

Stereo Review

MARCH 1974 • 75 CENTS

SPECIAL TAPE RECORDER ISSUE

On Buying Your First Tape Recorder
Michael Tippett * Cleo Laine * Ex-Beatles



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Fidelity.



The Allman Brothers Band is available exclusively on Capricorn records and tapes.

Pioneer High



The Allman Brothers Band has a great new sound...



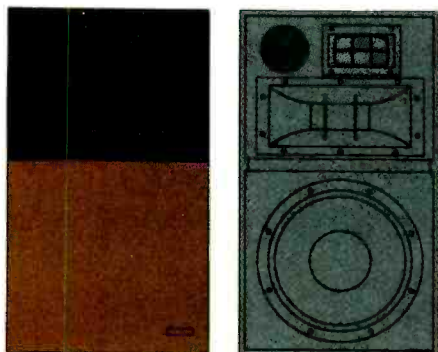
More than anything else, the Allman Brothers Band are musicians. Accomplished, sophisticated musicians whose blues-rooted improvisations have carried them to the top of their field.

Musicians, not rock stars. Their success doesn't depend on sequins or serpents, or make-up, or put-on showmanship. Instead, they innovate. And they stake their fame on their music.

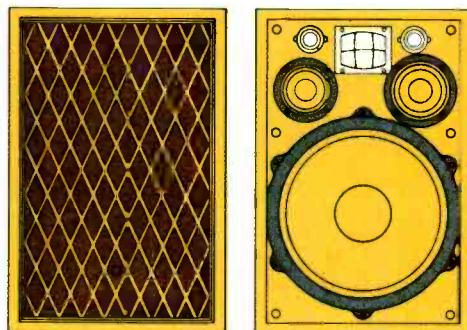
As musicians, the Allman Brothers Band prefer the sound of Pioneer speakers. They prefer Pioneer speakers because of their clarity and overall sound quality. They prefer Pioneer speakers because they reproduce the sound of an original performance without adding coloration, hyped-up bass or artificial brilliance. They prefer Pioneer speakers because exactly what goes in is exactly what comes out.

With Pioneer speakers, the Allman Brothers sound right to the Allman Brothers. It's that simple.

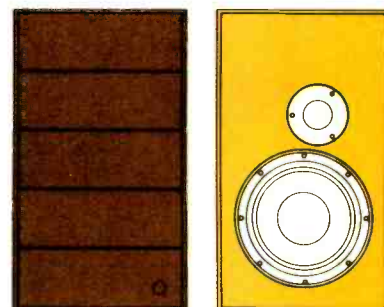
Pioneer makes a variety of speakers to match any hi-fi system. Speakers that are consistent in their clarity, sound quality and ability to exactly reproduce the sound of an original performance. Speakers that vary because people vary, hi-fi systems vary, room acoustics vary, budgets vary and tastes vary.



R-700



CS-99A



PROJECT 100

Series R

Series R speakers are designed for the individual who demands the finest in styling, design and sound. Styling and design as contemporary as the state of the art. And sound as contemporary as a live performance.

Series R speakers bring new life to live performances. And truly live performances to your listening room. Their high efficiency, extreme accuracy and zero coloration have been equally praised by artists, engineers, critics and musicians.

All of the Series R speakers — R700, R500 and R300 — deliver the true vibrancy of a live performance. In an untouched, uncolored and unusually natural way.

Project Series

Project Series speakers are designed to deliver maximum performance per dollar in a contemporary bookshelf design. Smallest of the three, the Project 60 is an extremely efficient speaker system that delivers a surprisingly high sound level from moderately powered receivers and amplifiers. It is perfect for smaller hi-fi systems. And equally well suited for 4-channel systems — since many of the new 4-channel receivers and amplifiers have less power per channel than their stereo counterparts.

Project 80 and 100 speaker systems use their air suspension design to deliver a beautiful natural

sound. Their superb bass response can effortlessly reproduce the lowest of lows with minimal distortion and uncanny accuracy. Their dome tweeters provide exceptionally wide dispersion and highs of unsurpassed clarity.

CS Series

There is a myth about speakers that handsome cabinets hide inferior sound. Fortunately, it need not be the case.

If you seriously demand the acoustic quality of custom cabinetry along with powerfully smooth sound, the CS series speakers will be your first choice. Their sound is precise and natural. And their craftsmanship is a reflection of an almost bygone era.

The air suspension design of the CS series speakers help to provide the quality of sound that is the hallmark of Pioneer engineering excellence. From the compact 2-way 2-speaker CS-44 to the 4-way 6-speaker CS-63DX, Pioneer CS series speakers offer a combination of superb sound reproduction and custom-crafted cabinetry.

There are 12 different speakers in the Pioneer line. There are six different musicians in the Allman Brothers Band. Different people have different needs and different tastes. Even the Allman Brothers. But they agree that Pioneer speakers deliver the best sound available.

Pioneer speakers are part of a complete line of Pioneer audio components — components preferred by the Allman Brothers Band. A fact you might consider when you make your own selection.

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New Jersey 07074.
West: 13300 S. Estrella, Los Angeles,
Cal. 90248 / Midwest: 1500
Greenleaf, Elk Grove Village, Ill.
60007 / Canada: S. H. Parker Co.

| Model | Type | Maximum Input Power | Size (HxWxD) | Price |
|-----------|-----------|---------------------|---------------|-----------|
| R-700 | 12" 3-way | 75 watts | 26"x15"x14" | \$229.95* |
| R-500 | 10" 3-way | 60 watts | 24"x14"x12" | 159.95* |
| R-300 | 10" 2-way | 40 watts | 23"x13"x11" | 119.95* |
| PROJ. 100 | 10" 2-way | 35 watts | 23"x13"x10½" | 129.95 |
| PROJ. 80 | 10" 2-way | 30 watts | 20¾"x11¾"x11" | 99.95 |
| PROJ. 60 | 8" 2-way | 20 watts | 18½"x10½"x8½" | 79.95 |
| CS-63DX | 15" 4-way | 80 watts | 28"x19"x13" | 269.95 |
| CS-99A | 15" 5-way | 100 watts | 25"x16"x11" | 229.95 |
| CS-A700 | 12" 3-way | 60 watts | 26"x15"x12" | 189.95 |
| CS-A500 | 10" 3-way | 50 watts | 22"x13"x12" | 149.95 |
| CS-66 | 10" 3-way | 40 watts | 22"x12"x12" | 119.95 |
| CS-44 | 8" 2-way | 25 watts | 19"x11"x9" | 74.95 |

*Fair Trade resale price where applicable.

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when you want something better

Is it live or is it Memorex?



If anybody knows what Ella Fitzgerald sounds like, it's her old friend Count Basie.

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He listened, but didn't look, as we alternated between Ella singing live and Ella recorded on Memorex with **MRX₂ Oxide**.

After switching back and forth a number of times, we asked the Count which was Ella live and which was Ella on Memorex.

His answer: "You gotta be kidding, I can't tell."

Now it just stands to reason that if an expert like Count Basie can't tell the difference between "live" and Memorex, you probably can't either.

But, why not buy a Memorex **MRX₂ Oxide** Cassette and listen for yourself?



MEMOREX Recording Tape.

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FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW

Stereo Review

MARCH 1974 • VOLUME 32 • NUMBER 3

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No sales talk. Just numbers.

Three new moderately priced bookshelf speakers for the audiophile:
The Fisher Studio-Standard 400 series.

| Specifications * | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | ST-465 | ST-445 | ST-425 |
| Price: | \$169.95 | \$99.95 | \$79.95 |
| Effective frequency response, on axis. (Pink-noise source, 1/3 octave bands.): | 40-20,000 Hz | 50-20,000 Hz | 55-20,000 Hz |
| Impedance, nominal: | 6-8 ohms | 6-8 ohms | 6-8 ohms |
| Continuous power-handling capacity: | | | |
| 2-second duration: | 100 Watts | 90 Watts | 80 Watts |
| 60-second duration: | 50 Watts | 45 Watts | 40 Watts |
| Long-term duration: | 25 Watts | 22 Watts | 20 Watts |
| Minimum continuous power, amplifier requirement: | 25 Watts at 8 ohms | 15-20 Watts at 8 ohms | 15-20 Watts at 8 ohms |
| Total number of drivers: | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Woofer cone diameter: | 12" | 10" | 10" |
| Voice-coil diameter: | 2" | 1 1/2" | 1 1/2" |
| Magnet structure: | 5 lbs. | 4 lbs. | 2 3/4 lbs. |
| Midrange speaker type: | flare dome | cone | — |
| Diameter: | 3 1/2" | 4 1/2" | — |
| Voice-coil diameter: | 1 1/2" | 3/4" | — |
| Magnet structure: | 2 1/2 lbs. | 1 1/2 lbs. | — |
| Tweeter type: | dome | dome | dome |
| Dome or cone diameter: | 1" | 1" | 1" |
| Voice-coil diameter: | 1" | 1" | 1" |
| Crossover frequencies: | 450, 5,000 Hz | 650, 5,500 Hz | 2,500 Hz |
| Controls: | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Midrange: | 3 pos. | — | — |
| Treble: | 3 pos. | 3 pos. | 3 pos. |
| Weight: | 39 lbs. | 30 lbs. | 25 lbs. |
| Dimensions: | 24 1/2" x 14 1/4" x 11 1/16" deep | 23 1/2" x 13" x 11" deep | 22 1/2" x 12 1/4" x 10" deep |
| Cabinet finish: | Walnut | Walnut Vinyl | Walnut Vinyl |

The Fisher
Numbers speak louder than words.

*Studio-Standard speakers are available only at Fisher Studio-Standard dealers. Fair trade prices where applicable.

Stereo Review

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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

By WILLIAM ANDERSON

DECEPTIVE PACKAGING

IT is with no thought of adding to your troubles in these parlous times but of enlisting you in the ranks of a vigilant minority that I call your attention to a kind of pollution that is likely to cause all of us, in time, infinitely more trouble than might, say, the whole of Texas covered a six-pack deep in non-biodegradable beer cans. One tends always to speak of one's own first concerns as if they were of equal moment to the entire world, but language pollution is unquestionably everybody's business, not just those of us who work under that infinitely various umbrella called "communications." Indeed, far too many in the communications business—those who write for newspapers, magazines, books, radio, TV, and including especially those libertine *littérateurs* whose pleasure it is to spread bad grammar over the nation's billboards—are not language's defenders but its betrayers, and their lazy ignorance (or energetic connivance) has worked to poison the streams of intellectual commerce, to trash the ecology of our minds with solecisms, malapropisms, and various syntactical sins.

Words have certainly been abused, misused, and suffered changes of meaning in years past, but, owing to the disseminating marvels of today's mass communications media, the destruction of perfectly good words is outrunning our ability to replace them, to find others of equal effectiveness to serve a still desperate need to communicate with each other. It is no help to this need to find so many useful words, once bright with glorious precision, turned literally (and often deliberately) into tarnished idols of the market place, blunt instruments of the status vocabulary. Thus it is already probably too late, for quick example, to rescue the vanished meanings of such recent victims of devaluating fashion as *charisma*, *compassion*, and *empathy*. And it is most certainly too late to keep Johnny Carson from teaching millions to say *nauseous* when they undoubtedly mean *nauseated*, or to keep practically everybody else from dropping a leaden *hopefully* into sentences already foundering with the ballast of too many "y'knows." Moreover, the world being what it is, even the New Illiteracy has its cohorts, brazen yahoos who are poised to attack, in the name of a misguided linguistic democracy, the fearful power of any sesquipedalian magus they feel threatened by, chanting the while their belligerent Humpty Dumpty credo: "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

It is not this, however, that most oppresses my soul, but the institutionalization of these tendencies in college-level hoaxes that call themselves "Studies in Rock Poetry" and the like. What disturbs me about these warts on the academic nose is not so much that they represent an unwholesome expansion of that area of "advanced education" already swollen with courses in Baton Twirling, Surfing, and Beginning Macramé, or even that they are undoubtedly appeasement tokens being paid out by tired and defeated faculties. What puts my back up is the impertinent appropriation of the good word *poetry* to lend a false dignity, a coloring of intellectual seriousness, to an activity that is at best an uncritical celebration of mediocrity, a pandering to undeveloped tastes unchallenged by any standards. I hasten to add that the blame for this attaches not to the students nor even to the subject matter, but to those apostates who give these indulgences catalog room and grant them degree credit.

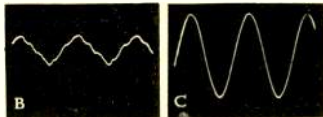
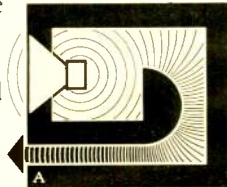
If we can agree, for purposes of understanding each other, that *poet* and *poetry* mean Shakespeare and his *Sonnets*, Hopkins and his *Pied Beauty*, Eliot and *The Four Quartets*, then there are no rock "poets," no rock "poetry." What we have are rock lyricists and lyrics, neither of which will merit our respect and admiration until they have stood up to be measured against the great examples of the past (and, perhaps, a few of the present), starting with, say, Sir William Schwenck Gilbert. But they probably won't, so let us prepare for the alternative: a freshly graduated student turning around and suing his Alma Mater for deceptive packaging, for failing to provide the education her prospectus promised. Are you ready, Ralph Nader?

Now BIC VENTURI™ puts to rest some of the fables, fairytales, folklore, hearsay and humbug about speakers.

Fable

Extended bass with low distortion requires a big cabinet.

Some conventional designs are relatively efficient, but are large. Others are small, capable of good bass response, but extremely inefficient. The principle of the BIC VENTURI systems (pat. pend.) transforms air motion velocity within the enclosure to realize amplified magnitudes of bass energy at the BIC VENTURI coupled duct as much as 140 times that normally derived from a woofer (Fig. A). And the filtering action achieves phenomenally pure signal (Scope photos B & C). Result: pure extended bass from a small enclosure.



B—Shows output of low frequency driver when driven at a freq. of 22 Hz. Sound pressure reading, 90 dB. Note poor waveform.
C—Output of venturi coupled duct, (under the same conditions as Fig. B.) Sound pressure reading 131.5 dB, (140 times more output than Fig. B.) Note sinusoidal (nondistorted) appearance.

Fairytale

It's okay for midrange speakers to cross over to a tweeter at any frequency.

Midrange speakers cover from about 800 Hz to 6000 Hz. However, the ear is most sensitive to midrange frequencies. Distortion created in this range from crossover network action reduces articulation and musical definition. BIC VENTURI BICONEX horn (pat. pend.) was designed to match the high efficiency of the bass section and operates smoothly all the way up to 15,000 Hz, without interruption. A newly designed super tweeter extends response to 23,000 Hz, preserving the original sonic balance and musical timbre of the instruments originating in the lower frequencies.



Humbug

You can't retain balanced tonal response at all listening levels.

We hear far less of the bass and treble ranges at moderate to low listening levels than at very loud levels. Amplifier "loudness" or "contour" switches are fixed rate devices which in practice are defeated by the differences in speaker efficiency. The solution: Dynamic Tonal Compensation.™ This circuit (patents pending) adjusts speaker response as its sound pressure output changes with amplifier volume control settings. You hear aurally "flat" musical reproduction at background, average, or ear-shattering discoteque levels—automatically.

angle dispersion in one plane. Since speakers can be positioned horizontally or vertically, you can miss those frequencies so necessary for musical accuracy. Metallic coloration is eliminated in the BICONEX horn by making it of a special inert substance. The combination of conical and exponential horn flares with a square diffraction mouth results in measurably wider dispersion, equally in all planes.

Hearsay

A speaker can't achieve high efficiency with high power handling in a small cabinet.

It can't, if its design is governed by such limiting factors as a soft-suspension, limited cone excursion capability, trapped air masses, etc. Freed from these limitations by the unique venturi action, BIC VENTURI speakers use rugged drivers capable of great excursion and equipped with voice coil assemblies that handle high power without "bottoming" or danger of destruction. The combination of increased efficiency and high power handling expands the useful dynamic range of your music system. Loud musical passages are reproduced faithfully, without strain; quieter moments, effortlessly.



A system for every requirement

FORMULA 2. The most sensitive, highest power handling speaker system of its size (19¾ x 12 x 11½)!" Heavy duty 8" woofer, BICONEX mid range, super tweeter. Use with amplifiers rated from 15 watts to as much as 75 watts RMS per channel. Response: 30 Hz to 23,000 Hz. Dispersion: 120° x 120°. \$98 each

FORMULA 4. Extends pure bass to 25 Hz. Has 10" woofer, BICONEX mid-range, super tweeter. Even greater efficiency and will handle amplifiers rated up to 100 watts. Dispersion: 120° x 120°. Size: 25 x 13¼ x 13" \$136 each.

FORMULA 6. Reaches very limits of bass and treble perception (20 to 23,000 Hz). Six elements: 12" woofer complemented by 5" cone for upper bass/lower midrange; pair of BICONEX horns and pair of super tweeter angularly positioned to increase high frequency dispersion (160° x 160°). Size: 26¼ x 15¾ x 14¾" \$239 each.

Sturdily constructed enclosures. Removable grilles in choice of 6 colors. Optional bases for floor standing placement. Write for brochure SR-3

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BIC VENTURI™

Wide dispersion only in one plane is sufficient.

Conventional horns suffer from musical coloration and are limited to wide-



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Don't Shoot the Player Piano

● Irving Kolodin's low opinion of reproducing player pianos, as revealed in his "Choosing Sides" column on Gershwin (January), puzzled me. So I put Gershwin's piano-roll recording of *Rhapsody in Blue* on my Duo-Art Steinway to see if it was indeed the "awkward, angular, unvital travesty" he said it is. Not at all. In fact, it proceeded to "delight the senses anew with body, bouquet, and bite," which left me all the more puzzled. Now, I have a very high regard for Mr. Kolodin. I cut my musical teeth on his *New Guide to Recorded Music* back in 1947 (I still have and treasure the book). So I am left with two possible explanations: (1) I can't recognize an unvital travesty when I hear it, or (2) Mr. Kolodin has never heard a reproducing player piano that was properly tuned, regulated, and adjusted.

Naturally, I hope it is the latter. It would not surprise me, because the reproducing piano was one of the most complex and temperamental machines ever made. It is possible that the Kolodin Ampico, weary of being fed Duo-Art fodder, gave up trying to digest even the Ampico rolls that had been made for it. But the point is, they can be adjusted to produce exquisite musical results. I believe mine is so adjusted, and if Mr. Kolodin feels it would serve any useful purpose, I would be honored if he would come and hear it the next time he is in Chicago. Perhaps then we could settle whether explanation number one or two is correct.

Meanwhile, I am not about to throw out my disc recordings, but then when the gentle ghost of the divine Wanda, for example, seats herself at my piano—slippers, robe, and all—and begins to spin out the exquisite tracery of a Mozart sonata just for me, I am not about to throw out my piano rolls either!

ROGER TORKELSON
Chicago, Ill.

Vinyl Analysis

● James Goodfriend's "Going on Record" in the January issue seems to accept the senseless popular notion that anything other than *combustion* of petroleum products is a relatively frivolous use, to be particularly curtailed by the present shortage. The curtailment, however, should be *confined* to combustion and should be drastic enough to permit extension of other oil uses which now

consume a scarcely significant part of the whole. Long before the immediate, politically caused deficiencies, it was pointed out by scientists that our oil would in time run out and that (even by crass commercial measurements) the value of a barrel of it in terms of its potential derivatives—plastics, antibiotics, and petrochemicals in general—is so many thousand times greater than its value as fuel that it is stupid to burn it up for purposes better served by bicycles and feet. Mr. Goodfriend's "the less oil, the less vinyl" would be replaced, rationally, by "the less oil for burning, the more for making things."

The solution to the polyvinyl chloride shortage and to the pollution crisis as well is to begin at once a rapid phasing out of all gadgets such as automobiles which burn fractions of petroleum (or of any fossil fuel, for that matter). And I propose that, as each jalopy is forcibly retired, its former owner would be compensated, at government expense, with its monetary equivalent in PVC pressed with Bach and Mozart. (The revenue should come from revoking the oil depletion allowance.) Suddenly enriched by several hundred hours of infinitely repeatable music, these people could then stay at home without fretting for the road. They could listen, groove, know joy—in short, be men and women.

HARLAN SPORE
Pine Bluff, Ark.

● As a music lover I am much concerned with the dwindling supply of vinyl owing to the current petroleum shortage. I suggest that the industry set up procedures to collect discs people don't want any more—there must be millions just lying around in homes over the country.

S. PHELPS
Columbia, N.J.

M.O.R., Please

● William Anderson's column "Less Means M.O.R." (January) is the most intelligent, logical, informative summary of the recording industry I have ever read. Watching any industry go down the drain is an agonizing experience, but with one concerned with supposedly artistic, intelligent people it is even more difficult to comprehend. If "the amateur hour is over," may we assume this includes recording company executives as well as their stars?

Mr. Anderson's last sentence about the

"classical reservoir" was a gem. Having spent thirty-five years exploring the endless caverns of the classics, I welcome the move to the M.O.R. The tried-and-true repertoire is the most likely to attract converts to the classics, not experimental work such as that of Cage. Classical music needs a broader base, so maybe M.O.R. has a silver lining beyond record-company profits.

ROBERT M. STRIPPY
Jacksonville, Fla.

More Ivie Anderson

● In reference to Chris Albertson's fine review of the superb Ivie Anderson and Duke Ellington set on Columbia (January), I may add that those interested in Ivie's work with Duke on RCA Victor can find six of the ten sides on the following discs: *I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good* is on RCA VPM 6042; *Me and You, Five O'Clock Whistle, Chocolate Shake*, and *Jump for Joy* are on LPV 517; and *Hayfoot, Strawfoot* is on LPV 541.

RUSSELL B. POWELL
Cleveland, Ohio

Hines and Gershwin

● Congratulations to Stanley Dance on his delightful article on jazz pianist Earl "Fatha" Hines (January) and to Henry Pleasants for the "Gershwin Season" in the same issue. I found both ju'S Wonderful!

DENNIS R. HENDLEY
Milwaukee, Wis.

Carpenter Controversy

● In defense of Peter Reilly: do people really need a review of the Carpenters at all? They're on TV so much lately—why write about them? Also, despite the "nonreview" complaints, the complainers bought the album anyhow, didn't they? What do they want in a review, a mere table of contents with indications as to the key in which each song is performed, the tempo, etc.? Ultimately, they're *reading* a review, not hearing the record via a magazine. Write on, Reilly!

JAMES MAASKE
Pasadena, Calif.

● Amazing. I can't imagine anyone getting so upset one way or the other about the Carpenters (Letters, January). To me, they are about as controversial or exciting as tapioca pudding, which I would also detest if I could summon the energy to care that much.

The people responding to Peter Reilly's review in the November issue seem unaware of one of rock's primary functions. Psychologists tell us that a certain amount of adolescent rebellion is both normal and necessary if a child is to achieve emotional independence, or whatever you call it, from his parents—in other words, to grow up. Rock has helped articulate and perhaps relieve the fears, anxieties, and resentments (including rebellion against parents) of growing up for an awful lot of kids, myself included. If this element is removed from rock music, that rebellion will surface in other, perhaps more dangerous or destructive ways. But then, the Carpenters have never really been rock-and-rollers in my book anyway.

What most disturbs me about the letters in the January issue, and some in several other issues as well, is their total lack of humor. I mean, these people sound almost as deadly serious as some "progressive" rock freaks I know. Good grief. In my own defense I might

(Continued on page 10)

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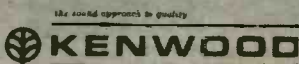


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TWO-FOUR
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add that I'm not crazy about the David Bowies or Alice Coopers either, but they are at least good for a laugh, which the Carpenters, except through the medium of Mr. Reilly's review, have never provided me.

Thanks to Peter Reilly and your other reviewers for pointing out and denouncing the pretentiousness, calculating commercialism, and artistic laziness that seem always ready to engulf popular music. What else is criticism for, anyway? We need the gadfly in all areas of our lives. Incidentally, you will recall that Socrates was also accused of corrupting the young. How does Mr. Reilly like his hemlock served up?

LINDA FREDERICK
Lebanon, Ohio

Straight, with a twist.

Lori and Roberta

● Certain quotes attributed to myself and to Norman Gimbel in the Lori Lieberman story in your December issue have been taken incorrectly by your reporter, Todd Everett, and I find it extremely necessary to correct those points and therefore dispel certain innuendoes which I feel are damaging.

Norman was quoted in the article as saying that Roberta Flack has recorded three songs from Lori's first album, when in fact what he did say was that she was interested in three songs, but as of this date she has recorded only *Killing Me Softly*.

I do resent deeply the quotation marks around the words "very nice" as they were used in the sentence "Roberta Flack has been 'very nice' to Lori . . ." which implies a patronizing attitude on the part of Ms. Flack towards Lori. That could not be further from the truth.

I would like to state that Roberta is a very sincere and wonderful artist who discovered a song and worked very hard and devotedly to produce one of the important records of the year. In addition, she has always been very lovely and complimentary to Lori, whose recording of that song she heard on an airline's tape program. Lori is also a young lady of great integrity and voice, and has only the most warm feelings for Ms. Flack both as a performer and as a person. I truly wish that people would not look for any implication of unkindness in the story surrounding the birth of the song *Killing Me Softly*, as all the people concerned with it are serious and caring people who are way above that.

CHARLES FOX
Beverly Hills, Calif.

● Just a note of thanks for the sensational feature on the newest, most beautiful songstress to come along in a while—Lori Lieberman. She has such an exquisite appeal and freshness. Mike Douglas has been captivated by her as has anyone who has seen her.

NANCY POWERS
Taylor, Mich.

A Compatible View

● The sketch complementing Julian Hirsch's article "How Important Is Audio-Component Compatibility?" in your January issue was of course designed to illustrate the most absurd and extreme case of audio-component incompatibility, to be an example of a condition that is frustrating but humorous. However, I strongly disagree with this particular view. I am the fellow in the sketch scratching his head, that is *my* amp he is holding, *my* speaker

system he is standing in front of—and it all sounds great!

My amplifier is a five-watt tube type, built from a kit. The speaker enclosure is over seven feet tall and occupies more than forty feet of space. There are five drivers, and the entire unit is completely homemade. The bass performance rivals many a large speaker system, considering the mere five-watt input.

Upon seeing this picture, I just had to write to let you know how perfectly this sarcastic illustration describes at least one of your regular readers!

RONALD B. D'ALBERO
Staten Island, N.Y.

Compatibility: A Clarification

● In my article on compatibility (January) I strongly recommended that vacuum-tube preamplifiers never be used with solid-state power amplifiers. At the time I wrote that, I was certainly not thinking of the Audio Research tube preamplifier, which has design features specifically intended to make it compatible with solid-state equipment. These include dual power switches to permit the power amplifier to be separately switched on manually after the preamplifier has warmed up. In addition, the output impedance of the preamplifier is low enough (50 to 600 ohms, depending on tone-control switch setting) to be compatible with the input requirements of any current solid-state power amplifier. I apologize for the possibly misleading comment and wish to reassure my readers that I was not referring to the highly regarded Audio Research preamp, either directly or indirectly, when I issued my original caveat. *Julian D. Hirsch*

Second-Rate Schoenberg?

● In his December "Basic Repertoire" column, Martin Bookspan wrote: "It is ironic that nearly a quarter of a century after his death Arnold Schoenberg's music remains largely outside the normal experience of the average music lover." This should not surprise anyone, really. The truth of the matter is that the average music lover does not care for Schoenberg's music. In the view of the great majority of music lovers, it is second-rate stuff. The ironic thing is that this fact has not dawned on the musical elite after all these years.

WELLINGTON ARTHUR
Birmingham, Mich.

Harping on Coppage

● I would like to enter an objection to the generally well-done essay by Noel Coppage in the December issue, "Lo, the Mighty Harp!" Mr. Coppage seems to write with a bias against Chicago harp men, as is evidenced by his all-too-brief mention of Little Walter and Big Walter Horton. More than that, his references to Sonny Boy Williamson (Willie "Rice" Miller) were jaundiced. The production on his records may be tinny in spots, although Sonny Boy left behind more than a few records—a live album with the Yardbirds, another live album with Memphis Slim, a collection of early material on Blues Classics, and a considerable body of work collected on the Chess album "This Is My Story." And Sonny Boy's poetry, which is considerable, doesn't merely shine through;

not with sidemen ranging from Muddy Waters, Otis Spann, and Fred Bellow to Buddy Guy. Mr. Coppage's remarks on Charlie McCoy, however, were well done and deserved saying.

DAVID C. MACKENZIE
Tulsa, Okla.

Mr. Coppage replies: Bias? Yeah, I'm envious of all those neat sounds those Chicago players get that seem so difficult to play. I think Mr. MacKenzie's complaint refers to space—and so, ironically, does his praise of the McCoy part. To the writer, space is something you fill up; to the reader, it's something already filled, and the question is, "How do I like it, filled like that?" To say as much about McCoy as I felt was warranted by the article's overall intentions, I had to skip elsewhere, for these things can be only so long. And . . . know what just occurred to me? It just occurred to me that we might have a little more space for the articles if some people didn't write such long-winded replies to letters on this page. Guess this is where we say Cowabunga.

● In the December issue of STEREO REVIEW, Noel Coppage's article "Lo, the Mighty Harp!" made an admirable attempt to touch on all aspects of harp playing. But I was disappointed when there was not even a mention of probably the greatest (or at least one of the greatest) blues-harp players of our time, the late Al Wilson of Canned Heat fame. His untimely death was a great loss to the world of blues, and Mr. Coppage does a great disservice to Wilson and his fans in bypassing this great musician. John Lee Hooker, the great black blues artist, called Wilson the greatest, and any article concerning harp players is incomplete without mention of Wilson.

KENNETH PELKER
Massapequa, N.Y.

● In his harp story in the December issue, that idiot Noel Coppage forgot to mention the late Al Wilson, the very harp player he was thinking about—listening to, in fact—when it occurred to him to deliver unto the world a harp story. Wilson was not, in my judgment, a better player than those who did receive some small acknowledgement, but he was one of the best, if not the best, of the latter-day rockers and rollers and blue-eyed bluesers. He had considerable influence on young players—I am continually running into it—and that is one of the reasons why the harmonica is more prominent these days. Don't know why he got left out unless it is true, as the jug player (tentative) in my jug band (tentative) claims, that trying to bend the notes in the top three holes of a harp leads to brain damage, loss of memory, double vision, and falling mustache.

NOEL COPPAGE
East Hideout
Somewhere in New England

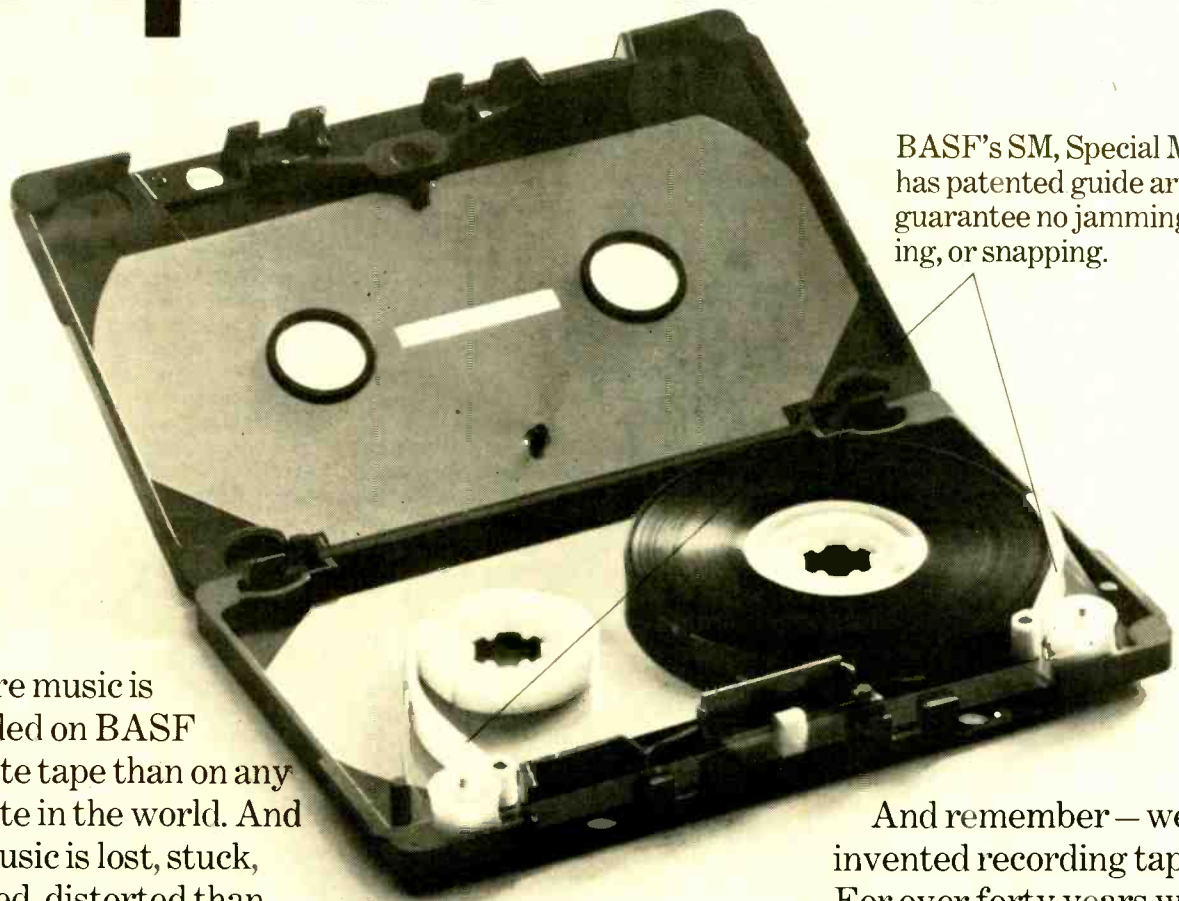
Of Kings and Cassettes

● I had no idea, until I read the first item in Larry Klein's column ("Audio News," December), that cassettes had been around for only ten years, and that Philips had started it all. I appreciate the historical note, as I went to cassettes about three years ago, directly from mono records.

Would you be interested in knowing that cassettes are mentioned in the New Testament? I may be reaching a bit for this one, but

(Continued on page 12)

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the French word "cassette," meaning "casket" or "box," is actually used in the Jerusalem Bible, which was translated into French from original sources. Referring to the visit of the Magi, Matthew wrote in the eleventh verse of his second chapter: "... puis, ouvrant leurs cassettes, ils lui offrirent en présent de l'or, de l'encens et de la myrrhe" ("... and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh").

CHARLES J. SHEEDY
Woodhaven, N.Y.

Starshiner

● I am grateful to Paul Kresh for his laudatory review of my "Stars of the Apollo" album in the December issue, but since I am solely responsible for concept, content, and production of this set, I am rather unhappy about his giving the credit to John Hammond.

CHRIS ALBERTSON
New York, N.Y.

The Music Editor replies: Both Mr. Kresh and I apologize to Mr. Albertson for the error. While John Hammond's name is liberally sprinkled across the four covers of the album, there is a definite statement on it that it was "produced by Chris Albertson," and we should not have missed it.

Classical Rookies

● Your article "Classical Rookies" (January) just doesn't make it. The only person interviewed who came up with a viable answer was Arthur Fiedler, who took into account rock music as *music* and not just the "... ear-deafening, mind-deafening" noise described by Hans Werner Henze. Mr. Henze is obviously totally against rock, whereas although Mr. Fiedler may not enjoy it, he realizes some other people do.

Being nineteen myself, I have a preference for good rock music, and it isn't *always* deafening. I can turn the volume down on the home stereo. At a live concert maybe it is loud, but I'm also sure you can get into the same volume levels at climaxes during a live classical concert.

Another point made by Mr. Fiedler was that curiosity about other types of music will lead to branching out. This is so true. I'm experiencing it myself, and am now buying some outstanding classics for the overall quality of the recording itself as well as for the music. I won't buy a poor recording of *anything*, be it rock or classical.

This whole thing may sound like an Arthur Fiedler fan-club letter, but it's not. It's just that when you print an article containing twelve interviews and only one is down to earth and true, it sets me wondering about the worth of the entire thing.

C. ENGBRETSSEN
Port Reading, N.J.

Or perhaps it only goes to show that what performers know about is performing, and only listeners know about listening? Even negative results are useful.

Introduction to Rock

● To the lover of classical music who needs help in his first explorations of *rock*, I would suggest Frank Zappa's "Hot Rats" (Bizarre 6356) and his "Weasels Ripped My Flesh" (Bizarre 2028).

JOHN GUNNING
London, Ohio

BOOKS RECEIVED

Compiled by
Louise Gooch Boundas

● *The Busby Berkeley Book*, by Tony Thomas and Jim Terry, with Busby Berkeley; foreword by Ruby Keeler. New York Graphic Society, Greenwich, Conn., 1973. \$14.95, 192 pp.

In addition to a short biography of Berkeley, the director or choreographer of some of the most famous movie musicals of the Thirties, Forties, and Fifties, this book contains a discussion (with complete credits) of each of his films. As befits the subject, the illustrations are lavish, well chosen, and well reproduced. This is a beautiful book, probably essential to any collection on the history of the movies.

● *Songs of the American Theater*, by Richard Lewine and Alfred Simon, with an introduction by Stephen Sondheim. Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, 1973. \$15.00, 820 pp.

The largest section of the book is a complete listing of all the songs from Broadway and Off-Broadway shows from 1925 through 1971, plus about three hundred others from important productions dating back to 1900. The songs are listed alphabetically by title, and the names of the composer and lyricist are provided for each song, as well as the title and premiere date of the production in which the song was first sung. Another section is an alphabetical listing of musical shows with authorship credits, song titles, information about vocal scores and record albums, etc. Also included are a chronological list of shows and an index of composers and lyricists. This is a useful reference work in a field where scholarship has been rare.

● *Ballet Music*, by Humphrey Searle. Dover Publications, Second Revised Edition, 1973. \$3.00 (paper), 256 pp.

This revised edition is an updating of a brief survey of music for the ballet, which was originally published in 1958. The revisions have not removed a faint air of British provincialism, but the book remains a serviceable introduction to the subject. An appendix of details of first performances is interesting, but the discography is too haphazard to be of much use.

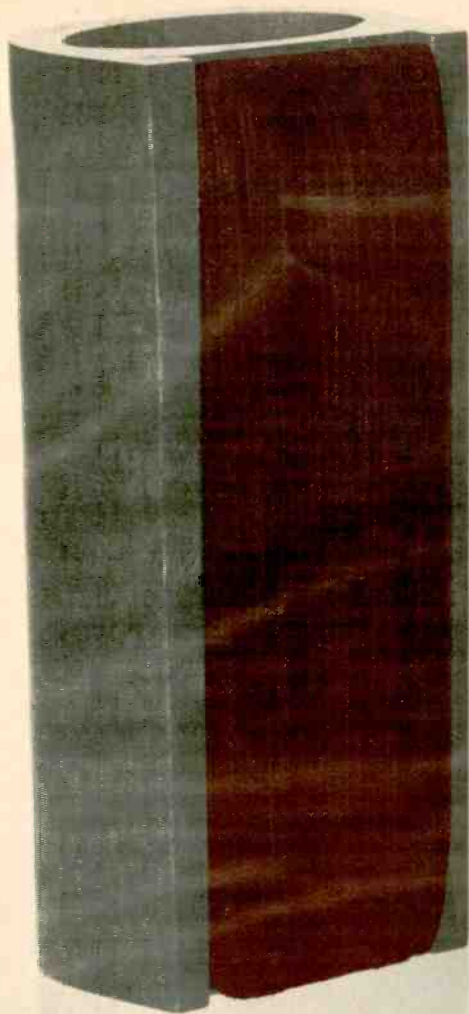
● *Divas*, by Winthrop Sargeant. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, New York, 1973. \$7.95, 192 pp.

Sargeant's profiles of six operatic superstars—Joan Sutherland, Marilyn Horne, Beverly Sills, Birgit Nilsson, Leontyne Price, and Eileen Farrell—support his contention that as far as sopranos are concerned, the Golden Age of opera singing is now. Most of the material in the book originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

DISCOGRAPHIES

● *Discography Series: No. VI, Mendelssohn Vocal Music; No. VII, Richard Strauss Lieder; and No. XI, Debussy and Ravel Vocal Music*, by Peter Morse. Available by mail, for \$2 each, from J. F. Weber, 1 Jewett Place, Utica, N.Y. 13501.

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at 20 Hz the damping factor is 100. The amplifier has an input impedance of 47,000 ohms, and a signal input of 1.5 volts drives it to full output. Protective circuits act to limit the output of the amplifier under conditions of excessive current or voltage. The amplifier has a brushed-gold metallic faceplate accented with a black Plexiglas strip. Approximate dimensions are $16\frac{3}{4} \times 6 \times 13$ inches. Price: \$399. An oiled walnut cabinet is optional at \$30.

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Hear-Muffs QM-440 Four-Channel Headphones



● A four-channel model is now available from Hear-Muffs, incorporating four $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch drivers positioned so that one pair rests just in front of the ears, the

other pair just behind, when the phones are worn. Like the other Hear-Muff products, the QM-440 "Quadramuffs" are thickly padded with soft polyurethane foam and covered by removable (and washable) velour fabric. The phones are worn around the back of the head, like a high collar, so that the foam padding forms a cushion for a listener who is reclining or lying down. Spring-steel headbands that shape the foam padding can be bent by hand pressure to provide the desired amount of clamping

force on the head. The frequency response of the phones is rated as 20 to 18,000 Hz. Impedance is compatible with headphone jacks intended for 4- to 16-ohm phones. Power-handling capability is 1 watt. The phones have an integral 10-foot coiled cable terminating in two standard color-coded phone plugs for the front and rear channels. Weight is 26 ounces, exclusive of cable. Price: \$49.95. The fabric covers are available in several different colors and patterns.

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Toujay Equipment Cabinet Plans



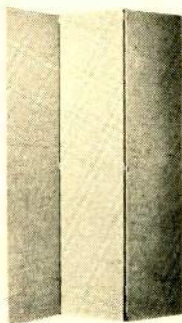
● As a service to audiophiles who can't find or afford equipment housing that really suits their needs, Toujay is offering a set of six plans for easy-to-assemble cabinets that permit the builder to choose his own lumber and finish. All the cabinets are of simple shelf-type construction, with dimensions alterable at the builder's discretion. Several can be installed either horizontally or vertically; one plan describes a modular system, based on identical rectangular bins, that can be expanded to any size desired.

Toujay has designed the construction of the cabinets around a two-piece lock-

ing corner connector that permits easy rearrangement and/or dismantling of the ensemble. A sample connector is included with each set of plans for a total cost of \$2 (\$1 of which is credited toward subsequent purchases of more connectors). Alternatively, a \$10 order buys the plans plus a sufficient number of connectors (thirty-two) to assemble the cabinet pictured at left. Send check or money order to: Toujay Designs, Inc., Dept. SR, 443 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016. Prices include the cost of postage.

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Magneplanar Tympani Loudspeakers



● AUDIO RESEARCH CORP. has announced the latest models in its evolving series of Magneplanar "Tympani"

speakers and speaker systems. The new systems, Tympani IA, Tympani II, and Tympani III, supersede the previous models in the Magneplanar line. Also available are mid-range/tweeter units (Tympani III-TM) for use with low-frequency drivers of the purchaser's choice, and the Tympani III-W bass drivers to reinforce the low-frequency performance of existing systems.

The Magneplanar speakers resemble full-range electrostatic designs in appearance and radiation characteristics. However, they are actually dynamic drivers, employing large Mylar-film diaphragms bonded to thin-wire "voice-coil" grids. Flat bars of magnetic ma-

terial distribute a uniform magnetic field over both sides of the diaphragm. According to the manufacturer, the speakers present an essentially resistive impedance of 8 ohms to the amplifier.

All the Tympani systems are made up of hinged panels that are 6 feet high, 16 inches wide, and 1 inch deep; they are entirely covered in acoustically transparent fabric. The Tympani IA (shown) is a three-panel array with a frequency response of 50 to 15,000 Hz ± 3 dB. The similar Tympani II has two panels, with low-frequency response extending down to 60 Hz within the same tolerances. The largest full-range system, the Tym-

(Continued on page 16)

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pani III, consists of a stereo pair of two-panel assemblies and a single four-panel bass section. Overall frequency response is 45 to 16,000 Hz ± 2 dB; the bass section must be driven by its own amplifier, with an external network (available from Audio Research in passive or active configurations) to cross over at 100 Hz. All systems have internal crossover networks dividing at 1,600 Hz with slopes of 6 dB per octave. Sound-pres-

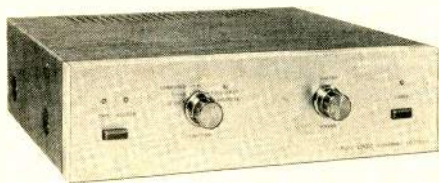
sure levels between 90 and 95 dB are produced at a distance of six feet from the speakers with an input of 10 watts continuous at 500 Hz.

Amplifiers with continuous per-channel output ratings of up to 500 watts can be used with the Tympani IA. The Tympani II handles inputs up to 250 watts, while the mid-range/tweeter and bass sections of the Tympani III have power-handling capabilities of 350 watts

each. The Tympani I's and II's are sold in stereo pairs at \$1,095 and \$795 per pair, respectively. The complete Tympani III stereo system costs \$1,595. The Tympani III-TM (\$850 per pair) and III-W (\$795 each) are essentially the corresponding sections of the Tympani III system. All the Magneplanar speakers are available with a choice of grille fabrics.

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Lafayette SQ-W Four-Channel Decoder



● THE most elaborate consumer form of SQ matrix decoding to date is offered by Lafayette in the new SQ-W four-channel decoder, with SQ "wave-matching" logic and the recently developed variable-blend technique (called "Vari-

blend" by Lafayette). The new circuitry, which replaces the front-back "gain-riding" logic of previous SQ decoders, augments the front-back separation by mixing (blending) the front and rear pairs of decoder outputs in controlled amounts to electrically cancel "leakage" information. The blend coefficients are not fixed; they can vary from moment to moment according to the encoded "positions" of sound sources in the incoming program (position information is converted into control signals that adjust the Variblend coefficients).

In addition to its SQ facilities, the SQ-W incorporates the familiar COMPOSER A

and B circuits (for enhancement of two-channel material and approximate decoding of other matrixed recordings), inputs for discrete four-channel sources, and conventional stereo operation. A rotary switch selects these operating modes. The other front-panel controls are master volume (affecting all four channels), a tape-monitor pushbutton (to replace the receiver or amplifier tape-monitor facilities that will be taken up by the SQ-W's installation), and an on/off pushbutton. The unit's dimensions are 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; its metal cabinet has a simulated walnut finish. Price: \$99.95.

Circle 119 on reader service card

Dokorder Model 7140 Four-Channel Tape Deck



● THE Model 7140 from Dokorder is at present the least expensive (\$549.95) four-channel record-playback tape deck to offer full Sel-Sync operation (Dokorder's name for this is "Multi-Sync"),

enabling the user to synchronize any new material with a previously made recording on another tape track. The three-motor transport is entirely solenoid controlled, with tape speeds of 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ and 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ips and a pause switch. Each channel has its own recording- and playback-level controls and tape-monitor pushbutton. The three-head design permits sound-on-sound and echo effects, with a special control provided for adjusting level. Microphone and line inputs are accepted, but without mixing capability. Tape reels of up to 7 inches in diameter are accommodated, and a retracting pinch roller moves out of the way to simplify tape threading. Dual front-panel headphone jacks that will

drive 8-ohm phones carry the front- and rear-channel signals.

The Dokorder 7140 can be used with both standard and low-noise, high-output tapes; a switch sets the recording bias appropriately for either type. With the latter tape, specifications include a frequency response of 40 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB at 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ips, and 40 to 12,000 Hz ± 3 dB at 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ips; the signal-to-noise ratio exceeds 55 dB at 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ips. Wow and flutter for the two speeds are 0.08 and 0.12 per cent or less. A 1,800-foot reel of tape can be fast-wound or rewound in 95 seconds. The recording-bias frequency is 130 kHz. Overall dimensions of the deck are 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 16 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Circle 120 on reader service card

BGW Model 250 Stereo Power Amplifier



● THE latest and smallest in the BGW line of stereo power amplifiers is the Model 250, described as a scaled-down version of the Model 500R for applica-

tions in which a lower continuous-power output rating will suffice. With 8-ohm loads, continuous output is 90 watts per channel, both channels driven simultaneously. The Model 250 will drive loads as low as 2 ohms (two 4-ohm speakers in parallel, for example), in which case continuous power output is 170 watts per channel. Frequency response is flat within 0.25 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz, and harmonic distortion is less than 0.2 per cent at any power level up to rated output. Signal-to-noise ratio exceeds 100

dB; damping factor is greater than 500 below 500 Hz.

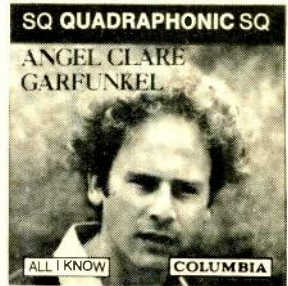
The Model 250 employs six heavy-duty output transistors per channel, and has the company's unique "SCR crow bar" protection circuitry. Additional protection is afforded by a circuit breaker in series with the power transformer's primary winding. Construction of the amplifier is modular, with each channel on its own heat sink. Dimensions: 19 x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Price: \$429.

Circle 121 on reader service card

Columbia announces the brand new Quadraphonic Music Service

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If you join now and agree to buy as few as 4 selections (at regular Service prices) during the coming year



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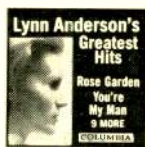
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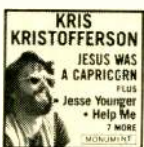
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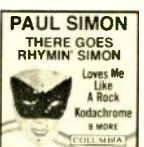
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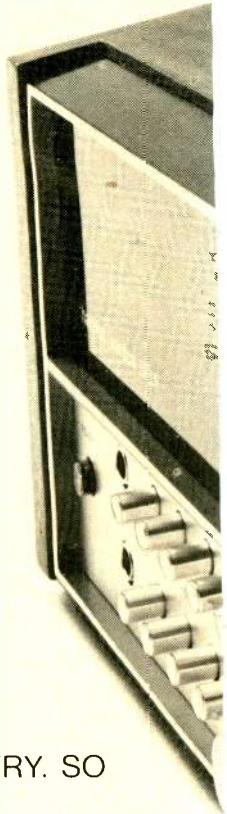
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CIRCLE NO. 17 ON READER SERVICE CARD

AUDIO QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

By LARRY KLEIN *Technical Editor*



Watergating?

Q. *I find myself faced with at least one of the problems dealt with so ineptly by the White House: that is, how to capture on tape conversations taking place in my office. My past attempts at such tapings using a quality recorder and good microphone have usually produced an unclear jumble unless the speaker was very close to the microphone. (I have not yet had any difficulty with inexplicable hum and blank spots on tape nor subsequent loss of the tapes once made.) Do you have any helpful suggestions?*

HARRY CHILDERS
Newark, N.J.

A. Since you haven't asked me about the legality or morality of your intended taping—or even explained your purpose in making the tapes—I will refrain from wading into those murky waters. Technically, the problem comes under the heading of signal-to-noise ratio, the signal being, of course, the voice or voices you wish to capture on tape. The noise, which is obscuring the voices, is produced primarily by the room reverberation (echo) picked up by the microphone along with the voices. And, of course, there is some slight additional noise (hiss) generated internally by the recorder's electronics. The interfering reverberation or echo can be coped with in several ways. The best approach, of course, is to get the microphone as close as possible to the person(s) speaking. The direct sound of the voices will then override the subsequent reflected sounds coming from the walls and hard-surfaced furniture. So you might ask your guest(s) to speak slowly and distinctly into the aspidistra plant (actually a disguised microphone) perched on the corner of your desk. However, if for some reason you find that approach impractical (and I suspect you might) then there are other things you could try. It would help to make your office as acoustically dead as possible so as to minimize the interfering reverberation. This might mean redecor-

ating to include heavy drapes, a thick carpet, soft fabric-covered furniture (rather than leather), an acoustic-tile ceiling, and a minimum of exposed glass surfaces. Eliminating noises from the street and air conditioning will also help. You need not construct an anechoic chamber (it would be uncomfortable to work in), but your efforts should tend in that direction.

Oddly enough, it would be helpful to record your guests in stereo—even in four-channel—because of a psychoacoustic phenomenon called the “cocktail-party effect.” The term is applied to the ability of the human binaural-hearing apparatus to “focus” on a specific nearby conversation even when surrounded by other equally loud conversations—such as occur at a cocktail party. This subjective focusing phenomena can render a conversation intelligible even though its volume level may be lower than that of some closer potentially interfering sound source. (You can check out the cocktail-party effect—and its dependence on binaural hearing—by focusing on one of several conversations taking place around you, then blocking off one ear. You'll find a severe loss of both localization and intelligibility.) Listening with stereo headphones to a stereo tape made with two microphones will therefore provide a great enhancement of clarity by enabling the listener to psychoacoustically “subtract” from them the accompanying reverberation and other noises. Using a four-channel recording setup with the four microphones placed in a square surrounding the conversation area will allow the transcriber wearing a good pair of four-channel or normal stereo headphones (connected to a not-too-complicated switch box) to change the acoustic perspective by switching among the signals picked up by each adjacent pair of microphones.

The final step in achieving clarity for transcription would be the use of a one-third-octave filter device to peak up those frequencies that contribute toward

intelligibility and depress the rest. And, of course, the tape recorder used should be a high-quality open-reel unit and have two functions built-in or available as accessories: an automatic recording-level control and a device that starts the recorder with the onset of sound. By the way, are you by any chance in politics, Mr. Childers?

Dolby De-noiser

Q. *I have several stereo tapes that have been recorded from FM and records. Much of this music contains static and other strange noises. Would a Dolby unit installed in my stereo system get rid of enough of this noise to make it worth the cost?*

KARL W. AVERY
Carbondale, Col.

A. (Old-timers among my readers will forgive me if I give this perennial question another go-round—I still get about two letters a week asking it.) No, Mr. Avery, the Dolby system can do nothing about noise that is already in the program material. The only thing Dr. Dolby has ever claimed his system can do is to prevent certain kinds of noise from being *added* to the program material by the tape-recording process. It cannot—repeat—cannot remove noise from program material if that noise was present in the signal *before* the tape was Dolby “encoded.”

DIN Tape-jack Sensitivity

Q. *The test reports on various products with DIN connectors usually state that they are paralleled with the normal phono-jack connectors. However, when I attempted to use its DIN socket input, my tape recorder overloaded and distorted severely. Do you have any idea what happened?*

LEONARD FERENZA
Trenton, N.J.

A. The input pins of the DIN socket in some tape recorders are connected in parallel with the *microphone* input jacks rather than the high-level “line” or “aux” inputs. Feeding a high-level signal of 0.5 volt into a mike input designed to accept perhaps 0.005 volt is going to produce just what you got—severe overload distortion. So, either you'll have to rewire the DIN socket on your recorder or install some signal-attenuating resistors at the plug to reduce the tape-output voltage from your preamplifier to a suitable level. The exact values of the resistors will have to be determined by trial and error, or possibly your recorder manufacturer may have some recommendations. As to why this strange state of affairs should be, it comes about because the DIN inputs have been designed to accommodate the very low signal levels provided by some European equipment.

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We'll be the first to admit it. There is a more advanced automatic turntable than our Miracord 760. It's our own Miracord 50H Mark II, and it costs about \$35 more.

But to call the Miracord 760 "second best" is to call a Bentley "just another car."

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The difference? It's in the motor. The 760 has a specially-designed spectacularly consistent asynchronous motor. Its speed accuracy is virtually unsurpassed in the audio field.

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A word of caution. All of our turntables are handcrafted. Because it's the only way to ensure the kind of precision that ELAC stands for. This means neither the 760 nor the 50H Mark II may be readily available at your corner audio dealer's. Frankly, we'd rather be great than easy to get. If you find yourself having to shop around for our turntables, take comfort in this obvious fact: you don't find a Rolls Royce dealer on every corner. Because greatness can't be mass produced.

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MIRACORD 760



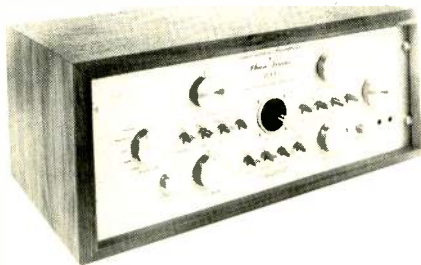
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CIRCLE NO. 36 ON READER SERVICE CARD

AUDIO NEWS VIEWS AND COMMENT By LARRY KLEIN Technical Editor

● IN coming months expect to see announcements of some startlingly novel high-cost preamplifiers with previously unavailable functions and features. The philosophy behind most of them has to do with the sonic shortcomings of recorded music. If everything in the recording/manufacturing chain from the microphones to the finished disc were in fact perfect, then the perfect component need be nothing more than a "straight wire with gain." However, we are all aware of the noise, distortion, compression, limiting, etc. that find their way, accidentally or on purpose, into virtually all program material before it gets onto tape or disc. Obviously a preamplifier that can do something about these problems will bring the listener closer to the original reality than a "perfect" preamplifier that simply handles program material without introducing further deterioration. And so we will find all sorts of very sophisticated "correction" circuitry built into the new equipment.

And it seems almost a "natural" development that a few of the acoustically concerned preamplifier designers are beginning to look at the other end of the reproducing chain also. There is at least one product on the drawing board that, with an accessory microphone, will measure (and enable you to correct for) the specific room-acoustic conditions at your listening location. The day may be just around the corner when the only real difference between the electronic gear in a recording studio or acoustic laboratory and an advanced audiophile's home recording and playback equipment will be the brand names on the front panels.

● And speaking of "super-preamplifiers," it has been just about one year since Bob Carver of Phase Linear demonstrated for me a noise-reduction circuit that he intended to build into a forthcoming Phase Linear preamplifier. In listening tests it seemed almost too good to be true. It was able to cope with almost any kind of disc or tape program material I could feed through it and yield a noise reduction at least as effective as that obtained with the Dolby B system. It did this without requiring preprocessed ma-

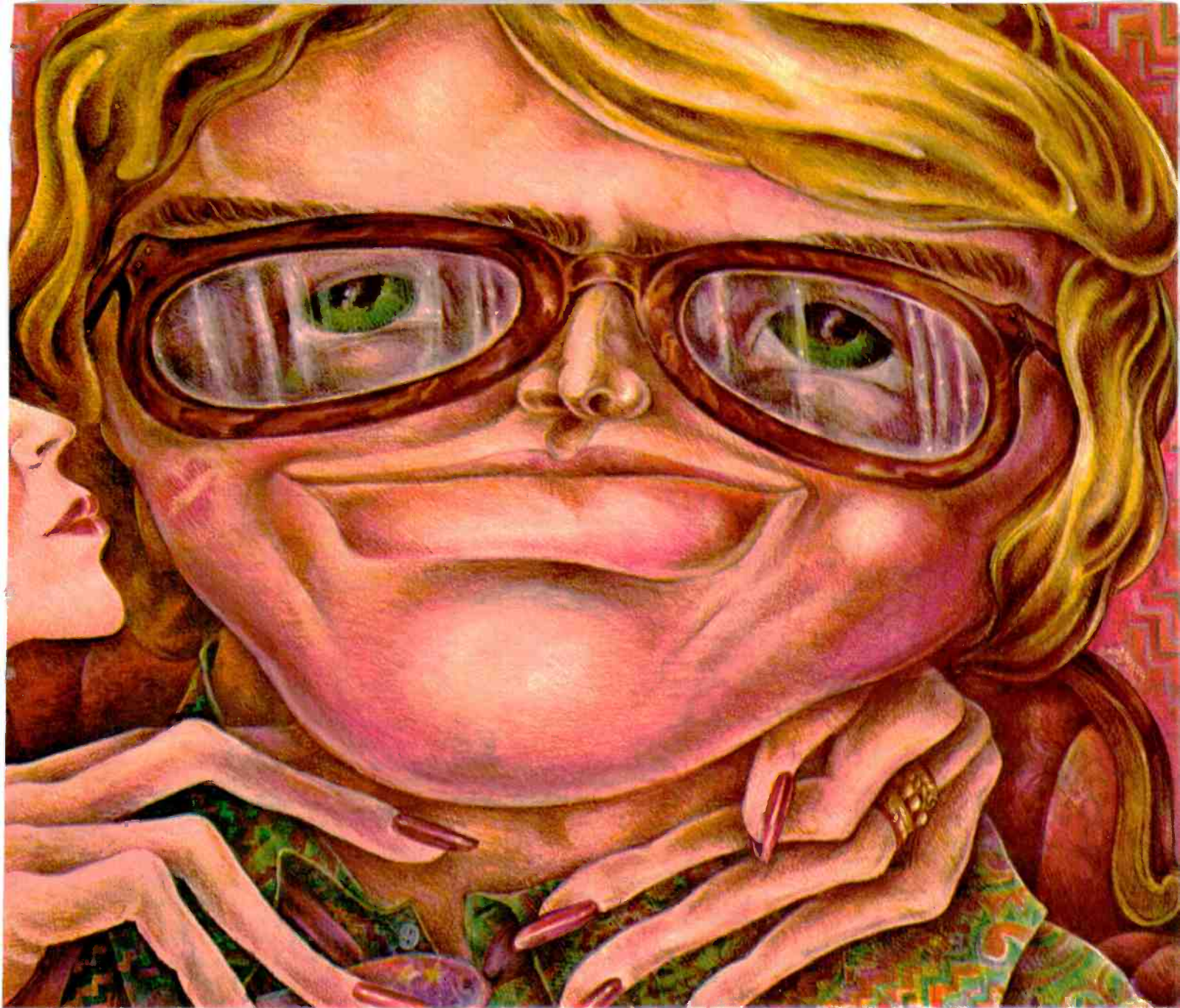
terial and without any detectable side effects such as "swishing" or high-frequency gain variation. For example, tapes of a guitar and a harp, both with an audibly annoying background hiss, were fed into the device, and what emerged was the sound of the two instruments against a velvety silent background. As far as my ears could tell, there was absolutely *no* loss of the high frequencies in the original program material—and the highs were *there* to be lost.

I have been playing with the new Phase Linear preamp for a while now and am happy to report that the somewhat refined circuit works at least as well as it did eight months ago. It continues to do for noisy non-Dolby tapes and discs just about what the Dolby circuit can do for Dolbyized tapes. And it was no surprise that it helps clean up FM hiss also.

The circuit of Carver's "correlator noise-eliminator," as he calls it, is quite complex. It has something like twenty-three discrete transistors and six integrated circuits, each IC containing the equivalent of forty-six (!) transistors. All this hardware is engaged in monitoring the audio signal and continuously opening and closing a series of electronically interlocked muting "windows," depending upon which fundamental frequencies and their harmonics are present at any instant. (If you want a better explanation than that you will have to write directly to Phase Linear.)

After a week or so of discussion, I think I convinced Carver of two things. One, he should make the noise-eliminator circuits available in a separate unit; two, the major problem that bothers record listeners is not *hiss* but *snap*, *crackle*, and *pop*—the raucous Rice Krispy noises that somehow manage to intrude into the grooves of even the most well-cared-for discs. Carver is working on the problem, and judging from the success he's had with his hiss suppressor, the noise-free phono disc may be in our near future.

● As I was writing the above, I received a call from Infinity Systems, responding to what I thought was a blue-sky fantasy in my January column. Infinity's new power amplifier, which uses both the toroid high-frequency power supply and the class-D operation I wrote about, will be available in perhaps three or four months. It isn't *quite* pocket size, since it is designed to fit into a 19-inch-wide rack. However, it is only 3½ inches high and 10 inches deep, and if you eliminate the chassis and case, it weighs so little that Infinity is afraid of a credibility problem. After all, how powerful can an amplifier be if you can lift it easily with only one hand? Well, Infinity rates it conservatively at more than 200 watts of power per channel, continuous!



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"Where's the flute Henry?" my wife complained constantly. I was about ready to leave her. Then we saw a Marantz dealer. He told us that separation of sound is a true test of a speaker system. He suggested we put Marantz and other popular speakers to the test by listening to a familiar recording so we'd be able to hear for ourselves that it's the speaker and not the recording that makes the difference. Oh, what a difference Marantz made! What we thought were two oboes were clearly an oboe and a flute. And that barbershop quartet...well, they're really a quintet.

The proof is in the listening. And that's where Marantz design concepts come into play. The transducers in Marantz speaker systems are engineered to handle an abundance of continuous power, so you get distortion-free

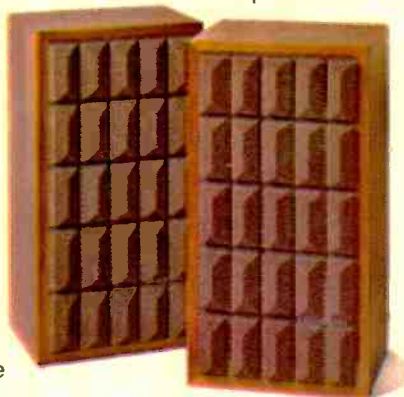
sounds that are as pleasing as a nibble on the ear.

We bought the Marantz Imperial 5G Two Way Speaker for just \$99. Perfect for our budget and it delivers fine sound separation even with minimum power equipment. And there are five other quality Marantz speaker models starting as low as \$59 and all are available with the new Marantz acoustically transparent foam grill.

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CIRCLE NO. 45 ON READER SERVICE CARD

AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES



GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS—8

● **CD-4** (compatible discrete four-channel) is the trade name for the four-channel phonograph-disc system developed originally by JVC in Japan. The system manages to get four *separate* (discrete) channels of audio information into a record groove by recording the extra two (or, more properly, the additional information necessary to recover *all* four of the channels) in the form of FM modulation of a very high frequency signal (30,000 Hz). These separate high-frequency modulations, which are impressed on each groove wall in addition to the normal left- or right-channel stereo signal carried by that wall, vary in frequency from 20,000 to 45,000 Hz. Such records are called "Quadradiscs."

The CD-4 system generally provides excellent separation between channels, but it requires a phono cartridge with exceptional high-frequency response to pick up all the recorded information, as well as a special decoder (generically termed a *demodulator*) to sort it out and present it as the intended four-channel program. Such demodulators are available as separate components, or as circuits built into some of the latest four-channel receivers. When Quadradiscs are played on reproducing systems not so equipped, all the music is heard, but as conventional two-channel stereo.

● **Damping**, in the audio sense, is the technique of applying mechanical friction or its electrical equivalent to a device in order to control mechanical or electrical resonances. The styli of most phono cartridges are damped by the elastic material in which they are mounted in order to control high-frequency response peaks. The damping used in speaker systems is frequently mechanical (the suspension), acoustical (the port arrangement and Fiberglas filling), and electrical (see *damping factor* below).

● **Damping Factor (DF)** is an amplifier specification that expresses the ratio of speaker impedance (usually assumed to

be a nominal 8 ohms) to the output impedance of the driving amplifier. For example, a DF of 10 indicates that the amplifier has an output impedance equaling one-tenth the speaker's impedance—that is, 0.8 ohm.

A high damping factor is considered desirable because a speaker, much like almost any electric motor, can be brought to a stop more quickly after the driving signal has ceased if a very low impedance (in effect, a short circuit) is placed across its terminals. Theoretically, "braking" a speaker rapidly improves transient response. However, the consensus among experts is that a DF of 10 to 20 is adequate for this purpose.

● **dB** (*decibel*: one-tenth of a *bel*) is a logarithmic ratio that is useful because it can express very large quantities in comparatively small numbers. A full definition of the decibel belongs in a physics or engineering textbook. Suffice it to say, for basic understanding, that a decibel, when it is used to express a change in loudness of a sound (as it usually is in these pages), represents about the smallest *change* that a human being can perceive. A 3-dB loudness change is also very small, but it is generally perceptible to anyone under any conditions. Frequency-response specifications contain—or should contain—a decibel tolerance: 20 to 20,000 Hz ± 0.5 dB, for example. This means, in effect, that when the device is called upon to reproduce—or amplify—audio signals (voice, music, or whatever), it can do so without improperly emphasizing or de-emphasizing any audible frequency significantly.

There is also a decibel *scale* to express absolute levels of sound. The threshold of hearing—the smallest sound level that can be perceived—is established at about 0 dB. The background-noise level of the "average" residence is approximately 45 dB; music-listening levels are generally in the range of 80 to 95 dB, and sound begins to become uncomfortably loud when it reaches 115 dB or so.

Superb performance - lavish engineering
- a new standard in high fidelity



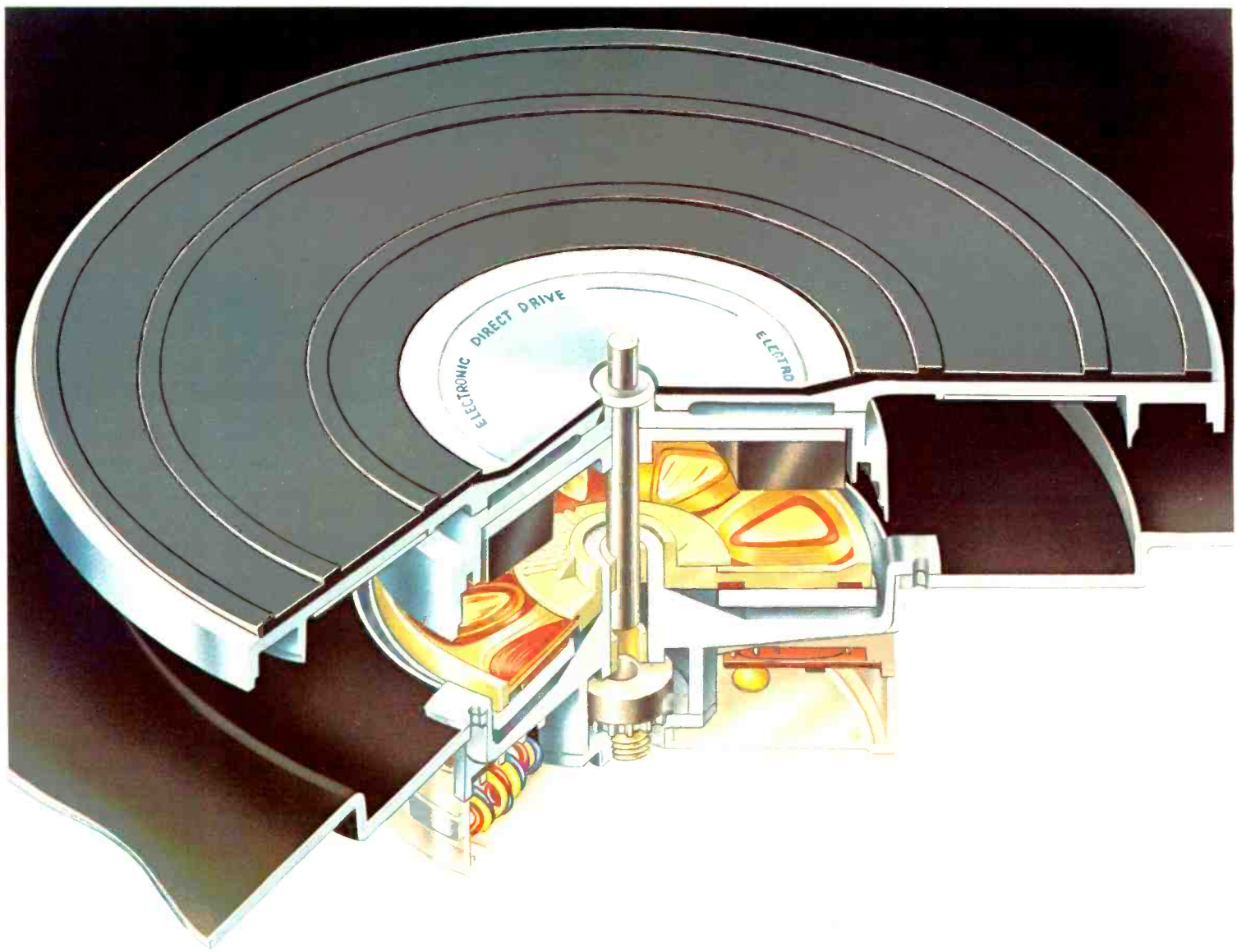
THE ALL NEW **REVOX** 700 SERIES

Stereo Tape Recorder A700 Digital Stereo Tuner/Pre-amplifier A720 Power Amplifier A722

Revox Corporation in USA; 155 Michael Drive, Syosset, NY 11791 & 3637 Cahuenga Blvd. West, Hollywood, California 90068
Revox in England; Lamb House, Church Street, London W4 2PB Revox Sales and Service in Canada.

Dual presents the 701.

The quietest turntable ever made.



The new Dual 701 is a significantly different kind of turntable—with an entirely different type of motor and a unique solution to the problems commonly introduced by resonance.

Vibration-free direct-drive electronic motor.

The 701 has an all-electronic, brushless, DC motor that rotates at actual record speed, either 33-1/3 or 45 rpm. The motor and platter form a common rotating mass (weighing 9.7 pounds) and the record spindle is actually the top of the motor shaft. This low-speed, direct-drive system does not introduce any vibration; thus can be mounted directly to the chassis without isolation.

Gapless rotating magnetic field.

The 701 motor has a number of exclusive features that eliminate problems common to all other electronic motors.

Dual's unique field coil design consists of two stacked coil layers, each with eight coils, offset by 22.5°, so that each coil overlaps a gap in the other layer. The result: a perfectly smooth rotating magnetic field with no magnetic flux irregularities.

In addition, each coil is bifilar-wound, freeing the motor from hysteresis or eddy-current losses.

Instantaneous electronic speed control.

Since the motor is energized by a regulated power supply, it is impervious to variations in line frequency or voltage.

In addition, speed is monitored by an electronic feedback system using two Hall-effect generators. A voltage induced from the motor's

magnetic field is continuously checked against the constant voltage of the regulated power supply. Any difference between these voltages is detected and fed back to adjust the current to the coils, thus instantaneously correcting even the minutest variations in motor speed.

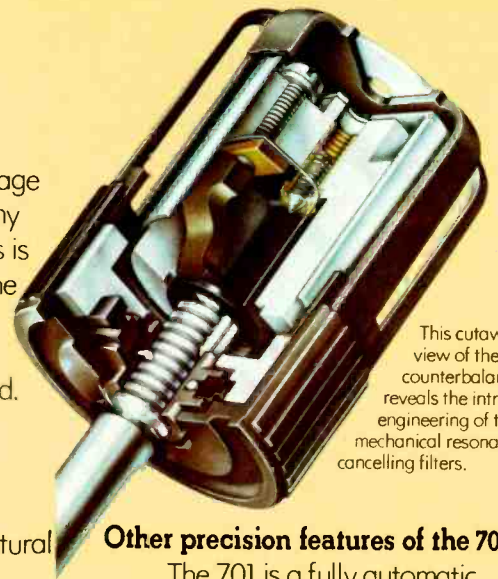
The solution to resonance feedback problems.

A potential problem in all record playback systems is the natural resonant period of the tonearm/cartridge system and the turntable chassis. When resonant energy from such mechanical disturbances as acoustical feedback, record warp, or room vibration reaches the stylus, distortion is the inevitable result.

Resonance has emerged as a practical problem with the increasing sophistication of associated equipment. For example, with amplifiers that can respond all the way down to DC. Or with speakers that can introduce extremely high energy levels into the room.

Dual's unique solution: two mechanical, anti-resonance filters located within the tonearm counterbalance. One is tuned to the resonant frequency range of the tonearm/cartridge, the other to the resonant range of the chassis.

These filters absorb resonant energy that would otherwise transmit feedback to the stylus. The result: frequency response is cleaner and smoother, since the stylus is able to respond to the signals in the record groove itself without interference.



This cutaway view of the 701 counterbalance reveals the intricate engineering of the two mechanical resonance-cancelling filters.

Other precision features of the 701.

The 701 is a fully automatic single-play turntable. (Its functional operation is identical to all other Duals when used in the single-play mode.)

The tonearm is mounted in a four-point low-friction gimbal suspension. The tracking pressure dial has 0.10 gram calibrations from 0 to 1.5 grams. Anti-skating is calibrated separately for conical and elliptical styli. Cue-control is damped in both directions. Pitch control is electronic and is set independently (8% range) for each speed.

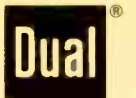
For those who want to know more.

We have a six-page full color brochure on the 701, with detailed descriptions of the motor and anti-resonance filters.

Because of these unique features, the 701 is slightly quieter than the Dual 1229, but any difference you detect will be minor. So if you now own a 1229, or any other current Dual, we suggest you don't trade it in for the 701.

Unless, of course, you are among those who would be happy only with the quietest turntable ever made, regardless of cost.

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



Exclusive U.S. Distribution Agency for Dual



The Dual 701, \$399.95, with base and cover.

CIRCLE NO. 50 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Add the new Sony SQA-2030 decoder / amplifier and two speakers to your present stereo system and you're into four channel. And what four channel!

Full logic IC circuits increase separation—side to side, front to back. SQ records and broadcasts are reproduced with rock-and concert-hall realism. Matrix recordings and broadcasts, other than SQ, discrete four channel tapes (with a quad deck), retain the excitement of the original performance. Even stereo records take on new depth.

And the SQA-2030 gives you something extra—a built-in stereo

amplifier. It delivers 18+18 watts, RMS into 8 ohms at every frequency in the audio range (20-20,000 Hz)—plenty of power to drive your back channel speakers. It's distortion-free (THD less than 0.8%). And it's easy to enjoy. Once you've balanced your system, the SQA-2030's master volume control is about all you'll have to adjust.

Thanks to new integrated circuits, developed and manufactured by Sony, this full logic decoder, control center and stereo amplifier is housed in a cabinet about half the size of a standard receiver. It costs just \$239.50.

Sony offers two other choices to go four channel. The full logic

SQD-2020 has all the quality and control convenience of the SQA-2030 plus four calibrated VU meters to help you balance your system visually. If your stereo system has high power output, add a basic amplifier of equal power plus two speakers. The SQD-2020 costs \$229.50.

Add full logic SQ to an existing four channel system. Or upgrade stereo to four channel (an integrated amplifier and two speakers are required).

The full logic SQD-2070 is an inexpensive choice, \$89.50.

Go four channel with Sony. It's very logical. **SONY®**

Introducing the \$240 full logic decoder. With an amplifier to boot.



CIRCLE NO. 47 ON READER SERVICE CARD



TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **SPEAKER TESTS VS. SPEAKER SOUND:** Judging by my mail, many readers seem as unhappy as I am with the seeming inability of acoustic measurements to “describe” the specific sound quality of a loudspeaker. The problem of scientifically quantifying human subjective response and correlating it with objective measured data is basic, and intrudes in many areas of human perception other than sound.

It is probably not necessary for me to point out how far we are from being able to work up, with measurements alone, a “complete” numerical description of a speaker system’s performance that will tell an engineer precisely how the speaker will sound. Nevertheless, we do have an evaluating tool at our disposal that does *not* depend either on having all the necessary data or on a simple subjective evaluation. I’m referring to the simulated live-vs.-recorded test that, in effect, compares an original sound against a speaker’s ability to reproduce it accurately. As we have pointed out on several occasions (see August 1973 issue), although the test is very useful, it does have a number of limitations—enough that we all would be much pleased if an even better method of speaker evaluation could be devised; but so far I see no signs of one.

A reader writes to ask why our measurements of the bass distortion and frequency response of a speaker often seem to lack correlation with our subjective sonic appraisal of its performance. In a way, this has its paradoxical aspects. With close miking, it is possible to make repeatable and acoustically meaningful measurements of a speaker’s bass performance virtually independent of the room characteristics. Unfortunately (or perhaps *fortunately*), few of us listen with our ears pressed to the speaker’s grille, so that the sound we hear is heavily influenced by room resonances and absorption. Our measurements provide clues to the *relative* bass performance of

different speakers, under conditions of identical placement in the same room, and with the same listening positions used for all subjective comparisons. Readers should not infer any more meaning than this from our comments on bass response.

One reason why two speakers with very different *measured* low-frequency responses may sound much the same at their low ends has to do with the limited low bass content of most program material. The majority of musical works—even those employing instruments capable of low bass output—usually contain

the listening room can have a far greater effect—for better or worse—at the lowest frequencies than the actual differences between many speaker systems. This is one reason why a speaker that seems to have exceptional bass in your listening room may not display any such characteristic in our tests.

Bass-distortion measurements, depending on how they are interpreted, can indicate how loud a speaker can play without excessive distortion (nonlinear distortion is usually greatest at low frequencies because of the increased cone excursion), or they can merely suggest a useful lower frequency limit, one below which harmonic distortion rises rapidly as the fundamental-frequency output drops off. Our tests fall into the latter category. At a modest drive level (such as 1 watt), the woofer distortion remains fairly constant down to some critical “break-point” frequency (typically in the 50- to 70-Hz range for compact speakers) and then rises abruptly. Increasing the drive-signal level merely shifts the break-point frequency upward, usually by only a few hertz. If the driver signal is controlled so that a constant acoustic sound-pressure level (SPL) is maintained, the “break” becomes very sharp indeed, since the speaker’s natural fall-off of response may necessitate rather high input power at low frequencies. The actual distortion percentages may seem excessive in comparison to those of the electronic components, but it is well documented that for various psychoacoustic reasons, several per cent of low-bass distortion is rarely noticeable.

As far as we are concerned, there is little to choose between constant drive level and constant SPL distortion measurements. Either method will tell us where the speaker “lets go” and is no longer an effective bass reproducer, but neither is much help in revealing how a given speaker will actually sound in normal use. The previously mentioned effects of room acoustics and program

TESTED THIS MONTH

●
Sansui QRX-3500 Receiver
Hartley Speaker Sentry
Robins Speaker Protector
Marantz Model 4140 Amplifier
E-V Interface:A Speaker System

little energy below about 60 Hz. Obviously, when comparing two otherwise identical speakers, if one cuts off at about 60 Hz and the other goes down to 35 Hz or so, they will usually sound very much alike on most material. Most recordings simply do not have enough energy in the 30- to 60-Hz octave to reveal speaker differences in that range.

It frequently happens that a speaker with reduced output in the very low bass sounds “heavier” than one with a bass response that actually goes lower. A slight rise in output in the 70- to 100-Hz range (2 or 3 dB is enough) can easily give the illusion of a strong bass response, since the lowest fundamentals of the program are likely to fall in that range. To further complicate matters,

limitations can overshadow almost anything short of a *gross* difference between speakers (for example, two speakers with 50-Hz and 80-Hz break points will probably sound very different, but one could not make such a confident prediction if they were 40 and 50 Hz).

We have limited this discussion to the

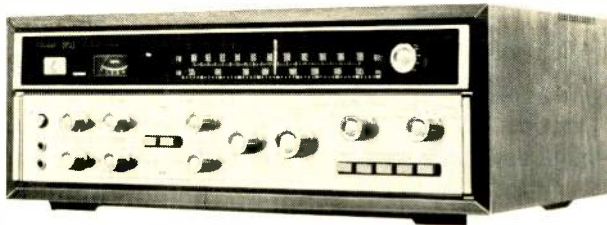
low bass, since it seems to have aroused the greatest reader comment and also is the easiest part of the speaker's spectrum to "measure"—if not to evaluate. At middle and high frequencies, the problems are much more severe. Modern technology has made possible a host of highly sophisticated measurements,

resulting in a mass of data which can tax the interpretive abilities of the most technically trained audiophile, and would surely overwhelm the average reader. But even with a mountain of such data available, it remains a regrettable fact that the only way still to tell how a speaker sounds is to listen to it!

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

Sansui QRX-3500 AM/FM Four-Channel Receiver



● THE Sansui QRX-3500 is a four-channel AM/stereo FM receiver featuring Sansui's new Vario-Matrix decoder, a unit that is claimed to provide exceptional channel separation with both QS- and SQ-encoded material. The direct-coupled audio amplifiers of the QRX-3500 are conservatively rated at 15 watts per channel, with less than 0.5 per cent total harmonic (THD) or intermodulation (IM) distortion from 20 to 20,000 Hz, all four channels driven. With one channel driven, the rated output is 22 watts into 8 ohms, or 30 watts into 4 ohms.

The Sansui QRX-3500 is relatively large—20³/₄ inches wide, 13³/₁₆ inches deep, and 7¹/₈ inches high—and weighs almost 41 pounds. Its satin-gold front panel has separate bass and treble tone controls for front and rear channels (with eleven detented positions), and separate left-right balance controls for front and rear channels. The low- and high-cut filters, operated by pushbuttons, affect all channels. To the right of this group of controls are a front-rear balance knob and a master volume control. The function switch selects 2 CH, QS SYNTHESIZER, QS REGULAR MATRIX with separate SURROUND and HALL settings (they provide different separation characteristics between front and rear channels), PHASE MATRIX, and DISCRETE modes. The last of these can be used with a four-channel tape deck (there are full monitoring provisions for one two-channel and two four-channel tape decks), or with an external CD-4 demodulator. The selector switch has settings for PHONO, FM AUTO, FM MONO, AM, and two 4-CH

inputs. Pushbuttons control LOUDNESS, tape monitoring for the three recorders, and FM MUTING. At the left side of the panel are separate headphone jacks for front and rear channels and a pushbutton power switch.

The upper third of the panel contains a black-out tuner dial scale with linear FM-frequency calibrations at intervals of 0.25 MHz. Above and to the left of the dial scales, illuminated words appear to clearly identify the selected operating mode and program source. The illuminated tuning meter reads relative signal strength for AM and FM reception, and the tuning knob operates a smooth flywheel mechanism. On the rear apron are the signal-input and -output terminals, including insulated spring-loaded connectors for speakers and antennas. A LOCAL/DISTANT switch attenuates the antenna signals to prevent overload by strong local FM stations. The 2-CH tape-monitoring jacks are paralleled by a DIN connector, and another socket is provided for use with the optional QBL-100 Remote Control (a four-channel "joystick" device for balance plus a slider volume adjustment for all channels). The AM ferrite-rod antenna slides out a couple of inches from the rear apron, but does not rotate or pivot. There are two a.c. outlets, one of which is switched, and an input-voltage selector plug that adapts the receiver for line voltages from 100 to 240 volts. The price of the Sansui QRX-3500, including a wooden walnut-finish cabinet, is \$599.95. The QBL-100 Remote Control is \$35.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* The audio

amplifiers clipped at 29 watts per channel with two channels driven, and at 24.2 watts per channel with all four channels driven. These measurements were made at 1,000 Hz with 8-ohm loads. The two-channel power at clipping into 4 ohms was 41 watts per channel, and with 16-ohm loads it was 18 watts per channel.

The total harmonic distortion (THD) was below the noise level at power outputs under 1 watt, where it measured 0.023 per cent, falling to 0.012 per cent at 10 watts and reaching 0.1 per cent at the clipping point of approximately 30 watts. The 1M distortion was 0.027 per cent at 0.1 watt, 0.058 per cent at 25 watts, and 0.25 per cent at 30 watts. The 1M remained at insignificant levels at very low power output (0.26 per cent at 1 milliwatt), indicating the relative absence of crossover distortion. We used 25 watts per channel as our reference full-power rating (two channels driven), and found that the maximum THD was only 0.23 per cent at 20 Hz and less than 0.08 per cent from 45 to 20,000 Hz. At half power and less, the distortion remained essentially below 0.08 per cent from 20 to 20,000 Hz, and was typically less than 0.03 per cent.

The amplifiers could be driven to a 10-watt output level with 92 millivolts (AUX) or 1.45 millivolts (PHONO). The signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) through either input was a very good 75 dB, referred to 10 watts. The phono-input overload of 120 millivolts was also better than average. The tone-control characteristics were good, with a sliding bass-turnover frequency moving from below 100 Hz to above 500 Hz, and high-frequency control hinging at about 2,000 Hz. The filters had gradual 6-dB-per-octave slopes, with the -3 dB points being 120 and 3,000 Hz. The loudness control provided moderate boost of both lows and highs.

The phono equalization of the QRX-3500 was very accurate—within ± 0.5 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz (actually from 20 to 20,000 Hz, which exceeds the RIAA—*(Continued on page 38)*)



Now – a unique experience
for lovers of the arts

TIME-LIFE RECORDS presents RICHARD WAGNER'S "RING"

This unparalleled 4-opera cycle, especially produced for stereo with a "dream" cast, orchestra, and conductor, is offered here in an extraordinary TIME-LIFE presentation that unlocks its secrets and brings out all its majestic beauty. The result is a peak cultural experience in home enjoyment of the arts.

Prove it to yourself by accepting the complete package shown on the next page for **FREE 10-DAY EXAMINATION**

You are invited to enjoy free for 10 days an extraordinary cultural adventure.

You will receive the first of four linked music-dramas by Richard Wagner, as Part I of the grandest operatic work of all time, "The Ring of the Nibelung." And with it, you will receive background material which make the music and characters come alive with startling vividness, power, and meaning right in your living room.

Like the literature of Shakespeare and the art of Michelangelo, the music-drama of Wagner is a towering artistic achievement that should be an essential part of your cultural experience.

Yet, surprisingly enough, many people who genuinely enjoy good music have never discovered the sheer listening enjoyment of Wagner's greatest work, "The Ring of the Nibelung." It has been difficult to find and collect satisfactory recordings of the complete work, and equally difficult to know how to *approach* this fascinating but intricate masterpiece.

Wagner Made Irresistible

Now, thanks to TIME-LIFE RECORDS, a once-in-a-lifetime combination of the arts of composing, conducting, performing, recording, writing, and publishing is opening up the enjoyment of "The Ring" to a wider audience of music lovers.

Took 7 Years to Record

The centerpiece of this superlative presentation of "The Ring" is a remarkable series of recordings by London Records that took seven years to complete. Instead of trying merely to record existing productions on the operatic stage, an inspired producer obtained permission from London Records to produce the entire work exclusively for stereo recording.

Internationally Acclaimed

This recorded production of "The Ring" has won unprecedented international acclaim. Wrote Paul Hume of *The Washington Post*, "London's cycle is not merely a landmark in the history of the musical art but represents the art and science of recording at its greatest." And the English

hi-fi publication, *The Gramophone*, called the TIME-LIFE presentation "an enterprise that will leave its mark for more than a generation."

What is "The Ring"?

"The Ring" is a revolutionary form embodying Wagner's ideal of a "total art work" – the intricate fusion of the arts of drama, singing, and symphonic music that thrills and involves the listener.

It tells of a magic ring forged from the gold treasure stolen from the Rhine-maidens by a dwarf or *Nibelung*, making him master of the world; of the curse the dwarf put on the ring when he is tricked out of it by Wotan, chief of the gods; of the ill-fated romance between Siegmunde and Sieglinde, son and daughter of Wotan; and the adventures of their heroic offspring, Siegfried.

It is a story that runs the gamut of human emotions from love to hate, adoration to envy, forgiveness to implacable anger. It deals with the basest of human actions, such as sadism, greed for power and gold, vengeance, as well as the most lofty, such as courage, heroism, sacrifice, pure love. And all expressed in music of such dazzling splendor and richness that it has never been surpassed.

The Miracle of Stereo Recording

Wagner's libretto and score call for many special effects which even the most ambitious opera company finds impossible to stage. Only in the recording studio can there be created so convincingly the illusion of the Rhine-maidens swimming to and fro, or a tenor changing suddenly into a baritone as Siegfried pretends to be someone else wooing his fair Brünnhilde.

And where Wagner's score calls for six harps for the Rainbow Bridge music, there are six harps (almost never heard in an opera house). Instead of the usual offstage clanking sound effects for the sound of the dwarfs hammering gold, eighteen real anvils were used.

For Donner's hammer striking the rock, a special steel sheet twenty feet by five feet was



An irreverent contemporary view of the master

constructed, hung, and struck by two strong men. For Hagen's horn call and the answering calls, the score indicates steerhorns; most orchestras use trombones but this time special steerhorns were fashioned by an old instrument maker. And for a horn call by a different character, Switzerland was combed for a huge elongated horn about 15 feet in length, still used in the Alps to summon cattle over long distances.

The All-Star Cast

The most illustrious operatic cast ever assembled on one "stage" was hand-picked for this special production. It includes virtuoso performances by Birgit Nilsson, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Wolfgang Windgassen, Hans Hotter, and George London. Two legendary stars, Kirsten Flagstad and Joan Sutherland, consented to sing relatively minor roles simply to participate in this historic event. "When Flagstad sang her first line," the producer recalls, "the entire orchestra turned around to gaze in amazement, so extraordinary was the authority and power of her voice."

And the musical world generally agrees with the appraisal of the producer that the conductor, Sir Georg Solti, is "the great Wagner conductor

(continued on next page)

An opportunity to enjoy the achievement of all time in

(continued from previous page)

of our time." For ten years he was Musical Director of London's Covent Garden Opera. He is now Conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Advisor to the Paris Opera. He is the only conductor to have won nine awards of the French *Grand Prix du Disque*.

The Choice of the Vienna Philharmonic

The use of the Vienna Philharmonic for all four operas, over a seven year period, provides an extraordinary artistic unity and texture for the entire work. "No other orchestra in the world can approach the Vienna Philharmonic when it comes to what an orchestra is *about*," writes the producer, "the sense or instinct through which suddenly a hundred men become a single musical instrument of infinite flexibility. It is the single most precious jewel in the heritage of orchestral performance in Europe."

Following the Story Made Easy

Following the story is made easy by a booklet for each opera, containing a synopsis of the story and a German/English parallel translation. Thus to the sheer musical enjoyment is added the excitement of Wagner's powerful unfolding plot.

To tell his story, Wagner devised his own musical language of melodic themes or *leit motifs*, which identify characters, elements of Nature, and recurring thoughts and moods. In the 3-record Introduction to "The Ring" which is included in the first shipment, a noted musicologist identifies all of these *leit motifs*, gives you musical examples, and shows you how they are blended and developed.

3 Bound Volumes of Rich Background

Your enjoyment will be further enhanced by knowing more about the work, the composer's life, and the fascinating inside story of the production. The first shipment also includes a unique boxed set of three handsome library volumes, splendidly illustrated and with covers stamped in gold.

1. **GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, "The Perfect Wagnerite!"** Delightful, impudent essays on "The Ring" presenting his own social interpretation of the dwarfs as the ill-treated laboring classes, the giants as skilled artisans, and the gods as the privileged ruling class.

2. **RICHARD WAGNER: THE MAN, HIS MIND, AND HIS MUSIC**, by Robert W. Gutman. A frank, irreverent view of the master's life, generally considered the best one-volume Wagner biography of our time: 535 pages, magnificently illustrated with more than 400 paintings, drawings, photographs, maps, and charts, many in full color.

3. **RING RESOUNDING**, by John Culshaw, the London Records producer's own inside story of the most impressive achievement in the history of recorded music.

Send No Money, Just Mail Card

Start your own at-home "Wagner festival" by mailing the card for the first part of "The Ring" shown here and enjoy it free for 10 days. Then if you are enthralled and wish to continue, you may keep it and complete your set on the terms outlined in the card. Otherwise simply return everything within 10 days and forget the matter. Mail card today. If card is missing, write for details to TIME-LIFE RECORDS, Dept. 0202, Time & Life Building, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

To unlock the secrets of Wagner's greatness

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1. DAS RHEINGOLD complete on 3 LP records.



2. SYNOPSIS—PLUS COMPLETE TEXT IN ENGLISH AND GERMAN SIDE BY SIDE.



3. COMMENTARY ON "THE RING" ON 3 RECORDS AND IN PRINT —IDENTIFYING 193 EXAMPLES OF WAGNER'S "MOTIFS."



plus—Yours Free If You Decide To Keep The Set

4. A 3-VOLUME LIBRARY OF FASCINATING BACKGROUND

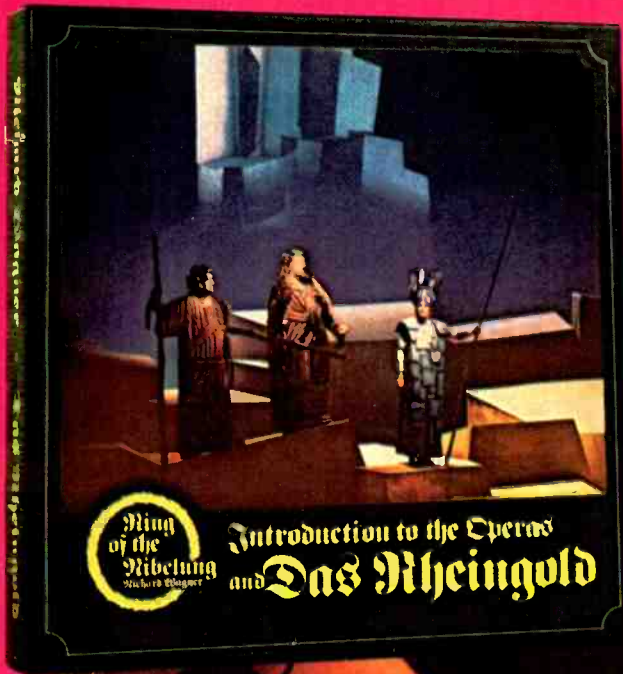
- **RICHARD WAGNER, The Man, His Mind, and His Music**, by Robert W. Gutman.
- **RING RESOUNDING**, by John Culshaw. The producer's own inside story of this 7-year recording achievement.
- **THE PERFECT WAGNERITE**, by George Bernard Shaw. Witty and penetrating essays on the meaning of "The Ring."



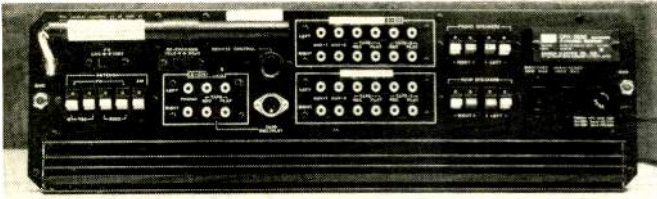
most outstanding music-drama a towering performance

The Ring of the Nibelung

A cycle of four operas by RICHARD WAGNER...performed by
the Vienna Philharmonic and an all-star cast led by Sir Georg Solti

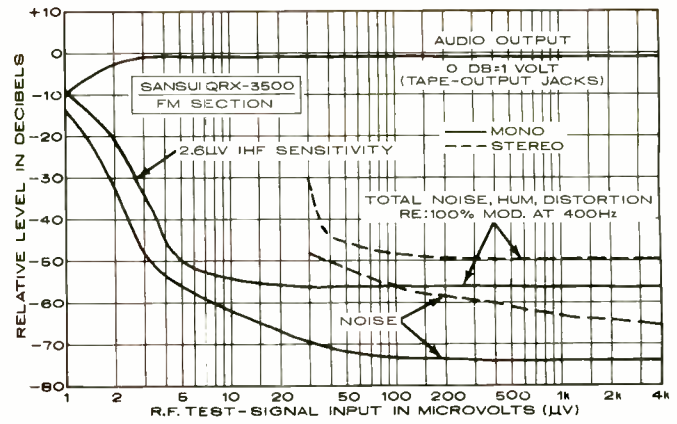


AWARDED THE HIGHEST INTERNATIONAL HONORS GIVEN TO ANY RECORDINGS,
including a special "Grammy" award from the American National Academy of Recording
Arts and Sciences and the premier European honor, the Grand Prix du Disque Mondiale.



The QRX-3500's rear panel groups the front- and rear-channel connectors separately. Speaker terminals are at right center.

In the graph of FM performance, the levels of both random noise and noise plus distortion are compared with the audio-output level as signal strength increases. Both mono and stereo are shown.



defined limits). The equalization was affected only slightly by phono-cartridge inductance, with a maximum loss (with a high-inductance cartridge) of 2 dB at 15,000 Hz and 3 dB at 20,000 Hz. This is considerably better than we have measured on most receivers and amplifiers.

The FM-tuner section had an IHF sensitivity of 2.6 microvolts (μV). The 50-dB quieting sensitivity was 3.6 μV (mono) at 1.35 per cent THD. The ultimate distortion at higher signal levels was 0.16 per cent (mono) and 0.35 per cent (stereo), and the ultimate S/N was 73.5 dB (mono) and 63 dB (stereo) at a 1,000- μV input. The transition from stereo to mono FM took place smoothly and gradually as the input-signal level was reduced from 40 to 25 μV . The interstation-noise muting threshold was 12 μV . The FM capture ratio was 1.75 dB (rated 2 dB). AM rejection was 49 dB, which is adequate. The image rejection of 77 dB (good) was slightly better than the rated 75 dB. The QRX-3500's alternate-channel selectivity rating is 50 dB, which is a moderately low value, though adequate in most listening situations. However, its measured selectivity was somewhat better: 51.5 dB above the signal frequency and 65 dB below. The 19-kHz pilot-carrier leakage was a low -69.5 dB. The frequency response with a stereo FM signal was very good, within ± 1 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. Channel separation was excellent, ex-

ceeding 21 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz, and better than 40 dB through the important mid-range. The AM frequency response rolled off at low and high frequencies - to -6 dB at 50 and 3,300 Hz.

Although our evaluation of the Vario-Matrix performance was largely subjective, we were able to make measurements of channel separation between various channels with the help of a Sansui QS-encoded test record. The side-to-side separation was about 12 dB in front and 14 dB in the rear. Along the left and right sides, the separation was 7 to 10 dB front-to-back, and it was 15 to 20 dB across the diagonals. Other separations, from the centers of each side of the "square" to the others, and to the corners, were typically 10 to 20 dB.

● *Comment.* If one were to consider only its audio-power and tuner-performance parameters, the Sansui QRX-3500 would appear to be simply another good stereo receiver. But it is more than that: in the important areas of audio and FM distortion, signal-to-noise ratio, and channel separation, it is well above the average for contemporary receivers, and in many ways it is comparable to the best separate components.

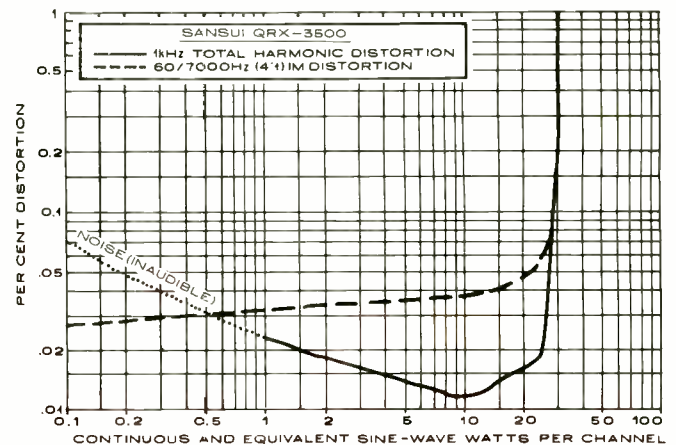
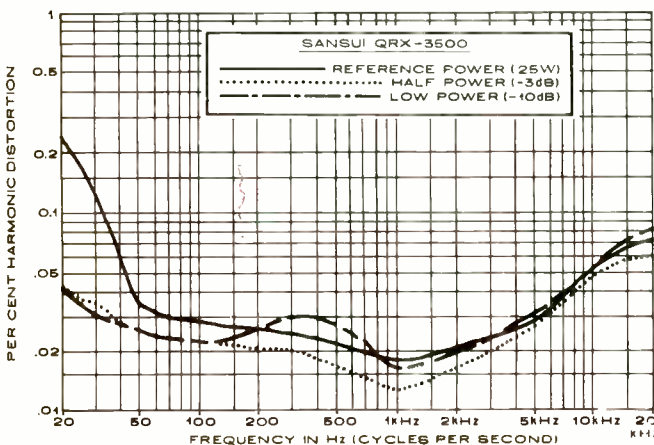
As so often happens, the real merits of this receiver are not apparent from its measured performance alone. It is perhaps best characterized as *smooth* in every sonic respect. There are no turn-

on thumps or clicks, no audible switching transients, and it has one of the best FM interstation-noise muting systems we have come across. Signals are either heard, with full quieting and low distortion, or are totally absent, with no noise, thumps, or modulation bursts as the unit is tuned across the FM band. The FM dial calibration is very accurate, although we would have preferred 200-kHz calibration intervals to correspond to U.S. channel spacings, rather than the 250-kHz intervals provided. The tape-monitoring flexibility of this receiver is outstanding: not only can three tape decks be handled, but it is possible to dub from a two-channel deck (such as a cassette recorder) to either of a pair of two- or four-channel recorders, or from one of the latter to the other. The lack of switched speaker outputs for more than one set of four speakers should not cause inconvenience to most users.

Having heard a public demonstration of the Vario-Matrix a year ago, we were anxious to put one through its paces in our own listening environment. We were not disappointed in its performance. The very limited separation characteristics of the basic QS (or RM) matrix have been enhanced by an ingenious "logic" system. Unlike others, this does not vary the channel gains to accentuate separation. Instead, it monitors the phase angle between the incoming left and right

(Continued on page 40)

Note: curves were made with the receiver in the four-channel mode, with two channels driven (one measured) to equal power outputs.





way out!

Tape cassettes and cassette recorders were once regarded pretty much as novelties. Sure, they were great for voice recordings, but they weren't taken seriously by hi-fi buffs. Then along came TDK's Super Dynamic, the tape that started a revolution in the industry. It gave the cassette true high-fidelity capability for the first time, thereby stimulating the development of improved cassette recorders.

As a result, manufacturers of both tape cassettes and cassette recorders started turning out better and better products. So today the question is "how well do they match each other in performance capability?" And with the devel-

opment of TDK's great new Dynamic-series of cassettes, the whole world of sound reproduction has changed.

When it comes to matching or exceeding the performance capabilities of present-day cassette recorders, TDK's new Dynamic series is way out front. Extra Dynamic (ED) cassettes offer an entirely new dimension in recording fidelity that is vastly superior to any other cassette now on the market. Super Dynamic (SD), the tape that started it all, still has better-balanced total performance characteristics than any other brand made and is available in cassette or open-reel format. And Dynamic (D) is an entirely

new hi-fi cassette offering excellent quality at moderate prices, with characteristics superior to most "premium" cassette tapes.

So, if you want to be sure of using cassettes that provide the best total performance on any recorder . . . for performance capabilities that are and always will be ahead of the industry . . . discover the dynamic world of TDK!

the new dynamic world of

 **TDK**®

TDK ELECTRONICS CORP.
755 Eastgate Boulevard, Garden City, New York 11530

CIRCLE NO. 51 ON READER SERVICE CARD

channels and uses this to continuously modify the matrix coefficients to achieve the desired signal directionality.

The Vario-Matrix works exactly as claimed. We could never hear any "pumping" or other gain-riding side effects, yet the subjective effect was almost totally unambiguous in its directionality—in other words, it is very close to "discrete."

In the PHASE MATRIX position of the function switch, the matrix is modified for SQ decoding, and the Vario-Matrix provides a considerable improvement over the simple SQ matrix found in other four-channel receivers (or, for that matter, over the partial or "front-rear" logic units we have tested). We would judge that the subjective separation heard with SQ recordings is not equal to that obtained with the latest "full-logic" SQ systems, but it is the next best thing.

A significant and valuable feature of the Sansui, in our opinion, is its QS SYNTHESIZER function. All matrix decoders can provide a rear-channel ambiance signal from stereo program material, and despite the vagueness and lack of side-to-side directionality, such "ambiance extraction" provides a worthwhile improvement over two-channel listening.

Sansui has taken a giant step in the direction of synthesizing four channels from two by cross-blending (with controlled phase shift) some portion of each stereo channel with the other. When the processed signal is passed through the Vario-Matrix decoder, the outputs consist of four distinctly different channels. In effect, the stereo stage is wrapped around the listening room so that full left or right signals appear at the corresponding rear speakers, with the overall spread of the program smoothly distributed along the sides to the front of the room, and then toward the front center (where mono sounds still originate).

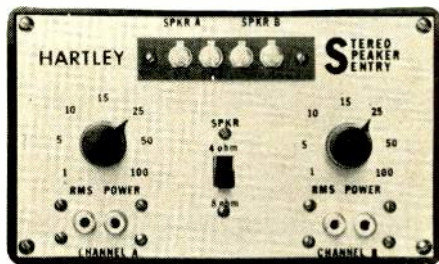
It may seem hard to believe, but our ears tell us that this system gives a better "four-channel" effect with most stereo program material than the majority of the four-channel matrixed records we have played through the various less-than-full-logic matrix decoders. Recognizing that most four-channel reproduction is *not* aimed at recreating an "original concert-hall reality" for the listener, and bearing in mind the ambiguous directionality of the typical matrix reproduction, we see this feature as a significant advantage of Sansui's synthesis approach. Few listeners, we believe,

would be able to detect that they were hearing a four-channel performance synthesized from a stereo program source rather than an SQ or QS disc.

From our experience with four-channel receivers (we currently have a number on hand for testing), it is clear that the totally self-contained receiver, able to provide optimum performance with *any* four-channel format is yet to appear on the market. Those having built-in CD-4 demodulators have *simple* matrix decoders, with their acknowledged limitations in channel separation. Those with advanced SQ logic systems do not provide comparable performance for QS or CD-4 records. As of the moment, the Sansui QRX-3500 is the most effective and universal matrix receiver we have seen, but still without CD-4 capability (though of course it could be easily added externally via one of the tape-monitoring circuits). In our judgment, however, the unit's four-channel synthesizing capability with stereo program material goes a long way toward compensating for this lack—especially when one compares the available number of four-channel discs in *any* format with the existing stocks of two-channel stereo records.

Circle 105 on reader service card

Hartley Speaker Sentry and Robins R47001 Speaker Protector



● WHEN amplifier power ratings rarely exceeded 20 or 30 watts, speaker damage from excessive drive levels was unusual. Today, with 60- to 100-watt amplifiers almost commonplace, and growing numbers of home-music systems equipped with a continuous-power capability of several hundred watts, the danger to many loudspeakers is a very real consideration. Amplifier protection circuits are usually designed to protect the amplifier only, although some of them will disconnect the drive to the speakers in the event of excessive signal amplitude. Otherwise, the audiophile concerned about the well-being of his speakers has had to depend on speaker fuses—when the fuses, or information as to suitable ratings, have been available from the speaker manufacturer.

Two interesting low-price accessories

have come to our attention—similar in their operating principles—that are designed to prevent speaker damage without any interruption of the program and without requiring the replacement of a blown fuse. The Robins "Electronic Fuse" speaker protector (Model R47001) and the Hartley "Speaker Sentry" are passive devices (essentially voltage-controlled attenuators) that are inserted either in the tape-monitoring path of an integrated amplifier or receiver, or between the preamplifier output and main amplifier input if this is more convenient. The control voltage is obtained from the amplifier's speaker outputs by an additional pair of leads. Both units have two independent stereo channels. Since neither unit has a tape-monitor switch to replace the one that would be taken up by use of the tape-monitoring path, the second connection path would usually be preferable.

When connected into a stereo system, these devices form a closed-loop limiter, or compressor, whose operating threshold can be set by controls on the device to limit the maximum signal to the speakers to the equivalent of any power from 1 watt to 100 watts. Up to the output level for which the control is set, the protector acts as a simple fixed resistive attenuator



with a nominal insertion loss. If the output tries to exceed the threshold, however, the attenuator swiftly reduces the drive to the power amplifier, and the desired level of power is not exceeded.

No specifications or other details are provided with the two units. Since the Robins Electronic Fuse is sealed, we could not examine its circuits, but the Hartley unit apparently has photoresistor/bulb elements to provide the variable attenuation. We assume that the Robins unit employs the same technique.

Although they differ considerably in size, both units are packaged in small plastic boxes. The Robins Electronic Fuse is about 4 x 2³/₄ x 1¹/₂ inches, and the Hartley Speaker Sentry is about 6³/₄ x 3³/₄ x 2¹/₈ inches. In addition to the signal and speaker connections and the

(Continued on page 42)



Who controls your four-channel destiny?

With Sansui you are right on. Sansui engineering provides a series of four-channel receivers that are enough ahead of their time to put the future in your hands, now. The unique Sansui QS vario matrix gives you richer, fuller four-channel sound from QS (Regular Matrix) as well as SQ (Phase Matrix) sources, plus demodulated CD-4 and discrete tape. With its superior QS synthesizing section, it creates realistic four-channel sound from conventional stereo. Control your future with the QRX-6500, 5500, 3500, or 3000. Hear them at your franchised Sansui dealer.



QS
REGULAR MATRIX

Sansui

SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.

Woodside, New York 11377 • Gardena, California 90247

SANSUI ELECTRIC CO., LTD., Tokyo, Japan

SANSUI AUDIO EUROPE S. A., Antwerp, Belgium • ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTORS (Canada)

CIRCLE NO. 44 ON READER SERVICE CARD

power-setting controls, all of which are common to both units, the Hartley unit has a speaker-impedance switch with 4- and 8-ohm positions. The Robins Electronic Fuse is priced at \$25 and the Hartley Speaker Sentry at \$35.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** For test purposes, we passed a constant-amplitude audio signal through the attenuators and used a short, high-amplitude tone-burst to simulate an excessive signal peak. The tone-burst input pulse and its effect on the output signal were observed on a dual-channel oscilloscope. The Robins unit attenuator circuit turned on in about 0.5 millisecond compared with a 5-millisecond attack for the Hartley device. Both units had a much longer decay (or release) time, with the Hartley restoring normal level about 0.5 second after the end of the control pulse, and the Robins returning to normal between 0.5 and 1 second.

We operated both units in the tape-monitoring path of a stereo receiver capable of delivering about 40 watts per channel. The insertion loss of the Robins unit was very noticeable, measuring 5.5 dB, even when its power control was set to 100 watts. The Hartley had an insertion loss of only about 2 dB. As might be expected, it became impossible, with either device installed, to overdrive the amplifier as long as the power controls were set to less than 40 watts. The power calibrations of both units were far from precise, but there is actually no need for the user to be concerned with *actual* power levels. Probably the best way to adjust one of these devices is to play loud music just a little louder than you normally wish to hear it, and then turn down the power controls (from the fully clockwise position) until you can hear the loudest peaks being affected. With this control position, the loudest sounds you hear immediately after adjustment are then the loudest sounds

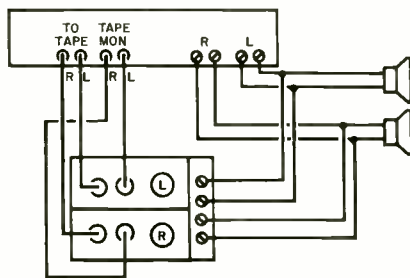


Diagram shows the manufacturer's recommended connection for the Robins device. The Hartley unit connects in much the same way.

your system will be capable of producing afterward.

At a 1-watt setting, the Robins unit permitted a measured 2.1-watt output and the Hartley an output of 8 watts. Setting the controls to 5 watts increased these figures to 3.5 watts and 9 watts, respectively. With a 10-watt control setting, the outputs were 5 watts and 11.5 watts. The speaker-impedance switch of the Hartley unit had only a 1-dB effect on the output with any control setting. Neither unit presented any significant load to the speaker terminals of the amplifier; the Robins had an impedance of about 5,000 ohms, while the Hartley looked like an open circuit, reading more than 100 megohms. Neither unit had any effect on frequency range or distortion.

● **Comment.** When these limiters are set to a low power, such as 1 watt, the receiver volume control has little or no effect beyond a setting corresponding to a modest listening level; further increases did nothing at all to the sound level. There was no audible distortion, but the characteristic "breathing" of an automatic gain-control system could be heard at times with that low a setting.

Although we did not attempt any destructive speaker tests, it was apparent that with either one of these units in use, it would be difficult indeed to damage a

speaker. Even a super-power amplifier can be tamed to deliver no more than a whisper with these units, and the very rapid response of the Robins unit in particular would probably protect the most delicate tweeter. However, it should be pointed out that neither of these units can do anything to protect the speakers in certain types of amplifier failure.

Both devices work essentially as claimed, and without objectionable side effects. Still, one must not lose sight of the fact that with one of these gadgets connected, an amplifier's output capability is then determined by the knob on the protector rather than by its own inherent capabilities. To invest a sizable sum in an amplifier capable of delivering perhaps 100 watts or more per channel, and then convert it to a 10- or 20-watt amplifier with the addition of one of these protective devices may not seem entirely logical at first glance. However, there are circumstances—as, for example, when the amplifier is used to drive a pair of remote speakers with less power-handling capability than the main pair—in which these accessories could be quite useful. In such a case, the device would be connected to the remote speaker lines only (assuming the main pair is not being used simultaneously). It would then effectively protect the speakers from overdrive at a time when the listener is likely to be far away from the system's volume control.

If the attack times of the Robins and Hartley protectors were to be reduced to provide protection against long-term signal overdrive but permit brief transients to pass through unhindered, one would still have some protection, plus a reasonably unrestricted dynamic range. On the other hand, the tweeters—usually the most vulnerable part of a speaker system—would be unprotected. Unfortunately, you can't have it both ways.

Circle 106 on reader service card (Hartley)
Circle 107 on reader service card (Robins)

Marantz Model 4140 Four-Channel Amplifier



● THE Marantz Model 4140 is that company's most powerful and flexible four-channel integrated amplifier. As its full name (Model 4140 Stereo 2-Quad-

radial 4 Console Amplifier) indicates, it can be switched from a four-channel to a two-channel mode, combining the front and rear amplifiers on each side to drive

only the front pair of speakers with more than a doubling of power-output capability per channel. The Marantz 4140 is rated at 25 watts per channel continuous, all four channels driven, and at 70 watts per channel in the two-channel mode.

The front panel of the 4140, with a brushed gold and black finish matching the style of other Marantz components, is dominated by a rectangular meters area containing four illuminated meters that indicate the signal levels at the speaker outputs. To the left of the meters, illu-

(Continued on page 44)

When two loudspeakers sound different, at least one of them is wrong. Maybe both.



Unpleasantly Distorted Reproduction

Which is better: the Rectilinear III, at \$299, or a comparably priced but totally different-sounding speaker by another reputable manufacturer?

The ready answer to that question by a nice, clean-living salesman or boy-scout hi-fi expert is: "It's a matter of taste. Whichever you prefer for your own listening. They're both good."

We want you to know how irresponsible and misleading such bland advice is.

Think about it:

A loudspeaker is a reproducer. The most important part of that word is the prefix *re*, meaning *again*. A loudspeaker produces again something that has already been produced once. Not something new and different.

Therefore, what it correctly reproduces should be identical to the original production. And *identicalness* isn't a matter of taste.

For example, it isn't a matter of taste whether the body shop has correctly reproduced the original color of your car on that repainted fender. Nor is it a matter of taste whether your mirror correctly reproduces your visual image. Is the reproduction identical to the original or isn't it?

Okay. We know. The ear is less precise than the eye. And in the case of loudspeakers, it's usually impossible to compare the reproduction and the live original side by side. Furthermore, the speaker is only a single link in a whole chain of reproducers. But these

problems only complicate the matter without changing the basic principle. *The reproduction is either right or wrong. Two different-sounding reproductions can't both be identical to the original.*

The common fallacy is to call the reproduction wrong only when it's obviously unpleasant (fuzzy or shrieky highs, hollow midrange, etc.). But what about a pleasingly plump bass, lots of sheen on the high end, and that punchy or zippy overall quality known as "presence"? Equally wrong. And, because of the seductive "hi-fi" appeal, much more treacherous.

To glamorize the original that way amounts to having a built-in and permanently set tone control in your speaker. For some program material it can be disastrously unsuitable. Like the funhouse mirror that makes everybody look tall and thin, it's great for short and fat inputs only.

At Rectilinear, we design speakers to approach facsimile reproduction of the input as closely as is technologically possible. We restrict the "taste" factor

to twiddling the tone controls of our amplifier in the privacy of our home. Not in our laboratory.

The Rectilinear III is our best effort to date in this direction.

And our inspiration for it was a totally different and rather impractical design: the full-range electrostatic speaker.

Any serious audio engineer will tell you that electrostatics

are inherently superior to conventional speakers in producing an output that's identical to the input. This superiority is due to scientifically verifiable characteristics, such as flatness of frequency response and low time delay distortion.

The trouble is that electrostatics create tremendous problems with amplifiers, have difficulty playing *really* loud without distortion and are also somewhat deficient in bass. But—they're accurate, undistorted "mirrors" of sound.

The Rectilinear III is the first successful attempt to give you this electrostatic type of sound in a conventional speaker without any of the above problems.

It allows you to hear what composers, musicians and record producers have created for you and not what some speaker manufacturer thinks will please you.

So, next time you're in a store and you hear another \$299 speaker that sounds different from ours, you'll have an idea which of the two is wrong.

And which is the one to buy.

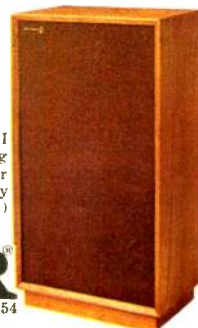


The Truth: Undistorted Reproduction



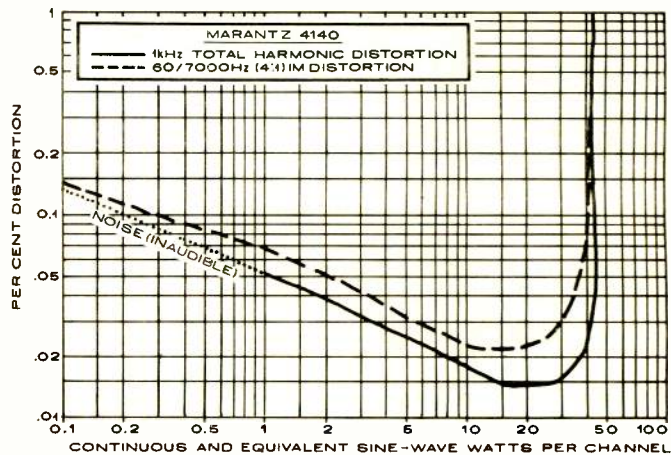
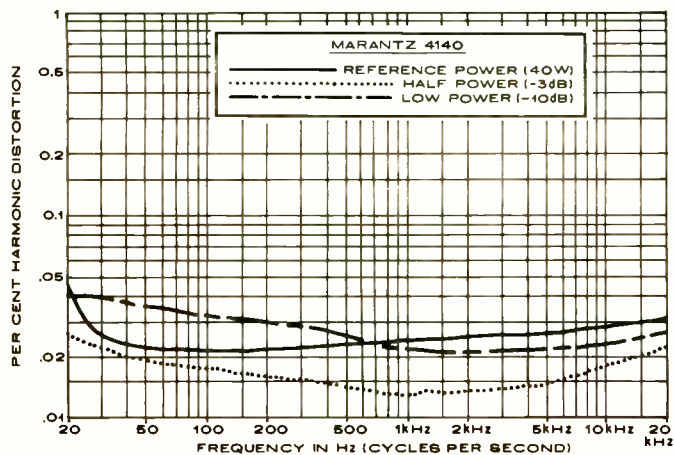
Seductively Distorted Reproduction

Rectilinear III floor-standing speaker (6 drivers, 3-way crossover)



RECTILINEAR

Rectilinear Research Corp., 107 Bruckner Blvd., Bronx, N.Y. 10454
Canada: H. Roy Gray Limited, Ontario



Note: curves were made with the amplifier in the four-channel mode, with two channels driven (one measured) to equal power outputs.

minated words identify the program source and operating mode. Below the meters are three horizontal slider controls for front left-right balance, rear left-right balance, and overall front-rear balance. Pushbuttons control loudness compensation and the high-cut filter, connect either or both of the two sets of speaker outputs, switch in the tape-monitoring circuit, and select the output of either of two tape decks for monitoring while recording.

Along the lower portion of the panel are a pushbutton power switch, separate stereo-headphone jacks for the front and rear channels, and seven control knobs. The input selector has positions for PHONO, TUNER, AUX, TAPE 1, and TAPE 2 (the AUX position is also labeled CD-4—presumably in anticipation of a separate demodulator's being used with that input). A MODE switch selects MONO, 2 CH, and three four-channel modes—DISCRETE, VARI-MATRIX, and SQ, the last requiring an optional SQ decoder module that plugs into a socket and mounts unobtrusively beneath the amplifier. Associated with the VARI-MATRIX position is a DIMENSION knob that adjusts the amplitude and phase characteristics of the rear channels. The VARI-MATRIX (which must not be confused with the totally different Sansui Vario-Matrix) synthesizes the rear channels from two-channel sources; it also has some decoding capability for matrixed four-channel programs.

There are three sets of tone controls—BASS, MID, and TREBLE. Concentric slip-clutch knobs are used for separate adjustment of front and rear channels. Finally, there is the VOLUME control, which affects all four channels.

In the rear of the amplifier are insulated spring-clip speaker connectors and standard phono jacks for all inputs and outputs. The two sets of tape-recorder connections, as well as the AUX inputs, are in quadruplicate for four-channel discrete sources; the tuner and phono inputs are for two-channel sources. The preamplifier outputs and main amplifier inputs are brought out to separate jacks joined by external jumpers.

A connector is provided for an optional remote balance/volume control accessory, with a switch to transfer control from the amplifier to the remote unit. One of the two a.c. outlets is switched. A small rear-panel knob changes the power mode from four channels of 25 watts each to two of 70 watts.

The Marantz 4140 is 15³/₈ inches wide, 14³/₈ inches deep, and 5³/₄ inches high; it weighs 33 pounds. Optional accessories include a walnut wooden cabinet (\$29.95) and the RC-4 remote balance and volume control (\$39.95). The price of the Model 4140 itself is \$549.45. The plug-in SQ decoder (Model SQA-1) with front-back logic is \$49.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** With all four channels driven by a 1,000-Hz signal into 8-ohm loads, the output waveforms clipped at 36 watts per channel continuous. Driving only the front channels (in the four-channel mode) increased the maximum power to 42 watts per channel, and all subsequent measurements were made in this mode of operation, as is our usual practice. With 4-ohm loads the maximum output was 54 watts per channel, and into 16 ohms it was 25 watts per channel. In the 2 x 70-watt stereo mode, all speaker terminals

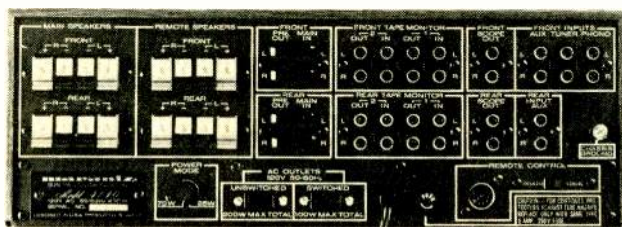
must be isolated from the chassis or any common ground. In normal use, this presents no problem, but because of the type of input circuit in our test equipment, we are unable to make power or distortion measurements under such circumstances. However, a check with a calibrated oscilloscope that did have isolated input terminals indicated that the 8-ohm clipping level was at about 97 watts per channel continuous with both channels driven.

In its distortion characteristics the Model 4140 proved itself worthy of the Marantz name. At 1,000 Hz, the harmonic distortion was unmeasurable below several watts output, being submerged in the circuit noise (which itself was very low and quite inaudible). From 8 to 38 watts output, the distortion was under 0.02 per cent (typically 0.015 per cent). The intermodulation (IM) distortion was under 0.1 per cent from 40 watts down to about 0.3 watt, and rose to a low maximum of 0.32 per cent at 1 milliwatt output. At a reference full-power output of 40 watts per channel, the distortion was essentially between 0.02 and 0.03 per cent from 25 to 20,000 Hz, rising to only 0.05 per cent at 20 Hz. The distortion did not change significantly at lower power outputs.

An input of 88 millivolts (AUX) or 1.15 millivolts (PHONO) produced an output of 10 watts with respective signal-to-noise ratios of 76 and 73 dB. The phono-input overload occurred at 115 millivolts—impressively high (and therefore safe) in view of the amplifier's high gain. The frequency response with all tone controls centered was as flat as that of our test instruments, measuring within 0.25 dB overall from 20 to 20,000 Hz. The bass tone controls had a variable turnover frequency, shifting from about 100 to 300 Hz as the control was moved from its center position. The treble control affected frequencies above 2,000 Hz. The MID control, whose action was centered at 1,000 Hz, affected a broad range of frequencies spanning most of the audible band. It had a maximum

(Continued on page 46)

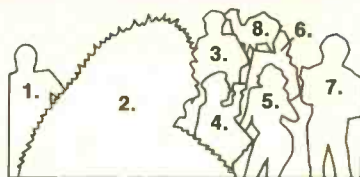
The elaborate rear panel of the Marantz 4140 even has oscilloscope outputs for all four channels.



Can you spot the Camel Filters smoker?



© 1973 R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co.



Even at the Zoo everybody has a gimmick... almost everybody. Find the one who doesn't. **1.** No. He's Miles Tugo, underwear salesman pretending he's a jogger. Gimmick: Cigarettes with filters so thick every time he inhales, his ears pop. **2.** Meet Livingston I. Presume, gorilla. A latent Homo Sapien, who throws tires at anybody who doesn't believe in Evolution. **3.** Nope. He's Jerry Bilt, zoo painter. Holds gimmick: A long pole to paint ape's cage (says he's allergic to fur and having his leg pulled off). His

Maxi-Long cigarettes easily break in half, too. **4 & 5.** No and no. They're Sam and Janet Evening, movie team making a low budget jungle picture: "King Kong Gives Detroit A Hickie." **6.** He's Skip Tickel. Was given this address to deliver 12 Chinese dinners. Gimmick: Smokes cigarettes with filters so hollow he talks with an echo. **7.** Right. He prefers wildlife to wild gimmicks. Wants no nonsense in his cigarette, either. Camel Filters. Good taste. Honest tobacco. **8.** No. It's either the symbol of a high-quality cigarette, or a high-rise sheep.

Camel Filters.
They're not for everybody
(but they could be for you).



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

19 mg. "tar," 1.3 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report SEPT.'73.

range of ± 5 dB, compared to the ± 10 dB or more of the other tone controls.

The loudness compensation boosted both low and high frequencies moderately. The HI FILTER had a 6-dB-per-octave slope, with the -3 -dB frequency being 4,000 Hz. The RIAA phono equalization was flat within ± 0.5 dB from 500 to 15,000 Hz, and rose slightly at lower frequencies. Overall, it was within ± 2 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz.

● *Comment.* As a four-channel integrated amplifier, the Marantz 4140 offers an impressive combination of high power and ultra-low distortion in a very compact (though certainly not lightweight) package. Its array of inputs and outputs should be able to handle almost any conceivable grouping of quadraphonic ac-

cessory components, such as matrix or discrete disc demodulators, tape decks, or active equalizers. Of course, it can also be viewed as a very fine high-power stereo amplifier. However, we suspect that most people will rightly consider the 4140 as the control center for a high-quality four-channel system.

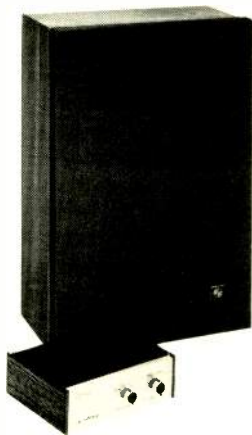
Our test unit did not come equipped with any of the plug-in decoder options. We tried the built-in VARI-MATRIX circuit both as a decoder for some of our matrixed records and as a rear-channel synthesizer with stereo program sources. In the latter function it did a satisfying job of providing rear-channel sound with some control of the spatial effect through the DIMENSION control. But with the four-channel matrix records we used (EV, QS, and SQ), the directionality was

no more positive than that achieved by "enhancing" most two-channel material.

The Model 4140 is protected by sensing circuits which operate a relay to disconnect the speakers if excessive output currents are drawn (they also provide a few seconds of delay upon switching on, to avoid problems with transient thumps). These circuits work very well, as we discovered during attempts to measure the output in the 2 x 70-watt mode. Summarizing, the Marantz Model 4140 offers state-of-the-art performance in four-channel integrated amplifiers, with the overall quality and solid construction we have always associated with Marantz products. It is expensive, but—the old saw to the contrary—some of the very best things are.

Circle 108 on reader service card

Electro-Voice Interface:A Speaker System



● THE Electro-Voice Interface:A is an equalized loudspeaker system with an unusual combination of design and performance features. Unlike most "bookshelf" speakers—and any with substantial low-bass response—the Interface:A can actually be installed on an ordinary bookshelf. Although the front dimensions are 14 x 22 inches, the system is only 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep, and it weighs 27 pounds, 4 ounces.

The Interface:A is a two-way system with a nominally 8-inch-diameter woofer that crosses over at 1,500 Hz to a 2-inch tweeter. The tweeter operates with a

front-loading arrangement that increases dispersion at the highest frequencies. A second tweeter at the rear of the enclosure operates above 7,000 Hz to maintain a reasonably constant total energy output over the full frequency range. A clear space of at least 2 inches at the rear and around the sides of the enclosure is recommended to permit the rear tweeter to radiate effectively. However, its audible contribution to the overall sound is quite subtle, and enclosure placement is not critical. When the Velcro-fastened grille is removed, the most striking visible feature of the Interface:A is the large passive-radiator cone. This is essentially an 11-inch-diameter mass-loaded speaker cone in a conventional frame, but without a voice coil or magnet structure. The passive radiator is actually a precisely designed substitute for a conventional vent or port, which would have to be unreasonably large to achieve the desired 32-Hz response with an enclosure of the Interface:A's size.

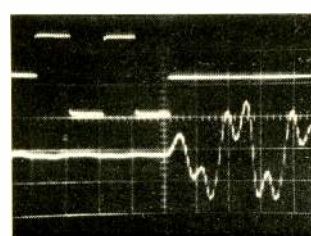
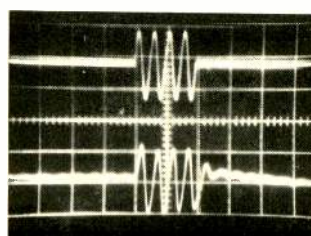
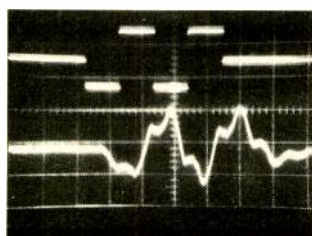
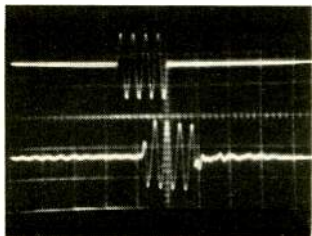
The frequency response of the E-V Interface:A even without its electronic equalizer is certainly respectable. At the bass end there is a gradual rolloff to -3 dB at 60 Hz and -10 dB at 32 Hz. The active equalizer improves this performance even further. Connected in the

amplifier's tape-monitoring path, this unity-gain equalizer has a flat response over most of the audio range. The bass boost begins at 100 Hz, reaching a maximum of $+6$ dB at 35 Hz, with a sharp cutoff below 30 Hz. A switch on the equalizer provides three high-frequency response curves. One is electrically flat, the second rolls off the response to -6 dB at 20,000 Hz, and the third produces a gentle boost of the highs, starting at 2,000 Hz, to a maximum of $+4$ dB at 20,000 Hz. The equalizer unit is a.c. operated, measures 8 x 7 x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches, and has a tape-monitoring switch and connectors to replace those it supplants in the amplifier. Another novel feature of the system is the provision for adding an optional "tweeter saver," the Model TS-1, which temporarily disconnects the tweeters when the amplifier drive level exceeds a safe value.

Among E-V's design goals for the Interface:A were an effective 32-Hz lower response limit and uniform total-energy output over the audible range. In addition, the use of a vented enclosure confers somewhat greater efficiency than is typical of acoustic-suspension systems. Overall, the Interface:A is a noteworthy example of intelligent engineering to

(Continued on page 50)

Oscilloscope photos show (from left to right) the fine response of the Interface:A's tweeter to tone-burst and square wave inputs (both at 5,000 Hz), and the woofer's response to similar inputs at 1,000 Hz. The input appears above the output in all four of the photographs.



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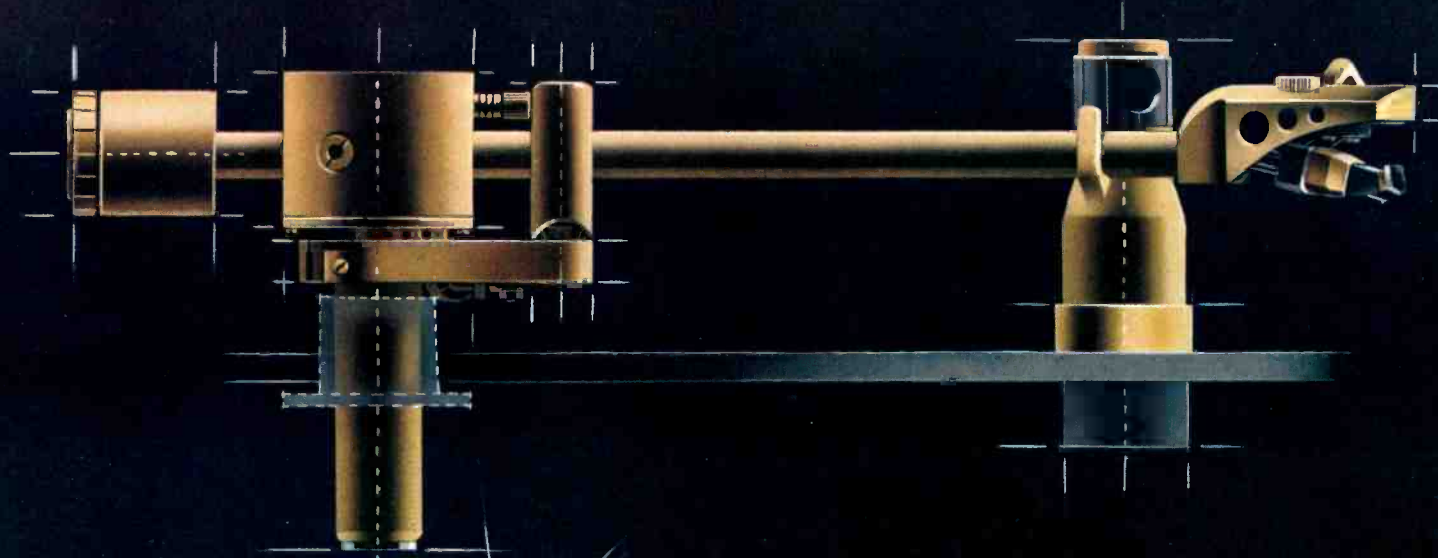
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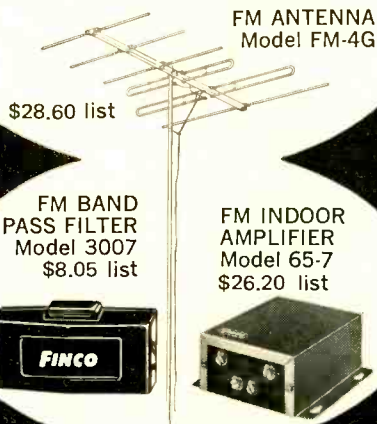
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CIRCLE NO. 16 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Electro-Voice Interface:A Speaker System . . .

(Continued from page 46)

achieve stated goals with a minimum of sacrifice in the inevitable "trade-off" of design parameters. The Interface:A is sold as a complete "system" that includes two speaker enclosures and the equalizer. Price: \$400.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** According to the manufacturer, setting the equalizer's high-frequency level switch to maximum provides the most uniform energy output from the system, and we used that setting during our tests. We measured the integrated frequency response from 500 to 20,000 Hz in a normally "live" room. Below 500 Hz, separate measurements were made using a closely spaced microphone for both the driven and passive cones; the two resulting curves were then combined with appropriate allowance for their respective contributions to the total output. When we joined this combined curve (corrected for the equalizer response) to the high-frequency curve, we obtained an excellent overall frequency response of about ± 4 dB from 32 to 20,000 Hz. The impressive bass response conformed closely to E-V's published curves, with no evidence of a resonant peak and an overall variation of only ± 2 dB from 35 to 450 Hz. The output at the extreme highs (which are most subject to measurement error) rose to about +5 at 15,000 Hz, relative to the 1,000-Hz level. The mid-range response, which was generally smooth, showed two moderate peaks with amplitudes of 4 dB at 600 Hz and 3 dB at 3,000 Hz.

The separate measurements of the driven and passive cones showed (as theory predicts) that the output below 40 Hz is almost entirely from the passive cone. At a 1-watt input, the distortion from the driven cone rose rapidly below 50 Hz. This is of little consequence, since its output (again, as theory predicts) at these frequencies, and hence its contribution to the overall sound, is very much reduced. On the other hand, distortion from the passive cone was unusually low, reaching a maximum of only 6 per cent at 34 Hz and actually decreasing to 4.5 per cent at our lower measurement limit of 30 Hz.

The impedance of the Interface:A reached low points of just over 5 ohms at 30 and 200 Hz, and the highest values were 25 ohms at 75 and 1,500 Hz. The response of the equalizer matched E-V's curves very closely. Aside from a phasing anomaly (the significance of which is not entirely clear), the tone bursts show good transient response, with little ring-

ing or start-up delay. We repeated this test with a two-cycle-long square-wave burst and found that, although the square-wave output was modified considerably, its basic shape was clearly recognizable. Unlike most equalized systems, the E-V Interface:A has relatively high efficiency. Our estimate is that it is 6 dB more efficient than a typical acoustic-suspension system in its price range—a substantial increase. This lessens the power demands made on the power amplifier by about 75 per cent over most of the audible band. At the very low end, the demand on the amplifier was about equal to that of an acoustic-suspension system.

● **Comment.** In our simulated live-vs.-recorded listening test, the E-V Interface:A had excellent highs with good dispersion—though not quite the equal of the better "omni" and "semi-omni" speakers we have tested. The mid-range had a slightly "forward" sound quality, one that in most cases would probably not be noticed except in a direct A-B live-vs.-recorded comparison. With popular and rock music particularly, the slight mid-range projection would be considered by many to be a positive quality, giving the sound a pleasing "punch." This, of course, is enhanced by the speaker's high efficiency and its power-output capability, which together can produce impressive sound levels without a super-power amplifier.

Watching the cones with the grilles removed and while playing some moderately warped records, we became aware of a major advantage of the equalizer system. Without the equalizer, both bass cones showed large excursions at normal listening levels, probably caused by "normal" record-surface irregularities. Switching in the equalizer completely removed these subsonic signals, even though the lower audio frequencies were considerably enhanced. The E-V approach is obviously far more effective in this respect than a typical rumble filter. In addition, and in contrast to some other equalizer systems that have much higher bass boosts, the moderate bass boost required from the E-V equalizer is not likely to place excessive demands on the amplifier.

All in all, the sound of the E-V Interface:A was well balanced and clean, with no hint of its exceptional bass capabilities—unless, of course, the program called for it. This should be an ideal speaker for those striving for convincing home reproduction of the kind of low frequencies heard from a large pipe organ. Rock listeners as well can approach the sort of bass reproduction heard in live concerts, since the E-V Interface:A can deliver a level of undistorted bass far superior to that of any other speaker of its size that we have heard.

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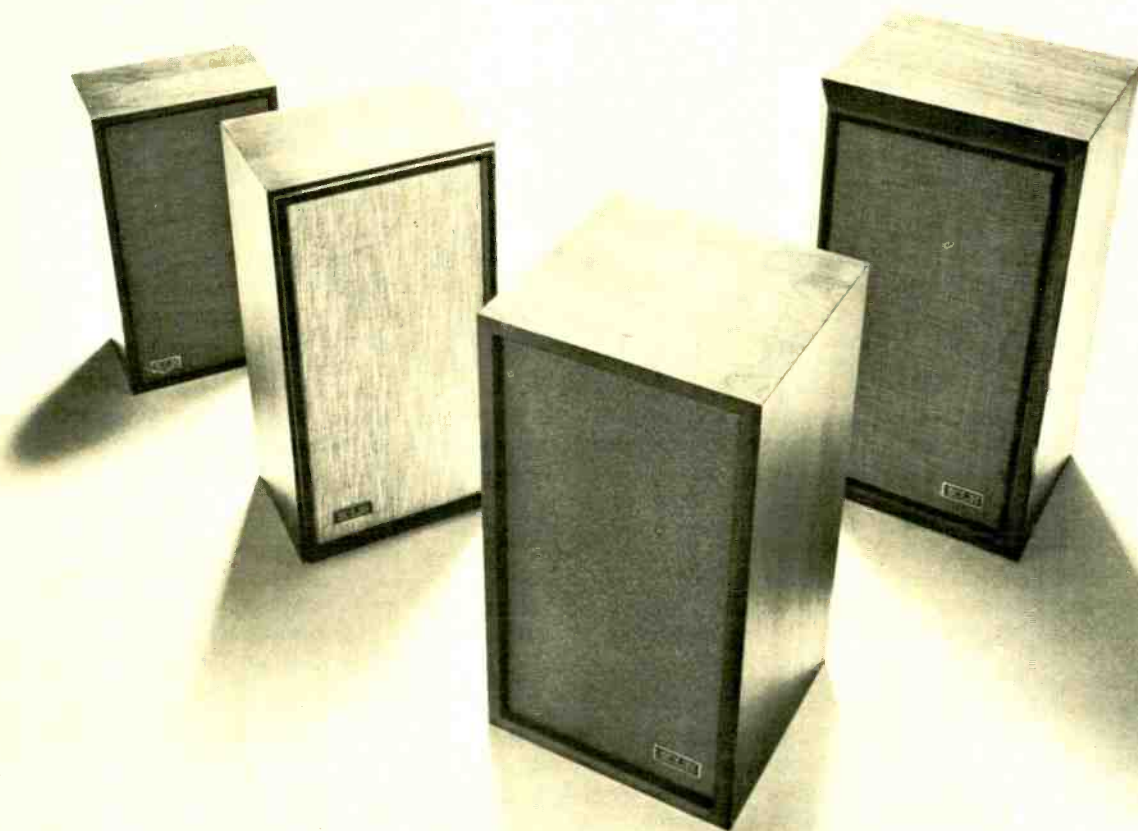
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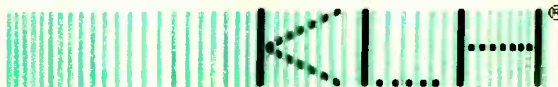
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CIRCLE NO. 20 ON READER SERVICE CARD

GOING ON RECORD

By JAMES GOODFRIEND

Music Editor



PACHELBEL'S COMET

UNDERGROUND excitement about a record or a song develops when several radio stations coincidentally program that selection and several hundred (perhaps several thousand) independent minds hear it and, without benefit of any "promotion," get excited about it. Some such thing has been happening recently to a piece that is coming to be known as "Pacobel's Cannon" or some variant thereof, since that is the name cited to record stores and the Musical Heritage Society by those people who want to buy the recording. In a culture that takes such names as Led Zeppelin, Christopher Milk, and Spooky Tooth as a matter of course, "Pacobel's Cannon" can hardly be considered out of line. Nevertheless, there is a story here. There are a few LP recordings of the piece, there may even be a single or two, and who knows what other developments are in store for this fragment of ancient music.

The piece is actually the *Canon* (one "n"), or *Kanon*, in D Major for three violins and continuo (that is, harpsichord, cello, and bass) by Johann Pachelbel, who was born in Nuremberg in August, 1653, and died in the same city on the sixth or seventh of March, 1706. The musical importance of Pachelbel, according to *Grove's Dictionary*, "is due to the fact that he was one of the spiritual ancestors of Bach." There is a one-column article on Pachelbel in *Grove's*, but the Canon in D Major is nowhere mentioned in it.

A canon is a piece for two or more voices (vocal or instrumental) in which the melody played by the first voice is imitated exactly by every other voice, each voice, however, beginning the melody at some specified time after the preceding one. Thus, the round *Three Blind Mice* is a canon, the second voice beginning the opening line only when the first voice reaches "see how they run," and the third and fourth voices waiting an equal length of time before beginning.

Such canons are frequently constructed to be infinite—that is, each voice, when it has reached the end, starts over again, and you can keep on singing it until you arbitrarily decide to stop.

Pachelbel's canon has the added complexity of a separate bass line, over which the other voices perform the canon proper, and that bass line is continually repeated, thus making the work not only a canon but a *passacaglia* too. (A *passacaglia* is a set of variations on a brief theme over a continuously repeated bass.) The melodic line of Pachelbel's canon is really a continuing set of variations on the opening tune. That opening tune (and the bass line that accompanies it) is only eight notes long in an unvaried rhythm, and thus the harmonic progression formed by the upper voices and the bass—for those who know about such things the progression is I-V-VI-III-IV-I-IV-V—is continuously repeated. Such close, regularly repeated progressions can lend a certain hypnotic quality to music and, when the variations over them increase in melodic complexity and tend to rise in pitch, a certain ecstatic quality as well. Pachelbel's canon does just this, and does it splendidly.

What is fascinating to me here is the at least hypothetical coming together of lines of musical tradition and interest that produced the work in the seventeenth century and produced a new appreciation of it in the twentieth. To begin with, it may be a representative work of its time, but it is hardly a typical one. Pachelbel was particularly noted for compositions based on Lutheran chorales, and nothing could be further from that peculiarly lucid and rational form of composition than this very sensual and really rather indeterminate piece.

If those seem like strange adjectives to use about a work that is, in fact, cast in two of the nominally strictest musical forms (textures, more properly), a relatively small amount of aural familiarity with the work will reveal that the melod-

ic line, once past the opening statement, is free to go in almost any direction, bound only by the dictates of the harmonic progression. In my experience of playing the work for others, I have found that it produces an almost irresistible impulse to sing along with it. Yet, the would-be singer has never heard the piece before and therefore cannot know which way the melody is going to go. What is happening, in effect, is that the singer is inspired to improvise over a stated and understood harmonic progression—and, of course, whatever he matches to that progression fits.

It took the increased interest in things harmonic of the Baroque era to produce a situation in which a work of this sort could have been composed; it could never have happened in the Renaissance. And yet there are antecedents: *Sumer is icumen in*, for example, a work of thirteenth-century England, is a four-part canon over a repeated lower part constructed of two intertwining voices. Its resulting harmonic progression is shorter and less interesting than Pachelbel's, but it too produces the feeling of harmonic security that allows for melodic improvisation.

The particular ecstatic quality of the Pachelbel also has its precedents—for example, passages in Monteverdi's *Lagrime d'Amante*—as well as its subsequents—Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* and a good deal of the music of Alan Hovhaness, among others.

BUT why this sudden appreciation today? Well, for one thing, there is a very definite preoccupation now with the idea of ecstaticism in music (together with its quasi-religious connotations). The quality of certain rock music shows that, together with the new interest in such musical figures as Scriabin and the continuing fascination with Indian music (where the ecstaticism received by Western audiences is perhaps not that intended by the Eastern music).

In the second place, the security offered by a short, repeated harmonic progression is a virtual cliché in rock. Whether one puts this down to the psychological needs of the artist or the audience, there is no question that rock much prefers to do variations in place rather than cope with the idea of an extended harmonic journey. And it is intriguing that the progression afforded by Pachelbel is really rather close to the harmonic movement of rock.

What we have here, then, is the musical idea as a sort of comet, which comes into our ken and looms very large for a time, then goes away, being forgotten by all but specialists, only to appear again a century or two later and subtly change the lives of a whole new generation. Pachelbel, what will they say of you in the year 2100?



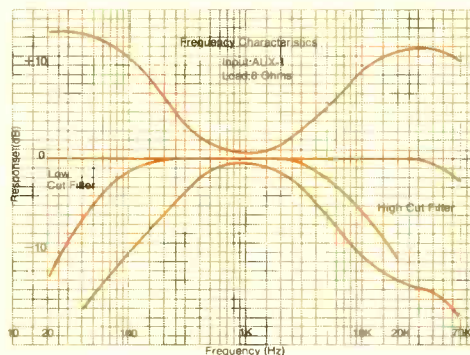
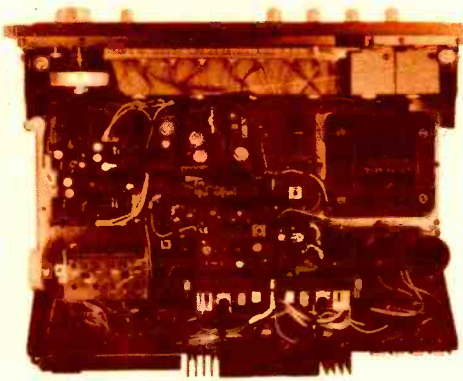
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CIRCLE NO. 35 ON READER SERVICE CARD

THE SIMELS REPORT

By STEVE SIMELS



GETTING THERE WAS ALL THE FUN

SOMEONE, I'm not sure who (and if any of our literate readers would care to enlighten me, I'd be most grateful), once said that it's the easiest thing in the world to start a new religion—all you have to do is be crucified and rise on the third day. "Easy" or no, there have been throughout history a number of aspiring divinities who have not taken this simple advice to heart, and it appears to have been similarly wasted on Teenage America's latest Heavyweight Spiritual Contender, the sixteen-year-old self-billed Perfect Master, Guru Maharaj Ji. In the long run, I think his credibility is going to suffer for it. As a matter of fact, I caught his act recently and frankly I can't see him as serious competition for either Billy Graham or David Bowie, the two performers he most closely resembles. However, the circumstances attendant on this confrontation between the reputed Wisdom of the East and the sensorium of this reporter deserve some explanation, at least insofar as this *is* a music magazine.

For several weeks during last fall, New York City (and, I assume, other parts of the country) was plastered with posters featuring the guru's smiling puss and an invitation to attend "Millennium '73," a three-day extravaganza at the Houston Astrodome at which he promised to announce solutions for all the world's problems. (Rennie Davis, the former radical who had gotten religion and become the Festival's organizer, had earlier declared it would be "the most significant event in the history of mankind.") Call me a sucker if you will, but with a hype like that I just knew I had to attend. My own particular problem (namely, how to justify a Popular Music Editor's interest in such spiritual matters to my more pragmatic associates at STEREO REVIEW) was soon solved, and I took it as a Good Omen. It seemed that Eric Mercury, Stax Records' latest entry in the "Let's Fill the Void Left by the Passing of Otis Redding" sweepstakes,

had been invited to perform during the Millennium's first day. The guru's people were predicting a massive turnout of premies (devotees) from all over the world, and, although Eric himself was not a follower (apparently the only reason he was approached in the first place was his recording of a highly secular soul number entitled *Love Is Taking Over*), the Stax organization was obviously receptive to the idea of presenting him to the hordes expected to pack the Astrodome to overflowing. So, being generally curious about outbreaks of mass psychosis, I allowed myself to be the guest of Stax, and, along with some other journalistic types, made the trek down to Houston.

My immediate impression upon arriving was that the seemingly unlikely alliance between Stax's Memphis Funk and the guru's Himalayan Homilies was not as farfetched as I had anticipated; it turned out that both the Stax executives and the Holy Stripling were inordinately fond of expensive limousines (the guru's was a spiffy green Mercedes, which I encountered in the hotel parking lot). But a vague air of uneasiness surrounded the whole undertaking; the record company people were promoting an artist, trying to sell records, while the guru-noids were jabbering about saving the world and offering "a thousand years of peace for those who want it." Strange bedfellows, to say the least.

Nonetheless, after a breakfast press conference at which both Rennie and Eric (a very likable and engaging young fellow, it turned out) hyped their respective things, we were off to the Astrodome to see at first hand What It Was All About. Oddly, it was a total bust: the biggest excitement (for me, anyway) was provided by occasional harassment by the assorted competing sects (Krishnists, fundamentalists, etc.) who were picketing at the gate. After all the publicity, the multitudes inconsiderately neglected to appear (official crowd estimates ranged from ten to twenty thou-

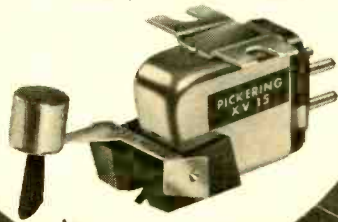
sand, which struck me as excessive), and in any event those that did couldn't have cared less about the entertainment provided for them; the kids I talked to were full of excited rumors about scheduled UFO landings and the like, and, understandably, traditional show biz must have struck them as pretty irrelevant to the grander scheme of things. So poor Eric, backed by the full-scale Stax production—big band and gospel singers—was left on stage to parade his wares before a crowd at best only vaguely aware of his presence. It was a shame, actually—Eric isn't Otis, but he's quite good; he has an excellent voice and lots of energy. But he is not Divine, and was therefore beneath the audience's notice (perhaps they should have booked Bette Midler). At any rate, I'd probably enjoy hearing him again under more reasonable conditions.

For those of you who may be wondering, I did indeed stay for the guru's opening appearance, and, although the faithful responded to him with worshipful enthusiasm, I didn't find him all that hot. For starters, he couldn't dance. Even worse, his material was lousy: he retold the same parable at least four times with different characters (owl and goose, fox and crow, etc.), and he was given to saying things like "I don't have to tell you . . . you know." Somehow, one expects more from a Living God.

Now that I've gotten all *that* out of my system, and just by way of a snappy closing, I would like to mention here the runners-up that I had to cut (due to space limitations) from my last month's 1973 Ten Best list. Normally, I wouldn't indulge in this sort of nit-picking, but I can't help feeling that the list as published may in some ways have misrepresented my thinking. So, briefly, a tip of the Hatlo Hat and a Better Luck Next Year to: the Hollies' "Romany," the debut of the New York Dolls, "Roger McGuinn," Procol Harum's "Grand Hotel," Lou Reed's "Berlin," The Band's "Moondog Matinee," Mike Oldfield's "Tubular Bells," Matthew Fisher's "Journey's End," "Ringo," and the soundtrack of *The Harder They Come*. As for singles, well, I had lots of favorites, among them the Raspberries' *Tonight*, Wings' *The Mess* (the live B-side of *My Love*, which proved conclusively that Paul McCartney still knows how to rock) and *I Lie Around*, Wizzard's *Carlsberg Special*, the Kinks' *One of the Survivors*, and, best of all, Stealers Wheel's *Everyone's Agreed That Everything Will Turn Out Fine*. Finally, Turkey of the Year was a toss between David Bowie's version of *Let's Spend the Night Together* (the real rock-and-roll suicide) and the entire "Living in the Material World" album by the late George Harrison. Thank you and good night.

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In London:
**SERGIO MENDES
AND BRASIL '77**

By Henry Pleasants

BANDLEADER-COMPOSER Sergio Mendes became a big name in the music world in 1966 with a group called Brasil '66. The group with which he toured England a short while back is called Brasil '77. An obvious first question: "Why '77?"

"Because," he replies, "it seems to give us time to move forward, to experiment, to improve, to try out new sounds, new techniques, new combinations, new colors, new rhythms. I don't want what we are doing to be tied to a date in the present, let alone a date in the past. Brasil '77 follows nicely on Brasil '66, but, more importantly, it gives us musical elbow room."

Mendes, at the moment of speaking, had little elbow room of any other kind. He had just been moved from one room to another at Claridge's. Indeed, he was still being moved, and the setting, with two foot lockers waiting to be opened, ten assorted pieces of hand luggage piled on the floor, and bellboys arriving at roughly five-minute intervals with racks of suits, shirts, costumes, and other items of stage attire, suggested an episode in a George Kaufman comedy. But Mendes, when he talks about his music, is oblivious to all else.

"Just as I don't want to be pegged to any certain date," he told me, "so also I don't want to be pegged to any one geographical area or any one musical idiom or style. I'm a Brazilian. I love Brazilian music, and I'll always play it. I'll keep Brazil in the name of my group. But I love classical music, too, especially Debussy and Ravel, and even Webern and some of the modern electronic composers. And I love jazz."

"When I was a boy studying classical piano at the conservatory in Rio de Janeiro, I was fascinated by what the young American jazz pianists were play-

ing at that time. My early idols and models were Bud Powell, Horace Silver, and Dave Brubeck. I have kept up my association with jazz and jazz musicians, and I play with them whenever and wherever I can.

"From that jazz experience I have learned to appreciate and treasure what North and South American styles have in common, although what *distinguishes* them from one another is treasurable, too. The important thing to recognize is that all this music is Afro-American, or Afro-European.

"The blacks came to the Americas from many different parts of Africa, and there were—and still are—as many *different* kinds of African music as there are different kinds of North and South American music—probably more, since the differences in Africa are tribal as well as regional.

"And, having arrived in the Americas, they were exposed to a variety of European cultures and to different kinds of European music—British, northern European, and Protestant in North America; Spanish, Portuguese, and Catholic in South America. The resulting musical blends varied accordingly."

THE composition and repertoire of Brasil '77 reflects the wide range of Sergio Mendes' experience and enthusiasm. An essentially Latin rhythm is provided by two sets of congas and bongos and a vast assortment of rattles, triangles, bells, gongs, etc. But there is also, appropriately between the other two, another drum set of distinctly North American appearance and function.

There are bass guitar and lead guitar, but no horns, their place in sustaining a melody line being taken by two girl singers, with nicely matched voices, who sing both Brazilian and North American popular songs and give a simple, easily followed continuity to the complex poly-rhythms being churned up behind them.

And there is Sergio Mendes himself, of course, right in the middle, accompanying, commenting, and controlling on both acoustic and electric piano, taking solo choruses now and then, usually on the electric piano, that reflect his early infatuation with jazzmen Powell, Silver, and Brubeck.

It is not, except for a fifteen-minute carnival suite, "Brazilian" music, and it is not jazz in any conventional sense, but rather a blend compounded from elements of both as they have met in the intensely musical sensibilities of Sergio Mendes. Call it Mendes music.

At his Royal Festival Hall concert he asked if there were any Brazilians in the house, and was delighted to be assured that there were many. But there was another there whose presence pleased him just as much, possibly even more, as confirmation of his objectives and his accomplishments. It was Count Basie.

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By MARTIN BOOKSPAN

MOZART'S CLARINET CONCERTO (K.622)

THE clarinet as we know the instrument today seems to have evolved during the early years of the eighteenth century as a single-reed woodwind. The instruments referred to in scores of that time as "chalumeaux" may have been early versions of the clarinet, and the term "chalumeau" is still used today to describe the lowest register of the clarinet. The first certain use of the clarinet in a serious way appears to have been in a Mass composed in 1720 by the Belgian composer Jean Adam Joseph Faber. There were further tentative uses of the instrument by largely obscure composers during the next several decades. Something of a stir was created in London in the winter of 1763 when clarinetists were summoned to take part in the premiere of the opera *Orione* by Johann Christian Bach (the "London Bach"). But Charles Sanford Terry, in his biography of J. C. Bach, says that the use of the instrument in *Orione* was really neither adventurous nor remarkable.

It remained for Mozart to seize upon the expressive possibilities offered by the clarinet, transcending, in his sympathetic usage of the instrument, everything done by his contemporaries and immediate predecessors. First in Mannheim, and then subsequently in Paris, Munich, and Vienna, Mozart became well acquainted with the instrument—though he had first employed it as early as 1771 (when he was fifteen!) in his *Divertimento* in E-flat, K. 113. The final flowering of Mozart's writing for the clarinet was prompted by the presence, in Vienna, of two extraordinary virtuosos of the instrument, brothers named Stadler, who were members of the Emperor's *Harmonie* of eight wind players. The older of the two, Anton, became a close friend of Mozart's; they were fellow Masons, and Anton was a frequent guest at the Mozarts' table. It was for Anton Stadler that Mozart composed his greatest music for the clarinet, including the Quintet of 1789 (K. 581), the

obligato parts in the opera *La Clemenza di Tito* of 1791 (K. 621), and the Clarinet Concerto of the same year (K. 622).

The Clarinet Concerto was Mozart's last concerted work for any instrument; he completed it on September 28, 1791, about two months before his death. The original manuscript of the work is lost, but there is strong evidence to indicate that Mozart wrote it with the basset horn—a lower-voiced clarinet—as the solo instrument. In the ten years intervening between the composition and publication (1801), certain passages seem to have been raised an octave for practical purposes related to the still evolving instrument.

Albert Einstein, in his biography of Mozart, wrote of the Clarinet Concerto:

The greatness and the transcendent beauty of this work are such as its high Köchel number would lead us to expect. . . . The first movement is from beginning to end in Mozart's last style, informed throughout by the closest relation between the soloist and the orchestra, and by the utmost possible vitality in the orchestral portion itself. . . . Significantly, in this work the basses are sometimes separated from the cellos; in the Adagio, a counterpart to the Larghetto of the (Clarinet) Quintet, there are passages of transparent sonority in which the contrabass is silent. And how all the registers of the solo instrument are exploited, yet without any exhibition of virtuosity! There is no opportunity for free cadenzas. One need only compare this work with similar compositions by another great lover of the clarinet and master in writing for it, Carl Maria von Weber . . . to see the difference between the supreme effectiveness of simplicity and more virtuoso exhibition.

The first great recording of the Clarinet Concerto was made in London in the late 1930's by Reginald Kell, the distinguished British clarinetist. About a decade later Kell re-recorded his fluent and polished performance of the score, this time in Symphony Hall, Boston, with the conductorless Zimmler Sinfonietta for the newly emerging long-playing record format. This Kell re-recording set the

modern standard of performance where this score is concerned, and all subsequent recordings owe it a debt.

THERE are currently nearly a dozen different performances of the Clarinet Concerto listed in the Schwann Record and Tape Guide. Several of them have special qualities of excellence: Gervase De Peyer's (London CS 6178; tape L 80053) is a good-humored, beautifully articulated virtuoso approach with rich sonics; Karl Leister's first recording of the score (with Rafael Kubelik conducting, Deutsche Grammophon 136550) is a perky, exuberant performance (unlike his later, soporific one on Angel S-3783); and Robert Marcellus' version, with George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra providing a matchlessly alert instrumental framework (Columbia MS 6968), has a special dignity and eloquence that many listeners find unequaled.

My own favorite of all the available recordings, however, is the one by Jack Brymer, with Neville Marriner conducting the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields (Philips SAL 6500378). For more than a quarter of a century Brymer has occupied the principal clarinet chair in a succession of London's great orchestras, beginning with Sir Thomas Beecham's Royal Philharmonic in the later 1940's, then the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and currently (since 1972) the London Symphony Orchestra. Indeed, his collaboration with Marriner marks the third time he has recorded Mozart's Clarinet Concerto: his first version, with Beecham conducting, is still available as a low-price Seraphim reissue (S 60193); his second recording, with Colin Davis conducting the London Symphony, was apparently never released in this country. Both performances have a liquid grace and charm, but the new one adds the qualities of greater bite and intensity. This is particularly so of the slow movement, where Brymer and Marriner make rather more of the troubled waters that seethe beneath the surface of the music. Throughout, Brymer produces a tone of uncommon clarity and purity, and he and the ensemble are given beautifully balanced sound by the Philips recording engineers. I must also mention the easygoing manner and relaxed tempo applied by Brymer and Marriner to the last movement, characteristics which give it an additional feeling of spontaneity.

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COMPOSER MICHAEL TIPPETT

An appreciation by Bernard Jacobson



AT THE TIME these notes appear in print, quite a number of American concertgoers in different cities are about to undergo—or will already have undergone—their most concentrated encounter thus far with the music of a man I believe to be the most important English composer writing today. I know that such a claim made on behalf of Michael Tippett runs the risk of appearing dangerously hyperbolic to American readers more familiar with such bigger “names” as Benjamin Britten and William Walton. But in making it I am worried less by the risk of exaggeration than by the likelihood of understatement, for Michael Tippett is for me one of the supreme composers of any time or place, and I fancy that a good many of those who come upon his Third Symphony and his Piano Concerto at the Chicago Symphony, or his Concerto for Double String Orchestra at the New York Philharmonic this month, or those who saw his third opera, *The Knot Garden*, produced at Northwestern University February 22 will not only agree with me but may find themselves wondering where he has been all their lives.

These are not the first opportunities Tippett has had to place his imprint on American musical life. Apart from the slowly growing availability of his music on disc and the occasional live performance of such works as the Concerto for Double String Orchestra, the Second String Quartet, and the oratorio *A Child of Our Time*, he enjoyed something of a personal triumph as composer-conductor as long ago as April 1968, when he filled in on short notice for Igor Stravinsky, conducting the St. Louis Symphony in his own 1963 Concerto for Orchestra as well as works by Purcell, Holst, and Ives and a magnificent performance of Elgar’s “Enigma” Variations as well.

At that time Tippett was sixty-three. Neither in the United States, where the ripples from that evening in St. Louis had little effect, nor in England,

where Britten is still widely accepted as the top composer (“If Britten sneezes, they record it,” one compatriot has ruefully remarked), was his reputation particularly high outside a small but dedicated circle of admirers. It is only in the last five or six years that the balance of reputation has tipped radically, and the number of British listeners to whose minds the name Tippett comes first when they think of their country’s musical resources has multiplied.

The advocacy of conductor Colin Davis has had something to do with the change. Davis had already recorded the Second Symphony and the Concerto for Orchestra when, in 1968, he led a revival of Tippett’s first opera, *The Midsummer Marriage*, at Covent Garden. Then, shortly after taking over as music director at the Royal Opera House, he mounted *Midsummer Marriage* again (and recorded it), and in December 1970 he conducted the premiere of *The Knot Garden*, a new recording of which I review on page 79.

The Knot Garden was really the fulcrum of Tippett’s elevation to a new plane of recognition, though it was an elevation that had, regrettably, just a touch of *succès de scandale* about it. I did not see the production, but it was evident from the reviews that at least part of the opera’s appeal derived from its quite obvious elements of titillating novelty: the unaccustomed presence of a black and white homosexual pair on the operatic stage and of an electric guitar and jazz combo in the orchestra pit. But though these elements may have helped Tippett’s new opera to make an impact, they are so carefully integrated into the fabric of the work that any accusation of cheap opportunism would be inappropriate. What can justly be said—and perhaps it is just a positive way of rephrasing that negative word “opportunism”—is that *Knot Garden* is a part of Tippett’s deliberate aim to widen his range and, by simplifying his musical style, to reach a larger audience. In any case, the move had its roots much earlier in the composer’s output.

The bare lines and stark scoring of the opera *King Priam* (1961), for example, had come with the disconcerting effect of a sudden cold shower after

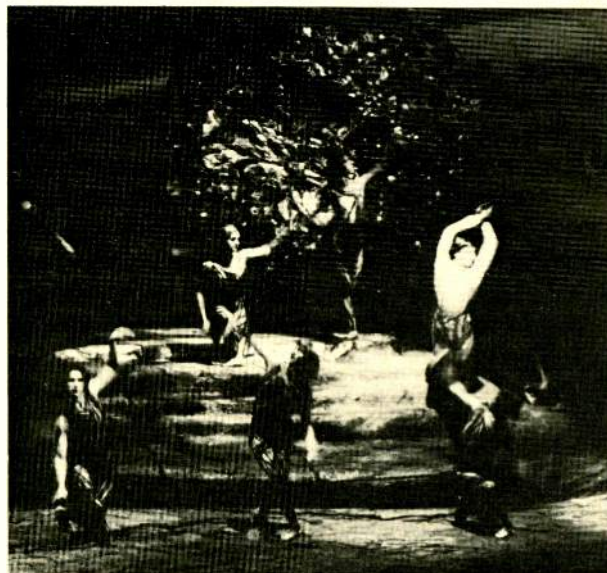
◀ Sir Michael Tippett turns from his piano (a big, German Steinway) to look through the reflecting picture window of the studio of his home.

the apogee of polyphonic complexity and sensual richness of sound attained in *Midsummer Marriage* (completed 1952) and its cognate work, the Piano Concerto of 1953-1955. Similarly, the Second Symphony of 1956-1957, though still complex enough, represented a noticeable pruning of musical thought in comparison with the First Symphony of a dozen years earlier. It is in such subsequent works as the Concerto for Orchestra and *The Knot Garden*, however, that the drive toward simplicity has been fused most fruitfully with the complex subtleties of Tippett's earlier style, producing a line of development full of exciting possibilities as the composer approaches his seventieth birthday.

Complexity nevertheless remains central both to Tippett's mind and to his music. Even after the change of direction initiated by *King Priam*, the premiere of the ambitious choral and orchestral *Vision of Saint Augustine* in 1966 showed that Tippett was still liable to be driven by the workings of an extraordinarily intricate musical imagination to expression of a formidable density—in this case, for all its evident power, one that I have not yet been able to penetrate.

As early as the Concerto for Double String Orchestra, completed in 1939 and probably Tippett's most popular work still, the vivid modern re-creation of the flexible rhythmic methods of the Elizabethan and Jacobean madrigalists (a resource fundamental to Tippett's style) had demonstrated this tendency toward the complex in one technical sphere. The extravagantly proliferating arabesques in the piano part of the song cycle *The Heart's Assurance* (1950-1951), which shade the meaning of the words with polychromatic washes of thirty-second notes, show it in another form.

Beyond musical technique, or rather beneath it, this propensity for the many-sided is characteristic of Tippett's world-view. And just here is to be found the nub of the difference between Tippett and Britten, a difference far more wide-ranging than that of their disparate attitudes to (and uses of) tonality, though these attitudes and uses may indeed be said to exemplify the basic difference on one relatively obvious level. Britten's treatment of tonality is often fresh and striking, but rarely subtle or profound; the same is true, I think, of his perception. Tippett, however, tackles far more taxing issues on both levels. Unusual among contemporary composers in adhering to tonality even to the point of continuing to employ key signatures, he is still more unusual in being able to invest traditional chord formations with all the mystery of previously unimagined contextual twists. And in his relation to the world, to humanity, and to whatever may be his gods, Tippett



The *Midsummer Marriage's* debt to Mozart's *Magic Flute* is evident visually in these two scenes from the Covent Garden . . .

seems to take a broader and deeper range of experience into account than Britten does.

Compare, for example, Britten's facile evocation of the subject of war in the so-easily-slipped-in bit of muted military fanfare that shades "Out on the lawn I lie in bed" in his *Spring Symphony*, or the more portentous military figurations that pervade the *War Requiem*, with Tippett's handling of similar issues in a *Child of Our Time*, and you will see the difference between a gift for apt illustration and a much more interior one for telling illumination. A similar distinction may be drawn between the black-and-white moral world of Britten's *Billy Budd* (again, "illustrated" with fatal ease by a major-minor juxtaposition far too insubstantial to bear the weight of Melville's ethical implications) and the much more multifarious and genuinely, messily human interrelationships of the people in Tippett's operas. It is hard to imagine Britten's characters ever acting out of character; Tippett's (like E. M. Forster's) often do, and the result is not loss of focus and force but rather a richer and more profound characterization.

THE operas, and particularly *The Midsummer Marriage* and *The Knot Garden*, offer the clearest demonstrations in Tippett's output of the way his multifaceted mind works. His subject, in these two works especially, is man's quest for wholeness, and perhaps the most striking aspect of his treatment of this theme is *its* wholeness: confronting the Cartesian dichotomy of flesh/spirit, Tippett is, I think, one of the few contemporary artists subtle, far-seeing, and intelligent enough to perceive that the dichotomy is an illusion. Here, as in the more readily schematized good/evil opposition of *A Child of*



... production produced by Ande Anderson, designed by Tony Walton. In both operas, the priest is man's mediator with God.

Our Time, he faces the contradictions and shows us that they are not contradictions but elements of an interdependent whole. For once, we are presented not with an "either/or" situation, but with an insight that truly strives to reconcile.

It is this wholeness of view, together with the capacity for profound joy through which it is expressed, that evokes an exhilaration of response rare in an age of neurotic art. André Gide, when asked once to name France's greatest poet, replied, "Victor Hugo, hélas." If, like me, you have ever had a similar feeling about *Wozzeck* among twentieth-century operas, a feeling that it is certainly one of the masterpieces, coupled with a regret that so neurasthenic, tortured, and ultimately life-denying a work should have to be so regarded, then you may well, like me, find the life-affirmation of *The Midsummer Marriage* an extraordinarily reassuring and even bracing experience.

The work depicts the progress of two young couples toward self-knowledge. Tippett's libretto invests characters and action with a wealth of mythological and anthropological background, and of allusion to other works of art as well. Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* is clearly to be felt as the central "parent" work. Tippett's first and more arduously self-questioning couple, Mark and Jenifer, correspond to Tamino and Pamina. The relatively easy-going Jack and Bella, like Papageno and Papagena, act as mundane foils to the other pair's spiritual heroism. In place of Sarastro, we have Sosostriis, "famous clairvoyante," purloined by Tippett from Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Myth—Greek, Hindu, and Celtic—and Jungian psychology are both liberally applied in the shaping of the piece.

This web of varied references, along with what

was alleged to be the "obscurity" of the libretto, provoked many critical strictures when the opera had its first performance in 1955. Certainly, if it is bad for a creative artist to be conscious of his universalist aims and to plan his mythological references deliberately, some of the criticism was justified. But, for myself, I never saw the difficulty. I was bowled over by music that exhaled a lyrical exuberance, an intensity of celebration unsurpassed in our century. As for the action, it seemed to me not only perfectly lucid in itself, but perfectly realized through the music. The success the work has had in revival (and in the excellent Philips recording) suggests that more and more people are beginning to feel that way, and it can surely not be much longer before some of the major American opera companies essay productions of their own.

THE *Knot Garden* is a less fully realized work of musical theater than *Marriage*. Concerned with themes of at least equal complexity, it endeavors to resolve them a little too hastily for complete conviction, and its musical invention, though still prodigal by the standards of any other living composer, doesn't quite match—doesn't, indeed, aim to match—that of *Midsummer Marriage*. But it is still an enormously valuable piece. Starting with people and situations that border much more closely and explicitly on the abnormal and the neurotic than those of the *Marriage*, it still reaches a conclusion of robust mental and emotional health. Though the process of growth toward self-awareness is here carried through less coherently, it may be that the attainment of equilibrium is even more remarkable than in the earlier work, given the still wider range of human material subsumed in the first place.

King Priam is a work that points in quite other directions, not only in the move toward an austerity of texture exceptional for Tippett, but also in its relatively faithful interpretation of one pre-existing story. It is a hard work to come to grips with, but upon closer acquaintance its very bareness comes to be understood as an ideal medium for the stripped-down projection of ritual emotion. Expressively, if not in musical terms, Tippett here comes closest to Stravinsky, who achieved a comparable effect through different means in the hard-edged ostinatos of his *Oedipus Rex*. This hieratic view of ritual may appear ascetic, but in the hands of a master it can be the reverse: by removing the flesh through which we usually perceive emotion, it lays open to us the bones of feeling that lie below. *King Priam* may eschew sensual allure, but there is no lack of human expression in it.

It is to be hoped that Philips, which has already

recorded the other two operas and is shortly to release the Third Symphony, will soon give us *Priam* as well. Productions of these works do not exactly lie thick upon the ground, and, with Tippett more than any other composer I know, appreciation of the music depends on actually hearing it. Even a work as lucidly laid out as *A Child of Our Time* yields comparatively little to inspection of the printed page. It is Tippett's unerring aural imagination, reaching our understanding through the corporeal ear, that turns what looks banal on paper into a kind of magic.

It is for much the same reason that formal analysis of Tippett's musical technique tends to be fairly unproductive. But there are a few telltale fingerprints, impressed on all his work, that may be usefully pointed out. Central, and strongly in contrast to

the metaphysical cast of the composer's work, is an empiricism that, along with the rhythmic debt to the madrigalists already mentioned, is his most fundamentally English characteristic. Thus, a delight in rhythmic play and experiment is a constant element. Yet, whereas another great rhythmic experimenter, Messiaen, resorts to systems and even builds up new super-systems of his own based sometimes on Indian metric theory, sometimes on strict serialism, Tippett, even at his most elaborate, never subordinates the free flow of his invention to any preconceived schema. The superimposed rhythmic modes of Messiaen's *Turangalila* Symphony, for example, and the bewitchingly interfaceted rhythms of the Scherzo of Tippett's Second Symphony exemplify opposite poles of artistic method.



PHILIP RECORDS

SIR MICHAEL TIPPETT (he was knighted in 1966) was born January 2, 1905, in London, of parents of Cornish descent. He studied at the Royal College of Music—composition with Charles Wood and R. O. Morris (significantly for Tippett, Morris was the author of a noted book on sixteenth-century contrapuntal technique) and conducting with Sir Malcolm Sargent and Sir Adrian Boult. His compositions prior to 1935 (they have all been suppressed by the composer) reportedly showed the influence of Sibelius. But beginning with the Fantasy Sonata of 1938, Tippett established a highly personal and individual compositional style. Its rhythmic basis was founded upon the madrigal technique of the sixteenth century, in which the bar line has no more than a visual significance and the rhythmic independence of every voice is emphasized, each

providing continually fresh impetus to the others.

Tippett is unusual among contemporary composers in that his music cannot really be divorced from the rest of the man. His concerns with life are his musical concerns and vice versa. His operas and his oratorio adopt philosophical, religious, and psychological positions which are as intrinsic to them as the music. As a conductor, he is an extraordinary interpreter of the works of such composers as Purcell and Tallis (he conducted the first recorded performance of Tallis' now familiar Forty-Voice Motet for 78-rpm discs), and though he is deeply concerned with matters of authenticity in those performances, somehow the works themselves expand to take on something of the personality of Michael Tippett as his own personality seems to subsume a perception and assimilation of the music

he conducts. He has critical and literary talents as well, and is highly regarded as a radio commentator on music. He has written much about music, including a volume of essays under the title *Moving into Aquarius*, a name chosen, by the way, long before the current public fascination with that zodiacal sign. Not least, Tippett has for many years been an esteemed teacher, formerly at Morley College, where he succeeded the composer Gustav Holst.

Bernard Jacobson's new estimate of Sir Michael Tippett as composer and as man comes none too soon for so brilliant, if so previously underestimated, a talent. But the composer, now in his seventieth year, can take some satisfaction in the knowledge that his message is at last getting through, and that this tribute, though not the first, is not likely to be the last either.

Music Editor



Baritone Raimund Herincx as Faber (left) and tenor Robert Tear as Dov in a scene from Act II of Tippett's *The Knot Garden*.

In the matter of assigning differentiated thematic material to specific instrumental groups within the orchestra, Tippett's practice has been similarly undoctinaire. In his case, the notion grew naturally out of the more or less traditional association of musical ideas with particular characters in *King Priam*. Even here, the technique is employed with all the freedom of an allusive rather than a systematic mind, and with none of the stiffness of the Wagnerian leitmotiv. And when he carried it over to a purely instrumental work, the Concerto for Orchestra, he used it with a flexible sensitivity much closer to Ives' method in the Second String Quartet than to the relatively theoretical orderings of, say, Elliott Carter's Double Concerto, in which the distribution of differentiated intervallic material among instrumental groups, though fully intelligible on paper, scarcely works at all in actual sound.

Again, in the sphere of formal organization, the varying exigencies of block juxtaposition on the one hand and of development on the other draw from Tippett a response that is always related to the compositional urge at a particular moment, and to the listener's needs in connection with a particular work. Even though, in a work like the Second Piano Sonata (based on material from *King Priam*), he may set himself the task of building a structure from sharply differentiated blocks, proceeding essentially through statement rather than through development, yet development is not thrust aside at the very few moments when the course of the piece demands it.

In an opposite context, the Second Symphony, which functions basically through development of an authentically "symphonic" kind, is also able to use elements of stark juxtaposition in its slow movement, and to turn in its finale to a musical method that is an extraordinarily original fusion of

developmental with juxtapositionive method. This remarkable and utterly convincing movement consists of a chain of broadly conceived sections (the most rational analysis would probably find there are four) each of which seems to grow inevitably out of its predecessor, but which are almost devoid of any conventional kind of repetition or recapitulation. Most astonishing of all is the penultimate section, a long-breathed melody of great lyrical beauty which sweeps along in the violins in a series of (mostly) arcs. It requires thirty-six measures for its initial statement, and is then repeated in the lower strings, to diverge midway into a tonal variant as refreshing as it is subtle.

The use of delicate tonal shifts, often up or down by a single tone or half-tone, to produce visionary expansions of the musical landscape is, of all Tippett's resources, probably the most powerful and characteristic. The sheer breadth of the resultant idea is elsewhere unexampled in the music of our time, and seems to me to represent a reshaping of musical time as radical as Beethoven's was to the ears of his contemporaries. In Tippett's own youthful musical initiation, Beethoven was the central figure, and Tippett has become, in his turn, one of the few composers who do not disappear when set against that supremely demanding precursor. For Tippett, like Beethoven, has revolutionized the musical world around him, though the manner of the Tippett revolution will not be fully apparent for a long time: such judgments need perspective.

FROM the standpoint of the present, the process is all the harder to define in that it follows lines obviously different—different, at least, from those pursued by the contemporary musical schools most commonly regarded as revolutionary. Perhaps the best illumination is provided by an analogy with the book *Without Marx or Jesus*, in which Jean-François Revel argues that it is in the United States that the true political-social revolution of our time is taking place. It is a thesis presented with dazzling ingenuity, and in the course of it Revel transforms the very concepts we use in thinking about "revolution," not merely propounding new answers to all the old questions, but showing that a whole new set of questions, fashioned from new terms, has to be asked. In the music of the twentieth century, Michael Tippett has wrought a parallel marvel. He has not only written a different music, he has transformed the terms.

Bernard Jacobson, formerly a Contributing Editor of STEREO REVIEW, is now Director of Great Britain's Southern Arts Council and, we hope, a frequent contributor to these pages.



HEA

CLEO LAINE

“What I’d really like
to be called
is just a *singer*”

By Bonnie Marranca



COMMUNICATIONS systems may be more efficient and ubiquitous than ever, but now and then we hear to our surprise of a great performer or musician—a singer in a Paris café, an aging bluesman in the Mississippi Delta—tucked away contentedly in his or her own little corner of the world and virtually unknown to the greater world beyond. Such has been the case—at least here in America—with England’s Cleo Laine, who until recently has been known on this side of the Atlantic only to a small coterie of well-traveled jazz fans. Now, however, after concerts in New York (one at Alice Tully Hall and two at Carnegie Hall), three weeks at the Rainbow Grill, a nationwide tour, and two American album releases, she has become one of the most talked-about singers in the country.

One music critic has raved that she is “quite simply the greatest singer in the world.” Another has compared her sound to “smoked salmon on toast.” Blessed with a voice that can soar to F above high C, she has been free to attempt just about every vocal form: opera, lieder, jazz, and pop. But a surprising thing about Cleo Laine is that she’s an actress as well; her British stage credits run from Titania in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and Mrs. Yajnavalka in Sandy Wilson’s *Valmouth* in London, to Hedda Gabler at Canterbury and the lead in Brecht-Weill’s *The Seven Deadly Sins* at the Edinburgh Festival and later at Sadlers Wells. Miss Laine has also taped numerous British and American television shows (she made a cameo appearance here year before last on the Tony Awards telecast, singing *Bill*, which had been her big number in the London production of *Showboat*, acted in at least one film, and performed in Carson McCullers’ *A Member of the Wedding* on British radio. Her versatility in this age of specialization is, to say the least, remarkable.

Looking trim and sexy in a pair of white slacks and a royal blue blouse dipping to a low V, Miss Laine talked easily about her multiple careers during a quick luncheon at Sardi’s, which she had somehow managed to squeeze in between two radio shows. I asked if she’d rather be known as a singer or actress. “Singing for me is very natural,” she answered. “I don’t have to make too much effort to get it right. Acting is not such a natural thing for me, and I have to work very, very hard at it. I think the gods have been very good to me and given me a voice that has a natural resonance.

“When I’m doing whatever I’m doing, I’d like to be known as that. I hate when I’m acting to have a critic write about me as a singer acting. When I did *A Member of the Wedding* on radio, the thing that pleased me more than anything in the world was that the critic who reviewed me in the *Financial Times* didn’t even talk about me as a singer—though I sang *His Eye Is on the Sparrow* in that version—but as an actress. I carry that review close to my heart.”

Her experience as an actress has been a tremendous asset to Miss Laine in her development of a lyrical style that lies somewhere between Sarah Vaughan and Morgana King. She readily acknowledges the relationship between drama and song. “Most of the songs I have sung in the past have needed a certain amount of acting to make them live in some way or other. Words have always meant quite a lot to me. If people sing songs and I’m more aware of the voice than the words, I’m not interested.

“For instance, with the song *What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?* I thought this way: I’m an older woman who is in love with a very young man. I have that

thought in my mind when I sing it. In *Tea for Two*, I think: I'm someone who has just been married for a short time and is very, very fed up with the city life, and I'm telling my thoughts and my dreams."

The repertoire Miss Laine performs embraces an unusual assortment of musical styles, each of them treated with a jazz stylist's feeling for improvisation. On records she sings with equal assurance songs by composers as dissimilar as George Gershwin, Johnny Mercer, Richard Rodgers, Charles Aznavour, Carole King, and Joni Mitchell. And at Carnegie Hall last April, she sang Noël Coward's *Mad About the Boy* and Bessie Smith's *Gimme a Pigfoot* back to back—and somehow made the combination work.

Commenting on her varied repertoire, she said, "It's been my problem, in fact, that I do so many different things on record. People don't know quite what to expect. People like to put you in a box. They generally like a whole album of 'slows' written by so-and-so. But I wouldn't be satisfied if I was just a commercial artist. And I wouldn't be completely satisfied if I did all jazz. So I'm gonna please myself—that's what 'a fancy,' she concluded in a mock Cockney accent, tossing the dozens of bronze curls that frame her expressive face.

Cleo Laine—born Clementine Dinah Campbell, of West Indian-English parentage, forty-five years ago—had her first taste of applause when, at three years of age, she sang *Let's All Sing the Barmaid's Song* for a community variety show. In later years she auditioned for singing jobs, entered contests—her *Embraceable You* always lost to an overweight soprano's aria from *Madama Butterfly*—played a few club dates, and held a succession of odd jobs. John Dankworth, one of the first British musicians to be influenced by American jazz (he has composed music for orchestra, film, theater, and television, and has conducted the leading British symphonies), gave the hopeful singer her first start with a professional band in 1952 at a salary of seven pounds a week. The two were married in 1958, and by 1961 her record sales were hitting the million mark. The marriage has had many musical rewards, as listeners who have heard Cleo scatting head to head with Dankworth's alto sax in one of their frequent duets will testify. It's nearly impossible to tell who is producing which sound.

THE female half of this celebrated duo is almost casual about her vocal pyrotechnics. "Over the years, I've had the natural instrument and I've worked at technique. So I know that when I go for certain things now, I'm going to get them." Does she practice every day? "Only when I need it," is her reply. But she does admit to humming a lot and singing in the shower. "I'm not constantly listening to music," she remarks unconvincingly, then stops a few seconds to reconsider. "My ears are always large and I apparently am not listening, but I am," she confesses with a mischievous smile. When she does listen, it's mostly to music other than singing. "I'm not very keen on singers; I prefer instrumentalists," she concedes. "I went to hear Stan Getz the other night. Ah, he's a dream, and my old man knocks me out."

John Dankworth and Cleo Laine operate the nonprofit Wavendon Allmusic Plan, a summer and Easter vacation music program for students, on their seventeen-acre Buckinghamshire estate, Old Rectory. There, trained teachers, including Dankworth's sister, offer guidance to both beginners and advanced students who write, per-

form, and finally even produce their own music programs.

At Wavendon students can attend lectures, concerts, and demonstrations in music that ranges from classical to jazz to pop. "A jazz guitarist—John Williams, for instance—will come along and give lessons, or André Previn come and give a lecture on jazz and classical music. They're all people who think the way we do—that things shouldn't be put in boxes," the singer says emphatically. She teaches there herself when she can. "If you're a musician you should know *everything* that's going on because it's something that will benefit you in your working life."

As a performer Miss Laine is willing to give an audience all the benefits she's got, but she expects an audience's attention too. "Audiences to me are friends, that's why I hate cabaret—it's battling, mainly. You can't make friends with clinking cups and saucers. At a concert the people are friendly or they wouldn't have come. So when I go there, I want to please them." And please them she does; her Carnegie Hall concert last fall lasted over three hours, and the audience still begged for more encores. Coming to America may well be a turning point in this singer's life. Her first visits here were well timed. Since some are proclaiming a "back to style" movement in this country coupled with a revival of interest in the pop-standard repertoire, perhaps the wider American audience is now ready for Cleo Laine.

UNLIKE many other popular singers, she has no single easily categorized style. But her reasons for choosing material are simple. "Either the tune is better than most that are around at the time, or the words have some meaning for me, or it fits in with my program. There's nothing intellectual about the way I choose songs."

Her recent albums bear that statement out. Her latest, "I Am a Song" (RCA), arranged by Dankworth and Ken Gibson, is a superb collection mostly of standards. But earlier last year, Stanyan Records released "Day by Day" (produced by EMI in London), which is heavy on contemporary pop: it features at least three James Taylor songs. "If you're going to record you've got to sing popular songs; you can't sing standards all the time. I was with a new label, and they wanted songs a bit more commercial," she said, not the least bit defensive about her commercial pop album. It is, after all, in keeping with her flexible musical tastes. It includes her excellent rendition of David Gates' seductive *I Want to Make It with You* and a dazzling treatment of Carole King's simple *Music*. However, Miss Laine expressed some disappointment over the briskness of the album's tempos. "The record was made during an electricity strike in England. Each part of London had the electricity cut off, and EMI had just one day when they were going to have electricity. So I had to do the whole LP in one day. Tempos hadn't settled down, and most of them are faster than I would have liked. I would have got them spread out slightly more if we had had more time to work."

When you ask her where she's going, musically, Cleo Laine will tell you quite frankly: "I don't really want to go in any direction. I like doors to be open. Today, I'll go through this door, tomorrow through that door. At the moment, in America, there are so many doors open, I could go in any direction. It's a bit difficult for me. I'm still very easy. What I'd really like to be called is just a *singer*. It's really what I am, after all—unless I start acting," she adds for the benefit of the critics.

So you're about to buy
**YOUR FIRST
TAPE
RECORDER!**

Careful... that initial
step is a great big one

By Ralph Hodges

ANYONE who is about to buy his first tape recorder faces the quandary illustrated by this month's front cover: there are three tape formats to choose from, open-reel, cassette, and eight-track cartridge. The question is, why should there be three, and, further, what advantages (if any) does any one of them have over the others?

The three formats were developed at different times and were intended for different, rather specific purposes (and I should explain that "format" refers both to the forms in which the tapes come to you *and* to the non-interchangeable machines on which they are played). *Open-reel*, which is the format that usually comes to mind when someone says "tape recorder," was the first of the existing configurations. The open-reel tape is wound in a pancake shape on a plastic reel much like home movie-film reels (Figure 1). And, like film, the tape in an open-reel machine has to be physically, and carefully, handled. You must unwind a length from the "supply" reel, thread it through the tape machine's guides and across its tape heads, and finally attach it firmly (usually by winding one or two layers over the loose end) to the hub of the "take-up" reel.

Open-reel machines for consumer use are almost always *four-track*, which is to say that they are designed to record and play back two-channel stereo

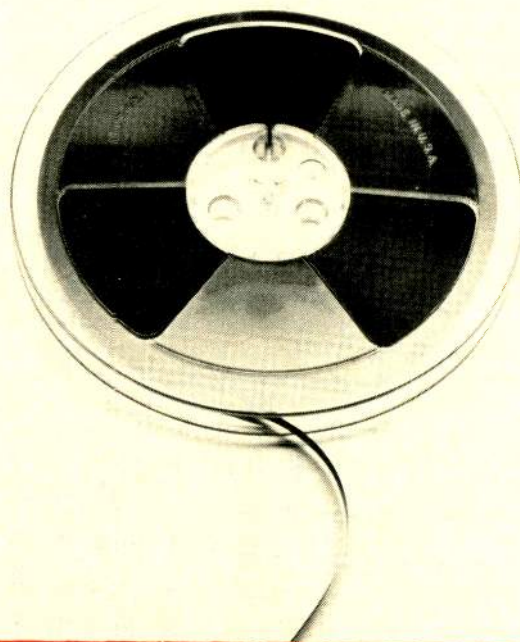


Figure 1

in both directions of the tape. Some open-reel tape machines require that you switch the reels around in order to play or record in the reverse direction. Others—the automatic-reversing types—are designed to reverse direction when all the tape has been transferred from the supply reel to the take-up reel (completion of the forward side), winding the tape back onto the original supply reel as side two is played. It's a confusing business to describe, but it's not especially difficult to deal with when the machine is in front of you. The reason for it is that there is room on the tape for four parallel recorded tracks—one stereo pair running in one direction and a second pair running in the other, as shown in the diagram on page 71. Utilizing the available space in this way saves tape, and the other two formats follow the example set by open-reel, though in different ways. (Discrete *four-channel*, or quadraphonic, open-reel tapes are *not* recorded in both directions: all four tracks are played simultaneously in one pass by the special machines equipped to handle them.)

The eight-track and cassette formats came later. They are both "cartridge" systems, with the tape being enclosed in a plastic shell—ideally, you should never have to touch it. Eight-track cartridges were initially designed for use in automobiles, where disc recordings and open-reel tape would be

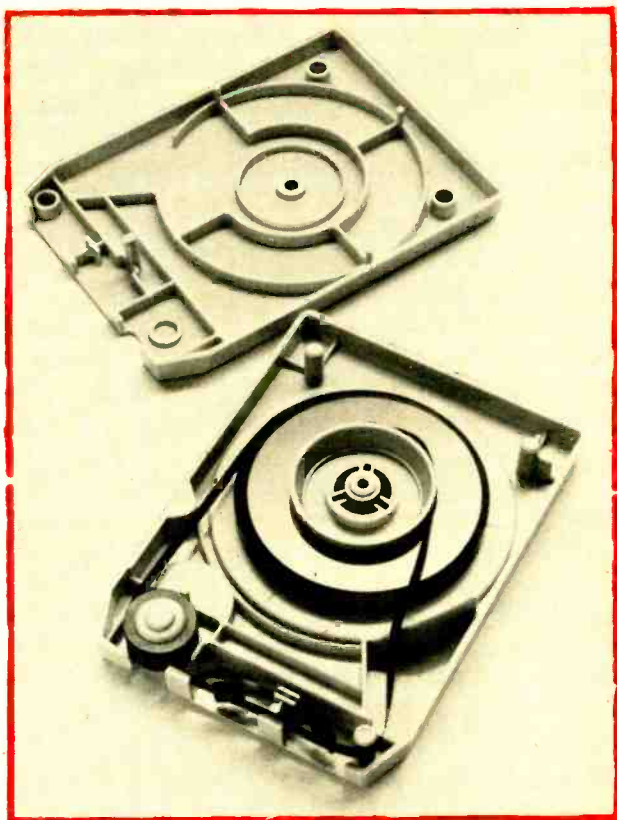


Figure 2

impractical. These cartridges are somewhat larger than cassettes and contain only one reel on which a long continuous loop of tape is, remarkably, wound and *unwound* simultaneously, as shown in Figure 2. You simply plug an eight-track cartridge into the player or recorder, and it does the rest. As its name implies, the cartridge has eight parallel tracks—it accommodates four stereo programs or, more recently, two four-channel programs. But the tape never reverses direction; instead, the tape head in the machine is periodically and automatically shifted to intercept the various sets of tracks.

Cassettes and the machines on which they are played were first envisioned as low-fidelity devices for recording speaking voices only, but somewhere along the line the cassette became a serious music medium. Cassette tapes themselves are small—a bit larger than a pocket address book. In their layout they resemble a miniaturized open-reel system, except that the two reels (simple hubs, actually) are *within* the plastic shell, and the tape is accessible only through openings along an edge of the housing (Figure 3). Cassettes are also recorded and played in two directions and must usually be flipped over for side two, although some automatic-reversing machines for home and automobile use are available.



Figure 3

Now that you know what the three formats are, let's look at their respective merits for your modest—or elaborate—tape-recording purposes. The considerations will be: fidelity, suitability, flexibility, reliability, and portability. Maybe one of these points will be a deciding factor in your case; maybe others will intrigue you and encourage you to dig deeper.

- **Fidelity.** If you plan to do most of your listening to commercially prerecorded tapes, *their* fidelity will determine the limits of the fidelity you get in playback. It is rare that audiophiles are really knocked out by the sound of a prerecorded tape produced by one of the big duplicating companies. In general, prerecorded tapes, at their infrequent best, sound as good as discs. Of the three formats, open-reel prerecorded tapes are probably still the best in overall frequency response, noise level, dynamic range, and so forth. Cassettes rank second, and eight-track cartridges are a somewhat distant third. This is no necessary reflection on the *potentials* of the formats—or how they might sound if you make your own tapes. It's simply the way things are with the prerecorded products.

A prerecorded tape that doesn't have hiss is rare in *any* format. Dolby B processing, the hiss-reduc-

Your first tape recorder...

ing treatment for tape introduced to consumers some years ago, is available on a number of cassette releases and (so far) on a few open-reel prerecorded tapes. According to Ampex, it will soon be offered on eight-track cartridges. This process is the most effective way of dealing with hiss on your tapes, but you will have to pay more for a tape machine with Dolby circuits or buy a separate, add-on Dolby unit. Equipment with built-in Dolby circuits is much more expensive in the open-reel format than with cassettes, probably because the open-reel machines generally use *four* Dolby modules (to encode for recording and simultaneously to decode the monitor-head output). Cassette machines, on the other hand, almost all use *two* Dolby modules that are switched to encode during recording and to decode during play. The exceptions are the very expensive cassette decks (about \$700 and up) with full-response monitor heads.

There are no Dolbyized eight-track cartridges available at this moment (their introduction has just been announced by Ampex, however), but there is a Dolby-equipped eight-track record/play deck (from Wollensak) that will enable you to make your own Dolbyized cartridges. I would expect the results to far outshine any commercially recorded cartridge. And the same would be true for tapes you make on your own Dolbyized equipment in the two other formats as well. Open-reel and even cassette recordings that are home-made on the best equipment are often audibly perfect. There are, however, certain unavoidable inconveniences in recording on eight-track cartridges, and these will be discussed later on.

● **Suitability.** None of the three formats is compatible with any other, which means that you cannot play a cartridge on an open-reel or cassette machine. (However, there are a few tape decks available that have special *separate* facilities for two of the three formats. There are also adaptors that will permit cassettes to be plugged into eight-track players, but they seem somewhat unreliable at best.) Therefore, you must think about the suitability of a particular tape format to your present and future needs and way of life. For example, if you bought your present automobile with a tape player already installed, chances are it's an eight-track unit, and this is a persuasive argument for owning a home eight-track recorder/player to generate new material for car play and to be able to play at home the tapes you have acquired to listen to while driving.

But if you're starting from scratch, an automatic-reversing cassette player is fully as convenient (and safe) to use in a car—and *four* cassettes will fit in the space occupied by *one* eight-track cartridge. Also, with a cassette deck connected to your high-fidelity system, you'll be able to make tapes to play either at home or in your car.

One question you'll have to deal with sooner or later is whether to buy a tape *recorder* or a tape *deck*. A *recorder*, in current parlance, is a machine that comes complete with its own amplifiers and speakers—in other words, a self-contained music

THIS MONTH'S COVER

"Synecdoche" is one of those oddly useful little turns of the rhetorical art that only the rhetorical Greeks thought important enough to have a word for. It means using a part of something to stand for the whole, and it is exactly what we need to describe this month's cover. The "whole" in this case is the universe of tape recorders, and the "part" is the trio of tape units we have quite arbitrarily brought together to symbolize all the rest. For the curious, they are, from left to right, Nakamichi's Model 700 cassette deck (\$690), Tandberg's Model 9000X reel-to-reel deck (\$699.50), and Realistic's TR-800 (\$159.95), an eight-track cartridge deck designed for home use. There are, of course, plenty more where these came from—just check these pages or the groaning shelves of your local audio dealer regularly. —Editor

system. A *deck* is designed to be connected to an existing music system (appropriate plug-in jacks must be provided on the amplifier or receiver), and it will never make a sound until it is. Recorders and decks are available in all three formats. (It might also be mentioned that many recorders can function as decks as well if they are connected to an external music system through special output jacks; in this mode of operation the recorder's own built-in speakers and amplifiers are simply by-passed.)

Four-channel prospects enter into the question of suitability to your needs. Should you want four-channel sound, which of the formats is best for you? In the eight-track and open-reel formats, four-channel recording is now a reality. You can buy discrete quadraphonic eight-track tapes and a few open-reel quadraphonic releases, as well as special machines to play them and even to record your own. But be warned that the equipment to play the *Dolbyized* discrete quadraphonic open-reel tapes that are emerging is going to be expensive.

Philips, the firm that licenses the cassette format, endorses discrete four-channel cassettes only in a form that is technically difficult to cope with. It involves four parallel tracks running in one direction, and four tracks running in the other—an eight-track cassette, in other words. The technical problem arises because the track width of an eight-track cassette is half that of the eight-track cartridge. This means increased difficulties with noise and overload, to say nothing of the problems of producing the special tape heads required. So far, only JVC has grappled with the many problems, and availability of its machine is limited. Since other manufacturers don't seem to be racing to catch up, it may be that the first prerecorded four-channel cassettes will carry two-track programs that have received so-called "matrix encoding" for four-channel reproduction through a suitable decoder.

● **Flexibility.** The idea behind the first high-fidelity cassette deck was to approach the same performance and flexibility afforded by open-reel equipment, but in a form that was more compact and easier to use. By and large, this goal has been reached. Cassettes are generally available in playing times from 15 to 90 minutes in each direction of tape travel, which nicely corresponds to what can be recorded on the various lengths of open-reel tapes (on 7-inch reels at $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches per second). Cassettes are much easier to handle (threading some open-reel

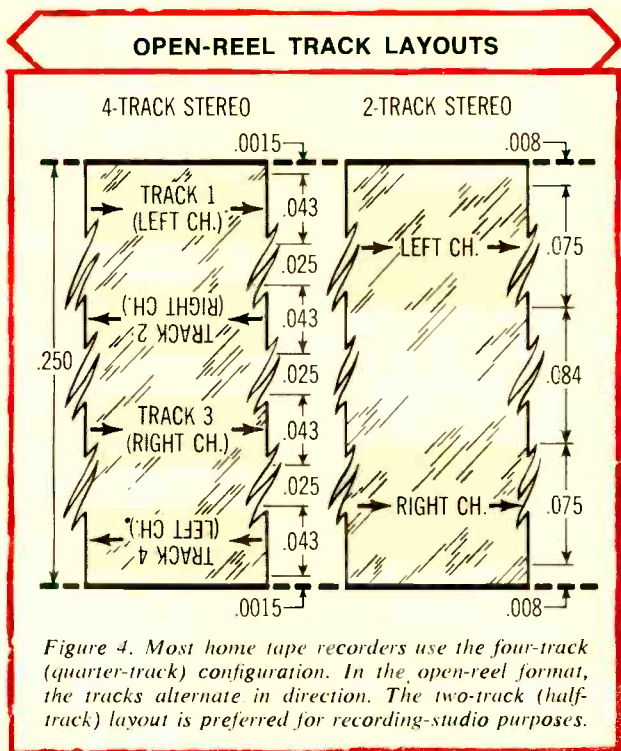
machines requires a knack that some master more quickly than others), and dozens of them will fit in an ordinary shoe box. Editing a cassette tape is considerably more difficult than editing an open-reel recording, but some people seem willing to attempt it. Since the prices of the best cassette decks generally end where those for good open-reel decks begin (somewhere around \$300), the two formats do not really compete on the basis of cost.

Look at the eight-track cartridge and you'll immediately see that it's a system basically intended for playback. Cartridge recording is a clumsy business, and for this reason there have been few cartridge recorders on the market until recently. The longest-playing cartridges I know of run 94 minutes in four segments of $23\frac{1}{2}$ minutes each. Every $23\frac{1}{2}$ minutes the endless loop of tape in the cartridge completes one full circuit, and the tape head shifts automatically, with a "chunk," to engage another set of the parallel tracks on the tape. It does this three times (once for the Q-8 four-channel cartridges), and then you're back where you started. The cycling process is the same for recording as for playback, and since there is a break in the program every time the tape head has to reorient itself, the recordist has to keep careful track of the passing minutes if he doesn't want his music interrupted. He can't just look (as he can with cassettes and open-reel) to see whether he is running out of tape—even if he *could* see it, which he can't, he couldn't tell. A timer is therefore required. Some Wollensak and JVC eight-track recorders, incidentally, have such timers built in.

Although most eight-track decks provide a fast-forward speed, you can't reverse an eight-track cartridge. Thus, backtracking for editing or any other purpose is simply out of the question. To return to a specific point on the tape you must fast-forward along through the entire loop until the spot comes up again.

All this has effects on the prerecorded product as well. A disc's worth of music offered in eight-track form has three interruptions instead of the disc's one. This is okay for popular songs, but disturbing for long classical works such as Beethoven symphonies or Strauss tone poems. On one such cartridge I heard recently each track-switching break was preceded by an aesthetically disturbing fade-out—then a fade-in after the track switch! In a car one could perhaps live with such anti-musical distractions, but not in the home.

● **Reliability.** According to reports, cassette and eight-track troubles are most frequently caused by the tape and its container, and open-reel difficulties



Your first tape recorder...

generally result from failures of the transport mechanism. Whatever the causes, the malfunctions manifest themselves in two ways: mechanically (the moving parts become erratic or inoperative) and electrically (one or more channels become weak, distorted, or noisy, or go dead altogether). Electrical problems can occur with any format, at any time; it's up to the designer of the equipment to foresee and prevent them. But tape-motion troubles, if they are caused (as happens with cassettes and cartridges) by the tape pack itself, reflect on the whole format. Open-reel has tape-pack problems of its own—warped reels and, sometimes, rippled tape edges. But transferring open-reel tape to a new reel is easier than prying open a cassette or cartridge to rescue the jammed tape inside.

Tape jamming within the plastic container has plagued cassettes since their beginning, and only in the past year or so has it seemed that jamming will diminish to a "normal" defect rate. Eight-track cartridges have a special problem. Since layers of tape wound on the reel must be free to slide past each other, the tape has to be treated with some kind of dry lubricant, and it appears that in time the lubricant can wear out (or off). If there is a way to avoid this, it is simply to buy only cartridges of the very highest quality—good advice, incidentally, for any of the tape formats.

The tape industry does offer warranties on its products. Many manufacturers of premium cassettes advertise unconditional replacement if their product ever causes trouble. The written guarantees for high-quality blank eight-track cartridges are less specific, but spokesmen for several of the major companies assure me that cartridges are also routinely replaced when a defective one is returned.

● **Portability.** This is a consideration that will interest only certain readers of this magazine. Some are looking for carry-along entertainment, and for them cassettes and cartridges should be equally suitable. The size of a portable tape player is mostly determined by the size of its speaker, but you can fit more cassettes than cartridges into your coat pocket. However, if you already have a large collection of cartridges, this might influence your choice and make you decide on one of the portable eight-track players.

Other readers may want to make high-quality recordings on location. The best—and in some cases the smallest—machines for this purpose are the special-application, battery-powered open-reel

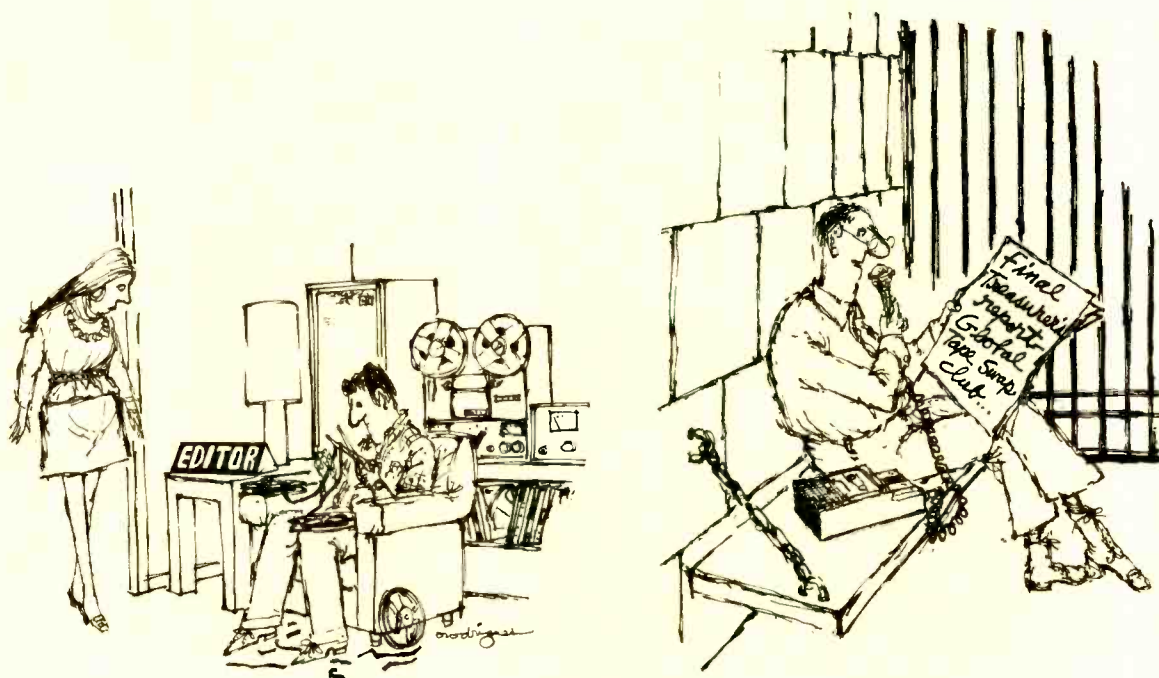
units (Nagra, Stellavox, Uher, and so forth) designed for recording film soundtracks and other professional uses. Ironically, the smaller they are, the more horrendously expensive they are. There are a few pocket-size battery-operated cassette portables that do a surprisingly good job of recording music with their built-in microphones. And Sony makes a *stereo* portable cassette recorder (Model TC-152SD) with built-in Dolby circuits and provisions for chromium-dioxide tape.

A few home cassette decks are available with high-quality microphone inputs, and, since they're small to begin with, they can be carried any place there's an a.c. socket to plug into. And, of course, there are portable versions of many popular full-size (and heavy) a.c.-operated open-reel decks. They are termed "portable" because they are supplied with carrying case and handle, but you have to supply (a lot of) muscle and a.c. power. Such a tape machine is not the kind you'd choose for recording bird calls.

I do not know of any portable eight-track units designed for recording.

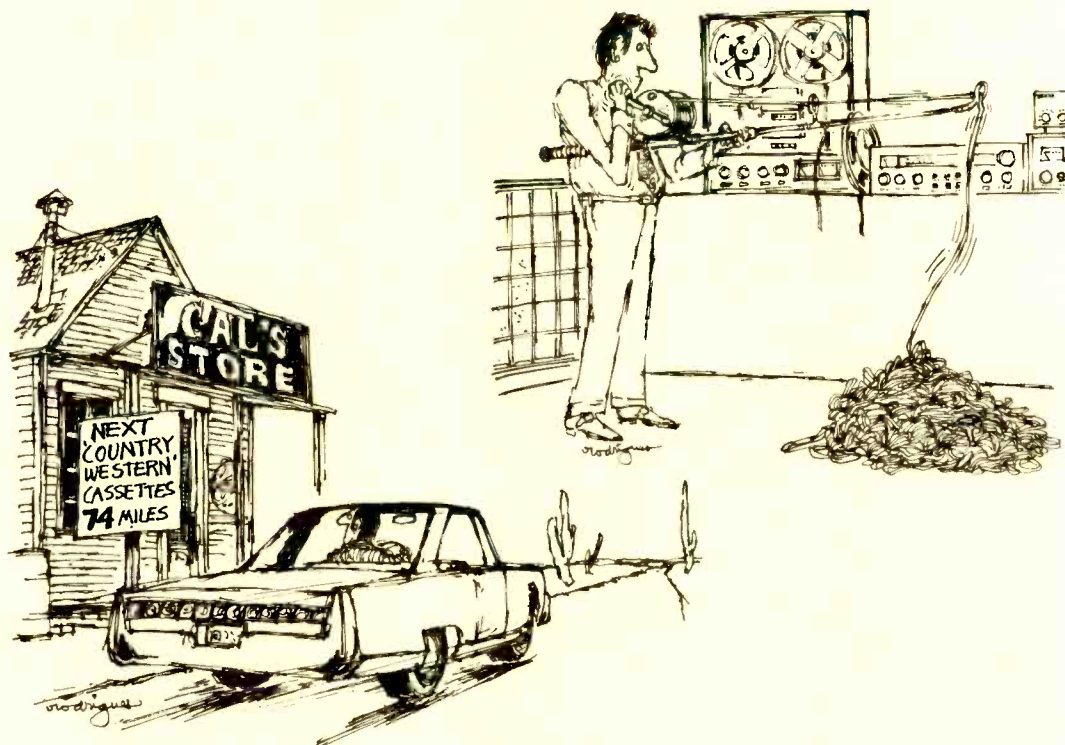
● **Summary.** The foregoing discussion of the present state of tape recording and its formats should provide you with the basic information you need in choosing the *format* for a first tape recorder. There are other factors that could have an effect—for example, the availability of the kind of music you like in one format or another. Ampex Stereo Tapes reports that sales of prerecorded cassettes last year amounted to a considerably smaller share of the prerecorded tape market than the year before. Also, prerecorded open-reel tapes have been growing in popularity since Dolbyized offerings were introduced. Personally, I don't think these data show anything but the inclination of cassette-deck owners to record their own material (sales of *blank* cassettes are way up) and the interest of open-reel enthusiasts in new prerecorded offerings of *high* quality. I don't think these reports indicate the future dominance of open-reel in the prerecorded market or the disappearance of cassettes from it. If you are concerned about the availability of the kind of music you like prerecorded for a tape format you are considering, a quick check of the Schwann catalog will reassure (or discourage) you.

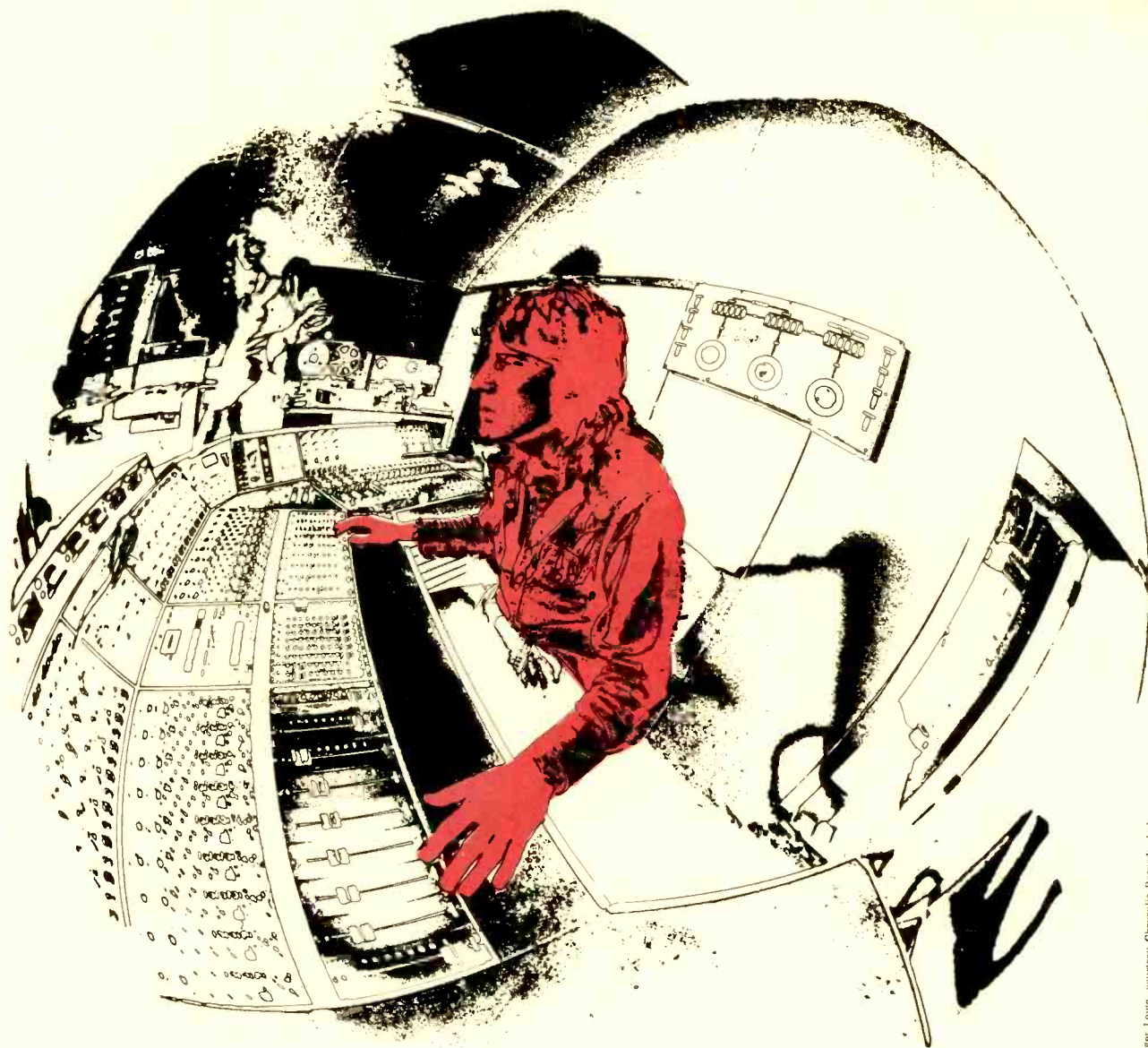
In any case, trends of the moment are risky as long-term indicators. It seems clear that all three formats are going to be with us for quite a while, and your choice of format and particular model should be made on the basis of your current recording requirements rather than on an attempt to guess what the distant future holds.



RODRIGUES ON TAPE

By Charles Rodrigues





Homer Lowe, courtesy: Chrisalis Records, Ltd.

A few guidelines to help you plan your own **HOME RECORDING STUDIO**

By Craig Stark

WHEN most of us think of a recording studio, we conjure up the image of a huge control board with more knobs than we could learn to use in a year; of massive sixteen-track recorders that use 2-inch-wide tape; and of forests of microphones in an adjoining, acoustically treated, glassed-off room large enough to house a symphony orchestra. But, for most professional recording, all that complex and costly flexibility simply isn't needed. In fact, it is quite possible to

construct a suitably scaled-down version of a commercial facility in your own home. Moreover, even if you are not interested in becoming a professional, being known in your area as “the guy to get in touch with about a recording” will open up a world of acquaintances you’ll find immensely rewarding.

The point to begin, perhaps, is at the recognition of some of the differences in perspective between the amateur and the professional recordist. (Even if you don’t intend to charge for your services, for the moment, at least, “think pro.”) When an audiophile dubs a disc or a radio broadcast, records his child’s first words or his grandmother’s last, the tape he makes is essentially a finished product. Much of what goes on in a commercial studio, however, concerns the *processing* of an original “raw master.” Except in rare instances, the original tape made is not the same as the tape delivered. Let me illustrate this with a personal example.

I recently recorded the retirement ceremonies for a local bishop, beginning with a massive church service and ending with a large testimonial banquet at a nearby hotel. The result was two 10½-inch reels of tape, one for the service and one for the dinner speakers—and I find that at least a couple of dozen people want copies (some cassettes, some open-reel). My real job is just beginning, for I must: (1) *edit* the tapes, taking out some—but not all, or it wouldn’t sound natural—of the verbal fluffs of the speakers, and a loud scraping noise when a clergyman’s vestments accidentally brushed against a microphone; (2) *equalize* (change the tonal response) where the sound isn’t quite right, cutting down the voice level of some of the guest speakers and raising that of others so I can make a “working master”; and (3) make the necessary number of copies, adding such “professional touches” as leaders and labels.

Just this listing of steps should convince you that you’ll spend many hours in your studio (without ever turning on a microphone) for each one you spend making the original recording. Judging from my experience, very often you won’t even have the opportunity to record the raw “master.” As you become known, musicians will spring from every nook and cranny with reels of tape (usually wretchedly recorded) from past performances, of which they need copies for friends, radio broadcasts, or audition purposes. Although I’ll discuss live recording in your home later, it will probably constitute but a small portion of your operation. After all, you do have to go “on location” to tape the original of a choir, school commencement or play, wedding, orchestral or rock concert, or a recital on a church pipe organ. This should be reassuring

if you live, say, close to an airport or highway, where no practical amount of soundproofing could make your living room or basement quiet enough to use microphones satisfactorily.

Another basic difference in perspective between the audiophile and the professional has to do with developing the most important piece of equipment you have: your ear. When you play a commercial disc or tape, you *expect*—or at least hope—that the notes will be right, the distortion inaudible, the frequency response brilliant and full, and the background noise (almost) inaudible. Therefore, as at a concert, you can afford to let yourself go and concentrate simply on enjoying the music. When you operate as a recording engineer, however, you can’t think like that—at least not until the job is done. Instead, you must listen for the *faults*, either in the performance or the recording process. Developing this kind of “recording-engineer’s ear” will make you bad company in a concert-hall audience, for you will find yourself instinctively wincing (and mentally noting “retake this section”) at errors you would ordinarily ignore in a live performance. Committed to tape, however, the same mistakes will be heard again and again, and what the listener (to say nothing of the artist!) will come to anticipate is not the musical line, but the errors. And *that* kind of expectation, whether of wrong notes or hiss during a quiet passage, can destroy all feeling for the music.

PERHAPS the best time to start developing your ear is when you are checking out the equipment you are considering for your studio—the music is up to the performers, but providing proper and reliable recording gear is up to you. Suppose, for the moment, that you have a high-quality, quarter-track audiophile recorder and some good discs that you can dub (and play back at equal volume) to compare directly with the originals. At the 7½-inch-per-second speed the differences between original and tape copy should be *barely* audible, but you should learn to listen for them. If you have trouble spotting them at 7½ ips, try the following comparisons at the 3¾-ips speed, where they’ll be more apparent. First, listen for hiss during some very quiet sections; you’ll hear more on the copy than on the original. (Studios traditionally monitor at an almost ear-shattering volume level, partly to make any hiss audible). Then listen to moderately loud selections of a solo violin. Your copy will probably have a slightly “fuzzy” or “edgy” quality, as if the hiss and/or distortion were riding on top of the original sound. Also, you’ll likely hear (especially at 3¾ ips) a slight dulling of the “highs” on a cymbal and

a slight vibrato-like effect (called wow) on sustained single piano notes.

At this "first-generation" level the differences will probably be so slight (particularly at 7½ ips) that you can safely surmise that a customer could, like you, hear them only in a direct A-B comparison

with the original. Good! That's what you want. But if you have to make a copy of your tape copy, and still another copy of *that* copy, small differences are likely to become glaring. You must therefore minimize these defects at the very outset so that the final product will be acceptable.

Choosing the Master Recorder(s)

In addition to using top-quality tape (a high-output/low-noise type) and employing noise-reducing accessories (Dolby, dbx, and Burwen are the best known), you have two main weapons in your arsenal: high tape speed and wide track width, and for studio purposes I recommend that you use them both. Unfortunately, this means that normally the recorder(s) you use for mastering will *not* conform to the normal quarter-track stereo format.

The track width and spacing of a conventional quarter-track recorder and those of a half-track machine are illustrated in the drawing on page 71. Half-track obviously doesn't allow you to turn over a stereo tape and play "the other side," for what you'd get would be the same recorded material backwards. The quarter-track deck lets you get twice the play time out of a reel of tape, but at the cost of narrower tracks. For mastering work, that cost—roughly 3 dB in signal-to-hiss level, or about the difference between an original and a copy—is too high. Moreover, you'll probably have to edit, so you can record in only one direction anyway, and you'd be silly *not* to use the whole width of the tape.

To convince yourself that a 3-dB loss in signal-to-hiss ratio between quarter-track and half-track operation *is* significant, just dub a good mono record onto both left and right channels of your own machine, using 0 VU for the maximum record level in one channel and -3 VU for the maximum record level in the other. Then listen to them, setting your playback controls so that both channels sound equally loud, and check the relative hiss levels of the two channels.

The track-layout drawing also shows the incompatibility between two track and four track. A normal audiophile recorder could play back the left channel of a two-track tape, but the right channel of the four-track machine falls primarily in the unrecorded space on the half-track tape. Obviously, then, for duplication of tapes intended for most of your customers you will also need a quarter-track machine. If your tapes are destined for broadcast or LP mastering, however, leave them in the half-track format or other professional machines won't be able to play them.

For mastering work, too, 15 ips is the speed of choice, and you should never use less than 7½ ips. I asked a friend what he'd do if he had to tape a live concert and found that, at 15 ips, he couldn't get all the music on and wouldn't have time to change reels. Without hesitation he said he'd bring *two* 15-ips machines, and as the first reel came near the end, he'd start the second one, then splice the tapes together later, rather than use 7½ ips. Indeed, he went on, there's a tendency in modern studios to return to using 30 ips.

This may seem surprising today, when many good home tape machines can honestly claim a frequency response that is flat to 18 kHz or higher. Part of the reason for using faster speeds lies, again, in preventing noise. You'll find several decibels of difference in signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) between 3¾ and 7½ ips on almost all machine specifications. And the faster the speed, the less wow and flutter there's likely to be. The most pressing reason, however, is disclosed by the curves shown in the graph on the facing page. In order to achieve flat response at the very high frequencies, recorders must boost the highs *before* they reach the tape—a process called "recording equalization" or "pre-emphasis," and the slower the tape speed, the greater is the need for such treble pre-emphasis.

For most notes in most music this presents no problem, for they contain very small amounts of really high-frequency energy (say, 10,000 Hz). But some sounds, such as a cymbal crash, *do* contain a tremendous amount of high-frequency energy. To add 1 dB of treble pre-emphasis at 10,000 Hz—all that's required at the 15-ips speed—would be no big deal. But to add 10 dB boost to a "hot high-end" signal as the recorder would do at 3¾ ips is a sure invitation to tape saturation (overload) and audible distortion.

Your studio must also be equipped to handle the big 10½-inch reels, and unless you want to buy a separate machine for on-location mastering, portability is a factor. Most machines you will consider will have three heads: one for erase, one for record, and a third for playback. A few, however, have space in the head-mounting area for a fourth, additional playback head, and this can be a tremendous

plus. For years I got along with only two recorders, one with three half-track heads and a fourth quarter-track playback-only head. The other machine had three quarter-track heads plus a fourth, half-track, playback-only head. In this way, if someone brought me a regular quarter-track tape and needed a quarter-track copy, I could play it on the first machine and run off the duplicate on the second. Half-track to half-track (for discs, broadcasts, or making submasters) was just vice versa. My own masters are, of course, all half-track, but I could make quarter-track copies of them for home use.

Today, of course, you'll have to add the ability to make high-quality cassette copies (with or without Dolby-B). And, as I suggested in my "Tape Horizons" column last month, for making quarter-track copies, for four-channel recording, or, in a pinch, playback of half-track tapes (using channels 1 and 4 only), you might well consider one of the new quadraphonic recorders. (To make four-channel recordings using the track width provided by the half-track format requires 1/2-inch-wide tape, machines for which usually start at about \$3,000—a little steep for a beginning home studio.)

Microphones

If you're going to be doing any live recording, either in your home studio or on location, you'll obviously have to have microphones. This is perhaps the most controversial aspect of picking your equipment. Ask six different recording engineers how they would mike some musical instrument—and with what—and you're likely to get eleven different answers. If you're contemplating starting your own studio, let me recommend a just-published work by Lou Burroughs titled *Microphones: Design and Application* (\$20 from Sagamore Publishing Co., Inc., 980 Old Country Road, Plainview, N.Y. 11803), and then confine myself here to the basic choices.

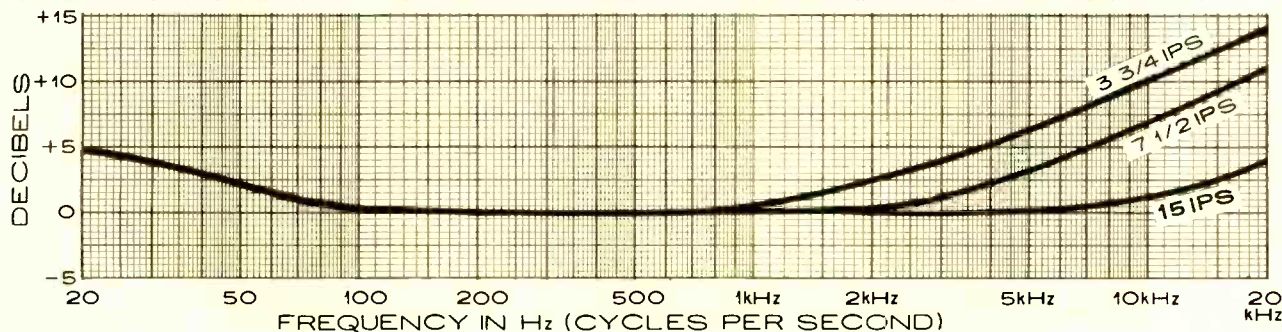
(1) Microphones are categorized according to three basic directivity patterns. (a) Omnidirectional mikes pick up sound equally well from all directions, generally tend to have the smoothest frequency response, and are to be preferred when you have to cover a large area—an orchestra, pipe organ, chorus or choir, etc. (b) Unidirectional (also called "cardioid") mikes reject sound from the rear, and, to some degree, from the sides, and so are useful in keeping out audience noise in a live performance, miking a single instrument or section, or a soloist. (c) Bidirectional (or "figure-eight") microphones reject sound from the sides only and are useful in some situations, but not very many. My recommendation for a minimal beginning studio, then, is one quality pair each of omnis and of cardioids.

(2) Microphones are also classified according to their impedance. High-impedance (generally 50,000 ohms down to about 10,000 ohms) and middle-impedance (a couple of thousand ohms up to about 8,000) microphones are generally wired "single-ended" or "unbalanced"—that is, with single-conductor shielded cable, similar to—but thicker than—the cable used in home hi-fi hook-ups. For studio work, avoid both and get low-impedance (50 to 250 ohms) microphones that take "two-conductor plus shield" cable. This is necessary to preserve high-frequency response and eliminate hum when you have to—and you will—use long cables.

(3) Microphones also vary according to type: ribbon, dynamic, or capacitor (also called "condenser"). Ribbon mikes, rare today, tend in most cases to be fragile but are capable of excellent performance. Dynamic microphones are the most popular type, and they list from about \$50 to \$200 for professional models. Generally very smooth in frequency response, they tend to droop at the extreme ends of the audible range, though some are exceptions to this rule. For extended high-frequency response, however, condenser mikes are the almost universal choice of professional studios, though they usually require a special power supply and cable and generally cost from about \$125 to \$500 each. Recently several companies have introduced a new type of capacitor microphone, called the "electret" type, that requires only internal batteries. Some of these rival good dynamic microphones in sound quality. They are worth considering—if you can remember to change batteries and turn them off when not in use.

This is only the most rudimentary introduction to

Typical recording pre-emphasis characteristics of a 1/4-inch tape at three speeds. As the tape speed becomes slower, a considerable amount of high-frequency boost must be applied to the signal to be recorded to offset the unavoidable high-frequency losses.



microphones, of course, but it should convince you to look into the matter with great care before you commit too much of the (probably) slender resources of your burgeoning home studio.

In planning your mike setup, count on one floor stand *plus* an accessory baby boom for each. (A

boom not only helps you position the microphone in front of an instrument more exactly, but can extend the maximum height of your stand, a feature often needed in concert-hall recording). Count too on one 50-foot and one 25-foot cable, with appropriate Cannon-type connectors, for each mike.

Controlling the Signals

If your experience with a home studio is like mine, you won't start out with—or ever progress to—a \$50,000 recording console. However, it's important to understand something about the various functions of such equipment and how it differs from hi-fi gear in order for you to pick out the proper units for your home studio. A typical stereo preamplifier doesn't allow you to "mix"—combine—several different inputs (microphones) on each channel, each with its own separate volume control. There's just no need for that feature in hi-fi equipment. However, for studio work, you do need

this capacity. (This month's and next month's "Tape Horizons" discuss "mixers," so I won't go into the subject further here).

As your home studio becomes more sophisticated, you'll probably feel the need for tone controls ("equalizers"), not simply on each channel, but on each of the separate inputs you're feeding into each channel, and "pan-pots" that can electronically place a soloist anywhere on the stereo stage. Similarly, you'll probably come to want the ability to use artificial reverberation and limiters—but that goes beyond the requirements of a basic home studio.

The Studio Itself

We come, finally, to your live recording and monitoring environment. Mine is in my basement; one friend's is carefully built-in—and so hidden—in an average-looking living room of a suburban three-bedroom home; still another's is so elaborate that he literally built his home around his recording studio. You can get *unsatisfactory* sonic results from any of them, but the converse is also true. You can't record Callas in a closet or put the Mormon Tabernacle Choir into your bedroom, and obviously the more cubic space at your disposal, the more flexible you can be regarding what you can record in your home and what must be recorded in an auditorium elsewhere. My rule of thumb is simple: if the sound of the actual speaker, singer, or instrument(s) is good in your recording room, you ought, through proper placement of mikes and performers, to be able to get a really good recording without resorting to artificial reverberation unless you're looking for special electronic effects. The test, obviously, is playback in your own living room, through a good reproduction system, for that's where the final product will be judged.

Even the best of home listening environments may require a little help to be suitable for live recording, however. All of us learn to automatically disregard certain persistent noises that others, unaccustomed to our specific acoustic environment, will notice. By this I mean the sound of a furnace, a clothes drier, or even the tape deck; the sound of water through pipes; the rumble of distant trains or

trucks; children playing outside (keeping your storm windows on is a good precaution against this); and even the sound of a ticking clock or high-flying airplane overhead. Before you try to use your home studio for live recording, check these things by setting up your mikes and recording four or five minutes of "silence," then playing it back at an above-normal volume. You'll be surprised how much extraneous noise (besides tape hiss) you will hear, and this is what you must minimize.

Occasionally, too, echoes, a lack of "presence," or some other acoustic defect will be found in your recordings. These can sometimes be cured by "baffles"—either absorptive or reflective. An ordinary sheet of plywood, coated on one side with acoustic tile and on the other with heavy-duty aluminum foil, gives you a multipurpose tool that can increase or decrease the reflected sound reaching a microphone and thus modify the sound quality. And, as you learn to listen not to what you're *used* to, but to what others will hear, you'll find, for example, that there's a quite different sonic environment even when heavy curtains across a bay window at one end of the room are open or closed.

No article, or even a series of them, can give you *all* the answers about planning a studio for your home. In the final analysis, the most important device you are going to bring to your recording tasks is your ear. It's worth training, for ultimately that's what *any* high-fidelity recording is designed to delight.

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



CLASSICAL

THE KNOT GARDEN: A NEW OPERA BY MICHAEL TIPPETT

The composer continues his exploration of the myths that might make us whole

THE U.S. release of *The Knot Garden*, the second opera by the British composer Michael Tippett to be recorded, has been neatly timed by Philips Records to coincide with the first American production on the campus of Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, on February 22. The recorded performance, led by devoted Tippett champion Colin Davis, is a notable though not flawless achievement, and it offers American audiences beyond Evanston an opportunity to acquaint themselves with one of the most recent—and most thought-provoking—works of a composer still too little known on their side of the Atlantic.

It might seem curious that the first evaluative phrase inspired by this three-act opera should be an intellectual one such as “thought-provoking.” Ratiocination is not an activity commonly associated with opera, but it may as well be said at once that *The Knot Garden* is not primarily a piece for connoisseurs of the human voice, though Tippett’s lyrical gift is such that, even when he is thinking of other things, his singers generally end up with a more grateful vehicle for vocal allure than most contemporary composers provide for them.

Tippett’s first line of interest, at any rate, is far removed from conventional notions of coloratura warbling—and from the more “serious-minded” naturalistic-dramatic concerns of most Italian opera in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

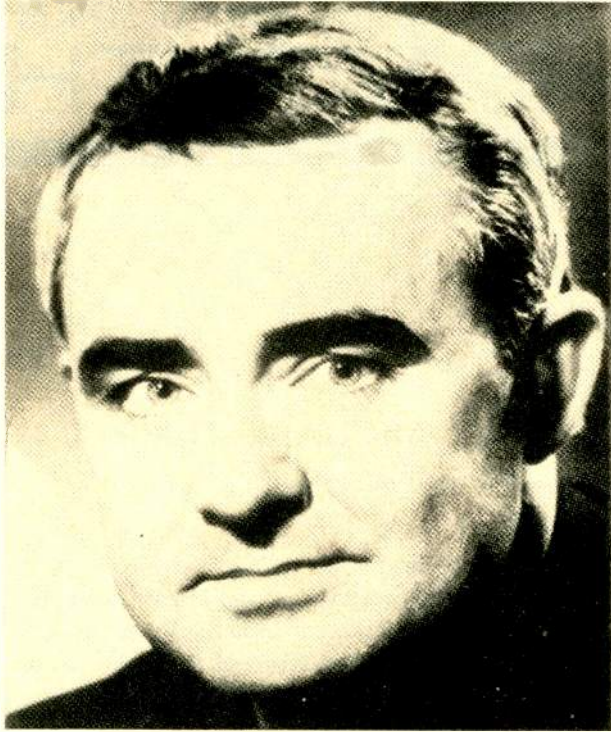
as well. In his first opera, *The Midsummer Marriage*, completed in 1952, he was already seeking a new concept of opera as a trenchantly philosophical, essentially mythic art form, close to the cosmological explorations of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* but worlds apart from Wagner’s musical style in its joyful, affirmative character, its freedom from morbidity, and its magical, light-winged celebration of life: dance rather than dirge.

In the appreciation of Tippett that appears elsewhere in this issue, I have tried to give some general account of the way the composer has prosecuted his quest, first in *The Midsummer Marriage* and later in *King Priam* (completed in 1961). In this review, it may be useful to offer a word on how *The*

Knot Garden, finished in 1970, stands in dramatic and musical relation to its two predecessors. For one thing, it is more obviously oriented toward present time and present concerns than either of them. *Marriage* was set in a “present” of sorts, but a timeless present whose mythic terms of reference were emphasized by its overt components of ancient Greek, Hindu, and *Golden Bough*-anthropological cult and culture. *Priam* explored humanity and its relation to an immanent world through the framework of one specific ancient myth. *The Knot Garden*, in contrast, is explicitly modern, as a glance at the list of characters immediately shows: Faber is “a civil



COLIN DAVIS
Tippett's worthy champion



Philips Records

ENGLISH BARITONE THOMAS HEMSLEY
Superb in the role of Mangus

engineer," his wife Thea "a gardener," and Flora, their ward, "an adolescent girl." Denise, Thea's sister, is "a dedicated freedom-fighter": Mel "a Negro writer in his late twenties": his white friend Dov is "a musician": and, most symptomatic of all for our time, Mangus is "an analyst" who has been called in by Faber and Thea to advise on Flora's problems.

But, for all this, the "eternal" aspects of plot and character are just as central as in *The Midsummer Marriage*. In an elaborate network of links with *The Tempest*, Tippett (as usual, his own librettist) makes it clear that Mangus is as much Prospero magician-figure as analyst. And the action, as before, is only the surface layer of a searching inquiry into the human personality and its complementary body-soul elements.

Superficial consideration might suggest that the "up-to-date" touches—analysis, freedom-fighting, and a nod at racism—are themselves superficial attempts to exploit "with-it" attitudes and interests. On the musical side, a similar criticism could be leveled at the score's various bows in the direction of blues and jazz idioms. But my developing acquaintance with the work leads me to believe that such comment would be wide of the mark. The politico-social "props" are merely useful contemporary symbols for concerns that have been central throughout Tippett's development. Further, black

idioms have been equally genuine elements in his musical language, not only in obvious cases like the spirituals in the early oratorio *A Child of Our Time* and the blues settings in the recent *Third Symphony*, but on a much more pervasive level of harmonic and rhythmic coloration.

The Knot Garden has, I think, its faults. They are not, however, the result of a basic dishonesty of outlook, but of shortcomings in execution. One of these is purely verbal: Tippett has not succeeded in reconciling the banalities quite reasonably permitted entry through the "modernistic" aspects of the libretto with a tendency toward more formalistic utterance of an "old-fashioned" kind. Phrases like "You'd like to take the mickey out of me" and "Take that, you cur, you coward" hardly sit well together in the same work. More seriously, the allusive brilliance of Tippett's mind has misled him into a degree of ellipticality too concentrated to work in stage, or generally dramatic, terms. The opera is simply too short for the length of its story. Neither in words nor in musical development is the final reconciliation of Faber and Thea convincingly prepared, so that their closing line, "The curtain rises," which would be a telling use of paradox if the plot had fully made its point, instead remains merely on the level of a cute trick.

FLAWS and all, this is a stimulating work whose rewards multiply on closer familiarity, and the inexhaustible freshness of Tippett's vocal and orchestral writing is masterfully deployed in a style that reconciles the hard-edged clarity of *King Priam* with the prodigal textural luxuriance of *The Midsummer Marriage*. Colin Davis' understanding of the piece is as sympathetic as his previous Tippett advocacies, though, surprisingly, he lets some of the singers (Robert Tear in Dov's ecstatic Californian song and Josephine Barstow at a crucial point in the last act) get away with damagingly lax rhythms. But these are small blemishes. The superb Mangus of Thomas Hemsley, a great baritone who ought long before now to have been heard in the U.S., is more characteristic of the whole, and Philips' recording is impeccable. Even the complex septet at the end of Act 1 emerges with perfect lucidity, and the test pressings I heard were absolutely silent.

Bernard Jacobson

TIPPETT: *The Knot Garden*. Yvonne Minton (mezzo-soprano), Thea; Josephine Barstow (soprano), Denise; Jill Gomez (soprano), Flora; Thomas Hemsley (baritone), Mangus; Thomas Carey (bass-baritone), Mel; Robert Tear (tenor), Dov; Raimund Herinx (baritone), Faber. Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 6700 063 two discs \$13.96.



ENGLISH COMPOSER JOHN BULL (c. 1562–1628)
An extraordinary In Nomine

*The Bull by force
 In field doth Raigne
 But Bull by Skill
 Good will doth Gayne.*

THE HARPSICHORD IN TUDOR ENGLAND

*Colin Tilney presents a carefully chosen
 and splendidly stylish program on Argo*

THOUGH the catalog is not lacking in recordings of English harpsichord music of the time of Henry VIII's later years and, especially, those of Elizabeth I, Argo's new collection titled "English Virginal Music" played by Colin Tilney is not only most satisfying but musically important as well. There is, first of all, a splendid selection of pieces, ranging in time from Hugh Aston's sprightly hornpipe (one of the first pieces that can be described as idiomatically written for harpsichord rather than any general keyboard instrument) of about 1540 to some early-seventeenth-century miniatures by John Bull. Second, although Tilney includes in this collection a few of the more popular examples of virginal music ("the virginals" was the generic term for harpsichord in England during this period), he alternates them with several elaborate masterpieces, grand creations such as Bull's extraordinary ninth *In Nomine* or Byrd's superb *Fantasia in A*, both of which stand at this repertoire's pinnacle.

The careful and intelligent program planning is aided not a little by Tilney's choice of the two instruments he plays, both of them reproductions of historical models: one side is played on an Italian harpsichord made by Jean-Pierre Batt after the well-known 1677 Faby of Bologna instrument, and the other is played on a Flemish virginal copied by Derek Adlam from a 1611 instrument made by Andreas Ruckers. Both of these sound exceptionally good on this disc, mellow, glowing, and utterly natural in recording perspective—which is to say not *unnaturally* close or strident.

Finally, there remains to be mentioned only Tilney's superbly stylish, deeply felt, immaculately executed, and musically penetrating performances. There are so many delights in this disc that it can be recommended with enthusiasm to any collector of early keyboard music. Let us hope that Colin Tilney, one of England's most admirable keyboard performers, will not be long in giving us a second volume of the same.

Igor Kipnis

ENGLISH VIRGINAL MUSIC. Byrd: *Pavan and Galliard "Tregian"; Fantasia in A Major*. Anon.: *Upon La Mi Re; Chi Passa*. Bull: *In Nomine No. 9; My Grief; Two Almans in D Major*. Gibbons: *Ground in A Major*. Farnaby: *Woody-Cock*. Philips: *Pavan and Galliard "Dolorosa."* Aston: *Hornpipe*. Colin Tilney (harpsichord). ARGO ZRG 675 \$5.98.

POPULAR

THE STURDY ELOQUENCE OF THE KINKS

*"Preservation Act 1" is another move
 in their campaign to keep rock honest*

THE Kinks' album "Village Green Preservation Society" (my copy of which is lost, lost, lost . . .) is said to have resulted from a remark someone made to Ray Davies to the effect that the Kinks "preserve things," meaning, one supposes, the music-hall flavor and all that. Now we have "Preservation Act 1" (notice that there's no comma between *Preservation* and *Act*) from RCA as a sequel to that album—another bash at it, as they say over there. Johnny Thunder is back. "a little overweight/And his sideburns are turning grey," riding his motorbike with Fifties rock-and-roll thumping in his head, *One of the Survivors*. Just before he reappears, the Tramp poses the musical question *Where Are They Now?* (meaning the Teddy Boys, Christine Keeler, the Beatniks, and others of recent memory) in a song that ends with the line (punctuated by some of



THE KINKS: John Dalton, Dave Davies, Ray Davies, Mick Avory, and John Gosling

those marvelous Dave Davies guitar chords), "Yeah, rock-and-roll still lives on."

Now, then: I don't know just how ambiguous Ray thought this thing ought to be, but the record does *seem* to view itself in part as a holding action for rock-and-roll, no less. And why not? The Kinks may be the very people best qualified for that kind of "preservation act." Ray Davies continues to see the music as belonging still to underpowered people (which is how it started out), and here he proves again, as he has so many times before, that its simple beat and chord layout can be used to produce songs that should have been in our heads all along—we should have been *born* that way. Ray does more with melody than any post-Beatles rock composer, and of course nobody can touch him at making simple, blunt, working-class language and speech rhythms come out eloquent. These songs are singularly—well, *sturdy*. *Daylight* alternates between pastoral chorus and nitty-gritty, Oh-God-it's-morning verse. *Sweet Lady Genevieve* is a beautiful ballad with a great opening line ("Once under a scarlet sky I told you never-ending lies"). *Cricket* has the Vicar idling away his time making cute analogies of the "life-is-a-game-so-play-fair-and-square" sort.

The Kinks' performances are steadier also, although the scrappy, disorganized sound remains. The horns (now permanent) are better integrated, and Laurie Brown (now listed as a member of the group) does some vocal backing of the "aah" and "ooh" kind that seems well-nigh *vital* now that I hear it in there. Just about everything else fits too. Will it all preserve Rock and Other Good Things from the ruling classes and their Alice Cooper billboards and their Maidenform commercials? It just may, I should think, help. *Noel Coppage*

THE KINKS: *Preservation Act 1*. The Kinks (vocals and instrumentals); Krysia Kocjan, Sue Brown, Pamela Travis, Lewis Rich, Lee Pavey (backing vocals). *Morning Song; Daylight; Sweet Lady Genevieve; There's a Change in the Weather; Where Are They Now?; One of the Survivors; Cricket; Money & Corruption; I Am Your Man; Here Comes Flash; Sitting in the Midday Sun; Demolition*. RCA LPL 1-5002 \$5.98, Ⓢ LPS 1-5002 \$6.98, Ⓢ LPK 1-5002 \$6.98.

THE NEWPORT FESTIVAL BLUES

Buddah brings in a bumper harvest of great originals from last summer's jazz gathering

FOR the past fifty years or so, America's popular music, whether it came from the Tennessee hills or Tin Pan Alley, has not been able to escape the influence of the blues. No one can pinpoint its origin, but year after year, from cat house to concert hall, the blues in its most basic form has been able to evoke an emotional response rivaling the kind a gifted Baptist preacher can conjure up.

When Bessie Smith and her colleagues bared their souls in the Twenties and Thirties, audiences were whipped into near frenzy. Helen Humes, Wynonie Harris, and Eddie Vinson carried on the tradition in the Forties. Big Mama Thornton, Arthur Crudup, and Muddy Waters saw many white performers turn their blues into gold during the last two decades, and they have survived to carry their emotional impact themselves into the Seventies, the age of electronic rock.

New York has had its share of fine blues concerts, but the one Buddah recorded at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall as part of last year's Newport in New York festival has to be one of the finest the city has heard in recent years. Big Mama Thornton, whose *Hound Dog* helped launch the career of Elvis Presley, opens the program with two of her own songs which became hits in versions by the late Sam Cooke and Janis Joplin, and she is simply magnificent. Arnett Cobb's *Smooth Sailing* is superbly played by violinist Claude Williams, a sixty-six-year-old veteran of Andy Kirk's band whom the producers fail to credit on the album. There is a remarkably faithful rendition of Meade Lux Lewis' *Honky Tonk Train Blues* played by pianist Lloyd Glenn. Muddy Waters, in top shape, comes off better than he has on his recent Chess albums. Jay McShann, the Kansas City band leader whose orchestra launched the talents of young Charlie Parker, sings *Confessin' the Blues* (a popular number which Walter Brown, his late vocalist, used to feature) and plays superb piano accompaniment on many other tracks. Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson is heard to great advantage in a set of four of his old favorites. Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup, who, from some place in obscurity, saw Elvis Presley make a hit out of his *That's Alright Now Mama*, is not as strong as he once was, but he has enough left in him to demonstrate why he has had such great influence. Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, who has quietly maintained his musical activity in Houston for the past twenty years, is represented by two selections that prove he is far too good for mere local renown. B. B. King, the evening's master of ceremonies, is, of course, the most famous member of this impressive assembly, but, ironically, his single track, *Outside Help*, turns out to be the least interesting of the lot.

I find no fault with the album's music, but I do think the producers could have listed the people responsible for some of the excellent accompaniment heard throughout. But that's minor. If you want to get the blues, I recommend you get them in the form of this exquisite set. *Chris Albertson*

THE BLUES: *A Real Summit Meeting*. *Little Red Rooster*; *Ball and Chain* (Big Mama Thornton). *Smooth Sailing* (Claude Williams). *Confessin' the Blues* (Jay McShann). *They Call Me Mr. Cleanhead*; *Hold It Right There*; *Back Door Blues*; *Kidney Stew* (Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson). *That's Alright Now Mama* (Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup). *Honky Tonk Train Blues*; *After Hours*; *Pine Top's Boogie Woogie* (Lloyd Glenn). *Long Distance Call*; *Where's My Woman Been*; *Got My Mojo Workin'* (Muddy Waters). *The Drifter*; *Please Mr. Nixon* (Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown). *Outside Help* (B. B. King). BUDDAH BDS 5144-2 two discs \$6.98.



BIG MAMA THORNTON



MUDDY WATERS



EDDIE "CLEANHEAD" VINSON



ARTHUR "BIG BOY" CRUDUP

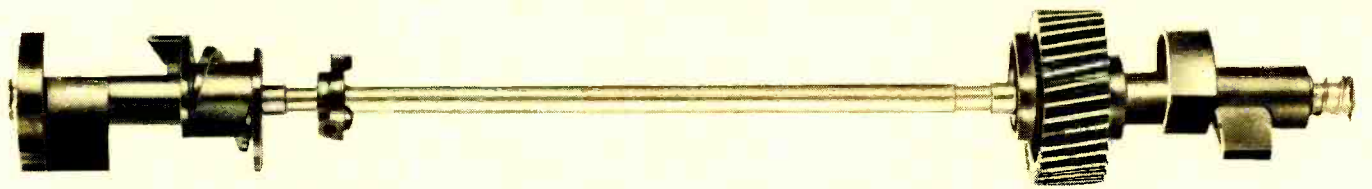


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POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GREGG ALLMAN: *Laid Back*. Gregg Allman (vocals, guitar, organ); Bill Stewart (drums); Chuck Leavell (piano, vibraphone); Tommy Talton (guitars); Scott Boyer (guitars, piano); Buzzy Feiten (guitar); Jimmy Nalls (guitar); Charlie Hayward (bass); Johnny Sandlin (bass); David Brown (bass); Butch Trucks (casaba); Jaimoe (congas); David Newman (saxophone); Paul Hornsby (clavinet, organ). *All My Friends; Please Call Home; Multicolored Lady; These Days; Don't Mess Up a Good Thing; Queen of Hearts; Midnight Rider; Will the Circle be Unbroken.* CAPRICORN CP 0116 \$5.98, Ⓜ M 8 0016 \$6.98, Ⓞ M 5 0116 \$6.98.

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

Each time I hear this album I am more grateful for it. In fact, if Gregg Allman ever made a public statement that the earth is flat, I would be willing to give it serious consideration. Here is one of those rare singers whose voice can aptly be called an instrument: any guitarist, trumpeter, pianist, or saxophonist would be proud to invent embellishments and improvisations on tunes the way Allman does. Most of the tunes here are taken at slow tempos, yet he manages to inject syncopation into his vocals, a wondrously effective technique. But there's nothing studied here, just soul.

Allman keeps reminding us that in loneliness there is a strange kind of comfort. The

twilight wail in his voice seems to summon up every lonely Scots-Irish ghost from his Southern ancestry that ever went looking for a friend. His music is real Southern matrix-music. The mesh of Allman and his supporting



Capriorn

GREGG ALLMAN

His voice is an instrument with soul

players is perfect, too. There isn't one thing wrong with this album. *J.V.*

THE BLUES: A REAL SUMMIT MEETING (see Best of the Month, page 82)

BING CROSBY: *Rare Early Recordings, 1929-1933.* Bing Crosby (vocals); various orchestras. *My Kinda Love; Let's Do It; I'm in Seventh Heaven; Great Day; Face the Music Medley; Brother Can You Spare a Dime?; Street of Dreams; I've Got the World on a String; My Honey's Lovin' Arms;* and four others. BIOGRAPH BLP-C13 \$5.98 (available from Biograph Records, P.O. Box 109, Canaan, N.Y. 12029).

Performance: **Pleasant memories**
Recording: **Authentic to a fault**

There was a time during the Thirties when, if you turned on the family radio, nine chances

out of ten, it seemed, Bing Crosby's voice would emerge from it. Here was cool before the word was invented, a bland, good-humored, reassuring sort of sound which, what with his movie appearances, his records and his radio turns, practically sang us out of the Great Depression.

Mr. Crosby's "rare early recordings" are supplied in this collection so conscientiously undoctored that some of them come complete with the original cracks, ticks, and needle chatter. Yet "Der Bingle," as he was coyly called in his heyday for some reason, makes everything musical sound smooth as cream anyhow. The earliest records have been garnered from New York sessions for Okeh and Columbia in 1928 and 1929. The singer is in distinguished company, but he is not yet his recognizable crooning self. In *My Kinda Love, Let's Do It,* and *I'm in Seventh Heaven,* the voice already reveals that relaxed quality but is surprisingly pallid and undistinguished. Most of the time, in fact, the not-yet-celebrated Mr. Crosby is only a member of a trio. But the accompanists! The Dorsey Brothers, Glenn Miller, Roy Barge, Bix Beiderbecke—names of the first magnitude in the history of jazz and pops. As we move forward to the records Crosby made for Brunswick in the early Thirties, he begins to emerge rapidly as the self we knew—cheering up the penniless populace of the period with *Great Day, I've Got the World on a String, Someone Stole Gabriel's Horn,* and that phony, romantic Southland of Sewanee Rivers and tapdancer-infested levees in *There's a Cabin in the Pines.* But Crosby could move us close to tears, too, in those days, when he chanted the sad lyrics of the *Blue Prelude* or *Buddy, Can You Spare a Dime?* These performances hold up remarkably well. And the pageant of name players in the background unfolds with startling spectacularity: Bunny Berigan, Benny Goodman, Joe Venuti, Paul Whiteman, the Mills Brothers, Matty Malneck, Victor Young. A fascinating entry in the current nostalgia sweepstakes. *P.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHEO FELICIANO: *With a Little Help from My Friend.* Cheo Feliciano (vocals); Ray Bar-

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓞ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓞ = stereo cassette
- Ⓜ = quadraphonic disc
- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel quadraphonic tape
- Ⓞ = eight-track quadraphonic tape
- Ⓞ = quadraphonic cassette

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

retto (conga); Vinnie Bell (guitar); Larry Harlow (piano); Charlie Rodriguez (tres); Bobby Valentin (bass); Orestes Vilato (timbales); others. *Nabori*; *Tema de Tu Regreso*; *Hace Furo*; *Pensar en Ti*; *Armonioso Cantar*; and five others. VAYA VS-21 \$4.98.

Performance: **Terrific**
Recording: **Good**

Cheo Feliciano is a vocalist noted for his interpretations of boleros, those steamy love songs that might sound a little peculiar in English translation ("You are my heat, my fever") but in Spanish are, um, well, they work. Feliciano (no relation to José) is not quite in the class of a Santos Colon yet, but as his career progresses and he matures, he is looked upon as an eventual successor to Tito Rodriguez—in other words, he is a comer.

This album is one of the best Latin sessions I have heard. There is an all-star backup group—Ray Barretto, Larry Harlow, Charlie Rodriguez, Bobby Valentin, Orestes Vilato, and Vinnie Bell. And it is another argument, I think, for my contention that the best—maybe the only—way that an all-star band works out is when it's backing up a singer all the musicians really like. Larry Harlow takes a splendid piano solo on the opening piece, *Nabori*; Bobby Valentin's arrangements are—there isn't any other word—perfect; and Charlie Rodriguez is a virtuoso on the tres. *Salome* cheerfully lifts chunks of its melody line from Ellington's *Satin Doll*, which is understandable, considering the lyrics: "Slightly Latin/My satin doll. . . ."

What a happy session this must have been! Part of it may have been that Feliciano, who free-lances as a vocalist with bands in Puerto Rico and New York, just happened to be in town, and the locals got excited. I am reminded of the story about the bass player who walked thirty blocks through a New York winter to get to a Charlie Parker jam session, because, he said, it was worth it. This album is worth a lot of things—it is certainly worth the money and the all-too-brief time it will take you to listen to it—and the pleasure will last and last. J.V.

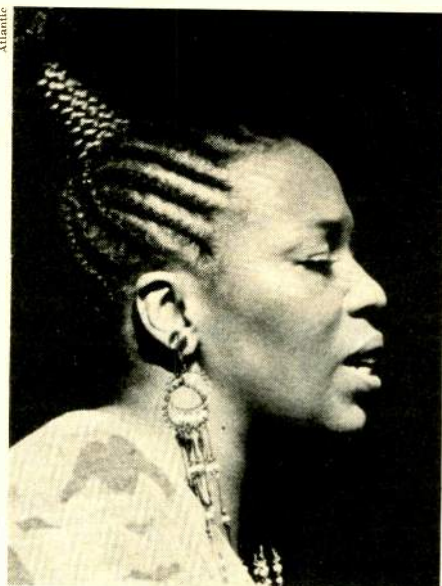
ROBERTA FLACK: *Killing Me Softly*. Roberta Flack (piano, vocals, arr.); instrumental accompaniment. *Killing Me Softly with His Song*; *Jesse*; *No Tears (in the End)*; *I'm the Girl*; *River*; and four others. ATLANTIC SD 7271 \$5.98, TP 7271 \$6.98, CS 7271 \$6.98.

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

Roberta Flack was/is a jazz singer who accidentally crossed into pop fame with *The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face* and *Killing Me Softly with His Song*. The latter was played so often on the radio that, with its hypnotic melodic structure, it drove several of my friends pleasantly mad. Miss Flack is still very much a jazz singer; she has a polished and meditative style that is quietly red-blooded—even, at times, blue-blooded. She knows what she wants as a performer, the material for her albums is carefully chosen, and the production by Joel Dorn is impeccable. (Dorn, by the way, is an art lover, and says that his method of producing is to find a painting that reflects the tune to be done; he then translates into sound what he sees in the painting. In Miss Flack's case the method seems to work very well.)

Apparently neither Miss Flack nor Dorn is in a hurry to get albums on the market, preferring to spend whatever time they feel is necessary to make superior recordings. Thus this album, for one that contains a "smash" hit, is rather late in arriving. The title tune overwhelms everything else (it is hypnotic). *I'm the Girl* is a marvelous ballad that sounds as though it were written thirty years ago, in the era of great ballads. *When You Smile* is, for Miss Flack, unusual in that it is kiddingly coquettish and features some fine Dixieland trombone fills. *River* is a half-gospel tune and thoroughly delightful. Although Leonard Cohen's *Suzanne* receives merciful and generous treatment here, I still think it is a meandering, tuneless, and comatose thing.

Miss Flack has a voice like a prism; through it the colors of songs shine. Reports from show-business journals have it that she



ROBERTA FLACK
The Ella Fitzgerald of the Seventies

will be starring in a movie based on the life of Bessie Smith. But she seems to me more like the Ella Fitzgerald of the Seventies. J.V.

GRAND FUNK: *We're an American Band*. Mark Farner (vocals, guitar); Don Brewer (drums, vocals); Mel Schacher (bass); Craig Frost (keyboards). *We're an American Band*; *Stop Lookin' Back*; *Creepin'*; *Black Licorice*; *The Railroad*; *Ain't Got Nobody*; and two others. CAPITOL SMAS-11207 \$5.98, 8XW-11207 \$6.98, 4XW-11207 \$6.98.

Performance: **Surprising**
Recording: **Very good**

Believe it or not, Grand Funk has improved; they are beginning to sound more like a band. Though their music is still best taken in small doses, to avoid monotony and high-volume headaches, they seem to be playing, writing, and performing better.

Why should this be? I can't say for sure, but I can make an educated guess: the departure of their former manager and producer, Terry Knight. Without him, the group seems to breathe easier. The group has also added a member, Craig Frost, who helps balance the sound with his keyboard work, relieving guitarist-vocalist Mark Farner of his former triple duty. Todd Rundgren's production and engineering job also contributes to Grand Funk's improvement, not only in their playing

but in their recorded sound, which is clean and dry without being sterile—and for a group that plays as loud as Grand Funk, Rundgren has done as right by them as any engineer could.

I never worried about why audiences liked Grand Funk as much as some pop journalists did. The public's happy with Grand Funk—the group has nine gold albums to prove it, including this one. So why worry? The public's getting what it wants, and what it wants is getting better. J.V.

THE J.B.'s: *Doing It to Death*. The J.B.'s (vocals and instrumentals). *Doing It to Death (Parts 1 & 2)*; *More Peas*; *La Di Da La Di Day*; *Sucker*; *You Can Have Watergate Just Gimme Some Bucks and I'll Be Straight*. PEOPLE PE 5603 \$4.98.

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

The J.B.'s are the backup band for soul star James Brown (hence their initials), under the direction of Fred Wesley. The "tunes" here, we are told, were "written" by Brown—which is to say they comprise one or two riffs with no melody, no lyrics, and a lot of huff and puff. But they are saved and made interesting by the band's ability to huff and puff with a will and spirit. The band is extremely well-drilled, they have commendable panache and skill, and they blow good jazz. Their performances indicate what might be if these were actual tunes. Brown is served well, beyond what he deserves.

I must also note that Fred Wesley, whose name appears on the label but not the jacket of the album, wrote the only decent song in the soundtrack that Brown applied to the film *Black Caesar*, and he is credited in newspaper ads for *Slaughter's Big Rip-Off* as being the co-composer with Brown of that score (but his name is in smaller type). I don't want to get Wesley in trouble, but I begin to wonder how much of Brown's current strength and reputation is based on Wesley's efforts. I begin to wonder very much indeed. J.V.

ELTON JOHN: *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*. Elton John (vocals, piano, organ, mellotron); Dee Murray (bass); Davey Johnstone (guitar); Nigel Olsson (drums). *Funeral for a Friend*; *Love Lies Bleeding*; *Candle in the Wind*; *Bennie and the Jets*; *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*; *Grey Seal*; *Sweet Painted Lady*; *Saturday Night's Alright for Fighting*; *Roy Rogers*; *Social Disease*; *Harmony*; and seven others. MCA MCA2-10003 two discs \$11.98, MCAT2-10003 \$12.95, MCAC2-10003 \$12.95.

Performance: **Grace and garbage**
Recording: **Variable**

Elton John's part in this is just dandy, up to a point. The music he wrote for Bernie Taupin's lyrics is much better than they deserve, and Elton's vocals—on all but a few lost causes—are of that forceful yet delicate nature that first made him attractive. He really can lay the phrasing on you, when he applies himself. But he is ultimately responsible for the lyrics, too—it is his album and he could have sent Taupin back to the drawing board or, better still, out on a snipe hunt with Lou Reed and Harry Chapin; the lyrics, by and large, are a mess. Taupin ranges far and wide, but always on what he considers the "other" side of the tracks, romanticizing your moderately seamy

(Continued on page 92)

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We explained that this new invention (U. S. Patent 3,424,873) is the last loudspeaker in the same sense as the wheel was the last device for transmitting rotary or rolling motion.

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Since then, our claims for the Ohm F have found support in the authoritative editorial pages of Stereo Review. In the November 1973 issue, the Equipment Test Reports by Hirsch-Houck Laboratories asserted:

"The Ohm F can do some things that no other speaker in our experience is capable of."

After acknowledging that "the cone has not been designed to function as a 'piston' (as virtually all other cones are), but should be viewed as a terminated acoustic transmission line," the review states that "the Ohm F produced one of the flattest extended curves we have ever seen ... it has a uniform energy output across the full audio-frequency range..."

Square-wave tests of the Ohm F against "several other fine

speakers we had on hand," in the words of the review, showed that "only the Ohm F was able to produce a reasonable facsimile of a square wave." This plus the toneburst response of the speaker "tended to confirm . . . that it has transient-response capabilities surpassing those of the best conventional (piston) speakers."

Further excerpts from the Ohm F test report:

"In our simulated live-vs.-recorded test it rated A to A+ . . . with one of the larger power amplifiers, able to deliver 100 watts or more, the sound began to warrant the use of such words as 'awesome' . . . achieves state-of-the-art performance."

The conclusion of the review requires some reading between the lines:

"As to whether or not the Ohm F is therefore the 'best' speaker available—we will leave that to the ears of audiophiles; we are prepared to say, however, without reservations, that it is easily one of the best."

Think about that. Wouldn't any responsible journal hesitate to declare categorically that a totally new and unfamiliar product is the best, period? Even if they thought so?

The Ohm F comes in a striking, tapered column cabinet, about 3½ feet high, and is priced at \$400. If your local dealer doesn't carry it yet, write us and we'll help you.

We want your next loudspeaker to be the last loudspeaker.

Ohm Acoustics Corp.,
241 Taaffe Place,
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205.



THE EX-BEATLES

Surmounting the aftermath

Reviewed by
NOEL COPPAGE

WE are still affected by the energy of stars that flared and died long ago. The speed at which light—information—can travel is simply not great enough, given the distances involved, to keep us up to date: we're always perceiving what was. Another sort of lag—this one not in front of our perceptions but behind them—has us similarly affected, after the fact, by the Beatles. We are still reacting to Beatle Energy, and . . . there . . . are . . . no . . . Beatles. Radio stations still have their "All-Beatle" weekends. Shops specializing in Beatle memorabilia are still opening up, after—how many years? The value placed on those *Yellow Submarine* drawings defies objective analysis beyond the conclusion that something happened that made waves that are still being felt. Headline writers consider it standard procedure, still, to put "Former Beatle" in front of any of those four names, and the rumors continue to go beyond the headlines, year after year, picked up and passed along with that hopeful-cynical, one-eyebrow-out-of-control look that's so useful these days. This last time the pushiest rumor of all—"Fab Four to Reunite?"—seems to have culminated in something less than the reopening of Camelot but in *something*, at least, something tangible: a Ringo Starr album called "Ringo" in which all four former Beatles perform, though not all at once, never four abreast. That isn't really the *Beatles* in that album, but Beatle Energy attends it, making it a carefully received, painstakingly examined, soberly evaluated social (and, of course, economic) event. The same goes, as it always does to some degree, for the new solo albums "Mind Games" by John Lennon and "Band on the Run" by Paul McCartney—and, of course, even Yoko Ono's latest, "Feeling the Space," is to be assessed just outside the distracting vortex of Beatle Energy.

Consider how *they* must feel; one does not ignore "that whole Beatle thing." One cannot say, "That's all in the past," because not all of it will get in the past and stay there. John may have tried to yank the Band-Aid off, to put it all behind him quickly and cleanly, and so forth, with "I don't believe in the Beatles," but it wasn't that easy. The headline writers put the relevancy—or perhaps the potency—of such a statement in perspective the very next time he or even Yoko ("Wife of Former Beatle . . .") did something.

And now, Paul.

BUT let us save that, hoping for a modest build-up while we try to figure the angles of Ringo's "reunion" and the later adventures of Johnandyoko. This is written at a time

when gossip columnists are hinting at a rip in the union of John and Yoko, and presumably is being read when more is known about that one way or the other—but this seems to be the place for information lags of various sorts. John's new album is largely *about* Yoko, in any case. Her face is the mountain behind his image in the chintzy jacket photograph, and while there may have been some kidding in that, the songs are laced with phrases about how she "blew away life's misery" and how Liverpool and Tokyo got together and made east west and vice versa and how they share in each other's minds and how she's the honey and he's the bee and all he has to do is call her name and things clear right up, and on and on. There's nothing wrong with committing such sentiments to song, but the album is so *redundant*, so . . . hard-sell. And predictable: the range of ideas in John's music seems to grow ever narrower. There's Yoko loved a thousand ways, and a play or two on words in this one, and, of course, politics. The album is beautifully produced, but the Plastic Ono Band, behind John, has evolved an increasingly stylized sound, and one not very far from the silvery-gritty aspect of the Beatles, at that. Nor did this project catch John in a mood to startle anyone with melodies; *I Know (I Know)* has a fine one, and a few others are better than average, but the surge into composing that the first album ("Plastic Ono Band") seemed to promise has not come. "Mind Games" is pleasant, but the harder one listens, the less he hears.

THE Plastic Ono Band behind Yoko is something else—versatile, expressive, reeling with ideas. Yoko herself is not versatile or expressive, but she does have ideas. One of her ideas in making "Feeling the Space," which is "dedicated to the sisters who died in pain and sorrow and those who are now in prisons and in mental hospitals for being unable to survive in a male society," was to show men, the rats, how it feels to be a sex object. One way of doing that was to close out the album with *Men, Men, Men*, which tells its object, "Your muscles are not for fighting in war/Your lips are not for voicing opinions/Your eyes were made for us to look into. . . ." Another way was to include in the credits what *Playboy* would call "vital statistics," only they're for the *males* in the band. And did you know that drummer Jim Keltner has a 42-inch chest? That's not the half of it; he's a dazzling 42-

33-37. I hate him. This sort of thing could drive a fellow to one of those mental hospitals for being unable to survive in a male society. But let it be said that Yoko's album reads much worse than it sounds. She hasn't done anything special with melody, and what she's done with words is no more special than what they do with them on the walls of truck-stop restrooms, but some synergy does occur when she puts the two together. Her melodies *are* provocative enough to interest the band, and, male chauvinists that they are, the musicians apparently pursue that interest in their own way rather than looking to Yoko for definitive hand-and-arm signals. Don Brooks (who is Waylon Jennings' harp player) and David Spinozza interweave mahvelous, abs'y smashing lines in *If Only*, a rather engaging and perplexing song in which Yoko's singing is a thousand million times worse than horrible plug-ugly. So it goes.

BUT Ringo, now, *Ringo*—ah, shucks, what can I tell you about Ringo? According to the write-ups, he is the most amiable human being in the history of the world. Paul, it was written, once told Ringo he would "get" him—but there Paul is, and Linda too, helping Ringo sing Paul's *Six O'Clock*. True, Paul doesn't sing a high harmony part that would show off that fancy vocal range of his, and of course Paul isn't let in with the other former Beatles. Ringo, John, and George play together (although whether they *re-corded* at the same time is another matter) in *I'm the Greatest*, written by John and written *for*, it seems, both Ringo and John. Elsewhere Ringo shares the honors with no more than one other ex-Beatle at a time. Harry Nilsson, Marc Bolan, most of The Band, and those fine examples of the Beatles' bench strength—Billy Preston, Klaus Voorman (who also contributes some fine lithographs for the lyric booklet), and Nicky Hopkins—were all brought in to help, for if there's one thing Richard Perry doesn't spare when he's producing an album it's expense. The album is cute, mainly. Some kind of chemistry that's all out of scale with the quality of the song itself does happen in *I'm the Greatest*, and George's guitars seem catalytic there. *Photograph*, which the booklet says was written by George and Ringo, could have been in George's "All Things Must Pass" album and gone unnoticed by everyone—but here it stands out.



The Lennons:
Yoko and John

Apple Records

offering lyrical relief in an album that is just a bit smug about its rock-and-roll savvy. It is the kind of song that keeps AM radio from going down the tube altogether. Nilsson was somehow persuaded to exert himself on such an old featherweight as *You're Sixteen*, and his assorted back-up voices do keep the thing from dying right on your living room rug. *Step Lightly*, a Ringo original, has some nice rhythmic things in it, but thirty seconds of it is about enough. The only other outstanding cuts are *Six O'Clock* and the closing *You and Me (Babe)*, written by Harrison and Mal Evans, an old Beatle insider,



The Starrs: Maureen and Ringo

and given a voice-over treatment by Ringo in which he thanks all the musicians and says one of those prolonged, grand-ballroom goodnights. *Six O'Clock* is a quiet, vaguely blues-based tune about standards not met, and I suppose it is drawing the usual more-fluff-from-Paul comments in the usual places, but it's a song one can stand to listen to repeatedly, and more than likely with increasing respect. In general, "Ringo" is better off being cute than what else might have happened to it—it has some intellectual tooth-marks, expertly contrived "nostalgia licks" and such—and it probably comes out as well as it does because Ringo's likable nature can match Perry's production shuffle for swagger.

Ringo seems destined to land on his feet—if the Great Purge comes and they're getting rid of "poor" singers, they'll vote a special exception so Ringo can stay—but of course Ringo in a *mano a mano* showdown with Paul Simon or someone for the troubadour championship of the universe would be overmatched. So would John and so would George, the way things are going.

PAUL MCCARTNEY, though, is showing signs of snapping out of it. Right now he seems the ex-Beatle most likely to become an ex-ex-Beatle, to surmount the aftermath. Paul not only has much greater vocal range (and to my ears a more pleasant sound) than the others but is turning out to have rangier vision about arrangements also—and he has the gift of ambiguity. His new tunes may sound something like, oh, some "Rubber Soul" tunes, and then again they may not. It

depends on how you listen. But of course where the gift of ambiguity really pays off is in the lyrics: poetry is what song lyrics aspire to be, and poetry in English is almost by definition ambiguous. I mean, who wants a poem that only says what it says it says? Not you and me and Bob Dylan, that's for sure.

Paul's gift is exercised with some cunning in "Band on the Run," which might be a superb album if *Let Me Roll It* didn't sound so tired, *Bluebird* weren't so effete and aimless, and *Helen Wheels* did not exist. Songs aren't necessarily related to one another, or don't seem to be, but the album does have some fuzzy application of the sonata form (or at least the Side-Two-of-"Abbey Road" form) punched into it, and there are all these sneaky little references scattered throughout, so that *one* (not the *only* one, of course, but one) way it can be interpreted is as an



The McCartneys: Linda and Paul

attempt to put the Beatles behind him, get the Beatles off his back, bury the Beatles.

It is subtler and less direct than John's attempt has been, to be sure, so subtle that Paul may not be doing it consciously at all. Possibly he isn't doing it at all, period. But there are little things—what does "stuck inside these four walls" in the title song really mean? And what about *Jet*? Very puzzling, this *Jet*: there's something about a sergeant major, a lady suffragette, and a line that goes, "Ah, Mater, want Jet to always love me," which of course sounds as if he's saying "Want ya to always love me." Question: what former Beatle has this loss-of-mother pain to the degree that he underwent "primal scream" therapy and then wrote a raw, agonized song called *Mother*—and wrote another song that was kind of nasty and addressed to Paul?

And yet, if Paul is answering, he is not being openly malicious. *Jet* makes no sense at all in any kind of literal reading, but it has powerful tones and is grandly arranged. *Mrs. Vanderbilt* is another fascinating song, at least in its tricky changes and its double-

think resolution: "What's the use of worrying?/What's the use of hurrying?/What's the use of anything?" There are nice rhythms, Latin and otherwise, scattered about in the album (which was recorded in Nigeria), a curious tribute to Picasso with a snippet from *Jet* spliced into it and more reprises in the last few seconds of the last selection.

Paul's band, Wings (and here's another lag: lead guitarist Henry McCullough and drummer Danny Seiwell have left), sounds something like the Beatles sometimes, but then the Beatles never sounded any one way and neither does Wings. That doesn't seem to bother anyone—no identity crises—and it doesn't bother me either. John's new album is infinitely more conservative than Paul's is, and, naturally, Paul's is somewhat more uneven than John's is. Smarter people may find God knows what in Paul's cagey revelations, but ambiguity, for all its usefulness, is also a hedge. Paul is moving toward individuality, but whether he's jetting or mostly drifting is not all that clear to me. It is a difficult direction to take, either way, considering the negative pull (on former Beatles, that is) of that black hole where the supernova of the Sixties was.

And now isn't. There are no Beatles. Long live the Beatles.

JOHN LENNON: *Mind Games*. John Lennon (vocals); Ken Asher (keyboards); David Spinozza (guitar); Gordon Edwards (bass); Jim Keltner (drums); other musicians. *Mind Games*; *Tight A\$*; *Aisumasen*; *One Day (At a Time)*; *Bring On the Lucie (Freda Peeple)*; *Intuition*; *Out the Blue*; *Only People*; *I Know (I Know)*; *You Are Here*; *Meat City*. APPLE SW-3414 \$5.98, ⑧ 8XW-3414 \$6.98, ⑨ 4XW-3414 \$6.98.

YOKO ONO: *Feeling the Space*. Yoko Ono (vocals); David Spinozza (guitar); Jim Keltner (drums); Ken Asher (keyboards); Gordon Edwards (bass); other musicians. *Growing Pain*; *Yellow Girl (Stand By for Life)*; *Coffin Car*; *Woman of Salem*; *Run, Run Run*; *If Only*; *A Thousand Times Yes*; *Straight Talk*; *Angry Young Woman*; *She Hits Back*; *Women Power*; *Men, Men, Men*. APPLE SW-3412 \$5.98, ⑧ 8XW-3412 \$6.98.

RINGO STARR: *Ringo*. Ringo Starr (vocals, drums); John Lennon (vocals, piano); George Harrison (vocals, guitar); Paul McCartney (vocals, mouth sax); Klaus Voormann (bass); Jim Keltner (drums); Robbie Robertson (guitar); other musicians. *I'm the Greatest*; *Hold On*; *Photograph*; *Sunshine Life for Me (Sail Away Richard)*; *You're Sixteen*; *Oh My My*; *Step Lightly*; *Six O'Clock*; *Devil Woman*; *You and Me (Babe)*. APPLE SWAL-3413 \$5.98, ⑧ 8XW-3413 \$6.98, ⑨ 4XW-3413 \$6.98.

PAUL MCCARTNEY: *Band on the Run*. Paul McCartney (vocals, bass, guitar, keyboards); Denny Laine, Linda McCartney, and Wings (vocals and instrumentals). *Band on the Run*; *Jet*; *Bluebird*; *Mrs. Vanderbilt*; *Let Me Roll It*; *Mamunia*; *No Words*; *Helen Wheels*; *Picasso's Last Words (Drink to Me)*; *Nineteen Hundred and Eighty-Five*. APPLE SO-3415 \$5.98, ⑧ 8XW-3415 \$6.98, ⑨ 4XW-3415 \$6.98.

Enclosure: Oiled walnut airtight cabinet having a volume of approximately 2.5 cu. ft.

Heavy 12-inch acoustic-suspension woofer with massive magnet and low-resonance cone produces powerful true bass to the very lowest regions of musical sound.

¾-inch Mylar dome tweeter projects uppermost highs with exceptional clarity over broad arc, resulting in "open" sound with accurate stereo space image.

Contour control with four distinct settings permits precise acoustic matching of the WDDS-12 to the acoustic requirements of almost any listening room.

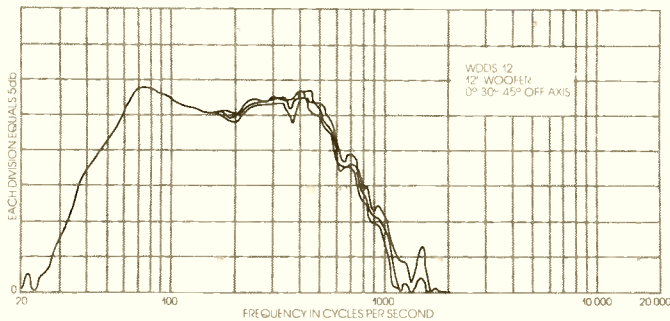
1½-inch Mylar dome tweeter assures smooth frequency transition into midrange while providing wide dispersion and crisp transients in the crucial "presence range."

Optional base in handsome matte black

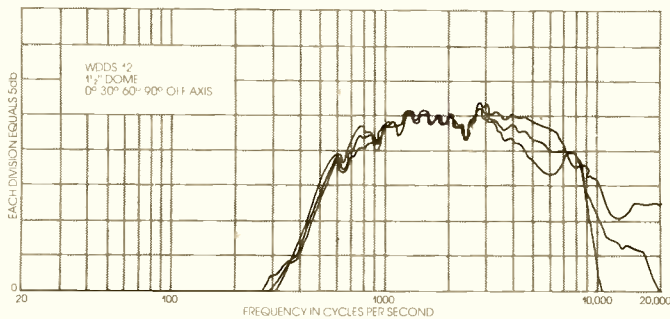
Angled dome tweeters generate a uniform sound field over 120° dispersion. Location of all drivers in the same curved plane, creates a Wide Dispersion Discrete Source (WDDS), vital for realistic stereo location and making the most of the speaker's outstanding transient response. WDDS avoids spurious sound scatter and infuses the sound field into the listening room in a pattern virtually analogous to that of a stage or auditorium performance. As a result, the listener remains unaware of the speaker—the music seems "simply there."

WDDS-12 SPECIFICATIONS

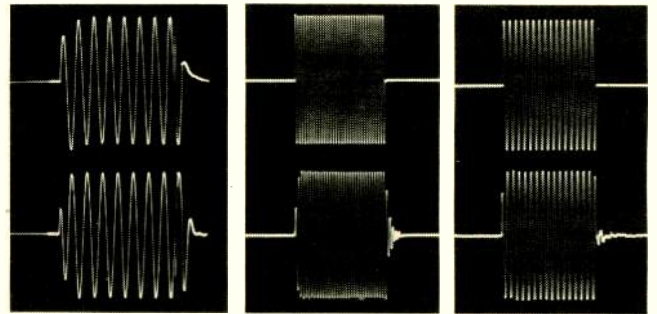
- NOMINAL IMPEDANCE:** 6 ohms
- FREQUENCY RESPONSE:** 30Hz.-25KHz ± 2 db. Average over 120° lateral radiation field and anechoic conditions above 300Hz.
- LOW FREQUENCY DRIVER:** 12" high compliance, heavy duty.
- HIGH FREQUENCY DRIVERS:** Two 1½" dome radiators and two ¾" dome radiators.
- CROSSOVER FREQUENCY:** Crossover takes place gradually between 600Hz and 5KHz.
- DISPERSION:** Frequency Response varies by no more than 3db from the "on axis" response over a 120° lateral field.
- GUARANTEE:** 5 years, as detailed in our guarantee form. All service to be carried out by authorized dealer or agent, eliminating need to return speaker to factory.
- PRICE:** \$350.00



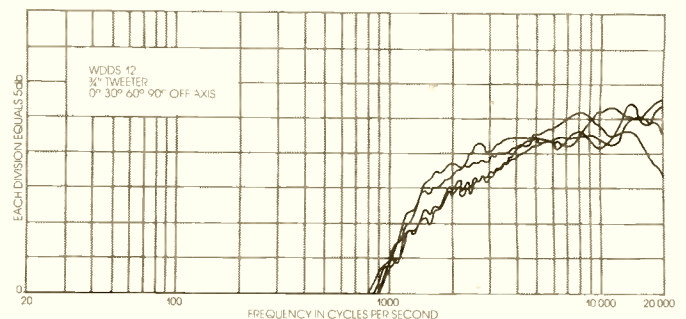
Woofer response, on and off axis, shows effective output below 30Hz, reaching the lowest range of musical sound.



Tweeter response curves on and off axis almost coincide, proving uniformity of sound spread in listening space.



Woofer tone burst at 45Hz and supertweeter tone burst at 16 and 4 kHz attest remarkable clarity of transients throughout audible spectrum.



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Small wonder the public is confused. And good reason why serious listeners rely on expert opinions, as well as recommendations from knowledgeable equipment owners.

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But among those people who, over the years, have learned to separate fact from fiction...who trust their own ears...and who respect "inside" opinions, this new speaker will be a revelation.

If you're a serious listener, unfamiliar with ADC speakers, we urge you to talk to people familiar with our products. They know that, among the relatively few outstanding speaker systems on the market, ADC's line ranks among the best. And, now, with the introduction of the Pritchard System, ADC's probably number one!

For most, the confusion about speakers will continue. For some, the WDDS-12 Pritchard System will shout "hello."

**ADC speakers
-the insider's choice.**



crowd the way Harry romanticizes the more spectacularly grotesque idiots among us. Bernie takes us into the mind of a tired sort of man who does his living vicariously, via Roy Rogers movies on the telly—and, as Taupin reports it, there's nothing particularly interesting on that person's mind. He also takes us into bed with a prostitute, where, Taupin profoundly observes, "There's a place in the world for a woman like you." And so on. We could probably settle once and for all who is the most "unorthodox" bubblegum lyricist by having a tennis match between Bernie Taupin and Harry Chapin, with Lou Reed taking Howard Cosell's part. Or maybe not.

Anyway, Elton makes the most of it. *Candle in the Wind* is another of those dopey salutes to Marilyn Monroe as a "real" but tragically misunderstood person, as trite and benign as Taupin's thoughts on foreign aid probably would be, but EJ has given it such a nice melody and sings it with such emotional credibility that the words actually do begin to mean something. Something similar could be said for the scoring and performance of the title song. The hit, *Saturday Night's Alright for Fighting*, leads a small battery of dead cells in which Elton slugs it out with his Fifties rock fixation, and I wish he'd hurry and get that out of his system. *Saturday Night* has its beat screwed up somehow, but straightening that out obviously wasn't necessary for commerce and would be laughable if undertaken for art. The arrangements, when they aren't thick and murky, are simply overblown; when there isn't something else interfering between you and the music, Nigel Olsson contrives to bang the damned cymbals. There are places where an overlay of sheer noise seems to have been dropped on the basic arrangement just for the hell of it. There are a few places, though, where Elton makes sure his piano and vocals are clearly heard, and both are striking in their subtlety, their stylish economy. One such place is *I've Seen That Movie, Too*. The album has some good music on it, enough perhaps for a fairly decent one-disc album. It is, of course, a two-disc album. N.C.

MORGANA KING: *New Beginnings*. Morgana King (vocals); orchestra. *Jennifer Had; All in All; A Song for You; We Could Be Flying*; and five others. PARAMOUNT PAS-6067 \$5.98, Ⓜ M 8091-6067 \$6.98.

Performance: **Highly styled**
Recording: **Frilly**

What turns me off Morgana King is probably what turns me off Chris Connor: they both let their styles intrude on everything they perform to the extent that every track sounds very much like every other one. Both are real musicians, each has a devoted cult audience, and neither has had broad success on recordings. Now Miss King is back, probably propelled by her success in the role of Mama Corleone in *The Godfather* (although all mention of that is omitted in the liner notes), bringing us another collection of mannered-to-the-point-of-preciousness performances. The perfume abates every once in a while, as in Stevie Wonder's *You Are the Sunshine of My Life*—a really fine job in all respects—but *Jennifer Had* or *Like a Seed* is more typically fussy. King is a very good singer indeed when you hear her late at night in a club and you've had a little alcoholic lubricant. Listening to her on a clear, crisp day only made me think how glad I am that I gave up cigarettes.

The production, by Vince Mauro, is as dim-

ly lighted as an aging beauty's bedroom and every bit as elaborate. P.R.

THE KINKS: *Preservation Act I* (see *Best of the Month*, page 81)

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON AND RITA COOLIDGE: *Full Moon*. Kris Kristofferson (vocals); Rita Coolidge (vocals); Donnie Fritts (organ); Terry Paul (bass); Lee Sklar (bass); David Bromberg (guitar); Vassar Clements (fiddle); Josh Graves (dobro); other musicians. *Hard to Be Friends; It's All Over (All Over Again); I Never Had It So Good; From the Bottle to the Bottom*; and eight others. A&M SP-4403 \$5.98.

Performance: **Real pretty**
Recording: **Excellent**

It isn't a case of Rita helping Kris, as one



PATTI LABELLE
Knows how to use a marvelous voice

might expect in this case-hardened Man's World of ours, but a matter of Kris doing the helping. It's mostly Rita's album, a result in part of a decision forced by simple mechanics: it seems their best ranges aren't quite an octave apart, so Kris' best key for a given song is not the same as Rita's best key. In a situation like that, you shoot your best stick (or producer David Anderle does, anyway) and tune to the better singer of the two. Rita sounds almost as beautiful as she looks, too, and Kris is both conscientious and graceful in his supporting role. The singing is so nice, in fact, that the album is mighty ingratiating for an album of such unsatisfying songs. The backing is generally excellent; recorded in Los Angeles, the thing brings together Memphis, Nashville, and California's own personal Mexico—such diverse musicians as Booker T. Jones on piano, Josh Graves on dobro, and Herb Alpert on trumpet. And they get along.

Kris wrote only two, and he and Rita are listed as co-writers of two other songs, all bland and unassuming. The album is over-stuffed with soft country ballads from various sources—the kind whose unfolding, line by line and note by note, you can just about predict after hearing the first four bars. The song that comes off best, by far, is Bobby Charles' *Tennessee Blues*. Kris' *From the Bottle to the Bottom* (the amazing thing about which is that Kris hasn't used that title before) is embar-

rassingly similar to, and embarrassingly inferior to, the Bill Rice-Jerry Foster tune *Special*, whose train metaphor would come in handy in an album hurtling for changes of pace. But no coupling is perfect, as they say around the turntable; maybe they figured all the featherbedding was railroad metaphor a-plenty. N.C.

LaBelle: *Pressure Cookin'*. LaBelle (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Pressure Cookin'; Can I Speak to You Before You Go to Hollywood?; Sunshine; Mr. Music Man; Let Me See You in the Light; Last Dance*; and three others. RCA APL-1-0205 \$5.98, Ⓜ APS-1-0205 \$6.95. © APK-1-0205 \$6.95.

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

LaBelle is a female vocal trio named after lead singer Patti LaBelle, who in the early sixties led a group called Patti LaBelle & The Bluebelles. Their best-known single was *Through the Years*, in which LaBelle displayed her remarkable vocal range and technical powers. The lady has lost none of that with time; if anything, she's improved. During one song on this album I thought she sounded like Aretha Franklin, but it's just possible, considering their careers chronologically, that Aretha Franklin sounds like LaBelle, especially in the modulated yips and whoops they tack onto the end of a lyric line.

As a group, LaBelle has been around for a few years and is gathering a faithful following in the New York area. It has a stage act that is probably equal to that of the Supremes or any major girl-group of the last decade. LaBelle hasn't had a hit record yet, but that doesn't mean it won't. I'm not terribly impressed by the material on this record, but the production and sound are first-rate and the group is in fine form. If you've not heard Patti LaBelle before or recently, I suggest you avail yourself of this album. So-so material or not, she has a marvelous voice and knows how to use it. J.V.

JAMES LAST: *M.O.R. James Last*. Chorus and orchestra, James Last arr. and cond. *Interlude/Feel Alright; If You Could Read My Mind; Jenny Jenny; Killing Me Softly with His Song; Delta Queen; I'm Just a Singer; Walk on Water*; and five others. POLYDOR PD 5538 \$5.98, Ⓜ 8F 5538 \$6.98, © CF 5538 \$6.98.

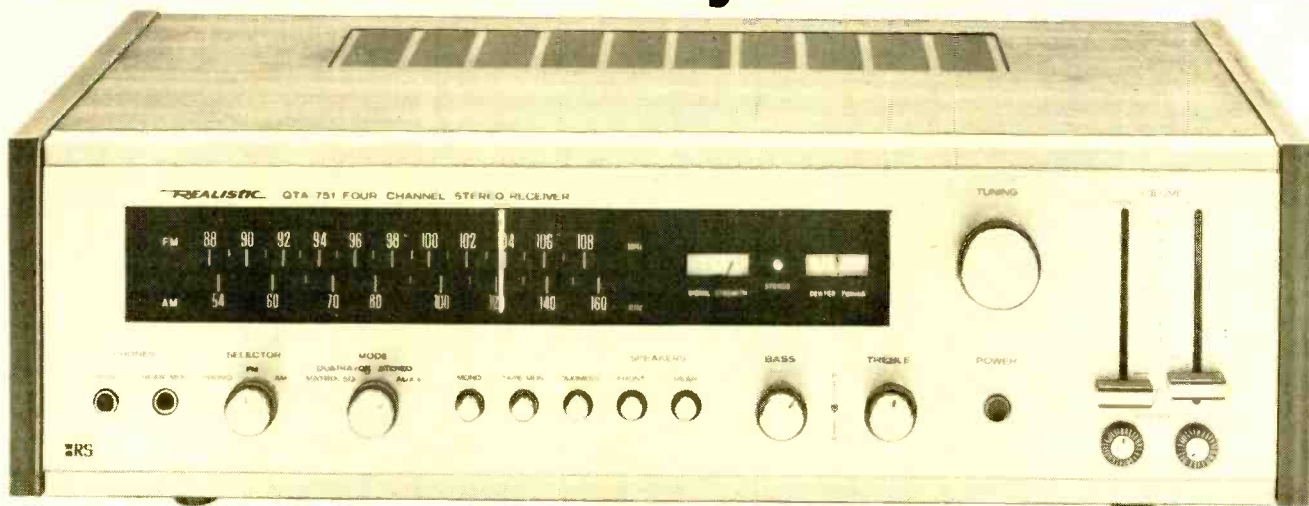
Performance: **Mediocrity rampant**
Recording: **Fair**

A printed blurb that fell out of this album, containing the declaration that "throughout Europe, 'Last Is First,'" is the only clue I have to the background of the gentleman who perpetrated it. The "M.O.R." in the title, however, stands for "Middle of the Road," and what James Last does is to take rock and pop hits and strain them smooth until they are suitable for piping through the sound system of an old-age home.

Not that Mr. Last is looking to compete with the sound of 101 Strings! On the contrary, his arrangements are imbued with a peculiarly nagging beat and given over to the vocal harmonizings of a chorus of adolescents who must twitter hard and long to achieve the ambience of demented banality that made his previous album, "Non-Stop Dancing," such a spectacular success (even though I can't seem to find anyone who ever heard of it). Whether Last's carefully coached chorus and orchestra

(Continued on page 94)

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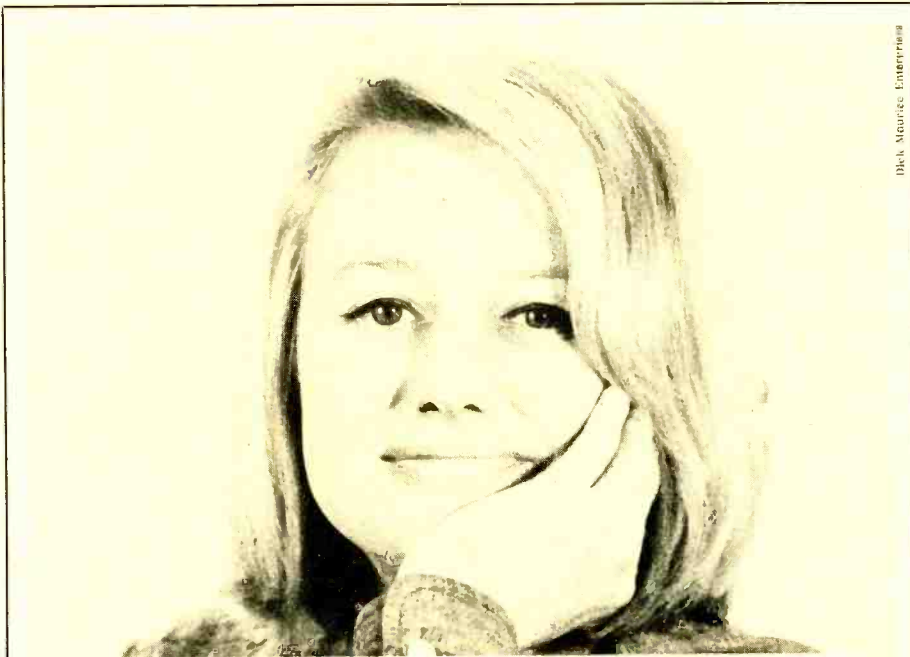
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Rex Reed is delighted to review her flawless new album

A LOT has been written by the cultured and the wise about the delicacy and freshness of Blossom Dearie's singing, about how her light, polite voice caresses the lyrics of the very best songs, about her unflagging good taste, and about the legion of admirers she has developed through the years in the intimate jazz rooms and supper clubs her hip musicianship has graced, admirers who come from far and wide to hear real music instead of noise. But too little has been conveyed, I'm sorry to say, of just what a *swinging* dame she is. Nestling beneath that daffodil hair bobbing just above eye level at the grand piano is a worldly-wise Lorelei ready to lure us all to destruction. When she sings, the songs are literate and sophisticated and always laced with joyous good humor. But there's another element involved: the lady has lived, and, like an actress pulling out all the stops, she has reached down into her experience to produce, finally, an album that demonstrates clearly the full measure of her musical knowledge and talent.

She had to produce the disc herself, but that's OK with me. The good things in life are always harder to find, but after the search proves fruitful you enjoy them all the more because of the trouble you went to. Blossom Dearie's fans have carried her banner in more parades than she can count, but the get-rich-quick recording companies in search of Top 20 hits instead of artists with integrity and endurance have turned a deaf ear to her special gifts, making it mandatory for her to turn out records on her own label. This new one is not available in many shops, either, so you probably will have to order by mail. Just send a check for \$5.98 to Blossom Dearie Enterprises, P.O. Box 522, Radio City Station, New York, N.Y. 10019. It's one way of inoculating yourself against the pollution (some people call it music) cluttering up the airwaves to-

day. Blossom Dearie provides the quality, you provide the check. The spirit of commerce is satisfied, and the resonance of beauty, sensitivity, and craftsmanship is your musical reward.

Clear as a bubble. Blossom's voice has never been in better shape, but the ten new songs she has composed for this debut outing on her own label demonstrate new facets and dimensions of her ability to write as well as she sings. Equally at home with bright, swinging jazz and melancholy ballad tempos, she has fashioned a musical picnic that is bracing as well as stimulating. With Johnny Mercer, she tells in *I'm Shadowing You* of a love even J. Edgar Hoover couldn't break up. With Bill Anthony (*Home*) she lights a flame in the heart that will not go out. And in *Baby You're My Kind* she brings home the bacon with the best of the blues wailers. Blossom Dearie's music doesn't hate anyone. It is created specifically to charm and to chill, and all her songs are stories told with sympathy and understanding. Her writing cannot be crammed into conventional phrase lengths and patterns, yet her rhythms are so natural and flowing that you are never aware of the oddly measured periods, phrases, and cadences, only of how "easy" it sounds. Blossom Dearie is one of the all-time great singers and composers of popular music, and this is one of her most agreeable albums. I'm not in a very elated state about today's music, but this record has filled me with delight, enthusiasm, and ecstasy. It is simply flawless.

BLOSSOM DEARIE: *Blossom Dearie Sings.* Blossom Dearie (vocals, keyboards); instrumental accompaniment. *I'm Shadowing You: Sunday Afternoon; Home; Hey John; You Have Lived in Autumn; Baby You're My Kind;* and four others. DAFFODIL RECORDS BMD 101 \$5.98.

are turning *Killing Me Softly with His Song* into a vehicle suitable for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir or further prettifying the already unbearably pretty tints of *Delta Queen*, the natural flavor of everything from Neil Diamond's *Walk on Water* to *Ave Maria* has been removed and the musical equivalent of sodium glutamate substituted to preserve the mixture. Middle of the road or not, I suppose there must be an audience for all this, but I don't want to be in it. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DAVE MASON: *It's Like You Never Left.* Dave Mason (vocals, guitar); Jim Keltner (drums); Mark Jordan (keyboards); other musicians. *Baby . . . Please; Every Woman; If You've Got Love; Maybe; Head Keeper; Misty Morning Stranger;* and three others. COLUMBIA KC 31721 \$5.98, ⓑ CA 31721 \$6.98, Ⓒ CT 31721 \$6.98.

Performance: **Great, perhaps**
Recording: **Excellent**

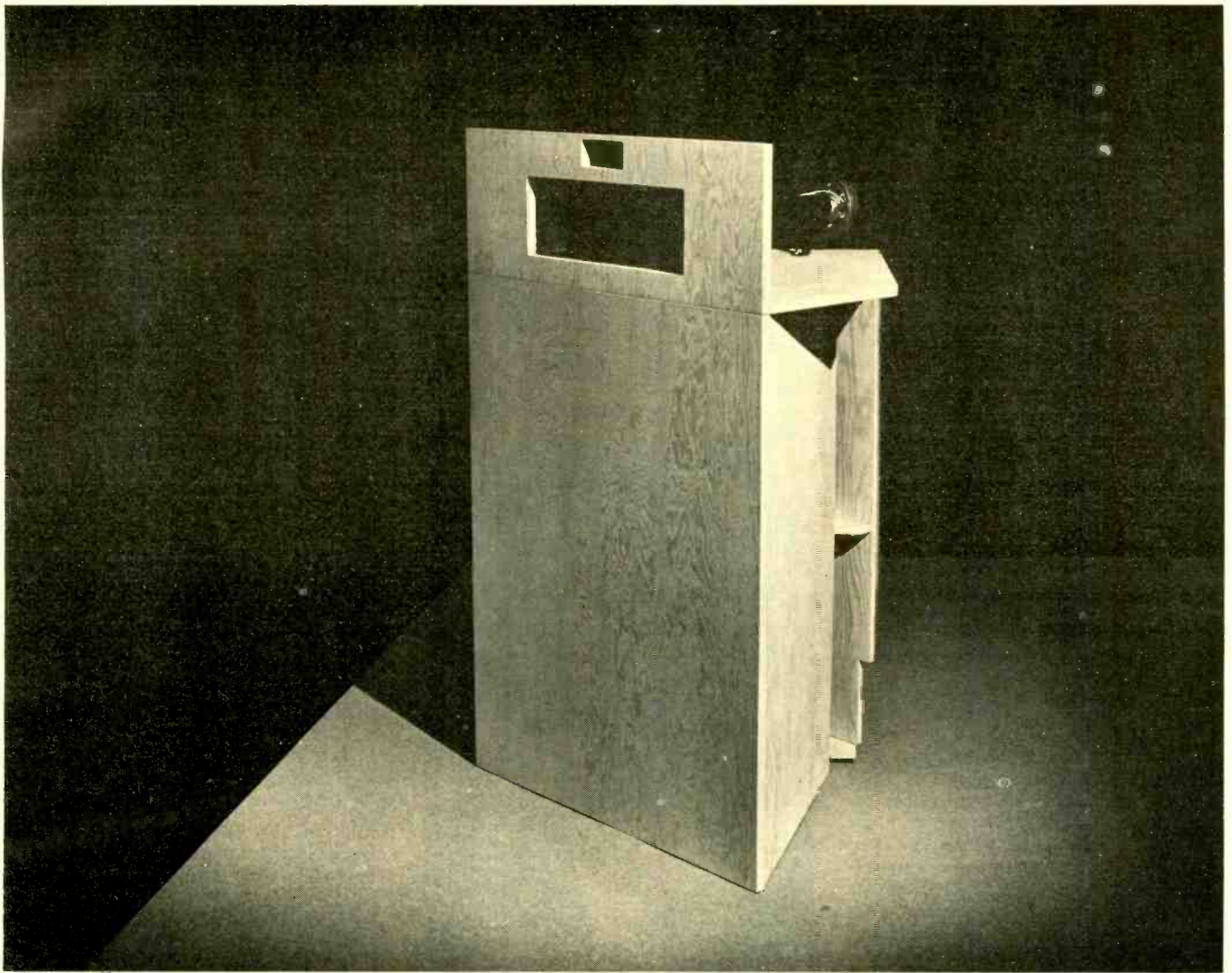
Well . . . the jacket has this back-lighted photograph of Dave Mason playing a fancy guitar, the thing one really notices being his right forearm—which looks just like *my* right forearm. Even has that little extra curve on the top, which in my case resulted from endless summers of "turning the ball over," trying to throw a screwball. Now, I don't know why I never paid any particular attention to this swell musician and wonderful human being before, but it is obvious that Dave's technical skill blah blah blah, sensitivity blah blah blah, depth of insight blah blah . . . The point of this, for those who must have points in these things, is that objectivity, if it exists at all, can be shattered by the damndest things.

I still think it is fair for me, even me, to say that this is Mason's best work since he left Traffic and probably his best work on record. One may not find any cosmic answers or even very substantive questions in the lyrics, but they won't embarrass anybody, and the melodies are better than average. Mason's vocals are not distinctive, but they're smooth and competent. If we stopped there the album would be listenable and mildly pleasurable, and only slightly more so when we allow for Graham Nash's harmony vocals on three songs—but stopping there would leave out the best part: Dave's guitar playing. It's clean, so clean and smooth that nobody will mind his borrowing a lick from Harrison or Clapton or somebody now and then. The acoustic picking, especially, in such cuts as *Maybe* and *Silent Partner*, is just elegant, just elegant. It's that extra little curve, you see, on the top of the forearm that does the trick. N.C.

MARIA MULDAUR. Maria Muldaur (vocals); orchestra. *Any Old Time; Mad Mad Me; The Work Song; Three Dollar Bill; Long Hard Climb;* and six others. REPRISE MS 2148 \$5.98.

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

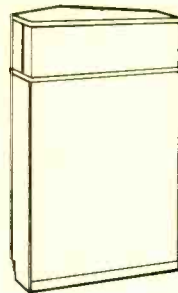
Maria Muldaur, late of Kweskin's Jug Band and late of two very good albums with her husband Geoff, makes her solo bow on an album that never seems to make up its mind. Her previous work has always been eclectic in style and performance, but here it becomes unfocused and jumbled. She is very talented, strikingly so in such comedy songs as *Don't* (Continued on page 96)



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You Feel My Leg (Don't You Make Me High), in which her slightly disheveled soprano is used to raffish effect, and *Three Dollar Bill*, a tirade along the lines of the classic *Why Don't You Do Right?* But what to say of her performance in Dolly Parton's *My Tennessee Home*, where she sounds like Stella Dallas confiding to a tea-leaf reader, or in a couple of drooping Wendy Waldman clinkers? Only that Muldaur becomes indistinguishable from hundreds of others out there in Sensitivityland. That the surrounding production is consistently grand and garish is no help at all.

Real coarse of me, I know, to like only them knee slappers that she sings so good. But I never could make much out of them soap operas. P.R.

GILBERT O'SULLIVAN: *I'm a Writer, Not a Fighter*. Gilbert O'Sullivan (vocals); orchestra: *A Friend of Mine*; *Ooh Baby*; *Get Down*; *Not in a Million Years*; and six others. M.A.M. MAM 7 \$5.98, ⑧ M87 \$6.95, © M57 \$6.95.

Performance: **Mills' Redi-Mix**
Recording: **Excellent**

Gilbert O'Sullivan says his song *Get Down* is actually an instruction to a dog, "Get down, get down, get down/You're a bad dog baby," and he was shocked by the Stateside reaction to it. I believe him after listening to the track. I'm even beginning to believe that he might be Irish (although with Gordon Mills as his manager I wouldn't really be surprised if he turned out to be an Albanian viscount), since his songs and performances seem to fade in and out in that particularly elusive way that characterizes the Gaels. There is a decidedly misty quality to even the writhing *Ooh Baby*. He sounds much more comfortable extolling his dog, Homer, in *A Friend of Mine*, confirming again his Irishness in the skittishness about matters sexual.

In any case, it's another gleaming commercial smash. O'Sullivan's lyrics are improving, his voice is still serviceable. Mills' crafty production cushions and strengthens at the same time, and if you are a fan I'm sure already own this one. Mills Marches On! P.R.

FREDA PAYNE: *Reaching Out*. Freda Payne (vocals); orchestra. *Mood for Love*; *For No Reason*; *If You Go Away*; *Reaching Out*; and six others. INVICTUS KZ 32493 \$5.98, ⑧ ZA 32493 \$6.98, © ZT 32493 \$6.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Implacably monumental**

Freda Payne is a very foxy lady both in looks and in performance. That she not only survives but at times (in *If You Go Away* and *Mood for Love*) triumphs over the noisy semi-embombment of the grandiose Holland-Dozier-Holland arrangements and production of this album is surely proof of basic talent. She is the possessor of a big, flexible voice, and as she slices through something as banal as *Two Wrongs Don't Make a Right*, driving it along by sheer will power, or tackles head-on the soupy inanity of *Mother Misery's Favorite Child* and makes artistic sense of it, then you know that the future is bright for Miss Payne. What she needs now is repertoire that she can relax with instead of having to wrestle with. When she finds it I'm sure there will be no need for this kind of production, which sounds the way one of Mussolini's railway stations looks. P.R.

HELEN REDDY: *Long Hard Climb*. Helen Reddy (vocals); orchestra. *Lovin' You*; *Long Hard Climb*; *The Old Fashioned Way*; *Delta Dawn*; *The West Wind Circus*; and five others. CAPITOL SMAS-11213 \$5.98, ⑧ 8XW-11213 \$6.98, © 4XW-11213 \$6.98.

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

Helen Reddy's work here is relentlessly jaunty. Even Buffy Sainte-Marie's poignant classic *Until It's Time for You to Go* (done here with a solo piano accompaniment that at first I thought was a put-on or a Hildegard imitation) and *Long Hard Climb*, all about the travails of "making it," are sung directly and strictly on beat with an undertone of boom-dee-dee. It all works just fine on *Leave Me Alone* or *The Old Fashioned Way*, and Reddy



LINDA RONSTADT
Delicious phrasing on a tasty album

struts through them, securely professional and upbeat all the way.

That this album is headed dead center for the charts, that Reddy is a very good commercial singer with a strong, melodic voice, and that she has been magnificently managed by her husband, Jeff Wald, is obvious. Also obvious, once you listen to the album, is that underneath all of Reddy's chrome-plated surface lies . . . pure stainless steel. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LINDA RONSTADT: *Don't Cry Now*. Linda Ronstadt (vocals); J. D. Souther (bass, guitar); Spooner Oldham (piano); Sneaky Pete Kleinow (steel guitar); Mickey McGee (drums); other musicians. *I Can Almost See It*; *Love Has No Price*; *Silver Threads and Golden Needles*; *Desperado*; *Don't Cry Now*; *Sail Away*; *Colorado*; *The Fast One*; *Everybody Loves a Winner*; *I Believe in You*. ASYLUM SD 5064 \$5.98.

Performance: **Purely lovely**
Recording: **Excellent**

Ah, Linda, Linda, when are you going to take me away from all this? I mean that in a musically metaphorical sense, of course, and I must say she almost did it this time. In fact, had not producer J. D. Souther (whose work on the sound-recording aspect of it is first-rate) imposed three of his own fairly weak

songs into the program, I might not be here now at all. There are a few other trifles that nag me, too: Linda's interpretation of one of my favorites, Randy Newman's *Sail Away*, is clipped and lacking in irony, and I'm still not very impressed with Rick Roberts' *Colorado*, no matter how it's sung. The Newman song, though, is hurt by an approach that helps most material, and I'm fair agog at the rest of the album. Linda's tendency—unless she's swinging with a country tune like the classic *Silver Threads and Golden Needles*—is to underplay the drama of a song. This not only gets around the pomposity of forced dramatics that is built into many songs, it not only creates a subtler, more effective kind of drama, but it allows her to pay more attention to her phrasing, which is simply delicious. *Silver Threads* establishes that, if she declared herself a full-fledged country singer, Linda would be one of the best. The other really outstanding cuts are of Eric Kaz and Libby Titus' *Love Has No Pride* and, particularly, Neil Young's *I Believe in You*. There are no very weak cuts, except for the cold ones (mostly liverwurst) I toss to the cat to get him to keep cranking the phonograph so I can hear the record again. N.C.

SPENCER DAVIS GROUP: *Gluggo*. Spencer Davis Group (vocals and instrumentals). *Catch You on the Re-hop*; *Don't Let It Bring You Down*; *Alone*; *Today Gluggo*; *Tomorrow the World*; *Feeling Rude*; *Legal Eagle Shuffle*; *Trouble in Mind*; *Mr. Operator*; *Tumble Down Tenement Row*. VERTIGO VEL-1015 \$5.98, ⑧ VC8-1015 \$6.98, © VCR4-1015 \$6.98.

Performance: **Boogie on!**
Recording: **Very good**

Listening, as I often do, to "golden oldies" radio stations, I am reminded that there were other reasons, besides the Beatles, why the music of the mid-Sixties and the British invasion was so exciting and satisfying. Songs like the Searchers' *Needles and Pins* and the Nashville Teens' *Tobacco Road* are examples. Another example is Spencer Davis, whose 1965 hit *Gimme Some Lovin'* was meaty, beaty, big, and bouncy. Davis disappeared for a while and his group splintered (Stevie Winwood left to join Traffic). He turned to acoustic music for three years, but he has now re-formed most of his old group and the result is that he sounds as good as ever.

"Gluggo," the album, is happy, loose, thoroughly professional, and a lot of fun. There is a perfectly acceptable version of the old blues *Trouble in Mind*, a Nashville-style twanger, *Legal Eagle Shuffle* (about divorce, which, with truck driving, is the story line for almost every pop-country song), and an instrumental, *Today Gluggo*, *Tomorrow the World*. But more typical of the Sixties Davis sound, with its dead-on drumming, sprawling organ playing, and holler-style vocals, are *Catch You on the Re-Bop*, *Mr. Operator*, and *Tumble Down Tenement Row*.

Gluggo, the thingie, is never defined, but it is apparently something between a detergent and an aphrodisiac. The album packaging is a mixture of subway-type advertisements with "unsolicited personal testimonials" and "9 Out of 10 Doctors . . ." come-ons.

As album and thingie, "Gluggo" is great fun. It's good to have Spencer Davis back, undiluted and unbowed. J.V.

(Continued on page 100)

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THE WAILERS

Making Jamaican reggae more accessible

Reviewed by Gary Kenton

EVER since those pictures of four long-haired musicians from Liverpool first started appearing in the mass media, at least one part of the audience has reacted by, shall we say, freaking out. Of course, long hair has long since ceased to be offensive to the majority of record buyers, but our newer, cleverer, rock idols have found newer, cleverer, ways to disgust, disgruntle, and dismay. And don't think that's easy: after Alice Cooper has axed babies in front of you, been guillotined above you, spit beer on you (Budweiser, no less), and sold millions of records behind your back, it should take something like a half-ton crane just to raise your eyebrows.

It kind of stands to reason that there'd be some sort of backlash. Unless we're going to start featuring real live kamikaze pilots in our rock shows for some thrills, or give up altogether and listen to the Carpenters, there's going to have to be a new musical development with some kind of value beyond that of pure shock. And there is. It's called reggae.

Which is not to say that reggae won't knock you out—it just won't do it in one K.O. punch. It gets to you in pokes and jabs, content to win you over by a decision. Many have to be exposed to reggae live, however, before it really gets under their skin, for it is a raw, multi-rhythmed music which cannot be separated from the people who perform it. Reggae emanates from the troubled Shanty Town area of Kingston, Jamaica, where people live in cardboard houses in the shadow of the elegant resort hotels patronized by tourists on weekend junkets to the Islands. Perhaps as a result of the omnipresent pressure that seems to hover over Kingston, reggae does not blast or explode. Instead, it seethes hypnotically, revolving around the central instrument—the bass guitar—working into a quiet, often pretty, frenzy, like a tea kettle that wants to let off its steam but simmers just short of the boiling point. It is only the sparseness of the sound, the utter simplicity of the style, that sometimes causes people to dismiss it lightly. As Michael Thomas put it in *Rolling Stone*, it is “the throb of the Island, the dead-simple beat that's so easy nobody else can play it, only illiterate Jamaicans.”

Reggae music is not simple to classify exactly; it is an organic admixture of rock, soul, and African tribal music. If you know what calypso sounds like you have an inkling—reggae is to Jamaica as calypso is to Trinidad—but reggae's roots are as firmly fixed in the sounds of Fats Domino, Smiley Lewis, and Amos Milburn as they are in the native sounds of the West Indies. Paul McCartney, one of the many rock recording artists to be attracted to the studios in Kingston (others include Paul Simon, the Rolling Stones, Johnny Nash, and Cat Stevens) explains reggae as a mutation of the Fifties rock-and-roll that Jamaicans picked up on the radio. However it began, reggae has become the absolute pulse beat of Jamaica, and has begun to conquer other lands as well: reggae records sell quite respectably in England, and the U.S. finally seems to be on the verge of accepting it to some degree.

So far, reggae (or “ska” or “rock steady” or “bluebeat” as it is also called) has had too little exposure here, however, to catch on in a big way, although a few years ago there was a U.S. reggae hit (*Israelites*) by Desmond Dekker and the Aces that was popular despite its irregular beat and the fact that no one knew what on earth the song was about. Dekker is still a large figure in the booming Jamaican music scene, along with a host of other artists including Toots and the Maytals, Jimmy Cliff (star of the first large-scale Jamaican movie production, *The Harder They Come*), the Melodians, Big Youth, Joe Higgs, and my personal favorites, the Wailers. Bob Marley, acknowledged leader of the Wailers, has written one of the few reggae songs you possibly have heard (*Sir Ii Up*, a single by Johnny Nash, which was a moderately successful follow-up to his reggae-influenced hit *I Can See Clearly Now*), and he could emerge as the poet laureate of Jamaica—he has already been tagged as “the first genius of reggae” by England's *Melody Maker* magazine.

But there is a definite cultural gap facing Marley & Co. in their quest for general acceptance in the States. The Wailers are Rastafarians (briefly, as I understand it, Rastafarianism is a brotherhood based on the tenets of Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican evangelist of the Thirties, who preached that

all black men are lost tribesmen of Africa and the goal of all exiled black brothers should be to return to their Mount Zion and join their African ancestors), and they have their own way of doing things, right down to their own dialect. Would-be interviewers who have gone to see them in Boston, New York, and Los Angeles have found it difficult to understand any two consecutive words, and invariably walk away scratching their heads, wondering what they're going to make up for their interviews. Not so good for publicity.

Another example of the type of obstacle keeping American record buyers and the Wailers from getting together: just before their first U.S. tour, one member of the six-man group, Bunny Livingstone, decided he didn't want any part of it. It seems that the group was warned about some of the, er... strange sights that might await them in America, especially since they were booked to play at Max's Kansas City, New York's den of ambisexual iniquity. They were told not to be surprised if they saw some fine examples of young American manhood parading around in women's clothes and make-up. “Oh no,” Bunny said, “Bunny no go where man wear frock.” He stayed home in Jamaica.

But all language and cultural barriers melt away when you hear the Wailers wail. Although their records are a pale approximation of their concert performances, their new album, “Burnin’,” is a giant step forward, in terms of accessibility, from their only other U.S. release, “Catch a Fire.” There are two instant classics in the newer package. The first, *Get Up, Stand Up*, a rallying cry for the oppressed, is basically a 1970's civil-rights anthem. Part of the appeal of the song, and of reggae music in general, is that the social message it carries has a validity in the context of Jamaican society that it hasn't had here since the last protest songster went out and bought himself an electric guitar. The second gem, *Small Axe*, is a perfect example of Marley's mixing Biblical wisdom with stoned Rastafarian morality. Both songs have melodies that will stick like glue both to your tongue and to your psyche, as do most of the Wailers' compositions.

It is doubtful, given the subtlety of their music and the intensity of their message, that the Wailers will become an overnight sensation here, at least not right away. After all, reggae sings out the heart and soul of an island and its people; it is not merely an innocent form of entertainment between cocktail parties for them, and it is impossible to expect most Americans, who ignore their own ghettos so blatantly, to be attuned to the plight of artists living in ghettos elsewhere. But the Wailers—and reggae—will catch on eventually. Questions of sociology aside, reggae is just about the best musical medicine for rock culture shock on the market today.

THE WAILERS: *Burnin'*. The Wailers (vocals and instrumentals). *Get Up, Stand Up*; *Small Axe: I Shot the Sheriff*; *Rasta Man Chant*; *Hallelujah Time*; *Burnin' and Lootin'*; *Put It On: One Foundation*; *Duppy Conqueror*; *Pass It On*. ISLAND SMAS 9338 \$5.98, ⑧XW 9338 \$6.98.

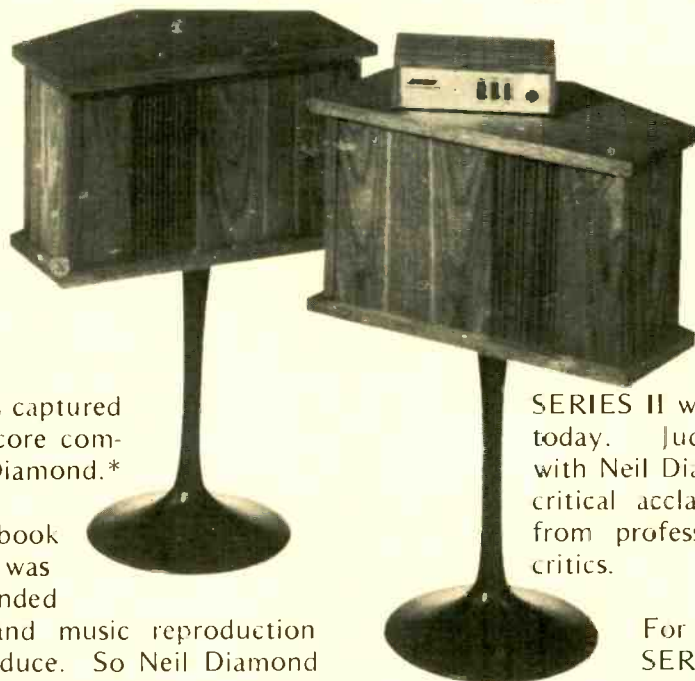


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JAZZ



DUKE ELLINGTON: Yale Concert. Duke Ellington and His Orchestra. *A Chromatic Love Affair; Drag; Up-Jump; Put-tin; Salome;* and four others. FANTASY 9433 \$4.98.

Performance: **Dukishly good**
Recording: **Excellent**

Here's another superb Ellington concert recording, this time from a January 1968 appearance at Yale University's Woolsey Hall. What makes this a particularly interesting set is the inclusion of material that has not previously appeared on records. There's even a spur-of-the-moment version of that old Yale favorite *Boola, Boola*.

There's not a bad track in the lot, and Duke's witty commentary helps keep things moving along: his introduction to the two-part *The Little Purple Flower* could stand by itself. There are fine solos by Paul Gonsalves, Cootie Williams, Johnny Hodges, Cat Anderson, and Russell Procope, who provides one of the highlights, playing clarinet in the New Orleans tradition on a *Mooche*-ish Ellington opus entitled *Swamp Goo*.

It is easy to see why the world loves Duke madly, but I would like to see some celebration of the men who form the backbone of his success. Will Dick Cavett ever play host to Harry Carney or the all-but-forgotten Sonny Greer? C.A.

DILL JONES: Davenport Blues. Dill Jones (piano). *In a Mist; Candlelights; Flashes; In the Dark; Davenport Blues; Big Boy; From Monday On; I'd Climb the Highest Mountain;* and four others. CHIAROSCURO CR 112 \$5.98.

Performance: **Disappointing**
Recording: **Very good**

Here is a project that is long overdue: a recording of the four extant notated Bix Beiderbecke piano compositions.

Bix was one of the two great horns of classic jazz, the other being Armstrong. Toward the end of his life, he found jazz insufficient for the new direction of his compositional talents and he turned more to the piano. He spent a lot of time with Bill Challis, who had written special arrangements featuring Bix with the Paul Whiteman band, and Challis notated the pieces for him—since Bix always had trouble reading and writing music. *In a Mist, Candlelights, Flashes,* and *In the Dark* are all related. There are references from each to the others, and all are probably part of a larger, ambitious, but undefined piece that the ambiguous Bix was trying to write. Had he lived longer (he died in 1931, at twenty-eight) he might have gained more confidence and made more progress.

Bix recorded *In a Mist* in 1928, and it was his only unaccompanied piano recording. Like its fellows, *In a Mist* was harmonically advanced for its time: it was not jazz per se,

but it contained jazz elements. It was romantic, with sentimental rather than melancholy passages, and—this is important, I think—Bix played it at the sprightly tempo that was his trademark.

Dill Jones' performances—the first time the four pieces have been recorded together—go in for interpretation rather than a literal rendering. His versions of the pieces are more introspective than they were *written* to be, though perhaps not more than they were intended to be. The result is that Jones slows the tempos to a crawl, or interrupts them (as in *In a Mist*) for "introspective" effect. It gets maddening after a while. Beiderbecke may have wanted to do various things with his piano music, and had he lived he *might* have done them, but I think it would have been better for this project to introduce the audience to what Beiderbecke *did* do and play the



MCCOY TYNER

His multifaceted talent shines throughout

pieces as written. There is enough music in them. They are charming prototypes with fine passages, and any speculation about had-Bix-lived should be left to—and not imposed on—the listener.

The other selections on the Jones album contain tunes associated with Bix, including his first, *Davenport Blues*. It isn't a blues, really, but it is a nice little thing. Bix cut it with a pickup band in 1923, and it received a fine and well-arranged treatment by Adrian Rollini's Orchestra in 1934 (Benny Goodman, Jack Teagarden, and Bunny Berigan were present). Jones' version, alas, starts out *à la* Gershwin and then blithers on in a pastiche of worn-out blues piano phrases; again, I think we would have been better off if the piece had been played more as written.

Less interpretation and more fidelity to the originals would have made this album better, but since it is the only one of its kind it's not dismissable. As an introduction to Bix's piano music for those who've never heard it, it serves its purpose. The project is a laudable one, but an indication of why this particular effort went astray is to be found in the liner notes, which refer to "the creative music [Bix] played on the trumpet." Sigh. Bix, for specific and well-known reasons, played the cornet. Small wonder they didn't listen to how he played piano. J.V.

MARIAN AND JIMMY McPARTLAND: Monticello. Jimmy McPartland (cornet); Marian McPartland (piano); others. *I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter; Avalon; Basin Street Blues;* and four others. HALCYON \$4.98 (available from Halcyon Records, Box 4255, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10017).

Performance: **Pros meet locals**
Recording: **Very good**

When Marian and Jimmy McPartland were married in 1945, many regarded them as an odd couple: a Chicago veteran who used to hang around with the likes of Bix Beiderbecke, and an English post-War bopper with a pop music background. The McPartlands, however, turned out to be quite compatible musically, for Marian, though generally pursuing a more modern path, is completely capable of romping stylistically into the past. She does so in this set, recorded in November 1972 at a Rochester, New York, concert that united the McPartlands (they divorced in 1968) and teamed them up with local talent.

The repertoire ranges from such standards of Jimmy's era as *Royal Garden Blues* and *Wolverine Blues*, played Dixieland style, to *Willow Weep for Me* and Ellington's *Things Ain't What They Used to Be*, played in more up-to-date fashion by Marian and a trio. The affair, held in something called the Monticello Room, was a happy one. The band plays well, there are good solos by clarinetist Jack Mahieu, and flugelhorn player Sal Sparazza does a noteworthy job on *Wolverine Blues*. Ms. McPartland chomps through the Dixieland stuff with the ease of a veteran, and Jimmy is as good as ever. These local bashes often turn out to be you-had-to-be-there events, but this is one that holds up nicely on disc. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

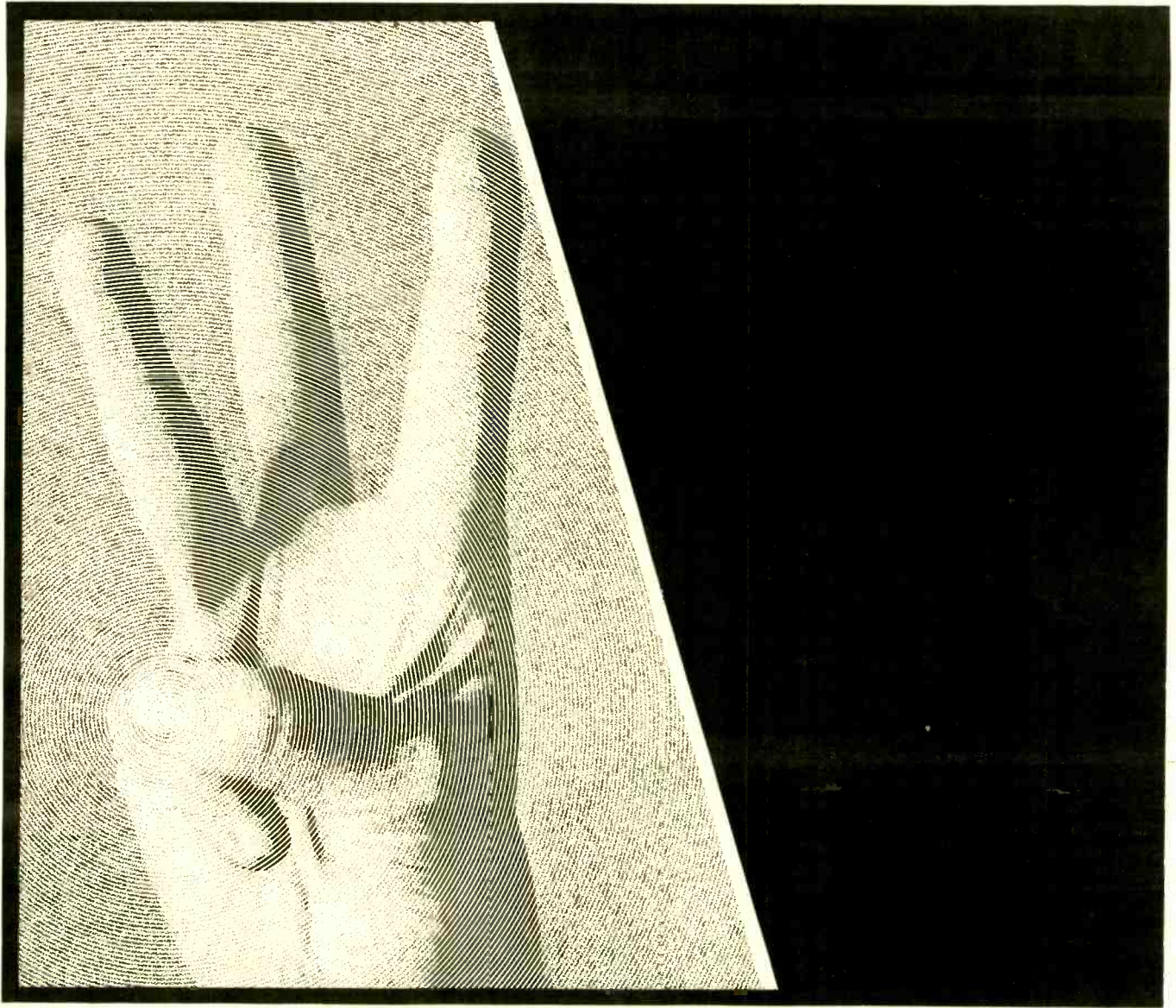
MCCOY TYNER: Song of the New World. McCoy Tyner (piano, arr.); various orchestras, William Fischer cond. *Afro Blue; Song of the New World; The Divine Love;* and two others. MILESTONE MSP 9049 \$5.98, © 8-9049 \$6.95, © 9049M \$6.95.

Performance: **The real McCoy**
Recording: **Excellent**

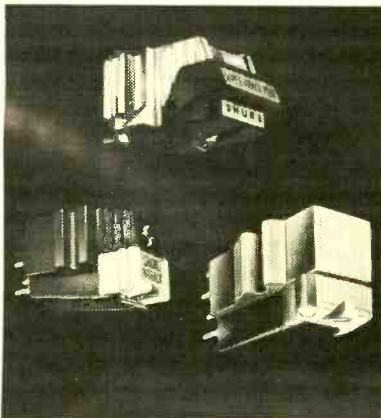
This is quite a change from McCoy Tyner's last album on Blue Note: in fact, it represents a whole new sound for the former John Coltrane pianist. The result of two sessions featuring large orchestras made up of flutes with brass and strings, respectively, the album places Tyner's impressionistic piano playing in an enhancing frame and gives us a good demonstration of his arranging talent.

The scores throughout are reminiscent of some of Cal Tjader's work, particularly the "Several Shades of Jade" album, but the similarity ends when Tyner takes over. Forceful and intensely rhythmic piano ripples cascade potently against choirs of brass and flutes, and play a rhythmic game of tag with Alphonze Mouzon's drums and Sonny Morgan's conga on Mongo Santamaria's *Afro Blue*—but the excitement does not end there. The remaining four tracks show that Tyner is not to be overlooked as a composer. Virgil Jones has a good trumpet solo on *Little Brother* and Sonny Fortune's flute gets a spot on *Some Day*, but it is Tyner who truly shines throughout. There seems to be no end to his development. C.A.

(Continued on page 102)



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FOLK



MOTHER MAYBELLE CARTER. Maybelle Carter (autoharp, guitar); Chuck Cochran (piano); Jim Colvard (guitar); Bob Moore (bass); Bobby Thompson (banjo); Charlie McCoy (harmonica); other musicians. *Good Old Mountain Dew; Still; Arkansas Traveler; Black Mountain Rag; Waterloo; Wabash Cannonball; Rocky Top; Release Me;* and eleven others. COLUMBIA KG 32426 two discs \$6.98. © GA 32436 \$7.98.

Performance: **Uneven**
Recording: **Adequate**

Country instrumentals can become wearing on the listener; despite a foundation in instrumental music, country has evolved—and its melodies show it—as storytelling music, with the vocal its most important element. A two-record set of country instrumentals is a bit much, no matter who the players are, and that's strike one against this album.

The autoharp is a quirky and charming backup instrument, an okay solo instrument on certain songs like *The Bells of St. Mary*, but it is not versatile enough, in the hands of any player I know, to be a solid lead instrument for song after song. That's strike two.

And now comes the high, hard one: Producer Larry Butler has either despaired of ever getting some of these tracks down right, or has concluded that sloppiness is charming—or both. *Wildwood Flower*, one of the few tunes for which Maybelle picks up the guitar, on which she developed the thumb-picking style still heard wherever folksingers congregate, is a disaster of bad timing, missed notes, and general shakiness—steel guitarist Pete Drake sounds absolutely lost in his break, and even the reliable Charlie McCoy sounds pretty worried. Several of the autoharp-led numbers are plagued by similar, though less blatant, unreliability. The half-dozen or so cuts—headed by *Still* and, of all things, *Never on Sunday*—in which the band is tight do not quite make this a bargain. Maybelle is a legendary figure, of course, and there is some value, I suppose, in the “dialogue” tracks that catch her joking with the musicians. There is some particularly fine work, too, by guitarist Jimmy Colvard and piano player Chuck Cochran. That said, it *still* doesn't look like a bargain. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LEADBELLY: *Leadbelly.* Huddie Ledbetter (vocals and twelve-string guitar). Recorded in concert at the University of Texas, June 15, 1949. *Goodnight, Irene; Ho-Day; Ain't Goin' Down to the Well No More; Rock Island Line; Old Hannah; Shine on Me; What Can I Do to Change Your Mind; Skip to My Lou; Mary and Martha; Scrambled Egg Song; Whoa Buck; John Henry; Backwater Blues; Ella Louise; I Don't Want No More of Army Life; Relax Your Mind; Old Ship of Zion; I*

Will Be So Glad When I Get Home. PLAYBOY PB 119 \$4.98.

Performance: **Historic find**
Recording: **Excellent restoration**

I first met Huddie Ledbetter at a radio station where I was turning out “continuities” for folk music back in 1940—just six years after his release from a Louisiana prison and nine years before his death in 1949. There was never anybody quite like him. I never understood much of what he had to say but I was always fascinated to hear him saying it. Those who claimed to understand his mumbly way of mouthing an anecdote explained that he was usually telling stories about growing up in Louisiana in the 1880's, learning how to play the concertina given to him by his Uncle Terrell, or how he got his nickname.

It was in Texas that he saw a man at a carnival one night playing a twelve-string guitar, and decided to buy one for himself; folk music was certainly the richer for that decision. He got started as an entertainer when he met Blind Lemon Jefferson, a street singer, and they joined up to play the guitar and sing the blues in the red-light district of Dallas. Much later, during a bout in jail, he met John A. Lomax, the folk-song collector for the Library of Congress, and it was then he started to become an institution—he certainly was one by the time I met him.

Leadbelly, as I said, was hard to understand when he talked, but when he sang it was something else again. I had never heard *Goodnight, Irene* or *The Midnight Special* or *Pick a Bale of Cotton* until I heard Leadbelly sing them, and I never expect to hear them sung better. There are a number of his records still available (notably “The Midnight Special,” LPV-505 in the RCA Vintage series), but this prize from Playboy is in a class by itself. They have managed to unearth a wire recording of a concert he gave at the University of Texas in Austin on June 15, 1949, just six months before he died. Moreover, their engineers have done a beautiful job of dubbing from the wire: the sound is remarkably clear. You can almost (though never quite altogether) understand Leadbelly as he talks in and around every song. The repertoire is a generous one, ranging from “hollers” he learned in childhood to the *Scrambled Egg Song* he wrote in Paris after he found out how to order scrambled eggs for breakfast (the never found out how to order anything else, so that was all he ever got to start his day in that town). There are blues and work songs like *Whoa Buck* (preceded by a hilarious tale about an ox-driver), spirituals like *Old Ship of Zion*, and even Irving Berlin's *I Don't Want No More of Army Life*. For the children in the audience he leads a rousing run-through of *Skip to My Lou*. He also sings his favorite railroad work song, *Rock Island Line*, and of course he sings *Goodnight, Irene*—but as it sounded before it was sentimentalized by the Weavers (Irene actually is a girl who won't come across, and the key line isn't “I'll see you” but “I'll get you in my dreams”). During Baptist hymns like *Shine on Me* he persuades the audience to join in, telling them over and over how “wonderful” they are (he was always an expert showman), and there is something eerily prophetic about his final encore, *I Will Be So Glad When I Get Home*. Wherever “home” turned out to be, I have the feeling there must be a crowd of adoring souls around, not understanding a word he's telling them, but loving every minute of it. P.K.

SPOKEN WORD



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CARL REINER AND MEL BROOKS: *2000 and Thirteen.* Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks (comedians). *Will to Live; Slow Growth; Natural Foods; Phil; Asparagus; Origin of Words; Great Inventions; Strawberries; Miracle Fruits; The Greatest Invention; Ancient Poetry; The Fig Leaf; Paul Revere;* and eleven others. WARNER BROS. BS 2741 \$5.98.

Performance: **A welcome comeback**
Recording: **Very good**

The “medically certified” bimillennarian who makes his long-awaited return engagement in this funny album first found his way to the nation's turntables in 1961, when straight-man Reiner and funny-man Brooks (still speaking with traces of the Yiddish accent he acquired at the dawn of time) cut “2000 Years with Reiner and Brooks” for Capitol. They were back a year later with a sequel which suffered the falling-off in comic quality typical of sequels. The old man made a brief reappearance in 1963 in “Reiner and Brooks at the Cannes Film Festival,” after which I assumed he had padded off to permanent occupancy of some ultra-old-age home. But he has turned up now at Warner Brothers, where the results of his reappearance, for collectors of comedy records, mean an indispensable acquisition.

Thirteen years older and not a whit wiser, the old man reports to interviewer Reiner on the results of his bicentennial checkup in Los Angeles by a geriatric specialist. The doctor has forbidden him to eat practically anything, with the result that he is living these days on “cool mountain water ten degrees below room temperature and a stuffed cabbage,” not because cabbages are less dangerous than cholesterol-rich eggs or iodine-deadly fish or gas-producing fruit and vegetables, but because “I gotta eat something.”

Although he has been around for so long and is more of a vulgarian than ever (don't look for subtleties with two-thousand-and-thirteen-year-old men), our hero has not stagnated mentally, and in the past decade he has even changed some of his most fundamental ideas. His admiration for Saranwrap, for example, which he formerly considered the greatest achievement of human ingenuity, has given way to a worship of the qualities of liquid Prell. Deodorant sprays draw his scorn: “There's a spray for everything and everybody smells like a strawberry.” Only one factor in his long existence seems to remain constant: of his 42,000 children—two thousand of them doctors—not one comes to visit him. They don't know what they're missing. P.K.



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CHOOSING SIDES

By IRVING KOLODIN



Sir Thomas Beecham would have called a "strong" pianist, one whose intentions are decisive and unambiguous. In the present instance, the magnetism and the strength are less suitable to the *Fantasiestücke* than they are to the *Davidshündlertänze* with which they are coupled. In either case, let us hope that someone up there on Columbia's executive floor really likes Perahia, for his is a talent to be nurtured as well as sponsored. No such prayerful hope need be invoked on behalf of Maurizio Pollini, whose blossoming Deutsche Grammophon career now has a proclamative *Fantasia*, Op. 17, and a boisterously energetic F-sharp Minor Sonata to its credit.

Of larger dimensions and wider implications is an issue of four discs from Telefunken (SKA 25 082/1-4) impressively labeled "Schumann. Das Klavierwerke I," performed by Karl Engel. These discs overlap Perahia's to the extent of including the *Davidshündlertänze*, but they go on to such uncommon matter as the *Intermezzo*, Op. 4 (a rare instance of "dull" Schumann, if the contradiction can be tolerated), the "Abegg" Variations (Op. 1), and the B-Minor Allegro (Op. 8), as well as the more expectable *Carnaval* and *Etudes Symphoniques* (the latter provided with the five posthumously published variations the composer deleted from the original sequence). Engel—with whom I have no prior familiarity—has plenty of strength to dispose, but less magnetism than either Perahia or Pollini. In Schumannesque terms, the answer to the question "What's in a name?" could be "A *Papillon* by any other name would still be a *Novellette*." For Engel, all too often, a *Papillon* or a *Novellette* is but a primrose by the river's brim—the final touch of fantasy that causes the petal to flutter and the leaf to glow is all too seldom at his command. In all, this release does not argue overpoweringly for Engel as the man to fulfill the promise of a complete Schumann cycle, as the designation "Das Klavierwerke I" implies.

THE informed reader might well ask, with proper skepticism, "Who is such a man?" My nomination for the man to do the job, and to take on our fourth, hitherto unspecified category—the Schumann *Nobody Knows*—is Jörg Demus. This is not a choice based on a hunch, a random impression, or even a personal predilection, but on the best of all reasons: a palpable demonstration (on nineteen discs, available through the Musical Heritage Society) of Demus' fitness as interpreter for the whole canon of solo-piano Schumann.

In the first three categories, Demus' *Carnaval* does not make us forget Rachmaninoff's, nor does his *Kreisleriana* put Cortot's to shame, or his *Etudes Symphoniques* surpass Ashkenazy's. I will, however, say that in each there are insights and outputs that identify Demus as a man with the truly Schumannesque spirit—which is to say one with a mind for the picturesque and the picaresque (as well as the *Humoreske* and the *Arabeske*) which make Schumann the most poetic of composers. In the big, broad body of work for which phonographic credit is now exclusively the property of Demus, the consequences leave little desire for a contrary point of view.

Included are not only the Eight Polonaises for four hands (played with Norman Shetler) which, though published as Op. 3, are actually the first known compositions of Schumann, but also some of the very last works of his of which we have knowledge—the *Albumblätter* (Op. 124) and the Morning Songs (Op. 133).

SCHUMANN AND THE SCHUMANNESQUE

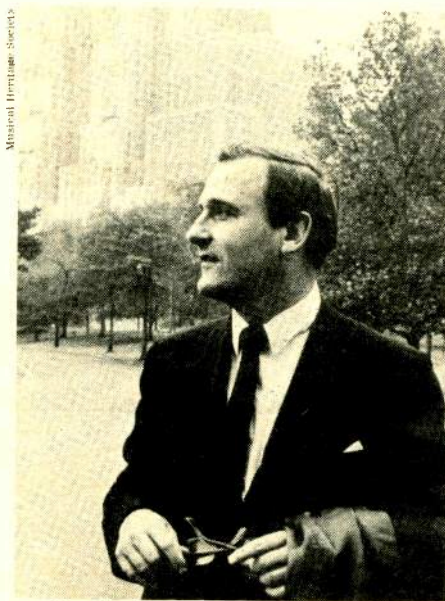
TO paraphrase an aphorism of the late W. C. Fields, "A man who plays Schumann well cannot be all bad." As there is scarcely any limit to the amount of performable Schumann, the proposition is, happily, an (almost) all-embracing one. It can take in a pianist whose only redeeming social value is the ability to play well the forty-two measures of *Warum?* as well as one who has mastered the fifty-four pages of the two editions of the *Davidshündlertänze*. There is a vast range there, so vast that rather than being divisible into the mere three parts that sufficed Caesar for carving up all Gaul, Schumann's piano music must be divided into *four* territories or domains.

There is, in the first instance, the Schumann Everybody Knows, those works that provide a common meeting ground for the nations as well as the sexes. I would cite as examples *Carnaval* (Sergei Rachmaninoff and Guiomar Novaes) or the *Etudes Symphoniques* (Percy Grainger and Claudio Arrau), the *Fantasia*, Opus 17 (Walter Gieseking and Edwin Fischer), *Papillons* (Eileen Joyce and Wilhelm Kempff), and even the *Toccata* (a challenge for the forty fleet fingers of Simon Barere, Vladimir Horowitz, Sviatoslav Richter, and Josef Lhevinne).

Then there is the Schumann Somebody Knows, a delectable range of works that have profited from the specialized attention of particular pianists over the years, people who have invested a lifetime's effort to producing the one, the insuperable rendition. I think of *Kreisleriana*, which Arrau recorded on five Columbia 78-rpm discs in the Forties and has recently re-recorded for Philips (6500 394); the *Kinderszenen*, which Benno Moiseiwitsch played as boy, man, and *petit maître*; of the *Waldscenen*, a particular passion of Clara Haskil; and of the *Arabeske*, for which Artur Schnabel was famous when he was famous for little else (his latest version is not only on LP but on eight-track cartridge and cassette as well).

Inevitably, there must be the Schumann Hardly Anybody Knows, those works of which even the merely adequate performances are so infrequent that their names are a command to the attention whenever they appear on the program of a reputable pianist. Heading the list would be the *Bunte Blätter*, whose sole listing in the current catalog is by Robert Silverman (on Orion 7146) and which

was once issued (in part) with credit to a performer provocatively identified as Anon. (on the General label in 78-rpm days); followed by the *Nachtstücke*, whose charms Arrau and Gilels presently propagate; and the *Novelletten*, of which Beveridge (Unabridged) Webster is the contemporary sponsor of the only complete version in general circulation.



JÖRG DEMUS: the man for Schumann

A recent freshet of releases has provided something of interest in all these categories. One of the most regenerating is the drenching shower of pianism lavished by Arrau on the *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, and the *Waldscenen* (Philips 6500 423); the release is the seventh in his current series of Schumann recordings for Philips. Tonally and technically, the results match any going (or gone) standard, and temperamentally Arrau renders unto Schumann's miniatures a miniaturization of the grand passion appropriate to the larger works. Youthful Murray Perahia, who won the Leeds (England) International Piano Competition in 1972, also shares with us, on Columbia 32299, the unique privileges of the *Fantasiestücke*. He is a singularly magnetic pianistic personality—meaning that what he does holds the attention—as well as what the late

Here the Schumann "quality," to borrow a painting term, is deeper in tint, the brushwork less sparkling. But the turn of phrase and the originality of attitude still surge to the surface in these works, even after such values have receded beyond the reach of Schumann's faltering mind in most other contexts.

Demus also shows his affinity with the greatest Schumann, those works in which planning leaves off and sheer impulse takes over. I think, for example, of the second of the *Nachtstücke* (in F Major), where it is Schumann's pleasure to ponder the possibilities of one two-measure, descending-ascending figure no fewer than forty times in a structure of approximately one hundred and twenty measures (there is an occasional contrasting idea). No two statements are quite the same, but Demus illuminates each deviation with a refinement of taste that supports my view that although Schumann may not have *invented* the inner voice, he did more to give it an individual identity than almost anyone else.

This affinity, demonstrated so briefly in the F Major *Nachtstück*, works to swing wide the portals of perception on such superior, little-known works as those involving the pianization of Paganini (Op. 3 and Op. 10), compositions that sparked an impulse that subsequently communicated itself to Liszt, Brahms, Rachmaninoff, Casella, Dallapiccola, and others; the *Album für die Jugend* (not to be confused with the *Kinderszenen*): sundry Fughettas (Op. 126); and the far-out, all but totally unexplored Sonatas for the Young (Op. 118), which Schumann wrote—one each—for his three children. Here is an incomparable *multum in parvo* in which Schumann at forty-three (1853) reduced to the essentials of technical simplicity the wisdom and sophistication of his musical mastery. After experiencing what Demus makes of them, it is my opinion that every virtuoso should be required to demonstrate a like command of content before being allowed to confuse the issue of artistry with the mere capacity to execute complex passagework in works of greater note.

For those to whom he is an amorphous entity on the musical scene, Jörg Demus may be identified as one of a trinity of pianistic talents that emerged from post-World War II Vienna. The others, faster off the mark but less endowed with staying power, were Friedrich Gulda and Paul Badura-Skoda. Schumann-by-Demus may be found in the earliest annals of Westminster (early Fifties), and the pianist has furthered his involvement with the Schumann style in the intervening years through various ensemble undertakings—including collaborations, as accompanist, with the peerless Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau.

It is a tempting invitation to participate in all four categories of Schumann that the Musical Heritage Society offers: each three-disc volume—superbly reproduced, incidentally—is available at a mail-order price of \$10.50 (plus 75¢ handling charge, from MHS at 1991 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10023). I recommend particularly Volume I, titled "Schumann and the World of Childhood" (with the three Sonatas for the Young), and Volume V, "Fantasies and Fantasy Pieces" (with the *Nachtstücke*, Op. 23, *Romances*, Op. 28, and the *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 111). Should you go for the lot, you may not have to buy another Schumann piano record as long as you live—an extraordinary statement, but an entirely defensible one.

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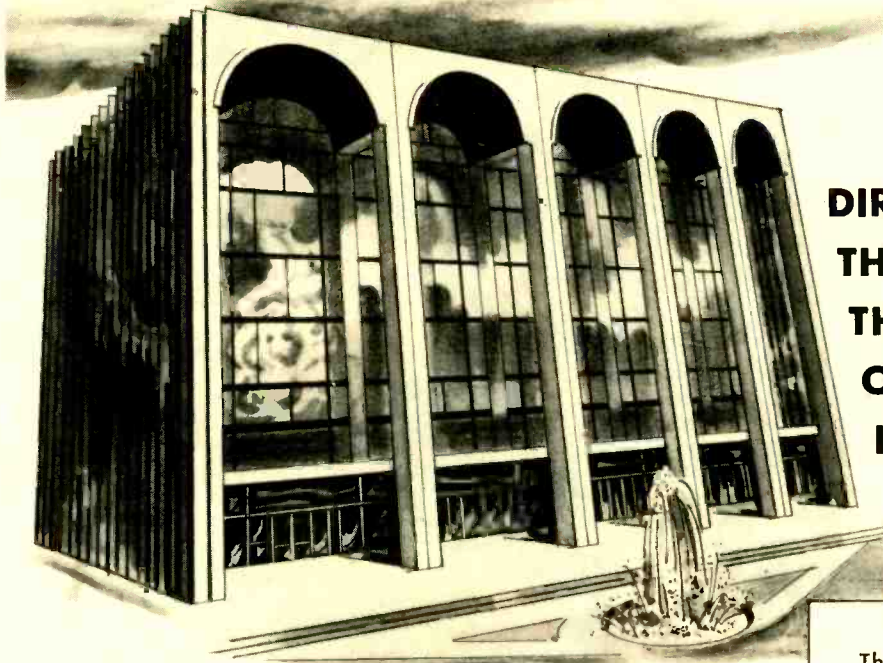


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| Dec. 22 | RIGOLETTO (Verdi) | | 2:00 |
| Dec. 29 | MANON LESCAUT (Puccini) | | 2:00 |
| 1974 | | | |
| Jan. 5 | SALOME (R. Strauss) | | 2:00 |
| Jan. 12 | CARMEN (Bizet) | | 1:30 |
| Jan. 19 | SIMON BOCCANEGRA (Verdi) | | 2:00 |
| Jan. 26 | TRISTAN UND ISOLDE (Wagner) | | 1:00 |
| Feb. 2 | LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN (Offenbach) | | 2:00 |
| Feb. 9 | OTELLO (Verdi) | | 2:00 |
| Feb. 16 | LA BOHEME (Puccini) | | 2:00 |
| Feb. 23 | DER ROSENKAVALIER (R. Strauss) | | 1:30 |
| Mar. 2 | IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA (Rossini) | | 2:00 |
| Mar. 9 | I VESPRI SICILIANI (Verdi) | | 2:00 |
| Mar. 16 | LES TROYENS (Berlioz) | | 1:00 |
| Mar. 23 | DIE GOETTERDAEMMERUNG (Wagner) | | 12:30 |
| Mar. 30 | MADAMA BUTTERFLY (Puccini) | | 2:00 |
| Apr. 6 | L'ELISIR D'AMORE (Donizetti) | | 1:30 |
| Apr. 13 | DON GIOVANNI (Mozart) | | 2:00 |
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CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • IGOR KIPNIS
PAUL KRESH • ERIC SALZMAN

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ALBRECHTSBERGER: *Organ Concerto in B-flat Major*. F. J. HAYDN: *Three Organ Concertos in C Major (Hob. XVIII, Nos. 1, 5, and 8)*. M. HAYDN: *Concerto in C Major for Organ, Viola, and Strings*. Daniel Chorzempa (organs of the Bergkirche, the Franziskanerkirche, and the Stiftskirche der Barmherzigen Brüder, Eisenstadt); Bruno Giuranna (viola, in M. Haydn): German Bach Soloists. Helmut Winschermann cond. PHILIPS 6700 052 two discs \$6.98.

Performance: **Very enjoyable**
Recording: **Excellent**

All five of these concertos date from the late 1750's or early 1760's, and they exhibit the tuneful and *galant* characteristics of the music of that post-Baroque era. Haydn's three extant concertos are not, perhaps, his most distinguished contributions to the art of the concerto, but they are pleasant and engaging. The same may be said of the concerto by Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736-1809), another Austrian who was a friend of Haydn, who eventually rose to the position of organist at Vienna's famous St. Stephen's Cathedral, and who is perhaps best known today as one of Beethoven's counterpoint teachers. Joseph Haydn's younger brother, Michael, is represented by the most unusual concerto in the album, a work featuring not only the organ as solo instrument but also the viola, both with a more virtuosic display than in the other works.

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
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- Ⓛ = quadrasonic disc
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Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

All three composers had greater or lesser associations with Eisenstadt and the Esterházy. Joseph Haydn, of course, was the resident composer, Michael Hadyn wrote various works for Prince Esterházy, and the manu-



MICHAEL HAYDN
Engraving by J. F. Schröter

script of the Albrechtsberger concerto at one time belonged to the Esterházy library. It is thus entirely appropriate that the organs used for these recordings should be connected with Eisenstadt, and this historical association is the album's most interesting feature. Three of the four extant eighteenth-century organs at Eisenstadt are played here, and these concertos display not only the transparency and delicacy of these instruments but the acoustical environment of their locales as well. (The fourth organ, at the Stadtpfarrkirche, may be heard in E. Power Biggs' recording of the same three Joseph Haydn concertos on Columbia MS 6682).

There can be nothing but the highest praise for the performances of the twenty-nine-year-old Daniel Chorzempa and that first-rate en-

semble, the German Bach Soloists, under the direction of Helmut Winschermann. Tempos are sprightly, rhythms are bouncy, and the precision of the instrumentalists (especially considering the acoustical difficulties of recording in some of these over-resonant churches) is entirely admirable. The reproduction is splendid. I.K.

C.P.E. BACH: *Flute Concerto in D Minor (Wq. 22)*. CIMAROSA: *Concerto in G Major for Two Flutes and Orchestra*. Aurèle Nicolet (flute); Christiane Nicolet (flute, in Cimarosa): Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, Karl Münchinger cond. LONDON CS 6739 \$5.98.

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

Unlike the celebrated Oboe Concerto Arthur Benjamin fashioned from Domenico Cimarosa's keyboard works, this delicious confection for two flutes (with oboes, horns, and bassoon in the orchestra as well as strings) is *all* Cimarosa. Twenty years ago Angel released a recording of this work, played by Arrigo Tassinari and Pasquale Esposito with the Scarlatti Orchestra of Naples under Franco Caracciolo, which, for all its tubby sound, was magical. The new one hasn't quite that magic, but, with two such fine soloists and London's shimmering sound, it is a good deal more than merely attractive.

So is the splendid C.P.E. Bach Concerto, a really substantial work with a good deal of drama, but Hans-Martin Linde makes a stronger case for it in his performance with the Lucerne Festival Strings on Deutsche Grammophon Archive 198435 (coupled with a G Major Flute Concerto by the same composer); Linde is more aware of the style of this music and its particular demands, and after hearing his performance, one is more likely to notice how wide a vibrato Nicolet uses. But those for whom a single C.P.E. Bach flute concerto is ample will not be unhappy with this London disc—and, of course, there is that lovely Cimarosa. R.F.

BEETHOVEN (arr. Liszt): *Symphony No. 9, in D Minor, Op. 125 ("Choral")*. LISZT: *Festival Cantata for the Unveiling of the Beethoven Monument in Bonn (1845)*. Richard and John

Contiguglia (pianos). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY □ CSQ 2052 two discs \$11.96.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Spacious**

I am second to none in my admiration for the many fine contributions Connoisseur Society has made to the recorded repertoire—Ivan Moravec's outstanding Beethoven and Chopin performances, for example, or the dazzling Scriabin sonata series of Ruth Laredo, or the splendid recordings of classic Indian music by Ali Akbar Khan and traditional Andalusian music done by Manitas de Plata. But I am baffled by what seems to me Connoisseur Society's erratic lurches into repertoire byways that either take the company out of its depth with the big-time competition (as in their version of the oft-recorded Tchaikovsky Fourth Symphony) or that delve into the realm of sheer oddity—odd even to the musical interests of those in search of the unusual.

The album under consideration here I put in the oddity category. I can't see for the life of me who, outside of musicologists and piano pedagogues, would want to own a recording of the Beethoven Ninth Symphony in two-piano transcription. Of course, in the days before radio and sound recording, the piano reduction—whether for two, four, or eight hands—was invaluable in bringing at least the bare bones of the major orchestral repertoire into every home possessed of a piano. Even today, there is some salutary educational experience to be gained from actually *playing* a major standard repertoire work in a first-rate piano version. However, the idea of *recording* the Liszt transcriptions of Beethoven symphonies seems to me an exercise in irrelevancy, if not futility.

I must say, though, that for the first three and one-third movements, Liszt's Beethoven Ninth comes off remarkably well. But with the onset of the vocal sections, it becomes a bit embarrassing, even as Liszt himself feared when he was working on the transcription for the publishers Breitkopf & Härtel. It is significant that Liszt wrote out the vocal parts on separate staves above the piano parts in the score he eventually submitted for publication.

The *Festival Cantata* was Liszt's earliest large-scale work with orchestra. Frankly, I'm sorry that Connoisseur Society couldn't see its way clear to recording the work in its original vocal-orchestral form, regardless of any textual banalities. With or without orchestra, the cantata strikes me as a pretty loose-knit, rambling affair, with more rhetoric than substance, up to the fine transcription of most of the Beethoven *Archduke* Trio slow movement, which serves as centerpiece for the whole.

The brothers Contiguglia acquit themselves with distinction throughout this very curious recording enterprise. The recording locale is spacious without sounding unduly cavernous, and the recording as heard in two-channel stereo conveys effectively the dialogue elements in the Beethoven Ninth transcription. Heard in quadrasonic format, the sonic ambiance is enlarged noticeably, but the dialogue effects of the two keyboards tend accordingly to become diluted. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BERLIOZ: *La Damnation de Faust*. Nicolai Gedda (tenor), Faust; Jules Bastin (bass), Méphistophélès; Josephine Veasey (mezzo-soprano), Marguerite; Richard Van Allan

(bass), Brander; Gillian Knight (mezzo-soprano), Celestial Voice. London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Ambrosian Singers, Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 6703 042 three discs \$20.94.

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

With the completion of *La Damnation de Faust*, this unique and forever fascinating "dramatic legend," another imposing pillar has been added to the edifice Philips is constructing under the heading of "The Colin Davis Berlioz Cycle." By now the conductor's credentials as the leading Berlioz interpreter of our time are well established, and here again he is the principal strength in the enterprise, bringing to the music an authority based on painstaking study and an obvious sympathy. His reading reveals the dazzling colors of the orchestration and revels in those quicksilver flashes of thematic hints, those



JOSEPHINE VEASEY
A sensitive, musicianly Marguerite

interjections and slashing strokes that are part of Berlioz's unique orchestral language. For my own taste, Davis perhaps understates the sensuousness of the music, but there is no lack of lyricism in his support of Marguerite's two arias, and the episode of the Will o' the Wisp is a miracle of precision.

The quality of the singing is never less than good, but it does not match the exceptional level of the musical leadership. This is Nicolai Gedda's third recorded Faust (counting Angel S-35941, a fine single disc of highlights recorded with André Cluytens in 1961), and it is once more an effective and resourceful triumph over a demanding and even treacherously written part. There is perhaps a little more strain in the tenor's tones now than there was in years past, but there is still no one around to do the role better. Josephine Veasey is a sensitive and musicianly singer whose achievement leaves little room for criticism, save for pointing out that it lacks the tonal *lustre* of such previous recorded Marguerites as Janet Baker and Rita Gorr.

The debonair Méphistophélès of Jules Bastin is reminiscent of past models of the Gallic school (Singher, Souzay, Bacquier): there is not much in the way of tonal solidity, but an abundance of style and pointed expression make up for it. Furthermore, Bastin's com-

mand of legato enables him to sustain "*Voici des roses*" well, if not spectacularly, and Richard Van Allan does Brander's little song effectively.

With good choral work well balanced with the orchestra, and very fine engineering that allows the shimmering musical textures to emerge with clarity, this new recording now becomes the preferred version of *La Damnation de Faust*: it is distinctly superior to the Angel set under Prêtre, the Deutsche Grammophon version (Markevitch) is abridged, and RCA 6114 (Munch) is in mono. The latter two are remarkably well conducted, but they offer no singing superior to that available in this new, sumptuously packaged Philips album.

A note of caution: you may be slightly taken aback by the unusually slow pace Davis has chosen for the famous *Rakoczy March* episode early on. It may take a little getting used to, but stay with it: it is completely justified by the unflagging orchestral splendors that follow through to the end. *G.J.*

BIZET: *Jeux d'Enfants* (see GERSHWIN)

BOYCE: *Symphonies (complete)*. No. 1, in B-flat Major; No. 2, in A Major; No. 3, in C Major; No. 4, in F Major; No. 5, in D Major; No. 6, in F Major; No. 7, in B-flat Major; No. 8, in D Minor. Menuhin Festival Orchestra, Yehudi Menuhin cond. ANGEL S-36951 \$5.98.

Performance: **Mellow**
Recording: **Good**

These wonderful little symphonies are in themselves so ingratiating that virtually any thoughtful performance is irresistible, whether the emphasis be on intimacy, charm, or sheer vigor. Menuhin gives joyous, stimulating performances—in which, however, I feel the "thoughtfulness" gets in the way of the feeling of robust spontaneity one really wants most of all in this music. Antonio Janigro, who conducts his Zagreb Soloists in the Boyce cycle on Bach Guild HM-23SD, and (I believe) Jörg Faerber, in his Turnabout recording with the Württemberg Chamber Orchestra (TV 34133), use Max Goberman's edition of the symphonies, based on the original publication of 1760; Menuhin uses one prepared for him from the same source—and incorporating "additional dynamic markings and ornamentation . . . from a contemporary manuscript copy"—by Neville Boyling, who has also edited several of the Handel works Menuhin has recorded (and who has served as engineer for most of his recent recordings as conductor, including this one). The instrumentation is the same as in Goberman's version, but what is heard—whether accounted for by the arranger or by the conductor—is conspicuously different at many points. The differences may be intriguing to some, but the Angel version strikes me as a little fussy, and while I do want to *hear* the harpsichord and bassoon continuo, I don't care much for their often being given near-solo prominence.

I like the spontaneity of the phrasing and the uncomplicated robustness of Faerber's performances, and particularly the smooth balance of the strings and horns in his handling of Nos. 2 and 4. Only in one movement among the twenty-three does he really disappoint: his timpani are barely audible in the jubilant opening of No. 5, the only one of the eight symphonies which calls for trumpets and

(Continued on page 111)

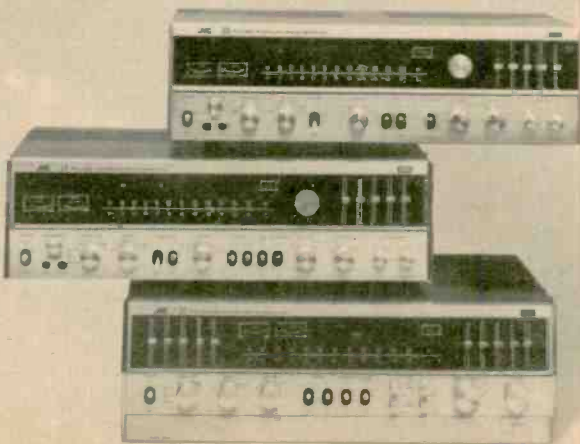


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ALBÉNIZ'S **IBERIA**

Alicia de Larrocha's performance is virtuoso in both technique and feeling

Reviewed by William Anderson



CAMI

IN his excellent book *The Music of Spain**, Gilbert Chase quotes Manuel de Falla, that most Spanish of Spanish composers, writing on the subject of a projected stage work: "My desire is to represent... through music that is intensely expressive and evocative... all that is greatest in the musical heritage of our race, be it in a *natural* or an *artistic* manner." It is a statement which, without too great a wrench out of context, can be read as an admirably concise and refreshingly unambiguous summation of the nationalist credo in music, one as applicable in Bohemia or Hungary as in Iberia. It is also, for Falla as well as for a number of other Spanish composers of his time, an apt description of a working method—the pragmatical exploitation of folk and popular-music sources as material for the creation of art music.

One particularly successful example of this method is Isaac Albéniz's piano suite *Iberia*, the four books and twelve individual pieces of which are brilliantly distilled and therefore stunningly evocative "impressions" (Albéniz's word) that take their titles from Spanish dances, places, and, in one case (*Fête-Dieu*), a religious festival. Pianist Alicia de Larrocha has just recorded for London a two-disc album that contains the whole of *Iberia* together with *Navarra*, a piece that—symmetry be damned—probably belongs in the suite as well, and the six *Cantos de España*, the Albéniz most of us already know, whether from the piano originals or from guitar transcriptions.

Though we know a little of the *music* of Albéniz, we know much less of Albéniz the man. As Paul Kresh pointed out in his December review of two other Albéniz albums, the composer-virtuoso's life story reads rather like a movie script. A child prodigy who was playing in public at the age of four, he was a Paris Conservatoire reject (too high-spirited) at six, a runaway (very likely from a father Albéniz himself characterized as being "a little mad") at eight, and a stowaway on a ship bound for Buenos Aires at twelve. He toured (bummed around?) South America, Cuba, and finally the United States, returning to Spain (at

fifteen) and a royal pension (from Alfonso XII) that enabled him to go to Brussels to complete his musical education (there being, doubtless, little else anyone could still instruct him in at that late date).

There is more, of course, and although the Albéniz biographies—"su vida inquieta y ardorosa"—have not yet, as far as I can discover, been translated into English, the extensive notes (both biographical and musical, and dating from the late Twenties) by the German musicologist Edgar Istel in London's generously illustrated album brochure have. The whole story is not a little reminiscent of the career of our own Louis Moreau Gottschalk—in fact, Albéniz arrived in San Francisco on his American "tour" only a few years after Gottschalk had precipitously embarked from that city for South America. It is fascinating, indeed, to let the mind run with the possibility that Albéniz was, in some strange way, following a warm trail left by Gottschalk. Albéniz was born in 1860; Gottschalk had left Spain in 1852 after a two-year sojourn as the darling of the court, so his music almost certainly would still have been on Spanish keyboards and in Spanish ears during the prodigy's childhood. Albéniz reached Cuba about 1873, and Gottschalk had returned to the U.S. in 1862 after spending a number of years in the Antilles. Is it just possible that Albéniz got the idea for an American tour in a Havana that was still echoing with the exemplary "national" music (*La Jota Aragonesa, Souvenirs d'Andalousie, El Sitio de Zaragoza*) of the older composer-virtuoso?

Albéniz, however, did not follow Gottschalk back to South America, though he did end up, in a rather involuted way, back on his trail: Liszt once claimed to have met Gottschalk, and Albéniz was to study with the Hungarian master, though details of just what that study involved are lacking. In any case, it was only after Albéniz's later contacts in Paris (where he wrote *Iberia*) with Fauré, Dukas, and d'Indy that his music began to take on a new seriousness and dedication to "the musical heritage of [his] race"—to say nothing of a technical difficulty that may not have daunted the sage of Weimar but that did

cause other pianists to pronounce *Iberia* unplayable. It may be that what Liszt inspired in him was the slow-ripening development of those abstractive gifts of which he was so renowned a master, the ability, well-demonstrated in his transcriptions of Paganini's violin music and Schumann's vocal music, to get down to essences, to translate into the idiom of struck strings musical ideas that were born on others that have to be stroked—by bow or by air, as the case may be. With Albéniz, it was not a matter of transcription but, as mentioned previously, of distillation. *Iberia*, except for *El Polo*, is fashioned not of specific, identifiable examples of Spanish folk or popular songs, but of their classically abstracted essence, a kind of "idea" of the originals that, like a perfume essence, is more pungent, more powerful than the musical flowers from which it came. (Album commentator Istel doesn't agree with most critics that *Iberia* occupies the more exalted plane in Albéniz's art, feeling that you can't write *real* Spanish music, "with folkwise amiability," on any but Spanish soil. But that is another, a sentimental or perhaps even political, kind of nationalism, one foreign, I think, to the *artistic* purposes of Albéniz and of Falla as well.) Albéniz's problem, beyond the attainment of tranquility for recollection and the maintenance of a necessary aesthetic distance, was in most cases that of translating from plucked strings to struck strings: that so many of his piano works have been arranged back into the guitar idiom and "returned to the folk" is testimony to his success.

ALICIA DE LARROCHA'S success in performing these pieces stands the guitar test as well: the instrument's unique throb is as omnipresent in her interpretations as the almost palpable sense of the Spanish air is in Albéniz's music. I have heard Sra. de Larrocha perform *Iberia* twice in the concert hall, both times experiencing, at the close, an extraordinary impulse to rise to my feet and shout ¡Olé! I obeyed the impulse, of course, as did the other members (all those admiring pianists!) of the audience, for Sra. de Larrocha's victory over these considerable technical and (particularly) rhythmic challenges finds its most apt parallel—the skill, the style, the risk, and the bravery—in the bull ring. She already has my *olé's*, so I am tempted to award her, in gratitude for these splendid recordings, Albéniz's ears. And I would, too, were I not so sure she has them already, and his fingers as well.

The recorded sound is excellent throughout—rich and resonant—though perhaps miked a shade too closely for my personal taste. No matter; there is no better, no more authentic, *Iberia* to be had anywhere.

ALBÉNIZ: *Iberia*. Book I: *Evocación; El Puerto; Fête-Dieu à Séville*. Book II: *Rondeña; Almería; Triana*. Book III: *El Albaicín; El Polo; Lavapiés*. Book IV: *Málaga; Jerez; Eritaña. Navarra. Cantos de España: Prélude; Orientale; Sous le Palmier; Córdoba; Seguidillas*. Alicia de Larrocha (piano). LONDON CSA-2235 \$11.96.

*Dover Publications Inc., New York, 383 pp., \$3.50.

drums; his tempo in that movement is a little headlong, too. Menuhin's timpani are much more in the picture, but his harpsichord is obtrusively rambunctious and his tempo is just a bit stiff. Janigro is outstanding in this particular work: not only is his basic tempo ideal, but he, alone among the three conductors, uses an organ instead of harpsichord for continuo in No. 5, a most effective touch. Of the three recordings, Menuhin's Angel offers the most opulent sound, marred only by what appears to be an imperfect tape-join in the allegro of No. 8.

Each of the three versions of the symphonies is really very satisfying in its own right, and each conductor is more persuasive than the others in certain of the individual pieces. Menuhin probably shows the greatest individuality but, as I have suggested, the least spontaneity. Also, it is worth noting that for the price of the Menuhin you could buy both the other versions. Pressed for a single recommendation, I would probably go with Faerber, but I would surely miss the grand effect both Menuhin and Janigro make in No. 5. R.F.

BRITTEN: *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* (see PROKOFIEV)

CHABRIER: *Trois Valses Romantiques* (see GERSHWIN)

CIMAROSA: *Concerto in G Major* (see C.P.E. BACH)

DVORÁK: *Slavonic Dances* (see MOZART)

GERSHWIN: *Rhapsody in Blue*. **MILHAUD:** *Scaramouche*. **CHABRIER:** *Trois Valses Romantiques*. **BIZET:** *Jeux d'Enfants*. Frances Veri and Michael Jamanis (pianos). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY □ CSQ2054 \$6.98.

Performance: **Bright bonbons**
Recording: **Excellent quadraphonic**

The husband-and-wife team of Frances Veri and Michael Jamanis have been getting themselves grants, winning competitions, and delighting concert-hall audiences ever since they met at the Juilliard School and decided to be duo-pianists together.

The long suit of the team is charm, and they seem to choose their programs accordingly. Nothing could be more charming than Darius Milhaud's popular *Scaramouche*, written as incidental music for a children's play in 1937. With its marionette-dance opening that recalls Golliwogg's *Cakewalk*, its flowing lyrical middle movement, and the Brazilian rhythms of its colorful, succinct finale, the nine-minute suite is hard to resist, and the pianists make the most of its pretty graces and winning harmonies. Here is music as light and insubstantial as a meringue, and they know just what to do with it. If the Milhaud piece is a meringue, Chabrier's *Trois Valses Romantiques* add up to a musical soufflé: again the touch is light, the colors clear, the shadings deftly drawn. Of the twelve pieces for children in Bizet's *Jeux d'Enfants*, the team has picked the five the composer himself chose to orchestrate. The little march, the lullaby, the spinning top of an impromptu, the duet for "little husband and little wife," and the dazzling galop are brought off with fleet Gallic sparkle.

When the team approaches Gershwin's original version for two pianos of his *Rhapsody in Blue*, however, it is of course no longer dealing with French *divertissements*. The Gershwin work, particularly when the lavish

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CALENDAR OF CLASSICAL COMPOSERS

BACK by popular demand and updated from its original (1966) printing, Music Editor James Goodfriend's Calendar of Classical Composers is a listing of the most important composers from the year 1400 to the present, grouped according to the stylistic periods—Renaissance, Baroque, Classic, Romantic, etc.—in which they worked. This 12 x 24-inch aid, guide, and complement to your music listening is printed in color on heavy, non-reflecting stock suitable, as they say, for framing. A key to the calendar, consisting of capsule accounts of the principal stylistic characteristics of each musical period, is included. The whole will be sent rolled in a mailing tube to prevent creases; we pay postage. All you do is send 25¢ to:
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orchestral colors are lacking, calls for a broader, bigger, less delicate approach. Symphonic jazz is nothing if you take away the jazz, refine to delicacy the strident vulgarity and syncopation that are the work's very fiber, and try to transplant the Broadway glitter to some sunlit vineyard of French impressionism. The Veri and Jamanis version, by the way, is billed as the "only recorded performance" of the four-hand score. It is the only LP performance, but there was an old Victor two-disc set of 78's by Fray and Bragiotti years ago. It captured the Gershwin idiom far better . . . but never mind. On the whole, this is a salutary recording debut and makes for a pleasant listening experience, especially with the sharply defined sound of the two instruments in counterpoint passages which the good SQ-matrix four-channel recording makes possible.

P.K.

HAYDN, J.: *Three Organ Concertos* (see ALBRECHTSBERGER)

HAYDN, M.: *Concerto in C Major for Organ, Viola, and Strings* (see ALBRECHTSBERGER)

IVES: *The Celestial Country*. Hazel Holt (soprano); Alfreda Hodgson (alto); John Elwes (tenor); John Noble (baritone); Schütz Choir of London; London Symphony Orchestra. Harold Farberman cond. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC. CRI SD 314 \$5.95.

Performance: **Fair to good**
Recording: **Ineffective**

In this cantata Ives the daring experimenter seems to have been smothered by Ives the practicing church musician (he was organist-choirmaster at New York's Central Presbyterian Church from 1899 to 1902 while he was learning the ropes in the insurance business during the week). Except for some intriguing dissonance woven into the organ prelude, some effective rhythmic drive and syncopation in the opening chorus, a very lovely string-quartet intermezzo, and some fine part-writing for the *a cappella* double chorus that follows, the music moves along at a fairly standard Victorian-churchy pace.

Unquestionably part of my negative response to *The Celestial Country*, at least this recording of it, stems from the production itself, which is marred by an over-prominent electronic organ and an instrumental and vocal ensemble sound that simply does not come together for effective and full-bodied projection in the first and last parts of the work. There are individual excellences throughout, however: the aforementioned string quartet intermezzo, the unaccompanied double-choir episode, and the beautifully graded dynamics that baritone John Noble brings to the concluding lines of his "Naught that country needeth" aria. Conceivably a genuine church acoustic would have provided the richness and body lacking in this recording. It is too bad that Harold Farberman, for many years a strong Ives proponent, had to carry out this project under what appears to have been less than ideal conditions, despite the excellent reputation of his performing forces. D.H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JANÁČEK: *Music for Male Chorus. The Soldier's Lot; Our Birch Tree; The Evening Witch; Leave-Taking; Czech Legion; The Wandering Madman; Schoolmaster Halfur;*

Maryčka Magdonová; Seventy Thousand. Běla Syková (boy soprano); Ján Jokl (tenor); Leopold Firley (baritone); Moravian Teachers' Choir, Antonín Tučapský cond. NONESUCH H-71288 \$2.98.

Performance: **Idiomatic**
Recording: **Good**

This is a splendid addition to the Janáček discography. The songs were written between 1885 and 1922, most of them for the Moravian Teachers' Choir, which was founded in 1903 and with which Janáček's relationship was especially close ("You grew with me; I grew with you," he told the singers during his last years). The texts are from folklore, from Czech national poets, and, in the case of the extraordinary piece *The Wandering Madman*, from the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore, whose appearances in Prague in 1921 so moved the composer that he translated this poem into Czech himself and set it to music the following year.

The Tagore poem is about a man who has spent his life seeking the philosophers' stone, which turns plain things to gold; when a little boy asks him why he wears a golden chain, he reminds himself his chain was only iron—and becomes aware that he must have picked up the magic stone and discarded it without pausing to recognize it. Most of the other songs—along with some on love, parting, and the sorrows of war—are on Czech themes; none is merely "patriotic" in any common, jingoistic sense, but all are profoundly moving, as if expressing in their tales of hope, martyrdom, and irony the deepest aspirations of a proud, long-suffering people.

Most memorable, perhaps, are the songs that end the two sides: *Czech Legion*, written at the end of World War I, with a text by Antonín Horák honoring the Czechs who had fought and fallen for the Allies in France, and *Seventy Thousand*, composed a few years earlier to a text by Petr Bezruč (a pseudonym for a Brno postal clerk who wrote revolutionary poems about the German-Polish-dominated Těšín area). Two of the other songs on the discs also use words of Bezruč, to whom Janáček once wrote: "Your words came at the right moment, and I brought to them a storm of wrath, despair, and pain."

All nine of the songs are superbly sung—indeed, "sung" seems too slight a word for these marvelous performances. The sound quality is more than satisfactory, full bilingual texts are provided, and Nonesuch has further enhanced this distinguished release with a characteristically excellent set of notes by Jack Diether. R.F.

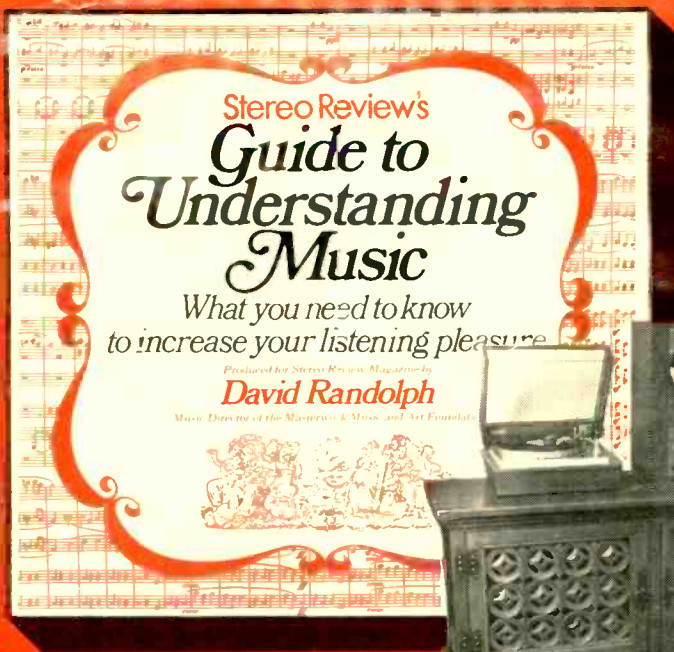
LISZT: *Années de Pèlerinage—Deuxième Année: Italie. Sposalizio; Il Pensieroso; Canzonetta del Salvatore Rosa; Sonetti del Petrarca Nos. 47, 104, and 123; Après une Lecture de Dante.* Alfred Brendel (piano). PHILIPS 6500 420 \$6.98.

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

Alfred Brendel's first exciting records for Vox, back in the Fifties, included five discs of Liszt: his fabulous account of the B Minor Sonata is still available on Turnabout TV-S 34424, together with the *Mephisto Waltz* and the so-called "Dante Sonata," which concludes the sequence on the new Philips release. It is good to have him recording Liszt again, and to have the *Deuxième Année* in full (Continued on page 114)

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George Jelinek reviews **THE BARBER OF BAGDAD**

PETER CORNELIUS (1824-1874), musician, poet, and all-round man of learning, was a friend of Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt and a resident of Weimar during the most important period of his short life. His comic opera *Der Barbier von Bagdad* (1858) was a minor masterpiece in the tradition of Weber's *Abu Hassan* (1811) and Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1847). In an open-minded society it would have been greeted with jubilation, but in the Germany of the post-1848 years it was met with incomprehension. Cornelius was a composer who aspired higher than did the popular and successful Gustav Lortzing (1801-1851), but his aspirations strayed from the Wagnerian path, and those were not the years to seek musical independence.

Hurt by the work's failure, Cornelius withdrew it and died without ever seeing it staged again. He was thus spared the efforts of such well-meaning friends as Franz Liszt and Felix Mottl, who attempted to remodel the opera according to the requirements of the *Zeitgeist*, but without success. An entire generation had to pass before the opera could regain its original shape, and, after a successful revival in 1905, begin to claim its rightful place in the German operatic literature. It may never become an international repertoire piece, but Eurodisc's new recording of the work, the first complete one in stereo, will go a long way toward enlarging its audience.

The story is based on an episode in *A Thousand and One Nights*. Abul Hassan Ali Ebn Bekar (his full name recurs enough in the opera to become a leitmotiv of sorts) is a tonsorial busybody with an immense respect for his own cleverness, just like his counterpart in Seville. Unlike Figaro, however, Abul is very old and not exactly nimble. Furthermore, his help is unwanted, and his meddling almost frustrates the efforts of

the two lovers, Margiana and Nureddin, to be united.

The opera has some built-in weaknesses. The plot takes a long time to get under way, and then the resolution comes too soon—it lacks a center, so to speak. But the text itself, Cornelius' own, is a gem. A versifying wizard, Cornelius had the virtuoso facility with the German language Wagner *thought* he had. (There is an inspired dialogue in *Der Barbier* in which Cornelius actually parodies the Wagnerian obsession with alliteration.) The lines are full of wit and light-hearted sophistication, and, to compensate for the structural weaknesses, there are some comic situations of surefire hilarity.

Musically, too, the opera is delightful. The musical idiom has inherited Weber's urgency and inventiveness of instrumentation, and shows the influence of Berlioz in the use of woodwind color and special harmonic devices (Cornelius translated the Berlioz operas into German). These influences, however, do not becloud the freshness and originality of the composer's creative invention. Cornelius may have been too much a craftsman: he believed in constant variation and took great pains to avoid predictable turns by unexpected modulations or harmonic variants, sometimes within the same musical number. This may explain the fact that, while the music is easy on the ear, it lacks the simpler magic of immediately memorable melodic phrases. But the score is unceasingly refreshing, with moments of great lyrical beauty in the second-act Muezzin scene.

About sixteen years ago, in the opera's first complete recording (Angel 3553, mono and deleted), Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Nicolai Gedda, in peak vocal form, set a standard for the music of Margiana and Nureddin which is not fully matched in the present performance. Nonetheless, Sylvia Geszty and Adalbert Kraus are both appealing singers, perfectly in character. The richly comic title role fits the high *basso cantante* of Karl Ridderbusch to perfection, and he makes the most of his many opportunities for inspired comedy and virtuoso vocal display. Trudeliene Schmidt, who has been heard in previous Eurodisc sets in serious roles to good advantage, does the comic part of Bostana very well, and the expert buffo tenor Gerhard Unger repeats the role he created for Angel sixteen years ago with undiminished zest. Hollreiser conducts alertly and lovingly, and both chorus and orchestra carry out their assignments with the precision and lightness the music calls for.

The set is attractively packaged but contains only the German libretto. An English synopsis is supplied, but it is not enough to acquaint a wide public with an opera in which so much depends on textual felicities.

CORNELIUS: *Der Barbier von Bagdad*. Sylvia Geszty (soprano), Margiana: Adalbert Kraus (tenor), Nureddin: Karl Ridderbusch (bass), Abul Hassan: Bernd Weikl (baritone), the Kalif: Gerhard Unger (tenor). Baba Mustapha; Trudeliene Schmidt (mezzo-soprano), Bostana; others. Chorus and Orchestra of Bavarian Broadcasting. Heinrich Hollreiser cond. EURODISC 86 830 two discs \$13.96 (available from the German News Co., 218 East 86th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028).

("in full" except for the three-part supplement *Venezia e Napoli*)—a release that presumably heralds his coverage of the entire series. There has been no complete domestically available recording of the *Années de Pèlerinage* since the retirement of Edith Farnadi's Westminster set several years ago, and the only one of the three *Années* in circulation since then has been the serviceable but hardly "world class" version of the *Première Année (Suisse)* by Sergio Fiorentino on Dover HCR-ST-7257. So there is certainly room for such a project, and Brendel would seem a very likely candidate for it. But there is something missing from these performances.

The earlier Vox recordings of the three Petrarch Sonnets were among the very few less than superlative things Brendel did for that company. His new performances of these pieces are somewhat more persuasive, but after enjoying them I listened to Wilhelm Kempff's 1951 Liszt package, which includes all but the first and last of the seven pieces in the *Deuxième Année* (formerly on London, now on Turnabout TV-S 34385), and I heard at once what was missing on Brendel's new disc. Kempff seems to go instinctively and effortlessly deep into the spirit and essence of this music—he makes me forget about *him*, in fact, and hear *only* the music. Brendel does not work this kind of magic here; with the exception, curiously, of the two pieces not on the Kempff record, which he does very effectively—he gives only "very good" performances, abetted by first-rate engineering.

The sound of the Kempff record, in phony stereo now, stands up remarkably well, and for less than the price of Brendel's new Philips one might buy both the Kempff Turnabout and Brendel's earlier recording of the "Dante Sonata": that would leave *Sposalizio* unaccounted for, but would include Kempff's performances of a half-dozen additional pieces (four of them from the *Années*) as well as the B Minor Sonata played by Brendel.

There is, by the way, another towering Liszt interpreter on Philips' own roster: if Philips can record both Brendel and Claudio Arrau in all the Beethoven sonatas, perhaps they can give Arrau, too, a crack at all of the *Années*. R.F.

LISZT: *Festival Cantata* (see BEETHOVEN)

LISZT: *Hungarian Rhapsodies, Nos. 1-19; Spanish Rhapsody*. Roberto Szidon (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709044 three discs \$23.94.

Performance: **Brilliant and controlled**
Recording: **Good**

Five-and-a-half L.P. sides of Liszt Hungarian Rhapsodies, with the Spanish Rhapsody as a final encore, would seem to be much of a muchness, but the fact is that there is a tremendous variety of music in these pieces. By no means do all the rhapsodies follow the same lugubrious-slow, frenetic-fast (*lassu-friss*) pattern familiar to us from the more famous examples. Rhapsody No. 3 is an oddly brooding work almost wholly in slow tempo, while No. 15 is a substantially straightforward version of the "Rákóczy March" tune Berlioz elaborated upon for part of his *Damnation de Faust*, and there are all kinds of variants and combinations of episodes in various tempos throughout these pieces.

Most of the Hungarian Rhapsodies were composed between 1846 and 1853, and orchestrations were made of Nos. 2, 5, 6, 9, 12,

and 14. The last four of the set belong to the last years of the composer's life and range from the strange and cryptic No. 17, lasting little more than three minutes in performance, to the expansive final one of the series, lasting almost twelve minutes.

My own special favorites are No. 7, with its genuine gypsy flavor, and Nos. 16 and 17 from the 1882-1885 series, with their anticipatory "modernisms." Rhapsody No. 8 is of more than passing interest, not only because of its cymbalom effects but because it and the Brahms Third Hungarian Dance share thematic material.

Brazil-born (but of Hungarian ancestry) Roberto Szidon offers brilliant and sternly controlled performances, and, though he by no means lacks fire and spontaneity in his readings, his treatment of the more familiar works, such as the famous No. 2, is quite different from the freewheeling versions to which we have become accustomed over the years. In short, he forces us to listen to the music from a fresh point of view. The recorded sound is clean and full-bodied throughout, and Deutsche Grammophon is to be complimented for the comprehensive and informative fourteen pages of notes that go with the album. *D.H.*

MAHLER: *Early Songs* (see SCHUMANN)

MILHAUD: *Scaramouche* (see GERSHWIN)

MOZART: *Concerto in A Major for Clarinet and Orchestra* (K. 622); *Concerto in B-flat Major for Bassoon and Orchestra* (K. 191); *Andante in C Major for Flute and Orchestra* (K. 315). Jack Brymer (clarinet); Michael Chapman (bassoon); Claude Monteux (flute); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Neville Marriner cond. PHILIPS 6500 378 \$6.98.

MOZART: *Concerto in G Major for Flute and Orchestra* (K. 313); *Concerto in C Major for Oboe and Orchestra* (K. 314). Claude Monteux (flute); Neil Black (oboe); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Neville Marriner cond. PHILIPS 6500 379 \$6.98.

MOZART: *Concerto in C Major for Flute, Harp, and Orchestra* (K. 299); *Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat Major for Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon, and Orchestra* (K. 297b). Claude Monteux (flute); Osian Ellis (harp); Neil Black (oboe); Jack Brymer (clarinet); Alan Civil (horn); Michael Chapman (bassoon); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Neville Marriner cond. PHILIPS 6500 380 \$6.98.

Performance: **Stylish**
Recording: **Good**

There have been, and still are, many attractive recordings of these works, but only a handful of really outstanding ones. Also, most of the individually desirable items have frustrating couplings in the form of (a) material certain to be duplicated (for instance, two of the horn concertos with the incomparable Gervase de Peyer/Peter Maag version of the Clarinet Concerto on London CS 6178); (b) uninteresting material (a Reinecke harp concerto with the K. 299 performed by Karlheinz Zöller and Nicanor Zabaleta on Deutsche Grammophon 138853); or (c) a less than winning version of an important work, representing either a grudging compromise or provocation to further duplication (the K. 364 attached to Karl Böhm's K. 297b on DG



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139156). Heinz Holliger's recording of the Oboe Concerto on an earlier Philips (6500 174) is a happy exception, in that the overside Strauss concerto provides perhaps even more incentive to buy the disc than the Mozart itself, but the problems otherwise present add up to a good argument in favor of an "integral" series of uniform high standards, which is what is offered here.

These three new discs come into direct competition with another such series, the recent Angel set (SC-3783) of the same material (minus the K. 315 Andante) by Karajan and his Berlin Philharmonic players. There is an abundance of elegant playing from both teams, but the Berliners' is unsatisfyingly faceless (except in their K. 299), while Marriner and his associates offer much more individual character, more of both the vitality and the intimacy one wants in this music. Unlike the Angel set, the new Philips discs need not be bought *en bloc*, but the consistently high level of these stylish performances leaves little possibility of disappointment, either individually or collectively.

The first record is especially successful. The splendid Jack Brymer is heard to better advantage in the Clarinet Concerto here than in his earlier recording with Beecham, whose over-romanticized approach drained the work of its momentum. Michael Chapman, whose name is less familiar than those of his colleagues, gives an exceptionally persuasive account of the Bassoon Concerto (with a tasteful cadenza), and the Andante for Flute, on its smaller scale, is no less impressive. All three of these soloists are heard again on the last disc, which pairs the two works for multi-

ple soloists. This, in general, is another winner, with little to fault it; my only reservations—neither of them too serious—are that the final movement of K. 299 is a bit faster than ideal and the balance between the four soloists in the last movement of K. 297b is less well judged than in the older but smoother Böhm recording on DG.

Philips favors a very close-up focus on the soloists, which tends to exaggerate Claude Monteux's gasps for breath in the Flute Concerto. This would not be enough to put me off, for both works on the second record are played very beautifully, but the Holliger disc is one I consider indispensable, so I would pass up this part of the new series in favor of Holliger's Oboe Concerto and one of the other versions of the Flute Concerto. *R.F.*

MOZART: Clarinet Concerto, K. 622 (see also the Basic Repertoire, page 59)

MOZART: Symphony No. 38, in D Major (K. 504, "Prague"). DVORÁK: Slavonic Dances, Op. 46, Nos. 1, 3, and 8; Slavonic Dances, Op. 72, Nos. 2, 5, and 7. London Symphony Orchestra, Zdenek Košler cond. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY □ CSQ 2051 \$6.98.

Performance: **Distinguished**

Recording: **Good four-channel (SQ)**

Czech conductor Zdenek Košler gives one of the finest performances of the "Prague" Symphony yet recorded. His pacing is superb, his phrasing natural, the balance between winds and strings (in the finale, especially) just about ideal. His way with the Dvořák dances is both as idiomatic and as refined as one could want.

Sonically, too, this strikes me as one of the handsomest, most natural-sounding orchestral items in the quadrasonic catalog. In two-channel playback, however, as with so many of the "compatible" discs I have had occasion to play (both SQ and CD-4), the sound seems less sharply defined than in the best of straight two-channel recordings. The surfaces on my copy are distractingly noisy, unlike those of this fastidious company's previous releases.

Much as I enjoyed Kosler's excellent performances, the record, I think, is primarily for those who insist on four-channel or like to have more than a single version of a favorite work. Peter Maag's remarkable version of the "Prague," which contains all the repeats, remains incomparable; it is now available on London STS-15087 for only \$2.98, and London's fifteen-year-old sound is still impressive. Also, six of the Slavonic Dances just aren't enough for Dvořák enthusiasts, and there is available a three-disc Telefunken set (SAT-22523/5), in which Neumann and the Czech Philharmonic perform all sixteen of them, together with *The Wood-Dove* (Dvořák's finest tone poem), the three Slavonic Rhapsodies, and the Czech Suite. *R.F.*

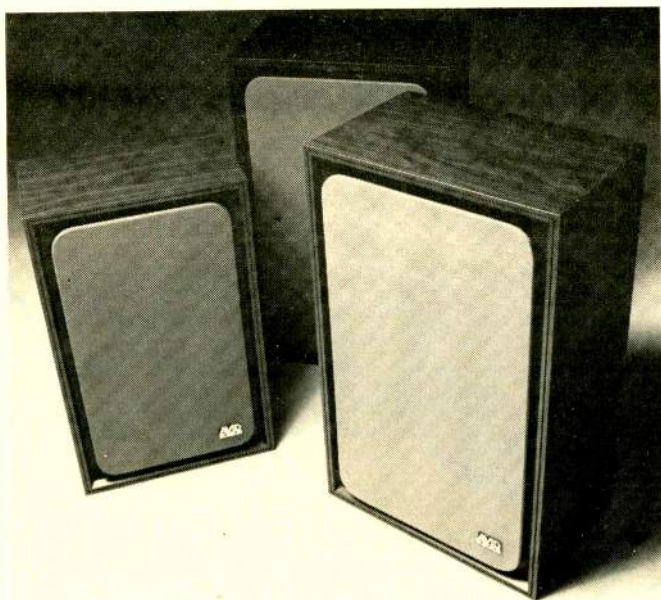
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Performance: **High on the list**

Recording: **Excellent**

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CIRCLE NO. 5 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Ever since *Peter and the Wolf* became a hit after the Boston Symphony recorded it for RCA Victor in the 1930's, it has served as a vehicle for the unluckiest people to try their hand as narrators. Richard Hale brought an unabashed elocutionary style to the first recording, in a performance that still reverberates in memory. Since then, we have had every sort of actor from Sean Connery to Peter Ustinov, Boris Karloff, George Raft, and Beatrice Lillie doing the honors: Leonard Bernstein both narrates and conducts; even Captain Kangaroo has had a turn at it. Personally, I prefer my Peter without any of them, uninterrupted, as available on the Everest label (on the *other* side of Captain Kangaroo) in a pliant reading by Leopold Stokowski with the Stadium Symphony. However, I am among the millions fond of the personality of Mia Farrow, who happens to be the wife of conductor André Previn, and so I turned to the results of their collaboration with eager interest. I was not disappointed. Miss Farrow takes the fable of Prokofiev's "musical tale for children" and makes the most of it. She starts in ladylike, quiet tones but proves quite equal to the challenge of the drama, letting herself go as the occasion demands. The sound Mr. Previn evokes from every solo instrument and from his orchestral forces is a bit cool, too, at first, but develops like a burgeoning sunflower into something simply gorgeous. The conductor himself takes over the microphone for the stunning music lesson Benjamin Britten devised in his brilliant *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, originally written for a film. The lesson is based on a set of variations worked up from a theme com-

posed by Purcell as part of the incidental music he wrote in 1695 for a play called *The Moor's Revenge*. This delicious score, too, I prefer without narration, but Mr. Previn makes a charming pedagogue (his only competition on records is Metropolitan Opera director Schuyler Chapin's son Henry narrating to a performance led by Bernstein) and is in top conducting form on this occasion—all but outshining Britten's own version of the work on the London label. The recorded sound is simply glorious. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RACHMANINOFF: *Vespers, Op. 37.* Konstantin Ognevoi (tenor); Klara Korka (mezzo-soprano); U.S.S.R. Russian Chorus. Aleksander Sveshnikov cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL SRB-4124 two discs \$11.96.

Performance: **Outstanding**
Recording: **Good**

Sergei Rachmaninoff had a special fondness for big choral works. He unequivocally designated the choral symphony *The Bells, Op. 35*, his favorite composition, and found almost equal pleasure in his *Vespers, Op. 37*, written soon thereafter (1915).

Vespers consists of fifteen numbers for a cappella chorus, some with soloists. Nine of these come from traditional liturgy, and six are original compositions. It is a dignified work just over one hour long, sumptuously harmonized, and full of vocal effects that reveal an expert compositional technique (sharply contrasted dynamics, humming, bell-like sonorities, deep basso underpinnings, and

the like). While such a work is probably not intended for a mass audience, it would not surprise me if it were now welcomed by a very broad public on the strength of this exceptional performance by the U.S.S.R. Russian Chorus. This is indeed a spectacular group, strong and well-balanced in all ranges and performing with exceptional coordination. The cavernous basses that sustain the "pedal point" in the conclusion of the fifth chant ("Prayer of St. Simeon," Rachmaninoff's personal favorite) are really something to hear. The soloists, not otherwise known to me, are also very fine: the tenor properly ardent, the mezzo soothingly opulent. Both voices sound as if they have been amplified to make them rise above the massed chorus. While the effect is somewhat artificial, it is imposing. There is some distortion in forte passages, but the engineering is good. An unusual treat and a welcome addition to the recordings catalog. G.J.

RAFF: *Symphony No. 5, in E Major ("Lenore").* London Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernard Herrmann cond. NONESUCH H-71287 \$2.98.

Performance: **Vigorous**
Recording: **Loud and clear**

Joachim Raff, a Swiss-born disciple of Mendelssohn and Liszt, found himself acclaimed in the middle 1870's as one of the major symphonists of the day (the first of Brahms' four masterpieces was not heard until 1876). But for almost two generations, until the so-called Romantic revival of the late 1960's, Raff's music—eleven symphonies and two hundred-



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- SCL 3615 BELLINI: NORMA (comp.). Callas, Corelli, Ludwig, La Scala, Serafin, cond. (3 records).
- SDL 3631 MOZART: COSI FAN TUTTE (comp.). Schwarzkopf, Ludwig, Kraus, Bohm, cond. (4 records).
- SDL 3633 MOUSSORGSKY: BORIS GOUDOUNOV (comp.). Christoff, Lear, Cluytens, cond.
- SCL 3639 SAINT-SAENS: SAMSON AND DELILAH (comp.). Vickers, Gorr, Pretre, cond. (3 records).
- SEL 3641 WAGNER: LOHENGRIN (comp.). Ludwig, Thomas, Fisher-Dieskau, Grummer, Vienna Philharmonic, Kempe. (5 records).
- SBL 3643 PUCCINI: LA BOHEME (comp.). Freni, Gedda, Sereni, Schippers, cond. (2 records).
- SCL 3718 VERDI: RIGOLETTO (comp.). MacNeil, Gedda, Grist. (3 records).
- SCL 3622 GOUNOD: FAUST (comp.). De Los Angeles, Christoff, Gedda, Cluytens, cond.
- SCL 3734 GOUNOD: ROMEO & JULIET (comp.). Corelli, Freni. (3 records).

- SCL 3742 VERDI: OTELLO (comp.). McCracken, Jones, Fisher-Dieskau, Barbirolli, cond. (3 records).
- SCL 3735 MASSENET: WERTHER (comp.). De Los Angeles, Gedda, Mesples, Pretre, cond. (3 records).
- SCLX 3650 BIZET: CARMEN (comp.). Callas, Gedda, Paris Opera. Pretre, cond. (3 records).
- SCL 3653 VERDI: IL TROVATORE (comp.). Corelli, Tucci, Merrill, Simonato, Schippers, cond. (3 records).
- SBL 3655 PUCCINI: TOSCA (comp.). Callas, Bergonzi, Gobbi, Pretre, cond. (2 records).
- SCL 3671 PUCCINI: TURANDOT (comp.). Nilsson, Corelli, Scotto. (3 records).
- SDL 3765 VERDI: LA FORZA DEL DESTINO (comp.). Arroyo, Bergonzi, Cappuccilli, Gardelli, cond. (4 records).
- SEL 3776 WAGNER: DIE MEISTERSINGER (comp.). Adam, Donath, Kollo, Von Karajan, cond. (5 records).
- SBLX 3784 DELIUS: A VILLAGE ROMEO & JULIET (comp.). Tear, Harwood, Shirley-Quirk, Davies, cond. (2 records).
- SPL 3774 VERDI: DON CARLO (comp.). Domingo, Caballe, Raimondi, Verrett, Milnes, Royal Opera, Giullini, cond. (4 records).
- SDL 3608 MOZART: DON GIOVANNI (comp.). Schwarzkopf, Sutherland, Wachter, Alva, Giullini, cond. (4 records).
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- SCL 3625 BEETHOVEN: FIDELIO (comp.). Vickers, Ludwig, Klemperer, cond. (3 records).
- SCL 3772 BELLINI: IL FIRATA (comp.). Caballe, Marti, Cappuccilli, Raimondi. (3 records).
- SBLX 3790 J. STRAUSS, JR.: DIE FLEDERMAUS (comp.). Rothenberger, Gedda, Fisher-Dieskau, Boskovsky, cond. (2 records).
- SCL 3638 ROSSINI: BARBER OF SEVILLE (comp.). De Los Angeles, Brusantini, Alva. (3 records).

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plus other pieces—went virtually unheard.

It was the ever-enterprising composer-conductor Bernard Herrmann—now resident in England after spending fruitless years in his native U.S. pioneering for Ives and others—who was the first to unearth Raff for the purposes of a large-scale recording, for this Nonesuch issue of the "Lenore" Symphony was initially released some three years ago on England's Unicorn label. Since then the Candide label in this country has added Raff's Third Symphony ("*Im Walde*"), *Ode to Spring*, and Piano Concerto to the disc repertoire, while Genesis has issued a sheaf of piano pieces and a second recording of the Piano Concerto.

Based on the same Gottfried Bürger ballad that inspired Duparc's symphonic poem *Lénoire*, composed two years later (and excellently recorded on RCA LSC-3151), Raff's Fifth Symphony is considerably more extended in scope, if not in harmonic originality. The *Lenore* ballad deals in essence with a love-tormented maiden who curses God for having taken her lover to a warrior's death, whereupon the lover reappears as a ghostly armored rider and takes her on a wild ride that ends amid the shrieks of the demons and spectres of hell.

Raff's symphony begins with a full-scale allegro and slow movement, evocative of the lovers, Wilhelm and Lenore. There follows a brazen folk-like march depicting Wilhelm's departure for the wars, and the finale deals with the actual substance of Bürger's ballad, complete to whinnying woodwinds conjuring up the image of the wild death ride.

A world-shaking masterpiece Raff's "Lenore" is not, but it is an entertaining and—in the slow movement—often beautiful period piece. And no one can complain that the march is not highly effective in its own way—a kind of link between the delightful pageantry of the march in Weber's *Konzertstück* for piano and orchestra and the frenetic devilry of Tchaikovsky's in the *Pathétique* Symphony. Herrmann plays this one to the hilt.

In any event, though, I would advise listeners not to pay too much mind to the program. The music is very enjoyable for its own sake, especially in this zestful performance. The recorded sound is generally excellent. *D.H.*

RIETI: Concerto for Harpsichord and Orchestra. Sylvia Marlowe (harpsichord); chamber orchestra, Samuel Baron cond. *Partita for Harpsichord, Flute, Oboe, and String Quartet.* Sylvia Marlowe (harpsichord); Samuel Baron (flute); Ronald Roseman (oboe); Charles Libove, Anahid Ajemian (violins); Harry Zaratian (viola); Charles McCracken (cello). COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC. CR1 SD 312 \$5.95.

Performance: **Definitive**
Recording: **Close-up**

One of the major losses when U.S. Decca abandoned its classical catalog was the collection of recordings made by Sylvia Marlowe—her Couperin (both solo and with various associates), Bach, Handel, Purcell, the Falla concerto, Elliott Carter's sonata, and so on. It seems unconscionably wasteful to allow these performances to disappear permanently, and it is heartening to find CR1 rescuing some of the American material from the limbo to which Decca had consigned it.

Marlowe herself commissioned Vittorio Rieti's *Partita* in 1945 (and first recorded it shortly thereafter, with Julius Baker, Mitchell

Miller, and the Kroll Quartet), and the Concerto was written for her ten years later: she has enthusiastically championed both works and certainly leaves nothing unsaid in their favor in these crisp, affectionate performances. The sound of the mid-Sixties recording is still excellent, though the focus is quite close-up. Both works, incidentally, reflect "Americana" in surprising ways: after the quasi-Oriental impressions of the *Partita*'s earlier movements, one of the subjects of its double fugue resembles an old popular song called *Should I* ("Should I reveal/Exactly how I feel?"), and the concluding movement of the Concerto, although marked *alla tarantella*, is evocative of the Hoedown in Copland's *Rodeo*. *R.F.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SARASATE: Nine Spanish Dances. *Malagueña and Habanera, Op. 21, Nos. 1 and 2;*



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Romanza Andaluza and Jota Navarra, Op. 22, Nos. 1 and 2; Playera and Zapateado, Op. 23, Nos. 1 and 2; Dances in A Minor and C Major, Op. 26, Nos. 1 and 2; Miramar, Op. 42. Victor Martin (violin); Miguel Zanetti (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1646 \$2.99 (plus 75¢ handling charge from Musical Heritage Society Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

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

This program duplicates much of Aaron Rosand's excellent Sarasate recital on Vox 512760, and the playing is on a similar level of excellence. Unfortunately, in the unholy tradition of record merchandising, the liner notes repeat the few sketchy details about Pablo Sarasate that are easily available from encyclopedias, but say nothing whatever about his gifted interpreter Victor Martin.

Señor Martin (he *must* be Spanish) addresses himself less to the flaming abandon and more to the silken elegance of Sarasate's style. He avoids frantic tempos, but clearly articulates all notes and faultlessly dashes off all those fiendish chords (well, virtually all) and virtuoso tricks. But virtuosity for its own sake never intrudes on the music; throughout, one is conscious of the beautiful writing and beau-

tiful playing. The loving treatment of the music is best exemplified in the *Playera*, where self-conscious virtuosity is absent.

Miguel Zanetti does more with the modest piano writing than any Sarasate pianist (now there is a new concept!) in my previous experience. His assertive playing in the *Jota Navarra* makes him a real collaborator. Good, clean recording, too. G.J.

SCHUMANN: *Dauidsbündertänze*, Op. 6; *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12. Murray Perahia (piano). COLUMBIA M 32299 \$5.98.

Performance: **Staunch**
Recording: **Good**

These performances have everything but the one thing Schumann cannot do without: poetic fantasy. The Dances of the Merry Anti-Philistine Band of David are the more successful here: not in the least dreamy, but good solid stuff. Perahia imparts energy, forward motion, and a bardic quality that isn't half bad. But his *Aufschwung* doesn't soar, and there is nothing at all whimsical about *Grillen*, and his *Fantasiestücke* are without much fantasy! Perahia is an excellent pianist, but his Schumann has not yet ripened. E.S.

SCHUMANN: *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15; *Sonata in G Minor*, Op. 22. Wilhelm Kempff (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 348 \$7.98.

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

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUMANN: *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16; *Sonata in G Minor*, Op. 22; *Presto in G Major*, Op. posth. Claudio Arrau (piano). PHILIPS 6500 394 \$6.98.

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

These two records exemplify the contrasting characteristics apparent in the preceding installments of the respective pianists' Schumann cycles: in general, Claudio Arrau displays greater poetic latitude, in immediate contrast with which Wilhelm Kempff frequently tends to sound prosaic. But play the Kempff record on its own and it is anything but prosaic—it is a fine, musicianly account of music the pianist obviously loves deeply. In the one instance in which Kempff and Arrau offer the same coupling—the *Fantasia in C* with *Carnaval*—Arrau's dreaminess and rubato seem overdone, and Kempff's firm, straightforward approach more convincing. Elsewhere among the eleven discs to date (four from Kempff, seven from Arrau), though, I find Arrau's way with Schumann invariably the more interesting, and his new disc is the most fascinating so far.

The same qualities of straightforwardness and occasional understatement that made Kempff's *Carnaval* so attractive serve the *Kinderszenen* especially well; this is a very satisfying performance. Kempff's rendition of the *G Minor Sonata*, however, does sound rather bland, particularly when it is compared with Arrau's compelling realization, which is alive with the most credible air of youthful impetuosity and yet so subtly and judiciously proportioned. For good measure, Arrau includes the alternative finale for the sonata, an "appendix" very much worth having.

Arrau's *Kreisleriana* is so brilliantly evocative of the work's varied moods that there is no real point to be served in comparing it with



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anybody else's. It is an interpretation that makes its own standards. Arrau is not given to understatement here, but judges perfectly the line between "expressive" and "excessive." This happens also to be extraordinarily beautiful playing—not mere "pianism," but virtuosity on the highest level.

Philips, in addition to providing first-rate sound, has put separating bands between the sections of *Kreisleriana* as well as the movements of the sonata—not a must, but a convenience in encoring this or that portion of the work.

R.F.

SCHUMANN: *Liederkreis, Op. 39.* MAHLER: *Lieder und Gesänge aus der Jugendzeit. Scheiden und Meiden; Nicht Wiedersehen; Um schlimme Kinder artig zu machen; Frühlingmorgen; Phantasie; Hans und Gräthe; Ich ging mit Lust durch einen grünen Wald; Starke Einbildungskraft; Erinnerung.* Anna Reynolds (mezzo-soprano); Geoffrey Parsons (piano). L'OISEAU-LYRE SOL-R 327 \$5.98.

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

Anna Reynolds has recorded opera and oratorio before, but this appears to be her first solo recital, and it is most impressive. A dignified and musicianly performer in the Ferrier-Baker mold, she is gifted with a voice of warm and velvety timbre, which she uses with great sensitivity and with expert control in matters of color and dynamics. Miss Reynolds is a native Briton, but her early studies in Italy doubtless contributed to the lovely legato line she is able to sustain, and extended work with such conductors as Karajan, Jochum, and Klemperer must account for her command of and affinity for the German language and musical styles.

Not surprisingly, the artist is at her best in the Schumann songs that call for the feminine touch, though she does make a brave attempt to convey fierceness in *Waldesgespräch*. The closing song, *Frühlingnacht*, could use more sense of rapture, but in the main this is a beautiful rendering of the cycle.

The Mahler songs are all early (1880-1888) and of variable quality. Most interesting among them are those that foreshadow the later Mahler. *Nicht Wiedersehen*, with its sombre mood of a funeral march, looks ahead to *Das Lied von der Erde*, while *Ich ging mit Lust* presages one of the Wayfarer Songs. As William Mann puts it in his informative notes, "Mahler in his twenties was an expert, adult, highly imaginative composer." The songs are important to round out our full picture of him. They are not easy to find elsewhere, and Anna Reynolds gives us here a committed and thoroughly sympathetic performance of them.

The accompaniments are generally fine, though I found a certain rhythmic unsteadiness in the Schumann *Intermezzo*, and the extremely difficult piano part of *Frühlingmorgen* was not handled with the sovereign command Gerald Moore reveals in this music. Nor was Mr. Parsons favored with anything better than routine reproduction of the piano tone. No texts are supplied—an unparadonable omission when it comes to the generally unfamiliar Mahler songs.

G.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUMANN: *Piano Sonata No. 1, in F-sharp Minor, Op. 11; Fantasia in C Major, Op. 17*

Maurizio Pollini (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 379 \$7.98.

Performance: **Superb Schumann**
Recording: **Excellent piano sound**

This is a model of how to play and record Schumann. Maurizio Pollini finds exactly the right balance between the gorgeous details of Schumann's keyboard writing and the more difficult problem of larger form and pacing. In particular, he makes the sprawling and difficult F-sharp Minor Sonata the almost-masterpiece that it is. He cannot really make the endless rambling finale hold together, but he gives it a good try. The approach is clever. Instead of pushing on to get through it—the usual desperation try—he takes his time, setting a modest tempo, lingering a bit over the improvisational details (just as though he thought them up himself), and building things up only here and there. The result is a slower performance that is actually more meaningful and therefore seems to pass more quickly.

For all the merits of the sonata, it is the superb reading of the great C Major Fantasia—curiously placed here as side two—that will attract most listeners. Florestan and Eusebius—the names Schumann gave to the twin halves of his schizophrenic personality—were never so well served as here. The expressive range is enormous, and, for once, the Fantasia emerges as the great epic of Romantic piano music. Beautiful piano sound.

E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STRAVINSKY: *Serenade in A; Piano Rag Music; Circus Polka; Ragtime; Tango; Sonate; Four Etudes; Les Cinq Doigts; Valse pour les Enfants.* Marie-Francoise Bucquet (piano). PHILIPS 6500 385 \$6.98.

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

Stravinsky composed all his life at the piano keyboard, but he wrote only a handful of works for solo piano. Among these there are only two or three really big works, notably the *Sonate* of 1924 and the *Serenade* of the following year. The *Ragtime* of 1918 and, especially, the incredibly intense *Piano Rag Music* of the following year are notable examples of Stravinsky's interest in the stylization of pop elements. This interest was also displayed in the early children's pieces (*Les Cinq Doigts* and the little-known *Valse*, originally published in a Paris newspaper) and was prominent during Stravinsky's American period (*Circus Polka* "for a young elephant," *Tango*). But it is a strong element also in the larger neo-Classical pieces such as the *Serenade* and *Sonate*. An important and little-discussed element in Stravinsky's neo-Classicism was the old Russian ballet and salon tradition of which he was clearly very fond and which he extended into our own day.

There is no reason (beyond its forbidding and rather misleading reputation) for this music to have remained somewhat esoteric. Strong, open, vigorous performances like those of Marie-Françoise Bucquet should do a great deal to change this state of affairs. Mile. Bucquet has recently appeared rather suddenly on the scene with a barrage of recordings and concerts of twentieth-century classics, and this recording should enhance her reputation. The early, Rachmaninoff/Scriabin-like études are a bit out of her line, but everything else has an energy and a frank way of speaking that are delightful.

Stravinsky, so widely regarded as an aristocratic, elitist type, had a certain notion that, given half a chance, there was a wide, not overly sophisticated audience that could appreciate and even play his simpler neo-Classical music, and, in one way or another, his solo piano music was created with this in mind. These performances and the excellent, lively piano presence achieved by the recording should go a good way toward achieving that not-so-secret ambition. *E.S.*

TIPPETT: *The Knot Garden* (see Best of the Month, page 79)

COLLECTIONS

MARIA CEBOTARI: *Recital. Mozart: The Marriage of Figaro: Venite, inginocchiatevi; Che soave zeffiretto: Deh vieni, non tardar* (with Margarete Teschemacher, soprano). **Verdi: Rigoletto: E il sol dell'anima; Tutte le**



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fieste al tempio; Piangi, fanciulla (with Helge Roswaenge, tenor, and Willi Domgraf-Fassbänder, baritone). *Luisa Miller: Scene from Act 1* (with Hans Hopf, tenor, and Josef Herrmann, baritone). *La Traviata: Un dì, felice, eterea; Ah, fors' è lui; Sempre libera; Scene from Act 2* (with Helge Roswaenge and Walther Ludwig, tenors). **Puccini: La Bohème: Mi chiamano Mimi; O soave fanciulla** (with Peter Anders, tenor). *Madama Butterfly: Love Duet from Act 1; Un bel dì* (with Helge Roswaenge, tenor). **Richard Strauss: Der Rosenkavalier: Final Scene** (with Tiana Lemnitz, soprano, and Paula Buchner, mezzo-soprano). *Salome: Final Scene.* Maria Cebotari (soprano); various orchestras. Karl Böhm, Artur Rother, Karl Elmendorff, Hans Steinkopf, and Robert Heger cond. BASF KBF 21483 two discs \$9.98.

Performance: **Fair to good**
Recording: **Vintage sound**

This varied documentary collection from radio broadcasts of 1938 to 1944 will delight the many admirers of Maria Cebotari (1910-1949), whose adventurous and tragically brief life probably contributed to a posthumous reputation based more on legends and recollections than on factual evidence. She did make a number of very fine studio recordings for HMV in the late Forties (Ariadne's "Es

gibt ein Reich" comes to mind, among others), and these clearly establish her major stature. The broadcast material that began to circulate in the early LP days, and continues to represent her art in the present release, attests to the dramatic awareness and intense femininity of her singing—but also reveals certain technical shortcomings. Hers, then, is a flawed legacy, but it is cherishable nonetheless, and perhaps more faithful than that of some of her contemporaries who lived longer and had more opportunities to record under controlled studio conditions.

Surely, Cebotari's HMV recordings offered more polished, more carefully drawn examples of her Mozart interpretations than these souvenirs of her Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*. Nor is there much distinction in the Verdi excerpts. Willi Domgraf-Fassbänder offers a somewhat unpolished but dynamic and convincing Rigoletto in the extended scene from Act III, but the heavy-breathing Duke of Helge Roswaenge is not much help. Cebotari's Violetta is consistently moving, but her intonation is faltering in "Un dì, felice, eterea" and in the aria as well.

Puccini and Strauss elicit happier results. Both Mimi's aria and the succeeding duet with the elegant Peter Anders are very fine, and Butterfly's vulnerability is conveyed with passion and conviction. Cebotari's Sophie comes across as a rather mature-sounding girl in this 1943 account of the *Rosenkavalier* finale, but the singing itself is pleasurable. So is her Salome in a 1941 version that is, I suppose, identical to the long-deleted Urania 7036.

Some of the best German conductors of the period assure orchestral performances of merit, but the recorded sound is variable: at times surprisingly clear, at times considerably distorted (in the *Luisa Miller* scene and in the *Butterfly* duet), with really damaging results in the *Salome* finale. *G.J.*

JOSÉ VIANNA DA MOTTA: Piano Recital. Liszt: Eglogue, from Années de Pèlerinage, Suisse, No. 7; Totentanz. Schubert-Liszt: Wohin? Schubert: Minuetto, from Sonata in G Major, Op. 78. Busoni: Elegie No. 4, Turandot Frauengemach. Mozart-Busoni: Duettino Concertante. Chopin: Polonaise in A-flat Major, Op. 63. Da Motta: Cantiga de Amor, Op. 9, No. 1; Chula (Danse Portugaise); Valse Caprichosa. José Vianna da Motta (piano); Mlle. de Castello Lopes (piano, in Mozart-Busoni); Portuguese National Symphony Orchestra, Pedro de Freitas Branco cond. (in Liszt *Totentanz*). INTERNATIONAL PIANO LIBRARY (IPL) 108 \$6.00 (available from International Piano Library, 215 West 91st Street, New York, N.Y. 10024).

Performance: **Extraordinary**
Recording: **Excellent transfers**

Among Franz Liszt's many important late pupils—Siloti, Sauer, D'Albert, Rosenthal—one of the least known is the Portuguese pianist José Vianna da Motta (1868-1948). Da Motta studied with Scharwenka in Berlin in 1882, took part in Liszt's master classes in Weimar in 1885, worked with Hans von Bülow, and was a friend and musical associate of Busoni (who dedicated a volume of his Bach organ chorale transcription to him). He was based in Berlin for some thirty years on and off, touring as far afield as the United States, South America, Scandinavia, and Russia, as well as in central Europe, and spent



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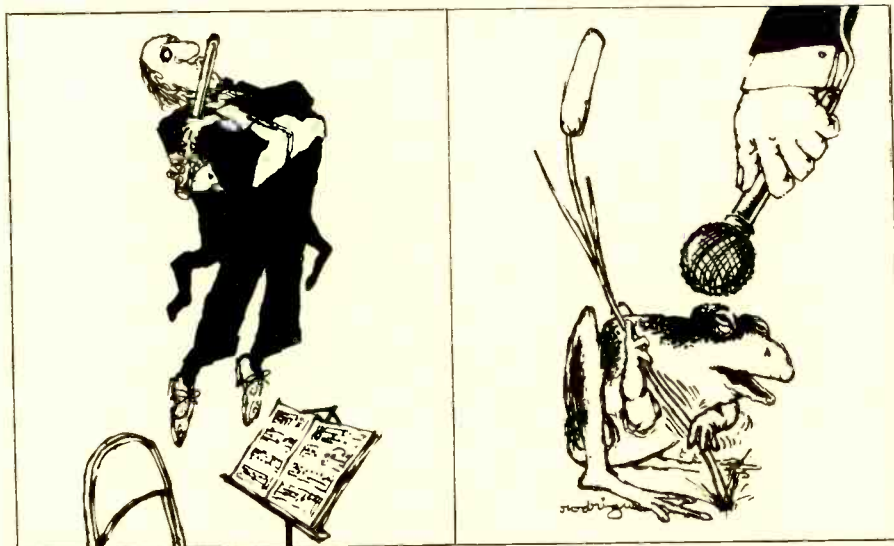
the latter part of his life heading the Lisbon Conservatorio. He was evidently very much admired as a teacher, as well as for his all-round musicianship, knowledge of repertoire, style, and technical skills.

Judging from the only surviving recordings he made in France in 1928 or 1929, Da Motta was certainly worthy of admiration. His choice of pieces as represented in this collection itself is unusual: only Chopin's A-flat Polonaise could in any way be described as a stock item; with the exception of Liszt's transcription of a Schubert song, the rest is remarkably esoteric. Da Motta's friendship with Busoni may be behind the inclusion here of the fourth of Busoni's *Elegies* (the one that uses the *Greensleeves* tune in the mistaken assumption that it was of Chinese

origin) and the quite straight transcription for two pianos of the finale from Mozart's Nineteenth Concerto. There is a Schubert minuet, played with masculinity and expressiveness though not quite with the lilt Schnabel gave it. But what I consider the gem of the collection is a perfectly exquisite performance of the *Eglogue* from Liszt's *Années de Pèlerinage* that combines marvelous dance-like rhythms and delicate filigree—really ideal Liszt and an object lesson for so many of today's hard-hitting and unsubtle Liszt interpreters. Da Motta's playing style is remarkably direct, and, except perhaps for parts of the Chopin, it is uncluttered by stop-and-start mannerisms. He gives the music definite personality, and there are few of his interpretations that do not sound "right." On the second

side are three minor salon pieces by the pianist, sounding a little like a cross between Granados and Saint-Saëns, fairly charming but inconsequential. The real surprise, however, is a live-performance recording of Liszt's *Totentanz* made on January 19, 1945, when Da Motta was not quite seventy-seven. This is a powerhouse of an interpretation with not one dull moment: there are, to be sure, smudged passages, but these do not detract from Da Motta's consummate understanding of the Lisztian temperament.

Overall, although it is far from meeting today's standards, of course, the sound is remarkably good. There is also a very interesting illustrated booklet that accompanies the record. I cannot recommend this important issue highly enough: if you enjoy the piano and its most outstanding practitioners, don't under any circumstances fail to acquire it. I.K.



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CIRCLE NO. 2 ON READER SERVICE CARD

DIABELLI VARIATIONS: *Variations on a Waltz by Anton Diabelli*. Composed by Ludwig van Beethoven, Ignaz Assmayer, Carl Maria von Bocklet, Leopold Eustache Czapek, Carl Czerny, Joseph Czerny, Moritz Graf von Dietrichstein, Joseph Drechsler, Emanuel Aloys Förster, Franz Jakob Freystädler, Johann Baptist Gänsbacher, Josef Abbé Gelinek, Anton Halm, Joachim Hoffmann, Johann Horzalka, Joseph Huglmann, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Anselm Hüttenbrenner, Friedrich Michael Kalkbrenner, Friedrich August Kanne, Joseph Kerzowsky, Conradin Kreutzer, Heinrich Eduard Josef Freiherr von Lannoy, Maximilian Joseph Leidesdorf, Franz Liszt, Joseph Mayseger, Ignaz Moscheles, Ignaz Franz Edler von Mosel, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Jr., Joseph Panny, Hieronymus Payer, Johann Peter Pixis, Wenzel Plachy, Gottfried Rieger, Philipp Jacob Riotte, Franz de Paula Roser von Reiter, Johann Baptist Schenk, Franz Schoberlechner, Franz Schubert, Simon Sechter, the Archduke Rudolph, Maximilian Abbé Stadler, Josephe de Szálay, Wenzel Johann Tomaschek, Michael Umlauf, Friedrich Dionysius Weber, Franz Weber, Charles Angelus de Winkhler, Franz Weiss, Johann Nepomuk August Wittassek, Jan Hugo Worzischek, Rudolf Buchbinder (piano). TELEFUNKEN SMA 25 081-T/1-3 three discs \$17.94.

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

Everyone knows how Beethoven came to write the last of his great piano works: the composer and publisher Anton Diabelli approached him and dozens of others in 1819 to write one variation apiece on his own little waltz tune, his intent being to boost his new firm by publishing the jointly created set as the work of the *Vaterländischer Künstlerverein* ("Patriotic Association of Artists"), exemplifying the best of the empire's musical talents (with a few well-chosen journalists, clerics, pedagogues, and nobles included). Beethoven rejected the idea of a small contribution, but he did get round to writing a magnificent set of thirty-three variations on Diabelli's waltz, and Diabelli published them in 1823 as Part I of his giant set. An even fifty other participants were represented in Part II, completed the following year. Among them was the eleven-year-old Franz Liszt, whose brilliant contribution was the first of his creative efforts to be published. W.A. Mozart, Jr., and Gottfried Rieger came up with two pairs of variations each, from which Diabelli chose

one pair each: Carl Czerny (to whom Joseph was not related) wrote a coda as well as a variation: each of the others produced a single variation, as requested, and the fifty-three segments were published in alphabetical sequence, from Assmayer to Worzischek (the German spelling of the Bohemian Voříšek).

What is perhaps most remarkable about this Telefunken release is that no one has done it before: I would have expected a Vox Box years ago, but it appears that the only portion of Part II recorded heretofore is the Schubert variation, a lovely piece more or less in *Ländler* style which Kathleen Dale once described as "so tenderly ethereal that even an angel might dance to it."

As one might expect—from contributors who were not comparing notes—both diversity and a certain degree of similarity may be noted in this vast sequence. Some of the variations are quite brilliant, some unusually imaginative, some funny (both intentionally and otherwise), and some just plain dull. There are not too many really dull ones, though, and there is no need, after all, to feel compelled to digest all of this at a single sitting. One of the more interesting variations is the three-minute piece by the Archduke Rudolph, which ends with what seems to be a reminiscence of the opening of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony. Carl Czerny's variation is one of the dull ones, but his coda has more to offer: it is a rather overt *homage à Beethoven*, including a hint at the Mozart aria ("*Noite e giorno fati-car*," from *Don Giovanni*) used by Beethoven in his own Diabelli set.

Collectors may wish Telefunken had followed Diabelli's example and released the Beethoven work and Part II separately. Rudolf Buchbinder gives a generally satisfying account of the Beethoven, but it is not a performance one would choose in preference to Brendel, Serkin, Schnabel, Richter-Haaser, or Stephen Bishop. In the lesser-known works he leaves nothing to be desired: he has evidently given some time and thought to these fifty-three pieces, and sets each one forth in its individual character. Telefunken has captured the sound of his Steinway with exemplary realism. The accompanying leaflet is as valuable in its way as the music itself, for it contains brief biographical sketches of Diabelli and his fifty collaborators of Part II, and pictures of him and thirty-eight of those gentlemen, as well as Ludwig Finscher's concise but informative annotation. R.F.

DOMINGO CONDUCTS MILNES! MILNES CONDUCTS DOMINGO! Bizet: *Carmen: Votre toast*. Massenet: *Hérodiade: Vision fugitive*. Gounod: *Faust: Avant de quitter ces lieux*. Giordano: *Andrea Chénier: Nemico della patria*. Mascagni: *Cavalleria Rusticana: Il cavallo scalpita*. Plácido Domingo (tenor); New Philharmonia Orchestra. Sherrill Milnes cond. Bizet: *Carmen: La fleur que tu m'avais jetée*. Boito: *Mefistofele: Giunto sul passo estremo*. Giordano: *Andrea Chénier: Come un bel dì di maggio*. Verdi: *Rigoletto: Parmi veder le lagrime. La Traviata: De' miei bollenti spiriti*. Sherrill Milnes (baritone); John Alldis Choir; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Plácido Domingo cond. RCA ARL 1-0122 \$5.98.

Performance: **Professional**
Recording: **Good**

Sales gimmicks are sometimes useful in energizing an industry's tired blood. Devoted as I am to the good of the industry, I sympathize

with the active minds that steer it away from dullness and predictability. But this is a gimmick and rates only a brief review.

Both artists are well-trained musicians, and working with an experienced orchestra, they have no difficulty in securing acceptable professional results. But the flaws cannot be hidden: rhythmic unsteadiness, textural imbalances (barely audible chorus in the Toreador Song: prominent saxophone but hardly any orchestra in "*Vision fugitive*"), and, above all, an absence of natural flow, caused by the kind of "bar by bar" conducting that reveals the inexperienced hand. Concluding the *Mefistofele* with such a prosaic "concert ending" is another sign of inexperience.

Although Plácido Domingo is below his best vocal form, his singing is nonetheless notable for directness and tonal polish. Sherrill Milnes's contribution is disappointing, however. He offers the appropriate vigor and brusqueness needed in the Toreador Song and in Alfio's aria, but his other three selections lack refinement and careful phrasing. Doubtful intonation and strained top notes do nothing to help. G.J.

ENGLISH VIRGINAL MUSIC (see Best of the Month, page 81)

THE FOUR FACES OF JAZZ. Weill: *Songs from "The Three Penny Opera."* Gershwin: *Variations for Piano and Orchestra on "I Got Rhythm."* Stravinsky: *Ragtime*. Milhaud: *The Creation of the World*. London Festival Recording Ensemble. Bernard Herrmann cond. LONDON SPC 21077 \$5.98.

Performance: **Sturdy program, sluggish handling**
Recording: **Excellent**

It was a happy thought of Bernard Herrmann's to bring together these four examples of symphonic jazz on one program for London's Phase 4 series—just as it was to assemble the elements he did for the earlier album called "The Impressionists." Weill's music from *The Three Penny Opera* is the essence of German music-hall jazz of the Twenties, sticking out its tongue to flash its tawdry wares with a deliberate yawn that conceals the restless, revolutionary bitterness beneath the banal meddles that express to perfection the play's ambience of cynicism, poverty, and corruption. Gershwin's ingenious, witty, and entertaining *Variations on I Got Rhythm* represent a more lighthearted, exuberant, sly use of jazz combined with the resources of the symphony orchestra and concert piano on quite another level; the piece never fails to scintillate and strut its stuff beguilingly. Milhaud's ballet based on the African legend of creation antedated Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* by a full year. It is endlessly interesting rhythmically, paints an atmospheric sound picture of sensuality and primitive modernism with enormous skill, and deserves the welcome back it has been getting in recent years on records—quite aside from its historical musical importance. Finally, Stravinsky's four-and-a-half-minute wry encounter with the idiom in *Ragtime* is a treasureable gem from the century's reigning musical master.

Unfortunately, Mr. Herrmann's conducting does not seem to be on a par with his program-making. The Weill suite is done with an admirable feeling for its style but nevertheless rather woodenly; the Gershwin is arty and slow to the point of dragging pretension—

(Continued on page 125)



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DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH's First Symphony, composed as his conservatory graduation piece when he was eighteen, enjoyed international success from its very first performances outside the Soviet Union. Bruno Walter, Leopold Stokowski, Otto Klemperer, and Arturo Toscanini all conducted it and helped make it well known. It has remained almost a repertoire standard and has never lacked for first-rate recorded performances, beginning with the Stokowski-Philadelphia Orchestra recording of around 1934 to the latest one by Kiril Kondrashin. Listening to Kondrashin's new recording for Melodiya/Angel, I marvel at how well the piece stands up as both music and sonic rhetoric. There is absolute formal mastery here—and overwhelming fire and imagination as well.

Kondrashin, in my opinion one of the best of the veteran Soviet conductors, takes a surprisingly mellow view of the First Symphony, in contrast to those (such as the late Artur Rodzinski) who tend to stress the work's sardonic and brilliant qualities. Kondrashin searches out the poetic aspects of the score, emphasizing the phrasing of its lyrical elements and eliciting the richest possible color and sonority from his players at the climactic moments. His argument along this line is wholly convincing, and his reading is for me a different and revealing view of the music.

As is now well known, after the smashing success of his First Symphony Shostakovich went in for a good deal of experimentation, much of it influenced by the European—particularly German—avant-garde of the late 1920's, since at that time there was relatively free cultural intercourse between the U.S.S.R. and Western Europe. A major result of this experimentation was the Second Symphony, a one-movement piece written in 1927 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution. Although the opening pages, with their multi-metric polytonal polyphony for strings, are something of a tour de force for the period, as music the piece is no match for the First Symphony. The middle section is entertaining in its brilliant use of counterpoint and sharp blotches of instrumental color, but the final chorus, "To October," is sheer rah-rah stuff reminiscent of the West Point cheering section at an Army-Navy football game. Just as Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony had enough ideas in it for a dozen works, so the Second is over-full of mere devices; still, it is good fun for an occasional hearing.

Melodiya/Angel has coupled the Second Symphony with the First on their new release. Kondrashin's, the fifth recording of the Second Symphony since its resurrection in the post-Stalin era and the third to be listed in Schwann, is unquestionably the best from the standpoint of convincing orchestral performance, topnotch choral work, and good recorded sound. Morton Gould's pioneering RCA disc (1968) still offers somewhat greater clarity of texture and rhythmic incisiveness in the central section, and it contains on the overside the only recorded version of the less interesting Third ("May Day") Symphony, but his chorus sounds rather anemic next to the Russian one. The earlier Melodiya/Angel issue, with Igor Blashkov conducting the Leningrad Philharmonic, suffers from inferior sonics.

Clearly a decision on whether to acquire the new disc depends on one's preferences in repertoire coupling. The excellent alternative versions of the First Symphony by Bernstein for Columbia and Weller for London offer the lightweight Ninth Symphony. Ormandy's First (recorded under Shostakovich's supervision), also on Columbia, offers a superb version of the Cello Concerto with Rostropovich. I consider the latter disc indispensable, but I am still drawn to the Kondrashin recording for its highly convincing and individual interpretation.

The Shostakovich of the Symphony No. 8, in C Minor, is a very different composer from the brilliant smart-aleck of the earlier works. The Seventh and Eighth Symphonies stand as Shostakovich's epochal commemoration of the Russian people's battle for sur-

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vival against the German invasion. One has only to read the accounts of the siege of Leningrad and of the battle of Stalingrad to get some realization of what was at stake for the Russians (and ultimately for the Western Allies). If the Seventh Symphony can be taken as a rallying cry, the Eighth is surely a harrowing statement of the human tragedy of war. Both symphonies, from a musical standpoint, seem flawed to me, but there are individual movements in both that contain some of Shostakovich's finest music—the slow movement and much of the finale of No. 7, and the first, third, and fourth movements of No. 8.

The Eighth Symphony opens with a slow movement some twenty-five minutes in length, a lamentation on a monumental scale. The second movement serves as a kind of intermezzo, but it is fiercely rhythmic in character, embodying thematic figuration that plays a major role in the three succeeding interlinked movements. The first of these is a satanic toccata-scherzo whose shattering climax leads to a shadowy *passacaglia* of the utmost bleakness. This fades into the lengthy finale, designed to end the symphony on a note of hope. There is some wonderfully brilliant writing here, much of it built out of materials heard earlier in the score. But somehow the thing fails to hang together, the lovely *pianissimo* ending for strings coming, it seems to me, altogether too abruptly, as though Shostakovich suddenly had run out of ideas and simply had to

halt. Despite the unconvincing end, I have come back to this work many times. The finest pages are wholly gripping, not only in their rhetoric but in their command of the material; Shostakovich is a past master of the art of thematic transformation, to say nothing of orchestral technique.

Kondrashin's new Melodiya/Angel disc offers the best overall recorded representation we have yet had of the Eighth Symphony. The reading is fine and suitably broad-scaled, though not as intense as Mravinsky's early MK mono disc, and the slightly excessive reverberation in the new recording makes for a texture less clean than that of Kondrashin's earlier MK stereo album. But, for the present, this recorded performance is without appreciable competition (or will be until the André Previn-London Symphony performance issued in England this past October becomes available in this country).

The Shostakovich First Violin Concerto, though not premiered until 1955, was composed in 1947-1948 and shares some thematic material with the somewhat later Tenth Symphony. I find this work, like the Tenth Symphony, masterly in every respect—absorbing in content, brilliantly written for the soloist, and displaying total command of its materials. The opening slow movement, a nocturne, is intensely lyrical with a fine use of subtle pinpoints of color from an orchestra devoid of trumpets and timpani but with a full complement of winds, plus celesta, xylophone, and two harps. The scherzo is brilliant and piquant in the best Shostakovich manner, but the crown of the work is the majestic *passacaglia*, which progresses to the scintillating *Burlesque* finale by way of a singularly challenging cadenza.

David Oistrakh, to whom the concerto was dedicated, recorded it with Dimitri Mitropoulos and the New York Philharmonic for Columbia at the end of 1955 during the course of his first visit to the U.S., but to my mind that superb performance was marred by recording that put the soloist in the spotlight at the expense of the all-important orchestra. Though there have been other recordings since, it has taken until now to come up finally with a first-rate stereo recording of one of Shostakovich's finest works. Angel is to be complimented on really getting it all together: David Oistrakh is again the soloist, the composer's son Maksim is the conductor, and Shostakovich *père* was on hand to supervise. One can assume that this is *the* definitive recorded performance from the composer's point of view. It certainly sounds superb to my ears.

SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 1, in F Minor, Op. 10; Symphony No. 2, in B Major, Op. 14 ("October Revolution"). R.S.F.S.R. Russian Chorus: Moscow Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, Kiril Kondrashin cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL SR-40236 \$5.98.

SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 8, in C Minor, Op. 65. Moscow Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, Kiril Kondrashin cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL SR-40237 \$5.98.

SHOSTAKOVICH: Violin Concerto No. 1, in A Minor, Op. 99. David Oistrakh (violin); New Philharmonia Orchestra, Maksim Shostakovich cond. ANGEL S-36964 \$5.98.

hopelessly grounded compared with the vivacious version by Earl Wild and Fiedler on the RCA label: *Le Création du Monde* lacks the necessary acerbity which the composer brings to it under his own direction; *Ragtime*, too, contains a bit too much musical vermouth for the dry tang it needs. But the recorded sound is gorgeous, and Mr. Herrmann is blessed with a magnificent ensemble. And the four works taken together certainly do offer a profile of the sound of "symphonic" jazz at its best. P.K.

ARTHUR LOESSER: *Con Amore. Haydn: Sonata No. 42, in D Major (Hob. XVI 42). Mozart: Adagio (K. 540); Gigue in G Minor (K. 574). Beethoven: Variations on "Kind, willst du ruhig schlafen." Schumann: Sonata No. 2, in F Minor, Op. 14. Prokofiev: Sonata No. 5, in C Major, Op. 38. Chopin: Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 3; Mazurka in F-sharp Minor, Op. 59, No. 3; Variations Brillantes on a Melody from the Opera Ludovic, Op. 12.* Arthur Loesser (piano). INTERNATIONAL PIANO LIBRARY IPI 5003/4 two discs \$15.00. (Available from the International Piano Library, 215 West 91st St., New York, N.Y. 10024).

Performance: **Wise**
Recording: **Tapes from live performances**

This is a sequel to the very captivating "Sic Transit Gloria Mundi" recital by Arthur Loesser previously issued by the International Piano Library. That album was devoted to music by forgotten composers; this one features forgotten works by well-known composers. All of the music here was recorded at faculty recitals at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where Loesser taught for many years before his death in 1969.

Arthur Loesser was a genial and witty man as well as a musician of the first mark. He had an intense interest in everything, music above all, and was certainly not the man to restrict himself to the life of the touring concert performer playing a handful of programs and pieces hither and yon.

One of the charms of the earlier recording was Loesser's own comments, but here his voice is heard only once, just before the final little Mozart Gigue. And technically his playing is nowhere near the level of the other recital. But the man's wit and musicality always come through.

All of this music was worth reviving, but I think the outstanding piece is the Schumann Sonata—also referred to as the Concerto Without Orchestra and generally called Sonata No. 3 (although it was in fact the second in order of composition). By any name or number it is a masterpiece, and I regret only that Loesser chose to cut the last movement so drastically. In spite of all my reservations, I enjoyed these performances, and they are worth listening to. Arthur Loesser was a wise man. Beneath the ironic exterior he liked to affect, there was always a great deal of human insight. The sound is nothing special, but it will do. The set comes with a booklet of pictures, material on Loesser, and his own program notes. E.S.

RENATA TEBALDI AND FRANCO CORELLI: *Great Opera Duets. Puccini: Manon Lescaut: Tu, tu, amore. Verdi: Aida: Già i sacerdoti adumansi. Cilèa: Adriana Lecouvreur: Ma dunque è vero? Ponchielli: La Gioconda: Oh! la sinistra voce. Zandonai: Francesca*

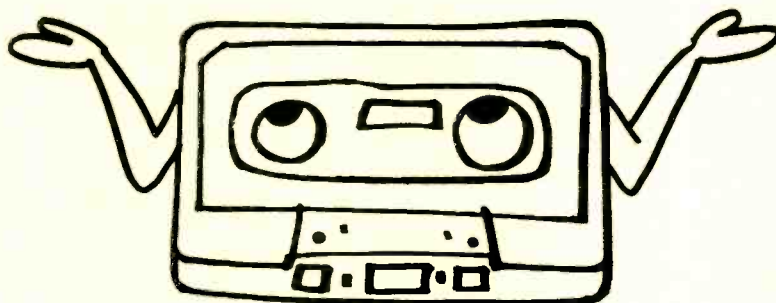
da Rimini: Inghirlandata di violette. Renata Tebaldi (soprano); Franco Corelli (tenor); Remo Cambiati (baritone, in La Gioconda); L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Anton Guadagno cond. LONDON OS 26315 \$5.98.

Performance: **Uneven**
Recording: **Fair**

"Together for the first time on records," says the special label affixed to this release. True, but Tebaldi and Corelli should have recorded together about a dozen years ago, when the results would have been spectacular.

It is the long and torrid love scene from *Francesca da Rimini* that elicits the best overall performance from the pair: they are convincing both in the early moments of restrained passion and in the end, when restraint

gives way to the outbreak of emotion. The remainder of the recital offers a very brief glimpse from *Adriana Lecouvreur*, the opera that united these artists in better days, and the duet from *Manon Lescaut*, in which Tebaldi is a too mature-sounding Manon and Corelli a fervent but undisciplined Des Grieux. It is interesting to hear Tebaldi in the unaccustomed roles of Amneris and Laura, but the scenes are not particularly memorable. There are flashes of former splendor, but for the most part the concentration takes too much out of both artists to leave room for attention to metric accuracy, niceties of phrasing, or even purity of intonation. Their fans, however, will be forgiving. The orchestral contribution is subdued and unassertive, the recording quality undistinguished. G.J.



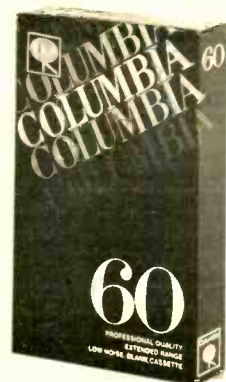
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SR-374

TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK



MICROPHONE MIXERS

To most people, a "mixer" is a multipurpose kitchen appliance. In audio recording, however, it's an indispensable device that combines at least two—but probably many more—different signals into a single, controlled composite. Why do you need a mixer? Suppose several microphones are required to capture the full sound of a group of performers or even a single instrument. You can't just plug them all together like a.c. plugs into a wall outlet, for that could cause distortion and frequency-response losses arising from what is called "impedance mismatch." Further, to achieve the desired acoustic balance—between instruments and a vocalist, for example—each of the input sources to be combined needs its own individual volume control. So you use a mixer.

However, picking a mixer that best suits your needs (and budget) requires careful investigation. To begin with, there are two basic types: passive and active. The passive units are quite inexpensive (under \$10) since they consist of little more than several isolating resistors and volume controls whose outputs are connected together. I do *not* recommend a passive mixer for high-fidelity recording, however, for its controls can only turn *down* the level of any microphone plugged into it, and this may mean a poorer signal-to-noise ratio.

Active mixers, by contrast, use tubes or semiconductors to boost each mike's signal *before* it reaches its respective level control. Thus the signal never drops below its original strength. Even here you must be careful, however. A few such active mixers supply *just enough* amplification to overcome their internal losses, and so must still be plugged into your recorder's microphone inputs. That's acceptable if your own machine's mike circuits are themselves relatively free of hum and hiss, but in my view many are not. How can you tell?

A simple experiment will give you the answer. With your mikes plugged into your recorder but with no sound being

fed to them, start recording while simultaneously monitoring from the tape through headphones as you slowly turn up your microphone record-level control. (If your machine does not permit monitoring off the tape, just use its index counter to make a log of when the record control is at each of the numbered settings so you will know where you are when you play back the tape.) At some point you will notice that the playback hiss level will not just increase gradually, as you'd expect it to, but will take a sudden jump. Turn the record-level control back to just below that point and start talking into the mikes normally. If your VU meters respond by swinging far into the red, well and good: your mike circuits are quiet enough for *your* mikes.

Incidentally, microphones whose impedance is too low for your recorder may make it appear that the recorder's inputs have insufficient gain. If you suspect such an impedance mismatch, check with the manufacturers of the recorder and the microphone. If you're told that your otherwise excellent mikes don't match your recorder's input, you then have a choice of using input-matching mike transformers or using a mixer that provides a choice of high- or low-impedance inputs. The microphone company will be able to advise you on the relative costs and advantages of each approach. But aside from the impedance-matching question, for reasons involving noise and gain you should look for a mixer that has an output of about one volt or more.

Needless to say, it would be a good idea to connect the mixer to your recorder and try the test outlined above on the mixer itself. You may find that some units are so noisy that they are poor buys despite their flexibility or low cost. A top-quality mixer, on the other hand, is almost always quieter than your recorder's mike preamps, and can often be used plugged into the recorder's high-level line inputs—even on occasions when you don't need its mixing facilities.

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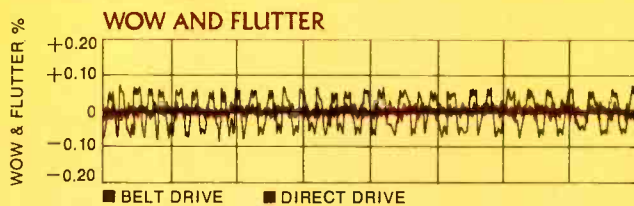
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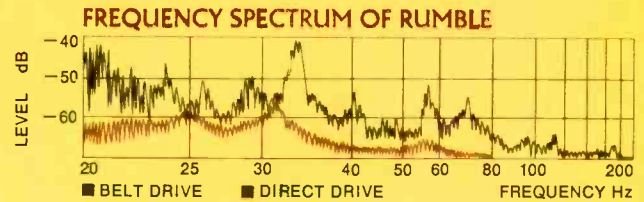
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*SP-10: Audio, 8/71; Stereo Review, 9/71.
SL-1100A: Stereo Review, 7/73; High Fidelity, 9/73.

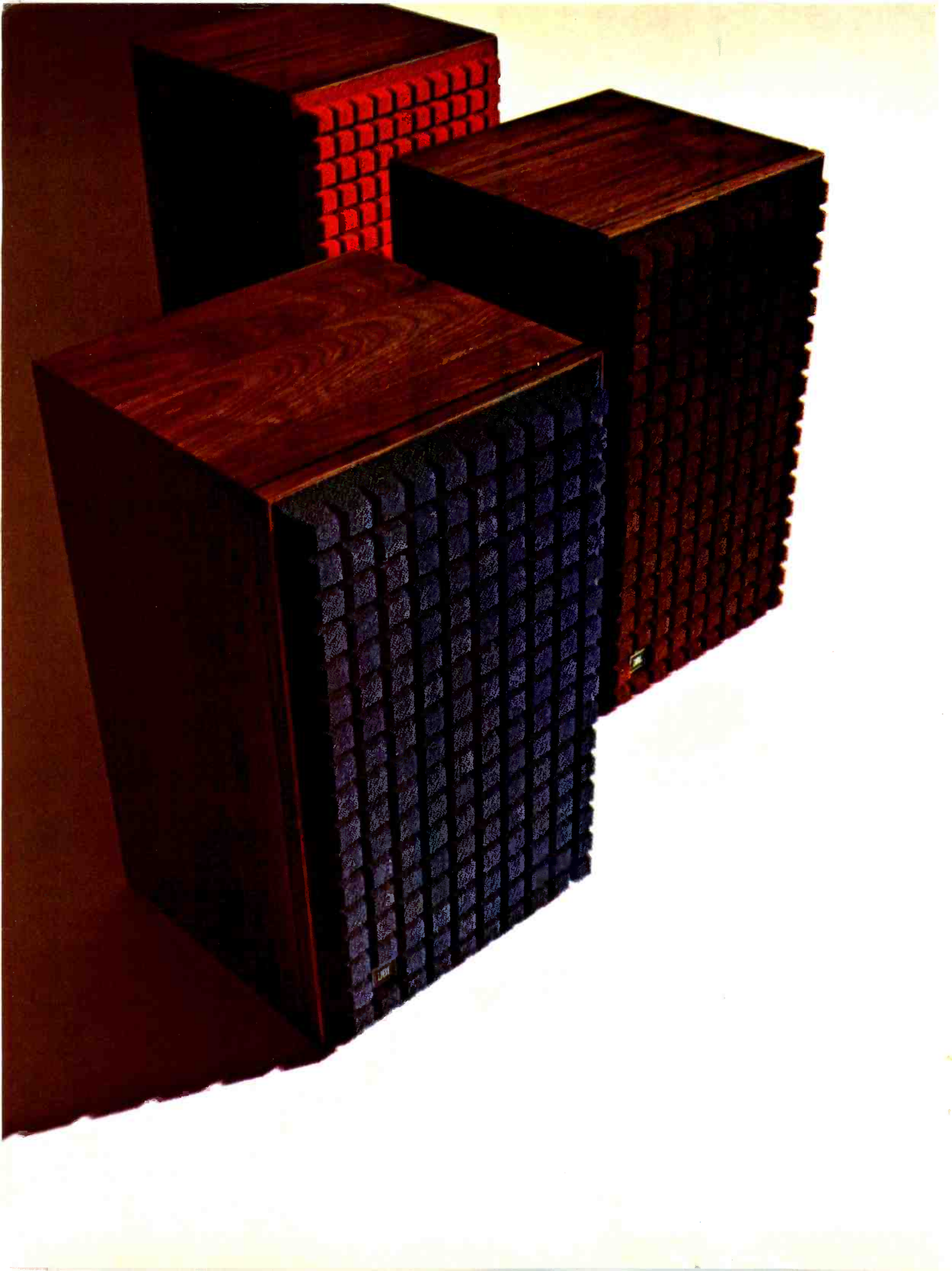
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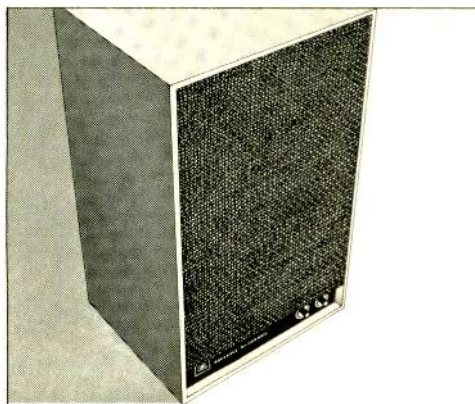
CIRCLE NO. 52 ON READER SERVICE CARD



JBL's Century 100.

(In two years it became the most successful loudspeaker we ever made, and it's not even an original. It's a copy.)

About five years ago, we developed a new speaker — a studio monitor for the professional recording business. It had the big sound that the studios required, but it was a compact. The size of a bookshelf speaker.

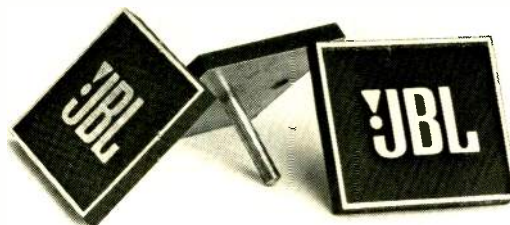


The Original

JBL's 4310. Especially designed for control room installations. Available only through professional audio contractors.

Would it impress you to know that the top professional recording studios like Warner Brothers and Capitol and Elektra and MGM use JBL loudspeakers to record, play back, mix down and master their music? It's true.

Instant success.
(Very flattering, too. It's nice to have a talented, opinionated recording engineer pick your speaker to go with his \$100,000 sound system.)
We sold more than we



dreamed possible.

Then we figured out why:

The professionals were taking our studio monitors home, using them as bookshelf speakers.

Well, if you were JBL, what would you do?

That's what we did.

JBL's Century 100. \$273 each. The size of a compact studio monitor. Almost its twin, in fact, except for oiled walnut and a sculptured grille that adds texture and shape and color.

Come hear JBL's Century 100. But ask for it by name. With its success, some of our admiring competitors have begun using words like "professional" and "studio monitor" to describe their speakers. They're only kidding.

Century 100. The perfect copy. From the people who own the original.

first came the word...



And then there was music. And then came Sony tape recorders to capture the words and music with perfect fidelity. Right from the start, Sony has always been first with the best, the newest and the broadest

selection of tape recording equipment in the world. Sony tape recorders, Sony accessories, Sony microphones, Sony recording tape. We could go on and on and on. We are.

SONY. Ask anyone.

Brought to you by **SUPERSCOPE.**



CIRCLE NO. 63 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The Koss HV/1LC.

A new twist to High Velocity Sound.



When you've already developed the finest high velocity Stereophone in the world, you've got to come up with a new twist to top it. And that's the HV/1LC. The world's first lightweight, hear-thru, high velocity Stereophone with volume-balance controls on each ear cup. So when you want to hear more of the violins and less of the bassoons, they're right at your fingertips.

But then, the new HV/1LC isn't the world's finest high velocity Stereophone just because it features volume-balance controls. It's a revolutionary new design concept that vents the back sound waves thru the rear of the cup without raising the resonance or inhibiting transient response. So you can hear your favorite music like you've never heard it before and still be able to hear what's going on around you.



And speaking of sound, the HV/1LC is in a class all its own. Why? Because Koss engineers not only created a unique new ceramic magnet, but they also developed a way to decrease the mass of the moving diaphragm assemblies. The result is a fidelity and wide-range frequency response unmatched by any other lightweight, hear-thru Stereophone.

But there's only one way to hear the difference the HV/1LC makes. See your Audio Specialist for a live demonstration.

And write for our free full-color catalog, c/o Virginia Lamm. The new HV/1LC in ebony teak and champagne gold with rosewood grained inlays should add a beautiful twist to your favorite music.



KOSS stereophones

from the people who invented Stereophones.

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CIRCLE NO. 23 ON READER SERVICE CARD