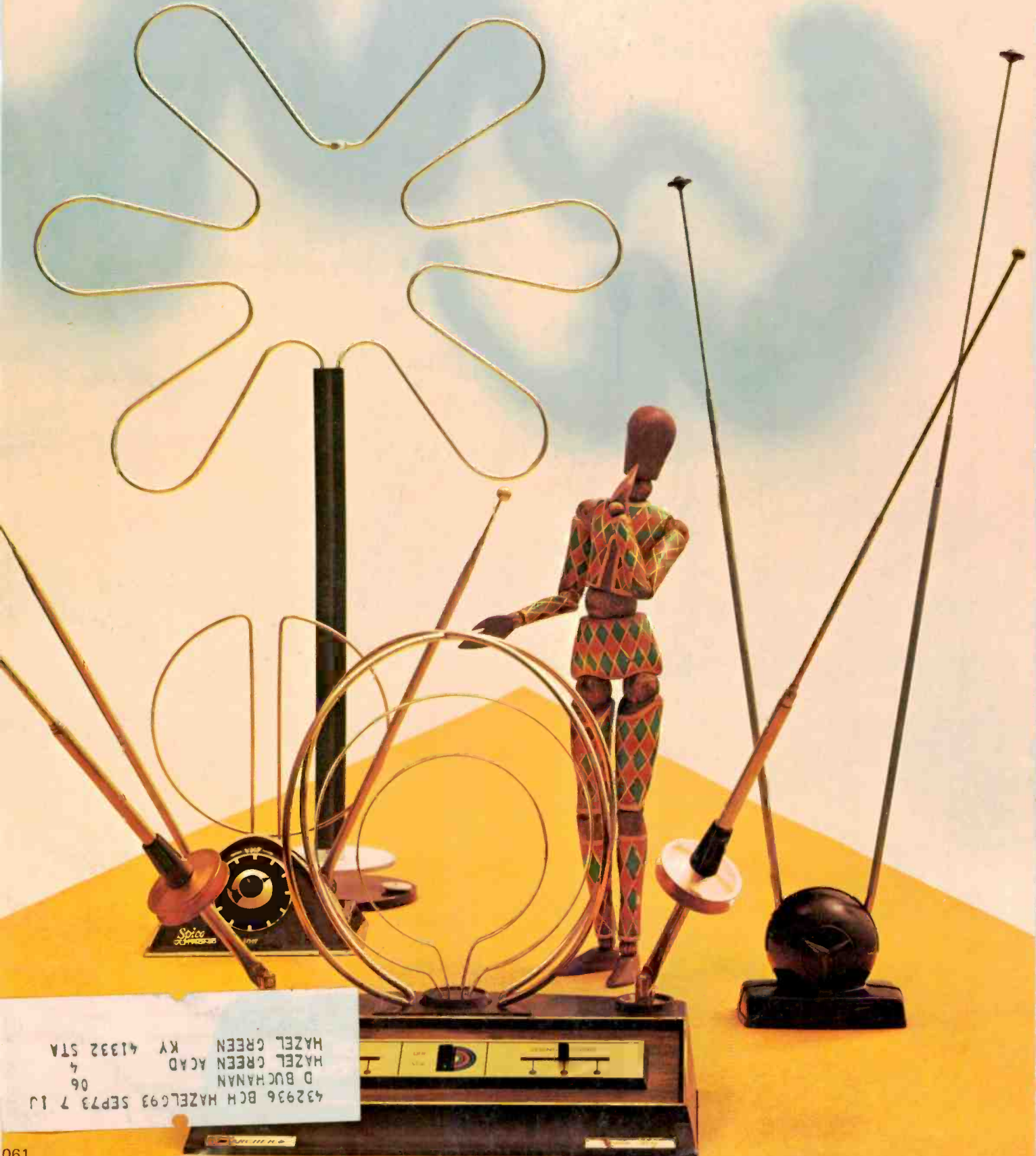


Stereo Review

JUNE 1973 • 75 CENTS

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R500

R300

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AUDIO (George Tillett)

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STEREO & HI-FI TIMES (Larry Zide)

"... This (R500) speaker will please many with its big, bright sound . . . The middle ranges . . . are most prominent, but there is more than enough good bass, too . . . The high end response is excellent; midrange and tweeter contribute to a smooth, wide range sound that goes well beyond audibility . . . It's time that we began to demand appearance along with performance. This, Pioneer is certainly giving us with this model, and they are to be commended for the effort . . . The R500 is a quality speaker and deserves your attention."

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MODERN HI-FI & STEREO GUIDE

(Robert Angus)

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FM GUIDE (William Kanner)

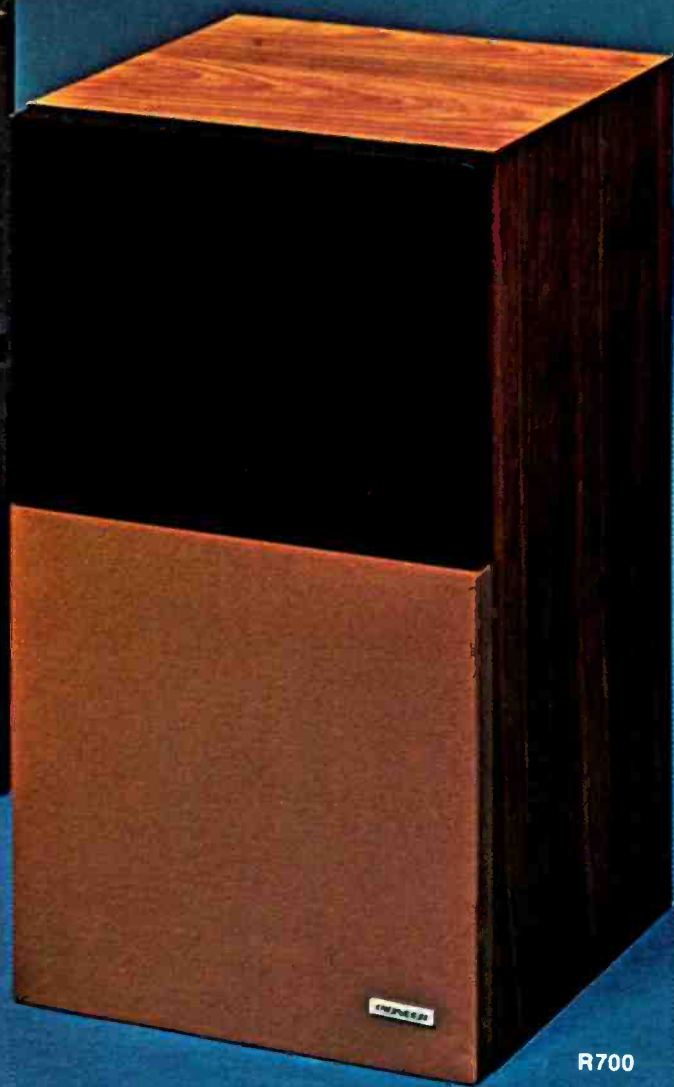
"If you think it's time for a new sound sensation and you suspect your present speaker system is holding out on the lows and highs, try Pioneer's R500 speaker system."

OPERA NEWS (Hans Fantel)

"The cadre of relatively low priced high-performance speakers has recently been augmented by a distinctive newcomer: Pioneer's R300, whose tonal characteristics have been tailored to the results of extensive preference-testing with large groups of listeners. The R300 has a quality of 'presence' and immediacy which made Salome's murderous ecstasies positively scary when I listened, and the massive sonorities of the Strauss score didn't faze this speaker a bit."

PIONEER'S NEW SERIES

An acoustic achievement that
universally preferred sound



R700

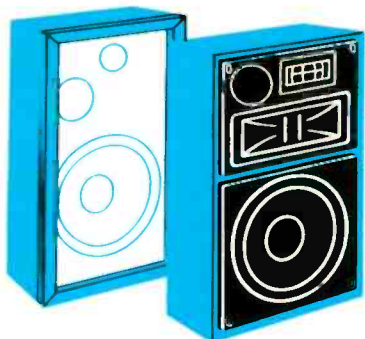
Too often these days superlatives are used to camouflage mediocrity. Let's just say you'll be excited with the magnitude of the achievement of the new Pioneer series R speaker systems, once you hear them. They represent the culmination of our more than six years of intensive research in every phase of speaker design on just this series alone.

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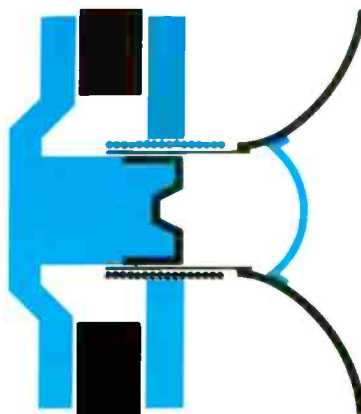


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Maximum Input Power	75 watts	60 watts	40 watts
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Dimensions	15" x 26" x 13 $\frac{3}{16}$ "	13 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 24" x 12 $\frac{1}{16}$ "	13" x 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11"
Price	\$229.95	\$159.95	\$119.95



Unique concave center pole design and pure copper cap/ring combination. The concave center pole of the drivers' magnetic structure is covered with a pure copper cap. Not only does this reduce the inductance of the voice coil, it also decreases the voice coil's intermodulation distortion generated by the magnetic field. The result: vastly improved bass and midrange transient responses. Another example of Pioneer's meticulous engineering detail.

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Stereo Review

JUNE 1973 • VOLUME 30 • NUMBER 6

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COVER: Design by Borys Patchowsky; photo by Bruce Pendleton

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Circulation Office
P.O. Box 2771, Boulder, Colorado 80302
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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

By WILLIAM ANDERSON

CLASSIPOPS

IF my mail is any guide, the world (or at least some proportion of the English-speaking part of it) is divided into two kinds of people: those who believe there are fundamental differences between "classical" and "popular" music (and rejoice in them for reasons of their own), and those who believe there are *no* differences (or that if there are, they are artificial, arbitrary, and probably undemocratic and should therefore be summarily done away with). The classical/popular subject has been touched upon in these pages repeatedly over the years (we do, after all, divide our record-review pages into two sections titled "Classical" and "Popular"), most recently on this very page in January ("Classical Has No Vocal") and subsequently in Letters-column aftershocks. In one such letter this month, reader (and New York *Daily News* music critic) Ron Eyer has at this windmill once more, only to end up with his lance ineffectually entangled in the bowels of the dictionary: the designations "popular" and "classical" make him uncomfortable, he says, because (for example) there are some so-called "popular" works that never achieve popularity with the general public (I would say that it may be because they don't deserve it) and there are some so-called "classical" works that are *very* popular (I would say that that is their great good fortune).

But both "classical" and "popular" mean a number of different things in different contexts, and though it is tempting, facing an uncomfortable truth, to fall back on a comforting semantic confusion or indulge ourselves with a little harmless euphemy, we really ought to prosecute the search with rigor until we have run down just what these words mean with respect to music: "*popular*—easy to understand, plain; syn. *common*," and "*classical*—appealing to critical interest or developed taste." Simple definition can take us no further, but this is quite far enough to explain why discussions of this issue usually tend to fall so quickly into bickering animosity. What we are clearly dealing with here is another manifestation of one of egalitarian America's dirty little secrets: the question of class. Classical music cannot escape the taint of its origins—the costly intellectual plaything of ecclesiastical and secular aristocracies—any more than popular music can escape its randy roots—the saloons, dance halls, and worse on the other side of the tracks. Little wonder, then, that social-climbing popular-music adherents continue to demand the "respectability" that is accorded classical music automatically, or that classical snobs (there are a few!) continue to treat them and their music with an insulting condescension.

Is that all there is to it, then—a tired, old, insoluble class argument? For some, perhaps; for me, no. Arguing from my own experience, I hear music, "class" quite aside, as a spectrum ranging from the simple, almost unconscious expressions of folksong (yes, I know some folk music is far from simple and very consciously constructed indeed) to the most abstruse and deliberate inventions of the questing musical intelligence operating on the frontiers of our tonal sensibilities (yes, I know some results of these complex efforts in learned music turn out to be of a startling "natural" simplicity). This does not mean that popular music is *only* folk, or that classical music is *only* "pure"; they shade toward each other, merging imperceptibly somewhere in between. In the end, what it comes down to here is *assignment*, and even the hard cases give us little trouble. In this issue's classical section, for example, you will find Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story* (the original was popular music, but the composer put these dances together for symphony orchestra—and for an audience of "developed taste") and Scott Joplin's orchestrated rags (Joplin himself knew he was writing a kind of classical music, and only the classical sensibility could have "rescued" his work—as it has the Auvergne folksongs in the classical Canteloube settings). And where is Handel's rockified "New" *Messiah*? Why, in the popular section where it belongs.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Sacred Harp

● I was thoroughly delighted with Eric Salzman's Best of the Month review of the Western Wind album (April). Wild horses couldn't keep me from going to the store to buy it. You may be interested to know that the music of Billings, Read, Ingalls, and others of their day still lives in many areas of the South, and in recent years has undergone a remarkable renaissance. It is a common occurrence in rural areas to have an all-day songfest at a local church involving just such music. In fact, so-called "music conventions" (e.g., the Chattahoochee Convention and the Georgia Convention) have regularly scheduled annual two-day sing-ins. And let me assure Mr. Salzman that no "false, prissy" sound is to be heard there.

The bible of all these groups and conventions is the *Sacred Harp*, a delightful hymnal published by the Sacred Harp Publishing Co. of Cullman, Alabama. Essentially a revised and extended version of the original *Sacred Harp*, first published in 1844, it contains many wonderful works of Billings, Read, and the others. (Copies are three dollars plus, I suppose, postage.) A yearly schedule of one-day sing-ins and two-day conventions is also published. There are few areas of the South that are more than a forty-five-minute drive from a Sacred Harp sing-in on any given Sunday. For those whose interest has been aroused, I also recommend *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, a book by George Pullen Jackson, now a Dover reprint available for three dollars.

GEORGE HARPER
Bremen, Ga.

A Layman's Book of Bach

● After reading Steven Ledbetter's letter (April) about Igor Kipnis' February review of the Bach Cantatas, I looked in the new Norton Critical Scores edition of Bach's Cantata No. 140 and found the "New Chronology of Bach's Vocal Music." This did in fact relegate Cantata No. 15 to a group by Johann Ludwig Bach, Telemann, G. M. Hoffmann, etc. The full title of this spurious cantata is "Denn du wirst meine Seele nicht in der Hölle lassen" (BWV 15). Norton acknowledges material that he used from such scholars as Werner Neumann, Alfred Durr, and Georg von Dadelsen. This list is copyrighted 1972, and is about the most up-to-date material available

for the layman. The Neumann *Handbuch der Kantaten Johann Sebastian Bachs* is very authoritative and up-to-date, but quite expensive. A large library might have it, but in a small town like mine it would probably not be available.

GENE M. LACY
Spartanburg, S.C.

Ricky-Tick

● On the basis of Joel Vance's review of Rick Nelson's "Garden Party" in the April issue of STEREO REVIEW, I rushed right out and bought myself a copy. Looking for "honesty," I found paranoia. Looking for a "very good" recording, I found voices obliterated by overpowering bass, poorly played electric guitars, and other noise. When the voices peeped through, as in one chorus of *Let It Bring You Along*, I found them painfully out of tune and dreadfully dull.

On the whole, my appraisal of the record is somewhere between painful and offensive. Instead of honesty, I hear a total lack of intelligence or direction. Perhaps these are some of the reasons for its appearance on sale at discount prices in the Chicago area.

JIM REED
Naperville, Ill.

The Classical Guitar

● Many thanks for Fred Grunfeld's long-overdue library of classical guitar music (April). The classical guitar repertoire presently is, at best, disorganized, obscure, and for the most part musically mediocre. The recording industry, perhaps fearing that a full disc of the same composer or in the same stylistic genre would be hopelessly boring and unmarketable, is compounding the problem by producing mostly "greatest hits" albums.

Mr. Grunfeld's attitude toward guitar duets, however, is either snobbish or was perhaps convenient in constructing his article. The New York Town Hall Williams-Bream concert last March surely refutes his position and furthermore ranks as perhaps the musical event of the year.

I was elated at the inclusion of the recording of the Domenico Scarlatti harpsichord sonatas transcribed by Carlos Barbosa-Lima. Surely he is the most overlooked of the younger guitar artists. Finally, though it is a "basic" library, I would have liked to see included Williams' brilliant Vanguard record-

ings of the first and third Bach cello suites and the Odyssey disc of José Luis González.

Now, about percussion . . .
DAVID SCHINBECKLER
Columbia City, Ind.

If It's Not Classical . . .

● I sympathize with the bewilderment of correspondent Larry Johnson in the March "Letters to the Editor" column over the meaning of the terms *popular music* and *classical music*. It involves a semantic distinction that has bewildered me also in all the near-forty years I have been scribbling about music, and I am no more comfortable with the labels today than I was in the beginning.

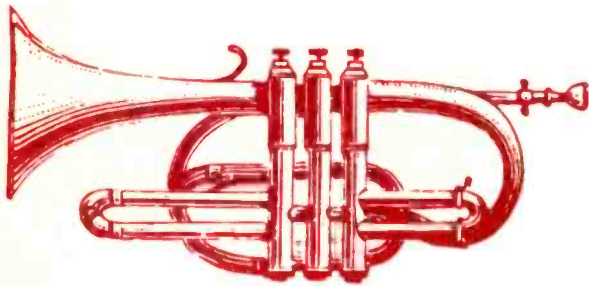
Both *popular music* and *classical music* are, of course, misnomers. So is *serious music*. All three are wildly misleading as labels or certifications and should come under the scrutiny of some agency like the Food and Drug Administration. This would be a matter of little moment, except that the *non sequiturs* involved have a demonstrable effect on public judgment of music and can cause real harm to whole areas of musical thought and practice.

Music has never been noted for the accuracy of its descriptive terminology. Most of its adjectives have been borrowed from the far more logical vocabulary of the visual arts, and it has become host to a whole lexicon of literary banalities that bear almost no relation to what composers set down on paper, what comes out when these notations are realized in sound, or what reactions they produce in listeners. Such basically simple words as *popular*, *classical*, and *serious* have, with constant usage and misuse, become encrusted with implications that have nothing whatever to do with their real meaning. Popular, for example, means (according to the Oxford Universal Dictionary) "adapted to the understanding, taste or means of ordinary people"; also, "finding favor with the people, or with many people; favorite, acceptable, pleasing." By this definition, there is a vast amount of popular music written and performed that is not popular at all. It is merely imitative in form and style of some other music that is popular. And truly popular music is not confined to any particular form or style. Who is to say that the latest pop hit is, or will continue to be, any more popular than Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony or Handel's "Hallelujah" Chorus? These pieces of music, and hundreds like them, probably have a firmer hold on long-term popularity than, say, *Grand Ole Opry Blues* or even *Tea for Two*.

So what's classical music? Again according to the Oxford Universal Dictionary, classical relates to classic, meaning "of the first rank or authority; standard, leading"; also, "a writer or work of the first rank and of acknowledged excellence." By definition, then, there must be tons of music lying around in libraries and homes all over the world that people refer to as "classical" that has no right to that description. Included are thousands of pieces distinguished only by mediocrity or worse that are called classical only because they are similar in form, style, or some other aspect to other compositions which are in fact classical.

The same misconception afflicts "serious" music. Who is to say that many blues, songs of protest, or simple love songs in the misnamed "popular" category are not serious in feeling and intent? Does serious apply only to counterpoint, symphonic development, and electronic calculations? By the same token,

(Continued on page 10)



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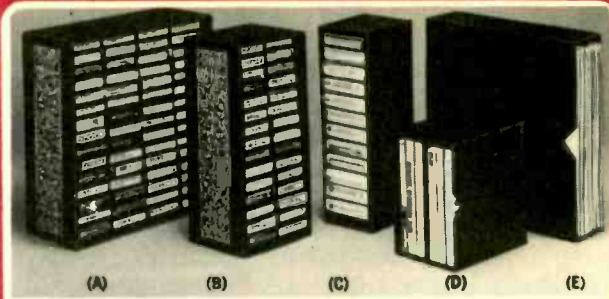


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all serious music is by no means serious, nor is it intended to be. Shall we consider *The Barber of Seville* or Satie's *Pièces en forme de poire* serious music?

Assuming that music should be classified at all, the chronic need clearly is for some more intelligent and pertinent system. What that system should be I haven't the faintest idea. I do think, though, that the visual and literary arts do a better job with their simple technical designations such as pointillism, cubism, cartoon, representational, etc., and novel, short story, essay, play, and poem. Nobody has the slightest doubt as to what they are talking about, and implied judgments of superiority or inferiority have no place in this terminology. Gertrude Stein's question, "If they are not pigeons, what are they?" doesn't really have to be answered.

RON EYER
Critic, *Daily News*
New York, N.Y.

Does this mean, then, that we have no business trying to differentiate, say, between a detective novel and War and Peace? See this month's editorial for more on this vexed issue.

Troubadours

● I enjoyed Noel Coppage's article "The Troubadour as Middle-Class Hero" in the March issue, and I thought his opinions of the different artists' styles were pretty fair. However, there is one artist I feel he evaluated unfairly: Stephen Stills, about whom Mr. Coppage said "... and Steve Stills. God knows, can't wait to try anything (Neil) Young has tried. ..." I do not feel Stills tries to imitate Neil Young in any way. The only similarity I find is the ability of both to become so much a part of their music that the listener becomes involved too.

THOMAS ZIMMERMANN
Granad Hills, Cal.

Starting on the Lightfoot

● I was very pleased to see not only "Old Dan's Records" reviewed in the March issue, but also an article that included deserved commentary on Gordon Lightfoot. Noel Coppage's treatment of "Old Dan's Records" was as perceptive as his review of the "Don Quixote" album last year. These reviews and the well-written March article on troubadours, "The Troubadour as Middle-Class Hero," make it obvious that Mr. Coppage admires Gordon Lightfoot's music. Relatively few people recognize his tremendous talent. Because Lightfoot does not receive significant AM airplay, he is overlooked and underrated. I hope he will ultimately receive his long-overdue recognition as a great songwriter.

BILL O'BRIEN
Albany, N.Y.

Ragtime Revivals

● With reference to the letter from Peter Lundberg (March), I would like to point out that ragtime revivals come at intervals in various guises. Probably the first came with Zec Confrey's *Kitten on the Keys*. The first LPs in the very early Fifties brought another ragtime revival of honky-tonk stride headed by Winifred Atwell, followed by Johnny Maddox, Del Wood, and others. The most clumsy and artificial attempt of all—but the most heralded—is the ragtime imitation of Rifkin on Nonesuch. Bad taste seems to sell best.

The most poetic efforts, however, are by

John W. "Knocky" Parker, who has at least eight Audiophile albums to his credit, including four records entitled "The Golden Treasury of Ragtime" and two sets "James Scott" and "Scott Joplin." All are delightful and charming, and, because they exhibit the influence of classical minuets and quadrilles on classical ragtime, they seem the purest to me. "Knocky" Parker deserves to be better known.

ARNOLD BOPP
Institut für klangrichtige Musikwiedergabe
Zürich, Switzerland

The Editor replies: To each his own rag. The notion that there is but one "right" way to play ragtime is as ungenerous and restricting as believing that there is but one "correct" waltz. Mr. Bopp likes his ragtime with a suggestion of the high-toned minuet or quadrille: Mr. Rifkin takes his ragtime into the salon. For myself, I am on the dance side as well, but the dance I want is the cakewalk. It seems to me that anyone who has ever heard his ragtime while watching a proper cakewalk will never settle for anything less than a high-spirited, strutting, absolutely bodacious ragtime style.

The New Math

● I am dismayed, nay, appalled by the inexcusably careless approach to your record reviews indicated by three significant errors which fairly leapt at me from the pages of the April issue. The first is found in Noel Coppage's review of Don McLean's latest album. 'Tis truly a Recording of Special Merit, but 'tis the *third* such offering by McLean, not the second as indicated by Mr. Coppage. As if this were not enough, the critic clearly leaves the impression that McLean wrote the lyrics for *On the Amazon*. A rather superficial scan of the liner notes should reveal that *On the Amazon* was first copyrighted in 1928. Just how old does Noel think Don really is? Mr. Coppage, being a critic and not a historian, can perhaps be forgiven.

Peter Reilly, however, cannot. Just one column away from Mr. Coppage's carelessness, one finds Mr. Reilly's absurdity. I refer to the review of Melanie's "Stoneground Words." I am no great fan of Melanie's and am disturbed to see her get undeserved credit. The critic quotes several lines from *Rainbow Race* and calls them "Melanie's lyrics." It takes no serious student of the current folk idiom to recognize the lyrics and title as properly belonging to Pete Seeger.

TIM GASTON
Crown Point, Ind.

Mr. Coppage replies: Would you believe I was just trying to keep you on your toes? The squirm-inducing part of it is that I have a copy of "Tapestry" (No. 1), but thinking of the new album as a follow-up to "American Pie" (No. 2), I typed "second album"—the result, I have no doubt, of trying to concentrate fiercely on the sound of the music at hand. Anyone who tries to concentrate intensely becomes preoccupied, another name for which is absent-minded, in this culture a pejorative term that (1) allows us to feel superior to the person it's used on (he ain't practical), and (2) allows us to avoid dealing with what he is concentrating on. Despair not, for commerce is right on top of this: there are now available, as statistic-laden as a world almanac, pop-star bubblegum cards. Those who are, ah, preoccupied with the bookkeep-

ing end of pop music can now become magnificently hip without ever bothering to listen to anything.

Mr. Reilly replies: Put it back on the turntable, listened again. Melanie may not have written Rainbow Race, but she should have. Apologies to Mr. Seeger.

Rethberg or Lemnitz?

● In his March review of RCA Victor's re-issue of Elisabeth Rethberg arias, George Jellinek asks, "By the way, has there been another soprano in the past fifty years who has equaled Rethberg in her persuasive command of both the German (Wagner) and the Italian (Verdi) repertoires?" The answer, of course, is "Yes, Tiana Lemnitz." In the 78-rpm days, Lemnitz's recordings of *Otello* for HMV were definitive, as indeed also were her records of *Figaro* and *Der Freischütz*.

Looking at that absolutely camp photo run with the review reminds me of the outfit she wore the first time I heard her at Stanford University in the early spring of 1931; Rethberg must have been the model for Walt Disney's famous and beloved diva Mme. Clara Cluck.

HENRY HAY
San Juan Pueblo, N.M.

Mr. Jellinek replies: Tiana Lemnitz was certainly a singer of comparable greatness. She did not match Rethberg's universality, however. Lemnitz sang her Italian operatic roles in German. Rethberg functioned as a star of an international opera company, singing her Verdi in Italian. There is a great difference in terms of "mastery."

Axelrod's "Auction"

● Concerning Peter Reilly's review of the album "The Auction" in the March issue of STEREO REVIEW:

The idea for the LP "The Auction" was brought to me by an attorney here in L.A. by the name of James L. Tolbert. He is a former president of the L.A. chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. (incidentally, he's black). He is also a law partner of Mrs. Yvonne Braithwaite Burke, the congresswoman from L.A. who co-chaired the Democratic convention in 1972 (incidentally, she's black).

I then discussed it with the co-producer of the album, Cannonball Adderley, and voiced reasons why I didn't want to do the album, the main one being reviewers not knowing my background and not bothering to find out why I would compose an album like "The Auction." Cannonball dismissed my doubts, as he thought that most reviewers are far too sophisticated for that. The only valid social comments would have to be from black people themselves (incidentally, he's black). The album was previewed before the entire NATRA convention and received a standing ovation. Without their approval the album would not have been released (incidentally, that's the black disc-jockey convention).

Mr. Reilly's was the only negative review out of more than 160 from all over the U.S. Papers such as the Baltimore *Afro-American* (incidentally, this is a black-owned newspaper) and *Soul* magazine (the black *Rolling Stone*) gave "The Auction" rave "critiques." M.C.A.'s public relations department will gladly furnish copies of any of the reviews.

I have never answered a reviewer (whether the review was good or bad), but I refuse to
(Continued on page 14)

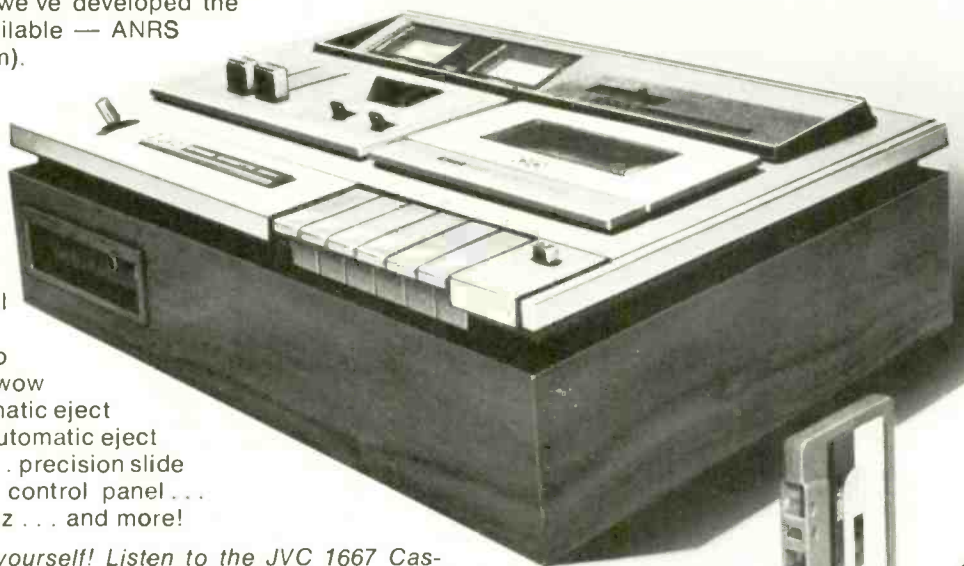
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let anybody question my integrity. That has no business in a music review, and unless Mr. Reilly is very young and extremely immature, he should know it.

I will close by quoting James Baldwin (incidentally, he's black) from his newest book: when speaking to a group of students, he answered a young black girl's "bum raps" regarding William Styron's *Nat Turner* by asking her, "Have you read it?"

DAVID AXELROD
Encino, Calif.

Mr. Reilly replies: Last things first. Yes, I have indeed read Nat Turner, and I have also listened to Mr. Axelrod's "Auction" a couple of times. My experience of both was such as to cause me to question their sincerity, a reaction which any critic ought to be frank about. The rest is beside the point. Even beyond the fact that such scorekeeping has no place in the artistic arena, the review tally of 160 to 1 is about as interesting as the results of a Russian election. And if black subject matter can be validly criticized only by black people—a rather startling example of cultural segregation in itself—perhaps it follows that it should then be created only by black people as well. (Mr. Axelrod, incidentally, is white.) But that is not exactly my point, which is that blacks have now found their own voices and no longer need others to speak, at one or more removes, for them. Porgy and Bess and Showboat are classics of the musical theater, but they hardly count as accurate descriptions of black life or black feelings. It was either bold or presumptuous of Mr. Axelrod to think that he could succeed—at this late date—where Gershwin and Kern failed. But (for me, at least) fail he did, as resoundingly and as melodramatically as Dion Boucicault's mid-nineteenth-century tear-jerker The Octoroon would in 1973. Has Mr. Axelrod read it?

Don Kirschner

● In the article on Don Kirschner in the March issue of *STEREO REVIEW*, Henry Pleasants writes "Kirschner . . . has been personally responsible for more than five hundred song hits in the past ten years. . . ." I believe the public is responsible for song hits. Mr. Kirschner didn't buy those 200-million records. He is only responsible for sucking every nickel he can from the music for himself.

ART M. FANER
Salem, Ore.

There's many a light under a bushel, many a better mousetrap, and full many a flower blushing unseen on many a desert. Their owners and creators would all just love to have Mr. Kirschner carry these to market for them, as Mr. Faner might himself discover if he were to write a song. The public is responsible only for what it knows about, and it would know very little indeed without the Kirschners of this world.

Stereovhanness

● Of course, Eric Salzman's subjective, personal view of the music of Alan Hovhaness as expressed in his March review of two Poseidon Society releases is not open to debate. However, it does not inspire one's faith in his perceptiveness to read that the Hovhaness recordings are "produced in mono only." Had Mr. Salzman played these in stereo—as the record labels most clearly indicate he should—he might have enjoyed them more.

Certainly I have grown to love and admire many Hovhaness works, not otherwise available to us, through the nine Poseidon Society discs that I have happily acquired so far—and that I have played properly in stereo.

JOHN P. COLLINS
Seattle, Washington

Mr. Salzman replies: Despite Mr. Collins' certainty that I must have made an error, I can assure readers that neither the printed labels nor the jackets of the Poseidon records I received for review carried any indication that the records were stereo, nor did the record numbers offer any hint that that might be so. In addition, switching my mode control from mono to stereo resulted in no significant change in the sound, and I could only conclude from all the evidence that the records were, in fact, mono. If Poseidon wants the records to be listed as stereo, they will have to do more than that to get their message across.

● May I correct Eric Salzman's error in his March review of Hovhaness' Symphony No. 11, *Fra Angelico*, and *Requiem and Resurrection* in which he stated that all Poseidon Society Hovhaness releases are in mono only? All ten Poseidon recordings of Hovhaness, including the ones reviewed, are in stereo, with the sole exception of Poseidon 1007, which includes Hovhaness' Fantasy for Piano, performed by the composer, as well as the complete piano music of Komitas. Of two imminent releases, one is an event long awaited by Hovhaness fans, the first stereo recording of the Saint Vartan Symphony, conducted by the composer.

ELIZABETH WHITTINGTON
Director, Poseidon Society
New York, N.Y.

Conclusions: The Beatles

● I enjoyed David Chestnutt's painting of the Beatles on the cover of your February issue, but I was depressed by what the rock critics had to say about the Beatles. It was just too negative. (I freely admit that my opinion of the Beatles is biased, since I consider myself the most dedicated Beatlemaniac in the world today.) Nevertheless, none of the short retrospectives could ignore the enormous effect the group has had on contemporary music, our society, and specifically this generation. What puzzled me was the negative tone in every commentary, with the contradictory conclusion that the Beatles were truly great. For example, Richard Goldstein wrote "'Sergeant Pepper' was dazzling but ultimately fraudulent." But his last comment is "Nothing they ever did can be remembered as rhetoric."

I think the Beatles' greatest asset was their versatility. The Stones could probably do a fair version of *Helter Skelter*, but I'd hate to see them attempt *Michelle*, *All My Lovin'*, or *Ob La Di, Ob La Da*. Dylan could do an interesting recording of *Norwegian Wood*, but could never attempt *Day Tripper* or *Eight Days a Week*.

JAMES WYSONG
Jacksonville, Fla.

Reader Wysong should reread his Goldstein. Further, the critical balance struck by the other critics was almost exactly even, pro and con; this perhaps reflects the climate "ten years after," but who knows what it will be twenty or thirty years from now? It may even contradict critic Goldstein and find the Beatles "remembered merely as rhetoric."

BOOKS RECEIVED

Compiled by
Louise Gooch Boundas

● *Sir Noël Coward: His Words and Music*, edited, compiled, and designed by Lee Snider. Chapell & Co., Inc., 609 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017. 1973. \$5.95 (paper), 176 pp.

There are thirty-two inimitable songs here, in a book that is just right for the family upright, the parlor spinet, or the music-room grand. It is also just right for browsing, for humming, for just remembering, or for wishing you had been there. There are photographs here, too, and an introduction (reprinted from the 1953 *Simon & Schuster Songbook*) written by Sir Noël himself.

"The world has treated me very well," Sir Noël once said, "but then I haven't treated it so badly either." That world is a little sadder now for his having left it, but surely happier for his having been here.

● *Haydn, Mozart and Metastasio*, by Stendhal (1814). Translated, introduced, and edited by Richard N. Coe. Grossman Publishers, New York, 1972. \$15.00, 370 pp.

Henri Beyle, better known to modern readers as Stendhal (he wrote a couple of those books on the college-freshman "required" list), had yet another pseudonym. "Louis-Alexander-César Bombet" was the impressive-ridiculous name of the author of a rather well ignored but still controversial book about music. The young writer—this was his first published book—may have lacked money and prestige, but he had no shortage of sheer gall: *Haydn, Mozart and Metastasio* is plagiarism from first to last, though there are a few original errors thrown in.

Yet it is worth reading. Who could resist at least dipping into the work of a French ex-civil servant with very shaky Italian and little real knowledge of music who places the librettist Metastasio on the same literary level as Virgil and Shakespeare? And editor Coe makes a good guide—no professorial Stendhal apologist he.

● *FM Multiplexing for Stereo*, by Leonard Feldman. Third Edition. Howard W. Sams & Co., Inc., Indianapolis, 1972. \$4.95 (paper), 176 pp.

This updated edition of a book first published in the early Sixties will answer many an audiophile's questions about stereo broadcasting. An appendix contains pertinent FCC Rules and Regulations, and there is a helpful index. Illustrated with diagrams and photographs. (For a sample of Mr. Feldman's writing, see his article on antennas in this issue.)

DISCOGRAPHIES

● *Charles E. Ives: A Discography*, by Richard Warren, Jr. Historical Sound Recordings. Yale University Library. New Haven, Conn., 1972, \$7.00, 124 pp.

● *The Clarinetist's Solo Repertoire: A Discography*, by Richard Gilbert. The Grenadilla Society, P.O. Box 279, Madison Square Station, New York, N. Y. 10010, 1972, \$7.50 (paper), 100 pp.

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†Suggested retail price—slightly higher in the South and West.

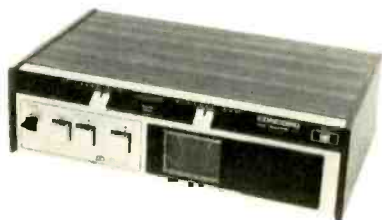


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NEW PRODUCTS

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EQUIPMENT

Concord DBA-9 Noise Reduction Unit



● CONCORD has expanded its line to include a second add-on B-type Dolby stereo noise-reduction unit, the Mod-

el DBA-9. Somewhat more compact (10³/₈ x 3 x 7¹/₂ inches) than the company's other Dolby device, the DBA-10, the new model also contains two Dolby modules, permitting stereo encoding (recording) and decoding (playback), although without tape-monitoring provisions. Dolbyized FM broadcasts can also be decoded. The two recording-level controls, which supplant those of the tape machine, are horizontal sliders. Two large meters, arranged point-to-point, monitor signal levels and also serve for Dolby-level calibration. Metal-clad pushbuttons switch the Dolby cir-

cuits in and out, select record or playback mode, and switch in a Dolby-level calibration tone. The DBA-9 has a frequency response of 20 to 15,000 Hz \pm 0.5 dB, and harmonic distortion is under 0.5 per cent. Input sensitivity is 30 millivolts, with an input impedance of 25,000 ohms and an output impedance of 2,500 ohms. Maximum noise reduction is 8 dB at 2,000 Hz and 10 dB at 5,000 Hz and above. The unit is supplied with patch cords and calibration tapes for cassette and open-reel machines. Price: \$99.85.

Circle 115 on reader service card

Rotel RT-1220 AM/Stereo FM Tuner



● ROTEL has brought out a new AM/stereo FM tuner, the Model RT-1220, with an IHF sensitivity of 1.5 microvolts and a 1-dB capture ratio. Selectivity is 90 dB, and image, i.f., and spu-

rious-response rejection are all 110 dB. At 1,000 Hz, stereo separation is 40 dB, harmonic distortion is under 0.5 per cent, and the signal-to-noise ratio is 70 dB at full quieting. The RT-1220's linearly calibrated dial scale has illumination that is adjustable in intensity by means of a front-panel dimmer control. Tuner functions are selected by a rotary control with positions for AM, automatic stereo/mono switching in FM, and stereo or mono FM only. The threshold of the FM interstation-noise muting can be set for 10 or 30 microvolts, or it can be deactivated entirely. A stereo head-

phone jack with its own level control is provided. In addition, the line-output signal of the tuner is variable by means of a control on the back panel. A push-button switch introduces a high-frequency blend to reduce noise on stereo broadcasts. Signal-strength and channel-center meters are provided as tuning aids. On the rear panel are 300- and 75-ohm FM antenna connectors, a ferrite-rod antenna for AM, and a terminal for an external AM antenna. The dimensions of the RT-1220 are 16¹/₂ x 5¹/₂ x 12 inches. Price: \$299.95.

Circle 116 on reader service card

Bozak Rhapsody Speaker System



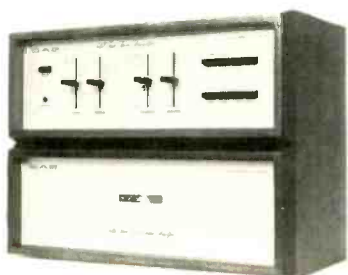
● BOZAK has introduced a series of bookshelf and compact speaker systems, the latest of which is the Rhapsody

(shown), available as a floor-standing model (B-401) or a bookshelf unit (B-402). In both versions the system uses a 12-inch woofer in a sealed enclosure, a 6-inch mid-range in an acoustically isolated sub-enclosure, and two small cone tweeters angled for best dispersion. Crossover frequencies are 800 and 2,500 Hz, with rolloff occurring at 6-dB-per-octave rates. A three-position tweeter-level switch adjusts the system's high-frequency output. The nominal impedance is 8 ohms, and power-handling capability is rated at an average of 60 watts. Frequency response is 40 to 20,000 Hz. The enclosure is constructed of

3/4-inch particle-board panels with walnut veneers, and overall dimensions are approximately 25³/₄ x 18 x 13³/₄ inches. Weight is 65 pounds. Price: \$249.50. Another system in the compact series is the Model B-201 Sonora, a bookshelf design measuring 20¹/₄ x 11³/₄ x 10 inches and containing an 8-inch woofer and the same tweeter arrangement used in the Rhapsody. Crossover, also at 6 dB per octave, occurs at 1,800 Hz, and the frequency response is 45 to 20,000 Hz. Nominal impedance is 8 ohms. The enclosure is finished in walnut-grain vinyl. Price: \$99.50.

Circle 117 on reader service card

SAE Mark XXX Preamp, Mark XXXI Power Amplifier



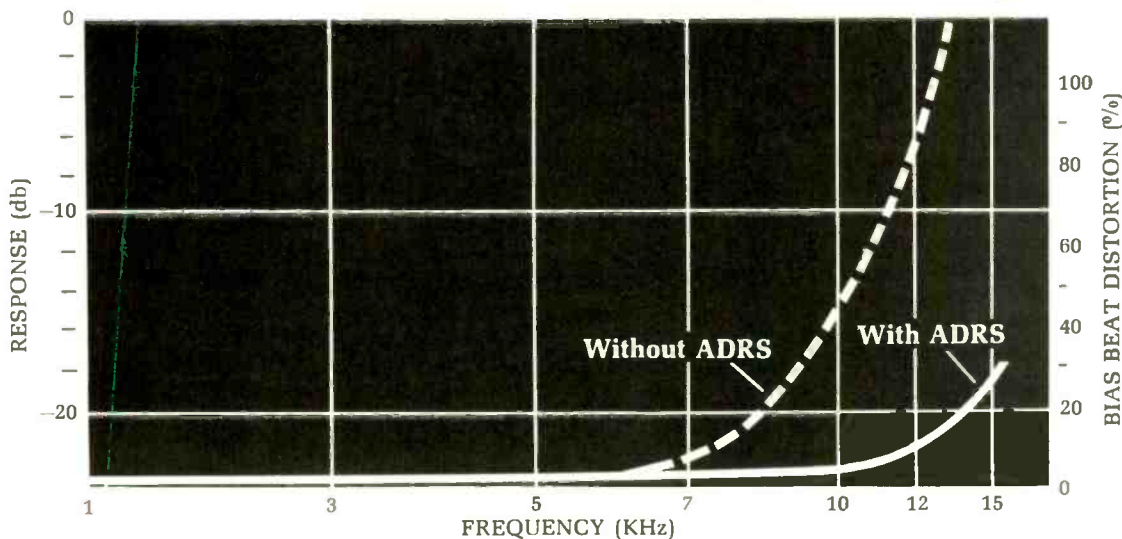
● SAE's new Mark XXX stereo preamplifier and Mark XXXI stereo power amplifier constitute a matched pair of components intended for medium-price systems. The preamplifier has a total of five pushbutton-selected inputs—phono, tuner, two auxiliary inputs, and tape monitor—along with slider controls for volume, balance, bass, and treble, and switching for tone-control bypass and mode (stereo, mono, or either channel). Maximum rated output is 9 volts into 100,000 ohms, with intermodulation dis-

tortion less than 0.03 per cent and typically 0.015 per cent. Harmonic distortion figures are the same, referred to a 2.5-volt output. The signal-to-noise ratios are 90 dB for high-level inputs and 72 dB for the phono input with a 10-millivolt signal level. Frequency response is 10 to 100,000 Hz \pm 0.25 dB. The front-panel headphone jack is intended for high-impedance phones.

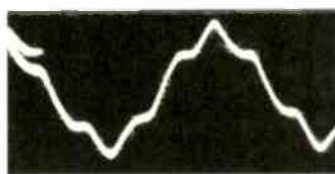
The Mark XXXI power amplifier has a continuous output of 50 watts per
(Continued on page 18)

ADRS*

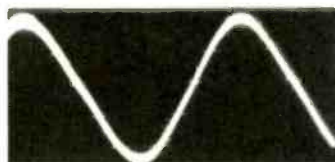
The curve that bent the Cassette Market out of shape.



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.



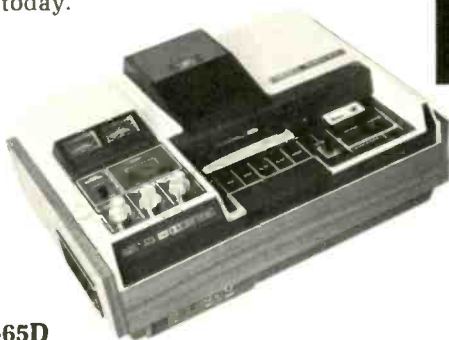
Without ADR System



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



GXC-65D

Invert-O-Matic - Automatic Continuous Reverse - Mechanism guaranteed two full years ... parts and labor



GXC-46D

Why settle for second best in cassette decks?

Only AKAI offers you ADRS, GX Heads and Dolby at a price no more than you would pay for decks equipped with Dolby alone. See ... and most of all hear ... our revolutionary new GXC-46D and GXC-65D. Your ears will make up your mind for you.

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CIRCLE NO. 3 ON READER SERVICE CARD

NEW PRODUCTS

THE LATEST IN
HIGH-FIDELITY
EQUIPMENT

channel, both channels driven into 8 ohms. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion are both under 0.1 per cent (typically 0.02 per cent), and hum and noise are more than 100 dB below rated

output. The Mark XXX and Mark XXXI are identical in size—15 x 4³/₄ x 8 inches—and in price: \$200 each. A walnut cabinet for either unit costs \$25. The Mark XXXI amplifier is also avail-

able in a mono version, with a continuous-power output of 60 watts into 8 ohms; other specifications are identical. Price: \$150.

Circle 118 on reader service card

Clark/4 CH-A Four-Channel Headphones



● THE David Clark Company has announced the availability of the Clark/4 CH-A four-channel stereo headset, the manufacturer's first such offering. The large earpieces are of the isolating type, with rectangular foam cushions enclos-

ing an internal volume (when on the head) that exceeds 100 cubic centimeters. Each one contains two moving-coil Mylar-diaphragm drivers, approximately thirteen square centimeters in radiating area and with a nominal impedance of 8 ohms. Power-handling capability for a white-noise signal is 600 milliwatts continuous (2.2 volts into 8 ohms). Frequency response is uniform from 30 to 16,000 Hz. Pivoting yokes connect the earpieces to a length-adjustable spring-steel headband thickly padded with vinyl-clad foam. An integral 10-foot coiled cable attaches directly to the left earpiece and terminates in two standard stereo phone jacks—one for the front channels, the

other for the rear. The headset weighs one pound.

An optional accessory offered with the Clark/4 CH-A is the DC-2A "Derived Ambience" Decoder, a small, passive device that receives the two phone plugs from the headset and plugs into a conventional two-channel phone jack. The DC-2A synthesizes a four-channel effect from two-channel sources, and also has some decoding capability for matrixed four-channel recordings played on two-channel equipment. Supplied with the DC-2A decoder, the Clark/4 CH-A costs \$95. Price of the headset alone: \$80.

Circle 119 on reader service card

TDK Tape Reel and Storage Case



● TDK has made available a combination package consisting of a metal 7-inch tape reel and a permanent molded-polystyrene storage case. The reel is manufactured of anodized satin-finish aluminum, and it has a standard slotted hub. The case, which has an integral latching mechanism that releases with the gentle

pull of a tab, is designed to permit access to the reel without the removal of the case from shelf or display rack. Adhesive-backed blank labels are included for identification of the case contents. The complete package is designated Model LR-7M; it is priced at \$10.50.

Circle 120 on reader service card

Dual 1214 Automatic Turntable



● DUAL's latest automatic turntable, the Model 1214, is also the least expensive in the company's line. The three-speed (33¹/₃, 45, and 78 rpm) design has

the familiar Dual operating controls, including speed-selector lever, start/stop switch, and a selector for 7-, 10-, and 12-inch record diameters. For manual operation the platter begins rotating when the tone arm is moved away from its rest. The tone-arm cueing control is damped in both directions of travel. The low-mass tone arm is balanced by means of an adjustable counterweight, and stylus force is set with a calibrated dial. The anti-skating compensation has three fixed adjustment settings; the intermediate adjustment is set at the factory and is judged optimum for the majority of cartridges, but it can be altered by the user at a later time. The arm is recommended

for use with tracking forces as low as 1¹/₄ grams. Other features of the 1214 include a platter-speed control with a range of ± 3 per cent, and an automatic spindle that accommodates a stack of up to six records. Dimensions of the motorboard are approximately 10³/₄ x 13 inches, with clearances of at least 5 inches above the motorboard and 2⁵/₈ inches below required for correct installation. Price: \$109.50. Bases in walnut-grain plastic (\$8.95) and oiled walnut (\$12.95) are available; a dust cover is also \$12.95, and a Scandinavian-style base and dust-cover combination costs \$39.95.

Circle 121 on reader service card

3M Recording Basics Booklet

● 3M has revised and updated its paperback booklet *Recording Basics*, a fifty-page guide to the important aspects of magnetic recording written on a beginner's level and liberally illustrated with diagrams. The booklet begins with an introduction to sound and the musical

significance of frequency and dynamics. The theory of tape recording is covered in part two, and the chapters following treat such subjects as tape formats (cassette, eight-track cartridge, and open reel), recording levels, editing, speech recording, tape types, maintenance, and practical recording tips. There are also short sections on chromium-dioxide

tapes and the Dolby noise-reduction system. The booklet ends with a ten-page glossary of audio and recording terms. Single copies of *Recording Basics* are available free of charge from 3M dealers, through the Readers Service Card (see below), or by writing Dept. Ma 3-8 SR, Box 33600, St. Paul, Minn. 55133.

Circle 122 on reader service card



**TEAC
announces
a major achievement in
tape technology:**

**A totally new
transport drive system
has produced
the first cassette deck with
record and playback
wow and flutter
of less than 0.07%!
Measurably better than
any other cassette deck
in the world.**

THE TEAC 450

with enhanced Dolby* system.

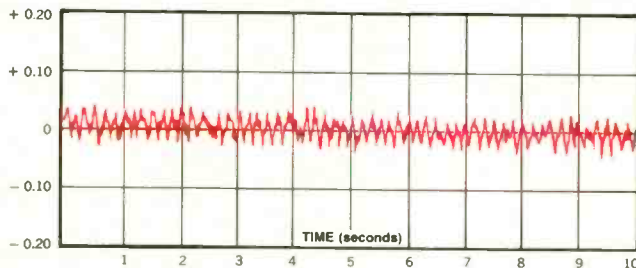
No other cassette deck can touch it.

Here's why it has no peer among cassette decks and why its specs are matched by only a few reel-to-reel decks.

TEAC can now announce a remarkable achievement in sound: a cassette deck with an enhanced Dolby system, and record and playback wow and flutter of *less* than 0.07%! This WRMS measurement is not just an abstract statistic; it is a measurement that assures you a steady, flutter-free sound previously unheard of in cassette decks. This is measurably better than any other cassette deck in existence!

How did we do it? With a hard-headed, uncompromising philosophy of design leadership, and incredible quality control.

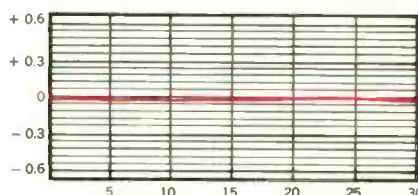
The heart of this accomplishment is TEAC's new transport drive system—a system with all new parts and exceptional critical tolerances.



(Actual wow and flutter chart of the 450 shows WRMS measurement of considerably less than 0.07%.)

Item: our new capstan

A newly designed capstan has a shaft with a diameter of 2.4 mm. The shaft has a critical tolerance of 0.15 microns (the accompanying diagram shows this 0.15 micron tolerance enlarged 4000 times).



(Actual tape speed chart using TEAC test tape with 3 kHz signal is extremely constant over 30 minute time span.)



causes of wow and flutter, and reduces level fluctuation (drop-outs) to a new low for cassette recording.

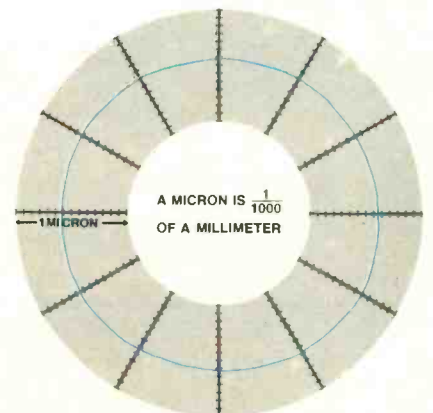
Item: our outer rotor motor

Our hysteresis synchronous motor has the *outside* revolving, rather than the *inside*—as in a normal motor. The flywheel is exceptionally large (93mm) and has twice the mass of any other TEAC fly-

wheel. This increases the inertia and stability of the transport drive element which pulls the tape.

Our outer rotor motor is even dynamically balanced, to be completely free of rotation variation!

It drives the capstan flywheel with a professional quality flat belt made of a new synthetic material created for minimum stretch and maximum durability.



(Actual "Roundness" tolerance of the 450 capstan shaft shows enlarged critical tolerance of 0.15 microns.)

CASSETTE DECK

Item: our enhanced Dolby system

TEAC has given Dolby circuitry a significant new flexibility: our exclusive Dolby FM/Copy control. In the past, when recording Dolbyized tapes or Dolbyized FM broadcasts, the high-pitched emphasis of the encoded Dolby signal was heard as you monitored—an inaccurate and disturbing representation of the sound being recorded. The exclusive TEAC Dolby FM/Copy switch decodes the Dolby signal for monitoring, while leaving the recorded encoded Dolby signal undisturbed.

While today there are only a handful of Dolbyized FM stations broadcasting throughout the country, TEAC has created this forward-thinking feature to enhance

Mic/line mixing. A feature of reel-to-reel decks now found on the 450. Professional slide controls allow you to mix 2 mic inputs and 2 line inputs to create voice and stereo instrumental mixing.

Lighted tape run indicator. A glance at the 450 from across the room tells you the tape is flowing normally.

Two heads. A record-playback head and an erase head of a new material called Permaflux—the lowest distortion head ever made.

Solid-state triggering devices. Solid-state switching and the elimination of relays further enhance reliability.

Signal-to-noise ratio of 60dB. This important rating places the 450 with the finest in reel-to-reel decks. Which translates into superior sound.

What does it all add up to?

A cassette deck that is in a class by itself. A sophistication in tape technology that is exclusive with TEAC.

The TEAC 450 has the flexibility to function as a complete record/playback unit, or as an integrated component in a total system. It is a pace-setter for the industry.

And to top it all, TEAC now offers a two-year warranty on all parts and labor—a warranty that reflects total confidence in our superior TEAC engineering and workmanship.

That 0.07% wow and flutter may be much better than anyone else's cassette deck. But it is only a hint of things to come from TEAC.

Only a hint.

Here are the specs:

Heads

Two, erase and record-playback, 4 track 2 channel stereo.

Motor

Hysteresis synchronous outer-rotor motor

Wow and Flutter

0.07% (wrms)

Frequency Response

30–16,000 Hz (Chromium dioxide tape)

Signal to Noise Ratio

60 dB (with Dolby process)

Dimensions

6¹⁵/₁₆" (H) x 17¹/₂" (W) x 10⁵/₈" (D)

Features and specifications subject to change without notice

*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.



your enjoyment of their signal.

And for good measure, we've added an automatic output stabilizing network that maintains Dolbyized levels despite changes in the line levels!

So what else is new?

Literally dozens of new exclusive TEAC features—both electronic and mechanical—can be found on the 450. For instance:

Three-level bias and equalization.

Flick the two switches and instantly adjust for normal, high output or chromium dioxide tapes. A vital, but neglected feature in other cassette decks.

Automatic timer circuit. You can plug into an external timer and control your entire system when you're not present. The 450 will turn on automatically, come out of pause, record, then shut off any connected component, as well as its own electronics, at the end of the tape!

LED. A light emitting diode backstops your 2 VU meters by warning you of transient high-level highs, and helps you avoid saturation distortion (about which we've spoken in a previous ad).



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CIRCLE NO. 52 ON READER SERVICE CARD

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amplifier design
since



the ORIGINAL
Super Amp

You remember the first super power amplifier - the Crown DC300. Well, most of its competitors are still using those six year old circuit designs pioneered by Crown. Most every amp but Crown's new DC300A - a totally redesigned amplifier inside and out. Frankly, the DC300A is not created for the hi fi mass market, but for demanding commercial and professional applications. However, we know there are discerning audiophiles, perhaps like yourself, who can appreciate the difference.

The new DC300A has double the number of output transistors, effectively twice the muscle of the old DC300 for driving multi-speaker systems. Each channel has eight 150-watt devices for 1200 watts of transistor dissipation per channel. Advanced electronic output protection permits the DC300A to drive the toughest speaker loads at higher outputs before going into protection, and even then there are no annoying flyback pulse noises or DC fuses to blow.

The new DC300A has unprecedented signal purity. IM and harmonic distortion ratings are .05%, although typically below .025%. Hum and noise rating is 110dB below 150 watts, while typically -122dB. The difference in increased listening comfort is impressive.

Although totally new, the DC300A has inherited some important traits from its predecessor:

PRICE — still under \$700

WARRANTY — three years on all parts, labor and round-trip shipping

POWER RATING — 150 w/ch continuous at 8 ohms; power at clip-point typically 190 w/ch at 8 ohms, 340 w/ch at 4 ohms, 500 w/ch at 2.5 ohms, or plug in two parts for 600 watts continuous mono power at 8 ohms.

There are many new super-power amplifiers. But when you buy a Crown DC300A, you're buying more than just an amp. You're buying the Crown company — a professional audio equipment manufacturer with a 26-year reputation for solid quality and lasting value. There are thousands of Crown amps in the field still working to their original specifications, and still outperforming most new amps. Visit your Crown dealer to hear the difference. For detailed product data, write Crown International, Box 1000, Elkhart, Indiana, 46514.



CROWN

CIRCLE NO. 13 ON READER SERVICE CARD

AUDIO QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

By LARRY KLEIN *Technical Editor*



Quadradisc Longevity

Q. *In the December 1972 issue Julian Hirsch tested the RCA Quadradisc for compatibility and record wear, but only on four-channel supersets. How long would such discs last on a Sears console or a teeny-bopper's portable stereo player? Not all records are played on high-quality equipment, you know.*

GARY STEFFINSON
Bellingham, Wa.

A. You raise a good point. Let's consider what happens to an ordinary stereo disc on a \$20 portable player. Every time the disc is played, the groove walls are subjected to considerable abuse. The microscopic ridges that embody the higher recorded frequencies have their "tips" physically knocked off or deformed by the unyielding stylus. The resulting damage and groove debris produce noise and loss of highs. This is of no concern to someone listening to the record on a player that is unable to reproduce either the original high frequencies or the noise that has replaced it. But when the damaged disc is played on a wide-range component system, it sounds just as you might imagine.

It seems to me that much the same situation would have to occur when a Quadradisc is played on a low-quality heavy-tracking record player. The high-frequency groove modulation that embodies the difference signals necessary for four-channel reproduction would be severely attenuated—and probably would not be recoverable during later play on a discrete Quadradisc system. I will be interested to see how the manufacturers of low-fi phonographs are going to handle the playing of the CD-4 discs. Although such manufacturers have no particular problem in producing a \$75 four-channel player for matrix discs, the discrete disc presents a far tougher row to hoe—but hoe it (I suspect) they will.

Incidentally, it was recently suggested that the *audible* effects of groove-wall wear caused by a conventional stylus might be mitigated when a Shibata stylus

cartridge (as is used with CD-4 discs) is employed. The reasoning was that the longer side-contact area of the Shibata tip would, in effect, "straddle" the damaged groove-wall areas.

Phono-Static Cure

Q. *I have a terrible problem with static electricity when playing records. Not only do I get a slight shock and draw a spark when handling my hi-fi system, but I hear an intermittent crackling, and dust is pulled out of the air to land on the record. Is there any way I can solve this problem other than by moving myself and my system to a damper environment for the winter months?*

HARVEY CAPONE
New York, N. Y.

A. By the time this answer appears in print the season of ultra-low humidity will be over (in New York City, at least), and much of Mr. Capone's problem will have disappeared for some months. However, for those who are still—or will be—disturbed by the various electrostatic phenomena that cause trouble when records are played in low-humidity environments, I have an alleviating suggestion. If your record player has a plastic dust cover, use waterproof glue to cement a square plastic sponge—like those sold for dish-washing—to the inside of the cover. Install the sponge in an area where it will not interfere with the record-player operation when the cover is closed—and where it will not drip on the turntable. If you keep the sponge slightly damp, perhaps using an eyedropper to water it when necessary, the air beneath the dust cover should be moist enough to allow electrostatic charges to leak off. The normal air turbulence brought about by the rotating turntable will produce all the circulation necessary to insure distribution of the moistened conductive air over the record surface.

If the sponge technique works in your setup, you can add one final touch. Drill a small hole through the dust cover at the

point where the sponge is installed to enable you to feed in water with the eyedropper when the cover is in place.

The Medium vs. the Message

Q. *I don't understand the need for all the de- and pre-emphasis equalization that one finds in records, tapes, and FM broadcasts. Wouldn't it be simpler if the signals were handled "as is" rather than introducing the possibility of distortion by boosting and cutting the various frequencies?*

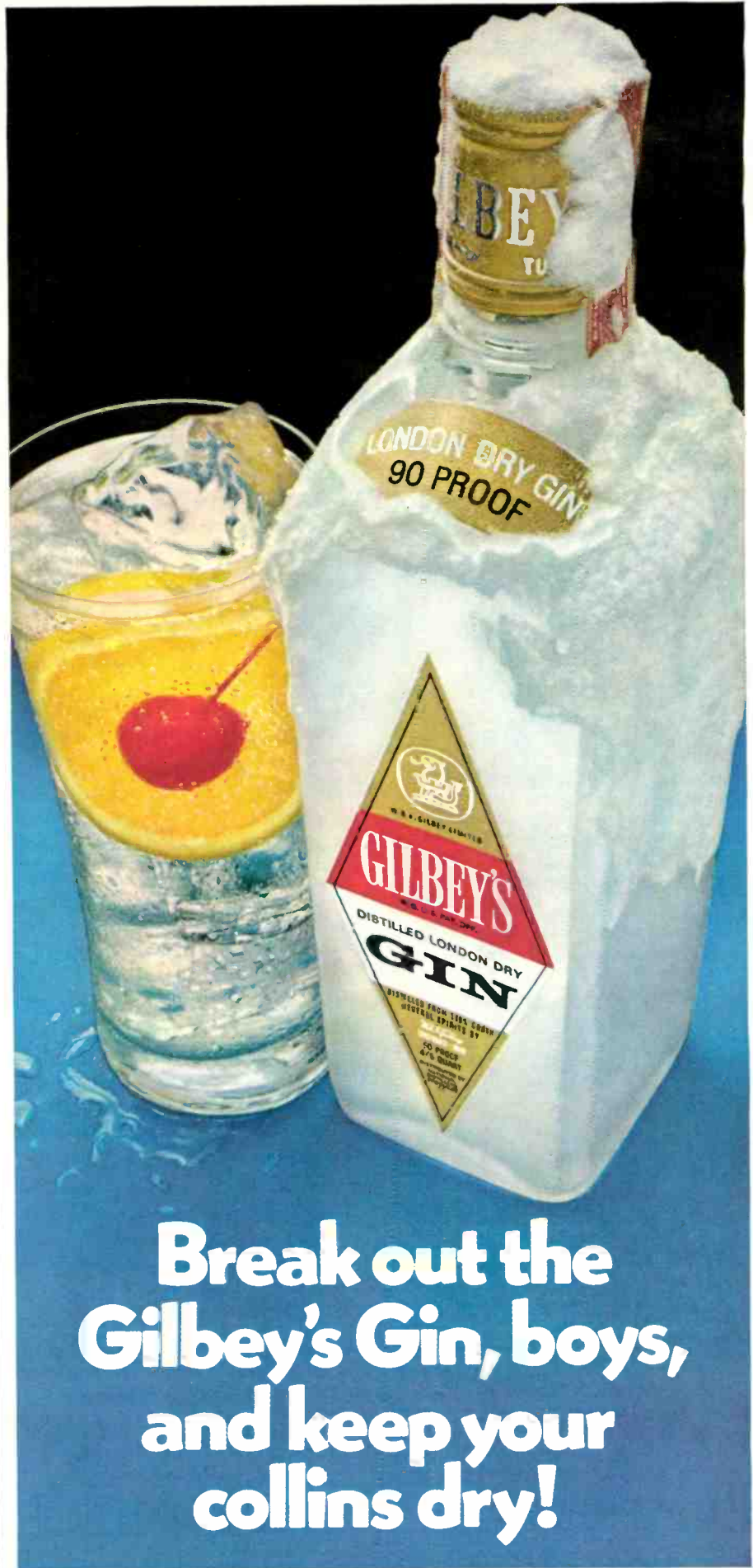
BERNARD JARVIS
Brooklyn, N.Y.

A. Yes, it certainly would be simpler—but unfortunately distortion and noise result if you *don't* do the equalizing. In each case it is some limitation in the medium that creates the need for equalization. To take your examples in order, if the bass frequencies were cut into a record without reducing their relative strength, the side-to-side swings of the record groove would be several times what they are now. Not that the groove itself would be wider, but the groove *path* would be displaced an excessive amount to the right and left. This would not only limit the playing time of the record, but would cause great difficulty for phono-cartridge designers, who would have to cope with excessive displacement of the stylus. At the high-frequency end, the harmonics of most instruments would end up buried under record-surface noise and other hiss components introduced during the playback process. To minimize these effects, the highs are boosted and the low frequencies are reduced during recording, and the reverse equalization is applied during playback.

A similar situation—and approach to equalization—exists with tape. Instead of working within the physical limitations of the record groove and phono cartridge, we have to contend with the electromagnetic properties of recording tape and tape heads. In respect to FM broadcasting, the potential difficulty handled by pre-emphasis/de-emphasis (high-frequency boost and cut, respectively) is simply that of overriding the high-frequency noise inherent in the broadcast and reception processes.

In other words, we find that for the most efficient storage, transmission, and/or recovery (reproduction), a signal has to be "conditioned" or equalized according to the specific demands of the medium (disc, tape, or FM) in which it is to operate.

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!



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Gilbey's Gin, boys,
and keep your
collins dry!**

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CIRCLE NO. 22 ON READER SERVICE CARD

AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES



FREQUENCY RESPONSE

FREQUENCY RESPONSE has always been a much-touted high-fidelity specification—probably because it lends itself so well to the numbers game. But a simple statement of the highest and lowest frequencies a device can produce (or reproduce) does not tell you as much as you may think about how it will actually *sound*. You do have a clue to the audible significance of a response specification if there is information about how *uniformly* the frequencies are reproduced. Deviations from an even or flat frequency response are expressed in decibels (dB). A specification of, say, 20 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB means that at no frequency between those extremes is there an upward deviation (+) or a downward deviation (−) that exceeds 3 dB. The smallest change in the strength of a steady tone that the ear can detect is about 1 dB. With most *music*, however, deviations from flatness of 2 or 3 decibels are usually not audible.

Electronic amplifying equipment usually has no difficulty achieving an almost perfectly “flat” or even response over the audible range—generally defined as 20 to 20,000 Hz. (The 20,000-Hz audibility figure is a little optimistic for everyone except young children—and most animals). But the *electroacoustic*, *electromechanical*, and *electromagnetic* audio devices (respectively, loudspeakers, phono cartridges, and tape machines) in general have difficulty achieving the high- and low-frequency extremes of the audible bandwidth. Many low to moderately priced speakers, phono cartridges, and tape machines, for example, are barely able to reach 12,000 Hz or so. If their response is “down” 10 dB at 12,000 Hz (meaning it is 10 dB below the signal strength at mid-frequencies), sounds such as the “shimmer” of cymbals are simply not audible. The manufacturer may claim a response up to 20,000 Hz, but if the 20,000-Hz signal has 20 dB less strength than the 1,000-Hz signal, it might as well not be there.

It is therefore evident that without a plus/minus qualification on the frequency-response specification, you really don't know very much about the actual sonic performance. And, sad to say, even with a response specification (unless it is somewhere close to ± 1 dB) you can't *predict* sound quality. For example, you might have two pieces of equipment, both rated 20 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB, that will have entirely different audible responses. As a very simple example of how that might occur, visualize two response curves, one 3 dB up at 100 Hz, 0 dB at 1,000 Hz, and 3 dB down at 10,000 Hz, the other 3 dB down at 100 Hz, 0 dB at 1,000 Hz, and 3 dB up at 10,000 Hz. A speaker having the sound characteristics of the first curve will sound somewhat bassy or bottom-heavy; a speaker with the second curve will sound slightly thin and perhaps even shrill. Yet both units could be legitimately described as having a frequency response of ± 3 dB from 100 to 10,000 Hz. Thus, if you are really concerned about frequency-response performance, the numbers provided are not *in themselves* sufficient; you will also have to see the unit's frequency-response graphs with all test conditions spelled out.



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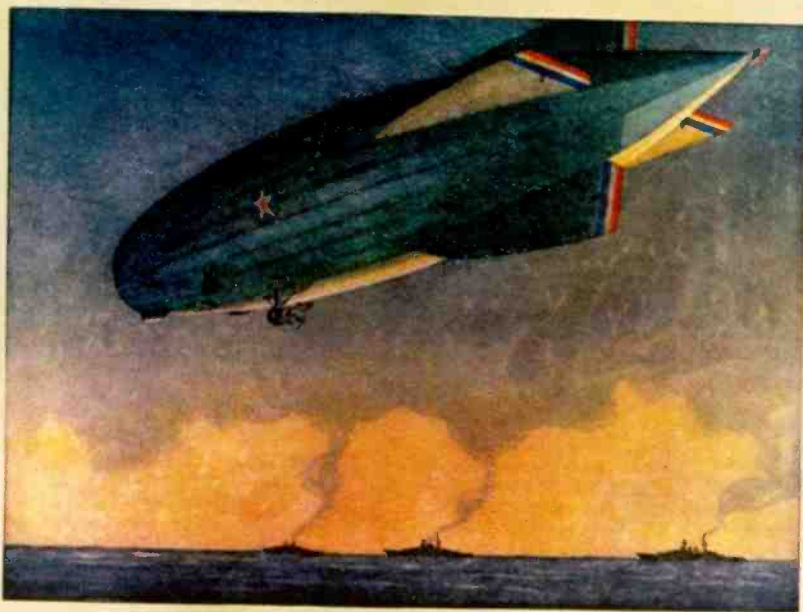
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Within 15 milliseconds, power is supplied to the pinch roller solenoid, the brake solenoid, the back tension motor, a second relay and, at the same time, the photocell is checked for the presence of tape. If present, Relay One self-holds.

Elapsed time, 25 milliseconds.

At 30 milliseconds, Relay Two closes and puts accelerating tension

on the take-up motor.

The logic checks are now complete and power is available to actuate all necessary functions.

From 30 milliseconds to 300 milliseconds, mechanical inertia is being overcome and the motors and solenoids are settling down.

By 300 milliseconds, the brakes have been released, the pinch roller is in contact with the capstan shaft, the tape lifter retracted, the playback muting removed and the motors have come up to operating speed.

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CIRCLE NO. 46 ON READER SERVICE CARD



TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **HI-FI IS STILL A BARGAIN:** Although international finance is as mysterious to me as I imagine an integrated circuit would be to a Swiss banker, I have no doubt that the devaluation of the dollar will result in somewhat higher prices for most hi-fi components on the American market. If a price increase of perhaps 10 to 15 per cent seems to be the "last straw" to someone who has been planning and saving money toward a substantial investment in a stereo or four-channel system, I would like to offer some historical perspective by way of consolation.

Rising living costs, in many cases, go hand-in-hand with deteriorating service or quality. Paying more for less is hard to accept; the least one should expect is a maintenance of standards, if not an improvement. I submit that there are few industries that can match the record of the hi-fi component manufacturers in delivering consistently greater value for our inflated dollars.

The other day I unearthed some of the spec sheets and test data on my first "hi-fi" system, circa 1949. Anyone who flinches at some of today's prices should consider what the audiophile of yesteryear had to cope with. We were mostly "do-it-yourselfers" for two good reasons: there was an appreciable cost advantage, and one's choice among the few factory-produced products was, by today's standards, severely limited. In those days, before the appearance of the acoustic-suspension speaker, most speaker enclosures were floor-standing bass-reflex types. Other designs, such as the so-called "back-loaded horn," cropped up from time to time. I chose to build a corner enclosure of the latter type, and installed a 12-inch "full-range" driver, the GE S-1201D, one of the most popular low-priced speakers of the time. Total cost: \$38.50.

The power amplifier, of course, was the ubiquitous Williamson. In a day when distortion levels of 4 or 5 per cent were considered to be "hi-fi," the

Williamson circuit delivered about 10 watts of audio with less than 0.1 per cent distortion. To do this, my "home-brew" power amplifier required two chassis (one for the power supply, one for the amplifier components), took up almost as much space in my cabinet as some of today's "bookshelf" speakers, and weighed somewhat more to boot. A simple homemade preamplifier, without tone controls, accepted my tuner and phono inputs. Total cost: \$75.

In the late 1940's, tuner kits were nonexistent, and most audiophiles were content to buy one of the few commercially available units. The wide-band discriminators and stable tuning circuits of today's FM tuners were unheard of then, so frequent retuning of the station was necessary, sometimes even when the tuner had AFC circuits. I bought the best I could afford, at a cost of \$57.50.

Manual turntables and tone arms were heavy, clumsy, and expensive. The best available cartridges tracked at about 6 grams, and a diamond stylus was a luxury. Like many others, I settled (at

first) for a \$39 record changer—and it was not nearly as good as today's models in the same price range, by the way. The cartridge was a magnetic type with an exalted (and largely undeserved) reputation; it cost \$17 with a sapphire stylus. The total cost of that system

(mono, of course) in 1949 was \$227, without housings. If stereo had existed then, another amplifier and speaker would have increased the cost to about \$340. If we assume that the 1949 dollar was worth about double today's dollar—a reasonable estimate, I think—the cost of a rudimentary stereo system was the equivalent of \$680 in 1973 currency.

For approximately that same amount, one can now assemble a system of unimaginably (by the standards of 1949) high power, wide range, and low distortion. A number of modern \$60 to \$80 speakers are more accurate reproducers, in every way,

TESTED THIS MONTH

●
Connoisseur BDC/2 Record Player
Sony TC-377 Stereo Tape Deck
Magnavox K8896 AM/FM Receiver
Hitachi HS-350 Speaker System

than any but a handful of the most expensive speakers of that day. A good automatic turntable, with a cartridge able to track at less than 1.5 grams, now costs in the vicinity of \$100 to \$150, and far surpasses in performance the best professional and broadcast equipment of the early 1950's.

For perhaps \$350, one can now buy a receiver with a tuner that is drift-free, has several times the sensitivity and selectivity—and a fraction of the distortion—of early FM tuners, and provides stereo reception in addition. Each of the two built-in amplifiers in the receiver is at least three times as powerful as my early Williamson, and has distortion at least as low. All this in a package that is

smaller, lighter, and much cooler than the Williamson two-chassis power amplifier alone, and able to operate for indefinite periods without re-alignment or tube replacement.

Regardless of the impending price increases, it seems evident that hi-fi components are today a bigger bargain than ever. For the same level of performance we accepted a few years ago, they actually cost fewer inflated dollars. For the same total cost, in terms of the current buying power of the dollar, they offer vastly superior performance, convenience, and reliability. It is a pity that the same cannot be said for food, clothes, housing, public transportation, and other aspects of modern living.

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

Connoisseur BDC/2 Record Player



● THE British-made Connoisseur BDC/2 record player, imported by Hervic Electronics of Los Angeles, is a compact, high-quality, single-play turntable with a manually operated tone arm. It is supplied on a wooden base with a clear plastic dust cover. The cast-aluminum platter is 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter and weighs 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ pounds. A 450-rpm synchronous motor drives the platter via a soft rubber belt. The playing speeds (either 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ or 45 rpm) can be selected by rocker levers that shift the belt to a different diameter of the drive pulley. Moving the start lever to ON simultaneously switches on the motor and gives the platter a push to reach synchronous speed in a fraction of a revolution. When the lever is moved to OFF, a rubber tip brakes the platter to a fast stop.

The tone-arm shank is a straight low-mass tube, 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches from stylus to pivots. The plug-in shell permits the cartridge to be adjusted for minimum tracking error (at a 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch radius) with the aid of a simple alignment protractor supplied with the unit. After the arm is balanced with its adjustable counterweight, a slight additional rotation of the weight establishes the desired tracking force. Instead of providing a calibrated scale on the arm or the weight, Connoisseur supplies a separate balance-type gauge for tracking-force adjustment.

The pivot design of the tone arm is quite unusual. It employs gimbal construction, but the gimbals do not rotate in the vertical and horizontal planes as in other arms: instead, their pivots are inclined at 45 degrees to the horizontal. This makes it possible to apply anti-skating correction with a simple, friction-free lever and

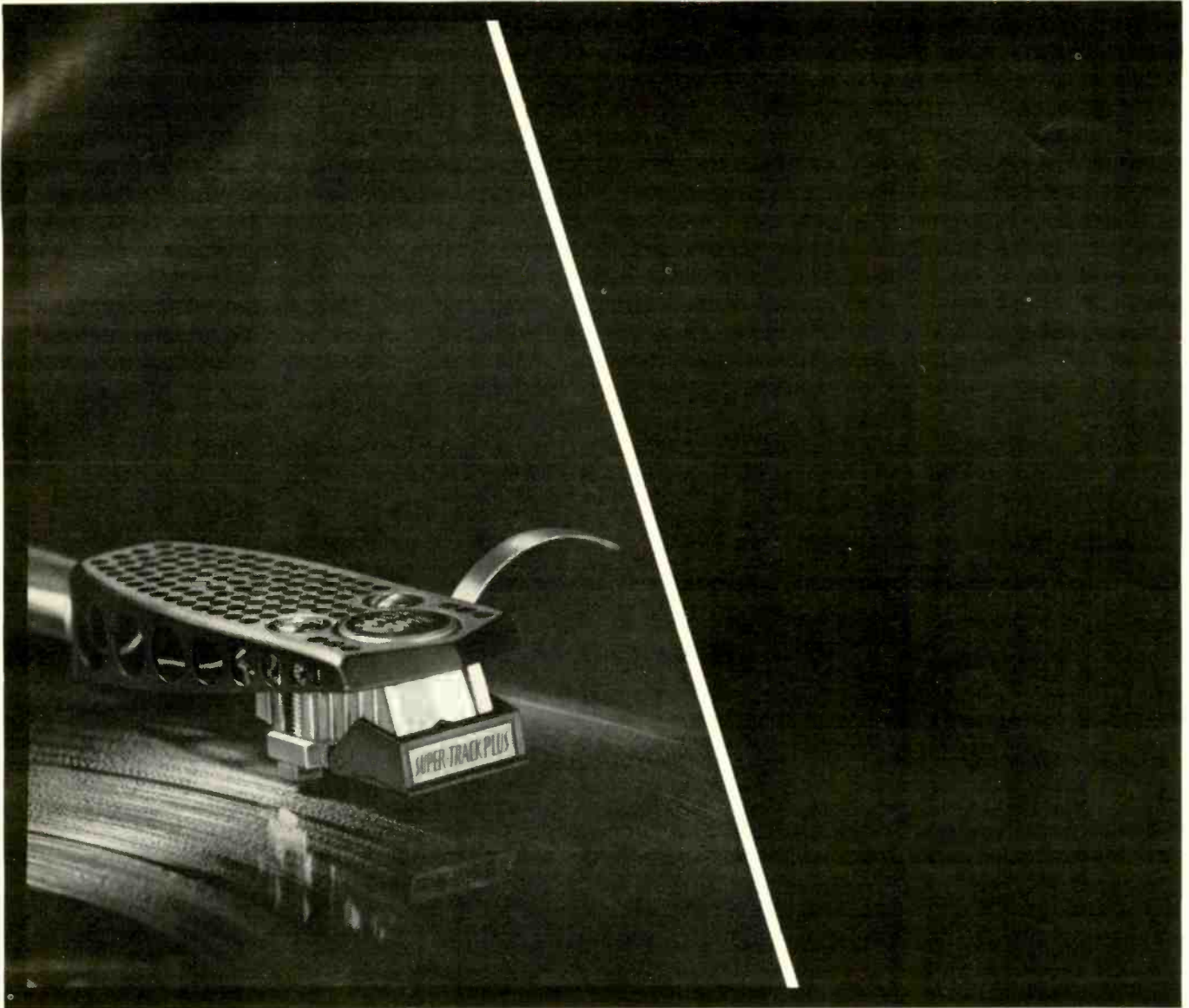
sliding weight mounted on one gimbal that moves only slightly (and entirely in the vertical plane) as the arm traverses the record. The arm's cueing system employs a rubber-covered support that rises under the arm, near the pivots, when a cue control is rotated. Its descent is viscous damped. The Connoisseur BDC/2, with its dust cover in place, is 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep, and 4 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches high; it weighs only 7 pounds. Price: \$129.50.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* The rumble level of the BDC/2 was on a par with that of the best automatic and belt-driven single-play turntables. Unweighted, it was -36 dB, and with the vertical components canceled out, it was -39 dB. With RRL audibility weighting, the rumble was a very low -55 dB. Wow and flutter were each only 0.04 per cent at either speed. The turntable speeds, which were unaffected over a line-voltage range of 95 to 135 volts, were about 0.8 per cent fast on one sample and accurate on another. To put the matter in perspective, the speed error found in the first sample is about that of a good cassette recorder. The tone-arm tracking error was less than 0.5 degree per inch for any record radius between 2 and 6 inches. The tracking force gauge showed no measurable error when compared with our laboratory gauge, and its unambiguous indications make it possible to set any force up to 6 grams (in increments of 0.5 gram) with essentially zero error.

The anti-skating setting proved to be quite noncritical, and when set somewhat higher than recommended gave correct compensation over an entire record side. (Most good tone arms we have tested have had recommended settings somewhat lower than the optimum setting in our tests.)

The arm friction was low, as evidenced by its completely free drift—both vertically and horizontally—when balanced to zero force. The cueing system worked smoothly, with a rapid lift (less than 1 second) and a descent time of about 3 seconds. That time can be shortened by raising the arm only partially, since the cueing lever

(Continued on page 34)



anything II could do III can do better!

Several years ago, we decided that our next challenge would be to go beyond the best there was. Our computers told us we had taken the existing cartridge structure and stylus assembly of the V-15 Type II Improved as far as we could, and that hereafter, any improvement in one performance parameter would be at the expense of performance in some other parameter.

Therefore, over the past several years, a wholly new *laminated* cartridge structure has been developed, as was an entirely new stylus assembly with a 25% reduction in effective

stylus mass! These developments have resulted in optimum trackability at light tracking forces ($\frac{3}{4}$ - $1\frac{1}{4}$ grams), a truly flat, unaccented frequency response, and more extended dynamic range than was possible even with the Type II Improved, without sacrificing output level!

If you like its sound today, you will like it even more as time goes on. In fact, to go back to any other cartridge after living with the Type III for a short while is simply unthinkable, so notable is its neutral, uncolored sound. You must hear it. \$72.50.

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will hold its position at any intermediate setting. There was a slight outward drift of the arm (only a couple of grooves) during the full descent time, but none at all during a partial descent. We had to use some care to avoid jarring the unit when the arm was raised (at least at the 1-gram force we used) to prevent excessive outward shift of the arm on the lift.

● *Comment.* Although the functional design of the Connoisseur BDC/2 lacks some of the glamour and visual impact of more expensive players, it has sacrificed nothing in performance. Not only are its measured characteristics at least as good as those of most record players selling for much higher prices, but it is easy to use and free of annoying idiosyncrasies or potential trouble areas. The spring suspension of the turntable on its wooden base proved to be highly effective in physically isolating it from the surroundings. Even when it was placed direct-

ly on a speaker cabinet, there was no tendency toward acoustic feedback at any reasonable listening level.

With unusual candor, the data sheet accompanying the BDC/2 points out that the unconventional pivot design causes the cartridge shell to rock slightly from side to side as it moves across the record (but not in excess of about ± 1 degree). Frankly, we could not detect any tilt by visual inspection, and we would not have been aware of the effect had it not been for the manufacturer's warning. In any case, it is an insignificant matter, since it is doubtful that most cartridges are mounted in their tone arms within 1 degree of the correct attitude to the record. The Connoisseur BDC/2, all in all, is one of today's better values in a rugged, honestly made record player. We found no audible problems, and anything that "measures" significantly better on our instruments would cost considerably more.

For more information, circle 105 on reader service card

Sony TC-377 Stereo Tape Deck



● **THE Sony TC-377** is an excellent example of the present state of the art in medium-price, open-reel recorders. It is a three-head, three-speed ($7\frac{1}{2}$, $3\frac{3}{4}$, and $1\frac{7}{8}$ ips), quarter-track, open-reel deck with a single induction motor driving the capstan and tape reels. The reel spindles are equipped with integral spring-loaded reel locks. The deck's walnut base, when stood upright, holds the transport at a convenient backward-sloping angle. And if horizontal installation is desired, removing the base and remounting it reversed provides a gently sloping horizontal panel. To the left of the head assembly is a speed selector and a pause lever that locks when fully depressed and releases with a slight upward push. The locking action is effective only when the transport is in operation.

To the right of the heads is a large function-selector knob, with positions for normal tape motion, fast forward, rewind, and stop. Its action is entirely mechanical. The retracting capstan pinch roller makes tape loading a simple wrap-around procedure. Below the heads are two illuminated meters, indicating recording and playback levels. Flanking them are the four recording-level controls, providing independent level adjustment and mixing capability for high-level (line) and microphone inputs. To their left are the left- and right-channel record-interlock levers, and a microphone-input attenuator that reduces sensitivity of the microphone inputs by 20 dB to prevent overload from high-output microphones such as the Sony electret-condenser models and/or from very loud live music. Below these controls are the two microphone-input jacks ($\frac{1}{4}$ -

inch phone jacks for low- to medium-impedance microphones) and a stereo-headphone jack for 8-ohm phones.

Completing the front-panel controls are the power switch, a recording-bias switch, and two tape-monitor switches. These connect the playback outputs either to the input signals (source) or to the playback amplifiers (tape). The bias selector has positions for "normal" and "special" tapes such as Sony SLH-180. Set into the left side of the cabinet are the line inputs and outputs, and a playback-level control with a 20-dB range. Using the external jumper cables provided (or an optional external mixer), it is possible to make sound-on-sound and echo recordings. The a.c. line cord emerges from a similar opening on the right side of the cabinet. The Sony TC-377 is about $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, and $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches deep: it weighs 24 pounds. Price: \$389.50.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The playback frequency response over the range of the Ampex NAB test tapes was +1.5, -3 dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz at $7\frac{1}{2}$ ips, and +2, -1 dB from 50 to 7,500 Hz at $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips. Using Sony SLH-180 tape and the SPECIAL bias setting, the $7\frac{1}{2}$ -ips record-playback frequency response was ± 3 dB from 20 to 30,000 Hz, ± 2 dB from 30 to 25,000 Hz. At $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips, the TC-377 still delivered a response flat within ± 2.5 dB from 30 to 20,000 Hz (actually ± 1 dB from 40 to 20,000 Hz) and at $1\frac{7}{8}$ ips its response was ± 3 dB from 24 to 11,000 Hz. Even with "standard" formulation tape (Sony PR-150) and bias, the $7\frac{1}{2}$ -ips response was ± 3.5 dB from 20 to 25,000 Hz and ± 2.2 dB from 30 to 20,000 Hz. At $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips it was ± 3 dB from 35 to 17,000 Hz. The $1\frac{7}{8}$ -ips response was more typical of what we have usually encountered on open-reel recorders: ± 3 dB from 30 to 6,200 Hz.

The distortion for a 0-VU recording level with SLH-180 tape at $7\frac{1}{2}$ ips was only 0.75 per cent — well below the recorder's specification. The reference-distortion level of 3 per cent was reached at +9 VU ($7\frac{1}{2}$ ips), +4 VU ($3\frac{3}{4}$ ips), and -1 VU ($1\frac{7}{8}$ ips). With PR-150 tape, the results were similar, with overload margins of +9 at $7\frac{1}{2}$ ips, +6.5 at $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips, and +1 at $1\frac{7}{8}$ ips. The signal-to-noise ratio with SLH-180 tape (referred to the 3 per cent distortion level) was 65.5 dB at $7\frac{1}{2}$ ips, 58.3 dB at $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips, and 49.5 dB at $1\frac{7}{8}$ ips. With PR-150 tape, S/N ratios were about the same at the two lower speeds: at $7\frac{1}{2}$ ips it was 62.7

(Continued on page 40)

Onkyo designed the TX-666 to be a genuinely fine, total quality audio instrument with unmatched features. Now the verdict is in. Two highly respected evaluating experts — Hirsch-Houk Laboratories for Stereo Review (March '73) and High Fidelity (in its May '73 issue) agree that the TX-666 is a winner!

Said Hirsch-Houk: "...A first-rate tuner and powerful, low distortion amplifier — a well-designed, well-constructed receiver... (with many) often overlooked details of design and operating 'feel'. Everything works smoothly and positively... FM Interstation muting is flawless, free from noise or 'thumps'. Dial Calibration is unusually accurate... FM Frequency Response and Stereo Separation are exceptionally uniform... Alternate Channel Selectivity is excellent... (and it's) as sensitive as any on the market... Amplifier ratings are quite conservative... at any output up to the rated 53W (RMS) per channel... Phono-overload

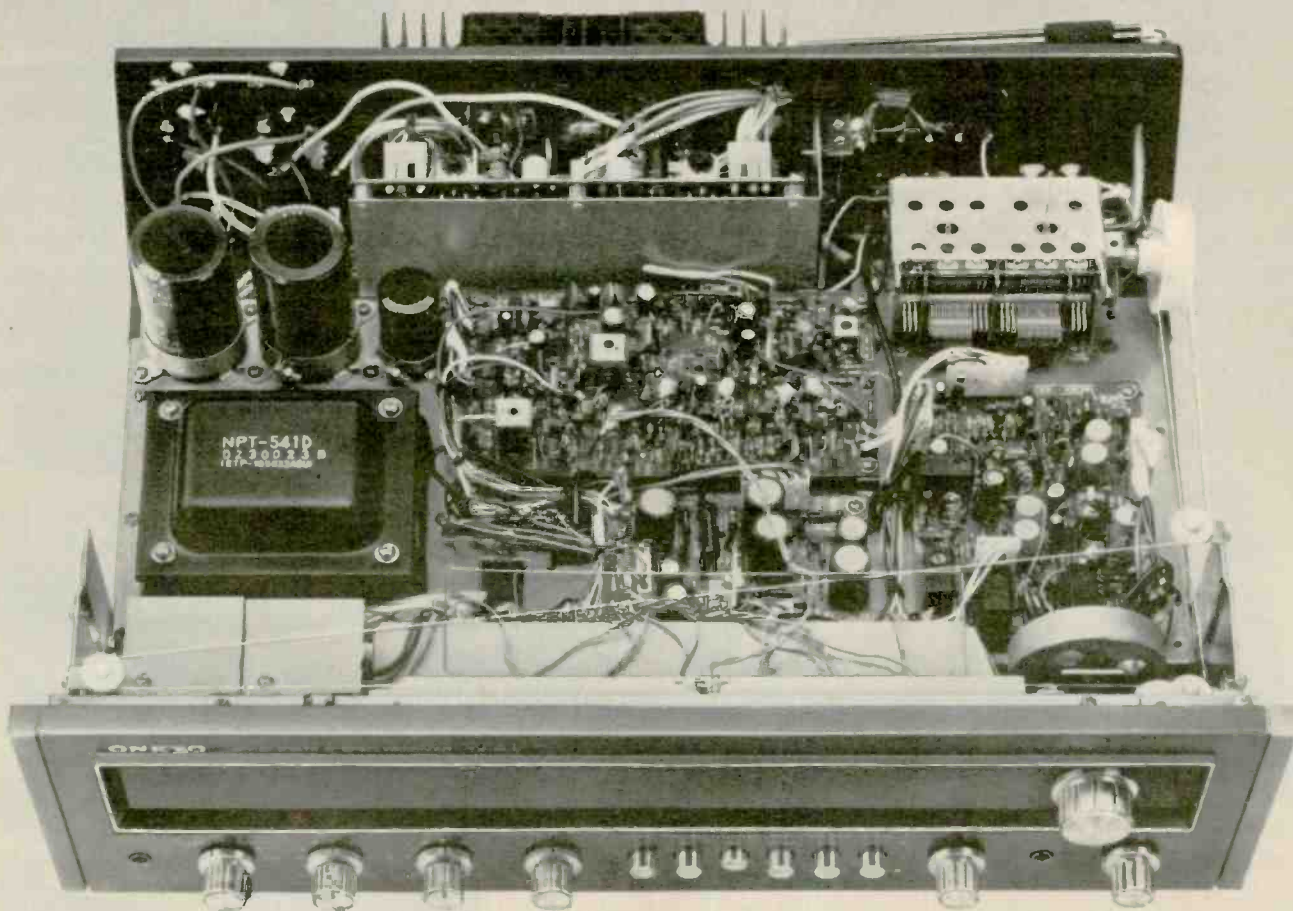
We're Not Just Another Pretty Face. Onkyo TX-666.

capability is extraordinary... The TX-666 is an auspicious entry for Onkyo..."

High Fidelity Magazine's test experts made these comments; "The TX-666... is a solidly built, generally well-planned unit... distortion readings at frequency extremes are exceptionally good... excellent in terms of harmonic distortion... it stayed well under 0.2% (THD) to the test limit. The amplifier section proved a hard act to follow... (In FM) its thump-free behavior across the dial is an attractive plus... The TX-666 is a worthy introduction for Onkyo."

Prove it to yourself and audition this fine instrument. As for its "pretty face", you'll discover a smartly styled, walnut cabinet with a brushed black gold panel. The price for this superior receiver is only \$469.95. The TX-555 with 43W (RMS) per channel is available at a lower price.

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(25-inch picture measured diagonally)

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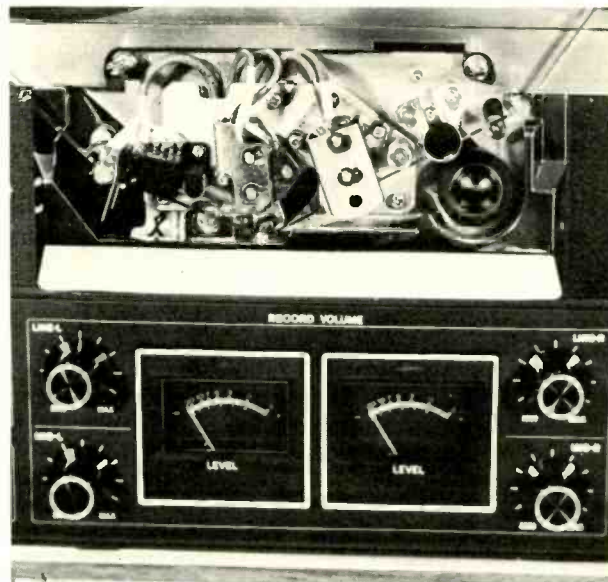
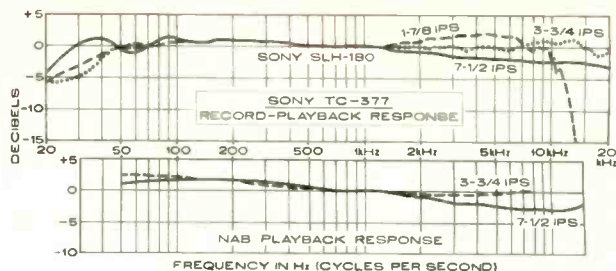
dB. An appreciable amount of hiss was added when the microphone inputs were used at full gain, reducing the S/N ratios by 5 to 8 dB. The input sensitivities were 48 millivolts (line), 0.14 millivolts (mic), and 1.75 millivolts (mic/atten). The microphone input overloaded at 0.2 volt; with the attenuator this was increased to 2 volts. The 0-VU playback output was 0.83 volt. The meters were slightly more damped than standard "VU" characteristics would dictate.

The tape transport operated at exact speed at 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ips, and it was 0.3 per cent fast at the other speeds. Wow was insignificant at 0.02 per cent and flutter was very low: 0.08 per cent (7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ips), 0.085 per cent (3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ips), and 0.15 per cent (1 $\frac{7}{8}$ ips). In fast forward and rewind, a 1,800-foot reel of tape ran through in 141 and 134 seconds, respectively.

● *Comment.* The figures above speak for themselves. Not only does the Sony TC-377 easily surpass its rated performance, but it clearly shows the advantages of the open-reel format over the cassette. At the two higher speeds, the frequency response, signal-to-noise ratio, and flutter are substantially better than those of the best cassette recorders (although those with the Dolby noise-reduction system come very close to the low noise level of the TC-377). The considerable overload margin allows meter excursions "into the red" without fear of distortion—a luxury not available with most cassette units.

The sound quality, needless to say, was excellent. We heard no significant difference between 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ and 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ips, although the measurably lower noise and greater overload margin of the higher speed would certainly prove advantageous in live recording. The sound at 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ ips was very listenable, especially with SLH-180 tape, but would offer little competition to any modern cassette recorder. The headphone volume, though low, was usable.

Sony makes a special point of the close match achieved between the phasing of the channels of the recording and playback heads, permitting the TC-377 to record SQ and other matrix-encoded programs for subsequent playback through a decoder without loss of the intended directionality of the four-channel program. We tested this claim by taping portions of SQ discs and playing them back to observe any alteration in their spatial properties, both subjectively and on a four-channel display oscilloscope. Our conclusion is that no listener is likely to detect any change caused by the recording and playback pro-



The Sony TC-377 is well-designed from the human-engineering aspect. The line and microphone recording-level controls are grouped around the meters, and the head cover is removable.

cesses, although the oscilloscope did reveal some blending of the rear channels, moving them slightly toward the rear center. Since the phase shift between channels is a function of colinearity of the head gaps and the alignment of the heads, this might vary slightly from one unit to another. In any case, it is evident that the TC-377 is an excellent medium-price machine, well suited to recording four-channel matrixed programs as well as stereo and mono material.

For more information, circle 106 on reader service card

Magnavox Model K8896 AM/Stereo FM Receiver



● Most readers probably associate the Magnavox name with mass-produced console audio products. However, as the Magnavox K8896 AM/stereo FM receiver shows, the company has now entered the hi-fi component market in earnest. The K8896 has a continuous power rating of 50 watts per channel into 8 ohms at less than 0.5 per cent harmonic distortion—considerably more powerful than

most other receivers in its price class. Its FM tuner carries modest but adequate performance specifications, including 3-microvolt sensitivity, a 50-dB signal-to-noise ratio, and less than 1 per cent distortion.

The K8896 has a "black-out" tuning dial, with a considerable amount of bright chrome on the edge trim, knobs, and control levers. Walnut side panels are included, and the lower portion of the panel is covered in wood-grain vinyl. The basic knob-operated controls include balance, volume, and bass and treble tone controls. A large tuning knob is located at the right of the dial. To the left are two pushbutton switches for independent control of two pairs of speakers, and a stereo-headphone jack.

At the lower left of the panel are six lever switches that operate with a push-on/push-off action. They control the

(Continued on page 42)

We can warranty our components for five years. Because we know what's inside them.

Dependable stereo performance depends in great part on the parts that make up each component.

In order to give you the longest warranty* in the stereo industry Yamaha engineers had to feel confident in the reliability of all the various parts that go into our many audio products.

They had good reason to feel confident.

Because we make more of our own parts than other stereo companies. We mill our own trees for the cabinet-wood.

We actually make the machinery that forms our chassis and other metalwork.

We make the magnets for our speakers. We make these under stringent conditions, in our own facilities.

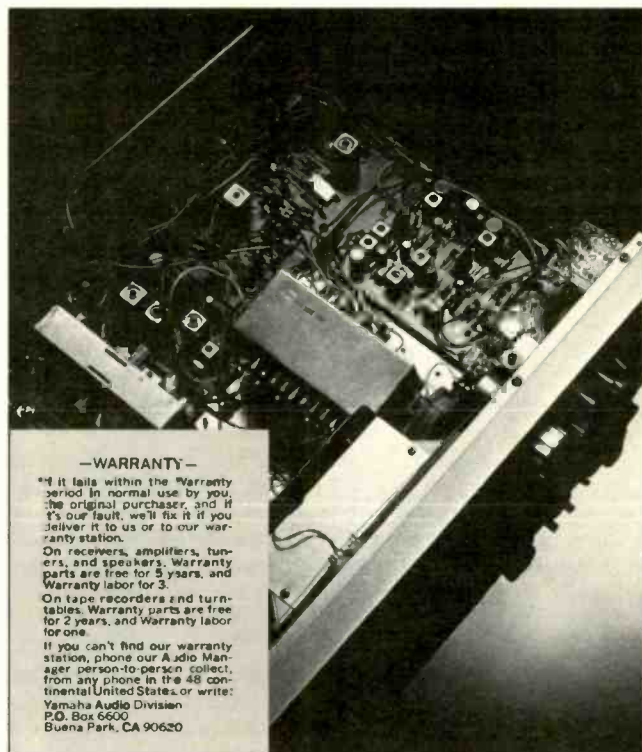
The result is stereo that can be warranted for five years on parts, three on labor.

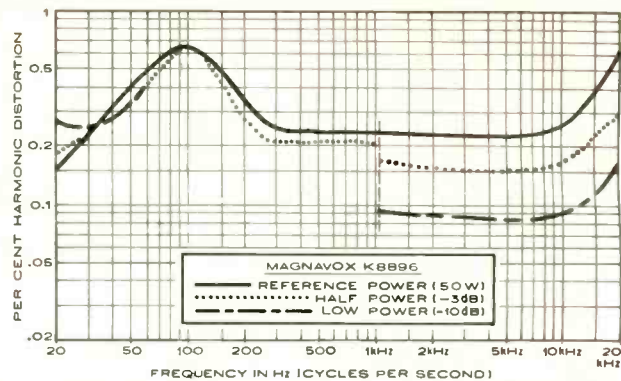
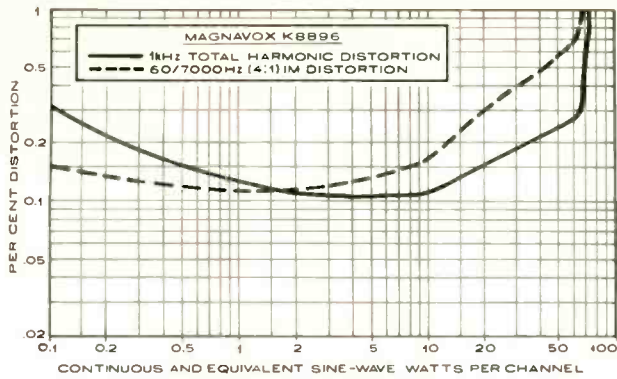
And some very clear, natural sounding reproduction from our receivers, amplifiers, tuners, speakers, turntables and tape decks.

Come hear them at your nearest Yamaha stereo dealer.

YAMAHA

We know what's inside.





For the right-hand curves, a high-pass filter was used above 1,000 Hz to prevent inaudible hum from affecting distortion measurements.

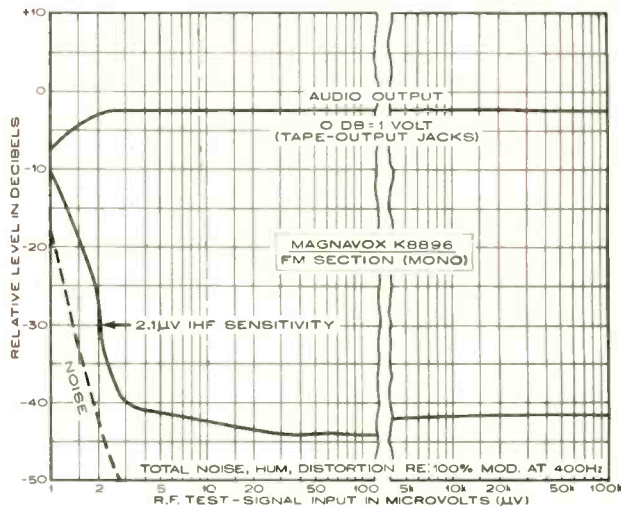
tape monitor, stereo/mono mode, FM interstation-noise muting, loudness compensation, and high- and low-cut filters. The mode and muting switches have some unconventional characteristics. In the mono (up) position of the mode switch, both program channels, from any source, are paralleled for mono reproduction. Pressing the switch down provides normal stereo operation, including automatic mono/stereo switching in the FM mode. If the muting switch is also in the depressed (on) position, however, only stereo FM broadcasts will be heard. The FM muting and the automatic mono/stereo switching cannot be used simultaneously.

Five similar levers at the lower right switch the receiver on and select the input source (AM, FM, AUX, PHONO). The power switch is red; all the others are bright chrome. The tuning-dial scales light up in green when either AM or FM is used. A small zero-center tuning meter functions on both FM and AM (the first time we have seen such a system used for AM tuning), and a red stereo indicator next to the meter functions during FM reception.

The rear of the K8896 carries the usual input and output connectors, a slide switch for ceramic or magnetic phono cartridges, two a.c. outlets (one of them switched), and a hinged AM ferrite-rod antenna. The large output-transistor heat-sink fins occupy almost half the rear of the receiver. Pushbutton spring-loaded insulated terminals are used as speaker-output connectors. The direct-coupled amplifier transistors are protected electronically against overdrive or short-circuited outputs, and a thermal cut-out guards against excessive operating temperatures, illuminating a front-panel indicator light when it acts. A single line fuse protects the receiver. A special receptacle is provided for connection of a Magnavox record changer, enabling it to control the power to the entire receiver when the phono input has been selected. The Magnavox K8896 is 18¾ inches wide, 5¼ inches high, and 13¼ inches deep, and it weighs about 33 pounds. Price: \$319.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Magnavox K8896 met or exceeded virtually all its published specifications. The FM tuner sensitivity was 2.1 microvolts with a 50-dB signal-to-noise ratio attained at 2.8 microvolts in mono and at 40 microvolts in stereo operation. The FM distortion was about 0.7 per cent at most usable input levels. The capture ratio was 3.2 dB, and image rejection was a

The K8896's rear panel. The special a.c. outlet (upper right) permits automatic on/off switching with a Magnavox changer.



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 -64.5 dB.

very good 89 dB. AM rejection was 35 dB, which is the rated value, though not particularly good by current standards. We could not measure the alternate-channel selectivity because of the nondefeatable AFC. The muting and stereo-switching thresholds were about 9 microvolts. The ultimate quieting was 64.5 dB (mono) and 52 dB (stereo) at input levels of about 50 microvolts or more. This represents acceptable performance and surpasses the rated 50-dB signal-to-noise ratio figure.

The FM frequency response was ± 1.5 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz, except for a broad rise of 3 dB in the 7,000-Hz region. Stereo channel separation was very uniform over the full audio range, exceeding 20 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz and measuring typically about 27 dB. Although the K8896 has active low-pass filters in its multiplex outputs, the -45.7-dB level of the 19-kHz pilot tone was considerably higher than we have measured on many other receivers. The AM tuner had average quality, with a frequency response that was flat from 20 to about 1,500 Hz, and down 6 dB at 4,500 Hz.

The amplifiers were as powerful as the considerable weight of the receiver would suggest. The output waveform clipped at 68 watts per channel into 8 ohms, 57.5 watts into 4 ohms, and 42 watts into 16 ohms. With a 1,000-Hz signal, harmonic distortion was between 0.1 and 0.3 per cent from 0.1 watt to about 65 watts per channel. The intermodulation (IM) distortion was between 0.1 and 0.2 per cent at power outputs from 30 milliwatts to 13 watts, increasing to 0.6 per cent at the rated output (50 watts) and at the very low output of about 2 milliwatts.

At the rated 50-watt output, harmonic distortion was under 0.7 per cent from 20 to 20,000 Hz, typically mea-

(Continued on page 44)

Should you use the LAFAYETTE LR-4000 just because CBS does?



No! There are also many other reasons . . .

CBS, the developer of the SQ* quadrasonic system and the producer of the largest number of 4-channel records, selected the Lafayette LR-4000 receiver for its own use when monitoring SQ 4-channel discs. This is because the LR-4000, the only receiver with "wave matching" full logic circuitry, provides the listener with the most precise definition of 4-channel SQ records and FM broadcasts yet developed. You hear the thrilling, spacious, surround sound that the SQ engineers built into the recording. This would be enough of a reason to buy the LR-4000, but there are also many more . . .

Through its exclusive "Composer" circuitry, the LR-4000 delivers superb playback of Regular Matrix (QS) and all other "encoded" 4-channel program sources, and derives the rich 4-channel sound hidden in your present 2-channel stereo records and tapes, and FM stereo broadcasts. When set to "discrete," the LR-4000 plays any discrete tape source through

And . . . the LR-4000 is just one of the 20,000 quality products in our FREE 1973 catalog!

its four separate powerful amplifiers, and even discrete discs can be played with an accessory CD-4 demodulator. The four amplifiers deliver 200 watts IHF or 41 watts continuous (RMS) per channel of direct-coupled power at 8 ohms. Advanced MOSFET/IC FM circuitry with phase locked multiplex and 1.65 μ V sensitivity brings in each station clearly even in difficult reception areas. And the LR-4000 has all the controls to put you in command of this truly masterful sound system.

It is not surprising, then, that Norman Eisenberg, audio writer for The Washington Post, remarked, "Considering all that the LR-4000 offers, its price tag of \$499.95 does not seem unwarranted . . . it is a prime example of a 4-channel receiver"; and that FM Guide asserted, "it has taken a giant step forward . . . the LR-4000 epitomizes the art of matrixed 4-channel sound."

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suring about 0.25 per cent. At half power, distortion was typically 0.15 per cent, reaching 0.3 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At 5 watts output, the distortion was under 0.1 per cent up to 15,000 Hz, increasing to 0.15 per cent at 20,000 Hz. Low-frequency distortion measurements, particularly at low power outputs, were obscured by the presence of some inaudible hum in the outputs.

The phono input required 0.55 millivolt for a 10-watt output, with a 63-dB signal-to-noise ratio and a safe overload level of 63 millivolts. The AUX sensitivity was 45 millivolts, with a 65-dB signal-to-noise ratio and a 5.3-volt overload point.

The tone-control characteristics appeared to be normal, with a variable low-frequency turnover point. However, the tone controls function only when the volume control is set to its two-o'clock position (-12 dB) or lower; at higher settings, they have no effect. If the bass and treble are boosted, increasing the volume merely raises the output at mid-frequencies to produce an overall flat response. This ingenious system employs a circuit design unlike any we have seen used in an amplifier before. We would guess that its purpose is to prevent overloading the amplifier with excessive tone-control boost at the frequency extremes when high power-output levels are in use. The loudness compensation, which boosts both low and high frequencies, is also operative only at volume-control settings below -12 dB.

The filters have 6-dB-per-octave slopes, with their -3-

dB points at 80 and 5,500 Hz. The RIAA phono equalization was accurate within ± 1 dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz, and was down 4 dB at 30 Hz.

● *Comment.* It is plain that Magnavox has not entered this market with a "me-too" copy of existing products. The K8896 is replete with original ideas, not all of which come off too well in practice. We did not like the interlocking of the mode and muting circuits, the noise during switching, and the fact that the control identifications were practically invisible when the set was off. The circuit design of the K8896, however, is thoroughly up-to-date, with an FET "front end" and three IC's serving as FM i.f. amplifier, limiter, detector, multiplex demodulator, and phono preamplifier. Two fixed inductance-capacitance filters provide permanently aligned FM selectivity, and a third serves the same function for the AM tuner. The novel tone-control circuit, of which one might never be aware unless playing the receiver at very high volume, impresses us as being a very practical solution to the potential problems of a high-powered amplifier in the hands of a careless user. Few (if any) receivers at anywhere near its price can approach the power-output capability of the K8896. In combination with a reasonably good (and honestly rated) tuner section, this can make it a fine choice for someone with low-efficiency speakers and a modest budget.

For more information, circle 107 on reader service card

Hitachi HS-350 Speaker System



● **HITACHI'S HS-350** is a compact, two-way speaker system suitable for shelf or floor mounting. Its 8-inch woofer has a unique "Gathered Edge" cone suspension with more than one hundred accordion-pleat folds on each of the two annular surfaces. The enclosure is a highly damped reflex design. At 3,500 Hz there is a 12-dB-per-octave crossover to the horn-loaded tweeter, which has an acoustic lens at its mouth to improve dispersion. The lens is normally positioned for vertical speaker mounting, but it can easily be rotated 90 degrees for horizontal installation on a shelf. A three-position switch behind the removable grille cloth provides a nominal ± 3 -dB high-frequency level adjustment relative to the "normal" response setting.

The insulated speaker terminals set into the rear of the enclosure are spring-loaded. In addition to the normal inputs, there are separate connections for the woofer and tweeter to permit bi-amplifier operation with an external electronic crossover. A switch is provided to select be-


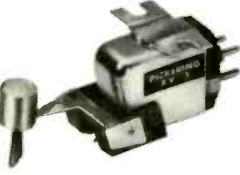





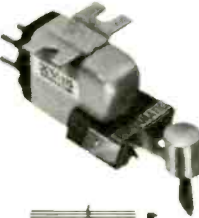
tween either mode of operation. The instructions warn against excessive high-frequency amplifier power or use of bi-amp crossover frequencies below 2,000 Hz (3,000 to 4,000 Hz is the recommended range). The rated maximum continuous-power input to the system (to the woofer, that is) is 20 watts above 70 Hz; in bi-amplifier service the tweeter drive should not exceed 1 watt continuous sine-wave power. The impedance of the system and drivers is nominally 8 ohms. The Hitachi HS-350 is housed in a walnut cabinet with an unusually attractive finish. Removing the grille (held in place by Velcro tabs) reveals a fully finished wooden speaker panel whose appearance would be compatible with many contemporary rooms. The system measures 14³/₈ inches wide, 23³/₈ inches high, and 9⁷/₈ inches deep; it weighs 33 pounds. Price: \$185.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* The measured frequency response of the HS-350 was within ± 4 dB from 55 to
(Continued on page 48)



The HS-350's tweeter and lens assembly are right in the center of the front panel, below the control and duct opening. The lens is shown adjusted for widest vertical dispersion, but it can be rotated to change the dispersion pattern.

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<p>XV-15200E DCF 200</p>  <p>MANUAL/AUTOMATIC</p>	<p>XV-15150 DCF 150</p>  <p>MANUAL/AUTOMATIC</p>	<p>XV-15140E DCF 140</p>  <p>CHANGER</p>	<p>XV-15100 DCF 100</p>  <p>CHANGER</p>

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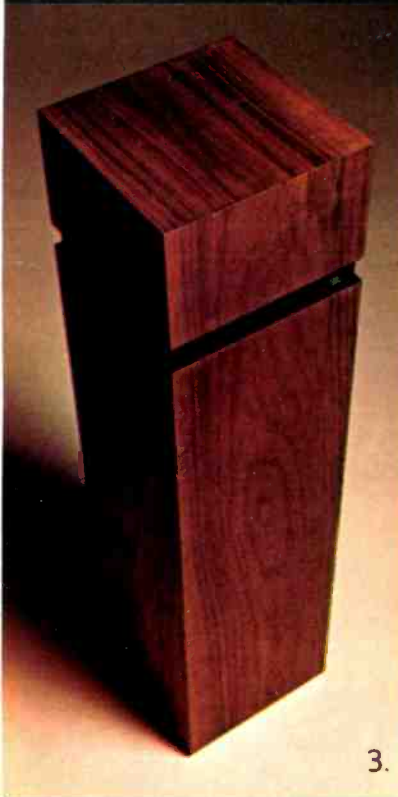
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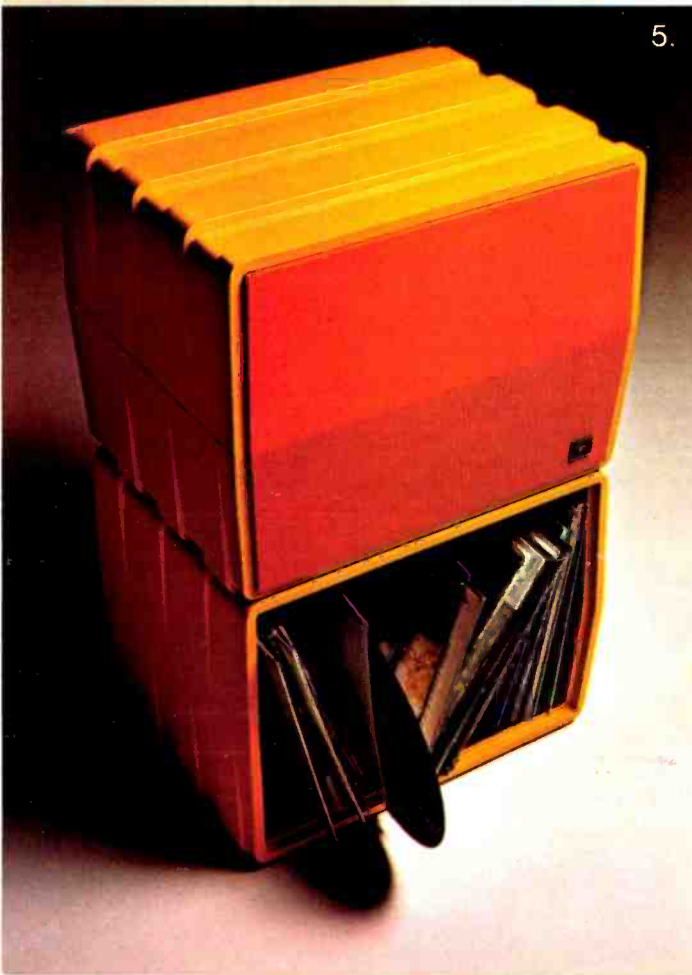
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6.



8.



9.

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15,000 Hz. Response in the lower mid-range and bass was very flat, with no detectable resonant peaks. There was a broad rise of about 4 dB in the 1,000- to 1,500-Hz region, and a depression of about the same amount between 4,000 and 6,000 Hz. The "+3 dB" tweeter-level setting increased the output by 1 to 2 dB at frequencies above 6,000 Hz, and the "-3 dB" setting reduced the output by 2 to 3 dB above 4,000 Hz.

The low-frequency harmonic distortion (as measured three feet from the system) was very low. It was well under 1 per cent down to 60 Hz at drive levels of either 1 watt or 10 watts or at a constant 90-dB sound-pressure level (SPL). At a 1-watt level, the distortion rose gradually to 5 per cent at 40 Hz and 10 per cent at 30 Hz. The increase was more rapid with a 10-watt drive, of course, reaching 5 per cent at 45 Hz and 15 per cent at 35 Hz. The rather steep decline in output below about 55 Hz was reflected in the distortion measurements at a 90-dB constant SPL, since high drive levels were required at low frequencies to maintain a constant acoustic output. The 5 per cent distortion point was 48 Hz, and the 15 per cent distortion point was measured at 40 Hz.

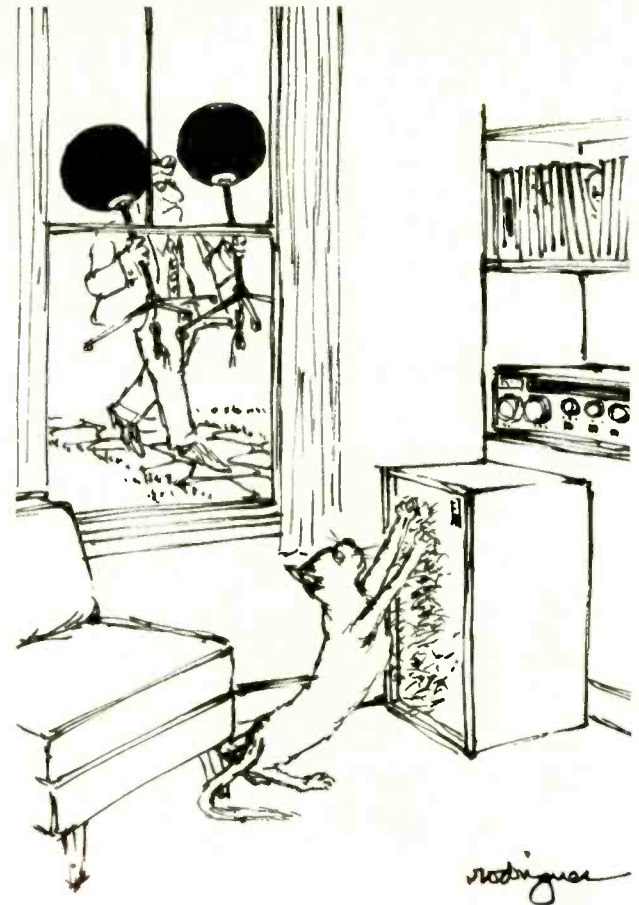
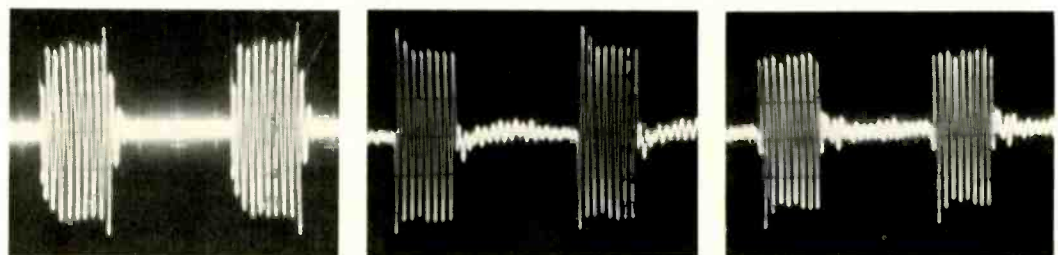
The system impedance was exceptionally uniform, measuring between 8 and 12 ohms over almost the entire audio-frequency range, and peaking to 30 ohms at 70 Hz and below 20 Hz (it was still rising when we reached our lower measurement limit of 20 Hz). The system was relatively efficient compared with typical acoustic-suspension designs. In the 1,000- to 2,000-Hz octave, about 0.6 watt was needed for a 90-dB SPL output.

The tone-burst response was generally good. At some high frequencies above 5,000 Hz we observed an apparent "ringing" after each burst and suspected that it was caused by the interaction of the acoustic lens with our test microphone, which was located only a few inches away. Removing the lens confirmed our suspicions and removed all traces of the ringing. At normal listening distances this interference effect is either not present or not audible.

● *Comment.* Listening to the HS-350, we were immediately impressed by its clean, open, and well-dispersed sound. There was a mild but definite "forward" projection to the sound that was clearly attributable to the mid-range response we had measured. This effect should not be confused with the "presence" peaks of some speakers, which usually occur at much higher frequencies and usually introduce objectionable coloration. The difference between the sound of the HS-350 and that of a speaker known to be "flat" through the mid-range can be heard easily in an A-B comparison, but it is not at all obtrusive when listening to the HS-350 alone.

Our simulated live-vs.-recorded test, as usual, completely confirmed the results of our measurements and earned the HS-350 a good "B+" rating. This very sensitive evaluation of the speaker's ability to reproduce faithfully the sound of a separate live program source revealed the mid-range response variations, and it also proved that the highest frequencies were radiated with better than average dispersion. Most conventional speakers we have tested have not fared as well as the HS-350 in this re-

Tone-burst response of the HS-350, shown (left to right) at 50, 1,000, and 6,000 Hz, was generally quite good.



spect. We found that either the "normal" or the "+3 dB" settings of the high-frequency level control, which were very similar, provided fine high-frequency response. As an experiment, we used an octave-band equalizer to modify the response of the HS-350 for the closest approximation to the live program, and achieved a near-perfect match. When we made a frequency-response measurement of the equalizer with its final settings, its variations proved (as they should have) to be almost exactly complementary to those we had measured in the speaker's response.

In sum, the Hitachi HS-350 is a wide-range, clean, and natural reproducer. It is thoroughly comparable in its acoustic quality to most of the better-known speakers in its price range, and its somewhat warmer sound may appeal to listeners who find that other speakers sound dry or distant in their listening rooms.

Furthermore, we could not help but be impressed by the superb quality of this speaker's finish and detailing, although these have nothing to do with its performance, of course. When the wood *behind* the grille is finished as handsomely as the cabinet exterior, one's confidence in the quality and integrity of a speaker is bolstered—particularly when it sounds as good as it looks. This the Hitachi HS-350 does.

For more information, circle 108 on reader service card

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Try on a pair of Superex PRO-B VI stereophones and see what happens to your body. It's a physical sensation you can't get with other stereophones. With the PRO-B VI, each earcup contains its own woofer and tweeter, plus a full crossover network.

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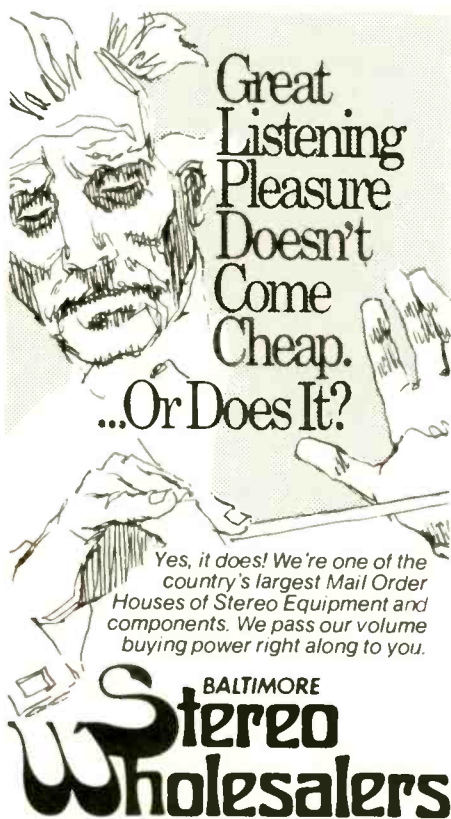
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CIRCLE NO. 9 ON READER SERVICE CARD



GOING ON RECORD

By JAMES GOODFRIEND

Music Editor

THE SOUNDS OF MUSIC

EVERY time a conductor or instrumentalist sandwiches a piece of modern music in between the other components of his concert program, a certain proportion of the audience contrives to be absent for it. If it is at the end, an early train must be made; if at the beginning, it was impossible to rush dinner; if in the middle, well, the prospect of a cigarette or a pre-intermission cocktail seems just that much more alluring.

Every time a conductor or instrumentalist programs a concert made up *exclusively* of modern music, a lot of people don't even buy tickets, but among those who get cajoled, tricked, or shamed into going, a certain number, at least, come out with the feeling that modern music is not as bad as it's cracked up to be, that some of it is interesting and some of it actually beautiful—even if you can't whistle the tunes on your way out.

Recently, the American pianist Charles Rosen gave one of his all too infrequent New York recitals, playing a program of works by Pierre Boulez, Béla Bartók, Arnold Schoenberg, and Elliott Carter. It was given in the small but handsome concert hall of the New York Cultural Center, attracted a fairly full house, and was, in the most direct language, a knockout. Rosen played magnificently; he almost always does, whether the repertoire is Boulez or Beethoven, Webern or Bach. But it was not merely his ability that made the concert such an exquisite experience. It was the fact that one had the chance to hear each piece in the context of others that were, at least superficially, in the same tonal language. That very slightness of resemblance allowed each of the works to proclaim in what *real* ways it was different from the others.

Pierre Boulez, too, has frequently expressed his preference for such integrated concerts, programs in which all the works share at least the language of a period. It is a pity he has not been able to indulge that preference with his New

York Philharmonic concerts, for, as he himself has pointed out, the sandwich sort of program satisfies no one completely and irritates everyone at least slightly. The point of this column, however, although it has been muffled somewhat thus far, is only incidentally to urge a rethinking of concert programs; more is it to point out that the language of music is not one but many, and that, like verbal languages, musical ones are groupable into smaller and larger categories and show degrees of relationship with one another ranging from the parental to none at all.

One who is fluent in a verbal language is able—if he has any interest in it at all—to appreciate niceties of style. One who is merely conversant with it is too busy attempting to understand the basic meaning of what is being said to give too much thought to anything beyond that. One who knows only words struggles to get the drift of things, and one who must depend upon a dictionary for *all* meaning attempts only to match the sound and the appearance of what he supposes to be the key word and thus gain some sort of answer to his question. What we are dealing with is different levels of fluency, not in speaking a language, but simply in understanding it. It is certainly well known that the more one is exposed to a language, to its own particular sound, the more fluent one's understanding of it becomes. It is equally well known that a degree of fluency in one language makes such fluency in another, related language easier to come by. And it can also be verified by experience that moving quickly from one unrelated language to another, even if one is fairly fluent in both, is quite difficult and sometimes very upsetting. It requires a complete reordering of the meanings of sounds.

Dare I oversimplify so much as to say that it is all very much the same thing in music? Well, perhaps it isn't quite, but the tendency is, I think, in that direction. When one has sat through an hour of

Classical tonality in the form of Haydn or Mozart, or even tonality with chromatic extensions in the form of Mahler or Strauss, it is no easy or pleasant thing to shift gears completely for the Bartók Second Piano Concerto, Schoenberg's Five Pieces for Orchestra, or Stockhausen's *Gruppen*. We are forced into the move (unless we escape to the lounge) because it is impossible to ignore the presence of such pieces in the concert hall. But the shift comes grudgingly and slowly, and the moment at which we begin to find pleasure in the different tonal language that has now been thrust at us is delayed, put off, perhaps (for this occasion at least) to the point of never coming to pass. The situation is altogether different in concerts comprising works in a shared musical language. One notices at once, then, the completely different qualities of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern, of Stockhausen and Boulez, of Sessions and Carter. For that superficial but difficult and annoying step has been bypassed: one has not been forced to shift *languages* drastically; one does not have to grope for the words. The meaning and, eventually, the fine points of style are at least relatively easy to approach. The giveaway is the fact that the pieces later in the program tend to sound better than those at the beginning.

FOR music does exist on levels, and the first of these levels is the sheer superficial *sound* of it, without any detailed observance of melody, harmony, rhythm, or what have you. It is that superficial sound that stands between modern music and people who profess to dislike it. Obviously, one is not going to argue that sound away by explaining to someone, as program notes do, the techniques the composer has used to create the piece, the details of its syntax, the niceties of its style. One can take in all these things intellectually and still hate the music. The only way one ceases to hate the music is to become aurally familiar with its language, with the *sound* of it, whether through multiple exposure to that single piece, or, more likely, by hearing it in company with other pieces that share, at least in part, that same sound language.

The unwillingness of most people to do this with any form of music they do not immediately like explains why one sees the same faces at every concert of Baroque music, at every nineteenth-century opera, at every lieder recital, and at every concert of modern music, and all too rarely sees a face familiar from one type of event at another. And it explains why M. Boulez (and many other conductors as well), who must draw an audience larger than any single group can consistently supply, must offer "sandwich" programs and irritate everyone at least slightly, while offering all only a degree of satisfaction.

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LONDON LETTER

THE AMERICANS ARE COMING

A report by
HENRY PLEASANTS

*Richard Tucker:
Giving them their
money's worth
in La Juive.*

I CANNOT remember a season when Americans have been so prominent or done so well on the London concert stages. I am thinking of Richard Tucker, James Levine, and pianists Murray Perahia, Craig Sheppard, and Garrick Ohlsson; of Ezra Rachlin (formerly of Austin, Texas, now a resident here after three years in Brisbane, who made an impressive debut as conductor of the New Philharmonia), and of Guido Ajmone-Marsan, winner of the Rupert Foundation Conducting Scholarship for a year as assistant to André Previn with the London Symphony Orchestra.

In addition to Previn, now in his fifth season with the LSO, we also have Lawrence Foster, with the Royal Philharmonic, and Erich Leinsdorf, a frequent guest with one orchestra or another. At Covent Garden we have in prospect, as I write, Grace Bumbry as Tosca, Leontyne Price as Aïda, Mignon Dunn as Amneris, Martina Arroyo as Leonora (in *Il Trovatore*), and James King as Florestan (in *Fidelio*).

Most memorable for me, and doubtless memorable for him, too, was Richard Tucker's appearance as *Éléazar* in a concert performance of Halévy's *La Juive*. It was not just that he sang so well, but rather that I am at least old enough to remember Martinelli as *Éléazar* at the Met, if not Caruso, and could well understand what the role meant to Tucker. He had a great night, but it must have been galling to be singing *Éléazar* in soup and fish in the Royal Festival Hall in London and not in costume on the stage of the Met in New York. His career there would certainly seem to have merited him a revival of *La Juive*, allow-



ing him to close it with the role associated so vividly with those other great Met tenors.

For much of this performance, he seemed inhibited by the absence of make-up, costume, and setting. But all that changed with "*Rachel, quand du Seigneur*," in the fourth act. Tucker took off his specs, stepped back from the music stand, and gave a performance that rendered make-up, costumes, and setting superfluous. The house came down, and he was able to sustain the same level of intensity to the final moment when the avenging *Éléazar* informs the inquisitorial cardinal that Rachel, whom he has just had deposited in a cauldron of boiling water, is not his (*Éléazar's*) daughter, but, in fact, the cardinal's. It's quite a finale. Since *Éléazar*, right then and there, follows Rachel into the pot, it must also be the shortest, as well as the bitterest, last laugh in opera—on a par, in any case, with Azucena's in *Il Trovatore*.

TUCKER's exuberantly histrionic vocalism, especially in the aria, was received a little less rapturously by the critics than by the audience. Typical was Ronald Crichton, in the *Financial Times*, with: "Mr. Tucker pulled out every stop, addressed himself to the further reaches of the hall, and gave his distant patrons better money's worth than they can have had for many an evening." He did that, all right.

The performance was recorded by BBC for a broadcast on April 15, so pirated discs will doubtless be in circulation in due course. Those into whose hands they fall will be favored not only with Tucker in fine fettle, but also with a

superbly endowed Rachel in the person of a Milan-based Japanese. Yasuko Hayashi, of whom more will be heard. RCA, I am told, is to produce a "highlights" album of *La Juive* with Tucker and Martina Arroyo: Antonio Almeida will be conducting.

The critics were more explicit in their reservations about young James Levine, principal conductor at the Met, who made a London debut with the London Symphony Orchestra. No one questioned his extraordinary ability nor doubted his success in getting just what he wanted; but what he wanted was little to most critics' taste, including mine. Both the overture to *The Bartered Bride* and Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony were felt to be too fast, too hard-driven, and Debussy's *La Mer* to be overconducted. "Mr. Levine," wrote Joan Chissell in the *Times*, "seemed too concerned with each specific wave and gust of wind," while to Gillian Widdicombe in the *Financial Times* "even the little waves seemed large enough to surf on." It was, nevertheless, an imposing debut. Levine will be back.

AMERICAN prize winners have been much and favorably in evidence. Murray Perahia, winner of last year's Leeds International Piano Competition, Craig Sheppard, runner-up to Perahia, and Garrick Ohlsson, winner of the Chopin contest in Warsaw two years ago, have all given debut recitals and harvested the kind of rave notices that are not easy to come by in London, and least of all for pianists.

Guido Ajmone-Marsan, born in Turin, raised in Chevy Chase, Md. (where his father, a neurologist, is on the staff of the National Institutes of Health), and educated at the Eastman School of Music, had a week (March 12) that he is unlikely to forget, beginning with the fact that the competition orchestra was the London Symphony. Eliminations in a field of twenty-five were held on Monday, the semi-finals Tuesday morning, and the finals Tuesday evening. On Thursday evening, young Guido, as the winner, conducted the LSO before a packed Royal Festival Hall in a program that included the overture to *Oberon*, the Beethoven Triple Concerto (with Previn as the pianist!), and Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. His flying colors were noted enthusiastically in the press the next day.

Some critics who attended the competition felt that Michiyoshi Inoue, Japanese winner of the Cantelli Contest in Italy a few months ago (where Ajmone-Marsan ran third, as he did in the Mitropoulos Contest in 1970), should have won. But the selection of a young conductor most likely to help, and be helped by, the LSO was the object of this unique competition. Inoue, too, will be heard from again.

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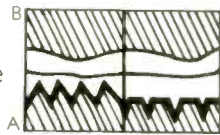
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CIRCLE NO. 18 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Ravel's *Rapsodie espagnole*

EVEN as a young man of twenty, and perhaps because of his Basque background, Maurice Ravel felt impelled to create a work with a Spanish flavor: the *Habanera* was composed in 1895 as the first of his two *Sites auriculaires* for piano duet. Ten years later, he incorporated Spanish feeling into the original piano-solo version of *Alborada del gracioso*, the fourth of his *Miroirs*. It was not without previous experience in the genre, then, that Ravel decided on the dominant mood of his first large-scale work for orchestra, the *Rapsodie espagnole* of 1907.

The *Rapsodie espagnole* is a suite in four movements of varied character—mysterious, passionate, languorous, sensuous. The opening *Prélude à la nuit* is largely built upon the repetition of a four-note chromatic descending figure, heard almost constantly throughout the music. Almost anticipating the subtle shifts in timbre and shading of his *Boléro* of twenty years later, Ravel varied the color and quality of his four-note motif by constantly shifting it from one instrumental group to another. Midway through the movement, there is an exotic free cadenza, first for two clarinets and then for two bassoons.

The second movement, *Malagueña*, opens with a theme in the double basses that is repeated throughout the section almost in the manner of a ground bass. Out of it is derived a theme in the bassoons and then the muted trumpets. A slow middle section presents a rhapsodic English horn theme, and the movement concludes with a reminiscence of the motif from the first movement.

As the third section of the *Rapsodie espagnole*, Ravel orchestrated the *Habanera* for piano duet of twelve years earlier. But Ravel's is not the riotous *Habanera* of the street or cafe: it is, rather, a highly refined and subtle dance, with elegant syncopations and almost impertinent rhythmic displacements.

The concluding *Feria (The Fair)* is a wildly vigorous and exciting movement, with constant shifting of fragmentary themes from one group of instruments to another. The scoring for percussion is especially deft and atmospheric. As in the *Malagueña*, the English horn has a prominent solo in the slow middle section. There is a return to the ex-

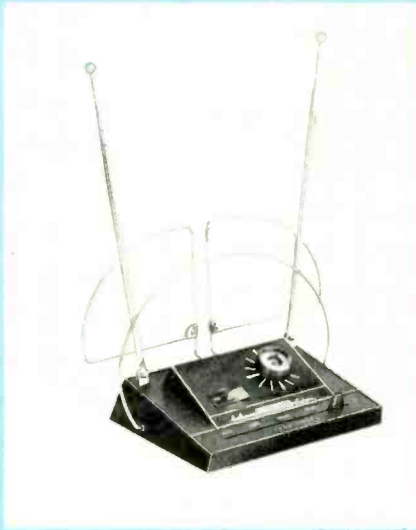
uberance of the opening of the movement, and the work ends in a blaze of swirling excitement.

In her biography of Ravel titled *Bolero*, Madeleine Goss wrote: "*Rapsodie espagnole* is essentially an orchestral study. Here for the first time the full power and color of Ravel's orchestration is in dazzling evidence. Subtle and penetrating contrasts, crescendos of breathtaking intensity, pianissimos faint as a whisper, wild dance rhythms, and heavy lethargy follow each other in bewildering succession."

WITH nearly a dozen-and-a-half currently available recorded performances, Ravel's *Rapsodie espagnole* is one of the most popular works in the entire catalog. And there are performances to suit all tastes. My own favorites among them are those conducted by Bernstein (Columbia MS 6011; tape MQ 522); Boulez (Columbia M 30651, cartridge MA 30651, cassette MT 30651); Monteux (London CS 6248, tape L 80108); Munch (RCA Victorla VICS 1041, cartridge V8S 1040); and Stokowski (Seraphim S 60104). Bernstein, Munch, and Stokowski deliver what might be termed "hot" performances, with deliberate (some might say exaggerated) emphasis on the music's contrasts and brilliance. All three recordings are now more than a dozen years old, and yet all three offer reproduction that need make no excuses because of age. Boulez and Monteux present "cooler" readings, in which clarity of line is the predominant consideration. Indeed, the Boulez recording is one of the finest in his by now familiar analytical style: the *Rapsodie espagnole*—and Ravel in general—can, I think, take the Boulez approach far more readily than some other music he has recorded.

Herbert von Karajan, in his collection of miscellaneous Ravel orchestral works (Angel S 36839, cartridge 8XS 36839, cassette 4XS 36839), strives for a combined "hot" and "cold" approach in the same performance. Though he elicits extremely sensuous sounds from the Orchestre de Paris, at the same time he maintains a deadpan objectivity toward the music. I do not care for this performance myself, but some listeners will undoubtedly find it rewarding.

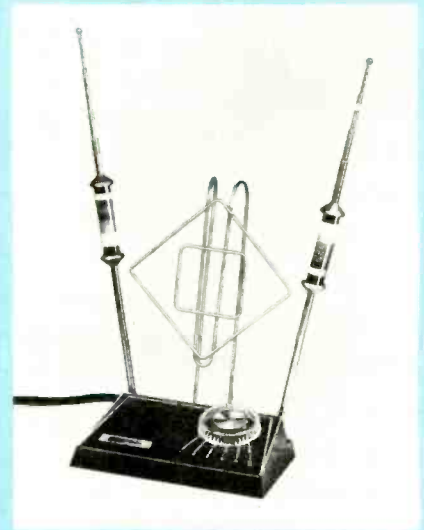
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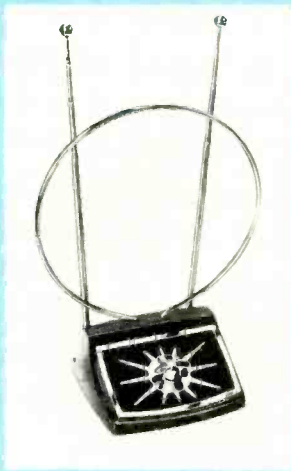
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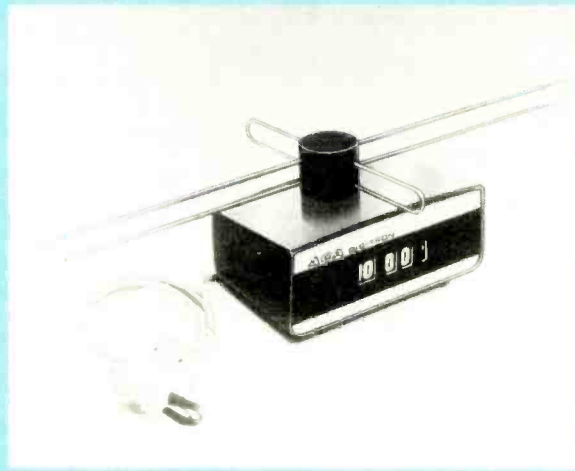
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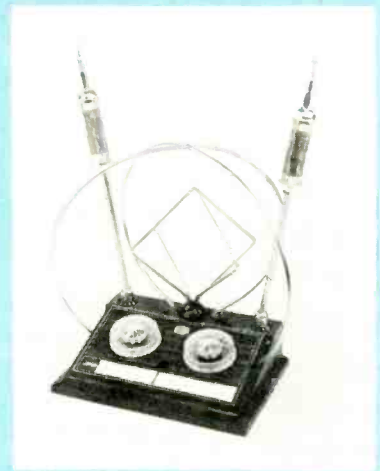
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INDOOR ANTENNAS FOR FM

Tests on seventeen different models furnish buying guidelines to an unusual market

By **LEONARD FELDMAN**

WHEN you first opened the carton of your new FM tuner or receiver, chances are you discovered a length of flat twin-wire cable folded up in the accessories envelope. If, after uncoiling this extra little gift from the manufacturer, you were somewhat puzzled by its "T"-shaped configuration and consulted the instruction booklet, you probably found something like the following instructive paragraph:

The 300-ohm, twin-lead, folded-dipole antenna supplied with this set is adequate in most reception areas. Simply connect it to the antenna terminals on your set and install the antenna behind the equipment and stretched out to its full length with the "T" section positioned horizontally. If noisy reception results, you may require an outdoor FM antenna because of the particularly difficult reception conditions in your area.

Well, you dutifully followed these instructions — and have been suffering with noisy, distorted FM reception ever since. Yes, you must be in one of those "difficult reception" areas. But you are not sure you want to go through the expense and trouble of a roof installation. What, then, about a better indoor antenna?

If you check your local radio/TV shops, you will find that most salesmen will tell you they stock only indoor TV antennas, not indoor FM antennas. True, but apparently they are unaware that the FM-band frequencies (88.1 to 107.9 MHz) are sandwiched between two segments of the VHF TV band, and any indoor antenna that will work on TV should also serve for FM. (*Outdoor* TV antennas, however, are often not satisfactory for FM.) The assortment of indoor antennas available ranges from the very simplest type (a pair of telescoping "rabbit ears") to very elaborate, multi-element affairs replete with switches, dials, colorful pedestals, and even some with built-in clocks. But before we get into the specifics of some of the individual antennas, it is worth considering a few facts relevant to FM antennas in general.

An FM antenna must perform two functions. First, it must intercept the minute signal voltages arriving at your location from the various FM transmitters in your area. In all but the most remote

areas this interception is a relatively simple task that can usually be accomplished by a single piece of wire of the proper length. Present-day tuners have sensitivity figures in the range of 2 microvolts or better, as measured according to the present IHF standard, and even such minute signals will result in program reception which is 30 dB above the background-noise level. Admittedly, a 30-dB signal-to-noise ratio provides a somewhat hissy listening situation, but with most tuners a few more microvolts — say, 10 or 15 — will result in a very satisfactory signal-to-noise ratio of 50 dB or better. In most locations, signals far stronger than this minimal amount are readily picked up with even the most rudimentary form of antenna.

The second function to be performed by an FM antenna is far more critical and demanding. The short wavelengths used for TV and FM signals are notorious for their ability to bounce off reflecting surfaces. For these frequencies, a "reflecting surface" can be a building, a water tower, or even a natural part of the terrain. Reflected signals, arriving at an antenna a fraction of a second later than the directly received signal, can cause havoc in both TV and FM reception. In TV, the effect is the familiar "ghosts" or multiple images often seen on the screen. In the case of FM, and more noticeably stereo FM, the reflections (which are referred to as "multipath interference") result in audible distortion, increased background noise, and even loss of stereo separation. Since reflections will usually arrive at the antenna from directions *other* than the primary signal (see Figure 1), the ideal antenna will not only pick up the directly arriving signal efficiently, but will ignore the signals arriving from other directions. This selective characteristic is called the antenna's *directionality*: the more directional an antenna is, the better it will be for FM reception. The simple "folded-dipole" antenna, made of twin-lead flexible wire and supplied with most tuners and receivers, has the directional pattern shown in Figure 2. Signals arriving from a direction perpendicular to the stretched-out top of the array are favored, and signals arriving from directions parallel to the wire will be substantially ignored.

Note, however, that in the case of the simple dipole shown, signals originating in front of the antenna as well as those coming from behind will be accepted equally. Therefore, if a distant reflecting structure is located directly *behind* the antenna, it will be unable to reject such reflections.

Highly directional antennas such as are manufactured for outdoor use often contain multiple elements and reflectors that not only increase the "gain" (signal pickup), but improve directivity as well. Unlike the situation with AM, where the greater the length of the antenna, the better the signal received, very specific antenna lengths are required for best signal pickup in TV and FM. Thus, making an antenna longer *or* shorter than the optimum length means a weaker signal.

Despite the differences between the two types of antennas, many people, either in a spirit of adventure or out of sheer desperation, do hook up their FM sets to an already installed TV antenna system. In some cases the results are quite satisfactory; in others, results are poorer than those achieved with even the most rudimentary indoor antenna. If you have an outdoor antenna for TV that is exclusively yours (not part of a master system), by all means buy yourself a "two-set coupler" (\$2.50 to \$5) and give it a try. The two-set coupler both isolates the antenna circuits of the TV set from those of the FM unit and provides a better impedance match for each than would be the case if you simply hooked the antenna line directly from one set to the other. Even the very best couplers introduce a signal loss, however, and if you are in an area of marginal signal strength (in respect to TV reception), you may detect an increase in "snow" in your TV reception.

Even assuming that there is enough FM and TV signal strength in your area, there is no guarantee that the TV transmitters are located in the same direction as the FM station transmitters whose signals you hope to pick up. Unless you have a rotator, the only "solution" would be to climb up to the roof every time you wanted to change from TV viewing to FM listening.

There are a few antennas available that are intended for installation outside your window by means of expandable brackets. If you're fortunate enough to have a window facing in the optimum direction, you might want to try one of these. Finco makes their Model FM-WT specifically for FM. Unfortunately, it is omnidirectional, and if you are plagued with multipath reflections that's the *one* characteristic you don't want.

As mentioned above, it's worth trying your outdoor TV antenna if it is yours and yours alone. The trouble with many master TV antenna systems is

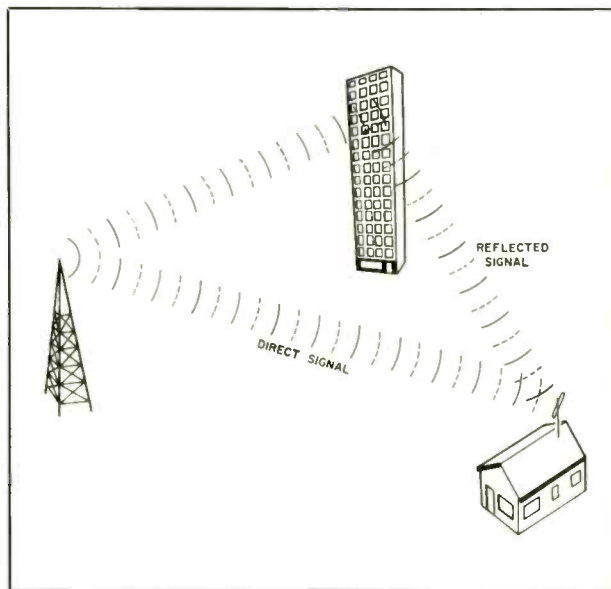


Fig. 1. "Multipath" literally means the same signal arriving at the antenna by several different paths. Here, a direct and a reflected signal impinge on the same receiving antenna.

that they often include a circuit designed to *reject* signals in the FM band, since FM signals in a master-antenna TV system can cause visible interference on certain TV channels. So, if you are thinking of hooking up your FM to a master TV antenna system, be sure to check with the installation company to find out if they have installed an FM trap.

IN setting about to do a survey of indoor FM antennas, we were faced with several problems. There are literally dozens of models, almost all designed for operation at TV as well as FM frequencies. To try to measure everything available would be a hopeless and perhaps pointless task, so we chose a number of representative units—seventeen models from nine different manufacturers—and studied them in depth. We also had to evolve a standardized method of testing, one that would be fair to all the units tested. Merely evaluating signal strength on the basis of listening tests would not do, since anything above a few microvolts will provide adequate quieting on a good FM receiver. Accordingly, we used a Blonder-Tongue field-strength meter which, when fed a signal from an antenna, reads incoming signal strength directly in microvolts.

Recognizing that the broadcast frequency of the received signal is a factor in antenna performance, we checked three stations—one at the low end of the FM dial, one around mid-band, and one toward the high-frequency end of the dial. Our choices, governed in part by familiarity with our local stations' programming, were 93.9 (WNYC), 96.3 (WQXR), and 105.1 (WRFM), all in New York

City. Our location on Long Island is some seventeen miles from midtown Manhattan, where the three transmitter antennas are located, and our ground-level living room (where the tests were conducted) is some 75 feet above sea level. Since the dipole antenna configuration represents the classical textbook antenna (and is supplied in twin-lead "folded" form with many tuners and receivers), we decided to use it as a measurement standard or reference against which the other more elaborate models might be compared.

Our measurement procedure for this standard antenna and all the others, though a bit empirical, consisted of orienting each antenna for maximum signal pickup while observing the field-strength meter readings. In the case of those antennas that have variable element lengths, the lengths of the elements were adjusted for greatest signal strength. Since most of the models provide for anything between total vertical and total horizontal positioning of each of the two elements, these were adjusted to whatever angle provided further increases in signal strength. The twin-lead dipole, however, was measured with its arms extended horizontally only.

Once the optimum length and orientation were established for each antenna and the best reading taken, the antenna was rotated 90 degrees in each direction, with no further alteration of length or angular position of the antenna elements, and two additional signal-strength readings were taken to determine the antenna's ability to reject signals coming in from undesired directions. The numerical results of these measurements are tabulated on page 61, and certain generalized conclusions can be drawn from the accumulated data.

First of all, there was no correlation between the price of a given antenna and its performance insofar as good stereo FM reception is concerned. Admittedly, some of the more expensive units are de-

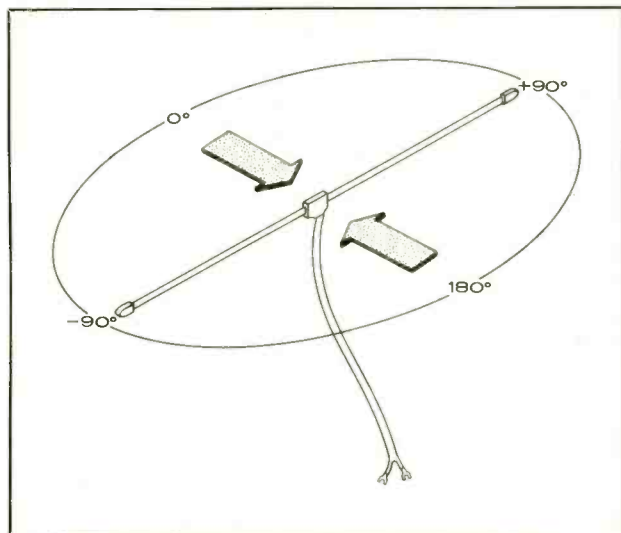
signed with separate mechanically and electrically variable elements for UHF-TV. All of these refinements involve extra cost because of the added complexity in construction and assembly. However, even confining the discussion to the few antennas designed *exclusively* for VHF and FM use, we could still not establish a relationship between performance and price.

IT was mentioned earlier that the length of the antenna elements is important, and our tests confirmed this. Invariably, we were able to adjust the element lengths of each of the antennas for best results, and in all cases the length that worked best for any one of our test frequencies was not the best for the other two. Antennas with telescoping elements therefore offer a decided advantage if you are willing to take the trouble to adjust the element lengths to correspond with desired station frequencies. If you want to avoid trial and error in doing this, just divide 5,616 by the MHz reading of the station desired and obtain the half-wavelength figure directly in inches. If the result is 60 inches, for example, you would want each element to be extended to a length of 30 inches, since the formula and chart give results for the *combination* of the two elements. Obviously, since our "standard" flexible-wire antenna was pre-cut to lengths corresponding to the middle of the FM band (as a compromise), it cannot be optimized for the extreme ends of the dial. We suspect that the only reason we were able to achieve higher signal readings with certain antennas at the 105.1-MHz dial setting than were obtainable with our "reference standard" was because of this adjustability of length. It was interesting to note that at the mid-frequency of 96.3 MHz, variations in signal pickup were far less from antenna to antenna than was the case for either 93.9 or 105.1 MHz.

Probably because of the growing popularity of FM car radios, many FM stations now transmit their signals with both horizontal and vertical polarization, radiated power normally being equally divided between the two. Tilting the rigid elements of indoor antennas to something resembling a "V" therefore means that signal contributions will be gathered from both of these transmitting antennas—another decided advantage of the indoor antennas over the rudimentary flexible-ribbon type supplied with most sets.

At best, the various switches and knobs associated with some of the more visually elaborate indoor antennas we tested are of questionable usefulness—at least for FM. Admittedly, changing switch positions *does* alter signal strength, as our signal-

Fig. 2. A dipole has two zones of maximum sensitivity, indicated by the arrows. Minimum pickup occurs at $+90$ and -90 degrees.



strength meter attested, but in no instance did any switch setting produce signal-strength readings materially greater than those that could be obtained by the very simplest "rabbit ears" types not similarly equipped! But before you are tempted to write to the Better Business Bureau, one thing must be said in defense of these multi-position switches. Their settings *do* have an effect on polarization or directivity patterns. That is, certain switch positions, either by connecting fixed "lumped" inductances, or by eliminating one of the two antenna elements, do bring about complex electrical changes that affect the antenna's directivity. As for the loss of actual signal strength in all but the "normal" switch position, remember that signal strength, in just about all listening situations, is the least of the many problems. Any modern tuner or receiver will be as noise-free when fed with 200 microvolts as it will when supplied with a 1,000-microvolt signal.

When it comes to antenna orientation, the mere fact that the indoor models have rigid, telescoping metal elements makes that job easier than dealing with a flexible-wire dipole that refuses to stay stretched out in "T formation" unless you staple the ends to a wall or to the floor. And, too, once they are stapled you can no longer adjust the elements for best multipath-free reception.

Of all the antennas tested (excluding the "standard" reference dipole) the best rejection of signals coming from undesired directions was afforded by the two least expensive models—the Saxton Orbit and the Archer (Radio Shack) 15-955. Whether lack of good directional characteristics—which seemed to be a failing of the more elaborate models—was due to their extra physical and electrical complexity is difficult to say, but the measured facts speak for themselves. In any case, it seems that the more variables there were, the more erratic the results and the less justified the extra cost—if FM reception is all you are after.

THERE are two kinds of "indoor antennas" that we didn't bother to measure, but that you should be aware of. One type consists of a length of wire terminating in a "magic black box" that contains a little five-cent capacitor or an equally inexpensive coil of wire. If you were unwary enough to be taken in by one of these things, I suggest you experiment by cutting off the box at the end of the wire and just use the piece of wire as the antenna—the results will be about the same.

An only slightly more legitimate product is the one that promises to use "your entire house wiring as a giant antenna." This device is connected to your wall socket, and a length of wire coming from

its innards is then connected to either of your two antenna terminals. That five-cent capacitor shows up again—this time as a means of coupling to your antenna terminals the signals picked up by your house wiring. It *does* provide a good deal of signal, but there are two things wrong. First, you don't *want* your house wiring to serve as an antenna because your house wiring runs in every direction and intercepts just about every reflected signal in your neighborhood. Often it intercepts signals *twice*—once on the east side of the house and again on the west side—creating its very own multipath interference! Secondly, that little capacitor is connected directly to one side of your 120-volt a.c. house wiring. The impedance of the capacitor is high enough that no significant power-line current is coupled through it, but if someday that capacitor should short out, the odds are fifty-fifty that the full 120 volts will be present at any metallic point on your receiver or tuner. You have then but to touch your equipment to get a much greater "signal" than you ever bargained for.

A FEW obvious and useful conclusions can be drawn from this study:

1. If you have the choice (and a lot of us don't) between a good, directional outdoor FM antenna and an indoor antenna, choose the outdoor one. The difference in cost and trouble will usually be worth it.
2. If you are limited to an indoor antenna and don't mind adjusting element lengths and carefully orienting the device, choose the least expensive and the least elaborate type available. Generally, the simple two-element rabbit-ears will be just fine.
3. You may find, as we did in experiments conducted after our measurements were completed, that the mere physical location of the antenna in your listening room can greatly affect reception results. Keep the antenna away from metal surfaces, extending the lead-in transmission line to do so if necessary. You'll lose a little signal strength in the course of "splicing in" extra wire, but you may come out ahead in terms of usable signal as a result.

ANTENNA MANUFACTURERS REPRESENTED

Antenna Corporation of America (ACA), Box 865, Burlington, Iowa 52601

Channel Master, Ellenville, N. Y. 12428

GC Electronics (Magic Color), 400 South Wyman Street, Rockford, Illinois 61101

JFD Electronics Corp., 15 Avenue at 62nd Street, Brooklyn, N. Y. 11219

Point Charge Corp. (Spintenna), 2105 Williamsbridge Road, Bronx, N. Y. 10461

Radio Shack (Archer), 2617 W. Seventh Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76107

Saxton Products, Inc., 215 N. Route 303, Congers, N. Y. 10920

Spirling Products Company (Spico), Inc. P. O. Box 722, Hicksville, N. Y. 11802

Make and Model	93.9 MHz gain in decibels			96.3 MHz gain in decibels			105.1 MHz gain in decibels		
	0°	+90°	-90°	0°	+90°	-90°	0°	+90°	-90°
Reference Folded Dipole	0	-12	-10.5	0	-9.5	-5	0	-14	-12
ACA Digitron AC/400	-6	-14	-14	-3.5	-13	-13	-2	-18.5	-20
Archer 15-955	-3	-8	-12	+2	-15.5	-7	+6	-8	-12
Archer 15-1820	-2	-8	-9	-2	-3.5	0	+3	-2	+1
Archer 15-1811	-2.5	-10.5	-15.5	0	-7	-4	+3.5	+3	+3
Archer 15-1815	-4	-12	-8	-3.5	-9.5	-15	+2.2	-8	-6
Channel Master Chroma I (amplified)	+10	-6	-6	+13	-5	-9.5	+14	0	+6
Channel Master Chroma III	-2	-10.5	-10.5	-2	-9.5	-9.5	+6	-4	-4
JFD VP100	-1.5	-13	-10.5	+1	-9.5	-3.5	+2	-14	-10.5
Magic Color Apollo	-2.7	-12	-9	+1	-5	-5	0	-22	-20
Saxton Orbit	0	-8	-8	-2	-19	-15	+2	-14	-10.5
Saxton Super 6	-3	-8	-16.5	-2	-3.5	-15.5	0	-14	-17.5
Saxton Caravelle	-4	-8	-2	+2	-13	-11	+3	-8	-10.5
Spico S6-G	0	-4.5	-7	0	-3.5	-1	+6	-4.5	-3
Spico 301	-3.8	-10.5	-16.5	-1	-3.5	-9.5	0	-8	+3
Spico 909	0	-6	-10.5	-3.5	-5	-8.5	+2.2	+1.5	-6
Spintenna FM250	-4	-14	18.5	0	-7	-5	+4	+3	+1

INTERPRETING THE TEST RESULTS

IN GENERAL, an antenna should be oriented so that its zone of maximum pickup or sensitivity is directed at the desired station's transmitting antenna. Its zone (or zones) of *minimum* sensitivity should face the sources of any unwanted, interfering signals such as multipath reflection. Since all of the antennas tested have the "figure-eight" directional characteristics of a simple twin-lead dipole (see Fig. 2), there are actually two zones of maximum sensitivity (0 and 180 degrees) and two zones of minimum sensitivity (+90 degrees and -90 degrees). Obviously, if the source of an unwanted signal is 180 degrees from the desired station, no dipole can effectively reject it. However, unwanted signals coming in from the sides can be considerably diminished by proper orientation.

The test results for three actual FM stations at different frequencies in the FM band—93.9, 96.3, and 105.1 megahertz (MHz)—are shown. The figures re-

present the "gain" of the various antennas in their direction of maximum sensitivity (0 degrees). Minimum-sensitivity gains (at +90 and -90 degrees) are also shown. The data are given in decibels (dB), with 0 dB at each frequency corresponding to the signal picked up by the twin-lead folded dipole used as a reference standard. When the primary consideration is maximum pickup of a station, a large figure in the 0-degree column (either a high "plus" number or a low "minus" number) is desirable. To judge an antenna's effectiveness in rejecting unwanted signals coming from the sides, the figure in the 0-degree column must be compared with the figures in the +90-degree and -90-degree columns. The greater the numerical difference, the better the antenna is at discriminating against off-axis interference.

IF your reception problem is simply one of inadequate signal strength (indicated by excessive background hiss and/or a weak and fading signal), the test

results show that none of the nonamplified indoor antennas is likely to do a much better job than a humble twin-lead dipole except at the high-frequency end of the FM band, where adjusting the lengths of the telescoping arms seems to be of some help. However, you may find a rabbit-ears device more convenient to aim at stations lying in different directions. In eliminating multipath reception, it appears that some experimentation with antenna orientation is necessary to obtain best results. For example, since most of the antennas have shown a different amount of rejection at +90 and -90 degrees, turning the entire antenna 180 degrees might serve to bring its least sensitive zone to bear on a particularly strong source of interference. And, under some conditions, it is conceivable that orienting the antenna for the best *compromise* between signal strength and interference rejection may actually produce a cleaner FM program than aiming the antenna directly at the station for greatest signal strength.

The Antennas: Individual Commentaries

● **ACA (Antenna Corporation of America) Digitron AC/400.** A telescoping "trombone" type with FM-VHF elements, UHF loops, and a built-in digital clock; \$32.95. This unit's short element length is a definite advantage, but there is reduced signal pickup. Elements are rotatable only through about 30 degrees, which means the entire unit has to be rotated for optimum signal pickup (and then you can't read the clock!). Side-signal rejection wasn't too good.

● **Archer (Radio Shack) 15-955.** A simple rabbit-ears with telescoping FM-VHF elements; \$1.29. This is as "basic" a pair of rabbit-ears as you could find. At two of the frequencies in our test, it bettered the "standard reference" dipole in signal-pulling ability. Side rejection was a bit critical in adjustment, but it turned out to be quite acceptable and even superior at the high end of the FM band. If this is all you really need, how could you go wrong?
(Continued overleaf)

● **Archer 15-1820.** FM only, with telescoping elements, a brass loop, and a twelve-position selector; \$6.95. That extra "brass loop" just about kills any hope of side-signal rejection, no matter how much you adjust the elements and the "twelve-position tuning control." Signal-pulling ability was a bit down at low and mid frequencies, somewhat better than our standard dipole at the high end when element lengths were properly adjusted.

● **Archer 15-1811.** Telescoping FM-VHF elements, rotatable UHF loops, FM-VHF/UHF switch, and a twelve-position selector; \$12.95. What would otherwise be a very handy unit (the elements rotate in a separate molded section so the base can remain stationary) is negated by the very poor side-signal rejection capability at the high end—again, probably caused by those ever-present UHF elements perched right near the FM-VHF rods. Perhaps removal of the UHF loops (if you don't need them for TV use) might still make this unit worthwhile for its other features.

● **Archer 15-1815.** Telescoping FM-VHF elements, rotatable UHF loops, FM-VHF/UHF switch, and a seven-position selector; \$22.95. Lots of fun for the kids in all these switches, knobs, and rotating UHF loops. As for FM performance, the unit worked best at the high end of the band, with side-signal rejection fair at most frequencies. A little reminiscent of Dr. Frankenstein's laboratory, and therefore exciting to behold.

● **JFD VP100.** Telescoping FM-VHF elements, rotatable UHF loop, FM-VHF/UHF switch, and an impedance-matching switch; \$19.95. This unit comes closest to the signal-capturing capability of a simple dipole *as well as* its side-signal rejection. It has the advantage of adjustable element lengths (lacking in the wire type) and therefore exceeded the performance of our "standard" by about 2 dB on the high end. A pity that the UHF elements bring the price up so high; otherwise it would be a real overall winner.

● **Magic Color Apollo (GC Electronics).** Telescoping FM-VHF elements, UHF loops, and a six-position selector; \$15.20. A very colorful unit, but signal strength was not always up to that of the standard dipole. Side rejection was only average at the low end of the band, but unusually good at the high—over 20 dB of side rejection. Another Magic Color model, the "Venus" (\$10.50), tested identically for FM reception and is therefore not included in the data chart.

● **Saxton Orbit (Model 1165).** A simple rabbit-ears antenna with telescoping FM-VHF elements; \$1.99. This is another basic rabbit-ears model with no frills. By all rights it should have performed exactly like the Archer 15-955, but for some reason it did better at the low end (equaling our standard dipole in signal-pulling) and the high end than at mid-frequencies. Side rejection, on the other hand, was good at all frequencies.

● **Saxton Super 6 (Model 1172).** Telescoping FM-VHF elements with UHF loop and a six-position selector; \$7.99. This one has somewhat lower sensitivity than its simpler cousin above, but it was one of the few UHF-included units in which the presence of the extra elements did not seem to degrade side-signal rejection to any great

degree. Only one of the six switch positions really worked well for us in our tests.

● **Saxton Caravelle (Model 1173).** Telescoping FM-VHF elements with UHF loops and a twelve-position selector; \$10.99. Six more positions for the switch and an extra loop in the UHF section make substantially no difference in signal-pulling or signal-rejection ability over the less-expensive Super 6 above. Possibly its use as a UHF antenna for TV might disclose superior performance, but there's no point in making the additional investment if the antenna is to be used only for FM.

● **Spico (Spirling Products Co.) S6-G.** Telescoping FM-VHF elements, tunable impedance slider, and knob adjustments; \$8.45. This unit provided the best signal of all in terms of actual microvolts measured, equalling our standard readings at the low and mid-frequencies and *surpassing* our high-frequency signal reading by a full 6 dB (double the number of microvolts). Unfortunately, the side-signal rejection capability was extremely poor, and the "variable impedance" slider seemed most effective near the top of its travel for all three frequencies and regardless of element length.

● **Spico 301.** Telescoping FM-VHF elements, UHF loop, and a twelve-position selector; \$9.95. There was somewhat lower signal pickup at the low end here compared with this manufacturer's more expensive model. Also, the location of the unwanted UHF elements seems to contribute to the poorer side-signal rejection capability, which could not be remedied by any of the twelve positions of the impedance switch. The wide discrepancies between side-signal rejection at +90 degrees compared to -90 degrees must be a direct consequence of the position of the UHF rings: they are probably acting as "reflector" elements in one condition and as "director" (or reinforcing) elements in the other, 180 degrees away.

● **Spico 909.** Telescoping FM-VHF elements and UHF loops, FM-VHF/UHF switch, a twelve-position selector, and an impedance-matching slider; \$19.95. Again, reasonable signal-pulling power at all frequencies and somewhat better side-signal rejection, but, despite the twelve-position switch, the UHF/VHF switch, and the multi-purpose applications, this seems just a bit much to pay if all you want is good FM reception.

● **Spintenna (Point Charge Corporation) FM250.** For FM only, with a rotatable star-shaped element configuration and a "phasor" control; \$24.95. This unit takes up little space and it rotates easily without knocking over adjacent vases or whatever. Note that though signal strength at the low end was a bit lower than that of our standard dipole, side rejection was good at both low and mid-frequencies. Our only objection was the poor side-signal rejection noted at the high-frequency check point. (Element length, unfortunately, is *not* variable because of the nature of the device.) And, too, however novel the idea, the price is fairly steep. (There is another Spintenna model available, the FM170, identical to the FM250 except that it lacks the "phasor" control; \$17.50.)

Leonard Feldman is a well-known engineering consultant and writer on audio topics, an authority on FM and stereo FM, and co-inventor of a matrix system for four-channel disc recording.

DO "BOOSTERS" WORK ON FM?



IN THE accompanying discussion of indoor antennas for FM, no mention was made of so-called "boosters" or high-frequency preamplifiers. Many such products are available separately and are intended primarily for use in TV reception. Their use for FM or stereo FM has never caught on, and for a very good reason. It is easy enough to build a radio-frequency amplifier that can be tuned to the desired FM frequencies, but merely amplifying a weak signal will not necessarily improve FM reception. That is because whatever noise is in the signal fed to the preamplifier (and the electronic noise originating within its circuit as well) will be amplified along with the desired signal.

As noted in the text, the signal-to-noise capability of most modern tuners or tuner sections of receivers is so good that it actually approaches theoretical physical limits. In FM, it is the *ratio* of signal to noise rather than just the signal *level* that is of concern. Now, since the internal noise of the r.f. section of a modern tuner is so low, the addition of an amplifier or a booster *ahead* of the tuner's front end rarely makes any significant improvement in the ultimate signal-to-noise ratio of the overall system.

There is one exception to this generalization. If an outdoor antenna is located at a great distance from the tuner, noise is often introduced in the long transmission line needed to deliver the signal to the set. Under such circumstances, if the signal level can be boosted after the antenna but *before* the transmission line, then the signal-to-noise ratio *can* be improved.

With this in mind, it was with some skepticism that we hooked up the Channel Master Chroma I indoor antenna. The unit's physical appearance is much like some of the other models investigated in our tests, but there is one big difference: the Chroma I model has a built-in transistorized r.f. preamplifier. In addition, the tuning slider actually adjusts an inductance which is

part of the amplifier circuitry and can therefore be optimized for highest gain at a given signal frequency.

We checked the Chroma models at the same frequencies used in our previous tests. In order to establish some frame of reference with regard to the antenna itself, we also measured the Channel Master Chroma III antenna (a physical duplicate of the Chroma I, but without the transistorized preamplifier circuit). We were therefore able to evaluate the actual contribution of the preamplifier, both with respect to simple gain and also with respect to off-axis signal-rejection capability. The same procedure was used for both of these antennas as had been used for the other models tested. At each test frequency, element length was adjusted for greatest signal strength and the entire assembly was rotated for signal in the case of the "on-target" readings. The results are tabulated in the accompanying chart.

The Chroma III unit (less amplifier) performed well in terms of the criteria previously noted, although signal-strength readings at low and mid-band frequencies fell somewhat short of the "highest" readings. At the high end of the band, however, signal strength exceeded that of the standard dipole by a good 6 dB as the arm lengths were adjusted properly. Side-signal rejection was quite symmetrical as the antenna was rotated clockwise and counterclockwise away from the "best-signal" orientation.

As was to be expected, repeating the measurements using the Chroma I produced considerably greater signal levels. Really surprising, however, were the relative attenuations of the signals when the antenna was reoriented for side-signal rejection measurements. At almost all frequencies the off-axis rejection capability was *significantly* better than that obtained from any of the passive units tested. Impressed by this obvious difference in performance, we spent some time actually listening to stations on the FM band using this antenna. It takes more adjustment to achieve the results on FM than when such a device is used for TV, but we found that the combination of change of orientation of the arms and arm lengths, and careful adjustment of the tuning knob, had a very marked effect on multipath distortion and, in the case of weak signals, on background noise as well. In nearly every case, an optimum combination could be found which resulted in clean, noise-free FM reception.

Our conclusion, then, is that although we did not need the extra *gain* provided by this preamplifier-booster antenna, it is an effective approach to the problem of FM signal reception and goes one step beyond the best "passive" indoor antennas available.

● **Channel Master Chroma I:** Built-in a.c.-line operated transistor preamplifier, telescoping FM-VHF elements and rotatable UHF loop, FM-VHF/UHF switch, and tuning slider. \$24.95.

● **Channel Master Chroma III:** Identical to Chroma I, except no preamplifier: \$13.95.

The hardy, perennial

ODETTA

By J Marks

IN the world of music, at least, it's very hard for established stars to shift into new orbits. When rock became the predominant form in American popular music, a number of older singers attempted to adapt rock hits to their own styles, but they usually bored their regular fans and won no new ones among the young rock audience. But Odetta, one of the top folk singers in the country, made a foray into rock territory a few years ago and has had considerable success with it. Her album "Odetta Sings" (Polydor 24 4048), containing her versions of songs by Paul McCartney, Mick Jagger, Elton John, and others, is still being played more than two years after it was issued, and that's rare longevity for a rock album.

When she appeared at the (now defunct) Fillmore East a couple of years ago, it was of little interest to the kids out front that the large lady on stage who was knocking 'em dead was named Odetta. To them she was just another incredible talent who sprang up from nowhere. But for the likes of, say, the Bennington class of 1959, a good bit of readjustment to the new image was required.

What had happened, they might wonder, to the Odetta who still merited the esteem of elite audiences at the Newport Folk Festival back in 1963? (That was the year Joan Baez and Bob Dylan sang duets about social problems, and *practically* everybody still believed that "Beattle" was a misspelling of the name of an insect.) Could this pulsing black singer in her Afro robe, huge earrings, and halo of hair *au naturel* be that same mature woman

whom the *New York Times* had called "the most glorious voice in American folk music" back in 1965? Could it be that same Odetta now wailing Paul McCartney's *Every Night* and the Rolling Stones' *No Expectations*? Could it be that same Odetta prancing around the stage with an *electric* guitar held at her hip like a rifle, pelting her audience of cheering Fillmore freaks with that enormous alto voice of hers while taking on Elton John's *Take Me to the Pilot* and almost making a brand new hit out of it?

Yes, it was the same Odetta all right. You could tell by the gracious reverence of her bows, her keen sense of programming, her majestic stage presence—and, of course, by the colossal latitude of the perfectly tuned vocal instrument she directs into perilous voyages with the ease and finesse of a master mariner. Yet, at least one tired old folkie was heard to mutter, "I thought she'd retired to San Diego or somewhere."

There *was* no retirement for Odetta, she confidently told me in her handsome apartment on New York's Fifth Avenue near 110th Street. ("That's *my* lake and *my* almost-forest," she exclaimed as if she were seeing her view of upper Central Park for the first time.) We settled down over a pot of hot tea, sitting by the window where we could enjoy the prospect of the park below. "No," she said, smiling graciously, "there was no retirement for me. I continued recording and I continued performing. But folk music simply ceased to be the big issue it had been on the campuses during the late Fifties and early Sixties.



And, of course, rock-and-roll became the prevalent kind of music."

And so eventually she began singing some of the new songs. But her rise into considerable new-found popularity with the rock audiences was not a miraculous transformation. Only a year prior to her triumph at the Fillmore and the release of her rock album on Polydor, I had seen her on the bottom half of a bill with Led Zeppelin at the New York Pavillion. When she was announced, the crowd hardly paused long enough in its noisy conversation to take notice of her name. And when she was six minutes into a rambling and antiquated version of *Home on the Range*, a barrage of boos grew to humiliating proportions, climaxed by shouts of "Get off the stage!" She continued—undaunted but visibly shaken—until she had wrung the last note out of the song. It was a calamity, and I went away feeling terrible.

At the Fillmore in 1971, however, the calamity was forgotten. In just about twelve months she had been recycled as another instant star, to be greeted with the normal standing ovations, stamping of feet for encores, and cheers of gratitude by practically the same crowd that had ordered her off the stage a year earlier.

It is ironic that in her song *Hit or Miss* she should have written "Sittin' here all by myself/Tryin' to be everybody else"—ironic because she has been so totally *non-imitative* in her approach to songs by such writers as Randy Newman, James Taylor, McCartney, and Jagger.

It is to her credit that her interpretations of this new material have been every bit as individual, as uniquely hers, as her presentation of folk tunes a dozen years ago or the beautiful blues songs she was singing six or seven years ago. In fact, she adds something new to rock. Because of her classical training and fine discipline, she's capable of getting all the way down to the smallest nuances of the melodies and lyrics of the songs, thus giving us a very fresh view of rock classics. But the ultimate proof of her grasp of the idiom is her own song called *Movin' It On*, which you can hear on the Polydor album. It's great pop music performed with fabulous style.

"I came upon the music scene," she told me, "when people like the Weavers had a song on the Hit Parade. My, my! Can you believe that it was actually *that* long ago?" And she laughed heartily. "From Los Angeles, where I grew up, I went to San Francisco, and it was there that I heard something called folk music, and I absolutely fell in love with it. My friend Jo Mapes and her husband Paul were the ones who got me into folk material. Previously, I had been studying classical music. I never really thought of opera—after all, in those days it was unheard of for a black to be of any consequence in opera. You know, it was only after many, many years that Marian Anderson finally got to do something at the Metropolitan, so my thrust was towards oratorios. I really loved them, and I wanted to get a group of soloists together and tour colleges with a repertoire of oratorios and perform

them with the schools' own choruses. But then I found folk music and I began struggling with a guitar. And I remember my voice teacher was so happy that I was working on playing that damn guitar because it would keep my mind off manipulating my throat and ruining it." She laughed again, and her rather proper "interview manner" began to relax.

Odetta is obviously a demon housekeeper—there was incense in the air, and the whole apartment was fresh and spotless. But that was far less impressive than the easy friendliness she used to make me feel at home as she surrendered candidly to the interview. Sinking back in her chair and smiling over her teacup, she looked astonishingly like Ethel Waters. "In the mid-Fifties I was offered a job singing folk songs. And, you know, for a kid who had decided a long time before that she wanted to sing and to earn her living as a singer, well, I just couldn't turn my back on the offer. Naturally, I didn't think it would end my career as a hopeful classical singer and turn me forevermore into a folkie! But how could I fight success?"

WE talked for a while about San Francisco, and she said, "When I was in San Francisco doing folk songs and hanging around with the folk crowd, which was very important at that time, I kept hearing about this Bessie Smith. People would come over, and what they'd ask me all the time was 'Have you heard Bessie yet?' And I'd say, 'No.' So one time I went to a party at the home of a jazz enthusiast, and we were all drinking that cheap wine which was the fashion back in those days, and this fellow put on a Bessie Smith record. Well, I listened and I was sitting there waiting for that magic thing to happen. And it didn't." She chuckled and slapped her hands together. "But," she exclaimed dramatically, "that same night they played a lot of Ma Rainey, and I fell in love with her. But not Bessie Smith. I just couldn't see what everybody was so excited about.

"It was years later, over at a friend's house, that somebody put on Bessie's tune *You Gotta Bring It with Ya When Ya Come*. That was just like a key. It opened a door, and there she was: *fantastic!* Well, from that time on I've always hoped to play Bessie Smith if they ever make a film about her. But it also scares me because you know how Hollywood is about black people even now. They'll probably get some super slick chick, and that would be a shame because it would turn out like a television special and have absolutely nothing to do with Bessie at all.

"Midway in my folk career—because of loving Ma Rainey and Bessie so much—I made a bid for the blues. I did an RCA album called 'Sometimes I Feel Like Crying.' That, too, was a departure from my folk image. On that album a new kind of group backed me: all the old, surviving jazz greats who had actually known and played with Bessie. But earlier I had had still another kind of backup group—a whole symphony orchestra—when I did 'Ballads for Americans.' So I guess it was only natural that I'd eventually find myself standing in front of a rock group.

"Music has taught me a great deal, and consequently it has changed me. When I first started singing folk songs, I knew very little about them. But then I began to understand where they came from and why they existed, and I started to see the *people* in my music. I also started to understand the history of where *I* had come from as an

American black. And it was a history that I had not been taught in the schools of Los Angeles. Well, I'm a good performer," she said without false modesty, "but I don't consider myself either an extrovert or a highly political person. And I don't think of myself as being particularly brave either. But I cut my hair—that means that I was maybe the first person in this country to have a 'natural.' That seems extremely unimportant now, but it took an attitude of the most militant sort to make me do such a thing when it was so utterly opposite to everything we had seen on TV or in the movies or in magazines. Through the music I began to feel personally involved in my own tradition and less uptight and less alienated.

"Black performers have come out of a whole variety of traditions, not just one. We represent a whole tapestry of current history. Little Richard is in show biz, right out of rhythm-and-blues, which the Baptist Church taught us to think of as *evil* music. But we loved it anyway. The Staple Singers came out of the church and its music, something people used to say would never interest rich, white audiences. But the Staple Singers have made the Top Forty! And me, well, I'm a mixture of things. In a black neighborhood in Los Angeles, you go to church. That's all there is to it. Nobody asks if you *want* to go. You just go. So that had a strong influence. Then you add the Grand Ole Opry, because my father insisted on hearing it all the time. And then the pop music that was on the radio. And Ray Charles. And finally, for me, there was the influence of classical music, which was very, very important since it was a tiny window that gave a glimpse of something beyond the ghetto."

She looked a bit sad as she reflected for a moment, but brightened as she continued, "As for my work with rock-and-roll, I'm afraid that most people need to feel that a performer is a constant personality, and once they've accepted a performer, they don't expect to have to change their minds or reactions. So if you do change, it's one of the greatest slaps in the face a performer can give a fan. I was a little afraid when I started doing new material. The first time we opened a concert with the new band I was worried—ready for the kind of reaction Bob Dylan got back in 1964 when he first used an amplified guitar. I expected boos, but there weren't any. And that's good because perhaps it means that I've succeeded as an interpreter, which is exactly what I've always wanted to be."

THE rock audience is amorphous and contains many small provincial cliques. It would be pointless to claim that Odetta has penetrated all of them, but she has succeeded as a rock performer and reached many who had never heard of her before. She hasn't gone much further with this kind of music because she entered the field just in time for the *Götterdämmerung* of the rock era. She came in at the end of the party. The party is all but over, but Odetta is still with us. A measure of her success as an interpreter of rock is that her Polydor album "Odetta Sings" remains an underground hit. It is a favorite with the most knowing disc jockeys in the country and receives daily air play on such stations as WPLJ and WNEW in New York, KMET in Los Angeles, and KSAN in San Francisco. And her records have a way of staying in the catalog—some that are still available go back as far as 1962 or 1963. Chances are good that if some of the songs we think of as "rock classics" today are still being played ten years from now, they'll be played in Odetta's interpretations.

● Match the newspaper headlines in Column A with the names of the personalities in Column B.*

Column A

1. Pianist Defects to West
2. Rehearses at Keyboard in Bikini
3. Operatic Basso New Broadway Matinee Idol
4. American Pianist Wins Moscow Competition
5. Soprano Disrobes in Nudie Film
6. Sixteen-Year-Old Replaces Ailing Colleague for Sensational Debut
7. Forgetful Mezzo Has Social Security Number Tattooed on Abdomen
8. Pianist Plays for Big Three at Potsdam

Column B

- a. André Watts
- b. Anna Moffo
- c. Eugene List
- d. Vera Francheschi
- e. Van Cliburn
- f. Rosalind Elias
- g. Vladimir Ashkenazy
- h. Ezio Pinza

MUSIC AND PUBLICITY (THE TATTOOED MEZZO AND OTHER STORIES)

Have our classical heroes and heroines reached their exalted state as affirmations of our superior taste, or are our opinions made for us by professional manipulators?

By Stephen E. Rubin

THE little quiz above is not meant to challenge you (it's too easy) so much as to alert you to a situation of which you're probably only peripherally aware: that there is a power at work (play?) which is subtly tinkering with your mind, and that power is the all-encompassing phenomenon of modern life called publicity. Whether through the medium of the newspaper, magazines, radio, TV, or sky-writing, it is all but impossible to dodge the barrage of publicity puffs for politicians, products, and performers of every stripe. Certainly the world of music is not immune, and it is that area of the activity I am about to examine in the interest of answering a simple question: Can publicity alone make a musical superstar?

First, if you will check the quiz above carefully, you will notice that all the headlines involve personalities from the world of classical music. I am purposely restricting this investigation to classical publicity because pop publicity, while superficially similar, is actually light years removed from it in style, means, and intent. But you needn't necessarily be a classical music buff to score well on the quiz, for the headlines were all chosen on the basis of general interest. I think we can all agree that Mr. and Mrs. Average American couldn't care less about pianist X, singer Y, or fiddler Z. But they can be made to care at least a little when they read that an *American* has won a famous *Russian* piano competition. This inevitably sets a few chauvinistic juices to flowing. Or they might read that a gorgeous

soprano is the first of her species to shed her clothes—for perfectly good dramatic reasons, of course—in a movie. That just might set some other juices to flowing. Quite suddenly, the artists concerned in these headlines are no longer a distant and eccentric breed, but people with whom Mr. and Mrs. A. American can “identify” or sympathize. Their names may not be exactly household words, but they do begin to be bandied about in circles other than musical ones. When that happens, Mr. or Mrs. A. American may just be intrigued enough to purchase that first classical recording, and thus it is that Van Cliburn's prize-winning performance of Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto became the all-time classical best seller.

That a pianist has triumphed in Moscow, or that a singer has undressed for the camera, means nothing in itself. That these facts were disseminated by publicity via an enormous communications machine means everything. Like all advertising, publicity is trying to sell you something. At its most basic level it introduces you to a performer and then attempts to influence you in that performer's favor by telling you things about him that interest you and make the performer attractive. Again, like advertising, publicity's attentions are focused on the *merchandising* of a product rather than on the qualities of the product itself. Does it then follow that, like a best-selling commodity (which is not necessarily the *best* commodity), the best publicized (most famous) performer is not necessarily the best performer? Let us see.

Publicity differs from advertising in one essential way: it gets *free* space in the media. The New York

* Answers: 1-g; 2-d; 3-h; 4-e; 5-b; 6-a; 7-f; 8-c.

Times or the *Sheboygan Herald* does not feel compelled to charge a performer for reporting on his or her newsworthy activity. (The performer may have paid someone to tell *them* about it, but more of that later.) The point is that an unknown American wins a prestigious contest in an Iron Curtain country; that is news, hard news. Or a well-known soprano appears nude in a movie; that is news too, though of a somewhat softer variety. But neither story has much to do with the qualities of the performer's art. The first story is essentially political in nature—the thawing of the Cold War, the opening of doors between cultures, *etc.* The second story is quite simply a silly appeal to prurience. That the pianist and the singer may be supremely fine or supremely rotten artists is secondary; the *angle* is primary.

In seeking and stressing an angle, publicity directs itself in the main toward our traditional national taste for the gimmick. It matters not a whit whether you play the piano well as long as you can play it faster or louder than anyone else, preferably in mittens or with one hand tied behind your back. It matters not a whit whether you sing well, as long as you sing higher and louder than anyone else, perhaps while standing on your head. (The Norwegian

It isn't all glamour. When Renata Tebaldi's mother died, I had to keep the press from mauling and agonizing her by begging them to stay away. A publicist's responsibility may begin with writing releases and setting up interviews, but it also includes helping artists find the right voice teacher and choose complimentary gowns, or telling them to grow sideburns if they look too square.

—Peter Gravina

violinist Ole Bull used to do just that—play while standing on his head—and of course he was wildly successful. But that was in the 1840's!) This is not to suggest that genuine art doesn't triumph over gimmickry. It generally does—but only in the *long* run. What temporarily triumphs along with it, and often in the name of great art, is what keeps the publicity mills churning, the record companies in business, and the concert halls and opera houses as filled as they're going to get.

Like any of the other performing arts, classical music, despite its "serious" nature, plays the survival-of-the-fittest game as expertly and as ruthlessly as the best of them. To participate, a performer needn't have great talent. But he must be highly driven, and part of that drive must be directed toward securing publicity. Publicity is a crop that can be harvested in many different meadows, and it therefore comes in many different strains. The best, perhaps, is *natural* publicity—winning a contest or defecting to the West. Natural publicity is also assured when a performer has a personality that is innately colorful and interesting. Two of the most

famous classical-music figures of recent years, Leonard Bernstein and Maria Callas, fall into this category. They were *born* superstars; publicity cannot manufacture, it can only polish such natural charisma.

Fate is cruel and ungenerous, however, so only a very few performers are granted these alluring natural endowments. Other personalities have to be "processed," and as a first step they must find out just what there is about them that is publicizable. If they are smart, they hire, as soon as they can afford it, someone to help them. That someone may be called a press agent, a publicist, or a public relations man. Without belaboring the semantics of the matter, all perform basically the same function: alerting the public, via the communications media, to the fact that their client is not only the best artist around in his category, but the most fascinating as well. The performer may, indeed, be a silk purse, but that doesn't make the job any easier.

In New York City, the classical performer seeking musical public-relations representation can choose from a number of firms and individuals. There are four major offices and a slew of smaller ones. In addition, if a performer is appearing at the Metropolitan Opera, the City Opera, or the Philharmonic, he can command the help of house publicists. The ones who are really in there trying, however, hire private press aides. They spend, quite possibly, as much as \$3,500 and up annually for the service. (Fees vary among publicists, and a lot depends on what the artist is doing and how much money he is earning.)

There is not a publicist alive who can *promise* a client anything in the way of success—but some do. Publicity is based largely on chance and a fine sense of when to seize an opportunity. It often involves simply being in the right place at the right time, and sometimes, of course, having the right connections. But most of all it comes down to the artist himself. A very hungry publicist will take on any Aunt Tillie who allegedly plays a great tuba, but the more practical members of the profession won't touch a performer unless they feel he or she is the kind of tinder that can be ignited by the spark of publicity.

There are a number of very fine artists performing today, as there have been in the past, who will never have really spectacular careers because, aside from their great talent, there is little about them that can be publicized. They perform at a consistently high level, they garner enthusiastic reviews, they have a circle of devoted and discerning followers. But they were not meant—to be elevated to superstardom. Nicolai Gedda, William Steinberg, Zino Fran-



Peter Gravina

GO SOMEWHERE...

Time was when ship's-rail cheesecake was a standard gambit for the publicity trade, as the shot of soprano Licia Albanese with the Andrea Doria life-preserver at left demonstrates (no, it wasn't that voyage). At left below, soprano Lily Pons arrives from Castle Lammermoor aboard the Queen Mary. Sailings have now given way to flights, and waving goodbye to their fans before take-off are Blanche Thebom (center) and Renata Tebaldi.



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London Records

cescatti, and Bernard Haitink should not take it amiss when I say that they fall into this category of low marketability.

In another category are those performers who can attain star status—but need a little initial push. Beverly Sills, Anna Moffo, Otto Klemperer, and Daniel Barenboim are all prime (though certainly very different) examples of this genus. Sills languished in obscurity until it was discovered that she has the kind of ingratiating personality to turn her into a TV talk-show regular. Moffo's warmth and beauty began to count in her career only when publicity found ways of capitalizing on them. In the cases of Klemperer and Barenboim, it took a switch to a larger record company (Angel) and its efficient publicity machine to up-grade their images, particularly in the U.S.

Today it is impossible for an artist to have a career of any significance unless he or she is prestigiously recorded and the recordings widely distributed. The larger public takes an artist seriously only when his records are generously represented in the bins of neighborhood music shops. Such is the power of recordings today, in fact, that there have been careers that were initiated in record studios and subsequently found expression in concert halls and opera houses.

A final category embraces those performers who have modest talents that are commercially valid but not much more. Publicity techniques here are often of the same kind that can "sell" the amiable chatter of a Sills or the sultry beauty of a Moffo, but they

fall flat when sabotaged by the subject's own lack of publicity awareness or of a significantly impressive talent. The pianist in the quiz at the head of this article (Headline 2, Column A) went along with her press agent's brainstorm of having her appear for an outdoor rehearsal dressed in a bikini. The agent called up every paper in town, and each agreed to send a photographer to cover the uncovering. The pianist, however, had second thoughts; she arrived in an ordinary summer dress. Unfortunately, she

There is a certain mystique about a performer which should at all times be preserved. The greatest promotion job ever done was on Greta Garbo. She was veiled in mystery. The late George Szell, who had already had all the big prestige stories, at one point said to me, "It's time now for me not to be so readily available for interviews." It then became my job to keep interviewers away from him.

—Edgar Vincent

had forgotten to tell the publicist, who had to mollify the furious cameramen, having already sacrificed her future credibility to an apparent hoax.

A similar incident involved mezzo Rosalind Elias—a valid talent, but not a major one—who was determined to launch herself on a wave of publicity. After trying a few of the regular, less sensationally oriented public-relations firms, she went out of the music field to a high-powered specialist. He decided that she should have her social-security number tattooed on her abdomen. Whether or not this was actually done is moot; in any case, the gimmick attracted enough newspaper space to appease the greediest publicity hound. Did it help Miss Elias professionally? Not particularly. Her career after

the alleged tattoo job was no better than it had been before it; she had simply reached a career plateau, and neither her talent nor her publicity could move her off it.

It should by now begin to be clear that when you read a newspaper or magazine story about an artist who is a great cook and a crack sportsman, who travels in smart society circles, dines in chic restaurants, and knows all about packing luggage with great economy, or about another who collects Inca art, is a devoted charity worker, lost her voice and miraculously regained it through yoga, and engineered a perilous escape from her native Hungary when the Communists crushed the rebellion . . . those stories, true or not, are there almost invariably because they were placed there through the efforts of a publicist. Same for the radio and TV talk shows. Mike Douglas, Johnny Carson, Dick Cavett, and Merv Griffin do not pine desperately to have the latest whiz fiddler or basso profundo on their shows. They have probably never even heard of them. But they don't have to: there is always a gaggle of press agents just outside the studio door more than willing to tell them or their talent scouts all they need to know about Miss Ivory Keys or Mr. Booming Baritone.

What finally persuades the talk shows and newspaper and magazine editors to run an interview or story on one personality as opposed to another is a nebulous thing. The choice is seldom based on simple merit. First of all, *only* the few music publica-

tions (and a very occasional talent scout or editor) know or care much about classical music. This makes the rest of them easy prey to the persuasive talents of a press agent. But other elements count too. Sometimes it is a sheaf of impressive reviews, a recent personal appearance, or even another article (the bandwagon effect) that convinces an editor. Again, it could simply be a pushy writer or a moment's whimsy: an editor chooses a violinist over a

When Beverly Sills made her La Scala debut in 1969 I persuaded her to engage somebody in Italy to keep her out of the papers. She agreed, although she would have been a natural with the Italian press. After the opening, the publicity was channeled very carefully. By that time, the critics had had a chance to judge her without pressure or prejudice.
—Edgar Vincent

pianist because his wife once studied the fiddle. And sometimes it is just a matter of prejudice: an editor will turn down a story on an artist because he, personally, doesn't like him. In short, for the most part, pure chance dictates the choice.

The question of whether or not the public then accepts the performer from whose publicity they cannot escape is equally chancy. Consider, for example, the tattooed mezzo: she got all the space she could wish for, and more when she indulged in other pranks, but the public hardly made of her the superstar she wanted to become. There is, after all, such a thing as counter-productive publicity. Classical music is, as *Variety* has it, a "classy" commodity. In film or pop-music publicity almost anything goes; but in classical music, good taste is generally

WEAR SOMETHING (OR NOTHING)...

Soprano Anna Moffo is good for a publicity shot whether shopping for a hat at Bergdorf's (below right) or sharing a shower with co-star Gianni Macchia (right) in a movie (A Love Story). Lily Pons once made a movie too, and she is shown (just below) costumed as a jungle bird for RKO's Hitting a New High (1939). Center below is Boston Pops conductor Arthur Fiedler, widely known as an irrepressible camera ham, trying on a Beatles wig (whatever happened to them?).



LPI Photo



Wide World Photo



Wide World Photo



LPI Photo

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MEET SOMEBODY...

Lily Pons again (left), posing happily with the Shah of Iran. Risé Stevens talks shop (perhaps) with Frank Sinatra (below left), Renata Tebaldi appears at a Waldorf-Astoria party with Lena Horne and mostest-hostess Elsa Maxwell, and Franco Corelli entertains Julie Andrews backstage at the Met.

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Will Vothberg



Louis Melancon



preferred to the cheap gimmick. Singers, instrumentalists, and conductors are supposed to be *serious* artists. To involve them in low-brow antics only makes clowns of them. Most publicists agree, but they don't all practice what they preach.

A well-known tenor once claimed to have suffered a memory lapse during a Met performance. The opera he was appearing in was being sung in English, but when he came to his big aria, the tenor "forgot" and reverted to Italian. But if this was the slip it was supposed to have been, why were the press releases explaining the lapse on the desks of newspaper editors before the performance began? This was nothing but a transparent play for space, and it backfired: even the most gullible editor could see the wheels turning.

Some publicity plays backfire in print: Yehudi Menuhin is a practitioner of yoga. But pictures in the late *Life* magazine showing the fiddler engaged in some of the less aesthetically appealing aspects of that art lost his press agent some friends, who felt he had cheapened Menuhin's public image. Even the august Metropolitan Opera has been known to descend from its dignified pedestal. In an attempt to raise funds, the management once interrupted a broadcast performance right in the middle of the overture. After a *very* theatrical pause, a voice at last came over the air saying that this could actually happen some day if money did not begin to flow in from the listeners. The stunt infuriated the radio audience, who bombarded the Met with letters objecting to the interruption on the grounds of aesthetics, simple good manners, and because it raised

the frightening possibility that the conductor had suffered a heart attack.

Generally speaking, although the public enjoys novelty, it is wary of the oversell, the obvious gimmick, the cheap stunt. There is not a press agent or a manager in the business who really believes the public can be fooled. Clever publicity can only lure the public into the concert hall; after that, the artist is on his own. If he cannot deliver, the public will not return.

Few cases in classical music are so neatly open-and-shut, however. Consider the following: Artist A is a good performer who employs a first-class publicist. Artist A is also very adept at giving interviews—perhaps even more adept than he is at playing the piano. Therefore, Artist A, thanks to a respectable talent, an inventive publicist, and a winning personality, has become something of a superstar. *Question:* Has the public (or at least the less discriminating part of the public) been persuaded that Artist A is a *major* talent when, in reality, he is merely a *good one*?

There is, of course, a subjective aspect to this question that makes a definite "yes" or "no" answer difficult. Who is to say which artist is merely "good," which artist is "major"? Perhaps the examination, as objectively as we can manage, of a few representative examples will throw a little light on some of those factors that go to make up our rather unscientific decisions in this area.

● **Beverly Sills.** Now in her forties, Miss Sills has come into her own only comparatively recently. For years she sang with the New York City Opera and, ac-

LOVE ANIMALS...

Soprano Helen Jepson (right) improbably introduces her cat to her canary. Rosa Ponselle accepts the homage of one of her many dogs (below left), Arthur Fiedler greets a musical colleague on a Boston streetcorner (center), and Anna Moffo visits the stables with a pet poodle.



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Edgar Vincent Associates

According to critical sources, did so just as well as she is doing now—some say even better. Then came the night she appeared as Cleopatra in Handel's *Giulio Cesare*. Sills had finally found her *métier*: suddenly she was interesting. And when she began to give interviews all over the lot it soon became apparent that the strawberry blonde was born not only to sing but to talk. The performing arts have seldom known a more ingratiating talker, and one, moreover, with a story to tell. The part about singing all those years without recognition was mere footnote stuff. She is a woman surrounded by personal tragedy. Her first

I can count on the fingers of one hand the number of artists who don't have the kind of ego that requires reading and hearing about themselves. Part of the essential psychological make-up of a great artist is the need for fame and adulation.
—Peter Gravina

child, a girl, was born deaf; her second, a boy, is retarded. Add to these genuinely touching facts some others of more conventional interest—how a nice Jewish girl from Brooklyn, born Belle Silverman, married a rich Super Wasp—and you have the stuff of real-life romance.

A curious thing about publicity is that when it works it sometimes works almost too well. The communications media hopped on the Sills bandwagon. She was copy too good to pass up. A cover story in *Newsweek* following her La Scala debut really got things moving. Today, there is hardly a major newspaper, magazine, or talk show in this country which has not done something or other on the soprano. And last winter *Time* magazine gave her a cover (re-read the paragraph just above on "how editors decide"). This, of course, was the straw that broke many a Joan Sutherland fan's back. *Time*, which merchandises personalities better than some press agents, apparently realized that to talk of Sills without mentioning her arch-rival Joan Sutherland would be to commit a really operatic boo-boo. So they gave Sutherland a minor box within the Sills story. Now Sutherland, an undisputed superstar who shies away from publicity, has never gotten a *Time* cover. "So see who gets it," the Sutherland fans screamed, "the one who capitalizes on her personal tragedies, the one who'll do anything to get attention!" (Actually, this is more than a little off the mark. Disappointing as it may be

to some of her critics, Beverly Sills has consistently turned down offers to appear on one extremely popular television show because she feels she would be called upon to poke fun at her operatic profession.)

But back to objectivity. The "case against Sills" lies in the accusation that she is a talented actress with a flawed voice who charmed her way into the big time with astute publicity. The defense is that no one is *forcing* people to come to her performances (which in New York always sell out) or to buy her recordings (which have almost made a small record company into a big one). No sides will be taken here. But Mr. and Mrs. A. American might ask themselves this question: *Has the extensive publicity on Beverly Sills convinced me that there is more to her art than her performances actually deliver?*

● **Anna Moffo.** Like all beautiful women, Miss Moffo was, as soon as she made her Met debut in 1959, a natural for publicity. Voice and good looks were not all of it, however. A small-town girl (Wayne, Pennsylvania) from a poor family, she is gracious and simple, has a great flair for clothes, and then there's that film career—in short, the kind of raw material of which publicists dream. Today (granted, more so in Europe than here in America) Moffo can hardly walk down the street without being mobbed by admirers.

● **Seiji Ozawa.** Unlike most successful artists, Mr. Ozawa has never employed a press agent. His initial publicity was a result of his association with Leonard Bernstein, when he was an assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic. But his exotic background contributes a touch of magic: we have never had an *Oriental*

Most laymen ask me how I can live with the egos of these artists. I always tell them, it's what keeps me in this business. The artist's ego is usually the most acceptable thing in a day's work. Years ago, when I was handling Lily Pons, the Shah of Persia came to the Met. Lily said she wanted to be photographed with him. I called up the papers and was told that the Shah had been photographed with everybody already, and that he was no longer news. When I explained this to Lily, there was a long pause, and she said, "But he's never been photographed with me!" I adore somebody like that.
—Edgar Vincent



Peter Grivina

COOK...

Bass Spiro Malas (left) presents a trayful of Crab Maryland at his family's Baltimore restaurant. Grace Moore (left) concocts an odd salad, Bidú Sayão does something with a mixing bowl while a pet marmoset kibitzes, and Blanche Thebom is back home at her chafing dish with a bottle of sherry.



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Opera News/Granier Collection

superstar (*pace*, Mehta) before in classical music. To the mystery of the Orient can be added youthful bounce, trendy clothing, a mod haircut, and, again, Ozawa becomes good copy for a big press buildup. The record companies (several of them) also played a part in promoting an artist in whom they've invested a great deal.

● **Philippe Entremont.** This French pianist is, at least in this country, almost exclusively a product of the recording studios. His career pattern is unusual, if not unique. The average, well-informed music lover may have *heard* of him, but he has probably never seen him in concert. Yet a major label records Entremont generously, and one must presume that the recordings find their buyers. There is a very subtle and probably persuasive point related to publicity here: whether they realize it or not, the public, thus bombarded with Entremont discs, begins to think, "Well, he must have *something* going for him if they continue to let him make so many records"—and this despite a plethora of less than enthusiastic reviews.

● **Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart.** These singers make up the latest husband-and-wife team to hit the classical big time. Look into any of the other performing arts and you'll see that, given even the shallowest basis for stardom, husbands and wives who perform

Many artists are like children. After a while, they start to believe their own publicity. And they think that it all happened naturally. When they say this, I just agree with them. —Alix Williamson

together in the same field almost automatically get attention. Lunt/Fontanne, Burton/Taylor, Bonyngel/Sutherland, Cronyn/Tandy, Wallach/Jackson, Sonny/Cher, Steve/Eydie—all are tailor-made for stories. Whatever else they may have, this simple gimmick is the publicity cornerstone.

AND so we have come full circle back to the gimmick—in the final analysis, the only surefire producer of headlines. Refer to those headlines at the beginning and ask yourself, "How many of

them—or others like them—have influenced me to the point that I might begin to suspect my own judgment?" If the answer is "too many," there may be a little solace in this: you have just proved that the press agents, the publicists, and the public relations men have honestly and deservedly earned their fees. And if this makes you feel as if you have been programmed by a propaganda machine that has more control over your mind than you do, rest easy. Public relations *can* accomplish wonders from time to time, but its powers are actually very limited. It can, for example,

- persuade you to attend concerts and buy records of an artist because his name has been virtually imprinted on your mind;
- make you think of certain artists more in terms of their personalities and activities than in terms of their art;
- cause you to support certain artists simply because you feel it is "the thing to do," that if *everyone* seems to like them, you should like them too.

But public relations can hardly clog your taste pipes to the point that it can persuade you to believe that a total "no" is a total "yes" talent. You may be charmed into thinking someone is quite good when he is really mediocre, that someone is excellent when he is only good, or that someone is supreme when he is merely excellent. But even these impressions are only temporary. Long-term publicity campaigns can be successful only if the PR men have something to work with. With talent, there is the possibility of stirring up publicity and keeping it alive; without talent, there is the same possibility, but it will work only on a short-term basis. The proof? Just cast your mind back over the last half-century or so and see how all those tattooed mezzos have faded.

BIZARROCK

The British are freaking!
The British are freaking!

By NOEL COPPAGE



Main Man

SOMETHING wicked this way comes. It is dark superstition set to jangly guitars. It is the cold lunacy of supertechnology. It is as if our two favorite Bélas—Lugosi and Bartók—somehow got their messages on the same frequency somewhere between Here and the Beyond, and the resulting signals were being interpreted by Mick Jagger and Ray Bradbury. It titillates, it disgusts. Is it the long-awaited, sorely needed dark alternative to *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*? No, they call it “freak rock,” “glitter rock,” and other names. I call it Bizarrock.

So that we might wallow in this blessing now, it was necessary earlier that too many intelligent people inhabit too small an island, that a media explosion wilt their upper lips, that Mandy Rice-Davies go into politics (or, ahem, come and go in politics, to be exact), that Antonioni submit his confusing report on Carnaby Street, that Yoko Ono do whatever the hell it was she did, that American aid be enlisted in the bankrupting of Rolls-Royce, and (at a slight extra cost) more. But the conditions were met, and the by-products were spectacularly zingy and inconsequential: the Mini-Cooper, funny suits, shaggy hair, nutty letters to the *Times*, Twiggy, and now Bizarrock.

It is possible to argue about whether Black Sabbath or Marc Bolan's T-Rex started it, or to claim it all stems from the early work of Jethro Tull or the zanier two-thirds of the Beatles' late-middle (“Mystery Tour”/White Album) period, or, indeed, from the gentle but elfish droodlings of Donovan. Some claim it never really got going until David Bowie picked up steam . . . um, that being the only thing he could lift with those limp wrists.

However it started, it is upon us in all its garish *chutzpah*—or all that the awkward surrealism, ugly chord changes, scare-tactic lyrics, and outrageously contrived personae can stir up—and its shadowy, comet-like tail points directly to the Mother Country, Merrie Olde England, which is becoming a Merrier Olde Mother all the time. How long will it last? Don't ask. I thought the square-heeled-shoe craze would die in a matter of *weeks*, so I've learned the folly of optimism in these matters.

What is it? Image, mostly, wrested from the same old ideas and theatrical devices after a slight juggling exercise. When you listen to the music itself, you find the lyrics aren't *really* dedicated to evil and the score is not nearly original enough to have benefitted from the help of supernatural powers, light or dark. What you see is just about what you get: Marc Bolan is five feet, four inches tall and has facial

◆ The space bloomers worn by David Bowie in a recent Carnegie Hall concert may not have been run up by a Vegan couturier, but it is hard to see where on Earth they may have come from.

muscles that easily contort into various "offensive" positions—including a smile that would curdle vinegar. That much nature has done for him. But the depravity in his vocals is studied and the substance of his music is, as some critics have noted, mere bubblegum—it's just that it comes wrapped in dragonfly wings instead of baseball cards. David Bowie is said by Ben Gerson of the Boston *Phoenix* to have different-sized pupils in his eyes, but in general appearance Bowie is less weird than Bolan—Bowie, in the right make-up, looks rather like Katharine Hepburn. He does it with cosmetics, choreography, a pack-rat frenzy of ideological thievery, and disciplined behavior, off-stage as well as on. You want to be the king/queen of bisexual rock, you got to live it. Only Ray Davies of the Kinks (Marc Bolan's vocal model and in other ways a definite antecedent figure in Bizarrock) is qualified to put this new kind of dues-paying in perspective.

But Bowie is not interested merely in showing off his own freedom from sex. He's just as interested in passing off his "art" as a Space Oddity (which happens to be the title of the album that got him on this kick). In his "Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars" album, he reports the death of erotic love as a semi-accomplished fact (each of us will, as Bowie reportedly does, make love to his own ego), and he seems to connect this new asexuality with the sleekness and technology of our now and future life—in short, he celebrates space Kubrick-style. If you see Stanley Kubrick's later films and then read Arthur C. Clarke's book version of *2001* and his book of *2001* "outtakes" (*The Lost Worlds of 2001*), you'll understand a lot about Bowie, including how unoriginal he is. Keep in mind, however, that Bowie refuses to fly in an airplane.

BOLAN is certainly no more original than Bowie, and is even less sophisticated in disguising stolen goods. In the early days, he wrote songs about dragons and prehistoric beasts—Donovan's psychedelic pixie persona was a heady influence in those days—but now he has a minimum guaranteed audience and can unleash the full profundity of his creativity in such a lyric as: "Is it love/Is it love/Is it love that makes us rock/We're gonna rock/We're gonna rock with love/Is it love that makes us rock." That's it; that's the *whole* song.

Bolan is heterosexual and "organic" in the sense that good old plain rock was based on our common primal rhythms and simple lechery, while Bowie embodies the antiseptic, magnesium-alloy, machine-tuned nightmare we unsmilingly call our future. He is therefore not committed to rock (or to music), but to his (and what he takes to be Ku-

brick's) explanation of What It's All About. The majority of the British Bizarrockers, however, follows neither of these courses.

The majority has gone gothic: evil spirits and other ghostly stuff. A Victorian fascination with superstition as strained through an adolescent fascination with grade-B horror movies is their bag. Still, it's mostly image too. The Rolling Stones cleared the field for practically all these groups, and the Moody Blues perfected the grandiose melodic sweep that most of them have adopted. One of the first "evil" groups (and one of the few owing little to the Moodies) is Black Sabbath, which plays so relentlessly loud it makes Led Zeppelin seem like the half-time act at Sunday School. The Sabs come on so foul looking and they play such nasty, snarling licks that they actually do appear to frighten some members of their audiences, who gleefully whisper rumors about whether the Sabs are going to spice things up this evening with a sacrificial virgin or some other devilish ritual. Moreover, the bass player, one Geezer, is supposed to be the seventh son of a seventh son, and *that's* always nice. But the Sabs' audience is pretty young and, one assumes, pretty impressionable. It is impossible to hear the lyrics, of course, but you can read them and learn that they are neither frightening nor weird, just fashionably pessimistic about mankind and given to paroxysms of moralizing.

And even if the Sabs managed to sound better than (or even different from) Beck-style conventional hard-rock bands, I'd continue to have trouble with the fact that the band changed its name from Earth to Black Sabbath in early 1970, which just happened to be the time when Charles Manson and various demonic cult activities were making the news.

Bizarrockers who aren't terribly original can still sound pretty good. Consider Genesis, which moralizes almost constantly but in flowery Olde Englishe immersed in sweeping waves of melody and texture. The influences aren't difficult to dig out: the Moody Blues, certainly, up to and including the mellotron, and the textures of Yes, a technically superb rock band whose style involves shuffling ornately sculpted sheets of sound into various relationships. Genesis has, at this writing, done three albums, of which the last two, "Nursery Cryme" and "Foxtrot," attracted considerable attention in England. Both come in jackets with the inept and disgusting sort of cover "art" that seeks to one-up such genuine artists as Peter Blume. (Both covers were done by Paul Whitehead.) The one on "Nursery Cryme" illustrates one of the songs, *The Musical Box*, which in turn is an evocation of the theme

of an old (?) folk tale the boys thoughtfully reprinted for us. During a croquet game, Cynthia, age nine, lops off the head of Henry, eight, with a mallet. Later, she finds Henry's music box, programmed to play *Old King Cole*. When she operates it, a spirit version of Henry forms and starts to age rapidly ("A lifetime of desires surges through him"), but he makes too much noise trying to entice Cynthia into satisfying certain of his grown-up desires. Nanny comes running, hurls the music box at the aging child, "destroying both." The jacket illustration shows a huge, surreal field festooned with wickets and littered with human heads, one of which is about to be driven home by Cynthia's mallet. Sweet. The song itself has about three melodies, but nothing very unusual in the lyrics.

ANOTHER "Nursery Cryme" song, *The Return of the Giant Hogweed*, is an out-and-out grab for weirdness, being a satirical fantasy reminiscent of John Barth: unfortunately, and in this at least it is like Barth, the more ridiculous it becomes the less funny it becomes. "Foxtrot" is packaged in a painting of several mounted fox hunters and their hounds, lined up at the edge of the sea and watching a fox-woman (fox's head, woman's formally clad body) float away on an iceberg. In the distant background are the main features of the "Nursery Cryme" cover—the playing field and Cynthia with her mallet. Well, it takes a lot of gall to try creating your own mythology with a system of self-references, and even if it doesn't work, I suppose it gives the listener-looker something to muse about for a few minutes.

"Foxtrot," which won considerable critical praise in England, is an ambitious album. Its songs are built of multi-faceted "movements," and some of the tunes are imaginatively constructed. But there are also places where the lyrics and melodies are about as compatible as Maggie and Jiggs; the melody wants to soar on flights of fantasy that the mellotron can get excited about (the mellotron being the Dinty Moore of our little metaphor), but the words grab the melody by the ear and haul it back to conformity with the stiff meter of the language.

Genesis' main cosmetic nod to weirdness is handled by lead singer Peter Gabriel, who wears eye make-up and parts his hair in the middle—with a razor; the part is two inches wide. The other members of Genesis are normal-looking rock music freaks, in the sense that they don't "dress up" in theatrical garb (unless you can tune in to the subtler theatricality of wearing ordinary Levis and other street garb on stage, in which case you understand that rock groups have, in their way, *always*

"dressed up"). One of these lads, Phil Collins, is among the best drummers in England.

The Charisma label, which brought you Genesis, also brings you String Driven Thing (and, while we're on the subject, a group called Van der Graaf [*sic*] Generator, whose album features a garbage-art treatment of outer space on the cover and an ungodly number of instruments in the arrangements, its main accomplishment being an eleven-minute song about lemmings, possibly written from the lemming's viewpoint—can't hear the lyrics through the lemming-like chaos of blare and sound effects). A Scottish group, String Driven Thing doesn't seem to aspire to strangeness, just to difference—but its members *look* weird enough. The cover of the first SDT album depicts, in a poor-quality color photograph, what passes for a mad banquet, but inside there's a picture of *them*: a severe, Cotton Mather type whose fringe of black beard frames a square face that is clean except for the sternest eyebrows this side of Westbrook Pegler (which reminds me: we *all* should have sympathy for the devil now that he has to put up with old Peg), a young-old woman of a really frightful toughness, a bearded and banged gent with glassy, wobbly eyes and twisted mouth, and a lovely boy whose big-eyed purity is perhaps the greatest jolt of all.

This band is good, maybe even a trifle original; it uses Graeme Smith's wild violin as the lead instrument (instead of the customary electric guitar), and it has no drummer. Percussion is fashioned in various hand-slapping ways, and the vocal harmonies seem always a little bit out of control. The songs range from excellent (*Circus*, in which a woman in the audience digs her nails into the narrator's arm and mutters in the direction of the tightrope walker, "Fall, fall for me!") to crummy and trite (*Hooked on the Road*), but a genuine style seems to be emerging and some people are noticing.

This is just a rough, subjective sampling of what the British are doing with Bizarrock. But what are the Americans doing? Well, we gave the world Charles Manson—who, among other things, claims to be a rock musician—and that ought to be enough. We've also made an allied stab at the formation of a "Los Angeles Gothic" subgenre. When the Manson business was newsworthy, a group called Plus tried to rival Black Sabbath with an album about the seven deadly sins (which was, as usual, moralistic); the group played well but the album went nowhere, so we're now minus Plus. For a while, Spirit flourished, its main claim to strangeness being visual, the presence of an "older" man with a shaved head. But Spirit is now (pardon the expression) a mere shadow of its former self, such key members as



Warner Brothers

Peel away Alice Cooper's snakes, costumes, and make-up, and what you have left is the gang of dudes above, another "persona" just as gaudy, just as determinedly theatrical as the first—but then you weren't planning to let your sister marry one anyway, were you?

Randy California having departed, and they are even rumored to have given up the ghost altogether.

We also have a brother act of albino rockers, Johnny and Edgar Winter. Unfortunately, record companies all but destroyed the more artistically gifted Johnny with hype and money games. And Edgar's strangeness is mostly visual; he plays straight, blues-based rock. Once you get past the album cover, Edgar doesn't strain to be gothic or spacey or even much of a punk.

Alice Cooper is, or tries to be, the ultimate in punk rock—which is not exotic at all but is supposed to be attractive in its perversity. Alice is a "boy" who dresses in drag, waves a whip around, and plays with a snake. He's the most commercially successful of our crazies, but he isn't really freaky—more a contrivance aimed at getting the Establishment's goat, an old-fashioned ham determined to get attention one way or another. His band is fairly solid, considering how little emphasis is given to the music. But Alice's original songs betray a very ordinary mind that fantasizes, for example, blowing up the high school. Such a paean to the adolescent vengeance-daydream was much more

intelligently handled in the Beatles' *Maxwell's Silver Hammer*.

America produced Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground, and Reed has written some songs calculated to shock some presumed "average" value-holders, but neither he nor the VU could really disconnect themselves from Andy Warhol in my mind, and Warhol is neither weird nor an artist, just a shrewd merchandising specialist.

But what can we expect? We look to Southern California to generate the energy for such things, and it is difficult to be gothic when the sun is always shining, it's always warm, the trees are never naked, and the men don't even wear neckties, let alone top hats and black capes. Britain sent us the MG and Genesis; we constructed the Corvette and Alice Cooper. So it goes.

As for Bizarrockers in general—well, practically everyone calls himself some kind of freak nowadays, but these chaps would have us believe they're freaks. You can believe that if you want to, but I wouldn't waste any money or valuable storage space stocking up on wolf-bane, hex symbols, or silver bullets. Or on mascara and sequins either.



JOSÉ MARÍA CARRERAS

A brilliant young Spanish tenor makes his American disc debut

By ROBERT CONNOLLY

PERHAPS the rarest, and to many the most precious, of voices is the meltingly sweet lyric tenor. It seems to appear only once in a generation, usually in Italy, and is often regrettably short-lived. The last great voice of this type is generally conceded to have been that of Giuseppe di Stefano in the late 1940's and early 1950's. Those disconsolate opera lovers who have been playing their old di Stefano records for the last two decades (in Italy they are known as the "di Stefano widowers") can take heart. It appears that a worthy successor has now arrived in the person of José María Carreras, a twenty-six-year-old Spaniard to whom God has been especially generous: he has the voice, the looks, the temperament, and the intelligence to become a great opera star. To many who have heard him sing, he is already on the verge of stardom.

There were no long years of painful apprenticeship for Carreras; he achieved prominence almost overnight. In 1970 he made his debut at the Gran Teatro del Liceo in Barcelona, and within a very short time he was performing with the world's most famous singers in Paris, London, and New York, always to rave reviews. Barely into his third professional season, he began to make records, and Vanguard's new release of Rossini's *La Pietra del Paragone* (reviewed in this issue) is his American disc debut.

I went to the final recording session for *La Pietra* last fall in the auditorium of a Masonic Temple in New York. The atmosphere was surprisingly informal. In the control room Seymour Solomon, president of Vanguard Records, talked excitedly about his new tenor discovery: "I heard José in London in *Caterina Cornaro* and said to myself, 'This is the tenor we want for *La Pietra*,' and I signed him on the spot." Over coffee at a break in the sessions, mezzo-soprano Elaine Bonazzi asked me, "Have you heard Carreras? He has a really marvelous voice, and he's a joy to work with." When recording resumed, it was time for the principal tenor aria. Carreras stepped up to the microphone, and during the orchestral introduction shook his arms and shoulders in a few limbering exercises; then, with no apparent effort, his voice floated out and filled the hall with the first line of the aria—"Quell'alme pupille io sento nel seno" ("Those beloved eyes pierce my heart"). Mezzo-soprano Beverly Wolff turned to Miss Bonazzi, silently mouthed the word "Beautiful," then closed her eyes to listen. When he finished, there were several bravos from the musicians, and Miss Wolff walked over and planted a kiss on his cheek.

After he had flown back and forth across the Atlantic a few times for important engagements in this country and in Europe, I interviewed Carreras during his spring season with the New York City Opera Company. I called on him at his hotel on Central Park West, a short walk from Lincoln Center. He was casually but impeccably dressed in a beige suit, navy blue turtle-neck sweater, and black boots. Although he was still tired from his performance of

Rigoletto the day before, he radiated charm, friendliness, and intelligence. Still a novice at English, he speaks virtually flawless Italian and so the interview was conducted in that language.

The results of a good education and careful upbringing are evident in his poise and easy good manners. He was born on December 5, 1946, in Barcelona, where his father owns a chemical plant. "As a small boy I was always singing around the house bits of opera arias that I heard on records or on the radio, and when I was eight, my mother had me study piano. When my voice changed, I found myself with what seemed to be a potentially good tenor voice, and so finally, at eighteen, I began serious vocal studies with maestro Jaime Francisco Puig, who was also the teacher of my close friend Giacomo Aragall. While I was still a student, I sang an audition at the Teatro del Liceo in Barcelona and was accepted. I made my professional debut in 1970 in the tiny role of Flavio in *Norma*, a production in which Montserrat Caballé sang the title role for the first time. I followed that with the larger role of Ismaele in *Nabucco* with Cornell MacNeill and Bonaldo Giaiotti." Carreras and Caballé became good friends and sang together in *Lucrezia Borgia* and *Luisa Miller* and in concert versions of *Maria Stuarda* in London and Paris.

In March of 1972 he came to America, completely unheralded, for a performance of Pinkerton in *Butterfly* with the New York City Opera. He made a strong enough impression to be given a contract for other roles later in the year. In the spring of 1972 he sang *Mefistofele* with Cesare Siepi in London, which brought him an invitation from Herbert von Karajan to repeat the role in Vienna. "In July, when I was back in London on vacation," he said, "my friend Aragall was ill, and I was asked to substitute for him on thirty-six hours notice in a concert performance of Donizetti's *Caterina Cornaro* with Caballé at the Royal Festival Hall. All things considered, it went well. That's because it was a concert performance and I didn't have to learn stage business in addition to the music. Otherwise, I could never have done it in so little time." The reviews were sensational, and his performance resulted in his engagement to sing *La Pietra del Paragone* with Clarion Concerts in New York and to record it for Vanguard.

His admiration for his compatriot Montserrat Caballé comes into his conversation frequently. "I have been privileged to sing with many fine artists," he said, "but the one I have most enjoyed working with is Montserrat. She does everything she can to help you, and she treats even a younger singer like an equal. She never expects special treatment because she is an international diva, but works and behaves like just another colleague. There may have been other singers with her technique, but no one has been able to sing *pianissimi* like hers.

"We have plenty of good singers in Spain today, but

they all sing abroad most of the year because there isn't enough work for them in Spain alone. The Spanish people love opera, but we're in the same position as you are in America—we don't have state subsidies for opera. Still, Madrid has a season of about two months, half a dozen other cities have shorter ones, and Barcelona has an important seven-month season."

The subject Carreras waxes most enthusiastic about is his native city, Barcelona, where his pretty blonde wife, Mercedes, has remained behind to care for their baby son Alberto, who was born in January. "Barcelona is absolutely marvelous," José said. "It is a beautiful, cosmopolitan city, which I would rank right after London and Paris. Even though Madrid is the official capital, Barcelona is the capital of Spanish business and culture—and music. Our best opera singers—Teresa Berganza, Victoria de los Angeles, Caballé, Pilar Lorengar, Alfredo Kraus, Aragall—they are all from Barcelona or were trained there." I observed that in this country people think of Spaniards as hot-blooded fiery types, yet the entire current crop of Spanish singers seem to be markedly reserved. "Yes, because when people think of Spain, they invariably think of Seville and bullfights, but practically all Spanish singers of the moment studied in Barcelona, which is in the North and is far more cosmopolitan than the rest of Spain."

Like other Spanish singers, Carreras is somewhat reserved on stage. Many tenors' careers are built on their brilliant high notes, but Carreras is not among those. Although a Los Angeles reviewer praised his ringing high B at the end of "*La donna è mobile*" in *Rigoletto*, and although he can go up to D-flat, what is special about him is the youthful sweetness of his middle range, and he is most affecting in the tender lyrical moments. His acting is tasteful and restrained and subservient to the music. When he made his debut as Alfredo in *Traviata* at the New York City Opera, the New York *Times* critic wrote that there was "something about his boyish manner that gave his portrayal an unexpected and beguiling naïveté, something about his smiling charm that immediately won the audience's heart as well as Violetta's." And the following week, when he sang his first Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, the *Times* wrote that he "sang with the sort of warmth and expressive flair that give the role a dimension far beyond the norm . . . from '*Che gelida manina*' on through the glorious love duets—indeed wherever the drama was inherent in the music—he was superb."

As Carreras himself points out, he does most of his singing outside of Spain. He opened the 1972-1973 season in Barcelona with Caballé in *Adriana Lecouvreur*. ("The public and critics liked it, and I think it went well—you can judge for yourself when the pirated recording comes out!") Then he returned immediately to America for his most important engagement in New York to date, a performance of Verdi's *I Lombardi* with Renata Scottò and the Opera Orchestra of New York. When I complimented Carreras on that performance, he said, "It was announced before the performance that I was not well but would sing anyway, and that was true. I had had a bad cold and my understudy sang all the rehearsals. I didn't decide to go on until about an hour before the performance, but I had the excellent support of the conductor, Eve Queler, and the audience was very demonstrative. Still, there were some uncomfortable moments."

After the *Lombardi* he returned to Europe for a successful *Bohème* in Berlin and to open the season at the

Teatro Regio in Parma in Verdi's *Ballo in Maschera*, and he is now booked into 1975. "After a *Traviata* in Philadelphia and the tour with the New York City Opera to Washington, I'm scheduled to sing Bellini's *Beatrice di Tenda* with Angeles Gulin for the Italian radio in June. Then I sing a *Bohème* at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires and will probably make my debut with the San Francisco Opera in that same opera. I have a *Traviata* in Tokyo with Renata Scottò and another back in Barcelona with Caballé."

In August of this year he will record Verdi's *Un Giorno di Regno* in London for Philips, and he is under contract for two more operas (as yet unspecified) for that label. "I've recorded a small part in a zarzuela, *La del Soto del Parral*, in Spain and have agreed to do more, but no contracts have been signed. In 1974 I will sing at the Vienna Opera, probably in a new production of *Luisa Miller*, and at Covent Garden in *La Traviata*. In the 1974-1975 season I'm scheduled for about twenty performances at the Metropolitan, probably *Tosca*, *Falstaff*, and *Bohème*." With the New York City Opera he is slated for *Manon* and more performances of *Bohème*, and there's talk of a new production of *Lucia*.

"Of all the operas I've sung so far, I think *Lucia* is my favorite," he said. "My voice is essentially a lyric one, and I'm still young, so I think that for now my repertoire should be lyric—*Bohème*, *Traviata*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, and *Lucia*. I can do four or five performances a year of heavier works—*Tosca* or *Ballo*—without harm if the other fifty performances are lighter roles. I still study, when I am in Barcelona, with Juan Ruax. He is not really a singing teacher, but a man of great taste and judgment, and I am his only pupil."

AMONG the tenors Carreras admires, he singles out Aragall first. "In my opinion Aragall's is the most beautiful lyric tenor voice in the world today. It has a special color—dark, melancholy, and haunting—and his phrasing is so pure and clean. For me Luciano Pavarotti is a *lirico completo*; in five years he'll be a *lirico spinto*. It all depends on what your idea of a lyric tenor is. I think Jussi Bjoerling was the complete lyric tenor—the quality of that voice and that technique! But then, if the public begins to comment on what a great technician a singer is, I become suspicious. I'm more impressed by a singer's technique if the audience seems not to be conscious of it but exclaims instead about his natural instrument and his spontaneity.

"In Italy, many young tenors have burned themselves out trying to sing like Mario del Monaco, who was unique. It is not his fault, but Italian audiences like clarion-voiced tenors (my own greatest successes there have been in the heavier operas), and many young tenors who were perfect for *Rigoletto* ruined their voices trying to imitate del Monaco and sing *La Forza del Destino* or even *Carmen*. And *Rigoletto* can be pretty exhausting when you sing it the way I did yesterday."

I commented that I had not heard his high note at the end of the love duet in Act II. "You didn't hear it because I didn't sing it," he said. "It's a D-flat, and I have the note, but it's not written in the score and many tenors leave it out. I didn't feel sure of it yesterday and thought better no sound than a less-than-beautiful sound. And, as they say in Italy, there are some singers who sing with their interest rather than with their capital; they last. Others sing with their vocal capital; they don't."

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



CLASSICAL

LONDON'S NEW *RIGOLETTO*: FIRST IN ITS CLASS

Joan Sutherland's performance in the role of Gilda is virtually flawless

FROM this observer's point of view, at least, the history of Giuseppe Verdi's once-controversial opera *Rigoletto* in recordings has been a long series of frustrations. I do not, in fact, recall hearing a fully satisfying version since the RCA recording that featured Erna Berger, Jan Peerce, and Leonard Warren—and that goes back twenty years and more, to when I was much younger and perhaps (who knows?) easier to please.

In any case, we now have a new *Rigoletto* just released by London. It is the sixth stereo version of the opera, and it approaches real excellence closely enough, I think, that it may safely be ranked first among its modern competitors. It offers three highly celebrated interpreters in the principal roles, it is extremely well recorded, and, like London's previous effort with this work, it is absolutely complete. (A note on "completeness": some of the "standard" cuts in this tightly constructed opera are unexplainable musically or dramatically; others make eminent sense. Performing both verses of the inferior tenor *cabaletta* "Posente amor," for example, may be faithful documentation, but it fails to make the opera a more effective work.)

Joan Sutherland's singing of the role of Gilda here is far superior to her monotonous and excessively mannered effort in the recording of ten years ago. Her performance is virtually flawless, and it is distinguished by careful attention

to musical phrasing as well. The "Caro nome" has the appropriate ecstatic quality and exquisite trills, and there is a sense of involvement that replaces the former blandness in "Tutte le feste." Too, there has been some improvement in her Italian pronunciation, but this is an area in which there is still much room for growth. By any standards, however, this is an outstanding Gilda and an artistic one. (The interpolation of a high D at the fateful entrance into Sparafucile's hut is an indulgence we can permit with grace, particularly since "Caro nome" is concluded as written.)

Luciano Pavarotti is perfectly cast in the role of the Duke. He simply exudes youth, *joie de vivre*, and carefree libidinousness, yet is capable of sum-

moning up a melting lyricism for the brief scene with Countess Ceprano that many a good tenor considers too insignificant to pay much attention to. The tone is nicely equalized throughout the range and exhibits a ringing freedom in the top register. If the final touch of elegance is missing from his bouncy "Questa o quella," the lack may be ascribed to the conductor's rigidity. "La donna è mobile" and the rest of Act III are exemplary.

Sherrill Milnes offers a well-conceived and intelligent characterization as Rigoletto. There is a certain self-consciousness in the first scene with Monterone that makes it not entirely convincing, but his portrayal gains depth and be-



LUCIANO PAVAROTTI
Perfectly cast as the Duke

lievability as the action progresses. He modulates his voice sensitively and makes skillful use of the *mezza-voce* in “*Deh, non parlar al misero*” and in the later scene with the courtiers. There is real tenderness in his voice in “*Piangi, fanciulla.*” In short, the best intentions are always there, even when they are not carried out with complete success in terms of vocal refinement—the top notes effortful, the intonation not always squarely on center. These matters are of little concern to the applause-hungry lovers of high notes, but they ought to mean more to Sherrill Milnes, an artist manifestly capable of perfecting his art even further. Unfortunately, the insertion of a gratuitous high B-natural in the final “*Maledizione*” is hardly an encouraging sign.

What keeps this *Rigoletto* at one remove from real excellence, however, is not any of the singing but the conducting. Richard Bonyngé works well with Miss Sutherland in all her scenes (though Gilda and Rigoletto do not really quite match phrases in the “*Ah, veglia o donna*” duet), but his tempo choices elsewhere are inconsistent. In the scene following Monterone’s curse, for example, the *accelerando* is clumsily executed and the music turns into a headlong jumble. “*Zitti, zitti*” is rushed at the expense of singing clarity, and Pavarotti could have made something impressive of “*Possente amor*” had it not been for the uninspiring direction. There are also instances of rhythmic slackness and absence of assertive leadership in “*Parmi veder le la-*

grime”—but there are good moments too, and the quartet, happily, is one of them.

London’s casting flatters us with an excellent singer (Kiri Te Kanawa) in the minor role of the Countess Ceprano instead of the usual *terza donna*. Martti Talvela offers a plushly vocalized but not very menacing Sparafucile, and Clifford Grant is an excellent Monterone. The rest—including Huguette Tourangeau as Maddalena—are adequate. Taken as a whole, the production is much more than adequate—well above the ordinary run in this league, in fact. But oh, for that final measure of perfection!

George Jellinek

VERDI: *Rigoletto.* Sherrill Milnes (baritone), Rigoletto: Joan Sutherland (soprano), Gilda: Luciano Pavarotti (tenor), Duke of Mantua: Martti Talvela (bass), Sparafucile: Clifford Grant (bass), Monterone: Huguette Tourangeau (mezzo-soprano), Maddalena: others. The Ambrosian Opera Chorus; London Symphony Orchestra, Richard Bonyngé cond. LONDON OSA 13105 three discs \$17.94.

BEN WEBER: CURVACEOUS, TWELVE-TONE ROMANTICISM

Pianist George Bennette perceptively communicates a complex musical content

A NEW Desto release of music by Ben Weber and Nikos Skalkottas is a simply stunning recording containing some of the finest piano music written by any American in the twentieth century—performed, moreover, with a stylistic and technical perceptiveness that I cannot quite believe even after having heard it. Ben Weber was born in 1916, and these works of his stem from a period some few years back in his life—the earliest from 1938, the latest from 1946. They are Expressionistic in ethos, though with admixtures of Americanism, a kind of covert neo-Classicism, and some personalized (though Satiesque) wit I don’t recall ever having heard in any other twelve-tone music.

Weber’s writing is almost entirely contrapuntal, which makes for a special kind of difficulty in performance. Unless lines are exquisitely articulated and balanced one against the other, they can end up sounding clotted and verbose. One of the most remarkable and evocative aspects of George Bennette’s performances here is that he manages to follow every melodic line through its entire trajectory, holding it in focus and perspective among the other lines that vie for attention. He communicates the

GEORGE BENNETTE: pungent directness



entire intellectual content of the music by keeping everything extraordinarily clear and sensitively nuanced, and without neglecting the music's emotional aspects. Even in his playing of chords, every voice is so perfectly balanced within the whole that Weber's harmonic meaning is projected with pungent functional directness.

I doubt that one could find any actual tonal aspects in this twelve-tone music except by the most farfetched and shaky rationalizations. Yet, unlike most twelve-tone music, this contains a high proportion of chordal aggregations with a convincing sense of focus and destination. This fact, plus a certain Romantic curvaceousness in many of Weber's gestures, led at least one critic in the past decade to refer to Weber's twelve-tonism as "conservative" and "old-fashioned." It is neither, I think: it is simply very fine Expressionist music, complex in texture and sentiment, full of personality.

George Bennette, more than any pianist I have heard (except perhaps William Masselos, who has been a staunch supporter of Weber's music for many years), penetrates the substance of this music and makes it available to the listener. He does equally well with the music of Nikos Skalkottas, which is somewhat simpler than Weber's but similarly dedicated to the honest communication of deeply felt ideas. Desto can feel very proud of this issue, and so can everybody involved with it.

Lester Trimble

BEN WEBER: *Fantasia (Variations); Three Pieces, Op. 23; Five Bagatelles.* **NIKOS SKALKOTTAS:** *Fifteen Little Variations; Suite No. 4; Reverie in the Old Style; Reverie in the New Style; Menuetto; Marcia Funebra; Greek Folkdance.* George Bennette (piano). DESTO DC 7136 \$5.98.

CHAUSSON'S POÈME DE L'AMOUR ET DE LA MER

*Victoria de los Angeles is the soloist
in a voluptuous performance for Angel*

BEFORE the turn of the century, from the years 1882 to 1892, Claude Debussy's friend and mentor Ernest Chausson was also listening intently to the sea. But Chausson, who had studied with Massenet and was a member of the group of composers that included César Franck and Vincent d'Indy, found amid the waves a music quite unlike the symphony of restless wind and water Debussy was later to set down. He heard in the sea's voice

not so much a song of nature as a threnody of regret, nostalgia, and infinite yearning; the result was a heady setting of the *Poem of Love and the Sea* by his close friend and contemporary Maurice Bouchor. The work had its premiere in Brussels in 1893, and at one time was represented in the catalog—though perhaps never with complete success—by several now out-of-print recordings. It is therefore particularly gratifying to welcome it back in all its subtlety and scope in a new performance for Angel by Victoria de los Angeles and Jean-Pierre Jacquillat conducting the Lamoureux Concerts Orchestra.

In the first section of the *Poem, La Fleur des eaux*, we are swept high above the waters to a world where lilac blossoms tumble down walls to a perfumed spring sea while the waves sing, mournfully at first and later mockingly, of a lost love. Still later, in the section *La Mort de l'amour*, the wind drives dead leaves through the dark, where the dew falls from "a thousand golden roses." But "the season of lilacs and roses, with our love, is dead forever. . . ." The pair who once were lovers return to the scene. They kiss, but their love cannot be reawakened out of the dead past. He reads the fatal word in her eyes: "Forgetfulness." The romantic fallacy is invoked: "The springtime is sad and cannot blossom." Nature's business, it appears, is to reflect our personal moods.

It is strange to hear all this today, sung with so much passion, and so movingly, by the still-voluptuous voice of Victoria de los Angeles emerging from the turbulence of the molten, shimmering sound Jacquillat draws with much drama from his fine orchestra. But if the "season of lilacs and roses" was already dead by the 1890's, what are we to say of it now, when it is considered as much in bad taste to talk of love in these romantic terms as it was then to discuss the physical aspects of the subject? Yet, this exceptional, incandescent piece of pre-Impressionism by the composer who is the missing link between Franck and Debussy is as moving now as it ever was, the music consistently tempering and redressing the excessive sentimentality and self-pity in the verse. The haunting, highly melodic closing section, *Le Temps de lilas*, was once Chausson's most popular song. I can almost see it making a comeback, filling with a rush the voids in our hardened hearts.

The *Songs of the Auvergne* are made of sterner stuff. Here we deal with folk ballads about shepherds who look at life and love—and their pleasures and disappointments in them—with shrewder, earthier eyes than were given to the decadent, Poe-haunted Bouchor. These songs from the rugged

Auvergne country in south-central France are by turns witty, sad, and joyous. Sweet as they are, they never drench life in lavender. Joseph Canteloube was a pupil of Vincent d'Indy, and he spent many years collecting these songs and then mounting them in gorgeous orchestral settings. Miss De los Angeles presents a sampling of nine chosen from the five volumes in the Canteloube collection. Her way with them is perhaps a mite too refined when compared with the often fierce approach of the justly famed Madeleine Grey performances in an earlier era of recording or Natania Davrath's more recent and more down-to-earth interpretations for Vanguard. Yet Jacquillat here draws such glorious sound from the Lamoureux Orchestra, and Miss De los Angeles brings so much musical understanding to every ballad in the program, that her rather operatic and ladylike treatment begins to be surprisingly persuasive — indeed, irresistible.

Texts in French and in up-to-date English by Alan Gregory are included for the *Poem of Love and the Sea*; also supplied are both provincial French dialect and English translations of the *Songs of the Auvergne*. Paul Kresh

CHAUSSON: *Poem of Love and the Sea, Op. 19.* **CANTELOUBE** (arr.): *Songs of the Auvergne. Bailèro; L'Aïo dè rotso; Ound'onorèn gorda?; Obal, din kou Limouzi; La delaissádo; Lo fiolaire; Passo pel prat; Brezairola; Chut, chut.* Victoria de los Angeles (soprano); Lamoureux Concerts Orchestra, Jean-Pierre Jacquillat cond. ANGEL S 36897 \$5.98.

POPULAR

GILLESPIE AND PARKER: AN IMPORTANT REISSUE

"The Greatest Jazz Concert Ever" documents a historic 1953 get-together in Toronto

THE "greatest jazz concert ever" took place at Toronto's Massey Hall on May 15, 1953. A recording of the event sent chills up my spine one year later. Now, *twenty* years later, a reissue of that recording creates the same effect. Two of the four sides in Prestige's just-released double album are devoted to the concert's starring quintet (Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Charles Mingus, and Max Roach). The other two are taken up by the Powell trio (with Mingus and Roach). The quintet was then called the "Quintet of the Year," but in terms of talent it would appear to have been one of the all-time great quintets. Several other factors made the concert an auspicious occasion: Gil-

lespie and Parker had had a falling out, and had not recorded together since June 1950. Powell was making his first public appearance in seventeen months, having just been discharged from a Long Island mental institution. He had not recorded with Parker for six years, and never with Mingus or Gillespie. As things turned out, Powell became, in a last burst of greatness, the star of this get-together.

Despite the fact that the two horn players are still obviously at odds, that the rhythm section doesn't always have it together, and that certain portions have Mingus' bass dubbed in (he was off mike on the original tapes), the quintet tracks nevertheless contain some supreme jazz moments. Parker's breakneck solo on *Wee* (a Denzil Best tune formerly known as *Allen's Alley*) is one of the highlights of the evening, and Powell's four choruses, as well as Roach's three, are simply brilliant. *All the Things You Are* best illustrates the confusion of the evening: Powell seems lost until he begins his solo, and Gillespie and Parker seem to have different ideas as to just how the arrangement should go. *Hot House*, Tadd Dameron's paraphrase of *What Is This Thing Called Love*, features good solos (three choruses each) by Parker, Gillespie, and Powell and plenty of quotes (as was the custom of the day), Parker's being inserted with more finesse than Gillespie's. But Gillespie is at his best on his own *A Night in Tunisia*, which ends the quintet segment. Although they lack the cohesiveness of the Louis Armstrong Hot Five or Miles Davis Quintet classics, the Massey Hall quintet performances, faults and all, are outstanding examples of jazz as it had developed just before the neo-bop period.

The trio tracks (some of which were made on another occasion) stand as monuments to the man

Dizzy Gillespie had had a falling out with Charlie Parker, but . . .



Lawrence Shustall

who virtually pioneered bop piano. Listening to these tracks, one hears not only echoes of those who influenced Powell (particularly Art Tatum), but the original source of influences that can now be heard in a whole generation of later pianists. *My Devotion*, *Polka Dots and Moonbeams*, *My Heart Stood Still*, and *I Want To Be Happy* are not from the Massey Hall concert (contrary to the information printed on the album) and are less interesting than the rest, but the album as a whole features too much important music to be left out of any representative jazz collection. *Chris Albertson*

DIZZY GILLESPIE/CHARLIE PARKER: *The Greatest Jazz Concert Ever*. Dizzy Gillespie (trumpet); Charlie Parker (alto saxophone); Bud Powell (piano); Charles Mingus (bass); Max Roach (drums). *Perdido*; *Salt Peanuts*; *All the Things You Are*; *Wee*; *Hot House*; *A Night in Tunisia*; *Embraceable You*; *Sure Thing*; *Cherokee*; *My Devotion*; *Polka Dots and Moonbeams*; *Jubilee*; *I've Got You Under My Skin*; *My Heart Stood Still*; *I Want To Be Happy*; *Lullaby of Birdland*. PRESTIGE 24024 two discs \$6.98.

PROCOL HARUM: VERY GRAND INDEED

Their debut album for Chrysalis may be 1973's first legitimate rock masterpiece

I AM happy to report that, despite the delays, despite the personnel problems, and despite one really ghastly lapse in taste, "Grand Hotel," Procol Harum's debut release for the Chrysalis label, is

... it didn't interfere noticeably with some supreme music making.



Robert Parent

perhaps their most mature, ambitious, and moving album yet, and probably the first legitimate rock masterpiece of 1973 as well. I am also happy to report that Keith Reid, though still preoccupied with death, gothic gloom, and other classical imagery, has actually come up with two lyrics that are (a) about love (albeit in vain) and (b) written, for a change, in the vernacular.

There are just all sorts of goodies here. The title tune, for instance, is an instant classic; Keith's poem is a marvelous evocation of vanished *fin de siècle* decadence ("The waiters dance on fingertips/The nights we dine at Hotel Ritz") and the music catches his ironic tone perfectly, with its sleazy cabaret violins (beautifully scored by the redoubtable Gary Brooker) and majestic guitar-laden finale. There are two rockers of absolutely bone-crushing force: *Bringing Home the Bacon*, a surrealist nightmare with B. J. Wilson setting up a staggering rhythm (even more irresistible than on their earlier *Still There'll Be More*), and *Toujours l'Amour*, in which new-boy-in-school Mick Grabham lays the ghost of Robin Trower with an over-dubbed guitar duet that can only be described as inspired. Best of all, there's a Procol Harum calypso (*Robert's Box*) in which Gary croons a chilling tale of morphine addiction while the band plays the catchiest island melody imaginable.

The fly in all this soothing ointment, the aforementioned ghastly lapse, is the sudden intrusion of a real, live Swingle Singer on *Fires (Which Burnt Brightly)*, a song that in concert had impressed me as one of their best-ever Baroque concoctions; here it turns, sadly, into a bad camp joke. Since the group's judgment in such matters has always been impeccable, I can only assume that producer Chris Thomas saw this as a clever ploy to grab a piece of the Moody Blues' audience. However, the "Abbey Road"-ish production he has lavished on the rest of the record is so downright snazzy I am inclined to forgive him.

I think it's about time we all fessed up to the facts: the music of Procol Harum is one of the most amazing experiences rock-and-roll has to offer, and after seven brilliant albums, their continued lack of superstar status is nothing short of a cultural tragedy. If "Grand Hotel" doesn't do it for them, I'm going to Computer School. Do yourself a favor: give them a break. *Steve Simels*

PROCOL HARUM: *Grand Hotel*. Procol Harum (vocals and instrumentals). *Grand Hotel*; *Toujours l'Amour*; *A Rum Tale*; *T. V. Caesar*; *A Souvenir of London*; *Bringing Home the Bacon*; *For Liquorice John*; *Fires (Which Burnt Brightly)*; *Robert's Box*. CHRYSALIS CHR 1037 \$5.98, © M5 1037 \$6.95.

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Priced as it is, it is a real bargain in cartridges. *Audio*

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POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by CHRIS ALBERTSON • NOEL COPPAGE • PAUL KRESH
PETER REILLY • JOEL VANCE

AMERICA: *Homecoming*. America (vocals, guitars, piano); Joe Osborne (bass); Hal Blaine (percussion); other musicians. *Ventura Highway; To Each His Own; Don't Cross the River; Moon Song; Only in Your Heart; Till the Sun Comes up Again*; and three others. WARNER BROS. BS 2655 \$5.98, Ⓢ M8 2655 \$6.98, © M5 2655 \$6.98.

Performance: **Love it or leave it**
Recording: **Very good**

For their first hit, *Horse with No Name*, America shamelessly aped the style of Neil Young. Their second album is a little less straightforward about who is being copied, but its hit number, *Ventura Highway*, goes back to the root, sounding vaguely like Young's *Old Laughing Lady*. But maybe originality isn't your thing—in which case I hope sophistication isn't either, because America manages only the kind of superficial gloss for which we are all indebted to Lemon Pledge. The truth is, America is an AM radio group in the tradition of pretentiousness that flourished with Tommy James and with the Monkees after they learned how to play their instruments and started getting ideas about Art. Isolated cuts on this album sound like specially commissioned Heavy Thoughts for use between the Coca-Cola commercials and the ones about quick relief from embarrassing acne. And lest you think the circle isn't complete, there are other cuts that sound like the commercials. N.C.

JULIE ANDREWS: *The World of Julie Andrews*. Julie Andrews (vocals); various orchestras. *If Love Were All; Smarty; Just You Wait; Without You; I Don't Care*; and fifteen others. COLUMBIA KG 31970 two discs \$6.98. Ⓢ GA 31970 \$7.98.



JULIE ANDREWS
A formidable Fair Lady

Performance: **Distant**
Recording: **Variable**

This album is a re-release, issued, I suppose, to cash in on Julie Andrews' new TV show. There are three songs from the original *My Fair Lady* album, and the remainder is a collection of songs that she recorded several years ago. Since the TV show is in the ratings cellar, though, and since her solo records never meant much in her career, this album seems a pointless release. What stops Andrews on records is what stops her on her TV show: she is a relentless performer. There is very little personal communication. In the context of a recorded show such as *My Fair Lady* or *The Sound of Music* she can be formidable: the music and the lyrics come across with great

depth and feeling—but it is always *their* feeling, not hers. The closest that she comes to contact here is in the folkish *Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be* and *The Honeysuckle and the Bee*. But they too are separated from us, by time. When she plows through such old music-hall standbys as *Burlington Bertie from Bow* or *Don't Go in the Lion's Cage Tonight*, she sounds like a child performing risqué songs before adults.

Her future certainly doesn't seem to lie in recordings, since she has little feel for the microphone or its possibilities. Nor is it in the kind of TV show that she's doing now. Where the future could and should, with luck, lead her is into the sort of light, high-comedy roles that have been nonexistent in American films since Irene Dunne retired. Dunne also began as an operetta heroine and made several highly successful musical films (*Roberta*, *Showboat*) before hitting her real stride in a series of comedies that exploited her naturally "ladylike" manner in hilarious, and, for their time, bawdy situations.

Julie Andrews is a very talented woman—although I would be hard pressed to prove it from this album aside from the *My Fair Lady* excerpts—who at this point in her career needs a good, sophisticated and contemporary script (*Torn Curtain* is her only film out of period dress), a director who knows that "ladies" are also females, and a leading man who reacts to her very real womanliness. Given the state of the film business today it all sounds impossible. But then again, miracles do happen. P.R.

DAVID BOWIE: *Images 1966-67*. David Bowie (vocals and guitar); other musicians. *Rubber Band; Maid of Bond Street; Sell Me a Coat; Love You Till Tuesday; There Is a Happy Land; The Laughing Gnome; Gospel According to Tony Day; Uncle Arthur; We Are Hungry Men; When I Live My Dream*; and ten others. LONDON BP628/9 two discs \$7.98.

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

I have a recurring fantasy lately that I'm going to return to my old school one day this spring

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

and find that the twerps on the lawn who for years have been favoring us with spirited renditions of Neil Young's Greatest Hits will have suddenly switched to deca-rock—that is, Lou Reed and David Bowie. Lou I wouldn't mind; but the thought of having to suffer through hordes of sensitive transvestites wailing inept versions of *Changes* or *Space Oddity* fills me, quite frankly, with unspeakable ennui.

Anyway, for those of you who do get off on this decadent piffle, let me report that Darling David recently hit New York again (this time at Radio City Music Hall, no less) and let me tell you he didn't miss a trick. Well, actually he did—the Rockettes were conspicuous by their absence—but other than that he threw in every conceivable bit of cheap, vulgar theatrics in entertainment history. To be honest, I loved it. His entrance . . . well, it just made *Jesus Christ, Superstar* look like a low-budget road show; Tom O'Horgan will simply die. Picture this: a light show is flashing old outer-space outtakes from "Captain Video," the sound system is blaring a Moog version of Beethoven's Ninth, and David is lowered from the ceiling on a Day-Glo revolving trapeze! And he's wearing a black plastic outfit (with pants flared about two feet wide) that glows in the dark!! It was all so magnificent that once the band started to play you just had to be let down that the music wasn't as impressive as the performers. Bowie must have sensed this, because later on in the set two huge Van De Graaff generators on either side of the stage lit up in an attempt to top the impact of the entrance; the overall effect was like watching a rock group going nova at the Hayden Planetarium. Musically (you remem-

ber music) it was the same show I commented on in the January issue, with a few new numbers thrown in, demonstrating again how uncomfortable Dave is with mainstream hard rock. And, of course, he insisted on trotting out his solo version of perhaps the worst song ever written, Jacques Brel's *My Death*. This is where Bowie is really at, and I would take it as a personal favor if he would just ditch the science fiction hokum and start playing coffee houses so that I could ignore him without guilt.

Meanwhile, I am having no trouble at all ignoring this new album, which is the inevitable reissue of his very first things on English Decca. (Personally, I think London should have called it "David Bowie: Back to the Roots," but that's my problem.) A press release accompanying the package notes that after the original release of this stuff David received congratulatory phone calls from the likes of Franco Zeffereilli, Mel Tormé, and Lionel Bart, three of the most distinguished rock-and-rollers of our time. After that, further comment from me would certainly be superfluous.

Steve Simels

BREAD: *Guitar Man*. Bread (vocals and instrumentals). *Welcome to the Music; Aubrey; Fancy Dancer; Tecolote*; and eight others. ELEKTRA EKS 75047 \$5.98.

Performance: **Cheerful**
Recording: **Good**

Good, free-swinging, almost happy-time sounds abound here. The material isn't all that terrific, but Bread often surmounts it, as in their extremely fine performance of *Guitar Man*. I confess this is one group whose music

goes in one ear and out the other for me. I enjoy it moderately while I'm listening but I can never get very involved. Sorry. P.R.

JAMES BROWN: *Get on the Good Foot*. James Brown (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Get on the Good Foot (Parts 1 & 2); The Whole World Needs Liberation; Your Love Was Good for Me; Cold Sweat; Recitation by Hank Ballard; Nothing Beats a Try but a Fail; Lost Someone; Funky Side of Town; Please, Please; Ain't It a Groove; My Part/Make It Funky (Parts 3 & 4); Dirty Harry.* POLYDOR PD 2 3004 two discs \$7.98. Ⓡ L 3004 \$7.95. Ⓢ 8F2 3004 \$9.98, Ⓒ CF2 3004 \$9.98.

Performance: **Monotonous and puffy**
Recording: **Okay**

It is extremely difficult for James Brown to translate his magical stage presence into recordings. He has complicated the situation by releasing, over the last few years, a series of maddeningly monotonous singles featuring his well-drilled band playing riffs while Brown screams something about a new dance (there's *always* a new dance). His collected efforts as a lyricist would barely fill a page: he rarely does anything more than "Hey! Yuh! Hit me! Make it funky! Outtasight! Heh, heh, heh!"

Polydor's press release says that this is Brown's first "concept" album and "no mere collection of singles." Yet it includes two singles from other collections and two re-re-recordings of *Cold Sweat* and *Please, Please*—although Brown has altered the latter to make it autobiographical. The other tunes restate his feelings about black pride. But

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Don't lose your



not only has Brown run out of anything to say that isn't obvious, he is now hitting everybody over the head with his prestige; here he even compels Hank Ballard, a fine artist whom Brown rescued from obscurity, to spend five minutes hyping the record itself and James Brown personally.

Brown has made valuable contributions to the black community in money and morale; he has always maintained that mutual respect between black and white will accomplish more than "hate-whitey" rhetoric; he associates with people—such as the present Administration—who he thinks can help the black community. He is disliked by black extremists and by political goonies in general. I respect him as a performer, and for his social conscience and his general common sense, but after suffering through this rag-tag, sloppy, irritating album I think he had better stop taking his musical reputation for granted; it is desperately in need of repairs that only he can make. J.V.

GLEN CAMPBELL: *Glen Travis Campbell*. Glen Campbell (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *My Cricket*; *One Last Time*; *Sweet Fantasy*; *Running Scared*; and six others. CAPITOL SW 11117 \$5.98. ⓑ 8XW 11117 \$6.98. © 4XW 11117 \$6.98.

Performance: **Gawsh** . . .
Recording: **Excellent**

Hi-ah-thur! He's Glenn Campbell!!! And, to steal a title from Christopher Fry, he's becoming A Phoenix Too Frequent on records. A country slicker if there ever was one, Campbell is still stubbing his toes bashfully in the soil of commercial c-&-w, still playing

excellent guitar, and still carefully maintaining both his drawl and his dead earnestness. This record—a skillful combination of mild rock, c-&-w, and super-Hollywood-style production—is so slick you may have to put glue on the turntable to keep it there. Tom Paxton's *The Last Thing on My Mind* is a quintessential Campbell performance, and a good one. The trouble is that everything he sings lately seems just that: a Performance. He seems to have misplaced his ability to project real expression in words and music shortly after he got to *Phoenix*. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ALLAN CLARKE: *My Real Name is 'arold*. Allan Clarke (vocals, guitar); Ray Glynn (guitar); Tony Newman (drums); Roger Coullam (piano); Herbie Flowers (bass); other musicians. *Ruby*; *Mary Skeffington*; *Baby It's Alright with Me*; *Moonshine Whiskey*; *Nature's Way of Saying Goodbye*; *You're Losing Me*; and four others. EPIC KE 31757 \$5.98. ⓑ EA 31757 \$6.98. © ET 31757 \$6.98.

Performance: **Bingo!**
Recording: **Fine**

Allan Clarke has an interesting face—one of those, like Johnny Cash's, that experience is ruthless in lining, only to have each new line give it more character. His voice is something like that, too: one could hear this occasionally when he was with the Hollies, but it is more apparent now. Clarke flings it out, not controlling every little nuance but moving the handle properly so that the loose end snaps. His handle is his excitement about the song—he has

written and chosen songs that move tensely toward climaxes, and he handles tension and climactic high notes well. The lyrics, time and again, are banal, but the sound is great (the cassette version doesn't have a lyric sheet with it, which may make it worth the extra buck).

Clarke rocks better than most group singers who step out on their own—he's not afraid to be all alone up there with a rock song. Consequently, the album is a little light on ballads, but there's richness and lyricism in it anyway. And if you don't listen to the words too carefully you won't be left wondering why a guy with a face like that would sing such twaddle. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JUDY COLLINS: *True Stories and Other Dreams*. Judy Collins (vocals, guitar, piano); Eric Weissburg (guitar, banjo, bass); Bill Keith (steel guitar); Jerry Mathews (electric guitar); other musicians. *Cook with Honey*; *So Begins the Task*; *Fisherman Song*; *The Dealer (Down and Losin')*; *Secret Gardens*; *Holly Ann*; *The Hostage*; *Song for Martin*; *Ché*. ELEKTRA EKS 75053 \$5.98.

Performance: **Ahhh** . . .
Recording: **Fine**

It always happens. Here we're drifting through the doe-eyed opener, *Cook with Honey*, a pleasant and only superficially mindless little straight pop thing, and I'm musing on how it ties the Fifties and the Seventies together, but I'm not very impressed—and here *they* come. Recorders. Sweet little
(Continued on page 92)

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flute in the gap!



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Left to right: Roger McGuinn, Chris Hillman, David Crosby, Mike Clarke, Gene Clark.

THE RETURN OF THE BYRDS

Reviewed by Steve Simels

THE day after the new Byrds album arrived, I was on the phone with *Creem's* Lester Bangs, who (whether he'll admit it or not) has one of the sharpest minds in rock journalism. Some weeks earlier I had approached him about reviewing it, and after chatting briefly I asked what he thought now that the thing was finally out.

"What's there to think?" he said. "It's just another bland record; it could be the Eagles or somebody."

Much as it pained me, I was in agreement: in fact, I felt personally betrayed. The album seemed at best a bore, and there were all sorts of unpleasant rumors flying: Crosby and McGuinn hadn't talked to each other at the sessions; the whole project was supposedly nothing more than a quick-buck attempt by a cynical bunch of fading superstars. Faced with the prospect of reviewing it myself, I dashed off a quick draft full of mournful pronouncements about how the album was the definitive epitaph for the dashed hopes of the Sixties, and then I tried to forget it as fast as humanly possible. I mean, these guys had been my heroes.

Well, I hope Lester has since changed his mind, because I have mine: the album has been on my turntable non-stop now for the better part of a week, and I love it unreservedly. Like the Beach Boys' "Wild Honey" or even "Exile on Main Street," it turns out that "Byrds" is one of those records whose essential depth and beauty is all but obscured initially by its lack of surface flash and the impossible expectations the audience has of it. Even if it should turn out to be a one-shot deal, even if the rumors are true (and it seems, thank God, that they're not; as of this writing, a tour seems almost definite), it doesn't matter now. The album is good enough to make all that irrelevant.

The question of audience is really crucial here, and the group must have been conscious of it. Lord knows they had an awful lot to live up to. I doubt that anybody (except perhaps the legions of suburban kids who've been practicing their Clarence

White licks for the last couple of years) had to be reminded that the original Byrds were as important and influential a group as rock-and-roll has yet produced. The fact that David Crosby has turned into a paunchy, self-indulgent *New Yorker* cartoon of a hippy, or that Roger McGuinn was so intimidated by the Telecaster pyrotechnics of his new lead guitarist that he soft-pedaled his twelve-string to the point of inaudibility, cannot obscure the simple truth that every note from the opening of *Mr. Tambourine Man* through the final side of "Notorious Byrd Brothers" was unmistakably the product of a band possessed of collective genius. Which is not to say they haven't had their moments as they pursued their separate careers: Crosby, despite the (partly) warranted critical backlash that has set in lately, made some fine music with Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young; McGuinn's interim group got me off at times; and Hillman and Clark in their Burrito days came fairly close to recapturing some of the magic. But, viewed unsentimentally, they had indeed suffered a falling-off in inspiration. The soaring jet-age lyricism somehow wound up as countrified pabulum, and too often they seemed merely to be indulging a frantic compulsion to live up to their images as musician-prophets to the Sixties.

So now, faced with what must have been an almost unbearable pressure to come across not with an album but with an Event, they took the most sensible course and bent over backwards to sound as little like anyone's preconceptions as possible. Which accounts for my initial disappointment: it just didn't sound like the Byrds. But then, of course it does. Granted, there's little of the hard-edged twelve-string roar of "Fifth Dimension," or the dazzling country textures of "Younger than Yesterday," or even the spacey crystalline purity of "Notorious Byrd Brothers": in fact, what this new stuff reminds me of most is the "Preflyte" album (which, you'll recall, was a collection of the demos they made just prior to the arrival of

Terry Melcher and their early hits). But if the Rolling Stones are, as Andrew Oldham once said, as much a way of life as a band, then the Byrds are an attitude, maybe even a philosophy, and it's quite clear that it's still intact: when Gene Clark's opening *Full Circle* hits you, you know they've never really been away.

Once that realization dawns (and it will) I think you'll be hard pressed to pick your favorite song. Hillman's *Things Will Be Better* has much of the old mystique, and for once the optimism of the lyric does not offend my Seventies sensibilities. I heard this one on AM radio the other night, and it sounded so good that I began immediately to re-evaluate the album in terms of singles: there're a lot of them, though I doubt the group even realizes it. *Laughing*, which bored me to tears on Crosby's solo album, is here, and this time it works: the slickness that ruined its earlier incarnation is gone, and the group singing is as lovely as anything they've ever done. (And, after all, David says he wrote it for them in the first place.) I'm also knocked out by Joni Mitchell's *For Free*, which is rendered somewhat akin to *I Come and Stand at Every Door* on "Fifth Dimension" — very stark and dramatic. But the real triumph is *Born to Rock and Roll*. Had McGuinn's other group done it, the song would have been merely another forgettable bit of country funk, even though Clarence White can probably pick rings around almost anyone alive. Here, with those classic Byrd double-rhythm guitar textures, with Roger singing with more conviction than he's mustered in years, and with what sounds like the sweetest backup chorus in rock history, it takes on a wistful, haunting quality that is remarkable even in the light of their early work.

IT's not a perfect record by any means: Crosby's production is erratic, as if he weren't sure when to mix the twelve-string or the vocals above the general din; and the Clarke-Hillman rhythm section (to my mind as crucial to the Byrd sound as Bill and Charlie are to the Stones) is a trifle under-recorded. And do we really need another version of Neil Young's *Cowgirl in the Sand*? I'll admit, though, that the Byrds do it with such understated prettiness that I can bear it again, something I never thought could happen. But these are niggling criticisms that shouldn't deter you for a moment. After their five-year separation, the Byrds' "Byrds" should be looked upon as a first album, and as such it's every bit as brilliant as any of us had a right to expect. What matters is that at long last one of the most vital rock-and-roll bands we've ever had is making music again, and it's our duty to make sure they keep at it. They have to perform, and they simply have to make more records. I suggest you tell your friends.

THE BYRDS: *Byrds*. Gene Clark, Chris Hillman, David Crosby, Roger McGuinn, Michael Clarke (vocals and instrumentals). *Full Circle*: *Sweet Mary*; *Changing Heart*; *For Free*; *Born to Rock and Roll*; *Things Will Be Better*; *Cowgirl in the Sand*; *Long Live the King*; *Borrowing Time*; *Laughing*; *See the Sky About To Rain*. ASYLUM SD 5058 \$5.98, TP 5058 \$6.98, CS 5058 \$6.98.

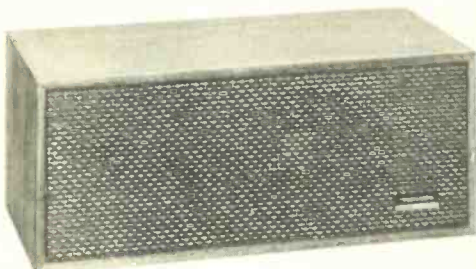
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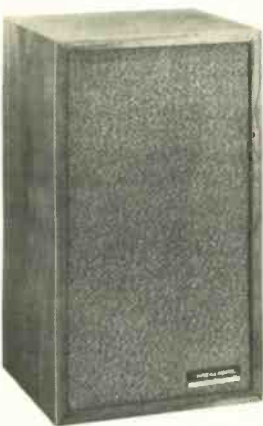
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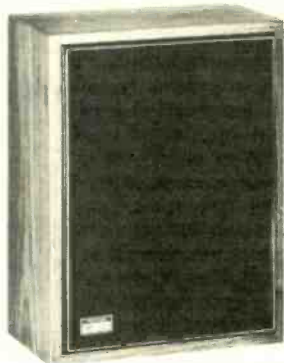
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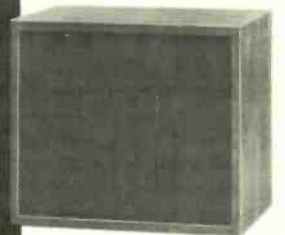
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recorders playing some thirteenth-century-sounding figure Richard Bell wrote for them, and they're just right. And here I, failed recorder player, sit, critical judgment lured away once again by Judy Collins. I've never written an objective paragraph about her yet, and I don't seem to be making it this time. This album sounds, through the seductive mist that fogs my ears, like one of her most relaxed, artistically cleanest efforts lately, but also a trifle stand-offish.

But then that faint quality is milked for dividends, I guess. Usually she lets political passion overpower her artistic judgment at least once—that thing about the lover in Vietnam on the "Living" album is an example—but here she does a better than passable job with Tom Paxton's *The Hostage* (a bitter one about the Attica massacre), and her own composition, *Ché*, is lyrical, not strident, and hovers about a lovely chorus. Her songs *Secret Gardens* and *Holly Ann* seem to extend something I detect in *Ché*—a beautifully womanly essence. If we could fully explore that we might have something, eh? Anyway, I know Judy always manages to brighten up my image of womanhood. I also know that if we ever meet she'll probably go away with my car and my faithful dog. N.C.

CHI COLTRANE. Chi Coltrane (vocals, piano, organ); orchestra. *The Tree: Goodbye John; Feelin' Good; I Will Not Dance; Turn Me Around;* and six others. COLUMBIA KC 31275 \$5.98. © CA 31275 \$6.98. © CT 31275 \$6.98.

Performance: **Accomplished but arid**
Recording: **Excellent**

A lot of intelligence, craft, and sophistication went into the making of this album. It is a conspicuously "well-made" product. Chi Coltrane, although young and blonde and pretty, is obviously dedicated enough to her career to have gone far beyond the basics of composing, singing, and playing before she rushed into a studio to make a record—unusual in itself these days. But the results here are songs that are professional in every respect, singing that—through careful phrasing and control—largely conceals what is basically a not very attractive voice, and pianism that combines great natural musicianship with a high-style technique. Unfortunately, it also results in an album that lacks the swing of free imagination and a loose spirit. *Feelin' Good*, for instance, sounds so premeditated that it doesn't communicate anything resembling musical excitement or ferment, but only a sense of excellent craftsmanship.

Chi Coltrane has talent, and she is already a thoroughgoing pro. But this album is a salon job. P.R.

ALUN DAVIES: *Daydo.* Alun Davies (vocals, guitar); Jeremy Taylor (guitar); Cat Stevens (piano); Jean Rousset (keyboards); other musicians. *Portobello Road; Poor Street; Waste of Time; I'm Gonna Love You Too; Vale of Tears; I'm Late;* and four others. COLUMBIA KC 31469 \$5.98, © CT 31469 \$6.98. © CA 31469 \$6.98.

Performance: **High on Cat-nip**
Recording: **Excellent**

Behind Cat Stevens, Alun Davies plays clear and crisp but warm, somewhat stylized acoustic guitar. His first solo album does not impose the limitations of stylization on his picking—or, directly, on his singing—but Cat's

influence on his songwriting is rather too heavy. *Abram Brown Continued* has Stevens' imprint on it in its build-up of drama, and *Market Place, Old Bourbon*, and some others labor with the mannerisms of Stevens' songs. *Bourbon* also sounds so much like the chorus of the old Everly Brothers hit *Dream, Dream, Dream* that a lawsuit wouldn't surprise me. (Incidentally, *Abram Brown Continued* and *Warrior* are out of position in the cassette version, which renames the latter *Young Warrior*.)

But Davies has an unexpectedly smooth, rangy voice and seems almost certain to work up to a nicely defined vocal style, given the time to practice. His chance to interpret with his voice is cut short here by a script that sends it where Cat Stevens' voice is supposed to go, but the songs do allow some broad hinting, and I'm impressed. I hope he can cut the cord and still continue to provide the excellent, sympathetic backing in Stevens' music.



EUMIR DEODATO

Striking about-faces on an expert album

although nobody would say that's going to be easy. N.C.

EUMIR DEODATO: *Prelude.* Eumir Deodato (piano and electric piano); orchestra. *Also Sprach Zarathustra; Spirit of Summer; September 13;* and three others. CTI CTI 6021 \$5.98.

Performance: **Odd but interesting**
Recording: **Good**

Stupid as it may seem, this is an album that I began to really enjoy only after I had reduced my usual volume control setting by half. I don't mean to label Eumir Deodato's new album as mere background music—there are too many good musical ideas here for that, and his playing is very good and idiomatic. It probably has more to do with what he chooses to play, which is, to say the least, eclectic. His version of *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, the Strauss-Kubrick contribution to the head culture of the late Sixties, has already hit the charts and deservedly so. It is a fine job, and his electric piano is suitably galactic. But then he switches to something like *Baubles, Bangles and Beads* and there you are right in the hot swarm of a Friday-night Spanish-American dance in a West Side hall. This is an expert album on all counts, but be prepared for

the sudden about-faces. And please do be sure to remember my suggestion regarding volume. P.R.

DUO REIM: *Chassidic Goes Pop.* Benny Rosenbaum and Yisrael Gottesdiener (vocals); orchestra, Avshalom Katz cond. *Od' Yishoma; Chemdat Yamin; Yedid Nefush; Torat Haselem Temima; Kol Rinna;* and seven others. LONDON SW 99543 \$5.98.

Performance: **Anomalous anachronism**
Recording: **Good**

Dat old-time religion is cropping up in the most unexpected guises and locales. A decade ago if you spoke Yiddish in Israel you were stared down like an unaccountably surviving dodo bird. Today Yiddish seems to be thriving, as is the emotional worship style of the Chassidim of Eastern Europe. Benny Rosenbaum and Yisrael Gottesdiener, a couple of enterprising boys (shown in suits, blue shirts, and conservative ties) who call themselves the "Duo Reim," have combined the Chassidic approach with pop rhythms and effects and have already won first prize in the "Festival Shirey Jerusalem" and "The Festival of Biblical Songs" as well as other special honors at the Chassidic Festivals of 1971 and 1972 (events whose occurrence had somehow completely escaped me). These boys also have completed the requisite tours of Israel, Europe, and our own land, so it was certainly time for a record. The one they have made provides lyrics in Hebrew and Yiddish only—except for a stiffing item in English called *My Mother's Shabbos Candles*, which should go back to the nineteenth century and stay there. The rest of their treatments are lively but bland. Somehow, too, the exaltation of the Almighty in *Ki Lo*, the greeting of the Sabbath as a bride in the traditional *L'cha dodi*, and even the "prayer for peace" in *Yahave Aleinu* make uneasy marriages with the glib popular rhythms and effects grafted onto them. But the old melodies shine through all the fashionable decoration and are still moving, even if they are dressed up like clowns. P.K.

GENESIS: *Foxtrot.* Genesis (vocals and instrumentals). *Get 'em Out by Friday; Time-table; Watcher of the Skies; Can-Utility and the Coastliners; Supper's Ready; Horizons.* CHARISMA CAS 1058 \$5.98. © M 81058 \$6.98. © M 51058 \$6.98.

Performance: **Regressive**
Recording: **Good**

Some British rock critics—they definitely aren't as nasty as American rock critics, and maybe they aren't as demanding either—are agog about this album, but I can't see it. To me, it represents a step backward from Genesis' previous effort, "Nursery Cryme." The music here, a series of rather involved, interrelated compositions, is ambitious—but the work of Yes in general and Jethro Tull's "Thick as a Brick" in particular beat "Foxtrot" to an awful lot of punches. Lead singer Peter Gabriel does sing better than on past recordings, and Phil Collins' excellence as a drummer comes through (although it still is by no means spotlighted), but the originality Genesis seemed to be grasping for is not yet in hand. The band doesn't take enough risks here; it isn't as cocky and reckless as it was before. The melodies, occasionally deft, are de-emphasized in favor of textural complexity. (Continued on page 94)

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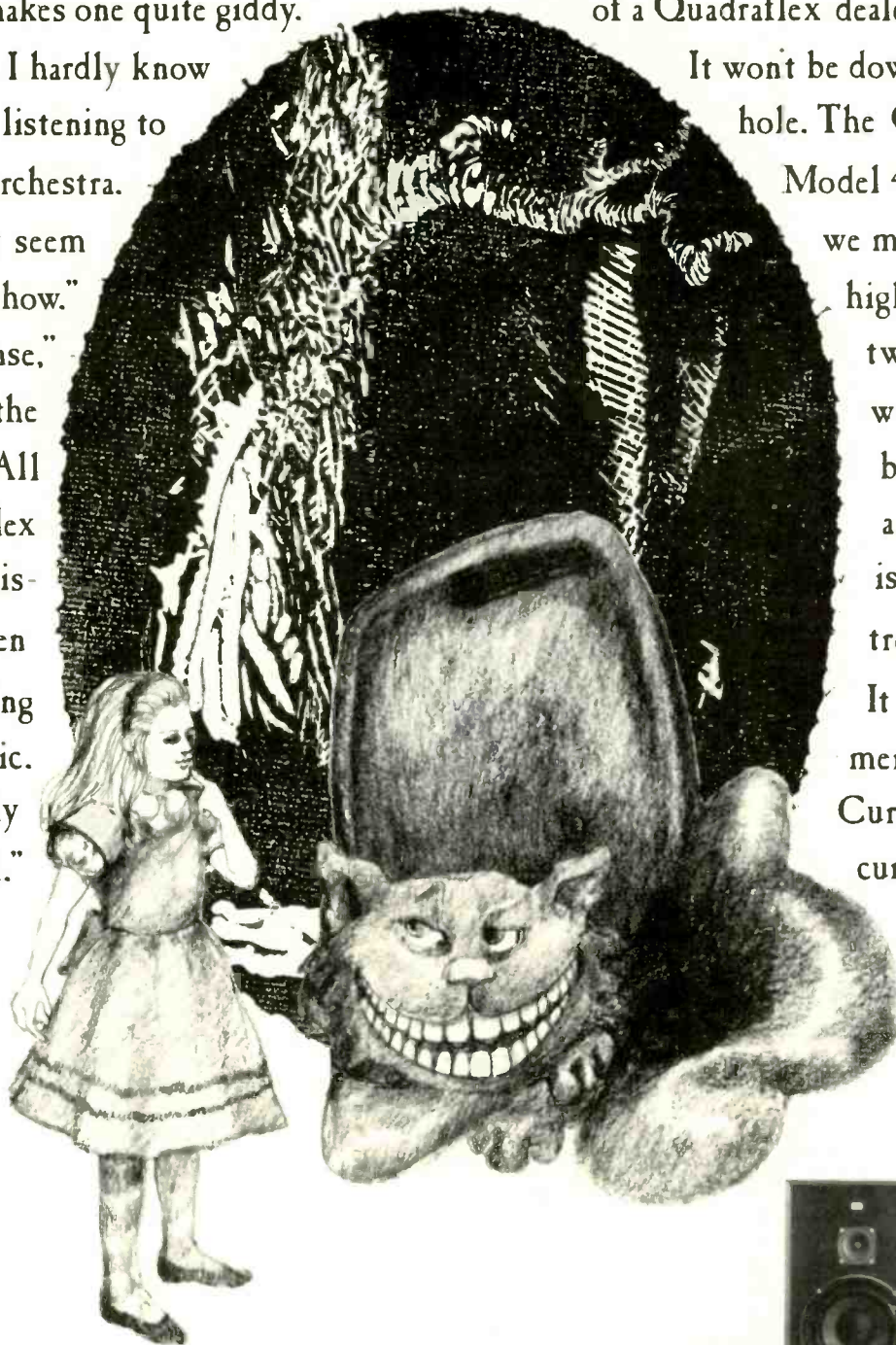
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ties. And the lyrics are erratic. The one assigned to *Get 'em Out by Friday*, an eight-minute, multi-tuned summary of what the Haves do to the Have Nots, is an embarrassing piece of heavy-handed hack work. Some of the shorter songs and segments of the twenty-two-minute *Supper's Ready*, however, do have lyrics with some taste and intelligence. This seems to me a sort of time-marking album for Genesis, who will surely do better. They are gifted, but they still haven't worked it all out yet. N.C.

JOHN HAMBRICK: *Windmill in a Jet Filled Sky*. John Hambrick (vocals); choral and instrumental accompaniment. *Hard Faced Road; Me and My Friend; Silence of My Heart; Share 'Til Tomorrow; I Ain't Never Seen a White Man*; and five others. BROWN BAG BB 14201 \$5.98.

Performance: **Pat and preachy**
Recording: **Excellent**

Brown Bag Records (and their records actually do come out of brown paper bags) is more generous than most companies these days in supplying information about their pop singers, so I am in a position to tell you that John Hambrick was born on June 21, 1940, in the "foothills and blacklands" of Conroe, Texas, attended the University of Texas from 1958 to 1959, set out to become an actor in Hollywood, California, and wound up married, with three lovely children, and gainfully employed in Cleveland, Ohio, where he is anchorman for ABC's Eyewitness News team. One would think that life had dealt fairly enough with Mr. Hambrick, and he would have been willing to leave things as they were, but he wasn't. No, he was determined to become a pop composer and singer of songs with indifferent tunes and uplifting messages—a mission that was somewhat misguided. I am afraid, considering the fellow's resources. If you can imagine one of those mellifluous announcer-type voices *singing* rather than speaking over a microphone you may have some notion of this performer's rather overbearing style. As for the content of his creations, they deal scrupulously with all the correct topics: the drifter hitchhiking through life down "that hard faced road" always bidding goodbye to folks; the friend he gets drunk with and talks to "bout Mars and wars and movie stars"; the importance of being color blind ("I ain't never seen a white man. I ain't never seen a black man." etc., etc.); nostalgia for childhood in a world "way out beyond the freeway"; ecology; mother-love. All of it comes across with the oppressiveness of a Sunday radio sermon, and is as easy to shut off. P.K.

RICHARD HARRIS: *Slides*. Richard Harris (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *I Don't Have to Tell You; Gin Buddy; Blue Canadian Rocky Dream; Sunny Joe; Best Way to See America; Once Upon a Dusty Road*; and six others. Dunhill DSX 50133 \$5.98. © 8023 50133 \$6.98, © 5023 50133 \$6.98.

Performance: **Without a song** . . .
Recording: **Very good**

The glory of Richard Harris' robust voice needs no endorsement from me; he has fluttered enough pulses ever since he sang *If Ever I Would Leave You* in the movie of *Camelot*. But even a singer with the luxurious vocal assets of Mr. Harris needs something to sing, and I fear that Mr. Tony Romeo, who has

"conceived and produced" this curious album and composed almost all the songs for it, has let his performer down. The album, a handsomely produced affair that contrives to represent an enormous color transparency of its star, starts out fashionably enough with one of those romantic tributes to the carefree hitchhiker on the open road. After that, we hear about the scenery in the Canadian Rockies, childhood friendships, sleepy seaside towns, and other memories. Then there is a *November Song* that will never replace *September Song*. All of this fills our hero with unspeakable sadness, leaving him with only a "Kodachrome memory" of his dreary travels. The listener readily shares these sentiments, since there isn't a decent tune in the lot.

Finally, Mr. Harris gets down to his own material, a half-sung, half-spoken portrait of a Mr. Chips type saying farewell to the boys in the third form, having just been fired from his post for having "a nip before the game." This is a sorry situation, and I have no doubt that



RALPH McTELL

Vibrancy and pathos from a new troubadour

still another terrible widescreen movie could be made of it; as a song, it is merely interminable. Wait, wait—there's more! P.K.

ELTON JOHN: *Don't Shoot Me, I'm Only the Piano Player*. Elton John (vocals and keyboards); instrumental accompaniment. *Daniel; Teacher I Need You; Elderberry Wine; Blues for Baby and Me; Midnight Creeper*; and five others. MCA 2100 \$5.98, © MCAT8 2100 \$6.98, © MCAC2 2100 \$6.98.

Performance: **Gymnastic**
Recording: **Very good**

Is it only wishful thinking, or was this an abridged title? Was it originally ". . . I'm Not Responsible for the Lyrics"? I'm firmly convinced that the farther away Elton John gets from Bernie Taupin, the better he gets; and I'm guessing that it was John's influence that made "Honky Chateau" such a pleasant and satisfying album and Taupin's influence that made "Madman Across the Water" such a puffy bore.

Part of Elton John's talent is that he can—or is forced to—twist and turn to provide some kind of musical resolution of Taupin's lyrics and song characters, to prop up Taupin's bad choices in song subjects or situa-

tions. John performs nobly on *Daniel* (a follow-up to *Levon*), and he manages to do something with throwaway songs like *Teacher I Need You* and even such wildly misplaced sympathy songs for the world's ugly and unlucky as *Have Mercy on the Criminal*. But what reasonable excuse is there for junk like *Texan Love Song* (about how them red-necks gonna kill them long-hair hippie commie faggie freakers who contaminate good Texan women)? This is schoolboy rebel stuff, but somehow John manages to make it passable anyway.

Crocodile Rock, though, is a deadly accurate portrait of a fossilized rocker from the Fifties—score one for Taupin—and *High Flying Bird* has some nice moments. The collaboration between John and Taupin is commercially very successful, but as someone once pointed out about the Lone Ranger's exploits, you always got the feeling that if it came to a pinch Tonto could handle everything without any help. Maybe one day John will ask Taupin: "What you mean 'us,' white poet?" J.V.

CLAUDIA LENNEAR: *Phew!* Claudia Lennear (vocals); orchestra. *It Ain't Easy; Sister Angela; Not at All; Casey Jones*; and six others. WARNER BROS. BS 6254 \$5.98.

Performance: **A Tina bopper**
Recording: **Good**

A former Ikette, Claudia Lennear seems intent on outdoing Tina at her own turn. Photographs, songs, and performances all closely follow the groove that Tina Turner has established. Lennear is good enough, in an imitative way, but why bother when the real thing is around? In the same situation I know that Geraldine would put in a call to Killer. Wonder what Tina's plans are? P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RALPH McTELL: *Not Till Tomorrow*. Ralph McTell (vocals, guitar, harmonica, piano, organ); Danny Thompson (bass); Laurie Allan (percussion); Tony Visconti (sitar, recorders, organ); Mary Visconti (backing vocals). *Zimmerman Blues; First Song; When I Was a Cowboy; Nettle Wine; Sylvia; Birdman; Barges*; and four others. REPRISE MS 2121 \$5.98.

Performance: **First-rate**
Recording: **Very good**

Ralph McTell's first Reprise album (and his first one with a shot at raking in big coin in the States) is tuneful, thoughtful, and tasteful. It acknowledges, but without panic, the delicate castle-of-balanced-matchsticks quality of the McTell talent. Temptations to characterize McTell's vocals as creative use of an adenoid condition are put aside; one would rather be held by the dramatic potential and be faintly reminded of, say, David Ackles. Still, *Birdman*, a loose salute to George Jackson, is a bit much, and *Sylvia*, for Sylvia Plath, doesn't work either. Just about everything else does, though; *Gypsy* and *Zimmerman Blues* (another salute, sort of) are particularly astute, and the acoustic arrangements (McTell is quite a good picker) enhance both the vibrancy and the pathos of McTell's songs and singing. So we'll just have to scrooch over here and make some room for yet another fine troubadour. N.C.

(Continued on page 96)



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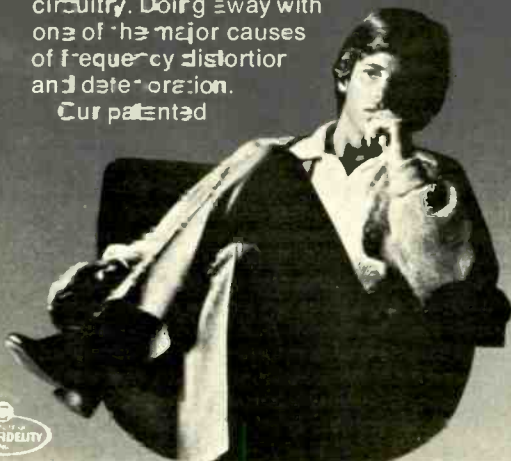
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THE NEW MESSIAH (Handel, transmogrified by Andy Belling). Various vocalists; Revelation Philharmonic Orchestra and One Experience Choir conducted by Andy Belling. COLUMBIA KC 31713 \$5.98.

Performance: **Dismal**
Recording: **Beside the point**

As everyone knows, if the classics are to be saved, they must be made relevant to today's perceptive audience, a group aware of what is viable and impatient with the Establishment put-ons of music and music-making as practiced for the benefit of the privileged few over the years. We needn't junk Beethoven and Bach altogether—just revise the basic material as necessary to bring it into the context of Now. Just think of what Walter de los Rios has done to keep Mozart from being tossed on the scrap heap, and how the brilliantly conceived "Naked Carmen" has kept the Bizet opera from going under.

Now, no doubt because it has been so beloved for so many decades by the forebears of the Now people themselves, this revivifying attention has been directed toward Handel's *Messiah*, pruning endless pages of deadwood and adorning the portions worth preserving in relevant modern dress. It is quite a rescue operation.

The album cover depicts a turned-on Madonna and Child surrounded by with-it angels. Though there is only one disc, the jacket is a gatefold, opening to a center spread of photographs of the beautiful Now people who made it all happen. The session pictures are unencumbered with identification (or words of any kind), and the back liner offers only a list of credits, including one for calligraphy and one for the copyist. It's like, y'know, letting the music speak for itself. And don't overlook those funky but, y'know, relevant names for the performing groups. Oh wow, Oi veh, Maria!

The word for this, really, is neither "relevant" nor "viable" but "depressing." Somehow, the producers did miss a bet—or perhaps it was only a typographical slip-up—in not calling this thing "The Nude Messiah," which would have been even cleverer, and in the tradition of "The Naked Carmen." But not much else has been missed: all the most turgid clichés of the "classics made relevant" phenomenon—à la rock, à la soul—are tiresomely abundant. The sounds are of a sameness so enervating that whatever there might have been of Handel is not so much "disfigured" as simply undistinguishable from Gluck or Corelli or Strauss or Prokofiev subjected to similar treatment. The tired old beat, the studiously coarsened, nonsinging voices, and the total, overwhelming absence of anything approximating originality or imaginativeness are all numbing.

The excerpts from Handel's oratorio chosen for attention in this dismal sequence are the Overture, "For unto us a Child is born," "Glory to God," "I know that my Redeemer liveth," "And the glory of the Lord," "Hallelujah," "All we like sheep," "Surely He hath borne our griefs," "He trusted in God," "The trumpet shall sound," and "Since by man came death." Anyone inclined, after hearing the "cool cat" delivery of "The trumpet shall sound," to suspect this is a burlesque of such arrangements will be disabused quickly enough, for there is not even a single redeeming measure of humor in this sequence. What is worst about this is that all of it, bar after bar, exudes the single really unpardonable sin

of any musical offering, whether classed as "art" or "entertainment": it is boring.

As Handel wrote it, the chorus "For unto us a Child is born" happens to be one of the most fizzy, exciting episodes in any work of music, from any period—jubilant and exultant in the most visceral way. Go back to the 1953 Scherchen recording (first issued on Westminster, later on Vanguard/Bach Guild) or, if you don't want a hunting expedition, to any one of the recent stereo versions under Colin Davis on Philips, Charles Mackerras on Angel, or Johannes Somary on Vanguard/Cardinal. The effect of that brilliant little chorus is electrifying, leaving the most jaded listener all but breathless. The same goes, of course, for "The trumpet shall sound," and even (perhaps particularly) the much-abused Hallelujah Chorus itself. Handel really knew how to warm the listener's blood, and the blandness manifest throughout this embarrassingly wearisome new recording is something that simply never marred his musical thought.



DOUG SAHM
Forges a flashy conglomerate of notables

"The New Messiah" and "The Naked Carmen" are not likely to lure new audiences to the respective original models. What is most dismaying is that young (and not so young) listeners never exposed to the originals may be gullible enough to accept this stuff as the "contemporary" and "viable" replacement for them, and thereby miss the emotional and sensual punch Handel and Bizet—and so many others—can still deliver in the originals. *Richard Freed*

NEW RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE: *Gypsy Cowboy*. New Riders of the Purple Sage (vocals and instrumentals). *Gypsy Cowboy*; *Whiskey*; *Groupie*; *Sutter's Mill*; *Death and Destruction*; *Linda*; *Superman*; and three others. COLUMBIA KC 31930 \$5.98, © CA 31930 \$6.98, © CT 31930 \$6.98.

Performance: **Obvious**
Recording: **Good**

Country-rock may be a nag of some spirit, but she must feel she's been rode hard and put up wet when *these* cowboys finally amble out of the studio. The New Riders are just that—riders of a fancy they helped create, and they ride it mercilessly. Their style is so self-consciously narrowed down to the most *obvious*

country and the most *obvious* rock that it takes the listener only about four bars to understand all he'll ever want to know about the formula, and only about eight bars to become utterly bored to death with it. It took me only one bar—down at the corner—to forget the whole business. *N.C.*

COLE PORTER: *Cole*. Cole Porter, Mary Martin, Danny Kaye, and Ethel Merman (vocals); various orchestras. COLUMBIA © KS 31456 \$6.98.

Performance: "What a swell party this is!"
Recording: **Aged**

Happy news. Here is a previously unreleased collection of the great Cole Porter singing his own songs from the 1935 musical *Jubilee*. He sounds as sprightly and as impish as his lyrics, whether running through a parody of a long Noël Coward song (*When Love Comes Your Way*) or imagining what Johnny Weismuller would use as a serenade (*When Me, Mowgli, Love*). But, for all the urbanity, most of the songs are now, alas, only dated camp. For some strange reason Porter does not sing any of the three great songs that make *Jubilee* memorable: *Begin the Beguine*, *Why Shouldn't I?*, and *Just One of Those Things*.

The second side of the record contains re-releases of the original recordings of Mary Martin doing *My Heart Belongs to Daddy* and *Most Gentlemen Don't Like Love*, Danny Kaye with *Farming* and *Let's Not Talk About Love*, and Ethel Merman at her classic peak in *You're the Top* and *I Get a Kick out of You*.

No matter how trivial most of the songs are (the Merman songs are the only two that display Porter's greatness), I couldn't resist a moment of any of it. Porter was a genuinely civilized man and often a genuinely funny one. I'm still chortling over such couplets as the one from *Let's Not Talk About Love*. "I let's talk of Lamarr, that Hedy, so fair,/Why does she let Joan Bennett wear all her old hair?" To help explain such esoterica, Columbia thoughtfully provides a glossary to bring us up to date (take us back to date?) on Porter's lyric references. There is also a brief but pleasant essay, mostly about the absurd plot of *Jubilee*, by the same Robert Kimball who wrote last year's lavish book also titled *Cole*.

The sound, particularly on the *Jubilee* side, is antediluvian. But who cares? The gracefulness of spirit shines through everything Porter touched, and there's never been anyone like him, before or since. *P.R.*

PROCOL HARUM: *Grand Hotel* (see Best of the Month, page 85)

DOUG SAHM AND BAND. Doug Sahm (vocals, guitar, bass, organ, piano, fiddle); Bob Dylan (vocals, guitar, harmonica, organ); George Rains (drums); Dr. John (organ, piano); David Bromberg (dobro, slide guitar); David Fathead Newman (tenor sax); other musicians. (*Is Anybody Going to San Antonio*; *It's Gonna Be Easy*; *Your Friends*; *Poison Love*; *Wallflower*; *Dealer's Blues*; *Faded Love*; *Blues Stay Away from Me*; and four others. ATLANTIC SD 7254 \$5.98, © TP 7254 \$6.98, © CS 7254 \$6.98.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Fine**

Doug ("Sir Douglas") Sahm has considerable talent. Whether most of it lies in performing *(Continued on page 100)*



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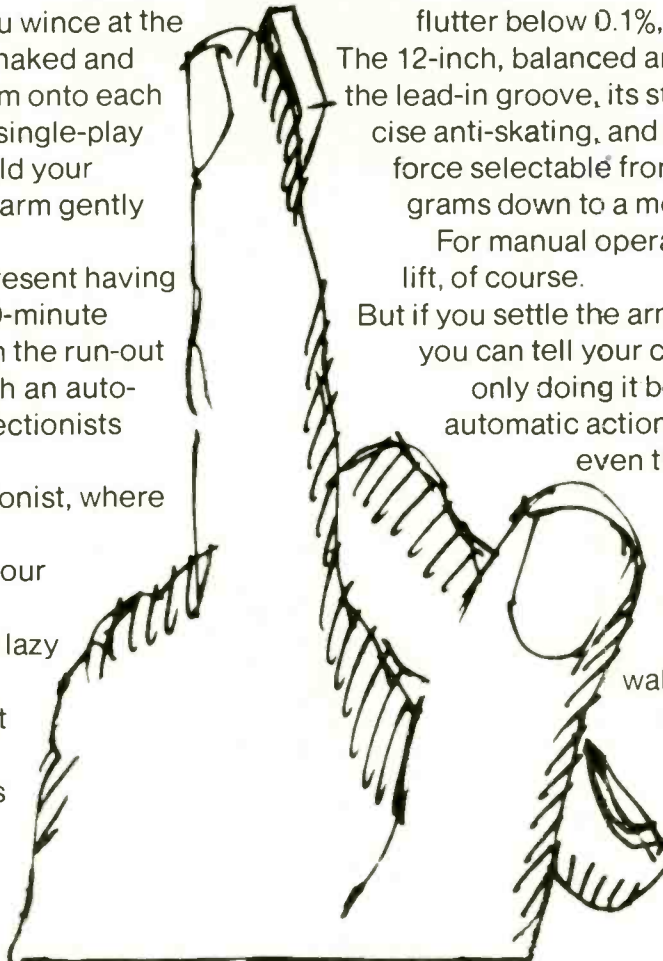
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DONNA FARGO

The Power of Perkins

By Noel Coppage

DURING the hiatus between my second and third childhoods, I was infatuated with Peggy King, who was on television in those days and was always referred to by George Gobel as "pretty, perky Peggy King." The power of prettiness we all acknowledge, regardless of whatever sensible, enlightened comments we may make at the moment as we stare down the barrel, itchy-fingered, toward Women's Lib—but what of perkiness? Even those old enough to recall Teresa Brewer tend to overlook its awesome power . . . until some bouncy wench like Donna Fargo bops in and sets up shop by grabbing a Country Music Association award and, before the dust settles, a Grammy for the same mantelpiece.

Donna is more than just perky, of course, being one of the few females in country music to write much of her own stuff. She may even be a point-rider for a country troubadette movement. But I am persuaded, listening to her two albums, that though she is *trying* to be mainstream country, which means following tried-and-true (and tired)

country formulas, a couple of things keep interfering. One of them is something . . . well, *perky* in her personality that just keeps making her jump off the pedestal that country women are supposed to perch on, in all their abused, washed-out, whining glory, and keeps urging her into up-beat, up-tempo music that makes both her albums rock steadily. The other thing is a tendency to (perhaps innocently) fly right in the face of the formulas and haul out a song—like the CMA- and Grammy-winning *The Happiest Girl in the Whole U. S. A.*—that is somehow bolted together all wrong and therefore has freshness and life in it.

Her affinity for up-tempo pieces is unusual in a female country singer—we've come to expect them to stand by their men, bitching and moaning continuously at a dirge pace—but it's also great show biz on Donna's part. What does the public know about her? Why, that she's from Mt. Airy, N. C., and that she was a schoolteacher when her big hit happened. Consider the inherent contrast: the schoolmarm sings *fast*

and *loud*, with a big, fuzz-tone, honky-tonkin' *beat*. It may not seem like much up-town, where the opportunity to see the New Breed of teacher walk picket lines and cuss out the school board has left onlookers somewhat jaded. But back where Donna comes from—back where her music mostly goes—there's still a kick or two in having a *schoolteacher* sock it to you. She's up there, by doggies, *doin' it* . . . perhaps even something like the way Grace Slick and those other fallen hippie Jezebels do it. Ah, the taint, the blessed taint.

And yet, she's doing it in prim gingham and homey ruffles. She sounds like she means it when she mentions Jesus favorably in her lyrics. She sounds like she means it when she sings *Daddy Dumplin'* (God help me: I have two daughters coming along) to her real, paternal daddy. She even sounds like the happiest girl in the whole whatchacallit just like she says. You *can* have it both ways, after a fashion, when a gal is perky and has spunk.

She doesn't violate the formulas quite often enough, but she does manage to puff some fresh air into an album two or three times. In the first, "The Happiest Girl in the Whole U. S. A." album, we find the shamed-by-a-man song, *Manhattan, Kansas*, which has the heroine washing dishes to support the offspring of that scandalous coupling (also makes her hands feel clean, she says . . . and maybe that's something Loretta Lynn, Connie Smith, Dolly Parton, *etc.*, *etc.*, didn't reveal in *their* versions of this song, but I'm too tired to check it out). Then there's the punch-line song, dear to the hearts of country scribes, in which every other line pimps for all it's worth for the last line of the verse, which is always a let-down because it is always, as it is here, given away in the title, *How Close You Came (To Being Gone)*. The second album, called "My Second Album," is much more cliché-prone than the first, however, and has an excessively slick instrumental patina besides; I like the first one better. In "Second Album," we encounter such Fargo originals as *Have Yourself a Time*, the familiar givin'-him-his-walkin'-papers song. And *How Would I* is, like the Stonewall Jackson oldie *Don't Be Angry* that Donna does nice things for, an example of the putty-in-his-hands song, describing the only other way (on record) that a country girl ever behaves when she *isn't* bitching in one way or another. *Superman's* lyrics are typical of how country girls lay down the law, but a rocking tempo does a lot for it. Donna has a way of (sometimes) salvaging more from these formulas than you thought was there—and a way of (sometimes) putting ouch-inducing lyrics of some integrity into a formula song: in the first album's *A Little Somethin' (To Hang On To)*, there's the line "Don't live it up if you can't live it down." Hey. That's a *punch* line! Hey, Donna, you wasted . . . (here you can fill in your own elaboration, or simply go Babble Babble Babble).

BUT then, on the second album, there's *Forever's as Far as I Could Go*, which is a suicide note set to music. There's some anxiety about this. Donna takes the trouble to explain in a spoken introduction how the happiest girl in the whole *etc.* came even to *think* of such a thing. Of course, the "expla-

nation" doesn't explain anything, but probably the soothing tone of voice accomplishes her purpose.

Donna's singing style is fashioned along conventional lines. You know how Tammy Wynette's voice is always *punching through?*—how it wells up behind this fog of choke-up and then, after a surreal delay, comes spearing through, slimmed back like a feather coming through custard? Donna Fargo's voice does the very same thing, and her phrasing is so like Tammy's that I worry about Donna when ballad-time rolls around. But the up-tempo things mask all that and put the emphasis on the sort of bunched-up crispness that really is her claim to style.

That's still not reason enough to include *Johnny B. Goode* on the first album. Donna may feel something for the song, but she manages to convey only that she likes the beat and misunderstands the rest of it. That and some chopped-off fade-outs and other indications that the engineers may have worn boxing gloves mar the first album. The second one includes Jim Croce's *You Don't Mess Around with Jim*, which becomes no less rotten with age, and Donna's own diddly-dinkum number, *Hot Diggity Dog*, which is almost as odious. The engineering is better, but the instrumental backing is typically overcontrolled.

The Happiest Girl and *Funny Face*, another hit from the first album, remain the best songs Donna has recorded, and neither is a country song. They're just songs, light, airy, easy to follow, shallow, catchy, artless, natural. There is nothing contrived about them. Contriving songs to rigid specifications has just about become a condition of country music, and Donna is clever enough to make a go of it that way in the songs mentioned earlier and similar ones—but she also has this other capability in her, if she can just capitalize on it. Those who *flaunt* the c-&-w rules, as Mickey Newberry does, aren't really accepted, except by renegades like Waylon Jennings, who is known to consort with known hippies. A very few people—Tom T. Hall is one—are at once so brainy and ingenious that they are welcomed, even out of uniform, into the truck stops. Whether Donna can do it that way is a big, mean question. But, as I said, don't underestimate the power of perkiness.

DONNA FARGO: *The Happiest Girl in the Whole U. S. A.* Donna Fargo (vocals): instrumental accompaniment. Bill Walker arr. *The Happiest Girl in the Whole U. S. A.: Manhattan, Kansas: The Awareness of Nothing; Funny Face: A Little Somethin' (To Hang On To); Daddy Dumblin'; How Close You Came; Society's Got Us; It Would Have Been Just Perfect; Johnny B. Goode.* DOT DOS 26000 \$4.98, © 8150 26000 M \$6.98. © 1510 26000 M \$6.98.

DONNA FARGO: *My Second Album.* Donna Fargo (vocals): instrumental accompaniment. David Briggs arr. *A Song I Can Sing; Superman; You Don't Mess Around with Jim; Have Yourself a Time; Don't Be Angry; You Were Always There; How Would I; I'd Love You To Want Me; Forever's as Far as I Could Go; He Can Have All He Wants; Hot Diggity Dog.* DOT DOS 26006 \$4.98, © 8150 26006 M \$6.98, © 1510 26006 M \$6.98.

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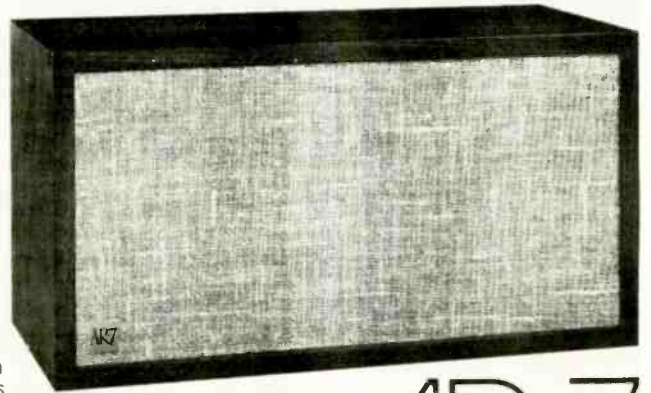
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music or in setting up an organization and attracting publicity is another matter. Here he gathers together Bob Dylan, for something more than a cameo appearance, with Dr. John, David Bromberg, Fathead Newman, Arif Mardin, and a host of other notables to fashion a splotchy, disconnected album that has flashes of something. For example: Dylan is really awful at singing with other people, but awful in a fascinating, almost haunting, way sometimes, and Doug's band captures that. Doug and Ken Kosek put in some almost percussive touches with twin fiddles (Doug's homework includes Chuck Wills) that get the straights and the unstraights all confused. And the band does such a fine, imaginative job with *Poison Love* that I forgive them for having the nerve to record a Johnny and Jack classic (come on, executives, let's have some Johnny and Jack reissues). But Doug also continues to fancy himself a blues/jazz singer, so we get some Sir Douglas-type excesses, accompanied by arrangements that are sometimes thoroughly inane, sometimes embarrassingly overcooked. And the song quality fails to keep one enthralled. As I said: splotchy but with flashes. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SLADE: *Slayed?* Slade (vocals and instrumentals). *How D'you Ride?*; *The Whole World's Going Crazy*; *Look at Last Nite*; *I Won't Let It Appen Agen*; *Move Over*; *Gudbuy ' Jane*; *Gudbuy Gudbuy*; *Mama Weer All Crazee Now*; *I Don' Mind*; *Let the Good Times Roll*. POLYDOR PD 5524 \$5.98.

Performance: **Fiery**
Recording: **Apt**

This is in some ways a brilliant album, but it leaves me with several rather uncomfortable nagging sensations. The basic problem is that I'm not sure whether the idea of neoclassicism makes any sense at all in rock, since the form itself is barely twenty years old, and since the music Slade deliberately recalls (the early Who) was made in the middle Sixties. My immediate reaction is gut-level: *Gudbuy ' Jane* and *Mamma Weer All Crazee Now*, the hits, are spectacularly good rock-and-roll, filled with all the raunch, exhilaration, and fire the grooves can hold, and everything else—especially a demented assault on *Let the Good Times Roll*—is nearly as good. You can't listen to this stuff and remain seated.

Unfortunately, I know all too well that Slade is *not* the early Who, any more than the Raspberries are the early Beatles, and the element of self-consciousness necessarily implied adds a kind of unbelievability. Granted that they have all the tricks down—the production, in particular, is superlative; it's amazing how, despite the wonders of sixteen-track technology, they've managed to make it sound as if the album was recorded at a two-track demo studio in 1965—but one still is supremely aware that, in fact, they *are* tricks. Slade simply is *not* four pill-crazed mods lashing out at the world in storms of heavy-metal feedback that they have just delightedly discovered, but is instead a very clever 1973 rock-and-roll band which has long since absorbed these techniques and uses them to gas an audience not yet quite aware of what music sounded like before the onset of their secondary sex characteristics. Which leaves old codgers like me, who grew up to the strains of *My Generation*, with, like I said, some uncomfortable nagging sensations.

Ultimately, I'm afraid, we're back to the question of when the Seventies are really going to begin. I love "Slayed?"—self-consciousness or not, there's legitimate passion here—but if rock is going to start cannibalizing itself at this early stage in its history, then we may be in serious trouble. Where, I inquire, is a band that will produce a Seventies rock vital enough to be itself revived ten years from now? Not here, I'm afraid, despite Slade's undeniable excellence and the claims of some critics whose views I generally respect. But I hope I'm wrong. *Steve Simels*

SPARKS: *A Woofer in Tweeter's Clothing*. Sparks (vocals and instrumentals). *Girl from Germany*; *Here Comes Bob*; *Batteries Not Included*; *Angus Desire*; *Whippings and Apologies*; *Moon Over Kentucky*; and five others. BEARVILLE BR 2110 \$4.98, Ⓜ M 82110 \$6.98, Ⓞ M 52110 \$6.98.

Performance: **Devilishly good**
Recording: **Very good**



MARY TRAVERS

Professionalism that reassures but never grates

Strange! Except for the two small punctures on the victim's neck, there is no sign of a wound. . . . I remember going into an East Side bookstore which specialized in British volumes and finding a profusely illustrated tome called *'Orrible Tragedy*, a gay compilation of gruesome but small-time murders from the Victorian era as recorded in contemporary newspapers. This album is a little like that.

Although the band is billed as being from L.A., the vocalist sounds British and the writing, melodies, and arrangements have a kind of British craftsmanship and studied intent. *Here Comes Bob*, about a motorist who strikes up acquaintances with people by deliberately ramming their cars, has a real melody, is carefully arranged, and is sung with a precision I would ordinarily expect from Peter Sellers or the Monty Python group. The short but sweet *Batteries Not Included* also has a well-crafted arrangement, with a dramatic pause before the punch line. The rest of the material—such as *Whippings and Apologies*, *The Louvre* (written and sung mostly in French), and *Angus Desire*—is three-cornered: (1) the songs present a character in an unhealthy state of mind. (2) the songs express distaste and fascination with that state, and

(3) the songs offer no resolution—is this state of mind to be cured or left to fester?

An interesting group, this Sparks. They remind me of that magnificent but sadly unavailable 45-rpm single, produced by George Martin, which had Peter Sellers declaiming the lyrics of *A Hard Day's Night* in the style of Laurence Olivier's Hamlet (the flip side was *Help!* done as a Church of England service). I would like to hear more of Sparks, although I doubt they will ever resolve the contradictions of their material—this form of humor almost forbids it. In the meantime I'm going to buy my best girl a brand new rubber suit and buy myself a new paddle with silver studs. J.V.

STONE THE CROWS: *Continuous Performance*. Stone the Crows (vocals and instrumentals). *On the Highway*; *One More Chance*; *Penicillin Blues*; *King Tut*; *Good Time Girl*; *Niagra*; *Sunset Cowboy*. POLYDOR PD 5037 \$4.98.

Performance: **Spotty**
Recording: **Good**

I tire easily of female rock singers who try to out-butch (1) the boys and (2) the shade of Janis Joplin. Maggie Bell of Stone the Crows is usually gaily on both counts, but not always; occasionally she tempers herself. She turns in a fine performance on the one redeeming cut of this album, *Sunset Cowboy*, cowritten by and featuring the piano of the admirable Ronnie Leahy. The rest of the disc is standard screamer stuff. As Little Richard, who I believe is the style setter for everyone from the late and unhappy Ms. Joplin to David Bowie, might say: "Shuddup!" J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MARY TRAVERS: *All My Choices*. Mary Travers (vocals); orchestra. *Goodbye Again*; *The Half of It*; *Five Hundred Miles*; *Southbound Train*; and six others. WARNER BROS. BS 2677 \$5.98, Ⓜ M 82677 \$6.98, Ⓞ M 52677 \$6.98.

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

Mary Travers recently said that she would never again work with Peter and Paul. She described her days with them as like working for Mao (she's currently deep into Women's Lib). None of her discontent ever came through on recordings, however, and they are still around to be enjoyed. Also to be enjoyed, and welcomed, is a new solo album. Sorry, male chauvinist pigs, but it is now apparent that Mary Travers was the big talent in the group all along. This album proves it in several ways: the strong, true voice, the dramatic grasp of lyric, and the professionalism of the kind that reassures but never grates.

Her best song here is *The Half of It*, in which she establishes a one-to-one relationship with the listener equal to that of a Peggy Lee. There is a basic intelligence in everything she performs, and she has the vocal equipment to transmit on several levels. *Too Many Mondays* is the dreariest of songs in conception, but Ms. Travers' performance of it transcends its banality; she makes an emotional point by her sensitive reading of it, just as any good actor or actress could make anything—even the alphabet—palatable.

Milt Okun's production work here is abso-lutely suited to Travers, and he has admirably
(Continued on page 102)

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resisted the gloss that he can pour so easily over a recording. So, welcome, welcome, Mary Travers. You are very good and you are very talented. Whatever nostalgia I feel for your old work with Peter and Paul (and it really was a fine trio) is more than made up for by my pleasure in hearing you come into your own in such a stunning way. P.R.

MARTHA VELEZ: *Hypnotized*. Martha Velez (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Lay It on the Line; Boogie Kitchen; Magic in His Hands; Black Rose; Two Bridges; Hypnotized*; and three others. POLYDOR PD 5034 \$4.98.

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

When, oh, when will somebody in the music business learn that because a performer has been with one of the American companies of *Hair* he or she is not necessarily the hottest thing to come down the pike since last year's hottest thing? I could list—but will not—a string of players plucked from the Los Angeles and New York productions who have been signed to juicy recording contracts, presented with much hand-rubbing and finger-popping, and have then proceeded to prove for all time that they should have stayed in the chorus.

Martha Velez makes that list. Like her colleagues, she writes almost all her own material, which is mediocre, but she differs from the rest in that she has what appears to be a naturally pleasant voice, or a trained one.

Some of the arrangements are interesting, and the backup musicians play well enough, but Ms. Velez turns in a series of bloodless performances. It all brings to mind that superb Noel Coward song, *Mrs. Worthington*—"Please, Mrs. Worthington/On my knees, Mrs. Worthington/Don't put your daughter on the staaaaaaage!" Well, that's not entirely fair. I assume Ms. Velez does all right on stage. Off it, she doesn't connect. J.V.

ROBERT THOMAS VELLINE: *Nothin' Like a Sunny Day*. Robert Thomas Velline (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Hayes; My God and I; Home; Going Nowhere*; and six others. UNITED ARTISTS UAS 5656 \$5.98, Ⓟ U 8470 \$6.98.

Performance: **Fair**
Recording: **Good**

Regardless of its title, Velline's album might be more appropriate for a rainy day when you want to stay in and ruminate about God, Life, and other Deep Subjects—especially if you are about fourteen and just had a fight with your parents. So, stay in your room. Refuse to come down for dinner. And switch on Velline. Sometimes it just feels so good to feel bad, doesn't it? P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

VINEGAR JOE: *Rock 'n Roll Gypsies*. Elkie Brooks and Robert Palmer (vocals); Jim Mullen and Pete Gage (guitars); Steve York (bass, harmonica); Mike Deacon (keyboards); John Woods and Keef Hartley (drums, percussion). *So Long; Charlie's Horse; Rock 'n Roll Gypsies; Falling; It's Gettin' to the Point*; and five others. ATCO SD 7016 \$5.98, Ⓟ TP 7016 \$6.98, Ⓞ M 5102 \$6.98.

Performance: **Dandy**
Recording: **Very good**

I am near swooning with delight and relief. Here, at last, is a woman rock singer who sings like herself and not like Janis Joplin. And expressing my pleasure in hearing Elkie Brooks is only a prelude to telling you how beaty and charming this whole album is. All concerned deserve highest marks for returning rock to its original tempting, exciting, and commonsense origins. Robert Palmer and Peter Gage have contributed sparkling original material to the album, and the group's versions of other people's material are sturdy and true.

Vinegar Joe is a renewal of faith for your servant; every time I am absolutely sure that rock has gone to hell, a marvelous, unpretentious group like Vinegar Joe comes along and shows that it's still being done and still being done right. And that is good to know. Thanks, group. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE WACKERS: *Shredder*. The Wackers (vocals and instrumentals). *Day & Night*;



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Hey Lawdy Lawdy; I'll Believe in You; Put Myself to Sleep; Eventually. Even You and Me; and five others. ELEKTRA EKS 75046 \$5.98.

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

This is one of the most pleasant, most refreshing albums I have heard in years. The Wackers are definitely a rock-and-roll band; part of their sound is a satiric throwback to old rock or lovely jabs at current rock stars guilty of wretched excess (*Last Dance* is a wonderful trashing of Cat Stevens, who, I think, deserves it), but the Wackers are also a damned good band on their own.

Their writing is charming—anyone who begins a song by crooning, "My love is like a killer whale" wins my Attention-Getter Award for this year—and they have a rare ability, for a rock band, to explore rhythm instead of clinging to the old bang-boom beat. There have been other groups who had the same intentions as the Wackers—I think of the Flamin' Groovies, for one—but the Wackers combine a sense of humor with real ability to get in there and swing. They have a marvel-

ous sense of fun; they can suggest that they are deliberately sounding like other people while simultaneously letting you know they are sounding like themselves. There are half a dozen tunes on this album that are immensely enjoyable—a much higher rate than most groups can claim for one disc, and more than the public usually gets. So get this album. J.V.

EDGAR WINTER GROUP: *They Only Come Out at Night*. Edgar Winter Group (vocals and instrumentals). *Round & Round; Undercover Man; Hangin' Around; Alta Mira; We All Had a Real Good Time; When It Comes*; and four others. EPIC KE 31584 \$5.98, Ⓞ ER 31584 \$6.98, Ⓟ EA 31584 \$6.98, Ⓞ ET 31584 \$6.98.

Performance: **Yeah, so?**
Recording: **Okay**

I wouldn't bring it up, but E. Winter and his manager S. Paul made a point of it on the album cover: bare-chested Edgar made up (literally) to resemble David Bowie, who on one of his album covers struck a pose in imitation of a famous Garbo photo portrait. The title of the album has nothing to do with the musical content, so I can only assume it is a jolly jab by those yucksters Winter & Paul, Ltd. (and, oh, how Ltd. they are).

Maybe this is how they try to sell the album. Like his terribly overrated brother Johnny, Edgar is a fluent musician, but his music doesn't go anywhere. So many groups recording nowadays pretend to some artistic prestige, and Winter's group is one of them. But it's really nothing more than a good dance band, and there are thousands of good dance bands. Winter is like a fellow I met at a party. He was fluent in five languages (I admired his accomplishment in mastering them) but didn't have anything to say in any of them. He, too, only came out at night. J.V.

WISHBONE ASH: *Live from Memphis*. Wishbone Ash (vocals and instrumentals). *Jail Bait; The Pilgrim; Phoenix*. DECCA DL 7 1922 \$5.98.

Performance: **Competent**
Recording: **Very good**

Wishbone Ash is capable of doing good British-style folk-rock: I wish they would do more of that and less of their competent semi-hard rock. On this live album they attempt to mix the two, performing three selections of gruesome length (*Phoenix* runs seventeen minutes) before an audience that applauds politely but certainly isn't wildly enthusiastic.

Each selection contains, at some point or another, a guitar figure that is repeated endlessly, vocals with forgettable lyrics, and some Clapton-style guitar solos. These appear in different sequences on each "tune," but the monotony can't be disguised.

Live recordings are sometimes dangerous for a band, especially one that seems not to have made up its mind yet about what kind of music it's going to play. The thrill of playing for a live audience and the desire to knock 'em dead may lead to excess of zeal and emphasis on a band's worst features. A studio recording can impose its own kind of discipline. In the case of Wishbone Ash, I can't see their producer or their studio engineer putting with up with nearly four minutes of the same guitar figure. I can't see me putting up with it either. J.V.

(Continued on page 104)

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JAZZ



ROY AYERS UBIQUITY: *Red Black & Green*. Roy Ayers (piano, vibes, organ, vocals); Charles Tolliver (trumpet); Garnett Brown (trombone); Sonny Fortune (soprano saxophone); Harry Whitaker (piano, electric piano); Bob Fusco, Billy Nichols, David Barron (guitars); Emir Ksasan, Clint Houston (bass); Dennis Davis (drums, vocals); Billy King, Daniel Benzebulon (percussion); background strings and vocals. *Ain't No Sunshine*; *Day Dreaming*; *Cocoa Butter*; *Papa Was a Rolling Stone*; and three others. POLYDOR PD 5045 \$5.98.

Performance: **Less good than before**
Recording: **Unbalanced**

This is Roy Ayers' third album for Polydor. It is not as good as the previous two, which could not hold a candle to the Atlantic recordings produced by Ayers' former boss, Herbie Mann. Ayers is not in a league with Lionel Hampton, Milt Jackson, or, for that matter, the late Lem Winchester, but he does have something to say and he says it well—one only wishes he would choose a better setting and give up singing. His breathy, no-range vocals are simply awful. But then, there isn't much anyone could do with such uninspired studies in monotony as the songs *Henceforth*, *Red Black & Green*, and *Rhythms of Your Mind*.

Bill Withers' *Ain't No Sunshine*, Aretha Franklin's *Day Dreaming*, and Ayers' own *Cocoa Butter* show what he can do on the vibraphone, although better illustrations of that are to be found elsewhere. *Papa Was a Rolling Stone*, a hit in the able hands of the Temptations, is done without its interesting lyrics but is still this set's most pleasing track overall.

The remix tends to drown the vocals (perhaps wisely) and makes these add-a-track arrangements sound just that way. About all one can say for the album is that the beat is good for dancing, somewhat akin to recent releases by the Temptations or Eddie Kendricks, though not quite in their league as discotheque pleasers go. C.A.

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

EUBIE BLAKE: *Rags to Classics*. Eubie Blake (piano and vocals). *Charleston Rag*; *Capricious Harlem*; *Rustles of Spring*; *You're Lucky to Me*; *You Do Something to Me*; *Rain Drops*; *Pork and Beans*; *Valse Marion*; *Classical Rag*; *Scarf Dance*; *Butterfly*; *Junk Man Rag*. EUBIE BLAKE MUSIC EBM-2 \$5.95 (available by mail from Eubie Blake Music, 284-A Stuyvesant Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11221).

Performance: **Tireless**
Recording: **Good**

EUBIE BLAKE: *And His Friends*. Eubie Blake (piano and vocals); Edith Wilson and

Ivan Harold Browning (vocals). *He May Be Your Man*; *There'll Be Some Changes Made*; *Black and Blue*; *Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho*; *Go Down Moses*; *In the Great Gettin' Up Morning*; *Exhortation*; *Medley from "Shuffle Along"*; *Eubie Dubie*; *I Can't Get You Out of My Mind*; *Memphis Blues*; *Corner Chesnut and Low*; *When Day Is Done*. EUBIE BLAKE MUSIC EBM-3 \$5.95 (available by mail from Eubie Blake Music, 284-A Stuyvesant Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11221).

Performance: **Mostly remarkable**
Recording: **Satisfactory**

Eubie Blake's recent recordings make it very hard to realize that he reached his peak as a performer in 1921, just as the recording industry was discovering a market for black artists. Now ninety years old, the indefatigable Mr. Blake has his own record label on which he records himself and friends of another era. Historically, most of these performances are of incalculable value (some compositions have never before been recorded, others have not previously been recorded in their original form), but their purely musical value should not be overlooked either.

Over the past three decades Eubie Blake has largely been neglected by the record companies. Columbia did do a double album four years ago, but most of it was recorded under unforgivable time pressures, often not allowing for a second take. The dexterity with which Mr. Blake demonstrates his craft on these new recordings, made in the relaxed atmosphere of his New York home, shows, however, that he has not neglected the piano all these years, nor has he ever ceased composing. *Classical Rag*, for example, is a 1972 composition, and *Butterfly* and *Capricious Harlem*, two compositions in the classic vein, date from the Fifties.

"Rags to Classics" starts off with the interesting juxtaposition of 1921 and 1971 performances of Blake's 1899 composition *Charleston Rag*. Fifty years have, of course, robbed Mr. Blake of some technique, but his youthful spirit is intact. It is a spirit that characterizes all his work today and, I suppose, makes it possible for him to remain as active as he does.

Only in his vocals does Mr. Blake reveal his age. In this album he sings *You're Lucky to Me*, a tune he wrote in collaboration with lyricist Andy Razaf for Ethel Waters to sing in *Blackbirds of 1930*, but what he lacks in voice quality he makes up for with his charming delivery—this, one instinctively feels, is how the song should be sung.

"Eubie Blake and His Friends" opens with three songs by veteran musical comedy star Edith Wilson. Miss Wilson recorded as a blues singer for Columbia between 1921 and 1925, worked in Berlin with Sam Wooding's orchestra in 1928, was featured in various musical revues here and in Europe during the early Thirties, played the mother-in-law of Kingfish in the Amos 'n' Andy TV series, and toured the United States for eighteen years as Aunt Jemima for Quaker Oats.

At the end of Miss Wilson's third selection, Eubie Blake shouts "Great, Edith, just like years ago!" Well, not quite, but certainly worth recording. Miss Wilson's voice is well preserved, her style relaxed, her delivery unwavering, and there is more than a hint of what once was there. In short, what is made very clear here is that Edith Wilson did not make it on looks alone.

(Continued on page 106)

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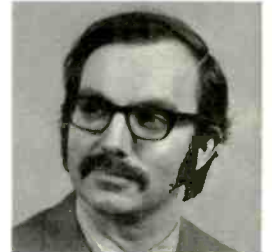
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The five remaining tracks on side one feature tenor Ivan Browning. A veteran of vaudeville and European supper clubs, he was eighty years old in 1971 when these recordings were made. Mr. Browning first met Eubie Blake in 1921 when his act, Four Harmony Kings, became a part of Sissle and Blake's successful *Shuffle Along*, but his strong voice has survived remarkably well. Stylistically a cross between Al Jolson and Harry Lauder, he is, however, a sad example of the acculturation so many black performers found necessary in order to make it commercially. Nevertheless, Browning's singing interestingly documents a style that went out with the Twenties, and his *Shuffle Along* medley, wherein he is joined in song and patter by Mr. Blake, is really enjoyable.

The final side features five selections by Eubie Blake, all of lasting interest.

Music lovers and jazz historians owe a debt to Carl Seltzer, the man responsible for recording, producing, and annotating Mr. Blake's albums. He has given us a permanent record of a vanished era, enabling us all to share the tremendous vitality of the extraordinary Mr. Eubie Blake. I hope Mr. Seltzer's tape recorders also are capturing Mr. Blake's fascinating, historically important, and extremely witty recollections of his childhood in Baltimore, and of the life of a black performer at the turn of the century. C.A.

DIZZIE GILLESPIE/CHARLIE PARKER: *The Greatest Jazz Concert Ever* (see Best of the Month, page 84)



THEATER • FILMS

BENNETT: *Music for the Film "Lady Caroline Lamb" (original soundtrack); Elegy for Caroline Lamb.* New Philharmonia Orchestra. Marcus Dods cond. ANGEL S 36946 \$5.98. ⑧ 8XS 36946 \$6.98, ④ 4XS 36946 \$6.98.

Performance: **Fine (but the music!)**
Recording: **Excellent**

The point of this release escapes me. I suppose it may have nostalgia for those who have seen and enjoyed Robert Bolt's star-studded film about the wife of the nineteenth-century British prime minister William Lamb and her affair with Byron. But for my part, the music may well keep me away from the film, for it is dreadfully overblown in a blowsy late-Romantic manner that has nothing beyond technical competence in common with Richard Rodney Bennett's more serious concert music.

Those familiar with the thirty-six-year-old English composer in other contexts should be warned: he succeeds far less well than some of his colleagues in preserving individuality in the necessarily ancillary framework of film music. And viewed simply as music, his work here just doesn't hold up. Side one consists of ten chunks of material, without beginnings or ends, based largely on a theme that combines the opening of the slow movement of Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for violin and viola with a phrase from the slow movement of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony. It becomes wearisome somewhat before the five-hundredth repetition. For side two, Angel's publicity writers tell us that Bennett "has reworked his themes into a substantive symphonic composition." I suppose they mean "substantial." But in any case, it's merely more of the same, and it doesn't work, even in Angel's sumptuous recording of Marcus Dods' sumptuous performance.

Bernard Jacobson

ELVIS PRESLEY: *Aloha from Hawaii via Satellite.* Elvis Presley (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. See *See Rider; Burning Love; Something; You Gave Me a Mountain; Steamroller Blues; My Way; Love Me; Johnny B. Goode; It's Over; Blue Suede Shoes;* and thirteen others. RCA □ VPSX 6089 (discrete) two discs \$7.98, ⑧ P8S 5144 \$9.95, ⑧ PQ8 2140/2141 two cartridges \$7.95 each, ④ PK 5144 \$9.95.

Performance: **Walk-through**
Recording: **Okay**

My guess is that in six months an album will be issued called "Buon Giorno from Elvis via a Tin Can with String." RCA seems to take—or make—any excuse to get another Presley set on the market. A global communications company helps send rockets into space and spew satellites into the astral murk, so the folks down at the record division may have thought that the late General Sarnoff—not to mention the late Nipper—would have ap-

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proved. But this entire effort is rather tacky.

To begin with, Presley's performance in Hawaii, broadcast by the Heavenly Bepier and recorded in quadrasonic sound, is his standard stage show—and boy, was he walking through this one; he sounds as if he can't wait to get the bloody thing finished. He sings *It's Over* as though he were reading a magazine at the same time, he seems not to know that James Taylor's *Steamroller Blues* is a satire, he fluffs part of the lyrics on *Johnny B. Goode*, and he hams it up on (twit) a medley of *Dixie*, *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, and *All My Trials*. Even considering that Elvis' standard stage show is a mixture of Las Vegas splash and Mississippi State Fair hokum, this is a poor performance, unworthy of him. He perks up only on his recent hits, *Burning Love* and *Suspicious Minds*.

As to the sonics: there are three overwhelming sounds here—Presley's voice, the lead guitar, and some rather thin-sounding drums. Background singers sound very much in the background. And there is a trombonist in the band who, so help me God, sounds like he is blowing Bronx cheers. When the full orchestra comes in, it sounds like a full orchestra, but not so as to make one cry "Swell!" for the fidelity. The stereo cassette, however, has an excellent, full-bodied, well-mixed sound. I'm told that the difference between the sound of the cassette and the disc probably arises from RCA's efforts to get the full playing time on the CD-4 record by putting in a 6- to 8-dB cutback of the groove-swinging bass frequencies. This would account for the thin, rather nasal quality heard on much of the disc. I haven't listened to the album on four channels, but I doubt things will be significantly improved by having low-fi coming at me from four directions.

The cover art on the album is depressingly schlocky, and the photograph of Elvis on stage is extremely uncomplimentary: he looks fat and he is not. The photo on the other side of the record sleeve has a superimposed Elvis grimacing into a mike, surrounded by Hawaiian ladies of disputable allure. The Honolulu Chamber of Commerce should sue. Come to that, we should *all* sue. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

KURT WEILL: *Berlin to Broadway*. Original-cast recording. Margery Cohen, Ken Kercheval, Judy Lander, Jerry Lanning, Hal Walters (vocals); orchestra, Newton Wayland cond. PARAMOUNT PAS 4000 two discs \$9.98.

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

Kurt Weill, of course, was the composer of *The Three Penny Opera*, an updating of the eighteenth-century *Beggars' Opera* through the literary genius of Bertolt Brecht. Weill was also the composer of *Mahagonny* (also with Brecht as collaborator), *Marie Galante* (with Jacques Deval), *Johnny Johnson* (with Paul Green), *Knickerbocker Holiday* (with Maxwell Anderson), *Lady in the Dark* (with Moss Hart and Ira Gershwin), *One Touch of Venus* (with Ogden Nash), *Love Life* (with Alan Jay Lerner), *Street Scene* (with Langston Hughes), and *Lost in the Stars* (again with Maxwell Anderson), to itemize only a part of his output.

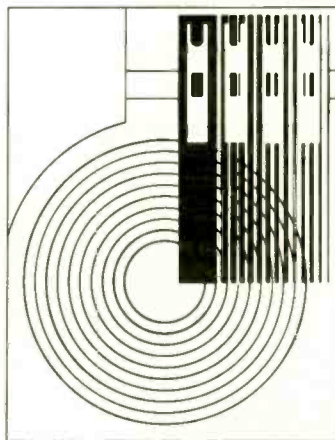
"Berlin to Broadway" is a fine introduction to the spectrum of Weill's work, and it includes selections from every one of the

shows listed above. Lotte Lenya (Weill's widow) has written a note for the album in which she expresses her delight at the youthfulness of the cast—she and Weill and Brecht were all about that same age back in the Berlin days. Certainly the performers here are enthusiastic, iconoclastic, and versatile, and they have captured the true spirit of Weill—a melancholy but hard-edged sweetness that pervades the incredible variety of his melodies.

The album contains a great deal of material that is difficult to find elsewhere—or is likely to be unavailable soon. Fortunately, the music is beautifully performed (although I admit that once having heard Lenya sing *Surabaya Johnny* or *Pirate Jenny* all other performances seem feeble), it has been produced in an excellent stereo atmosphere that

gives a true cabaret feel, and there is a small orchestra. The size of the orchestra is an important point: at its premiere, *Three Penny Opera* had an orchestra of only eight, and all of Weill's music benefits from the sparest of orchestrations.

The show itself is going on a national tour soon, and if it plays in your area I urge you to see it. Take the kids along: the show might come as the same sort of cultural shock to them as *Hair* did to some parents. For, from *Three Penny Opera* to *Lost in the Stars*, Weill proves that social protest can also be a controlled art form, and the art—if art it is—may survive when the social significance has long since faded. That is something that hasn't sunk in yet for some of our current counter-culture heroes and heroines. P.R.



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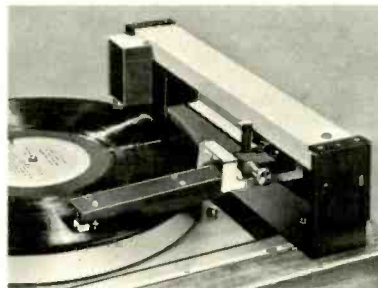
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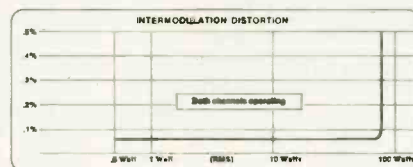
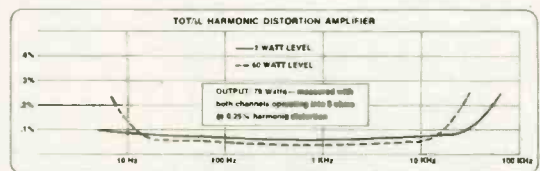
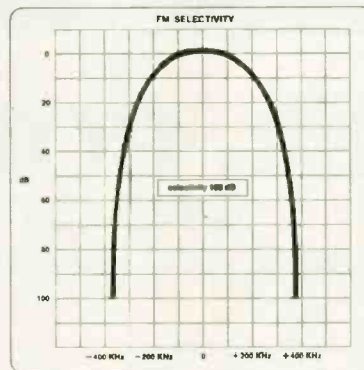
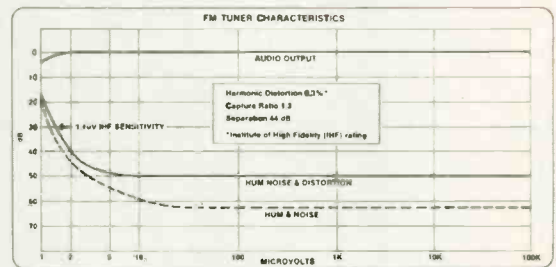
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NOËL COWARD

(1899-1973)

Two recorded salutes reviewed by Peter Reilly

THE impish, dancing flame that illuminated so much of twentieth-century theater, movies, and popular music has finally flickered out. Noël Coward is gone, but he has left behind him a legacy of pleasure that will endure as long as there is an English-speaking theater. Always indifferent to those long-faced critics who saw him only as a machine that persisted in grinding out campy trivia, he must nonetheless have smiled just a little to see so much of his work blossom again in an Indian summer of revivals on both sides of the Atlantic during the past few years.

He created, all by himself, a whole theatrical genre, and merely to say "Noël Coward" is enough to summon up that style and a complete set of images to go with it. Except when he dealt with members of the working class from which he sprang, his characters were always implausible as human beings, but their brittle, moonlit grace and their elegant, careless wit were imitated (usually badly) by a whole generation who found in them an enviable and congenial style—just as a much younger generation now finds itself imitating the Rolling Stones.

Coward created himself as much as he created his art. He did this deliberately and rather early, and, though he continued to add finishing touches all his life, long

practice in moving within the role of Noël Coward permitted him to do so with complete, "natural" ease. When he was belatedly knighted (belatedly, considering that he had years before written, directed, and starred in one of the greatest propaganda films of all time, *In Which We Serve*, and that his ardent patriotism approached the fanatic in such works as *Cavalcade* and *This Happy Breed*), it seemed almost an arbitrary anticlimax, ironic and paradoxical, for someone who was already a legend. The same might be said for any kind of eulogy at this time, for Coward was always intent on living, on "grabbing every moment while you can," and it is that vital intensity we remember, even in the face of death.

Coward's last years were spent mostly in retirement—which he regularly broke to attend performances of revivals of his work. He enjoyed them all enormously, and, though stooped and frail (he described himself as looking like "a heavily doped Chinese illusionist"), he never lost his innocent enthusiasm. Tammy Grimes, waiting in her dressing room for Coward to come backstage after seeing her as Amanda in the recent Broadway revival of *Private Lives*—a tour-de-force part for any actress, of course—remembers him entering, taking her into his embrace, and

exclaiming, "Darling, isn't it a perfectly marvelous play!"

Coward's last public appearance took place earlier this year when he came to New York to attend a performance of *Oh, Coward!* given specially in his honor. I did not see the show that or any other night, but the Bell recording of the revue, which featured a collection of his songs and dramatic vignettes, was a disappointment to me. The show originated in Canada in 1971 as *A Noël Coward Revue*, and the uncomfortable sense of strain about the whole thing is pretty well summed up for me by the clumsy title change. The three performers miss not only the quintessentially English bite but the equally typical sentimentality of Coward's songs. Just as only the French can do Racine, only someone with extensive training in the British theater can do justice to Coward. He follows in the legitimate line—Sheridan and Wilde—of great writers of English artificial comedy, and there is also a legitimate line, a tradition, in the manner of performing them. It is just this traditional, sure-footed authenticity that I find lacking in *Oh, Coward!*

AND that is why RCA's new release of *Cowardly Custard*, an original-cast recording of a similar tribute to the Mandarin of Mayfair and his music, currently running in London, is the best possible modern introduction for the listener new to his work. For not only does the cast perform the songs and monologues with the innate, familiar ease of an Ella Fitzgerald singing Duke Ellington, it also captures perfectly the tough *chic* of the 1930's, the period in which Coward dominated both London's West End and New York's Broadway with a string of sparkling comedies, revues, and operettas. Finally, *Cowardly Custard* has no truck with "nostalgia"; it simply honors "The Master," as he is known throughout the English theater, with performances that are scrupulously faithful to his inimitable style. It is, in short, the crisp, get-on-with-it kind of production he approved of, and it clearly differentiates the three sensibilities that alternate throughout Coward's work.

There are the great, arching love songs: *Someday I'll Find You*, *You Were There*, and *I'll Follow My Secret Heart*. They are full of sentimentality, but just as full of high romanticism. Operettas were at their fashionable peak in England during Coward's adolescence, and he later confessed to having seen—and loved—every one of them. These songs are proof of that affection, souvenirs of his Edwardian childhood, and grateful tributes to his predecessors.

Then there are the Super Camp ditties: *Nina*, *Don't Put Your Daughter on the Stage*, *Mrs. Worthington* (which also has its serious side), and *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*. Their point of view is usually arch, and their leering impertinence is occasionally a bit forced, yet they still hold up today, kept alive by Coward's brilliant rhymes, which were no less accomplished than Gilbert's. In this sort of

material he displays the total command of technical skills that perhaps alienated so many critics... "decidedly ungentlemanly to be able to do things so easily and effortlessly!" Doubtless can check his additional lyrics for Cole Porter's justly famed *Let's Do It* in this album; their cleverness often exceeds that of the original.

And, finally, there are the songs that somehow seem closest to Coward the man: *If Love Were All*, *Mad About the Boy*, and *Nothing Can Last Forever*. They are all ironic, detached, and more than a little disenchanted. They recognize passion's power, but they know it to be transitory as well, so they endorse instead a wry sort of independence. Comedienne Hermione Gingold recently described Coward, whom she had known since childhood, as "a very lonely man," and these songs seem to prove her point.

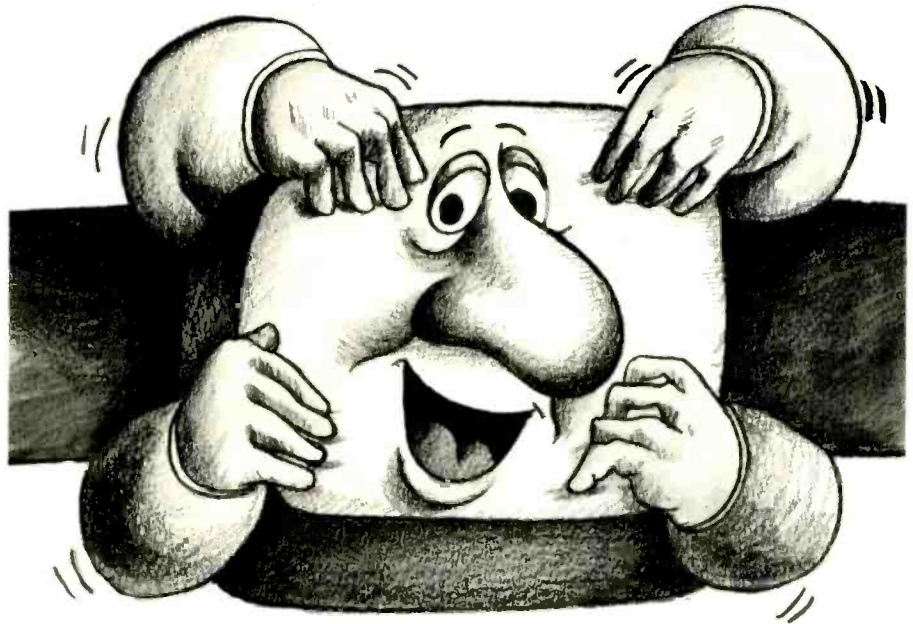
The performers in *Cowardly Custard* are all expert, in particular Patricia Routledge in her hilarious delivery of *I Went to a Marvelous Party*. Between gales of increasingly liquorous laughter she tells a wicked tale of the sort of grisly parties the international "society" riff-raff of the Thirties used to toss. And there is also a highly dramatic and at times touchingly effective performance of *Mad About the Boy*, sung in turn by a society woman, a schoolgirl, a cockney miss, and a tart. Best of all, to my mind, *Cowardly Custard* provides an almost complete survey of Coward's work from 1917 through the late 1960's. John Moffat, who sounds enough like Coward to be him, handles his job of stringing the whole evening together with excerpts from various autobiographical writings with panache, echoing perfectly that uniquely invented voice and diction. The album has further been very well recorded, evoking very nicely the feeling of direct audience contact (why does that feeling always seem stronger in London than on the New York stage?).

Noël Coward saw his career's wheel turn full circle, from extravagant praise and success, through airy dismissal as a trivial relic of a best-forgotten past, and back again to an appreciation of his unique comedic gifts. But, as this album shows, he remained, in or out of fashion, consistently true to his own distinctive talents, his own theatrical instincts. The courage to do this has assured his work, as it has that of all great artists, a permanent place in our cultural history.

OH, COWARD! (Noël Coward). Original-cast recording. Barbara Cason, Roderick Cook, and Jamie Ross (performers); orchestra, Rene Wiegart arr. and dir. BELL 9001 two discs \$7.98, © J89001 \$9.95, © J59001 \$9.95.

COWARDY CUSTARD (Noël Coward). Original-cast recording. John Moffat, Patricia Routledge, Tudor Davies, Peter Gale, Laurel Ford, Una Stubbs, Jonathan Cecil, Derek Waring, others (performers); orchestra, John Burrows cond. RCA LSO 6010 two discs \$11.98.

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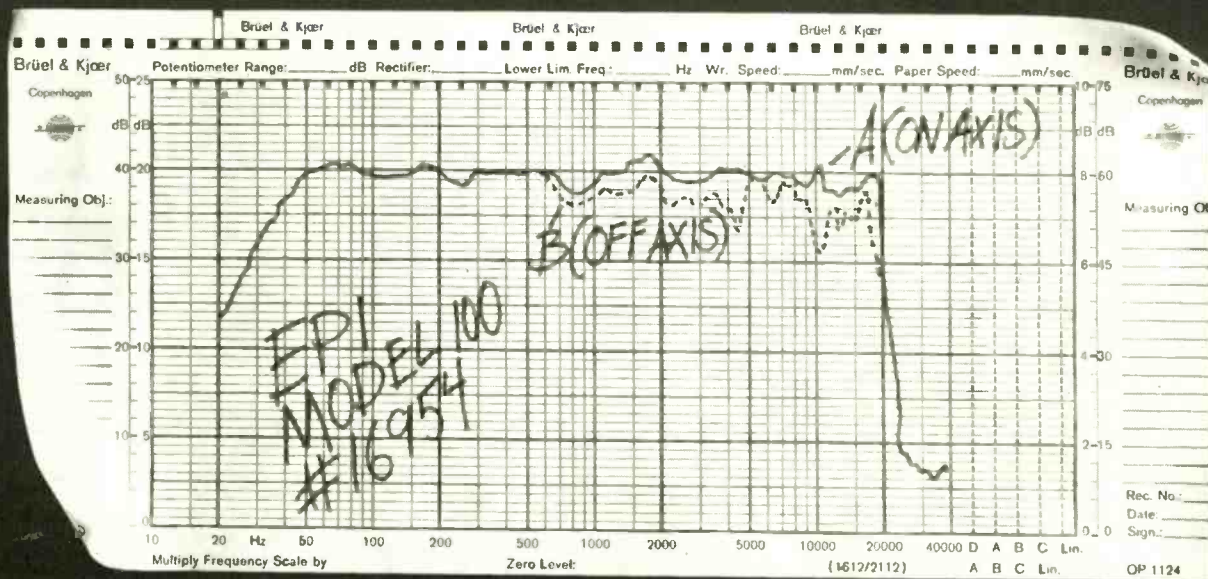


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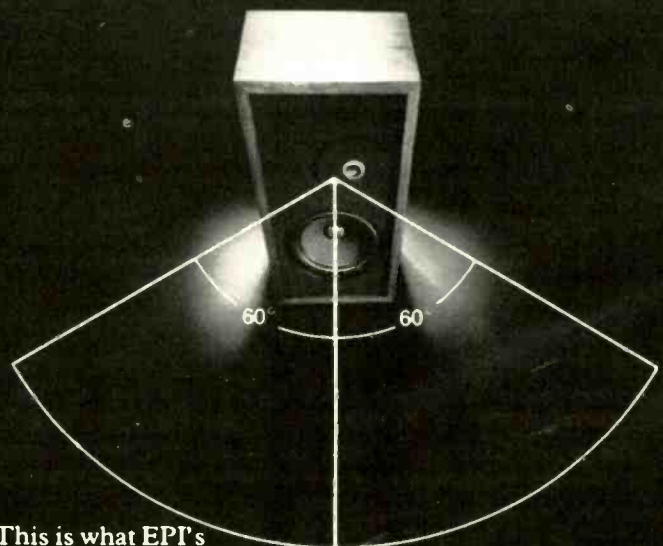
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CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

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BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 9, in D Minor, Op. 125 ("Choral")*. Pilar Lorengar (soprano); Yvonne Minton (mezzo-soprano); Stuart Burrows (tenor); Martti Talvela (bass); Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Georg Solti cond. LONDON CSP 8 two discs \$11.96.

Performance: **Highly polished**
Recording: **Very good**

One can no more speak of a definitive performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony than one can speak of a definitive photograph of Mount Everest. One *can* speak of great performances of the Ninth, however, performances that have revealed from their conductors' respective viewpoints the essentials of Beethoven's musical thought. Weingartner. Furtwängler. Toscanini. Klemperer. Szell. Karajan, Stokowski—all have achieved such performances, and so too has Georg Solti in this new London set.

Solti's reading of the Ninth is far from what one would expect after having heard his magnificently high-strung and virtuosic Mahler performances. Here he chooses the path of Classic measure and proportion. The result is somewhat akin to the broadly expansive Klemperer reading still available on the Angel label, but the London set has infinitely finer sonics. Solti also takes all the repeats in the scherzo, thus stretching its playing time to nearly fourteen minutes.

To me Solti's reading seems distinctly finale-oriented: he holds back his thunder in the

turbulent opening movement, adopts a moderate pace (compared to Karajan's, for instance) in the scherzo, begins to warm up the proceedings in the course of a very solemn slow movement, then really lets go in the great cho-

When I compared this recording of the Beethoven Ninth with recent ones by Karajan, Szell, and Stokowski, I found that all of them are blessed with first-rate sonics and each in its separate way represents an outstanding conception of the music. Frankly, I find the Szell performance most to my personal liking (I also prefer the perspective of the chorus relative to the orchestra), with the brilliantly urgent Karajan as a close runner-up. But those listeners whose tastes lean in the direction of a Beethoven Ninth worked out along the broad lines of Furtwängler or Klemperer will find this new Solti performance ideal.

D.H.

BEETHOVEN: *Missa Solemnis, Op. 123*. Agnes Giebel (soprano); Marga Höffgen (mezzo-soprano); Ernst Haefliger (tenor); Karl Ridderbusch (bass); Netherlands Radio Chorus. Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam. Eugen Jochum cond. PHILIPS 6799 001 two discs \$13.96.

Performance: **Somewhat understated**
Recording: **Good**

The complexity of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, with its rugged polyphony, dense orchestral textures, intricate chorus-solo balances, and great dynamic contrasts, poses interpretive and technical challenges that have seldom been conquered on records. Otto Klemperer achieved such a near-miracle on Angel SB 3679 a few years ago, and his recording has been the standard for me ever since.

The new Philips set falls short of that standard. Eugen Jochum has good soloists and a marvelous orchestra at his command, and he secures from them an eloquent and devotional performance. The incisiveness and rhythmic momentum of Klemperer's reading, however, is not matched here. The *Sanctus*, in particular, lacks a sense of forward motion and drama—an impression not fully justified by slow pacing alone. In point of clear articulation and clarification of orchestral details, too, the Angel set clearly surpasses the current effort.

All four soloists are good. They perform with self-effacing artistry and offer an effective blend. The *tesitura* of the bass solo in the *Agnus Dei* is a bit uncomfortably low for Ridderbusch, however. The chorus is more



STUART BURROWS
A splendidly fresh tenor episode

ral finale. The ensemble work of the superbly matched soloists and the magnificent playing of the Chicago Symphony in the double-bass recitative and the *fugato* interlude can only be described as thrilling. I still find Richard Mayr in the ancient Weingartner recording and Hans Hotter in the Klemperer one more authoritative in the bass solo, but Martti Talvela is no slouch—even if he is a bit light-voiced. Stuart Burrows sounds splendidly fresh in his *alla marcia* tenor episode.

The sonic balances are excellent throughout, and the overall texture is rich in detail and wonderfully ample in body. The recording was made in the Krannert Music Center at the University of Illinois, however, and I do miss in the acoustic the slight aura of reverberation that gave to Solti's Mahler recordings (made in Chicago's Medinah Temple) a special liveness of sound.

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓒ = stereo cassette
- Ⓛ = quadrasonic disc
- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel quadrasonic tape
- ⓑ = eight-track quadrasonic tape
- Ⓒ = quadrasonic cassette

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

than acceptable, though the sopranos do not really triumph over their cruelly high *tessitura*.
G.J.

BERG: *Piano Sonata, Op. 1* (see CASADESUS)

BERNSTEIN: *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*. **RUSSO:** *Three Pieces for Blues Band and Symphony Orchestra, Op. 50*. Siegel-Schwall Band: San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 309 \$6.98.

Performance: **Boldly energetic**
Recording: **Excellent**

William Russo got his commission to write his *Three Pieces for Blues Band and Symphony Orchestra* in a curious way. It seems Seiji Ozawa was sitting in Big John's bar in Chicago one night in 1966, listening to the Siegel-Schwall Band play jazz, when he decided that he'd like to bring the band together with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, where he was music director at the time, for a summer concert. A year later, Big John's was closed by the police, but meanwhile Ozawa had heard Russo's Symphony No. 2 (subtitled *Titans*, and I can't seem to find anybody else who ever heard it), and pretty soon Russo (at the age of forty) was busy writing a "blues concerto" for the Siegel-Schwall Band and Mr. Ozawa's orchestra. The work was completed in 1968 and played outdoors on a summer afternoon during one of the Chicago Symphony's concerts in Ravinia Park. Since then, it's been played by the New York Philharmonic and Siegel's Happy Year Band. Now Mr. Ozawa has recorded it with the San Francisco Symphony and the Siegel-Schwall Band, who had already *disbanded* but apparently were persuaded to reunite for recording sessions.

So after all that history, what kind of a work is it? It's a brash, fresh job, with the blues soloists improvising away while the symphony orchestra plays mostly notes written down for it. It starts with a "blues harp" sounding over low strings, followed by an abstract riff and a sort of montage where the band plays a concertino and the orchestra, according to David Noble's notes, "develops or frames it with long dissonant lines." A slow blues comes after that, rocking gently, almost coming to a halt at times. Then there's a big finale, putting both the band and the orchestra through their paces and winding up in a wild, wailing coda. The piece is an ingenious one and played with the bold energy its composer must have had in mind. Certainly it's not the cocktail music one might have feared from its title. Jazz *should* be improvised—that's what it's all about, after all, and its idiom is certainly no stranger to "serious" music by this time. If *Three Pieces* lacks anything, it's the melodic invention to justify all that rhythmic ingenuity. Mr. Russo may be living in understandable fear of being mistaken for a latter-day Ferde Grofé, but an occasional tune might have given his ambitious work a bit of memorable content to balance its complicated form.

On side two of this disc, Mr. Ozawa again puts the orchestra through its paces in a carefully recorded version of the dance music from *West Side Story* that sizzles almost as much as it does under Bernstein's own baton for Columbia. It is good to see this suite, which reflects all the brashness, originality, and toughness of the musical's score while minimizing its melodic banalities (some of us always have found *I Feel Pretty* and the



SEIJI OZAWA: Bringing a blues band and a symphony orchestra together

sticky *There's a Place for Us* a bit hard to take, finding its way into the repertoires of so many orchestras.
P.K.

BERRY: *String Quartet No. 2*. Composers String Quartet. *Canto Lirico for Viola and Piano*. Bernard Zaslav (viola); Naomi Zaslav (piano). *Duo for Flute and Piano*. Bryan and Keys Duo. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC. CRI SD 282 \$5.95.

Performances: **Excellent**
Recording: **Excellent**

The composer Wallace Berry, born in LaCrosse, Wisconsin in 1928, is represented here by some exceedingly impressive music. His String Quartet No. 2, played by the Composers String Quartet, is a one-movement work with a broad range of moods and ideas that add up to an intensely convincing and even noble utterance. In the liner notes the composer refers to his inclination toward "traditional procedures of thematic statement, variation and development within a tonal order." These procedures can be heard in the music, but since the composer uses his techniques with such grace and sure-handedness, and since his "traditional" procedures are so fresh in effect and based almost entirely on twentieth-century concepts, this is anything but an "old-fashioned" or dogmatic quartet. The Composers Quartet plays it with great adroitness and elegance. Even the fastest, most difficult passages give them no pause. One could wish for a trifle more "affect" sometimes, and expressivity in phrasing. But the performers get very close to the core of the piece, and relaxation and reflectiveness are qualities seldom found in any first recording of a new composition.

The *Canto Lirico* for Viola and Piano is a highly canonic piece, chromatic and melodious, a bit stiffer than the quartet but finely made nonetheless. The Duo for Flute and Piano is similar in style, though more elegiac for much of its length. Both works are very well played.
L.T.

BIZET: *Carmen, Highlights* (see VERDI)

BRAHMS: *Piano Sonata No. 3, in F Minor, Op. 5; Scherzo in E-flat Minor, Op. 4*. Claudio Arrau (piano). PHILIPS 6500 377 \$6.98.

Performance: **Characteristic Arrau**
Recording: **Heavy on the left hand**

I did not have on hand for comparison with Arrau's readings of these works the currently

available versions by Rubinstein and the late Julius Katchen, but I found that the out-of-print discs I did have were more than adequate yardsticks: Clifford Curzon's marvelously vital and free-wheeling interpretation of the piano sonata, issued by London in 1963, and a remarkable scherzo played by Clara Schumann's pupil Carl Friedberg in 1953 at the age of eighty-two.

Heard next to Curzon, Arrau's view of the sonata seems oddly inhibited except in the two slow movements. It is as though he were trying to bring some measure of rational discipline to the devil-may-care Romanticism of the young Brahms instead of letting the phrases and rhythmic patterns breathe naturally, as Curzon does. The scherzo, always one of my favorite bits of early Brahms, fares much better—Arrau's is a fine interpretation, beautifully played.

I'm a bit perplexed by the Philips piano sound here: the low end of the piano seems to have decidedly more presence than the register from middle-C upwards. Was this a function of the actual room acoustic, or voicing of the instrument, or a miscalculation in stereo mixing? If your playback equipment has suitably refined bass compensation controls, you may find them handy in dealing with this disc.
D.H.

BRAHMS: *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel* (see RAVEL)

CANTELOUBE (arr.): *Songs of the Auvergne* (see Best of the Month, page 83)

CASADESUS: *Piano Sonata No. 2*. **BERG:** *Piano Sonata, Op. 1*. **EISLER:** *Vier Klavierstücke*. Carol Colburn (piano). ORION ORS 7298 \$5.98.

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

Carol Colburn is a young pianist who has been fortunate enough to study with a galaxy of fine, prestigious teachers, including Irwin Freundlich, Grant Johannesen, and Artur Balsam. She is a really splendid young artist, and her performances of the three difficult works on this disc are so technically fine and musically mature that one would take her for an artist twice her age.

Robert Casadesus the composer has never been regarded as highly as Robert Casadesus the pianist. But hearing his Sonata No. 2 again after many years, I am more impressed than I once was. Casadesus did not do for the piano

what Liszt or Chopin or even Rachmaninoff did—he did not create a style and technology different from all that had gone before. His sonata is a very polite, very French, very “pianistic” work, which deals intelligently with civilized musical ideas and problems posed by himself. It sounds very good (especially when played as well as Miss Colburn plays it), and if you don’t listen for greatness but, rather, read between the lines for signs of culture and personal refinement, you will find it more satisfying than you might expect.

Alban Berg’s one-movement Piano Sonata, Op. 1, is another proposition entirely. In this work one hears a master composer in his youthful almost-maturity, wrestling new things out of old materials. This is neither a “major” piece nor a “minor” one; it is somewhere in between. Only in light of Berg’s subsequent achievements does it fall into perspective as the first glimmering of a new kind of light.

Hanns Eisler, like Berg a student of Arnold Schoenberg, was terribly fascinating to people of his generation because of the political vicissitudes of his life. This is the first of his works I’ve heard, and I’m disappointed. It is a dry, stiff, studentish exercise in Schoenbergianism. But Miss Colburn plays even this piece with elegance and sympathy. *L.T.*

CHAUSSON: *Poem of Love and the Sea* (see Best of the Month, page 83)

CHOPIN: *Cello Sonata in G Minor, Op. 65.*
FRANCK: *Violin Sonata in A Major (arr. for*

cello). Jacqueline Du Pré (cello); Daniel Barenboim (piano). ANGEL S 36937 \$5.98.

Performance: **Impassioned**
Recording: **Good**

The Du Pré-Barenboim husband-and-wife team is in fine form here. Their music making is vital and communicative. In the Franck sonata, Miss Du Pré occasionally shows signs of strain in dealing with the high register toward the end of the recitative-fantasia, but this is a minor flaw in what I found, on repeated playing, to be a very interesting disc.

It is the Chopin sonata that I find particularly interesting, for I am among those who contend that this work, the last to be published during the Polish master’s lifetime, was no “sport”; instead, like the *Polonaise-Fantasia*, it indicates a new creative approach that might have reached full realization had Chopin’s health held out for another half-dozen years. The first movement seems a bit labored to me (Chopin omitted it in the two or three performances in which he participated), but the mazurka-like scherzo, with its richly lyrical trio, and the fine slow movement, which harks back faintly to the middle section of the B-flat Minor Sonata *marcia funebre*, strike me as prime Chopin; and the finale, with its restlessly chromatic textures, does indeed point toward newer paths.

When I compared the Du Pré-Barenboim cello version of the Franck sonata with the Oistrakh-Richter 1968 public performance of the original violin version, also issued by Angel, I found that I prefer the violin—I find the music easier to take in the more transpar-

ent texture. But listeners who like their Franck in a rich plum-pudding consistency will prefer the cello. (The cello arrangement was not the work of Franck himself, by the way. Several performances of it have been recorded, though, and one by Fournier has just been released by DGG in Europe.)

The recorded sound has ample presence and satisfactory resonance and localization. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

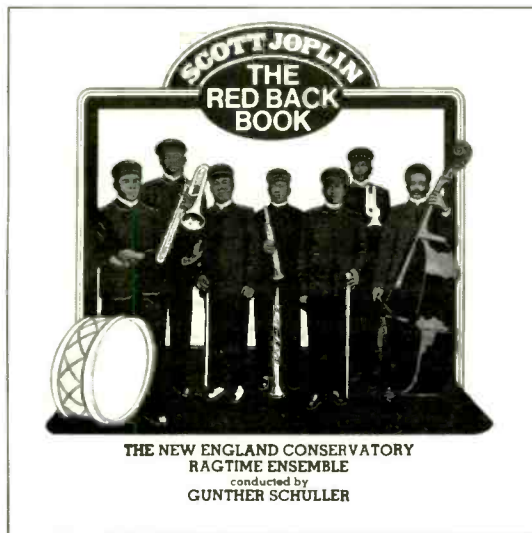
CHOPIN: *Polonaise in A-flat Major, Op. 53.* Witold Malcuzyński (piano). *Nocturne No. 2, in E-flat Major, Op. 9, No. 2; Nocturne No. 5, in F-sharp Major, Op. 15, No. 2.* Artur Schnabel (piano). *Etude in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 12 (“Revolutionary”); Fantaisie-Improvisation in C-sharp Minor, Op. 66 (Posth.).* Shura Cherkassky (piano). *Etude in E Major, Op. 10, No. 3.* Claudio Arrau (piano). *Mazurka No. 32, in C-sharp Minor, Op. 50, No. 3.* Vladimir Horowitz (piano). *Etude in F Minor, Op. 25, No. 2; Etude in D-flat Major, Op. 25, No. 8.* Geza Anda (piano). *Sonata No. 2, in B-flat Minor, Op. 35; Funeral March; Prelude No. 15, in D-flat Major, Op. 28, No. 15 (“Raindrop”).* Alfred Cortot (piano). *Waltz No. 1, in E-flat Major, Op. 18; Waltz No. 6, in D-flat Major, Op. 64, No. 1 (“Minute”).* Dinu Lipatti (piano). *Berceuse in D-flat Major, Op. 57.* Walter Gieseking (piano). SERAPHIM 90 60207 \$2.98.

Performance: **Generally superb**
Recording: **Variable**

(Continued on page 118)

First Time On Record

**Authentic Original Orchestrations
of
SCOTT JOPLIN’S
GREAT RAGTIME CLASSICS**



- The Cascades
- Sun Flower Slow Drag
- The Chrysanthemum
- The Entertainer
(solo piano version)
- The Ragtime Dance
- Sugar Cane
- The Easy Winners
- The Entertainer
- Sun Flower Slow Drag
(solo piano version)
- Maple Leaf Rag



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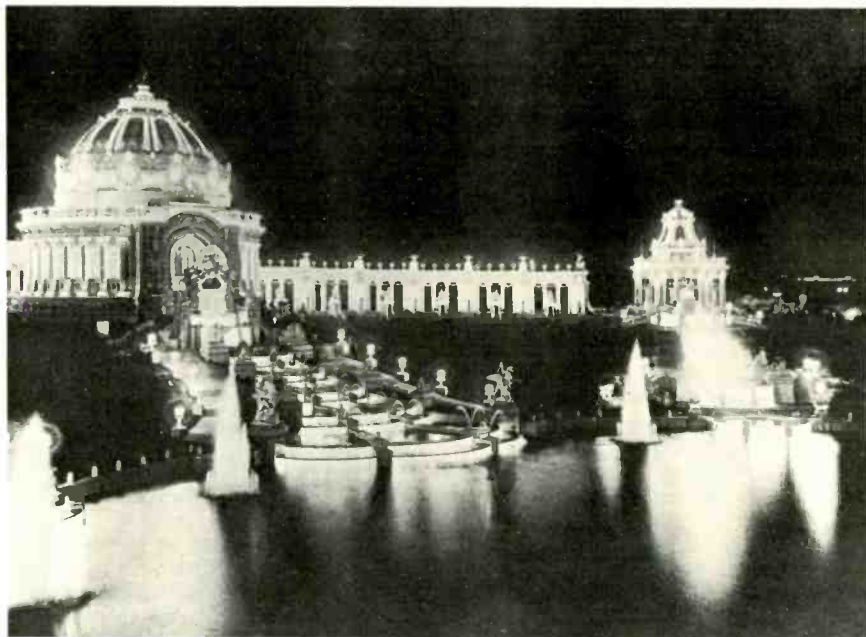
“They are small,
but they are jewels”

SCOTT JOPLIN'S ORCHESTRATED RAGTIME

A dazzling new Angel
release pungently evokes
an American Centennial Summer

Reviewed by
ROBERT OFFERGELD

*The St. Louis Fair of 1904: a night
view of the Festival Hall and the
Cascade Gardens for which Joplin
wrote a musical background.*



Wide World Photos

I'VE BEEN listening to what are probably the most contagious pieces of music in existence. Even if I ever get them out of my head (which seems doubtful), I'm sure as hell ruined for my life work on the isorhythmic motet.

The pieces that have undone me are all Scott Joplin classics from ragtime's golden age, more particularly *The Entertainer*, *Sun Flower Slow Drag*, and *The Rag Time Dance*. They appear with five other demoralizers in a new Angel release called "The Red Back Book," an anthology of vintage Joplin, mostly in orchestral arrangement, that is delivered with a dazzling blend of softshoe grace and Stravinskian precision by Gunther Schuller and the New England Ragtime Ensemble.

The "Red Back" title in question is simply the name conferred in New Orleans by old ragtime hands on a legendary collection of orchestral arrangements issued in St. Louis around 1905 by the music publisher John Stark, Joplin's oddball admirer and energetic champion. Two of the pieces on Angel's release are doubled in Joplin's original version for solo piano—a didactic maneuver that could not be more instructive. The comparison of the originals and the arrangements, by making explicit the arranger's contemporary sense of Joplin's music, gives us the liveliest kind of feeling of "you are there."

On another level, the device also sketches ragtime's fantastic social range. In its heyday it was demanded with equal public appetite from the obsequious house orchestra behind the potted palms at Delmonico's and from the U.S. Marine Corps Band; from the white folks' star pianist Ben Harney at Tony Pastor's (he ragged everything from *Old Hundred* to Mendelssohn's *Spring Song*) and from the overworked resident ivory-tickler at every bordello in the country.

The fascinating stylistic subspecies, not to mention the aggregate *joie de vivre*, may be imagined. Down in New Orleans' Storyville where it all began, for example, Miss Josie Arlington's palatial establishment boasted three pianos, one each in the Vienna Parlor,

the American Parlor, and the Music Hall (you knew when you were in the American Parlor because the piano there supported an imitation marble bust of George Washington). Up the river at Babe Connors' rather less stately emporium in St. Louis, Mama Lou and her gifted staff not only sang their own unprintable ragtime lyrics but certifiably composed the music for them—of which more in a moment, for their most celebrated production, following its outright theft by one of the house's clients, raucously entered the White House and its history at a time when Joplin himself couldn't have gotten in with a singing telegram.

If there were any justice in such matters, Angel's new release would be placed in our next and possibly final time capsule. Simply as *sound* it would tell whoever would one day want to know that American musicological initiative could produce delectable fruit and that American recording technology could present it immaculately. Yet the main message delivered here by Mr. Schuller and his forces concerns Joplin himself—his marvelous gaiety and stylishness, his endlessly refreshing human sweetness. I'd be astonished to learn that the man had an ounce of meanness in him. But he hadn't an ounce of inanity in him, either, and since he wrote his pieces for popular consumption at a rather special moment in American history, we can offer this collection to posterity as clogging an era when ordinary Americans were not only remarkably civilized but a barrel of fun to be with, too.

The time was 1904, and if you didn't happen to be red, black, or poor, the year was an absolute lulu. The assassination of President McKinley and the Spanish-American War were forgotten as the country expanded euphorically on an apparently boundless plateau of prosperity. It was rather like a marvelous garden party, and this particular affair was the next thing to universal. In England it was called the Edwardian Era, with music by Sir Edward Elgar (he became Sir Edward in 1904 with *Pomp and Circumstance*). In France it was called *La Belle Époque*, and the music was mainly by

Massenet. But nowhere else did the period's dreamlike sense of luxury (luxury of time, space, well-being) affect so many so deeply as in the U.S.A. In the recollection of those who knew it, the dream was to be unbearably poignant, for it lasted just ten years, it in some strange and fatal way defrauded the American future, and it vanished forever with World War I. And it was Joplin who, against all probability, wrote for the entertainment of the dreamers a music at once humorous, earthy, and utterly elegant.

It was all incredibly pretty to see. Fashionable women nowhere else—not the Proustian ladies at Longchamp, not the Galsworthian ladies at Ascot—were as dressy that year as America's matrons. They were the dressiest because, to begin with, they were the richest. Most of the great American fortunes were by then well on their way to third-generation respectability, and dozens more were in the making. High fashion had become a caste imperative, and in their combination of ostentation and moral rectitude the Fifth Avenue contemporaries of Lillian Russell wound up richly upholstered rather than gowned. In Percy Byron's 1904 documentary photograph of a grand ladies' luncheon at Delmonico's, you literally can't see the tables for the enormous floral and aviary explosions of the sumptuous hats. And these were the steel-stayed ladies who, if they could not help hearing ragtime, could very well help keep anyone else from enjoying it, for they were the principal source of the outraged weekly denunciations of it in pulpit and press. Music, as it happened—*cultured* music, that is—was much on their minds. They needed respectable orchestras, pianists, violinists, and singers for their pet charities, and most of them had been to the Met the preceding winter to look over the new tenor Enrico Caruso.

Younger women meanwhile dressed rather more simply, particularly as they headed for the nation's croquet lawns (where they were affectionately noted by young James Montgomery Flagg, just as their mothers had been by young Winslow Homer). They too were wasp-waisted, but they were also

adorably shirt-waisted, and they wore airy straw hats called boaters. Their beaus wore celluloid collars and peg trousers and smoked nickel cigars, and for the first time since the Monroe era American males appeared in public dressed in something besides black.

Fast women wore rouge ("Does she *paint?*") the young blades wanted breathlessly to know) and smoked Sweet Caporal cigarettes. Turkish baths in big cities had Ladies' Reposing Rooms. Although the first movie with a plot, *The Great Train Robbery*, was already a year old, the country had yet to explore its first nickelodeon. At Kitty Hawk those crazy Wright brothers had at last gotten off the ground, and Tin Pan Alley fired right back with *Come, Take a Trip in My Air-Ship*. In New York the first automobilist was arrested for speeding (eighteen miles an hour), and the city with great fanfare opened its first subway on Lexington Avenue. In Keith-Albee vaudeville, barber-shop quartets from coast to coast were singing a 1903 hit called *Sweet Adeline*. Young performers like Blossom Seeley and Sophie Tucker did blackface comedy routines and ragtime novelty dances, and everybody's favorite encore was still an irresistible 1902 ragtime smash called *Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home?*

Really, now, could you ask for anything more? Teddy Roosevelt was in the White House, Dink Stover was at Yale, and God was almost as demonstrably in His heaven, which was a sort of Wasp retirement complex in the sky not far above Middle America. As the greenish-yellow gas lamps came up in the beer gardens and the bands played, the country sighed with the sheer *niceness* of it all and sang "Meet me in Saint Louis, Louis, meet me at the Fair."

On the horizon there were, nevertheless, one or two tiny clouds—so tiny that unless you were looking for them you'd never know they were there. A few people—over-emotional women, mostly, like Ida M. Tarbell—were saying that the Standard Oil Company wasn't a very humane institution. Others doubted that the U.S. was annexing all the best Pacific island real estate for the good of the shiftless natives. But it was absurd to say that America, which everybody *knew* was the biggest-hearted nation in history, was really out to beat the English, the French, and the Germans at empire grabbing. There are always inconsiderate people around who just *have* to spoil a party.

THE special national celebration that nobody wanted to see spoiled had a name and an address. Though it was really the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, everybody just copied the popular song and called it the St. Louis "Fair." And for most Americans in the long, lazy summer of 1904, that was the realest thing around.

The Fair itself was a sprawling white confection realized mainly in lath and plaster—a sparkling and totally ahistoric fantasy in an architectural style that can best be called Wedding Cake Neoclassical. Its lofty porticos, its fountains, its great lagoons that reflected the nightly fireworks displays, its gorgeous electrified cascades (Joplin describes the cascades delightfully in the first piece on Angel's release) were a wonder of the world.

The only thing the Fair really lacked was a zone of quiet, for from Midway to bandstands to concert hall it was awash with music. Most of the music was ragtime or ragtimish (interrupted of course by straight Sousa marches and Victor Herbert favorites), and this was provided by the country's best brass bands, by great vaudeville stars, by Scott Joplin himself, and by dozens of unknowns who performed in the Fair's popular and long-remembered ragtime contests.

On the Midway the ragtime musicians had some exotic competition. Between a Joplin slow drag and a Herbert waltz, you quite possibly sandwiched in Jim Key, the Sensational Spelling and Counting Horse. There was also a girlie show with cancan at the Casino de Paris. And, to the icy disapproval of the promenading ladies, there was *also* Little Egypt and the hoochie coochie, complete with drums, flutes, and belly dancing.

Another kind of competitor, a man who permanently altered America's social history, was a concessionaire named E. A. Haimwi at Constantinople-on-the-Pike. Mr. Haimwi was an emigrated pastry vendor from Damascus and he did a brisk business in *zalabia*, a crisp, wafer-thin Persian waffle. An adjacent booth sold ice cream. More and more Midway strollers seemed to enjoy gorging waffle and cream simultaneously—obviously a very tricky two-handed proposition. The observant concessionaire presently folded a waffle into a funnel before it cooled . . . tentatively inserted some borrowed ice cream. . . .

At this point there should have been a trumpet fanfare, for Mr. Haimwi had just invented the ice cream cone, and I suggest that personal bliss on the hoof may have had its greatest American moment when somebody at the Fair stood eating his first cone while listening to Joplin's *The Easy Winners*.

Now it would be absurd to say that all of this can be heard reflected in "The Red Back Book." Only *The Cascades*, after all, is known to be directly related to the Fair. But quite a bit of it *can* be related, and at moments in considerable detail. Listen for an unmistakable and hilarious allusion to hoochie coochie in *The Rag Time Dance*. And for the equivalent of tactful references to the nearby premises of Babe Connors, listen for several delicately dirty slides in the brasses. For of course it was to Babe's place that numbers of Fair-worn gents went around midnight when the Midway thinned out. By that hour they would probably have missed Mama Lou's lively opening number, *Ta-ra-ra-boom-der-é* (original spelling), but surely would have been in time for her greatest and long-since plagiarized hit. *There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight*. After laundering and publication, the stolen piece had entered U.S. history as the tune that led Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders in their charge up San Juan Hill, and since Mr. Roosevelt had become President it was impossible for him to show his face without getting a complimentary blast of it—to his great indignation, as he made clear when he publicly denounced its vulgarity.

With the autumn rains the Fair closed, its splendors visibly melting like sugar. Almost none of its glories have survived, the main exceptions being the ice cream cone, the imitation marble bust of Washington that

Josie Arlington carted back to her American Parlor in New Orleans, the Jefferson memorial building in St. Louis, which is made of real marble, and the music of "The Red Back Book," which is made of real music.

The publisher John Stark was the first and for half a century almost the last man to understand *how* real Joplin's music was. The surprising thing in retrospect is not that Joplin died brokenhearted in 1917 over his failure to get a staged performance for his ragtime opera *Treemonisha*. The real anomaly is that a black composer could, in 1904, see his name on a body of published work for which he had received money—and Stark was all but unique among publishers in having made this possible. The theatrical exaltation of Stark's promotional style is straight out of *East Lynn*: "Have you looked for their finish along with the season's hits?" he thunders rhetorically in an ad for Joplin's rags. "Nay, they have *come to stay!*" Stark obviously believed in both Joplin and his own copy, and fervently. But as the Twenties roared past it seemed he could scarcely have been wronger. Although professionals still remembered *Maple Leaf Rag* affectionately, there was no public to speak of for classic ragtime.

Joplin fared as badly or worse in musicological print. The first substantial statement of the ragtime case came with Rudi Blesh's *They All Played Ragtime*, published in 1950. The book was an eye opener for all who had not sold their souls to one or another of the great jazz cult figures. But to be jazz-addicted in 1950 was to be not only partisan but grimly puritan, and, except for the formation of small but dedicated ragtime societies and the publication of occasional articles, little of real importance followed Blesh's book for another generation.

In 1971 *The Collected Works of Scott Joplin* appeared in facsimile under the editorship of Vera Brodsky Lawrence (Mrs. Lawrence wrote the liner notes for "The Red Back Book") in association with Richard Jackson. Simultaneously the New York Public Library presented its history-making Joplin concert in October 1971, a remarkable public breakthrough further signaled by the superb ragtime recordings of Joshua Rifkin and William Bolcom on the Nonesuch label, and followed by the world premiere of Joplin's opera *Treemonisha* in Atlanta in January 1972.

The story of Joplin's rediscovery is to date a short and atypical one, and it couldn't have a lovelier or more promising continuance than Angel's glowing showcase for his pictures of a vanished era. They are small, but they are jewels, and today we know they are realer by far than the dreamlike world they first entertained.

SCOTT JOPLIN: *The Red Back Book*. *The Cascades* (arr. E. J. Stark), *Sun Flower Slow Drag* (arr. D. S. De Lisle), *The Chrysanthemum*, *The Entertainer* (solo piano version), *The Rag Time Dance* (arr. D. S. De Lisle), *Sugar Cane*, *The Easy Winners*, *The Entertainer* (arr. D. S. De Lisle), *Sun Flower Slow Drag* (solo piano version), *Maple Leaf Rag*. Myron Romanul (piano): New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble, Gunther Schuller cond. ANGEL \$ 36060 \$5.98, 8XS 36060 \$6.98, © 4XS 36060 \$6.98.

Angel's low-priced Seraphim issue entitled "Great Pianists of the Century Play Chopin" strikes me as a subtle and effective offering designed to compete with some of the other companies' "Greatest Hits" Chopin albums. The subtlety lies in the inclusion of a great many highly distinguished pianists, some no longer alive (such as Lipatti and Cortot) and some still very active before the public (Rubinstein, Arrau, and Anda). The EMI catalog is surely a gold mine for such an anthology, and from those British vaults the compilers have taken performances from as far back as 1933 (Cortot's beautifully modulated "Raindrops" Prelude) and as recent as 1959 (a rhythmically vital if not astounding performance of the A-flat Polonaise by Malcuzyński). There are some great classics here: Horowitz's incomparable Mazurka, Op. 50, No. 3, of 1935; two of Rubinstein's nocturnes from his earliest (1936) set, previously available only on imported discs; and, not least, two of Dinu Lipatti's waltzes from the commercial set made in the last year of his life and no longer available. With this kind of vault-picking assemblage, of course, it is always fun to play the game, "Why wasn't so-and-so included?" (for instance, Moiseiwitsch, Solomon, and, among the younger generation, Ashkenazy, who recorded Chopin for EMI at the time he was a second-prize winner in the 1955 Warsaw Chopin Competition). But then Seraphim can always issue a second volume. In any case, there is not a weak item here, and it is fascinating to be able to hear the variety of performing styles contained in this well-planned recital. The sonics, of course, are extremely variable, though a number of the older performances sound surprisingly good and a few of the more recent ones a bit less clean than one might have expected. In sum, if you don't already have some of the originals from which these selections are taken, by all means acquire this disc. *I.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHOPIN: *Polonaises: No. 1, in C-sharp Minor, Op. 26, No. 1; No. 2, in E-flat Minor, Op. 26, No. 2; No. 3, in A Major, Op. 40, No. 1 ("Military"); No. 4, in C Minor, Op. 40, No. 2; No. 5, in F-sharp Minor, Op. 44; No. 6, in A-flat Major, Op. 53 ("Heroic"); Polonaise-Fantaisie No. 7, in A-flat Major, Op. 61.* Antonio Barbosa (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2041 \$5.98.

Performance: **Exceptional**
Recording: **Superior**

Antonio Barbosa's recording of the Polonaises No. 1 through No. 7 maintains the same high level that the young Brazilian pianist revealed in his previous recordings for Connoisseur Society of Chopin's Second and Third Sonatas and the waltzes. He has an excellent feeling for both the aristocratic grandeur of the Polonaises and the elegance of the Chopin style. Tempos are extremely well judged—the "Military," for instance, is not taken too quickly; but lest you think that Barbosa lacks brilliance, you have only to hear the very exciting and rapidly played octave passages in the middle of the "Heroic" to realize that the pianist has plenty of technique as well as temperament. If a few rhetorical devices are not yet fully formulated, it is still possible to consider this set of Polonaises as being at the top of the available list. The total effect, complemented by the splendid sonics, is quite stunning. *I.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CORELLI: *Twelve Sonatas for Violin and Continuo, Op. 5.* Eduard Melkus (violin); Huguette Dreyfus (harpsichord and organ); Karl Scheit (lute); Garo Altmacayan (cello); Capella Academica, Vienna (in Sonata No. 7). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIVE 2533132/3 two discs \$13.96.

Performance: **Accurate, sensitive**
Recording: **Excellent**

From the Chrysander edition of the Op. 5 Violin Sonatas: "All Corelli's compositions succeeded in gaining popularity, and were thus circulated far and wide, and served as models for the musicians of his time; but the present *Opera quinta* was in this respect the most successful. It was taken up as a school-book in all countries; and if the copyright of

and very imaginative. That, however, is not even half the stylistic story. The continuo line is handled, shared, and varied among harpsichord, organ, lute, and cello, with hardly any sonata ever having the same continuo forces as another. Sonata No. 6, for example, has a cello continuo; there is no filling-in by another instrument, the cello itself occasionally arpeggiating an implied harmony. There is even one sonata, No. 7, which is handled as a violin concerto. (Since my advance copy of these discs is not annotated, I do not know whose arrangement was used here. Geminiani did, of course, adapt some of Corelli's music, so there is historical precedent for the procedure.)

Melkus plays with admirable stylistic understanding, a suitably improvisatory manner, and secure technique throughout the four sides of this set, and he is ably seconded by his accompanying forces. The recorded sound



ANTONIO BARBOSA:
An excellent feeling for the aristocratic grandeur and elegance of the Polonaises

our time [1890] had been valid then, Corelli would have grown rich even on the proceeds of this single work." This work, which Corelli dedicated in 1700 to Sophia Charlotte, Princess of Hanover, consists of twelve sonatas, of which half are in the *sonata da chiesa* form and half in the dance-movement format of the *sonata da camera*. The final sonata consists of variations on *La Folia*, and, except for individual movements of the others that have become well-known out of context, it is perhaps the most famous part of the set.

Although performances of the complete twelve sonatas as well as of individual sections have been recorded before now, the majority of these (Sonia Monosoff's three sonatas for the Library of Recorded Masterpieces is an exception) were stylistically inaccurate in terms of what we know of Baroque performance practice: ornaments were not played or were not played correctly, phrasing was romanticized, and, perhaps most important of all, no real attempt at embellishment was made, especially in slow movements or repeats. And this in spite of the fact that the Chrysander edition contains "graces" purported to be the embellishments that Corelli himself added in his performances.

Eduard Melkus, who has previously recorded Biber and Handel sonatas, among other works, could be counted upon to do stylistic justice to Corelli's sonatas, and these performances are not in the least disappointing. Where Corelli provided his own embellished movements, Melkus plays those, executing them sensitively and with rhythmic flexibility (they are florid to a high degree!). And where Corelli didn't provide any examples, Melkus supplies his own, equally florid

is quite satisfactory, and the set as a whole can be considered an important and valuable contribution to the recorded repertoire. *I.K.*

DE LA VEGA: *Segmentos for Violin and Piano* (see SESSIONS)

EISLER: *Vier Klavierstücke* (see CASADESUS)

FRANCK: *Violin Sonata in A Major* (see CHOPIN)

FRESCOBALDI: *Toccatas Nos. 5 and 7; Bergamasca Variations; Four Verses on the Hymn "Ave Maris Stella"; Canzona No. 1 ("La Rovetta"); Recercar No. 7; Toccata for the Elevation, "Cum júbilo"; Fourteen Variations on the Romanesca.* Lawrence Moe (organ). CAMBRIDGE CRS 2516 \$5.98.

Performance: **Conscientious**
Recording: **Very good**

This well-varied selection of Frescobaldi's keyboard music combines such representative works as a Toccata for the Elevation and variations on the Gregorian *Ave Maris Stella* with such strictly secular pieces as a French-styled Canzona and variations on the popular harmonic patterns the *Bergamasca* and the *Romanesca*. These early Baroque works are here played on a late-Baroque, seven-stop Italian organ that was discovered some years ago by Alan Curtis, restored, and then brought to the United States. It now resides at the University of California at Berkeley, where both Curtis and Lawrence Moe, the performer on this disc, teach. It sounds well suited to the majority of this repertoire.

Professor Moe plays with dexterity and understanding, and I especially enjoyed the sobriety and choice of registration in such a work as the Toccata for the Elevation. In general, however, and in spite of the inclusion in the program notes of some of Frescobaldi's admonitions regarding the flexible performance of his music, the interpretations seem to me rather inflexible rhythmically. To be sure, the organist does pay attention to pausing on the last note before the end of a cadential trill, but he manages to run through the majority of cadences without pausing for a breath, so to speak, something Frescobaldi wrote about with more than usual care. It is particularly noticeable in the longest work on the record, the *Romanesca* Variations, and I respectfully suggest that Professor Moe reread what the composer said about how he wants his music to be played. Perhaps he should also listen to Alan Curtis' admirable recording (on Cambridge CRS 1708).

The recorded sound of the Italian chamber organ is quite good, although the high level causes some slight warbling in the loudest places. *I.K.*

GOETZ: *Spring Overture, Op. 15; Symphony in F Major, Op. 9; Overture to "The Taming of the Shrew"; Overture to "Francesca."* Orchestre National de l'Opéra de Monte-Carlo, Edouard Van Remoortel cond. GENESIS GS 1031 \$5.98.

Performance: **Adequate**
Recording: **Generally good**

GOETZ: *Lose Blätter, Op. 7; Sonatinas, Op. 8: No. 1 in F Major, No. 2 in E-flat Major; Genrebilder, Op. 13.* Adrian Ruiz (piano). GENESIS GS 1023 \$5.98.

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

When the Piano Concerto in B-flat, Op. 18, by Hermann Goetz (1840-1876) was released by Genesis a year ago from a Swiss taping, I found it a fresh and charming work in a post-Mendelssohn-Schumann vein. And, when I listened to it again in conjunction with the discs under consideration here, it struck me as the most viable of Goetz's bigger works.

Regardless of the encomiums from George Bernard Shaw in his Corno di Bassetto music critic days, what I hear on these two new Genesis discs does not lead me to believe that Goetz would have developed into a serious rival to any of the great late-Romantic symphonists. The middle movements of the symphony (a lighthearted bucolic intermezzo and a warmly songful slow movement) and the two sonatinas (lively music written with a light touch and a fine command of two-part writing) were the pieces that made a real impression on this listener. The *Loose Leaves* and *Genre Pieces* are agreeable miniatures in the song-without-words tradition, and the *Taming of the Shrew* Overture is pleasant stuff (there once was a recording of the complete opera on the Urania label). But the *Spring Overture* has more impulse than maturity of execution, and the Overture to *Francesca* has neither the drama of Tchaikovsky's celebrated orchestral fantasia nor the poetry of Enrique Granados' extraordinary *Dante* on the same theme issued a year ago on the Louisville label.

The recorded performances by Edouard Van Remoortel offer adequate orchestral playing, excellent interpretation—especially of the symphony—and reasonably good son-

ics. Adrian Ruiz's interpretations of the piano pieces are uniformly fluent and poetic and are beautifully recorded. *D.H.*

HANDEL: *Cantata "Lucrezia"; Three Arias from "Tamerlano."* Carole Bogard (soprano); James Weaver (harpsichord in *Lucrezia*); Catharina Meints (cello in *Lucrezia*); Chamber Orchestra of Copenhagen, John Moriarty cond. (in *Tamerlano*). CAMBRIDGE CRS 2773 \$5.98.

Performance: **Stylish, atmospheric**
Recording: **Excellent**

However good Carole Bogard's long-deleted older recording of *Lucrezia* may have been (and I have not been able to unearth a copy), I find it hard to imagine that it could have rivaled this splendid new version, which captures the uncanny human understanding and sheer excitement of one of Handel's finest cantatas with all the American soprano's familiar wealth of musicianship and stylistic insight. The accompaniments add their own dimension to the overall effect, and the recording itself is admirable.

The only possible cause for regret here is the inclusion of three arias—"Se non mi vuol amar," "Deh lasciatemi il nemico," and "Padre amato, in me riposa"—from *Tamerlano* to make up the second side. *Tamerlano* itself is a superb, quite unfairly neglected opera, and Cambridge's recording of it, released a couple of years ago, was a triumphant success. But those who have already invested in that four-disc set may have doubts about paying the top price for what is in effect only half a new record—or, to be precise, just a little more than half, since the middle section and *da capo* of "Deh lasciatemi," omitted from the almost-complete set for timing reasons, has been reinstated here.

The *Tamerlano* performances, in any case, are every bit as good as the *Lucrezia*. And anyone who still thinks of Handel as a bland master of Baroque wallpaper patterns will find this record (or, for that matter, the *Tamerlano* set) a revelatory corrective. *B.J.*

HANDEL: *The Messiah* (see THE NEW MESSIAH, page 96)

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 92, in G Major ("Oxford"); Symphony No. 95, in C Minor.* New Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer cond. ANGEL S 36919 \$5.98.

Performance: **Heavy**
Recording: **Old master**

When I first put this disc on the turntable I was sure that someone was playing a trick on me and had slipped some old recording into a new sleeve. This is the way they used to play Haydn: a large orchestra with strings drowning out the winds, no eighteenth-century stylistic niceties, tempos on the slow, thumping side. Even the dry, studio-ish sound and the not-quite-togetherness of the large string section seemed to provide touches of authentic nonauthenticity.

But no, this really is the *New* Philharmonia conducted by Otto Klemperer, circa 1972. In England in the nineteenth century they used to apply coats of varnish to paintings to make them look like Old Masters. Now somebody has decided to put a little varnish on Haydn. The "Oxford" Symphony, so full of the joy of life, is sickled o'er. The C Minor Symphony, one of Haydn's rare late ventures into the sterner side of things, can take the dignified-

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and-stately approach better than its counterpart, but the first-movement tempo is really unjustifiable—if Haydn's *alla breve* is authentic, Allegro Moderato is meant to apply to a two-beat measure, not a four-beat one.

Nobody but Klemperer could get away with it. In fact, I really don't think *he* gets away with it either. Much of the slow-tempo stuff hovers on the edge of real foot-dragging; the line between dignity and fatigue is not all that great. The trio in the Minuet of the C Minor Symphony, a genial cello solo beautifully played by the Philharmonia's first-desk man, ends up sounding like a tired salon piece by Popper. Even the deliciously contrapuntal G Major finale—for once taken at a good clip and in high spirits—is more energetic bustle than anything else.

Whether Klemperer's Haydn is a throwback or just idiosyncratic, it does not do justice to a great composer who too often comes off second best. *E.S.*

HAYDN: *The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross, Op. 51.* Amadeus Quartet. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 213 \$6.98.

Performance: **So-so**
Recording: **Good**

It would be pleasant to be able to say that the Amadeus Quartet's performance of the string quartet version of Haydn's *Seven Last Words*, announced a few months ago by DG and for some reason delayed, had been worth waiting for. But to my ears it constitutes another instance of a great ensemble's sad decline, for the playing here is much less pure, much more inappropriately heart-on-sleeve—indeed, schmaltzy—than in the much older Amadeus version on Westminster, long since dropped from the catalog.

If you *must* have the quartet version, I think the Dekany-Quartet performance, in one of that group's series of Vox Boxes, is preferable. But the Leslie Jones performance of the even more moving original orchestral version is still available on Nonesuch, and it is very good.

When, by the way, is some company going to be enterprising enough to offer us a new recording of Haydn's own oratorio arrangement of the work (the Scherchen Westminster has been unavailable for years), to which he added some entirely new material, and of which H.C. Robbins Landon speaks enthusiastically in his preface to the Eulenburg quartet score? *B.J.*

IVES: *Variations on "America"; Adeste Fidelis.* **SOWERBY: *Arioso; Fast and Sinister (Symphony in G Major); Prelude on Psalm 46; Air with Variations (Suite for Organ).*** Janice Beck (organ). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY OR A 264 \$2.98 (plus 65¢ handling charge, available from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

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

If this does not become the musical "party record" of 1973, I shall be very surprised. Charles Ives' *Variations on "America"* is one of the most hilariously inspired lambastings of a familiar tune in all of musical literature, and Janice Beck gives it a performance that is every bit as sober-campy as the music. Ives was one of the few composers who could really express wit musically without losing the

sense of stability and decorum that makes humor stand out. This piece is a tour de force, and, in a more sober mien, *Adeste Fidelis* is not far behind.

Leo Sowerby was for many years an extremely influential composer in Chicago and one of this country's prime composers for the organ. He was never one of my musical favorites, but nevertheless, because of his persistence in writing the kind of music he wanted to, and his manifest seriousness and imagination, he demanded a kind of respect. His music was like that of an American Delius tinged with César Franck, and that was an appealing if not exactly a pithy combination.

The performer for this recording, Janice Beck, is a consummate musician, and she plays here on an excellent Romantic organ (the Noehren organ of the First Baptist Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan). I'm pleased



JANICE BECK

A sober-campy performance of Ives' music

to know that the Musical Heritage Society plans to release more of Miss Beck's recordings of American music. *L.T.*

MOZART: *Horn Concerto in D Major (K. 412); Horn Concerto in E-flat Major (K. 495); Rondo in E-flat Major (K. 371); Horn Concerto in E-flat Major (K. 447); Horn Concerto in E-flat Major (K. 417).* Alan Civil (horn); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. PHILIPS 6500 325 \$6.98.

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

Alan Civil is the current co-holder (with Barry Tuckwell) of the French horn crown formerly held by Dennis Brain (Civil was a pupil of Aubrey Brain, Dennis' father). For all intents and purposes, the solo horn literature can be said to consist of the Mozart concertos (this is not literally true, but for most listeners it might as well be). There are three complete concertos, all written for Mozart's fellow Salzburger, Ignaz Leutgeb, all in E-flat Major, all featuring similar 6/8 hunting-horn finales. There is also an Allegro in D, generally paired with a later Rondo in D to make a "Concerto" in D, as well as an earlier Rondo in E-flat (K. 371) with an incomplete orchestral part, here completed by Civil himself; these are amusing works, but the musical meat is in the three complete concertos, which are vintage Mo-

zart (although they have too much of a family resemblance to listen to more than one at a time).

All of this material has often been recorded. Civil himself has recorded the four concertos twice before (with Kempe and Klemperer) and the concertos plus the Rondo in E-flat Major and another incomplete fragment have been recorded by Barry Tuckwell with Neville Marriner and his excellent chamber orchestra. Some may prefer Tuckwell's recording for one reason or another. But you certainly cannot go wrong with this one, whether it be on the grounds of the beauty of the playing (Civil's tone is heavenly), the excellence of the orchestra, or the attractiveness of the recording quality.

I do have one or two reservations, though. Civil has written his own cadenzas, and they are, for the most part, acceptable. But why does the cadenza to the first movement of K. 495 end with such an unexpectedly vigorous phrase? Such heartiness is almost entirely missing everywhere else in these ultra-suave performances. And the double-tones—actual, audible harmonic arrays produced simultaneously—are even more startling and unlikely in the cadenza to K. 371. Is there any historical justification for the use of this apparently ultra-modern technique? *E.S.*

MOZART: *Quartet in D Major (K. 499, "Hoffmeister"); Quartet in D Major (K. 575).* Quartetto Italiano. PHILIPS 6500 241 \$6.98.

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

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: *Quartet in D Major (K. 499, "Hoffmeister"); Quartet in B-flat Major (K. 589).* The Vienna Philharmonic Quartet. LONDON STS 15116 \$2.98.

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

These two recordings, which have an "overlap" in Mozart's "Hoffmeister" Quartet, allow one of the most fascinating comparisons of performance styles I've been able to make in a long time. I listened to the Quartetto Italiano disc first—probably because its jacket art is more glossy and assertive—prepared to be whammied, as I usually am by this group's playing. And I was greatly impressed. They are a splendid quartet, with incredible smoothness of ensemble and technical virtuosity, projection and appealing gusto. But Mozart the composer disappointed me. It was interesting to hear how very operatic some of his melodies were, especially since this quartet was composed in the same year as *Figaro*, but that is not the way I recalled them from those days when I was playing the Mozart quartets myself. How could I have so totally misremembered?

The answer came immediately when I put the Vienna Philharmonic Quartet's record on my machine. Here, making use of the very same score, was a different composition—the one I knew. It is mysteriously more complex and sophisticated, more elegant, a tour de force of contrapuntal writing as opposed to a simple flight of tunesmithing. I am certainly under no misapprehensions as to the importance of subtle and really "knowing" interpretations of music from any period. But everyone's inclination is to hear the outline of the notes in a composition and believe that they are the real piece, blaming the composer if it

happens to sound shallow or wrong. It's hard to outgrow this aspect of naïveté.

In any case, I recommend the Vienna Philharmonic Quartet's recording without reservation. Their interpretive surfaces seem a bit less opulent than those of the Quartetto Italiano, perhaps, but this represents a difference in concept between the two groups. The Italians are interested in their own attractive kind of bravura and physical agility, in songfulness and a hearty projection of all sentiments. These are very fetching, and the ensemble is very, very good. One certainly can't fault Italians for not being Austrians.

But here we have an example of how it is often easier for interpreters to understand accurately music that stems from their own national culture. The Vienna Quartet plays as if they had absorbed the *Gestalt* of this music with their mothers' milk. It is utterly natural to them, and they find a hundred meanings where other ensembles find only one. As for their sonic beauty or lack of it, one might say that their luster comes from within rather than lying on the surface.

Inevitably I will seem to be putting down the Quartetto Italiano's playing more than I should—or more than I want to. My remarks are not meant that way. This is one of the finest string quartets in existence, and I admire their playing a great deal. But in this particular high-level comparison, I'm afraid they lose the contest, however elegantly. *L.T.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: *Serenade No. 7, in D Major (K. 250, "Haffner").* Thomas Brandis (violin); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530290 \$6.98.

Performance: **First-class**
Recording: **Excellent**

Composed in 1776 for the wedding of the daughter of a former burgomaster of Salzburg, Sigmund Haffner, this eight-movement serenade is the first of Mozart's works in this form to have become justly renowned and considered on a par with the finest of the middle-period symphonies. In its inclusion of two movements with violin solo it is a rather curious hybrid, part symphony (or at least symphonic in scope) and part violin concerto. Karl Böhm's performance, unfortunately minus the serenade's accompanying march (K. 449), is excellent in all respects; the orchestra's playing is pointed, warm, and vibrant, and the execution, including that of the solo violinist, is immaculate. Overall, this is an exciting version to hear, with tempos that are always well gauged and never dragging. Stylistically, too, except for the usual short *appoggiatura* interpretations and main-note trill beginnings, the reading is splendid. And the well-balanced recording is another plus. *I.K.*

POULENC: *Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon* (see WILDER)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RACHMANINOFF: *Piano Concerto No. 2, in C Minor, Op. 18.* Artur Rubinstein (piano); Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA □ ARD 1 0031 \$5.98, © ARK 1 0031 \$6.95.

Performance: **Masterly**
Recording: **First-rate**

RACHMANINOFF: *Piano Concerto No. 2, in C Minor, Op. 18.* FRANCK: *Symphonic Variations.* Alexis Weissenberg (piano); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL S 36905 \$5.98.

Performance: **Richly detailed**
Recording: **Occasionally too reverberant**

Artur Rubinstein, now in his mid-eighties, shows few signs of flagging: his musicianship is becoming more revealing with the years, even if the fingers every so often—as in the opening solo pages of the Rachmaninoff Second Concerto finale—are not quite as effortlessly agile as they once were. Both Rubinstein and Eugene Ormandy, who accompanied the composer himself in numerous concert performances, have the Rachmaninoff

Second Concerto in their blood, and they give here a superbly vital and warm performance. Moreover, they are backed up by gorgeous recorded sound, even heard, as it was by this reviewer, as two-channel stereo from the discrete quadraphonic disc. The cassette, though slightly higher in background hiss level, compared favorably with the disc when played at the same level.

Alexis Weissenberg, with the formidable Herbert von Karajan at the conductorial helm, takes a decidedly more portentous view of the Rachmaninoff Second Concerto. The memorable opening chords sound almost like a funeral knell, and the pacing of the whole movement is somewhat more deliberate than that of Rubinstein and Ormandy. Possibly this slower pacing is designed to accommo-



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date the churchy acoustic of their recording locale, an acoustic that, to my ears, tends to muddy the piano-and-orchestra climaxes, especially in the first movement. In the slow movement the pacing becomes almost unbearable—the music seems to come almost to a stop (and, at least on my review copy, the final minutes are afflicted with audible hum). The finale, however, proceeds in more normal fashion. Though there is much to appreciate in the richness of both pianistic and orchestral detail in this reading, I'd prefer to live with the Rubinstein version.

I have no reservations whatever about the Weissenberg-Karajan reading of the Franck Symphonic Variations, abounding as it does in sparkle, richness of detail, and tonal warmth. Fortunately, the scoring of this piece does not strain the acoustic ambiance to the point of muddiness. *D.H.*

RAVEL: *Miroirs*. BRAHMS: *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24*. Erika Lux (piano). HUNGAROTON LPX 11528 \$5.98.

Performance: **Clean, attractive**
Recording: **Good but wobbly**

RAVEL: *Gaspard de la nuit; Miroirs*. Kun Woo Paik (piano). HARLEQUIN 3803 \$5.98 (postpaid from Harlequin Records, 350 West 55th St., New York, N.Y. 10019).

Performance: **Poetic**
Recording: **Not the best**

The fascinating ambiguities in Ravel's music are well revealed by these recordings of *Miroirs* by two young artists from opposite ends of the earth: Erika Lux from Hungary and Kun Woo Paik, presumably from Korea (his country of origin is not here identified; his principal studies have been in New York with Rosina Lhévinne). The difference between these two recordings might be described as that between an Eastern art, based on wash and brush-stroke, and a Western linear style. Ravel's "impressionism" has many obvious and subtle Eastern influences and might seem to lend itself very well to a nonlinear approach. Nevertheless, Ravel is finally a Westerner and, even in these most original works, something of a Classicist in a good old French tradition. Between these two recordings of *Miroirs* the decision must come down strongly in favor of Erika Lux. The differences show up most clearly in the rhythmic pieces—*Noctuelles*, which for all its color is a highly accented and melodic piece, and the delicious *Alborada del gracioso*, with its flowing dance movement.

The Hungarian pianist's Classicizing tendencies are equally illustrated by her choice and performance of the Brahms "Handel Variations" on the overside. She lacks a measure of expressive heightening which might have carried both works into a poetic realm that seems to elude her—she strives for it in the fugue of the Brahms but not entirely successfully. She also hits at least one beautifully wrong chord in the Ravel. Nevertheless, these most attractive performances have real character. The recorded piano sound, although basically not bad, has some defects, notably a wobble in the tone that I have noticed before in Hungaroton recordings (tape speed trouble?).

Kun Woo Paik's impressionistic approach to Ravel perhaps works better in *Gaspard de la nuit*—at least in the rather stationary first two sections—than in *Miroirs*. However, the

poetry of his playing is somewhat marred by the dull sound and a noisy, inferior-quality disc. The rather handsomely produced jacket—the notes are by the producer—contains very little hard information about pianist or composer and refers to the company as Harbinger Records. Is it *Harbinger*, or is it *Harlequin*? *E.S.*

ROSEN: *Five Pieces for Violin and Piano* (see SESSIONS)

RUSSO: *Three Pieces for Blues Band and Symphony Orchestra, Op. 50* (see BERNSTEIN)

SARASATE: *Spanish Dances—No. 1 (Malagueña), No. 2 (Habanera), No. 3 (Romanza Andaluza), No. 4 (Jota Navarra), No. 5 (Playera), No. 6 (Zapateado); Introduction and Tarantella, Op. 43; Caprice Basque,*



AARON ROSAND

An eminently enjoyable Sarasate program

Op. 24; Navarra (for two violins), Op. 33. Aaron Rosand (violin); Michal Walevski (piano). VOX STPL 512. 760 \$4.98.

Performance: **Elegant**
Recording: **Rather dry**

With the disappearance of Ruggiero Ricci's recital on Decca 710044, this is the only record in the catalog that is devoted to Pablo de Sarasate's brilliantly written, engaging, and ingenious brief concert pieces. (The Vox release is a reissue, having originally appeared in 1965.) The program is eminently enjoyable. Rosand has a glowing tone and all the technique the music needs—which is a lot. But he avoids a mere self-conscious virtuosity in his pursuit of silken elegance by way of fleet but not headlong tempos, cleanly articulated chords, and limpid harmonics (those in the *Caprice Basque* are spectacular). The music is lovingly treated by an artist who is devoted to it and who, in the accompanying liner notes, deplors the relative disfavor into which these pieces have fallen. For, as Mr. Rosand puts it, "In its own way, a difficult technical passage, played brilliantly and with finesse, is as moving as a beautifully turned phrase."

Both parts of the *Navarra* are played by Mr. Rosand. Whatever Sarasate's writing requires from the piano accompanist is ably

supplied by Mr. Walevski. Technically, the recording is acceptable but unremarkable. *G.J.*

SCHMIDT: *Symphony No. 4, in C Major*. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON CS 6747 \$5.98.

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

Who? To most American music lovers the name Franz Schmidt—if it makes any impression at all—will appear to be a misprint for Florent Schmitt. But Franz Schmidt was quite someone else: a composer of considerable fame in his own provincial sphere, which just happened to be Vienna, Austria.

Schmidt was born in 1874 (the same year as Schoenberg) in Pressburg, then the frontier town of the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He studied with Bruckner in Vienna, came under the influence of Mahler, for whom he played cello at the Vienna Opera and Vienna Philharmonic, taught cello and composition at the Vienna Academy, and later became director of that institution. Many of his major compositions were created in the years just before his death in 1939 and represent a distinct carrying-forward of the Bruckner-Mahler line. In ultra-conservative Vienna, where Bruckner has always been preferred to Mahler, Schmidt was a more popular and highly regarded composer than Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, or even Mahler himself. Ironically, however, his name was scarcely known in the rest of the world—and this at a time when Vienna was accounted a world music capital, and when her un-favorite sons were changing the course of musical evolution the world over. Schmidt's name was not even to be found in major English-language reference works for years after his death, and only recently has an occasional performance or recording turned up outside of Austria.

Zubin Mehta's knowledge of Schmidt dates from his student days at Schmidt's Vienna Academy, and he is a persuasive if unlikely exponent of this late Romantic music. Schmidt's principal antecedents, at least in this symphony, are Bruckner, Bruckner, and Bruckner. There is some Wagner—the Wagner of *Parsifal* heard through Bruckner's ears—and perhaps a touch of Mahler. There are also connections, notably in the opening and final sections, with post-Romanticism: some mildly far-afeld chromaticism, fourth-chords, and the like, in the manner of early Schoenberg, Berg, and Scriabin. Indeed, there are some uncomfortable discrepancies between the rather unsettling opening and its unconvincing return as a finale on the one hand, and the ultra-Romantic adagio and scherzo on the other. Consistency is not really one of my critical criteria, and Schmidt's thematic unification of the four-movement symphonic form into a single expanded movement is quite clear aurally and intellectually. Yet it seems odd that the development sections of the work—where one expects adventure, drama, and conflict—should constitute nostalgic, Romantic throw-backs, while the outer sections—the places for statement and resolution—should be so full of extended anxiety and irresolution.

I doubt that these widening ripples of the post-Romantic revival (if I may be permitted the metaphor) will really reach these rather barren and inhospitable shores. Whatever the specific sources of Mahler's inspiration, he nearly always succeeded in universalizing the particularity of his ideas. With Schmidt the

reverse takes place: he seems to particularize—I almost said provincialize—a sense of uneasiness and nostalgia drawn from the generality and even vagueness of ideas descended from the great tradition of which he was a late representative.

This is not an enormously polished or brilliant realization but it is, without doubt, thoroughly Viennese and, I believe, would have met with the composer's approval. The quality of the recording is excellent. *E.S.*

SESSIONS: *Sonata for Violin Solo*. **ROSEN:** *Five Pieces for Violin and Piano*. **DE LA VEGA:** *Segmentos for Violin and Piano*. Robert Gross (violin); Richard Grayson (piano). ORION ORS 73110 \$5.98.

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

It is hard for me to be objective about Roger Sessions' *Sonata for Violin Solo*. The work was written in Berkeley, California, a few years before Sessions returned to Princeton where I studied with him. Although I was not really conscious of doing it, I undoubtedly modeled my own solo partita on the Sessions sonata, which seemed to me then a landmark in American music (it still does, but for different reasons). It represents, among other things, the re-entry of twelve-tone writing into American music, and its intense Expressionism was a strong reaction to the neo-Classicism then dominant in this country. It was—to choose a useful if slightly misleading parallel—the musical equivalent of the Abstract Expressionism that appeared in American painting at that time and which, like musical Expressionism, came to be a dominant force for a decade or more.

So the Sessions sonata is an important piece and too little known. It was recorded once before—by Hyman Bress on Folkways, I think—but this recording is notable because it was made by the man for whom the work was created. Robert Gross is a West Coast violinist of considerable accomplishments. Like the music he plays, his achievements have not been adequately recognized, and, in particular, he deserves praise for his efforts in behalf of new music. He equally deserves credit for the mastery of some very difficult music. The Sessions solo sonata is nearly half an hour of intense, austere, very difficult fiddle music, and it is to Gross' credit that he largely overcomes its violinistic and listening difficulties.

Both of the works on the overside of this disc were also written for Mr. Gross. Jerome Rosen, a pupil of Sessions and Milhaud, and Aurelio de la Vega, a Cuban composer, are both active on the West Coast. The former's *Five not-so-easy Pieces* are in a kind of extended dissonant Romantic idiom—tradition at the end of the line. De la Vega's *Segmentos* is, however, closer to the Sessions in idiom and dynamic: the serial idea, augmented by tone clusters and glissandos, is everywhere present in striking, expressive form.

I think I have already suggested Gross' exceptional violinistic abilities with some difficult music. The recorded sound is quite good; though there are some changes in the acoustic here and there, they are not serious enough to be disturbing. *E.S.*

SKALKOTTAS: *Piano Music* (see Best of the Month, page 82)

SOWERBY: *Organ Works* (see IVES)

R. STRAUSS: *Capriccio, Highlights* (see VERDI)

R. STRAUSS: *Introduction for String Sextet from Capriccio, Op. 85* (see SUK)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STRAVINSKY: *Petrouchka (1911 version)*. London Symphony Orchestra. Charles Mackerras cond. VANGUARD VSD 71177 \$5.98, □ VSQ 30021 \$6.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Extraordinarily vivid**

Considering that there are ten complete *Petrouchka* recordings listed in the current Schwann Record and Tape Guide, including three of the original 1911 large-orchestra scoring, one might legitimately question the need for another, particularly as it comes rather hard on the heels of one by Boulez and the New York Philharmonic. Well, I am surprised and pleased to report that this is not just another one.

Mackerras knows exactly what he's about here and has communicated the musical and theatrical scenario of Stravinsky's masterpiece with a dramatic thrust and tautness that I have heard equaled only by Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra on the extraordinary 78's of the middle Forties. The playing of the London Symphony is razor-sharp and fairly seethes with the vitality and pathos implicit in Stravinsky's music. I'm thinking here especially of the episodes depicting *Petrouchka's* frustration and rage.

What adds a special dimension to this particular performance, over and above its own perfection, is the recorded sound—amazingly vivid in its clarity of texture, in its conveyance of the particular timbre of each solo instrument, in the transparent yet full-bodied texture of the big Shrovetide Fair episodes, and in its brilliantly effective pinpoint localization of individual instruments and instrumental groups. The one moment that stands out for me in this respect is in the opening fair episode with hurdy-gurdy and music-box effects in counterpoint. In virtually every recording I have heard, the effect is vaguely impressionistic, but here all emerges with crystalline clarity—to the point that I felt myself in front of the fair booths, able to point out the precise locations of the hurdy-gurdy player (left) and the music box (right center).

From beginning to end, this recorded performance maintains the same remarkable standard of sonic and dramatic vividness. For me this is certainly the finest realization of the original *Petrouchka* scoring I have yet heard on records, surpassing that of Boulez not necessarily in musicality, but certainly with respect to justness of balance and clarity-plus-presence in recorded sound texture.

My original review copy was a two-channel stereo pressing, but just before deadline time I received the quadraphonic disc, the sound of which in no way alters my essential reactions. As heard with a Lafayette SQ-L decoder, the same extraordinarily vivid sonics are projected in an enlarged ambiance, wherein the music of the final Shrovetide Fair scene gains enormously in sheer kinetic effect. One is quite literally enveloped in the scene. In brief, then, this is a stunning record. *D.H.*

SUK: *Serenade for Strings*. **WOLF:** *Italian Serenade*. **RICHARD STRAUSS:** *Introduction for String Sextet from Capriccio, Op. 85*. Stutt-

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gart Chamber Orchestra, Karl Münchinger cond. LONDON CS 6737 \$5.98.

Performance: **Excellent**

Recording: **Beautiful**

More late Romantic music! Josef Suk was a pupil, son-in-law, and musical heir of Dvořák. His *Serenade*, more or less his graduation piece for the Prague Conservatory, was the work that first attracted attention; both Dvořák and Brahms recommended it to the publisher Simrock. Suk's later works are said to incorporate more twentieth-century elements, but this early work—composed in 1892, when the composer was eighteen—is still well within the bounds of the Schubert-Schumann-Brahms-Dvořák tradition of Classical Romanticism. It is, in any case, one of those springtime works with the fresh bloom of youth still on it.

Wolf's *Italian Serenade*—a movement from a projected Suite for String Quartet transcribed by the composer himself for small orchestra—is a charming expression of that fascination with the Southland which is such a recurring motif in turn-of-the-century German art. Strauss felt that pull too—not only in works like *Aus Italien* (his own Italian Serenade)—but in his theater works as well. By 1941—the date of *Capriccio*—the old North-South, Romantic-Classic opposition had turned into a traditional-contemporary, music-drama dialogue that is itself the subject of this “conversation piece in music.” “*Prima le parole, dopo la musica*”: “*Prima la musica—dopo le parole*” (“First the words, then the music”; “No, first the music, then the words”), argue the characters (in Italian!) to the strains of a string sextet playing beautiful pseudo-, neo-Romantic/neo-Classic music in a pre-Revolutionary aristocratic setting—while World War II raged outside! This impeccably beautiful sextet, perhaps the only piece of chamber music to have its origins on the operatic stage, wends its imperturbable way across an artificial, autumnal landscape; one always has the feeling it could stop anywhere or continue indefinitely. Strange music!

Except for some not particularly pleasant German reed sounds in the Wolf, these are beautiful performances and very well recorded; in my opinion, London consistently produces the best orchestral sound coming out of Europe. E.S.

SZYMANOWSKI: Violin Concerto No. 2, Op. 61 (see WIENIAWSKI)

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis; The Lark Ascending; Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus; Fantasia on Greensleeves. Iona Brown (violin): Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. ARGO ZRG 696 \$5.95.

Performance: **Excellent**

Recording: **Excellent**

The Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, directed by Neville Marriner, seems to be pouring forth a veritable flood of excellent recordings these days, with an appropriate emphasis on English music. This latest disc contains four Vaughan Williams works, of which the two fantasias are very familiar as exemplars of the composer's “Tudor style.” Both are gorgeously performed and interpreted by Marriner and his ensemble of soloists. The reading of the Tallis Fantasia is exceptionally sensitive and dignified. Rather than seeking to touch your heart-strings with

sweetness, the interpretation aims for nobility and achieves it. The *Greensleeves* Fantasia is, of course, a relatively small and simple treatment of a folk song. Marriner treats it with honesty and elegance, as does the flute soloist, William Bennett. Speaking of soloists, violinist Iona Brown, who is featured in three of these works, is an especially stunning musician. Her playing in *The Lark Ascending* is transcendently lovely, as is the music itself (although almost unbearably gentle and restrained). *Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus* is a bit more muscular, but equally dedicated to what might be called the “ethos of the English countryside.” For admirers of that facet of Vaughan Williams' music, this record should be a joy. L.T.

VERDI: Otello (highlights). Helge Rosvaenge (tenor); Maria Reining (soprano); Hans Reinmar (baritone); other singers: Berlin State



JOSEF SUK

Dvořák's pupil and musical heir

Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Karl Elmendorff cond. BASF 21360 \$5.98.

BIZET: Carmen (highlights). Elisabeth Höngen (mezzo-soprano); Torsten Ralf (tenor); Josef Herrmann (baritone); Elfriede Weidlich (soprano); other singers: Dresden State Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Karl Böhm cond. BASF 21362 \$5.98.

RICHARD STRAUSS: Capriccio (highlights). Viorica Ursuleac (soprano); Franz Klarwein (tenor); Hans Hotter (baritone); Georg Hann (bass): Bavarian State Opera Orchestra, Clemens Krauss cond. BASF 21363 \$5.98.

OPERA SAMPLER. Mozart: Don Giovanni: Madamina (Kurt Böhme); Trio from Act I (Mathieu Ahlertmeyer, Elfriede Weidlich, and Gottlob Frick). Die Zauberflöte: Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön (Helge Rosvaenge); Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen (Tiana Lemnitz and Karl Schmitt-Walter). The Marriage of Figaro: Duet from Act III (Margarete Teschemacher and Maria Cebotari). Die Entführung aus dem Serail: Wer ein Liebchen hat gefunden (Herbert Alsen and Anton Dermota). Flotow: Martha: Letzte Rose (Erna Berger and Peter Anders). Nicolai: Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor: Duet from Act II (Wilhelm Strienz and Georg Hann); Horch, die Lerche (Walther Ludwig). Beethoven: Fidelio: Duet from Act I (Peter

Klein and Irmgard Seefried). **Gluck: Orfeo ed Euridice: Ach, ich habe sie verloren (Margarete Klose). Wagner: Lohengrin: Scene from Act I (Franz Völker and Maria Müller).** Various orchestras conducted by Karl Elmendorff, Karl Böhm, Artur Rother, Robert Heger, and Johannes Schüler. BASF 21549 \$5.98.

Performances: **Varied**

Recordings: **Middle-fi**

BASF is a large German industrial concern recently drawn to the field of recordings. Its varied catalog so far includes operetta and light music on the one hand, and a batch of historical reissues on the other. The latter have been culled for the most part from radio archives, and some of them were available in the United States in the early LP days on the Urania and Vox labels. The four releases here add up to a mixed batch.

The *Carmen* disc gains distinction from Karl Böhm's conducting. The pacing is slower than the brisk and sometimes headlong tempos favored by “modern” batoneers, but there is evidence of firm leadership, clarity of textures, and precise articulation. The mastery of today's patriarchal Karl Böhm unquestionably rests on a solid foundation. I liked the relatively subdued but certainly not passionless singing of Elisabeth Höngen and, even more, the exemplary José of Torsten Ralf (1901-1954); Josef Herrmann (1903-1955) offers the unusual effect of an Escamillo with a Wotan-like vocal weight and sonority. Only the tremulous Micaela is weak. This is an enjoyable *Carmen* for the specialized collector who is not averse to hearing it in German. For its age (it was recorded in 1942), the disc offers serviceable sound.

The *Otello* disc (1943) is less satisfying sonically, with noticeable distortion in the climaxes. Karl Elmendorff, of Bayreuth eminence, imparts an improper Wagnerian breadth to the proceedings. In this context, the *Otello* of Helge Rosvaenge displays some beautifully controlled *mezza-voce* singing in the Love Duet and in the death scene, but elsewhere he is frequently over-declamatory and glottal. Hans Reinmar's Iago sounds as though he got his military training in the SS, but the warm, affecting Desdemona of Maria Reining is a pleasure throughout.

The *Capriccio* disc is interesting mainly for historical reasons, since it offers the cast of the opera's premiere. Outstanding here is Georg Hann in La Roche's famous monologue. The eminently authoritative conducting of Clemens Krauss cannot compensate for the antiquated sound here, especially if one holds the view (as I do) that the orchestral writing is the most valuable element in this work. It should be stated, however, that Richard Strauss was so pleased with these performers that he remarked: “May heaven allow me to have such a cast for my next operas!” If only he could have heard the superior Countesses of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Gundula Janowitz, as we can hear them in more recent and better recordings!

The BASF “Sampler” is grandiloquently described as “featuring the great voices of the golden era of German opera.” I would be reluctant to say the years 1938-1944 were the golden era of German anything, but we'll let that pass. . . . The disc is a hit and miss affair. Erna Berger and Peter Anders are simply marvelous in the *Martha* scene, and the work of Strienz and Hann is full of infectious gusto in the Nicolai opera. Tiana Lemnitz, Margar-

ete Klose, and Walther Ludwig sustain their fine reputations in other excerpts: in the remaining selections the singing ranges from mediocre to adequate, celebrity names notwithstanding. Technically, the disc is not outstanding, but it is listenable.

Everything in these four releases is sung in German. The discs are attractively packaged, are well annotated, and indicate dates of recording. In spite of a less-than-sensational beginning, the further growth of the BASF catalog bears watching. *G.J.*

VERDI: *Rigoletto*. Ettore Bastianini (baritone), Rigoletto; Renata Scotto (soprano), Gilda; Alfredo Kraus (tenor), Duke of Mantua; Ivo Vinco (bass), Sparafucile; Silvio Maionica (bass), Monterone; Fiorenza Cossotto (mezzo-soprano), Maddalena; others. Orchestra and Chorus of Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Gianandrea Gavazzeni cond. EVEREST 470/3 three discs \$8.94.

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

Everest is returning to circulation the interesting and puzzling Mercury-Ricordi *Rigoletto* of 1961. The conducting of Gianandrea Gavazzeni is at times mechanical and in one instance ("*Questa o quella*") totally charmless, but it is nonetheless far more authoritative than that of Richard Bonyng in the new London recording (see Best of the Month). As for the rest, Ettore Bastianini, as Rigoletto, pours out a steady stream of golden tones without any real effort to color or shade them; the Duke of Alfredo Kraus is absolutely first-rate (only Pavarotti matches him in his sovereign command of this music); and the Renata Scotto of 1961 is not yet the mature artist of later years. Her tone is hard and her phrasing at times unsubtle, but there are good moments in her singing. The Maddalena, Sparafucile, and Monterone are all outstanding. The recorded sound is rich but a bit harsh. What is puzzling about the set is that the entire performance is pitched almost a half-tone too high. (What is the "A" in Florence?) Since this troubles the life out of me, I am unable to recommend this recording, though it offers much of value, especially at the attractive price. *G.J.*

VERDI: *Rigoletto* (see Best of the Month, page 81)

VILLA-LOBOS: *Fantasia Concertante for Clarinet, Bassoon, and Piano* (see WILDER)

WALTON: *Belshazzar's Feast; Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten*. John Shirley-Quirk (baritone); London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, André Previn cond. ANGEL S 36861 \$5.98.

Performance: **Good but not best**
Recording: **Good but not best**

Of these two works by William Walton, one is a familiar entry in the record catalog, the other is a new addition. André Previn and the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, with soloist John Shirley-Quirk, give what on the surface is a first-rate performance of the familiar *Belshazzar's Feast*. Conductor and orchestra alone do similar honors for Walton's *Improvisations on an Impromptu of Benjamin Britten*, a set of variations on the melody from the slow movement of Britten's Piano Concerto. Both works, for some inscrutable

(Continued on page 128)

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Rossini's
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LA PIETRA DEL PARAGONE

in a new recording
by Vanguard

Reviewed by
ERIC SALZMAN

*Listening to the studio playback
are (l. to r.) bass Andrew Foldi,
tenor José Carreras, conductor
Newell Jenkins, and baritone
John Reardon.*



LA PIETRA DEL PARAGONE (*The Touchstone*) was Rossini's first really big hit. His earliest operas, brought out after 1810, were written mostly for Venice, once a leading operatic city but now only a provincial center. In 1812, with eight major works under his belt and something of a reputation, Rossini received a commission for La Scala in Milan, by then already the leading house in Italy. The libretto was provided by one Luigi Romanelli, a Scala regular (opera houses had librettists-in-residence in those days!) and apparently a skilled hand at the sort of thing required. Rossini turned out the music in his usual two weeks or so, and the work reached the stage on September 26. It was an enormous success and, we may assume, a brilliant contrast to the rather mediocre works that had come to dominate the Italian stage after the death of the great eighteenth-century masters. Rossini was the toast of Milan—indeed, of all Italy and, shortly, of all Europe.

La Pietra del Paragone had fifty-three performances at La Scala that season, and in the following years it was produced in something like forty European theaters. Even within the relatively brief span of Rossini's operatic career, however, it was replaced in popularity by its successors and has only recently reappeared—briefly and in adapted form—in a few theaters in Italy and Germany. The version performed at New York's Lincoln Center in the fall of 1972 may well have been the first performance of the original in a century and a half. And now, with the release of a new four-disc album, Vanguard will be making the opera available to a wider public.

La Pietra del Paragone, like many of Rossini's comedies, belongs to the genre of the eighteenth-century comedy of manners. Nevertheless, as astute a critic as Stendhal—whose enthusiastic evaluation of the work is all most of us have known about it until now—praised the subject matter as strong, charming, amusing, lively, and not at all remote from real life. Is *La Pietra del Paragone*, then, an early example of operatic *verismo*? Hardly. Even in its hour of upheaval and decadence, Italy somehow preserved its complex social conventions. It

is not so much that Italian opera resembles "real life" as that Italian life often—even today—follows the conventions of opera!

The subject of *La Pietra* is strikingly like that of *Così Fan Tutte*. The scene is a weekend party at the country villa of Count Hasdrubale, a rich, eligible bachelor. Three predatory females (sexism was almost a way of life in those dark days) are among the guests: one, Clarice, is genuinely fond of the fellow, but the other two are pure schemers. In order to test them out, the count stages an elaborate charade, pretending he has lost all his money—and this test is the "touchstone" referred to in the title. In keeping with the elaborate social code of the upper classes—see Stendhal on Italy, *passim*—each of the ladies arrives with a gallant: Clarice with a sensitive young poet (the tenor), and the other two with a fatuous poetaster and a venal newspaper critic. These characters provide the real fun. The critic explains—at musical length—that he has, ready-made for sale, reviews to suit any and all performers. The poet, equally ready for all occasions, trots out his grandest, most bombastic grand opera scenes, with Babylonian kings making love to Greek queens on the banks of the "Mississippi" (and if you don't think that's very funny, just say it to yourself a couple of times).

FOR this rather promising material, Rossini has created a score that cedes nothing to his later and more famous works. It is hard to think of what to say that has not been said a thousand times about Rossinian operatic wit and verve. Perhaps one should point out that the music is full to overflowing with the joy of life and let it go at that.

La Pietra del Paragone is erroneously said to have been the work in which the Rossinian crescendo was first introduced, but that honor really belongs to *La Scala di Seta*, written earlier in the same year: indeed, at least one such passage was simply lifted bodily out of the earlier work and inserted into the later one. William Weaver's album notes cite borrowings from two other earlier works, but *Scala* is also liberally quoted. Rossini, in turn, cannibalized *Pietra*: he used the overture again for *Tancred*, and

(surprise!) here also is the original storm music familiar to us from *The Barber of Seville*. In any case, the Rossinian style is here in full bloom, and there are things in *Pietra* he never surpassed.

Why, then, has *Pietra* remained such an obscure entry in the history books? One of the reasons certainly is the casting problem, or, perhaps more exactly, the character of the vocal writing. This is, above all, an opera for low voices. Clarice, created for Marietta Marcolini, is an alto (or, as we would say, a mezzo) role requiring great strength and virtuosity in the low and middle registers. By itself, this problem might have been overcome—Rosina in *Il Barbiere* was later simply lifted up into a soprano role—but this is merely the beginning of the difficulty. Only one of the three female leads is a soprano, and, of the four male roles, three are basses (or, as we would say, bass-baritones). The tenor part, while important, is not showy and is definitely secondary to that of the Count (a rare example in opera of a bass who gets the girl). Most difficult of all, the three low male leads are all quite elaborate vocally. Rossini was writing for the last generation of the agile, small-voice, florid, "natural" singing that gave way shortly thereafter to the full, large-house sound that we now think of as operatic.

In my view (admittedly it is always dangerous to express any opinion about singing without bringing an avalanche of outrage down on one's head), the problem with reviving this kind of singing has to do with the fact that current ideals of vocal beauty, the rise in pitch, the hugeness of our opera houses, and the consequent need for vocal power all conflict fatally with the simplicity, accuracy, freedom, and agility required in a work such as *La Pietra*. And unless this kind of singing makes a comeback—there are, indeed, a few signs of it—these operas will never really make it.

Let me say that I have nothing but praise for Newell Jenkins' conducting and the excellent orchestra and chorus. On the other hand, with one or two exceptions, these are just not the right kinds of voices for this music. One should not hesitate, for example, to ornament this music extensively with

appoggiature, cadenzas, and vocal variations of the repeats, but here these stylistic points are neglected and all effort is devoted—with mixed success—just to pushing through the notated difficulties. Only the tenor, José Carreras (here making his American disc debut), has the right purity, lightness, phrasing, and style—but even he unaccountably neglects vocal opportunity after vocal opportunity, omitting, for example, a required high B-flat in favor of the lower octave at the end of an aria. Nevertheless, it is his attractive singing that provides most of the vocal high spots. And, vocally third-rate though it is, Andrew Foldi's portrayal of the critic Macrobio (is a macrobe the opposite of a microbe?) is genuinely amusing, and Justino Diaz and John Reardon register their comic moments with some effectiveness. Oddly enough, Raymond Murcell—here cast in the small part of the servant—has sung florid Rossini parts of this period (with me, as it happens) with a good deal more authority and accuracy than is here encountered among the leads.

FOR whatever solace it may give to our feelings of musical chauvinism, whatever aid and comfort to our balance of payments, this production is one of the very few major operatic recordings done in the United States in recent years (Clarion also recorded—for Vanguard—Mayr's *Medea in Corinto* here a couple of years back, and the DG/Met *Carmen* is to be released shortly). But before you conclude that these little swallows are harbingers of some kind of American recording renaissance, I hasten to add that the costs of *La Pietra del Paragone* were largely financed by a grant to Clarion Concerts from the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust. In any event, the album has so much real musical value that I wish I could be more positive about it. Let me, therefore, stress its virtues: it is a wonderful rediscovery of a scintillating, love-of-life Rossini comedy; it is conducted with real affection, style, and *vivacità*; it is superbly performed by a first-class New York orchestra (with Kenneth Cooper as the excellent harpsichordist); and, except for some possible balance problems, it is well produced. Further, it features a notable new tenor, excellent choral work, and some very good comic moments. And, if the singing lacks something of purity, freshness, and ease, it is at least tasteful and artistic in its intentions.

The recording was reviewed from advance stereo tapes, and there were several problems in balance that will probably be cleared up in the final mastering. The discs will be issued in compatible SQ matrix quadraphonic form. Tune in next month for a final technical evaluation of the finished product.

ROSSINI: *La Pietra del Paragone*. Beverly Wolff (mezzo-soprano), Marchesina Clarice: Elaine Bonazzi (mezzo-soprano). Baronessa Aspasia; Anne Elgar (soprano). Donna Fulvia; John Reardon (baritone). Count Hasdrubale; José Carreras (tenor). Giocondo: Andrew Foldi (bass), Macrobio: Justino Diaz (baritone), Pacuvio: Raymond Murcell (baritone), Fabrizio: Clarion Concerts Orchestra and Chorus, Newell Jenkins cond. VANGUARD VSD 71183-6 four discs \$11.96.

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table (and some scrutable) reasons, sound rather dull.

The word "inscrutable" applies to the performance of *Belshazzar's Feast*. This should be, by every rational yardstick, a thrilling interpretation. On a technical level it has everything: good orchestral playing, good choral singing, good solo singing, and reasonably good recording technique. Yet it left me utterly untouched. Could it be the slight lack of focus and projection in the recorded sound of large choral numbers? Could it be the soloist's modicum of stodginess? Could it be that Previn tamed down the drama a bit in striving for elegance and smoothness?

The "scrutable" reasons, which come out in Walton's *Improvisations*, have to do with the composition itself. There are some fine moments in this work once it has gotten beyond the thin, unimpressive statement of the theme itself. But that statement is very long, and its weakness demands considerable counterbalancing to save the piece as a whole. Some sections function splendidly in this regard; others do not. So the end result is a pretty spotty affair. And that is rather strange, considering Walton's proved ability to put together solidly inspired, consistently well sustained music. L.T.

WEBER: *Piano Music* (see Best of the Month, page 82)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

WIENIAWSKI: *Violin Concerto No. 1, in F-sharp Minor, Op. 14; Violin Concerto No. 2, in D Minor, Op. 22.* Itzhak Perlman (violin); London Philharmonic Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. ANGEL S 36903 \$5.98.

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

WIENIAWSKI: *Violin Concerto No. 2, in D Minor, Op. 22.* **SZYMANOWSKI:** *Violin Concerto No. 2, Op. 61.* Henryk Szeryng (violin); Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, Jan Krenz cond. PHILIPS 6500 421 \$6.98.

Performance: **Good Szymanowski**
Recording: **Mostly good**

Henryk Wieniawski's F-sharp Minor Violin Concerto is a virtuoso vehicle he wrote for himself to play at Leipzig in 1853 when he was seventeen. Certainly, its bristling Paganinian hurdles offer some indication of Wieniawski's fiddling prowess: he was one of the greatest of his day. Next to the more popular and lushly lyrical D Minor Concerto it is fairly lightweight stuff, but highly entertaining.

Perlman plays with really terrific pizzazz and bravado, not to mention tonal accuracy, digital dexterity, and lyrical warmth, and Ozawa is in absolutely top form in his supporting role. Climaxing the whole affair is a blazing performance of the famous gypsy finale of the D Minor. There is nothing wrong with the recorded sound either.

Henryk Szeryng's reading of the Wieniawski D Minor Concerto does not fare so well, partly because of a rather over-reverberant hall and partly because of what seems to be the performers' lack of genuinely intense involvement in the music. But when they perform the work of Poland's counterpart to Béla Bartók, Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937), both Szeryng and Krenz are involved on a thoroughly intense and committed level. The Second Violin Concerto (1933) is one of the most successful and effective of Szymanowski's mature works.

Though his earlier period is highlighted by such works as the opera *King Roger* and a luxuriant First Violin Concerto, it is generally agreed that Szymanowski's creative life reached its true fulfillment when he began working with the Polish folk idiom of the Tatra mountain region, as Bartók worked with Magyar and Transylvanian materials. Unhappily, not enough of Szymanowski's work has been heard in concert or steadily available on records (except on the imported Polish Muza label) to allow a proper critical evaluation in an international frame of reference. However, the Second Violin Concerto does represent a prime example of the mature Szymanowski idiom, in which a rhapsodic, personal lyricism finds accommodation with rhythmic elements derived from folk sources, and the whole is treated with a richly varied palette of orchestral color.



E. POWER BIGGS

In good form on famous old instruments

As I have already indicated, this performance is thoroughly committed and convincing, and it is better recorded than the Wieniawski reading on the other side of the disc—a welcome replacement for the short-lived Artia recording issued some eight years ago. D.H.

WILDER: *Suite for Clarinet, Bassoon and Piano.* **VILLA-LOBOS:** *Fantasia Concertante for Clarinet, Bassoon, and Piano.* **POULENC:** *Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon.* Academy Trio. GOLDEN CREST CRS 4115 \$5.98.

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

Three very refined musicians collaborate in performances that do as much to make this recording a pleasure as does the music in its grooves. The instrumental combination of clarinet, bassoon, and piano is unusual, and the surprise (to me) is that it works as well as it does. Apparently Alec Wilder, whom the Academy Trio commissioned, was sceptical when he first contemplated the instrumentation but ended up loving it. Well he might. He composed a very successful and pleasing, pop-tune suite of five movements that won me over not only with their melodiousness but with their sincerity.

The Villa-Lobos *Fantasia Concertante* was written for Eugene List. It is as lyrical as the Wilder piece, but (obviously) it is couched in the South American's familiar style. Poul-

enc's *Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon* is a piece of French *gebrauchsmusik*—well made, witty, and sometimes pretty. The medium is a bit astringent without the piano, but the message is nice.

The performances are all splendid, and so is the recording, except that on my pressing the second side had a few groove flaws. L.T.

WOLF: *Italian Serenade* (see SUK)

COLLECTIONS

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

E. POWER BIGGS: *Famous Organs of Holland and North Germany.* J. S. Bach: *Chorale Prelude, "Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr"* (BWV 715). Niehoff 1551-1553 organ in Johanniskirche, Lüneburg. Scronx: *Two Fantasias in Echo Style in G Major and F Major.* Telemann: *Aria in C Minor.* Schnitger 1700 organ in Dutch Reformed Church, Uithuizen. Sweelinck: *Fantasia in A Minor; Fantasia in the Dorian Mode with Echoes; Fantasia in A Minor with Echoes.* Schnitger 1720 organ in the Grote Kerk, Zwolle. Buxtehude: *Fanfare from the Sinfonia of the Cantata "Ihr lieben Christen freut euch nun."* Wilde 1598 organ in Lüdingworth, rebuilt by Schnitger in 1682. *Chorale Prelude, "Lobt Gott, ihr Christen, allzugleich."* Schnitger 1697 organ in Dedesdorf. Paumann: *Mit ganzem Willen* (1452). Circa 1500 organ in the Great Church of St. Laurens, Alkmaar. Cornet: *Courante met Varieties.* A. and F. C. Schnitger 1723 organ in the Great Church of St. Laurens, Alkmaar. Koetsier: *Partita for English Horn and Organ, Op. 41, No. 1.* Flentrop 1958 organ in the Church of the Holy Sacrament, Breda. E. Power Biggs (organs): Leo van der Lek (English horn, in Koetsier). COLUMBIA M 31961 \$5.98, © MT 31961 \$6.98.

Performance: **Highly commendable**
Recording: **Excellent**

The E. Power Biggs international organ survey, having covered instruments in England, France, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland, among others, continues with an admirable disc devoted to instruments from the northern regions of Germany and Holland. Some of the organs heard here—the one at Zwolle and the St. Laurens organ at Alkmaar, for example—are already familiar from previous discs, but the idea of combining a variety of instruments and styles of organ construction on one disc continues to be a fascinating one, and the recording is a welcome listening experience. Mr. Biggs once again displays his knack for revealing the most effective registers of each organ.

The choice of pieces, too, is extremely well judged. There are a few rarities, such as that wild, early Bach chorale prelude with the strange harmonies and flamboyant scale passages between verses, "*Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr*" (BWV 715), that starts things off. The program continues with a variety of echo fantasias by the little-known Gherardus Scronx and his far better-known contemporary, Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, which are particularly effective in exploiting the various Schnitger organs that predominate on this disc. The fifteenth-century Conrad Paumann and the twentieth-century Jan Koetsier (Dutch, born 1911) represent the chronological extremes, and Koetsier's neo-Classic variations, played on a modern Flentrop in duet with an English horn, are a highly effective

and imaginative contrast to the earlier part of the program.

Mr. Biggs is in good form throughout, and the recording, though at times at a rather high level for cleanest tracking, is colorful and brilliant. Comparing the disc and the Dolbyized cassette revealed that the loudest sections at the beginning of the disc sides had a more open quality, but in slightly lower-level sections the cassette was virtually indistinguishable from the disc; even cassette flutter vanished during the less loud moments, and at the end of each sequence the cassette played more cleanly than the disc. I.K.

COMPOSERS THEATRE. David Foley: *Four Pieces for Saturday Afternoon*. Robert Keys Clark: *Concerto for Clarinet and Chamber Orchestra*. John Watts: *Signals for Soprano and Chamber Orchestra*. Alvin Brehm: *Cycle of Six Songs on Poems of Garcia Lorca*. Jerome Bunke (clarinet); Catherine Rowe (soprano); Jan DeGaetani (soprano); Composers Festival Orchestra, Alvin Brehm cond. TRILOGY/COMPOSERS THEATRE SERIES CTS 1002 \$5.95.

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

The Composers Theatre was founded in 1965 as part of the Composers and Choreographers Theatre directed by John Watts and Laura Foreman. Since that time it has been extraordinarily active in producing a wide range of performances, pieces, and kinds of music—largely in a series of May Festivals in New York. The Composers Festival Orchestra is made up of some of the best free-lance and chamber musicians active in New York.

Conductor Alvin Brehm, himself a virtuoso of the double-bass, is represented on this disc by a series of dramatic pieces from Garcia Lorca very beautifully sung by Jan DeGaetani. Director John Watts' *Signals*—Catherine Rowe is the excellent soloist—are warning signs and notices ("Notice: this envelope contains unsolicited illustrated brochures offering merchandise of an adult nature . . ."). There is an oddly poignant contrast between the seriousness and delicacy of the settings and the texts themselves—a contrast rendered even odder by Watts' program note comments: "The trouble with being serious is a profound question: Why do we have to be serious all the time?" And yet his settings are intense and highly serious! The Robert Keys Clark Clarinet Concerto—the most conservative work on the record—has its playful moments but, like all the music on this disc, also comes down on the serious side. David Foley's beautiful set—oddly enough the oldest and yet the most "modern" of the works here—is an intense, serious, beautifully made series of sound pieces. Everything is extremely well played, and the recording is of good quality. E.S.

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

DANCE MUSIC OF THE RENAISSANCE. Anon.: *Lamento di Tristano/Rotta; Trotto; Istampita Ghaetta; Istampita Cominciamento di gioia; Saltarello; Bassa danza à 2; Bassa danza à 3. Gulielmus: Bassa danza à 2. F. de la Torre: Alta danza à 3. Attaignant (publ.): Basse danse La brosse/Tripal/Tourdion; Basse danse La gatta; Basse danse La Magdalena. Dalza (Petrucci, publ.): Calata ala Spagnola. Neusiedler: Der Judentanz; Welscher Tanz Wascha mesa/Hupfauff.*

Milán: *Pavanas I & II. Mudarra: Romanesca "Guarda me las vacas." Phalèse (publ.): Passamezzo/Saltarello; Passamezzo d'Italyel Reprise/Gaillarde. A. le Roy (publ.): Branle de Bourgogne. B. Schmid der Ä. (publ.): Englischer Tanz; Tanz "Du hast mich wollen nemmen." Paix (publ.): Schirazula Marazula; Ungaresca/Saltarello. Susato (publ.): Ronde. Gervaise (publ.): Branle de Bourgogne; Branle de Champagne. Konrad Ragossnig (lute and guitar); Ulsamer Collegium (virginal, regal, fidel, gamba, crumhorn, recorder, flute, Schalmei, pommer, sackbutt, etc.), Josef Ulsamer dir. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIVE 2533 111 \$6.98.*

SIXTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH DANCE MUSIC. *La Bataille (Pavane); Dont vient cela (Chanson and Gaillarde); Belle, qui tiens ma vie (Pavane and Allemande Prince); Dance Suite (Hoboeckendans, Tordion, Two Branles simples, and La Mowisque); Cest a grant tort (Chanson, Arrangement for two lutes, and Reprise); La rote de rode; Tant que vivray (Chanson, Allemande-Reprise, and Passamezzo francese); Au joli bois (Two Chansons and Pavane/Gaillarde); Il me suffit (Chanson and Basse danse); J'ameroye mieus dormir seulette (Pavane); Il estoit une fillette (Chanson, Pavane "La Gaiette," and Ronde); Pourquoi donc (Chanson and Ronde); Si par souffrir (Chanson and Pavane); Le cuer est bon (Chanson and Reprise); Jamais n'aymeray masson (Pavane).* Musica Reservata (vocalists, recorders, shawm, crumhorn, cornetts, rebecs, harpsichords, percussion, etc.), Michael Morrow dir., John Beckett cond. PHILIPS 6500 293 \$6.98.

Performances: **Stylish and entertaining**
Recordings: **Both very fine**

We have come a long way from the semi-amateurish performances of Renaissance dances that used to be—just a few decades ago—the only way one could hear this kind of music. As both these collections attest, older instruments can be played with a high degree of technical proficiency, a thorough understanding of the stylistic requirements (tempos, phrasing, ornamentation and embellishment, scoring, and notation), and a wonderful sense of the music's entertainment value.

For various reasons, if I had to choose only one of these two discs, I would take the Archive one. This collection of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century dances is about as good a group of performances as one can find on records today. The repertoire includes courtly as well as peasant pieces from a variety of countries, mainly Italy, Germany, France, and Spain. A glance at the heading above indicates some of the tonal variety contained in this collection, but no listing or recital of stylistic attributes can possibly prepare one for the color (considerable use of ethnic influences is one reason), rhythmic verve, and scintillating ensemble to be heard here. There is perhaps only one minor disappointment: the Milán Pavanas are quite sweetly rendered on the vihuela, but surely some additional ornaments could have been expected in the performance. Otherwise, this is a great set, supremely well recorded. Archive has also provided annotations and illustrations.

At first sight, the Philips collection entitled "Sixteenth-Century French Dance Music" would appear, like the Archive one, to be purely instrumental. Not at all. There are a great many dance tunes that exist in more

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than one setting, and sometimes the source for the dance is a vocal piece. What we have here is essentially a collection of comparisons of different settings. For instance, Claudin de Sermisy's chanson *Dont vient cela* is heard first in its vocal version and then in an arrangement published by Pierre Attaignant as an instrumental gailarde. Likewise, Janequin's chanson *Il estoit une fillette* is first sung, then played instrumentally as a pavane subtitled "*La Gaiette*," and then, finally, in another instrumental setting published by Tielman Susato as a ronde. The concept of such comparisons is not unique: Musical Heritage Society has a similar collection entitled "*La Chanson and La Danse*" (MHS 1125) which to some extent duplicates four of the tunes on the Philips disc. But the British group Musica Reservata is a highly professional body, and that, combined with superb reproduction of the colorful instruments and a good deal of infectious music making, makes the Philips disc one to consider very carefully. My reservations have to do with a certain lack of graciousness in the vocal style and on occasion in the instrumental pieces, which sometimes are played with too much metronomic regularity (without easing up at cadences). Although the singing of the sixteenth century was probably based on head-tone production and was nasal in sound without much vibrato, it is difficult to sanction the flat, relatively expressionless quality of a good deal of the singing here. Still, the marvelous sound of the full ensemble and even the combination of three lutes (Pacolini's *Passamezzo francese*) are very difficult to resist. I.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RAVI SHANKAR AND ALI AKBAR KHAN: *In Concert 1972. Ragas: Hem Bahay; Sindhi Bhaivavi; Manj Khamaj.* Ravi Shankar (sitar); Ali Akbar Khan (sarod); Alla Rakha (tabla). APPLE SV BB 3396 two discs \$11.96.

Performance: **Two masters**
Recording: **Good live**

Ustad Allauddin Khan was Ali Akbar Khan's father, Ravi Shankar's father-in-law, and the teacher of both the younger men. He died in September 1972 at an age reputed to be over one hundred. This concert, given at New York's Philharmonic Hall about a month later, was dedicated to his memory by his two most famous disciples.

The instrumental duet is, I believe, not an ancient Indian form but a modern one brought to a high state by Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan. According to Shankar, this kind of playing had its origins in joint student sessions and student/guru concerts. But certainly the popularity of Indian string music in the West had a great deal to do with the development of these *Jugalbandi*, or duets, and most of their musical meetings seem to have taken place in Europe or this country.

I do not offer these comments in any spirit of criticism, however. It would be foolish and presumptuous of Westerners to want Indian music to stand still, to preserve itself in a museum for our delectation. Not the least significant thing that can be said about Indian music is that it is a living tradition and as such is still evolving, as it must. Artistic evolutions are justified by their results—in short, by the quality of the music.

The first raga, a composition of Ustad Allauddin Khan, is a slow and even mournful music for the strings alone without tabla—at

least what we get of it. Just as it is beginning to intensify, it is rather uncomfortably faded out (presumably a five-sided album was out of the question). The second raga is allowed to spread itself over two sides—a full fifty minutes and a very satisfying experience. The final piece, a morning raga, is the most obviously appealing with its beautiful, exotic, and sinuous first section and a brilliant *Gat in Teental* which builds up to a tremendous pitch of intensity, brilliance, and excitement. No Western virtuoso showpiece has a more thunderous and crowd-pleasing finale.

The quality of this live recording is good. Aside from the unfortunate fade-out on the first raga, I would question only the idea of beginning side one with a sustained and (to the record listener) meaningless round of applause from the audience. E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GALINA VISHNEVSKAYA: *Russian Opera Arias. Rimsky-Korsakov: The Tsar's Bride: It was in Novgorod (Act 2); Marfu's aria (Act 4). Tchaikovsky: Mazeppa: Sleep, my pretty child. The Sorceress: Where are you, my beloved. The Oprichnik: Ah, the wild winds. Iolanthe: Why did I not know before. The Queen of Spades: Oh, listen, night! (Act 1); Oh, I am weary of sorrow (Act 3). The Maid of Orleans: Farewell, my hills.* Galina Vishnevskaya (soprano); Bolshoi Theater Orchestra, Boris Khaikin and Aleksander Melik-Pashayev cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL SR 40220 \$5.98.

Performance: **First-rate**
Recording: **Good**

A glance at the list of its contents should convince the opera lover that this is an indispensable collection. Considering the fact that both Rimsky-Korsakov and Tchaikovsky were significant and prolific composers of operas, they are far from well represented in the record catalogs. Moreover, except for isolated stagings of *Le Coq d'Or*, *The Queen of Spades*, and *Eugene Onegin*, they are represented in the theater not at all. In the past, even mediocre recorded documentation of their important activity has elicited a grateful response. And what we have here is positive luxuriance. Galina Vishnevskaya is Russia's leading operatic soprano, and her interpretive authority in this repertoire is unquestionable. She recorded these arias approximately ten years ago (the disc has been "available," in an elusive sort of way, as a Russian import), when her voice was in prime state. Her singing here is clearly superior to that on recent recordings. There is a slight and not too disturbing vibrato in the upper mid-range, but the top notes ring out strongly and securely. From the dramatic point of view she leaves little room for criticism as she ranges through the gamut of emotion demanded by these varied but generally tragic situations.

It remains to be added that the excerpts themselves are quite beautiful. The relatively familiar arias from *The Queen of Spades* and *The Maid of Orleans* receive treatments here that are not likely to be duplicated on records today, and the excerpts from *Iolanthe*, *The Sorceress*, and *The Oprichnik* are also illustrative of Tchaikovsky's inspiration.

The authoritative orchestral backgrounds are captured in sound that is unspicacious but enjoyable. Full texts and informative notes are supplied. This is a highly recommendable disc. G.J.

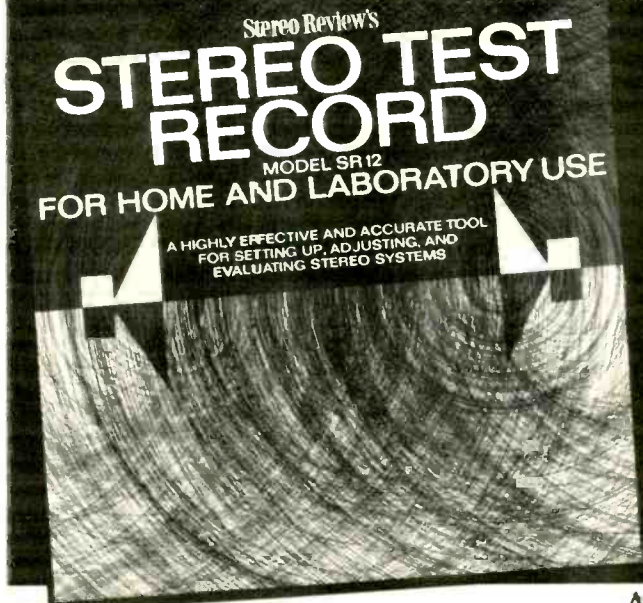
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TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK



WHERE DO YOU PUT YOUR MIKES?

PROFESSIONAL engineers will tell you that optimal microphone placement is more an art than a science. Since newcomers to live recording obviously don't yet have the backlog of experience that adds up to what might be called a "trained instinct," a couple of quick, general-purpose mike setups can be useful. I've found them highly successful when I haven't had the option of suspending my mikes from the ceiling, as I prefer to do.

Many times microphone stands are either unavailable or, as in a stage play, aesthetically intolerable. (Audiences want to see performers, not a recording studio.) To get around this, both Electro-Voice and Shure have developed inconspicuous, inexpensive microphone "stands" for floor placement that hold a mike aimed at the performers, but within 1/4 inch of the stage floor, while keeping it isolated from footfalls and other vibrations that would otherwise ruin the recording. Using cardioid ("unidirectional") mikes, you might want to separate your pickups by only a couple of feet for small groups; four to six might be required for large ensembles. When placing the mikes, keep in mind the angle each microphone covers, so you don't have any "dead" areas. I'd place the mikes about six feet from, say, a chamber orchestra, but the distance from the performers is not too critical when using this technique. The reason is that the microphones are so close to the floor that they pick up both the direct sound from the performer and the sound that bounces off the floor right in front of the mike. This almost doubles the output from each mike.

An article in the *Journal of the Audio Engineering Society* (January-February 1972) drew my attention to another successful technique for recording a full orchestra using only a single pair of cardioids. An orchestral selection was recorded simultaneously on six tape machines, each one being fed by a different microphone-placement configuration. Comparing the tapes without knowing which was which, colleagues at the Central Europe Convention of the Audio Engineering Society agreed that best results were obtained from a microphone technique that, with a little ingenuity, the amateur recordist can easily duplicate. It involves spacing the pick-up ends of two cardioid mikes between seven and eight inches apart so the mikes form an angle of 110 degrees. You can space and angle the mikes easily enough by strapping them to a short stick with plastic electrical tape, so a single stand will support them both. To cover the usual spread of an orchestra or chorus, this little assembly will be placed just behind—and, of course, above—the conductor. Normal mike stands go up to only about five feet, but a "Baby Boom" attachment (costing less than the stand itself), a home-made extension, or even a dowel rod from a lumber or hardware store will supply the required elevation. I've lashed up such assemblies inside of fifteen minutes, taping the mike cables right to the stand to make them as inconspicuous as possible. Inelegant, perhaps, but this technique is easy and it works; sonically speaking that's all that really counts.

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A Marantz speaker system breaks up that old gang of yours.

Separation of sound is a true test of a speaker system. And to put Marantz—or any speaker—to the test you should listen to something you are already familiar with so you'll be able to hear for yourself that it's the speaker and not the recording that makes the difference. Oh, what a difference Marantz makes! What you thought were two oboes are now clearly an oboe and a flute and that barbershop quartet...well, they're really a quintet.

Let's face it: ALL speakers claim to be the very A-1 HOT SHOT MOSTEST BEST.

But the proof is in the listening. And that's where Marantz speakers come in. Each model is engineered to handle a plethora of continuous RMS power and each

employs a long excursion woofer and a tweeter with fantastic off-axis response. And Marantz offers you a wide selection of sizes. Each model for the money is truly the very A-1 HOT SHOT MOSTEST BEST.

However, keep this in mind. Marantz speaker systems are built by the makers of the most respected stereo and 4-channel equipment in the world. The same quality that goes into Marantz receivers and amplifiers goes into the entire line of Marantz speaker systems.

To find out how much better they sound, listen. That's all we ask. Listen.

marantz.
We sound better.

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CIRCLE NO. 43 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Only the sound is heavy.

Koss breaks the lightweight sound barrier with a revolutionary new High Velocity Stereophone.

Up until now a lightweight phone meant a lightweight sound. But not any more. Because Koss engineers have developed a micro/weight, high velocity type stereophone that sounds like a heavyweight. And that's an achievement no music lover will take lightly.

Unique electro-acoustical design.

Unlike conventional stereophones which contain the sound waves in a sealed acoustical chamber, the new Koss HV-1 High Velocity Stereophone vents the back sound waves to the rear. Without raising the resonance or inhibiting transient response. This unique electro-acoustical design concept provides not only unusual lightness and hear-thru characteristics, but also the exciting, full-range Sound of Koss as well.

Superb tonal quality.

And by substantially reducing the mass of the moving diaphragm assemblies used in the HV-1, Koss has been able to achieve a wide-range frequency response of unusual fidel-



ity. Delicate overtones, which add to the faithfulness of the reproduction are retained. Yet, bass response is extended, clean and "unmuddied."

Stylish low-silhouette design.

Designed to fit close to the head, the new Koss HV-1 Stereophone has a stylish, low-silhouette design without the cone-type projections found in other headphones. This slim design permits unusually fine acoustical tuning of the element chamber at the factory. Which means that, unlike other lightweight phones, every Koss HV-1 Stereophone provides the breathtaking Sound of Koss. And that's not something to treat lightly.

Designed for unprecedented comfort.

You'll listen in comfort hour after hour. Because the new Koss HV-1

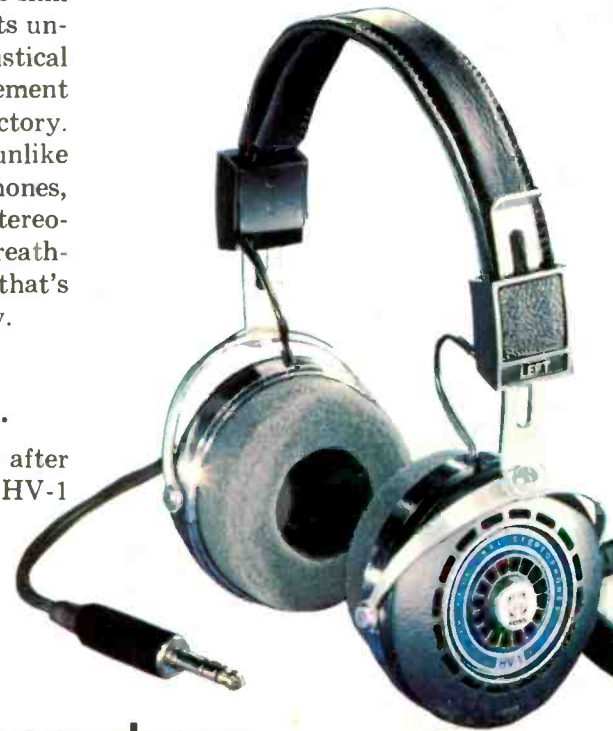
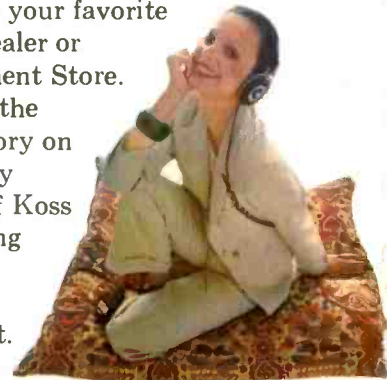
is lighter than 10 ounces. And because it has the perfect balance you expect in a Koss Stereophone. Not to mention a glove soft vinyl-covered headband and acoustical sponge ear cushions.

Hearing is believing.

Listen to the Koss HV-1 Stereophone at your favorite Hi-Fi Dealer or Department Store.

And get the whole story on the heavy Sound of Koss by writing Virginia Lamm, c/o Dept. SR-372.

We won't take your interest lightly either.



 **KOSS HV-1 stereophone**
from the people who invented Stereophones.