. That's what you hear when our woofers, tweeters and purring mid-ranges start to sound off.

Our Total Energy Response makes a difference you can hear when you compare our systems to any others. Because in every price range, they give the best performance per dollar on the market today.

Consider these three new systems from Jensen. With more features, matched components and the best 5 year warranty in the business.

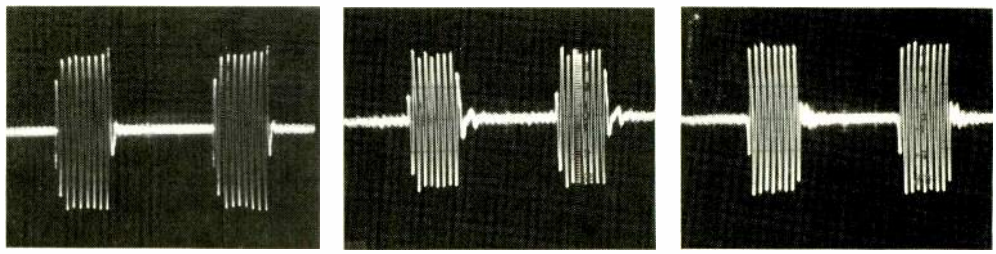
Model 4. A three way system introducing the first purr in speakers. Jensen's purring mid-ranges. There's a 10" woofer, 5" direct radiating mid-range and Sonodome® ultra-tweeter. $99.

Model 5. What a cast of characters. A three way system with a 12" woofer, two purring 5" direct radiating mid-ranges, Sonodome ultra-tweeter. $147.

Model 6. A fabulous four way, four speaker system, including a huge 15" woofer, 8" purring direct radiating mid-range, 5" direct radiating tweeter, and Sonodome ultra-tweeter. $198.

JENSEN SOUND LABORATORIES

A DIVISION OF [illegible]



These oscilloscope photos taken at (left to right) 50, 1,500, and 5,000 Hz illustrate the general excellence of the D-12's tone-burst response.

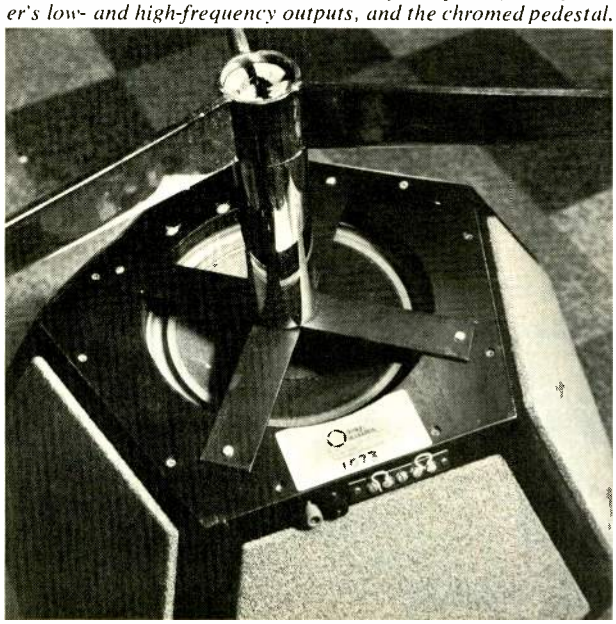
speaker input connectors. On the other hand, if the D-12 is placed near or in a corner, the low-bass response may be undesirably accentuated, and another jumper-wire change can reduce the low- and middle-frequency output as required.

The Design Acoustics D-12 is approximately 22 inches in diameter and 30 inches tall on its pedestal; it weighs about 40 pounds. In our test samples, the exposed wood trim was walnut, and each of the twelve sides was covered with a pentagonal black grille panel. Grille panels are available in a variety of other colors with black wood trim. The standard pedestal is a solid walnut post on a black steel base, but a fully chromed metal pedestal is available. The system can also be suspended from the ceiling by a suitable chain. Price of the standard D-12 is $349.

● ***Laboratory Measurements.*** The only meaningful way to measure the output of a true omnidirectional speaker such as the D-12 is in a reverberant room which integrates its output in all directions. We believe that this is one of the best ways to measure *any* type of speaker (our test set-up is designed roughly to approximate reverberant room conditions), but with a speaker such as this one it is a necessity. As a check on the validity of our procedures, we had the D-12 calibrated in a true laboratory reverberant chamber (effective in the frequency range from 500 to 15,000 Hz) and verified that our techniques produced essentially similar results. For measurements at low frequencies, we placed our microphone close to the woofer opening with the speaker in its normal upright position. This eliminated the influence of room resonances, so that "splicing" the high- and low-frequency curves produced a reasonably valid plot of the total energy output of the system.

Our test results completely confirmed the manufacturer's claim of uniform energy output, with a total measured variation of ±2 dB from 70 to 15,000 Hz. This ranks among the "flattest" responses we have measured for a speaker system. Since the speaker was tested in the center of a 15 x 20 foot room, it was in the worst possible location for propagating low frequencies, and, as a result, the measured output dropped off rather rapidly below about 50 Hz. In addition, our measurement could not take into account the radiation from the port, which becomes effective below 50 Hz and is dominant below about 35 Hz. Our ears attest to the fact that the D-12 maintained a healthy output down to 30 Hz or below.

A view of the D-12's underside, showing the 10-inch woofer, the input binding posts, strapping terminals for adjusting the speaker's low- and high-frequency outputs, and the chromed pedestal.



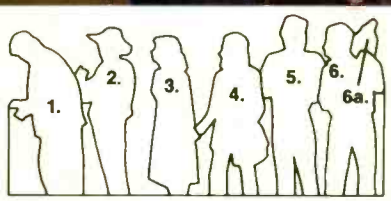
Our response curve had a broad, shallow dip (about 3 dB deep at its maximum) between 1,000 and 3,000 Hz which did not show up on the reverberant-chamber curve. A possible explanation would be the predominance of the upward-facing mid-range speaker in this range. With our microphone set 90 degrees off the axis of the mid-range speaker, we were highly dependent on ceiling reflection for our measured output, and the acoustic-tile ceiling may have had appreciable absorption. At a 1-watt drive level, low-frequency harmonic distortion was very low (under 2 per cent at 50 Hz and above, rising to 5 per cent at 40 Hz and 14 per cent at 30 Hz). Distortion at a 10-watt drive level increased only slightly, and, for a 90-dB sound-pressure level, distortion was 6 per cent at 50 Hz and 14 per cent at 40 Hz. The D-12 is somewhat more efficient than typical acoustic-suspension speakers, and 1 watt of drive was sufficient to produce a 90-dB sound-pressure level at mid frequencies as measured about 3 feet from the speaker. The high-frequency level (above 2,000 Hz) was reduced about 3 dB when the jumper connection was removed. When the low/middle range was attenuated, the slope began at 2,000 Hz and was down about 4 dB at frequencies below 500 Hz.

The D-12 is nominally an 8-ohm system. Its measured impedance was about 6 ohms above 100 Hz, with a rise to 30 ohms at the bass resonance of 50 Hz. With the jumper set for reduced lows, the maximum impedance was 8 ohms at 50 Hz, dropping off gradually from 6 ohms at 100 Hz to between 3 and 4 ohms at frequencies above 2,000 Hz. Given this impedance, D-12's should not be used in parallel with another pair of speakers when driven by a transistor amplifier.

Tone-burst response was generally excellent, although we found a small amount of ringing at 7,000 Hz. The effect was insignificant in itself, and was noted only because the tone-burst output was near-perfect at all other frequencies.

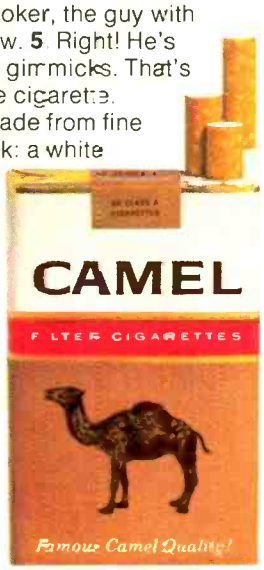
● ***Comment.*** The D-12, even in its muted walnut and black grille configuration, is visually prominent, and we suspect that most people will have a strong reaction, *pro* or *con*, to its appearance. Technically speaking, the D-12 is the first true "omni" speaker (as distinguished from those systems designed for controlled proportions of direct and reflected radiation) that we have had the opportunity to evaluate and live with for some time. Having observed for years that the speakers with the widest dispersion (all else being equal) usually sounded the best, we were not too surprised to find that the D-12 was a remarkably fine-sounding system. *(Continued on page 32)*

Can you spot the Camel Filters smoker?



In this picture everybody has a gimmick . . . almost everybody. Try picking the one who doesn't go along.

1. Nope. He's Alfonso Cliggitt, divorce lawyer. Gimmick: far out dress to intimidate the opposition. Smokes cigarettes made of dried tundra. **2.** Harold A. Baer, rare book expert. ("Books Old and Rare from Harry Baer.") Thinks rolling his own makes him look younger. A real dingbat. **3.** If she's the Camel Filters smoker, the guy with the beard is Jean Harlow. **4.** Gene Harlow. **5.** Right! He's just himself. And he sees through all the gimmicks. That's why he smokes an honest, no-nonsense cigarette. Camel Filters. Easy and good tasting. Made from fine tobacco. **6.** A. Boswell Farquar. Gimmick: a white (not green) parrot. Hasn't seen a movie in years. They won't let his parrot in. **6a.** Parrot. Smokes a meerchaum pipe but has trouble keeping it lit.



Camel Filters. They're not for everybody

(but they could be for you).

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

20 mg. "tar," 1.4 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report AUG.'72.

The most obvious feature of a true omnidirectional radiator is its total elimination of the speaker as the apparent sound source. Often the only way to tell if a D-12 is operating is to put your ear directly over its mid-range driver! This is not just a psychoacoustic phenomenon, since the measured sound field in our room (using interstation FM tuner hiss as a signal) varied less than 1 dB over practically the entire room area. When a sound-level meter was brought to within a foot of the grille of any of several conventional direct-radiator speakers, the increase in level was 8 to 10 dB. At 1 foot from the D-12, the increase was only 1 to 2 dB.

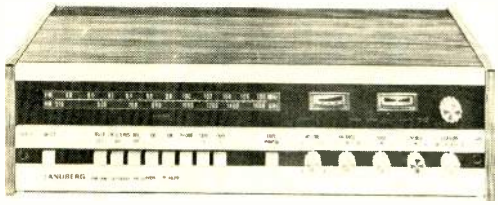
The stereo image provided by the D-12's is as distinct as we have ever heard, and can furthermore be enjoyed from *anywhere* in the listening room. One can stand practically on top of the right- or left-channel speaker and still hear the stereo image *between* the two speakers.

In our simulated "live-*vs*.-recorded" test, the D-12 earned a solid "A" rating. Unlike most speakers, it maintained a uniform energy output to the highest audible frequencies, matching the highs in our recorded "orchestra" to perfection. At times we could detect a minor change in the mid-range when comparing the D-12 with the original sound. This could have been due to the mid-range dip we had measured, or to the speaker's omnidirectional characteristics, since the "original" program emanated from a wide-dispersion but conventional direct-radiator loudspeaker. Even with the speaker installed well away from corners and walls, the low bass had an impressive solidity which could frequently be felt as well as heard. And it is certain that corner placement of the D-12 would further enhance its bass response.

It is also worth noting that, while all speakers are influenced to some degree by the acoustics of the listening room, omnidirectional types are especially sensitive in this respect. However, the fact that the D-12 sounded so listenable in our very "bright" room suggests that it would be even better in a more normal home environment. In sum, the D-12, which looks unlike any other speaker, has an equally unique sound, an open, airy quality that we find most pleasing, and an obvious smoothness and lack of coloration that correlate completely with our measurements. Without a doubt, the Design Acoustics D-12 is one of the finest-sounding home speaker systems we have ever encountered.

For more information, circle 105 on reader service card

Tandberg TR-1020 AM/Stereo FM Receiver



● FOR MOST American audio enthusiasts, the name Tandberg is one associated with fine tape recorders. In Europe, the company is also known as a leading manufacturer of other electronic home entertainment equipment, and this expertise is reflected in their recently introduced TR-1020 stereo receiver. The distinctive styling—satin aluminum front panel and knobs, tuning dial and meters softly lit in blue, the whole framed in a handsomely finished wood cabinet—is suggestive of the receiver's Scandinavian origin and is also well suited to almost any home decor.

The principal front-panel controls (ten push-on/push-off switches, five closely spaced knobs) form a single line across the panel. The buttons control a.c. power, FM interstation muting, FM stereo/mono, FM-AFC, input selection from phono, FM, AM, and either of two tape recorders. (These last two inputs can also be used for other high-level sources). There is also a separate tape-monitor pushbutton switch. The knobs control volume, balance, bass and treble (separate and concentric for the two channels), and speaker selection. Either, both, or neither of two pairs of speakers may be activated, and the front-panel stereo headphone jack is always "live." Another phone jack (TAPE 3) supplies a recording output for a third tape recorder, and can be used for playback as well (it has another unusual capability, which will be described below).

The entire lower section of the panel below the buttons and knobs is hinged and swings downward to reveal eight small pushbuttons. One of them controls stereo/mono switching. Two others, MONO L and MONO R, connect the corresponding input channels to both outputs. Pressing both MONO buttons has an unexpected effect—stereo operation with channels reversed. Other buttons control loudness compensation, a LO filter, and two HI filters (with different cut-off slopes). The eighth button is PRE-AMP RECORD, which connects the front-panel TAPE 3 output to the preamplifier section so that the amplifier controls can be used to modify signals before they are recorded. It is not self-evident, but engaging various combinations of the three tape-function pushbuttons will allow either of two decks connected to the TR-1020 to record (and monitor) from one to the other and play through the receiver. When the hinged covering panel is released, it closes gently, with a damped action. Illuminated words on the dial face then show which of the hidden buttons are engaged.

Across the top of the front panel is the tuning dial, with FM and AM scales and an FM STEREO indicator, two tuning meters providing relative signal-strength and channel-center indications, and the tuning knob. An interesting "extra," activated by pulling out the speaker-selector knob, is the conversion of the signal-strength meter to a peak-responding audio voltmeter, monitoring the outputs to the speakers and reading the higher of the two channels. This gives the user a rough idea of his average operating power level.

In the rear of the TR-1020 are four sets of speaker outputs (each pair of binding posts is paralleled by a DIN speaker jack), the various inputs and outputs, and separate preamplifier output/main amplifier input jacks joined by jumper cables. Our test unit had a European antenna socket, but Tandberg informs us that future production units will have conventional screw terminals. There is also a socket for a 75-ohm unbalanced coaxial antenna cable, and a built-in ferrite-rod antenna for AM. One of the two a.c. outlets is switched. Underneath the receiver are three knobs to control the sensitivities of the PHONO, TAPE 1, and TAPE 2 inputs. They are normally set to match the audio level from the tuners, which assures that the low-level amplifier stages will not be overdriven by excessive input levels.

The Tandberg TR-1020, though compact, is relatively

(Continued on page 38)

Flip the switch to 4-channel.

The newest thing in sound is the newest Sound of Koss. And it's right at your fingertips.
The switch is on to 4-channel. And only Koss gives you 4 ways to make it. With the big four from Koss. Four exciting Koss Quadrafones that do for 4-channel what Koss Stereophones have done for 2-channel listening.

Four separate Driver Elements.
On the left cup of each Koss Quadrafone is a 2-channel to 4-channel switch. Flip it to 4-channel and four separate Koss dynamic driver elements (two in each cup) surround you with breathtaking, full-dimensional quadraphonic sound from either your matrix or discrete system. If you thought the Sound of Koss was superb in 2-channel, wait until you hear it in 4-channel.

So you haven't made the switch.
There are two plugs on Koss Quadrafones. If you haven't made the switch to 4-channel, you only use one of them. The black one. Which you insert into your present stereophone jack on your 2-channel system. That automatically connects the two drivers in each ear cup in parallel. So what you'll have is nearly double the bass radiating area and an unbelieveable increase in efficiency over the full range. Which should make the switch to Koss Quadrafones worth it even if you haven't made the switch to 4-channel.

Volume-Balance Controls.
Slip on a Koss Quadrafone and you'll slip into any seat in the concert hall. Because Koss Quadrafones feature volume-balance controls on each ear cup. That puts any seat in the concert hall at your fingertips. From the middle of the concert hall one minute, to front row center the next. And you don't even have to leave the comfort of your own living room.

Hearing is believing.
With all that at your fingertips, it's hard to believe that you can buy Koss Quadrafones from $39.95 to $85. But it's true. And while you're on your way to hear them at your Hi-Fi Dealer or favorite Department Store, mail us a request for our full-color catalog, c/o Virginia Lamm, Dept. SR-472. You'll find a lot more from Koss that'll switch you on.

KOSS QUADRAFONES®
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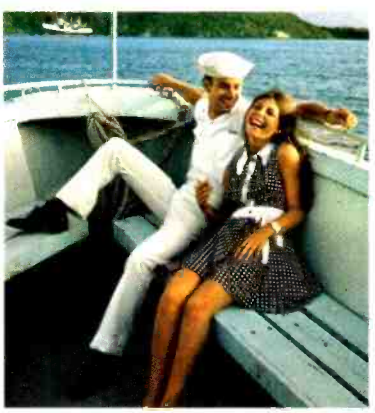
1919: Join the Navy and see exotic places.

and get job

This Navy poster originally appeared in 1919. For a free full-color reproduction, stop by your local Navy recruiter's office. No obligation, of course.

1972: Join the Navy training that will take you places.



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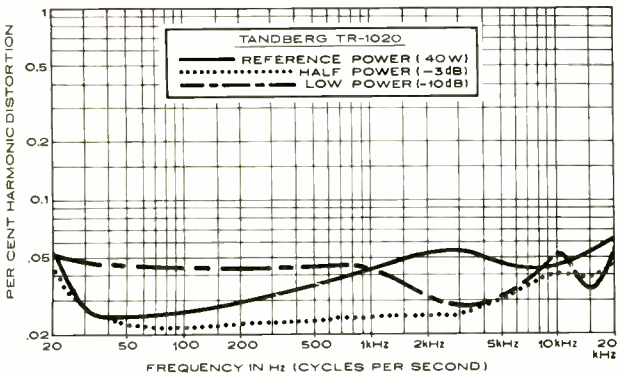
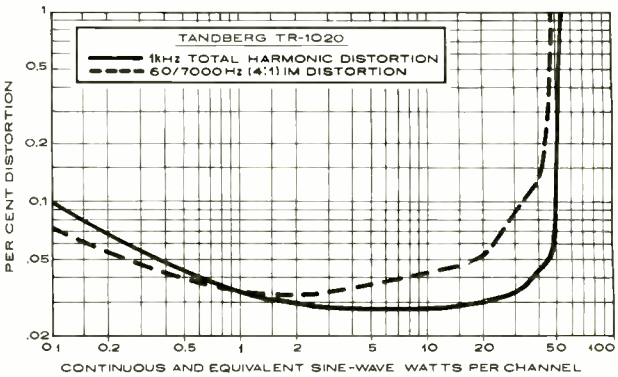




powerful, rated at 40 watts continuous per channel with 8-ohm loads, or 52 watts into 4 ohms. Its extensive performance specifications define a receiver of the highest quality. It measures 17 inches wide, 4¾ inches high, and 12 inches deep; it weighs 20 pounds. Price: $429.80.

● ***Laboratory Measurements.*** The FM tuner had a measured IHF sensitivity of 2.2 microvolts, with an extremely rapid limiting and quieting characteristic that produced an excellent 50-dB signal-to-noise ratio with less than 3 microvolts input. Measured distortion, including the 0.5 per cent residual of our signal generator, was less than 0.75 per cent at 100 per cent modulation. The frequency response was uniform within ±1 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. Stereo separation, better than 40 dB from 400 to 2,000 Hz, fell smoothly to 13 dB at the frequency extremes of 30 and 15,000 Hz.

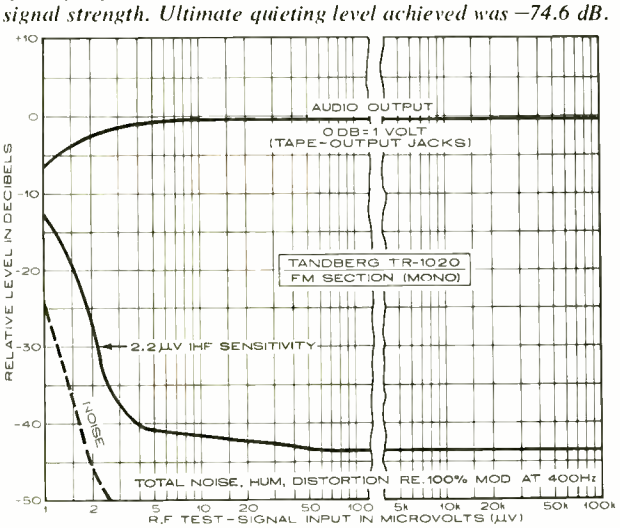
The capture ratio was an adequate 2.6 dB at 10 microvolts, and it improved slightly to 2.2 dB at 1,000 microvolts. AM rejection was considerably better than average at 60 dB. The image rejection (68 dB) and alternate-channel selectivity (74 dB) were also very good. The FM noise-muting threshold was 15 microvolts. AM frequency response was down 6 dB at 130 and 4,000 Hz.

The audio power output at waveform clipping (both channels driven into 8 ohms), with a 1,000-Hz test signal, was 50 watts per channel, increasing to an impressive 75 watts into 4 ohms. With 16-ohm loads, the maximum output was 29 watts. Harmonic and intermodulation (IM) distortion were both well under 0.2 per cent, and typically under 0.05 per cent, from 0.1 watt to well beyond rated power output. Using 40 watts per channel as a reference power level, the distortion was between 0.02 and 0.06 per cent from 20 to 20,000 Hz at any power from maximum to one-tenth of maximum. This exceptionally uniform performance over the full audio-frequency range sets the TR-1020 apart from many other receivers we have tested. IM distortion rose at very low output levels, as with most receivers, but did not reach 0.2 per cent until the output fell to 10 milliwatts; it reached 0.65 per cent at 2 milliwatts.

The phono sensitivity for a 10-watt output was adjustable from 0.84 to 4 millivolts, with corresponding overload levels of 37 millivolts and 110 millivolts. The TAPE input sensitivity was adjustable from 0.055 to 0.245 volts, with overload occurring at 2.4 volts and 10 volts, respectively. Hum and noise were very low: −79 dB (TAPE) and −74 dB (PHONO) referred to a 10-watt output.

The tone controls had good characteristics. The bass-turnover frequency shifted from below 30 Hz near the center of the control range to about 300 Hz at the extreme settings. The loudness compensation boosted both lows and highs moderately without introducing serious coloration of the sound. The LO filter had a 12-dB-per-octave slope, with the −3-dB point occurring at 65 Hz. This effectively eliminated most rumble with negligible effect on the musical program. The HI 1 filter also had a 12-dB-per-octave slope, beginning at 7,000 Hz; HI 2, with the same turnover frequency, had the more usual 6-dB-per octave characteristic. The two can be switched in simultaneously for more drastic treble attenuation than either provides alone, but this will rarely be required. RIAA equalization was exceptionally smooth and accurate – within ±1 dB over the full audio range.

The dashed curve labeled "noise" shows how random noise (principally hiss) drops below the audio output with increasing signal strength. Ultimate quieting level achieved was −74.6 dB.



The Tandberg TR-1020 has sockets for DIN speaker connectors in parallel with the speaker-output screw terminals. The inputs and outputs for two tape recorders are below the heat sinks.

● ***Comment.*** Although it might not be obvious to the user, the TR-1020 is electronically tuned, with voltage-controlled diode capacitors replacing the usual mechanically variable tuning capacitor. The Tandberg TR-1020 is the first electronically tuned receiver we have used which was "rock stable," having no perceptible warm-up drift even when the AFC was not used. The tuning was non-critical, and the interstation-noise muting worked well.

The audio performance of the receiver was flawless. Its compact dimensions (comparable to those of many receivers of one-half to one-third its power) belie its capabilities – the TR-1020 is a real "powerhouse." All the

(Continued on page 42)

There's more behind the BOSE 901 than just a reflecting wall.

Research

The 901 DIRECT/REFLECTING® speaker system is the result of the most intensive research program that has been conducted into the physical acoustics and psychoacoustics of loudspeaker design. The research that gave birth to the 901 in 1968 began in 1956 and continues today to explore the frontiers of sound reproduction. Copies of the Audio Engineering Society paper, 'ON THE DESIGN, MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION OF LOUDSPEAKERS', by Dr. A. G. Bose, are available from the Bose Corp. for fifty cents.

Technology

As might be expected, the product that emerged from 12 years of research is technologically quite different from conventional speakers. Some of the major differences are:

1) The use of a multiplicity of acoustically coupled full-range speakers to provide a clarity and definition of musical instrument sounds that can not, to our knowledge, be obtained with the conventional technology of woofers, tweeters, and crossovers.

2) The use of active equalization in combination with the multiplicity of full range speakers to provide an accuracy of musical timbre that can not, to our knowledge, be achieved with speakers alone.

3) The use of an optimum combination of direct and reflected sound to provide the spatial fullness characteristic of live music.

4) The use of a totally different frequency response criterion—flat power response instead of the conventional flat frequency response—to produce the full balance of high frequencies without the shrillness associated with conventional Hi-Fi.

Quality Control

It's a long way from a good theoretical design to the production of speakers that provide you with all the musical benefits inherent in the design. To this end BOSE has designed a unique computer that tests speakers for parameters that are directly related to the perception of sound. There is only one such computer in existence—designed by us and used for you. In January alone it rejected 9,504 speakers that will never be used again in any BOSE product. It is the speakers that survive the computer tests that provide your enjoyment and our reputation.

Reviews

The BOSE 901 DIRECT/REFLECTING® speaker is now the most highly reviewed speaker regardless of size or price. Read the complete text of reviewers who made these comments:*

Julian Hirsch STEREO REVIEW. ". . . I must say that I have never heard a speaker system in my own home which could surpass, or even equal, the Bose 901 for overall 'realism' of sound."

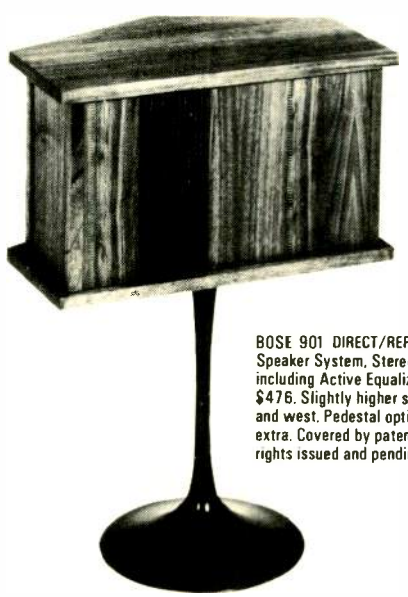
e/e HIGH FIDELITY. "It is our opinion that this is the speaker system to own, regardless of price if one wants the ultimate in listening pleasure."

Irving Kolodin SATURDAY REVIEW. "After a time trial measured in months rather than weeks, this one can definitely proclaim Bose is best, big or small, high or low."

Performance

You alone must be the judge of this. Visit your BOSE dealer. Audition the 901 with your favorite records. We make only one request. Before leaving, ask him to place the 901's directly on top of the largest and most expensive speakers he carries and then compare the sound. You will know why we make this request when you have made the experiment.

*For reprints of the reviews circle our number on your readers service card.



BOSE 901 DIRECT/REFLECTING® Speaker System, Stereo Pair, including Active Equalizer, $476. Slightly higher south and west. Pedestal optional extra. Covered by patent rights issued and pending.

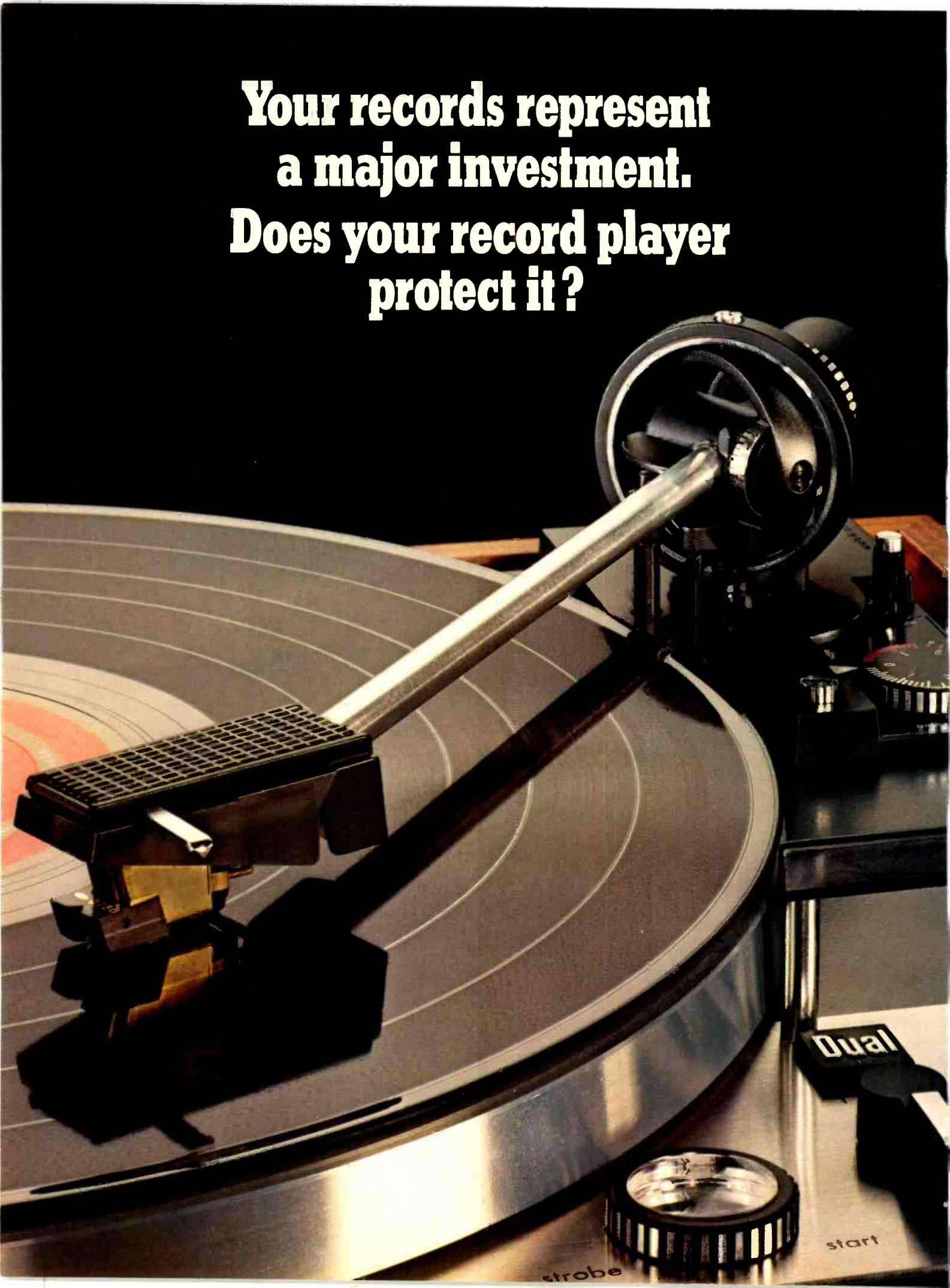
You can hear the difference now.

BOSE®

FRAMINGHAM, MA. 01701

CIRCLE NO. 7 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Your records represent a major investment. Does your record player protect it?



According to surveys by the major music magazines, the average music lover owns more than 200 records.

If you're typical, a little math will tell you that your record collection has already cost you over a thousand dollars. And will cost even more as you continue to buy records.

With that much money involved, it's certainly worth your while to consider how to protect that investment. Especially since the soft vinyl record is so vulnerable to permanent damage from the unyielding hardness of the diamond-tipped stylus.

What can do the damage.

When the stylus touches down in the groove, a running battle begins. The rapidly changing contours of the groove force the stylus up, down and sideways at great speeds. To reproduce a piccolo, for example, the stylus must vibrate about fifteen thousand times a second.

The battle is a very uneven one. If the stylus can't respond easily and accurately, there's trouble. Especially with the sharp and fragile curves which produce the high frequencies. Instead of going around these peaks, the stylus will simply lop them off. The record looks unchanged, but with those little bits of vinyl go the lovely high notes.

It's all up to the tonearm.

Actually, no damage need occur. Your records can continue to sound new every time you play them. It all depends on the tonearm, which is to the stylus as the surgeon's hand is to the scalpel.

The tonearm has just three jobs to perform. It must apply just the right amount of stylus pressure, keep this pressure equal on both walls of the groove, and follow the stylus without resistance as the groove spirals inward.

Today's finest cartridges are designed to track optimally at very low pressures (one gram or less). So you can appreciate how important it is for the tonearm settings to be accurate and dependable. And for the friction in the bearings to be extremely low.

Yet the difference in cost between a turntable with a precision-balanced tonearm and one with a less refined tonearm can be as little as $50. (The cost of only a dozen records.)

Dual: The choice of serious record collectors.

For these reasons and others, Dual turntables have long been the choice of serious music lovers.

And for years, readers of the leading music magazines have bought more Duals than any other make of quality turntable.

We think these are impressive endorsements of Dual quality. But if you would like to know what independent test labs say about Dual, we'll send you complete reprints of their reports. Plus an article on what you should look for in record playing equipment.

Or, if you feel ready to invest in a Dual, just visit your franchised United Audio dealer for a demonstration. The dividends will start immediately.

How Dual protects your records.

Dual®

United Audio Products, Inc., 120 So. Columbus Ave., Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10553

Exclusive U.S. Distribution Agency for Dual.

controls operated smoothly, and although we did not operate it with two or three tape recorders, it would seem to be a natural part of the audio system of any serious tape hobbyist. In general, we were highly impressed with, and enthusiastic about, the Tandberg TR-1020. It is not inexpensive, but it has been designed and built with the care and attention to detail that have given Tandberg its enviable reputation for quality. The TR-1020 is well worth every cent of its price.

For more information, circle 106 on reader service card

Philips 212 Record Player

● THE Philips 212, distributed by Norelco, is a compact, moderately priced integrated record player with several unique design features. The 212 uses a relatively light (2½ pounds) platter, 11½ inches in diameter, belt-coupled to an electronically driven and regulated low-speed motor. A tachometer/generator coupled to the motor shaft supplies a correcting "error" signal that is fed back to the transistorized motor-drive amplifier, thus maintaining speed accuracy. Each of the electronically controlled speeds (33⅓ and 45 rpm) can be adjusted slightly by a small knob on the motorboard, and speed is independent of both line voltage and frequency. The turntable's ribbed rubber mat has stroboscope markings to assist in speed adjustment.

A pushbutton switch turns on the power to the 212, lighting a small circular STOP indicator at the right of the motorboard. This is flanked by two more such indicators marked 45 and 33. Although these appear to be pushbuttons, they are actually nonmechanical electronic switches. A mere touch of the finger on one of the contactors starts the platter turning at the selected speed. The center STOP contact halts the platter. To change speeds while the turntable is in operation, one pushes STOP and then the desired speed contactor in rapid succession, and the speed change is completed in a couple of seconds. Each of the contactors lights up when touched.

The low-mass tubular arm, only about ¼ inch in diameter, has an adjustable counterweight and a slide-in plastic cartridge-mounting plate. A plastic jig is supplied for positioning the cartridge for minimum tracking-angle error. After the arm is balanced, any force from 1 to 4 grams can be set by sliding a small weight along the arm tube to one of the calibration markings. An anti-skating knob on the motorboard has separate calibrated scales for elliptical and conical styli, with respective ranges of 0 to 3 grams and 0 to 4 grams.

A slow, damped arm lift is actuated by a rocker switch on the motorboard. The arm has a well-designed finger lift which can be used to position the pickup anywhere over the record surface (or on the record itself, if the lift mechanism is not used). When the pickup reaches an inner-groove radius of about 2¾ inches, the motor is shut off by a photo-electric sensor, although the pickup remains on the record. The arm, lift bar, and turntable platter are floated as a unit on soft springs, isolating them from motor vibrations that might have been a source of rumble.

The Philips 212 is supplied on an attractive wooden base with a hinged, tinted-plastic dust cover. Overall dimensions (including cover) are 5 x 15¼ x 15⅛ inches; weight is 15½ pounds. Price: $149.50.

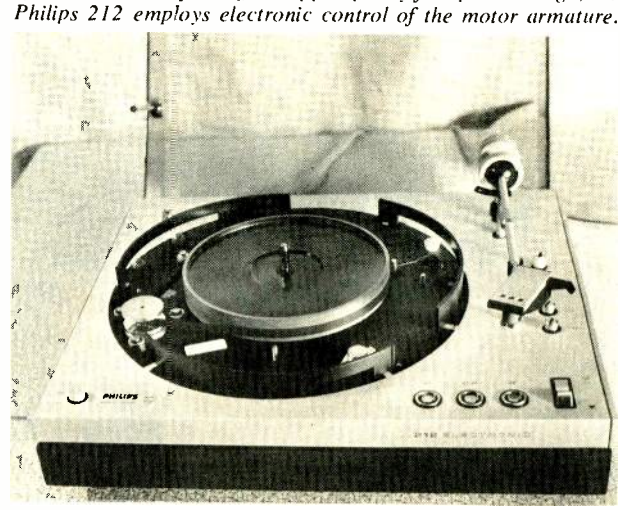
● ***Laboratory Measurements.*** Our testing was done with an ADC 10E Mk IV cartridge. The arm tracking error was extremely low—under 0.33 degree per inch of radius from 2.5 to 6 inches, and zero or close to it over much of that range. The tracking-force calibration was good, with the actual force being 0.1 gram higher than the indicated value at settings of 1 and 2 grams, and about 0.2 gram high at the 3- and 4-gram settings.

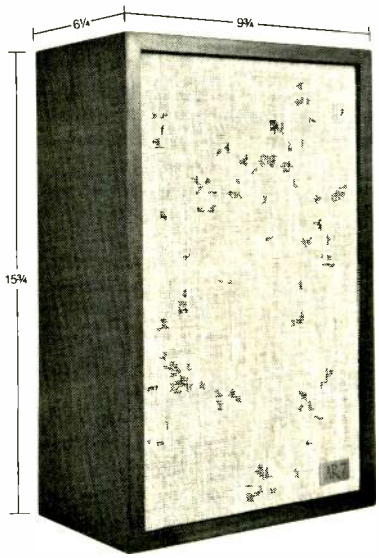
The turntable speeds could be adjusted from about 3 per cent fast to 4.8 per cent slow at each nominal speed. The speed showed no tendency to drift during operation, and was unaffected by line-voltage variations from 65 to 130 volts. Wow and flutter at 33⅓ rpm were 0.07 and 0.04 per cent, respectively, and 0.03 and 0.035 per cent at 45 rpm. The unweighted rumble was −33 dB; with RRLL weighting it was −57 dB, which is one of the lowest rumble levels we have measured. This reflects the fact that the 212's motor operates at a low speed, restricting what little rumble there is to sub-audible frequencies.

The anti-skating dial calibration appeared to be correct. However, operating at 1 gram or less (the 212's instructions do not suggest using forces lower than 1 gram), there was a slight outward drift of the arm during cueing descent owing to the effect of the anti-skating force. The entire floating assembly (arm, lift mechanism, and turntable) was sensitive to physical jarring, and considerable care was required when the arm-lift switch was operated or the cover lowered to avoid inducing a momentary wow or having the pickup jump from the groove. To check the effect of a less compliant cartridge, we installed a Philips

(Continued on page 44)

Removal of the outer shell of the platter reveals the belt-drive system. Instead of using a stepped pulley for speed change, the Philips 212 employs electronic control of the motor armature.





AR-7

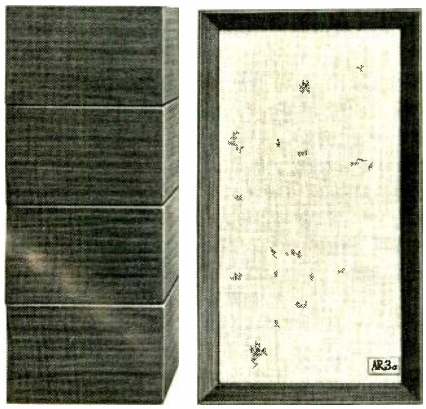
a new standard of excellence in a speaker of small size

The AR-7 is the smallest speaker system Acoustic Research has ever designed. It is purposely small.

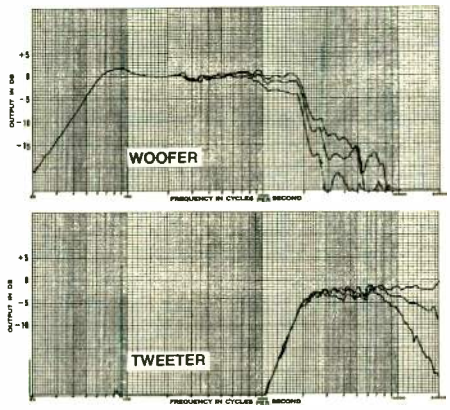
Recognizing the space demands imposed by four channel stereo music systems, AR decided to develop a small speaker to permit installation in areas where our larger speakers are not appropriate. At the same time, this speaker must offer the extended range usually associated with speakers of much larger dimensions.

That the AR-7 has achieved both design objectives is clearly evident.

The size (9¾ x 15¾ x 6¼) is such that four AR-7's occupy less cubic volume than a single AR-3a.

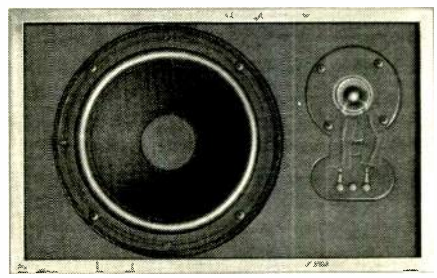


The accuracy of the sound is such that we show these power response curves and guarantee each AR-7 speaker to match the curves within ± 2dB. Such accurate, full frequency range performance from an enclosure of this size did not come easily. It required years of development and state-of-the-art technology.



The woofer of the AR-7 uses such advanced design and manufacturing techniques that its low frequency response extends substantially below that of competitive speakers of far greater size.

The tweeter of the AR-7 is similar to the tweeter used in the highly acclaimed AR-6. It produces smooth, wide dispersion sound. Both the woofer and the tweeter use high temperature voice coils, permitting higher power handling capability.



Though the AR-7 was designed primarily with four channel stereo installations in mind, its accurate wide frequency response makes it a wise choice for high quality two channel stereo systems.

AR-7's come packed two to a box and sell for $60.00 each.

Acoustic Research, Inc.
24 Thorndike St., Cambridge
Massachusetts 02141

Please send detailed information on the AR-7 speaker system to

Name_____

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SR-1

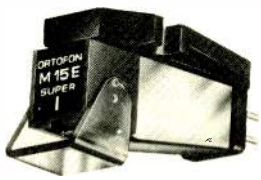
GP-401 unit tracking at 2 grams. At this force there was no arm drift during descent, and the entire assembly had a considerably more "solid" feel.

● *Comment.* Although the low arm mass and friction of the 212 are fully compatible with the finest cartridges, the susceptibility of the unit to jarring probably makes it advisable to operate with tracking forces of 1.5 to 2 grams. There are many fine cartridges that can deliver their best performance at these forces. A firm support for the player is a "must," otherwise there may be acoustic-feedback problems in rooms with floors too loose or too springy.

On the other hand, the isolation of the arm and turntable of the 212 from the outside world, at frequencies above a few hertz, was exceptional. Acoustic feedback should never be a problem with this record player—we were unable to induce it with the 212 on top of or directly in front of the speakers. And in the important aspects of arm tracking geometry and freedom from turntable rumble, the Philips 212 has few peers. Any rumble you hear with the 212 must be on the record!

For more information, circle 107 on reader service card

Ortofon M 15E Super Phono Cartridge



● FOR many years, the name of Ortofon has been synonymous with fine phono cartridges. Historically, these Danish-built cartridges have been relatively expensive moving-coil types with a very low output voltage. Ortofon's new M 15 Super series differs radically from most of its predecessors. It uses what Ortofon describes as a "variable magnetic shunt" (VMS) principle. The coils, pole pieces, and a tiny ring magnet are imbedded in the cartridge body in a fixed position. The stylus cantilever deflects a low-mass tubular iron armature in the air gap of the magnetic circuit to generate voltages in the coils. The stylus assembly is user replaceable.

The M 15E Super cartridge is very light in weight—about 5 grams, compared with the 18 grams or so of the older moving-coil units we tested several years ago. This is advantageous when the cartridge is installed in a modern low-mass arm. The stylus compliance is extremely high: 50×10^{-6} cm/dyne in the horizontal plane and 30×10^{-6} cm/dyne vertically, which permits (and requires) operation at very low stylus forces. The rated range of tracking force is 0.75 to 1.5 grams, with 1 gram being the recommended value. The Ortofon M 15 Super is fitted with an integral hinged plastic stylus guard, and is available either with a 0.6-mil conical diamond stylus, or, in the version we tested (M 15E Super), with a 0.3 x 0.7-mil elliptical stylus. Both styli have an effective tip mass of 0.5 milligram. The price of the Ortofon M 15E Super is $79.95.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* The Ortofon M 15E Super was tested in a Thorens TP-16 arm (part of the Thorens TD-125 Mk II record player), which had a total capacitance, including the cables supplied, of 360 picofarads. Preliminary tracking tests showed that the M 15E Super could produce a virtually perfect, undistorted sine wave from the 1,000-Hz, 30 cm/sec (centimeters per second) bands of the Fairchild 101 test record at a 1-gram force, and at 0.75 gram it was better than almost any other cartridge we have tested. The high-amplitude 32-Hz bands of the Cook Series 60 record were also tracked at 1 gram, and this force was used during our other tests.

Signal output was 4.1 to 4.2 millivolts for a 3.54 cm/sec stylus velocity, which is on the high end of average for a top-of-the-line cartridge. Hum shielding effectiveness was typical of a fine cartridge, and considerably better than that of earlier Ortofon cartridges we have tested. Frequency response with the CBS STR100 test record was smooth and uniform all the way up to 20,000 Hz, with a variation of ±3 dB on one channel and ±1.5 dB on the other (some of this essentially minor difference is in the test record). Channel separation was typically 20 dB or better below 10,000 Hz (it was greater than 30 dB in a narrow range of frequencies in the 5,000 to 9,000 Hz region). Even at 20,000 Hz, there was 6 to 10 dB of separation. We also checked the cartridge's response with the CBS STR120 record, which sweeps from 500 to 50,000 Hz, and found a smooth drop-off in output above 20,000 Hz, with some channel separation maintained as high as 25,000 to 35,000 Hz. The response to a 1,000-Hz square wave was very good, despite several cycles of low-level ringing at about 16,000 Hz, where there was a very minor high-frequency resonance in the response curve.

Ortofon claims outstanding tracking ability for the M 15 Super, and this was confirmed when we played the Shure "Audio Obstacle Course" record. At 1 gram, it was at least the equal of any cartridge we have tested, even when playing the high frequencies of the orchestral bells and harpsichord. We recently received a new "trackability" test record from Shure (the TTR-103) which provides a quantitative measure of tracking ability at a number of recorded signal velocities. The measured parameter is actually a form of intermodulation (IM) distortion, involving the tracking of a 10,800-Hz tone burst at velocities up to almost 30 cm/sec. In this test, at a 1-gram force, the Ortofon cartridge tracked the highest velocities on the disc with well under 2 per cent distortion. Distortion was about 1 per cent for velocities below the highest. At 1.5 grams, distortion never rose significantly above 1 per cent, and at 0.75 gram, distortion rose smoothly from 1 per cent at 16 cm/sec to about 2.5 per cent at 29.6 cm/sec.

We were so impressed by the performance of the M 15E Super that we decided to test a few other cartridges in the same manner to provide a frame of reference for our judgment. These included the "top-of-the-line" models from several major American manufacturers. The comparison showed unequivocally that the Ortofon was the equal of the best cartridges we have tested at any force from 0.75 to 1.5 grams. Under certain conditions, one cartridge or the other would seem to have marginally less distortion, but the differences were insignificant. The important—and most impressive—conclusion from this test was that the M15E Super could track 30 cm/sec velocities at frequencies above 10,000 Hz, with very low distortion, at a tracking force of 1 gram. The measured distortion of the Ortofon playing the highest velocity on the record was slightly lower when using 1.5 grams, but the improvement would not be sufficient to warrant using

(Continued on page 46)

Other fine turntables protect records. The new $79.95 PE 3012 also protects the stylus.

Some of the finer and more expensive turntables stress their ability to protect records. Which is as it should be.

But no turntable, at any price, can promote its ability to protect the stylus. Except PE. For this is a feature exclusive with PE. And it's available on all PE turntables, including the 3012 at $79.95.

This fail-safe feature prevents any possible damage to the stylus by preventing the tonearm from descending to the platter unless there's a record on it. Simple, foolproof and very important.

Yet this is not the only reason for you to consider the 3012, no matter how much or how little you intended to spend for a turntable. Because the 3012 also has a number of features you won't find on any other turntable at or near its price.

For example: variable speed control that lets you match record pitch to live instruments. Cue-control viscous-damped in both directions for smooth rise and descent. And, a single-play spindle that rotates with the platter to prevent binding or causing eccentric wear.

In short, the 3012 offers exactly what you've come to expect from the craftsmen of West Germany's Black Forest. Good design, fine engineering, costly materials and meticulous manufacturing.

But if you do insist on spending freely, there are two other PE's to choose from. At $119.95 and $149.95. Both are superb precision instruments, offering progressively greater sophistication.

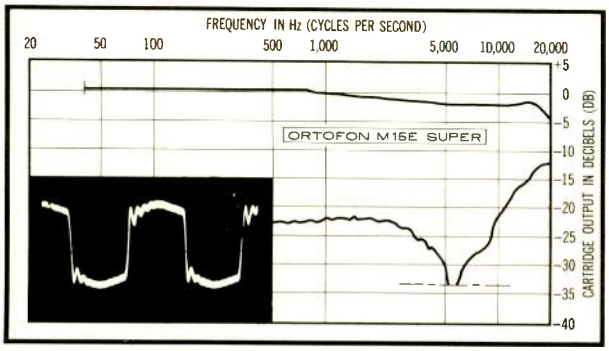
You should consider the matter carefully before spending more than $79.95. And to help you decide, we're offering our new brochure. Simply circle the number at the bottom of the page.

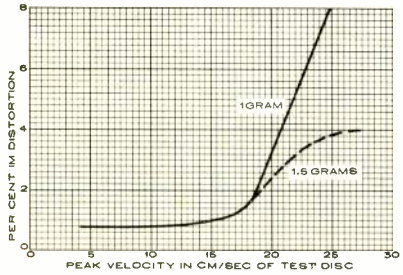
The new PE

Precision for under $100

PE

Impro Industries, Inc., 120 Hartford Ave., Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10553





The upper curve represents the averaged frequency response of the cartridge's right and left channels. The distance (calibrated in decibels) between the two curves represents the separation between channels. The oscilloscope photograph of the cartridge's response to a 1,000-Hz square wave is an indication of a cartridge's high- and low-frequency response and resonances. Most program material on discs has velocities well below 15 cm/sec, and it only rarely reaches 25 to 30 cm/sec. Distortion figures shown are therefore not directly comparable with figures obtained on other audio components, but are useful in comparing different cartridges.

this force. Most of the other cartridges (and they were all very good) had equivalent performance at 1.5 grams, but fell well short of the mark at lower tracking forces.

In addition to the tracking tests, we measured the IM distortion of the M 15E with the RCA 12-5-39 test record. At 1 gram, distortion was very low—under 2 per cent and typically under 1 per cent—up to velocities of 18 cm/sec. Above 18 cm/sec, distortion increased rapidly, to 6 per cent at about 23 cm/sec.

To determine the M 15E's sensitivity to capacitive loading, we measured the frequency response with 235 picofarads and 470 picofarads, as well as with the 360 picofarads provided by the Thorens record player. Lowering the capacitance had negligible effect on the response curve up to 15,000 Hz, where there was a very slight increase in output. With 470 picofarads capacitance there was about a 1-dB elevation of response between 4,000 and 8,000 Hz, and a somewhat more rapid rolloff of the frequencies above 15,000 Hz. Although this change produced a slightly flatter overall response, we would not judge the effect to be audibly significant.

● ***Comment.*** To put all our findings in the proper perspective, bear in mind that all of the better cartridges, at 1 gram, have just about the same measured tracking distortion at velocities of 15 cm/sec or less. Since most recorded material rarely exceeds this velocity, one would not expect to find a striking difference in sound character between these cartridges, and this proved to be the case. The Ortofon M 15 E cartridge has a frequency response as smooth and uniform in the audio range as any cartridge we have tested, and better than most. It really shows its worth with very high level recordings (particularly at the highest frequencies). The shattering distortion caused by mistracking will rarely be heard with the M 15E Super. Perhaps there are recordings of music that have been cut with velocities beyond the tracking capabilities of this cartridge, but we haven't found any yet!

For more information, circle 108 on reader service card

The awesome responsibility of being the very best.

Leadership means responsibility. At Pioneer we do not accept th s lightly. This is dramatized magnificently by the new SX-828. As the top of the great Pioneer line of receivers, the SX-828 is extravagantly endowed with increased performance, greater power, unsurpassed precision and total versatility.

Providing 270 watts of IHF music power (that's 60+60 watts RMS at 8 ohms, with both channels driven), there's more than enough power to fill your world. And it's consistently controlled throughout the 20-20,000 Hz bandwidth with direct-coupled circuitry and dual power supplies.

Suburbia, exurbia or inner city. It makes no difference to this superior performer. Advanced FET/IC circuitry brings in each FM station smoothly and cleanly as though it's the only one on the dial. Small wonder with 1.7uV FM sensitivity and 1.5dB capture ratio.

Music lovers will have a field day with a complete range of connections for 2 turntables, 2 tape decks, 2 headsets, 2 microphones, 3 pairs of speakers, an auxiliary, plus 4-channel terminals, when you want them.

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At $429.95, including a walnut cabinet, the SX-828 is overwhelmingly the very best receiver at its price. It completely fulfills Pioneer's responsibility of leadership. Hear it at your Pioneer dealer.

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Heathkit AR-1500 180-Watt Receiver... 379.95* less cabinet

Successor to the famed Heathkit AR-15, with improvements in every critical area. 180 watts Dynamic Music Power, 90 watts per channel, 8 ohm load. Less than 0.2% IM and 0.25% harmonic distortion. Greater than 90 dB FM selectivity and 1.8 uV sensitivity; vastly superior AM; easier to build; now available kit or wired.

Kit AR-1500, 53 lbs. (less cabinet) **379.95***

ARA-1500-1, walnut cabinet, 8 lbs. **24.95***

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Heathkit AR-1302 60-Watt Receiver... 239.95* less cabinet

An unusual value in its price/power class. Delivers a clean 60 watts of Dynamic Music Power, 30 watts per channel, 8 ohm load. Less than 0.25% IM and harmonic distortion. New FM IF section with 2 ICs and 2 ceramic filters for outstanding performance. 60 dB selectivity and 1.9 uV sensitivity. Features assembled and aligned FM tuner, built-in test circuitry, Black Magic Panel lighting.

Kit AR-1302, 30 lbs., (less cabinet) **239.95***

AE-19, oiled pecan cabinet, 9 lbs. **19.95***

NEW Heathkit AR-1214 50-Watt Receiver... 169.95* incl. cabinet

Produces 50 watts IHF, 25 watts per channel into 8 ohms with amazing fidelity. Two ICs and 2 ceramic filters in the IF offer greater than 60 dB selectivity, while phase lock multiplex demodulator gives 40 dB typical channel separation at less than 0.5% distortion. Preassembled FM tuner boasts 2 uV sensitivity and 2 dB capture ratio. Other features are phono preamp level controls, flywheel tuning, stereo indicator light, headphone jack, and complete tape monitor facilities. And the cabinet is included in this low price. Stereo "separate" versions also available (AJ-1214 Tuner and AA-1214 Amp., 89.95* each).

Kit AR-1214, 18 lbs. **169.95***

Heathkit AJ-1510 "Computer" Tuner... 539.95* less cabinet

Pure digital computer design including digital frequency synthesizer tuning employing phase-lock-loop techniques. FET varactor FM RF front end, digital discriminator and readout result in channel frequency accuracy better than 0.005%; less than 1.8 uV sensitivity; distortion levels of 0.1%; selectivity and IF rejection better than 95 dB; image and spurious rejection better than 90 dB; S/N ratio better than 65 dB; separation better than 40 dB. 3 distinct tuning modes; keyboard, computer-type punch cards (up to 3), plus automatic band scanning with variable-speed and stereo-only capability.

Kit AJ-1510, 23 lbs., less cabinet **539.95***

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NEW Heathkit AA-2010 200-Watt "Universal" 4-Channel Amplifier... 359.95* less cabinet

Decodes all matrix encoded material, and handles any discrete 4-channel material available. Produces 200 watts into 8 ohms (4x50) with amplifier sections controlled in pairs for 2 independent stereo systems if desired. Pushbuttons activate speaker pairs in any combination of up to 8 speakers — or 2 complete 4-channel systems. 20 input level controls for up to five 4-channel program sources are adjustable beneath the chassis. Rear panel jacks for biamping, filters, equalizers, etc. 4 VU meters monitor output. 0.25% THD. Hum & noise —65 dB phono, —75 dB tape & aux.

Kit AA-2010, 37 lbs., less cabinet **359.95***

AAA-2004-1, pecan cabinet, 7 lbs. **24.95***

NEW Heathkit "Universal" 4-Channel Decoder... 39.95*

The new Heathkit AD-2022, with an additional stereo amp & speakers, gives 4-channel capability to any stereo system having tape monitor circuitry, or any system using separate amp & preamp. Decodes all matrix encoded material... as well as enhancing recorded stereo material and stereo FM broadcasts by reproducing the "hidden presence" common to 2-channel programming, resulting in a realistic "derived" 4-channel effect. Get in on the 4-channel fun the low-cost Heathkit way.

Kit AD-2022, 4 lbs. **39.95***

NEW Heathkit/Thomas Spinet Organ... 689.95*

The all-solid-state TO-1160 Heathkit/Thomas Spinet has full 44-note keyboards for Solo and Accompaniment, exclusive Colo-Glo keys that light up to indicate notes and chords. There are six solo stops — flute 16′, 8′ and 4′, trumpet 8′, oboe 8′, and violin 8′. Five accompaniment stops — horn 8′, diapason 8′, melodia 8′, cello 8′, and pedal voice with 16′ and 8′ combined. Plus both regular and a new "light" vibrato effects. Other features include keyboard jacks for private earphone listening or use of a tape cassette deck. Cabinet is shipped fully assembled, includes bench.

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CIRCLE NO. 17 ON READER SERVICE CARD

GOING ON RECORD

By JAMES GOODFRIEND
Music Editor

CLASSICS THAT SELL

"THE classical market is like a funnel," Peter Munves, Director of Classical Music for RCA, recently announced. "The largest number of buyers are at the mouth of the funnel, and trickling through at the other end are the connoisseurs and dedicated classical buffs." It is not one of the more elegant similes of our time. I, for one, keep seeing connoisseurs and classical buffs being squeezed unmercifully, like so many grapes at the bottom of a barrel, and falling through the narrow end of the funnel to Heaven only knows what fate below.

Munves' statement appears on a press release from RCA headlined: "RCA's Red Seal Label Introduces 'Music America Loves Best' Series of Thirty Albums by Greatest Artists," and that rather put *me* into an image-evoking mood. What came to my mind was something about the likelihood of a camel (which, if you remember, is a horse designed by a committee) passing through the eye of a needle before a rich man could enter the kingdom of heaven.

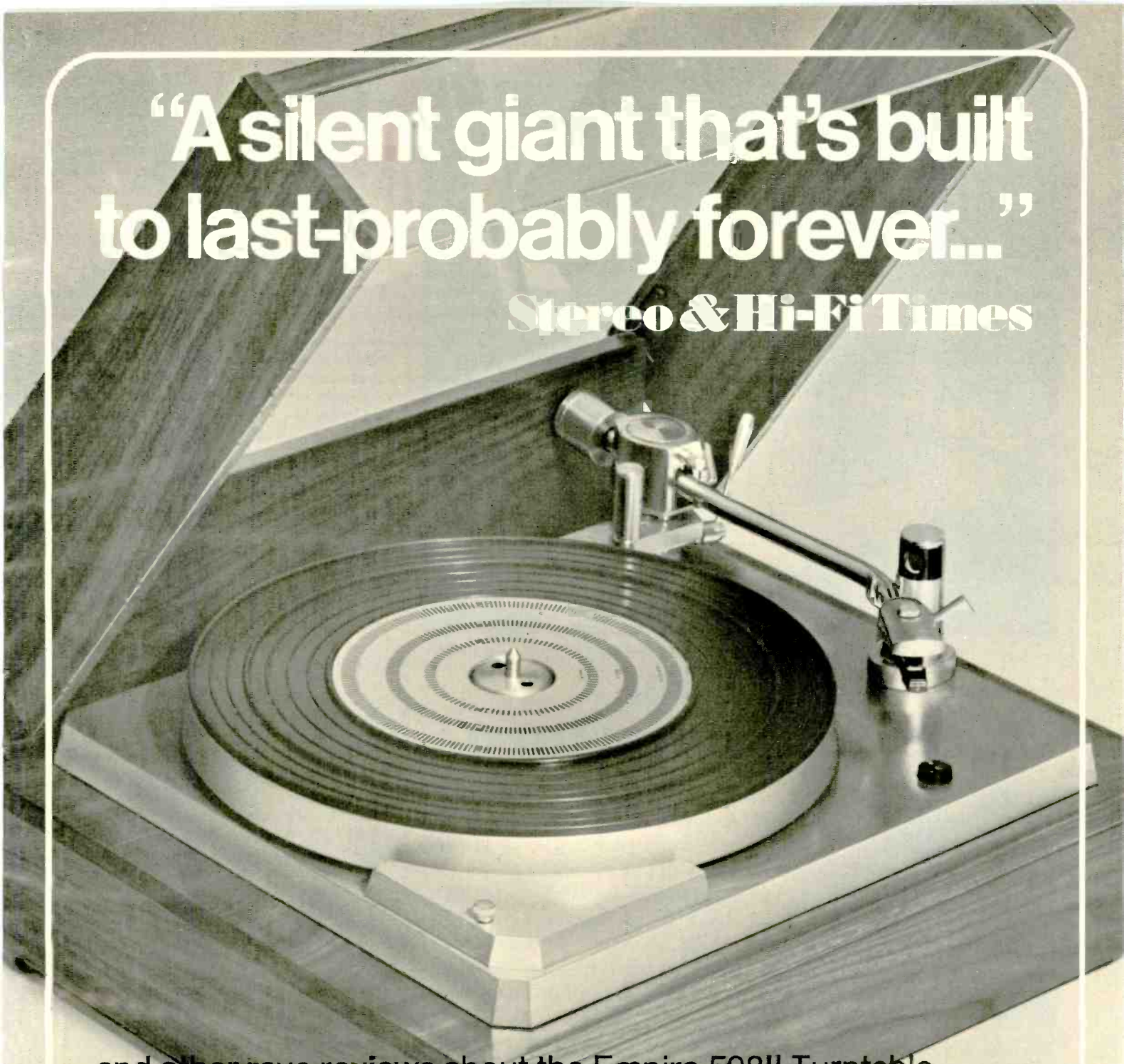
Peter Munves has always been less concerned with literary images than he has been with selling classical records. His statement continues with, "Any manufacturer who wants to stay in the classical music business neglects the beginning and occasional buyer of classical product at his own risk." And so, to put all the images together, Peter, if he is not a rich man himself, has certainly been putting RCA Red Seal into the black, which in the classical-music business is tantamount to being admitted to heaven. And this particular thirty-disc camel may very well get pushed through the eye of the needle (or is it the mouth of the funnel?) which is represented in the record business by the racks and rack jobbers who normally stock only hot pop items. At any rate, what it all means is that RCA is intending to sell a lot of classical records—and to those people who don't ordinarily buy them.

Every record of the group has a notation on the jacket corner saying, "A Basic Library of the Music America Loves Best," and every one has in addition a title: "The World's Favorite Showpieces," "The World's Favorite Concertos," *etc.* You can perhaps guess the repertoire, but, in case you need some reminding, it includes *Finlandia*, the *Moldau, Bolero, Pictures at an Exhibition* (Showpieces); Beethoven's Fifth and Ninth, Tchaikovsky's Sixth, Schubert's Eighth (Symphonies); *Colonel Bogey, Radetzsky*, March of the Toys (Marches); and so on. So far as I can tell, there are no new recordings in the lot; it is, in short, a recoupling and repackaging project.

Now, I can well imagine your reaction to all this: "Feh!", probably, or words to that effect. And yet I must remind you ("you," of course, are the connoisseur and dedicated classical buff) that what RCA is doing here concerns you very deeply. First of all, it shows that RCA intends to remain in the classical-music business, and that is to everybody's advantage. Second, it shows RCA is aware that there is another, larger, if more irregular market for classical music than the known one, and intends to sell to it. Third, it shows that RCA has come to the realization that it does not have to spend a lot of money to make a *new* recording of the Beethoven Fifth or *Swan Lake* for this new market, but that a repackaged, previously issued one will suffice. In other words, if one has the backlog of material (and RCA certainly does), it is possible to *make* a little money in the classical-music business without *spending* a great deal of it to do so. This is important.

In years gone by record companies commonly produced pop records for profit and classical records for prestige. To a great extent, the former paid for the

(Continued on page 52)



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latter. Today, it is the popular records themselves that carry the prestige for a large portion of the population and, concomitantly, the costs and the risks of producing pop records have grown so enormously that the luxury of a classical catalog dependent on pop sales seems financially foolish.

What a pleasant situation it would be if classical music could pay for itself! And how many different ways have been tried to make it do so! We have had the cult of the glamorous personality, the Baroque revival, better and still better recording techniques, the Romantic revival, "filling the holes in the repertoire," the complete-and-collected syndrome, the bargain-price line, and the results of the "let's make another *1812* because at least we can sell that" line of thinking. All have succeeded to some extent, but all have also failed over the long run—and all have glutted the market with more and more "product."

Now, finally, it has come down to a matter-of-fact proposition: if you can't sell another something to someone who has twelve of them already, perhaps you can sell one to someone who doesn't have any at all. At any rate, it can't hurt anyone to try. And if you succeed, you have a little money to spend on something that should be done because it is musically worthwhile.

So if you (*you*, the connoisseur) want to see a recording of Dukas' *Ariane et Barbe Bleue*, the Franz Tunder cantatas, Delius' *Koanga*, Kilpinen's lieder, or whatever uncommercial music your taste might run to, you had better hope that RCA sells a lot of repackagings, that other companies follow its example and sell a lot too, and, further, that somebody remembers what is supposed to be done with the money after they make it.

* * *

While I seldom care to review books that one is more likely to consult in the library than at home, I would like at least to bring to the readers' attention a new volume entitled *Thematic Catalogues, an Annotated Bibliography*, by Barry S. Brook (Pendragon Press, Hillsdale, New York, $18.00). It is not a book to be read (unless you share my looney fascination with catalogs of all sorts), but one to be consulted when trying to pin down some fact about a particular musical work or find a particular theme. It is, in essence, a catalog of musical catalogs, with critical listings under Vivaldi, for instance, of not only Rinaldi, Pincherle, and Fanna, but more than a dozen others as well, and the striking bit of information (for those who were wondering about just that) that there *is* a thematic catalog of the music of Othmar Schoeck. The volume is a research tool of the greatest importance, and a far more than adequate substitute on the subject for such failing memories as mine.

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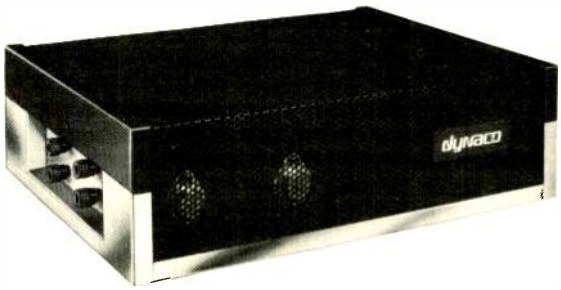

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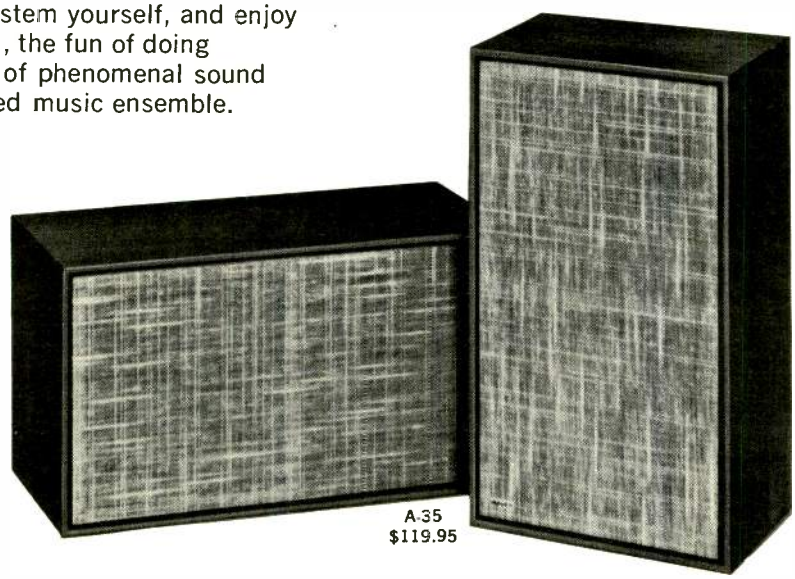

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LONDON LETTER

ANNUNZIO PAOLO MANTOVANI

A visit with the palm-garden Toscanini

By HENRY PLEASANTS

London Records

"IT ALL began with Fritz Kreisler. And it wasn't the Beethoven Concerto, either. It was the Arthur Hartman transcription of Debussy's *The Girl with the Flaxen Hair*. I suddenly realized how much art there could be—and should be—in the performance of light, slight music, and what pleasure there could be in hearing light music played so perfectly, so artistically."

This was Mantovani, as soft-spoken as his music, chatting during a rehearsal break at the BBC-TV center, where he was preparing for a new series of six programs by Mantovani and His Concert Orchestra. He was telling me what got him started—some forty-odd years ago—in a musical direction that would lead to sales of more than fifteen million LP's and to his present eminence as a kind of palm-garden Toscanini.

Those who have not seen him on TV or in concert may be surprised to learn that Mantovani is really a person, not just a label associated with the sound of coruscating strings enveloping a tune that everybody loves. He's a person, all right. His Christian names are Annunzio Paolo, and he is a Venetian-born Englishman with residences in London's St. John's Wood and in Bournemouth. He has a wife and two children and indulges two passions: exotic automobiles and bridge.

The association with Toscanini is not so far-fetched or outrageous as it may seem at first glance. Mantovani's father, Benedetto Mantovani, was Toscanini's concertmaster at La Scala in Milan, and was also principal violin for Mascagni, Hans Richter, and Camille Saint-Saëns. He came to London in 1909 to play at Covent Garden, bringing the four-year-old Annunzio Paolo with him. Some twenty-five years later he was playing in his son's orchestra at the fashionable Monseigneur Club in Jermyn Street.

After watching Mantovani guide his fifty-piece orchestra through *S'Wonderful*, *Trees*, and Johann Strauss' *Village Swallows* (*Dorfschwalben*), it occurred to me that the connection with Toscanini was musical as well as familial. He works in a different repertoire, to be sure, but the performance objectives are the same: song, balance, buoyant rhythms, and—perfection!

The setting was a far from theatrical TV studio, and Mantovani was in his shirtsleeves. But what my mind's eye saw was the conductor of an opera orchestra (Italian opera, of course) leading his forces through, say, the Intermezzo from *Cavalleria Rusticana*. So I asked him: "How did you escape becoming an opera conductor?"

"I suppose," he said, "because from the very beginning I was playing fiddle and leading my own small bands in restaurants, clubs, and moving-picture houses. That's the music I grew up with. But I will tell you one thing: conducting short, light pieces is, in some ways, more difficult, more exacting, than conducting an opera or a Beethoven symphony. And it can be, odd as this may sound, more creative. That's what I learned from Kreisler.

"With the opera and symphony masterpieces you have substantial music that can survive a less than perfect or inspired performance. You have the great composer to fall back on. And you have more time to establish atmosphere, mood, color, and pace. With the short, light pieces that we play you have less to work with. And you have to accomplish everything in a matter of four or five minutes, maybe less. You can't waste any time warming up to your subject. Besides, the audience knows and loves the piece. They're looking over your shoulder."

Mantovani the conductor is only one part of what has made him an institution. Another part is the arranger. He began, like his father, as a violinist—he once played Saint-Saëns' Concerto in B Minor at the old Queen's Hall—and he has always had a special knack for scoring for strings. This flowered prodigiously, back in 1951, with a slight waltz called *Charmaine*. It had been Erno Rapee's theme song for the silent-picture version of *What Price Glory?* (1926). Mantovani was to record it for the American market. "Why not," asked Ronald Binge, his arranger at that time, "include as many as thirty-two strings in an orchestra of forty-five?" The rest, as they say, is history. *Charmaine* is still Mantovani's theme song.

For recording purposes today he employs thirty-six strings in an orchestra of fifty. For the rest, there are three trumpets, two trombones, one clarinet/English horn, one flute/piccolo, one French horn, drums, timpani, guitar, accordion, and keyboard. But it is not just a matter of size and proportions. Anyone familiar with the London studio scene, casting an eye over that orchestra, could instantly identify another facet of the Mantovani phenomenon: he gets the best studio musicians.

He also gets pretty much the *same* musicians. The Mantovani Concert Orchestra is not a permanent institution in the sense that a leading symphony orchestra is, but studio musicians like to work with him, and he estimates that for any recording date, eighty per cent of the personnel will be men he has worked with before.

Lionel Solomon, on flute and piccolo, has been with him for twenty-six years. Emile Charlier, his accordionist, has been with him for eighteen, and Ivor Mairants, his guitarist, for twelve. And this despite the rigor of rehearsals and the versatility required of every player.

"He is a relentless perfectionist," Charlier told me. "With Mantovani conducting you don't dare go lax. You've got to be up to scratch the whole time. He's completely sincere about what he does, no matter how small or simple the piece. In fact, the more simple the tune, the more time he spends on it, working to bring something special out."

I ASKED Mantovani if it was true that he had sold more records than anybody else. "I don't know about that," he replied, "but we have certainly sold more than anyone working in this field. Indeed, I sometimes wonder why, in view of our great success, we haven't had more imitators."

One reason, possibly, is that Mantovani's arrangements (about evenly distributed, nowadays, among himself, Cecil Milner, and Roland Shaw) have never been published. Another: it is not easy to score and play simple music that well. Fritz Kreisler remained unique. So, in his similarly amiable way, does Annunzio Mantovani.

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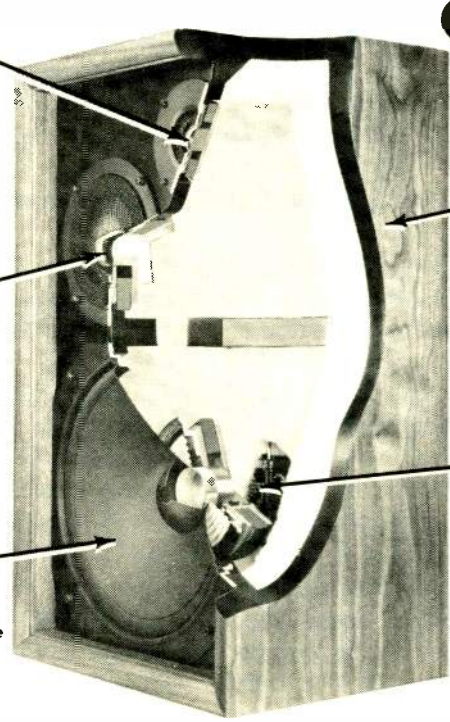

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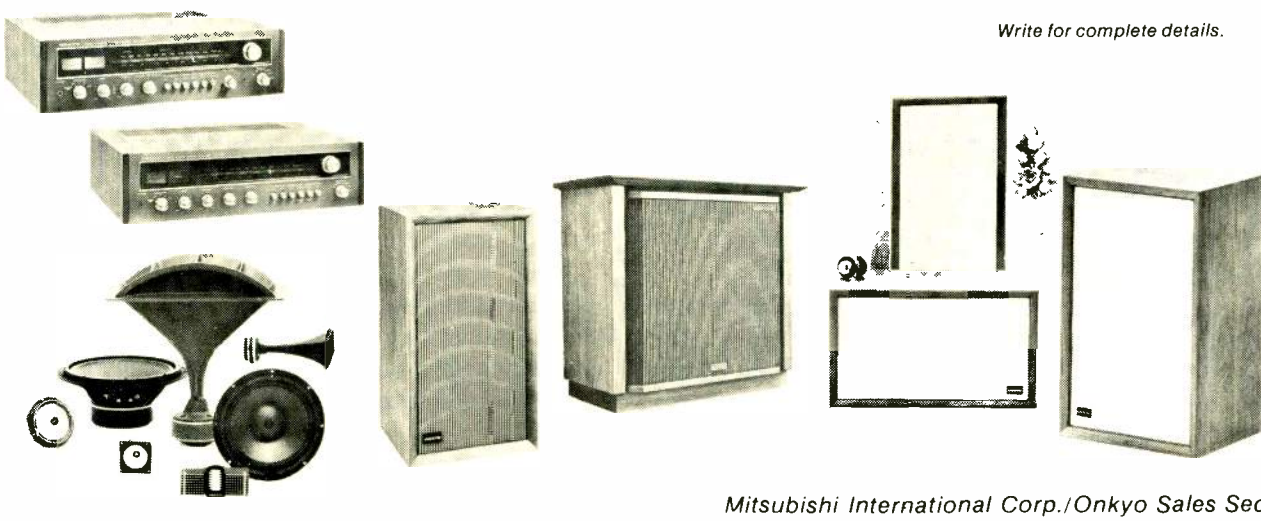

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CIRCLE NO. 34 ON READER SERVICE CARD

By Martin Bookspan

Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini

SURELY I am not alone in hoping that one consequence of this centennial year of the birth of Sergei Rachmaninoff will be a general re-evaluation of his stature as a composer. For too long it has been fashionable to denigrate Rachmaninoff as an "outdated Romantic" whose music was anachronistic while he was still alive, let alone now, thirty years after his death. Yet, despite this attitude—promulgated mainly by critics and performers who regard sentiment and passion in music as somehow unclean—certain of Rachmaninoff's scores have stubbornly refused to go away and hide: the Second and Third Piano Concertos, certainly, and perhaps above all the Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini.

Eight years elapsed between the composition of Rachmaninoff's Fourth Piano Concerto, in 1926, and the Rhapsody, the score that was to be his last for piano and orchestra. Just as had happened earlier in his lifetime, Rachmaninoff had hit a dry spell creatively, and composed only the Three Russian Songs for Orchestra and Chorus, Opus 41, and the Variations for Solo Piano on a Theme by Corelli, Opus 42, between 1926 and 1934. Then, during a week in May, 1934, Rachmaninoff was hospitalized for minor surgery in Switzerland. It was in his hospital bed that the plans for the Paganini Rhapsody took shape. For forty-six days, between July 3 and August 18, 1934, he worked on the score "from morn to night." In early September he wrote to a friend: "Two weeks ago I finished a new piece; it's called a Fantasia for piano and orchestra in the form of variations on a theme by Paganini. . . . The piece is rather long, 20-25 minutes, about the length of a piano concerto. . . . The thing's rather difficult; I must begin learning it. . . ." Just two months later, on November 7, 1934, Rachmaninoff played the world premiere at a Baltimore concert by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. The work's success was immediate.

As the basis for his Rhapsody, Rachmaninoff took the same Paganini theme that had earlier served Liszt, Schumann, and Brahms as the subject for variations: the last of the twenty-four Caprices for Unaccompanied Violin, Opus 1. Rachmaninoff's setting consists of an introduction and twenty-four variations. The introduction hints at the theme, but surprisingly does not lead directly to it. Instead, Rachmaninoff offers us the first variation, and then the theme itself is stated, followed by a dazzling series of vignettes based on it. In the seventh variation, Rachmaninoff introduces the plainsong theme of the *Dies Irae*, a sequence of the Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead; the *Dies Irae* returns again in the tenth variation and also just before the end of the work. Also notable is the familiar eighteenth variation, a meltingly beautiful one in which Rachmaninoff inverts the intervals of the Paganini theme.

OF the dozen-plus recordings of the score currently available, I would single out five of them for special mention: Rachmaninoff's own (included in RCA LM 6123, a three-disc mono-only album containing Rachmaninoff's recordings of his four piano concertos as well); Vladimir Ashkenazy's (included in London CSA 2311, also a three-disc set, but in superb contemporary stereo sound, with the composer's four piano concertos as well); Agustin Anievas' (Seraphim S 60091); Gary Graffman's (Columbia MS 6634); and Artur Rubinstein's (RCA LSC 2430). Rachmaninoff's own performance, recorded some six weeks after the world premiere performance of the score, emphasizes the kaleidoscopic nature of the music. The *diablerie* is underlined, more so than in any other recorded version, and the four-decades-old recorded sound is still remarkably serviceable. The team of Anievas and Moshe Atzmon presents a lithe and supple performance; Ashkenazy and André Previn emphasize the structural unity and the delicacy of the score; Graffman and Leonard Bernstein present a reading of great brilliance; and Rubinstein and Fritz Reiner make much of the music's wit and fancy. All four are very well recorded, with the Anievas-Atzmon version having the added attraction of a low price.

None of these five disc versions are available in any tape configuration. On reel-to-reel tape, I prefer the Entremont-Ormandy collaboration (Columbia MQ 526) to the more staid performance by Katchen and Boult (London L 80036). On cassette my preference is for the Weber-Fricsay issue (DGG 923064) over the unsmiling and rather rigid account by Cliburn and Ormandy (RCA RK 1199).

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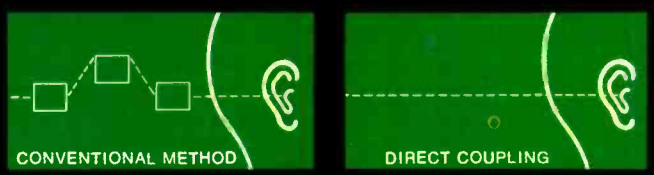

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Radio Opera

The unsung story of an institution which has subtly and powerfully influenced American musical taste for more than forty years

By Stephen E. Rubin

The greater part of the Metropolitan Opera's vast radio audience undoubtedly got its first look at the house's stage with Texaco's precedent-breaking hour-long TV broadcast last April 30 of the gala farewell to former general manager Sir Rudolf Bing. In the *Rosenkavalier* setting above, Sir Rudolf, surrounded by a galaxy of Met stars, stage hands, and other staff, responds to the applause of the audience.

Photo courtesy Texaco *Star*

Opera fans are crazy people. They're really nuts.

"I'm not particularly fond of Milton Cross' voice," writes one listener to the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts, "but my dog loves it. As soon as I turn on the radio and Cross comes over the airwaves, the pooch remains glued to the set. When the music starts, he leaves. As soon as Cross is on again, the dog is back—all ears."

Opera fans are crazy people. They're really nuts.

"I don't know what is worn in an opera house today," says one elderly matron, "but on Saturdays I get my black velvet dress out of its box. And I dress my hair and put a fresh flower in a vase beside me. After all, I am to spend the afternoon with dukes and duchesses."

Opera fans are crazy people. They're really nuts.

Torn between his two passions—football and opera—one listener reports that when they're broadcast simultaneously, he solves his dilemma by means of an unusual compromise: he watches the TV set without sound while listening to the Met on the radio.

Opera fans are crazy people. They're really nuts.

A radio station in Norfolk, Va., ceased carrying the Met broadcasts when its manager found that he could no longer stomach the gripes of disgruntled listeners who jammed his switchboard on Saturday afternoons calling to complain about artistic and musical matters which were beyond his control—and interest.

"TEXACO presents . . . The Metropolitan Opera. Welcome, opera lovers in the United States and Canada. This is Milton Cross inviting you. . . ." The words are as familiar as the National Anthem or, at least, the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. That's because the Met broadcasts are as American an institution as apple pie, hot dogs, and baseball. Opera may not sit as well as any of those items among Americans as a whole, yet, for twenty afternoons every season, a devoted, hard-core audience of 1,600,000, as well as some six million other occasional listeners, tunes in to hear "opera live from the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City."

Without its forty-one-year history of coast-to-coast broadcasts the Met would be little more than a local phenomenon, a forbidding institution to those souls who had never ventured within its hallowed halls. Americans, unlike Italians and Germans, have no innate feeling for opera and its special peculiarities. Even today, the greater part of the public looks upon this art form as a bizarre and unapproachable musical spectacle. And if that part is smaller than it might be, it is because, with a flip of the switch, the average guy, in the privacy of his own home, can journey to the Big City and partake of what was once a pastime reserved for the privileged few.

While it is difficult to measure specifically what the broadcasts have done for Culture—even Musical Culture—as a whole, there is no doubt that collectively as a nation we have profited from the steady stream of Saturday afternoons filled with music. Others profit as well. Foremost, of course, is the Met itself. The broadcasts are good business; they have made the Met the national institution it is today. The company's annual tour may help too, but the tour would be long forgotten were it not for the radio which drummed up business better than any public relations or advertising agency could possibly have envisioned. The broadcasts also assist the Met on its home ground. There may be box-office slumps, but they would be greater were it not for the out-of-towners who flock to see in person what they usually hear on radio.

The broadcasts have been sponsored, since 1940, by Texaco. What this "in excess of two million dollars" annual public service has done for the petroleum company is as difficult to calculate as what it has done for culture. But let Texaco try to pull out of its sponsorship, and the halo the company has been wearing for thirty-two years would become so thoroughly tarnished it would never return to its original glow. They've gained in prestige, that's for sure. No doubt the sponsorship has also paid off in dollars and cents. Texaco knows, via studies, that opera listeners are car owners. If they can believe the six thousand letters of thanks they receive annually, there are a lot of people who appreciate them. These same people would surely rather drive a mile for Texaco than pull into a nearer competitor's place. Gas stations report regularly that customers are verbal and generous in praise of the sponsor. These laurels are garnered despite the fact that there are no direct commercials during the broadcasts. A four-hour opera, for example, carries only approximately one-and-a-half minutes of sponsor identification during the entire afternoon.

Record companies might also thank Texaco. Opera is the most expensive form of music to produce on disc, and, whatever sales are, they are boosted by the broadcasts, which whet the appetite for opera generally and for individual works and artists specifically. The record companies, while unable to cite figures, admit that when a broadcast of, say, *Otello* is scheduled, sales of that opera on records go up during the period before and after the air date. The companies further claim that the customer most affected by the broadcasts is part of the

Regular opera goers are no more likely than radio listeners to catch the Metropolitan Opera with its hair up in curlers, so to speak—as here, during the rigging of the house's stage for the gala farewell to general manager Sir Rudolf Bing.

A glittering audience (above) gave a standing ovation to Sir Rudolf at the gala's close. Below, technicians monitor the five cameras used in the television broadcast from a videotape-relay truck parked behind the opera house.

Photos courtesy Texaco *Star*

fringe public which doesn't usually buy the expensive multi-disc albums.

The broadcasts, then, are truly unique in a number of ways. Surely, they serve as an active catalyst to awaken interest in classical music and, by doing this, also stimulate various business enterprises. But most important is the unusually successful marriage between commerce and the arts which has worked beneficially for so many years. Of late, particularly on educational television, one can point to examples of large commercial concerns underwriting "high-class" cultural programming. But Texaco had the vision to be far ahead of its brethren. With the broadcast of *Otello* on December 9, 1972, Texaco began its thirty-third consecutive year—635 operas worth—the longest continuous coast-to-coast commercial sponsorship of the same program in radio history.

BEFORE Texaco came into the picture in 1940, the broadcasts were of a different nature. In 1931, the National Broadcasting Company approached Giulio Gatti-Casazza, then general manager of the Met, with the proposal that they air a weekly series of opera programs from the stage of the Met. Gatti was extremely hesitant—fearful particularly that if the quality of the broadcasts was inferior, the prestige of his company would suffer. But business was bad, the money was tempting, and Gatti was persuaded to hear a trial run, at the end of which the general manager stroked his beard and declared, "*Benissimo*!"

And so, at two o'clock on Christmas Day 1931, history was made with a complete performance of *Hänsel und Gretel*, broadcast direct from the stage of the old Met. The opera was chosen because it took an hour, which was all the free time NBC had at its disposal. Four people—Milton Cross, Deems Taylor, and two engineers—ran the show, which was heard over the combined Red and Blue networks of NBC—some 190 stations.

Throughout its first season, the program was only an hour long, which meant, with most operas, that only excerpts could be aired. In subsequent seasons, operas were presented in their entirety, broadcast time being regulated by the length of the works. When the Red and Blue networks split, the Blue, newly called the American Broadcasting Company, took over the show. It was a success beyond everyone's expectations, and it lasted on ABC from 1946 to 1958, when CBS took over.

During the first nine seasons, the operas were sponsored at various times by the American Tobacco Company, Lambert Pharmaceuticals, and the Radio Corporation of America. For most of this

period, however, the Met broadcasts were an NBC sustaining program.

In 1960, another historic move was made. Texaco hired G. H. Johnston, who still packages the show for them, and he created and developed the now famed Texaco-Metropolitan Opera Radio Network. This was done for a number of reasons, all of them practical. By 1960, the Met had been in association with all three prime networks, none of which was able to overcome some hazardous inherent problems.

The major offender was "DB"—delayed broadcasting. If something more interesting or, in their opinion, more important came up, individual stations would broadcast the operas at whatever time they felt it most convenient—nine o'clock Saturday morning or midnight on Sunday or whenever. This brought in a plethora of complaining letters from disoriented and unhappy opera lovers. "Opera fans are crazy people," Gerry Johnston says with a knowing smile. "They're really nuts. They want the broadcasts live. Presumably it's because the fans can tell if the singers are hitting the right notes or not. They realize that on tape the note can be changed." (This happened only once in the history of the broadcasts when, in the Mad Scene from *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Lily Pons missed an E-flat which was later dubbed in.)

And so the Texaco-Metropolitan Network was born. Today it comprises 127 commercial stations and about ninety college (noncommercial) stations. Setting up a new network was more expensive than buying time on an existing one, but at least Johnston could make the stations "sign in blood" to observe the following rules: the operas must be carried for the whole twenty-week season; they must be carried in their entirety; they must be carried live. The only delayed broadcasting is to Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico, which get the program the following week. The Voice of America is also given a tape of the broadcasts.

There are instances in which the rules can be broken, but only as follows: if, for example, a station feels the need to carry a local news event at the time of the opera broadcast it may do so—but not before it has found a competitor willing to take over its obligation and to advertise that it is going to do so at least two weeks before air date.

Johnston is a tough man to deal with when it comes to breaking the ground rules, but, he claims, he never forces stations to join the network in the first place, and when they do they must stick to the agreement. The college stations are all unsolicited. Whether consciously or not, Johnston's mania for consistency in broadcasting schedules has, in one sense, dictated the program's success. There is nothing easier to get used to than a program that is on every Saturday for twenty weeks—same time, same station. Many cultural experts believe that if television would try scheduling serious music on a more regular basis, it would have greater success with it than it has had in the past.

Television might also look to the setup of the broadcasts as a model of how to get along with the various powers that be. The Met itself does little more than offer its facilities, schedule operas, and assign casts. G. H. Johnston is responsible for the actual technical pickup of the stage presentation. (Fourteen stage mikes, hidden in strategic locations, follow the action. For obvious reasons, singers are never told which mikes are on or where they are to be found.) Texaco pays the bills. The lines are clearly drawn, and the bounds are never overstepped. Texaco, for example, cannot and does not dictate to the Met about artistic matters. "The secret of our success is that we don't run into so-called 'policy differences,'" an official of the petroleum company explains. The Met, in turn, cannot tell Johnston how to run his network, and Johnston, who couldn't care less about opera himself, wouldn't think of asking the Met to schedule *Die Walküre* instead of *Sonnambula* or Birgit Nilsson instead of Joan Sutherland.

"I said it's so grand of you to bring us those Metropolitan broadcasts."

WHICH brings us to the intermission and the entry of another power—one to reckon with. Geraldine Souvaine, producer of the intermission features, has been associated with the talk part of the music program ever since Texaco took over in 1940. A thrice-married widow, she is knowledgeable, driven, and tough. "My life is run by ideas, personalities, and a stopwatch," she says, complaining. "It's awful." Miss Souvaine, or Geri, as she's

known in the music world, proudly announces: "There's an unwritten law. Texaco doesn't interfere with repertoire and casting, and the Met doesn't interfere with my intermission features."

No one at the Met will say so for the record, but Miss Souvaine is not exactly a favorite at the house. She herself admits, rather extravagantly, "I'm at the top of their bitch list." The reason for the tension and clashing of wills is simple. Politically—and the opera world is wildly political—the intermission features are as prestigious and valuable as the broadcasts themselves. If the Met controlled them, all sorts of things could be accomplished. But with as strong-minded a lady as Miss Souvaine running the show, their hands are tied.

The Metropolitan's former general manager Rudolf Bing tried to force the producer to have certain artists on her shows, but to no avail. "*Most* artists want to get on," she explains, "but they have first to be articulate, opinionated, and intelligent. Out of one hundred on the roster, I don't think there are twenty-five who are any good. My favorites are Birgit Nilsson, Ezio Flagello, William Walker, Martina Arroyo, Marilyn Horne, James McCracken, John Alexander, and Joan Sutherland. We once had a singers' roundtable with Arroyo, Horne, and Sutherland, and I got letters all summer long."

Miss Souvaine, who works with an assistant and two secretaries, is solely responsible for all the spoken dialogue of the broadcast that does not emanate from the Met's stage. This includes announcer Milton Cross' script, plus the various features which are inserted during intermissions, the number depending on how many acts an opera has. "I have to keep people listening," Miss Souvaine says simply. "The first intermission should have some intrigue. And it should be interesting to people without talking up or talking down."

Boris Goldovsky is frequently her choice to contribute some intrigue to these shows. He is usually involved in explaining musical matters. Miss Souvaine proudly recalls his talk on *Pelléas et Mélisande*, which prompted a letter from one grateful listener who said that even though he had never enjoyed or understood the opera, thanks to Goldovsky, he would listen to it anyway, realizing nonetheless that he still wouldn't like it.

The second intermission, and the most popular one, is the Opera Quiz. The third is Biographies in Music, with the Met's Assistant Manager, Francis Robinson, as host. To keep the features fresh, Miss Souvaine tries out various innovations from time to time, such as a singers' roundtable, a musicians' roundtable, or a quiz with panelists taken from the ranks of the Met's ushers.

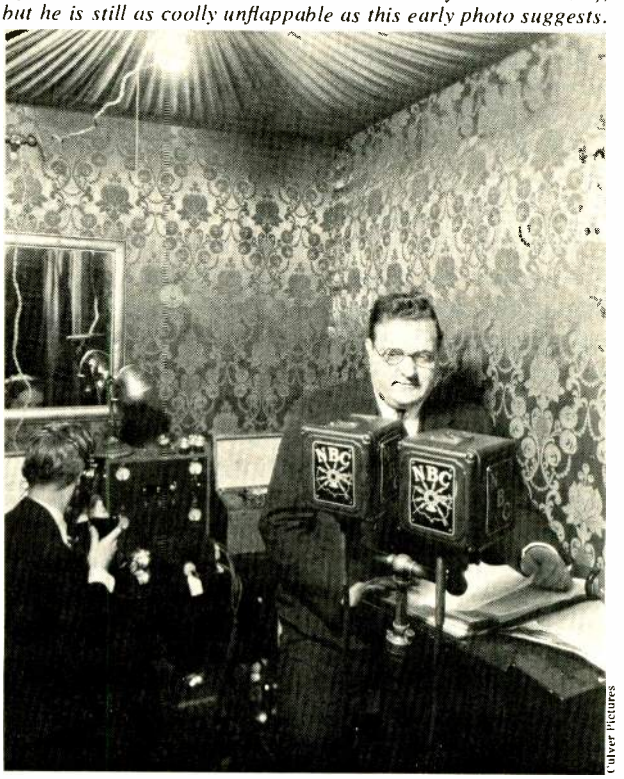
Despite her many other problems, Miss Souvaine can rest easy in the knowledge that she has on her side, in announcer Milton Cross, the man most identified with opera in this country. Dubbed "The Voice of the Met," or "Mr. Opera," Cross, who prefers not to have his age mentioned (he is beyond the seventy mark), has been associated with the broadcasts since their beginnings in 1931. In all—never missing a show—he has told the story of the opera being broadcast at more than eight hundred performances.

A student of singing, composition, and theory, Cross, a New Yorker, first came to radio in 1922 at station WJZ in Newark, N. J. His first job, short-lived, was singing ballads. His second was as an announcer, and he did everything from reporting on Herbert Hoover's inauguration to reading children's stories. He later got the Met job, he explains, "because I was the only one around there who knew anything about classical music."

Until 1940 and the arrival of producer Souvaine, Cross himself was responsible for all his spoken material. Today, he receives a script two days in advance of the broadcast, and, for the small number of off-the-cuff remarks he has to make, he comes prepared with ad-lib notes.

Should there be emergencies, Cross has the experience of a veteran trouper to back him up. His record for ad-libs took place before the Met broadcasts began, when he was announcing for the Chicago Civic Opera. He had to talk nonstop for half an

Milton Cross has been guilty of a bobble or two during his forty-odd years as announcer for the Met broadcasts (he once referred to Kate Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly *as Kate Smith), but he is still as coolly unflappable as this early photo suggests.*



Culver Pictures


Goldovsky


Robinson


Downes


Coveney


McEwen

Intermission

- *What opera might well have been subtitled* Gong Busters?[1]
- *What operas besides* Carmen *take place in Spain?*[2]
- *Who was Lohengrin's mother?*[3]

THE questions are as abundant as snow flakes in a blizzard. Often they are as lightweight, sometimes as colorless, and frequently as soggy. Each season a fresh truckload arrives. Listeners to Texaco's Opera Quiz never seem to tire. And they are optimistic. If their query is used on the air, they are rewarded handsomely by the famed "gift package"—four newly recorded operas and an AM-FM transistor radio.

The Opera Quiz is universally acknowledged to be the most popular intermission feature. Like all other spoken portions of the Met broadcasts, it is produced exclusively by Geraldine Souvaine. Neither the Met nor Texaco has any say in the format, choice of questions, or choice of panelists. The post of quizmaster has been held since 1959 by Edward Downes.

Steady listeners know most of the regular panelists well. Miss Souvaine employs only a handful of them. The producer claims that she will try anybody with the proper credentials, but that only a half dozen or so have worked out well. Others, including a slew of music critics she once auditioned, suffered grievously from the worst sin on radio—mike fright.

Among Miss Souvaine's favorite panelists are two men from the record world—John Coveney, artists relations manager for Angel, and Terry McEwen, classical manager from London. The producer is particularly fond of Coveney's quick wit, and often cites a prize example. During the first broadcast from Lincoln Center, the quiz panelists were asked what they liked most about the new house. "Not seating latecomers," was Coveney's immediate reply. The next question was, what did they like *least* about the new house. "Not being able to get to my seat when I'm late," was the equally fast answer from Coveney.

Despite his humorous facility, Coveney takes his job seriously, and doesn't necessarily enjoy the ordeal. "I almost always come off with a headache," he reports. Over the years, however, he has learned to be less tense. People don't listen that closely, he has discovered, and frequently don't realize who gave which answer to what question.

Regular exposure on a national program, of course, makes the panelists celebrities of sorts. Once, while returning a rented car, Coveney was asked by a clerk, "Haven't I heard you on radio?" Terry McEwen can cite similar incidents, but claims that the most important result of his being on the quiz is its effect on his mother. "She's gotten a whole new standing in the community," McEwen says. "She's become the minor celebrity."

Coveney, McEwen, and other panelists are generally invited to appear on the quiz about a month in advance. If they accept, they are asked to call Miss Souvaine's office not before 4 p.m. of the Friday before air date. They are then read anywhere from between four to eight discussion questions (they never hear the fact questions until the quiz itself). Friday night they are supposed to determine which of these they think are the most interesting. An hour or two before air time, they all meet to discuss their individual appraisals.

"I can't remember one quiz where we got to answer half of the questions we planned on," Coveney says. "We don't know what the fact questions will be, of course, and that's what keeps us on our toes and makes it stimulating."

THE fact questions come and go, and are answered or not answered. It is the discussion questions that really get the panelists involved and give the listeners the most for their money. Once McEwen, in the heat of an argument with a fellow panelist, said that tenor Giacomo Lauri-Volpi "sang like an animal." As McEwen himself reports, "the adverse mail was unbelievable." Another time, McEwen announced that Rossini was his favorite composer. This too inspired enough pens to make the mailbags particularly heavy.

On another occasion, actor Tony Randall, a devoted operaphile and frequent panelist, announced, without really explaining why, that he didn't like Mozart. This caused the heavens to storm. And once the late critic Olin Downes, father of Edward Downes, couldn't answer the question about who Lohengrin's mother was, so he fliply remarked: "It must have been an immaculate conception." This crack proved to be more offensive than disliking Mozart.

Embarrassments and imbroglios aside, the quiz rolls merrily along and never seems to lose its popularity. Listeners whose questions don't get used one year try again and again the next. Since only one winning question per year per person is allowed, the fortunate ones also try their luck again in subsequent years. For those interested, questions should be submitted to : Texaco's Opera Quiz, Texaco, Inc., 135 East 42nd Street, New York, N. Y. 10017.

[1]Turandot. [2]Don Giovanni, Marriage of Figaro, Fidelio, Barber of Seville, Don Carlo, Ernani, La Forza del Destino, Il Trovatore, Parsifal, among others. [3]We're working on it.

hour while the company's director read his annual fiscal report to the audience. Cross did everything from telling the plot of *Il Trovatore* (which takes some doing) to describing dressing rooms and the number of pieces of scenery and trunks needed for the opera's forthcoming tour. His success was such that he was commended on the editorial page of the New York *Herald Tribune*.

Perhaps the greatest crisis in the history of the broadcasts occurred on February 2, 1963. The opera scheduled for the day was *The Flying Dutchman*, but at 12:15 in the afternoon—one hour and forty-five minutes before air time—Miss Souvaine got a call from the Met: because of the indisposition of singers, the opera was going to be changed to *La Traviata*. Fifteen minutes later came another call: because of scenery problems, *La Traviata* was going to be changed to *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

This was a blow to Miss Souvaine. *Ariadne* had never been broadcast before. There was no script for Cross, no material in the files. By pure chance, two things were in her favor—the curtain was set for 2:30 instead of the usual 2 p.m., and, because *Ariadne* was scheduled for broadcast two weeks later, two tapes had already been recorded. The pre-broadcast analysis by Boris Goldovsky was ready to run. But the other tape, Opera News on the Air, which had John Gutman interviewing Maria Jeritza and Lotte Lehman (the first singers to portray Ariadne and the Composer, respectively), ran an hour and had to be cut to twenty-five minutes.

At one o'clock, Miss Souvaine began working on Cross' script, which she presented to him ten minutes before he went on the air. At two o'clock, her assistant began work on the second part of Cross' script, and handed it over five minutes before intermission. Meanwhile, producer Souvaine had gone to work on the intermission tape (*Ariadne* has only one break): she had sixty-five minutes in which to hear *and* edit the sixty-minute recording. Standing by and ready to go on "live" if the editing could not be accomplished were the participants in the Opera Quiz, who had been scheduled for the original *Dutchman* broadcast. Miss Souvaine never quite finished editing the tape, but it went on anyway and ran only a minute overtime. It was a job supremely well done, and the producer thankfully reports that it was the only time in her thirty-three-year history with the broadcasts that it *had* to be done.

THE Met broadcasts, like so many of "the better things in life," rarely come in for any sort of serious criticism. It seems unfair to pick on a national institution that has consistently, for the past forty-one years, been offering ninety-five per cent of the nation a chance to hear—free—a vital part of America's musical life. Surely, no one can argue with the broadcasts' record or the technical mode of presentation. The little carping that has taken place has always concerned artistic and aesthetic matters.

At her desk (above) Geraldine Souvaine awaits the next intermission crisis. Above right, Mrs. August Belmont, the grande-dame founder of the Metropolitan Opera Guild and long-time benefactress of the Met, presents a cake to Miss Souvaine at an (unspecified) anniversary celebration. In the studio, right, Miss Souvaine and Edward Downes confront the day's intermission guests, Met regulars Licia Albanese, Cesare Siepi, Judith Raskin, and Geraint Evans.

Photos courtesy The Souvaine Associates

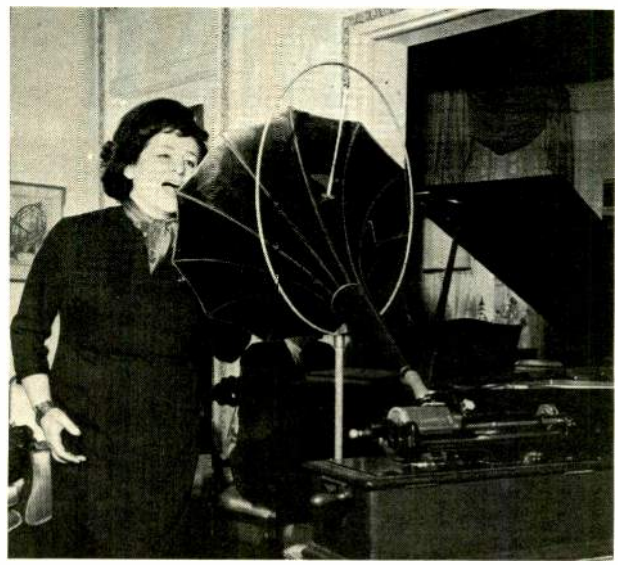
Rudolf Bing was particularly criticized for the choice of operas and casts that were assigned broadcast dates during his twenty-two-year regime. Geraldine Souvaine herself—no great fan of the former general manager—has suggested that "Bing took it for granted that people would listen, no matter what the cast." As a producer, Miss Souvaine, of course, wants only first-rate casts, or at least the same cast which appeared on the opening night of a production. As an example of what she means, Miss Souvaine cites *The Daughter of the Regiment* broadcast, which was minus Luciano Pavarotti, who had a sensational success in his role.

Terry McEwen, classical manager of London Records, has a similar complaint. "Bing ignored the broadcasts," he says, "otherwise he wouldn't have put dogs on them, as he often did." McEwen also cites the existence of an "if they are singing at the Met, they must be good" attitude, which might have resulted in some carelessness in casting. He further complains that "in the last ten years, there were many instances of new productions that were not broadcast until the following season."

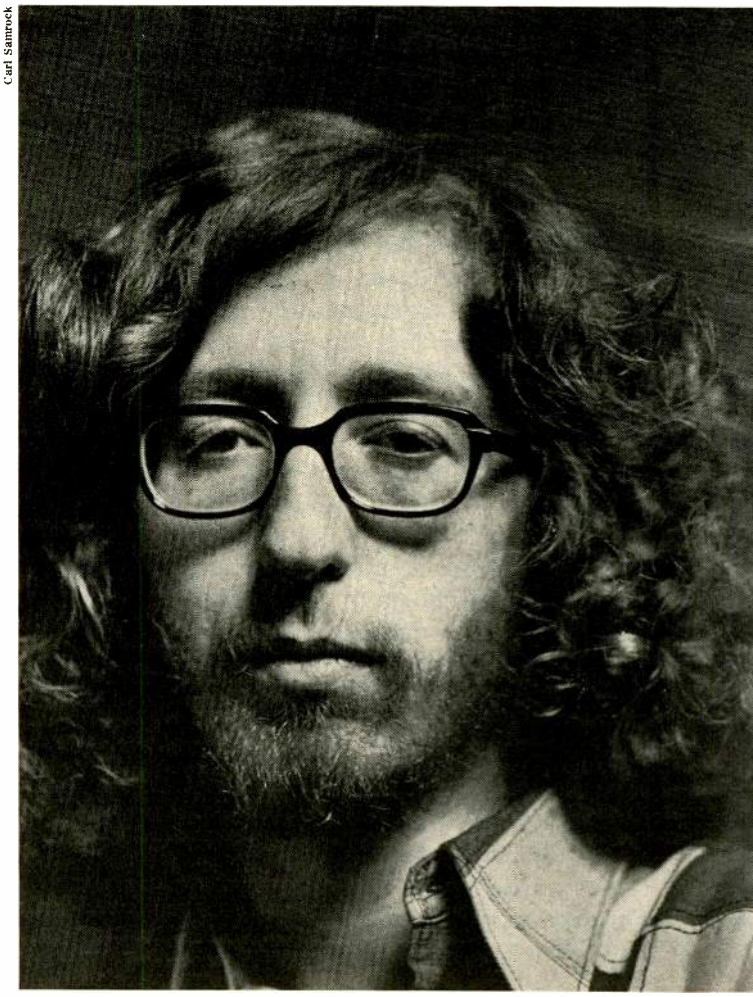
Even Miss Souvaine and McEwen would have to admit that most of the great singers who have appeared at the Met over the years were also, at one time or another, given the privilege of singing on a broadcast. It must be understood, however, that a general manager has a problem on his hands when it comes to the broadcasts. Artists seek them out, often placing their value above that of an opening night. So the general manager has a powerful plum with which to bargain with singers. It becomes, then, a political game, and, as Geri Souvaine says, "There's already too damn much politics in opera." The producer feels that more competition would allow for less in-fighting and dirty politicking. She suggests that it would be interesting to see what would happen if the opera companies in San Francisco and Chicago began broadcasting nationally instead of locally.

Miss Souvaine has also come in for her share of bad notices. The intermission features vary only within a strict framework. There are those who believe that a change might allow for a much-needed breath of fresh air. "There is a home-grown and corny quality about the intermissions which is not in tune with the country today," Terry McEwen says. "On the other hand, that may be their charm. Look, I feel ambivalent about knocking the broadcasts. They're the single most important musical event in the country, and they've done more for music than anything else."

Probably the only thing about the broadcasts that has never received even the subtlest criticism is the long-standing sponsorship by Texaco. But McEwen sums up that matter succinctly: "Texaco has done more for the Met than any general manager." Perhaps even Rudolf Bing wouldn't argue with him on that point.



Above left, quizmaster Edward Downes chats with Maria Callas, a great intermission favorite. Left, Miss Souvaine and Boris Goldovsky put Rosalind Elias and Reri Grist through their prebroadcast paces. One of the small coups of the quiz broadcasts involved hoaxing the panelists: soprano Birgit Nilsson recorded an aria on an antique cylinder machine (above), the recording then being used to stump the experts —proving, if nothing else, that recording has improved.


Carl Samrock

TROUBADOUR TOM RAPP

The brief but eventful odyssey of a melancholy story-teller

By J Marks

At first glance, Tom Rapp looks disturbingly like Albrecht Dürer with black horn-rimmed bifocals, like that portrait of the sixteenth-century artist that shows a severe young gentleman, proud face framed by heaps of ringlets, a motley beard, a sharp nose, narrow eyes outlined in thick lashes—the epitome of the stern economy of the German Reformation. But what's he doing in the twentieth century? He is the single consistent force behind a musical group called Pearls Before Swine, a quasi-rock ensemble which has very slowly attained a good reputation since 1967 when its first album came out on the off-beat ESP record label. Today the group is one of the most venturesome aggregations on the Warner/Reprise label.

Tom was born in Lawrence Welk's hometown, Bottineau, North Dakota. He has subsequently lived in Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Florida, Holland, and New York City. "One of the things about Minnesota," he recalls, "was that every year all the little towns would have a three- or four-day festival. In Pine Island, with a population of maybe six hundred, there was this *cheese* festival. And in Northfield there was Jesse James Day. . . . You see," he says, smiling, "they never had anything really terrific happen to them in Northfield. The only thing that ever really excited anybody was when Jesse robbed the bank in the town. So they celebrate *that*. The bank isn't a bank any more, it's a barber shop, and right there on the wall, in black paint, they've gone and put circles around Jesse's bullet holes."

That's where Tom Rapp started his long pilgrimage. "Minnesota was very do-it-yourself at that time. They had talent contests in all the towns as part of the festivals. I remember a blind lady from 'way out in the backwoods who sang opera, and there was a boy who played the saw, people who played spoons, and things like that. I was pretty much the only pop-music freak in the area. I sang

in a nasal voice with a kind of lisp, and I played the guitar. I won a lot, so they'd send me off to Rochester, Minnesota, which was supposed to be the Big City. That's where you competed with all the other winners from the other small towns.

"We were a pretty poor family, and my guitar was a treasure to me. But when I was about twelve, this kid did a cartwheel at a picnic and—BLAM!—landed right on my guitar and wrecked it. I mean totaled it! And I couldn't buy another guitar, so until I was eighteen I wrote poems and short stories and did watercolors and read a lot of science-fiction. I also did a stint at Edinboro State College."

He was inspired to compose and perform again in 1962 by the Peter, Paul and Mary single *Blowin' in the Wind.* Like most contemporary troubadours, he chose Bob Dylan as his early model. "I heard *Blowin' in the Wind* and freaked out. I ran out and got the 'Free Wheelin' album, listened to the rest of it, and yelled, 'I've been screwed! . . . I wasted four dollars on this!' It was the same problem that most people had with Dylan. I was thinking, 'He really can't sing,' and 'Boy, do Peter, Paul and Mary sure have it on this guy!' and stuff like that. Of course, I came around to him after a few listenings. Like any ordinary kid, I hadn't heard the real folkies, like Woodie Guthrie and those guys. So for me Dylan had to compete with Pat Boone. In fact, I remember reading that poem of Dylan's printed on the Joan Baez album, about his concept that only the ugly is beautiful. Well, I had never in my life come across that attitude. To me beauty was simply beautiful and ugliness was ugly. But Dylan, he changed all that."

Rapp and three musician friends made a home tape in 1965, the year Tom graduated from Eau Gallie High School, and it resulted in the ESP album. The disc wasn't released until May of 1967, on a date which marked the anniversary of Tom's eighteen straight months of work at a MacDonald's hamburger stand. "I detested that kind of work," he admits, "but I never figured we'd make it. What is more, I know we will never be stars. It's not feasible if you think about the kind of music we make. But I'm beginning to see how we are becoming important to a lot of people." His faith in his own music prompted him to drop out of Florida State University in 1968. Shortly after that, Pearls Before Swine made its first appearance anywhere—at the Anderson Theatre in New York City. Since then, it has been apparent that the band is more convincing on records than it is in person, mainly because of the fact that musicians don't seem to stick with the band for very long. "The special type of person who wants to work with me is a composer and not just a musician—eventually he wants to do his own kind of music. So he splits," Tom explains ruefully.

Tom Rapp is one of the new melancholy troubadours—like Kris Kristofferson, Randy Newman, Leonard Cohen, and the new John Lennon. These writer-performers are distinctly indebted to, but clearly different from, Dylan. There are some amazing things in Dylan's songs, especially those in the "Blonde on Blonde" album, but they are essentially surreal images, removed a bit from life. Dylan is much like film director Stanley Kubrick: they both deal with emotion, but their work is not expressive of it—it is moving, but not touching. The overriding emotion in Dylan's songs is thus a kind of sardonic anger, rather than melancholy or regret or even compassionate concern.

The songs of Tom Rapp, on the other hand, are emphatically touching. His most accomplished offering to date is his second Reprise album, called "The Use of Ashes" (Reprise 6405). Of the songs on that disc, *The Jeweler* in particular has an immediate, palpable emotional impact. *When the War Began* moves through time and uses repeated but altered images to convey a simple story line. The words are perhaps less powerful than the gorgeous melodic line. But melody and lyrics are in perfect, haunting balance in *Rocket Man*, which takes its theme from a Ray Bradbury science-fiction tale and makes it a simple expression of tragedy.

"I was born a Catholic," Rapp says quietly, "but I was one of those who found out at thirteen that God doesn't exist." He no longer thinks that words—the Mass, the Bible—will save the world. But he has occasional glimpses into the chaos for which the words are an antidote, and this experience prompts his songs. They are marvelous songs that draw on the tradition of the old English ballad, a musical form based upon a verse narrative and sung generally to music derived from a folk dance. As such, most of his songs have a beginning, middle, and end, and they tell a story with a point of view. In his darker moods, which are prevalent, he writes, among other things, of blood and lepers. But he is conscious that his personal terrors are only pages in a much larger book, and his sense of humor persistently saves him from bathos. One of the most sophisticated and humorous pop songs of recent years is his *Oh Dear, Miss Morse*, which makes use of Morse code to tell a Restoration-comedy story of a young lady.

INNOVATIONS abound in Rapp's music—the use of leitmotifs one might say, or settings that require a string quartet and other classical instruments. On the first Pearls Before Swine album there's a song called *Uncle John* that anticipates by five years the techniques of John Lennon's solo album. Such devices must have been very radical for the days of maximum amplification and phonographic freak-outs. How did his unique music come about? "To make a statue from a block of stone," Tom says, "you simply chip away everything that isn't the statue. Working with music is the same for me. I start out with a feeling, and I try to get rid of everything which doesn't fit the specific sentiment I have in mind. It's the same way that I introduce a new song to the guys in the band. I try first of all to make everyone aware of the central feeling that is the basis for the tune. Then we start massing sounds that seem to fit, stripping away all that is unessential and ending up with the simplest possible approach to the material. That's how we finally record the song. I can see why people link us to early music and to groups like the Pentangle. But I've got to admit that I'm not particularly into Renaissance music, so if the resemblance is there it's by accident."

Rapp and Kris Kristofferson and all of the new singers of sad songs have emerged from a generation which has witnessed Viet Nam, Kent State, My Lai, and the violent deaths of several humanist leaders with which they identified closely. What has come of this confrontation with disorder and early sorrow is a new mood that leads on the one hand to the lines outside the movie houses showing *Love Story*, and, on the other, to that multitude of responsive listeners to the songs of these troubled troubadours. When you listen to his music you know why Tom Rapp has a solid place among them.

Seven critics zero in on a current target:

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WHY ALEXANDER SCRIABIN?

THE YEAR 1972 marked the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Alexander Scriabin. Whether for this or for other reasons, we have witnessed, in the last several years, a definite revival of interest in his music, noticeable in the many new recordings of it released in that time and, to a certain extent, in the reappearance of his works on concert programs. Perhaps unlike the Mahler revival, or even the Nielsen revival (such as it was), the reasons for this surge of interest in Scriabin are not altogether clear. Is he the object of a complete re-evaluation? Are we finding something new in his music? Is it pure fad? Do "the kids" *really* like it?

STEREO REVIEW decided to ask its critics to comment on these matters. Since one's personal feelings about the music will also be a determinant of what one thinks of the "revival," we have asked the critics to include also some remarks on their own appraisal of Scriabin's music. We hope the following comments, then, will shed some light on what many people feel to be a somewhat puzzling musico-cultural situation. If, together, they seem to be a less than gracious tribute to Scriabin so soon after his centenary, perhaps the discussion they provoke will focus more attention on his music than would a more straightforward encomium.

—James Goodfriend, *Music Editor*

● In Western culture, it seems to be the "normal" case that each generation rejects its parents' tastes, but goes all out for that of the previously rejected preceding generation. In pop culture, for example, the Twenties and the Thirties are now "in," with the Forties coming up strong. In classical music—here the turnover is a little slower—it's the turn of the century that is getting the play. Nearly every major figure from the years just before and after 1900 has been or is being re-evaluated: Debussy, Mahler, Ives, Nielsen, even Busoni—and now Scriabin.

That serious attention would turn to Scriabin sooner or later has long been obvious. Scriabin is one of the key figures in the development of twentieth-century music. If Stalin had not quashed the development of avant-gardism in the Soviet Union (which, in any case, subsided everywhere else in the Thirties and Forties), Scriabin would appear to us as even more of a major figure than he does. As it is, he stands as the major link between late Romanticism and atonalism, and only Schoenberg himself was really as much of an innovator in this area. Scriabin directly influenced such diverse figures as Berg, Ruggles, Messiaen, and others.

In addition to his historical importance, Scriabin was also a fascinating personality. His mystical predilections and his experiments in mixing the media have something of a contemporary feeling and, since even his very dissonant, atonal late music has a basic Romantic-expressionist character, one can enjoy the best of two worlds. Or so it might seem.

In actuality, it never quite works out that way. The problem with Scriabin is that he is, finally, a victim of some rather severe limitations. Unlike his contemporaries who truly straddle the centuries and whose vision is large, Scriabin's mysticism only drove him deeper and deeper into himself. But he was also a skilled public performer and personality. The resolution of this paradox seems to have led him more and more in the direction of highly personal keyboard musings. In his earlier music he tries to give strong direction to his music and often strives for some kind of apotheosis. Later, he falls back more and more on undulating forms—the sure, telltale mark of a free improvisational style. The listener must himself fall into the spiritual rhythm of this psychic ebb and flow if he is to be carried along. Scriabin was a talented and original composer, but he did not have the ability to universalize his ideas. His music will probably continue to be around, but it is likely that it will remain the province of a coterie and not really the subject of a large-scale permanent revival.

● Alexander Scriabin had no more ardent champion and admirer than Serge Koussevitzky. Koussevitzky undertook to publish Scriabin's music when no one else would; he engaged Scriabin as his piano soloist for those legendary tours up and down the Volga during the summers of 1910 and 1911—tours that brought the sound of a symphony orchestra to tens of thousands of listeners for the very first time—and during most of the years of his conducting career, Koussevitzky programmed the music of Scriabin regularly. The *Poem of Ecstasy*, in fact, figured on his very first program as the new Music Director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in October of 1924.

A quarter of a century later, when Koussevitzky was celebrating his silver anniversary season with the Boston Symphony, he chose to begin the season with a repeat of the very same program that had served to introduce him to Boston—but the *Poem of Ecstasy* was dropped. When I asked Koussevitzky why he had done this, he replied that the *Poem of Ecstasy*—and Scriabin's orchestral works generally—had become dated and out of fashion, and he could no longer identify with the aesthetics of the music.

After the passage of another quarter of a century, there seems to be something of a boom in Scriabin's stock, but I seriously question both its validity and its staying power. Rather, I think it has come about as one result of our musical life's being saturated in the standard repertoire, both on records and in the concert hall, and the resultant need to investigate the fringe repertoire for additional viable material. In a very real sense, of course, Scriabin has never been completely out of the active repertoire: Horowitz has always played certain of the Piano Sonatas, and the *Poem of Ecstasy* has never lacked for dedicated conductor champions. What is new in recent years is the interest in Scriabin's *total* output, and though this interest has been a career stimulus to certain thoroughly deserving pianists, particularly Ruth Laredo, I cannot but agree with Koussevitzky's feeling of 1948 that much of Scriabin's music has outlived its usefulness. The metaphysical elements aside, the chromatic excesses and structural weaknesses of much of the composer's music will, I feel certain, soon cause it to be returned to the shelves once more to accumulate another layer of dust.

● I have had extremely mixed feelings about most of the so-called "revivals" that have taken place in recent years. To my mind, they are a reaction to the exhaustion of consumer interest in the "standard" musical repertoire (so long exploited) and a desperate attempt, mostly for economic reasons, to create a new, commercially exploitable repertoire without troubling to engage the central musical problem of our era: the chasm between twentieth-century music and the public at large.

I do not believe *anything* is unprogrammed and unmanaged these days, be it one's response to a Presidential candidate, a new detergent, or a musical revival, so whatever I have to say about the Scriabin "revival" should be understood in these terms. Harold Schonberg, Music Critic of the New York *Times*, was the first person to assert, in his columns, that there should be—and, in fact, *was*—a "Romantic revival" in progress. Immediately thereafter, almost every artist who played in New York began programming musical shards from the nineteenth century. Conductors were not far behind (New York *Times* prophecies are often self-fulfilling). Even Pierre Boulez, professional iconoclast and committed avant-gardist (when "post-Webernism" was avant-garde), has spent his first year of tenure as music director of the New York Philharmonic plumbing the compositional nether regions of Liszt, Henselt, and Rubinstein. Others have since had their fleeting exhumations, and, I am sure, have already been rediscarded as poor specimens of their era's musical life.

Where does the Scriabin revival fit into all this? Though I doubt the revival's spontaneity, I do thank heaven that his music is laced with genius. We probably won't be able to stand it four years from now, but it has been, for me, the only *real* refreshment of the "Romantic revival," bringing me into contact with a seminal personality with whom I was relatively unacquainted. At least a couple of important twentieth-century composers could not have written the music they did had they not known his work, and to me the aspect of Scriabin's *influence* is more compelling than the body of the music itself.

Since Scriabin has in many ways been offered to us this time around as a classical composer for the "kids," I asked my students at the Juilliard School what they think of him; their answers were strikingly inconclusive. This, I think, relates to the fact that they themselves vaguely sense that their taste is being manipulated, and

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Scriabin is at the piano while Serge Koussevitzky conducts the Moscow Symphony. (From a sketch by Leonid Pasternak.)

such awareness begets uncertainty, particularly in those whose taste is still being formed.

Pianists often love the music. It gives their fingers a thrill, and they are amazed at the phantasmagoria they can whip up all by themselves. String players can't imagine what it's all about. And the composers are split. Some of them hate it; some don't. I find, however, that a student who digs Berg and Babbitt may also go wild for Scriabin, and another who admires Copland, Thomson, Schuman, and Hanson will detest him utterly. In sum, my guess is that the Russian composer will appeal most to those with an inclination toward "ecstatic" states. But he *did* write that *Poem*, didn't he?

Igor Kipnis

● The burgeoning interest in Scriabin can be ascribed to a number of causes, the most obvious of which is undoubtedly commercial. If enough people express enthusiasm over a particular composer or piece, others jump on the bandwagon—the others in this case being performers, listeners, and, not least, record companies. The principle of a lot of noise being made over something, thereby causing that commodity to become popular, is hardly a new one. What it doesn't explain, however, is why it was Scriabin who was chosen to become the hot commodity in the first place.

To view Scriabin as one of the so-called "Romantic revival" composers is not, I think, entirely accurate. To be sure, early Scriabin (of which I am personally quite fond), such as the Opus 8 Etudes, the Op. 11 Preludes, or even the F-sharp Minor Piano Concerto, seems to be merely an extension of Chopin. It is highly conservative Scriabin, if somewhat advanced Chopin, and this kind of music—tempestuous, moody, and a bit *fin de siècle*—deserves to be part of the resurgence of interest in the Romantic repertoire. But there is far more to Scriabin than the early, velvet-draped drawing room.

A comparison of the extremes of Scriabin's creative output shows an amazing and violent difference between the earlier and the later works, perhaps as great as that between the early and late Beethoven. That difference is even more startling when one realizes that Scriabin lived only to the age of forty-three. The growing interest in mysticism on his part and a resultant new harmonic system is, of course, responsible. Though Scriabin did not produce pupils of any importance, his later works—or rather the musical and aesthetic theories behind them—have had considerable indirect bearing on several contemporary composers (Messiaen immediately springs to mind). In his efforts to rid music of conventional tonality, Scriabin was even slightly ahead (at least in time) of Schoenberg.

Whether his creations are masterworks is, I believe, open to doubt, but the intrinsic *nervousness* of so much of his music, coupled with its sensuous, orgasmic ebb and flow, would appear to be in sympathy with our own times, in which tastes (especially of the younger generation) appear to have veered away a bit from the de-personalized, clinical, and cerebral approach to the arts.

David Hall

● That the number of recorded performances of Scriabin listed in Schwann should have doubled from two dozen to more than fifty in the space of three years does indeed constitute a revival of imposing dimensions. We now have available not only the whole of the significant solo piano music, but all of the major orchestral works as well. Still, I'd be curious to see some sales figures that might tell me the *true* extent of the Scriabin revival in terms of buyer response. What part of the total classical record pie does Scriabin enjoy as against, say, Liszt, Ives, or Mahler? What proportion of the new Scriabin public is young and relatively unversed in the mainstream classical repertoire? I'd like some solid answers to these questions before venturing unqualified opinions on the revival.

This being the case, I can only offer subjective (though reasonably well-informed) generalities. As to my own biases, I don't "dig" Scriabin, despite thirty-five years of intermittent trying to—live concert performances and a good representative library of recordings (Horowitz, Richter, Sofronitzky, Somer, Ashkenazy, Stokowski, Mehta, Abbado). In point of fact, I have had more than a passing motivation to "get with" Scriabin, having been both a relative by marriage and a friend (in his later years) of the conductor Modest Altschuler (1873–1963), Scriabin's foremost supporter in this country and the man who led the New York world premiere of the *Poem of Ecstasy* and the American premiere of *Prometheus*.

Granted that one can enjoy the big orchestral pieces for what might be called, in the words of Janis Joplin, "cheap thrills," and admitting that the early piano music makes an eminently sensual post-Chopin tonal dessert, the substance of Scriabin's musical message lies in the mature piano works from the Fourth Sonata on. I contend that listening to this music takes intense concentration, preferably with the help of the printed music, and cannot be assimilated through any amount of superficial listening, even if one does take seriously the mystical verbal apparatus with which Scriabin chose to load his later work. Personally, I find that aspect of Scriabin an annoying imposition, just as I do in the case of Messiaen. I'm not averse to conjuring up nonmusical imagery as an adjunct to the listening experience, but I prefer to do my own conjuring rather than have it slopped on for me, even by the composer himself. The combination of virtuoso brilliance and artful motivic transformation—rhythmic and linear—is what I find most intriguing in Scriabin's music. His harmonic scheme simply palls for me after a time.

I question the extent to which the Scriabin revival, in its more lasting aspects, is tied up with the mystical kick among the young. If they have, in fact, gravitated to the Russian mystic, I wonder how long the attraction will last. What is important about the Scriabin revival—or, for that matter, the revival of interest in any composer of significance—is that it offers the listening public the opportunity to re-evaluate the music for itself as direct experience, rather than taking as gospel the words of others, whose opinions of yesteryear were necessarily circumscribed by their time and circumstance.

● Why are we summoning Alexander Scriabin back from the grave just now, some one hundred years after his birth? In 1903, in Moscow, a conductor named Vassily Safanov shook the score of Scriabin's Second Symphony in the faces of his musicians and said, "Gentlemen, here is the new Bible!" But three years later, when Serge Koussevitzky brought Scriabin to America for a tour, audiences were scandalized by his music and by his personal behavior (a married man, he had openly brought his mistress Tatiana with him, an action which horrified a puritanical public).

After Scriabin's death in 1915, Rachmaninoff traveled through Russia offering recitals of Scriabin's piano works, and Artur Rubinstein later aroused interest in them through a series of performances in European cities. But the excitement kindled by his strange music and dreamy mystical theories soon sputtered out. For decades his work was not taken seriously. In a book published here in 1942, the composer Dmitri Shostakovich called him "our bitterest musical enemy." And yet, he has in recent years achieved great popularity in his native land, and a positive frenzy of interest, especially among young listeners, is now in evidence here in the United States.

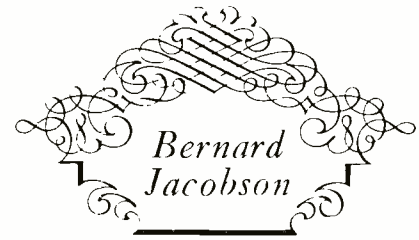
I personally discovered Scriabin when I lugged home records of his *Poem of Ecstasy* and *Poem of Fire* (on shellac recordings by Leopold Stokowski) from the Columbia University Teacher's College music library back in 1937. At seventeen I was completely carried away by those weird chords and teasing twists of voluptuous sound, those restless, knotty convolutions that seemed to harbor secret messages, and the startling pianistic and orchestral flights on which his themes would suddenly wing their way into mysterious distances.

I tried to share these thrills with contemporaries, but they just looked blank and bored. My family, which had already endured my discoveries of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, Varèse's *Ionisation*, and Honegger's *Pacific 231* on a scratchy phonograph, suffered through the Scriabin period stoically, but they were glad when I took the records back to the library. Soon afterwards I had to prepare an oral report for my Natural Science class. I chose the color theories of Scriabin. My presentation was elaborate and intense, but I succeeded in exciting only myself. *Nobody* seemed to care about Scriabin's charts of the relationships between various notes and colors, or for the color organ which had accompanied the strange harmonies of his *Prometheus* during the one such performance it had been given in New York in 1914, or for the great *Mysterium*, that orgiastic festival of the arts and religion he had been planning for "performance" in India at the time of his death—a crucial event in the course of which humanity would "achieve divinity and the godhead humanity." It never happened.

Why, then, the new interest in Scriabin today? It is one, of course, with the new impatience with the rational, one with the passion for astrology and ouija boards and the *I Ching*, one with the urge to escape from our drab dismembered world (even the moon has proved to be a pretty colorless rock now that we've reached it), to fly into a liberating sensuality. (Scriabin equated spiritual with physical ecstasy, and said he could not compose unless he was sufficiently drunk and sexually excited.) It is not surprising that Hilde Somer's recordings of Scriabin come packaged with psychedelic posters to hang on the wall, or that her performances take place to the accompaniment of light shows.

It may even be that music like Scriabin's is a kind of sonic methadone for a generation already partially wrecked by drugs. Certainly he was ahead of his time with multimedia, seeking to synthesize speech, colors, smells, and even touch (between performer and listener) with all the arts. How he would have loved stereophonic and quadrasonic sound, and "lumia" pictures, and science fiction movies! Little wonder, then, that his music is back in fashion. With Scriabin—and a little help from the poems he supplied with his scores—I can be Icarus ascending to the sun, and my wings will never melt. I can get drunk on *The Divine Poem* and wake without a hangover. His earlier works, those written before he started experimenting with strange chords and "the emancipation of dissonance from consonance," still leave me cold, especially if I try to listen to too many of them in succession. They are like Chopin, but without Chopin's charm. But set me loose with one of his late sonatas—*The White Mass* or *The Black Mass*—or lower the lights and let a great keyboard artist have his way with *Vers la Flamme* or *Flammes sombres* or *Guirlandes*, and I am seventeen again.

Of course, the mystical always tends to verge on the ridiculous, and when they tried to give a performance of the *Poem of Fire* with color effects at Philharmonic Hall a couple of years ago, it was like sitting in Radio City Music Hall waiting for the stage show to start while colored lights played on the curtains; it was not what the composer had in mind at all! Scriabin, with his incense and his grandiose ambitions for the role of art in healing all human ills was a preposterous figure as well as a fascinating one. It is best to be seventeen when one discovers him, but I am glad he is being discovered, that so many brilliant recordings of his orchestral and piano works are becoming available today. It's comforting to know that somebody besides myself is going on those trips to the sun while "the universe," as Scriabin puts it in the poem he supplied with his *Poem of Ecstasy*, "resounds with the joyful cry I am!"



● Any explanations I can formulate for the Scriabin boom are likely to be as unoriginal as they are—to all involved—unflattering. I think the reasons are the obvious ones. Scriabin's music has both a razzle-dazzle quality and an aura of extramusical associations that commend it to lazy listeners. There is none of that tiresome nonsense about formal subtlety to distract you from the sensual enjoyment of its sybaritic harmonies.

To the question "Why *now* rather than any other time?", I would hazard the answers: because Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff have already had their somewhat exhaustive innings, and it was time for another Big Romantic to come and collar the casual music-lover; because, moreover, Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff are rather inextricably associated with an older generation of predominantly middle-class concertgoers, from which younger audiences (understandably, when you observe the concert manners of their elders) are eager to dissociate themselves; and furthermore (to answer also the question "Why Scriabin rather than someone else, such as Medtner, for example?") because the diabolism and religious mania that constitute the core of Scriabin's extra-musical character are precisely the qualities likely to appeal to a younger generation much occupied with the retreat from rationalism. In other words, the Scriabin aesthetic and the hallucinatory drug experience go together. I think, too, that Scriabin's multimedia interests naturally attract enthusiasm at a time when the multi-media approach has acquired a cult of its own, to some extent among gifted artists, but more commonly, in my judgment, among those who can well afford a distraction from the apparent thinness of their purely musical invention.

Performers no doubt have much to do with the boom. Some of them think that, if they play something fast and loud and difficult and mindless enough, they can be sure of an ovation. In general, and unfortunately, they are right.

After all that, any exposition of my own feelings about Scriabin's music would surely be superfluous.

Confessions of an Ex-liner-note Writer

(including the true story of the Freedomburger papers)

By Noel Coppage

ONE WONDERS just what *True Confessions* is doing for copy these days, now that juicy unburdenings are taking place everywhere else: James Taylor confessing in song lyrics to various emotional problems, Nora Ephron con-

fessing in *Esquire* to an abiding anxiety about having small breasts, Hunter S. Thompson confessing in *Rolling Stone* that the story he was supposed to write got away from him, Merle Miller confessing in the New York *Times* to his abiding anxiety about being homosexual, and Ray Milland confessing, somewhere or other, that for years he has been as bald as a kiwi egg.

None of these is my problem, however. My problem is how to sandwich in my own small admission somewhere while the time is right (it's hustle, hustle, hustle in this media game). You see, I used to write record-album liner notes. For money. With more or less full knowledge of what I was doing. Now, if you're fairly young and buy only popular albums, you may be a bit confused as to just what I'm confessing to. It is possible to assemble a bookshelf-busting collection of records these days with nary a liner note amongst them. And if you collect only classical albums, you may be worrying that any minute now my prose will put you to sleep—for it is also possible to assemble a large collection of classical albums with not one sentence of readable prose on any of the jackets.

You can see right there what kind of business I was a party to. I was on the side of it that is becoming a lost art (is that the right word?): writing notes for pop albums. I became involved in it when I received a telephone call from Fred Binkley, who was then director of editorial services (popular) for Columbia Records, offering me something more than a hundred dollars for something less than a thousand words of something you might call not quite deathless prose.

Having read a few liner notes in my day, I naturally winced. The word "integrity" resounded and echoed inside my skull. Besides, at the moment, I didn't need the money.

"I don't want to use a lot of adjectives," I said, "or feel obligated to praise everything to the skies."

"You don't have to praise anyone," Fred said. "Just say how the record affects you. If what you write is interesting, that's better than praise. And you don't have to write about any record you don't like."

That sounded reasonable. And, indeed, in the ensuing months Fred proved reasonable in every way, and we became friends. But the awful truth is that, despite the best efforts of any editor, a liner-note writer sooner or later is called upon to write about a recording he has never heard. And he *usually* has to write notes rapidly, which means even if he does have the acetate "proof" of the album to listen to, he won't be able to listen to it very much. Almost every one of our telephone conversations ended with my saying, "When do you need this?" and Fred's saying either "today" or "tomorrow" or "day after tomorrow." Why didn't Fred give me more time, you may ask (as I did)? The question really is, why didn't someone else give Fred more time? And why didn't some third party give *that* chap more time? An so on, receding back into the corporate maze.

It's one thing—no trick at all, really, for a writer disciplined by the harsh whip of the newspaper deadline—to grind out a sufficient amount of reasonably sensible prose in a couple of days, but quite another to be willing, or able, to stand behind what that prose said forever and ever. There are things said above my name on certain record jackets that now make me want to run and hide: not just the mangled metaphors, silly similes, and dangling participles that a pressing deadline can squeeze out of a writer and onto the page, but expressions of enthusiasm I no longer feel—not out-and-out lies, but misrepresentations of myself all the same. The nature of the liner-note writer's role makes this kind of second thought inevitable. No matter how convinced he may be that the music is laudable, he's still involved in selling it. On the album his prose *exists* for the purpose of helping sell the product, or helping the buyer enjoy it. Either way, he is supposed to convince the buyer that the product is worth hearing. It may be, and often is, true that the product *is* worth hearing, but that's beside the point. When your prose is designed for the packaging, your prose is advertising copy, pure and simple.

THIS would present no moral quandry for anyone oriented toward writing advertising copy (that is, I assume it wouldn't, although it is true that they drink a lot of martinis in that business, and there must be *some* reason), but my job had always been journalism and criticism. I was supposed to be the one people could trust, the one who said whether the gushing enthusiasm on a cereal box or a record jacket was merited. Did it really matter that, when I was doing the jacket, I managed not to gush? Beyond that, I worried about my credibility as a reviewer; if I was helping sell some recordings, would people believe I was sufficiently objective about others just because I had put on my reviewer hat? There was a secondary fear that I would be asked to review a recording I had written the notes for, or that a friend would, and would either be unduly influenced by my notes or would dislike the recording so intensely that he would conclude my judgment had either curdled or been bought. These alternatives were about equally distasteful to contemplate.

Fred, bless him, apparently sensed my anxiety

and made it a practice to ask me to write notes mostly for reissues and "greatest hits" collections. This accomplished two things: neither reissues nor "greatest hits" anthologies are reviewed much, and there was a good chance I had already heard all or nearly all of what was to be on the album, for another, and could start typing without waiting for an acetate to emerge from the Columbia labyrinth.

Producers generally have the final word on liner notes. They may cut them, edit them, change them, or scrap them altogether. A writer who is oversensitive about what happens to his stuff had better go into another line of work. I have probably earned more money writing liner notes that were never printed (in almost all cases for albums that finally wound up with no notes at all) than for notes that were used. I was the one who wrote those notes for "Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits, Volume Two"—and, with the unheard-of luxury of *four days* to get them done, I really worked hard on them. I'm sure Dylan fans realize that they didn't look much like the color photograph that actually appears on the album jacket. One of my early jobs was for an album by the New York Rock Ensemble, a group whose versatility and craftsmanship and willingness to experiment with classical themes I had admired. I started the notes with "All the intellectuals in my neighborhood . . . " (which eventually became a private-joke catch-phrase between Fred and me), and ruminated about the definitions of such terms as "Bach rock" and about how fortunate the rock community was to have these Juilliard-trained musicians among us. It turned out that the band's producer was trying to change its image, as they say, and any liner-note reference to Juilliard or Bach, to say nothing of intellectuals, would be sure to send him into a blind rage. The album, straight rock with no dabbling in classical themes, was released with no notes and promptly died. Of course, I could have adjusted the notes to account for the new image (and would have either done that or turned down the job completely), except that the innards of Columbia didn't disgorge the acetate until about ten minutes before Fred had to have the notes in his office.

I soon learned that producers of country-and-western records would print practically any liner notes shoved under their noses, while producers of rock albums usually would decide they really didn't want any notes at all (this, of course, after they had got the editorial-services director to hire someone to write some). I neither lament nor applaud this. Certainly no liner notes at all is better than those on an early John Denver album saying, in too many words, that he is "honest, young and himself." But the Johnny Cash poem on the first Kris Kristofferson album is considerably more effective than another folk-rock cliché photograph would be, and Don Heckman's gossipy notes telling how "B, S, & T: 4" was made by Blood, Sweat and Tears perform a valid service, particularly for avid fans of that group. Liner notes would seem almost mandatory for classical albums—there is so much information that can help the listener, and listeners have so little time in which to comb all those biographies and musicological tomes. Even if the notes are as dry as those I recently encountered on a Cleveland Orchestra recording (the author quotes Virgil Thomson as saying "either you understand music viscerally or not at all," and then proceeds to a tedious, fine-print technical analysis, augmented by no fewer than eight illustrations of what's going on in the treble clef), we still need them. But only the best pop-album notes are indispensable.

My own best liner notes will probably never make it out of the CBS building. As Churchy La-Femme would say to Pogo, "A veritibobble classic is lost." These notes were written for an album I had never heard and they have, so far as I know, nothing whatever to do with the music on that album. Since that was the idea, there was no moral quandary involved. Fred said, "The album is by the New York Rock Ensemble and it's called 'Freedomburger.' The cover will show the band dressed up like the Colonial Army crossing the Delaware on a giant hamburger. That's all I know about it, and you can say anything you want so long as it makes some reference to a 'freedomburger,' whatever that is."

My notes started with a dictionary-style definition of "Freedomburger," complete with abbreviations for "Old French" and "obscure" and other dictionary terms, and then went into short essays under the subheads "Early History of the Freedomburger," "The Freedomburger in Peace and War," "How the Freedomburger Saved a Village," "The Freedomburger in Space," and "Special Note," and closed with a rather surreal recipe for making a freedomburger in one's own home. It was complete, unabashed—indeed, proud—nonsense, but the members of NYRE thought it was funny, and so did the producer. Everyone was laughing, everyone was satisfied, and, for once, I really had fun writing liner notes.

But something, somewhere along the line, went wrong. When the album came out, it had a one-paragraph "thank-you" from the group on the back, together with a photo showing them midway between a New York skyline behind and a wall of French-fried potatoes in front. Can you wonder what drove me to take the pledge?

STEREO HEARING

A psycho-acoustician describes some of the physical and psycho-physiological factors that together govern our perception of the "dimensions of auditory space"

By Floyd Toole

THOSE of us old timers who were around for the introduction of stereo can recall (with a certain nostalgia, to be sure) the steam locomotives chugging from the right to the left speaker, the bowling alleys and the jet-plane runways laid out across the livingroom wall, and, of course, the ping-pong game with a player in each channel. The purpose behind this tomfoolery was simple—it proved even to the cynical and sonically unsophisticated that stereo did indeed work. Stereo could and did provide right and left directionality; the apparent source of a sound could be made to move between your speakers and appear anywhere in the frontal area bounded by them.

Time has stilled the once clamoring complaints of the purists, the diehards, and the technically confused who maintained that stereo was simply a sham, a delusion, and a transparent conspiracy by the manufacturers to sell the extra components needed to set up two channels. Now, a decade or so later, the introduction of additional channels (*two* more, this time) has prompted new cries of outrage—this time, of course, from the owners of stereo equipment. They will tell you that they find no theoretical virtue or practical advantage in having, say, each member of a string quartet or rock group play from his own corner of the room. Such sonic shenanigans may be effective in the light and popular repertoires, where special effects can provide extra fun and games for the listener. But for serious works, say the conservatives, quadraphonics is a waste of time and money.

It might seem unnecessary at this late date to return again to the basic intent of high-fidelity recordings, but, judging from my mail, certain confusions still exist. So, once more, with feeling: simply stated, the purpose of high-fidelity reproduction is enhanced realism. And every improvement anywhere in the recording/reproduction sequence that starts in the recording studio and ends at your ears can contribute to this enhancement of fidelity.

It is no longer sensible (assuming it ever was) to talk about "concert-hall realism," since recordings are seldom made with the intent of capturing the acoustic qualities of any *particular* hall. The best we can hope for—and in my view it is certainly more than good enough—is to have music reproduced in our homes that sounds as though the performers were playing in some plausible environment somewhere. (Even this rather flexible criterion lacks universality, considering that electronically synthesized music may never have enjoyed a "real" acoustical existence as sound waves.) This "plausible somewhere" can either be a concert hall, recording studio, *or your listening room.*

To put it another way, recordings can be engineered so that you are *there*—or they are *here*—"here" being your listening room. In general, classical recordings try for "you-are-there." Pop/rock recordings usually attempt "they-are-here." Technically, what we are referring to in both cases is *engineering control of recorded auditory perspective and ambience.* Whatever tricks an engineer attempts in those areas with his control board, they must, for full effectiveness, be executed with an understanding of how human beings hear. That the auditory perception process is still not fully understood is proved by the frequent discovery of new psycho-acoustic phenomena. The fact that engineers find it difficult to capture a realistic acoustic experience on record can be demonstrated by playing almost any recent release—though there *are* brilliant exceptions.

And that is why, as we stand in 1973 on the threshold of the new quadraphonic era in sound reproduction, we have asked Dr. Floyd Toole, an expert on psycho-acoustics with the National Research Council of Canada, to review what is known about the binaural hearing process so that we will be better prepared to understand some of the problems that will be absorbing our attentions for perhaps a decade to come.

—Larry Klein, *Technical Editor*

A firm grasp of the principles of stereo reproduction must be based on an understanding of how a human being perceives the dimensions of auditory space. It is especially important at the present time, with all the confusion over quadraphonics, to be able to subject the claims and counter-claims advanced on behalf of the competing four-channel systems to one's personal scrutiny.

To begin, then, the process of determining the direction from which a sound emanates is called, logically enough, *localization.* Complete localization involves the specification of horizontal angle, vertical angle, and distance, but for the purposes of music reproduction we are interested mostly in localization in the horizontal plane.

It is well-known that many of the dimensions of auditory space are perceptible only because we have two ears. In simple terms, what happens is that sounds arriving at the two ears are processed independently and, after the appropriate conversion

into a form that can be interpreted by the brain, the two separate signals are compared. It is the interaural *differences* between these two signals which are largely responsible for our perception of directionality. The differences between the sounds arriving at the two ears arise because of the physical position of the ears on the head, as shown in Figure 1. Clearly, if the sound source is straight ahead (or straight behind) as in (A), the sound paths to the ears are identical and there are no interaural differences. However, sounds arriving from off-axis sources as in (B) must traverse paths of different lengths to get to the ears. Thus there will be an interaural *time* difference because of the path-length difference (*d*). Since the earlier sound arrival is at the ear nearer the source of sound, the brain, using the time-difference information, automatically determines the side (left or right of center) and the horizontal angle away from center. However, there still remains the question of front or back, since, as shown in (B), for every location in front there is one in the rear that produces the same interaural time difference.

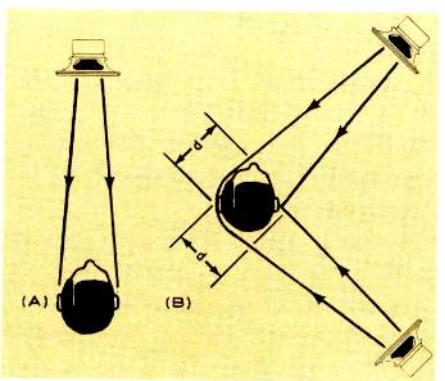
Fortunately, our two ears can provide additional data that the brain can utilize, this time in the form of interaural *amplitude* differences. In other words, the strength of the signal reaching each ear is different. Figure 1 (B) shows that the path to the more remote ear, in addition to being longer, is also bent. This is significant because at frequencies above 200 to 300 Hz, the wavelength is short enough so that the head is an effective obstacle. And since high-frequency sounds tend to travel in straight lines, the remote ear is in an acoustical shadow zone cast by the head, and the sound level at the ear is therefore reduced somewhat. The graph (Figure 2) shows the manner in which amplitude difference alters with changes in frequency for different angular positions of the sound source.

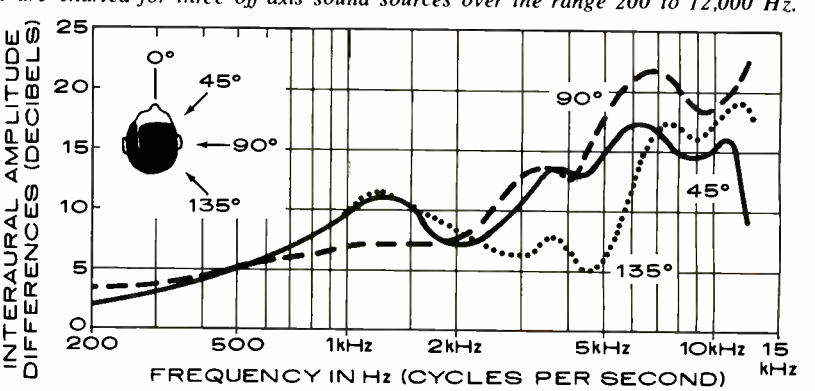
Some of the signal-strength differences between the ears are considerable, and the brain makes use of these amplitude effects to do more than just confirm the time-difference data. Because of the intricate and nonsymmetrical structure of the external ear, sounds arriving from different angles are modified differently before reaching the eardrum. This is especially useful in sorting out possible front-back confusion. When a specific combination of strength and timing differences leaves some doubt as to where sound is coming from, the normal reaction is to move the head. Without thinking about the process, we monitor changes in the interaural differences and correlate them with information from the eyes, muscles, *etc*. We are thus able to resolve the ambiguities of front and back, up and down, and other similarly opposed locations. (Since with binaural headphone listening, we cannot move our heads in relation to the sound sources, front-back ambiguities will always occur on some program material.)

This system of sound localization works extremely well in daily life, and occasions on which we encounter directional confusion are not very common. In large part this is because of the dominant role of vision. If we *see* the sound source this will usually override whatever contradictory directional information is coming to us from our ears. For example, in the case of a loudspeaker some distance away from a TV screen, one is not often conscious of the spatial conflict between visual and auditory signals. On the other hand, in stereo reproduction, one is deliberately striving to create auditory illusions completely isolated from their original visual setting. The stereophonic-sound illusion seems to be at least partly dependent upon a listener's ability to detach himself mentally from the real environment and be "transported" to whatever acoustical environment the recording demands. For that reason, closing your eyes almost always helps the stereo auditory illusion.

The fact that we hear sound as originating from a

Fig. 1 (left). Shown at (A) are identical path lengths to the ears. This localizes the sound source as either directly in front or directly behind the listener. The brain uses interaural differences (d) shown at (B) to localize off-axis sound sources. In Fig. 2 (right) interaural differences in signal strength are charted for three off-axis sound sources over the range 200 to 12,000 Hz.





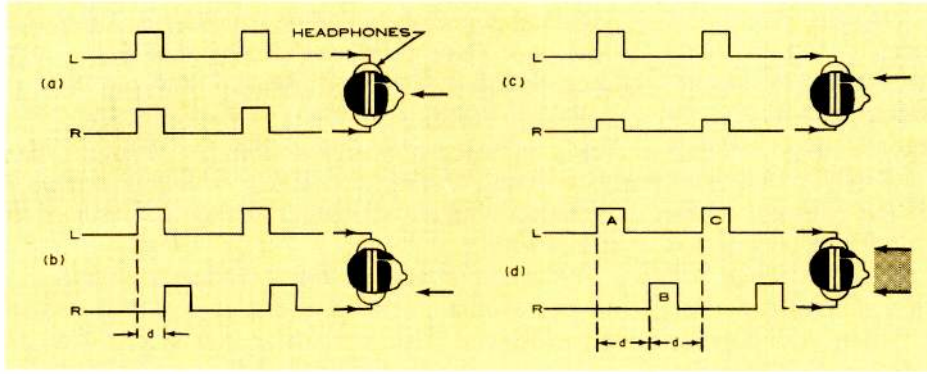


Fig. 3. Four different localizing situations are shown at (a) through (d). When the left and right pulses have equal strength and the same arrival time, the source is centered. When a pulse arrives at one ear before the other (b), or the pulse is stronger in one ear than the other (c), there is a shift in localization. Alternate arrivals of equal strength (d) produce localization ambiguity.

single source even though the sound is received through two ears is attributed to a process called *binaural fusion*, and in normal listening the sound "images" are, by and large, perceived in their true locations. In earphone listening to normal stereo material, the spatial illusions are altered somewhat, the common experience of listeners being that the sound images seem to be within or quite near to the head. Localization, however, still depends upon the same phenomena as in normal listening. For example, consider the cases illustrated in Figure 3. At (a), two identical trains of pulses (only two of each are shown) are presented to the left and right earphones. The listener perceives the resulting "buzz" sound image produced by the square waves to be on the mid-line of his head since there are no interaural differences. At (b), the left signal has been slightly delayed; the image moves toward the right ear receiving the earlier signal. At (c), the right signal has been reduced in amplitude; the image then moves toward the ear receiving the louder signal. At (d), the left signal is delayed by a length of time equal to half the repetition period, and localization is confused. The hearing mechanism now has no way of deciding whether the fact that pulse C leads pulse B (producing an image at the left ear) is more significant than the fact that pulse B leads pulse A (producing an image at the right ear). In practice, the listener may hear two images, one at each ear, or an ill-defined spatial effect which may seem to extend across the entire head. Obviously, the greatest arrival-time differences that can normally occur between a person's two ears are determined by the nature of the barrier and spacing between them. And since human heads don't differ too much in this regard, an artificially produced time difference between the ears in excess of the normal range of 0.6 to 0.7 millisecond can be downright confusing.

In any event, at frequencies where the interaural time differences exceed one half the signal repetition period, as in Figure 3(c), localization is ambiguous. This condition is approached at 750 Hz, at which frequency the acoustic wavelength of the sound corresponds roughly to the path length between the ears. This helps explain why above 750 Hz, interaural *amplitude* differences begin to play a major role in localization (see Figure 2). This is not to say that, for high-frequency localization, time differences are *never* significant; on the contrary, they remain very important at high frequencies for localizing signals that are *not* repetitive. Examples of these are such sounds as the initial transient of a plucked string, the instant of impact of drum stick on drum head, the onset "bite" of an energetically bowed string, and so on. In short, even when the on-going components of sound may be spatially indeterminate for one reason or another, the onset transients provide the high-frequency arrival-time differences that permit localization. This turns out to be an important ingredient in the sorting out of signals in the presence of complex room-acoustics effects arising from multiple reflections.

THE signals discussed so far have been those that are delivered directly to the ears of the listener, undisturbed by the acoustical environment. But in Figure 4 we see a few of the many possible routes that sound may travel in reaching a listener in a room. The listener is bombarded by sounds, some arriving directly from the source, but most are re-

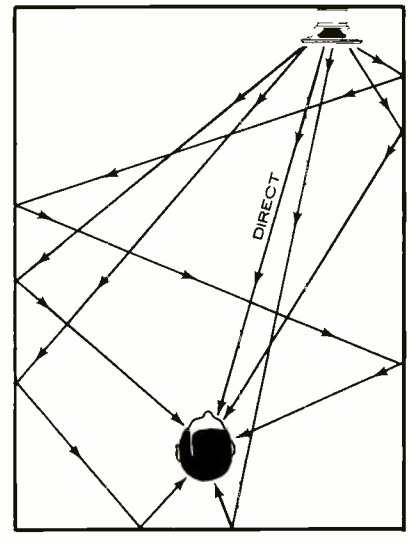


Fig. 4. Only a small part of the sound reaching listeners comes directly from the source in an ordinary room if there is some distance between them. Most of the sound will reach a listener only after it has been reflected one or more times from the room boundaries.

flected, coming to the listener from many directions. Depending on how far the reflected sounds have traveled, there may be a substantial time lag between the early and late arrivals. Sound travels approximately 1,100 feet per second; therefore, as a rule of thumb, there is about one millisecond delay for every extra foot a sound travels before it reaches the listener. For example, a reflected sound that travels two feet further than the direct sound will arrive 2 milliseconds later. In a normal room the multiple reflections of "reverberant" sound may hang on several *hundred* milliseconds before decaying into inaudibility. If we were to use an isolated "click" as an example, a listener would first hear the direct sound, followed after a short interval by the first reflection and thereafter a rapid-fire, multidirectional, decaying "tail" of reverberant sound arriving from all directions. We know that listeners reliably localize the real source in such a situation, but how?

The answer appears to be a property of the hearing mechanism known as temporal masking. Temporal refers to time, and masking implies the obscuring of one signal by another. Normally we speak of masking in the context of two sounds that exist simultaneously; here it applies to sounds that occur one after another. An earlier sound can, as it happens, suppress some audible effects of later sounds. Logically enough, this effect has been called the "precedence effect," although in the field of sound reproduction the name of the acoustician Haas has been more commonly used to label the phenomenon.

There appear to be several fairly distinct classes of these temporal effects. On one hand there is the case of a direct sound hotly pursued—within, say, a few milliseconds—by the early reflections. Here the usual result is that the earliest arrival determines sound localization, and the later arrivals, conditioned by the acoustic characteristics of the listening room, contribute to the "color" of the sound without seeming to be spatially distinct. On the other hand, sounds arriving much later may be perceived either as individual echoes, distinct both in space and time, or as an ambiance or reverberation without specific direction but separate from the direct source. Between these extremes there are many "shades" of spatial effects.

So far, this appears to be fairly simple—but what about repetitive signals such as steady tones or a sustained, periodic, complex sound? In these the emission of sound is not a discrete event; it goes on continuously, with new and identical "direct" sounds being sent out at the fundamental frequency of the sound. One would imagine that, with so many identical sounds rebounding around the room and new ones being produced at a rapid rate, the ears must be utterly confused. And so they can be. Localizing a steady pure tone in an acoustically "normal" room is nearly impossible; the sound is anywhere and everywhere. Even relatively complex but strictly repetitive sounds are sometimes hard to pin down.

What about the many musical sounds which seem to be repetitive—for example, a sustained note—but are nevertheless easy to localize in a room? The trick seems to be that few sounds in music or nature are *completely* repetitive. A wind instrument is not blown with strict uniformity; a stringed instrument is not bowed with perfect continuity; and besides, most instruments are played with vibrato. Instruments that are plucked or struck produce sounds that are mostly transient, although the properties of pitch are still involved. Speech and music are both highly staccato in nature; even white and pink noise, which sound uniform, are ever-changing.

In short, there are sometimes obvious, sometimes subtle variations in the amplitude, pitch, or timbre of sounds that provide the binaural hearing mechanism with the data with which to monitor and reevaluate, if necessary, the spatial impressions. Even the source of a pure tone can be easily localized if the sound is interrupted occasionally. One simply focuses on the starting transient, even though what follows may easily be lost.

FROM the simplistic examples of Figure 3, one can begin to envisage at least some of the ways certain properties of the hearing mechanism might be "used" in various schemes for the artificial recreation of spatial effects. Including the listening room in the acoustical picture complicates the matter enormously, but, in normal listening at least, the ear seems to accommodate to that situation well enough. The conflict comes when one attempts to reproduce the spatial effects of one room within another.

We know that one sound source can easily be binaurally "fused" into a single image, but what happens when there there are two—or even four—sources radiating the same sound? How compatible are headphones and loudspeakers in the reproduction of stereophonic recordings? Must there be a "stereo seat"? These are important questions; they will be discussed, along with others, in a second article, *The Reproduction of Auditory Space.*

Dr. Floyd Toole *is in the Acoustics Section of the Canadian equivalent of the U.S. Bureau of Standards; his articles on the technical aspects of sound reproduction are widely published.*

STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEST OF THE MONTH

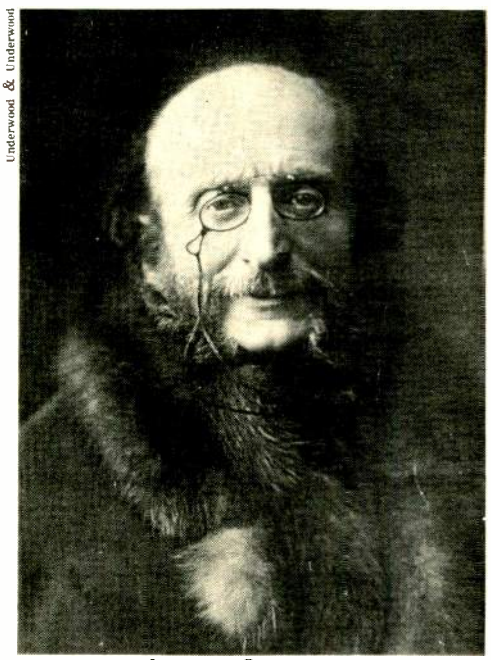
CLASSICAL

THE TALES OF HOFFMANN TWICE TOLD

Two superior versions of the Offenbach opera are coincidentally released by London and ABC

JACQUES OFFENBACH'S remarkable opera *The Tales of Hoffmann* has not been neglected on records: there have been several quite respectable attempts at a good representation in the recent past. But the mere competence and good intentions that characterized these efforts are not sufficient for the demands of a work which, in its own way, is no less exacting than, say, *Don Giovanni*. Since these previous efforts fell short of the ideal by so wide a margin, it is therefore extraordinary that we should now be presented with *two* superior new versions simultaneously. To compound the miracle, the two are so different in style and intention as to be almost noncompetitive.

In both versions, one soprano interprets Hoffmann's four loves—Olympia, Giulietta, Antonia, and Stella. In the same manner, the four devilish incarnations of the poet's enemy are also interpreted by one baritone. This is the proper way to cast the opera; unfortunately, neither previous recorded version had access to the exceptional artistic resources commanded by Joan Sutherland and Gabriel Bacquier (in the London recording) or Beverly Sills and Norman Treigle (in the ABC). Also, in an equally logical and commendable manner, both recordings have assigned the parts of Hoffmann's friend Nicklausse and his poetic Muse to the same interpreters—Huguette Tourangeau (London) and Susanne Marsee (ABC).



Underwood & Underwood

JACQUES OFFENBACH
A work as demanding as Don Giovanni

So much for similarities. The ABC set, under Julius Rudel's direction, offers a performing version substantially identical to that staged by the major opera houses of the world (but not, however, by the New York City Opera, which, under the same eminent conductor *and* General Manager, unaccountably omits the Epilogue from its current production). Richard Bonynge, who conducts on the London set, delved into the shadowy past of the opera (it was left completed but not fully orchestrated by the composer) and decided that the conventional "version" was not a faithful realization of Offenbach's original intentions. Briefly, his changes are these: the recitatives, largely the work of Ernest Guiraud (he also composed the *Carmen* recitatives), have been discarded in favor of spoken dialogue. Also, the second act (in Venice) ends not with Giulietta's rowing merrily away in a gondola but with her sudden and inadvertent death by poison. The act thus comes to an abrupt end and the elaborate Septet usually heard there disappears—to re-emerge in the Epilogue as a Quartet sung by Hoffmann, Stella (!), Lindorf, and Nicklausse. There are also textual changes and a sense of general streamlining which makes the opera seem to move faster, at least for those who are not disturbed by the spoken dialogue. The changes are, of course, covered in some detail by Mr. Bonynge in the booklet that accompanies this London album. *(Continued overleaf)*

All this, of course, takes some getting used to by those who, like me, have long known and admired the opera in its usual format. I have always thought, for example, that the ending of the Venice episode that has the faithless Giulietta abandoning Hoffmann was perfectly in character. And I cannot agree with Mr. Bonynge that the Septet (which he calls "thick and clumsy") is inappropriate at this point. As a matter of fact, I have always though that the duel between Hoffmann and Schlemil (done to the haunting strains of the famous Barcarolle) was a fine touch of bizarre inspiration. On the other hand, I have never liked the placing of the Barcarolle *Entr'acte* after the Antonia scene. It belongs there neither musically nor dramatically, but I long ago taught myself to believe that those five precious minutes may be essential for scenery changes. Imagine my surprise, then, to find that Mr. Bonynge has retained the *Entr'acte* and that the otherwise tradition-minded Mr. Rudel has omitted it!

Circumstances have thus far shaped this into a somewhat lopsided account, and it is time for the "review" to begin – in this case with the distribution of well-deserved compliments. Both conductors are excellent. Bonynge favors lighter textures and brisker tempos, which (save for a few overdriven *allegros*) are effective. Rudel's somewhat broader approach is exactly to my liking, and the richer sonorities he secures from the London Symphony lend impressive support to this reading. Joan Sutherland and Beverly Sills are both in characteristic top form. The Doll Song finds them at their scintillating best, both performing with remarkable agility and accuracy, though Sutherland's more purely focused tones command my preference. Neither soprano has the ideal sensuous tone for Giulietta, but Sills manages the better characterization through vocal means. As Antonia, the choice is between Sutherland's interpretive blandness and vocal near-perfection and the characteristic Sills sensitivity and interpretive insight accompanied by intonational flaws.

Both tenors are good. Placido Domingo sings his "*O Dieu! de quelle ivresse*" meltingly, maintaining a lovely lyric line with a minimum of strain, if not with a maximum of tonal variety. Stuart Burrows offers a more appropriate Gallic style (and diction), but his lighter voice finds the high tessitura of the second-act aria difficult to sustain. He is excellent in the first act, however. Unquestionably, there is more variety in Burrows' singing, but Domingo's is tonally more satisfying.

I like both villains, too: Bacquier is the more suave and insinuating, Treigle more dynamic and devilish, with a voice of stronger and harsher impact. Neither is a high baritone, however, and therefore neither can really come to terms with Dapertutto's "*Scintille, diamant.*" Even with a downward transposition here, Treigle must resort to a modified and somewhat deflated ending. Bacquier manages the same transposition acceptably.

Both sets offer good Crespels in Paul Plishka (London) and Robert Lloyd (ABC). By and large, London has the better supporting singers, with the indestructible Hugues Cuénod and the rich-voiced Huguette Tourangeau making stronger impact in their roles than their counterparts. In the Inn scenes, too, London has come up with smoother and more idiomatic-sounding interpreters for the roles of Luther, Nathanael, and Hermann.

Technically, both productions are excellent. If you prefer a "traditional" *Tales of Hoffmann*, then the ABC set eclipses all competition. But if the French spoken dialogue does not deter you, then you will find that Mr. Bonynge has made a very persuasive case for his own performing version on London.

George Jellinek

OFFENBACH: ***The Tales of Hoffmann.*** Beverly Sills (soprano), Olympia-Giulietta-Antonia-Stella; Norman Treigle (bass), Lindorf-Coppélius-Dapertutto-Dr. Miracle; Stuart Burrows (tenor), Hoffmann; Susanne Marsee (mezzo-soprano), Nicklausse-Muse; Nico Castel (tenor), Spalanzani-Andrès-Frantz-Pitichinaccio; Robert Lloyd (bass), Crespel; Patricia Kern (mezzo-soprano), Antonia's Mother; Raimund Herincx (baritone), Hermann-Schlemil; others. John Alldis Chorus; London Symphony Orchestra, Julius Rudel cond. ABC/AUDIO TREASURY ABC/ATS 20014/3 three discs $17.94.

OFFENBACH: ***The Tales of Hoffmann.*** Joan Sutherland (soprano), Olympia-Giulietta-Antonia-Stella; Gabriel Bacquier (baritone), Lindorf-Coppélius-Dapertutto-Dr. Miracle; Placido Domingo (tenor), Hoffmann; Huguette Tourangeau (mezzo-soprano), Nicklausse-Muse; Hugues Cuénod (tenor), Andrès-Frantz-Pitichinaccio-Cochenille; Jacques Charon (speaking voice), Spalanzani; Paul Plishka (bass), Crespel; Margarita Lilowa (mezzo-soprano), Antonia's Mother; others. Chorus and Orchestra of the Swiss Radio, Richard Bonynge cond. LONDON OSA 13106 three discs $17.94.

A PERFECT ALBUM OF BEETHOVEN FOLK SONGS

Two trios – vocal and instrumental – are equal partners in a program of miniature masterpieces

THE Beethoven who could be so cruel to the human voice in his big vocal works could also be kind to it in his small ones – a point that is ele-

gantly made by the three great singers who perform the solos on an extraordinary new Deutsche Grammophon recording of the composer's folksong arrangements. The arrangements were commissioned from Beethoven—and some also from other composers, including Haydn and Pleyel—by a Scotsman named George Thomson, who was devoted to the traditional airs of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales and hoped to insure their survival by linking them with the names of the most distinguished composers of his time.

If it has not worked out exactly that way, it is not Beethoven's fault, for he was not a man to tackle a folksong, a ballad by Robert Burns, or an Irish jig merely by jotting down the tune, adding a pretty accompaniment for piano, and letting it go at that. His settings of Irish and Scottish folk songs, done between 1813 and 1817, call for anywhere from one to three soloists, a singing choir, and a violin, cello, and piano trio. The jig may be from Ireland, the Highland lament from Scotland, the words all in English, but the voice is always that of Herr van Beethoven from Vienna, and each setting transforms a mere popular song into something of a miniature masterpiece.

Up to now, the best recording we have had of these songs offered Richard Dyer-Bennett as tenor soloist with a trio accompaniment. They were moving interpretations in his own folk-singer style, but the application of a higher vocal art in the Deutsche Grammophon disc puts these performances, quite simply, in another league. Fischer-Dieskau is, as usual, the hero of the occasion, but Alexander Young has contributed the resources of his celestial tenor and Edith Mathis her fine lyric soprano with admirable subtlety, taste, and discretion. The chorus, heard in *The Highland Watch, Highlander's Lament*, and *The Elfin Fairies*, supplies vocal texture exactly in the measure needed, with never a forced intrusion. The instrumental trio is precisely focused. And all three soloists join in the rousing arrangement of *The Miller of Dee* that brings a perfect album to a frisky close. *Paul Kresh*

ALBERT KING: *a tremendous talent refined*

Stax Records

BEETHOVEN: *Folk Song Arrangements.* *Music, Love and Wine; Behold, My Love; The Pulse of an Irishman; The Highland Watch; Highlander's Lament; Come Fill, Fill, My Good Fellow; O Sweet Were the Hours; Duncan Gray; The Elfin Fairies; Faithfu' Johnie; He Promised Me at Parting; Oh, Had My Fate Been Join'd with Thine; Put Round the Bright Wine; The Miller of Dee.* Edith Mathis (soprano); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Alexander Young (tenor); Karl Engel (piano); Andreas Röhn (violin); Georg Donderer (cello); RIAS-Kammerchor (chorus). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 262 $6.98.

POPULAR

LET ALBERT KING PLAY THE BLUES FOR YOU

Make a little room in the spotlight for an unheralded contributor to an important form

IT's Albert King's turn. Well, at least it *should* be Albert King's turn. In recent years there has been a rediscovery of musicians—white and black, but mostly black—who, unheralded, have made major contributions to modern American music—people like Chuck Berry, B. B. King, Bo Diddley, Little Richard, John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, and Howlin' Wolf, to name just a few. Some of them have been extremely successful of late, and now, I repeat, it should be Albert's turn.

He has had a career roughly similar to that of B. B. (their guitar styles are alike in that they both play distinct single-string treble notes, except that B. B. chokes them off and Albert holds them). There is even a rumor that they are cousins, though one or the other of them (I forget which) will as hotly deny it as the other will casually say it is so.

Albert is a big man, a pipe-smoker given to pinstripe suits, and he plays the guitar left-handed. He has never had the commercial success or national recognition he deserves. But he has recorded, for roughly ten years, for Stax/Volt, a Memphis-based, basically black label that discovered, among others, Otis Redding and Booker T. & the MG's. Lately, Stax has turned more to pop in an effort to put their artists into the bigtime. Thus this album is not Albert's best, artistically, but it is damned fine, and if it

puts him over I will buy the first round of drinks.

The title tune is a Dutch Uncle monologue by Albert that really sounds as if it were unrehearsed; it is so sincere that I wish I had him to tell my troubles to. *High Cost of Loving*, *Don't Burn Down the Bridge*, *Angel of Mercy*, and the hilarious *Answer to the Laundromat Blues* (in which, without hamming, he is funnier than Fats Waller) are also knockouts. Those who haven't heard Albert King should start with this record and work their way back to his earlier efforts; the trip is most rewarding. He is a tremendous talent, and has now arrived at a point where his playing, in the words of another critic, is "refined to a serene perfection." If I were in charge of the wheel of fortune, I'd give it a swift kick and send it rolling Albert's way. I'm not, but I'll do it anyway: be the first on your block to pick up on him. He's great. *Joel Vance*

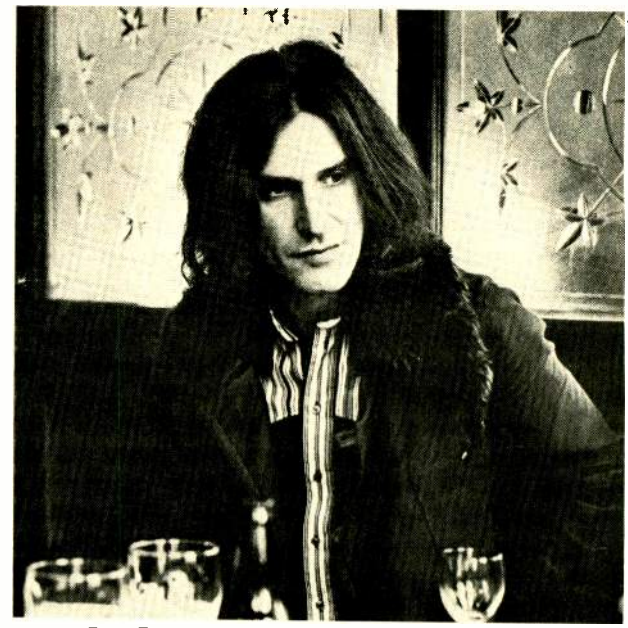
ALBERT KING: ***I'll Play the Blues for You.*** Albert King (vocals and guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *I'll Play the Blues for You; Little Brother; Breaking Up Somebody's Home; High Cost of Loving; I'll Be Doggone; Answer to the Laundromat Blues; Don't Burn Down the Bridge; Angel of Mercy.* STAX STS 3009 $5.98, ® ST8 3009 $6.95, © STC 3009 $6.95.

TWO IN A ROW FOR THE KINKS

Their new "Everybody's in Show-Biz" is a sad and funny look at the struggle for stardom

FEW OF THE fans could have suspected during the lean pre-*Lola* hiatus that it would be the Kinks who would come roaring back from the wings to pull rock's chestnuts out of the fire. But here they are again on RCA, following up their excellent "Muswell Hillbillies" with another corker called "Everybody's in Show-Biz." One could hardly find two more hackneyed, overworked themes—the alienation of the workingman and the vicissitudes of the struggle for recognition—but the Kinks have done them both up so intelligently that they fairly shine with new insights. "Show-Biz" seems slightly weaker musically than "Muswell," but it's also funnier and sadder, and it has a mighty one-two punch in *Sitting in My Hotel* and *Celluloid Heroes*.

Celluloid Heroes is easily the best rock song I've heard in a year. It has a driving chorus that's just predictable enough, and a logical, natural-sounding verse to set it up. Ray Davies' lyrics are also blunt, eloquent, and moving. *Sitting in My Hotel* is strong



RAY DAVIES: *his songs borrow from everywhere*

lyrically too, in its own way, and is one of those songs in which Davies flashes a fragment of some familiar but forgotten refrain at a critical point in the melody. Davies is like that, borrowing from everywhere, extracting pieces of "folk" music for use in his own melodies, welding clichés from the pub into spots where they actually attract attention and provoke thought.

On the other hand, the second disc included in this package, a "live" recording of mostly "Muswell" songs, is a mixed blessing. It may be a nice bonus, but it diffuses and weakens the album's total impression. Also, since all the new music is on one side of the cassette version, you have to do a lot of rewinding to hear that more often than the live stuff. I worry a little too about the Kings' flirtation with the horns, which are now threatening to get out of hand. There are funky nods toward Dixieland here that might more profitably have taken some other direction. And, finally, the album is so topical and so specific that its appeal may not last as long as all the creativity and hard work that went into it deserve. Nonetheless, even given the temporal nature of pop music in general, it just has to stand as the Kinks' second colossus in a row. *Noel Coppage*

THE KINKS: ***Everybody's in Show-Biz.*** The Kinks (vocals and instrumentals). *Here Comes Yet Another Day; Maximum Consumption; Unreal Reality; Hot Potatoes; Sitting in My Hotel; Motorway; You Don't Know My Name; Supersonic Rocket Ship; Look a Little on the Sunny Side; Celluloid Heroes; Top of the Pops; Brainwashed; Mr. Wonderful; Acute Schizophrenia Paranoia Boat Song; Skin and Bone; Baby Face; Lola.* RCA VPS 6085 two discs $6.98, ® P8S 5122 $9.95, © PK 5122 $9.95.

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RECORD REVIEWS POPULAR

ROCK • JAZZ • FILMS • THEATER • FOLK • SPOKEN WORD

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

JAMES BROWN: ***Soul Classics, Volume 1.*** James Brown (vocals); band. *Sex Machine; Papa's Got a Brand New Bag; I Got You (I Feel Good); It's a Man's, Man's, Man's World; Cold Sweat; Give it Up or Turnit A Loose*; and four others. POLYDOR SC 5401 $4.98.

Performance: **Hot stuff**
Recording: **Variable**

This is the first in what will be a series of albums of collected hit singles, all from the King Records catalog which Polydor bought when they signed Brown. This collection is spotty; they were all genuine hits, all right, but some of them consist of an endless riff and Brown grunting "Huh huh heh hey!" Performed in person they would be killers, and Brown can get away with recording almost nonexistent tunes because so many have seen his amazing stage act and visualize him when they hear his records. But other tunes here, such as *I Got You (I Feel Good)* and *Papa's Got a Brand New Bag*, are fine just as they are. Brown has one of the most tightly drilled bands in history; together with his sandpaper voice the effect is, like Brown's nickname, dynamite. *J.V.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOHN DENVER: ***Rocky Mountain High.*** John Denver (vocals, guitars); Mike Taylor (guitar); Dick Kniss (bass); Frank Owens (piano, organ); Gary Chester (drums). *Rocky Mountain; Paradise; Darcy Farrow; Mother Nature's Son; For Baby (For Bobbie); Prisoners; Goodbye Again; Season Suite.* RCA LSP 4731 $5.98, ® P8S 1972 $6.98, © PK 1972 $6.98.

Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **Excellent**

John Denver acts like the most naïve kid who ever stumbled into a studio. Probably very little of it is acting; he is by no means totally innocent and dreamy, but he does have a self-effacing, ingenuous quality that is as natural as fingernails. Still, if you are taken in by that (as some are) to the extent of superimposing it on his music, you may have trouble listening carefully enough. Denver may say "sir" to cab drivers and night watchmen, but in the studio he is the boss. In his own quiet way, he knows exactly what he wants, and his producer, Milt Okun, knows how to help him get it. Denver's new "Rocky Mountain High" for RCA flashes a considerable amount of this musical savvy before us. In fact, it's a dead giveaway.

JOHN DENVER
Sophistication underneath the naïveté

It is Denver's watershed album, the most experimental and sophisticated one he has done. There is almost a "new" sound: the arrangements (by Denver, Mike Taylor, and Dick Kniss) do not allude to the gentle romanticism Denver has been associated with, but are hard-edged and tense. You've never heard acoustic instruments sound so urgent, thanks in part to the way the material was recorded. The bass is not prominent—the trade-off is beat for bite—and the crowning sonic touch in one song after another is the fey, noodling piano-accent work by Frank Owens.

The arranging falters only once, in John Prine's *Paradise*, where the instruments are too many and too headstrong in refusing to be pulled along by the vacuum of the song's own needs. Other problems are minor: *Darcy Farrow* doesn't seem to interest Denver enough, probably because he sings it so slowly, and his work on the twelve-string guitar is generally wasted because he simply doesn't hit the thing hard enough to get that warm, resonant, tubby sound that is its specialty.

The title song is ideal for Denver's voice, its long, receding lines tuned perfectly to the natural echo in his vocals (and the small *un*natural one emanating from the control board). *For Baby (For Bobbie)* has been around a lot, going back to Denver's Mitchell Trio days, but it has a melody of elegant, timeless, classic beauty and words that must grab Middle America by the *superior vena cava*. *Prisoners*, the rockingest song, also has the janglingest accompaniment, telling its story quickly and effectively in broad, urgent strokes. *Season Suite*, occupying most of side two, has some structural weaknesses, but it features clean Fahey-like picking by Taylor and some dazzling Nilssonesque vocal overdubs by Denver. And the hit, *Goodbye Again* ("the last of the Jet Plane Trilogy," Denver calls it), is full of those subtle little goodies you finally manage to uncover in an M. C. Escher engraving. To name perhaps the best one: the sense of a narrow but definite space between Denver's lead vocal and Martine Habib's harmony vocal—the voices don't *quite* merge, don't *exactly* blend—and their separation reinforces the theme of the song.

That's the kind of album this is. You won't wear it out easily. *N.C.*

JOHN DENVER: ***Rocky Mountain High.*** John Denver (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Season Suite; Darcy Farrow; Paradise; Prisoners; Goodbye Again*; and three others. RCA LSP 4731 $5.98, ® P8S 1972 $6.98, © PK 1972 $6.98.

Performance: **Preacher-man**
Recording: **Excellent**

Mr. Good Vibes is back, and the more I hear him the less impressed I am. There is something unreal in Denver's work, a patina of corn-flake soul, a machine-tooled sensitivity that can be as grating as an old-time Doris Day smile. His musical professionalism is unquestionably superb. But compassion and sympathy (*Prisoners*) seem to pour from him—on cue—ecological concern and anger about strip mining (*Paradise*) ooze—on cue—and an updated version of Rousseau's noble savage (*Season Suite*) mopes or rejoices narcissistically—on cue—with earth's changes. Now that may not be the way it's supposed to come out as far as Denver is concerned, and it may not be the way it comes out for those who believe in him, but it's the way it comes out for me. I've listened to several of Denver's recordings, and I still haven't the vaguest idea of who he really is or what he truly believes in. Perhaps it only goes to prove the

Explanation of symbols:

- ® = *reel-to-reel stereo tape*
- 8 = *eight-track stereo cartridge*
- © = *stereo cassette*
- ☐ = *quadrasonic disc*
- R = *reel-to-reel quadrasonic tape*
- 8 = *eight-track quadrasonic tape*
- C = *quadrasonic cassette*

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

folly of an artist's trying to hook a ride on the relevance wagon. *P.R.*

THE CARTER FAMILY: ***Travelin' Minstrel Band.*** The Carter Family (vocals and instrumentals). *A Song to Mama; Never Ending Song of Love; Come Back Home; Take Me Home, Country Roads; Jubal; A Bird with Broken Wings Can't Fly*; and five others. COLUMBIA KC 31454 $5.98, ® CA 31454 $6.98.

Performance: **Girlish goo**
Recording: **Good**

The Carter Family claims to have started country music all by itself. There was a time, starting in 1927, when Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family were all the rage on radio. And today mother Maybelle and her daughters Helen, June, and Anita—all grown up and pretty as pictures—are chiming in on vocals that range in loftiness of subject matter from mother-love to the future of mankind. The first is taken care of in *A Song to Mama*, which must have been written before Philip Wylie got to the subject; the family is proud of its frequent appearances with that stalwart of the contemporary folk scene, Mr. Johnny Cash (who happens to be June Carter's husband), and I have a feeling it is his very own voice we hear praising the virtues of motherhood. The future is dealt with in a number called *2001*, but, since the Carter girls have a tendency to drawl their lyrics with their mouths not altogether open, I wasn't sure whether we were to expect global destruction or a brave new beautiful world. But lovers of old-fashioned country music may be reassured that the Carters confine themselves most of the time to safe, sentimental topics like homesickness, the superiority of that old-time religion to new-fangled brands, the world's great need for hummable melodies and loving your neighbor, and such keen ecological observations as *A Bird with Broken Wings Can't Fly*.

Well, if the Carters started country music I can see no reason why they shouldn't be on hand to finish it off. *P.K.*

DOUG CLIFFORD: ***Cosmo.*** Doug Clifford (drums and vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Latin Music; Regret It; Guitars, Drums and Girls; I'm a Man; She's about a Mover; I Just Want to Cry*; and five others. FANTASY 9411 $4.98.

Performance: **Okay**
Recording: **Okay**

Doug Clifford is the drummer for the artistically disintegrating Creedence Clearwater Revival. Their last album was a dud, because lead singer and head honcho John Fogerty only did four numbers, leaving the rest of the field to Clifford and bassist Stu Cook, who wanted their shots at immortality as songwriters and performers.

Now Clifford has done his own album. It should have been done in the *first* place. Stu Cook should have done a solo album. The three of them should then have gotten back to business and made a Creedence Clearwater Revival (which is to say, a John Fogerty) album. By this time it is probably too late. This is one of the problems that might have been solved by record-label-executive whip-cracking, were it not that Fantasy was a small label eking out a few bucks from their jazz catalog until Creedence became a major seller. So now the tail wags the dog. Prediction: bye-bye, Creedence; and back to the jazz vaults, Fantasy.

Clifford's album? Pleasant and pointless. He doesn't do anything wrong and he doesn't do anything right. *Vanitas vanitatum!* *J.V.*

CASS ELLIOT: ***The Road Is No Place for a Lady.*** Cass Elliot (vocals); orchestra. *Say Hello; All My Life; Saturday Suit; Who in the World; Love Was Not a Word*; and five others. RCA LSP 4753 $5.98, ® P8S 2088 $6.95, © PK 2088 $6.95.

Performance: **Best possible, considering**
Recording: **A mess**

This is an album that I feel bad about not liking. From the earliest days of the Mamas and the Papas, it has been clear that Cass Elliot is an authentic talent. That wonderful free-wheeling voice, secure and musical from top to bottom, is able to touch and move. Her readings of lyrics are lustrous, with an instinctive response to the key emotive phrases. And she makes love to a melody with the sweetness that Kern and Lehár and Rodgers must have hoped someone would bring to their music. On her own now (perhaps she should always have been), she is trapped here in a dismal piece of overproduced and gimcrack claptrap, with the wrong kind of song (no standards), the wrong kind of production (English grandiose), and the wrong kind of approach (stupid-hip). She is a genuinely square singer (accent on the genuine), so why not put the squareness out front and let us all enjoy what she does so superbly? If more of the pop performing world had her natural gifts to begin with, they wouldn't have to insist so frantically on being NOW.

Conceptually, this is a disastrous album and a damaging one to a woman who should just *sing*, baby, *sing*. *P.R.*

Charisma

GENESIS
The Moody Blues with fangs

EMERSON, LAKE & PALMER: ***Trilogy.*** Emerson, Lake & Palmer (vocals and instrumentals). *Abbadon's Bolero; Living Sin; Hoedown; Fugue; The Sheriff*; and three others. COTILLION SD 9903 $5.98.

Performance: **Music-biz Appreciation I**
Recording: **Florid**

Emerson, Lake and Palmer go splayfootedly on their pompous way here, offering original (?) material that is what I'm sure a teenybopper would gravely consider "real artistic." This disc features something called the *Endless Enigma*. It is in two parts, separated by *Fugue*. Side two presents *Trilogy* and *Abaddon's Bolero*. (Is it beginning to get to you?) It is all performed with aching "sensitivity." For this listener it has the dramatic impact of thirteen-year-old Betty Jean bidding farewell forever to fourteen-year-old Arnold in a late-night phone call. I think E, L and P's work might safely be dubbed bubblegum art song. This time out they've also involved Aaron Copland by "arranging" *Hoedown* from his *Rodeo*. The result only leaves me with the hope that Mr. Copland is not a violent man. *P.R.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GENESIS: ***Nursery Cryme.*** Genesis (vocals and instrumentals). *The Musical Box; Harold the Barrel; Seven Stones; For Absent Friends; The Return of the Giant Hogweed; Harlequin; The Fountain of Salmacis.* CHARISMA CAS 1052 $5.98.

Performance: **Inventive**
Recording: **Fine**

Big things are expected of this British group, and this album clearly shows why. The set has its flaws, and is more promising than fulfilling, but it clearly stakes out some claims that are worth the digging. Those who would like to see some fangs on the Moody Blues will be attracted immediately, for a not exactly lush but heavily textured instrumental backwash has a way of building up, crescendo style, in Genesis' choruses. When that isn't happening, some rather sophisticated individual accomplishments come through. Michael Rutherford is an outstanding bassist, Steve Hackett plays stylish electric guitar, and Tony Banks' grand style with the keyboards (including that old Moodies favorite, the mellotron) is the hook on which the group's identity hangs. Vocals are just passable but neatly arranged. The songs, on this disc at least, aren't of quite the caliber the group seems capable of achieving. Included are not one but two mythic epics (*The Musical Box* and *The Fountain of Salmacis*), both musically quite good, and a couple of fair tunes besides, but there is also some filler fluff on which the band can do little other than sound like Jethro Tull's duller moments.

The editing of the master tape wasn't letter-perfect, either—the transitions to the big buildups aren't as smooth as they could be. But that's just barely noticeable, and the band *is* tight and capable without sounding the least bit stale. It's easy to see how this group attracted so many early boosters. *N.C.*

GRAND FUNK RAILROAD: ***Phoenix.*** Grand Funk Railroad (vocals and instrumentals); Craig Frost (keyboard); Doug Kershaw (electric fiddle). *Flight of the Phoenix; Trying to Get Away; Someone; She Got to Move Me; Rain Keeps Fallin'*; and five others. CAPITOL SMAS 11099 $5.98, ® 8XW 11099 $6.98, © 4XW 11099 $6.98.

Performance: **Getting better**
Recording: **Very good**

No, I'm not a Grand Funk fan yet, not by a long shot. But the group is getting better, and even the recent management hassles it has

(Continued on page 88)

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CIRCLE NO. 25 ON READER SERVICE CARD

been going through have not dampened the gradual improvement in its musicality.

True enough, much of the space here is devoted to the kind of heavy-bottomed, simple-minded interpretation of the music of earlier, better groups (like Cream and the Rolling Stones) that has been the sum and substance of earlier Grand Funk outings. But there are also a few pleasant moments of acoustic gentleness, some good harmonica playing from Mark Farner, and the beginning of a feeling for textures in Don Brewer's drumming.

Not a lot to brag about, and for all the Grand Funk fans who are dashing to their typewriters at this very moment to send me the usual murder threats, it really won't make much difference. For those folks, the hotly-hyped trio can do no wrong. But for this listener, one step up may be a small one, but it's one worth making, and worth noting as well, nonetheless. *Don H.*

JOHN LEE HOOKER: ***Live at Soledad Prison.*** John Lee Hooker (vocals, guitar); John Lee Hooker, Jr. (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *What's the Matter, Baby; Lucille; Boogie Everywhere I Go; Serve Me Right to Suffer; Bang Bang Bang Bang; Superlover; I'm Your Crosscut Saw.* ABC ABCX 761 $5.98, ® M 8761 $6.95, © M 5761 $6.95.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Excellent**

John Lee Hooker is one of the great city-blues singers of the last thirty years. His guitar style combines gentle and sensitive finger-picking with roaring, keep-'em-dancing, gully-low chords (a really good, raw blues guitarist, like Leadbelly, can get more meat and marrow out of one chord than most guitarists can get out of six or seven), and many of his guitar riffs and figures have become standard stuff for blues and rock bands of every persuasion. His vocals are those of a quiet man who feels things deeply; he never shouts, whoops, or screams—because he doesn't have to. He is subtle, intense, and very, very good.

This album is designed to capitalize on one kind of political feeling—*i.e.*, right-thinking people will thrill to a Genuine Bluesman singing for all those Political Prisoners in prison—a shabby and expedient way to treat Hooker. He plays well here (he always does), and his son, who has two long cuts on his own, is okay, maybe better than okay. But despite the liner notes, designed to appeal to sincere folks who still hang ELDRIDGE CLEAVER WELCOME HERE signs in their window, the album is nothing more than the recording of a gig. I'm not saying Hooker Senior and Junior weren't pleased to play at Soledad, but I do say there is a political intent behind this album, be it naïve or cruelly exploitative, sincere or cynical. The intent of an album by the producer—despite the artist—is often what the album is all about. Politics gets in the way of music here, and that's not good. It is unfair to Hooker, who ought to be allowed to go on playing, surrounded by musical admirers, forever.

It should also be mentioned that *Bang Bang Bang Bang* is exactly the same tune as *Boom Boom*, recorded by Hooker more than ten years ago for another label with a different associated music publishing company—which leads me to think that someone, with impeccable political credentials, is trying to make money that they don't deserve off a tune that Hooker wrote and has never really been paid for. My suspicions are aroused. *J.V.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LINDA HOPKINS. Linda Hopkins (vocals); orchestra. *Shake a Hand; Walk on In; Congratulations; It's My Beat; Deep in the Night;* and five others. RCA LSP 4756 $5.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Very good**

Although she isn't very old, Linda Hopkins has been around for a while—and it shows, in all the right ways. There are the obvious comparisons to be made with Mahalia Jackson, but they are, in my view, all in Hopkins' favor. She has one of those luscious, open voices that vibrate with conviction and feeling. This is her first solo album (she also appears in the original-cast recording of *Purlie*), and it is a beauty. *Shake a Hand*, the first track, puts her best vocal foot forward immediately, and what follows adds up to a real virtuoso recital. This one is recommended to all admirers of the late Mahalia, of course, but also to everyone interested in a magnificent natural voice projected with enormous style and feeling. *P.R.*

DAVE JASEN: ***Fingerbustin' Ragtime.*** Dave Jasen (pianist). *Raymond's Rag; London Rag; Dave's Rag; Festival—a Ragtime Cakewalk; That American Ragtime Dance; Qwindo's Rag; Make Believe Rag; Susan's Rag*; and eight others. BLUE GOOSE 3001 $5.98.

Performance: **Hard and hasty**
Recording: **Good**

The craze for ragtime may be wearing a bit thin for some by now, but the revival is still very much alive in the record industry. The bouncy rags of Scott Joplin seem as ubiquitous these days as they must have been when player pianos were plunking out those two-four rhythms in every corner saloon in Grandpa's day. But it is a strict rhythm, and it becomes clear after a while why popular composers had to free themselves of its confines.

Meanwhile, pianists all over the country seem to be putting garters on their sleeves, and derbys on their heads, puffing on cigars and pounding out the stuff. Max Morath and others can lend it a lightness and flexibility that take the curse off the idiom; Jasen is strictly a pounder. What he lacks in lightness, however, he makes up in velocity, and it's a giddy experience to listen to him whirl through half a dozen of his own numbers, including a cakewalk and an *American Ragtime Dance*, which re-creates dances of the Twenties like the one-step and the Charleston—even though I found it difficult to figure out where one rag ended and the next began. Side two has more flexibility, offering an assortment of interesting period pieces by Eubie Blake, Joplin's *Elite Syncopations* and *Maple Leaf Rag*, and a version of *Kitten on the Keys* that sounds as if the tromping up and down were being done by an overweight lion. Jasen is something of a missionary, and the fervor of his enthusiasm *is* catching. I just wish he'd ease up a little and not thump so hard. *P.K.*

ALBERT KING: ***I'll Play the Blues for You*** **(see Best of the Month, page 81)**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

B. B. KING: ***Guess Who.*** B. B. King (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Summer in the City;*

(Continued on page 92)

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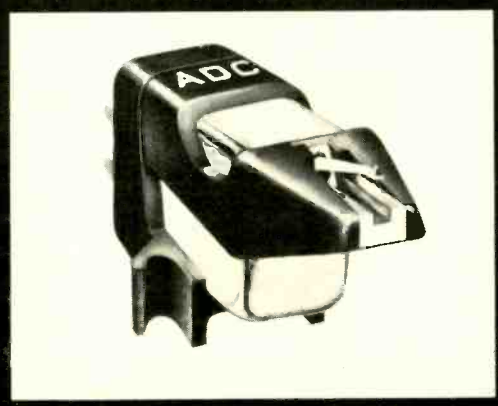

That's the way Stereo Review described our XLM. High Fidelity headlined their review, "Superb new pickup from ADC" and went on to say, "...must be counted among the state of the art contenders." And Audio echoed them with, "The ADC-XLM appears to be state of the art."

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...response is within ±2dB over the entire range. *Audio*
Frequency response is exceptionally flat. *High Fidelity*

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The XLM went through the usual torture test at 0.4 grams (some top models require more than a gram). *High Fidelity*
The XLM is capable of reproducing anything found on a phonograph record. *Audio*

Distortion Distortion readings...are almost without exception better than those for any other model we've tested. *High Fidelity*
The XLM has remarkably low distortion in comparison with others. *Audio*
At 0.6 grams the distortion was low (under 1.5 per cent). *Stereo Review*

Hum and noise The XLM could be instrumental in lowering the input noise from the first stage of a modern transistor amplifier. *Audio*
The cartridge had very good shielding against induced hum. *Stereo Review*

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We found it impossible to attribute superior sound to costlier competing models. *High Fidelity*
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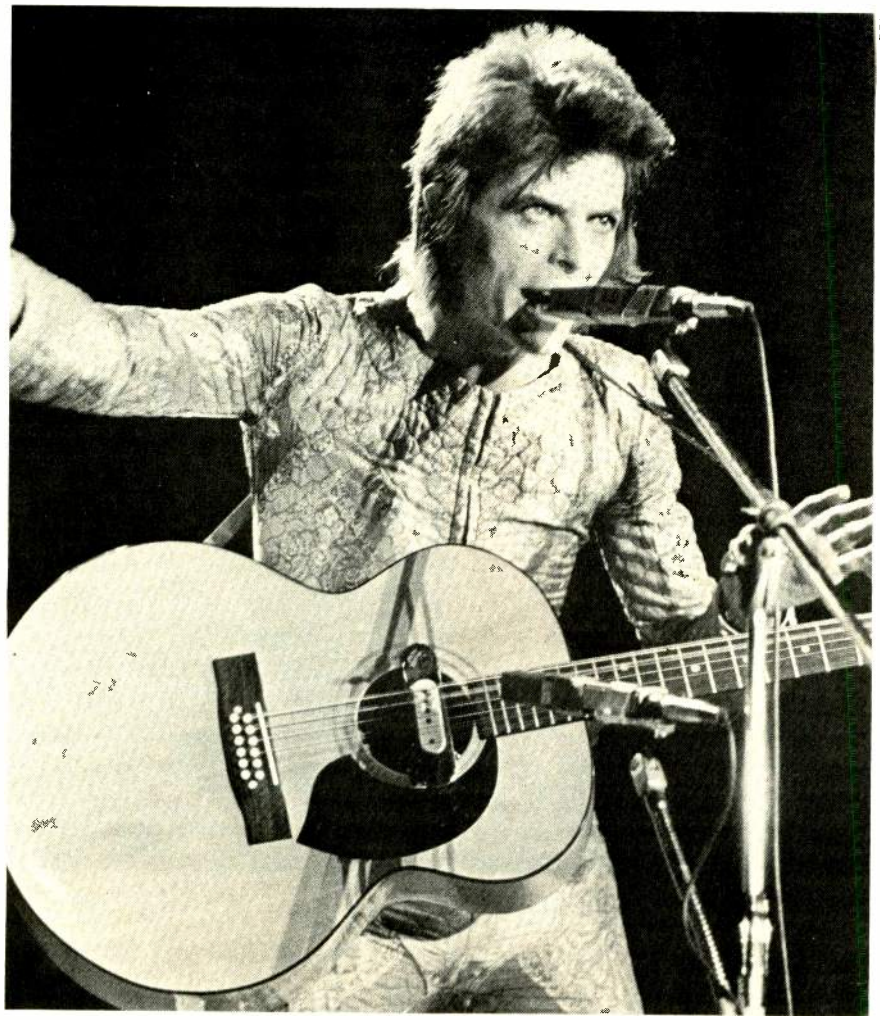
RCA

DAVID BOWIE:

No, honey, it's not one of those

Reviewed by STEVE SIMELS

IT'S ODD sometimes how consistently wrong the critics can be. For example, I've been reading a lot of the stuff cranked out lately about T. Rex, and as yet I'm apparently the only writer to have noticed that *Get It On* sounds exactly like the Ohio Express' *Yummy Yummy*, or that, in fact, *everything* Mark Bolan does sounds exactly like *Yummy Yummy*. The Bubblegum Baudelaire indeed! Anyway, you read it here first.

But speaking of T. Rex and all that fey English stuff, I have before me RCA reissues of David Bowie's two Mercury albums, both of which I dismissed as trivial poop at the time of their first release. Of course, that was before his current incarnation as Ziggy Stardust, which I observed recently at Carnegie Hall and about which the critics seem to have missed the point completely. Ellen Willis, in *The New Yorker*, came the closest—not surprising, since she's one of the few critics in the country who has the vaguest idea of how rock-and-roll operates. But even she got a little confused. I forgive her, though; watching David got me a little confused too.

The problem was, I think, that the hype almost totally misrepresented him. On the basis of his last two albums (not to mention a rather incredible photo in the journal *Phonograph Record* of David sexually assaulting the neck of Mick Ronson's guitar in the middle of a British concert) we were expecting the ultimate rock manifestation of that sinister homosexual cabal we all know controls the theater and the art world, a superqueen who came on as militantly sexy for the boys as Jimi Hendrix did for the little girls. What we got instead was Ricky Nelson in drag, which is not the same thing at all.

At any rate, rather than making a thing of his sexuality, David chose instead to put on the slickest rock show I've ever seen. He didn't do anything Steve and Eydie haven't been doing for years, but it was—for rock, anyway—almost revolutionary; the band pulled costume changes, lights were cued to fade in and out with the beginnings and ends of songs, and it was unarguably effective. The band itself (billed as the Spiders from Mars) is the most bizarre-looking aggregation in recent memory. David's songs are centered around his rather dumb fantasy of a pop star from outer space; and that was the visual metaphor for the group; the drummer, in particular, with his bleached-blond pompadour, looked uncannily like the aliens in *This Island Earth*. David himself, however, reminded me of nothing quite so otherworldly as Conrad Byrdie, or one of Dick Shawn's Elvis parodies. And, to be honest, in his green jumpsuit, with a layered haircut that looked suspiciously like an old-fashioned D. A., and a big white acoustic guitar on his hip, I thought he looked pretty silly.

The crowd, of course, did not, and it was perhaps the weirdest surprise of the evening. I had anticipated the *crème de la crème* of New York's decadent, but Carnegie Hall was filled instead with the most depressingly wholesome fifteen-year-olds I've seen since my junior high school prom. The atmosphere was reminiscent of a Melanie concert, with everyone staring at the star in rapt admiration hanging on his every word.

Despite all this, the Spiders are quite good in a third-generation Jeff Beck way, and David himself comes off so ingenuously that you almost have to like him just a little. Unfortunately, he has a voice of absolutely zero expressive range, and his songwriting is abysmal, with one or two exceptions like *Suffragette City*. Worse, he has the distressing habit of doing an occasional Jacques Brel song, which almost disqualifies him as a rocker out of hand; likewise his Chuck Berry encore and his versions of two Lou Reed classics, none of which is he capable of pulling off with the slightest degree of believability.

After all was said and done, I felt cheated. Not, as Ellen Willis seems to think, because Bowie uses stardom as a metaphor (and he does), but because he simply isn't up to the demands placed on him by his loudly proclaimed sexual proclivities. A real, live homosexual playing dynamite rock-and-roll while camping it up to the point of outrage—now *that* would have been something for the mass straight audience to wrestle with. As it was, sadly, the only strong feeling I got from David's act was that it's a shame they've cancelled the Ed Sullivan show.

And after that monumental digression, you may be wondering about those reissued albums. Well, simply, they're awful, symptomatic of everything that was wrong with British rock *circa* 1969-1970. They're bloated, pretentious, and (especially in the case of "Space Oddity") so datedly psychedelic-nouveau as to be unintentionally funny. In a word, no.

DAVID BOWIE: *Space Oddity.* David Bowie (vocals and guitar); other musicians. *Space Oddity; Unwashed and Somewhat Slightly Dazed; Letter to Hermione; Cygnet Committee; Janine; An Occasional Dream; The Wild Eyed Boy from Freecloud; God Knows I'm Good; Memory of a Free Festival.* RCA LSP 4813 $5.98, ® P8S 2101 $6.95, © PK 2101 $6.95.

DAVID BOWIE: *The Man Who Sold the World.* David Bowie (vocals and guitar); other musicians. *The Width of a Circle; All the Madmen; Black Country Rock; After All; Running Gun Blues; Saviour Machine; She Shook Me Cold; The Man Who Sold the World; The Supermen.* RCA LSP 4816 $5.98, ® P8S 2103 $6.95, © PK 2103 $6.95.

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Performance: **Great**
Recording: **Fine**

If you want the best and most authentic word on the talents of B. B. King, you will have to wait for Henry Pleasants' forthcoming book on the great American singers. I was lucky enough to read the typescript of the chapter on King, and, as usual, Mr. Pleasants defines superlatively well the contribution that this man makes and has made to music. King raises blues to the level of great folk art—that judgment can hardly be questioned now.

Humanity, humor, and unconscious and never self-pitying pathos are all part of the King mix—these and a talent for honest communication, no matter what the words of the song—are what make him the master of all he chooses to perform. *Summer in the City*, for example, is not the world's finest song, but in King's performance it at first comes fitfully to life and then genuinely begins to breathe and pulsate. The rasping sweetness of his voice and the idiomatic but absolutely secure guitar playing add to the total impression. You never doubt that you are listening to a performer who has absolute command of his means.

Most of the material that he has chosen for this album isn't much above the level of mediocre. But in this case it is easy to be carried along by the singer, if not the song. *P.R.*

THE KINKS: ***Everybody's in Showbiz*** **(see Best of the Month, page 82)**

LIGHTHOUSE: ***Live!*** Lighthouse (vocals and instrumentals). *I Just Wanna Be Your Friend; Old Man; Rockin' Chair; Take It Slow; One Fine Morning; Insane; Sweet Lullabye; Eight Miles High; 1849; You And Me.* EVOLUTION 3014 two discs $4.98.

Performance: **Proficient**
Recording: **Good**

Lighthouse, as I've said before, is a very good band who don't do anything exciting because it's all been done before by other people. Despite the two-for-one price on this set, four sides of Lighthouse is too much. Good as they are at execution, they don't really swing; the vocals are correct and bland. Significantly, the best cut on the album, the only one in which the band starts to fly, is *Eight Miles High*, which they didn't write. *J.V.*

ROD MCKUEN: ***Odyssey.*** Rod McKuen (vocals); instrumental accompaniment; orchestra, Arthur Greenslade arr. and cond. *And to Each Season; Smell the Buttercup; Thank You Baby; Moment to Moment; To Die in Summertime; Solitude's My Home; October Odyssey*; and seven others. WARNER BROS. BS 2638 $5.98.

Performance: **Poseur's posies**
Recording: **Excellent**

Wouldn't it be fine to be Rod McKuen! Every time you scribbled enough greeting-card rhymes with fatuous sentiments in a notebook they would be published overnight and hit the best-seller lists by morning. Or you could set them to music (or turn them over to Georges Delerue or somebody for setting) and the next day you'd have a song on the charts, a gold record, or even a concert at Carnegie Hall. And all this out of rueful little lines about the brevity of life ("Days to decades, so little time . . ."), or dying "as gently as a dead leaf when it hits the ground," or going down to have ice-cream cones "on Sunday next, if the weather holds." They would record all your songs in your own hoarse whisper with sighing orchestras and little echo effects when you wanted them, or a disembodied woman's voice to suggest an October sky, or a chorus to go "la la la la" like on the soundtrack of a French movie. When you felt lonely, you could shuffle off into the twilit distance down a San Francisco street, or talk of a woman you once loved, or God, with no obligations to either, and all the time lounging romantically through life with your golden hair and blue jeans while young girls sighed over you. And if you felt really profound one morning, you could just sit down and dash off a symphony or a piano concerto and get it recorded immediately, perhaps by your own record company, and distributed by Warner Brothers.

ABC

B. B. KING
Makes blues a great folk art

On this latest collection of words and music, we hear fourteen new mood-pieces from the bottomless McKuen well, including ballads about buttercups, solitude, October skies, ice-cream, mountaintops, and hand-holding. There is even one band devoted to the second movement from Mr. McKuen's very own Concerto #3 for Piano and Orchestra, in the form of a waltz, that goes down like ice-cream and is twice as melting. And there are some really immortal lines like "I have no family now/But that of man." Who says romance is dead? *P.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SERGIO MENDES & BRASIL '77: ***Primal Roots.*** Sergio Mendes & Brasil '77 (vocals and instrumentals). *After Sunrise; Pomba Gira; The Circle Game*; and four others. A & M SP 4353 $5.98, ⑧ 4353 $6.98, © 4353 $6.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Splendid**

For what it is—a splendidly produced and recorded album of pieces with "Afro-Brazilian overtones" (translation: in the style of Villa-Lobos at his most lushly ornate and middlebrow)—this album is a consistently satisfying listening experience. There's no need to take it very seriously, despite the scholarly liner notes, which tell a lot more about the mingled folk strains of Brazilian music than you really want to know. The sound is so radiant and so lush that the recording becomes primarily a sensual experience. Lots of chanting, weird sound effects, arrangements that suggest night-blooming jasmine—all contribute to a feeling of that good old "jungle madness" after only a few minutes. I can't imagine anyone not enjoying it, although probably the better your components the more often you'll be in the mood for all this exotica. Sergio Mendes' recording work has always been and still is first-class entertainment. *P.R.*

VAN DYKE PARKS: ***Discover America.*** Van Dyke Parks (vocals); Esso Trinidad Steelband (instrumentals); orchestra, Kirby Johnson arr. *Jack Palance; Bing Crosby; Steelband Music; The Four Mills Brothers; Be Careful; John Jones; FDR in Trinidad; Sweet Trinidad; Occapella; Sailin' Shoes*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2589 $5.98.

Performance: **Well, ah . . . er . . .**
Recording: **Very good**

If record-company executives are all hard-hearted money-grubbers, then how come Van Dyke Parks, who never sells any records, is so eminently successful in the record business? After his "Song Cycle" drew enormous critical praise and sold approximately fourteen copies, Parks brought out "Esso Trinidad Steelband," and then took (for a short period) a "development" job with Warner Brothers. Parting with WB, he said what passes in Van Dyke for unkind words about some Warner's executives (that is, a patient man with enough time and a good dictionary could determine that some of the allegations were of a pejorative nature). The executives, in turn, said Van Dyke had done a fine job, *etc.*, *etc.*, and would continue to be a great asset to the company, *etc.*, *etc.* Nobody ought to mess with a genius, but then nobody can be sure when a genius is just messing around and when he's really *doing* something.

This album is a case in point. Steel-band music again seems to be its main ingredient, along with calypso-nostalgia and Trinidad lore. It will leave most wondering what Parks hears in steel-band music that escapes us. It is probably great fun to play in a steel-band—and Parks probably does love Trinidad, as he says—but a little bit of steel-band music goes a long way when I'm in the audience. The songs here are about as lazy and lackadaisical as the instrumentation. Parks says in some brief notes that all the songs (which are by such people as The Mighty Sparrow, Wilmouth Houdini, Buevedo, Lord Kitchner, and John Philip Sousa) have been recorded before—and although I know *FDR in Trinidad* has, I can't help wondering where, besides in Parks' own head, *Jack Palance* has ever appeared before. (That song, incidentally, has lyrics that seem to have not the faintest connection with Mr. Palance.) Anyway, Parks says he will see that all songwriters, or their estates, are paid royalties, thus reversing a trend.

It's all mildly interesting the first or second time around, but either so far ahead of its time or so far out in left field that it doesn't light up

(Continued on page 94)

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any scoreboards. Parks again seems safe from the taint of commercialism, since, in addition to all those estates that will be paid royalties, he will presumably pay the steel band and the thirty-eight other musicians he used. There wouldn't be any money left over if the album sold a million copies. In *that* unlikely event, I'm sure Parks could think of something else to keep his balance sheet in the red. *N.C.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOHN RENBOURN: ***Faro Annie.*** John Renbourn (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Little Sadie; Kokomo Blues; The Cuckoo; Faro Annie; Willy O'Winsbury*; and six others. REPRISE 2082 $5.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Excellent**

This is a superior album in every respect. John Renbourn, formerly of Pentangle, is a guitarist of dazzling skill and virtuoso technique. His singing voice is rich, colorful, and dramatic. Here he has chosen to perform a collection of traditional blues and folk tunes in his own arrangements. He accomplishes all that he sets out to do, and so well that it would be difficult to pick out one band in which it all comes together more beautifully than elsewhere. If pressed, I suppose that my choice would be the title song, *Faro Annie*. In it, Renbourn's opulent improvisational guitar playing and his deeply moving performance create the sort of elegiac feel and texture I see in a Rouault painting. This disc is highly recommended. *P.R.*

JOSHUA RIFKIN: ***Scott Joplin Piano Rags, Volume II.*** *Elite Syncopations; Eugenia (1905); Leola—Two-Step*; and five others. NONESUCH H 71264 $2.98.

Performance: **Historically valuable**
Recording: **Very good**

The popular rediscovery of the body of American musical literature called ragtime comes at a fortuitous, if not unexpected, time. It is music composed largely by blacks in an era (the turn of the century) when few avenues of serious aesthetic adventure were open for them; it is music that is completely written out and, therefore, easily playable by even the most classically oriented performer; and, let's face it, it is music that is simple, pleasant, melodic, and jauntily rhythmic. All these elements have had a favorable influence upon the music's revival.

Fine. Scott Joplin certainly deserves his due, posthumous though it may be. This second edition of Joplin rags performed by Joshua Rifkin examines some of the more obscure material—especially *Bethena—A Concert Waltz* and *Solace—A Mexican Serenade*. Rifkin's interpretations are impeccable, if a trifle lacking in visceral quality for this listener, and Joplin unquestionably comes across as a potentially gifted composer.

But, more to the point, one becomes aware of the limitations of the form, and of the frustrating dead end it represented for Joplin's gifts. What, one wonders, might he have accomplished, given the opportunities afforded a white composer? We will never know, of course, and the rags and the other lengthier, rag-inspired works—like the opera *Treemonisha*—are all we have. They're really not enough to do any more than indicate the unfulfilled promise of a pathetically incomplete artistic life. *Don H.*

ROD STEWART: ***Never a Dull Moment.*** Rod Stewart (vocals); various musicians. *True Blue; Lost Paraguayos; Mama You Been on My Mind*; and four others. MERCURY SRM 1 646 $5.98.

Performance: **Uneven Stewart**
Recording: **Very good**

There are, in fact, many dull moments here. Only that genuinely unique Stewart vocal timbre—hoarse, rough-and-ready—saves the album, as it has all of Stewart's past outings, with the Jeff Beck group, with Faces, and, as in this case, on his own. He is at his best, I think, as an interpretive performer, and does particularly well here with Dylan's *Mama You Been on My Mind* and Sam Cooke's *Twistin' the Night Away*. He is less effective with Jimi Hendrix's *Angel* and the four songs of his own that are included here. Nothing approaches the level of *Maggie May* from his last album, and it is surely to Stewart's credit that his remarkable voice, monochromatic though it may be, manages to sustain one's interest throughout the disc. I've got grave reservations about the superstar labels that have been attached to him lately, but he is, at the very least, one of England's top-level pop exports. *Don H.*

ABC

THREE DOG NIGHT
Tasty straight-ahead rock

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THREE DOG NIGHT: ***Seven Separate Fools.*** Three Dog Night (vocals and instrumentals). *Black and White; My Old Kentucky Home; Prelude to Morning; Pieces of April; Going in Circles; Chained; Tulsa Turnaround; In Bed; Freedom for the Stallion; The Writings on the Wall; Midnight Runaway.* ABC/DUNHILL DSD 50118 $4.98, ® M 85118 $6.98, © M 55118 $6.98.

Performance: **Superior**
Recording: **Excellent**

Highest marks to all concerned: as a sophisticated and tasty straight-ahead pop-rock group, Three Dog Night is at the moment unbeatable. Boy, are they *thorough*! When they do a tune, it stays done. Production, vocal and instrumental performance, and selection of songs are all first-rate. Randy Newman's adaptation of *My Old Kentucky Home* is a killer. *Prelude to Morning* is a lovely and evocative instrumental. *Tulsa Turnaround* opens with a parody of Leon Russell's vocal style and accent. That remarkable writer Allen Toussaint is represented by a fine tune, *Freedom for the Stallion*. There isn't a bum cut on the whole album. *J.V.*

SARAH VAUGHAN. Sarah Vaughan (vocals); orchestra, Michel Legrand arr. and cond. *The Summer Knows; Hands of Time; Pieces of Dreams; I Will Say Goodbye; His Eyes, Her Eyes*; and five others. MAINSTREAM MRL 361 $5.98, ® M 8361 $6.95, © M 5361 $6.95.

Performance: **Poor**
Recording: **Enormous**

This is precisely the sort of album that has always deprived Sarah Vaughan of the broad pop success she deserves. Her recent "comeback" album ("A Time in My Life") was a lovely job, with the rich voice beautifully embedded in straightforward arrangements by Bob Shad that allowed lyrics to be projected with clarity and intelligence, and an overall suppression of the infamous mannerisms that so often interfere with the impact of her performances. The only band on that disc with which I took issue in my review (June) was *Sweet Gingerbread Man*, in which she twisted and turned so much that the Legrand-Bergman song took on a claustrophobic air. I found it the kind of exercise in the rococo that justifies non-fan impatience with her.

Even fans, however, are going to have a hard time with this release, which contains ten Legrand-Bergman songs. It seems to have been made on the premise that *Sweet Gingerbread Man* was the high point of the previous release—which means ten tracks of bloated Legrand arrangements, and Miss Vaughan's voice swooping and sliding around lyrics so that they lose whatever wispy meaning they originally had, and her mannerisms pushed and spotlighted to the point of parody. Legrand seems to have little, if any, feeling for the basic texture and communicativeness of Miss Vaughan's musical gifts. So he has her doing a series of high-style tricks, which may be fun to listen to in the recording booth but make for listening of the most wearisome kind. The whole effort is a gigantic, overinflated musical dirigible of the kind that has more and more become a Legrand trademark. As for Miss Vaughan, I'm afraid she has fallen back into listening to herself rather than encouraging *us* to listen to her. *P.R.*

WISHBONE ASH: ***Argus.*** Wishbone Ash (vocals and instrumentals). *Time Was; Sometime World; Blowin' Free; The King Will Come; Warrior; Throw Down the Sword.* DECCA DL 75347 $4.98.

Performance: **Pleasing**
Recording: **Very good**

In the record business, "programming" means the sequence of cuts on an album; the first side of an album is supposed to be the strongest. In the old days the labels used to do the programming; nowadays it's most often done by the album producer or the artist (who are sometimes the same). It doesn't always work to the artist's best advantage.

Wishbone Ash is a case in point. All the best material and the best performances are on side two of "Argus." The group is basically English folk-rockers and has some interesting melodic and harmonic ideas, but you wouldn't guess it from side one. The album's

(Continued on page 96)

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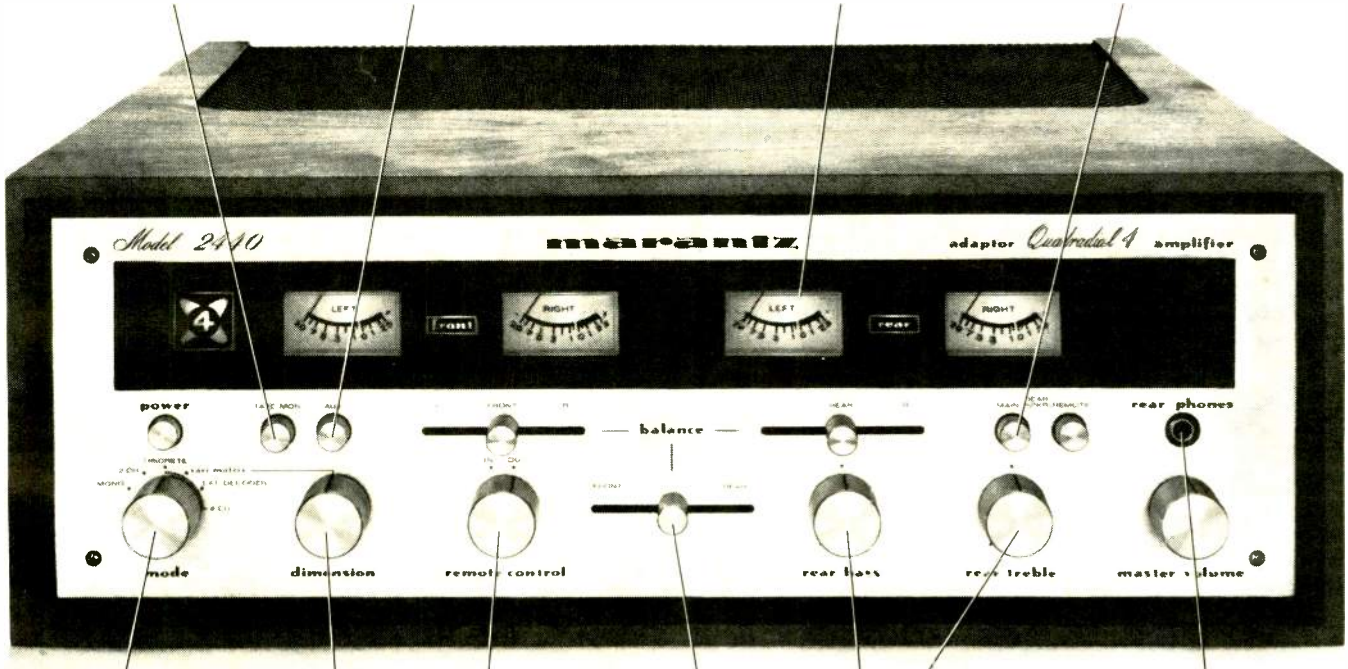

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good enough to own but if you get it, make like a disc jockey and "flip" it, starting with side two. And tell 'em Groucho sent you.

J.V.

FRANK ZAPPA: ***Waka/Jawaka—Hot Rats.*** Frank Zappa (guitar, percussion); Aynsley Dunbar (drums); Sal Marquez (trumpets); Erroneous (bass); other musicians. *Big Swifty; Your Mouth; It Just Might Be a One-Shot Deal; Waka/Jawaka.* REPRISE-BIZARRE 2094 $5.98.

Performance: **Rambling**
Recording: **Very good**

When I was a kid I heard or read at least once a week that the big bands were coming back. Despite being only eight and a certified nongenius, I knew enough to keep saying "baloney." Now I hear or read once a week that jazz is coming back. I'm still saying "baloney." Here, however, and for what it's worth, is Frank Zappa banking his sound off the left-field wall. Unlike the original "Hot Rats" album, which was tightly played, though progressive, rock, "Waka/Jawaka—Hot Rats" is loose, improvised jazz. As with rock, Zappa cannot decide whether to play it or make fun of it. But whereas that conflict produced an artistic standoff in rock, it produces a clear-cut victory for satire in the present case. *It Just Might Be a One-Shot Deal*, featuring a zany vocal in Russian accent, comes off nicely, but the more "serious" *Big Swifty* amounts to seventeen very tedious minutes. Zappa is perhaps sorting himself out. Let us hope he passes through this particular phase quickly.

N.C.

COLLECTIONS

DO NOT GO GENTLE. Tom Glazer (vocals and instrumentals). **Dylan Thomas-Tom Glazer:** *Do Not Go Gentle*; **A. E. Houseman-Tom Glazer:** *With Rue My Heart is Laden; We'll to the Woods No More; From Far, From Eve and Morning;* **Langston Hughes-Dick Weissman:** *Greyhound, Greyhound;* **Anon.-Tom Glazer:** *Western Wynde;* **Robert Burns-Burl Ives:** *Tibbie Dunbar;* **W. B. Yeats-Tom Glazer:** *The Brown Penny;* **Shakespeare-Stevens-Glazer:** *Sigh No More, Ladies;* **William Blake-Dan Fox:** *Memory Hither Come;* **Lord Byron-Richard Dyer-Bennett:** *A-Roving;* **Sappho-Tom Glazer:** *The Moon Has Set.* CMS 647 $5.99.

Performance: **Too light for its cargo**
Recording: **Good**

The idea of turning great poetry into song is practically as old and honorable as music itself. The works of Blake and Shakespeare in particular have attracted the talents of contemporary English and American composers—one thinks of the haunting songs Virgil Thomson, Benjamin Britten, and Ralph Vaughan Williams have fashioned from the lines of these poets.

Whether these lyrics can be dragged out of their anthologies and packed off to the egalitarian summer camp of folk music, however, is another matter. Tom Glazer has a pleasant, amiable voice and an honest way with a song that I have long admired, particularly in his programs for children. The ditty he has made out of the impassioned poetry of Dylan Thomas' "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night," however, sets a musical standard that is far too low for the words it treats, and the program only occasionally rises above that level. I was less embarrassed by the folksy Glazer approach to the airier lyrics of A. E. Houseman, and downright won over by his Elizabethan treatment of "Western Wynde," which has cajoled a pretty tune out of many a predecessor. There was validity, too, in his setting of Yeats' "The Brown Penny," with the cry of its hurt young lover that love is a "crooked thing." As for Sappho, Mr. Glazer would do well to steer clear of her aphorisms, which defy both the simplisms of his melodic line and the incongruous twang of his guitar.

Other composers whose works are heard on this program sometimes fare better—Dick Weissman, for instance, in his jaunty treatment of Langston Hughes' "Greyhound, Greyhound," and Richard Dyer-Bennett in his properly rueful approach to Byron. When the record was over, though, I was forced to conclude that it is folk lyrics that best belong with folk music.

P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

NOSTALGIA'S GREATEST HITS, VOL. 1. Rudy Vallee, Maurice Chevalier, Beatrice Lillie, Pola Negri, Ramon Navarro, Noel Coward, Tallulah Bankhead, Gloria Swanson, Charlotte Greenwood, Sophie Tucker, Walter Pidgeon, Elsa Lanchester, Yvonne De Carlo, and Stanley Holloway. STANYAN SR 10055 $5.98 (available by mail from Stanyan Records, P.O. Box 2783, Hollywood, Calif. 90028).

Performance: **Looking back with glee**
Recording: **Good of its kind**

Here they are, those golden memories of yesteryear—or, to many, those faded faces from the *Police Gazette* and *Flair*—reincarnated once more through the miracle of vinyl. This is a delightful package for collectors of trivia, containing a few surprises for even the most jaded. Tallulah Bankhead trills sweetly for tea dancing on a 1930 recording of *Don't Tell Him* in a manner so appealing as to dispel all doubts about her ability to warble with the best of them. Yvonne De Carlo does her thing with veils around a caliph's campfire in a 1951 recording of *I Love a Man*, and I am reminded how innocent everything was back then. Pola Negri making history with *Farewell My Gypsy Camp* (a song whose title has any number of possible meanings) will, I hope, shame all the amateur vamps on the scene today into retirement. And if there's anyone out there who never heard Charlotte Greenwood or saw her legs slice the air like scissors snapping at the proscenium, the recording of her great *It Happened in the Moonlight* is a loving tribute to her memory.

Chris Ellis has researched and assembled this spirited and nostalgic collection of the most cherished memories of vaudeville and show business with skill and dedication. In fact, everything about this funny, endearing, and delightful album seems to have been assembled with love. Except for Chevalier doing the Chevalier bit and Rudy Vallee doing whatever it was *he* did, there is wonder and magic in each band on this album. The recording quality is swell, considering the conditions under which many of these sides were originally recorded (some by the acoustic method, before talking pictures!). Mr. Ellis and Wade Alexander, who supervised the collection, handled these old records with tender loving care. They emerge sounding in fine condition, as thrilling and joyous today as they were then—I guess.

R.R.

JAZZ

JAY McSHANN ALL STARS: ***Going to Kansas City.*** Jay McShann (piano and vocals); Gus Johnson, Jr. (drums); Gene Ramey (bass); Buddy Tate and Julian Dash (tenor sax). *Doggin' Around; Hootie's Ignorant Oil; Blue and Sentimental; Hootie's in Hutchinson; Say Forward, I'll March; Four Day Rider; Moten Swing.* MASTER JAZZ RECORDINGS MJR 8113 $5.98.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Very good**

Gathered here are veterans of Kansas City jazz and its attendant bands of the Thirties and Forties, reunited for a relaxed quickie session. Since most of the guys are locals who do not play outside a limited area, there's no pressure on this record. Nobody is out to prove anything or be a star or get written up in obscure jazz journals. They have all been through the music and the music's satellite moons of hoopla, critical brow-furrowing, *et al.* So what happens? Some very pleasant music, much of which we've heard before, and probably played originally by these guys and their pals. Nobody tries to hit you over the head here, but nobody gives you a hot foot either.

The tunes are taken from the Basie, Benny Moten, and earlier McShann repertoire of the Thirties and Forties. *Blue and Sentimental* is the best cut on the album and a perfect example of how a jazz ballad ought to be played. There is a wonderful clarinet entrance by either Buddy Tate or Julian Dash (liner notes don't say) on the tune, harking back to that perfect fellow Barney Bigard when he was Ellington's clarinet. This album is Kansas City jazz, as recalled by the men who originally made it. Like all "local" jazz (New Orleans, white Chicago), it is confident as only a local thing can be. That has its virtues and drawbacks. Knowing their own world, such local musicians apparently don't care much what the rest of the world thinks. That may be a legitimate attitude but, truthfully, it produced a lot more exciting results thirty years ago than it does today. Still, this is an absolutely good-natured album that will never, never bite you.

J.V.

GERRY MULLIGAN: ***The Age of Steam.*** Gerry Mulligan (baritone and soprano saxes); various other musicians. *One to Ten in Ohio; K-4 Pacific; Grand Tour; Over the Hill and Out of the Woods*; and four others. A&M SP 3036 $5.98.

Performance: **Mulligan discovers rock**
Recording: **Very good**

Well, it's nice to have Mulligan back again recording on his own after seven years of intermittent activity as a film composer and occasional sideman for other people's groups. He hasn't changed much. The good humor, the *joie de vivre*, the extraordinary ability to

impose his unique musical personality upon the music of the day—it's all here.

Mulligan was one of the first musicians to read the popular potential in bebop in the early Fifties, he was an early adherent of bossa-nova jazz, and this time—although he's a bit later than usual—he has found a way to blend the rhythms of rock into his pieces. Some of the stuff goes on too long—an old bad habit of Mulligan's—but mostly it's lighthearted and pleasant. Mulligan's quick ear for commerciality has uncovered what sounds like a remarkable generic connection between cool jazz and cool rock. Could it be the start of a new trend? Hmmm. *Don H.*

COLLECTIONS

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHICAGO AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT A BLUES BAND. Sunnyland Slim, J. T. Brown, Morris Pejoe, Jo Jo Williams, Eddie Clearwater, Harmonica George. *Recession Blues; Everything's Gonna Be All Right* (Slim); *WOPA Jingle; I Want to Go Home to My Baby; Give Her Plenty Money to Spend* (Brown); *I Don't Know Baby; A-Minor Cha Cha; Hillbilly Blues* (Clearwater); *All Pretty Women; Rock & Roll Can Save Your Soul* (Williams); *You Gone Away; She Walked Right In* (Pejoe); *Sad and Blue; Sputnik Music* (George). DELMARK 624 $5.98.

Performance: **Good to great**
Recording: **Atmospheric**

If I'm right, this is the label owned by the guy who used to own Seymour's Jazz Record Shop on North Wabash Avenue in Chicago, a great place with an incredible stock of original and post-1945 78-rpm records. It's where I once paid a dollar to buy an original copy of Bessie Smith's first record, on which she was billed as a "comedienne."

This album is a collection of singles by various Chicago artists from the Atomic-H label, owned by a preacher who also holds a patent on a rocket. The artists sell to a select audience which already knows them; there's no attempt at national distribution. These are guys who play dance gigs at West Side and South Side bars in Chicago, so most of the music is raw Saturday-night stuff. That can be great stuff too, and here it sometimes is.

Sunnyland Slim has two cuts; *Recession Blues* is really fine, but I wish it included more of his wild, delightfully disorganized piano. J. T. Brown's *I Want to Go Home to My Baby* is a gentle, hold-back blues based on a gospel tune, the name of which I can't remember, and it is great to hear him do the radio station WOPA jingle for Big Bill Hill's show (whatever happened to Richard Stamms, "the Crown Prince of All the Disk-uh Jockeeeeehs"?). Jo Jo Williams, Morris Pejoe, and Harmonica George are all right, but not much more than that. For me, the real find is Eddie Clearwater, whom I had never heard before. He owes a lot of his guitar to his idol Chuck Berry, but he's not a slavish imitator. His voice is clear and fine, kind of lay-back-and-do-right. His three cuts are the best on the album. *I Don't Know Baby* is a nice little blues ballad, close to pop, and *Hillbilly Blues* is a lot of fun. But the real killer is *A-Minor Cha Cha*. I would guess that the chord progression is taken from Ray Charles' recording of *Unchain My Heart*—but does it ever thump! You can just see the dancers. Run get this album quick. *J.V.*

Photo: Chrysalis Records

The cast, left to right: Chris Copping (organ), Mick Grabham (guitar), Alan Cartwright (bass), Keith Reid (words), Gary Brooker (vocals and piano), and B. J. Wilson (drums).

PROCOL HARUM

A retrospective look at the finest band in Christendom

By STEVE SIMELS

ONE OF THE many pleasures rock-and-roll affords is that of rooting for the underdog. The story is familiar: you get knocked out by an unknown or unpopular group, so you buy their infrequent albums with an almost religious fervor and make a nuisance of yourself by playing the B side of one of their flop singles for all your friends who really only want to hear Neil Young for the 800th time. If you're a real zealot, you also put out a fanzine devoted to your idol's career (or lack of one) and write nasty letters to *Rolling Stone*. When the group finally clicks, you smile your best I-told-you-so smile. If, instead, they fade unheralded, you wipe your nose, mutter "ahead of their time" under your breath, and feel sensitive. A wonderful game, because you can't lose.

Just about every real rock fan of my acquaintance has at least one such mania to his credit. Myself, I used to conduct lonely vigils at record stores for Kinks albums—this in the days when their sales were so uninspiring that Reprise was seriously considering dropping them altogether. Now, to the delight of RCA, their cult following has expanded to the point where they've become a viable commercial entity, and I figure my taste is an idea whose time has come.

More recently much the same has begun to happen to Procol Harum, another cult band that many of my critical confreres have been pulling for since 1967, but with a notable lack of success. Yet, as of this writing, the group's sixth album (seventh, if you count their released-only-in-England greatest hits collection), "Live in Concert with the Edmonton Symphony," is in *Billboard*'s Top Ten, the first such achievement in their history, and *Conquistador*, the single excerpted from it, is doing similarly boffo biz. This radical reversal of the band's fortunes is especially odd in the face of the current trends toward anti-intellectualism (now manifesting itself in the rock press) and extravagant theatricality (now being demonstrated by the likes of Alice Cooper, David Bowie, and, most stunningly, in the last Rolling Stones tour).

The Procols, image-wise, have always tended toward invisibility. Their act, such as it is, is limited to an occasional one-liner from pianist Gary Brooker, and what little glamour surrounds them stems from the compulsive morbidity of lyricist Keith Reid, about whom fans play a little guessing game: is he as screwed up personally as his work indicates, or is he not? I once did an interview with them during which Reid spent the whole time huddled in a corner babbling to himself, and this kind of behavior, while perhaps interesting in itself on a number of levels, is nevertheless not quite the stuff of which pop stars are made. And though, being British, they do possess a sort of built-in flash, by and large there is really nothing terribly impressive about them—except their music. But, despite an occasional demurrer from people who should know better (I think of Nik Cohn's brief dismissal of them as one-hit wonders in his *Rock from the Beginning*, or the remark by Robbie Robertson of the Band—with whom they're often and superficially compared—to the effect that everything they do "sounds vaguely like that Percy Sledge thing"), that music is as significant a body of work, in terms of emotional depth and all-around rock-and-roll smarts, as can be found in contemporary pop. For those of us who've been convinced of this all along, their metamorphosis into genuine headliners is, in many ways, a vindication. The question then becomes, where have they been all *your* life?

Procol Harum's recorded output is still relatively small (they've confined themselves pretty much to one album a year), and it divides itself handily, as a by-product of some complicated personnel juggling, into three distinct periods. For their first

few outings, the band was a fivesome starring the organ and piano of Matthew Fisher and Gary Brooker, the bass of David Knights, the guitar of Robin Trower, and the drums of the ubiquitous B. J. Wilson (not to be confused with B. J. Thomas). This lineup set the basic pattern for their work, with the compositional chores divided between Fisher, Brooker, and Trower. (It is interesting to note, parenthetically, that a good deal of the material from this early period remains a part of their performing repertoire.)

In 1969, David and Matthew departed, to be replaced by one Chris Copping, a tricky lad who could play Matthew's organ lines with one hand while negotiating a keyboard bass with the other. As a four-piecer, the band recorded "Home" and "Broken Barricades," and it became apparent that most of the weight had fallen on Robin. Whereas previously he had functioned almost exclusively as a solo voice, he now unleashed a scathing Hendrix-style attack that more than compensated for the reduction in manpower and began to gain him a measure of notoriety. We can, with some justification, label this the band's Blue Period.

Finally, last year, the inevitable happened: Robin, visions of superstardom dancing in his head, trotted off to form his own ensemble, and was promptly replaced by David Ball and a new full-time bassist named Alan Cartwright. Full circle, with their original instrumentation intact, it was this band that moved out to cut the live effort which has so unexpectedly propelled them into the public eye.

This convoluted game of musical chairs might well suggest that we have *several* Procol Harums to deal with, but, remarkably, the sense of continuity from record to record is very strong. This is not to say that they haven't experimented or grown (their later stuff, such as the forthcoming "Grand Hotel," is increasingly full of conscious attempts at non-mold material), but rather that a particular vision has guided the band since its inception. That vision, not surprisingly, is most formally exemplified by the music of their debut album, titled simply "Procol Harum." Procol was not the first to attempt the elusive fusion of rock and classical techniques, but they are still the only ones to have pulled it off, and never quite so effortlessly as they did in that seamless merger of Bach and Ray Charles. One recalls the similar attempts at fusing "serious" music with jazz—the Third Stream of Gunther Schuller and others—and more recently the work of such rock bands as the Nice and King Crimson. It's generally agreed that what resulted in all these cases was a basically sterile music in which the two styles never really meshed, but merely alternated with each other. Procol Harum never fell into this trap—largely, I think, because first and foremost they're rock-and-rollers, and they consequently adopted only those elements of classical music that are most compatible spiritually with those of rock, the harmonic language and the tight structure in particular. With this in mind, the quintessential Procol Harum track would have to be *Repent, Walpurgis*, a shattering instrumental from that first album in which, against a melancholy Bachian organ-and-piano background, Robin Trower's guitar screams out in the purest kind of rock-and-roll language. The juxtaposition is moving in the extreme.

The man who provides the words for Procol is the previously mentioned Keith Reid, who can, at his best, achieve as cunning a synthesis with seemingly divergent verbal traditions as the band can with its musical ones. His work is terribly literary in the academic sense (in some ways it is even more overtly "poetic" than that of Paul Simon), owing to a fondness for classical imagery and an almost Eliot-like feeling for modern life. And yet he's extremely funky, a rock poet demonstrably in the line that runs all the way back to Chuck Berry. He has often been compared to Dylan, and indeed there are times when his surrealistic narrative style recalls the Dylan of the early electric albums (as in *Ramblin' On*). But more often than not he's simply his own man. *Still There'll Be More*, one of the niftiest cuts from "Home," provides a good example of his approach. The song centers around a prototypical *macho* fantasy that has been common in rock since Bo Diddley's *Who Do You Love*, and it has roots in blues that are considerably older. But Reid's kind of skinny, and he's been to college, so it comes out like this:

I'll bathe my eyes in a river of salt
I'll grow myself right up to the sky
I'll sing in the forest and tear down the trees
Foul all the fountains and trample the leaves.

I'll blacken your Christmas
And piss on your door
You'll cry out for mercy
Still there'll be more . . .

and so on.

Overall, his viewpoint is unrelievedly pessimistic; in fact, his lyrics of late have been sicklied over with such an alarmingly graveyard cast that the band (which considers him an equal member, incidentally) reportedly postponed an album until he could turn out something a bit more upbeat. Practically speaking, this may have been a good idea; *Broken Barricades*, after all, was about the decline of Western civilization, an awfully tough act to follow. But I think they needn't have worried. Even at his gloomiest, he seems unable to avoid flashes of mordant wit and healthy self-mockery. And if his vision is a dark one, it is never trivial; if he has not been quite the Compleat and Perfect Songwriter, he has rarely been anything less than a very good one:

There's too many women, and not enough wine,
Too many poets, and not enough rhyme,
Too many glasses and not enough time.
Draw your own conclusions.

The next few steps for the band are obviously going to be crucial. Procol is now in the enviable position of coming off a hit album just as their record contract expires. They are, I'm sure, well aware of the power this gives them; a strongly supportive label (which is something they've never really had at their disposal) can be an important factor in their continuing to reach the mass audience that suddenly seems to have discovered them. And they are probably equally aware that the next album had better be damn good or there goes the ball game. Odds are, of course, that it will be: let us not forget that Procol boasts, in Gary and B. J., a vocalist and a drummer who are arguably among the most powerful in the business.

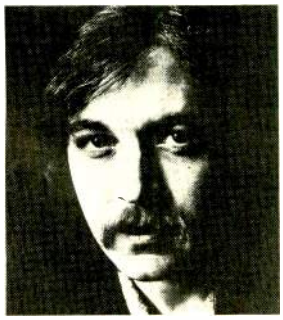
Meanwhile, the new band has had more than a year to get its chops in shape, and the evidence of the last tour is that they're playing, if possible, even better than ever. (A measure of that can perhaps be gleaned from the most recent concert of theirs I attended, at which the Staten Island audience sat in stunned silence for a full *ten seconds* after an encore of *Repent*.) Nonetheless, Keith Reid is likely at this very moment to be off somewhere reading a lamb's entrails for confirmation.

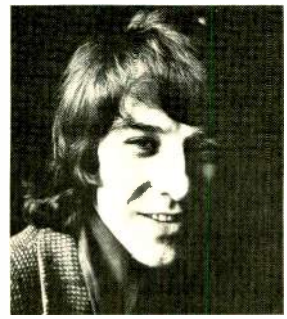
Jerry Garcia is fond of quoting the *I Ching* to the effect that perseverance pays, and though personally I find both book and guitarist unreliable, there's still a little grain of truth in there somewhere. God knows Procol Harum has persevered, and it looks like it just might begin to pay. For an old cultist like me, that's got to be cause for a couple of loud huzzas at the very least.

* * *

All that was written a couple of weeks ago and, as the alert reader will know, a great deal has gone down since then. God knows what may happen before this finally sees print (I am adding this postscript in early November), but as we go to press, this is the scoop: the band is now on the WB/Chrysalis label, A & M is reissuing the first album and "A Whiter Shade of Pale," and—most important—they've shuffled lead guitarists again. Ball has apparently pulled an Eric Clapton, quitting the now successful group to play the blues, and his replacement is Mick Grabham, formerly with an English country band called Cochise. How the personnel change will affect "Grand Hotel" is at this point anybody's guess, but I can report that in concert, at least, things are working out just fine. Stay tuned.

Three constants: Gary Brooker, Keith Reid, and B. J. Wilson





the Sansui Seven

Here is another wonder from Sansui. Who else but Sansui engineers could have achieved it? We've highlighted seven significant features of the many that will make this total-capability FM/AM Stereo Receiver the most wanted instrument of its kind. Actually there are more than 30, many of them Sansui exclusives, that set the SEVEN off from others. Yours for $459.95.

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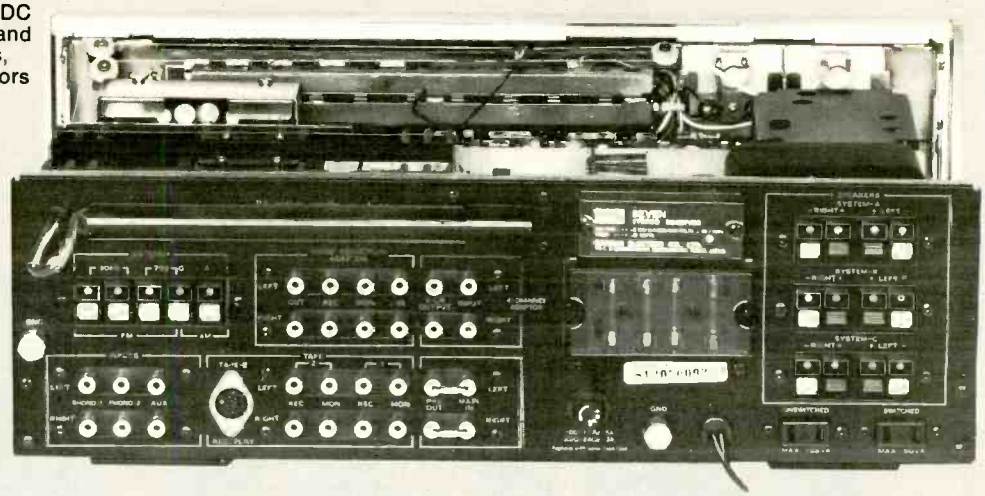
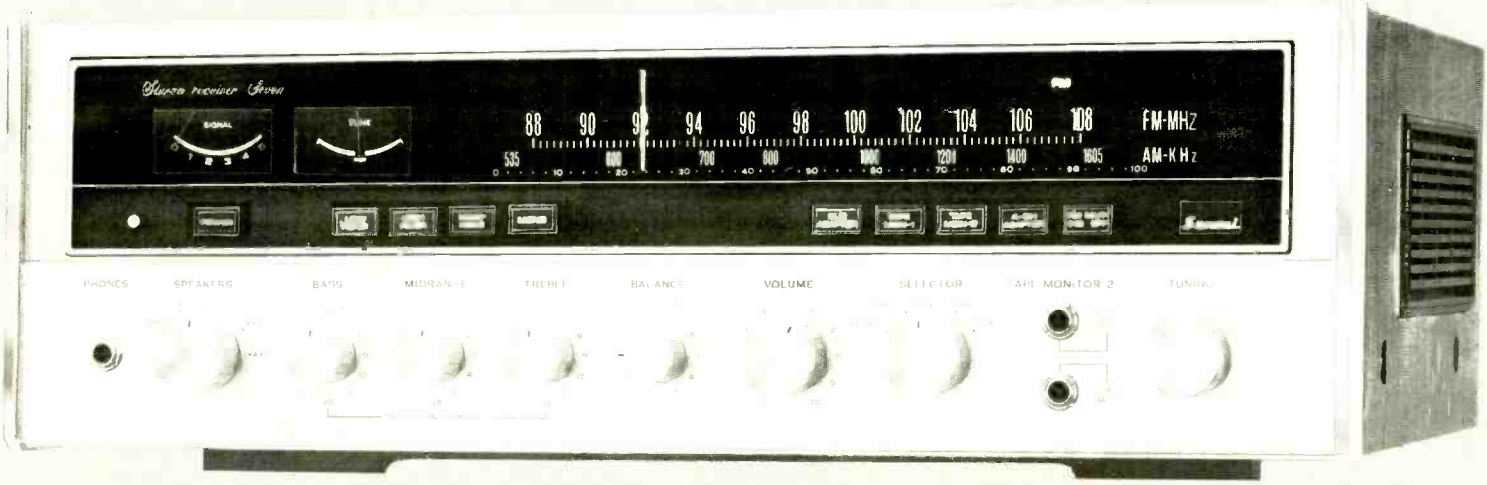


Sansui

and its seven wonders



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Continuous RMS	47/47 watts, 8 ohms
Power Bandwidth, IHF	10 to 50,000 Hz, 8 ohms
Frequency Response, Overall	15 to 40,000 Hz +1dB, −1.5 dB (1 watt)
Distortion, Overall	
Total Harmonic	below 0.3%, rated output
IM	below 0.3%, rated output
Hum and Noise, Overall (IHF)	80 dB (AUX input)

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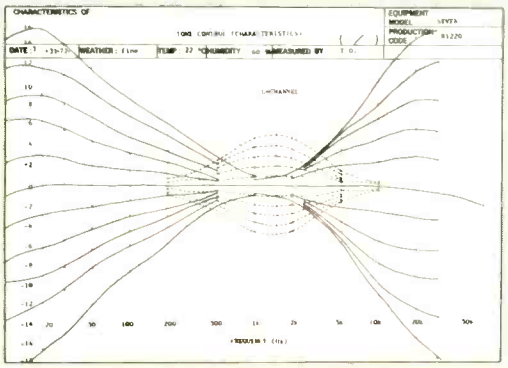

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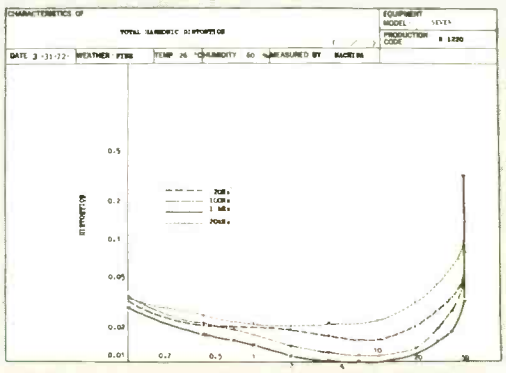

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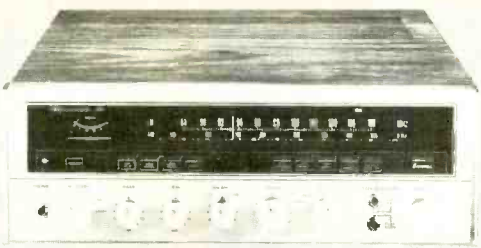

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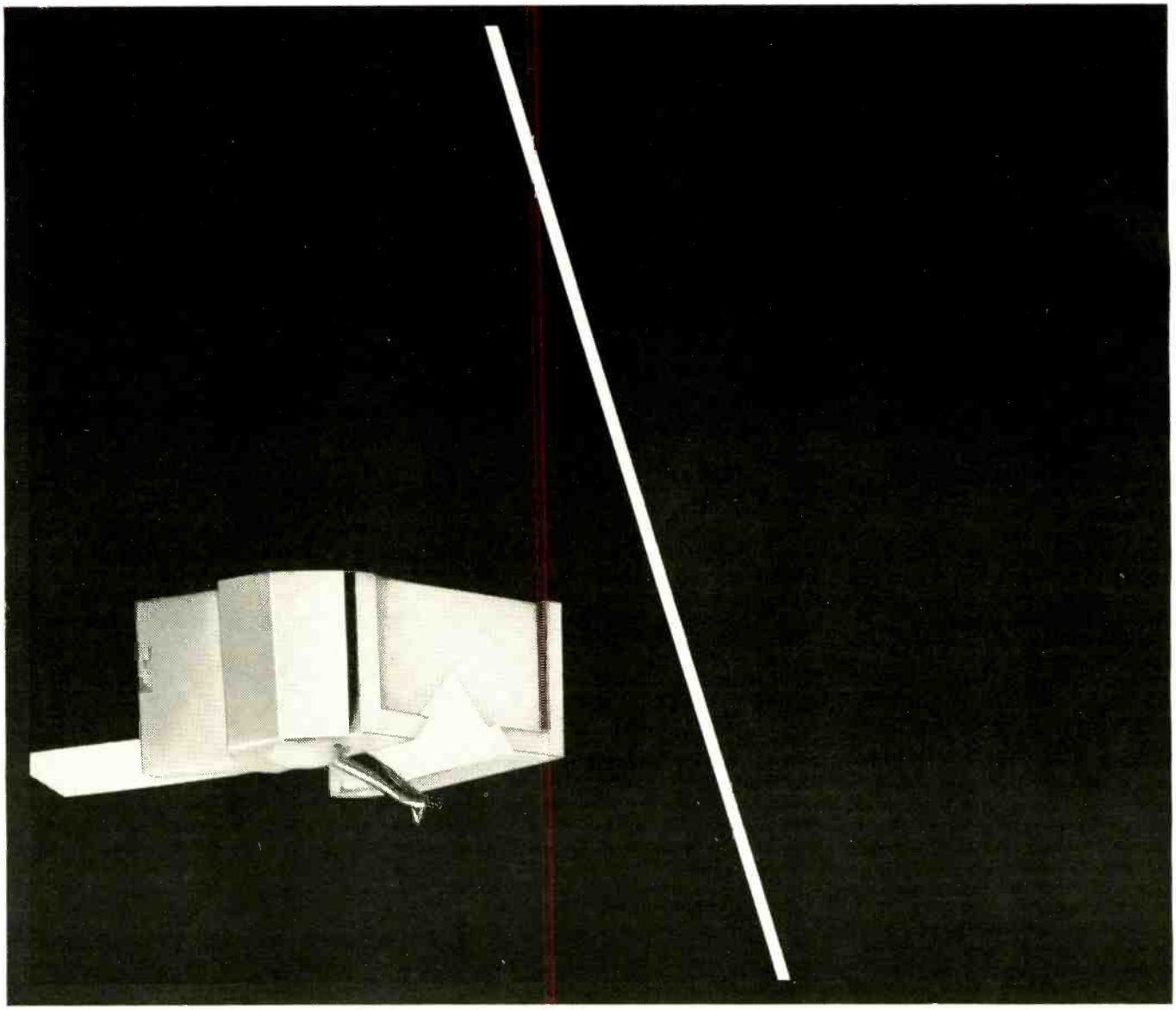

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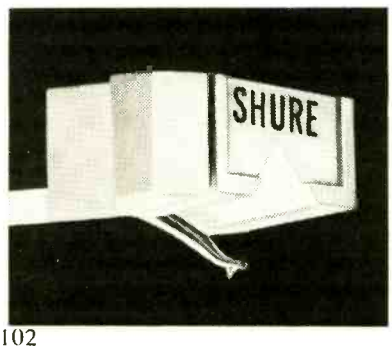

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CIRCLE NO. 48 ON READER SERVICE CARD

RECORD REVIEWS CLASSICAL

Reviewed by DAVID HALL • BERNARD JACOBSON • GEORGE JELLINEK • IGOR KIPNIS
PAUL KRESH • ERIC SALZMAN • LESTER TRIMBLE

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ARGENTO: ***Postcard from Morocco.*** Barbara Brandt (soprano), Lady with a "Cake Box"; Barry Busse (baritone), Man with a "Shoe Sample Kit"/Second Puppet; Edward (Michael) Foreman (bass), Man with a "Cornet Case"/Puppet Maker; Janis Hardy (mezzo-soprano), Lady with a "Hat Box"/Foreign Singer; Yale Marshall (lyric tenor), Man with Old Luggage/First Puppet/Operetta Singer; Sarita Roche (soprano), Lady with a Hand Mirror/Operetta Singer; Vern Sutton (tenor), Mr. Owen/Man with a Paint Box; Center Opera Company of Minnesota; orchestra, Philip Brunelle cond. DESTO DC 7137/8 two discs $11.96.

Performance: **Felicitous fantasy**
Recording: **Excellent**

American opera evidently is alive and well in Minneapolis, where the Center Opera of Minnesota has been putting on new indigenous works with small budgets and big courage in handsome, highly professional productions. One of the latest operas in their daring repertoire is *Postcard from Morocco*, the album of which I unwrapped rather gingerly, fearing it might contain some sort of musical plastic bomb—or worse, a dud. These fears, based on years of disappointment in contemporary opera, proved groundless. *Postcard* turned out to be a welcome arrival.

The time is 1914, and the scene is "like a memory, like an old postcard from a foreign land showing the railway station of Morocco or some place, hot and strange, like the interior of a glass-covered pavilion or spa." Waiting for the train is an assortment of real people and plaster ones. There are also puppets who behave like people—and the people frequently act like puppets. The travelers guard their suitcases, each of which contains some "secret or lack of secret," and on this thin thread John Donahue's diverting and ingenious text is spun. Surrealism is the most treacherous of styles, a method that over the years has amassed its own vocabulary of clichés, and the author has done wonders in steering clear of its pitfalls. His characters are full of surprises. There's the mirror lady who never travels without a handmirror: "you can see places . . . under things . . . behind, around . . . anywhere. . . ." There are ladies with cake boxes and hat boxes; a man with a kit of shoe samples, another with a cornet case; a gentleman who favors old luggage because it's least likely to be stolen; a chap with a paint box. As the travelers wait, they are entertained: by a puppet show; by a "foreign singer" who chants romantic gibberish that sounds like a cross between Arabic and French; by a band that plays a lopsided divertimento—a farrago of themes from Wagner. We get whiffs of the passengers' private lives, until Mr. Owen, the painter, makes the *gaffe* of revealing the contents not only of his luggage but of his life. This brings out all the cruelty, callousness, and self-preoccupation of his fellow voyagers, who show him no mercy. In the end, when the others have gone to take their train, Mr. Owen stays behind to join the puppets and board their ship for some doomed voyage of the imagination, and to wait, endlessly, like Wagner's Flying Dutchman, for kindness to lift the curse on him.

Around this strange and always entertaining book, composer Dominick Argento has woven a score as oblique and mocking as the dialogue, rich in allusions—like Walton's *Façade*—to the empty mannerisms of tired musical styles, from the idiotic sentimentalities of old French *chansons* to the stentorian pomposities of Wagnerian bandstand medleys. He fashions a fresh sort of magic out of curious bits and tatters—a stint of *sprechstimme* in the style of Schoenberg; recitative that can cloy like Menotti's, but deliberately, for wry effect; strains that place a spell of pre-World War I Impressionist languor over the scene, parodying Ravel. Yet in the unexpected emotional passages that bring the seemingly desultory action to a head, Argento speaks out with admirable strength in a voice that is surely his own, and with surprising passion. His writing for voice is unusually satisfying, teetering on some wonderfully dangerous brink between *arioso* and aria, and he is especially adroit at composing contrapuntal passages for half-speaking, half-singing group ensembles.

Desto

DOMINICK ARGENTO
Admirable strength, surprising passion

The cast is entirely satisfactory, and equal to the strenuous demands of a score that requires each singer to tackle several roles. Among them, Vern Sutton as the man with the paint box stands out strikingly, but Barbara Brandt as the soprano lady with the cake box, Edward Foreman as the puppet maker and the man with the cornet case, baritone Barry Busse with the caseful of shoe samples, and Janis Hardy as the *chansonnière* are also worthy of special mention. Conductor Philip Brunelle has worked wonders in making his nine-man orchestra sound practically philharmonic. Technically, the recording is one of the best Desto has attempted. A complete text is supplied. *P.K.*

BACH, J. S.: ***Brandenburg Concertos (complete).*** Anthony Newman (harpsichord and cond.) and friends. COLUMBIA M2 31398 two discs $11.96.

Performance: **Extremely uneven**
Recording: **Fair**

Those who dip first into Concertos Nos. 1, 2, 3, or 6 in these performances by the young harpsichordist Anthony Newman and a group of two dozen chosen soloists may find the above capsule evaluation of the performance much too kind. I have bestowed it on the strength of the slow movement of the Fourth Concerto, which is exquisitely done, and of the rest of that work and the Fifth Concerto, which receive decent performances.

For the rest, devotees of Florence Foster Jenkinsiana and other nasty marginalia of musical history will be the only ones to enjoy this deplorable set. Apart from stylistic notions—some sound, others weird—for which Newman's epiphany as a brilliant Baroque

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The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

specialist and his subsequent descent into idiosyncrasy ought to have prepared us, the performances are marred by a musical waywardness that is relatively unexpected and a lack of technical discipline that recalls the worst efforts of the Telemann Society.

As it happens, Concerto No. 1 supplies more than enough instances to illustrate these points. Unless Newman is in possession of some musicological information unknown to me, his evening-out of all the horn triplets into groups of eighths and sixteenths is pure whimsy. The two horns are, moreover, so badly balanced that it takes close knowledge of the score and some effort of will just to *hear* the first part. The phrasing throughout is extraordinary for its Romantic fulsomeness, with nineteenth-century articulation underlined by vibrato as wide as *Parsifal* is long and perfectly innocent little cadences elevated to the status of portentous "plot points" by mannered hesitation. The minuet is much too slow and soupy, the entirely reasonable effort at embellishment in the trios is spoiled by being done exactly the same each time around, and the four measures marked *forte* in the *polacca* are actually played softer than the rest.

To cap it all, the intonation of several instruments is poor, and it becomes actively excruciating in places, such as the slow movement of the Sixth Concerto.

I cannot see how any responsible musician can have passed such a set for release. Harnoncourt on Telefunken continues to be my top recommendation, but almost *any* current version is preferable to this one. ***B.J.***

BACH, J. S.: *Italian Concerto (BWV 971); French Suite No. 6, in E Major (BWV 817); Fantasia in C Minor (BWV 906); English Suite No. 2, in A Minor (BWV 807).* Alicia de Larrocha (piano). LONDON CS 6748 $5.98.

Performance: **Expert and appealing**
Recording: **Good**

Alicia de Larrocha's is a discful of admirable Bach-on-the-Piano, a musicologically suspect genre of which I have been unabashedly fond ever since I became acquainted, in the Fifties, with Dinu Lipatti's celebrated performances (now on Odyssey 32 16 0320). Miss De Larrocha achieves nothing as exquisite as Lipatti's readings of the *Siciliana* from the E-flat Flute and Harpsichord Sonata or the Sarabande from the Partita in B-flat—only in the slow movement of the Italian Concerto does she suggest the yearning, moody poet that Lipatti's performances call up. But her more extroverted way pays compensating dividends: she is never very far from the dance in the English and French suites, and that is as it should be. Needless to say, these are not Baroque re-creations. Geoffrey Crankshaw's informed and informing liner notes—a really substantial asset to the album, though they could have used more careful editing—talk of "terrace dynamics" in the Italian Concerto, but Miss De Larrocha's dynamic shadings run the gamut from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*, with a pretty free use of *crescendo* and *diminuendo*. Yet she never overindulges in the piano's anachronistic capabilities. Her fingers are fleet, her use of the sustaining pedal is judicious and sparing, and her ornaments are conventional but skillfully executed. She knows, too, how to point up the contrapuntal tensions of these very linear works.

The recorded sound is clean and sweet, but slightly lacking in bite. A bass cut helps.

Robert S. Clark

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BARTÓK: *The Miraculous Mandarin; Dance Suite.* Schola Cantorum (in *Mandarin*); New York Philharmonic, Pierre Boulez cond. COLUMBIA M 31868 $5.98, © MT 31368 $6.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Excellent**

Bartók wrote only three stage pieces, all strange works from his most difficult and expressionistic period. *The Miraculous Mandarin* was written in 1919 between the end of World War I and subsequent political upheavals. This is a work of tremendous turmoil, but, in spite of the large orchestral apparatus—the most elaborate and striking that Bartók ever used—the conflicts are somehow internalized. The action passes as if in a dream, the music hovering over it, always anxious and traumatic. The Mandarin is the victim of a banal trap,

London Records

ALICIA DE LARROCHA
Extroverted Bach on the piano

but as long as his lust for the "hooker" remains unsatisfied, he cannot die. Only when she relents and takes him in her arms do his wounds bleed. This macabre *Liebestod*, once so shocking, now hard to take seriously, is accompanied by an extravagant, rambling, dissonant, *Sacre*-size score, as blood-curdling a piece of horror music as I know.

This is the full ballet score—not the shorter suite often heard—including Bartók's final extravagance, a wordless chorus for a few creepy bars near the end. All in all, this is about as satisfactory a version of this intense music as I know. Boulez cannot supply the dramatic structure of contrasts that is not there and the continuity of the music remains a moment-to-moment matter—but that is the nature of the piece. What he can supply is clarity and tremendous accentual and rhythmic articulation. Boulez's ability to clarify a complex score detracts from its power no more here than in *Sacre*. Indeed, in this case the music gains enormously from the sorting-out process.

In contrast to the pictorial and psychological "super-realism" of *The Miraculous Mandarin*—constantly near the edge of madness—the Dance Suite is stylized folk music. None of the elements of the Suite, written in 1923 to celebrate the anniversary of the union of Buda and Pest, is actual quotation. The Hungarian, Rumanian, and Eastern elements are the fruits of Bartók's intensive study of Eastern European music. He often used folk or folk-like material, of course, but in none of his other works is it so consistently and so well integrated as in the Dance Suite. There are five dances separated by a returning melody which is then woven into a finale with all the other principal dance tunes. This music is never coy or "jes'-folksy" but adds up to one of the composer's most satisfying works.

Although the pictorial or folk aspects of Bartók's music would seem to produce very little sympathetic resonance in Boulez, I find these eminently satisfactory realizations, with none of the "coldness" and "intellectualism" that are supposed to mar the performances of the New York Philharmonic's conductor. On the contrary, the rhythmic energy and impetus are tremendous. Boulez is particularly a master at shaping big and unpromising pieces for the recorded medium, and the Columbia engineers have also got it right. *E.S.*

BEETHOVEN: *Scottish, Irish, and Welsh Folk Song Arrangements* **(see Best of the Month, page 80)**

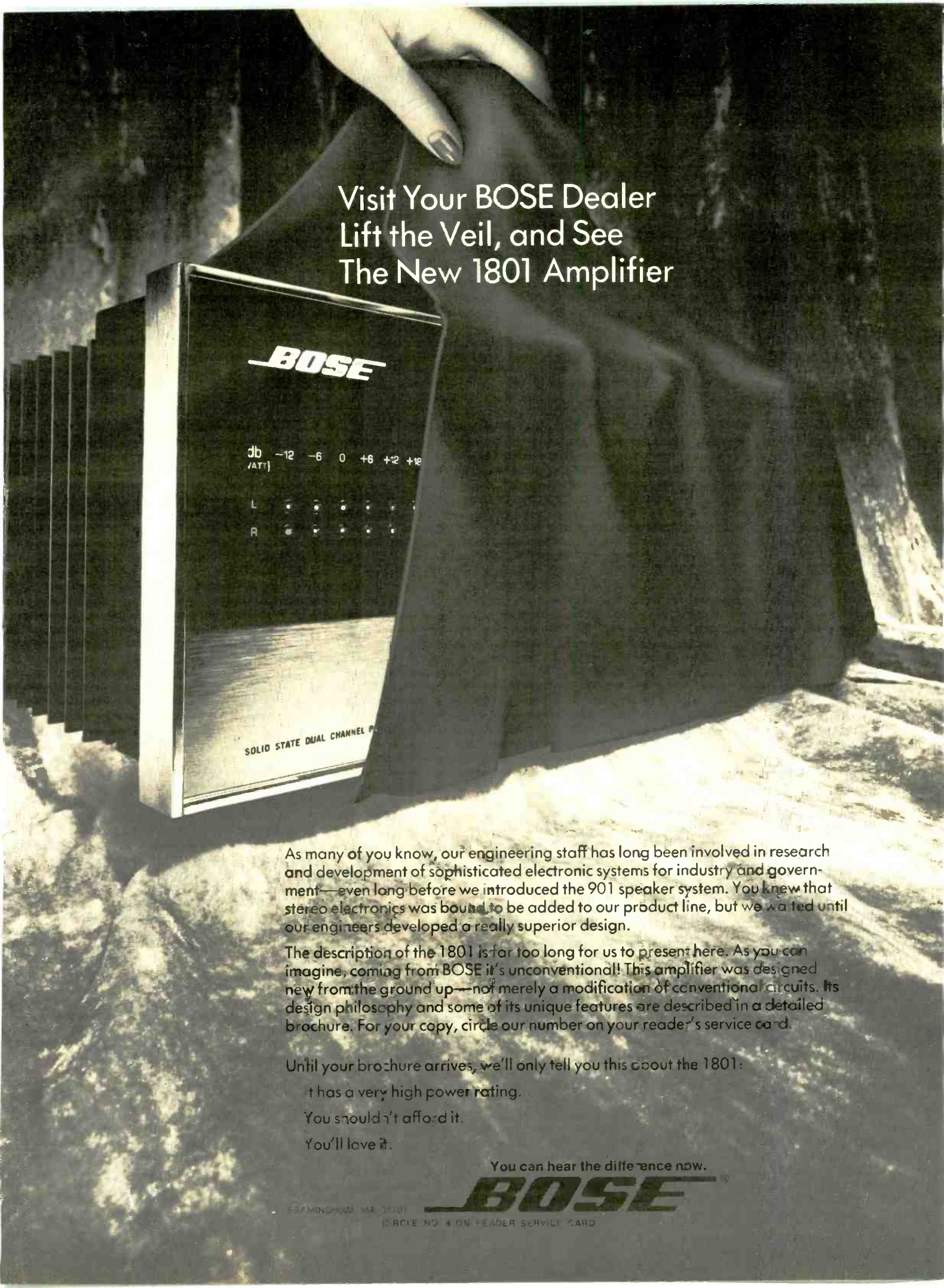
RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: *The Nine Symphonies. Overtures: Egmont; Coriolanus; The Creatures of Prometheus.* Gwyneth Jones (soprano); Tatiana Troyanos (alto); Jess Thomas (tenor); Karl Ridderbusch (bass); Concert Society of the Vienna State Opera Chorus (in Ninth Symphony); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2720 045 nine discs $36.00.

Performance: **Much to admire**
Recording: **Excellent**

With the exception of the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, which had been issued previously, this integral set of the Beethoven symphonies is brand new. The critics of one of STEREO REVIEW's opposite numbers in Germany have a great fondness for using the expression *"auf hohem Niveau"*—on a high level—to describe performances. That expression, I think, serves well here, too, in the case of Karl Böhm's conducting of this music—the performances seldom fall below a high level. Of course, as with every one of the sets of all the symphonies, some are better than others. Generally, it seems to take this conductor some time to get going. He is inclined to be very steady in tempo (if you don't care for this sort of thing, you use the word metronomic), allowing the pulse of the music to make its own points without manipulation. Sometimes, the architecture threatens to crumble when the tempo is too slow (certain sections of the finale of the Ninth, for example). Yet the cumulative drive of this approach, as in the finales of the Second, Fifth, and Seventh, can often make the heady appeal of Beethoven's punch impossible to resist. Thus I found myself, generally speaking, moving mentally from a state of moderate appreciation to genuine enthusiasm at climactic moments. There are no interpretive excesses here; everything moves sensibly and traditionally. The music's lyric strain is carefully controlled—it never becomes the easygoing *Gemütlichkeit* of an earlier generation of Romantic exponents. Above all, one is constantly aware of the music's inexorable,

(Continued on page 106)



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but never frenetic, rhythmic drive. And it is this attribute that firmly places these performances on that *"hohe Niveau."*

The Vienna Philharmonic makes a glorious sound, and the chorus and the soloists (with the exception of a vocally unradiant Jess Thomas) are on an equally high plane. The recording, moreover, is quite exceptional in its impact. By all means try it with your volume control up as high as you dare, for the dynamic level is extremely wide. In a few cases there are some balance peculiarities (the distant timpani in the Scherzo of the Ninth; the reticent bass drum, more felt than heard, at the martial-section tenor solo in the same symphony's finale), but overall the sonics are tremendously impressive. Note, incidentally, that the set takes nine discs, with three solidly played overtures thrown in for filler. Actually, it might have been possible to add a few more overtures, for several sides are quite short, and regrettably Böhm does not take any more repeats than the majority of conductors (*i.e.*, the first-movement repeat of No. 8 but not of No. 7). Aside from these small complaints, one should consider this set worthy competition in the complete-Beethoven-symphony market. *I.K.*

BELLINI: ***Il fervido desiderio; Bella Nice; Per pietà, bell'idol mio; L'abbandono; Almen se non poss'io; Malinconia, ninfa gentile.*** **DONIZETTI:** ***Me voglio fa 'na casa; Meine Liebe; A mezzanotte; Amore e morte; Eterno amore a fè.*** **ROSSINI:** ***La gita in gondola; La serenata; L'orgia.*** Lydia Marimpietri (soprano); Ugo Benelli (tenor); Enrico Fabbro (piano). LONDON STS 15164 $2.98.

Performance: **Elegant**
Recording: **Excellent**

There are many songs by Bellini, Donizetti, and Rossini, and it is pleasant to find them on recordings nowadays with increasing frequency. They are relatively simple songs with modest accompaniments, ranging through the usual amorous sentiments, with occasional drinking songs among them and, at times, contemplations of such morbid subjects as loneliness and death. For all their simplicity, however, these songs are not easy to sing. They demand pure tone, secure rhythm, facility with ornamentation, and solid musicality. Fortunately, these two young singers possess these qualities, particularly Benelli, who has proved himself in previous recordings (London's complete *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *La Cenerentola*) as a graceful and elegant stylist. The alternation of composers and artists in the sequence goes a long way toward overcoming the menace of sameness in repertoire of this kind. With two pleasing singers, an expert accompanist, and excellent sound, this is a very pleasant offering of charming and unpretentious music. *G.J.*

BRAHMS: ***Die schöne Magelone, Op. 33.*** Bernard Kruysen (baritone); Noel Lee (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1377 $2.99 (plus 65¢ handling charge, from Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10023).

Performance: **Good, with reservations**
Recording: **Good**

Bernard Kruysen is a Dutch baritone who seems equally at home in the German and French song literature. (A few years ago, he distinguished himself in a recorded recital of Poulenc songs.) He is a sensitive and cultivated artist, but his voice is rather limited in range and resonance. With artistic resourcefulness he succeeds in covering up certain deficiencies at times, but in the higher tessituras he must frequently resort to semi-crooned *mezza-voce*, or else round out phrases with less than their full measure. In the comfortable middle range of voice, he sings with a mellow warmth that lends particular effectiveness to songs in the subdued mood. The more dramatic utterances in this demanding cycle (*Verzweiflung*, for one) are delivered with noticeable strain. It is unfortunate for this release to follow the collaboration of Fischer-Dieskau and Richter (Angel S 36753), which is so clearly superior. For all his mannerisms, Fischer-Dieskau remains a far more compelling singer than Kruysen, and though Noel Lee is a very fine pianist, he cannot match the Russian artist's consistently probing and revelatory contributions. *G.J.*

SIR ADRIAN BOULT
Splendid performances of Elgar symphonies

BRAHMS: ***Sonata No. 1, in G Major*** **(see TARTINI)**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BRUCKNER: ***Symphony No. 5, in B-flat Major.*** Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, Bernard Haitink cond. PHILIPS 6700 055 two discs $13.96.

Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **Superb**

With only the First Symphony yet to come, it appears, from this reviewer's vantage point, that Bernard Haitink's recorded performances of the Bruckner symphonies will not only be the first wholly complete one—including not only the "Symphony No. 0" of 1864-1869, but also the 1878 version of No. 3 with the uncut finale. Thus far I have heard the Haitink readings of Nos. "0," 1, 3, and 9, and have found them all wholly satisfying in concept, performance, and recording.

In my opinion, Bruckner's Fifth Symphony presents an even greater test for a conductor's ability to synthesize architectonic and expressive substance than its equally Cylopean and later companion, No. 8 in C Minor. Besides its sheer length and its grandiosity of structure, culminating in the double fugue and chorale of the finale, No. 5 is more episodic in character, so that only with the greatest cunning and with supreme control over a virtuoso orchestra can a conductor prevent the Symphony from seeming tedious, fragmented, or both.

Whereas Eugen Jochum in his DGG recording has sought a way out of the dilemma by providing variety in the form of fluctuating tempos, Haitink has chosen the harder road: that of setting just tempos and sticking to them, and above all controlling the dynamic patterns throughout the first three movements so that the work emerges as the gigantic finale-oriented structure that Bruckner undoubtedly had in mind. Only Karl Böhm's pre-War 78's—the first complete recording—achieved a comparable success, for my taste. Thanks to marvelous orchestral playing, superb recorded sound, and a miraculous combination of elemental vitality and total control from the podium, Haitink's is, in my opinion, the first wholly successful stereo realization of the Bruckner Fifth, right up there with Georg Solti's of the Mahler Eighth. Brucknerians may rightly rejoice, and the unconverted may, through this recording, find reason to alter their views. *D.H.*

CHERUBINI: ***Symphony in D Major*** **(see WEBER)**

DONIZETTI: ***Songs*** **(see BELLINI)**

ELGAR: ***Symphony No. 1, in A-flat Major, Op. 55.*** London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1285 $2.99 (plus 65¢ handling charge from Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Excellent**

ELGAR: ***Symphony No. 2, in E-flat Major, Op. 63.*** London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1335 $2.99 (plus 65¢ handling charge from Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Excellent**

The symphonies of Sir Edward Elgar are on that long list of works from past eras which one never, never hears in public performance. That's not too hard to understand, for they call for a rather specialized taste. And beyond this, the two symphonies are of such different quality (the second being far less successful than the first) that it is easy to lump the two together and ignore them both. I can't say I'd welcome an Elgar festival on the concert stage, but is is certainly good to have the symphonies on records in an alternative version. Up to now, only Barbirolli's performances on Seraphim were available.

It would be impossible to give a more convincing explanation of the emotional nature of Elgar's symphonic music than Michael Kennedy does in his notes for the Symphony No. 1, "The clue to these great works is not in their Edwardian background but in Elgar's personality, in which there conflicted an extrovert who loved military ceremonial, the racecourse, Viewing Day at the Royal Academy, and influential friends, and an introvert filled with self-doubts, who was at heart lonely, suspicious, a prey to neurotic tendencies and the belief that he was 'not wanted', happy only in the solitude of crea-

(Continued on page 108)

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tive work in the heart of the Worcestershire countryside."

All this is in the music, particularly that of the Symphony No. 1, where it is more concisely stated than in the Second. One does not have to refer to these works as "post-Brahms" (though they are that), for there is a personality in them which reveals its own special Romantic, British qualities to whoever will give them a chance.

I have often been impressed with the notion that a performer of British music has to be aware of the frequent understatement in it, and prepared to cope with this rare element. In Elgar, however, I'm not sure this is needed. He was a bona-fide nineteenth-century composer, and his music needs the same kind of dramatization as does that of Wagner, Brahms, and the rest. Sir Adrian Boult's performances are splendid. But I have a suspicion that with that touch of the hyper-dramatic that Stokowski used to have and that Bernstein has still, the symphonies might have come forth even more excitingly than they do here. Unlike Vaughan Williams, who strikes me as a Britisher first and a Romantic second, Elgar is a nineteenth-century Romantic first, and only after that an Englishman.

The Musical Heritage Society has an interesting pair of records here, with fine sound as an important part of the bargain. For anyone curious about Elgar's symphonies, they will yield a lot of satisfaction. *L.T.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HANDEL: *Music for the Royal Fireworks (HW 47, pp. 100-127); Concerto in F Major for Four Horns, Two Oboes, Bassoon, and Strings (HW 47, pp. 72-79); Concerto in F Major for Two Horns, Two Oboes, Bassoon, and Strings (HW 47, pp. 2-15); Concerto in D Major for Two Trumpets, Four Horns, Timpani, Two Oboes, Bassoon, Strings, and Organ (HW 47, pp. 80-98).* Leslie Pearson (organ and harpsichord continuo); English Chamber Orchestra, Raymond Leppard cond. PHILIPS 6500 369 $6.98.

Performance: **Infectious and stylish**
Recording: **Splendid**

With this new recording of Handel's *Royal Fireworks Music* and related concertos, Raymond Leppard once again demonstrates his flair for style and his keen sense of programming. There is nothing unusual about the five movements Handel wrote in 1749 to help commemorate the signing of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle the previous October. And there have been some superb recorded performances of this music, which was intended to accompany a fireworks display in London's Green Park. There have been those using original instruments (Wenzinger on DGG Archive, for instance); renditions using modern wind, brass, and percussion instruments, in the combination considered to duplicate the scoring of the original performance (Mackerras on Vanguard); and the version combining winds and strings that Handel was believed to have made from the first score (Marriner on Argo). Leppard, using the combined strings-winds score, leads a performance of tremendous panâche, brilliance, and sense of occasion. There are some interesting scoring additions—snare drums in the overture, for instance—but these are extremely effective and justifiable stylistically. This is also the longest *Royal Fireworks* on records, not only because all the repeats are taken, but also because, quite in line with historical precedent, a number of the faster movements are repeated, each time with appropriately different instrumentation.

But there is yet another unusual aspect to this recording. As everyone knows, Handel used much of his material more than once, self-plagiarism not being considered at all unworthy during his time. Among Handel's orchestral works are two other concertos which make use of material contained in the overture to the *Royal Fireworks*; they are generally thought to have been written earlier, though for what purpose or occasion no one knows. One of these, a Concerto in D for two trumpets, four horns, two oboes, bassoon, timpani, strings, and organ continuo, was recorded during the Thirties by Sir Hamilton Harty in his own arrangement; later, Eugene Ormandy reorchestrated it. Hermann Scherchen recorded it, too, erroneously calling

GLENN GOULD
Master of eighteenth-century keyboard music

it a "Concerto for Two Trumpets." None of these versions showed a proper sense of style—double-dotting of the opening dotted-rhythms section and the like—and the organ, if one was used at all, did nothing to fill in the *ad libitum* middle movement to the concerto, intended for solo organ. Here for the first time we hear this predecessor of the *Royal Fireworks*, which in part uses the same themes and yet is sufficiently different to establish its identity as an entirely new piece. And we hear it in a superbly stylish performance, with a beautifully embellished keyboard setting of the *Siciliano* section of the *Royal Fireworks* as the *ad libitum* slow movement.

Leppard also performs what scholars consider the very first version of the *Royal Fireworks* material, an even earlier Concerto in F for four horns, two oboes, bassoon, strings, and continuo. This, to my knowledge, is a first recording, and in it one can hear not only the familiar opening overture but also some themes used in the D Major concerto. To fill out the disc, Leppard chooses a Concerto in F for two horns, two oboes, bassoon, and strings (recorded previously), consisting of an alternate version, probably written earlier, of an Allegro and the familiar *Alla Hornpipe* from the *Water Music*. If all this sounds like an exercise in musicological comparisons, be assured that the music can stand quite well on its own. It is *all* first-rate Handel, and the performances are infectious, wonderfully lively, and splendidly recorded. *I.K.*

HANDEL: *Suites for Harpsichord, Nos. 1-4.* Glenn Gould (harpsichord). COLUMBIA M 31512 two discs $5.98.

Performance: **Exceptional**
Recording: **A bit inflated**

I have always been fond of the Handel Suites — they are always near the top of the pile on my piano near the Viennese sonatas, the Bach Inventions, and the ragtime collection — but I don't think I have ever run across them in concert or in recorded performance before (there are numerous recordings, of course—I simply haven't heard them). Usually when one "possesses" certain music in a private sort of way, one's first public encounter with it is likely to be disappointing. In fact, I am often disappointed and annoyed with Glenn Gould's misplaced brilliance and willfulness. To all these hurdles, add the rather unattractive sound of his harpsichord registrations, the only-too-faithful big-sound recording (with the usual Glenn Gouldian humming carefully monitored by the Columbia engineers), as well as a noisy, crackling side two, and you have pretty much the complete list of debits.

Now comes the good part. In spite of everything, these are really remarkable performances. In eighteenth-century keyboard music, phrasing and articulation—the two can hardly be separated—are very nearly everything, and Gould is a master of them both. The sensitive and fluid shape of these readings—their melodic and rhythmic flow, elegant ornament, clarity of voicing and expressive arch—elevate the music, sometimes considered not quite first-rate, to a position among the most impressive productions of the eighteenth century.

In view of the powerful effect these performances make, I can forgive the rest—well, almost. *E.S.*

HOLST: *Lyric Movement* and other works **(see Collections—*English Music for Strongs*)**

SCOTT JOPLIN: *Piano Rags*, Volume II **(see Popular Reviews, page 94)**

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

KÁLMÁN: *Die Csárdásfürstin.* Anneliese Rothenberger and Olivera Miljakovic (sopranos); Nicolai Gedda and Willi Brokmeier (tenors); Wolfgang Annheisser (baritone); Bavarian State Opera Chorus; Graunke Symphony Orchestra, Willi Mattes cond. ODEON 29066/7 two discs $11.96.

KÁLMÁN: *Gräfin Mariza.* Anneliese Rothenberger, Olivera Miljakovic, and Edda Moser (sopranos); Nicolai Gedda and Willi Brokmeier (tenors); Kurt Böhme (bass), Bavarian State Opera Chorus; Graunke Symphony Orchestra, Willi Mattes cond. ODEON 29068/9 two discs $11.96.

Performance: **Topnotch singing**
Recording: **Excellent**

Continental operetta, never too comfortable on this side of the ocean and virtually extinct here nowadays, still flourishes in Europe. Even if I did not know this from personal experience, a steady flow of record releases provides the proof. We now have two Kálmán

operettas for the first time in "complete" form, offering on two discs each all the musical numbers, with as much of the spoken text retained as is necessary to provide some kind of continuity. Well, let me be a little more candid: the spoken dialog is not *really* necessary. Opera librettos of this kind are strictly formula-bound, with stock characters and plots that are about as suspenseful as the outcome of a Soviet election. There is no need to conceal the fact that the *music* is the thing here and in these two sets we get operetta music *in excelsis*.

Die Csárdásfürstin (1915) and *Gräfin Mariza* (1924) are the two best scores of Emmerich Kálmán, a true master of the genre. Not only are they full of enchanting music of endless variety and melodic invention, but they also reveal Kálmán as the total master of his craft, an inspired link between the Viennese and Hungarian styles, and an outstanding orchestrator as well. I have known this music all my life, but never have I heard so much of it so well sung. Anneliese Rothenberger and Nicolai Gedda shine at the top of their operatic form, and they are assisted by an outstanding group of supporting singers, all of front-rank operatic caliber.

I am, sorry to say, less happy with the work of conductor Mattes. He draws a rich sound from the orchestra and maintains a good ensemble, but some of his tempos are too slow, and there is not enough fire in the Hungarian melodies as he leads them. I also miss the gypsy band which both librettos call for; merely *accurate* playing by the orchestral strings is simply no substitute for real gypsy abandon.

These reservations aside, I welcome these beautifully recorded and elegantly packaged operettas, which represent a genre that is a contemporary (I hope *temporary*) Stateside casualty. Continental operetta *is* idealized, escapist entertainment. Its relevance to our times is nil and the literary merit of its librettos negligible. All (!) it has to offer is a wealth of imperishable melodies. This may not mean much to some people, but it does gladden *my* heart to rediscover such riches in the midst of the unmemorable musical debris attached to the "relevant" subjects of today's musical theater. *G.J.*

KRAFT: ***Concerto No. 3.*** Alexander Kouguell (cello); New Wind Quintet, Raymond Desroches (percussion). ***Statements and Commentaries.*** Dwight Peltzer (piano). ***Partita No. 3.*** New Wind Quintet. ***Trios and Interludes.*** Samuel Baron (flute); David Sackson (viola); Dwight Peltzer (piano). SERENUS SRS 12037 $6.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Excellent**

This first disc in the recorded edition of Leo Kraft's music, issued by Serenus in their new "in-lieu-of-printing" series, presents four serious compositions by a composer who has been on the faculty at Queens College for twenty-five years. Like most music by Americans who have sought their fortunes in the shady groves of Academe, it is polished and intelligent throughout. The spirit it expresses is predominantly lyrical, imbued with a broad humanism. Technically, there is no aspect of the composer's art in which Kraft is less than expert. Indeed, "knowingness" is a deeply felt quality of all these pieces. So is the strong desire to communicate ideas and feelings. If I have any reservations about them, it is that they are a bit *too* careful, a trifle *too* conscious of all the ingredients and all the potential pitfalls. My choice among these several works would be the Concerto No. 3 (1969) for cello, wind quintet, and percussion. It is the largest, the most various, and the most free-wheeling of the group. *L.T.*

MENDELSSOHN: ***Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64; Violin Concerto in D Minor (1822).*** Yehudi Menuhin (violin); London Symphony Orchestra, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos cond. ANGEL S 36850 $5.98.

Performance: **Menuhin special**
Recording: **Rich**

Menuhin and Mendelssohn! Once upon a time—it actually wasn't very long ago but it seems like it—there was a whole special world of magic, glamour, beauty, and culture that had to do with violins, concertos, prodigies, Carnegie Hall, and certain mythical figures with names like Elman, Heifetz, and Menuhin. And of course the Mendelssohn Concerto . . . always the Mendelssohn Concerto. It comes as something of a shock to realize that at Menuhin's famous debut in 1927, he played Beethoven. But Menuhin and Mendelssohn go together like bagels and lox. Menuhin recorded the Mendelssohn early on, and he has rerecorded it any number of times since. Here is the latest: an attractive English version, warm, unpressured, free in tempo, relaxed, confiding.

But *two* Mendelssohn Concertos? The D Minor Concerto for violin and string orchestra was written in 1822 when Mendelssohn was thirteen. The manuscript was offered to Menuhin in 1951 by a member of the Mendelssohn family, and it was subsequently edited and published by the violinist. Unfortunately, it is not a very good work. Somehow I had been led to expect more from the precocious young composer. It has its moments, but most of it is awkwardly put together. The truth is that, if it were even halfway successful music, it would have been in wide circulation long before now. The Mendelssohn is still just *the* Mendelssohn. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: ***Ballet Music for "Les petits riens." Overtures: La finta semplice (K. 51); Lucio Silla (K. 135); Il rè pastore (K. 208); Der Schauspieldirektor (K. 486).*** Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. ANGEL S 36869 $5.98.

Performance: ***Galant* and sparkling**
Recording: **Excellent**

Les petits riens, which Mozart wrote in Paris in 1778 for a ballet by his friend Jean Georges Noverre, has always been considered a minor bit of rococo fluff. In fact, among the overture and thirteen numbers that make up the published score, there are fully five which may have been written by contemporary French composers. The work, however, is not in the least without charm, and there are some movements that rank with the better sections of the serenades and divertimentos of the younger Mozart.

An even *younger* Mozart is heard in three of the four overtures on the second side, *La finta semplice*, *Lucio Silla*, and *Il rè pastore* all having been composed when he was between twelve and nineteen years of age. The *Impresario* Overture (K. 486), however, dates from 1786. None of these are over-

familiar, and seldom have they been performed on records as elegantly, and as full of sprightliness, as they are here. There is an excellent performance of *Les petits riens* available on London CS 6513 (coupled with the march and ballet music from *Idomeneo*) with Willi Boskovsky, but even a casual listener would be able to tell that Marriner's is the more sparkling and *galant* rendition. The latter has some interesting scoring touches as well: in the third number of the ballet, instead of the solo flute being echoed by a second, distant flute, the Angel recording utilizes a high recorder as the echo instrument. Then, too, there is a harpsichord playing discreet continuo throughout the disc, not always noticeable but often quite effective as a coloristic addition to the orchestral texture. In sum, this is not the most significant Mozart, but it is played with superb verve and sensitivity of phrasing. *I.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: ***Eine Kleine Nachtmusik (K. 525); Symphony No. 32, in G Major (K. 318); Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola (K. 364).*** Alan Loveday (violin); Stephen Shingles (viola, in K. 364); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. ARGO ZRG 679 $5.98.

Performance: **Exquisite**
Recording: **Lovely**

For years I have been waiting for a copy of K. 525 to review—they always seem to pass me by—so I could tell my favorite story about it. A friend of mine who used to work in a record store swears that a little old lady came into the shop one day to ask for a piece of music by Mozart that she had just heard on the radio. Upon being informed that Mozart wrote over six hundred works and that some more precise information would be necessary, she very hesitantly added, "Well, you may not believe this but the announcer said it was called Mozart's 'I'm inclined to knock music.'"

No, I'm not inclined to knock this music—or this recording either. Quite the contrary. It offers an extraordinary amount of pleasure in the form of a warm and highly poetic version of K. 364—much more satisfactory than some highly touted and illustrious versions—and an elegantly melodic "night music." Marriner's favorite melodic phrasing—an arch with a subtle crescendo in the middle and a falling away at the end of the phrase—is heard to particularly good advantage in K. 525. It gives the music a kind of breathing, sighing, pastoral quality that is just right. K. 318 is an oddity. It is called a symphony, but it obviously is not. It has a single movement—a big *allegro*, interrupted by a long *andante*—and has the festive scoring of horns, trumpets, and drums in addition to the more common winds and strings. There are other peculiarities: the ambiguous opening, the unexpected *andante* in the original key, the truncated reprise, all of which somehow suggest the theater. It makes a nice, although hardly needed, extra.

The recorded sound is warm and full, but doesn't get in the way of the music or the attractive interpretations. I recommend this disc highly. *E.S.*

MOZART (arr. Harris): ***Suites from the Great Operas. The Abduction from the Seraglio:*** *Overture; Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln; Welche Wonne, welche Lust; Vivat Bacchus, Bacchus lebe; Ha! wie will ich triumphieren.* ***Don Giovanni:*** *Madamina: Là ci darem la mano; Menuetto; Il mio tesoro.* ***The Marriage of Figaro:*** *Se vuol ballare; Non più andrai; Voi che sapete; Dove sono.* ***The Magic Flute:*** *Der Volgelfänger bin ich ja; Bei Männern; Ach, ich fühl's; Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen.* Members of the London Symphonic Band, John Snashall cond. COLUMBIA M 31310 $5.98.

Performance: **Well done, but why?**
Recording: **Good**

There is something attractive, if only in a nostalgic way, about a band playing music in a park. There is also a practical aspect to it, knowing what weather can do to strings. In 1967, a Mr. Bernard Harris founded the London Symphonic Band, forty-six musicians drawn from well-known London orchestras. Being neither a military band nor a symphony orchestra, the players, relying on woodwind and brass instruments, with a double-bass and a harp for glissando effects, make up a unique group. They play popular classics and show tunes, but they also have their serious side, as was reflected in their first record for Columbia called "Bach for Band." This time around, they have taken their cue from a letter Mozart wrote to his father describing a suite he was writing for wind instruments, drawn from his opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. With this noble precedent as a pretext, they go on to play arrangements by Arthur Harris of selections from four Mozart operas, two German, two Italian—but who's counting? Let's face it: after a while, one selection for band begins to sound much like another. It's all very well for an outdoor diversion on a sunny summer afternoon, but indoors one begins to yearn for the sweet sound of a violin or, better still, a human voice in all these eminently vocal operatic passages. *P.K.*

MOZART (arr. and orch. Smith): ***Excerpts from the "London Notebook": Contradanses in F Major (1766, no K. no.; K. 15h & x); Divertimento in C Major (K. 15b, a, & f); Divertimento in G Minor (K. 15p, q, & r); Divertimento in D Major (K. 15o, bb, l, ik, & d); Two Contredanses (K. 15e & z); Divertimento in F Major (K. 15t, u, & v); Divertimento in B-flat Major (K. 15ii, ll, pp, qq, mm, & gg); Divertimento in E-flat Major (K. 15kk, dd, cc, & ff).*** Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. PHILIPS 6500 367 $6.98.

Performance: **Ebullient**
Recording: **Superior**

In 1764 Leopold Mozart and his son and daughter traveled to England, where they intended to display their talents before royalty and the musically inclined public. Early in the tour, Leopold fell ill and recuperated for some weeks in Chelsea. During this period, the eight-year-old Wolfgang busied himself by composing forty-three little keyboard pieces (K. 15a through 15qq), which were not published until early this century as the "London Notebook." On the premise that a great deal of the young boy's fairly simple (albeit highly precocious) writing was not nearly as suited for keyboard as for orchestra (there are some awkward intervals, and there is a certain short-score sketchiness to the music), Philips producer Erik Smith has arranged and orchestrated three-quarters of these brief pieces plus one other short dance, combining movements in the same key into divertimento-like suites

(Continued on page 112)

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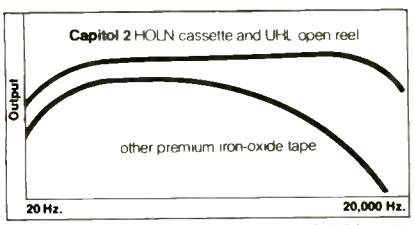

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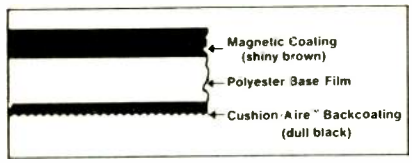

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or groupings of *contradanses*. He has fleshed out the writing by adding inner parts (oboe melodies, for example), but adhered basically to the young Mozart's original melodies (already incredibly fecund) and harmony, orchestrating the music as Mozart himself might have done in a slightly later period. To be sure, the music is hardly great, but the combination of highly skillful and affectionate orchestration and a scintillating performance by Marriner's superb chamber orchestra makes this a charming program to hear. The end result, an album impeccably recorded and entitled "Mozart in Chelsea," can stand on its own with recordings of the divertimentos and serenades of a much later time in Mozart's career. *I.K.*

OFFENBACH: ***The Tales of Hoffmann*** **(see Best of the Month, page 79)**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PERGOLESI: ***Stabat Mater.*** Mirella Freni (soprano); Teresa Berganza (mezzo-soprano); members of the Scarlatti Orchestra of Naples, Ettore Gracis cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIVE 2533 114 $6.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Excellent**

Pergolesi's subdued little masterpiece gets a model performance here. Two lovely vocal timbres form a beautiful blend, and the singing combines involvement and restraint in just the right proportion. The overall approach is stylistically correct: there is no attempt to overdramatize or over-Romanticize the piece, operatic mannerisms are kept in check, and embellishments are observed with care and accuracy. Berganza's skill in florid music has prepared me for her marvelous performance here, but Freni—better known as a Puccini interpreter—performs on the same high level of musicianship.

The new disc's only serious competition is London OS 25921, with Judith Raskin and Maureen Lehane as the fine soloists and Franco Caracciolo as a conductor who favors a lighter touch, somewhat brisker tempos, and occasionally a more dramatic inflection. But I find the slightly broader approach of Gracis equally convincing, and the superb singing of Miss Freni and especially Miss Berganza tips the balance in Archive's favor. *G.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RAMEAU: ***Hippolyte et Aricie (highlights).*** Angela Hickey (soprano), Aricie; Robert Tear (tenor), Hippolyte; Sylvia Rhys-Thomas (soprano), High Priestess of Diana; Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano), Phèdre; John Shirley-Quirk (bass-baritone), Thésée; Gerald English (tenor), Tisiphone; Roger Stalman (bass), Pluton; Jill Gomez (soprano), Priestess and Huntress; Thurston Dart (harpsichord continuo); English Chamber Orchestra and St. Anthony Singers, Anthony Lewis cond. L'OISEAU-LYRE SOL 321 $5.98.

Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **Excellent**

Hippolyte et Aricie, Rameau's first opera, was written in 1733 and helped to launch the composer's theatrical career. The plot, adapted from Racine's *Phèdre*, has all the standard operatic ploys of the day: unrequited love (Phaedra for her stepson, Hippolytus), jealousy (Phaedra for Aricie, a priestess of Diana), underworld goings-on (Theseus traveling to Hell to talk to Pluto), hunting scenes, storms and monsters, and even a *Deus ex machina* Diana who rescues Hippolytus and brings him together finally with Aricie.

The score, a highly imaginative work full of color and effects, is a masterpiece, and if you didn't buy the complete recording of the opera with these performers when it was first issued in 1966 (L'Oiseau-Lyre SOL 286/7/8, three discs), I strongly recommend that you get it now—that, or try this expertly chosen sampler taken from that brilliant set as a starter. Those who believe that eighteenth-century French opera is a crashing stylized bore are in for a surprise. Much of the set's appeal, of course, is the very stylish singing by a first-rate cast that includes Janet Baker as a many-faceted Phaedra. The continuo work by the late Thurston Dart is delightful, as is also the convincing direction of all the performing forces by Anthony Lewis. The sonics are excellent, and the jacket includes not only annotations but a text insert. *I.K.*

RAYKI: ***Elegiac Variations; Lamentation for Orchestra.*** **RIEGGER:** ***Dichotomy.*** Louisville Orchestra. Jorge Mester cond. LOUISVILLE FIRST EDITION RECORDS LS 715 $5.95.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Excellent**

Since the issuing company did go to the trouble of providing liner notes for this Louisville Orchestra recording, it's a pity they didn't bother to say one word about either the music or the composers presented. So, in the absence of any such information, I'll pass on my listening-based observations and conjectures.

György Rayki's *Elegiac Variations* and his *Lamentation for Orchestra* sound like the work of a very young man—perhaps not yet past his student days. They are pleasingly melodic (you can spot the sources of some of his melodies), opulently orchestrated, but more than a bit naïve.

Wallingford Riegger's *Dichotomy* is, of course, the work of a composer who was extremely experienced, and conductor Jorge Mester does a splendid job of revealing all the voluptuousness of color and texture implicit in the score. Mester's "sound ideal" is a rich one. He has a capacity for making the orchestra ring forth with a seductive overall resonance while articulating details with brisk, silvery precision. This works to fine advantage in the Riegger piece. I can't say I care for everything the Louisville Orchestra chooses to record these days, but Mester has certainly stabilized the ensemble at a handsome, vivacious level. *L.T.*

ROSSINI: ***Songs*** **(see BELLINI)**

TARTINI: ***Sonata in G Minor ("The Devil's Trill"); Sonata in G Minor ("Dido Abandoned").*** **BRAHMS:** ***Sonata No. 1, in G Major, Op. 78.*** David Oistrakh (violin); Frieda Bauer (piano). MELODIYA/ANGEL SR 40197 $5.98.

Performance: **Brahms superb**
Recording: **Lush**

Someone obviously expects the "*Trillo del Diavolo*" to continue to work its magic. Tartini is placed on side one, and we get a fine if violin-less medieval Beelzebub for a jacket cover. However, the virtues of this disc lie not with the Devil and his trills, but in the very different world of Brahms. Oistrakh is simply

(Continued on page 114)

It began as a simple idea.

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a great interpreter of this music, and a perfect partner to the excellent Frieda Bauer.

Tartini is another question entirely. The playing is beautiful and not at all diabolical. There is no stylistic authenticity at all: no repeats, no ornaments, no long appoggiaturas, no harpsichord, no Baroque swing, almost nothing in the way of "performance practice." If you're not going to practice the musicological virtues you might as well do up the whole Paganini bit. But Oistrakh, with all his gorgeous phrasing and impeccable tone and articulation, is not really that kind of showman; his tempos are deliberate, and his style rather heavy for this flamboyant music. No, Brahms is his métier and his meat; this is a rich, thoughtful, introspective, formful, firm, poetic Op. 78, worth the price of the whole record. And there's rich, attractive recorded sound.

E.S.

TCHAIKOVSKY: ***Symphony No. 4, in F Minor, Op. 36.*** Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL S 36884 $5.98, ® 8XS 36884 $6.98, © 4XS 36884 $6.98.

Performance: **Impassioned**
Recording: **Reverberant**

TCHAIKOVSKY: ***Symphony No. 5, in E Minor, Op. 64.*** Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL S 36885 $5.98, ® 8XS 36885 $6.98, © 4XS 36885 $6.98.

TCHAIKOVSKY: ***Symphony No. 5, in E Minor, Op. 64.*** London Symphony Orchestra, Claudio Abbado cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530198 $6.98, © 3300217 $6.98, ® 89443 $6.98.

Performance: **Karajan hot, Abbado crisp**
Recording: **K. reverberant, A. close-in**

TCHAIKOVSKY: ***Symphony No. 6, in B Minor, Op. 74 ("Pathétique").*** Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL S 36886 $5.98.

TCHAIKOVSKY: ***Symphony No. 6, in B Minor, Op. 74 ("Pathétique").*** London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1369 $2.99 (plus 65¢ handling charge, from Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Both eloquent**
Recording: **Karajan better**

My biases regarding the performance of Tchaikovsky, especially the last three symphonies, are strong ones. They can be summed up thus: play what's written in the score with rhythmic precision, a singing quality, maximum clarity of line and texture, and full justice to specified dynamics—and the emotion implicit in the music will take care of itself. There is no need to become fussy with phrasing and with individual episodes just to "hype up" the emotional impact—there's enough already in the music. This is why I still regard Toscanini's readings of the "*Pathétique*" and *Manfred* symphonies as exemplars of fine Tchaikovsky performance, and why Stokowski's readings of any of the last three symphonies all go beyond the pale for me.

Herbert von Karajan has had no lack of experience in recording the last Tchaikovsky symphonies, beginning with a reading (verging on the hysterical) of the Sixth with the Vienna Philharmonic in 1949, issued over here by Columbia. Numbers Four and Five with the Philharmonia came in 1954, then a stereo version of No. 4 with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1960. Between 1964 and 1967, DGG issued a complete Karajan series of the last three symphonies with the Berlin Philharmonic—all of them restudied, impressively disciplined performances, and well recorded. Now, with the current Karajan recording allegiance transferred to EMI-Angel, we have yet another Karajan traversal of the "big three." I find them neither as well disciplined in performance nor as well recorded as the DGG Berlin series.

The sonic problems are those that trouble the Angel Bruckner Fourth in Karajan's reading: excessive reverberation destroys the clarity of texture in the climactic passages of the end movements of Nos. 4 and 5 (No. 4 suffers especially in this regard), timpani being particularly troublesome. I feel much of the time, particularly upon direct comparison of the Angel and DGG pressings, that here I am hearing as much reverberant violin sonority as I am fundamental tone. Because of its longer melodic lines, the "*Pathétique*" suffers less. Karajan's readings of all three symphonies are, in general, "hotter" and more Mengelbergian than the DGG series, but it's the last-named I shall continue to hear with pleasure. Claudio Abbado takes a very different view of the Fifth Symphony than Karajan—never mind Stokowski. His reading is a virtual counterpart to the 1953 Dorati-Minneapolis Symphony performance—lean, clean, and in its own way very exciting, particularly in the final pages. I was interested, by the way, to note the difference in his and Karajan's treatment of the modulatory *pizzicato* chord progression in the slow movement that leads back to the string restatement of the opening horn melody: Karajan in both the DGG and Angel recordings arpeggiates these chords (not indicated in the score), whereas Abbado plays them precisely as written. The playing of the London Symphony under Abbado is brilliant in the extreme, and the recording rather close-miked, with occasional overemphasis on the brass, mostly in the finale.

One would not associate the seemingly reticent temperament of Sir Adrian Boult with effective readings of Tchaikovsky, though I do remember a good pre-War version of the Serenade for Strings by Boult and really spirited and brilliant performances of the *Marche slave* and *Capriccio italien*—all with the BBC Symphony, of which he was then chief conductor. The MHS issue of Boult's "*Pathétique*" reading dates, I think, from 1960, having been issued originally by Pye in England and by the Somerset/Stereo-Fidelity label over here. The reading is well controlled and in its own way impressively eloquent, but the recording's lack of refinement deprives the MHS disc of much of its value, save as a documentation of Sir Adrian's ideas. Comparison with the Karajan-Angel recording shows the MHS recording totally lacking any of the finer dynamic gradations (the opening emerges from my speakers *mezzo-piano* instead of *pianissimo*, as specified in the score); and the recording is no model of sonic cleanliness, even beside Karajan's Angel discs (not to mention DGG's). One final note: the Abbado Tchaikovsky Fifth came to me in both cassette and disc form. The cassette sound, like most DGG releases in this format, is above average for the medium, but the disc is still the better for effective presence and dynamic contrast.

D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHOENBERG: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 36: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 42.* Zvi Zeitlin (violin); Alfred Brendel (piano); Symphony Orchestra of the Bavarian Radio, Rafael Kubelik cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 257 $6.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Excellent**

Schoenberg always maintained that he was the heir of the Classical-Romantic tradition, and that, far from being a radical, he was the true traditionalist among modern composers. My favorite Schoenberg quotation is worth repeating: "My music is not avant-garde," he used to say, "only badly played."

Well, he's not badly played here. In fact, he is very well played, and the music sounds anything but avant-garde. Schoenberg's violin and piano concertos take their place with the concertos of the earlier Central European masters with whom the composer identified. It is ironic, therefore, that it is the modern, electronic medium of recording that serves Schoenberg so well. The concert hall, the traditional orchestra, and the traditional audience are not buying—not yet anyway.

Poor Schoenberg! When the American violinist Louis Krasner—who premiered both the Berg and Schoenberg concertos—was invited by Mitropoulos to record the Schoenberg for Columbia, the session time was squeezed out by racing the orchestra through Rimsky-Korsakov. After more than two and a half hours of waiting, Krasner had suddenly to leap up and dash through the most fiendishly difficult concerto ever written with the dog-tired orchestra men, and no retakes available. When Stokowski performed the Schoenberg Piano Concerto with Eduard Steuermann on a nationwide NBC radio broadcast, his contract was not renewed for the following season. Just the other day, the folks at Schwann took a poll of record collectors' least favorite composers and Schoenberg was the walk-away winner.

Schoenberg's two concertos are both attempts to produce large-scale, expressive, twelve-tone pieces in a clear, accessible—I almost said "popular"—vein. These works are actually melodic, motivic, straightforward rhythmically, fairly transparent in their orchestration, and, for Schoenberg, comparatively simple in form. They are highly expressive and even, in their Germanic way, lyrical.

The surprise here is the Piano Concerto, which is an extraordinarily gentle and even tender work, delicately scored, pastoral and lyric in feeling and almost playful in its invention. I find it altogether a sympathetic work and recommended for the Schoenberg-shy. The more familiar Violin Concerto is a much more intense work and, like many of Schoenberg's large-scale compositions, is occasionally overwrought. Nevertheless, it is a rich piece of work, not so far removed from the Berg Concerto in its conjunction of the familiar and unfamiliar, the almost tonal with the atonal. Schoenberg's twelve-tone writing, here dominated by thirds, is so shaped into expressive phrase structures and traditional forms that tonal resolution always seems just around the corner.

No one should dive into this disc literally expecting Brahms. But these performers treat Schoenberg *like* Brahms, and that's exactly the way he should be treated. All told,

these are first-class performances and recordings which bring out the essential shape of the music with exceptional fidelity. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUMANN: ***Piano Sonata No. 3, in F Minor, Op. 14 (Concerto without Orchestra); Kreisleriana, Op. 16.*** Anton Kuerti (piano). LONDON STS 15255 $2.98.

Performance: **Highly satisfying**
Recording: **Very good**

SCHUMANN: ***Piano Sonata No. 3, in F Minor, Op. 14 (Concerto without Orchestra); Bunte Blätter, Op. 99, Nos. 1-11 and 13.*** Robert Silverman (piano). ORION ORS 7146 $5.98.

Performance: **Virile**
Recording: **Good**

Schumann piano-music buffs have a miniature feast in these two discs. We have not one but two readings of the F Minor Sonata, which has been out of Schwann since deletion of Byron Janis' Mercury recording of the 1960's, and a first-ever extended survey of the little-known *Bunte Blätter* (twelve out of the fourteen), plus a top-notch performance of the *Kreisleriana* with a bargain price tag.

The Vienna-born and Toronto-resident pianist Anton Kuerti, a Serkin pupil and Leventritt Award winner, has some fine Schubert and Beethoven performances to his credit on the Monitor label, but they are marred by indifferent tape-to-disc processing. Amends are made in this Canadian Broadcasting Corporation recording issued in London's Stereo Treasury series. The piano sound is warm and full-bodied, yet intimate in a way especially appropriate to Schumann's music. To both the *Kreisleriana* and to the larger-scale F Minor Sonata Kuerti brings just the right blend of impetuosity and heartfelt lyricism, all superbly disciplined in tempo relationships and dynamics.

Robert Silverman, Canadian-born and Milwaukee-resident, has already done a formidable program of Aaron Copland piano music for Orion. Not unexpectedly, his treatment of the F Minor Sonata is more extroverted and less impulsive in spirit than Kuerti's and his piano emerges from my speakers as considerably brighter and harder in tone. But it is his choice of repertoire for the overside that gives this disc its special value, for the Op. 99 *Bunte Blätter*, collected by the ailing Schumann in 1852 from pieces written in the late 1830's and early 1840's, have never been recorded before to any large extent (I do recall a pre-War 78-rpm disc on the Timely label of four of the pieces done by an unnamed pianist). There is some prime stuff here, the wistful first and fourth of the *Albumblätter* (Nos. 4 and 7 of the series), the turbulent Prelude (No. 10), the impressive slow march (No. 11), and the satisfyingly virile Scherzo (No. 13). The theme of No. 4, by the way, was used by Brahms as the basis for his own Op. 9 Variations.

In a word, the Kuerti disc is a general must, especially at the price, and the Silverman is equally a must for dyed-in-the-wool Schumann devotees. *D.H.*

SCHUMANN: ***Davidsbündlertänze, Op. 6; Nachtstücke, Op. 23.*** Claudio Arrau (piano). PHILLIPS 6500 178 $6.98.

Performance: **Okay**
Recording: **Okay**

Arrau's new performance of *Davidsbündlertänze*—the symbolic dances of the anti-Philistine company of David—did not inspire me. I think the problem is that Arrau has not penetrated very far into Schumann's divine schizophrenia. The Florestan or Lisztian-Faustian side of his nature and the Eusebius or Chopinesque side provide the spiritual dialectic of this music—one explicitly described by Schumann himself, who signed each piece F., E., or, in a few cases, F. and E. together.

The rare Op. 23 are Nocturnes in the sense that Gothic novels take place at night; we are here in the dark recesses of the soul. Op. 23 does not have the suave and poetic flow of the more popular piano sets, but consists rather of a set of character pieces closely bound together harmonically, and expressive of a series of rather dark and somber spiritual states. The music is repetitious, even obsessive, with sudden, breathless, furious break-outs that storm the heights and then subside into introspection and melancholia.

Arrau's approach to all this is of a piece. He is lyrical, reasonably flexible, broad—and not very introspective. He plays well enough, but there is never any Florestan-like delirium. Nor do we hear Eusebius' desperate tenderness or ghostly smile. But we do get excellent piano sound. *E.S.*

SHOSTAKOVICH: ***Concerto for Piano, Trumpet, and Strings*** **(See STRAVINSKY)**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SHOSTAKOVICH: ***Symphony No. 13, "Babi Yar."*** Artur Eizen (bass); U.S.S.R. Male Chorus and Moscow Philharmonic, Kiril Kondrashin cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL SR 40212 $5.98.

Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **Excellent**

This work is, to my mind, one of the masterpieces not only of this century but of all centuries. When I first heard it, in the premiere recording by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, with Tom Krause as the bass soloist, I could hardly credit either my ears or my reaction to it. I have never been a Shostakovich lover. But with this particular work, in which it seems to me the composer's emotional, psychological, sociological, political, and humanistic feelings must have coalesced and been released by contact with Yevtushenko's poetry, which he uses for texts, something unbelievably profound was brought into being. The Thirteenth Symphony contains a special, deep warning message for our time. We should hear it, and hear it again.

This recording, with Kondrashin conducting the Moscow Philharmonic, the U.S.S.R. Male Chorus, and Artur Eizen as bass soloist, is different in myriad nuances from the one by Ormandy. In many ways, it is plainer. You can almost feel the gritty soil underfoot sometimes, or sense a special bleakness of landscape. There are particular attitudes of mind which I suppose to be present-day Russian, and which cannot be duplicated by a musician of another nationality, no matter how splendidly talented he may be. To describe these differences is almost impossible, for they are too subtle. They have nothing to do with musical notes or technology, which can be described with some accuracy, but with nuances of feeling. All I can say, finally, is that if Beethoven's "*Eroica*" does really speak of events in the nineteenth century,

this work can be believed as speaking of some very important things in the twentieth. Anyone who admires the Thirteenth Symphony could do no better than to have both Ormandy's and Kondrashin's recordings on his shelves. They are both thoroughly great. *L.T.*

SMETANA: ***Four Czech Dances; Three Salon Polkas, Op. 7; Souvenirs of Bohemia; Three Poetic Polkas, Op. 8; Reminiscence of Pilsen; From Student Life.*** Radoslav Kvapil (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1373 $2.99 (plus 65¢ handling charge from Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Fairly good**

Though at first glance a disc containing sixteen polkas for piano is not likely to rouse anyone to feverish anticipation, this unassuming collection manages to be musicologically meaningful and delightfully entertaining at the same time. Smetana, who was an excellent pianist, discovered the music of Chopin in his childhood, around 1839. He was instantly drawn to it and influenced by it on several levels, including that of musical nationalism. This record reveals a fact Smetana readily supplies in one of his letters: that he treated this Czech national dance form the way Chopin treated the mazurka. There is a world of difference between the earliest polka in the collection, *From Student Life*, dating from 1842, a charming but entirely unadventurous effort, and the four *Czech Dances* of 1877, with their harmonic ingenuity and considerable technical demands. But Smetana's growth as a composer is already observable in the *Souvenirs of Bohemia*, which were written during his absence from his homeland in 1859-1860. These introspective pieces reveal a wealth of imagination—Opus 12, No. 2, is virtually a tone poem for the piano.

Though I would not encourage playing the contents at one sitting all the time, I recommend the disc very highly. I had not previously known the name Radoslav Kvapil, evidently a Czech artist, but his playing is loving and elegant, with nice color variety. The limited dynamic range may be ascribed to the recording, which is not particularly lively or resonant, but certainly adequate. There were several surface clicks in my review copy. *G.J.*

STRAVINSKY: ***Capriccio.*** **SHOSTAKOVICH:** ***Concerto for Piano, Trumpet, and Strings.*** John Ogdon (piano); John Wilbraham (trumpet); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. ARGO ZRG 674 $5.98.

Performance: **Good, but . . .**
Recording: **Pretty good**

There is something fundamentally unsatisfactory about this recording, and it is not going to be easy to say exactly what it is. For starters, there is the pairing of Stravinsky and Shostakovich—the second such to turn up in recent days. It must have seemed supremely logical—the pieces, written within a few years of each other, have all sorts of things in common. That's just the trouble. The works *are* alike: outstanding examples of middle-modern cutesie-poo. But whereas Stravinsky is always arch, campy, ironic, cultivated, and full of *bon mots*, Shostakovich is brassy, mocking, giggly, crude. Stravinsky's witticisms are in French, and they are about music and culture. Shostakovich postures; he seems to

want us to take him seriously—broken C minor triads, portentous scales, lots of sixteenth notes, and other neo-Baroque paraphernalia—and just when we are ready to be convinced he thumbs his nose at us. No wonder he was always making those commissars furious; I get pretty mad myself.

Ogdon and Marriner seem to take Stravinsky more seriously, and make a success out of their performance of the piece. The Shostakovich performance is somehow offhand and unconvincing. Perhaps some may even prefer Shostakovich's sass, but Stravinsky's classicism is no doubt closer to the performers' concerns—and to ours. The recording is nice enough, but does not really have the crispness that would serve this music best. *E.S.*

SZYMANOWSKI: ***Metopes, Op. 29.*** **TUROK:** ***Little Suite, Op. 9; Passacaglia, Op. 10; Transcendental Études, Op. 30.*** Regis Benoit (piano). ORION ORS 7274 $5.98.

Performance: **Brilliant**
Recording: **Good on the whole**

Karol Szymanowski's *Metopes* (1915)—here recorded for the first time—are three ripely Impressionistic evocations of Greek marble reliefs (*L'Ile des sirènes, Calypso, Nausicaa*). I sense in this music, together with the Debussian elements, a good dose of late Scriabin. Unlike his Hungarian contemporary Bartók, Szymanowski attained a completely mature and personally distinctive style only in the last dozen years of his life. The music of New York-based Paul Turok (b. 1929) covers a wide range of styles in the three opus numbers represented here: from neo-Russian in the *Little Suite* to Messiaen in the last of the *Three Transcendental Études*. His piano writing is highly effective, and I found the fantasia on a late Liszt work, the Debussian *Nuages gris*, the most fascinating and original of all the works here.

The performances by Regis Benoit are clean and fluent, and the recording is excellent, but the piano used is somewhat glassy-toned in the upper middle register. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TRIMBLE: ***String Quartet No. 1 (1949);*** **New Forum Quartet.** ***Five Episodes for Piano (1961-1962);*** **William Masselos (piano).** ***Panels I for Ten Players (1969);*** Chamber Ensemble, Lester Trimble cond. DESTO DC 7132 $5.98.

Performance: **Authentic**
Recording: **Good**

Lester Trimble (b. 1923) is not represented on discs by a large volume of his work, but what there is—the three on the present disc, the *Caunterbury Tales* songs (1958) on Columbia CMS 6198 (now deleted), and the 1951 Symphony in Two Movements and *Five Episodes* (an orchestral version of those for piano under consideration here) on CRI 187—does offer a significant cross-section of his output, all of it extremely well-crafted, communicative, unmannered, and in what I regard to be the healthily merging pluralist tradition now developing on the American contemporary musical scene. I am, in short, most pleased with the trend away from *dernier cri* stylism and toward the kind of creative eclecticism that makes possible the emergence of strong musical personalities.

As might be expected from a young man in his middle twenties, fresh from Paris studies with Milhaud, Honegger, and Boulanger, Trimble's Quartet is taut, polyphonically dense, and motoric in its end movements, somewhat acidulous harmonically, yet eloquent in its central movement. The *Five Episodes*, worked out in free serial technique, stand for me among the best of Trimble's work in their blend of craft and communicative substance. I liked them in their orchestral guise when issued by CRI, but I find the music even more convincing in its leaner and more precise piano texture, superbly set forth by William Masselos.

Panels I is a fascinating essay in the art of developing an "orderly" aleatoric music. The scoring is for "non-standard" chamber group, including string trio and double-bass, piccolo, baritone saxophone, and rock organ, plus electric guitar and electric harpsichord and a variety of percussion. The elements of the music

LESTER TRIMBLE
Communicative, unmannered compositions

consist of ten panels, each with six subdivisions (making for a total of sixty)—all mutually interchangeable in modular fashion, save for the last section of the panel for strings, which is an obligatory conclusion. Clearly there can be no such thing as a "definitive" realization of a work of this kind, but as heard on this disc, *Panels I* came through as a most intriguing listening experience in its kaleidoscopic mélange of recitative (baritone sax), twitterings, plectral sounds, passing bits of harmonic texture, bell-*cum*-marimba sounds, *etc.* I use the word kaleidoscopic advisedly, since, as in a kaleidoscope, certain characteristic patterns recur throughout panels, in varied context.

The performances can certainly be regarded as authentic, since they are composer-approved. The recording varies from somewhat overreverberant in *Panels I* to somewhat over-"tight" in the quartet, to just right in the *Episodes*. *D.H.*

TUROK: ***Little Suite; Passacaglia; Transcendental Études*** **(see SZYMANOWSKI)**

WAGNER: ***Die Meistersinger: Preludes to Acts I & III; Lohengrin: Preludes to Acts I & III; Tristan und Isolde: Prelude; Tannhäuser: Overture.*** New Philharmonia Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult cond. ANGEL S 36871 $5.98.

Performance: **Broad-gauge**
Recording: **Good**

In his long recording career, Sir Adrian Boult has associated himself with a vast repertoire, both standard and British, but I do not ever recall a note of Wagner's appearing on disc under his leadership. Since he grew up hearing and working with Hans Richter and Artur Nikisch in the Wagnerian repertoire, one would expect, in the natural course of events, that a Wagner reading by Boult would be in the classic, broad-gauge, central-European mold. This is certainly the case with this new Angel offering, in which the *Meistersinger* Prelude gets top marks in my book, with the *Lohengrin* Act I Prelude a close second. A distinct plus here is Sir Adrian's choice of the version of the *Tristan* Prelude with Wagner's original concert ending instead of the usual *Liebestod*—only Erich Leinsdorf with the Boston Symphony (RCA LSC 3011) has done it similarly in the past. The sonics here are spacious and warm, yet amply detailed in texture. *D.H.*

WEBER: ***Symphony No. 1, in C Major, Op. 19.*** **CHERUBINI:** ***Symphony in D Major.*** New Philharmonia Orchestra, Wilfried Boettcher cond. PHILIPS 6500 154 $6.98.

Performance: **Spirited**
Recording: **Good**

As one might expect, Carl Maria von Weber in his late twenties and Luigi Cherubini in his middle fifties took quite different tacks in their symphonic writing. The Weber work is full of impulsive ideas, brilliant effects, and atmospheric sounds (the slow movement, particularly), together with a mild formal obeisance to the Classic tradition of Haydn and Mozart. The Cherubini, save for a certain eloquence in the slow movement and a genuinely spirited finale, is little more than a meticulously crafted score in the late-Haydn mold. It is a bit surprising to realize that it was written at a time when Beethoven had completed all of his major orchestral masterpieces except the Ninth Symphony. Bremen-born Wilfried Boettcher leads spirited and warmly phrased readings, aided by a beautifully scaled recording. A nice package, this, for those who want off-the-beaten-path Classic-style symphonies. *D.H.*

MALCOLM WILLIAMSON: ***Quintet for Piano and Strings.*** Gabrieli String Quartet; Malcolm Williamson (piano). ***Five Preludes for Piano.*** Malcolm Williamson (piano). ***From "A Child's Garden."*** April Cantelo (soprano), Malcolm Williamson (piano). ***Pas de Quatre.*** The Nash Ensemble, Malcolm Williamson (piano). ARGO ZRG 682 $5.95.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Excellent**

This one-man show of music by the British composer Malcolm Williamson puts on display several facets of a personality which, at first blush, seem more different from each other than they really are. The Piano Quintet is a dissonant piece, with materials organized in large formal blocks, the opening one featuring harmonics, subsequent ones being based on clusters, dissonant scale-rushings, and so forth. Williamson tends to view form in terms of broad sections, with the internal details of each being kept quite uniform. This makes the music easy to comprehend, but sometimes at the expense of belaboring a minor subject at major length.

The Five Preludes for Piano show the same consistencies in each section, as is normal for

this form. Williamson's writing is fluent and pianistic, the style being largely the kind of modernized Romantic-Impressionism which was current in the Forties (though the Preludes were composed in 1966). *From "A Child's Garden"* (1967-1968), a cycle for high voice and piano, partakes of the same general ambiance. Harmonies are simple and tonal, with a few soft dissonances thrown in for spice. Hugo Wolf and Franz Schubert might have collaborated on the sixth and seventh songs; elsewhere, influences are not so obvious. But this is dangerous stylistic ground, it seems to me. The *Pas de Quatre*, for woodwinds and piano, was commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera for a summer festival at Newport, Rhode Island, in which chamber-ballet music was featured. Williamson's response to the commission was a score which mixed neo-Romantic and neo-Classic elements together with easygoing assurance. I would not call this music chic, in the sense that Rieti's ballet scores often are (it resembles Rieti in some ways), but it seems to have been aiming in that direction.

The performances are excellent, though I suspect the intonation of some of the Quintet's opening passages. A printed insert carries the Robert Louis Stevenson poems on which *From "A Child's Garden"* is based. *L.T.*

COLLECTIONS

MARCELLA DE CRAY: ***Harp Aujourd'hui.*** **Schifrin:** *Continuum.* **Jolas:** *Tranche.* **Berio:** *Sequenza II.* **Handel:** *Pastorale (Theme and Variations).* **Prokofiev:** *Piece for Harp; Prelude in C Major, Op. 12, No. 7.* **Sheinfeld:** *Patterns for Harp (1962).* Marcella DeCray (harp). CORONET 2745 $5.95.

Performance: **Alert**
Recording: **Good**

NICANOR ZABALETA: ***Spanish Harp Music.*** **Albéniz:** *Suite Española No. 1: No. 1, Granada (Serenata); No. 5, Asturias (Leyenda). Suite Española No. 2: Zaragoza (Capricho); Mallorca (Barcarolla), Op. 202; Tango in A Minor, Op. 124.* **Falla:** *Serenata Andaluza.* **Turina:** *Toccata and Fugue, Op. 50.* **Gombau:** *Apunte Betico.* **E. Halffter:** *Sonatina.* **Granados:** *Danza Española No. 5, Andaluza.* **Chavarri:** *El viejo Castillo moro (Cantos y Fantasias, No. 5).* Nicanor Zabaleta (harp). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 230 $6.98.

Performance: **Polished**
Recording: **Good**

Having produced Carlos Salzedo's harp recordings for Mercury back in the middle Fifties, I know from experience that a solo harp in a recording studio can be a notably intractable beast: the pedal mechanism is prone to produce extraneous noise, as are the harpist's fingers when damping the strings. So, regardless of the fact that I find most harp records pretty dull, I still marvel every time I hear one relatively free of the aforementioned noises.

Save for the intriguing Turina Fugue, a marvelously clever amalgam of neo-Classic style and Iberian atmosphere, and Ernesto Halffter's lovely Sonatine, I found most of the Zabaleta recital pretty uninteresting fare, as most of it is arranged from piano orginals (by Zabaleta himself?—no credit is given on labels or sleeve). The recorded sound is fine.

Marcella DeCray of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra has come up with a quite different and far more interesting pack-

age than the usual recorded harp recital, for four of the seven works included were composed to demonstrate—and do so most effectively—that the harp is good for something other than arpeggios, glissandos, and a kind of overgrown guitar style of writing. Salzedo was among the first to free harp technique from these clichés, but the pieces by the French-born Betsy Jolas (b. 1926), the Argentine-born film composer Lalo Schifrin (b. 1932), and the San Franciscan David Sheinfeld (b. 1910) really take up where Salzedo left off. In the instances of Berio and Jolas, every trick of the contemporary musical armory is brought into play.

The Prokofiev Prelude, Op. 12, No. 7, has long been a staple of the harp repertoire, and deservedly so—it's a charmer. His *Piece for Harp* (1913) would appear to be a heretofore unpublished work, decidedly Debussyan in vein, but very effective in its exploration of chordal coloration.

The Handel *Pastorale*—agreeable enough, but decidedly un-Handelian in harmonic flavor—strikes me as a curious affair. The index of works in Gerald Abraham's symposium *Handel* (Oxford University Press, 1954) cites this work as having been published with a French title by the Viennese firm of Artaria in 1826, details having been furnished to Mr. Abraham by the well known Russian-born British harpist Maria Korchinska. Could this piece be another item from "ye olde spuriosity shop?" In any event, this is no reflection on Miss DeCray's technical expertise and enterprise, all of which comes across on the disc in good, high-quality sound from yet another small label (based in Columbus, Ohio) intent upon introducing gifted new musicians and interesting unfamiliar music to the public.

D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ENGLISH MUSIC FOR STRINGS. Holst: *St. Paul's Suite.* **Delius:** *Two Aquarelles.* **Britten:** *Simple Symphony.* **Vaughan Williams:** *Rhosymedre.* **Walton:** *Two pieces from "Henry V."* **Purcell:** *Chacony in G Minor.* Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. ANGEL S 36883 $5.98.

Performance: **Beautiful**
Recording: **Excellent**

HOLST: ***Lyric Movement for Viola and Small Orchestra; Brook Green Suite, for Strings; Nocturne for Strings; A Fugal Concerto, for Flute, Oboe, and Strings; St. Paul's Suite, for Strings.*** Cecil Aronowitz (viola); William Bennett (flute); Peter Graeme (oboe); English Chamber Orchestra, Imogen Holst cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1303 $2.99 (plus 65¢ handling charge, from the Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Courteous**
Recording: **Good**

These two discs give a fine slice of English music for strings (with a touch of other instruments here and there). I must say immediately that Neville Marriner and his Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields ensemble sound just the way they have on every recording of theirs I've heard: really remarkable! On the Musical Heritage Society record, the composer's daughter and the English Chamber Orchestra do not play with the same musical drama and intensity, though they otherwise play splendidly.

The Marriner disc begins with Holst's *St. Paul's Suite.* One would never suspect this had been composed for a student orchestra at St. Paul's Girls' School where Holst taught from 1905 until his death in 1934. It has several lovely movements, and if Marriner's performance on the Angel disc is more compelling than Imogen Holst's, this is not to denigrate the latter, which is elegant and tasteful in its own right.

This *St. Paul's Suite* is the only duplication between the two records. Marriner's goes on with Delius's *Two Aquarelles* (one of which surely ranks among the most sensuous of all English musical creations), Purcell's graceful, high-minded *Chacony in G Minor*, and works by Vaughan Williams, Walton, and Britten. It is all endearing music, not heavy in sentiment or philosophy, but full of gentle grace and sincere good spirits.

On the Musical Heritage disc, most of the works are unfamiliar, and it is good to have one's picture of Holst's *oeuvre* slightly expanded. I can't say that anything here will cause a revolution in one's estimation of Holst as a composer, but the *Lyric Movement for Viola and Small Orchestra* (1933) is indeed, as Miss Holst says, "one of the best and least known" of the composer's works. The playing by violist Cecil Aronowitz and the Ensemble is fine. And yet, I don't think the full drama and passion of the work are more than hinted at. The performance is a bit too level and sane. This could be a popular repertoire piece if orchestras would ever dare to include violists among the solo performers they hire. (So could Hindemith's *Der Schwanendreher*, for that matter).

The *Brook Green Suite* is folksy and nice, ultimately a bit too obsessed with the jig; the *Nocturne*, I'm sorry to say, is just rather dull and academic. *A Fugal Concerto* seems to be a deliberate comment on the Baroque *concerto grosso*, and yet one cannot say with certainty whether it is a "neo-Classic" comment, a parodistic one, or just an academic redoing—rather uncomfortable.

I've already indicated that Miss Holst's conducting of these works is in every respect—save one—excellent. My *caveat* has to do with what seems to be overrespectfulness, which tends to make many passages unnecessarily tame.

L.T.

ANDRÉ KOSTELANETZ: ***Program.*** **Glazounov:** *The Seasons, Op. 67—Suite from the Ballet.* **Khachaturian:** *Waltz, from Masquerade Suite.* **Wolff-Ferrari:** *Jewels of the Madonna (excerpts).* **Villa-Lobos:** *Modinha Preludio.* **Fauré:** *Merchant of Venice (excerpts).* André Kostelanetz and his orchestra. COLUMBIA M 31077 $5.98.

Performances: **Good**
Recording: **Excellent**

Tchaikovsky's name isn't mentioned on this record by André Kostelanetz and his orchestra, but it immediately comes to mind as one listens to Glazounov's *Seasons*. There are few passages in this work which could have been written without the stylistic and technical groundwork Tchaikovsky laid for his Russian compatriots. It is a graceful and harmonically and melodically attractive work, in which the Romantic ethos of the nineteenth-century Russians holds full sway. Khachaturian's *Waltz* from the *Masquerade* Suite is no less influenced by Tchaikovsky, though the modern Soviet hard edge gives it a different flavor.

The other works on this disc are, like the Russian ones, designed to charm, please, and entertain. For all my admiration of Fauré, I must admit that my second-side favorite is Villa-Lobos' *Modinha Preludio* from the *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 1*. Kostelanetz plays it here with the full string section of his orchestra. It is deeply moving, as always. But I rather wish he had played it in the original orchestration for an ensemble of cellos: it is so extraordinarily intense that it needs that special instrumentation.

And speaking of orchestras—I don't know what (who?) Kostelanetz's ensemble is, but if it is not one of America's major orchestras, I'll be very surprised. The playing is terrific. *L.T.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

VIGNETTES OF OLD RUSSIA. Arensky: *Impromptu in B Major, Op. 25, No. 1; Barcarolle in F Major, Op. 36, No. 11.* **Balakirev:** *Polka in F-sharp Minor.* **Borodin:** *At the Convent: Serenade from "Petite Suite."* **Cui:** *Etude in F Major (A Chat), Op. 40, No. 6; Berceuse in E-flat Major, Op. 20, No. 8.* **Glazounov:** *Prelude in D-flat Major, Op. 49, No. 1; Gavotte in D Major, Op. 49, No. 4.* **Glinka:** *Nocturne in F Minor.* **Ilyinsky:** *Berceuse in G-flat Major, Op. 13, from "Noure and Anitra" Suite.* **Liadov:** *Prelude in B Minor, Op. 11, No. 1; Prelude in D-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 1.* **Liapunov:** *Berceuse in F-sharp Major, Op. 11, No. 1.* **Medtner:** *Mood Picture in E-flat Minor, Op. 1, No. 3.* **Rachmaninoff:** *Melody in E Major, Op. 3, No. 3.* **Rubinstein:** *Barcarolle in G Minor, Op. 50, No. 3.* **Scriabin:** *Poèmes, Op. 32, Nos. 1 and 2.* **Tchaikovsky:** *Berceuse in A Minor; Meditation, Op. 72, No. 5.* Sergei Tarnowsky (piano). GENESIS GS 1004 $5.98.

Performance: **Genial and charming**
Recording: **Very good**

Basically, this is a program of salon music, pleasant miniatures of the Romantic era in Russia extending from Glinka to Glazounov. These pieces are of the sort that most keyboard amateurs of a cultivated Russian home would have been perfectly capable of rendering, and, with a few exceptions (such as the Rachmaninoff *Melody* or the first of the Scriabin *Poèmes*) they are *morceaux* that have been ignored during more recent decades. This is rather a shame, for though there is not much that is significant or startling here, the music does have great charm. It is good to have such a selection, especially when the performances are so sympathetic. Sergei Tarnowsky, whose credentials include pre-Revolution (!) concertizing in Russia, as well as accompanying Milstein, Garbousova, and Kurenko, among others, in this country, was acquainted with César Cui, Alexander Glazounov (he married his step-daughter), Anatole Liadov (with whom he studied harmony), Rachmaninoff, and Scriabin. Thus there is a kind of authenticity to Tarnowsky's playing. To be sure, the Kiev-born pianist's fingers are not as agile as they must have been at earlier stages of his career, but then the music is not technically demanding either. Tarnowsky taught at the Kiev Conservatory, was also, between 1933 and 1950, head of the piano department of Chicago's De Paul University School of Music, and is now teaching in Los Angeles. I would guess that he must be in his late seventies or early eighties. Would that performers half his age had such warmth and color to their playing! *I.K.*

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By CRAIG STARK

OBSERVING THE SPEED LIMIT

READERS OFTEN ask if there's any reason today to record at 7½ inches per second or whether they can get just as good results at slower speeds. Not many years ago there was a consensus: professionals used 15 (or 30) ips, serious home recording was at 7½, background music could be tolerated at 3¾, and 1⅞ was strictly for dictating letters. But technical developments have now made it possible—at least in demonstrations, where everything is peaked up to a fare-thee-well—for cassettes operating at 1⅞ ips to sound as good as some 15-ips professional master tapes.

However, since you probably make your recordings under *less* than optimum conditions, you will probably hear differences between the faster- and slower-speed tapes. And factors other than recorder performance also must be taken into account. For example, consider the problem of tape hiss. Every time tape speed (or recorded track width) is cut in half, the signal-to-noise ratio (s/n) of a properly designed recorder will lose about 3 dB. That adds up to approximately a 9-dB difference between a stereo cassette and a 7½-ips stereo quarter-track tape. To judge the practical significance of this figure, let's do a little arithmetic. Suppose that your listening room has enough background noise to "mask"—that is, cover up sufficiently so as to render inaudible—any tape hiss at a sound pressure level (SPL) of 45 dB. If you listen to music at high volume, say 100 dB SPL, your recorder must have a 55-dB s/n to keep the hiss imperceptible during soft passages. (100 − 45 = 55). Obviously, then, if you forfeit 9 dB in s/n by using the cassette and play the music at the same volume, you'll hear hiss aplenty, for it will be 9 dB louder than the room's masking capability. On the other hand, if you listen to the music at a background level of perhaps 80 dB SPL, you won't hear hiss from either machine, since in both cases the noise remains below the room's masking level.

Minute tape imperfections that cause momentary signal interruptions called "drop-outs" are also more of a problem at slow speeds. This is because it takes four times as long for a defective spot on the tape to pass the heads at 1⅞ ips as it does at 7½ ips. And similarly, no matter how good a multi-speed machine is, the slower its operating speed, the higher its wow and flutter will be—listen for a wavering or roughness of tone on tapes with sustained piano chords. Finally, in order to preserve high-frequency response, slow speeds have to use much more treble-boost equalization during recording. On material with lots of high-frequency content, this can sometimes lead to distortion even when the meter needles read less than 0 VU. In short, all the basic technical problems faced by the tape-recorder designer are aggravated by slow-speed operation. The designer's success in solving those problems, the associated playback equipment, the nature of the program material, and the criticalness of your ear all determine whether a tape speed is fast enough. For most recordists, a few comparative listening tests made under their own special conditions should tell the story.

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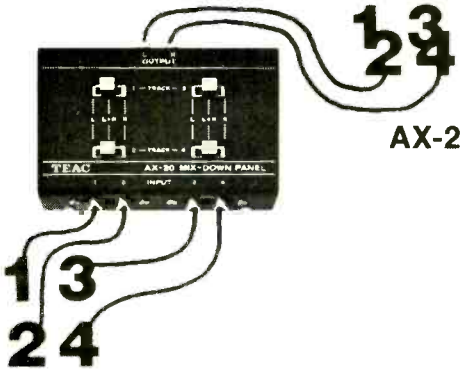

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