

# Stereo Review

OCTOBER 1975 • ONE DOLLAR

## BUYER'S GUIDE TO THE NEW TURNTABLES



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 PHENIX CITY AL 36867  
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# receivers the world

Pioneer believes that any objective comparison of quality/performance/price between our new SX-1010, SX-939 and SX-838 AM-FM stereo receivers and any other fine receivers will overwhelmingly indicate Pioneer's outstanding superiority and value.

## Our most powerful ever.

Pioneer uses the most conservative power rating standard: minimum continuous power output per channel, into 8 ohm loads, across the full audio spectrum from 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz.

Despite this conservatism, the SX-1010 far surpasses any unit that has come before it with an unprecedented 100 watts of power per channel, minimum RMS, at no more than 0.1% total harmonic distortion. Closely following are the SX-939 (70 watts RMS per channel, minimum) and the SX-838 (50 watts RMS per channel, minimum), both with no more than 0.3% total harmonic distortion. Dual power supplies driving direct-coupled circuitry maintain consistent high power output with positive stability. A fail-

safe circuit protects speakers and circuitry against damage from overloading.

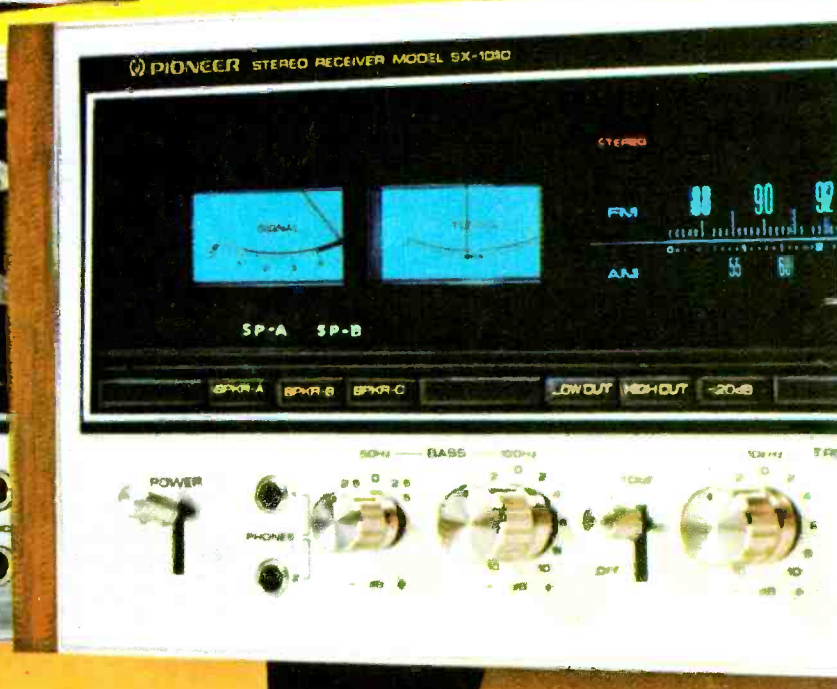
## Outstanding specifications for flawless reception

FM reception poses no challenge to the exceptionally advanced circuitry of these fine instruments. Their FM tuner sections are designed with MOS FETs, ceramic filters and phase lock loop circuitry. The result is remarkable sensitivity, selectivity and capture ratio that brings in stations effortlessly, clearly and with maximum channel separation.

	SX-1010	SX-939	SX-838
FM Sensitivity (IHF) (the lower the better)	1.7uV	1.8uV	1.8uV
Selectivity (the higher the better)	90dB	80dB	80dB
Capture Ratio (the lower the better)	1dB	1dB	1dB
Signal/Noise Ratio (the higher the better)	72dB	70dB	70dB

## Total versatility plus innovations

Only your listening interests limit the capabilities of these extraordinary receivers. They have terminals for every conceivable accommodation: records, tape, microphones, headsets — plus Dolby and 4-channel multiplex connectors. Completely unique on the SX-1010 and SX-939 is tape-to-tape duplication while listening simultaneously to another program source. The SX-838 innovates with its Recording



# There can be only one best.



# The finest stereo has ever known.





3,025 possible tonal compensations with unique twin stepped tone controls (SX-1010, SX-939)

Selector that permits FM recording while listening to records and vice versa. Up to three pairs of speakers may be connected to each model.

INPUTS	SX-1010	SX-939	SX-838
Tape monitor/4-ch. adaptor	3	2	2
Phono	2	2	2
Microphone	2	2	1
Auxiliary	1	1	1
Noise reduction	1	1	1
OUTPUTS			
Speakers	3	3	3
Tape Rec./4-ch. adaptor	3	2	2
Headsets	2	2	1
Noise reduction	1	1	1
4-channel MPX	1	1	1

### Master control system capability

Pioneer's engineers have surpassed themselves with a combination of control features never before found in a single receiver. All three units include: pushbutton function selection with illuminated readouts on the ultra wide tuning dial, FM and audio muting, loudness contour, hi/low filters, dual tuning meters and a dial dimmer.

Never before used on a receiver are the twin stepped bass and treble tone controls found on the SX-1010 and SX-939. They offer over 3,000 tonal variations. A tone defeat switch provides flat response instantly throughout the audio spectrum. The SX-838 features

switchable turnover bass and treble controls for more precise tonal compensation for room acoustics and other program source characteristics.

In their respective price ranges, these are unquestionably the finest values in stereo receivers the world has ever known. Audition their uniqueness at your Pioneer dealer. SX-1010 — under \$990\*; SX-939 — under \$600\*; SX-838 — under \$500\*. Prices include cabinets.

### Also quality-built and more moderately priced.

Pioneer's line of receivers presents equally outstanding values starting at under \$250. Shown here are the SX-535 — under \$300\*; SX-636 — under \$350\*; SX-737 — under \$400\*. All with cabinets.

U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp.,  
75 Oxford Drive, Moonachie,  
New Jersey 07074  
West: 13300 S. Estralla, Los Angeles  
90248/Midwest: 1500 Greenleaf,  
Elk Grove Village, Ill. 60007/Canada:  
S.H. Parker Co.



SX-535



SX-636



SX-737

\*The value shown is for informational purposes only and includes the following cabinet construction: SX-1010, walnut veneered top and side panels; all other models use walnut grained vinyl top and side panels. The actual resale price will be set by the individual Pioneer dealer at his option.



# The best way to listen to a speaker is with your eyes open.

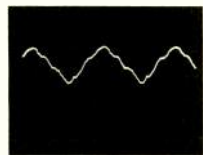
All speakers are not alike.

Even speakers that appear similar can sound very different.

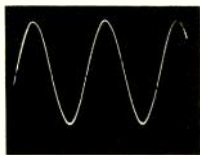
For example, when you compare a B·I·C VENTURI™ speaker system with others, you'll be astonished at how much more sound it delivers...even from a modest amplifier:

Behind the speaker grille you'll see the Venturi name over a cabinet slot that looks like a bass reflex "port" but isn't. "Bass reflex" speakers, whether they use slots, holes, or shelves, merely resonate an enclosure to a single frequency, achieving bass emphasis only at that one point.

The opening you see on a B·I·C VENTURI cabinet is the terminus of the Venturi path inside the enclosure (U.S. Pat. 3892288). It works as an acoustic transformer to produce bass energy as much as 140 times greater than would otherwise be achievable from a woofer alone in the same size cabinet.



A—Shows output of low frequency driver when driven at a freq. of 22 Hz. Sound pressure reading, 90 dB. Note poor wave form.

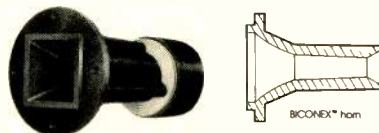


B—Output of B·I·C VENTURI coupled duct. (under the same conditions as Fig. A) Sound pressure reading 111.5 dB (140 times more output than Fig. A) Note non-distorted appearance.

Oscilloscope photos reveal that a B·I·C VENTURI speaker actually eliminates harmonic distortion from reproduced tones, literally purifying the sound and resulting in clean, tight and extended reproduction. That you can hear!

Notice the square-shaped mouth of the exclusive BICONEX™ midrange horn (pat. pend.). This unit is exceptionally efficient. It has remarkably smooth, uncolored response because of its unique conical/exponential flare. It is made of an inert substance to avoid "ringing" and spurious resonances. But,

equally important, it provides wide-angle dispersal of sound in both horizontal and vertical planes, making speaker positioning non-critical. There is a super tweeter that operates in only the last octave for accurate musical timbre.



Even the control panel on the front of the baffle board contains a surprise. It controls an exclusive built-in device (pat. pend.) which compensates for the normal loss in hearing of bass and treble tones, (figure C) at various listening levels. Regardless of amplifier loudness settings, you hear all the music, all the time. This is accomplished automatically with the switch in the "on" position, or, you can adjust tonal balance manually for the type of music you play or the kind of sound you prefer.

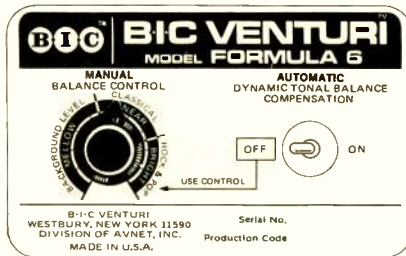


Fig. C

There's really much more to B·I·C VENTURI speakers such as how they compare with other design types in performance, and the way they function in a high fidelity system.

If you want to read some interesting and informative literature, ask your franchised B·I·C VENTURI dealer for a copy of our new 20-page consumer guide to loudspeaker performance, or write to us: B·I·C VENTURI Westbury, N.Y. 11590.

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**B·I·C VENTURI™**



FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW

# Stereo Review®

OCTOBER 1975 • VOLUME 35 • NUMBER 4

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For several years, independent surveys of component owners—audio experts, hifi editors, record reviewers, readers of the music/equipment magazines—have shown that more of them own Duals than any other turntable. This is quite a testimonial to Dual's quality performance, reliability and fully automatic convenience.

We believe the new 1249 will add even more serious music lovers to the roster of Dual owners, as it provides every feature, innovation and refinement long associated with Dual turntables plus some new ones. And all in a newly designed chassis that complements the superb design and meticulous

engineering of the 1249.

The low-mass tubular tonearm pivots in a true four-point gyroscopic gimbal suspended within a rigid frame. All tonearm settings are easily made to the exacting requirements of the finest cartridges. The tonearm is vernier-adjustable for precise balance; tracking pressure is calibrated in tenths of a gram; anti-skating is separately calibrated for conical, elliptical and CD-4 styli.

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Of course, if you already own a current Dual, you won't really need a new turntable for several years. However, we would understand if you now feel you must have nothing less than the new 1249. \$279.95, less base.

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## EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

By WILLIAM ANDERSON

### CASSETTE PROGRESS

NO ONE, in all likelihood, is born a skeptic, though life surely teaches us skepticism in a hurry. Thus, perhaps even before we find out about Santa Claus, we discover that small boxes do not always contain good things. But only a confirmed doubter, far gone in refined and practiced incredulity, will have made a more sophisticated discovery about boxes, that the fault may lie not with the contents, but with the box itself, the packaging. The tape cassette would seem to offer some proof of this thesis: a marvel of electronic and mechanical ingenuity, it is both aurally and visually attractive—but it is, well, just too *small*.

Now there are advantages to smallness, certainly, easy portability and spatial economy principal among them, but it seems to me that the cassette does suffer, as the aspirin box once did, because of its size. It is, for example, an apparently irresistible temptation to the light-fingered shopper, with the natural result that retailers have to keep their little boxes locked up in sales-limiting look-but-don't-touch cases—rather like penny candy. And they are only slightly easier to keep track of at home, even though you may have gone to the trouble and expense of building or buying tricky storage cabinets. Another problem, particularly with classical tapes, has been the difficulty of providing "jacket" notes, librettos, lyric sheets, translations, and the like in type that can be read without a magnifying glass and on paper that will still fit into the tiny boxes. This impasse has generally been avoided in practice, as tapers know, by omitting the notes. The multiple set has also been a poser for cassette producers—you can get a lot of music on one tape, but not yet a full-size opera, Passion, or oratorio. The solution so far with the few multiples we have seen (issuing companies have mostly abstained, of course) has been to squeeze two, three, or four cassettes into one fat little box—and there's just no way you can keep it from mucking up your standard one-cassette storage system if you have one.

What to do? Why, beef up that little box, of course, and that is just what Deutsche Grammophon has recently done with the first U.S. release (twenty-four titles, more to follow) in its "Prestige Box" series. They aren't really boxes at all, but rather books which open to reveal libretto (and/or notes) in a pocket on the left, the two (or three, as the case may be) cassettes affixed, in their usual crisp plastic containers, on the right. The "books" are a uniform 9½ inches tall, 3 inches deep when they contain two cassettes, 4½ when they contain three. Width varies slightly (around 1 inch) depending on the size of the booklet containing libretto or notes—that for *Don Giovanni*, in four languages, is 120 pages! The cover designs (book jackets?), specially done for the series, are attractive and the spines eminently readable. Inside covers (including the pocket for the booklet) are of brightly colored buckram to inhibit wear, and the only improvement I can think of is to chop a small diagonal off the lower right corner of the libretto to make it easier to slip it into its pocket. One can do that for oneself when the booklet is thin, but only a guillotine will work on, say, 120 pages of *Don Giovanni*.

The music in the first release is a stunning collection of basic high seriousness. Bach first: two complete *Brandenburgs* (one includes the four *Orchestral Suites*), the *B Minor Mass*, and both the *John and Matthew* (twice!) *Passions*. Beethoven: the five piano concertos, plus the *Ninth Symphony* (with *Egmont* and *Coriolan Overtures*). Also, Brahms' four symphonies, Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Creation*, Verdi's *Requiem*, and thirteen operas. I haven't heard them all, but every one of the half-dozen I did hear is superb, both technically (all are Dolby, of course) and musically. This to me spells cassette progress, and I urge producers of both blank and pre-recorded tapes to examine the ways in which this format can be adapted to their needs. The Cassette Era still beckons temptingly just over the horizon.

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Models 221, 331, 551, 661, 771, and 881



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Words, Words, Words

● I have made a game of covering your reviewers' initials at the end of reviews and guessing who generated each one. Noel Coppage's are eminently detectable and delectable no matter what the subject. And he has finally exposed himself literarily with his article on country-music word play (July). His own writing always seems to be characterized by a quick pun or some down-home metaphor that immediately makes the reader *feel* something, probably the same something he felt when he wrote the piece. I have been following N.C.'s reviews since I lived in Whitesville, Kentucky, so I know about the goat-on-the-church in Dundee, the Fordsville Trojans, the Laws brothers' gas station and all: thus when I read Noel's work I always seem to reach an empath. I would like to see him explore further the use of *authentic* Southern regional accents in both country and pop music. It might do a lot toward justifying them as viable means of communication rather than evidence of humble intellect.

PATRICK HARDESTY  
Chesterfield, Mo.

● Noel Coppage would have us believe that country music is the last great repository of Original Clever Lyrics but fails to make a case in his article. "Words, Words, Words" (July). His examples of supposedly great one-liners are mostly contrived, cutesy puns and gooey melodrama. Lyrics like "I got tears in muh ears from layin' on muh back, ka-ryin' in bed over yew" and those in Lynn Anderson's *Rose Garden* make the vast majority of country music garbage. I just don't feel like picking through the haystacks of junk for the needles of brilliant wit.

K. A. BORISKIN  
Milford, Mass.

*Mr. Coppage replies: Has Mr. Boriskin ever heard I Overlooked an Orchid While Looking for a Rose?*

### The Eagles

● It's a shame that such smooth-skinned softies as Steve Simels can make such rash comments about country-rock groups ("The Proficient Eagles," August). Perhaps he'd have a different viewpoint if he was out picking up rocks in the hot sun with the rest of us country folk. Country rock hasn't reached a

"dead end"; Mr. Simels' car merely ran out of gas at the city limits.

RICHARD QUEMERE  
Graves Mill, Va.

● The Teaneck Terror (Steve Simels) should stick to reviewing (and dreaming about) the Rolling Stones and the Kinks, his two pet bands, and leave the serious work for his able staff, who generally seem to have a bit of understanding of and insight into the various kinds of popular music. His attack on the Eagles (August) and on country-rock in general is typical of most East Coast, city-bred, rock-and-roll fans' attitudes. They smile scornfully at the merest mention of the word "country," envisioning either "Hee-Haw" or Tex Ritter without the slightest knowledge or appreciation of the culture that produces music like the Eagles'. The "Cosmic Cowboy" image Mr. Simels ridicules is not some PR hype for a bunch of painted, screaming, "decadent-chic" clowns, but a way of life. I wonder if Mr. Simels has ever seen a tequila sunrise after camping out in the desert—one that wasn't poured into a glass. I wonder if he has ever seen the sage and the cactus and the "million stars" at night or a horse that wasn't in a race or under a cop—or even a live country-rock band. The Eagles portray the West in much the same way the Allman Brothers Band represents the South with their dancing, thinking, and loving music, each a style within a style.

KENNETH M. LEONARD  
Tucson, Ariz.

*Mr. Simels replies: This cowboy business strikes me as being about as silly as the old "Can white men sing the blues?" argument that used to rage in the pages of Rolling Stone. Nonetheless, as far as the Eagles go, I'd like to just mention that Glenn Frey was born and bred in Detroit, cut his musical teeth on the kind of hard rock represented by Detroit bands like the MC 5, and has stated that he agreed to call the group the Eagles because he thought it sounded like the name of a street gang! So much for his firsthand knowledge of tequila sunrises. I suspect the "country" influence on the Eagles' music has as much to do with Asylum Records' David Geffen's business acumen as anything else. In any event, it is role playing that we get on albums like "Desperado," and, unlike Mr.*

*Leonard, I just don't find the Eagles believable in the part. This is a problem I never had with, say, Gram Parsons or the Byrds. Has Mr. Leonard heard the Byrds' "Sweetheart of the Rodeo"?*

● Steve Simels' review of the Eagles' "One of These Nights" (August) could only have resulted from hearing the title song too many times on the radio. The Eagles have developed into one of our finer bands, and they have made it apparent that terms like "country rock" should have been done away with long ago. If *Train Leaves Here This Morning* and *Peaceful Easy Feeling* from their first album are forgettable, I would like to know what isn't. Could it be that Mr. Simels is upset that the Eagles now command a larger audience than his beloved Byrds ever did?

BOB SILVEY  
North Hollywood, Calif.

● To answer Steve Simels' question in his review of the Eagles (August), I care very much if I ever hear *Tequila Sunrise* again. It is a beautiful song and I'm going to play it right now!

ANGELA ROTONDI  
Bloomfield, N.J.

### Simels' Back Pages

● I thought I was the *only* one still listening to "Beatles VI." And P.S.: the voice at the end of *Nowhere Man* harmonizing with John is Paul, not George.

ROBERT KURIS  
Whitestone, N.Y.

*Mr. Simels replies: Mr. Kuris is right, of course, but I was referring not to the vocal harmonizing, but the bell-like guitar harmonic George hits at the end of his solo.*

### The Pop Crew

● Thank you for Steve Simels. He has proven himself to be one of the most interesting and knowledgeable critics in the business. He is a little overly subjective, to be sure—but that's a hell of a lot better than some of our stuffy, boring L.A. critics. His article on the Rolling Stones (August) was truly sensitive and totally devoid of all the groupie nonsense which has become the standard fare of many. Your whole crew of pop reviewers deserves a lot of credit for making intelligent, thoughtful, and lively reports. Keep them coming!

MATT WRIGHT  
Los Angeles, Calif.

● I'd always suspected Popular Music Editor Steve Simels had more taste than he let on to—and "My Front Pages" (August) confirms that. I can dig it all, especially Carly Simon's legs.

PAUL FALON  
Ann Arbor, Mich.

### Stones, Stones, Stones

● Despite the fact that the Stones are one of the biggest hypes of this century, Steve Simels is content to laud their self-important, ultra-chic talent in his August column. Somehow he sees his way past flatted interviews and twelve-fifty seats at the Garden and finds something worth getting ecstatic over. I pay my respect to the roots, but I cannot possibly accept the Rolling Stones as all the rock world can offer until the "third coming" is upon us. The "third coming" died stillborn when the world realized that David Bowie can't sing

without an eight-track at his side. The Rolling Stones are no more than a parody of the bands making a living being parodies of the Rolling Stones.

DENNIS MCGRATH  
Kendall Park, N.J.

*Mr. Simels replies: Well maybe, except that few of those bands are making a living.*

#### Minnesota Microphones

● David Hall's article "The Minnesota Orchestra's Ravel" (August) leaves me rather confused. On the one hand he says "here are clarity . . . and a wonderful sense of space" and "Solo-instrument aural 'placement' is precise and clear . . . while the larger ensemble textures come through with fine transparency. . . ." On the other hand, he complains that in *Daphnis et Chloé*, *La Valse*, *Alborado del Gracioso*, etc., there is an apparent lack of "sonic focus."

Now what exactly is "sonic focus," later on also described as "precise focus"? Surely Mr. Hall does not mean that all sections in a symphonic orchestra should be miked and recorded separately in order to obtain a "clarity" which is not in the score to begin with. This would be hard to believe, as Mr. Hall has been an ardent proponent of the so-called one-microphone technique for classical recordings. In fact, the entire four-record Ravel set (Vox QSVBX 51300) was done with the same microphone placement. Once the balance in the control room was arrived at, dynamics and balances were adjusted internally within the orchestra as required. Sonic differences from one piece to another fortunately reflect Ravel's intentions rather than the producer/engineer-helping-along syndrome.

Finally, Mr. Hall is quite wrong when he says that the *a cappella* choir in *Daphnis* "should sound totally disembodied rather than so uncomfortably close." The superb St. Olaf choir was placed in the twentieth row of the audience for quad rear channels to get the distant effect needed. Disembodied no, distant perhaps, although the choir in performance is right on stage with the orchestra.

MARC J. AUBORT  
New York, N.Y.

*Mr. Hall replies: All of which goes to show, "syndrome" or no, that different producers might record the same work differently.*

#### Massenet Mania

● In view of the present Massenet revival, STEREO REVIEW readers might be interested in the Massenet Society. This organization was founded by soprano Stella Wright, whose sole interest is to perform rare Massenet works. If you'd like to join, write to Miss Stella Wright, Flat 2, 79 Linden Gardens, London W2C4, England.

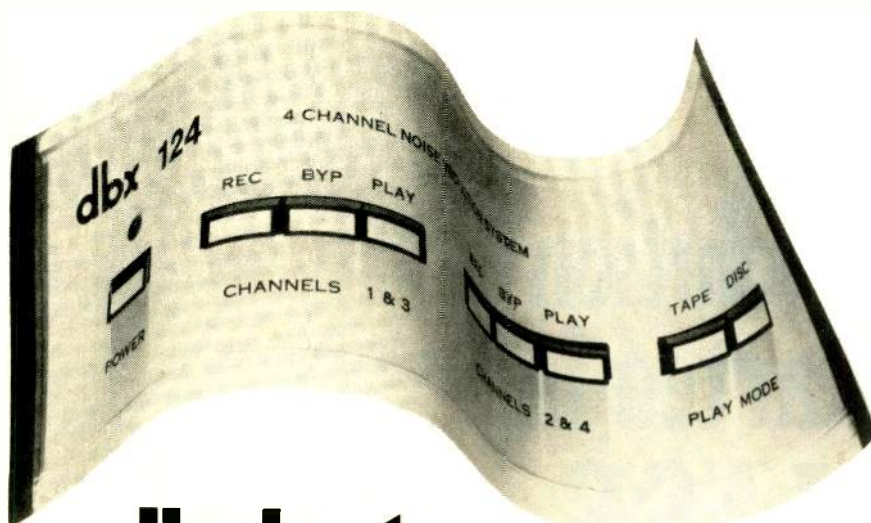
GERALDINE SEGAL  
Randallstown, Md.

#### Pulitzer Performance

● A small correction in the information regarding Dominick Argento (August, "Musical Honors"): his song cycle was premiered by Janet Baker in Orchestra Hall in Minnesota but with the piano accompaniment of Martin Issep, as scored, and not with the Minnesota Orchestra. At a reception after the premiere, I asked Mr. Issep if he might consider an orchestration, as it seemed the texture of the piano part might lend itself to this treatment.

(Continued on page 12)

OCTOBER 1975



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However, after talking at length, we both agreed that the work is more effective as Mr. Argento conceived it, and thus the Minnesota Orchestra will probably not have an opportunity to perform it in the future. As a further footnote, Miss Baker's recital was presented by the Schubert Club of St. Paul, which has been in continuous operation for more than ninety years and which presents several distinguished artists in recital each year.

DONALD L. ENGLE  
President, Minnesota Orchestra  
Minneapolis, Minn.

#### Hairy Loudspeakers

● Ralph Hodges' "Audio Basics" for August was probably the most concise and definitive report ever made on the hairy subject of loudspeakers. It is a gem like this that makes the other eleven issues worth waiting for. The "Speaker Placement" article by Roy Allison was also a winner.

And while I'm on the line, the July issue was outstanding because of the troubleshooting chart. This is an invaluable guide for the novice, who just has to be grateful that some previous know-it-alls have developed a respectable sense of system analysis for the beginner with a problem. I still believe a basic guide to *understanding* is what works . . . and what sells. So I thank you once again . . . a fine effort.

RICHARD MUELLER  
Tampa, Fla.

#### Good Soldier Kurka

● I enjoyed reading Paul Kresh's review of Robert Kurka's *The Good Soldier Schweik Suite* (August). However, Mr. Kurka did not die at fifty years of age as noted, but at the impossibly young age of thirty-three or thereabouts. The music world lost a great talent and a warm, gentle, and very bright young man as I knew him.

ELINOR KLEINER MARKS  
Summit, N.J.

According to Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians, *Mr. Kurka, born December 22, 1921, died December 12, 1957.*

#### Rossini's Stuffed Turkey

● I was delighted to see in Managing Editor William Livingstone's July Opera File some interest in Rossini and some justice done to his reputation. I am even more delighted to know that Mr. Livingstone is a Rossini enthusiast, and I share his fervent hope that *Le Comte Ory* will be reissued. Among the other operas we need to have recorded is *Armida*, which Cristina Deutekom sang at some festival half a dozen years ago in a kind of marvelous yodel. The tunes are delicious. And how about *Tancredi*, the original home of "I Tanti Palpitii"? Is the rest of it up to that aria?

Rossini said that after he became successful he wept only three times in his life: when his first opera was performed, when he heard Paganini play the prayer from *Moses*, and when a turkey stuffed with *paté de foie gras* fell overboard at a picnic on the water. A man with that kind of taste deserves all the support we can give him.

LOUIS T. MILIC  
Bratenahl, Ohio

#### Gloria Gaynor Again

● Concerning the little brouhaha in your letters column about the Gloria Gaynor album "Never Say Goodbye," I'd like to point out

how unusually successful it is as disco music. Instead of a token dance cut, the whole album was conceived from that perspective, and the producer did not bother with the subtleties that make a record listenable while lounging in one's living room. Judging from the reactions of the disco crowd, what is important are thick textures and a relentlessly danceable beat. Eight Voice of the Theater horns blasting onto a dance floor tend to overwhelm subtlety and precious detail. Those who have no inclination to throw dance parties needn't bother with this "wired-up Martha Reeves."

DARRELL THOMAS  
Vacaville, Ga.

#### Ray Noble

● Peter Reilly disparages the Pasadena Roof Orchestra in his August review as an apparent "attempt to parody the old and very great Ray Noble Orchestra" and wonders why EMI doesn't release some of this "splendid orchestra's" recordings. No doubt it has escaped Mr. Reilly's notice that six (and soon seven) discs of Ray Noble's Orchestra have in fact been issued in the U.S. by Monmouth-Evergreen in collaboration with EMI. They provide a fine sampling of Ray Noble's brilliant arranging gifts, Al Bowlly's (this is the correct spelling, not Mr. Reilly's Bowley) truly inimitable vocals, and the band's great performances. Here are the "elegance" and "heart" Mr. Reilly laments as being absent from the modern-day product.

WALTER DIEHL  
Great Neck, N.Y.

*Mr. Reilly replies: I am happy to know that Mr. Diehl's favorite orchestra (and mine) can be heard again, and sorry that spelling was never my best subject. But "Bowly" still looks a little peculiar, doesn't it?*

#### Composer as Interpreter

● Igor Stravinsky spoke often and at length of the composer's role as the only valid "interpreter" of his own works. Thus it is certainly surprising that Columbia would discontinue recordings of such vital works as *Threni*, *Agon*, *Persephone*, *Canticum Sacrum*, and the two larger works for pianoforte and orchestra. Also, no longer available to complement Robert Craft's Russian performance of *Les Noces* is a composer-conducted one (sung in English) with, as pianists, composers Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland, Lukas Foss, and Roger Sessions. If one performance of *Le Sacre du Printemps* can exist in no less than five formats, the reissuing of these other works must be possible.

MICHAEL CLAY BRUNSON  
Monroe, La.

*Well, ninety-five per cent of classical releases don't break even; perhaps this Sacre does. Music Editor James Goodfriend will be examining the implications of this interesting little statistic in his Going on (off?) Record column next month.*

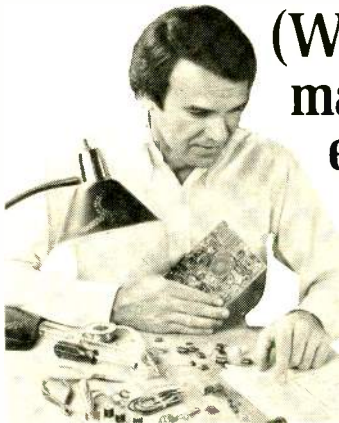
#### One More for Rodrigo

● Regarding David Hall's July article on Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*, there is one other 1959 recording, an absolutely unique and superb transcription for trumpet and orchestra by Miles Davis and Gil Evans. Davis' horn has a nerve-icing quality unfathomed by any guitar recording I have yet heard.

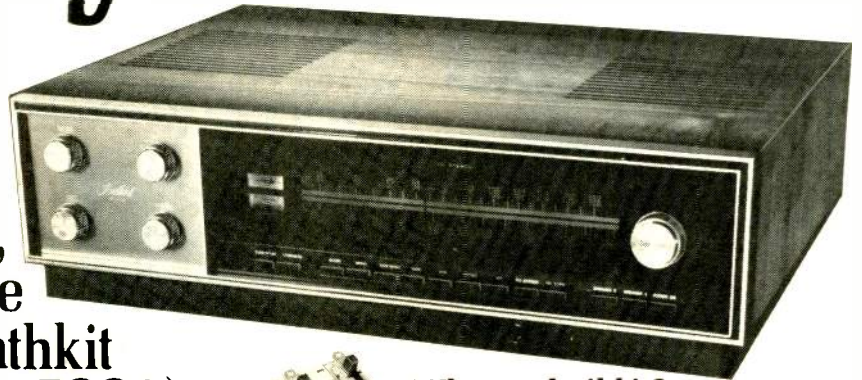
JOHN HOGLE  
San Jose, Calif.



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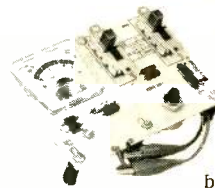
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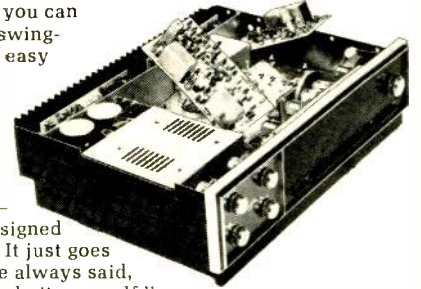


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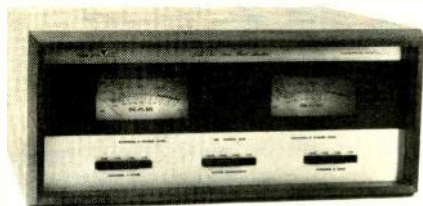
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amplifier. Rated power is available over a bandwidth of 10 to 30,000 Hz with a maximum of 0.1 per cent harmonic distortion and 0.05 per cent intermodulation distortion. An input of 1.5 volts drives the amplifier to full output, and the input impedance is 50,000 ohms. The signal-to-noise ratio is greater than 100 dB. The amplifier has a minimum damping factor of 150.

The Mark XXV has two large front-panel meters for indicating output levels, calibrated both in watts and decibels. Three rows of four pushbuttons set the gain of each of the two channels (0, -3, -6, or -12 dB) and adjust the meter sensitivity (0, -6, -12, or -24 dB). Internally, the Mark XXV employs eight output transistors per channel, wired in a series-parallel configuration. A cooling fan is mounted in the heat-sink assembly for forced air circulation through the fins. A relay with a 5-second delay before activation is installed in the speaker lines to prevent turn-on transients from reaching the speakers. The amplifier is available in both consumer (Mark XXV, shown) and professional (Mark 2500) versions, the latter with rack-mounting slots and black face plate and handles. Price: \$1,250. A wood cabinet is \$44 extra.

Circle 115 on reader service card

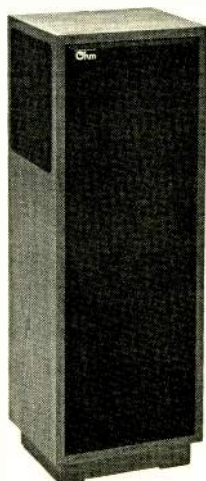
## Ohm G Speaker System

The new Model G speaker system from Ohm Acoustics has what is called an "abbreviated" Walsh driver measuring just 8 inches in diameter and 9 inches in height, as compared with the 12 x 16-inch dimensions of the Ohm F driver. As in the Model F, the driver operates according to the "wave-transmission-line" principle. Voice-coil impulses travel downward through the inverted cone as concentric ripples; their velocity in the cone material and the included angle of the cone are so related to the velocity of sound in air that a phase-coherent acoustic waveform is generated. Radiation of the driver is omnidirectional in the horizontal plane, and the Ohm G enclosure has grille-covered openings on all four upper sides to permit this.

The Ohm G differs from previous Walsh designs in its low-frequency propagation. In-

stead of a sealed cabinet, the Ohm G employs a 1.05-cubic-foot enclosure with a 10-inch passive radiator. In normal installation the passive cone faces the rear wall; it has significant output only at 64 Hz and below. At lower frequencies the passive radiator is responsible for most of the system's output, which has the effect of reducing the excursion requirements for the Walsh driver and appreciably increasing the electro-acoustic efficiency of the system.

The frequency response of the Ohm G is 32 to 19,000 Hz  $\pm 4$  dB; impedance ranges from 4.3 to 18 ohms, with a nominal rating of 6 ohms. In an anechoic environment the Ohm G produces an 87-dB output at a distance of 1 meter with a 1-watt input at any audio frequency above 30 Hz. The enclosure is rectan-



gular, with dimensions of 12½ x 35 x 11½ inches. Optional finishes are oiled walnut veneer (\$350) or walnut-grain vinyl (\$300).

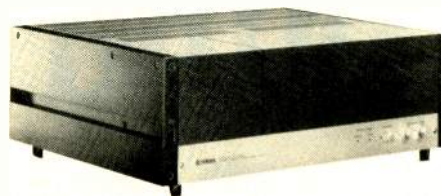
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## Yamaha Model B-1 Stereo Power Amplifier

Yamaha's new Model B-1 power amplifier is an all-FET (field-effect transistor) unit employing the newly developed vertical power FET's in output and driver stages. Benefits attributed to FET circuitry include high linearity with reduced generation of high-order distortion products within the amplifier, lower negative-feedback requirements with consequent improved electrical stability, and superior transient response and thermal stability.

The B-1 is constructed on a chassis measuring 18 x 6 x 11½ inches, with completely separate power supplies for each channel. Parallel inputs permit either direct coupling from the preamplifier or the more conventional capacitive coupling. The amplifier also has a subsonic filter acting below 10 Hz with a slope of 12 dB per octave. Spring-loaded connectors for five pairs of speakers are provided, and these are intended to be switched by an optional control panel (the Model UC-1) which has controls, acting at the amplifier inputs, for matching the acoustic levels of the

speakers. The UC-1 has connectors that plug directly into the front face of the B-1, or it can be used as a remote-control unit linked through an 18-foot cable that is supplied. Also incorporated in the UC-1 are peak-reading meters for the two channels, calibrated in decibels and watts, and power and filter switches



that take over these functions from the corresponding controls on the B-1 itself.

Rated power output of the B-1 is 150 watts per channel, both channels driven simultaneously into 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000 Hz. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion at rated power are 0.1 per cent (0.04 per cent or less at lesser power outputs). The signal-to-noise ratio (A-weighted) is 110 dB. The amplifier's damping factor with 8-ohm loads is 100 at 1,000 Hz, and the input impedance is 50,000 ohms with a sensitivity of about 0.75 volt for full output. The B-1 weighs 96 pounds. Price: \$1,600. The optional UC-1 control panel (18 x 6 x 2¾ inches) costs \$250.

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## Garrard Z2000B Automatic Turntable

A novel belt-drive system recently developed by Garrard is one of the principal features of the new Garrard Z2000B automatic turntable. The belt is not turned directly by the motor pulley, but is instead driven by an intermediate idler. This permits the use of a simple, mechanical speed-change and fine-tuning mechanism (a stepped, tapered motor shaft bearing on the idler) such as is found in many idler-driven automatic turntables.

The Z2000B is a two-speed (33⅓ and 45 rpm) model with a built-in illuminated stroboscope to assist in adjusting its vernier speed control at the two speeds. A stack of up to six discs is accommodated on its two-point support system, and a manual spindle that turns with the platter is included for single-play operation. The main controls of the turntable are three lever tabs to select manual or automatic operation, cue the tone arm (the cueing mechanism is damped in both directions of travel), and initiate and interrupt automatic play. The platter is an 11½-inch nonferrous casting that weighs 5 pounds; it is driven by Garrard's familiar Synchro-Lab motor. An improved version of the Zero Tracking-Error tone arm is also used in the turntable. The magnetic anti-skating system is now calibrated for elliptical and CD-4 styli, and a resettable stylus timer has been added to indicate how many disc sides have been played (alerting the user to have his stylus examined

(Continued on page 16)

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CIRCLE NO. 15 ON READER SERVICE CARD

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Circle 118 on reader service card

## 3M Cassette Edit/Repair Kit

A compact splicing and repair kit for cassettes, self-contained in a narrow 5 3/4-inch plastic splicing block, is being marketed by 3M. Inside the hollow block (with removable cover) are six short lengths of splicing tape, plus six adhesive-tipped picks that can be inserted into a cassette to snag and withdraw a broken tape end. Splices can then be made on the block, or editing can be done with the assistance of a single-edged razor blade. One end of the block is molded into the form of a hex spindle for rotating the cassette hubs by



hand. The 3M kit comes blister-packed on a cardboard sheet with complete illustrated instructions included. Price: \$3.10.

## Pioneer HPM-200 Speaker System

The high-polymer film electro-acoustic transducer developed by Pioneer and first used in a stereo headset has now found application in a new speaker system, the Model HPM-200.

The high-polymer material exhibits a piezoelectric effect when an a.c. voltage is applied, expanding and contracting in the plane of the film's surface. Pioneer has formed sheets of the film into upright cylinders. The expansion and contraction of the film causes the cylinder to pulse radially, producing sound.

Two HPF drivers (large and small) are employed as tweeters in the HPM-200; they operate at 2,000 Hz up with a crossover between them at 5,000 Hz. Since they are omnidirectional in the lateral plane, they occupy an upper section in the 32-inch-high enclosure with acoustically transparent openings on all sides. The system also uses a 2 1/2-inch soft-dome tweeter for the range from 700 to 2,000 Hz and two 10-inch woofers with different resonance frequencies, each in its own sealed sub-enclosure. The cones are composed of a mixture of conventional pulps and carbon



fibers, which are said to provide exceptional rigidity. One woofer covers the range from 25 to 100 Hz while the other operates from 35 to 700 Hz.

The HPM-200 has a frequency response of 25 to 25,000 Hz and a power-handling capability of 100 watts continuous, 200 watts program. Nominal system impedance is 6 ohms (5.5 ohms minimum). Crossover slopes at all dividing frequencies are 12 dB per octave. The speaker is designed to be used in a conventional system or to be tri-amplified by means of an electronic crossover, with separate power amplifiers driving the woofers, mid-range, and tweeters. The HPM-200's floor-standing enclosure has a cloth grille in a shallow V configuration with the driver-mounting panel angled slightly upwards. Dimensions are 29 x 32 x 19 inches. Controls on the system adjust the outputs of the HPF tweeters separately over a ±3-dB range in five steps and the mid-range output over a ±1.5-dB range in three steps. Price: \$500.

Circle 119 on reader service card

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901 cabinet is walnut veneer on particle board.

# AUDIO QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

By LARRY KLEIN *Technical Editor*



## Double-Dolby Dubbing

**Q.** Consider the following situation: I want to dub a Dolbyized reel-to-reel tape onto a cassette. Should I decode the signal from my open-reel machine and then re-encode it with the Dolby circuits in my cassette deck, or should I feed the Dolbyized open-reel recording into the cassette machine with all Dolby circuits shut off? I've tried it both ways, and the best results occur when I activate the Dolby circuits in both units. In other words, I decode the output of the reel-to-reel unit and then encode the signal as it is being fed into the cassette. However, this seems like unnecessary processing. Is it?

JOHN KADOR  
Durham, N.C.

**A.** Your observation is correct; best results are achieved in duplicating tapes when you decode the Dolbyized signal and then re-encode when making the copy. Although this may seem like a redundant process, it is necessary because accurate decoding of a Dolbyized signal can only be achieved if the decoder "tracks" the encoder both in signal level and frequency. When you copy a Dolbyized signal, the odds are that it is recorded on the new tape at a higher or lower level than on the original tape. This can confuse the Dolby decoding circuits, because the Dolby-level reference point has shifted. In addition, any frequency aberration that occurs in the signal after the encoding (because of the use of a hotter tape for the copy, for example) would be emphasized by the decoding process. In short, if an encoded signal is not fed to the decoder circuits at exactly the same reference level at all frequencies that it had when encoded, then the Dolby circuits simply cannot react properly. The result is a diminution of the noise-reduction potential of the Dolby circuits and some high-frequency boost (or loss) in playback of low-level (soft) audio signals.

## Distorted Views

**Q.** Much of the equipment evaluation in your magazine is based on the degree of deviation from the accurate reproduction of a sine wave. The various modes of distortion are given in percentages of such deviations. Yet, isn't it true that any musical instrument manifests at least some distortion of the sinusoidal waveform and isn't such deviation to be expected? Although such deviations from an ideal sine wave may be measurable in a

laboratory, they have absolutely no meaning in musical listening enjoyment. The ear is the only final judge.

G. M. KOSOLAPOFF  
Auburn, Alabama

**A.** Mr. Kosolapoff's letter shows a basic confusion between sound production and reproduction. It is true that one rarely finds a pure sine wave (meaning a tone without any harmonic content) among natural sounds or even those produced by musical instruments. However, this fact has nothing to do with what we demand of our audio equipment. Ideally, a component should be able to do a perfect job of amplification—or transduction—of any audio signal, whether it be a sine wave from a signal generator, a trill from a Stradivarius violin, or the mating call of an impassioned yak. My definition of "perfect" is this context is: good enough that trained critical ears cannot detect any difference in quality between the component's input and output signals. Note that there is no attempt to define in numbers how good is good enough. We just don't know enough about the sensitivities of the ear to various kinds of waveform distortions to state with assurance, for example, that x per cent of any given type of distortion is audible or inaudible and under what circumstances. Of course, it's easy enough to determine that gross distortions of one type or another are readily audible, but when you get below 5 per cent or so, then the nature of the distortion, the complexity of the program material (or test signal), the acuity of the listener, and the ability of the other components to pass on whatever fine distinctions exist, can play a determining role in whether or not a measurable distortion is also audible.

To return to Mr. Kosolapoff, he almost touched on a matter of real concern to many audio engineers: the validity of the commonly used test signals as indicators of component quality. All of the distortion test procedures work the same way. A signal (or signals) of known characteristics is fed into the component. The signal(s) at the output of the component is analyzed to determine the degree to which it has been undesirably modified by the action of the component. Although the percentage numbers provided by the analyzing instruments do correlate somewhat with the perceptions of trained listeners, the correlation is far from absolute. Many investigators think the problem arises from lack of a test signal that properly simulates the characteris-

tics of music. Others feel that the available test signals are adequate, but that the effect of the component on them is not analyzed in sufficient detail to disclose the audibly significant factors. Both may be right. Given all of the above, we've come to an area where Mr. Kosolapoff and I agree. For the present, the ear is the final judge. But, unfortunately, the acuity, the consistency, and the "taste" of the ears making the judgment must also be carefully evaluated, and that is a whole 'nother ball game.

## Equalization for 78's

**Q.** I am taping a number of 78-rpm discs and am trying to locate a listing of the old equalization curves used by the various recording companies so that I can compensate for them with my graphic equalizer. Do you know where I could find such a list?

JOSHUA P. HILL  
New York, N.Y.

**A.** For many listeners, the search for the "correct" record-playback equalization seems to have achieved the status of a holy quest. But consider: every time a recording engineer or producer twitches a frequency-equalization knob during the recording or mixing process he is, in effect, injecting his own deviation from the recommended RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) equalization curves. And any time you second-guess the engineer (it is frequently necessary to do so) by adjusting your tone controls, you are in a sense departing from his notion of the proper RIAA equalization.

During the 78-rpm days and the early LP days, the recording-equalization situation was quite chaotic. There were at least seven or eight different equalizations in common use, and many preamplifiers had two separate controls—one to set the low-frequency turnover and the other the high-frequency rolloff—to be manipulated according to the recording company's notion of how it should be done. Frequently, a change in chief engineers would result in a change in a company's record equalization; the same record label might therefore require any of several different equalizations, depending on the date of a particular pressing.

In the light of all this, it seems pointless to be concerned about duplicating the original specified equalization for each specific disc. But there are other considerations also. All these discs were engineered to play through what would today be thought of as very low-fidelity phonographs. The equalizations employed were intended to get the best possible performance despite the technical recording and playback limitations of the day. It doesn't necessarily make sense therefore to duplicate the old equalization curve when the disc is going to be played through modern equipment.

Why not simply adjust your equalizer until you get the best possible sound from each disc as heard through your system and make your tapes using those settings? If that idea strikes you as cheating or diminishing the "authenticity" of the original, then I would suggest that your only recourse would be to find a phonograph of the same vintage as your discs and do a "live" recording of its acoustic output.

Incidentally, I'm sure that you are aware that many of the old 78's were not recorded at exactly 78 rpm. Therefore, if the music seems a little sharp or flat, try adjusting the playing speed slightly up or down before applying the equalization.



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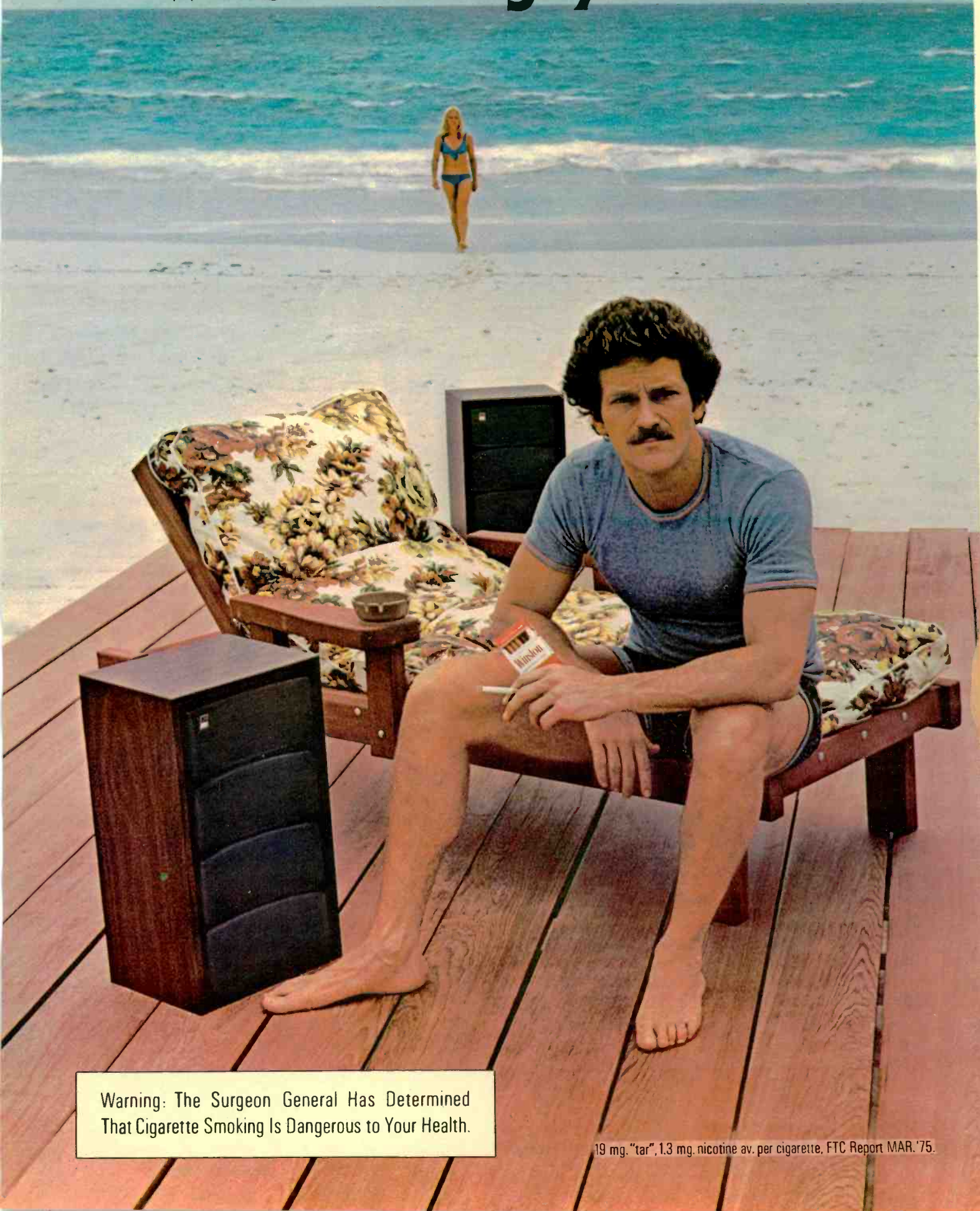
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# Crown

WHEN LISTENING BECOMES AN ART  
CIRCLE NO. 12 ON READER SERVICE CARD

## AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES



### GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS—22

- **Micro-** is a prefix meaning one millionth, as in a *microvolt* (millionth of a volt). A *micron* is a millionth of a meter.
- **Mil, milli-** both mean one thousandth. A *mil* is one thousandth of an inch—a familiar unit in specifications of tape thickness and phono-stylus dimensions. The prefix *milli-* (millisecond, millivolt) designates one thousandth of whatever unit of measure it is attached to.
- **Mix** (or mixdown) is the process of combining two or more audio signals in carefully chosen proportions to create a single signal with the desired instrumental and frequency balance. The device usually used for mixing—as well as the person doing it—is called a *mixer*.
- **Mixer**, an audio control unit whose basic function is to combine two or more audio signals into a single composite signal, is most familiar to audiophiles in the form of a *microphone mixer*. Such a unit permits the outputs of a number of microphones to be adjusted in level and combined (mixed) for recording on one or two (or four) channels. The simplest mixers are small, passive (that is, not powered) units; the most elaborate are the large mixing *consoles*, used in sound studios, which can reduce sixteen or more inputs to two or four channels, adding equalization and artificial reverb to each input when desired.
- **Modulation** is the imposing of a signal on some type of transmission or storage medium—a radio carrier, record groove, magnetic tape, etc. Occasionally you'll encounter references to an *unmodulated* record groove (meaning simply a straight, smooth groove with no audio information inscribed in it) or an *unmodulated* radio signal (meaning that the carrier embodies no audio signal in the form of frequency or amplitude modulation). On the other hand, 100 per cent modulation means that the medium is carrying the strongest signal it is capable of handling or, in the case of radio, the strongest signal legally allowed. (Modulation also has a specific musical meaning: a change of key within a piece of music.)
- **Mono** is a word freely used as a substitute for *monaural*, which is unacceptable to careful users of language, and *monophonic*, which is correct but somewhat unfamiliar to many readers. In either case it means single-channel sound, in contrast to *stereophonic* (two-channel) and *quadraphonic* (four-channel).
- **Moving coil, moving iron, moving magnet** are all designations for different types of transduction systems used in generating the electrical output of a magnetic phono cartridge. All magnetic cartridges derive their outputs from the relative motion of a magnetic field and a coil of wire. Sometimes the stylus moves the magnet, sometimes it moves the coils, and sometimes it moves a soft-iron "armature" that varies the magnetic flux impinging on the coils.
- **Multipath** refers to the reception of the same radio signal (by a receiving antenna) from several different sources at the same time. Typically, one source is the *direct* broadcast from the transmitting antenna, which follows a straight-line path to the reception site. The other sources are *reflections* of the signal, usually caused by large natural objects or structures in the vicinity, and frequently arriving from other directions. Thus a single broadcast can find its way to the receiver via *multiple paths*.
- Multipath reception is undesirable because the reflections, having traveled a longer distance than the direct signal, arrive "late" at the receiver and interact with the direct signal in ways that cause noise, distortion, and loss of stereo separation. Practical cures for multipath include use of a directional receiving antenna, a reception site free of reflection-causing objects, and a tuner with good interference rejection.

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# Technics

by Panasonic



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CIRCLE NO. 46 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK



## TAPE BACKINGS

**N**EW, improved oxides and smoother, more uniform coatings seem to get the major share of tape publicity today, but a reader inquiry prompts me to consider what these marvelous materials are, literally, based upon.

For twenty years acetate tape film has held its own with the slightly newer polyester backings, but recently the latter have taken over almost completely. My correspondent has heard, however, that polyester stretches more than acetate, so that a taped voice and music commentary will gradually fall out of synchronization with his home movie and slide shows.

This concern is given apparent credibility by the fact that you can often snap an older cellulose acetate tape apart cleanly, put the broken ends together in a splicing block, apply a splice, and never hear the break. Try the same trick with polyester-backed tape, and you end up with an elongated length of useless tape that must be cut out at both ends, resulting in a permanent loss of the material in the stretched section. This is progress?

Actually, it is, for my reader combined several partial truths to reach the false conclusion that acetate was the better tape base. First, it is true that, being plastic materials, acetate and polyester will stretch when sufficient force is applied to them. Up to a point, however—about 5 per cent elongation—they will return to their original length when the force is removed, and the important fact to note is that in this vital area polyester is 15 to 20 per cent stronger than acetate. Moreover, the tape tensions on a properly adjusted recorder don't come *close* to causing a 5 per cent elongation except, perhaps, on the very thinnest tapes (for example, a C-120 cassette or "triple-play" open-reel tape), where pre-stretched ("tensilized") polyester base is always used.

Second, and more important in keeping a tape at a constant length, is the fact that acetate is about eight times as susceptible to the humidity in the air as

polyester is. A roll of polyester tape that might change length (and thus running time) by two seconds with a 60 per cent change in humidity would change about seventeen seconds if acetate were used. And that's not all. Suppose you make a recording in the summer when the relative humidity is a dripping 95 per cent. At this point the cellulose has soaked up moisture from the air and expanded about as much as it can. As you record, the tape is taken up at normal tension. Then, however, you put it away and get it out on a winter's evening, when the humidity may have dropped to around 15 per cent. During the storage interval the tape has lost its summer moisture and contracted, creating an enormous internal pressure—perhaps enough to exceed the elastic limit of the inner layers, thus permanently deforming them. Conversely, if you record in the dry winter and then try to fast-forward the tape in the summer, it may have become so loose that it will "cinch," that is, form a series of accordion-like pleats in the middle of the reel. Polyester is not totally immune to humidity changes, but in addition to its greater tensile strength, it's eight times more resistant to humidity effects than acetate.

Third, acetate tapes contain a plasticizing agent which, with age, tends to dry out. This makes them stiff and brittle, so they may break (cleanly, to be sure), when subjected to much less than the force needed to make a fresh tape reach the critical 5 per cent elongation point. Polyester needs no plasticizer, and so resists the aging process better. Which is probably one reason for the "clean break" reputation of acetate. Fresh acetate will stretch about 25 per cent, polyester about 100 per cent before breaking—both well beyond the elastic recovery limit. The other is that the slightest edge damage (such as a nick) will cause acetate to break very easily, but affects polyester far less. All in all, then, the shift to polyester is one more layer added to tape progress.

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# TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **RECORDED VELOCITY:** It is hardly possible to read specifications or a test report on a phono cartridge without finding a reference to recorded *velocity*. We are concerned with velocity because the output signal voltage of a magnetic phono cartridge is proportional to the velocity of its stylus movement.

What is meant by stylus velocity? It relates to both the amplitude (the peak-to-peak excursion of the stylus in the groove) and the rate at which the stylus moves back and forth during its excursions. Although the mathematics of this relationship is not difficult, it does reach the level of differential calculus, which is not exactly like your everyday multiplication tables. Fortunately, however, the matter can be ably demonstrated by graphic means. Figure 1 shows an idealized record groove, drawn as though it were in a straight line instead of following the usual spiral path. A single cycle of sine-wave modulation is imposed on it (normally, there would be a number of identical cycles preceding and following the one shown, but they are omitted for clarity). The physical width of the groove can be ignored for present purposes, and it is further assumed that an ideal stylus is being used, one whose position is controlled at all times by the groove movement.

The peak amplitude of the modulation, measured in centimeters (cm), is  $A$ . The rate at which the stylus moves from side to side (its velocity in centimeters per second or cm/sec) obviously changes constantly with its position along the recorded cycle. At time  $t = 0$ , the beginning of the positive half-cycle, it is a maximum, as shown by the fact that the slope of the tangent to the waveform at that point is greatest. At the peak of the sine wave, the velocity is zero; although the record continues to move past the stylus at a constant rate, the stylus motion at right angles to the line of the unmodulated groove (which generates its output voltage) is zero at that instant.

As we continue along the cycle, the stylus reverses direction and moves negatively with increasing velocity, again reaching a maximum when it crosses the zero axis one half-cycle after the start. The process continues through the completion of the cycle, and through any subsequent cycles.

Shown below the groove-modulation sketch in Figure 1, and on the same time scale, is the electrical output waveform of the cartridge (which is proportional to the instantaneous velocity). At the crest of the cycle, where the velocity is zero, the signal output is zero, and it reaches its maximum levels at those times when the waveform passes through the zero

with a 1,000-Hz signal recorded with a velocity of 3.54 cm/sec in each stereo channel. This number is not entirely arbitrary, since it corresponds to a lateral (mono) modulation of 5 cm/sec, which is often taken to be a typical "average" recording level. The velocity is actually a *peak* level, but the cartridge output is measured in terms of an *rms* voltage (0.7 times peak). This seeming inconsistency is a matter of convention, and it is a universal practice.

Sometimes, *recorded velocity* is confused with *groove velocity* or *linear velocity*, which is the rate at which the record groove moves past the stylus. They are quite distinct, though still related. For example, if the record speed in the example of Figure 1 were to be doubled, the side-to-side movement of the stylus would take place twice as frequently. The cartridge output would thus be at double the frequency, and as the relationship  $v = 2\pi fA$  shows, the velocity would also be doubled—and with it the output voltage. The linear groove velocity ( $V_g$ ) is equal to  $2\pi RN/60$ , where  $R$  is the distance of the stylus from the record's center in centimeters (in other words, the playing radius) and  $N$  is the rotation speed in revolutions per minute. Obviously, the groove velocity increases linearly with playing radius; for a 12-inch (30-cm) record whose inner radius is 2.5 inches (6.25 cm), the groove velocity varies from 52.4 cm/sec at the outside of the record to 21.8 cm/sec near the record label.

The *wavelength* of the signal, which is the amount of groove length occupied by one cycle of the waveform, varies with frequency, playing speed, and radius. Consider our sine-wave illustration. If it is part of a 1,000-Hz signal recorded at the outside edge of a record, 1,000 complete cycles will be recorded in each second. The 1,000 cycles will cover a distance of 52.4 cm, so that the wavelength of each cycle will be  $52.4/1,000 = 0.0524$  cm. Near the end of the same

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## TESTED THIS MONTH



**Hitachi D-3500 Cassette Deck**  
**Shure M95ED Phono Cartridge**  
**Rectilinear 5 Speaker System**  
**SAE Mark IB Preamplifier**

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axis, corresponding to its maximum velocity. Notice that the electrical output has the same waveform as the groove modulation, but that it is displaced in time (or phase) by a quarter of a cycle, or 90 degrees.

The relationship between peak recorded amplitude  $A$ , peak velocity  $v$ , and frequency  $f$  is:  $v = 2\pi fA$ , where  $v$  is in centimeters per second,  $f$  is in hertz, and  $A$  is in centimeters. Although this formula applies only when dealing with a single-frequency sine wave, it can be extended to cover more complex waveforms that are actually combinations of a number of sine-wave signals.

We measure the output voltage of a phono cartridge by playing a test disc

disc, the 1,000 cycles will occupy a distance of 21.8 cm, giving a wavelength of 0.0218 cm.

Figure 2 shows how the same number of cycles recorded at different record radiuses have different wavelengths (the wavelength is the distance between successive positive or negative peaks of the signal). Note that, although the wavelength near the outside of the record is more than twice as great as that near the inside, the groove is moving past the stylus at a correspondingly greater speed, so the frequency (as well as the recorded velocity and thus the cartridge output voltage) should be the same at both points.

Some recordings are said to have a *constant-amplitude* response over a certain frequency range, and a *constant-velocity* response over other parts of the range. A constant-velocity recording, as its name suggests, should deliver a uniform output at all frequencies when played with a velocity-responding (magnetic) cartridge. But this is not really ideal. If we assume that there is a peak groove amplitude of 0.001 cm at 1,000 Hz, the velocity is a reasonable 6.3 cm/sec. If the same velocity is maintained at higher frequencies, the amplitude at 20,000 Hz will have dropped to only 0.00005 cm. Even though that should yield the same output voltage as the 1,000-Hz signal, the normal surface roughness of the vinyl groove wall can generate sufficient noise in the cartridge output that its signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) will be seriously degraded with such a low-amplitude recorded signal. At the other end of the audio spectrum, as we go down in frequency, the amplitude of the signal becomes very large, reaching 0.05 cm at 20 Hz. While it might be possible to record such a high amplitude, a

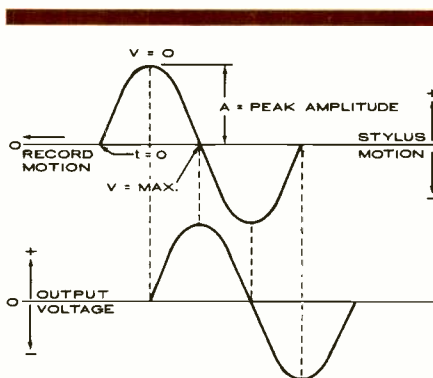


Fig. 1. A velocity-responsive cartridge's output signal lags the record-groove waveform because of the zero-velocity condition at the positive and negative amplitude peaks.

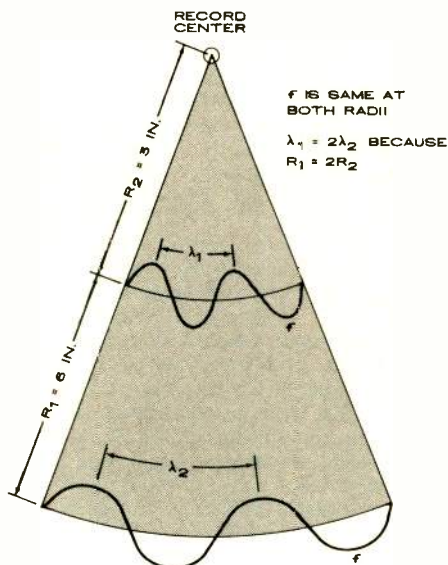


Fig. 2. The pie-wedge shape represents a section of a disc. Shown in simplified form is the compression in wavelength (not frequency) that occurs in the inner grooves.

very wide groove spacing would be needed to avoid interference between adjacent grooves, and this would be uneconomical in terms of the disc's playing time.

The solution is to change from a constant *velocity* to a constant *amplitude* characteristic at suitable frequencies, maintaining a reasonable balance between the two, so as to achieve the desired playing time per side, a satisfactory S/N, and a maximum velocity within the capabilities of most cartridges. Normally this transition takes place below 500 Hz and above 2,120 Hz. Between those limits, the constant-velocity recording characteristic is used. The output decreases by half with each octave of frequency below 500 Hz, and doubles with each octave increase above 2,120 Hz (slopes of 6 dB per octave).

Such a recording, played with a magnetic cartridge and an unequalized amplifier, would sound very shrill and lacking in bass. For this reason, the amplifier introduces a standard playback equalization (RIAA) which boosts the lows at a 6-dB-per-octave rate below 500 Hz and cuts the highs at the same rate above 2,120 Hz. The result is the modern LP recording process, with an essentially uniform frequency response over the full audio range, a quiet background, a playing time of up to one-half hour per side, and maximum velocities that can usually be tracked by any reasonably good phono cartridge.

Obviously, this has been a very simplified treatment of a rather complex process, and the exceptions to these "rules" are legion. Nevertheless, an understanding of the fundamentals should help anyone to interpret and appreciate the specified and measured performance of phono cartridges.

## EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



### Hitachi D-3500 Cassette Deck

● Most of the few three-head cassette recorders to reach the market have been notable for both their high performance and correspondingly high price. The new D-3500 cassette deck from Hitachi is dramatically less expensive than the typical three-head machine, and it has an overall performance level that falls between that of a high-quality two-head machine and the very expensive three-head models.

The Hitachi D-3500 has separate recording and playback heads within a common housing. This assures that their alignment relative to each other will be permanent. The combined head structure is small enough to fit through the center opening in the edge of the

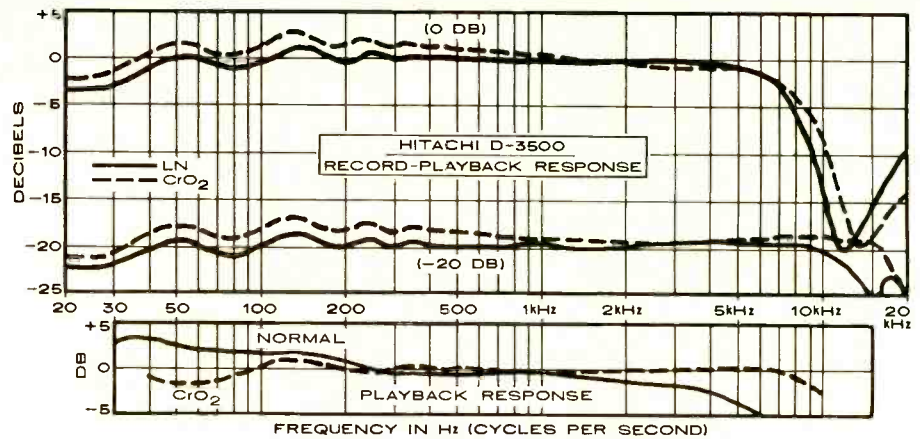
cassette where the conventional record/play head goes, the two distinct gaps being close enough to share the cassette's built-in pressure pad. The playback gap is 1.2 microns ( $\mu$ ) wide, while the head's recording gap is 4  $\mu$  wide, both dimensions being optimum for their application. There are separate recording and playback electronic sections, including separate Dolby encode and decode systems for both functions (Hitachi refers to these as "Double Dolby"). This permits a program to be recorded with Dolby encoding and monitored from the tape in decoded form with the correct frequency balance and improved signal-to-noise ratio.

The tape transport is driven by a four-pole hysteresis-synchronous motor. The controls are fairly conventional "piano keys" along the front edge of the horizontal control panel. The STOP/EJECT key stops the transport when pressed once; releasing it and pressing again ejects the cassette. It is possible to go from normal speed to fast speed in either direction or to shuttle between the two fast-speed modes without using the STOP button, but the tape must be stopped before it can be put into PLAY or RECORD. A hinged cover in front of the cassette door lifts to expose the heads for cleaning. On the sloped rear of the panel are REC (record) and PLAY signal lights and the pushbutton-reset index counter. To their left are two large illuminated level meters.

Along the left front of the panel are six slider level controls—two each for the line and microphone inputs (which can be mixed) and two for playback-output level. The pushbutton POWER switch is at the left front. A row of six large pushbuttons behind the level sliders controls MONITOR (from source or tape), INPUT SELECT (line only, or line and microphone mixed), DOLBY, TAPE (bias and equalization for "normal" and chromium-dioxide tape), MEMORY (an automatic stop in rewind at the point where the index counter reads 000), and METER. The last, in its VU position, gives the meters the ballistic properties of a true VU meter, while in the PEAK position they have a very fast rise and a much slower decay time, permitting them to respond to very brief program peaks. The status of each button is indicated by an adjacent light. With CrO<sub>2</sub> (chromium-dioxide) cassettes having the special rear-edge notching (most current production does), the CrO<sub>2</sub> bias and equalization are selected automatically when the cassette is inserted. There is no way to defeat this action manually unless the notch itself is blocked by a piece of tape.

Recessed into the front of the recorder's wooden base are the microphone and headphone jacks, an MPX button that cuts off input signals above 15,000 Hz to prevent FM pilot-carrier leakage from affecting the Dolby system, and the Dolby calibration controls. The ability to monitor from the tape while recording makes the Dolby calibration a very simple process—the noise-reduction system can be adjusted for any kind of tape in a few seconds. In the rear of the machine are the line inputs and outputs, a DIN socket, and a switch that removes the source program from the line outputs. The Hitachi D-3500 is approximately 17 inches wide, 11 inches deep, and 5½ inches high; it weighs about 15½ pounds. Price: \$399.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The playback frequency response of the Hitachi D-3500 was measured with the Teac 116SP (CrO<sub>2</sub> equalization) and Nortronics AT-200



("standard" equalization) test tapes. The CrO<sub>2</sub> test-tape response was within  $\pm 2$  dB from 40 to 10,000 Hz; the "standard" tape response was smooth and free of sharp peaks or dips, but sloped downward slightly with increasing frequency above 1,000 Hz and showed the expected rise below 200 Hz because of the older equalization characteristic of the Nortronics tape. Referred to the 1,000-Hz level, it varied +0 to -6 dB over the range for which the tape's equalization is correct.

All tests of the recorder's overall record-playback response were made with Hitachi "Low Noise" (LN) and "Chromium Dioxide" (CrO<sub>2</sub>) cassettes, which were supplied with the machine. Both were C-90 cassettes. The response with the LN tape was  $\pm 1.5$  dB from 30 to 12,500 Hz at a -20-dB level. It dipped to a minimum at about 15,000 Hz, and then rose at higher frequencies. From 20 to 20,000 Hz, the variation was only about  $\pm 3$  dB. The CrO<sub>2</sub> tape gave an extremely flat response:  $\pm 2$  dB from 30 to 18,000 Hz and  $\pm 3.5$  dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz. The 0-dB response curves, as expected, rolled off at a much lower frequency than the -20-dB curves, but unlike the usual case, neither fell below the -20-dB response for any significant portion of the frequency range: even more surprisingly, the LN tape had at least as good a 0-dB response as did the CrO<sub>2</sub> tape.

The MPX filter had almost no effect in the audible range, reducing the 15,000-Hz output only about 1 dB, and, as it should, it attenuated the 20,000-Hz response by about 20 dB. The Dolby tracking was good, with an effect

of less than 2 dB on the response at any frequency when the Dolby system was used during recording and playback at levels of -20 and -30 dB.

A line input of 45 millivolts (mV) produced a 0-dB recording level, and the line inputs overloaded at a safe 3 volts. The microphone sensitivity for 0 dB was 0.26 mV, but the microphone preamplifier overloaded at a rather low 19 mV, which means that external attenuators should be used with high-output microphones. The output from a 0-dB recorded signal, which also read 0 dB during playback, was 0.78 volt. The headphone volume was quite low with 200-ohm phones.

The total harmonic distortion at a 0-dB recording level was 1.4 per cent with LN tape and 2.1 per cent with CrO<sub>2</sub> tape. The reference 3 per cent distortion level was reached at a high +6 dB with LN tape and +2 dB with CrO<sub>2</sub> tape. The unweighted signal-to-noise ratio of both tapes, referred to those levels, was 51 dB, and it improved to 56 dB with IEC "A" weighting. With the Dolby system in use, this improved further to an impressive 65 dB, one of the best S/N measurements we have measured on a cassette recorder.

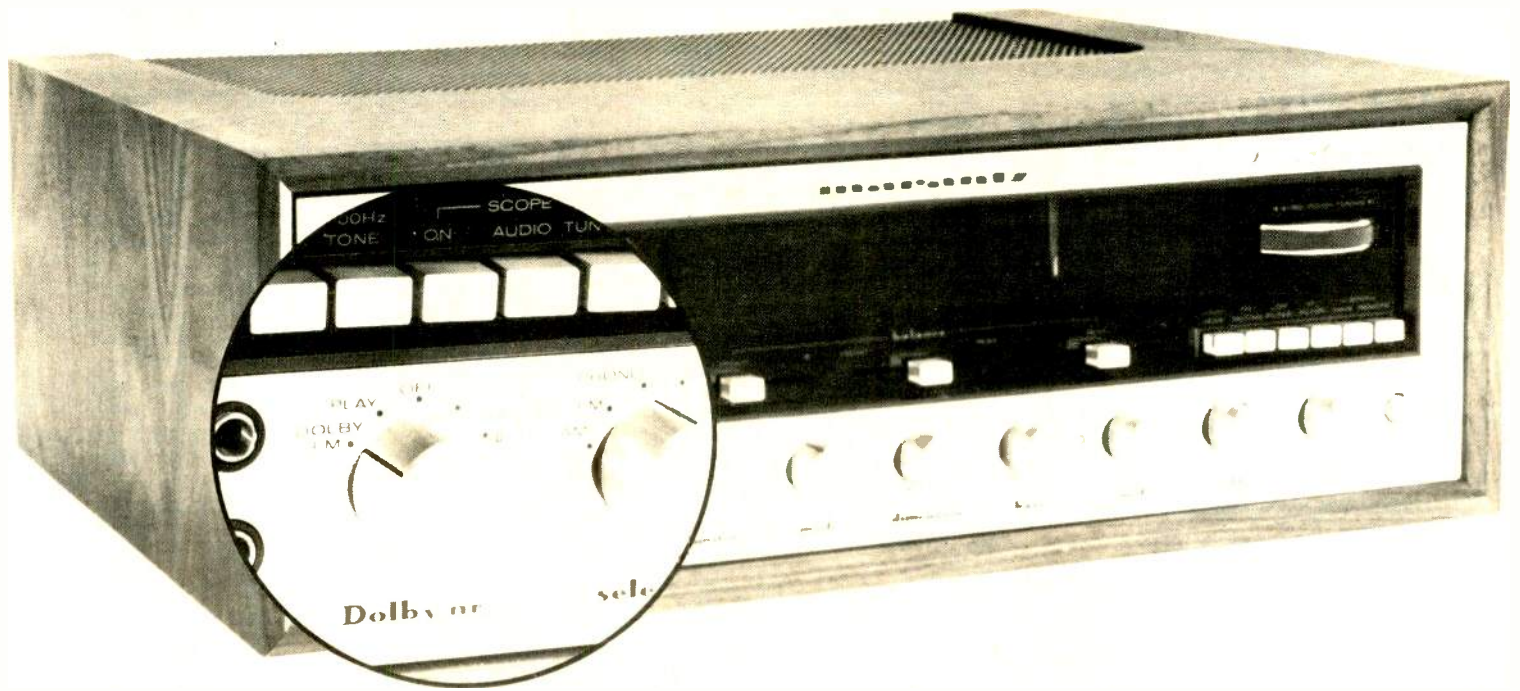
A standard Dolby level tape gave a +2-dB reading, coinciding with the Dolby marks on the recorder's meters. In the VU mode, the meter ballistics were close to those of a true VU meter, with a rapid rise and return on 0.3-second tone bursts and an overshoot of about 10 per cent. In the PEAK mode, the meter read 100 per cent of its steady-state value on the

(Continued on page 30)

The head arrangement of the Hitachi D-3500 appears conventional despite the "3-Head System" marking. However, the center head has four separate record and playback gaps.







## Dolby FM is happening

Remember the first time you came across Dolbyized cassettes? And how surprised you were that music could sound so good in such a convenient form?

Well, now the same principles are being used to improve FM broadcasting. The audible effect of the Dolby system as used in FM is a bit more subtle than with

cassettes. But the overall results are just as important. Dolby FM is cleaner, with sparkling high frequencies free of limiting. And, of course, noise is reduced, which often increases the area of good reception.

As of August 1975, over 100 US stations have purchased the Dolby Model 324 or

334 FM Broadcast Encoder. (The encoder accurately compresses the signal in accordance with the Dolby B-Type characteristics and changes the effective transmission time-constant to 25 microseconds. At the same time, the station eliminates any high frequency limiting required previously).

Akron OH	WAEZ	97.5	Cincinnati OH	WGUC	90.9
Albany NY	WHSB	106.5	Collegeville MN	KJSR	90.1
Allentown PA	WFMZ	100.7	Columbus GA	WEIZ	100.1
Alta Vista VA	WKDE	105.5	Columbus OH	WCOL	92.3
Arlington TX	KAMC	94.9	Columbus OH	WOSU	98.7
Baltimore MD	WAMR	106.5	Dayton OH	WTUE	104.7
Birmingham MI	WHNE	94.7	Dallas TX	KCHU	90.9
Boston MA	WROR	98.5	Dallas TX	KTLC	100.3
Boston MA	WVBF	105.7	Dallas TX	KVIL	103.7
Buffalo NY	WDCX	99.5	Dallas TX	KZEW	97.9
Buffalo NY	WBEN	102.5	Denver CO	KBPI	105.9
Carbondale IL	WSIU	91.9	Denver CO	KLZ	106.7
Charlotte NC	WEZC	104.7	Detroit MI	WABX	99.5
Charlotte NC	WROO	95.1	Detroit MI	WOMC	104.3
Chicago IL	WFMT	98.7	Detroit MI	WJZZ	105.9
Chicago IL	WLOO	100.3	Detroit MI	WMUZ	103.5
Cincinnati OH	WEBN	102.7	Detroit MI	WORS	105.1

Edmond OK	KWHP	97.7	Los Angeles CA	KGBS	97.1
Fairmont NC	WFMO	100.9	Los Angeles CA	KIQO	100.3
Flint MI	WGMZ	107.9	Los Angeles CA	KPFK	90.7
Fort Wayne IN	WMEF	97.3	Lancaster PA	WDAC	94.5
Fort Worth TX	KWXL	97.1	Lexington VA	WLUR	91.5
Fresno CA	KPHD	95.5	Louisville KY	WCSN	99.7
Gainesville GA	WELN	100.7	Louisville KY	WLRS	102.3
Grand Rapids MI	WZZM	95.7	Madison WI	WYXE	92.1
Hanover NH	WOCR	99.3	Maine FL	WAIA	97.3
Hartford CT	WTIC	96.5	Manassas VA	WEZR	106.7
Henrietta NY	WTR	89.7	Memphis TN	WKNO	91.1
Houston TX	KILT	100.3	Miami FL	WAIA	97.3
Houston TX	KRIY	93.7	Minneapolis MN	KSJN	91.1
Indianapolis IN	WNAP	93.1	Morgantown WV	WAJR	101.9
Jackson MS	WELI	96.3	New Orleans LA	WEZB	97.1
Kettering OH	WLDD	99.9	New Orleans LA	WNOV	101.1
Los Angeles CA	KBIG	104.3	New York NY	WNEW	102.7

New York NY	WQXR	96.3	Seattle WA	KIXI	95.7
New York NY	WRFM	105.1	Skokie IL	WCLR	101.9
Normal IL	WGLT	91.7	St George SC	WPWR	95.9
Opportunity WA	KZUN	96.1	St Louis MO	KCFM	93.7
Pateron NJ	WPAT	93.1	Stevens Point WI	WSPT	97.9
Philadelphia PA	WMMR	93.3	Sylvania OH	WXEZ	105.5
Portland ME	WDCS	97.9	Topeka KS	KTPK	106.9
Richmond VA	WEZS	103.7	Tuscaloosa AL	WUOA	95.7
Rochester NY	WCMF	96.5	Utica NY	WOUR	96.9
Rochester NY	WEZO	101.3	Washington DC	WAMU	88.5
Saline MI	WIOB	102.9	Washington DC	WASH	97.1
Salt Lake City UT	KDAB	101.1	Washington DC	WGMS	107.3
Salt Lake City UT	KSL	100.3	Washington DC	WHUR	96.3
San Antonio TX	KEXL	104.5	Washington DC	WMAL	107.3
San Diego CA	KGB	101.5	Wilkes-Barre PA	WYZZ	92.9
San Francisco CA	KABL	98.1	Youngstown OH	WYSU	88.5
Seattle WA	KIRO	100.7			

As you can hear for yourself, a Dolby FM signal is compatible. In fact, most people find it a better signal even when received on their normal equipment without Dolby decoding.

However, you may be the kind of person who likes to take advantage of every opportunity for improvement. If you use Dolby circuitry during reception, you can bring the signal even closer to the quality of the original source material.

Naturally, the noise is reduced. But that's not all. Dolby compression is standardized, recoverable compression. By using Dolby encoding instead of the conventional high frequency limiting normally required during transmission, the station gives the listener at home the opportunity of recovering the full frequency range and dynamics of the signal.

If these prospects excite you, we think you will soon be wanting to check out the new generation of receivers with built-in Dolby circuitry.\* Some Dolby licensees are already producing their new models, and others have new designs in the pipeline.

Dolby FM is an improvement we think you will appreciate. **And it's happening.**

\*If you enjoy doing your own hook-ups, you can use an add-on Dolby unit, aided by a simple circuit to change your receiver time-constant to 25 microseconds.



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bursts, and returned to zero quite slowly (with a time constant on the order of a second or two). Wow of the transport was unmeasurably low (0.01 per cent, which is the residual of our test equipment), and the unweighted rms flutter was 0.14 per cent. In fast forward, a C-60 cassette was handled in 74 seconds, and rewinding required 81 seconds.

● **Comment.** When we received the Hitachi D-3500 for testing, we did not know its price. From its features, we judged that it would be an excellent value at \$500, and estimated that it would sell between \$500 and \$550. Needless to say, we were surprised by its very modest (by today's standards) cost.

The D-3500 is a very easy, unfussy machine to use. Once the Dolby system is calibrated (it takes less time to do than to describe), it handles like any other cassette recorder. When we first used the MONITOR

button to compare the original and recorded programs, we had to use the pause lever to convince ourselves that we were really hearing the playback from the tape and not merely the input signal. In every case where we recorded from a disc or an FM broadcast, there was *no* audibly detectable difference between the signal from the source and the signal played back from the tape! Even when recording interstation hiss from an FM tuner, we heard only the slightest modification of the hiss frequency spectrum.

We preferred to use the PEAK meter mode exclusively, seeing no advantage to the VU mode. When the maximum peak meter reading is kept below 0 dB, there is almost no likelihood of tape saturation or distortion; with VU indications, the "safe" readings must be kept considerably lower and are not as unambiguously related to the recorder's or the tape's limits.

The Hitachi D-3500 would seem to be an excellent choice for the cassette enthusiast who is not quite enthusiastic enough to invest several hundred dollars more than the price of this recorder, yet would like to enjoy the benefits of separate recording and playback heads (which are every bit as applicable to cassette recording as to the open-reel format).

As far as we can tell, nothing has been skimped on this machine, which has just about every useful feature we have seen on competitively priced two-head machines, with the possible exception of FM Dolby decoding and solenoid-operated controls. We would gladly sacrifice these features, attractive as they are, in favor of top-quality three-head cassette recording, with full "Double Dolby" circuitry, at a \$400 price. No doubt there will be others coming to somewhat the same conclusion.

Circle 105 on reader service card

## Shure M95ED Phono Cartridge



● SOME of the design improvements that went into Shure Bros.' V-15 Type III have now been incorporated into a new phono cartridge, the M95ED. Billed by Shure as their "second-best" cartridge, it is available at a price substantially below that of the V-15 Type III. Two of the most important factors in improving the frequency-response flatness and tracking ability of the V-15 Type III were the use of a new high-efficiency laminated magnetic structure and a reduction in effective stylus mass. The M95ED also has a rede-

signed magnetic system, and although it is not laminated, it does embody many of the concepts employed in the V-15 Type III. The M95ED tip mass has been reduced to about 0.5 milligram, roughly that of the earlier V-15 Type II Improved—in fact, Shure states that the high-frequency tracking of the M95ED is equal to that of the Type II Improved.

However, the M95ED has been given the sonic character of the latest V-15 Type III. Earlier Shure cartridges typically had a slight dip in the upper mid-range of a couple of decibels, whereas the Type III (and the M95ED) have a virtually flat response throughout the audible range. The physical appearance of the M95ED is also similar to that of the V-15 Type III, including the integral swing-away stylus guard. According to Shure's data, the tracking ability of the M95ED at a 1-gram force is about equal to that of the V-15 Type III operated at 0.75 gram. Price: \$59.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Shure M95ED was tested in the tone arm of a typi-

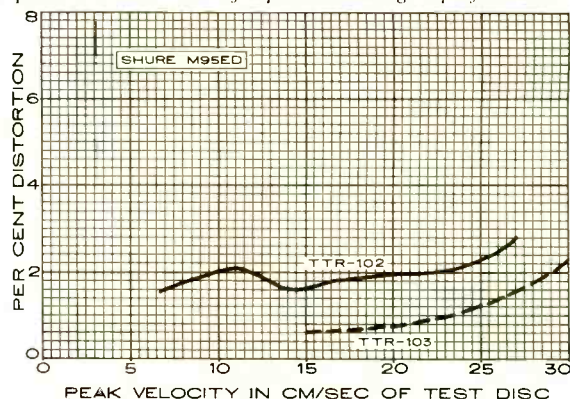
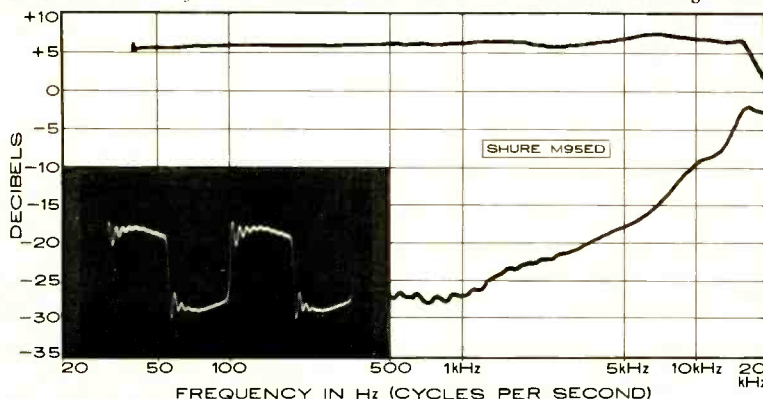
cal high-quality record player. Initial tracking tests showed that it could trace the high-level low- and mid-frequency portions of the Cook Series 60 and Fairchild 101 test records at 1 gram, and we used that force in our subsequent tests. At 1 gram, the 300-Hz test bands of the German Hi-Fi Institute test record were tracked at a 60-micron ( $\mu$ ) amplitude; at the 1.5-gram maximum rated force, the cartridge tracked the 90  $\mu$  band (this is a severe test of tracking ability).

The output at a standard velocity of 3.54 centimeters per second (cm/sec) was 4.3 millivolts per channel. A 1,000-Hz square wave showed several cycles of ringing at the stylus resonance frequency of about 20,000 Hz.

The M95ED's high-frequency tracking ability was evaluated using the 10.8-kHz tone bursts of the Shure TTR-103 test record, and it proved to be one of the better cartridges we have tested in this regard. Intermodulation distortion measurements, using the Shure TTR-102 record, indicated that the distortion

(Continued on page 32)

In the graph at left, the upper curve represents the smoothed, averaged frequency response of the cartridge's right and left channels; the distance (calibrated in decibels) between it and the lower curve represents the separation between the two channels. The inset oscilloscope photo shows the cartridge's response to a recorded 1,000-Hz square wave, which gives an indication of resonances and overall frequency response. At right is the cartridge's response to the intermodulation-distortion (IM) and 10.8-kHz tone-burst test bands of the TTR-102 and TTR-103 test records. These high velocities provide a severe test of a phono cartridge's performance.



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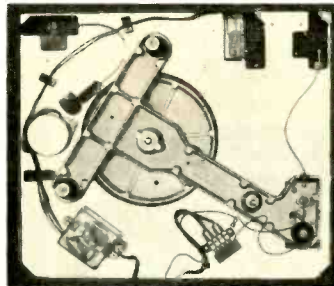
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was low at normal recording levels, and it remained an impressively small figure, even at a 1-gram tracking force. The intermodulation distortion measured by the TTR-102 remained low with recorded velocities as high as are likely to be encountered on conventional music discs.

Shure cartridges require a relatively high capacitive load (400 to 500 picofarads) for flattest frequency response. We checked the response with a 200-pF load (the turntable's connecting cables) and again with added capacitance to bring the total to about 440 pF. With the lower capacitance, there was a peak of about 4 dB centered at 16,000 Hz; the higher capacitance flattened the curve to an excellent  $\pm 1$  dB from 40 to 17,500 Hz, dropping slightly to -4 dB at 20,000 Hz. The channel separation was excellent, exceeding 30 dB up to about 2,000 Hz, and gradually falling to 17 dB at 10,000 Hz and 5 dB at 20,000 Hz. The separation characteristics of

both channels (as well as their frequency responses) were identical.

● *Comment.* A comparison of their published specifications suggests that, except for an increase of 400-Hz tracking ability from 22 to 24 cm/sec, the Shure M95ED and M91ED are very similar. This, of course, does not take into account their rather different upper mid-range frequency-response characteristics. In an A-B comparison between them, we could hear their distinctly different tonal qualities. The M91ED had a slightly heavier, warmer sound, while the M95ED seemed brighter and—at times—crisper and better defined. The differences were slight, and in our opinion they were not of the magnitude that would establish one of the cartridges as clearly superior to the other.

With the Shure "Audio Obstacle Course—Era III" record (TTR-110), all selections except the sibilant test were tracked at their

maximum levels at the 1-gram test force. A trace of "sandpaper" quality was heard on the two highest levels of the sibilance test, and was not removed by increasing the tracking force to 1.5 grams.

Our view is that the Shure M95ED falls very neatly into the gap between the M91ED and the V-15 Type III. Its performance in most respects is closer to that of the V-15 III, but its cost is not! For those who prefer the more "forward" sound of the V-15 Type III, but are unwilling or unable to make the considerable investment in that cartridge, the M95ED would seem to be an ideal choice. It has the general sound quality of the V-15 Type III, and most of us will rarely encounter recordings that demand the superior tracking ability of the latter. Best of all, we note that the M95ED is available with substantial discounts from a number of dealers, making it an exceptionally attractive value.

*Circle 106 on reader service card*

## Rectilinear 5 Speaker System



● *THE Rectilinear 5* is a four-way speaker system whose 12-inch woofer operates in a sealed enclosure. At the unusually low frequency of 200 Hz there is a crossover to a 7-inch upper-bass/mid-range driver housed in a separate sealed chamber within the main enclosure. The next crossover, at 1,800 Hz, is to a 1½-inch dome tweeter, followed by a final

crossover at 10,000 Hz to a 1-inch dome super-tweeter. Except for the woofer, each driver is permitted to operate over its full range above its low-frequency crossover. The frequency balance of the system is set at the factory by means of two screwdriver-slot adjustments in the rear of the cabinet. These are sealed to discourage tampering.

The Rectilinear 5 is nominally a 6-ohm system, rated for use with amplifiers delivering from 30 to 250 watts per channel. It is protected by a 3-ampere fast-blow fuse, and a clip in the rear of the cabinet holds a spare replacement fuse (a handy touch we would like to see adopted more widely).

The oiled walnut cabinet is 25 by 15 by 14½ inches and weighs about 55 pounds. The black cloth grille is removable, and the system can be installed horizontally or vertically. Although it is described as a "bookshelf/floor" system, few bookshelves are deep and sturdy enough to support this speaker. Recognizing this, Rectilinear offers an optional "dispersion base" for floor mounting. This tilts the face of the speaker upward about 10 degrees for more effective dispersion, and it is claimed to minimize room boundary effects on the mid-bass response. The Rectilinear 5 sells for \$299, and the optional tilt base is \$20.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* The composite frequency-response curve (roughly corresponding to the total-power response of the Rectilinear 5) was flat within  $\pm 2.5$  dB from 38

to 6,000 Hz and had a broad rise between 6,000 and 17,000 Hz. Overall, the measured total response variation of  $\pm 5$  dB from about 40 to 20,000 Hz represents a much better than average flatness for a loudspeaker in a "live"-room measurement. The bass distortion was about 1 per cent between 80 and 100 Hz (at a 1-watt constant input) and increased smoothly to a mere 5 per cent at 20 Hz, except for an inaudible rise to slightly below 4 per cent at 40 Hz. With a 10-watt input (a very loud level) the distortion was roughly twice as great as with a 1-watt input.

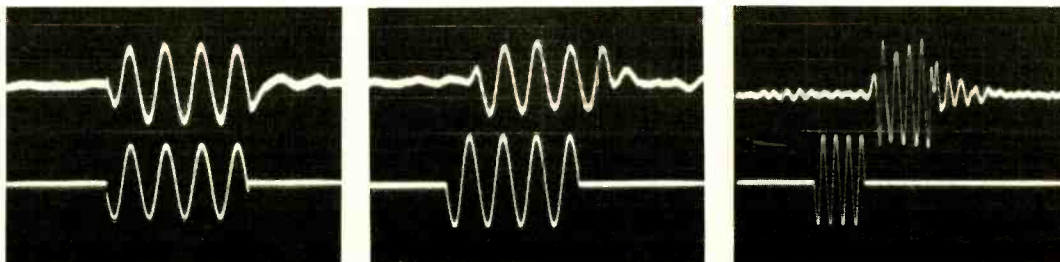
The minimum impedance of the Rectilinear 5 was 5 ohms at 100 Hz and above 15,000 Hz. The maximum was 10 ohms at the bass resonance of 40 Hz, and the average was about 8 ohms over most of the audio range. Although many speaker manufacturers would probably call this an 8-ohm speaker, we commend Rectilinear for their more realistic rating.

For an acoustic-suspension system, the Rectilinear 5 was quite efficient, producing a 92-dB sound-pressure level (SPL) at a distance of 1 meter with 1 watt of random-noise input in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz. Its tone-burst response was very good, with nearly ideal bursts at low and middle frequencies and only minor—and inaudible—ringing following a 5,000-Hz burst.

● *Comment.* The simulated live-vs.-recorded listening test confirmed the essential flatness

*(Continued on page 36)*

*These oscilloscope photos show the fine tone-burst performance of the Rectilinear 5 at (left to right) 100, 1,000, and 5,000 Hz.*



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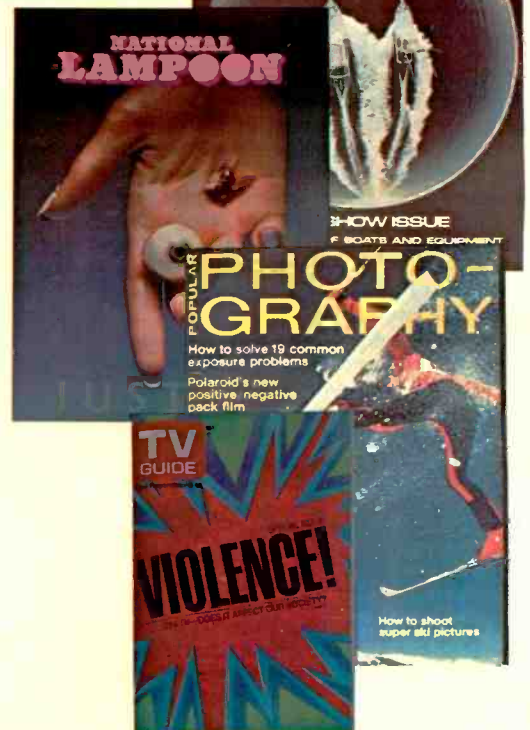
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and lack of coloration of the Rectilinear 5. The high-frequency emphasis revealed by our measurements added a trace of sparkle at the highest frequencies which could be removed, if desired, by a cut of 2 to 3 dB at frequencies above 8,000 Hz. The dispersion of the system was also very good, and without recourse to any special dispersion-enhancement design techniques.

We were especially interested in the relative performance of the Model 5 compared with the very early original Rectilinear Model III which earned itself a rave review in 1967.

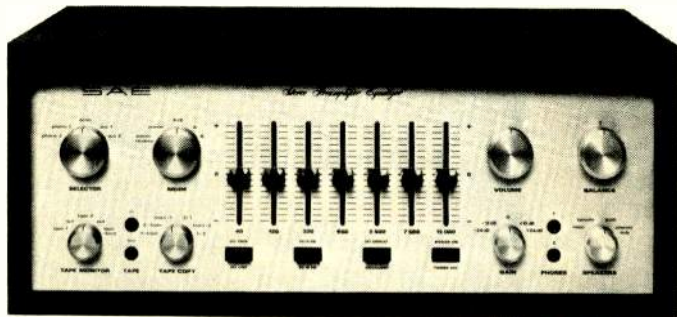
(Since that time the III has undergone numerous revisions and is now known as the IIIa). The measured curves of the original III and of the 5, though quite similar in their overall shape, indicate a slightly crisper sound in the Model 5. And when we made an A-B comparison against a pair of our Model III's, that is just what was heard. Not only is the Rectilinear 5 a trifle brighter at the extreme top end, but it has better dispersion and a much more powerful deep bass. Although it is a smaller system, the Model 5 has an acoustic-suspension woofer that is clearly able to go down

lower in the audio spectrum, and with less distortion, than the ported woofer of the III. There was a notable absence of mid-bass coloration or "boominess," combined with a potent low-bass capability.

All in all, the Rectilinear 5 is a distinct improvement over its predecessors in the line, apparently without sacrifice of any their desirable qualities. We think it is noteworthy that this has been accomplished without a price increase, and with a substantial reduction in cabinet size.

Circle 107 on reader service card

## SAE Mark IB Preamplifier



● THE SAE Mark IB is a de luxe stereo preamplifier/equalizer designed as a companion to the power amplifiers manufactured by SAE and others. The most prominent and unique feature of the Mark IB is its seven-band graphic equalizer whose slider controls dominate the unit's front panel.

The equalizer uses toroidal inductance/capacitance filters with center frequencies of 40, 120, 320, 960, 2,500, 7,500, and 15,000 Hz. The sliders, lightly detented at their center (flat) positions, provide a maximum gain variation in their respective frequency bands of either  $\pm 16$  or  $\pm 8$  dB, depending on the setting of one of four push-buttons on the front panel. The other buttons control the a.c. power to the Mark IB, bypass the equalizer circuits, and transfer the equalizing function to the tape-recorder outputs or the line outputs.

The input selector at the upper-left corner of the panel has positions for two magnetic phono cartridges, tuner, and two additional high-level (AUX) sources. A MODE switch provides normal or reversed-channel stereo or connects either input channel or their sum (mono) to both outputs. Below these controls are two switches for the tape-recording functions. The TAPE MONITOR can control three tape decks, two of which connect to the rear of the unit and the third through a pair of stereo phone jacks on the front panel. The playback output of any of these machines can be channeled through the preamplifier circuits to replace the normal selected input program. The six-position TAPE COPY switch interconnects the tape decks for dubbing from any one to any other.

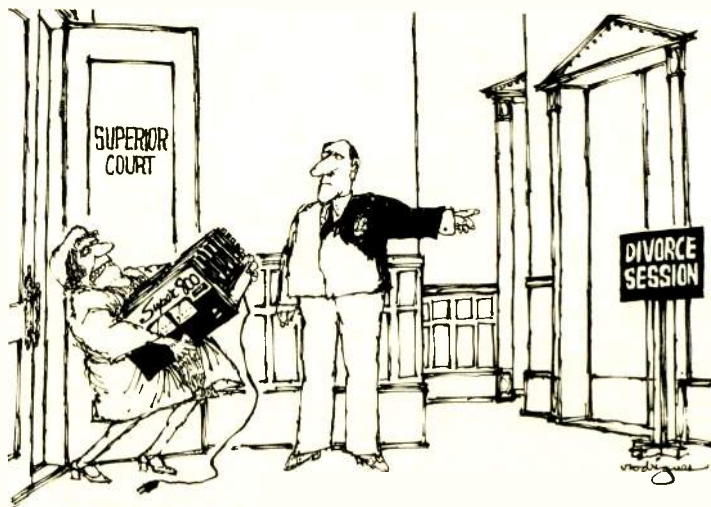
At the upper right of the panel are large knobs labeled VOLUME and BALANCE. The volume control is a twenty-three-position step

switch which maintains a channel balance within  $\pm 0.1$  dB over its 33-dB control range (the lowest position shuts off the sound completely). The balance control is lightly detented. Since 33 dB is not an adequate volume-control range, a smaller GAIN switch below the volume control changes the gain in 12-dB steps over a 48-dB range. Once it has been set for normal listening levels, all volume adjustment can then be made with the volume control. The Mark IB will accept the power amplifier's speaker outputs and channel them to either main or remote speakers, to both, or to the headphone jacks by means of a SPEAKERS switch at the lower right of the panel. The two stereo headphone jacks are driven from the power-amplifier outputs through isolating resistors.

The rear apron of the SAE Mark IB, in addition to its basic input and output jacks, has a second pair of MAIN outputs and a pair of outputs for driving the vertical and horizontal inputs of an oscilloscope. A pushbutton switch in the rear provides the option of increasing the overall preamplifier gain ten times (20 dB) should the available gain be inadequate.

A cable assembly supplied with the Mark IB carries the power-amplifier speaker outputs into the preamplifier via a four-pin socket. Heavy-duty binding posts are provided for connection to the speaker systems. There are six switched a.c. outlets (rated for a total of 1,000 watts) and two unswitched a.c. outlets. The satin gold-finished front panel of the SAE Mark IB is 17 inches wide and 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches high, and the chassis extends 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches behind the panel. The unit weighs 20 pounds. An accessory wood cabinet is available. Price: \$750.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* With the front-panel GAIN switch set to its mid-position (0 dB), the volume control at maximum, and the rear gain switch at  $\times 10$ , the input level required for a 1-volt reference output was 1.75 volts (AUX) and 14 millivolts (mV) at the PHONO inputs. Setting the GAIN to +24 dB (the maximum) raised these figures to 98 mV and 0.78 mV, respectively. In both cases, the phono-input overload was a very safe 82 mV.



The output noise was unmeasurable through the high-level inputs, being less than the 100-microvolt lower limit of our test equipment. This translates to better than -80 dB referred to 1 volt. Through the PHONO input, the noise level was 75 dB below 1 volt, or 83 dB below the Mark IB's rated 2.5-volt audio-signal output.

The output clipped at 12.5 volts into a high-impedance load and at 11.4 volts into the 10,000-ohm rated minimum load. The harmonic distortion at 2.5 volts was 0.025 per cent at 20 Hz (including hum components) and about 0.0075 per cent at all frequencies up to 20,000 Hz with the hum filtered out (this "hum," of course, was far below audibility and was significant only in comparison to the minuscule distortion of the preamplifier). Intermodulation distortion was 0.025 per cent at 0.1-volt output, less than 0.01 per cent at outputs of 1 volt or slightly more, and 0.021 per cent at the rated 2.5 volts. Just below clipping, at 10 volts output, the IM was still only 0.2 per cent and the harmonic distortion was 0.067 per cent.

The equalizer response curves conformed to specifications and should make it practical to correct for many room and loudspeaker aberrations in a manner not possible with less elaborate "tone controls." The RIAA equalization was extremely accurate, within  $\pm 0.5$  dB over the entire audio range, and we were pleased to see that equalization was essentially independent of cartridge inductance, which affected the response by less than 1 dB at 20,000 Hz.

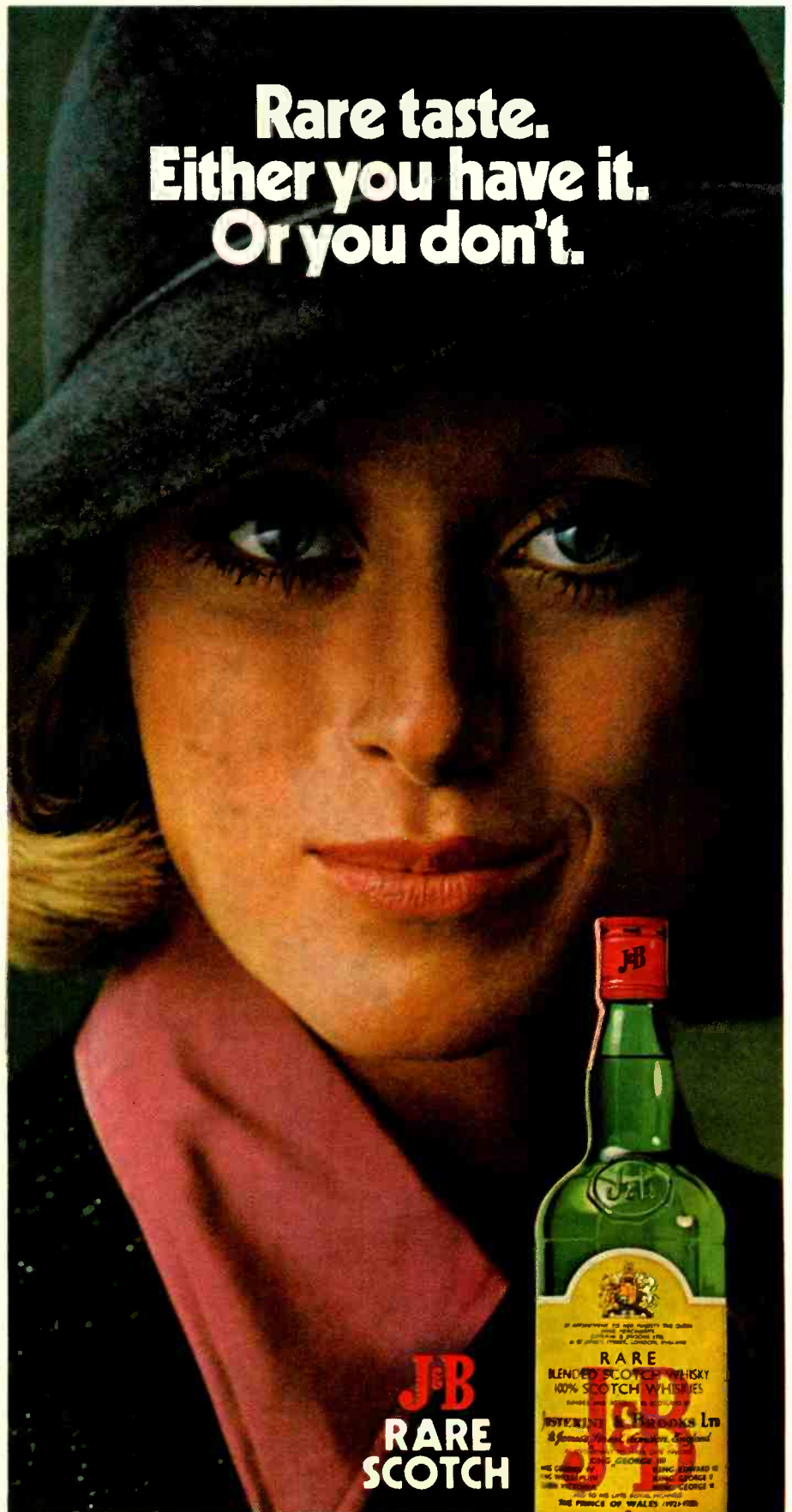
● **Comment.** When it comes to operating and control flexibility, the SAE Mark IB has few peers. The tape-recording hobbyist in particular can not only dub with ease between as many as three machines, but he can insert the equalizer into the recording path at the touch of a button. The equalizer, of course, is at the heart of the Mark IB's performance capability. In our view, the seven specific bands chosen by SAE are an ideal compromise between the ten or more bands of an octave equalizer (which can be quite cumbersome to adjust) and the simpler five- or three-band versions offered by some manufacturers. The controls are easy to adjust, they produce immediately audible effects, and they are actually able to equalize the response of many speakers effectively. (For example, we were able to make some fairly good but undistinguished speakers sound very much like our flat, calibrated laboratory reference models.)

Although the Mark IB offers more gain-setting options than we can recall seeing on any other preamplifier, most of them are in the "set and forget" category. It is doubtful if the distortion or noise characteristics of the preamplifier could be degraded significantly by any possible combination of these control settings. If they are adjusted so that the main volume control has adequate range, they are correct.

The speaker-switching arrangement, although it necessitates bringing even more wires to the rear of the preamplifier than would otherwise be required, gives the system the output flexibility of a good receiver, which is one of the few features not usually available to the user of separate components. All in all, our tests and use reveal the SAE Mark IB to be a truly excellent (albeit somewhat expensive) performer that ranks among the finest available components.

Circle 108 on reader service card

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"Does it have a Heil?" This is the question more and more audiophiles are asking. Does it have a Heil air-motion transformer in it? Why? Because if it is not a Heil air-motion transformer, it's not a state-of-the-art high fidelity loudspeaker. Because anything else is behind the times, outmoded in design, obsolete even before it was built.

This is a fact governed by the laws of physics, not by mere opinion. The Heil air-motion transformer marks a new era in loudspeaker technology and a new freedom from the problems of speaker mass and inertia. The Heil air-motion transformer is as radical a departure from conventional "air pushing" speaker designs as the jet engine was from the propeller. And for the same reason. Where before the driving force of an airplane engine merely served to turn a heavy propeller which reacted poorly with the air, the jet engine obsoleted propellers by applying the driving force directly to the air itself for a far superior energy transfer.

So it is with the Heil air-motion transformer. Instead of the driving force moving a "voice coil" conductor that moves a cone or dome that sets air into motion by "pushing" back and forth against it, the Heil air-motion transformer applies the energy flowing through its conductor directly to the air as a *squeezing* pressure potential and therefore eliminates the losses and inaccuracies introduced by transferring energy through a heavy solid to the air.

For a dramatic example of how a squeezing pressure is more effective than pushing, when it comes to moving a light substance like air, try to "shot put" a cherry pit. The "pushing" action doesn't send the pit very far or very fast because most of the energy is wasted in moving your "heavy" arm and hand so that very little goes into actually moving the pit. But now put the cherry pit between your thumb and forefinger and *squeeze*. The pressure of your fingers creates a force whose potential is transferred directly to the cherry pit as motion and it accelerates away from your finger much more effectively than with the large "shot put" push.

Heil air-motion transformer speaker systems have no "voice coil," no cone or dome surfaces, no forward-backward "pushing" motion and achieve their direct transformation of energy through a unique folded diaphragm that "squeezes" air. These Heil air-motion transformers can actually set air into motion *five times faster* than the movement of their own diaphragms. The results: *instantaneous acceleration and a level of performance that approaches theoretical perfection.*

Don't undertake an exercise in futility by listening to yesterday's loudspeaker designs. Only the Heil air-motion transformer gives you the dynamic transient attack, incredible purity, and pinpoint stereo imaging of tomorrow's recordings. Now you'll find two new Heil air-motion transformers in an exciting new loudspeaker marque: the FORTURA PEDESTAL SERIES and FORTURA BOOKSHELF SERIES. These truly advanced systems can be heard by visiting any of the FORTURA dealers shown in the partial list below, dealers perceptive enough to bypass the conventional and understand the loudspeaker of tomorrow—the Heil air-motion transformer.

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# THE SIMELS REPORT

By STEVE SIMELS



## RAMBLING ON (PART THREE)

WELL, there's nothing particularly earth-shaking happening right this minute, pop-wise, and so I thought I'd just share with you the ramblings of my reasonably idle mind once again. It's too hot in this July heat wave for a think piece anyway.

To start off, a few predictions (and if I get all of them right, I'll be sure to say I told you so). First: Bruce Springsteen's third album, which I have heard *most* of in rough mixes and which will be available in the stores by the time you read this (I promise a full-scale review of it next month) will once and for all establish him as *the* artist of the decade. The record is as staggering a musical and lyrical advance for him as the last one was over the first, and what really impresses me about it is that it sounds like he still has room to grow. Further, songs like *Born to Run* are going to prove as important to the Seventies (and with this record, for my money, they've finally arrived) as *Satisfaction* and *Like a Rolling Stone* were to the Sixties: Springsteen is going to reach that many people.

Second: Patti Smith, whose debut album will be out late in the winter, has an almost equal potential, and in some ways she's almost more interesting than Bruce, if only because she could be the first woman in rock to have an audience as broad as that of Dylan, Elvis, or (to go from the sublime to the ridiculous) Elton John, and without compromising her femininity one whit. Her appeal is probably going to cut both ways—that is, she'll be a sex symbol for *both* sexes the way Jagger is. Beyond that, though, she's really terrific. She and her band are very strong—her one recording so far, a limited-edition single of *Hey Joe* with a lyric revised to include musings on Patty Hearst, is so powerful that you don't even notice the lack of drums—and she truly *understands* rock-and-roll (in much the same way Springsteen does). That is something we've never gotten from a woman before, and certainly not from any of the other so-called artists who have emerged thus far in the decade (the Bowies, the Bryan Ferrys—you name them). She's going to get an enormous hype, of course, and that may put some people off. And the fact that she's signed with Clive Davis and Arista Records worries me—I'm afraid they'll try to clean up her act, turn her into some kind of assembly-line type like Melissa Manchester. But, with any luck, her debut album should be an absolute stunner.

Third: By the time this appears, the Bay

City Rollers will have either bombed out or taken our teenyboppers by storm; my guess is the former. The Rollers, who are currently the biggest thing in England since You Know Who, are planning to hit this country with precisely the kind of publicity machinery that Brian Epstein masterminded for the Fab Four—television saturation, the whole business—and there are those who are convinced the formula will work again. I doubt it, for a variety of reasons.



Drummer Henry Weck: *tasteful*

For one thing, American teenagers, even the really young ones, are far more sophisticated musically today than their English counterparts; besides, with rare exceptions, Americans have *never* been as pop crazy as the English (remember the Teddy Boys? The Mods? The Rockers? The Skinheads?) because they don't have to be. English kids *need* constant new and different sensations because their lives are so drab, their opportunities so limited: art school if they're lucky, rotten jobs if they're not. But this country, shortcomings and all, is just too big and affluent to support a climate for real pop mania. Anyway, if someone is going to fill that Osmonds/Partridge Family gap the Rollers are trying to squeeze into, I suspect it will be an American act that American kids can relate to: the Scots-plaid Rollers, with or without sporan, tam, and dagger, strike me as far too parochial a phenomenon to make a splash here. Incidentally,

their record is absolutely worthless—very poorly done remakes of old Four Seasons and Phil Spector songs with vocals reminiscent of the most cloying moments of the Monkees' Davy Jones. In other words, whether they make it or not, they are no Beatles.

PROGNOSTICATIONS out of the way, and moving right along, I'd like to mention (briefly, believe me) that everything I said about the Stones' performances in the August issue should have been raised to the *n*th degree. I saw their closing night in New York, and it was—flat out—the greatest rock-and-roll show I've ever witnessed. Ron Wood and Keith Richards were so good together it was frightening, Jagger was in top form, Bill and Charlie played like men possessed, and, in general, I've never heard music like that from *anybody*, including the Rolling Stones. I suggest we all send their management threatening letters if there isn't a live album fast.

Finally, I'd love to tell you some Brownsville Station stories, but most of the ones they told me are unprintable. I met the group at their New York hotel recently (after a local gig with Slade), and despite my well-known aversion to interviews, I found them the most charming, funny, and approachable rock people I've yet met. (Those who know them only through their TV appearances or such AM hits as *Smoking in the Boys Room* should try to find a copy of their now-deleted first album on Warner Brothers; it's a minor classic.)

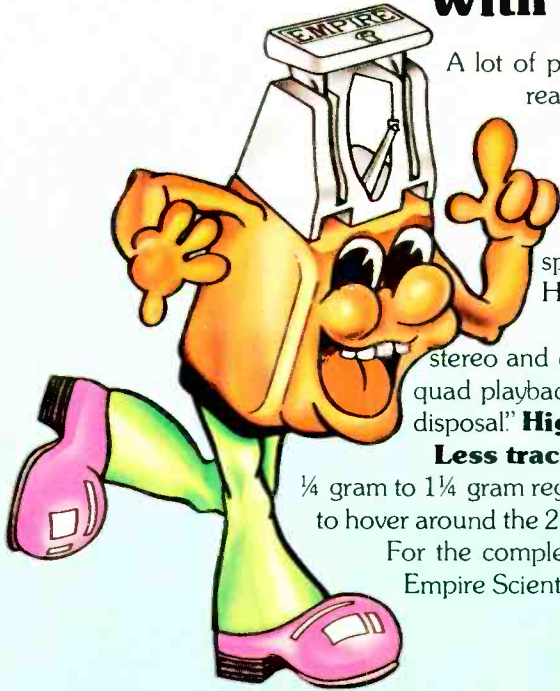
The band is a quartet again, and they're very interested in having people take them a bit more seriously as musicians; their latest album, which (sorry, guys) I personally don't care for, is a bit more mature than most of their others, and as it was the first they've ever made under the lack-of-pressure conditions bands dream about, the care involved in its production really shows. But no matter; as people, they are totally crackers and therefore absolute delights.

We talked a bit about their days as local sensations at the tail end of the great Detroit/John Sinclair hype. "We were really poor," guitarist Cub Koda told me, "and our manager would get us *two* offers for an evening; a hundred dollars for a gig at a high school, or a freebie political benefit, and we used to say 'We'll take the hundred dollars and then go out and vote.'" They confirmed some rumors (yes, they assured me, the MC 5 were really as great a band as Michigan residents still insist) and debunked some of the legends that have followed them around (they were *not*, as one rock journal reported, ever beaten up in a parking lot by a Detroit band called the Frut, supposedly the worst group in the history of rock and proud of it). Best of all (from my point of view, anyway), they read STEREO REVIEW. Drummer Henry Weck won my simple heart immediately when he quoted from some of my reviews, and it turns out we have similar musical heroes (he adores Ray Davies and Procol Harum's B. J. Wilson).

But the big surprise came when I asked the band if there was any professional ambition they would like to see realized. Their answer? To make a record with—are you ready?—the remaining members of the Benny Goodman Quartet. Just imagine—this raucous, high-energy rock band nurses a secret desire to jam with Goodman, Teddy Wilson, and Lionel Hampton. It just goes to show, as Chuck Berry so sentimentally observed some years back, that you never can tell.

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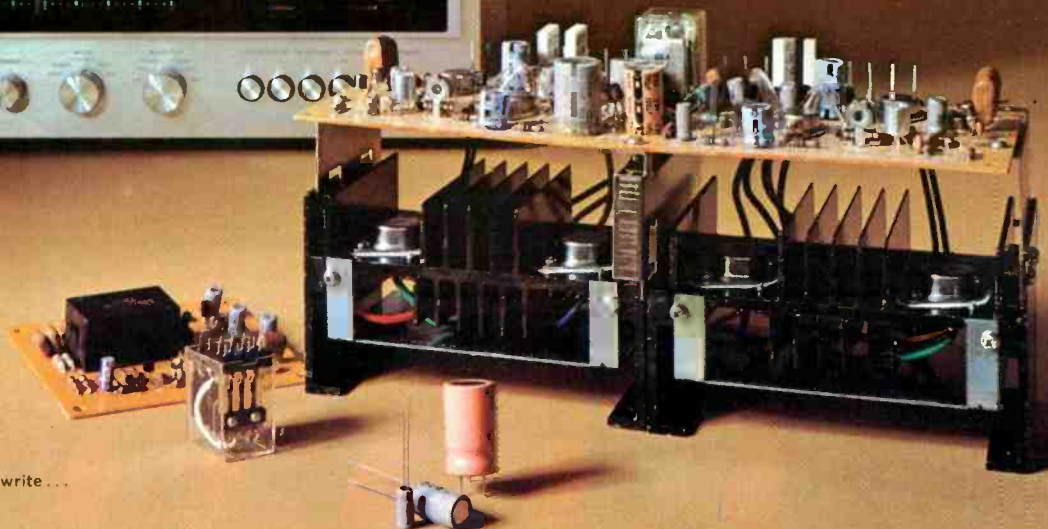
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# GOING ON RECORD

By JAMES GOODFRIEND  
Music Editor



## MODERN MUSIC: WHERE WE ARE

IT is the inevitable duty of every age to make value judgments about the artistic products of its own time, judgments that will be passed upon by posterity with the same critical eye and ear as the art itself. The good citizens of Leipzig in the early eighteenth century, for example, who were unfortunate enough to have put down their judgment in writing for all future ages to see, will probably never be pardoned for their estimation of Telemann and Graupner as being superior to Bach. Mid-Europeans of the nineteenth century get high marks today for their appreciation of Beethoven—at least up to his late works. But they fail miserably, in our eyes, for their estimation, or lack of estimation, of Schubert—he was ignored until Robert Schumann discovered him and told the world what it had been missing. One could also cite (with less ease) composers praised to the skies by their contemporaries whose work is all but defunct today. But it is a hard thing to assess art contemporaneously, and it is harder now than ever before, simply because there is so much more of it than ever before.

An assessment as such was probably not what was in the minds of the directors of the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard when they sought, through a mail survey, to get some opinions on the music of our time. What they asked for, in a letter addressed to 1,600 composers, conductors, performers, critics, educators, and others, was a list of "works of quality from the last forty years which you believe have not been performed with any frequency or which have not been performed at all." Their stated purpose in making and publishing the results of this survey was "to help bring this worthy but neglected repertoire into the mainstream of our musical life" by encouraging performing musicians to use the list as a means of extending their own repertoires. Limited in scope though it may be, no one can question the worthiness of the endeavor.

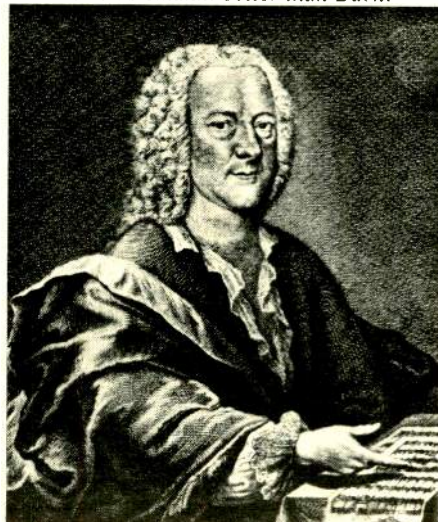
What the foundation came up with, however, can be read in different ways. Over three hundred people replied and the replies were then tabulated, individual works receiving an A, B, or C rating for their frequency of citation. An A means that one to four people listed the work; B, five to eight; C, nine or more. I wish that they had given the actual number of citations rather than categorical approximations, but even so, it seems to me that what

we have is a vote, from a musically sophisticated segment of the population, on what is believed to be important in the music of our own time, for virtually all modern music is performed relatively infrequently, and almost all of it can therefore be considered eligible for such a list. There are some few pieces that do get their fair share of performances (certain works by Bartók, Stravinsky, Copland, Orff, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, and others), and that alone demonstrates our feelings about them. But out of the thousands of others, this survey can indicate what we feel is important (the interpretation is my own, and I take responsibility for misunderstandings and error) and tell us, essentially, where we are in music. Where are we?

Prepare for a few surprises. First of all, a lot of works were mentioned that were written more than forty years ago, signifying one or both of the following: (1) people felt strongly enough about certain pieces to consciously disregard instructions; (2) much of the music of more than forty years ago is still so little accepted that, even in the minds of musical sophisticates, there is a vagueness about just how old or new it is.

There were, also, an immense number of works listed with A category ratings (the total response included 2,207 works by 686 com-

G. P. Telemann: better than Bach?



posers, according to the introduction to the published results). Many of these are the result of composers' suggesting their own works (perfectly legitimate) or the individual enthusiasms of only a couple of listeners.

The B ratings are interesting in that they permit us to see how many modern works have made *something* of an impact on their time, but it is the C ratings, I think, that identify those works we currently feel to be our most important musical works of art. They are as follows:

- Milton Babbitt: *Relata I*\*
- Alban Berg: *Violin Concerto* (1935)
- Luciano Berio: *Circles*
- Luciano Berio: *Sinfonia*
- Pierre Boulez: *Pli Selon Pli*
- Pierre Boulez: *Le Marteau Sans Maître*
- Elliott Carter: *String Quartets Nos. 1, 2, 3*
- Elliott Carter: *Variations for Orchestra*
- Elliott Carter: *Piano Concerto*\*
- Elliott Carter: *Concerto for Orchestra*
- Elliott Carter: *Double Concerto*
- Mario Davidovsky: *Synchronisms* (numbers not specified)
- Lukas Foss: *Time Cycle* (chamber version)\*
- Lukas Foss: *Time Cycle* (orchestral version)
- Roy Harris: *Symphony No. 3*
- Paul Hindemith: *Mathis der Maler* (opera)\*
- Charles Ives: *Symphony No. 4* (1910-16)
- Donald Martino: *Mosaic*\*
- Wallingford Riegger: *Symphony No. 3*
- Carl Ruggles: *Sun Treader*
- Arnold Schoenberg: *Moses und Aron*
- Arnold Schoenberg: *Five Pieces for Orchestra* (1909!)
- Roger Sessions: *Symphony No. 2*
- Roger Sessions: *Violin Concerto*
- Karlheinz Stockhausen: *Gruppen*
- Igor Stravinsky: *Agon*\*
- Igor Stravinsky: *Requiem Canticles*
- Edgard Varèse: *Déserts*
- Anton Webern: *Concerto for Nine Instruments*

(The last of these was listed twice under two different names, receiving an A and a B, thus essentially adding up to a C.)

OF course, one has to pay more attention to the inclusions than to the omissions (Cage? Henze? Penderecki?), but there is still enough that is unexpected to exercise the mind. Some of the various avant-gardes are well represented, but then there are those retrospective choices too: Harris, Riegger, Ruggles, perhaps even Sessions. And *Mathis der Maler*: everyone who sees it agrees it is a masterpiece, but one so rarely gets the chance to either see it or hear it. And Schoenberg's *Five Pieces*: the work is sixty-six years old, obviously established in reputation but not at all in the concert hall. And then we have the dark horses: Davidovsky's *Synchronisms*, Foss' *Time Cycle*, Martino's *Mosaic*, even Babbitt's *Relata I* instead of his better-known *Philomel* or *Vision and Prayer*. These are not well-known pieces even by reputation, even among the music fraternity. But, obviously, an important segment of the musical elite thinks they should be.

I might point out that *all but six* of these works are currently available on records (those that are not are starred). It is, perhaps, just as incumbent upon us, as music listeners, as it is on performers to increase our familiarity with the music of our own time and find out just where we are—or at least where some people think we are.

# THE OPERA FILE

By WILLIAM LIVINGSTONE



## THE BOLSHOI: ON STAGE AND ON DISC

THE announcement that Hurok Concerts was bringing the Bolshoi Opera here from Moscow this summer for the company's first visit to the United States did not send opera fans running through the streets gleefully shouting "The Russians are coming! The Russians are coming!" We had gotten all excited about such announcements several times before, and the Russians invariably canceled.

The Bolshoi Ballet, which preceded the opera company, dampened enthusiasm with their very disappointing season—ugly sets and costumes and abysmal new choreography. Then, too, aside from *Boris Godounov*, Russian opera has never been popular in this country, and aside from the impressive basses, Russian singers' voices often sound acid and edgy to Western ears.

By the time the tons of scenery began to arrive and it was certain that the Russians did intend to fulfill the engagement for four weeks of performances at the Met and two weeks at the Kennedy Center in Washington, it was also clear that we were entering the most oppressively humid summer in many years. Like most other New York opera fans, I consequently looked at the Bolshoi performance schedule with something less than maximum enthusiasm, and it did not even occur to me to go to the airport to greet the arriving company of 450 soloists, choristers, supers, stage hands, orchestra members, and conductors.

But now that it's all over, I wish I had made some such extravagant gesture, because I'm never going to be able to thank them enough for those four weeks of fascinating performances. I was genuinely surprised that I liked them so much, and I couldn't seem to get enough of them. They brought productions of six operas from their own national repertoire: Moussorgsky's *Boris Godounov*, Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and *Pique Dame* (*The Queen of Spades*), Prokofiev's *The Gambler* and *War and Peace*, and a brand new opera by Kiril Molchanov, *The Dawns Are Quiet Here*. The opportunity to see any one of them without having to go to Moscow would have been an occasion for rejoicing, but they brought six!

All the performances I attended were distinguished by an overwhelming sense of stylistic authority about direction and production details right down to the last prop. And down to the last super the performers looked abso-

lutely right. Why not? They were Russians playing Russians and singing their own music in their native language. The Bolshoi chorus is the best I have ever heard—how they made the rafters ring in *Boris Godounov* and *War and Peace!*—and their orchestra and conductors are topnotch.

The Bolshoi is a great ensemble company, and in their New York performances the overall level of acting was extraordinarily high, especially in the small character parts. It was as though every single member of the company felt that his contribution, no matter how small, was vital to the performance, and every once in a while you could spot a major soloist in a tiny role. The leading baritone Evgeni Kibkalo, for example, turned up as one of five Jesuits on stage briefly in the Kromy Forest Scene in *Boris*.

The names of a few of the fifty-seven principal singers listed alphabetically in the programs were dimly familiar from Melodiya recordings, but most of them were unknown quantities. After a week or so of performances it became clear who the stars were. Public favorites in New York were the mezzo Elena Obraztsova, who had a big success as Marina in *Boris Godounov* and other roles, the tenor Vladimir Atlantov, who has a surprisingly Italianate voice and temperament,

and the baritone Yuri Mazurok, who is simply fabulous.

I now think Russian sopranos have been unjustly maligned in the West. The Bolshoi's prima donna, soprano Tamara Milashkina, has a definite Slavic tone color, but it's not hard on the ears, and it sounds quite idiomatic in the Russian operas. As for those impressive basses the Russians are famous for, they seem to have run out of them for the moment. Although very convincing dramatically, the ones who sang the title role in *Boris Godounov* here did not come up to the vocal level we expect in the West.

I am not fond of *Boris*—I don't like operas with no real love interest, operas in which the actual protagonist is something like the city of Paris or the people of Russia—and I had already done my duty to *Boris* this year by attending the Met's acclaimed new production with Martti Talvela. Nevertheless, despite some vocal shortcomings, this Russian *Boris* was one of the most enjoyable operatic performances I've ever seen. I felt completely transported in time and space. You could almost smell the incense in the cathedral. Hurok's ads for the Bolshoi season said, "There is nothing in the world to match the splendor and scope of these magnificent productions." I wouldn't go quite that far, but the *Boris* was good support for the claim.

I feel more strongly about the Tchaikovsky works—*Pique Dame* is my favorite Russian opera—and I was fortunate to hear it sung by Milashkina and Atlantov and to hear them with Yuri Mazurok in *Eugene Onegin*. Vocally, dramatically, and visually, *Onegin* was the best of the six works the Bolshoi performed here. It looked like a lovely Chekhov play, and the company acted it that way.

Prokofiev's *War and Peace* blew my mind. I have not taken so much delight in discovering a twentieth-century opera since my first *Turandot*—at moments it is reminiscent of *Turandot*. I never knew Prokofiev had written so lyrically for the voice, and I was moved by the big patriotic scenes, which some people found propagandistic. In reviewing an exhibition of nineteenth-century French history-painting at the Metropolitan Museum this summer, art critic David Bourdon wrote: "One of the revelations of the show is seeing how much blatant propaganda a painting can successfully sustain." I submit that *War and Peace* is a great enough work of art to sustain

*The Bolshoi's Pique Dame: Russians singing Russian music in Russian*



Hurok Concerts

any amount of propaganda. It was not a Communist tract, but an expression of the Russians' love for their country, and it made me wish native faultfinders would allow us the luxury of such patriotism in this country.

An opera that cannot sustain its burden of patriotism and propaganda is *The Dawns Are Quiet Here*, which is about an all-girl (!) anti-aircraft unit in World War II and the noble deaths of four of them. It reminded me of all those 1940's war movies on late-night TV—Veronica Lake in *So Proudly We Hail*—and Molchanov's score sounded like a very efficient movie soundtrack. Though it was interesting to learn what a new Soviet opera looks and sounds like, one was quite enough.

With the exception of *The Dawns*, the Bolshoi visit was cultural exchange of the finest kind, and as my excitement mounted, it seemed there were Russians everywhere. Right next door to the Met. at the State Theater, the American Ballet Theatre was presenting such defectors as Rudolf Nureyev, Natalya Makarova, and Mikhail Baryshnikov. Alexander Solzhenitsyn was in town warning Americans of the world-wide danger of Soviet power. Out in space Apollo astronauts were meeting the Soyuz cosmonauts, and an exhibit of paintings from Russian museums opened at the National Gallery of Art in Washington.

I am told that Washington's music critics took a unanimously positive view of the Bolshoi Opera. New York's critics were divided. Harold Schonberg and the others who reviewed the company in the *Times* were rather cool to the Russians and wrote guarded or picky reviews that I found, well, mean-spirited, and in *New York* magazine Alan Rich seemed almost hostile. The Bolshoi was championed in the *New Yorker* by Andrew Porter, who got sufficiently worked up to list aria titles not just in Russian but in Cyrillic type, and by the *Post's* critic Harriett Johnson, who seems to me more and more the one who really calls the shots on vocal music.

I got sufficiently worked up to listen to all my Russian opera records again. Although there is no substitute for *seeing* productions like the Bolshoi's, you can get a very good idea of the way they sound from discs. You could start with a single disc, "Stars of the Bolshoi" (Melodiya/Angel SR 40050), but only one side is excerpts from Russian opera, and Milashkina, Atlantov, and Mazurok are represented only by excerpts from *Aida*, *Pagliacci*, and *Faust*. If you are willing to gamble on a complete opera recording, I would recommend first the Bolshoi's *Eugene Onegin* (Melodiya/Angel SRC1 4115) with Vishnevskaya, Atlantov, and Mazurok, conducted by Mstislav Rostropovich. It's excellent. So is *War and Peace* (Columbia/Melodiya M4 33111) with Vishnevskaya, Kibkalo, and many others, conducted by Alexander Melik-Pashayev.

The complete recording of either *Onegin* or *War and Peace* will cost you about the price of a ticket to a Bolshoi performance and will repay your investment for years. Hurok Concerts cannot have made money on the Bolshoi's visit (they charged only \$10 more than normal Met prices for an orchestra seat), and it is generally supposed that the agency underwrote the Bolshoi visit for reasons of prestige.

It was the dream of the late Sol Hurok to bring the Bolshoi Opera to America. He died March 5, 1974. I wish he had lived to see his dream come true. The Bolshoi's visit made me glad I'm alive, well, and living in New York.

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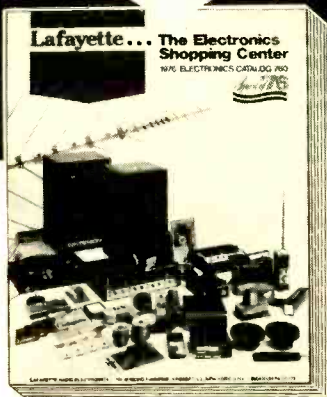
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# THE BASIC REPERTOIRE

By MARTIN BOOKSPAN



## MOZART'S CLARINET QUINTET

SCRATCH almost any orchestral musician and you will uncover a frustrated chamber-music player. Behavioral psychologists might have a field day with this fact, but the chief reason seems fairly obvious: constant involvement in orchestral performance demands a self-abnegation on the part of the individual musician that is not too far removed from self-destruction. Playing chamber music, on the other hand, elevates each single performer to a position of spotlighted importance. Added to this is the pleasure to be derived from a cooperative joint effort involving relatively few other participants.

The riches and the glories of chamber music literature are boundless. Composers over the years have reserved some of their most deeply felt and intensely personal thoughts for the chamber music medium. Some of the most sublime musical inspiration ever conceived in Western culture is to be found, for example, in a Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, or Rochberg string quartet. Some works, such as Schubert's C Major String Quintet, seemingly have the power to transport performer and listener alike to another realm of existence altogether.

Then there are other works that delight through the sheer exuberance, the animal good spirits of their expression, while being at the same time so ingeniously crafted and so rich in invention as to astound us with their musical perfection. Such a work, surely, is Mozart's Clarinet Quintet in A Major, my nomination as *the* work in the chamber-music repertoire to serve as an introduction to the genre for the newly-interested enthusiast.

DURING the last decade of his life, Mozart lived in Vienna. Anton Stadler, the superb principal clarinetist of the court orchestra, quickly became a close friend of the composer, and it was from Stadler that Mozart learned the capacities and limitations of the instrument. Mozart, in turn, produced for Stadler a whole series of works that are among the chief glories of music: these include the Trio for Clarinet, Viola, and Piano, the Clarinet Concerto, and of course the Quintet for Clarinet and Strings.

The Clarinet Quintet is distinguished by extraordinary clarity, long-breathed melodies, pages of hushed pathos, and, finally, rollicking good spirits. It is hard to believe that anyone could profess to love music who did not respond to this irresistible score with immediate affection.

There are a number of excellent recorded performances of this music available currently, chief among them being the performances that feature the two leading British clarinetists of our time: Jack Brymer and Gervase de Peyer. Brymer plays with the Allegri String Quartet (Philips 6500073) and De Peyer with members of London's Melos Ensemble (Angel S 36241). Both, coincidentally, couple the quintet with the Clarinet, Viola, and Piano Trio on their discs. If I prefer De Peyer's performance to Brymer's, it is by the slimmest of margins, and only because De Peyer invests his playing with a shade more personality.

Among other available recordings of the quintet, I would single out for special praise those involving leading clarinetists in American symphony orchestras: Harold Wright, principal clarinet with the Boston Symphony, and Peter Simenauer, associate principal clarinet with the New York Philharmonic. Wright's (Columbia MS 7447) is the product of recording sessions held at Rudolf Serkin's summer musical oasis in Marlboro, Vermont, and his associates in the performance are an *ad hoc* string quartet made up of Alexander Schneider and Isidore Cohen, violins; Samuel Rhodes, viola; and Leslie Parnas, cello. Simenauer's recording (Monitor S 2115) is with the Pascal Quartet. Both Wright and Simenauer (as well as their respective colleagues) favor a more assertive approach than do their British counterparts, and the recorded sound on their discs is likewise more sharply focused, with consequent keener spotlighting of the individual instruments involved. Brymer and De Peyer, however, bask in a warmer, more resonant acoustic ambience.

But whether your preference is for Brymer or De Peyer or Simenauer or Wright, get a recording of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet as quickly as possible and then settle back to enjoy one of music's most spontaneous and delightful pleasures, a perfect introduction to the world of chamber music.

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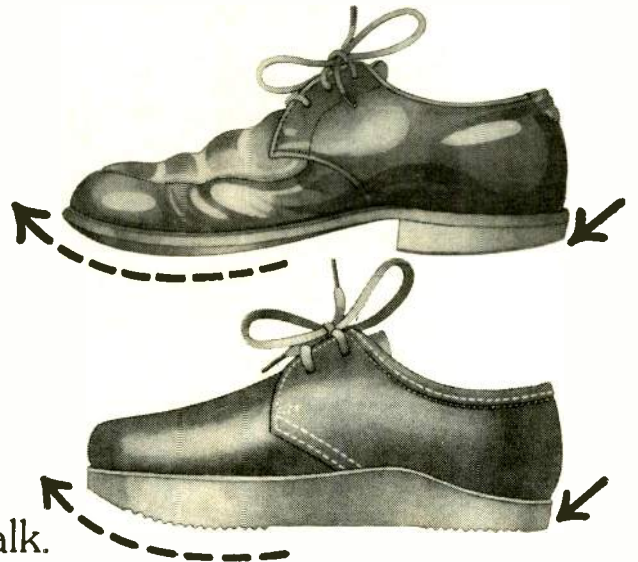
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# Nashville's Fan Fair

Country music  
is the only organism  
in the American  
culture that could  
put on such a show

By Noel Coppage

**F**OUR of them drove down from Sleepy Eye, Minnesota.

The announcer, reading notes passed up from the audience, read that, and about "a whole airplane load of folks all the way from Norway." Others had come from Germany, Switzerland, England, New York, Philadelphia, and, among other places, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, where a country-music disc jockey sometimes brings his small son to the studio and the people out in radio land get to hear him tell the lad to be quiet. By bus and by car they came from every state known to man, including Ohio, which sends more citizens to the Grand Ole Opry every Saturday than any other state (averaging 91 more than Indiana and 169 more than Tennessee); and one sturdy little clump of folks rode down from Buffalo, through all kinds of rain and lightning, on motorcycles. There were enough Okies from Muskogee to start a football league and, according to another note, three half-breeds from Holland, Michigan.

It seemed important on and off the stage, this matter of communicating how far they had come and how much or how little trouble it had been to find shelter for themselves and their machines. They had accomplished a pilgrimage, with the help of air-conditioned Chevys and Ramada Inns, the main thing about a pilgrimage being the common reverential attitude that attends it, and they were entitled to savor it. That it was a sure-enough pilgrimage all right was verified by the way the people who run country music and the people who make it (artists, they are invariably called) bent back and strained blood vessel for five days to woo them, these fans, these folks, in ways you don't often see 12,000 people wooed. (Continued overleaf)



Paul Gahner, Jr.

# Nashville

The International Country Music Fan Fair is what they call the event, and Nashville naturally is where they hold it, every year as soon as the planting is done; country music is the only organism in the American culture that could or would put on such a show. It is sponsored jointly by the Country Music Association, whose members are debating whether giving awards to such pop stars as John Denver and Linda Ronstadt is the way to keep country music "country," and by the Grand Ole Opry, an institution threatening to become as big as the telephone company. The fair, the fourth-year version that I saw, was something like an old-time camp meeting (with dinner moved up from the ground to the Municipal Auditorium plaza deck, but with a tent top shading it all the same), something like a music festival, something like a pep rally, something like a family reunion, something like an overgrown Tupperware party, and quite a lot—embarrassingly enough for some of us—like Norman Rockwell's vision of small-town America as drawn up twenty years ago and updated in the most casual and offhand manner. It was, in short, a gentle rebuff to anyone taken with the coastal notion that radical changes in recent years have shaken up the *whole* country. And it was also like what you always get at the end of a pilgrimage—a veritable orgy of church attendance. Nashville, way ahead of any of the rest of us, long ago dubbed its Opry and, by implication, its whole self "The Mother Church of Country Music."

Country fans from all over go down or up to Nashville and gorge themselves until they have to sit down, feasting, feasting on the sight, sound, smile, touch, smell, and signature of artist upon artist upon artist. For it is also like a giant autograph party in which the teenagers are outnumbered by middle-aged moms and pops. The fans' favorite part of it, obviously, is, as a Missouri woman put it, "maybe the best chance you'll ever get to see them up close, shake hands with them, have your picture taken with them—if you can fight your way through the crowd."

It is difficult to tell whether the performers enjoy this mingling all that much, although they smile all the time and would say, in public, yes, they do. But we do know what Sigmund Freud said the goals of the artist are, and I doubt he'd have taken it back had he guessed how Nashville would use the word *artist*; their goals, he said, are money, fame, and beautiful lovers. I don't have to tell you that some artists, a lot of artists nowadays, consider signing autographs for grown people and making

small talk and grinning at Instamatics a pretty tame way of moving toward those goals.

But in country music the artists court right back when the fans make overtures. Or before. The Fan Fair is a concentrated place where, wildly outnumbered, they court back pretty hard. Artists were beaming and hugging chubby ladies from Arkansas and Wisconsin while Instamatics and Pocket Instamatics clicked and flashcubes whirled and blasted, whirled and blasted. Jim Ed Brown stood up on the desk at his booth so fans could see him better; another artist's fan club was offering free memberships, no dues at all, limited time only, you understand, to anyone who'd come by and sign up; even Roy Acuff, the King of Country Music, had stopped by to sign programs, I was told, for those pure enough in spirit (they did not include me, alas) to crawl out at a decent hour and get down to the shindig early. Ernest Tubb, swamped by a hundred each of cameras and persons around his booth, demonstrated a remarkable ability to detect when any camera was about to go off, flashing his famous Texas grin in the nick of time.

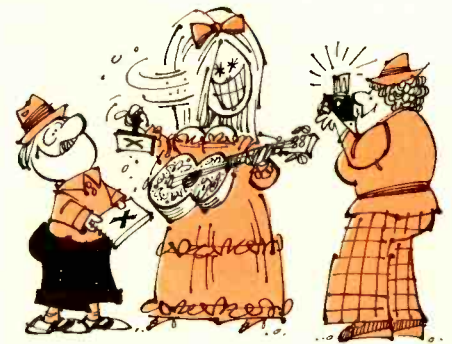


**"Nashville . . . long ago dubbed its Opry 'The Mother Church of Country Music'."**

Most of the fair was held at the Municipal Auditorium, apparently because it has a larger seating capacity than, say, the new Opry House at the new amusement park, Opryland. The new Opry House was the site, however, of the very first Fan Fair program, the bluegrass show, and the last one, a fiddlers' contest. Downtown, the record companies took turns putting on shows from ten in the morning until midnight for two days and then until late afternoon on Saturday, the Opry itself being available for its usual two sittings on Saturday night.

The basement of the auditorium was where the fair's uniqueness lay, though, where the booths stretched out farther than you could throw a cob, and banners were unfurled, baubles glittered, pretty

girls smiled, little hurt. Fan-club bou half of nearly every eral non-name artists ents had to dig to reme Delaney was, but their kids with her name on them), and where, any minute, a Big Favor stop by for an hour or so of aut ing, chatting, and posing close-hug with anyone nervy enough to ask. It was where dreams were realized in the flesh, and where a certain, relatively paltry, amount of disillusionment was suffered having to do with hairpieces and wrinkles. This was where courage was



**" . . . a remarkable ability to detect when any camera was about to go off. . . ."**

worked up, gods were approached, requests were blurted out, grins were grinned, and trinkets (a Tom T. Hall Sneaky Snake, for example, or a heavy-duty Faron Young shopping bag or a dancing wooden doll with your choice of an Archie Campbell face or a Grandpa Jones face) were bought cheap or, at the rare booth, acquired free—the best I could do in that area were some Tompall and Waylon stickers for my guitar case and a raffle coupon that might win me a Japanese pickup truck.

Free buses ran from the auditorium to Opryland, to the Hall of Fame, and to the old Ryman Auditorium, former site of the Opry, near as tacky a Broadway as ever belted an Athens of the South. A young man with the gentle demeanor and new clothes of a deacon was there to help the bus riders keep it all straight. "As soon as that bluegrass show is over," he said that first day, "you get back to Area Three of the parking lot. I mean go *straight* back; don't piddle around the Opryland gift shops or you might miss the last bus."

As it turned out, there *was* time for piddling, as some of the acts, including Lester Flatt (who was about to undergo open-heart surgery), didn't make it. But Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys were

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IM Distortion Comparison

YAMAHA	Brand "A"	Brand "B"	Brand "C"
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CR-800	.1%	.3%	.5%
CR-600	.1%	.5%	.8%
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**THE TAPE THAT'S HEARD  
AROUND THE WORLD**

there, and Bill's son James and *his* band were there, and that seemed appropriate, with Father's Day approaching. James showed he can pick the guitar, too, and Bill sent the first chills scraping along from coccyx to coiffure when he introduced Kenny Baker as "the greatest fiddler in bluegrass music" and, with some magnificent back-up runs from Baker, tore into *Muleskinner Blues*, which he's been doing since 1939.

Opryland is a theme park, "the home of American music," providing periodic live performances of various popular musics in appropriate settings (a "New Orleans" area for Dixieland, and so forth), and of course has an assortment of rides and things to shoot and throw at. The place can park 8,000 automobiles at a time, is lavishly landscaped, and is as neat as a pin, its walkways and crannies constantly patrolled by girls with sunny



"Fan-club booths beckoned on behalf of nearly every name artist. . . ."

olive uniforms, nice legs, dustpans, and broom-like things. All this from one little old radio show. . . although, if you really want to talk history, the whole powerful country-music industry owes much, many personal fortunes as well as heritage, to an *insurance company*; it was National Life and Accident that put WSM into operation on October 5, 1925, and the station put the Grand Ole Opry on the air as soon as possible, November 28 of that year.

The record company shows started with Columbia's at ten o'clock in the morning, not one of my best hours but not an unusual one for Charlie McCoy, the legendary harmonica player and almost-as-legendary leader of studio sessions; he usually starts his day that early. Wearing an off-white leisure suit (it was a big summer for leisure suits, you may recall) and a railroad cap, McCoy guided a band of studio cats through a tricky series of break swaps and key modulations—and the truth is no other band I

heard during the fair was as tight as this one, or as willing to take risks. "I like being here among my heroes," McCoy said, and played his extraordinary, wind-breaking version of *Orange Blossom Special*. Young fellows like David Allen Coe and Eddie Rabbit showed what the new breed of country star is like—heavily influenced by Waylon Jennings is what he seems to be like—and Bob Luman demonstrated playing an un-miked guitar.

And there was Connie Smith, with her fine, clear, robust voice and her religion; later that night I heard her tell Ralph Emery on WSM that she no longer testifies every time she gets up on stage, "but every other song I do is a religious one—and if it bothers folks that probably means the spirit of the Lord is getting to them." And there was Buck Owens with the power of television behind him, hitting the stage in a burst of energy and selling, slicker than a lightning-rod salesman, a set plainly based on old rock-and-roll songs such as *Roll Over Beethoven* and *Johnny B. Goode*. It seemed to matter less what Buck did than what Buck clearly *is*, an earthy, witty old country boy who always seems to enjoy himself.

Bobby Bare, during the RCA show, did something you might think under the circumstances couldn't be topped. After singing a Billy Joe Shaver tune and Mel Tillis' famous *Detroit City* (which Bare mostly made famous), he brought out, to sing one song each, his wife Jeanie, his daughter Carrie, his little son Bobby Junior, and his tiny son Shannon. After they'd wrapped it all up by singing, together, *Singin' in the Kitchen*, the audience thundered and thundered and the announcer was moved to comment, "You'll never see anything like that anywhere but in country music. You'll never see it in rock, I'll guarantee you."

But nobody topped Loretta Lynn—her head fans, the Johnson girls, are more famous than a lot of performers who've had hit records—for she had *two* booths operating on her behalf downstairs and the biggest crowd down there of anyone. During an International Fan Club Organization banquet, to which ladies wore what in that part of the country are called "formals" and gents pretty much stuck with leisure suits, it was announced that Loretta had won one more thing, a popularity poll conducted by *Music City News*; her frequent duet partner, Conway Twitty, was the readers' favorite male vocalist.

And nobody really upstages Chet Atkins, either. All he did was pick a little to loosen up and then tell the folks, "We're comin' up on the Bicentennial, so I'm going to play you a little patriotic medley," and all he had to do then was make sure he started it with *Dixie*. Still, that wasn't really *all* he did; a childhood so poor as to include malnutrition lies in his background, and that kind of qualifica-

tion never completely stays out of the way a person plays a guitar. And Jerry Reed was too busy playing the devilish egomaniac ("You ain't heard nothin' yet—I'll have you throwin' babies up in the air. . ."), too busy shooting up on the folks' laughter, to notice who was upstaging whom.



"Bobby Bare . . . did something you might think under the circumstances couldn't be topped."

The most sentimental stage show was a first-time feature called the Reunion. Pee Wee King sang *Slowpoke* and introduced Floyd Tillman, who wrote *Slippin' Around*, and Ray Whitley, one of the first Hollywood cowboys brought in to be on the Opry. Whitley was paid \$350 for writing *Back in the Saddle Again* and helping Gene Autry buy all the saddles, boots, pickup trucks, jerky, and baseball teams any old cowpoke could want. Joe and Rose Lee Maphis (parents of Jody, Earl Scruggs' drummer) did *Hot Time in Nashville*, mainly an excuse for a blazing fast solo by Joe on his double-necked electric guitar. Minnie Pearl introduced the Fruit Jar Drinkers, regulars for all the Opry's fifty years, and Alcyone Beasley, the Opry's first female singer, and Fiddlin' Sid Harkreader, seventy-seven, who played a tune he made famous during the first year of the Opry, *Mockingbird Breakdown*, and drew a great, emotional roar from the crowd.

"Bless his heart," Minnie said, and then caught us up on news of her kin: "Uncle Nabob's corn crop was so bad he didn't get but five gallons to the acre."

Lulu Belle and Scottie Wiseman, examples of stars who, in the old days, came to Nashville after making names for themselves at the WLS Barn Dance in Chicago, did their celebrated song, *Have I Told You Lately That I Love You*. Grandpa Jones and wife Ramona were there, and Clyde (*Shenandoah Waltz*) Moody, Jimmy (*Let's Say Good-bye Like We Said Hello*) Skinner, and the Bailes Brothers of *Dust on the Bible*

# Nashville

fame, and there was Whitey Ford, the Duke of Paducah, still oddly sophisticated and corny at the same time. And there was much ado in tribute to the late Bob Wills, creator of country swing, big dance-band country (who managed to get a snare drum on the Opry stage, past the late George D. Hay, the Solemn Old Judge who ran things; Ford said nobody, in fifty years, has been allowed to use a full set of drums in the Mother Church). Leon McAuliff, playing the pedal steel from a standing position, narrated the tribute, and a few of Wills' Texas Playboys performed: drummer Smokey Dacus, fiddler Johnny Gimble, vocalists Laura Lee McBride and Leon Rausch. The Reunion didn't quite pack the house the way the record-company shows had, but it had the most intense, attentive audience I've seen at anything in a long while.

**M**ANY celebrants, though, were still punishing their feet downstairs, trying for two or three more autographs. The circular shape of the basement area, the milling crowd, the colors and sounds, and such distractions as the golden tresses of Barbara Mandrell combined to mess up one's sense of direction down there. I stumbled across an old friend, singer Marti Brown, whose little girl, Leah Ann, was flying an Ethel Delaney balloon.

"Now people are going to think I'm Ethel Delaney," Marti said. As we talked—about how many fans were in wheelchairs, which Marti noticed, and about how several of them were really quite tremendously fat, which I brought up—and as I talked to myself about how you don't see goiters on Southerners and Midwesterners the way you used to, thanks to iodized salt, I noticed the passersby included Billy Swan and his song-writing pal, Donnie Fritts, known to some fans as the Alabama Leaning Man, sauntering along as ogle-eyed and rubber-necked as anyone else.

Heeding Marti's advice to check out Bill Anderson's booth, I wandered. I saw Jeanie C. Riley in a long dress (no more Harper Valley miniskirts for her!) and running around loose, out of her booth, and holding hands with a dude almost as shaggy as Tompall Glaser and Waylon Jennings have become lately; saw Danny Davis, leader of the Nashville Brass and a great favorite with the photographers or editors or somebody at *Music City News*, standing alone and temporarily unrecognized; asked McCoy if he'd tried the new Golden Melody harps and was told he liked the case they come in; saw where one could acquire Jerry Reed's "I'm a Coonass"

stickers that were plastered everywhere; caught a glimpse of Tanya Tucker, whose club had brought in a replica of a rumble-seat roadster as a prop relating to one of her songs; went out for some fresh air and saw Jerry Clower in a yellow (double-knit but non-leisure) suit about to be approached by seven persons on the streets of Nashville; ducked back in for the drink in Municipal Auditorium, a Pepsi, and finally found it.

The booth was impressive, designed to represent an old cathedral-style radio with the grille cloth removed so you could see Bill Anderson (famous for *Po' Folks*, of course, and recently as the writer of the outrageous *Between Lust and Watchin' TV*) and his trusted aides inside it. But it was the little sign beside the booth that got my attention, and not the content of that but something in the style of the lettering. Now where? . . . Ah, yes, in a *department* store: it was that odd, shy kind of lettering they use on the little signs in department stores, such as. . . . I read: "Bill Anderson and J. C. Penney welcome you to the Fan Fair." And under that: "Bill Anderson's wardrobe by J. C. Penney."

Well! That *is* the interior of the country for you, isn't it? But hold on, now; Bill's threads looked all right, as good as



**"Bill Anderson and J. C. Penney welcome you to the Fan Fair."**

Johnny Miller the golfer's Sears duds and as good as my Levi's. Anderson is a fastidious fellow, never a hair out of place, all fingernails the same length and immaculate and that sort of thing, but this isn't just a case of someone wanting to put on the dog and not knowing where the fancier dogs are kept. Neat and clean is the thing, not the label; people who get dirty doing their work—and most Middle American jobs get you dirty—like his kind of crinkly fresh cleanliness on a holiday. The stars do dress to please the folks, of course, but they also dress as they do because they *are* the folks. Bill Anderson's *were* po' folks; like most pickers, he came from amongst what are

now your television watchers and bowlers, farmers and shopkeepers, coon hunters and good old boys, the Elks, the Eagles, and the Odd Fellows.

These are survivors, not tastemakers. The Fan Fair does teach a little something about how country fans have changed—about the acceptance of long hair and beards and other such liberations; hell, the truck drivers are sporting *whiskers* these days—but it seems to teach more about the similarities, the constancy of country fans old and new. I think this lesson involves some kind of bent physics impregnated with sociology that seems to postulate that the land, all that distance from the sea, somehow soaks the urgency out of incoming messages (concerning man's cosmic predicament or, for that matter, his measly triumphs) before they reach these hinterlands. I do not know how the land does this, defies the television and electronics we've been led to believe are instantaneous and leveling and unstoppable, but the land always has been quite something. I do know there's more optimism back in there than you'll find on the coasts. They know about the corruption and the downturn of economic indicators (including a slight dip in country record sales) and they don't claim to be smarter than the slick politicians, but they also seem to know there's strength in being a Miasma of Methodists, as Mencken called a high percentage of their grandparents; these other matters are just too short-term to fool with much. They watch Cronkite, but they don't treat the news of the day as some kind of damned bottle to suck on. So it's about as easy to find a genuine pessimist at an affair like the Fan Fair as it is to find someone who'd rather discuss abstractions, ideas, than something he can feel and see and, better still, manipulate, such as a car. A man and a woman (it usually takes both, still, so they still tend to stay married) can manipulate the land to an extent, order their relationship with it when the weather permits, while their seaboard cousins can't do much with the ocean except fish in it and contemplate it, which is bound to lead to abstractions because the thing is so big and mysterious, and in all this stuff may lie profounder influences than we realize.

The best thing about the Fan Fair, one may then say, was that it showed America's regions still working. The development of the nondescript, general, grey hybrid culture is not zinging along at the clip I had thought it was. We may yet pass 1984 with a little diversity still in us.

At least they haven't taken all the country out of the country fan. True, there don't seem to be many old-time, hillbilly-style, actual genuine *hicks* left, at least not out on air-conditioned pilgrimages. But back in Ohio and Tennessee and Fitchburg and Sleepy Eye, they've still got some *folks*. □



“...flawed in the worst place a movie about Nashville could be”



Ronee Blakely and Henry Gibson on stage in Nashville

## And Then There's "Nashville"

IF you get your media from New York, and if Dr. Pavlov's experiments meant anything at all, then when I say "Robert Altman's *Nashville*," the word "Masterpiece!" should explode in your mind like the Shea Stadium scoreboard going off when one of the Mets hits a home run. You've had the kind of conditioning people used to think should only happen to a Russian dog, but which is not all that unusual nowadays. The New York-based, New York-biased movie critics haven't gone around the bend like this (that is, together, or, as some might put it, in a pack) on a movie since . . . well, since Peter Bogdanovich's *The Last Picture Show*. You will probably be able to remember *The Last Picture Show* if you can slip into a black-and-white mode of thinking about another non-New York place, Texas, and concentrate about medium to medium-well.

One can understand it, though: Robert Altman probably is the one American director capable of a masterpiece. In fact, he may already have come at least as close to that as *Citizen Kane* did—but it wasn't *Nashville*, it was *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*. Now there the overlapping dialogue, the unobtrusive precision of the television-documentary-style camera work, and Altman's fondness for a "natural" episodic, nonlinear replacement for beeline plot all worked together beautifully, and the central theme was of classically tragic proportions . . . and the evocation of it was so understated yet concentrated, so robust yet elegant, that the pain of it may actually stick with me the rest of my life. Individual critics here and there praised it highly, but they never ganged up for a concerted push, and the public wouldn't or couldn't deal with *McCabe* in significant numbers.

But *Nashville*'s social implications—since it deals with Making It and (new wrinkle) not only that but Making It in a Middle American City—are easier and a lot more fun to write

about than are *McCabe*'s sad conclusions about each person's essential isolation, and before a political science professor could jerk his knee the Opp Ed writers, such as Tom Wicker, started getting in on it, rambling on about stock-car racing and other signs of America's "heedless vitality," which you've got to admit is kind of a cute phrase. The right wing played its part too, with a surprising piece extravagantly praising the film in William Buckley's *National Review*.

So far, you say, this is sounding dreadfully familiar: New York has elected something new to celebrate and here we go again, and at least Cybill Shepherd isn't in this one. But I, perhaps under the influence of Altman's anti-storytelling technique, have let us get ahead of ourselves. Altman being Altman, you don't want to be reactionary and prejudge the thing (even though that will save you a lot of time if you have to deal again with Bogdanovich or Mike Nichols or other recent Big Apple anointees). We had the subject and the director for something extraordinary, I kept thinking, recalling the feeling for authenticity at which Altman excels—how depressingly muddy the Korean mud was in *M\*A\*S\*H*, or how bloody the blood was, and how absolutely convincing the deep-bogging Northwest snow and the under-construction frontier village were in *McCabe*. The connective tissue for a movie about making it in Tennessee of course is country music, and if Altman could get that right the way he had gotten visual connectives right in other movies . . . well.

WELL. The first jolt was the ABC Records soundtrack album, which came to my town before the film did. The collection of songs and performances sounded like some kind of parody of country music (except in one or two cases involving Keith Carradine, who's supposed to be doing folk-rock, or something vaguely like it). The tone of the reviews and

columns had led me to expect songs and performances that represented country music (that were as good, bad, and mediocre as it really is and which, individual aesthetic differences aside, could be taken easily enough for the real thing), to expect—Altman being Altman—the ring of authenticity. The soundtrack album, if that were the case, should stand up with other country anthology albums (Epic's "Country 45's," for example) and hold its own, for the movie was supposed to be that important. But alongside albums like that, the soundtrack was not only aesthetically inferior, it sounded amateurish, dated (in the uninformed sense), and everywhere superficial, as if made by outsiders and johnny-come-latelies.

Still, there was the question of how the film intended to use the music. It was possible it had to be this way, somehow, for the story to be told. But seeing the movie didn't convince me it had to be that way. *Nashville* turned out to be visually superb, an object lesson, technically, in how to handle complicated scenes on location, and it did seem that the words, at least, of some songs did relate to the story images in fairly subtle ways typical of Altman—but there is no getting around the fact that the movie is flawed in the worst place a movie about Nashville could be flawed: in its music. Anyone reasonably familiar with the music Nashville actually makes will find himself having to make too many allowances, help the movie too much, during the music scenes. The actors and the songs they themselves mostly wrote are almost never very convincing in such scenes.

ALTMAN has shown the bias that prevails every day in high-school and college theater productions, the idea that acting is more difficult than anything else, the idea that leads to trying to get music out of actors when it might be more sensible to try to get acting out of musicians. Without getting into just how much we may have romanticized and consequently overrated acting, it is an inescapable truth that we all do a little of it almost every day, every time we weasel out of an invitation and don't give the real reason, every time we appear (starting in the second grade or earlier) interested in some subject that bores the hell out of us, and so on. But we can't all sing, and very few of the mediocre singers among us could pass ourselves off for a minute as established professionals who've been making a good living at singing for a long time. It was considerably easier to make allowances for John Denver's acting in an episode of *McCloud*, for example, than it has been to tolerate, let alone believe, Dennis Weaver's so-called singing in two or three subsequent variety shows and an awful single or two. Television (where Altman got his start) routinely operates on the assumption that "anybody can sing," meaning Lorne Greene, Telly Savalas, Sammy Davis Jr., anybody (television even assumes Jack Palance can play the harmonica), but television is only doing in quantity what the movies—perhaps drama itself—started a long time ago. Surely you

remember those awful scrapings wrung from the throat of Gene Kelly.

Nashville has *tried* toying with that assumption a few times, but it has never really stuck. *Nashville's* music works only occasionally, even as part of the non-plot—the song that precedes the climactic killing scene, Ronee Blakely's *My Idaho Home* (probably the best of her songs in the bunch; at least it *sounds* as if it is based upon real memory instead of adopted character memory), does fit as only a piece of “original material” would. Karen Black, of all people, wrote the one song, *Memphis*, that might be taken (if you used the old test of waking up a country fan in the middle of the night) for a current product of Music Row. For the *Sake of the Children*, written by Richard Baskin, the film's music arranger, and by someone identified as R. Reicheg, isn't *too* bad, but it sounds like a country song of twenty years ago, and Conway Twitty alone, with his tricky new recastings of the eternal triangle, has made such simplistic treatment of the old generalities obsolete.

**S**IMILAR small bad judgments abound: Henry Gibson, playing Haven Hamilton, “the king of country music,” introduces *Keep a-Goin'*, which he and Baskin wrote, and what he says about it leads you to believe it is the song that made him, years ago, and is the one fans still identify with him. But it turns out to be one of those quickie throwaways of the sort producers keep finding for Olivia Newton-John. Country audiences back when grey-at-the-sideburns Hamilton made it—which would be vaguely relative to the time when Roy Acuff, the real-life “king,” made it—wouldn't have clung to such a song in a steady, tradition-cultivating way, as they glommed onto *The Great Speckled Bird*. The tune (for the purposes of our story, anyway) might have been a mild hit forgotten in two weeks, but it simply could not have been the trademark of the genre's Big Honcho. Blakely, the only actor-writer-singer with appreciable experience at writing and singing in places like coffee houses where they *don't* assume anybody can sing, makes a pretty good start on a country feeling with the title *Tapedeck in His Tractor*, but as soon as you learn it's a *sod-busting* tractor instead of the kind on the front of a semi, she's got problems. It goes into a rambling, nonsensical refrain about *cowboys*—“He was a cowboy and he knew I loved him well./A cowboy's secret you never tell . . .”—and your attention scatters like buckshot. First, the mind has to go through the farmer-cowboy business; plowing is not something a cowboy does. She's not necessarily *wrong*, since it's self-image or girlfriend's image of boyfriend she's dealing with, but *real* country songs don't leave you wondering how to define the terms like that. And then, what is this stuff about a secret? The song just leaves that hanging, and country songs don't do that, either.

And where a *Nashville* song is passable, the singing is not. The backing is fine; they used real Nashville studio musicians for that (Vassar Clements even manages a lovely break on a Karen Black song, *Rolling Stone*, that is itself the absolute dregs), and Nashville studio musicians may be the best musicians in the world, a major reason why there *is* a

Nashville, something Altman perhaps should have given more thought to before starting the project. The star system, something Altman didn't miss, does thrive in Nashville, though, and the singers are the stars. The real ones may be good by any standard (Marty Robbins could hold his own anywhere in a vocal-instrument one-on-one) or as singing is generally evaluated they may be terrible, but they all have something an actor cannot be expected to develop in a brief rehearsal period, and

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that's style. Country singers are passionately aware of the need for sounding unlike anyone else. Once they manage to do that—and it may be already built-in by nature or it may take them years—they take security in it, and that helps everyone relax a bit even when this personal trademark sound is, if you analyze it, grotesque. The movie singers are clearly faking it (except for Blakely, whose shaky, transparent sound, like her writing in such decent but not-quite-appropriate songs as *Bluebird*, belongs to a folkie-type who might be better cast in a picture called *The Troubadour* or *Mariposa*), and even when Black isn't making a complete mess of anything approaching a low note or when Gibson isn't putting a corny wave in his phrasing that he must have picked up from the groaning in minstrel shows, the absence of stylistic security can be heard. It reminds you this is a story, this is *pretending*. Carradine fakes it better than the others—he doesn't quite represent country music, for one thing, but mainly he benefits from being able to play the guitar, which solves the hands problem. A real country boy has trouble growing out of the anxiety concerning what to do with his hands in a public, polite place. The movie “king,” old Haven, sings standing

stock still or walking around holding the mike, but real country stars—male ones, that is—use instruments (among other things) at least as props. The real “king,” Acuff, plays the fiddle, after a fashion, or sometimes he will do yo-yo tricks, and as the song ends he likes to balance the violin bow on his nose.

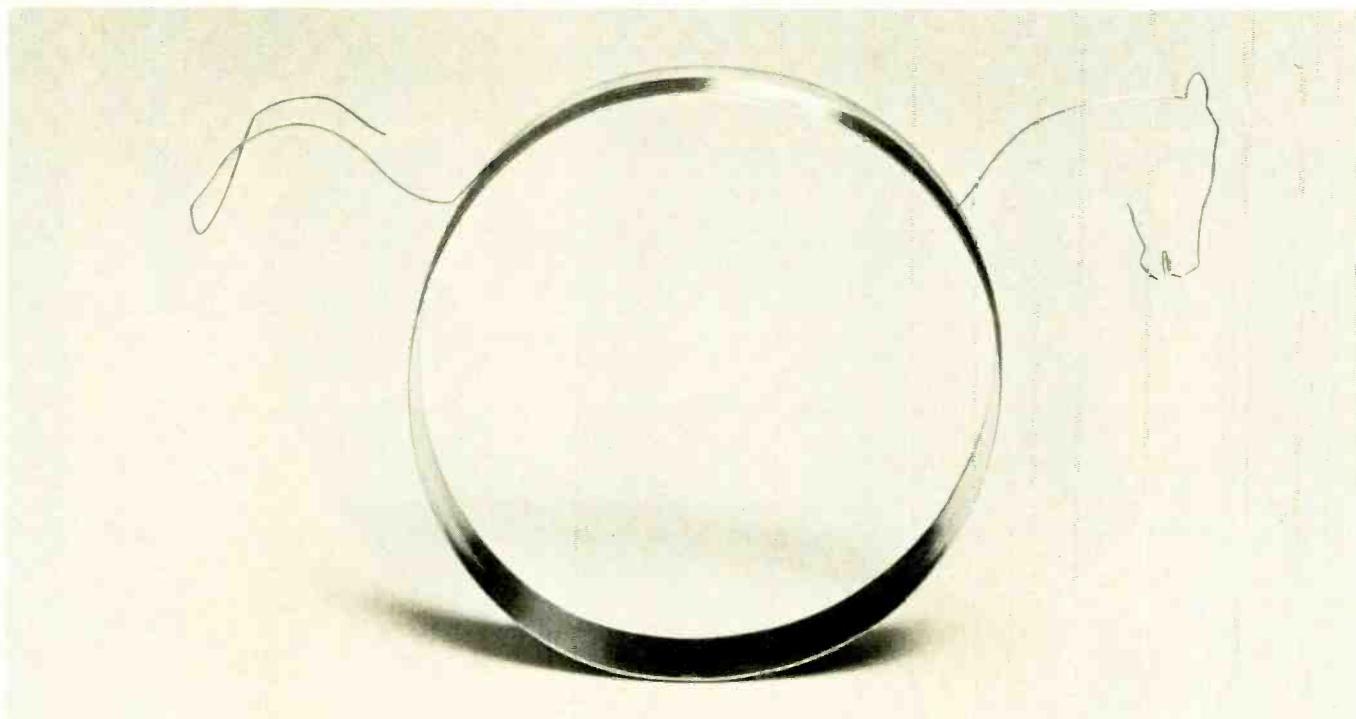
**N**ASHVILLE is a *good* movie (as was *The Last Picture Show*) in view of how much pretending we have to do to help *other* movies along. Altman's attention to the visual details serves it well (although I think the edited version we get to see could have used some shots of Church Street, downtown, one of the “other” Nashvilles), and nowhere does he botch the job the way other directors regularly do. You will perhaps recall that *Fear Strikes Out* had Anthony Perkins, who is a pretty good actor but who throws like a girl (the way girls *used* to throw, anyway), playing Jim Piersall, who probably had the best throwing arm of any outfielder then in the American League. Altman's “singers,” who are supposed to be able to carry a tune, do come reasonably close to carrying one. It's the understanding of subtle truths about the music itself that fails, and one of the results is that the movie appears—intentionally or not—to be saying something on the side about how cynical *all* Nashville is about the music itself. There is plenty of cynicism in that city, of course, and the Middle Americans who populate the area do look more gawky and awkward than New Yorkers and Californians in the act of practicing the Big Hustle. But the music is taken seriously a reasonable percentage of the time (how else could the studio sidemen have gotten so good?), and when Loretta Lynn defends her decision to record a song like *The Pill* she is either genuinely exercised and wide-eyed or she is one hell of an actress. And I don't think Altman—unlike some of the critics and columnists—is merely out for the sport of beating up on the New Kid; he does not have a reputation for cheap shots.

No, I think *Nashville* is to Altman as *Sanctuary* was to William Faulkner, a contrivance containing a little bit of everything and designed to attract a lot of attention and make a lot of money, which should have the effect of getting the really dangerous hustlers—the so-called businessmen who run the industry—off his back and, in the process, garner a little more attention for the rest of his work. I don't say Altman designed it that way consciously, as Faulkner said he did with *Sanctuary*, but I do have some hope that *Nashville* may do for *McCabe* and *M\*A\*S\*H* what *Sanctuary* did for *Absalom, Absalom* and *As I Lay Dying*.

—Noel Coppage

**NASHVILLE** (Robert Altman). Original-soundtrack recording. Ronee Blakely, Henry Gibson, Timothy Brown, Karen Black, Keith Carradine, others (singers); Troy Seals, Harold Bradley, Weldon Myrick, David Briggs, Vassar Clements, Johnny Gimble, others (instrumental accompaniment); arranged and supervised by Richard Baskin. *It Don't Worry Me*; *200 Years*; *Bluebird*; *Memphis*; *For the Sake of the Children*; *Keep a-Gain*; *Rolling Stone*; *Dues*; *My Idaho Home*; *Tapedeck in His Tractor*; *One, I Love You; I'm Easy*. ABC ABCD-893 \$6.98, Ⓜ 8022-893 H \$7.98.

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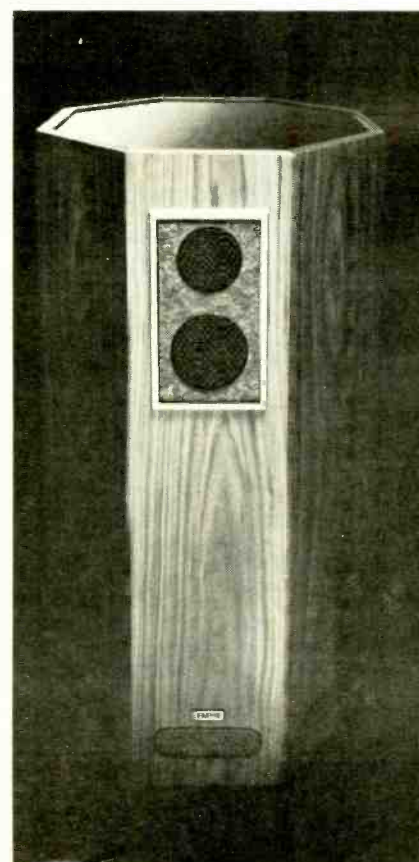
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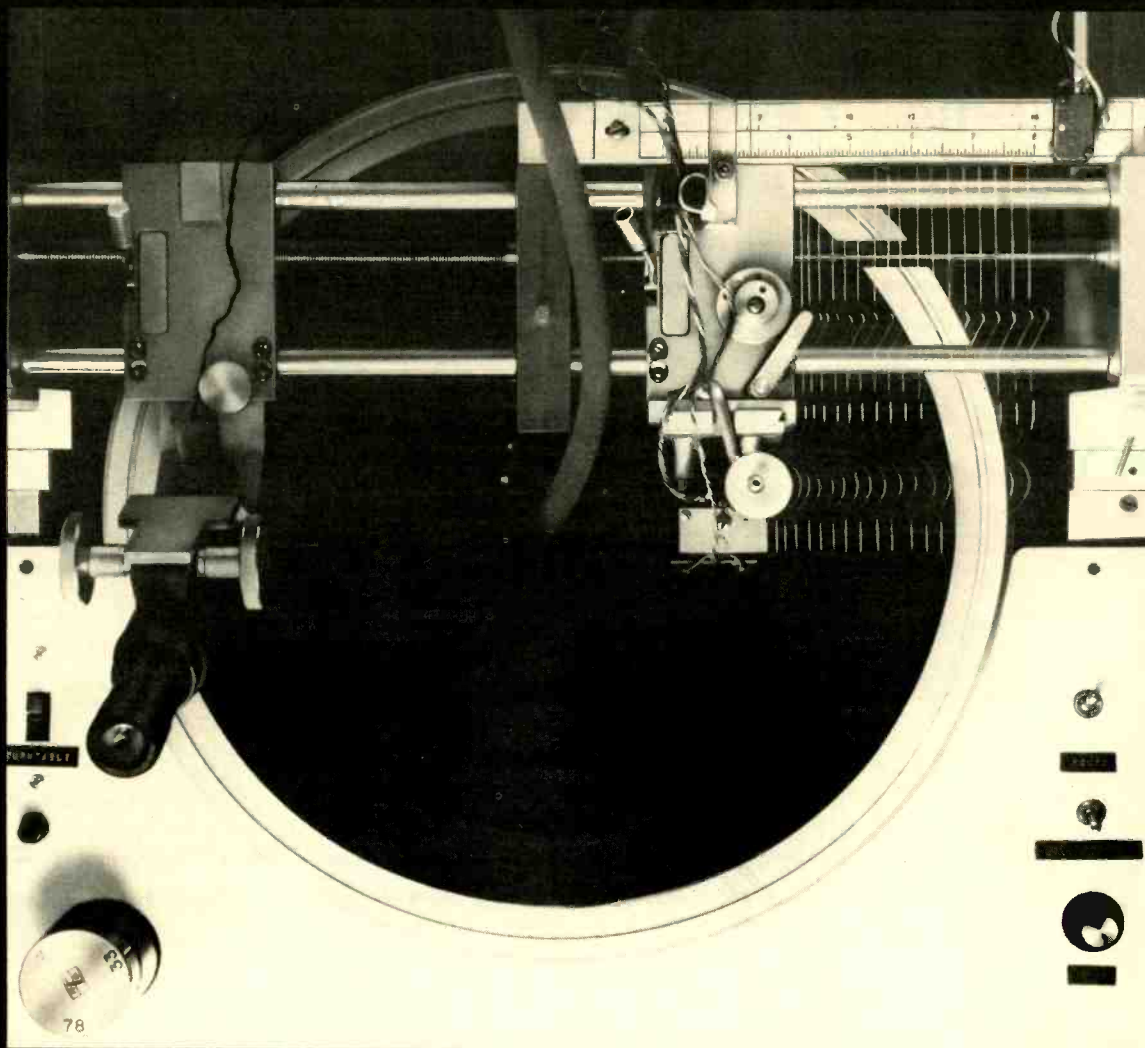
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The Utah Symphony's  
**MAURICE  
ABRAVANEL**

By Roy Hemming



**T**HE excitement was clearly evident in Maurice Abravanel's voice. "Yes, we are the first American orchestra to have recorded *all* the Mahler symphonies. And I've just received the news that our complete set has been chosen by the largest record club in Switzerland and Germany as the one it will offer. That is quite an honor for us. I'm sure they could have made as good a deal for the recordings made by orchestras and conductors that are much better-known in Europe. But they chose us—from Utah. I am most happy."

Abravanel's Mahler recordings with the Utah Symphony Orchestra have stacked up a number of other firsts. Not only are they the first all-American set (Bernstein's and Solti's were both recorded partly in America, partly in Europe), but the Abravanel-Utah versions of Mahler's Seventh and Eighth Symphonies were the first studio recordings of these mammoth works by *anyone* (earlier releases had been based in whole or in part on live concert performances in Europe).

For Abravanel himself, the Mahler cycle marks the culmination of a love affair with Mahler's music that goes back to his youth. "I first heard Mahler in Berlin when I was nineteen," the tall, wiry,

seventy-two-year-old maestro recalled recently in an interview in New York. "It was in 1922, when Mengelberg conducted *Das Lied von der Erde*. I was absolutely struck by it. A short time later, I heard the Eighth Symphony. That did it! I fell in love with Mahler and promptly went out to buy every score of his that I could get my hands on. I was just a kid, a student in Berlin, and I went without lunches for three months so I could buy those scores."

Berlin in the 1920's has other vivid memories for Abravanel, memories of events and encounters that were equally influential in his career: it was in Berlin that he first met and studied with Kurt Weill and Bruno Walter. "Bruno Walter helped me a great deal 'way, 'way back, and he was the one from whom I learned Mahler," Abravanel said with the combination of warmth and animation that marked almost all the comments he made during our interview. "Before I conducted the First Symphony for the first time, he and I went through the score as he sat at the piano. He would say to me: 'This is what Mahler told me.' It was an unforgettable experience. I think the things we learn when we are very young stay closest to us throughout our lives. They're in our blood."

How then, I asked, would he compare his approach to the Mahler symphonies with those of Bernstein, Solti, Haitink, or others who have also recorded complete sets? Abravanel seemed a bit reluctant at first to answer, but then plunged in. "We are all different because we are different men. I'm not as theatrical as Bernstein—although that is certainly a great and special quality of his: in my book he is a genius. I think I'm more of a romanticist in the traditional sense than some of the younger conductors who have also recorded Mahler. I learned the tradition from musicians who knew Mahler and worked with him. I think I bring that to the music."

"Today there are many conductors who play just the notes [of any piece], which was the prevalent idea Stravinsky peddled from the 1920's on. I believe a performer must put all his heart and soul into whatever he does. The combination of the composition *and* the convincing performer—*this*, to me, is music. I agree with Gide when he talks about the 'part of God' in art. One always does more than one thinks he's doing. I believe there exists for every artist—whether a sculptor, an actor, or a musician—something beyond the technical ability, something in your heart."



For this reason, Abravanel is not particularly bothered by the fact that his Utah recordings “compete” in the commercial world with those of more famous orchestras led by more famous conductors. “When I perform Mahler, I know it is music that has long been a part of me, that I know well, and that I believed in long before many others did. So I do not feel I am ‘competing’ against *anybody!*”

**A**BRAVANEL was born in Salonika, of an old Spanish family. “One of my ancestors was Don Isaac Abravanel,” he says. “He was quite a guy in his time—a minister to Portugal at the age of twenty-one and then chancellor to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. He left Spain at the time of the Inquisition, although the king asked him to remain. One of his sons was invited by the Sultan Suleiman to settle in Turkey—to help lure trade away from Spain and Portugal, and also from Venice and Genoa, which he did very successfully.” Eventually the family settled in Salonika, which was under Turkish rule at the time. “But our family traditions remained Spanish. I remember my mother singing Spanish folk songs to me as a child. And she cooked Spanish.”

As Abravanel neared school age, his

father, a pharmacist, moved the family to Lausanne, Switzerland. For several years the Abravanel family lived in the same house as Ernest Ansermet, the Swiss conductor who later founded the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande but was then chief conductor for Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes. “Ansermet took me for my first sleigh ride!” Abravanel cries out, as if suddenly remembering a long-forgotten joy. “And we used to play piano four-hands. He was an even worse pianist than I was!”

“I also remember piano run-throughs at the house with Milhaud for *La Boeuf sur le Toit* and with Stravinsky for *L’Histoire du Soldat*. Stravinsky came there often, as he lived about a five-minute train ride from Lausanne. The first staged performance of *L’Histoire*, in fact, was given almost entirely with students from my school.”

Abravanel’s own music studies began at age nine. “My sister had started piano lessons, as did all the dutiful daughters of middle-class families. I think I enjoyed her practicing more than she did. I was in love with the minor scale especially; I thought it was too beautiful for words. The piano teacher was our governess, a very good-looking blonde from Munich. So maybe that also had something to do

with my eagerness to take piano lessons!

“I would go to all the concerts I could as a teenager. I remember once riding on the back seat of a motorcycle all the way to Geneva—in the dead cold of winter—to hear *Lohengrin*. I knew then that music was my life. I think I also realized I was too dumb to do anything else! I had to be a musician or nothing.”

From Lausanne, Abravanel went to Berlin to study. “Someone recommended me to a brilliant young student of Busoni’s—that was Kurt Weill. He taught me counterpoint and harmony.” Over the next twenty-five years Abravanel’s career was linked closely (though not exclusively) with Weill’s. They left Germany together in 1933. “It was two weeks after Bruno Walter was forbidden by the Nazis to conduct.” They went to Paris, where Abravanel became a conductor for the Ballet Balanchine for a year, leading, among other things, the premiere of the Brecht-Weill “ballet with song” *The Seven Deadly Sins*. He also helped Bruno Walter prepare *Don Giovanni* at the Paris Opéra and alternated with Walter in conducting it.

He went to Australia with the British Covent Garden Opera company and stayed on there for two years as head of the Sydney Orchestral Society. He came

to the United States in 1936 when he was invited to conduct at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and he remained at the Met for several seasons. "I once conducted seven performances of five different operas in nine days," he says. "I think it's an all-time endurance record for the Met."

In America he also continued his close friendship with Kurt Weill. "One of the first things I mentioned to Edward Johnson, who was then general manager of the Met, was that he should do one of Weill's operas. He was shocked. He knew only *The Three-Penny Opera* and felt it had no place at the Met."

Weill, of course, went on to compose numerous works for Broadway—and Abravanel became music director for most of them, including *Knickerbocker Holiday*, *Lady in the Dark*, *One Touch of Venus*, *The Firebrand of Florence*, and *Street Scene* (the last has since entered the repertoire of the New York City Opera). "You know, Weill's style did not change as much in America as most people seem to think," Abravanel declares. "He was always his own man, writing his own way. He tried very hard to write 'Broadway music,' but he never really did. If you compare some of the music of *One Touch of Venus*, for example, with the Berlin pieces, you'll see that Weill was always Weill no matter where he was. He was a great human being as well as a musical genius."

I asked Abravanel, since he's the conductor of most of the original-cast recordings of Weill's Broadway works, why he hasn't recorded some of Weill's purely orchestral works. "Frankly, because no one has asked me to record them," he replied, "but I've played the Second Symphony, the Violin Concerto, and the Walt Whitman Songs in Salt Lake City with great success."

Abravanel's Broadway credits also include Billy Rose's *Seven Lively Arts*, a 1945 revue that mixed two most unlikely composers: Cole Porter and Igor Stravinsky. "It was a wild combination," Abravanel recalls. "And it had the most beautiful showgirls this side of heaven!"

In the years following World War II, the Broadway whirl began to pall for Abravanel. "At first it was very exciting," he admits. "The concert life was fantastic in New York—the best anywhere. You could hear Bruno Walter on Monday night, Rubinstein on Tuesday, Koussevitzky on Wednesday, Fritz Busch on Thursday, Stokowski on Friday, and so on and on, night after night. You went from peak to peak. But after a while, you began to lose all perspective. You could only remember how great something was for twenty-four hours—until the next great concert erased its memory. I decided I wanted to settle down with an orchestra of my own somewhere away from all that."

The Utah Symphony provided just

that opportunity. Since 1948, Abravanel has been its music director—the longest permanent tenure of any conductor in America today other than Eugene Ormandy (who's been in Philadelphia since 1936). Over the years, Abravanel has built the Utah Symphony into an internationally respected ensemble, especially well-known for its more than eighty recordings for Vanguard, Angel, and other labels—many of them first recordings of works by such diverse composers as Handel, Grieg, Honegger, Gottschalk, Satie, Vaughan Williams, Mahler, and an American composer Abravanel believes deserves a much wider hearing, Henry Lazarus.

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All this talk about  
'relevance'  
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At a time when more and more conductors seem to be splitting their time between two orchestras, Abravanel insists that he is monogamous. "Even in Mormon territory I believe in one wife and one orchestra. It is my life's blood. I love every member of the orchestra."

The orchestra gives about one hundred eighty concerts over a forty-week season each year, eighteen to twenty different programs. Abravanel conducts most of them. All are taped for rebroadcast by independent radio stations throughout the country.

"Almost every concert in the Mormon Tabernacle, which seats 5,000, is sold out," Abravanel says proudly. "We also record in the Tabernacle." Abravanel, who is not a Mormon, says, "The church has been very generous to the orchestra and to me personally. We have the use of the Tabernacle for our concerts completely free of charge—an enormous contribution. And in twenty-eight years there has never been a single instance of the church saying 'we want you to do this' or 'we don't want you to do that.'"

Abravanel is unhappy, however, about some of the attitudes other orchestras have about programming today. "In Berlin a few years ago," he reports, "I

proposed opening a program with Weber's *Oberon Overture*, and they said 'You can't do that—it's pops.' Since when is Weber only 'pops'? It is good music, beautiful music. It was good enough for Furtwängler and Hindemith!" He finds the same attitude applies to works by Gershwin and Weill. "You know, there's a lot of snobbery around music circles, and it's a pity. I think it's a great mistake to ban from regular symphony concerts those pieces which please all kinds of audiences. It's silly.

"People go to concerts to be moved," he continues. "I think one of the big problems with music today—why there is such a gap between the creators and their audiences—is that form has become more important than content. In an age of computerization, I believe the role of music should be away from computerization. The role of music should be to cultivate depth, which the technological brain cannot do. Music should be a counterpoint to the time in which it is created. All this talk about 'relevance' is wrong. If it were right, someone should have asked Shakespeare 'who cares about a black man in Venice, or teenage lovers in Verona, or a crazy Dane?' In very quiet times, mankind needs tragic art—and that's why Mahler was 'rediscovered' in the 1950's. But in hard times, art should be consoling."

Who, then, does Abravanel think will be the next major composer to be rediscovered? "Bruckner," he replied immediately. "No question about it. Bruckner is the next man for America because there is a crying need for spirituality in America. Mankind, the human animal, always needs something to hold on to. It can be religion, or patriotism, or science and progress—but there must be something. Right now, America doesn't have anything to hold on to. Formal religion doesn't seem to mean that much to most people anymore, which is very regrettable in my view. People also have mixed feelings on what patriotism means, or even science.

"Bruckner is spiritual in an agonized way—yet so much simpler to understand and more monolithic than Mahler. His music is mystical and full of faith. That's why I think America will grab on to him."

Abravanel feels even more strongly that the potential audience for good music in America has only just begun to be tapped. "Recordings have done a lot," he says, "but our next frontier must be to give every citizen a chance to hear good music 'live.' That's why I love touring with the Utah Symphony—to all kinds of towns that most people have never heard of. The response we get is wonderful! There is something happening in America artistically, musically, that is unique. It's a great time in our history and I'm excited to be part of it!" □



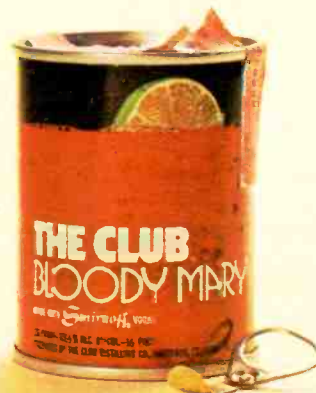
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# Robert Stolz



Harry Königshof/Austrian Information Service

(1880-1975)

*A remembrance of the last waltz king by Aram Bakshian*

I SUPPOSE that when you have a friend sixty-three years older than yourself you should be prepared to hear the worst. Still, when the Austrian Embassy phoned last June 27 to inform me that Robert Stolz, last of the Viennese "Waltz Kings," had died, it came as a real blow. The irrepressible Maestro, who would have been ninety-five in August, had just arrived in Berlin to conduct a new series of quadraphonic albums—latest additions to a personal catalog that began in 1904 with a wax cylinder recorded in Vienna with soprano Selma Kurz.

Besides conducting and recording, Stolz somehow found time to compose two thousand songs, one hundred film scores, and fifty operettas of his own. As a boy his family friends included Brahms, Humperdinck, Bruckner, and Johann Strauss, Jr., and it was Strauss who, in 1899, persuaded him to forsake serious music for operetta and the waltz. From then on his course was set. After turning the century as a wandering Kapellmeister (operetta tours in Brno, Maribor, Salzburg, Petersburg, Moscow, and Odessa—along with a stint as a bordello pianist and circus bandmaster in Berlin and many other colorful misadventures), Stolz became conductor at Vienna's famous Theater an der Wien just in time to direct the original production of his friend Franz Lehár's *Merry Widow* and to ride the crest of the second great wave of Viennese operetta successes—which included, of course, a number of his own.

In 1929 he made more music history with his waltz theme for *Zwei Herzen im Dreiviertel-Takt* (*Two Hearts*

*in Three-Quarter Time*), the song that launched the "talkies" in Germany and, on the basis of sheet music sold, is second only to Strauss' *Blue Danube* in global popularity. (You still stumble across it in the damndest places; I heard it on Radio Moscow last summer, being played with predictably mechanical gusto!)

Although safely "Aryan" himself, Stolz repeatedly risked his life smug-

gling Jews out of Nazi Germany, and, when Hitler seized his native Austria, he voluntarily migrated to America. There, at sixty, he started a new career in Hollywood, in time winning two Oscar nominations for his film music, besides reviving the American taste for Viennese operetta in several successful cross-country tours. After the war, he caught the first plane back to Austria and started all over yet again; he remained an active and beloved artist to the day of his death.

Robert Stolz was a brilliant conductor in the Johann Strauss tradition and a prolific composer of everything from a one-act opera on a solemn religious theme (*Die Rosen der Madonna*) to Europe's first popular foxtrot (*Salome*), which, under different titles, reappeared as a global bestseller three times in three generations). But, to many Europeans, he also came to be a kind of symbol. The gentle, generous, and impishly humorous little Maestro was a pleasant reminder that decency—while it usually takes quite a bit of buffeting along the way—sometimes enjoys the final victory, outlasting the periodic tides of barbarism that threaten to destroy what is best in art and human values alike. To the end, he had a special gift for rubato. No one was better at stretching and enriching what was best in a score, or smoothing over the rough parts. He had the same gift for life, whether sipping wine with his charming wife, Einzi, and a few friends in his Grinzing villa, penning his sprightly memoirs, or greeting thousands of his fans on the street as he did in Stuttgart just a few days before his death. As both a musician and a man, he warrants remembrance. □

## Stolz on Disc

● *The Musical Magic of Vienna*: RCA Red Seal, VCS-6804, a massive six-record anthology of the best Viennese light music from Lanner and the Strausses down to Lehár, Kálmán, Fall, and Stolz, played by the Vienna Symphony, Robert Stolz conducting.

● *Wiener Blut*: Everest Opera Series (S-472/2), a two-record set (Stolz's rousing direction of the post-humorous Strauss operetta masterpiece with a fine cast including Rudolf Schock, Margit Schramm, and Hilde Gueden).

● Everest has also released two-record sets of other major operettas conducted by Stolz, including *Fledermaus*, *Gypsy Baron*, *Beggar Student*, and *Merry Widow*. Stolz's European releases run into the hundreds on EMI, Eurodisc, Mercato, Amadeo, and many other labels, often available here from import firms. In addition BASF, for which Stolz conducted many albums in the last few years of his life, has distributed several of them in America—for example, *Kaiserwalzer*, BASF 29-21122-3, *Blumenlieder*, BASF 20-21458-3, and *Tango Festival*, BASF 20-21347-1.



## The Empire 598 III Turntable

### Created by concentrating our total effort on a single superb model.

#### The Motor

A self-cooling, hysteresis synchronous type with an inside out rotor, drives the platter with enough torque to reach full speed in one third of a revolution. It contributes to the almost immeasurable 0.04% average wow and flutter value in our specifications.

#### The Drive Belt

Every turntable is packaged only when zero error is achieved in its speed accuracy. To prevent any variations of speed we grind each belt to  $\pm .0001$  inch.

#### The Platter

Every two piece, 7 lb., 3 inch thick, die cast aluminum platter is dynamically balanced. Once in motion, it acts as a massive flywheel to assure specified wow and flutter value even with the voltage varied from 105 to 127 volts AC.

#### The Main Bearing

The stainless steel shaft extending from the platter is aged, by alternate exposures to extreme changes in temperature, preventing it from ever warping. The tip is then precision ground and pol-

ished before lapping it into two oilite, self-lubricating bearings, reducing friction and reducing rumble to one of the lowest figures ever measured in a professional turntable; -63 dB CBS ARLL.\*

#### The Suspension

Piston damped, 16 gauge steel coil springs cradle the arm and platter. You can dance without your stylus joining in.

#### The Tonearm

The aluminum tubular design boasts one of the lowest fundamental frequencies of any arm, an inaudible 6 Hz. Acoustic feedback is unheard of, even with gain and bass turned all the way up. The vertical and horizontal bearing friction is 1 milligram. This allows the arm to move effortlessly, imposing only the calibrated anti-skating and tracking force you select.

#### The Cartridge

Empire's best, the 4000D/III, wide response cartridge is a standard feature. The capabilities of this cartridge allow you to play any 4 channel or stereo record at 1 gram or less. And the frequency response is an extraordinary 5-50,000

Hz, with more than 35 dB channel separation.

#### The Controls

The coordinated anti-skating adjustment provides the necessary force for the horizontal plane. It is micrometer calibrated to eliminate channel imbalance or unnecessary record wear.

Stylus force is dialed with a calibrated clock mainspring more accurate than any commercially available stylus pressure gauge.

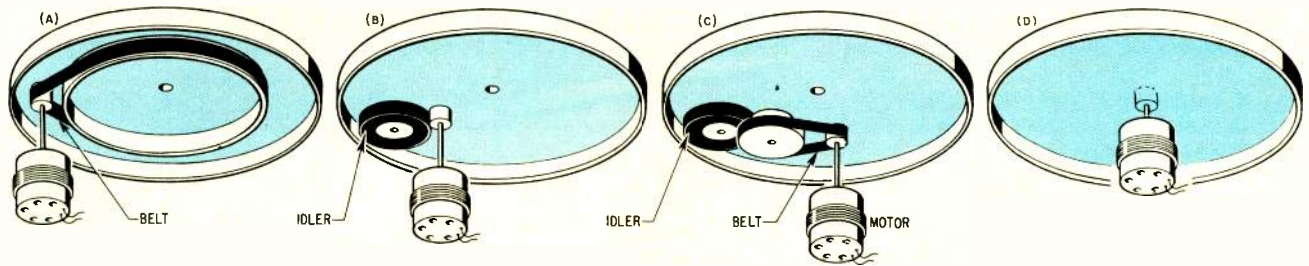
A true-vertical cueing control floats the tonearm up or down from a record surface bathed in light.

At Empire we make only one model turntable, the 598III, but with proper maintenance and care, the chances are very good it will be the only one you'll ever need.

\*Independently tested and recorded in High Fidelity's 1974 Test Reports.

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The diagrams above illustrate the various turntable drive systems in common use. Belt drive is shown in (A); (B) shows the idler-drive system popular in automatic turntables; in (C) a combination of belt and idler drive is used; (D) is direct-drive.

## Julian Hirsch focuses on **TURNTABLE BASICS** for the component shopper

### GLOSSARY: RECORD-PLAYER TERMS

- **Acoustic Feedback:** In some installations, or rooms, sound (traveling through the air or by way of the floor or cabinet) may vibrate the record player in such a way that the cartridge will generate an output voltage. The result is called acoustic feedback, which is heard as a loud rumble or howling sound, particularly when the speakers have good bass response and are played at a high level. Even before it reaches the distress level, acoustic feedback can muddy the sound.

Good installation practice requires that the record player be isolated from the speakers to the greatest possible extent. However, record players differ widely in their ability to resist external vibration. Some are mounted on highly compliant "feet" that isolate the entire unit from the shelf or other support. Others depend on springs or similar isolators between the turntable mounting board and the player's base. Frequently the arm and platter bearing are mounted as a subassembly on a rigid frame or plate, and the combined structure is suspended from the mounting board (this helps to prevent the movement of one relative to the other).

- **Flutter:** A rapid pitch fluctuation in reproduced music, caused by pulsations of the turntable speed. Flutter occurring at a low rate is called "wow," from the characteristic sound it imparts to steady musical tones. At higher rates, the effect

is of a "gargling" or roughness. Wow and flutter are often combined into a single flutter measurement, which may be weighted to emphasize the most objectionable flutter rates (around 5 to 10 Hz).

- **Rumble:** A low-pitched sound, caused by mechanical vibration acting on the turntable and tone arm. This vibration may occur at the rotation frequency of the motor, the idler, the platter, or multiples of any of these frequencies. Rumble often sounds like power-line hum, but it disappears when the pickup is lifted from the record. Weighted rumble measurements discriminate against subsonic frequency components, which cannot be reproduced by loudspeakers or heard by the human ear. However, such frequencies can overdrive an amplifier or speaker and impair the reproduction of higher frequencies, so that an unweighted measurement is also informative.

- **Servo Control:** A technique by which the output of a device is compared with the input signal or with a reference quantity, and the difference between the two is used to force the output into conformance with the input or reference signal. In the case of a turntable, the reference may be a precisely regulated voltage and the output feedback signal a variable voltage proportional to the turntable speed. Any difference between the two voltages varies the driving signal to the motor (and thus its speed) until they are nearly equal, thus maintaining constant turntable speed under conditions of varying line voltage or record load.

A servo-controlled tone arm senses any departure of the arm from tangency with the record groove. Such a departure causes the arm to move in such a way as to restore tangency.

- **Skating Force.** When a cartridge is mounted at an offset angle in a pivoted tone arm, friction between the stylus and the record material creates a force component directed toward the center of the record. This effectively adds to the tracking force on the inner groove wall (left channel) and subtracts from the force on the outer (right channel) groove wall of the record. If the cartridge is being operated near its minimum tracking-force limit, this can cause mistracking and distortion on the right-channel program. As an alternative to increasing the total vertical force (which may exceed the maximum rated force for the cartridge or result in excessive tracking force on the inner groove wall), an equal and opposite force can be applied to the pickup through an anti-skating system.

There is no agreement as to the "correct" amount of anti-skating compensation. A small amount will keep the pickup from moving inward when it is placed on a rotating ungrooved record. However, the friction in a record groove is higher, so that more force is needed to equalize the wear on the two walls of the groove and on the stylus. Still more force is needed to provide equal tracking ability in both channels at high recorded velocities. But as long as the anti-skating compensation is not excessive, thus producing a net outward force, any amount is beneficial.

SHOPPERS in today's hi-fi component market are fortunate in having a huge assortment of record players from which to choose, and the intense competition between the various manufacturers has made it possible for the consumer to get the maximum value for his investment. On the other hand, making a choice from among the many available units, even within a limited price range, can be a formidable task. It will be simplified considerably, however, if the buyer has prepared himself with an understanding of the basic record-player design approaches and features.

To begin with, the typical record player is usually sold as a coordinated combination of a turntable and tone arm installed on a base. Some models are also supplied with a suitable cartridge mounted and properly positioned, but these are still in a minority.

## Turntable Drive Systems

In the better turntables, the *platter* on which the record rests is machined alloy so that it will not attract the magnet present in most phono cartridges. Platter weight may be anything from less than 2 pounds to as much as 9 pounds, and the heavier platters are often touted by their manufacturers as providing superior performance. This is not necessarily true, since mass is by no means the only—or even the most important—requirement for state-of-the-art turntable performance.

Several types of turntable drive systems are commonly used, each having its pros and cons. Potentially, the least expensive (and therefore the most widely used in the lower price ranges) is the *idler drive*, usually in conjunction with a four-pole induction motor turning at about 1,800 revolutions per minute (rpm). The rubber idler wheel, which serves to “gear down” the motor-shaft speed to the 33 1/3 or 45 rpm of the platter, contacts both platter and motor shaft directly. Unfortunately, this tight mechanical coupling can transmit to the platter and record whatever vibrations and speed fluctuations there are in the motor. For this reason the better idler-drive machines use very well made, specially designed motors that are relatively vibration free and whose speed is completely unaffected by a.c. line voltage changes. In this higher price range (\$130 and up) rumble and flutter are likely to be lower than in the less expensive players driven by simple and more cheaply made induction motors. Paradoxically (since they are least likely to need it), the players with true constant-speed motors often have vernier speed adjustments that let the user vary the speed a few per cent above and below the nominal value.

Modern high-quality record players are almost equally divided between single-play and multiple-play types. The multiple-play machines used to be known as record changers or automatic turntables. Changers are all “automatic” in the sense that the user does not have to handle the tone arm, but most single-play units also have some degree of automation. In its simplest form, this may be nothing more than an end-of-record arm lift, perhaps with a simultaneous motor shut-off, but the trend seems to be toward fully automatic operation, equivalent to that of a record changer, except that the record doesn't change.

Almost every record changer also has a *manual* mode and a short, stubby shaft to replace the “umbrella” or angled spindle commonly used to support a stack of records and drop them in sequence. This versatility does not come without cost.

In general, a *belt drive* is mechanically simpler and transmits less flutter and rumble to the platter than an idler-drive system (although there are exceptions to this); most single-play turntables use belt drive. Usually the belt is driven by a synchronous motor turning at a speed in the 300- to 600-rpm range. This places the basic vibration (rumble) frequencies below audible limits (5 to 10 Hz). A disadvantage of the belt system is that it transmits a limited torque to the platter, and this may prevent it from operating conventional record-changing mechanisms. However, several manufacturers have recently succeeded in developing sophisticated belt-driven record changers.

The most sophisticated drive system is *direct drive*, in which a special low-speed motor rotates the platter directly at the playing speed. Direct-drive turntables can have nearly ideal characteristics, but they may be costly. Only one direct-drive record changer has been manufactured, and it is considerably more expensive than the best of the conventional-drive changers. All the direct-drive turntables (and some of the best belt-driven units) use a *servo* system to maintain their speed at a constant value and to reduce flutter to an almost unmeasurable level.

Rather than becoming involved in mechanical details, the buyer should remember that competition is keen in the record-player field and for that reason overall quality is usually directly reflected in selling price. Each manufacturer has therefore chosen the drive system—or systems—that will, in his judgment, provide the best performance in a given price range. Of course, price does not correlate 100 per cent with quality, but it is certainly an excellent reference point from which to start—at least when dealing with turntables.

At a given selling price, it is almost certain that a single-play unit will be superior in some aspect of its construction or performance to a multiple-play changer (though this superiority will not necessarily be in an audible area). Conversely, while there are record changers whose quality matches or surpasses that of many single-play models, they are usually quite expensive. The message is plain: if you do not really *need* a record changer, you can either save money or get a “better” product for the same money in a single-play turntable.

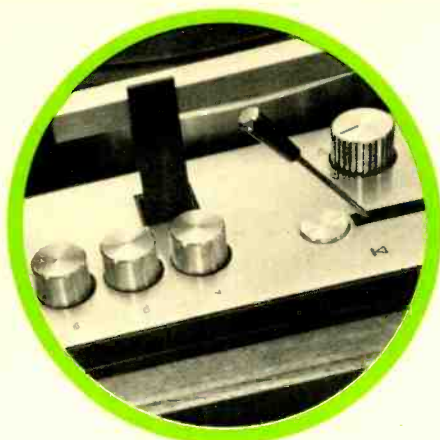
Since the turntable and tone arm are functionally separate, it is perfectly possible for a superior turntable to be paired with an unexceptional tone arm, or vice versa. This usually makes it difficult to state with confidence that player A is better than player B, except when both of its components are plainly superior.

## Turntable Features

Performance aside, what *features* should you look for in a turntable? Almost every modern record player operates at both 33 1/3 and 45 rpm, and this reflects the facts of record production. However, the nature of the repertoire on 45's and the inconvenience of playing them singly would probably make a record changer fitted with a large-diameter automatic spindle the best choice for playing *them*. In addition, since the special calibration/test discs supplied with most CD-4 components also operate at 45 rpm, it is desirable to have that speed available even on a single-play turntable if you are gearing up for four-channel. If you decide on a record changer, you will want to consider the maximum number of records you will likely play automatically at any one time. Current models can handle stacks of four to ten 12-inch long-playing records, with six being the most common number.

A turntable with vernier controls for fine adjustment of speed should have illuminated stroboscope markings located so that they can be viewed while a record is being played. Some models have the stroboscope markings at the center of the platter, where they are not visible when a record is in place. This is less desirable, except when the unit is servo driven so that its speed is not affected by the drag of the stylus in the grooves of the record.

Most record changers and semi-automatic single-play turntables have a control that must be set to index the arm for the required record diameter. If you play only 12-inch LP's this is of little consequence, but if you have appreciable numbers of 10- or 7-inch discs, you may wish to consider one of the few players that choose the proper index point auto-



Some designs use pushbuttons rather than levers or sliders to control the automatic and semi-automatic functions.



The anti-skating force control can be a rotary knob, an adjustable slider (see right), or a hanging counterweight.



All the new players have separate anti-skating calibrations for conical and elliptical styli, a few for CD-4 types.

matically. A couple of de luxe single-play turntables are completely automatic, selecting the correct operating speed and indexing diameter without any action on the part of the user. Although they are expensive, their overall performance is correspondingly high.

## Tone Arms

Although tone arms come in a variety of shapes, almost all are basically metal tubes, pivoted near one end on low-friction bearings, and supporting the phono cartridge at the other end. The different tone-arm configurations ("S" bends and the like) derive from the requirement (for proper tracking) that the cartridge be offset at an angle to the line joining its stylus to the horizontal pivot. Any well-designed arm can play a record with negligible tracking error *if* the phono cartridge has been installed correctly.

A counterweight at the rear of the arm balances the mass of the cartridge and forward portion of the arm, and the necessary vertical tracking force is applied by a slight readjustment of the weight *or* by a spring. Usually a calibrated scale shows the force in grams. These scales differ somewhat in convenience and accuracy, but almost all are sufficiently accurate for their purpose. Lower-price record changers sometimes lack calibrated force scales and tracking force must be set up with a separate gauge.

Every offset tone arm is subject to a *skating force* that tends to swing the pickup in toward the record center. This can cause uneven record and stylus wear, and sometimes distortion in one channel when playing heavily recorded passages. Practically every record-player arm has some form of anti-skating compensation using springs, magnets, levers, or hanging weights. The several systems differ in their effectiveness and accuracy, but since the amount of compensation required with any player or

record can only be approximated at best, most of them are quite satisfactory.

Every arm should have some device that allows the pickup to be lifted from the record automatically by moving a lever or pressing a button and then (ideally) returned to the same groove area. On most of the better record players, the arm lift is damped, providing a slow, gentle rise and fall that does not jar and shift the pickup, even if it is done rapidly. Some arms are pulled outward during their descent by the anti-skating force. This can negate much of the usefulness of a cueing lift, so check its accuracy before buying.

Some low-price record changers do not permit completely free arm movement, and may apply undesirably high forces to the stylus when the mechanism that raises the arm at the end of a record operates. Fortunately, good players are virtually free of such effects and can be used safely with the highly compliant and delicate styli in today's cartridges. An important feature is the quality of the tone arm's bearings, which vary from simple point-in-cup pivots to precision ball bearings or knife edges. The record-player manufacturer will usually rate his arm for use with cartridges operating above a certain minimum tracking force, and it is wise to stay within these limits (and to keep well above the lower limit, if possible). The particular pivot principles used is *not* important; how well it works *is*.

On any record changer, the angle between the arm (and cartridge) and the record changes as the record stack on the platter grows higher. Theoretically this could slightly increase the distortion by altering the vertical tracking angle of the cartridge, but a more serious problem is the possibility of the cartridge body's touching the record when playing the last record of a stack. Two slightly different steps have been taken by record-changer manufacturers to correct this condition at least partially. In one

the cartridge holder is tilted in the vertical plane by means of a knob or lever so that it remains parallel to either a single record or to a record at the center of the maximum stack height. Another system raises the entire tone arm to achieve the same result. Both systems are equally effective. Needless to say, this problem does not exist with single-play units.

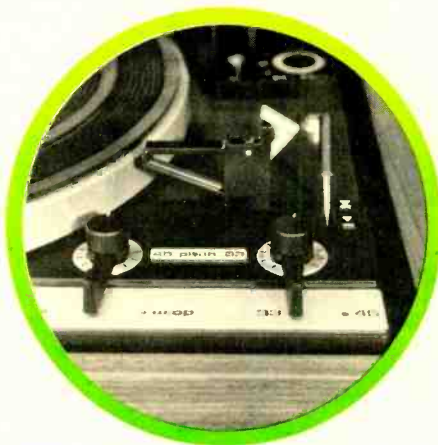
There are a couple of radial-tracking tone arms (integrated with high-quality turntables) that move in a straight-line path across the record and are free of the tracking-error, vertical-angle, skating, and mass problems of other arms (a radial arm is always tangent to the groove and has no tracking error or skating force). These arms are servo-driven, and the players using them are expensive.

## Performance

The performance specifications of two record players can be compared only if they were measured in the same manner; unfortunately, there is so far little standardization of test methods within the industry. Valid comparisons can be

### TEST RECORD

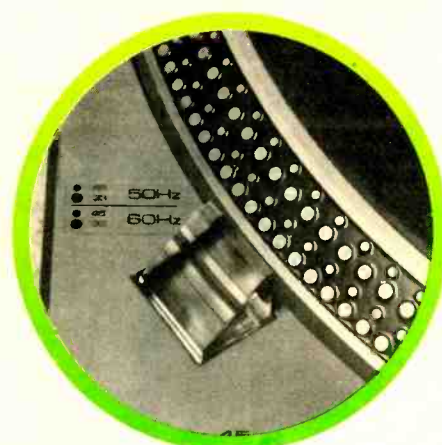
**T**HE Stereo Review Model SR 12 Stereo Test Record has specially recorded bands for evaluating rumble, wow, and flutter *without* test instruments. It is a worthwhile investment, not only for testing a turntable in the showroom, but also because it permits you to check cartridge tracking with different stylus-force settings and accurately set a tone arm's anti-skating adjustment. Full instructions for using the SR 12 are supplied with the record, which is available from Ziff-Davis Service Division, 595 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012: \$5.98 postpaid within the U.S.; \$8.00 outside the U.S.



Dual-function controls are used in this single-play unit. The top sections of the levers are vernier speed controls.



All controls and adjustments for this tone arm are concentrated in the pivot area; this is common for separate arms.



One easily read speed readout uses a neon-lit prism to illuminate the stroboscopic markings on the platter's edge.

made between different record players when tested by the same laboratory (as in the Hirsch-Houck Laboratories reports in *STEREO REVIEW*), or between different models from the same manufacturer. However, one cannot assume that a turntable from company A, advertised as having 5 dB less rumble than one from company B, is actually lower in rumble. It could even be higher!

Rumble is expressed as a number of decibels (dB) below some reference recorded velocity level. Often the reference velocity is unspecified, but most common values fall within a few decibels of each other. However, most manufacturers use a weighted measurement, sometimes without specifying the weighting curve. (Weighting minimizes the low-frequency noise contribution on the basis that it is less likely to be heard). It is not unusual for a weighted measurement to be as much as 30 dB lower (better) than an unweighted measurement, so be sure you are not comparing "apples and oranges"—different *kinds* of weighted or weighted *and* unweighted figures, that is—when judging turntable specifications.

Wow and flutter are different audible manifestations of the same problem—a rapid and periodic speed fluctuation of the turntable. At low fluctuation rates, the "wow" imparted to the sound is unmistakable, but at high rates the flutter effect may be no more than a barely detectable "muddying" of the sound. Usually the two are combined in a single flutter measurement, which may be peak or rms (root mean square), weighted or unweighted (Hirsch-Houck Labs measurements are unweighted rms). Unweighted flutter readings are always higher than weighted readings, so be careful when comparing these published figures as well.

Individuals differ in their ability to perceive flutter, but it is safe to assume that a turntable with less than 0.1 per cent unweighted flutter (many are this

good or better) will not introduce audible flutter. At 0.2 per cent, critical listeners will usually hear flutter on some program material, and the 0.3 per cent or greater flutter of some low-price record players is unacceptable for music listening.

Most tone-arm specifications mean little by themselves, since ultimate arm performance depends on the cartridge used in it also. In a way this is just as well, since almost no quantitative data, other than physical dimensions, are published by most tone-arm manufacturers. The aspects of tone-arm performance that will be of most concern to the user are the "handling" characteristics—smoothness of operation of the cueing device, the shape of the finger lift, and so forth.

Rarely will a record-player manufacturer refer to his product's immunity to acoustic feedback. Many otherwise satisfactory players cannot be used in proximity to speakers having a strong low-bass output, except at reduced listening levels, without annoying and potentially destructive (to the speakers) acoustic feedback. On the other hand, some record players are nearly immune to feedback. Test reports provide some guidance in this matter, and the advice of a reliable dealer can be very helpful.

## Other Factors

There are a number of factors not covered by most specifications that can influence the performance or convenience of use of a record player. In the case of a record changer, the ability of its dropping mechanism to function with records having slightly out-of-tolerance center holes or thicknesses is obviously important, though quite difficult to assess. If you have some records that have been troublesome on another changer, take them to the dealer's showroom and try them on any model you are considering buying.

Some early record changers earned a reputation for rough handling of records and cartridges. Today's models—even the inexpensive ones—are at least as gentle as the hand of a skilled human operator, and some are considerably better than that. In fact, one is less likely to damage a valued record or cartridge with a good modern changer than with a manual record player.

Unless the record-player manufacturer specifically states that his tone-arm wiring capacitance is low enough for use with a CD-4 quadrasonic cartridge, you can assume that it is not. Unfortunately, some players are claimed to be "CD-4 compatible" but still require a different kind of cable between the record player and the demodulator to achieve the necessary low capacitance. If CD-4 is a part of your present or future plans, be sure to check this point, since it may not be practical to rewire a tone arm at a later date.

## Checks You Can Make Yourself

Many of the operating characteristics of a record player, such as the number of speeds, the various controls and their functions, the handling ease of the tone arm, and the convenience of the control layout, can be checked easily in the dealer's showroom. But it is also a good idea to take along your worst records—those pressed off-center, warped, or with non-standard center holes—to evaluate the player's ability to cope with less-than-ideal conditions. If possible, make these checks with the same cartridge you plan to use or at least one with similar tracking-force requirements. Some performance characteristics, such as wow, flutter, rumble, and anti-skating compensation, can be checked roughly with the aid of the *STEREO REVIEW* SR 12 test record (see accompanying box for instructions on how to order). □

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# AKAI



# STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

# BEST OF THE MONTH



## Carl Orff's *Der Mond*: The Zesty Sizzle of Refreshingly Audacious Orchestral Sonorities

**T**HOUGH more like a morality play than an opera, Carl Orff's *Der Mond* was expressly written for the stage, unlike *Carmina Burana*, the composer's first major work, which had immediately preceded it. Associating the two is inevitable, however, for *Der Mond* has very much the same musical characteristics as its predecessor—simple diatonic melodies, ostinato rhythms, heavy reliance on percussion—and in much the same proportions. What it does not have is any of the excesses of Orff's later work, which have caused even some of his

most enthusiastic partisans to develop second thoughts about him.

First of all, *Der Mond* is fun to listen to. It is lighthearted, musically light-textured, fast-moving, and brief enough that its high energy level will not exhaust you. Orff has deftly alternated singing and speaking lines in the vocal parts, and his orchestration is zesty, refreshing, and full of surprising sonorities—even the most recklessly audacious effects delight the ear. There is no thought of a unified style—the music evokes in turn the spirits of oratorio, operetta, cabaret, even Bavarian folk song—yet the composer not only makes it all hang together but *work* with a virtuoso flair.

There is a story, too, and the scholarly annotations that accompany Philips' new recording of the work take its symbolism very seriously. It is about four country lads who steal the moon from a neighboring village. In time, they grow

old and die, each taking his share of the moon with him to the beyond. After some complications, St. Peter intercedes and eventually returns the moon to its rightful position in heaven. I have streamlined the plot in the interest of avoiding tedium (Orff himself adapted the libretto from one of the Grimm fairy tales), and suggest that you try not to take it too seriously either. Only the music matters, and if you respond to Orff at all, you'll find that *Der Mond* matters a great deal.

It would be impossible to overpraise the achievement of conductor Herbert Kegel and chorus master Horst Neumann for their work in this recording: the music sizzles with excitement, and the unconventional orchestration is captured in sharp detail. Eberhard Büchner, whose role here is similar to that of one of Bach's Evangelists, delivers his high-lying music exquisitely, and Reiner Süss

CARL ORFF: music that matters a great deal



Daniela Maria Brandl/BASF license

does justice to both the majestic and the coarse elements of "Petrus" expertly. The rest of the cast forms a good ensemble—no more, indeed, is expected of them. I heard one bad tape splice on side one, but the sound otherwise is just about perfect.

George Jellinek

**ORFF: *Der Mond*.** Eberhard Büchner (tenor), Narrator: Reiner Süss (bass), Petrus: Helmut Klotz (tenor); Horst Lunow (baritone); Fred Teschler and Armin Terzibaschian (bass); the Four Fellows: Wilfried Schaal (baritone), a Farmer; others. Leipzig Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra. Herbert Kegel cond. PHILIPS 6700 083 two discs \$15.96.

## A Hearty Welcome to The Poetic Emanuel Ax, Latest Laureate Of the Keyboard

**E**MANUEL AX is the twenty-six-year-old, Polish-born, American-trained, First Prize winner of the Artur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition held in Israel in 1974. Although the winners of major competitions are frequently rushed by record companies (to produce another Tchaikovsky First or Rachmaninoff Third), few competitions carry a recording contract as an intrinsic part of the prize. This one does, and it obviously helped Mr. Ax to dodge the inevitable demand for more hackneyed repertoire in his just-released first recording on the RCA label. Not that the Chopin B Minor Sonata on side one is not already over-represented in the catalog; but it would take a frugality beyond my imagining to refuse to duplicate that piece to obtain the exquisite pianistic pleasures on side two.

Mr. Ax's Chopin is capable, musicianly, neat, and reserved; it is a performance no one need be ashamed of, but I would be less than candid if I said that it did not strike very many sparks for me. The other side of the record is quite another thing, and in particular the Schubert-Liszt *Liebesbotschaft*. I don't mind saying that I have never heard this perhaps most beautiful of all Liszt transcriptions played so beautifully before, and though I may hear it played as beautifully in the future I have no expectation of hearing better. Certain characteristics of Ax's musical personality and pianistic ability really come out here, and they are not what one would necessarily expect from someone of his background and training. Yes, of course, he has the technique; no one who studied with Mieczyslaw Munz, as Ax did at Juilliard,



EMANUEL AX AND ARTUR RUBINSTEIN: purveyors of charm

could possibly be without it. But Ax is a far more skillful colorist—and color is obviously important to him—than most young virtuosos, Polish or otherwise. His *Liebesbotschaft* has all the inner voices (and the outer ones) and a different color for each, a strikingly gorgeous arrangement of sounds. But, beyond the colors, Ax produces phrasings—the way Schnabel produced phrasings. It would not be quite correct to say that he makes the music sing. He sees through the Lisztian transcription to the Schubert underneath, yes, but what he gets out of it is more akin to an undiscovered impromptu or *moment musical* than to a *Lied*. In other words, he has the phrasings of Schubert's own piano music, and so what we hear seem not to be Lisztian transmogrifications (except in places) but new keyboard masterpieces of Schubert's maturity. If all this sounds like a rationalization of having fallen in love with this performance, so be it. You listen to it; you'll fall in love with it too.

*Liebesbotschaft* is the best, but *Horch! Horch! Die Lerch!* gets some beautiful playing too. The other two are less apt as transcriptions, but again Ax does lovely things with the phrasings. Of the *echt* Liszt material, *Gnomenreigen* gets an amply virtuosic and musically sensitive performance, and the etude has all fingers flying—but with a vital trace element, all too often missing, present as well: charm. There's quite a lot of that on the disc. It makes it all the more apt that the contest Ax won was named after Rubinstein, another purveyor of that quality as elusive as it is fragrant. The recording seems a little more distant than RCA's usual piano efforts, but it also has a little more bass.

James Goodfriend

**CHOPIN: *Sonata No. 3, in B Minor, Op. 58.***  
**SCHUBERT-LISZT: *Das Wandern; Der Muller und der Bach; Liebesbotschaft; Horch! Horch! Die Lerch!*** LISZT: *Gnomenreigen; Etude No. 6, in A Minor, after Paganini.* Emanuel Ax (piano). RCA ARL1-1030 \$6.98.

## Steve Goodman: One of the Best— And He Continues To Get Better

**A**RE there no more worlds for a troubadour to conquer? Was Alexander the Great really crying because he felt self-parody was about to set in? Well, weep not; Gordon Lightfoot was not merely passing the time when he said what he's trying to do now is to refine what he's been doing, that a good song will last and one's performance of it can always be improved. Steve Goodman's new Asylum album, "Jessie's Jig & Other Favorites," shows graphically how you and I and everyone I can think of stands to gain from that, as some of our really good troubadours take to musicianship the way others, who could sort of sing and play, used to take to "relevancy" and all that.

Some noticed long ago that Goodman was a fine guitarist, of course, but the evolution that's going on is a matter of where *they*, the troubadours, put the emphasis, not where we put it. Songwrit-



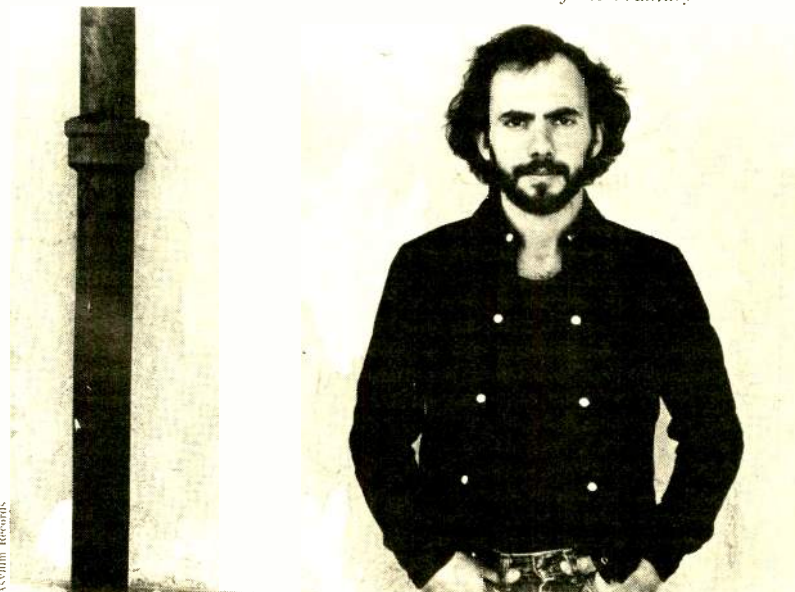
MICHEL LEGRAND AND LENA HORNE: a brilliant match

ing hasn't been shelved or anything (Goodman wrote three new songs for this album and helped write another), it's just that the execution of it, making it *sound* right, is being brought up to snuff here and there as talent permits. Goodman's talent is ultrapermissive in this case: his vocal sound is not lovely, and you may not have thought of the lad who wrote *City of New Orleans* as a singer, but here he has written less and (carefully) selected more just so he *could* sing, it seems, and he never sang (or, for that matter, played) better. His interpretation of friend John Prine's *Blue Umbrella* uncovers the song's basic spirit better than Prine's more urgent, more

aggressive vocal did (and one of the things we need to be rid of is the silly idea that a song's writer can always sing it better than anyone else can), and his delight in finding Mike Smith's nifty song *Spoon River* may be the energizing force behind the way he and his backers perform it. Something certainly is. And did I say *guitarist*? Nobody, regardless of his reputation for relevancy, would record *It's a Sin to Tell a Lie* in this day and age unless he could do something out of the ordinary in performing it, and Goodman's unaccompanied picking is so far out of the ordinary that all *my* calluses went into shock.

Performance means with other people,

STEVE GOODMAN: a talent out of the ordinary



though, by and large, and Goodman has been as successful at picking out the other people as he was at picking out the songs. Jethro Burns—know *who he is*? He's the Jethro of Homer and Jethro, the comedy team, but Goodman apparently noticed that Burns has also been one of the better mandolin players around for years. Then there's Saul Broudy, whose stylized harmonica line does so much for *Spoon River* and (Goodman's best new song) *Lookin' for Trouble*. And I could go on. *Mama Don't Allow It* is a little threadbare, even if it isn't often done in a country-swing scramble like this, but call it an error on the side of growth. The album, on the whole, finds Goodman taking risks and, as the fellow says, picking them clean.

Noel Coppage

**STEVE GOODMAN:** *Jessie's Jig & Other Favorites*. Steve Goodman (vocals, guitar); Steve Burgh (guitar); Jethro Burns (mandolin); Saul Broudy (harmonica); Vassar Clements (fiddle); Hugh McDonald (bass); other musicians. *Door Number Three; Blue Umbrella; This Hotel Room; Spoon River; Jessie's Jig (Rob's Romp, Beth's Bounce); It's a Sin to Tell a Lie; I Can't Sleep; Moby Book; Lookin' for Trouble; Mama Don't Allow It*. ASYLUM 7E-1037 \$6.98.

## The Art of La Belle Lena: Far Too Special To Categorize

THERE has never been much doubt among those who care about such things that Lena Horne is one of the most beautiful women of our time. Opinions have always differed sharply, however, as to how good a singer she is. "If you've never seen her, then you really can't appreciate her on records," runs one argument. Another has it that she may be a great and neglected stylist, but that just about everyone copied her unique phrasing and tigerish delivery for so long that it became impossible to appreciate the lustrous original, obscured as she was by garish imitations. It is, I think, fair to say that she is far too special a talent to categorize easily, hard to deny that her sensational looks may well have worked against the success of her recording career. In three and a half decades of recording, Lena Horne has never been a really hot commercial chart star, but I for one wouldn't want her to be—taste and style have never been mass-market specialties, as a quick look around at any form of the entertainment business will affirm.

(overleaf)

Her newest RCA album, "Lena & Michel," brilliantly matches her with composer, arranger, and conductor Michel Legrand; it won't settle any of the arguments about her talents for those still of a mind to argue, nor is it likely to bust any charts, but it is a completely professional, expert, serenely self-assured musical job. Legrand, who has lately been spreading himself as unfortunately thin as gold leaf, is in superb form here, cajoling a satiny, form-fitting sound out of his hand-picked band to drape over *La Belle* Lena. Horne wears it easily and well, adding a little of her own high personal style, her inimitable teasing impatience, to such things as Legrand's *I Will Wait for You*. She also spins out the narrative line of the late Jim Croce's *Time in a Bottle* simply, quietly, and superlatively well, and her performance of the Hal David/Legrand *Everything That Happens to You, Happens to Me* is a one-round knockout.

In short, the Queen of Sheba is back, and don't you just know that a lot of damn fools are going to stand there and quibble about the length and/or the reality of her musical fingernails? Not me. And, if you really listen, not you either.

Peter Reilly

**LENA HORNE & MICHEL LEGRAND:** *Lena & Michel*. Lena Horne (vocals); orchestra, Michel Legrand arr. and cond. *I Will Wait for You*; *I Got a Name*; *Nobody Knows*; *Being a Woman*; *Let Me Be Your Mirror*; *Everything That Happens to You, Happens to Me*; *Sad Song*; *I've Been Starting Tomorrow All of My Life*; *Thank You Love*; *One at a Time*; *Loneliness*; *Time in a Bottle*. RCA BGL1-1026 \$6.98, Ⓟ BGS1-1026 \$7.95, © BGK1-1026 \$7.95.

## Waylon Jennings: Suddenly a Low-pitched Baritone Is the Voice to Have

WAYLON JENNINGS is one of the most important and influential singers of his time. Poets as well as musicians are in awe of him, and he's number one with my friend Vicki and with Vicki's grandmother. That's good enough for me, that and what I hear; one would not have thought such a voice were possible, and one still has trouble believing he can do so much with it. You've already heard his influence in pop music, though; suddenly a low-pitched baritone is the kind of voice to have. The other thing I hear, speaking of influence, is that if Waylon wants to grow a beard, well, by God, Waylon

grows a beard; you have to be pretty rugged to practice individualism in the country-music business, although (thanks to Jennings) you don't have to be quite so all-fired rugged as you once did.

Several of his previous albums have been hurt by erratic song selection, but in RCA's new "Dreaming My Dreams" Jennings has smoothed that out pretty well. He does repeat the trick of includ-

be, and is approximately where one notices the carefree, hell-for-leather way some of those old guitars are being played. Jennings is one of the rare good singers capable of playing his own lead guitar, and his stuttering lick mingling with, say, Randy Scruggs' little thousand-note runs is the kind of combination that keeps instrumental breaks witty and surprising. *High Time (You Quit Your Low-Down Ways)*, whose country



WAYLON JENNINGS: one cowboy who needs no help with his hits

ing a song that's so difficult to sing that others don't dare try it (*I've Been a Long Time Leaving*, one of the strange early songs by Roger Miller), but, being Jennings, he pulls it off, making a semi-rousing success of it. *Let's All Help the Cowboys* is a simple three-chord country song (C-F-G, if that saves you some time), but it has such charm that, well, I couldn't do anything else until I'd sat down with the guitar and learned that little sucker. The song that gives the album its title is clearly an outstanding one; you can hate country music and still love it. *Waymore's Blues* (Waylon was renamed Waymore and made a character in *Ladies Love Outlaws*, which Lee Clayton wrote for him sometime ago), a Jennings original, is the kind of up-tempo thing we always hope the fast ones will turn out to

clichés are maybe a little too commonplace, too everyday, is the album's low point, but it isn't serious enough about being a bad country song to keep this album from being one of the year's better recordings.

Noel Coppage

**WAYLON JENNINGS:** *Dreaming My Dreams*. Waylon Jennings (vocals, guitar); James Colvard (guitar); Randy Scruggs (guitar); Larry Whitmore (guitar); Duke Goff (bass); Ralph Mooney (steel guitar); Richie Albright (drums); Charlie McCoy (harmonica); other musicians. *Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way*; *Waymore's Blues*; *I Recall a Gypsy Woman*; *High Time*; *I've Been a Long Time Leaving*; *Let's All Help the Cowboys*; *The Door Is Always Open*; *Let's Turn Back the Years*; *She's Looking Good*; *Dreaming My Dreams with You*; *Bob Wills Is Still the King*. RCA APL1-1062 \$6.98, Ⓟ APS1-1062 \$7.95, © APK1-1062 \$7.95.

# THE ART ADVANCES



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# POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

**AVERAGE WHITE BAND:** *Cut the Cake*. Average White Band (vocals and instrumentals). *School Boy Crush*; *If I Ever Lose This Heaven*; *Cloudy*; *Groovin' the Night Away*; and six others. ATLANTIC SD 18140 \$6.98, ⑧ TP 18140 \$7.97, ③ CS 18140 \$7.97.

Performance: **Kilted soul**  
Recording: **Excellent**

The Average White Band is anything but that. Hailing from Scotland (except for drummer Stephen Ferrone, an Englishman of Jamaican ancestry), these six men—both vocally and instrumentally—sound closer to Detroit than Dundee. We have heard a young English lady named Jo-Ann Kelly gurgle and bottleneck her way through the repertoires of aging black blues men, and the term “blue-eyed soul” was applied to such white artists of the last decade as the Righteous Brothers and the Magnificent Men, who had incongruity to thank for some of their wide appeal. But the AWB makes them all pale by comparison. They have a smattering of Earth, Wind & Fire and a bit of James Brown on the instrumental side, but their style is nevertheless essentially their own, and the novelty of black sounds emanating from a white group is overshadowed.

This is the AWB's second album on Atlantic. Except for *If I Ever Lose This Heaven*, all the selections were written by members of the group, all are meritorious, and most are suitable disco items. I am usually wary of white musicians who try to make black music, but the quality of their performance and material makes the Average White Band worth listening to. C.A.

#### 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

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

**BACHMAN-TURNER OVERDRIVE:** *Four Wheel Drive*. Bachman-Turner Overdrive (vocals and instrumentals). *Four Wheel Drive*; *She's a Devil*; *Hey You*; *Flat Broke Love*; and four others. MERCURY SRM-1-1027 \$6.98, ⑧ MC8-1-1027 \$7.98, ③ MCR4-1-1027 \$7.98.

Performance: **Noisy**  
Recording: **Cluttered**

It is time I confessed. Disguised as a mild-mannered reviewer for the best of all metropolitan music magazines, I am in reality the Supreme and Beloved Military Chairman and Unmistakably Majestic Ideological Disseminator of the small but fanatic organization known as the Anti Loudmouth One Riff Bar Band Army. Beware, Bachman-Turner Overdrive. Your plugs are going to be pulled. J.V.

**THE BEE GEES:** *Main Course*. The Bee Gees (vocals and instrumentals). *Jive Talkin'*; *Wind of Change*; *Songbird*; *Fanny*; *All This Making Love*; and five others. RSO SO 4807 \$6.98, ⑧ TP 4807 \$7.98, ③ CS 4807 \$7.98.

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

The remarkable durability of the Bee Gees suggests they're pretty good at charting the audience's zig-zagging (some would say tick-tacking, and some would say worse) taste, but with the last two albums the Gibbys seem to be circling in on something, and not sure what it is. Some of those ubiquitous jazz influences have come their way (along with other American influences; their fascination with this place, once harmlessly manifested in such plainly English-made things as *Massachusetts* and *Living in Chicago*, has narrowed down to concentrate on how we do things), and the washed-out colors of nostalgia attract them for the moment, but this new deal, whatever it's going to be, hasn't yet settled into shape. The lads are still flitting, some of their new concepts too fragile to really grasp, and it's the annoying repetitions of *Jive Talkin'* (that's how we do things, all right) one minute, and the modern—wobbly, mannered—construction one expects of Curtis Mayfield in *Winds of Change* the next, and the curious wavering between intensity and detachment in *Songbird* after that. It isn't until the second track of

the second side (*Country Lanes*) that you hear what we used to call a Bee Gees song, instantly identifiable, tightly organized to take advantage of Barry Gibb's whispering approach and Robin Gibb's vibrato in the chorus harmonies, riding on a simple, almost-too-ripe melodic line. Ah, those simple good times of yore. But this confusing present situation does make an interesting curiosity. It's just that some of us have been curious and confused long enough. N.C.

**BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS:** *New City*. Blood, Sweat & Tears (vocals and instrumentals). *Ride Captain Ride*; *One Room Country Shack*; *Applause*; *Got to Get You into My Life*; and six others. COLUMBIA PC 33484 \$6.98, ⑧ PCA 33484 \$7.98, ③ PCT 33484 \$7.98.

Performance: **The way they were**  
Recording: **Very good**

The return of Blood, Sweat & Tears, reunited with vocalist David Clayton-Thomas, will undoubtedly reap some financial profit for those involved, but it makes no artistic waves. The sound is pretty much the same as it was before, which isn't bad, but it will come as a disappointment to anybody who had expected this regrouping of BS&T to reflect some kind of development.

The program relies heavily on outside material, from the Blues Image's *Ride Captain Ride* to Lennon and McCartney's *Got to Get You into My Life* and veteran bluesman John Lee Hooker's *One Room Country Shack*, which Clayton-Thomas performs in unconvincing vocal blackface accompanied by David Bromberg's guitar. If you like BS&T, you'll undoubtedly like this album, but I think time has passed the group by. C.A.

**THE CAPTAIN & TENNILLE:** *Love Will Keep Us Together*. The Captain and Tennille (vocals and instrumentals); orchestra. *Disney Girls*; *Cuddle Up*; *Feel Like a Man*; *The Good Songs*; and eight others. A&M SP-3405 \$6.98, ⑧ 3405 \$7.98, ③ 3405 \$7.98.

Performance: **Chart-busting**  
Recording: **Good**

*Love Will Keep Us Together* will probably be a Golden Oldie by the time you read this.

Would that it were right now! The Captain & Tennille's performance of this Neil Sedaka gem is a good-humored, commercially zowie job. But enough is enough. The radio hums with it, TV shows seem to find it impossible to fill their time slots without at least a token appearance by the duo, merrily lip-synching away. The rest of the album doesn't quite live up to the title song, but it does provide a lot of warm-voiced singing by Toni Tennille and some inventive and colorful playing and arranging by the Captain. (Y'see, Rona, in real life the Captain is Daryl Dragon—Isweartagod!—the son of Carmen Dragon. Oh, all them nights in the Hollywood Bowl!) They maintain a terrific commercial sound, and no matter how tired I am of their hit I have a feeling that I'd better get used to them because they are bound to be back again and again.

The cover photo features two of the most gorgeous creatures I've seen. Tennille and the Captain look okay too, but I think I'm in love with their companions. *P.R.*

**DR. HOOK: *Bankrupt*.** Dr. Hook (vocals and instrumentals); orchestra. *Levitate; Only Sixteen; Cooky and Lila; The Millionaire*; and eight others. CAPITOL ST-11397 \$6.98, ⑧ 8XT-11397 \$7.98, ⑨ 4XT-11397 \$7.98.

Performance: **Heavy-footed**  
Recording: **Good**

What we get here is some clumsy foolin' around by a group with two left feet. Even given a funny enough song such as *Everybody's Making It Big But Me*, Shel Silverstein's sardonic and witty tale of a have-not in the conspicuously consuming pop world of the haves, Dr. Hook mangles it with a paratroop-booted vocal by Rick Elswit and an instrumental arrangement apparently left over from a Minnie Pearl session. With other, more run-of-the-mill stuff, such as *Cooky and Lila* or *Wups*, the results are as lively and interesting to listen to as the sounds of the Invisible Man jogging around the house. *P.R.*

**FREDDY FENDER: *Before the Next Teardrop Falls*.** Freddy Fender (vocals, guitar); Donny King (bass); Chester Vaughn (drums); Randy Cornor (guitar); other musicians. *Roses Are Red; I'm Not a Fool Anymore; Please Don't Tell Me How the Story Ends; I Love My Rancho Grande; Wasted Days and Wasted Nights*; and six others. ABC-DOT DOSD-2020 \$6.98, ⑧ ADT 8310-2020 H \$7.98, ⑨ ADT 5310-2020 H \$7.98.

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

Freddy Fender (Baldemar Huerta) has been in the brig and in the slammer, was a migratory farm worker, and was a Chicano trying to get into country music before Johnny Rodriguez could reach around a guitar, so don't talk to Fender about checkered lives. The one thing that does it for such a B-scripted life story is a big hit, and he finally has one to his credit—the title song here—and we're now in the post-hit shakedown period in which he will find his own audience. His is the fat-man tenor sort of voice, with more of the flavor of Old Mexico in it than I hear Rodriguez putting into the honky-tonk and overalls ditties of country—and there's more of it in the instrumental backing, too, which is mixed well below the loudness of his voice. But Fender's tremolo (and it is insistent but not grotesque; it won't loosen the screws in the mike stand the way Glenn Yarborough's does) and

clipped phrasing need to be matched to the song more carefully than is usually the case here. The ones that work well are the title hit and *Wasted Days and Wasted Nights*, a song Fender first recorded sixteen years ago. Much of the rest is the result, I think, of rushing out an album to take advantage of the hit single. Fender is almost certain to be back with better albums. *N.C.*

**STEVE GOODMAN: *Jessie's Jig & Other Favorites*** (see Best of the Month, page 72)

**THE GUESS WHO: *Power in the Music*.** The Guess Who (vocals and instrumentals). *Down and Out Woman; Women; When the Band Was Singin' Shaking All Over; Dreams; Rich World—Poor World*; and four others. RCA APL1-0995 \$6.98, ⑧ APS1-0995 \$7.98, ⑨ APK1-0995 \$7.98, ⑩ APT1-0995 \$8.98.

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

The Guess Who is refining its new, more sophisticated sound and continues to get some of the best rock singing from Burton Cummings (and some crazy piano playing), but this album catches the songwriting in an old pose. Delicately, that is, shading toward boorishness. The overall sound of the recording isn't bad at all, but if you try really paying attention to a particular song, watch out. *Coors on Sunday*, for example, is a waste of a good title for many reasons and one of them is so obvious you can but wonder about the writers. The very first line goes "... you gonna laugh now that you fell down?" but the melody doesn't take the inflection up, the way the

inflection *has* to go if the listener is to know it's a question; it takes it down. It's a small thing, but one a conscientious, half-awake songwriter would fix. Then there's the lecturing tone that got into Guess Who songs of old, making a fairly spectacular reappearance in *Rich World—Poor World*. And *Rosanne* is catchy but turns into a tiresome simpleton after it repeats the same stuff a few times. There is one, *Dreams*, that does seem to have engaged Cummings and co-writer Domenic Troiano, and it has a certain charming audacity about it—although it too has hack marks where its details ought to be. The flaws aren't actually ruinous—no song fails completely—but they are bothersome and they do interfere with any effort you might be making to concentrate on how well this band has learned to play and sing. *N.C.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**TOM T. HALL: *I Wrote a Song About It*.** Tom T. Hall (vocals, guitar); Charlie McCoy (harmonica, vibes); Jerry Kennedy (guitar); Bob Moore (bass); Buddy Harman (drums); Pig Robbins (piano); other musicians. *Deal; From a Mansion to a Honky Tonk; The Girl Who Read the Same Book All the Time; The Trees in Philadelphia; I Like Beer; Sad Song for My Friend*; and five others. MERCURY SRM-1-1033 \$6.98, ⑧ MC8-1-1033 \$7.98, ⑨ MCR4-1-1033 \$7.98.

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

Some of them you can count on. Tom T. Hall always comes up with *something*, so now if

AVERAGE WHITE BAND  
*Closer to Detroit than Dundee*





**TOM T. HALL:**  
Mind-engaging music  
you can count on

the commotion concerning *Deal* dies down, there could be an equally impressive chuckling and smacking of chops over *I Like Beer*—and that still leaves the better stuff for private discoveries. *The Singer's Song*, *The Girl Who Read the Same Book All the Time*, *Lying Jim*—these aren't great or formidable songs, but each one is capable of actually engaging a person's mind, and they all come in Hall's language, which is easily the most nearly accurate language going into any kind of region-speaking lyrics I am allowed to hear. Hall's singing ability is limited, but his baritone sound is pleasing and he knows precisely what he wants to communicate, which gives him a head start over many singers. Jerry Kennedy's production, involving judicious use of Charlie McCoy's excellent back-up harmonica and of Kennedy's own fine guitar, is consistently good through Hall's albums and is superb in this one. The only thing I don't like about it is the recitation, *The Fallen Woman*. Recitations always sound to me like exploitations of an audience's presumed mawkish naïveté; I expect a preacher to pull a cheap trick like that, but not a singer. That still leaves six or seven more decent cuts than your album money normally buys. *N.C.*

**ISAAC HAYES:** *Chocolate Chip*. Isaac Hayes (arrangements and vocals); orchestra. *Loving Feeling*; *Body Language*; *Chocolate Chip*; *Come Live with Me*; and three others. ABC ABCD 874 \$6.98, Ⓢ 8022-874 H \$7.98, © 5022-874H \$7.98.

Performance: **Very slick and very good**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Here is more opulent folderol by a masterly musician who uses his gorgeous technique for arranging in the service of his own not very inspired compositions. He's written everything here with the exception of *That Loving Feeling* (by Tony Joe White), and I doubt that

anything would ever have seen the light of recording on intrinsic merit. But oh-me-oh-my, the changes he can put material through with his arranging and producing talent! He seems to think so highly of *Chocolate Chip*, for instance, that he runs it through twice, once as an instrumental (very fine indeed) and then again in a vocal version (his voice is serviceable but hardly galvanizing). Hayes' lyrics have a highly glossed, rather artificial sexuality, and his performing manner is super-hip, super-knowing. Basically, he is the master of a particular kind of mood-background music that is inventive far beyond the usual examples of its genre, but it is also music that never escapes that same genre. *P.R.*

**RUPERT HOLMES.** Rupert Holmes (vocals and instrumentals); orchestra. *Brass Knuckles*; *Deco Lady*; *Rifles and Rum*; *Studio Musician*; and six others. EPIC KE 3343 \$5.98.

Performance: **The bark is more effective than the bite**  
Recording: **Good**

Rupert Holmes would make a terrific blurb writer. In fact he is a terrific blurb writer. His description of *Brass Knuckles*: "Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, the underbelly of California, great falls from high places, the jaded shamus seeking a kind of truth while drowning in a rain of right crosses to the head." Hmm. . . . How then is it that the song itself, once waded through, turns out to be deplorably worse than even a bad script for one of those TV police shows? *I Don't Want to Hold Your Hand* is about the decade it took Rupert to become disenchanted with the Beatles. *Everything Gets Better When You're Drunk* is another intellectual high point, and a dangerous assumption where his own work is concerned. Holmes' voice is, well, serviceable, in much the same sense that a unicycle is a convenient means of transportation. *P.R.*

**NICKY HOPKINS:** *No More Changes*. Nicky Hopkins (vocals and piano); orchestra. *Sea Cruise*; *The Ridiculous Trip*; *Hanna*; *No Time*; *Refugee Blues*; and five others. MERCURY SRM-1-1028 \$6.98.

Performance: **Good piano, fair vocals**  
Recording: **Good**

Nicky Hopkins has a highly personal, idiomatic style at the piano. His extended instrumental work in *Lady Sleeps* is vivid and stylish, with a flashy ease that puts one in mind of the very best. His voice, however, can best be described as musicianly—that is, he knows what it is supposed to be doing even though it isn't capable of doing it. If you can take this rather offhand approach to things and if you like good keyboard work, then there is some entertainment to be found here. *P.R.*

**LENA HORNE & MICHEL LEGRAND:** *Lena & Michel* (see Best of the Month, page 73)

**THE ISLEY BROTHERS:** *The Heat Is On*. The Isley Brothers (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Fight the Power*; *The Heat Is On*; *Hope You Feel Better, Love*; and three others. T-NECK PZ 33536 \$6.98, Ⓢ PZA 33536 \$7.98, © PZT 33536 \$7.98, Ⓢ ZAQ 33536 \$8.98.

Performance: **Strong**  
Recording: **Very good**

I am a great fan of the Isleys, and I have raved before in these pages about the artistry of lead singer Ronald Isley. The brothers have had great success in recent years, for which I rejoice. But their recordings are best when they contain a mixture of original Isley material and carefully selected songs by others around which the Isleys can work their magic—especially ballads, in which Ronald excels.

It is all Isley material this time out, all energetically and expertly performed. But it lacks spark. The Isleys have had a habit, through their long career, of writing and performing a few dynamite songs of their own (*Shout*; *Twist and Shout*; *It's Your Thing*; *Who's That Lady*), running themselves into the ground as their imagination dries up, floundering for a while, and then hitching their stars to another wagon (*Love the One You're With*, by Stephen Stills; *It's Too Late*, by Carole King). This revitalizes them and they start turning out original material that is worthwhile. Then they get confident, a little cocky, and disdain doing other people's songs.

The Isley cycle has come around to the point where they are beginning to run dry again, though they can probably get away with it longer this time, given the general bland public taste and the melting together of black and white music into something approaching milk chocolate. *J.V.*

**WAYLON JENNINGS:** *Dreaming My Dreams* (see Best of the Month, page 74)

**HERBIE MANN:** *Discotheque*. Herbie Mann (flute); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Hi-Jack*; *Pick Up the Pieces*; *Lady Marmalade*; *Bird of Beauty*; *High Above the Andes*; *I Can't Turn You Loose*; and three others. ATLANTIC SD 1670 \$6.98, Ⓢ TP 1670 \$7.98, © CS 1670 \$7.98.

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

As they used to say on *American Bandstand*,  
(Continued on page 80)



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you can dance to it, which is why this record was made. The (cough) tunes are done in "discotheque hit" style. A discotheque record is made with the bass line and the drums beefed up through the studio control board, and it usually features some nonentity singing about what fun it is to do a new step. It may be that one day several discotheque hits will be placed in a time capsule to give future generations here a better idea of what level some tastes once sank to.

Herbie Mann has made dozens—and dozens and dozens—of albums during his long career. They are almost all formula pieces in which his band lays down rhythms and riffs and everybody does his best to sound busy and trendy. Mr. Mann then plays the same flute solo on all tunes. It is evident that Mann

is a capable flautist, but since he has spent so much of his time doing catchpenny versions of current pops, it is also possible that he is a hack. To his credit, he sounds here as bored performing as it is boring to listen to this ersatz music. *J.V.*

**JON MARK:** *Songs for a Friend.* Jon Mark (vocals, guitar); orchestra. Kirby Johnson cond. *Signal Hill; The Bay; Liars of Love; Old People's Homes;* and five others. COLUMBIA PC 33339 \$6.98, Ⓞ PCA 33339 \$7.98, © PCT 33339 \$7.98.

Performance: **Sweet nothings**  
Recording: **Very good**

I didn't care for Jon Mark's vocals with the Mark-Almond Band, but I found some com-

pensation in the music. There is no such compensation here; listening to him whisper his way through this album against a background of soft guitars and strings is a dreary experience. As a songwriter—he wrote all the material in this set—Mark is no Leonard Cohen or Bob Dylan. His lyrics are innocuous and the music is bland. This is not an offensive album, however. Just shallow. *C.A.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**ROGER McGUINN AND BAND.** Roger McGuinn and Band (vocals and instrumentals). *Lisa; So Long; Lover of the Bayou; Circle Song; Bull Dog;* and five others. COLUMBIA PC 33541 \$6.98, Ⓞ PCA 33541 \$7.98.

Performance: **Sure-handed**  
Recording: **Excellent**

The "and Band" part (Steve Love, Richard Bowden, Greg Attaway, and David Lovelace) might as well be called Some More Byrds, but then that wouldn't likely be bad, would it? As the Byrds used to, Roger McGuinn has picked up a familiar Bob Dylan song, *Knockin' on Heaven's Door*, and he has given it a better, more satisfying interpretation than Dylan did. Perhaps that came out so well it inspired and brightened the whole project: anyway, there's a scattering of pretty good songs here, recorded and performed with the old style and flair. It is difficult to say exactly what McGuinn (or any of his bands) ever did that was out of the ordinary, but the results have been, more often than not, and there's not much in this album as anemic as "ordinary" Seventies rock. A clarity and an authority get footings right away, which didn't happen in the last "solo" McGuinn album I heard. And this one is beautifully engineered; the opening notes of steel-band music in *Lisa* are almost a shock. The solid feel and the perfect tempo of *The Circle Song* (there's a certain speed at which any given song sounds best, although we don't talk about that much and plenty of musicians don't seem to give it much thought) make it my favorite while it is playing, but *Lover of the Bayou* is the one I remember later. That good old Byrd-like acoustic treatment of *Easy Does It* wears well, too. The only one that sounds messy and disorganized, once you've gotten the hang of how loosely McGuinn likes to hold the reins, is *So Long*, which is also monotonous. Elsewhere, though, the thing is alive with extended vocal harmonies and cutting guitar breaks and other things that most other bands just can't seem to do with this kind of easy understanding. *N.C.*

**McKENDREE SPRING:** *Get Me to the Country.* McKendree Spring (vocals and instrumentals). *Hold On; Meeting in Paris; The Hustler; Get Me to the Country;* and six others. PYE 12108 \$6.98.

Performance: **Pleasant**  
Recording: **Very good**

From their past work you might expect McKendree Spring to perform well; the surprise is that they are able to stay as fresh as they do. They do their customary careful, well-thought-out job on such things as *So Long Daddy-O* and the title song. The only rub is *The Hustler*, a mushy political satire that they succeed in making even more simple-minded with their craftsmanlike approach. Otherwise, the album makes unremarkable but very nice listening. *P.R.*

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Nati Mistral accepting an award for her "Trascendencia Universal . . ." album from STEREO REVIEW's William Livingstone.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**NATI MISTRAL.** Nati Mistral (vocals): Los Gemelos (vocals, guitars). *Tata Diós; Guitarra Dímelo Tú; La Flor de la Canela; Envidia; Amarraditos; Yo Vi Llorar a Diós; Fina Estampa*; and five others. ALHAMBRA CS 8055 \$5.98. Ⓢ CS 8055 \$6.98 (from Alhambra Records, 2214 West 8th Court, Hialeah, Fla. 33010).

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

Was it the Emperor Charles V who said that he spoke English to his banker, French to his mistress, and Spanish to God? That statement came to mind as I listened to this album because Nati Mistral's Spanish diction is one of the wonders of the Hispanic world—she really makes the language sound divine. Formerly available as an import from Spanish Columbia and now released domestically by Alhambra, the album is a capsule concert by the Spanish star. As in her concerts, she includes here a couple of brief spoken items—"Granada," an excerpt from Federico García Lorca's play *Doña Rosita la Soltera*, and "*Que doloroso es amar*" ("How painful it is to love") from Joaquín Dicenta's *Leonor de Aquitania*. These will mean little to non-speakers of Spanish, but I have recently seen Miss Mistral move Cuban audiences in Miami to standing ovations with these same recitations, and anyone who knows even a little high-school Spanish should enjoy hearing the language so beautifully spoken. Just as her diction distinguishes her reading of poetry, it distinguishes everything she sings, and to my mind she is one of the world's greatest singers of popular music.

The songs on this album are standards from Miss Mistral's extensive repertoire, two from Spain and eight from various Latin American countries. All of them show off the beauty of her voice and the skill and intelligence with which she uses it. She injects humor into the flirtatious *Fina Estampa* and *Amarraditos* and deeper emotion into *Envidia* ("I envy your shadow, the streets you walk through. . ."). Her musical taste can even manage to remove the curse of oversentimentality from *Yo Vi Llorar a Diós* (*I Saw God Cry*). The singing twin guitarists Los Geme-

(Continued on page 84)



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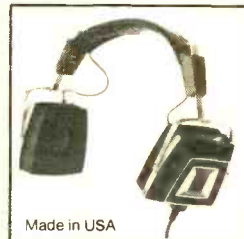
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Capitol Records

## Paul and Linda: Alright Tonight

LET'S face it; Will and Ariel Durant they ain't.

Turning your wife into one of your employees is not always a wise decision, especially if you happen to be an artist. So why this current deplorable trend of making your mate a full-fledged aesthetic and business partner? James and Carly Simon/Taylor may be excused from contention forever because they both had talent in the beginning, even though in amalgamating they have rendered each other inert. And Jimmy Reed knew how to put his wife to work: she sat behind him, handing him his whiskey bottle and whispering lyrics in his ear when he forgot them. But what of John and Yoko? She taught him how to pull invisible butterflies out of boxes and rain them on the heads of the audience, and he taught her to think she was musician enough that she could yowl on vinyl with a clear conscience. Which is obviously no fair deal for anybody.

It seems just as obvious that Paul McCartney made *his* wife, who was a perfectly adequate "rock photographer" when she was merely Linda Eastman, a co-star in direct reaction to John's exhibitionistic excesses with Yoko. Look at *us* by contrast, they seemed to be saying; a decent, respectable, tidy, talented suburban couple. Not content to celebrate simple marital joys in a series of songs each more deeply mired in vacuity than the last (*Eat at Home*, *The Lovely Linda*, and

*My Love*), Paul actually made Linda a member of his band, and by the time of the "Wild-life" album she was warbling *Love Is Strange*—well off-key, but in the center spotlight nonetheless.

Anyone who has heard that album, seen their 1973 television special, or witnessed Linda ineptly playing organ on stage with a perfect punk panache might well wish that Paul had contented himself instead with having her pose nude on his album covers. But, at the same time, any reasonable man who examines the current lyrical output of the other ex-Beatles must conclude that, glib and empty though they may be, Paul's celebrations of his union with Linda are certainly an acceptable verbal product—relatively speaking, at least: between George Harrison's Krishna, John's Yoko, and Paul's Linda, I'll take Linda any day.

There is more of this cloying connubial narcissism on their latest outing, "Venus and Mars Are Alright Tonight," and astute observers will note that Paul's even thrown in an astrological hook this time, a little late in the day to be sure, but still it shows that Paulie is thinking. And, as usual, he is thinking more about music and production than about lyrics. "Venus and Mars" is basically an addendum to "Band on the Run," and it consolidates Wings' position as the most proficient and diverting bland-out on the boards. Pre-

vious to the last record, McCartney had been in danger of becoming so pallid musically ("Red Rose Speedway" comes to mind easily, though its contents are forgotten) as to fade away altogether. But with "Band" he achieved a perfect synthesis of the puerile and the catchy—a classic pop throwaway. And so, since no one should now rightfully expect McCartney to "matter" in the Dylan-Joni Mitchell sense, there is absolutely no excuse for slugging poor "Venus and Mars" just because it has all the same melodic ingredients that have endeared him to the relevancy-swamped twit that lives in all of us. The title track is winsome and wistful; *Rock Show* is gutsy in a *Band on the Run* vein; *Magneto and Titanium Man* is one of those loose, loping, half-stalked and half-sung progressions (check "Ram" 's *Smile Away*); and the hit single, *Listen to What the Man Said*, is really magnificent beauty-parlor music.

So what if *You Gave Me the Answer* is Paul's most cloying quasi-Twenties megaphone-fey truffle yet, if *Medicine Jar* is perhaps the most ineffectual anti-drug sermon in rock history, or if he actually continues to come up with such lines as "My you're so fine/When love is mine/I can't go wrong" (*Love Song*)? Can't all you rude infidels and ruffians out there see the *point* and *true meaning* of these little ditties, that everything is, indeed, *fine*?

It is also a credit to McCartney that he manages to render guest artists Allen Toussaint, Tom Scott, and Dave Mason as slick and faceless as the rest of Wings has always been. And the reader must bear in mind that none of this is meant as deprecation; on the contrary, facelessness is the *business* of Wings, and their recent success at it has been nothing short of dazzling.

THIS critic has read not a few recent reviews in these pages in which the root complaint was that the album under examination was just a piece of "product" put out by an artist indifferent or half-dead but propped up by slick production and session musicians. How refreshing, then, to note that Paul McCartney is *not* indifferent, that he is very much alive—and shrewd enough to turn *himself* into a glossy kingpin among session men. You may find a little dust in the grooves of Wings' product, but never in its soul: it's a *clean* machine—with Linda, of course, lending to the figurine on the radiator cap the radiant sarcasm of her smile. —Lester Bangs

**WINGS: *Venus and Mars Are Alright Tonight*.** Paul McCartney, Linda McCartney, Jimmy McCulloch, Joe English, Denny Laine, and Geoff Britton (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Venus and Mars*; *Rock Show*; *Love in Song*; *You Gave Me the Answer*; *Magneto and Titanium Man*; *Letting Go*; *Venus and Mars (Reprise)*; *Spirits of Ancient Egypt*; *Medicine Jar*; *Call Me Back Again*; *Listen to What the Man Said*; *Treat Her Gently—Lonely Old People*. CAPITOL. SMAS-11419 \$6.98, 8XT 11419 \$7.98, 4XT 11419 \$7.98.

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los provide an excellent accompaniment throughout, and the album ends with a joyful medley of songs from the Canary Islands. To me any Mistral album is a joy, and if you have any interest in Latin music at all, this one should whet your appetite for more. And if you live in New York, I advise you *not* to miss Nati Mistral's concert in that city in October.

William Livingstone

**ORIGINAL PIANO TRIO:** *Nostalgia*. Edgar Fairchild, George Dilworth, Adam Carroll (pianos). *I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise*; *Chicago*; *Teasin'*; *Do It Again*; *The Sneak*; *Hot Lips*; *Yankee Doodle Blues*; and seven others. KLAVER KS-128 \$6.98.

Performance: **Too little, too late**

Recording: **Good**

The Original Piano Trio started attracting attention on Broadway in the early Twenties with three-piano arrangements of popular melodies of the day. The Trio comprised Edgar Fairchild, George Dilworth, and Herbert Clair, and their style lay somewhere between the ragtime that was on its way out and the foxtrot that was on its way in. They appeared in big Broadway revues to tremendous acclaim. By 1925, Adam Carroll had replaced Mr. Clair. Carroll, Fairchild, and Dilworth went on to play their arrangements of popular songs and "novelty" numbers right into the Thirties, when they introduced a relatively serious and ambitious suite called *Night Club* by John Green.

Eventually, their kind of music fell out of favor, but on February 20, 1975, Mr. Fairchild, Mr. Dilworth, and Mr. Carroll gathered together at a studio in Southern California to

reconstruct a program of the numbers that had made them famous—Gershwin tunes, novelties by Zez Confrey, and those dear paeans of praise to a mythical South known only in the geography of show business. Mr. Fairchild did not live to see the album released, but here it is, and the years do not seem to have diminished the skills of these three at projecting the flavor of the bygone Twenties—just as it was when they were on stage and the curtain first went up on *I'll Build a Stairway to Paradise* in the 1922 edition of the *Scandals*. The question is, how does this kind of playing affect us today, when ragtime is back in and the foxtrot is back out? Not too profoundly, I fear. For all their skill, there is something rigid and constricting in the style of the team. Their numbers are long and tend to lag, and the "cute" touches, as in *Dear Old Southland*, are a bit cloying. As history come to life, this exercise in deep recall is interesting, but as music it wears out its welcome long before it's over. I found Peter Minton's thoroughly researched notes rather more entertaining than the music. P.K.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**ELVIS PRESLEY:** *Today*. Elvis Presley (vocals): instrumental accompaniment. *T-R-O-U-B-L-E*; *And I Love You So*; *Susan When She Tried*; *Woman Without Love*; *Shake a Hand*; and five others. RCA APL1-1039 \$6.98, Ⓢ APS1-1039 \$7.98, © APK1-1039 \$7.98.

Performance: **Outstanding**

Recording: **Excellent**

Hats off to the King, folks. He's in superb

voice, his performances are models of power, detail, and discretion, occasionally relieved by a wail of joyful release, and he graces any song (and there are some unsold fish amongst the material here) with his long experience, master craftsmanship, and unique will to thrill. The techniques and disciplines of making a studio recording—which Presley understands—make a good case for putting a tiger in a cage: it brings out more of the tiger. His live albums are disappointing.

What makes "Today" especially exciting is the sense of camaraderie. Presley is obviously enjoying himself, and the musicians supporting him give that extra oomph that is possible only at a happy session. At several moments it seems that Presley is summing up his whole career, demonstrating what he has learned and referring to his early days. Throughout the proceedings he displays his natural, infallible sense of what was considered shocking when his career began but is better understood today—that great music (or a great musician) is basically sensual. The sensuality may be tempered, disciplined, buried, or wildly misplaced, but it is the root. Presley always understood his roots. J.V.

**PURE PRAIRIE LEAGUE:** *Two Lane Highway*. Pure Prairie League (vocals and instrumentals): orchestra. *Kentucky Moonshine*; *Runner*; *Memories*; *Harvest*; *Give Us a Rise*; and six others. RCA APL1-0933 \$6.98, Ⓢ APS1-0933 \$7.98, © APK1-0933 \$7.98.

Performance: **Mild**

Recording: **Good**

This is Western guff by a bunch of tenderfeet who can't seem to decide whether or not the

## SECRETS FROM THE AUDIO FILE



# Sock that sibilant singer

**ADVICE FROM:** John Wilson, recording engineer, Capitol Records, Inc.

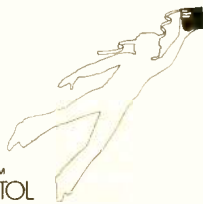
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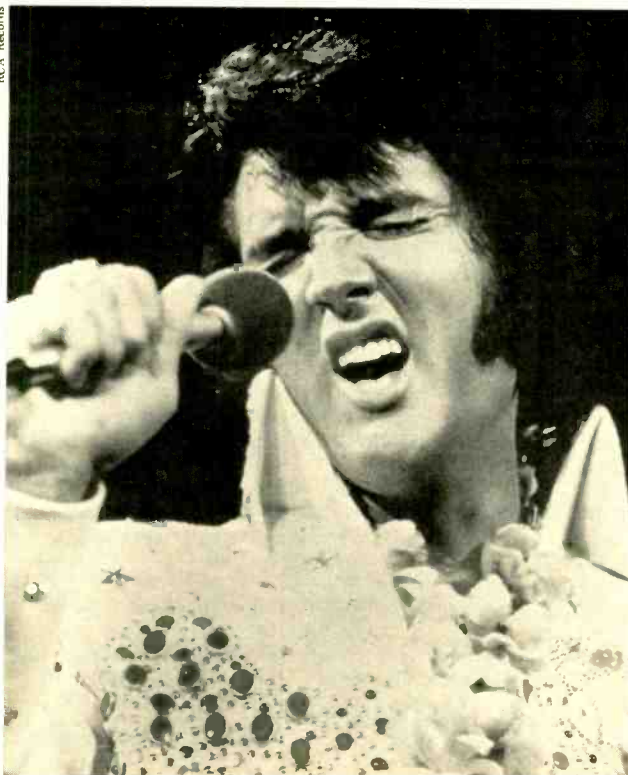
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**ELVIS PRESLEY:**  
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whole thing is a put-on or a "fond re-creation." The most talent here is displayed by Chet Atkins, who makes a guest solo-guitar appearance in *Kentucky Moonshine*. The rest ranges from mild to mildewed, none of it up to the level of the cover art. *P.R.*

**MINNIE RIPERTON:** *Adventures in Paradise*. Minnie Riperton (vocals); orchestra. *Inside My Love; Simple Things; Alone in Brewster Bay; Love and Its Glory*; and six others. EPIC PE 33454 \$6.98. Ⓟ PEA 33454 \$7.98. © PET 33454 \$7.98. Ⓡ EAQ 33454 \$8.98.

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

Minnie Riperton is a good-time girl, and her new album provides a good time. Never one to linger over "deep meaning" in lyric or to ponder musically, she sails through this collection of her own material with the absent-minded but expert charm of the prettiest woman at a party. She's really at her best in such weighty songs as *Minnie's Lament* or *Alone in Brewster Bay*, which tend to make her serious-up for a while. Not that there's anything wrong with the frippery of *When It Comes Down to It* or *Feelin' That Your Feelin's Right*, only that she tends to toss them off so casually and assuredly that the label "professional charmer" seems ready and waiting to be pinned on her. *P.R.*

**DAVID SANCIOS:** *Forest of Feelings*. David Sancious (keyboards, guitar, percussion); Gerald Carboy (bass); Ernest Carter (drums). *Joyce #8; Dixie; Suite Cassandra; East India*; and five others. EPIC KE 33441 \$5.98.

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

David Sancious used to play keyboards in the E-Street Band, which backed singer Bruce Springsteen. Now he has his own group, Tone, and this is their first album, produced

by drummer Billy Cobham, who joins in on timpani here and there.

Sancious is only twenty-one, and we are told that he has been playing keyboards since the age of six; judging by what he does here, that is probably true. None of it will take your breath away, but *Crystal Image*, which he performs on the acoustical piano, indicates a combination of technique and improvisational talent to be reckoned with as a future breath remover. Sancious' version of *Dixie* is the least exhibitionistic track in this set, a brilliant, sinister mockery of the racist redneck chauvinism that song has come to symbolize. With delightful originality, Sancious gives the old Rebel anthem a new identity, conjuring up images of slaves escaping to freedom.

Although Sancious himself is most prominent here, credit should also go to his colleagues, who obviously are on his wavelength and make the album as much a group as a solo effort. The music is not really jazz, nor is it rock in any strict sense, though there are certainly strong elements of both in evidence. Let's just call it music and hope for more. David Sancious has just begun to speak for himself—and he ain't just whistlin' *Dixie*. *C.A.*

**SPIRIT:** *Spirit of '76*. Spirit (vocals and instrumentals). *Victim of Society; Lady o' the Lakes; What Do I Have; Sunrise; When?; Happy*; and nineteen others. MERCURY SRM-2-804 two discs \$9.96. Ⓟ MCT8-2-804 \$10.96, © MCT4-2-804 \$10.96.

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

Spirit was around for a while in the Sixties, when they put out a few albums. They disappeared and might have stayed away forever, only (I gather) someone convinced someone else that all those lotus-eating California groups that never made it should be given another chance. Here are two discs full, all white sheep and baah-baah. The album is a

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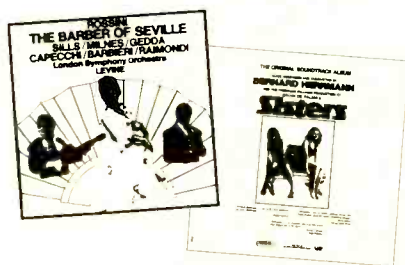
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dated collection of psychedelica and that woofy-tweety studio dial twisting that passed as mind-expanding in those innocent days when the children of the "summer of love" were going to Frisco to wear flowers, acquire habits, catch diseases of the privates, and—if they were very lucky—get beaten to death in cellars by beautiful people who turned out to be ungroovy.

There is something repulsive about this music. It is an echo of the "anthems" of that disorganized, fumbling, but determined volunteer movement of the young of those years to rush like lemmings in herds over the cliff into the beautiful, swallowing sea. Spirit's album urges those few lemmings who overcame their natural instincts back then to have another go at the ocean. This comatose "music" celebrates resolute naïveté and a brat's fear of life. Eschew it. J.V.

**JOHN STEWART: Wingless Angels.** John Stewart (vocals, guitar); Joe Osborn (bass); Ronald Tutt (drums); Peter Jameson (guitar); other musicians. *Hung on the Heart; Rose Water; Wingless Angels/Survivors II; Mazatlan/Adelita; Let the Big Horse Run;* and five others. RCA APL1-0816 \$6.98, Ⓢ APS1-0816 \$7.98, Ⓢ APK1-0816 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good but spare**  
Recording: **Very good**

John Stewart has one of the few really different-and-excellent male pop singing voices to come along in years, and his songwriting has always had, and still has, a certain flair to it. But he has padded just about every album ("Cannons in the Rain" may be the least padded) with repetitive refrains and stylized romantic sayings that don't really say much, considering the space taken up; *por ejemplo*, amigos, I give you *Mazatlan*, exactly the kind

of Maria-waiting Mexican set piece you've heard from all the other gringos—at least Gordon Lightfoot's example, *Miguel*, got some nice Spanish guitar licks out of Red Shea. And Stewart has a tendency to waste more space by reciting at least part of one song per album, another romantic thing to do, perhaps, but aesthetically questionable unless one sounds as awful singing as the late Tex Ritter did. Even so, listen to *Wingless Angels/Survivors II*, which is this album's hardest-working, most concentrated few minutes, and the simple, plaintive, probing advance of *Some Kind of Love*, remodulating gently like a sports car shifting gears with the terrain—well, these things constitute, in these troubled times, your money's worth. Stewart isn't going to stop being a romantic, and I doubt if anyone would want him to; you just can't help noticing what a superb performer he would be if he filled in a few of the wide open spaces in his music, just enough to make some of them stop looking like gaps. N.C.

**SWEET: Desolation Boulevard.** Sweet (vocals and instrumentals). *Ballroom Blitz; The 6-Teens; No You Don't; A.C.D.C.; I Wanna Be Committed; Sweet F. A.;* and four others. CAPITOL ST-11395 \$6.98, Ⓢ 8XT-11395 \$7.98.

Performance: **So-so**  
Recording: **Good**

Sweet is an English group. They sound something like Sparks, with the difference that when Sweet plays a corny riff they do it straight where Sparks would send it up. The material is that chi-chi kind of stuff that appeals to protracted college sophomores: a song about bisexuality here, a ditty about nervous breakdowns there—all delivered with strident belligerence. I recommend a year in Her Ma-



**RICHARD & LINDA THOMPSON:**  
*a sane new album  
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jesty's Merchant Marine for this quartet. If that fails, surgery may be necessary. J.V.

**JAMES TAYLOR: *Gorilla*.** James Taylor (vocals, guitar, ukulele); Andy Newmark (drums); Willie Weeks (bass); other musicians. *Mexico; Music; How Sweet It Is; Wandering; Gorilla; You Make It Easy;* and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2866 \$6.98. © M8 2866 \$7.98. © M5 2866 \$7.98.

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

More musician than entertainer, James Taylor will build a chord progression that is surprising, perhaps inspired in a mild way, and over this fine framework he will stretch a melody thin as recycled gauze, and onto it he will toss an offhand assortment of lyrics that tend to be disjointed when they are about something and (more often the case lately) trite when they are not about anything. "Gorilla" is both aimless and pointless. Taylor sometimes conveys with his singing that a lot of things are pointless—and yet he is skillful at promising and teasing and keeping people hanging on for better things. The last album before this was his best-sustained piece of work in some time, but that may be merely part of the tease—try doing "Mud Slide Slim" too many times and everyone will leave. Now I'm back to sitting on my hands and waiting for him. Part of it, of course, is the understanding between Taylor and his audience that the real show's going on inside his and their heads. This is the kind of game a performer and his cult can play a long time, so he may put off for years having to actually articulate that profundity his dark, romantic soul is supposedly working on back in there. He does keep up his musical standards, once you allow for the flatness of the tune he's settled on—David Grisman's mandolins even put some tantalizing moments into the title song—but he's gone through another whole album without getting much of anything said. N.C.

**RICHARD & LINDA THOMPSON: *Hokey Pokey*.** Richard Thompson (vocals, guitar, mandolin, electric dulcimer [!], hammered dulcimer, piano); Linda Thompson (vocals); other musicians. *Hokey Pokey; I'll Regret It All in the Morning; Smiffy's Glass Eye; The Egypt Room; Never Again;* and five others. ISLAND ILPS 9305 \$6.98, © Y81 9305 \$7.98.

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

Richard Thompson used to be with Fairport Convention and is one of the more capable guitar players in British pop-land. Linda is his wife, but this isn't like one of those Paul-and-Linda deals. *This* Linda has a lovely voice in the tradition of Jacqui McShee and Sandy Denny, and this album, measured against a previous solo attempt by Richard, is quite . . . well, sane. Well done, too, although it isn't the kind of super thing you couldn't live without another day or two. *Never Again* is one example of the kind of singing Linda can do, the kind a British pop lady has to be able to do, and *Georgie on a Spree* and *Mole in a Hole* indicate *she* doesn't have to stick to pretty little tunes. Richard continues to sound like most other British folk-rock boy singers up from the working class, nasal as hell and in over his head with about half the lyrics, but he plays more acoustic guitar here than usual (and the electric dulcimer turns out not to be a

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rampaging horror), and he can pick. The songs are reasonably good, and the back-up, which includes Aly Bain on fiddle sometimes, is lean and clean. N.C.

**TANYA TUCKER.** Tanya Tucker (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Lizzie and the Rainman; Love of a Rolling Stone; I'm Not Lisa; Traveling Salesman*; and five others. MCA MCA-2141 \$6.98, Ⓣ MCAT-2141 \$7.98, Ⓞ MCAC-2141 \$7.98.

Performance: **Improving**  
Recording: **Very good**

Tanya Tucker is sixteen or so and is, as is Johnny Rodriguez, vital to country music in a specialized way, both having proved they can attract new teenage fans to it. Her image

is interesting for the paradoxical, look-but-don't-touch antiquing they've seen fit to give it; on the one hand, the song selection and Ms. Tucker's pseudo-torchy delivery seem calculated to make her seem a hot little number, and on the other, the prevailing press hype has to do with the strict if not old-fashioned sense of propriety she is said to share with her father, who is the main manager of her business affairs. (He has another daughter, La Costa, coming along in c-&-w too; she is older and visually less of a problem in any kind of earthy song than Tanya is.) Tanya does not have a radically new or extraordinary kind of voice; she's getting better at the fundamentals, but her phrasing still slips from Loretta Lynn-influenced to Dolly Parton-influenced to Tammy Wynette-influenced to other things.

The biggest problem with this album, though, is that it just isn't country. Linda Ronstadt's version of *When Will I Be Loved*, in addition to being richer, is closer to being country than Tucker's is. Still, Tucker is more believable as an interpreter than you might expect, and she doesn't seem to be afraid of work. I expect she'll grow up to be a rich lady. N.C.

**RICK WAKEMAN: *The Myths and Legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table*.** Rick Wakeman (keyboards); Ashley Holt, Gary P. Hopkins (vocals); Jeffrey Crampton (guitar); Roger Newell (bass); Barney James (drums); John Hodson (percussion); English Chamber Choir; orchestra. *Arthur; Lady of the Lake; Guinevere; Sir Lancelot and the Black Knight*; and three others. A & M SP-4515 \$6.98, Ⓣ 8T-4515 \$7.98, Ⓞ CS-4515 \$7.98.

Performance: **Ye gads**  
Recording: **Good**

The legend of King Arthur has turned to schlock before our eyes before and will again. Even Mark Twain lost his perspective in trying to exploit this particular motif, although his business about the bicycles—at least if you could get it in the old "Classics Illustrated" comic-book version—was easier to take than Richard Burton's singing and Robert Goulet's acting in *Camelot* and everything but Maria Schell in *The Hanging Tree*. Small wonder, though, that Rick Wakeman, the Ken Russell of sound, should get around to this. Just think of all the costumes; not even *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* could match it there, being stuck indoors so much. This time Wakeman has written lyrics—well, words—and got some orchestral and choral help to back his keyboard evocations of How It Must Have Been. His ideas concerning How It Must Have Been seem, as usual, to be based on the feeling that it included a lot of sound-effects blipping from one side of the room (or the greensward or whatever it was) to the other. If he were demonstrating how the old ping-pong days of early stereo must have been, it would make a little more sense. There's also a little lyrical piano here and there, and the kind of moon-June lyrics the subject of *Camelot* always seems to inspire. I could hardly wait for the Norman Conquest. N.C.

**BARRY WHITE: *Just Another Way to Say I Love You*.** Barry White (vocals); orchestra. *All Because of You; Let Me Live My Life Lovin' You Babe; Love Serenade*; and three others. 20TH CENTURY T-466 \$6.98, Ⓣ 8466 \$7.98, Ⓞ C466 \$7.98.

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

There's something of an anomaly here: Barry White writes and performs, with sweaty gusto, very good rhythm-and-blues songs; but then, as arranger and producer, he sets them in suavely ornate commercial arrangements. The result? A lot better than you might think. Best is his two-part *Love Serenade*, tracks that alternately quake and purr and that demonstrate White's real abilities to entertain. "Easy listening" may sound a bit weird as a description of the album, but it's about as apt as I'm able to get. Highly enjoyable. P.R.

**PETER YARROW: *Hard Times*.** Peter Yarrow (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Carry Me; Wanderin'; Wrong Rainbow; Sitting in Lim-*

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bo: *Another Chain Unbound*; and four others. WARNER BROS. BS 2860 \$6.98.

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

This is a sensitively done collection of songs from both the Depression of the Thirties and the current one of the Seventies. Some of the Thirties material, such as *Beans, Bacon and Gravy* and *Winnboro Cotton Mill Blues*, has been updated with new words and music by Yarrow. He's done a carefully researched and respectful job on them, and he performs them well, keeping a loose style that fits what were, in the originals, basically ad-lib songs sung by people forced out onto the road. One classic that he has wisely left alone is Jay Gorney and Yip Harburg's *Buddy, Can You Spare a Dime?*, a song that remains as powerful and as mordantly true as anything that Bertolt Brecht ever wrote. The newer songs, such as Michael Bacon's *Wrong Rainbow* and Yarrow's own *Break the Polished Glass*, are good enough, but they are no match for the gallantry, the knocked-about-but-still-on-one's-feet poise, that permeates the earlier work. But that's probably the difference between the two Depressions: today the ultimate cry of desperation is, "I'll have to go on welfare!" Hey, how about all the people who had (or have) no welfare to count on? Small wonder that the older songs still burn and cauterize with such an acid sharpness. P.R.

#### COLLECTIONS

**SAN DIEGO BLUES JAM.** Tom Courtney and Henry Ford Thompson: *Somebody's Been Knockin'*; *Just Goes to Show You*. Bob Jefferey and Sam Chatman: *Watergate Blues*; *Ash Tray Taxi*. Thomas Shaw: *Jack of Diamonds*; *Hey Mr. Nixon*. Sam Chatman: *She's My Baby*. Tom Courtney and Louis Major: *Early One Morning*. Bonnie Jefferson: *Take Me Back*; *Got the Blues So Bad*. Louis Major: *Shot Gun Blues*; *Handy Brandy*. Bob Jefferey: '73 *Hop*. ADVENT 2804 \$6.98 (available by mail from Advent Productions, P.O. Box 635, Manhattan Beach, Calif. 90266).

Performance: **Good jam, but it has pits in it**  
Recording: **Homemade**

Southern California isn't exactly a breeding ground for blues performers, but, as this album shows, there is some blues activity in San Diego. This is a collection of recordings made in the Folk Arts Music Store there, presumably a couple of years ago. Much of it is rather ordinary, catching, as it does, bluesmen in the dusk of their careers, but there is also some good stuff here, most notably the singing of Tom Courtney backed by guitarist Henry Ford Thompson—an entire album devoted to them would not be out of order. Louis Major—at forty-one the youngest in the crowd—might also be given more exposure: he is only a fair singer, but his guitar playing is quite impressive. Bonnie Jefferson is downright awful. Thomas Shaw and Sam Chatman—a veteran of the Mississippi Sheiks (his name is misspelled on the album)—show only traces of what they once had to offer, and Bob Jefferey plays piano like an old guitarist. Technically, the recording is on a par with home movies: lots of pops on most of the vocals, but fairly good presence. C.A.

(Continued on page 92)

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Photo courtesy Phillips Productions, Inc.

## Judy Garland: On the Tube On Disc

JUDY GARLAND'S voice was a natural phenomenon which will continue cascading over us from records for years to come. After her death she fell from grace somewhat, and some of her albums have gone out of print, but all the books about her out this year may set trend bells ringing and record-business accountants salivating. Of course publishers are notorious overreactors, producing five or ten books on a subject when one would do. Perhaps there is no Judy Garland revival Out There. Perhaps there is left only a forlorn rear guard of die-hard fans, a Lost Patrol manning the last outpost of Nostalgia.

Yet, as her death in 1969 of an "incautious overdose" of barbiturates recedes into the past, the more grotesque aspects of her worship by the Day of the Locust people and the faghaggerie will also be effaced by time. Then perhaps we can savor the distillate of her life and talent in purer form, see her not as our Crazy Lady of the Sorrows but as the infectious, ebullient entertainer she was at her best.

Whether by calculation or happenstance, there is a *new* Judy Garland album out this year. It has been cobbled up from her television shows, titled "Judy Garland Concert," and is, I am told, being hawked on television, presumably in that increasingly ubiquitous genre of commercials offering things like "The All-Time Hits of Horace Heidt and His Musical Knights," "Love Songs of World War III," and "The Best Jewish Wedding Music of the Last 4,000 Years" as played by Freddy Marmelstein and His Magic Accordion. The album is available in Woolworth/Woolco stores, and although you wouldn't call it a million-dollar baby in a five-and-ten-cent store, it is surprisingly good, mainstream Judy Garland.

Judy's first television appearance, a ninety-minute special for CBS in 1955, was well received. Behind the scenes, however, it was a characteristic Garland teeter on the brink of disaster. As Gerold Frank recounts the story in his book *Judy*, the show almost didn't come off because Judy, unable to sleep, had swallowed a mess of her favorite Seconals just before early wake-up call on the day of the show, which was to be broadcast live. Benzadrine, iced tea, and Chinese food were forced down her and she walked through the special dress rehearsal like a zombie, mouthing her songs because her voice was totally gone. But, come show time, she was sufficiently detoxified to do her numbers.

A typical Judy Garland story, then, but it outlines an image. Frank fills it in: after she had sung the finale—*Over the Rainbow*, of

...strong friend she could always call on."

course—she ran backstage to embrace her then husband, Sid Luft. When Luft withdrew from the embrace, he discovered blood on his shirt. In straining to reach the final high notes of *Over the Rainbow*, she had dug her fingernails so hard into her palms that she drew blood. So we can't say Judy Garland never bled for us; those were singer's stigmata, emblematic of her professionalism and the inner, driving need for approval that kept hurling her against the footlights like a bruised moth.

Whether the version of *Over the Rainbow* in this album is that particular one or whether it occurred during the series of shows she did on CBS in 1963 can't be determined. "Judy Garland Concert" contains a nice spread of pictures of her, plus a text reciting the highlights of her career, but almost nothing about when the songs were done or, indeed, about the television shows they are drawn from. The producers of the record might have solicited some notes from Mel Tormé, who wrote special musical material for the 1963-1964 series and later set down the entire horrendous experience in a book called *The Other Side of the Rainbow*.

The television series, which could have solved Judy's chronic, debilitating financial problems if it had caught on, was not a success. It was on Sunday night opposite *Bonanza*, the nation's most popular show at the time, but there was also the problem of the immiscibility of Judy and television. As the *New York Times*' television critic Cyclops recently observed, Judy may have been too "hot" a personality, in the McLuhan sense, for the "cool" medium—she was such a welter of emotions, tremulous, always clinging to her guests.

Furthermore, the network production geniuses never figured out what to do with her, other than let her sing, and she couldn't do that for a solid hour. Nor could she ever develop the cornpone bonhomie of Dinah Shore or the narcoleptic, sweated casualness of Perry Como, to name two singers who did make it on the box. My God—she was a bundle of nerves! Every ganglion and synapse was magnified under the camera's cold eye. She was not a *comfy* person, the kind you'd want in your living room of a Sunday night. In concerts, as a packaged star with a growing hint of disaster about her, she was something the people would pay money to see, generating a curious mixture of teary, sentimental fondness and a darker communion with potential self-destruction. Little Eva on the highwire: Isn't she sweet and talented—I hope she falls.

Yet, for all the show's problems, there were plenty of high moments, and this record has preserved some of them. The songs are all standards—both *standard*-standards and Judy Garland standards. Among the latter are *Swanee*, *The Trolley Song*, *For Me and My Gal*, *Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart*, and *Over the Rainbow*. There are also such warhorses of the belter's repertoire as *Rockabye Your Baby* and *After You've Gone*. To my taste, these are the least appealing, although she could certainly belt a song with the best (worst?) of them. Still, in the movie *For Me*

and *My Gal*, she did a slow, sorrowing, against-the-grain version of *After You've Gone* that was memorable, quite a departure from the conventional version offered here. As for *Swanee*, even though it made a great production number in *A Star Is Born*, when I hear it I want to shout: "But it's been done—by Jolsen—to the death and forever!"

But these are minor matters. There are some imaginative, up-tempo songs such as *Chicago* and *Hey Look Me Over*, which either show Judy stretching herself into jazz-like improvisation or else reveal the fine hand of Mel Tormé at work. (She grew rather lazy about her repertoire and perhaps needed good arrangers to prod her.) Even better are the slow numbers, in which her voice has a tender, breathy quality, proving she could sing quietly and directly to the heart. Especially memorable are *I'm Always Chasing Rainbows* and Charlie Chaplin's *Smile*, two sentimental chestnuts which she infuses with honest simplicity. In contrast, *Come Rain or Come Shine* and *Foggy Day* demonstrate her tact and sensitivity with somewhat more sophisticated material.

At times, like a sudden breath of autumnal chill in the air at the end of summer, one hears a harsh, *old* quality creep into the voice; the vibrato has the beginnings of cracks around the edges, reminding me of a sad record Billie Holiday made after her voice had gone. Judy Garland abused her voice—not the least with drugs. There was Ritalin, for example, an amphetamine-like drug which, taken in the skull-lifting amounts she needed, dries the membranes of the throat, among other side effects.

FOR the greater part, however, the voice here is whole: it was one which seemed to embrace three or four voices—Dorothy's wistfulness (that was almost gone), the ingenious cheerleader peppiness of *Babes in Arms*, the vibrant young womanhood of Esther in *Meet Me in St. Louis*, the throaty maturity of Vicki in *A Star Is Born*. Though she would occasionally bemoan the fate that had gifted her with that blind force of nature within (because it retarded her development as an actress), her voice was something of a dumb, strong friend she could call on to stun into docility that potentially dangerous, potentially nurturing beast, the audience. And when it was slow to answer her call she would have to clench her fists till the blood came. For the buzzsaw of time was grinding again, poor Pauline was at the eleventh hour, and only her voice could save her—certainly she could not save herself. Eventually the eleventh hour came—and went. Midnight tolled for Judy Garland.

—Richard R. Lingeman

**JUDY GARLAND CONCERT.** Judy Garland (vocals); unidentified orchestral accompaniment. *Liza*; *After You've Gone*; *San Francisco*; *From This Moment On*; *Alexander's Ragtime Band*; *Moon River*; *Be a Clown*; *Smile*; *Get Happy*; *That's Entertainment*; *Almost Like Being in Love*; *Over the Rainbow*; and twelve others. TROPHY TR 7-2145 two discs \$7.95. © TR 7-2145-8 \$8.95.

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chief. Terry Jones, Eric Idle, John Cleese, Graham Chapman, Michael Palin. Terry Gilliam, Carol Cleveland (performers). ARISTA 4039 \$6.98, © 8301-4039 \$7.98.

Performance: **Inspired**  
Recording: **Clean**

This will probably be the first Python LP to reach a mass audience in the United States. Two others, "Another Monty Python Record" and "Monty Python's Previous Record," were released here about three years ago with little promotion, but this one will certainly benefit from the success of the group's very popular television show.

"Matching Tie and Handkerchief" is billed as the first "three-sided" album. Bear with me now, because this gets a little confusing. Both

faces of the record are deliberately listed as "Side 2." The actual second side has the serial number AL-4039-SB. By a mysterious mechanical process, they have managed to include two separate, full-length recordings by putting recording A into one series of grooves and recording B into the alternate, parallel series of grooves. So don't be surprised if you decide to play the second side again to enjoy a favorite sketch and come up with, as the Pythons are wont to say, something completely different.

The humor is quick-fire, literate, demonic, and cheerfully laced with English sadism, and the Pythons are all excellent actors. It's not possible to describe their routines in detail without spoiling them, but there are several choice ones here: the Church police investigating the death of a halibut; a discussion of medieval open-field farming supposedly sung by reggae star Jimmy Cliff and rocker Gary Glitter; an interview with a surgeon who's aroused controversy by "grafting a pederast onto an Anglican bishop"; and a particularly treasurable and lunatic sketch about a man in a record shop listening to something called "World War One Noises." There are some weak moments in the album, as there are in all Python outings, but the best of the material and performances here are better than my former favorite of their LP skits (on "Another . . . Record"), a concert by the Royal Philharmonic topped off with Pablo Casals taking a solo while jumping four hundred feet into a jar of hot fat. Noble Python, for this relief, many thanks. J.V.

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

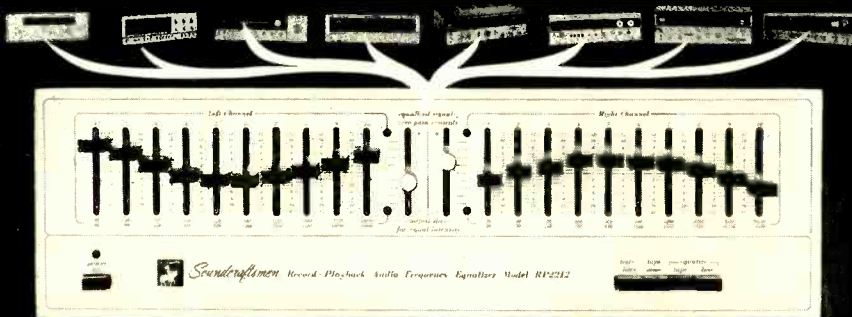
**MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS: *The Monty Python Matching Tie and Handker-***

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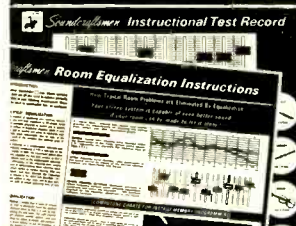


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## JAZZ

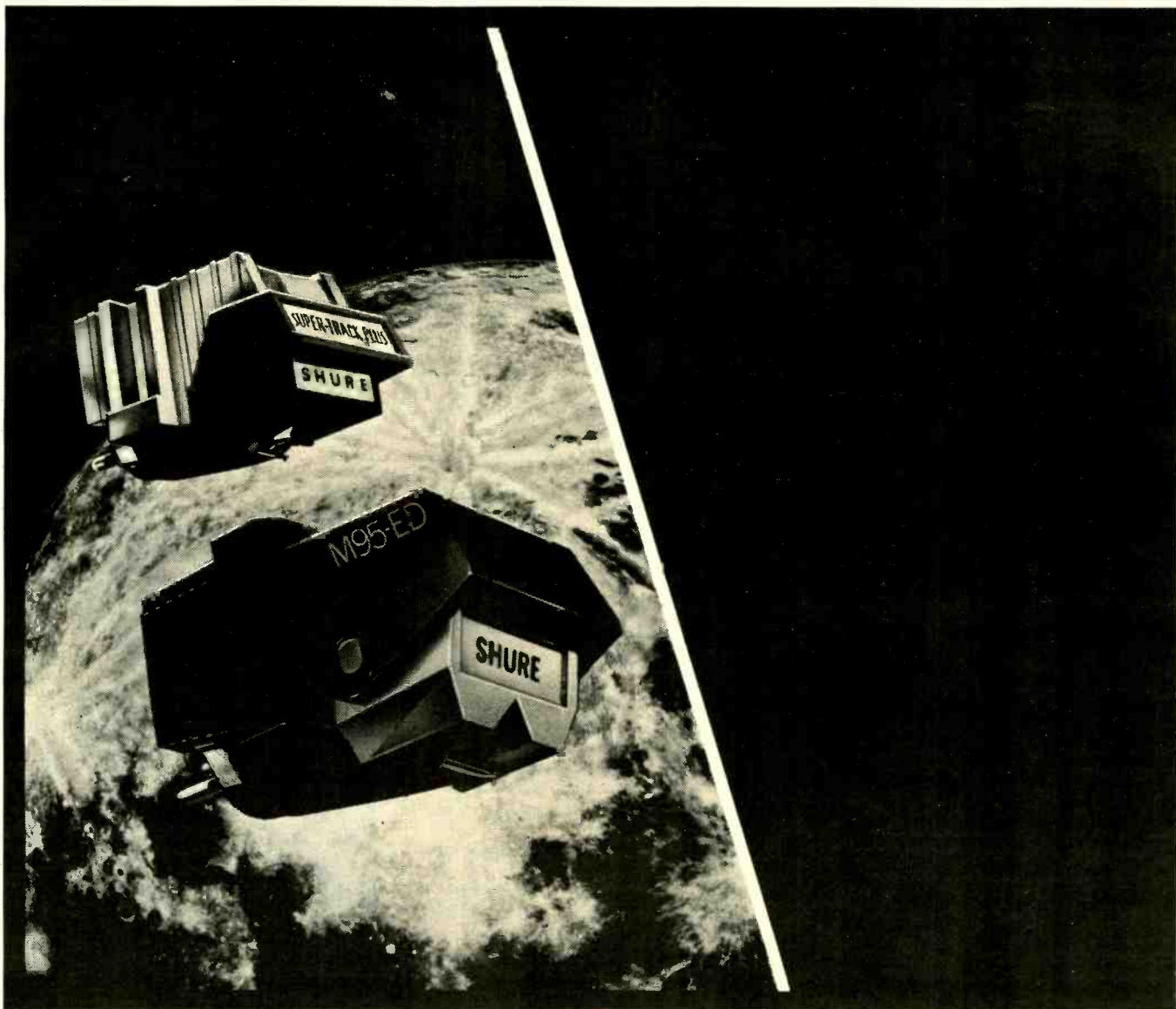
## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**RON CARTER: *Spanish Blue*.** Ron Carter (bass); Hubert Laws (flute); Billy Cobham (drums); others. *Sabado Sombbrero; El Noche Sol; So What; Arkansas.* CTI CTI-6051 \$1 \$6.98, © CT8-6051 \$6.95, © CTC-6051 \$6.95.

Performance: **Creed Taylor-made**  
Recording: **Excellent**

This is another album by members of the CTI repertory players. Ron Carter is the leader, but the set could just as well have been issued under Hubert Laws' name, or, for that matter, Billy Cobham's. Be that as it may, the album bears a distinct CTI stamp, and that translates into good music excellently played. Except for Miles Davis' *So What*, the compositions are all by Carter, influenced, we are told, by his visit to Barcelona with the Miles Davis Quintet eleven years ago. Carter and Cobham take rhythmic teamwork to new heights, and Laws' funky flute soars fancifully through the ensuing smoke — you'd better clear your table-top for some dancing. C.A.

(Continued on page 94)



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CIRCLE NO. 42 ON READER SERVICE CARD

**BENNY GOODMAN: *The Complete Benny Goodman, Volume I—1935.*** Benny Goodman and His Orchestra. *Hunkadola; I'm Living in a Great Big Way; Hooray for Love; The Dixieland Band; The Japanese Sandman; You're a Heavenly Thing;* and twenty-three others. RCA Ⓜ AXM2-5505 two discs \$11.96.

Performance: **The sound of innocence**  
Recording: **Respectfully dubbed**

The lore that has grown up around the "Jazz Era" of the Twenties and the "Swing Era" of the Thirties has proliferated to the point where it takes longer to read the album notes accompanying one of these exercises in nostalgia than to listen to the music. In his shamelessly admiring essay for this two-record set that makes up the first volume of RCA's "The Complete Goodman" drawn from the once-popular bargain Bluebird label, Mort Goody not only tells all about how Mr. Goodman ushered in the Swing Era in 1935—the year all the items on these discs were recorded—but even supplies headlines of the period from the *New York Times* to cue us in on world history. Half-blind from reading the close-printed type and impatient with the doggedly researched documentation, I turned with some relief to the mild, easy music it's all about: songs like *Hunkadola* and *The Dixieland Band* and *The Japanese Sandman*, all in an idiom this listener grew up with when the sound of Benny Goodman's clarinet, and the sound of swing, seemed a part of the natural landscape. Goodman, we were told even then, was out there on the ramparts, making musical history, getting guts back into the sound of jazz, reviving the essential element of improvisation, setting the whole world on its ear to the sound of swing.

Well, it all sounds fairly innocuous now—items like *Restless, The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea,* and *Blue Skies* never quite shed their banality no matter how expert and ingenious the clarinet embellishments, how energetic Gene Krupa's drums. Still, it was important then for Goodman to try to take the slobbery out of popular music, to de-sentimentalize it, to get it going. In his treatment of Jelly Roll Morton's *King Porter Stomp* and *Madhouse* you can hear how he did it, and the sound holds up. Much of the time, though, he was far less a swinger than a smoothie. Mr. Goodman, at least in 1935, was further behind the barricades than we thought. P.K.

**BUNK JOHNSON: *The Last Testament of a Great New Orleans Jazzman.*** Bunk Johnson (trumpet); Alphonso Steele (drums); Ed Cuffee (trombone); Don Kirkpatrick (piano); Danny Barker (guitar); Wellman Braud (bass). *Chloe; The Entertainer; The Minstrel Man; You're Driving Me Crazy; Someday; Till We Meet Again;* and six others. COLUMBIA SPECIAL PRODUCTS Ⓜ JCL 829 \$5.98.

Performance: **Appealing**  
Recording: **Fair**

Bunk Johnson was a New Orleans cornetist during the days when jazz was developing out of marching-band tunes, field hollers, blues, and ragtime. He was second cornet in the band led by Buddy Bolden, traditionally honored (on the testimony of his contemporaries) as the first great jazz cornet. Johnson also claimed to have inspired young Louis Armstrong (which Armstrong denied).

The first part of Johnson's career lasted until 1931, when the Depression, the loss of most of his teeth, and the smashing of his horn

in a brawl put him out of action. He took whatever kind of work he could get as a laborer. During the late Thirties the authors of *Jazzmen*, one of the most important histories of the music at that time, contacted Johnson, who supplied valuable information on the early New Orleans period, as well as noting that he was sure he could play again if he had a new horn and new teeth. The grateful authors and researchers supplied him with both. By late 1945 he had assembled a band (including, if memory serves, George Lewis on clarinet and Jimmy Archet on trombone) and was playing in New York. He was successful, popular, and lionized. He still had the beauty of tone and delicate phrasing he had been applauded for in his youth. Shortly after coming to New York he made his first commercial recordings.

Two years later he organized a new band along lines more to his liking. He was fed up



**BUNK JOHNSON**  
*Beauty of tone and phrasing from old New Orleans*

with endless requests to play such warhorses as *When the Saints Go Marching In*. He wanted a band that played primarily for dancing, with musicians capable of reading, so as to take advantage of the whole repertoire of popular music from four decades, whether it was New Orleans-spawned or not. But the public was confused (Johnson's success two years before would now be described as a media event) and not as enthusiastic over Johnson's new group. His backers decided that recordings might help popularize the band, so twelve brief sides were cut on three afternoons at Carnegie Recital Hall. But no commercial label was interested in them at the time, and Johnson died seven months later. Columbia acquired the recordings in the early Fifties and issued them on LP, of which this reissue is a facsimile.

Though he was long past his prime, a little short on lung power, and sometimes thrown slightly off-key, Bunk Johnson provides good examples of his pure, warm tone (one of the loveliest ever achieved on trumpet) and his rule of never taking too many liberties with the melody. Probably his greatest achievement in these recordings was his superb

Columbia Records



choice of repertoire, ranging from rags played as scored in the original *Red Back Book* to the exquisite Thirties ballad *Out of Nowhere*, with chestnuts like *Chloe*, *Some of These Days*, and *Marie Elena* thrown in for ballast. Taken together, the tunes make up a wonderful program, and the band behind Johnson is solid (though required to be deferential). Johnson was not, on this evidence, a great horn, but he was an awfully good one—as good as his intentions. *J.V.*

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**HUBERT LAWS:** *The Chicago Theme*. Hubert Laws (flute); Randy Brecker (trumpet); Bob James (keyboards); George Benson, Eric Gale (guitar); Ron Carter, Stanley Clarke (bass); Steve Gadd, Ralph McDonald (percussion); other musicians. *Going Home; Midnight at the Oasis; Inflation Chaser*; and three others. CTI CTI-6058 S1 \$6.98, © CT8-6058 \$7.95. © CTC-6058 \$7.95.

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

Hubert Laws' latest album is slick and commercial. Now, those adjectives usually horrify jazz people, but I am applying them positively to this album, which blends highly marketable glossiness with outstanding artistry. Hubert Laws fronts a group of elite CTI regulars here, and you wouldn't expect less than good results; this set, however, is more than excellent.

*Going Home*, the old spiritual Antonin Dvořák used in his *New World Symphony*, is replete with train effects, but it moves appropriately, and *The Chicago Theme*—a composition by Bob James, who wrote all but two arrangements for this set—is a catchy number made to order for the FM soul set. Laws' own *I Had a Dream* and *Inflation Chaser*, on which the strings bow out, flirt less with the cash register and should appeal to those who like their improvisations without designed accouterments.

*You Make Me Feel Brand New*, a hit in the hands of the Stylistics, is played rather straight and is less interesting than the rest of the album, but *Midnight at the Oasis*, the only track featuring guitarist George Benson, more than makes up for that minor weakness. The interplay between Laws and Benson, top men on their respective instruments, provides an exciting highlight to an album crammed with rich, rhythmic sounds. *C.A.*

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**PAUL MOTIAN:** *Tribute*. Paul Motian (percussion); Carlos Ward (alto saxophone); Sam Brown, Paul Metzke (guitar); Charlie Haden (bass). *War Orphans; Tuesday Ends Saturday; Song for Che*; and two others. ECM 1048 \$6.98.

Performance: **First-rate**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Drummer Paul Motian is approaching the age of forty-five, and to my knowledge this is his first album as a leader. But Motian's professional career goes back more than twenty years to the time he was with pianist George Wallington, and it includes work with Lennie Tristano, Oscar Pettiford, Al Cohn and Zoot Sims, Herbie Mann, Paul Bley, Bill Evans, George Russell, and, more recently, Keith Jarrett. In part, "Tribute" embraces the free form to which Motian's background almost inevitably had to lead, but there are surpris-

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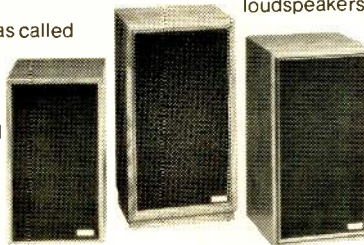


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**CIRCLE NO. 40 ON READER SERVICE CARD**

ingly traditional passages here, dominated by the two Spanish-tinged guitars, and it all bears the mark of excellence we have come to expect from producer Manfred Eicher. Besides some exquisite playing by guitarists Sam Brown and Paul Metzge, there are effective performances from saxophonist Carlos Ward on two selections, *Victoria* and *Sod House*. Motian's percussion work is, of course, an active ingredient throughout, but he is never obtrusive (as drummers usually tend to get when they are calling the shots).

The Polydor pressing of this U.S. release is unusually good, but I must say that I had no idea how good the ECM sound *really* was until I recently received a batch of the label's German pressings. C.A.

**RAUL DE SOUZA:** *Colors*. Raul de Souza (trombone); Richard Davis (bass); Jack DeJohnette (drums); others: *Nana*; *Crystal Silence*; *Canto de Ossanha*; *Dr. Honoris Causa*; and three others. MILESTONE M-9061 \$6.98.

Performance: **Silk purse to sow's ear**  
Recording: **Prejudiced mix**

I don't know who Raul de Souza is, and I'm afraid this album hasn't aroused my curiosity. The credits are most impressive, so—after reading such names as Cannonball Adderley ("guest soloist"), J. J. Johnson ("horns arranged and conducted by"), Richard Davis, and Jack DeJohnette on the back cover—I promised my ears a treat. I won't go so far as to say that they were assaulted, but what went in one soon went out the other. De Souza is probably a good section trombonist, but his improvisations are deadly dull, and he is given

such prominence in the remix that he stands out through sheer volume while the orchestra plods along mechanically on a lower level. Cannonball has only a cameo role, swirling briefly above the morass on two selections, *Canto de Ossanha* and *Chants to Burn*. With such outstanding talent on hand, producer Airoto Moreira—himself an impressive performer—has seemingly accomplished a remarkable feat of de-inspiration. C.A.

**MARY LOU WILLIAMS:** *Mary Lou's Mass*. Mary Lou Williams (piano); David Amram, Julius Watkins (French horn); Roger Glenn (flute); Chris White (bass); Al Harewood, Ralph McDonald (percussion); Milton Grayson, Carl Hall, Christine Spencer (vocals); others: chorus, Howard Roberts cond. Mary M 102 \$5.98 (from Mary Records, P.O. Box 32, Hamilton Grange, New York, N.Y. 10031).

Performance: **Well-intentioned**  
Recording: **Good**

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MARY LOU WILLIAMS:** *Zoning*. Mary Lou Williams, Zita Carno (piano); Bob Cranshaw, Milton Suggs (bass); Mickey Roker (drums); Tony Waters (conga). *Play It Momma*; *Holy Ghost*; *Olinga*; *Praise the Lord*; and seven others. MARY M 103 \$5.98 (from Mary Records, P.O. Box 32, Hamilton Grange, New York, N.Y. 10031).

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

Numerous jazz artists have survived the changing eras of jazz, but pianist/composer/

arranger Mary Lou Williams not only survived them, she changed with them and often pointed the way to new developments. She was arranging for the Andy Kirk orchestra as far back as 1929 and playing boogie-woogie in the best Kansas City tradition; in the late Thirties she wrote arrangements for Benny Goodman's band; in the early Forties she contributed to the charts of the Ellington band; in 1945 her *Zodiac Suite* was premiered at New York's Town Hall, and the following year it was performed by the New York Philharmonic; she hailed bop in its early hours and welcomed it with her open mind; when free-form jazz became the idiom's avant-garde, Ms. Williams was not left behind, for her musical thinking had always been avante-garde.

Religious activities took Mary Lou Williams away from her music for a few years during the mid-Fifties, and when she returned she combined her two devotions: jazz and Roman Catholicism. "Mary Lou Williams" (Mary Records FS-32843), released in 1964, marked Ms. Williams' return to recording after a ten-year absence. The album—now out of print—contained a mixture of spiritual and secular music, the former giving a hint of things to come. An unnumbered album entitled "Music for Peace" was released in 1970; it is this album—with some deletions and the addition of five 1972 tracks—that now reappears as "Mary Lou's Mass." Although I find the new version an improvement over the old, the overall effect is rather fragmentary. The segments range in time from fifty-two seconds to nearly four and a half minutes, and the album counts among its attributes the flute play-  
(Continued on page 98)

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ing of Roger Glenn (son of the late Tyree Glenn), the high-register voice of Carl Hall, and a disappointingly stingy serving of the composer's own piano. But if the album is spiritually uplifting, musically it never begins to approach the high quality of "Zoning."

"Zoning" is Mary Lou Williams' ultimate statement as pianist and composer. She is hauntingly lyrical in *Holy Ghost* and *Ghost of Love*, she swings madly and delightfully in *Medi II*, *Praise the Lord*, and Dizzy Gillespie's *Olinga*, and she bares her roots in *Rosa Mae* and *Play It Momma*, two blues with modern changes over current rhythm patterns. I am particularly in love with the strange quality of *Medi I*, a slow blues played to the accompaniment of bassist Bob Cranshaw with miking that has Ms. Williams' piano starting off in what sounds like the studio hallway, then gradually gaining presence. Beautiful!

C.A.



## THEATER • FILMS

**HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD.** Original-soundtrack recordings. Dick Powell, Ruby Keeler, Joan Blondell, Una Merkel, and others in selections from *Hollywood Hotel*; *Gold Diggers of 1935*; *42nd Street*; *In Caliente*; *Gold Diggers of 1937*; *Wonder Bar*; *Fashions of 1934*; and *And She Learned About Dames*. UNITED ARTISTS (M) UA-LA 361-H-1 \$7.98, (B) EA361-H \$7.98.

Performance: **For God and Warner Bros.**  
Recording: **Hoarse, relentless**

This "companion volume" to the earlier United Artists release of "The Golden Age of Hollywood" doesn't come complete with a pop-up of a Busby Berkeley production number the way the first one did, but little else has been overlooked. The disc is surrounded by pictures and blurbs and a sixteen-page booklet to stare at while you listen. Even the label is decorated with a flower-arrangement of chorus girls. But the record itself has to be heard to be believed. This time, we are treated not only to the excruciating Vitaphone sound of original songs from the musicals, soaking in their sudsy settings, but also to snatches of dialogue already immortal in the annals of cinema. I mean, here is Warner Baxter himself exhorting the cast of *Pretty Lady* on their opening night in *42nd Street* to go out there and knock 'em dead, in the show-biz pep talk to end them all. Here is Bebe Daniels, with a sprained ankle, limping into the dressing room of Ruby Keeler, her replacement, and telling her, "Now go out there and be so swell that you'll make me hate you . . ." and "You're going out a youngster but you've got to come back a star!"

In addition to such spoken treasures, the album offers songs that sent us Depression kids out into the dismal streets humming, songs like *The Lady in Red*, *Young and Healthy*, and *Shuffle Off to Buffalo*—all there

down to the last train whistle and ham-fisted double-entendre. And Miss Daniels herself sings (if that's the word for it) her big number before her ankle went on her, *You're Getting to Be a Habit with Me*. There are also songs of incredible insipidity, such as *Spin a Little Web of Dreams* from *Fashions of 1934* and *Don't Say Goodnight* from *Wonder Bar*. In short, this is a veritable orgy for nostalgists, complete with on-screen applause after every number—which was the way the old Warner Brothers musicals tipped off the movie audience that one of their lavish routines was an unmitigated success.

P.K.

**JEROME KERN:** *Ben Bagley's Jerome Kern Revisited*. George Reinhold, Nancy Andrews, Barbara Cook, Harold Lang, Cy Young, and Bobby Short (vocals); orchestra, Norman Paris arr. and cond. *Good Morning, Dearie!*; *Didn't You Believe?*; *I Have the Room Above*; *Blue Danube Blues*; *Heaven in My Arms*; *Bojangles of Harlem*; and ten others. PAINTED SMILES PS 1363 \$6.98.

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

Ben Bagley has been engaged for some years in the giant task of restoring to us the genteel sophistication of a brighter day when, as he explains in his program notes, "Love was all." He has made available once again the wit and sting of his own Shoestring Revues as well as a series of "revisited" albums featuring the lesser-known music of, among others, Porter, Coward, Gershwin, Loesser, Youmans, Rodgers and Hart—not to mention De Sylva, Brown, and Henderson. Now he is devoting his energies to re-releasing these same restorations on his own Painted Smiles label for those who were not quick-witted enough to acquire the originals. *Jerome Kern Revisited*, for example, was issued by Columbia about a decade ago and disappeared from the shelves all too fast. Now it is back with one new singer—George Reinhold, adored as daytime TV's top-rated star until he quit NBC's *Another World* recently—singing an additional four Kern songs to swell the program to a total of thirteen. And swell the program is, as those of us who have been enjoying it all these years have been trying to tell our friends.

Mr. Kern, his annotator reminds us, "was married to the same wife for forty years" and "this love is reflected in his music—a sweet, trusting sort of emotion which may never come back." I dare say that if it does it will be Mr. Bagley who is responsible. Not all the items on this "revisited" list are top-drawer hits, nor were they intended to be presented as such. Songs like *I Have the Room Above*, *Blue Danube Blues*, and *Some Sort of Somebody* have a certain goofy period charm just because they didn't have it in them to be hits. But the record also offers Bobby Short's sly tribute to *Bojangles of Harlem*, Barbara Cook's winsome treatment of the composer's favorite, *In the Heart of the Dark*, and *Never Gonna Dance*, long since immortalized by Fred Astaire. The five singers on the original disc—Nancy Andrews, Barbara Cook, Harold Lang, Cy Young, and Bobby Short—are all impeccable pluggers of the Kern tunes. Mr. Reinhold has a strong, clear baritone and "puts over" his share of these old-fashioned songs in a surprisingly old-fashioned way for such a young man, but none of them are remarkable enough to make me urge you to go all the way out and acquire this re-release if you already own the Columbia version.

P.K.

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## "Chicago"—the kind of show that made American musicals famous.



Chita Rivera and Gwen Verdon strut in Chicago's finale *Nowadays*

### Two Harbingers of Health

WHILE I was still congratulating myself for having rediscovered Broadway during the 1974-1975 season—hugely enjoying such very different shows as *The Ritz*, *Equus*, *Sherlock Holmes*, and *Bette Midler's Clams on the Half-Shell Revue*—I learned with a certain chagrin that this has been the largest-grossing season in American theater history and that I was not especially clever in going back to Broadway, but was just one of thousands, part of a trend.

Theorists among my showfolk friends tell me that during bad financial periods audiences flock to the theater—perhaps escaping from unpleasant reality—and the theater responds by trotting out its whole bag of time-worn tricks. To me the healthiest sign at this moment in the life of Broadway theater, known for years as the Fabulous Invalid, is the resurgence of interest in American musical comedy. *The Wiz* and *Goodtime Charley* may not have made history, but there were two big musical hits at the end of the season that probably will. They are *Chicago* and *A Chorus Line*, and their original-cast albums are now available for you to sample.

So much talent was concentrated in *Chicago*—music by John Kander, lyrics by Fred Ebb, direction by Bob Fosse, and performances by Gwen Verdon, Chita Rivera, Jerry Orbach, and Mary McCarty—that I couldn't wait for it to open officially. I went to a preview and came out of the theater beaming and proud to be an American, for this is really an area in which the American composer and lyricist have no peer. The craft, professionalism, and virtuosity displayed in this show are nothing short of staggering.

It's set in Chicago during the Twenties, which gives it a short-skirted, black-stockinged, sinful tone—"men everywhere, jazz everywhere, booze everywhere." It's the story of two cheap floozies, Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly, who meet in prison (each has murdered her lover), and of their efforts to win acquittal and capitalize on the publicity generated by their crimes.

In content *Chicago* is a cynical, rather Brechtian piece about American justice and the role played in it by newspaper publicity and public sympathy for sexy, low-class murderesses. There's just nobody to like among the characters, but the show is so much fun it doesn't matter. It's billed as a musical vaudeville (Brechtian structure), and the story is told in a series of entertaining show-biz routines. An expert chorus and fine scenery and costumes contribute to the flashiness, and I loved the show most for its blatant, unabashed theatricality.

THE *Chicago* recording (on the new Arista label) is rare among show albums in that it is complete in itself whether you've seen the show on stage or not. You can follow the story quite well on the record, and you get all the best numbers from the show. The score, lyrics, and performances are so strong that the album stands up without the glitter of the visual presentation.

Kander's tuneful score, more than just a jazzy evocation of the Twenties, has a lot in it. *All I Care About (Is Love)*, for example, is an affectionate tribute to such singers as Al Jolson and Bing Crosby. *A Little Bit of Good* (well performed by M. O'Haughey) is a take-

off on the optimistic operettas of the Twenties and Thirties. Although each song is nicely integrated into the show, about half a dozen of them are potential hits, and I think you'll be hearing them a lot. Ebb's clever lyrics lie beautifully on the melodies, and they sing well. His witty rhymes show a delight (and a skill) in word play that is rare these days, especially in my two favorites from the show, *Razzle Dazzle* and *When You're Good to Mama*.

Having material of this kind to work with brings out the best from any cast, and it certainly does here. Chita Rivera (Velma), a dynamite performer with a pretty voice, makes it clear in *All That Jazz* and the disarmingly vulgar duet *Class* why her recent cabaret act was such a hot draw. Gwen Verdon (Roxie) sounds a little weak and tired in *Roxie*, but in *Nowadays* her wicked chuckling delivery shows the raunchy vulnerability that has long made her a favorite of male theatergoers. Mary McCarty is strong as the prison matron Mama Morton, and she gets the most out of every wickedly suggestive line in *When You're Good to Mama*. And I feel that I owe Jerry Orbach, who plays the shyster lawyer Billy Flynn, some kind of apology, for I, who prize diction so highly, have been far too slow to discover his superb way of projecting lyrics (just listen to him in *All I Care About* and *Razzle Dazzle*). Barney Martin, Roxie's ineffectual husband, has a very good song in *Mr. Cellophane*.

The sound is excellent, and the whole thing hangs together so well that I looked 'way down into the fine print to see who had produced it: Phil Ramone. *Chicago* is the kind of show that made the American musical famous: the original-cast recording is the kind that got a lot of show-album collectors started. If you're already a collector, it's a must: if you'd like to be, it's the place to start.

A more widely discussed show is *A Chorus Line*, produced off-Broadway by the New York Shakespeare Festival and later moved uptown to a larger theater. It won the New York drama critics' award as the best musical of the year. As the title implies, it is a show about dancing, specifically about Broadway show dancers, who are known in theater circles as gypsies.

In the men's room of a bar in the theater district (where I once collected the graffiti "Latin is sic, sic, sic!"), I recently saw penciled on the wall: "*A Chorus Line* will do for gypsies what *Fiddler* did for the Jews." Well, I don't know precisely what *Fiddler* did for Jewish Americans, but I don't think anyone who sees *A Chorus Line* will ever again take for granted the contribution of chorus dancers to Broadway musicals.

The show does not glamorize backstage life. It takes a hard look at the dancer's short, strenuous career (in the various shows in which they have appeared the cast members of *A Chorus Line* have sustained thirty back, twenty-four knee, and thirty-six ankle injuries). The realistic, very precisely constructed book for the show (by James Kirkwood and Nicholas Dante) is based on the lives of ac-

tual dancers, including some connected with this production.

*A Chorus Line* makes its effects quite differently from *Chicago*. Lacking fancy sets and costumes, it takes place on a rehearsal stage where a director is auditioning dancers for the chorus of a Broadway show he is casting. After the first elimination, seventeen candidates remain from whom the director must choose eight. Since the dancers he picks for the projected show will have some lines in it, the director needs to hear them talk, and he has each of them tell something about his background. (Gypsy friends tell me it never happens this way at real auditions, but it's an inspired device, and it works very well in the theater.)

At the beginning the dancers are a rather unprepossessing crew dressed in motley practice clothes, but as the show unfolds and they reveal themselves one by one, you realize that they are quite individual and a thoroughly likable, even lovable, bunch. You grow to loathe the director, Zach (Robert LuPone), and you get very much involved with the dancers, for there are humor and pathos in their rather prosaic life stories.

Some of what you learn about them comes from the musical numbers that make up the show. In *At the Ballet*, for example, Sheila (Carole Bishop), Bebe (Nancy Lane), and Maggie (Kay Cole) explain that they began studying dance because their home lives were drab and "everything was beautiful at the ballet." In *Dance: Ten; Looks: Three*, Val (Pamela Blair) tells how her career was hampered until she had her flat chest pumped up with silicone ("Tits and ass can change your life/They sure changed mine.") The most moving scenes, confrontations between the director and Cassie (Donna McKechnie) and Paul (Sammy Williams), are spoken.

By the end of the show, when the director chooses the eight dancers he wants to hire and dismisses the others, you are so engrossed in the situation that you are stunned. Then, in a big finale, all the dancers return in shiny satin and sequins for a reprise of *One*, the number used for the auditions. To see those kids all smiling, singing, and gallantly dancing their hearts out to give life to that banal number can tear you apart. I saw the show off-Broadway and again after it moved uptown (I think it works better in the larger theater), and it wrecked me both times.

**T**HE things that make *A Chorus Line* such a marvelous and touching show—most of the funny lines, the dramatic tension, the big spoken scenes, and of course the company's fine dancing to Michael Bennett's choreography—are, I am sorry to report, absent from Columbia's original-cast album. The disc presents a well-edited condensation of the music from the show in excellent sound, but the score provided by Academy Award winner Marvin Hamlisch can most charitably be described as serviceable, and the lyrics by Edward Kleban are, I think, a little less than that.

I rather like *At the Ballet* and the raucous evocation of adolescence *Hello Twelve, Hello Thirteen, Hello Love*, but neither is a song you'd want to play many times. *Sing!*, an amusing duet in which Al Percassi finishes all of Renee Baughman's lines, goes on a bit too long in the show, and I find it simply unlisten-

able on the album. Donna McKechnie's elaborate solo *The Music and the Mirror* suffers without her dancing. Paul, a major character affecting performed by Sammy Williams, is limited on the disc to a brief arioso in *I Hope I Get It* ("Who am I anyway/Am I my resume?"). The heart of *A Chorus Line* is simply not on this disc. I listen to the album and wonder how I enjoyed the show so much. The show deserved its award as best musical, but ironically not for the music. I'd go back to see *A Chorus Line* tomorrow, but I don't expect to play the album many times.

*A Chorus Line* contains one song (*What I Did for Love*, well sung on the album by Priscilla Lopez) that just might make it as a pop hit on the order of *The Way We Were*. It's vague enough to give a strong interpreter some leeway in interpretation, and its lyrics have that Hallmark-card quality that always appeals to the mass audience ("Gone, love is never gone/As we travel on . . ."). Jack Jones has already recorded it for RCA and Johnny Mathis' version is due soon from Columbia. I'd like to hear it sung by, say, Shirley Bassey or, even better, Vikki Carr.

The strength of the score for *Chicago* is demonstrated by the way pop singers, always hungry for good material, have pounced on its songs. Before the show opened, Dinah Shore, Bernadette Peters, Kate Smith, and Tom Smothers were singing excerpts from *Chicago* on television. Within a week after release of the original-cast album, there was a big-band jazz recording of *Chicago* songs by Lee Konitz on Groove Merchant. The same label issued a single of *Roxie* by Cathy and the Richettes, and Ella Fitzgerald recorded that song and *My Own Best Friend* for Pablo. Recorded but unreleased at the time of writing are *Roxie* by Fred Astaire, *Me and My Baby* by Teresa Brewer and George Segal, *All That Jazz* and *My Own Best Friend* by Liza Minnelli, and *Razzle Dazzle* by Bing Crosby. There will be lots more because these are the kind of songs—good songs—they used to write back in the old days.

**I** shall chart the progress of *What I Did for Love* and the songs from *Chicago* with great interest. If *Chicago* and *A Chorus Line* prove not to be isolated incidents and the Broadway musical is coming to life again, it could be very healthy for popular music. The theater's pulse, blood pressure, and other vital signs are good enough to make me think the Fabulous Invalid may yet get up out of her bed, put on her dancing shoes, and paint the town red again. I can hardly wait for the 1975-1976 season.

—William Livingstone

**CHICAGO** (John Kander—Fred Ebb). Original Broadway-cast recording. Gwen Verdon. Chita Rivera, Jerry Orbach, Barney Martin. Mary McCarty, M. O'Haughey (vocals); chorus and orchestra, Stanley Lebowsky cond. ARISTA AL 9005 \$7.98.

**A CHORUS LINE** (Marvin Hamlisch—Edward Kleban). Scott Allen, Renee Baughman, Carole Bishop, Pamela Blair, Wayne Ciento, Clive Clerk, Kay Cole, Patricia Garland, Nancy Lane, Priscilla Lopez, Donna McKechnie, Don Percassi, Sammy Williams, others (vocals); orchestra, Don Pippin cond. COLUMBIA PS 33581 \$7.98.

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# CHOOSING SIDES

By IRVING KOLODIN



## THE BUDAPEST GODFATHER

THE reissue on the Odyssey label of a choice cross-section of Budapest Quartet performances from that group's prime period in the Fifties (Haydn's Op. 76 on Y3-33324; Beethoven's Op. 59, Op. 74, and Op. 95 on Y3-33316; Schubert's Op. 29, Op. 161, and *Death and the Maiden* on Y3-33320) is much more than an event welcome in itself, for it also provides a recorded link in the chain of chamber-music appreciation in this country, connecting the prior phase of it, represented by RCA's reissue of Flonzaley Quartet material a couple of years ago, with the ongoing tradition, represented by the latest Schwann listings of today's fine American quartets.

The Flonzaley heritage was unique (even for its time) in being the product of an eccentric—meaning that it was supported by a man of means who was also a devotee of chamber music. The Budapest accession, a decade later, to the position of prominence relinquished by the Flonzaleys in 1927 exemplified a totally different economic approach as well as a wholly individual aesthetic one. History tells us that a Budapest Quartet toured briefly in America in 1930, but it was not until 1937, when Alexander Schneider (second violin) and Boris Kroyt (viola) joined Joseph Roisman (first violin) and Mischa Schneider (cello), that America began to hear the Budapest Quartet.

Against the still-echoing background of such elite groups as the Flonzaley (with its Franco-Italian conditioning), the Lener (authentically Hungarian, and the first to have a complete cycle of Beethoven quartet recordings issued in this country), the unforgettable London (with its refinement and warmth of temperament), the Roth (peerless in Mozart), and the Pro Arte (Franco-Belgian at its best), the Budapest, as newly constituted, had its detractors. It was held by some to verge on coarseness in its fervent pursuit of musical meaning; to stretch quartet sound to excess in its stress on equality of execution; to court vulgarity in making vibrato a strong, steady part of a warm ensemble sound rather than a color to be touched in with care. And as for welcoming a reigning jazz musician (Benny Goodman) to join in the recording of the Mozart Clarinet Quintet, wasn't that pushing lack of pomposity just a bit *too far*?

But it is precisely the fervor, evenness of execution, warmth of sound, and lack of pomposity that make these performances as vital

and alive today as on the day they were recorded. It was a "day" coincidentally equidistant from the real beginning of the quartet's American adventure in 1937 and its termination thirty years later. The precise median point would be 1952: fifteen years after its beginning, fifteen years before its end. The contents of these three Odyssey albums straddle the target year like well-placed bombs: the Beethoven a year before, the Schubert a year later, and the Haydn two.

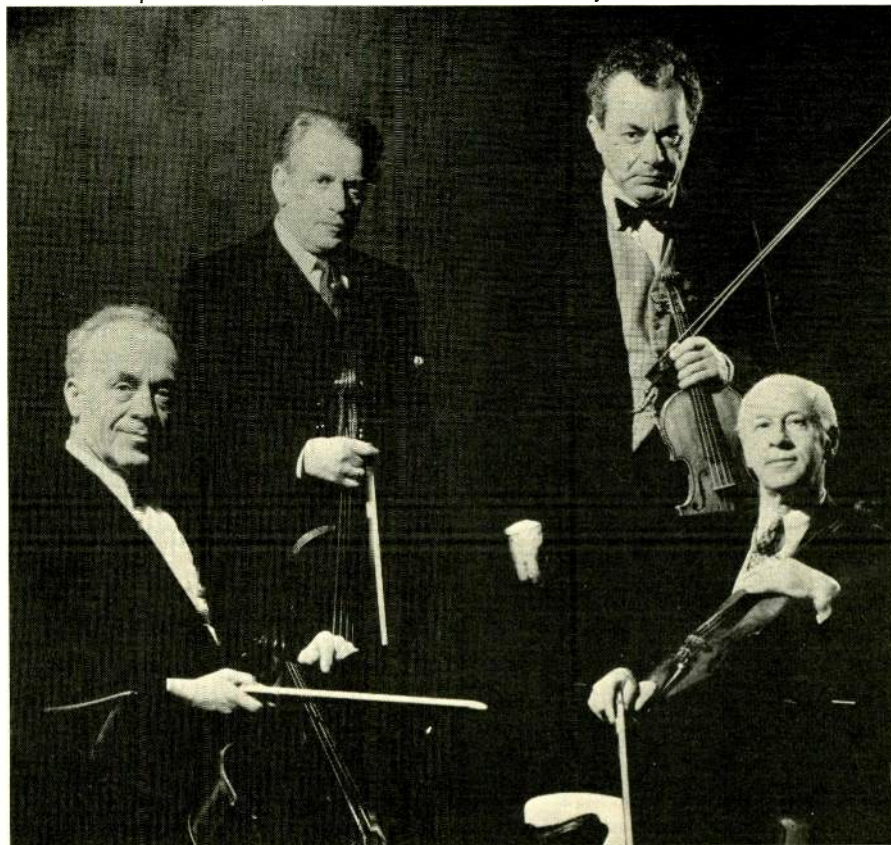
This timing might be said to maximize the element of musical proficiency and to minimize the possible incursions of age. In any event, those fifteen years of preparation were sufficient for a concept of quartet playing to

be converted into an actuality and for the three players who made the long journey all the way together to accommodate themselves to changing second violinists without audible alteration of the ensemble. In these performances that second chair is occupied not by Alexander Schneider, the one member of the 1937 quartet still active today, but by Jac Goredetzky. It was his illness (and death in 1955) that brought back Schneider, who was to remain with the group until it disbanded in 1967.

Nevertheless, these performances are "Budapest" in every detail: broadly swinging and forthright in the Op. 59, No. 1, of Beethoven; inimitably anguished but self-contained in the Schubert *Death and the Maiden*; marvelously sportive yet elegant in all six Haydns. Given such a heavenly high standard of quality throughout, I would shrink from recommending one set as preferable to another, but if I were challenged at pistol point to make a recommendation "or else," my favor would fall to the album containing the six Haydn quartets of Op. 76. This is not because they are "better" Budapest than the Beethoven or Schubert, but because they are least likely to be soon equaled or surpassed. We already have Beethoven performances by the Juilliard and Guarneri Quartets which, in their own way, equal the strength of the Budapest performances of Op. 59 if not yet their insights, and the Cleveland Quartet's *Death and the Maiden* is something with which to reckon. But the generally celestial standard of Budapest performance is raised to an unmatched seventh heaven of sonorous splendor in the Haydn.

REHEARING these performances after twenty years is like revisiting a gallery to see a great

THE ONCE AND FUTURE BUDAPEST QUARTET:  
Joseph Roisman, Alexander Schneider, Boris Kroyt, Mischa Schneider



Columbia Records



painting and, standing back and apart from it, appreciating new values and subtleties. During its playing days, the Budapest membership made much of its democratic rehearsal procedures, of not having a "leader" in the old Joachim, Kneisel, Rosé, Lener sense (a musical "dictator" to whom the others deferred). Perhaps so, but when it comes to articulating the *personality* of a quartet, of responding to an eighteenth-century work the way an eighteenth-century composer wrote it, only one man can assume the responsibility. Call him the "leader" or simply the first violinist, the unassuming Roisman assumed that leadership with the right amount of authority and all the strength of purpose needed to give Haydn's musical profile its distinctive, quirky conformation. In Op. 76, No. 1, it is the solo in the trio of the *Menuet* to which he imparts just the properly roguish touch, much as, in the *Più presto* of the finale of No. 4, he gives a delightful imitation of a man trying to oblige the composer by playing almost (but not quite) faster than he can. But he is also capable of a supernal sobriety, as in the hymnal slow movement of No. 3, the *Emperor*: I cannot recall ever having heard a performance more perfectly proportioned.

FOR those to whom these remarks may be merely affirmations of their own high regard for records already on their shelves, the overall release nevertheless holds an interest. That is a disc (Y3-33315) coupling previously unreleased performances (the forerunners of others to come, I am told) of the Franck Quintet (recorded in 1956) and the Fauré Piano Quartet No. 1 (recorded in 1957). Like the others, these are Library of Congress performances with all the acoustical benefits that implies. And they were recorded "live." I doubt the Clifford Curzon would play a more resonant, forceful Franck today, or that Jesús María Sanromá, now living in Puerto Rico, would be in any finer form for the Fauré.

The second violinist in these performances (which are undoubtedly more intensely Slavic than a Francophile would prefer) is Alexander Schneider, whose presence returns the quartet to its first, and to its last, form (save that Leslie Parnas replaced the ailing Mischa Schneider in its final three concerts). As individuals, its members brought a rare combination of unity and diversity to their work: all were Jews, all were Russian-born (Roisman and Kroyt in Odessa, the Schneiders in Vilna), all pursued their higher musical education in Germany. As a group they had a powerful effect on the playing of chamber music the world around.

The direct products of the quartet are the strongly emotional, highly disciplined, intensely intellectual music-making of these totally typical and thoroughly remarkable discs. The by-products are no less remarkable, for they are nothing less than the whole breed of today's supremely strong American string quartets. During a long period (1939-1949) in which foreign travel was all but ruled out, the Budapest Quartet was domiciled here, as active on the West coast as it was on the East. If the Juilliard Quartet (founded in 1945) can be said to be the father image to such groups as the Guarneri, Cleveland, Fine Arts, La Salle, and Tokyo, the spiritual godfather that set the standard they aspire to was surely the Budapest, the ensemble that was begun by Hungarians and ended up comprising four Russian-born, German-speaking American citizens.



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# CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

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

J. S. BACH (trans. Hess, Busoni, Lüstner, Liszt, Siloti): *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring; Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland; Nun freut euch lieben, Christen g'mein; Siciliano in G Minor; Prelude and Fugue in A Minor; Ich ruf' zu dir Herr Jesu Christ; Chaconne in D Minor; Toccata and Fugue in D Minor; Prelude in B Minor*. Alexis Weissenberg (piano). ANGEL S-37088 \$6.98.

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

The ancient and honorable art of transcription, although recently in disrepute, has generally held a high place in musical culture. The greatest challenge—taken up by such disparate masters as Liszt, Busoni, Webern, and Stravinsky—is J. S. Bach. Since Bach lived before the age of the pianoforte and since the Romantics worshipped at the shrine of Johann Sebastian, it was natural for them to rethink Bach's keyboard music for the modern concert instrument. And, along with the revival of many aspects of Romanticism, it was inevitable that contemporary pianists would resurrect this fine old genre.

Alexis Weissenberg is certainly in the line of the old Romantic-intellectuals, and, although he is rarely animated by the tremendous fire and passion that drove his illustrious predecessors (or that they successfully affected for the edification of their public), he is capable of a strong measure of grand, severe style well suited to these very imposing transcriptions. Good piano sound. *E.S.*

#### 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

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

#### RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BARTÓK:** *Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano; Rhapsody No. 1 for Violin and Piano; Two Roumanian Dances*. Denes Zsigmondy (violin); Anneliese Nissen (piano). KLAVIER KS-535 \$6.98.

**BARTÓK:** *Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin; Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano*. Denes Zsigmondy (violin); Anneliese Nissen (piano). KLAVIER KS-542 \$6.98.

Performance: **Absorbing**  
Recording: **Very good**

The two violin/piano sonatas of Béla Bartók were considered barely listenable for many critics during the years following their composition (1921-1922). Their unconventional, frankly experimental effects—barbaric-sounding chords, swooping glissandos, strangely placed pizzicatos—no longer sound terrifying, but these sonatas are still a long way from being ingratiating in the conventional sense. The solo sonata (1944), a late work written by an older, mellower, but not much more compromising Bartók, is more accessible; its slow third movement is almost a Romantic gesture in its winding chromaticism, and its final *Presto* has a *moto perpetuo* layout.

All three are highly individual and intensely colorful pieces, and they reward concentrated listening. Bartók, a virtuoso pianist, understood the violin but struggled against its harmonic limitations. Nonetheless, he seldom allows the piano, a naturally harmonic instrument, to assume the commanding role in the violin-piano sonatas; the rich chordal writing of the violin carries the principal burden. The two instruments, incidentally, rarely complement one another—this is a partnership contrapuntally pursuing independent lines.

The performances are exceptionally good. Hungarian-born Denes Zsigmondy (pupil of Carl Flesch and now Professor of Music at the University of Washington) plays this music with an elegance that bespeaks complete mastery of its difficulties. With all its rhythmic intricacies and strange sound combinations, it is obviously "mainstream" music for him. In the solo sonata, incidentally, he comes remarkably close to the timings indicated by

Bartók (a notoriously fast timer of his own works) without compromising accuracy, articulation, or intonation. The pianist (Mrs. Zsigmondy) collaborates with him in a manner justifying the record liner's high praise of this team of fine musicians.

There are some printing inaccuracies on both the jackets and the labels, but the music and the recording are of a very high caliber. *G.J.*

**BEETHOVEN:** *String Quartets, Opp. 59, 74, and 95* (see Choosing Sides, page 102)

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BEETHOVEN:** *Symphony No. 9, in D Minor, Op. 125 ("Choral")*. Marita Napier (soprano); Anna Reynolds (contralto); Helge Brilioth (tenor); Karl Ridderbusch (bass); Ambrosian Singers; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. PHILIPS 6747 119 two discs \$15.96.

Performance: **Radiant**  
Recording: **Realistic**

Just fifteen months ago Karl Böhm's Deutsche Grammophon recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was welcomed in these pages for the "faultless sense of proportion" with which the veteran conductor "emphasizes the work's straightforward humanity"; it has headed my list of recorded Ninths since then, and I would not have imagined so strong a rival would appear in so short a time. Seiji Ozawa's new Ninth on Philips is not faultless: it is an imperfect performance of what we are constantly reminded is an imperfect work; but it is also an extraordinarily moving one, generating more of the unforced radiance and spiritual "lift" one used to hope for from this music than any other recording of it known to me.

The solid integrity of Böhm's Ninth is in no way diminished by Ozawa's achievement, and the two approaches in fact have more than a few points in common. Both eschew the ceremonial and monumental connotations frequently attached to the work; neither sees the Ninth as a solemn rite, nor as an outpouring of bacchanalian abandon. Ozawa's tempos, like

(Continued on page 106)

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*"Abravanel's is the only Mahler cycle available at budget price."*

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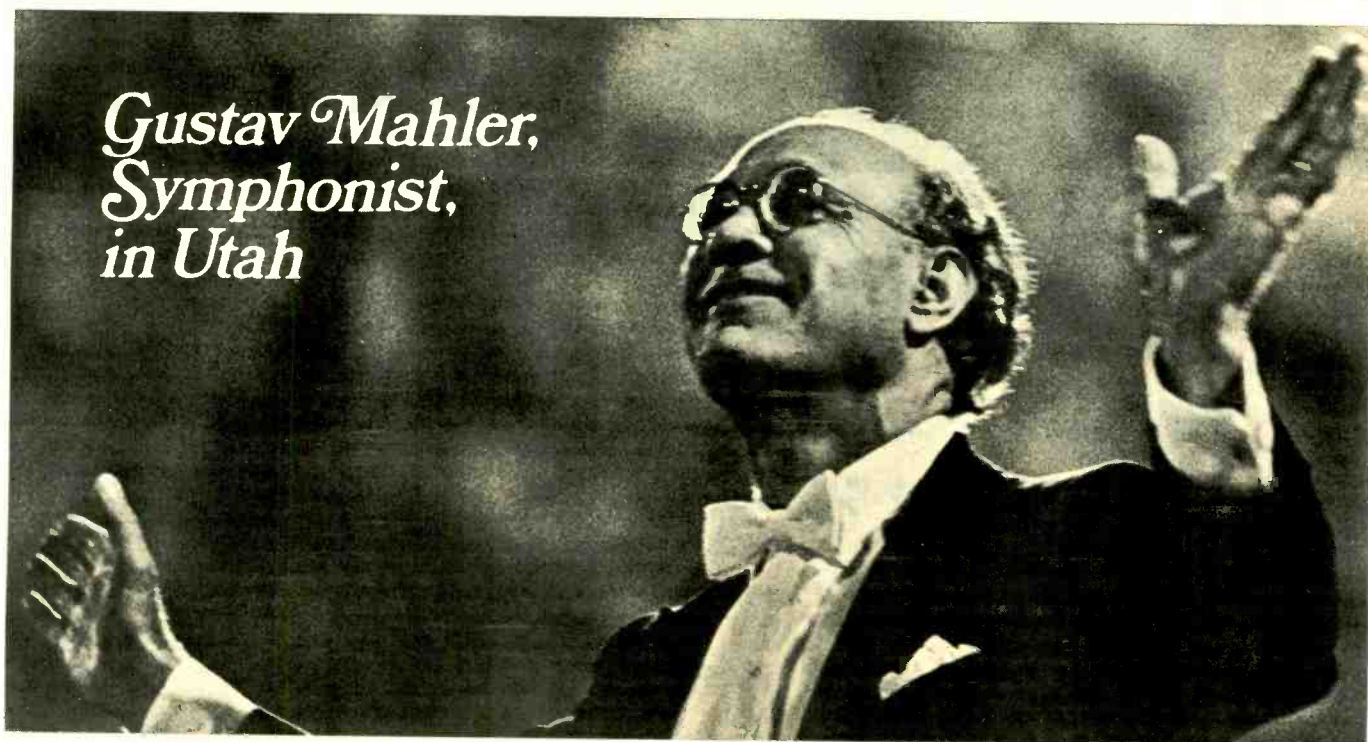
WITH three new albums from Vanguard, issued in both quadrasonic and stereo formats, Maurice Abravanel becomes the fifth conductor to complete the Gustav Mahler symphony cycle on records. Though the Utah Symphony is not the equal of Solti's Chicago Symphony, Haitink's Concertgebouw, or Bernstein's New York Philharmonic, the general level of performance Abravanel achieves is remarkably high, and for the most part the performances are enhanced by the acoustic excellence of the Mormon Tabernacle and the intelligent engineering work of

mise between maximum clarity and percussive impact.

Definitely the most successful of the new Abravanel readings, in my opinion, is the Fifth Symphony, whose contrapuntal complexities become very neatly unraveled in this conductor's predominantly light-handed approach. There is some tendency toward over-prominence of the trumpet line in the lamentation episode of the opening funeral march, and I would have liked a shade quieter overall dynamic in the famous Adagio, but these are minor flaws in a reading of generally high

should sound disembodied as though heard floating up from distant valleys to the heights of the Austrian Alps, sound all too close at hand.

VANGUARD's quadrasonic sound in these recordings is no match, in terms of semi-surround effect, for the same company's remarkable series of recordings done in London with Charles Mackerras and Johannes Somary. The root of the problem probably lies in the difficulties of controlling and altering basic acoustic ambiance—a lot easier to do, ap-



*Gustav Mahler,  
Symphonist,  
in Utah*

the Vanguard recording staff. Moreover, Vanguard's Cardinal and Everyman stereo discs are only \$3.98 each, making Abravanel's the only Mahler symphony cycle available at a budget price. (The Vanguard quadrasonic discs are \$7.98 each.)

Abravanel's view of Mahler is not one of impassioned neurasthenia à la Bernstein, nor does he unleash the ardor Horenstein does in his readings of No. 1 and No. 3 on Nonesuch (or, preferably, on Advent cassettes). Rather, Abravanel's reading of the First Symphony rates high marks in terms of carefully gauged tempo relationships and textural transparency. It all seems a little cool and distant, though—a situation aggravated by the fact that the bass line and the low percussion (in the finale, chiefly) simply do not come through with enough impact relative to the rest of the music's vertical component. Direct comparison of Abravanel's First with James Levine's rather similar "cool" and transparent reading for RCA tends to confirm my impression on this point. I suspect that the longish reverberation period of the Mormon Tabernacle forced the Vanguard engineers to compro-

quality that reaches a peak in the immensely difficult fugal-texture finale.

In the great opening Adagio movement from the Tenth Symphony (left unfinished by Mahler), the Abravanel reading is cool, clear, and beautifully recorded, but the cumulative effect of the whole, particularly in those climactic episodes of eerie dissonance that point the way toward Alban Berg and beyond, lacks the power and tensile strength of the 1959 Columbia recording by George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra. And, with the best will in the world, Abravanel and his players are no match for Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic in the Sixth Symphony. Abravanel's temperament and the makeup of his orchestra simply will not accommodate the shattering urgency Bernstein brings to this symphony, the finest achievement in his Mahler symphony cycle. The Abravanel reading is a good, conscientious job—at its best in the heart-wrenchingly poignant slow movement—but no more. The emphasis on achieving clarity of texture occasionally mars the musical result, as in the first movement and the slow movement; the cowbells, which

parently, in the English locale, with its shorter reverberation period, than in the almost cavernous Mormon Tabernacle. In short, I don't think the degree of quadrasonic enhancement achieved in the Abravanel recordings is worth the \$4 extra per disc. Still, in stereo, these Mahler symphonies are a good buy, especially Symphony No. 5 from this group of releases and No. 8 from the earlier Cardinal series.

—David Hall

**MAHLER: *Symphony No. 1, in D Major.*** Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel cond. VANGUARD □ VSQ 30044 \$7.98, VSD 320 \$3.98.

**MAHLER: *Symphony No. 5, in C-sharp Minor; Symphony No. 10, Adagio.*** Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel cond. VANGUARD □ VSQ 30045/6 two discs \$15.96, S-321/2 two discs \$7.96.

**MAHLER: *Symphony No. 6, in A Minor.*** Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel cond. VANGUARD □ VSQ 30047/8 two discs \$15.96, S-323/4 two discs \$7.96.

Böhm's, are for the most part unhurried but steadily propulsive; his dynamic range is broader and involves some risks, most of them successful. His reading from beginning to end is spectacularly controlled, but very subtly, too: the music is at every point allowed to breathe naturally. If Ozawa's approach is somewhat less straightforward than Böhm's, it is even more compassionate, more permeated with a sustained and expanding sense of exaltation.

One might complain that, even though there are some exaggerated dynamic contrasts, the first movement shows too little in the way of dramatic conflict—as if Ozawa were too confident of his progress toward the joy-filled finale. All three of the wholly instrumental movements do serve more obviously as pre-

ludes here, leading on, not impatiently, but with a grand and serene sense of momentum. Both the scherzo and the slow movement, though, come about as close to the ideal as I ever expect to hear; in the latter, particularly, Ozawa seems to have found the more effective balance between contemplation and thrust. Along the way, one may note that the drumbeats in the scherzo, while superbly executed, are not recorded with the sharp definition they are given in the Böhm set and that the marvelous horn solo in the slow movement also suffers from a rather mushy acoustic focus; otherwise, the recorded sound is stunningly realistic, and there is little else to complain about.

The women soloists may be less striking than their counterparts in certain other re-

cordings, but they are a good deal more than adequate vocally, and their voices mesh well with Ozawa's concept. The two men are never less than first-rate. Ridderbusch is possibly even more admirable here than he is in the Böhm recording; Brilioth is ideally suited to the demands of this work, and the brisk pacing of his solo section leads most effectively into the ensuing fugato. The "*Seid umschlungen*" which follows is very majestic, taken about as slowly as possible without allowing the momentum to falter, and the end is credibly exuberant. Balances throughout the long movement are unfailingly excellent, both between the choral and instrumental forces and within each respective ensemble.

But no amount of verbal description can convey the impact of this wonderfully realized Ninth. There is not a bar anywhere that is superficial, bland, or vulgar: the performance has both dignity and exhilaration in abundance, and the balance is achieved not through compromise but through the apparently instinctive response of a great interpreter to a great creator. At a list price of \$15.96 and with no other work on the two discs, Ozawa's Ninth is the most expensive version around; it is also, without question, the most inspiring.

In addition to providing generally superb sound (with the two lapses noted), Philips has at last abandoned the oversize box heretofore used for its two-disc sets in favor of a more convenient gatefold container, and even the annotation is exceptional: Bernard Jacobson's thoughtful and provocative observations on the work itself instead of the thrice-told tale of the 1824 première. *R.F.*



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#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BRAHMS: *Piano Quartets (complete)*.** Beaux Arts Trio; Walter Trampler (viola). PHILIPS 6747 068 three discs \$23.94.

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

Brahms wrote three quartets for piano and strings. Two of them, Opp. 25 and 26, were written in 1859. The third, the least known of the three, appeared in 1875 as his Op. 60 but is actually a reworked version of an earlier work. It is not without interest, but it pales beside the first two quartets, perhaps the greatest masterpieces for this rather special medium.

The Beaux Arts Trio and violist Walter Trampler—American chamber musicians of the highest achievement, here recording in Europe—are the perfect interpreters of this music. Their playing is warm, full of poetry and strength, and utterly Brahmsian. The only thing missing is Brahms' other great work in this genre: the F Minor Quintet. Next time. *E.S.*

**CAGE: *Winter Music*** (see FLYNN)

**CHOPIN: *Piano Sonata No. 2, in B-flat Minor, Op. 35*** (see LISZT)

**CHOPIN: *Piano Sonata No. 3, in B Minor, Op. 58*** (see Best of the Month, page 72)

**FAURÉ: *Piano Quartet No. 1*** (see Choosing Sides, page 102)

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

FLYNN: *Wound*. CAGE: *Winter Music*.

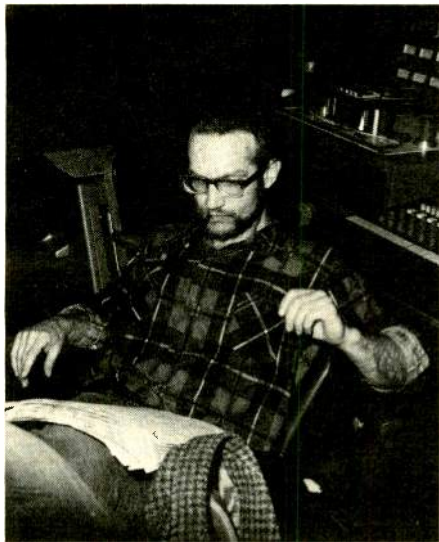
George Flynn (piano). FINNADAR □ QD 9006 \$6.98.

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

George Flynn's *Wound* is one of those artistic documents of passion and involvement that is simply overwhelming in its impact. There have been a number of attempts to create the pianistic *ne plus ultra* in recent years. This may be it, but not because Flynn set out with such an aim. On the contrary, it is because the piece so clearly grows out of his own impulse to say something; the pianistic tour de force is the result, not the cause.

Cage's *Winter Music*, written in 1957 and dedicated to Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, consists of twenty unbound and un-

M. Sami Uçkan, Finnadar/Atlantic



GEORGE FLYNN  
*A pianistic tour de force*

numbered pages that may be used, in whole or in part, in any number of possible arrangements and interpretations by one to twenty pianists (why not more?). For this recording, Flynn made four separate realizations which are heard here simultaneously, one track per channel in quadraphonic playback, two per channel in stereo. The "divine emptiness" of these random clusters of piano sound is a long way from *Wound* but equally effective in Flynn's realization.

The CD-4 recorded sound is excellent, and Finnadar has had the courage to cut all the music close to the outer edge of the record rather than spreading the grooves to make a deceptively full-looking side. The result is a considerable improvement in inner-groove sound, especially in quadraphonic playback.

E.S.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

FRANCK: *Quintet for Piano and Strings*. Samson François (piano); Bernède Quartet. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2077 \$6.98.

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

This is an important recording of a major piece of chamber music. César Franck's piano quintet, one of the earlier works of his maturity, is a fine, impassioned piece, quite comparable to his slightly later and better works. This recording, originating with Pathé-Marconi and the last ever made by the late Sam-

son François, catches the music's special passion and its romantic sensibility very well indeed. E.S.

FRANCK: *Quintet for Piano and Strings* (see Choosing Sides, page 102)

HAYDN: *String Quartets, Op. 76, Nos. 1-6* (see Choosing Sides, page 102)

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HINDEMITH: *Mathis der Maler, Symphony*. R. STRAUSS: *Death and Transfiguration, Op. 24*. London Symphony Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein cond. NONESUCH H-71307 \$3.96.

Performance: **Luminous**  
Recording: **Very good**

Jascha Horenstein, who died in April 1973, a month before his seventy-fifth birthday, recorded the Strauss work on this disc in July 1970 and the Hindemith in May 1972; surely neither session was undertaken in a valedictory context, but, as Jack Diether observes in his memorial tribute, these two performances "fittingly and movingly rounded out" the conductor's career on records. (The new Mahler Sixth, also on Nonesuch, was taped in concert with the Stockholm Philharmonic in 1966 and was not originally planned as a commercial release.) Anyone familiar with Horenstein's Vox recording of *Death and Transfiguration*, made some twenty years ago with the Bamberg Symphony, will know what to expect in this splendid remake: a cogently organized reading, brisker than most but with no sense of undue haste, in which musical values and natural flow are accorded prime consideration. It is a highly dramatic reading, too, yet somehow "unstaged" and spontaneous in its effect, without abrupt shifting of gears from one episode to the next; the piece comes off with majesty, lift, and luminosity.

*Mathis der Maler*, new to the Horenstein discography, is also music ideally suited to the late conductor's temperament; it is no surprise at all that this is one of the finest realizations of the work yet recorded. The opening "Angelic Concert" has an otherworldly transparency, and the "Entombment," which Horenstein took more deliberately than most other conductors, is exceptionally moving because it seems to be allowed to speak for itself instead of being fussed over. The concluding "Temptation of St. Anthony" is also a bit slower than usual, and some listeners may feel the tension is too slack here; my own feeling is that the tempo was naturally determined by the weight and breadth of Horenstein's concept, and that it works beautifully.

The London Symphony Orchestra is in great form in both works, giving Horenstein everything he asked for, and Robert Ludwig's mastering for Nonesuch strikes me as at least the equal of what I heard on the Unicorn pressing. Further, these exceptional performances are handsomely packaged and on a low-price label—what more could one ask? R.F.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

IVES: *String Quartets Nos. 1 and 2*. Concord String Quartet. NONESUCH H-71306 \$3.98.

Performance: **Really into it**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Charles Ives' string quartets are a perplexing pair of works that have stymied many ambi-  
(Continued on page 109)

# BEVERLY SILLS



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SCLX-3780 (LP and Cassette) VIOLETTA. Her characterization is what Verdi himself surely had in mind. "This 'Traviata', in totality, comes the closest yet to the ideal performance." *Dettmer*, Chicago Today.

Available November... VICTOR HERBERT SONGS. Miss Sills, with André Kostelanetz conducting the London Symphony Orchestra. S-37160 (LP, Cassette & Cartridge)

CIRCLE NO. 3 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# "For a concert in Manhattan, the trombones should be in Brooklyn."

The Smithsonian Social Orchestra & Quadrille Band plays for a cotillion at Washington's Renwick Gallery with the help of Ohio State University dancers.

## American Ballroom Music: Sheer Delight

CALL it nostalgia if you must, or history if you will. Whatever the association, after listening to the Nonesuch album "19th Century American Ballroom Music," I cannot think of any other recording of early American music that combines so much authenticity with so much charm—and by that I mean *sheer musical delight*. My favorite dictionary defines nostalgia as "a longing for things, persons, or situations that are not present." The almost miraculous beauty of music is that it actually *makes* present, physically, tangibly, something that comes from the past. True, this happens in a way with the visual and the tactile arts. But the kinetic impulse of rhythm, the temporal continuity of melody, and the physical projection of sound—its direct impact on the human organism—make music the assuager of nostalgia par excellence. A friend of mine told me that when he listened to this recording he could hardly resist the impulse to skip across the floor—even though at the time he was hobbling around on a rather painful fractured foot! This music is indeed an invitation to be foot-loose and fancy-free.

The invitation is there, to begin with, in the delightful front-cover illustration of a ballroom scene from 1845, with its high vaulted ceiling, its elegant draperies, its ornate chandeliers, its band of eight musicians atop a neo-classical balcony, and its obviously happy couples stepping out for a polka. To what sort of music were they dancing? It is not enough to answer by saying that of a polka, a waltz, a schottisch, a mazurka, or a galop. These were the dances in vogue, true, but how did the music *sound*? To look at the sheet music and read the notes is not enough either. Music does not consist only of notes. There is its *timbre*, for example, the intrinsic *quality* of the sounds. And this in turn is a variable, for it depends on the kind of instruments that were available and in use at certain times and places. Here is where the Division of Musical Instruments of the National Museum of History and Technology, at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., comes in. And this is what gives the present recording its quite exceptional quality of absolute historical authenticity.

Being myself a historian of American music, I am naturally impressed by the extraordinary research, technical expertise, and devoted teamwork that have gone into this marvelous



reconstruction—I should like to say resurrection, because how *alive* it all is!—of a body of American music too long relegated to archives and bookshelves. With the Smithsonian Social Orchestra and Quadrille Band directed by James Weaver, with the historical instruments of the collection restored to playing condition by Robert Sheldon (who plays three of the brass instruments as well), with skilled and dedicated professional musicians who have mastered the tricky techniques of obsolete instruments, with the immensely informative (and entertaining) liner notes by Cynthia Adams Hoover, and with the splendid production supervised by Teresa Sterne for Nonesuch Records, we have here a recording that is as enjoyable to the lay listener as it is valuable to the historian and the specialist.

The twenty-two selections, all brief, may be divided into two categories: (1) dance music and (2) concert and intermission music. A ball might begin at 8 p.m. and last until 4 a.m. Periods of rest and refreshment—no doubt of flirtation also—were therefore welcome, during which the musicians would play a familiar tune, or perhaps a popular march. It was customary to open the ball with a Grand Promenade of all the couples. An example on this record is the *Masonic March* (1859), in which the trio uses a favorite sentimental song of the time, *Ever of Thee I'm Fondly Dreaming*, by Foley Hall. The instrumentation for this piece represents the larger type of brass ensemble for such occasions. It consists of two soprano saxhorns, two cornets, two alto and two tenor saxhorns, baritone and contrabass saxhorn.

The influential band leader, arranger, composer, and instructor Allen Dodsworth (1817-1896), author of *Dodsworth's Brass Band School* (1853), favored replacing trumpets, horns, and trombones with cornets, keyed bugles, and saxhorns. He also objected to trombones as being too loud. He proposed that if required for a Manhattan concert, "the trombones should be placed in Brooklyn." Flute, clarinet, strings, and piano were favored for more intimate occasions, and especially for arrangements of songs. The piano might also be heard as a solo instrument, as in the *Five Step Waltz* by the black composer A. J. R. Conner, or the celebrated Spanish Dance *La Cachucha*, popularized by the famous dancer Fanny Elssler. The piano used

in these selections is an 1850 Chickering square piano with an iron frame, a seven-octave range, and two pedals. The piano combines with flute and violin in a thoroughly captivating performance of *La Traviata Waltz*, arranged by G. W. E. Friedrich from Verdi's opera (Act I, Scene 4).

The combination of saxhorns (soprano to contrabass) with two cornets and tenor trombone is heard in Dodsworth's arrangement of the *Star Spangled Banner* (1853), which preserves the pleasant, waltz-like lilt of a traditional tune that was a social song (*To Anacreon in Heaven*) before it became the national anthem of the United States (officially adopted in 1931). The saxhorns take over completely in the aptly named *Charming Waltz*, while two violins and a cello are joined by flute, clarinet, cornet, and bass ophicleide in the no less charming *Sontag Polka*, named after the famous opera singer Henriette Sontag. In the *Voice Quadrille* by the highly popular black composer and band leader Francis Johnson (1792-1844), the instruments are joined by a small chorus, with bells added in the Laughing Finale, where the voices sing: "If you will dance, we will sing, and the merry bells shall ring, Ha, ha, ha."

The last selection is an arrangement by Dodsworth of Henry Bishop's *Sweet Home*, which traditionally signaled the end of the ball. And I see that I've overlooked Stephen Foster's striking *French Quadrille*, for flute, two violins, and cello. But the varied contents of this unique recording are meant to be heard, not written about. All I wish to say is: *don't miss it.*

—Gilbert Chase

**19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN BALLROOM MUSIC.** Waltzes, marches, polkas, and other dances by various composers. *Star Spangled Banner*; *Sontag Polka*; *Charming Waltz*; *Mountain Belle Schottisch*; *Five Step Waltz*; *The Musidora Polka-Mazurka*; *Masonic March*; *Money Musk Reel*; *Military Parade Schottische*; *Wood Up Quickstep*; *Voice Quadrille*; *Post Horn Duetto*; *National Schottische*; *Gift Polka*; *French Quadrille*; *Polonaise*; *La Traviata Waltz*; *Medley Quick-Step*; *Last Rose of Summer*; *La Cachucha*; *Schomberg Galop*; *Sweet Home*. Cameraata Chorus of Washington: Smithsonian Social Orchestra and Quadrille Band, James Weaver cond. NONESUCH H-71313 \$3.96.

tious performers. The Concord, a gifted young ensemble with a reasonably liberated attitude about music-making, is the perfect group to get into this music. And get into it they have, even to the extent of studying the original manuscripts and working with John Kirkpatrick, Ives' editor and executor.

The First Quartet, a product of Ives' Yale days and studies with Horatio Parker, is hymn-tune music in the manner of the early symphonies. The Second is one of Ives' first-class eccentricities: "String Quartet for 4 men—who converse, discuss, argue (in re 'politick'), fight, shake hands, shut up—then walk up the mountain-side to view the firmament." And that is exactly what happens in the music: a conservative second violinist named Rollo plays *Andante emasculata*, *Largo sweetota*, and *Alla rubato Elman* while the others slug it out with *Dixie* and *Columbia the Gem of the Ocean* until the classic Ives transcendental finale gets 'em all. The Concord musicians go all out on this stuff and somehow make it work with the fullest Ivesian vigor. It takes a new breed. E.S.

**KABALEVSKY:** *Overture Pathétique in B Minor, Op. 64; Spring, Op. 65; Songs of Morning, Spring and Peace, Op. 57; School Years; The Unit of Young Pioneers; Good Night.* Chorus of the Central House for Railwaymen's Children: V. Mamontova, L. Komarova (vocal soloists); Symphony Orchestra of the Moscow State Philharmonic, Dmitri Kabalevsky cond. WESTMINSTER GOLD WGC-83038 \$3.49.

Performance: **Cheerful**  
Recording: **Very good**

Dmitri Kabalevsky has been writing music of such broad, old-fashioned appeal for so many years (he is now seventy-one) that he was practically the only prominent Soviet composer not reprimanded by the regime in 1948. He has always been willing to write his opera and ballet scores on themes acceptable to the establishment, with plenty of folk material and only a little dissonance here and there to spice things up. No wonder he is editor of the official Soviet journal *Soviet Music*, head of the music department of the Soviet Radio Committee, and secretary of the Union of Soviet Composers! Yet, as you know if your pulse has ever tingled to the sound of the *Colas Breugnon* overture or *The Comedians*, Kabalevsky can write music of such scintillating vitality that it is easy to forgive the traditionalism of his style. Here he conducts two of his relatively recent works, an *Overture Pathétique*—more reminiscent in its vigor of *Colas Breugnon* than of anything tragic or pathetic except that it's written in a minor key—and his symphonic poem *Spring*, which is a kind of Debussy *Printemps* with a Russian accent. Both of these pieces were composed in 1960, and they were new when this record was made in the Soviet Union a year later (it has waited fifteen years for release here), but they blazed no trails then, and they certainly don't do so now, even on their own terms. What makes the record worth acquiring is the series of songs for children on the second side. The *Songs of Morning, Spring and Peace* glow with musical sunlight and good cheer, and are performed with much freshness and skill by a group of kids who can be counted on to brighten the darkest day. Two more pretty songs round out the program. P.K.

(Continued overleaf)



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CIRCLE NO. 27 ON READER SERVICE CARD

KAY: *Six Dances for String Orchestra* (see STILL)

KORNGOLD: *Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 2; Marchenbilder, Op. 3*. Antonín Kubalek (piano). GENESIS GS 1055 \$6.98.

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

The interest in Erich Wolfgang Korngold aroused by the RCA recordings of his film music continues to have interesting consequences. Within the last year and a half, we have had recordings of Korngold concert works on RCA, Angel, and Orion, and the New York City Opera has produced *Die Tote Stadt*; now we have a first recording of his earliest piano compositions (a First Sonata, presumably, was discarded by the composer), both written in 1910, the year in which Korngold, at age thirteen (not eleven, as stated in the notes with the disc), became a celebrity with the Vienna Opera production of his pantomime *Der Schneemann*. Evidently Korngold wrote nothing more for solo piano for fifteen years, and then very little: his thinking, apparently, was not really pianistic. Glenn Gould, who produced this recording for Genesis and ornamented it with a characteristically provocative essay on "Korngold and the Crisis of the Piano Sonata," describes the Second Sonata, an astonishingly mature work, as "the blueprint for what might well have made one of the better symphonic essays of its time."

It may be recognized as a blueprint for much else, besides, for the very shape of its themes is fully characteristic of those Korngold was to create for Hollywood more than a quarter-century later. The cyclical reappearance of the big, expressive first-movement theme—altered in the inner movements, back to its original form in the finale's coda—is a further prophecy of his film style, and so, for that matter, is the dramatic, almost pictorial nature of the sonata as a whole. The *Märchenbilder* (*Fairy Pictures*) suite comprises brief evocations of six familiar fairy tales and a fairly elaborate epilogue, more or less à la Schumann but with echoes of Strauss as well: Glenn Gould refers to it as "an eclectic circus," which is, he says, "because of its less ambitious design, relatively more successful, instrumentally," than the sonata. Both works are rich, however, in a late-Romantic sort of inventiveness and high-level craftsmanship, and Antonín Kubalek performs them very persuasively.

The very thoughtfully produced and well recorded release includes, in addition to the Gould essay, a biographical sketch of Korngold by Tony Thomas (comprehensive and entertaining, despite a minor slip or two), a chronological list of all his published works, several photographs, and a cartoon from a Viennese newspaper showing Korngold as a balding and bespectacled infant seated at the piano in a highchair and surrounded by Siegfried Wagner (benevolently holding the artist's pacifier), Reger, Nikisch, Strauss, and Eugène d'Albert. R.F.

LISZT: *Gnomenreigen; Etude No. 6, in A Minor, after Paganini* (see Best of the Month, page 72)

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LISZT: *Piano Sonata in B Minor*. CHOPIN: *Piano Sonata No. 2, in B-flat Minor, Op. 35*.

Tedd Joselson (piano). RCA ARL1-1010 \$6.98, © ARS1-1010 \$7.98.

Performance: **Accent on the lyrical**  
Recording: **Excellent**

There may be some who will question throwing a brilliantly gifted pianist in his twenties to the lions, so to speak, by having him record the two major Romantic sonatas that have already been recorded by most of the major virtuosos of the world. It should be noted, though, that this is the only currently available disc that *pairs* these two quintessentially Romantic masterpieces. What's more, his age notwithstanding, young Tedd Joselson contributes distinctly illuminating interpretative insights in his readings of both sonatas.

Never mind technique; it's all there, so that this pianist can and does concentrate on the business of the *music* and its essential substance and structure. And, thank goodness, Mr. Joselson's musical intelligence is not only in his head, but in his heart as well. Thus, his reading of the Liszt sonata has real coherence, both in its argument—the blend, contrast, and metamorphosis of its basic thematic elements—and in its architectural grandeur: the dazzling fugal episode, the grand reprise of the main theme, and the hushed epilogue, the last eliciting the finest music-making on the entire record.

The much-abused Chopin B-flat Minor Sonata also gets a treatment different from the hell-for-leather one so often encountered. Joselson brings lyrical elements into proper balance with the purely rhetorical, and he develops a cumulative concept that reaches its peak in the reprise of the Funeral March, the intensity continuing unabated till the very last chord that concludes the terrifying *presto* finale.

It would be an exaggeration to say that these performances surpass the best of what has been documented heretofore on discs. But it is reasonable, I think, to say that they are remarkable in substance and brilliance for a pianist of any age. What's more, I have the feeling that they will wear well with repeated hearings. They have so far. D.H.

MOZART: *Clarinet Concerto in A Major, K. 622* (see NIELSEN)

MOZART: *Clarinet Quintet in A Major, K. 581* (see The Basic Repertoire, page 46)

ANTONÍN KUBALEK  
*Persuasive Korngold sonata*







TEDD JOSELSON

*Illuminating Liszt and Chopin sonatas*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**NIELSEN:** *Clarinet Concerto, Op. 57.* **MOZART:** *Clarinet Concerto in A Major (K. 622).* John McCaw (clarinet); New Philharmonia Orchestra, Raymond Leppard cond. UNICORN UNS 239 \$7.98.

Performance: **Altogether lovely**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Carl Nielsen's quirky and occasionally demonic Clarinet Concerto (1928) can sound nasty and crabbed when not treated well in balance and room sound, particularly in regard to the omnipresent orchestral antagonist, the snare drum. The Stanley Drucker/Leonard Bernstein/New York Philharmonic performance of the late 1960's, still available on Columbia, is a highly charged and wonderfully potent realization of the piece, but this 1971 British Unicorn disc offers a more modestly scaled, more lyrical, though in some ways tauter reading, which reveals still more rewarding aspects of this fascinating music. John McCaw, a Frederick Thurston pupil and first-desk clarinet of the New Philharmonia, is a wonderful player who can command just the right tonal incisiveness or melting sweetness as the occasion demands, and whose passage-work and skips are effortless in effect. Raymond Leppard does a sterling job of accompaniment, keeping clarinet and snare drum in perfect balance not only with one another but also with the ensemble. The recording staff, too, deserves some credit for the exquisite balance, as well as for the suitably intimate acoustic surround achieved for both works.

Mozart's ever-lovely masterpiece has never lacked for distinguished recorded performances, going all the way back to Reginald Kell's 78's from the late 1930's. Mr. McCaw need take no back seat to Kell or any of his successors when it comes to a musicianly and ravishingly beautiful performance of the solo part. Tempos are on the leisurely side, but never sluggish, and the result is a half-hour of purest joy. *D.H.*

**ORFF:** *Der Mond* (see Best of the Month, page 71)

**ORFF:** *Street Song—Selections from Schulwerk.* Tölzer Boys' Choir; instrumental en-

semble, Carl Orff cond. BASF HC 25122 \$6.98.

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

From this album's brief liner blurb (in lieu of any annotation), it appears that radio stations in Cleveland and Milwaukee have been playing the piece called *Gassenhauer* (*Street Song*) from the *Schulwerk* of Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman every morning, and it has really caught on, leading BASF to assemble a disc of similarly provocative selections from the complete recording of the *Schulwerk* made by Harmonia Mundi about a decade ago. There are twenty of them in this package, in varied instrumentation and rhythms, with fifes, recorders, and "rhythm instruments" predominating. The *Klangstück* which opens side two and some of the other mallet pieces make a pleasantly Balinese effect; the boys' choir takes part in only one number (*Diminution-Schrei*), and one is performed entirely in hand-clapping (*Rondoupplause*); the sequence includes a Brittenesquely titled *Canonic Caprice* and ends with an *Unsquare Dance*. I wish BASF had at least pictured or described the instruments in the respective pieces, but the bright packaging is appealing, and this would be a nice surprise to slip into a pre-teen's rock pile. *R.F.*

**PROKOFIEV:** *Piano Concerto No. 3, in C Major, Op. 26; Piano Concerto No. 5, in G Major, Op. 55.* Michel Beroff (piano); Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Kurt Masur cond. ANGEL S-37084 \$6.98.

Performance: **Suitable**  
Recording: **Spacy**

Michel Beroff is a brilliant exponent of the kind of keyboard athleticism usually associated with American pianism. The Prokofiev concertos are suitable vehicles for this kind of playing, and, if you can manage the notes (Beroff can), not much else is usually needed for a surefire result.

The quirky, problematic work here is the Fifth Concerto, which contradicts the notion that Prokofiev's later, Russian-period works are simpler and more traditional than his earlier ones. Set against the familiar lyric virtuosity of No. 3, the Fifth Concerto appears to be eccentric, yet it has wit and appeal. I could imagine another kind of performance making it work better, but this reading seems reasonably apposite. The reproduction, however, has a slightly artificial-sounding spaciousness that is not much to my taste. *E.S.*

**PROKOFIEV:** *The Story of a Real Man.* Evgeni Kibkalo (baritone), Alexei: Glafira Deomidova (soprano), Olga; Georgi Shulpin (tenor), Grandfather Mikhailo; Georgi Pankov (bass), Andrei; Mark Reshetin (bass), Vasili Vasilevich; Artur Eizen (bass), Commissar; Kira Leonova (mezzo-soprano), Klavdia; Alexei Maslennikov (tenor), Kukulshkin; others. U.S.S.R. Bolshoi Theatre Chorus and Orchestra, Mark Ermler cond. WESTMINSTER GOLD WGSO 8317-2 two discs \$6.98.

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

*The Story of a Real Man.* Prokofiev's last opera, is based on the true story of a Soviet war hero, pilot Alexei Maresyev. Shot down by the Nazis, Maresyev was severely wounded. *(Continued on page 114)*



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LILI KRAUS

## The Mozart Solo Sonatas: Two Integral Sets

No pianists active today have been so long and so closely identified with the music of Mozart, especially through recordings, as have (1) Artur Balsam, whose new recordings of all the solo sonatas have just been released in an eight-disc set by the Musical Heritage Society, and (2) Lili Kraus, whose similar project, initiated on the Epic label in the late Sixties, has now been completed and issued in two three-disc Odyssey albums.

Balsam's 1950-ish Concert Hall recordings of some of the early concertos are still cherished by collectors, his 1963 set of the piano sonatas is still circulating on L'Oiseau-Lyre (as is a collection of the violin sonatas he made with William Kross), and MHS has also recorded him in virtually all of Mozart's other piano works. Kraus, who has published her own edition of the sonatas, also made an earlier recording of the entire cycle (for *Discophiles Françaises* in 1954, issued in this country by the Haydn Society together with the violin sonatas and piano trios, in which her associates were violinists Willi Boskovsky and cellist Nikolaus Hübner). Earlier still she made a celebrated set of the violin sonatas with Szymon Goldberg and recorded several individual sonatas and concertos for EMI and Vox, much later she remade some titles for Concert Hall (issued here on Vanguard and Monitor), and just prior to her stereo remake of the sonatas she became the first pianist to complete a recorded cycle of all the Mozart concertos. Such credentials, on the part of both pianists, command attention, and the new recordings repay it well.

Before considering the performances themselves, it might be noted that the contents of Balsam's eight discs and those of Kraus' six are not identical. In addition to the conventional canon of seventeen sonatas, with the Fantasy in C Minor, K. 475, as preface to the sonata in the same key (K. 457), Kraus plays

the Fantasy in D Minor, K. 397, and the Rondo in D Major, K. 485. Instead of these two very brief works, Balsam offers the additional sonata made up of the Allegro and Andante in F Major, K. 533, and the Rondo, K. 494. (MHS has listed this composite work as "Sonata No. 15" and renumbered the last three sonatas, as shown in the detailed listing at the end of this review. The numbers assigned to K. 310 and K. 311 have been reversed, too, evidently in the interest of chronology, but these gratuitous relabelings of familiar works, like those tried by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in its listings of the Mozart piano concertos a few years ago, can only create confusion.) The additional discs in the beautifully recorded MHS presentation are not accounted for by this one difference in repertoire, but by more leisurely tempos on Balsam's part and a more cautious time limit per side: the brief first movement of K. 284 is on the side preceding the other two, even though the total playing time for the work is only about twenty-seven minutes, and K. 457 is given an entire side to itself, with the Fantasy on the preceding side. Kraus' C Minor Fantasy and K. 457 Sonata are on the *same* side but with no separating scroll between them; in fact, with the single exception of the scroll following the first movement of K. 333, there are none between the movements of any of the sonatas in the Kraus sets—a format inconvenient for anyone who may wish to spot a particular slow movement or finale.

Balsam's MHS series is not only far less expensive than his L'Oiseau-Lyre discs, but more attractive musically (and sonically, too, except for a nasty hiss across the start of K. 494 and some insistent pre-echo on several sides). He always brings impeccable style and solidity to his playing, but there is more life and variety in the remakes, and I suspect (though I have no information on which to

base my inference) that this may be because the MHS sessions were spaced over a longer period, allowing time for refreshment and renewal between the respective works. Balsam sees none of the sonatas as mere "charm-ers" or opportunities to dazzle, nor does he labor to make them portentous; he shows his authority in a very undemonstrative way, which many listeners are sure to find comfortable and convincing and others are likely to find a bit bland—just as those who admire this approach may consider Kraus too assertive.

There is, without question, more drama in Kraus' playing, and more variety, both throughout her series and within each work. It is not simply a matter of brisker tempos (there is nothing here resembling Glenn Gould's drive to see how *fast* the allegros can be played), but of an almost mystically enlivening "aura"—a visionary approach without self-consciousness on Kraus' part. She takes some risks to achieve something like the improvisatory spirit we associate with Mozart-as-performer. Her phrasing is characterized by subtle inflection, one is aware of a controlled undercurrent of nervous animation, and there are most effective dynamic contrasts—but always within reasonable approximation of the dynamic range of the late-eighteenth-century instruments.

It is curious that none of the Mozart specialists who have made "integral" recordings of the sonatas have recorded on a period instrument. Both Kraus and Balsam, of course, play modern concert grands, but Kraus shows more regard for the "slender" character dictated by the nature of the *Hammerklavier* Mozart himself played—again, it is not a matter of mere briskness, but of crispness in her articulation. And how much this tells in the radiant opening of K. 333 and in such works as the last of the series (K. 576 in D Major), the marvelously tight-knit K. 284, and the well-loved K. 331! Balsam may seem to show more affection in the opening measures of K. 331, and his unfolding of the movement does not lack momentum, but it is really a bit too relaxed; Kraus has not only momentum, but the tension to raise and sustain a really imposing edifice: the conclusion of the variation movement is credibly climactic.

As for the suggestion that Kraus' way with Mozart is too aggressive, I can only wonder if that attitude doesn't represent some sort of lingering sexual prejudice. Walter Susskind remarked, in a recent memoir, that Artur Schnabel "played with great understanding, but almost *against* the accepted concept of Mozart style; he emphasized the *masculine* element, and brought it off superbly." This, it seems to me, is exactly what Kraus does in these recordings; there is nothing "ladylike" in her playing, and a comparison of her version of the great A Minor Sonata (K. 310) with Schnabel's will show some astonishingly close parallels.

After living for some time with all the currently available sets of the Mozart sonatas, I find myself enjoying the Kraus performances more and more. The one set that appeals to me as strongly is Walter Klien's, also in two

three-disc albums (Vox SVBX-5428 and SVBX-5429). Klien is a bit less adventurous than Kraus, but his integrity and inspiring sense of style are unfailingly satisfying—and his Volume 11 has the advantage of including the K. 533/494 Sonata, though his performance of this piece happens to be less persuasive than Balsam's. (The Vox recording is more than a dozen years old, and less bright than either Kraus' Odyssey or the fine sound provided for Balsam by MHS, but it is unmarred by the excessive pre-echo that obtrudes in the latter set.) I would urge anyone interested in an integral set of the Mozart sonatas to try to hear at least parts of both the Kraus and the Klien—and also to decide how important it is for K. 533/494 to be included. From the way Daniel Nimetz's annotations are laid out in the MHS booklet, I would expect those discs to be made available individually before long, and Balsam's K. 533/494, paired with K. 333, would make a handy supplement to the Kraus series.

**I**T is not absolutely necessary to acquire the sonatas in an integral set, of course, but it is the most convenient and economical way, and most of the Kraus and Klien performances are fully competitive with any available individually. Moreover, both the Odyssey and Vox prices are so low that one need not feel extravagant in duplicating a work occasionally, when so outstanding a release as Vladimir Ashkenazy's magnificently large-scaled K. 310 (London CS-6659) or Glenn Gould's agreeably exciting K. 284 (Columbia MS 7274) comes along.

—Richard Freed

**MOZART: Piano Sonatas: No. 1, in C Major (K. 279); No. 2, in F Major (K. 280); No. 3, in B-flat Major (K. 281); No. 4, in E-flat Major (K. 282); No. 5, in G Major (K. 283); No. 6, in D Major (K. 284); No. 7, in C Major (K. 309); No. 8, in D Major (K. 311); No. 9, in A Minor (K. 310); No. 10, in C Major (K. 330); No. 11, in A Major (K. 331); No. 12, in F Major (K. 332); No. 13, in B-flat Major (K. 333); No. 14, in C Minor (K. 457); No. 15, in F Major (K. 533, with Rondo, K. 494); No. 16, in C Major (K. 545); No. 17, in B-flat Major (K. 570); No. 18, in D Major (K. 576). Fantasy in C Minor (K. 475). Artur Balsam (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3056/3063 eight discs \$28.00 (plus 75c handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).**

**MOZART: Piano Sonatas: No. 1, in C Major (K. 279); No. 2, in F Major (K. 280); No. 3, in B-flat Major (K. 281); No. 4, in E-flat Major (K. 282); No. 5, in G Major (K. 283); No. 6, in D Major (K. 284); No. 7, in C Major (K. 309); No. 8, in A Minor (K. 310); No. 9, in D Major (K. 311); No. 10, in C Major (K. 330). Lili Kraus (piano). ODYSSEY Y 33220 three discs \$11.98.**

**MOZART: Piano Sonatas: No. 11, in A Major (K. 331); No. 12, in F Major (K. 332); No. 13, in B-flat Major (K. 333); No. 14, in C Minor (K. 457); No. 15, in C Major (K. 545); No. 16, in B-flat Major (K. 570); No. 17, in D Major (K. 576). Fantasy in D Minor (K. 397); Fantasy in C Minor (K. 475); Rondo in D Major (K. 485). Lili Kraus (piano). ODYSSEY Y 33224 three discs \$11.98.**

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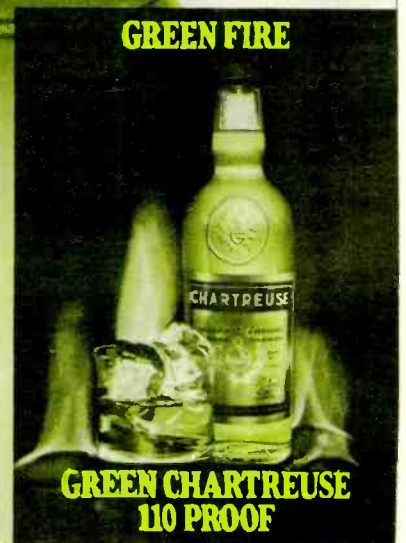
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ed and near death from hunger and frostbite when he was found by some villagers. The amputation of one leg threw him into severe depression, but, after an agonizing period of physical and psychological readjustment, he eventually found his way back to usefulness, self-esteem, and even happiness.

In a sense, this is an experimental work. After his successful stints as a composer for motion pictures, Prokofiev wanted his new "Soviet opera" to benefit from cinematic techniques: short episodes that are disconnected in space and time, with fadeouts, are at times linked by brief symphonic interludes. The experiment worked somewhat unevenly, as did the infusion into the musical fabric of such elements of popular music as a waltz and a rhumba, but the opera as a whole is decided-

ly not without interest. The musical style employed is Prokofiev at his most conservative. There are some commonplace pages of love music and rather obvious patriotic choruses (many based on folk elements), but there are also passages of great descriptive and evocative power.

*The Story of a Real Man* was given a single hearing at Leningrad's Kirov Opera on December 3, 1948, and then withdrawn for reasons known only to Soviet authorities. Prokofiev was subsequently attacked in *Izvestia*, and to the end of his days (1953) received nothing but abuse for this ardently patriotic work. Posthumous sanction came in 1960, when the Bolshoi Theatre gave the opera's official premiere, with the real-life "Real Man" Maresyev in attendance.

This recording, made a year later, features most of the members of that Bolshoi cast headed by Evgeni Kibkalo, who performs the title role movingly, with great conviction and vocal authority. The cast is large, and the singers, as usual in Russian productions, are noteworthy more for vivid character projection than for show-stopping vocal splendor. Outstanding among them is basso Artur Eizen as the old commissar whose heroic example inspires Alexei to regain his own wish to live. Tenors Maslennikov and Shulpin also contribute memorable cameo characterizations. The choral and orchestral work is creditable, and the recorded sound is far superior to the mono pressings of the same performance which circulated here (on Ultraphone 147-149) around 1966. *G.J.*

**RACHMANINOFF: *Aleko*.** Nikola Gyuselev (bass), Aleko; Dimiter Petkov (bass), Old Gypsy; Blagovesta Karnobatlova (soprano), Zemfira; Pavel Kourshoumov (tenor), Young Gypsy; Tony Christova (contralto), Old Gypsy Woman. Chorus of the Sofia TVR Ensemble; Plovdiv Symphony Orchestra, Rouslan Raychev cond. MONITOR HS 90102/3 two discs \$7.98.

Performance: **Fair**  
Recording: **Very good**

*Aleko*, written by Rachmaninoff when he was nineteen, is not a perfect opera, but it is a highly effective one. Tchaikovsky's influence is evident, but so is the precocious genius of the composer. With a cast of Bolshoi front-liners, *Aleko* could easily hold the stage today. This Bulgarian production offers only an adequate performance, though, and the harsh, tremolo-ridden Zemfira is even somewhat below that level. The strong characterization of Gyuselev (spelled Ghuiselev when the artist sings away from Bulgaria), who projects the passion and revenge of Aleko vividly, suffers from the excessive effort demanded by the high tessitura. Dimiter Petkov brings a powerfully resonant dark bass to the role of the Old Gypsy, but his tones are unsteady, and tenor Kourshoumov forces his attractive light tenor unmercifully. The orchestral background is quite good, and the chorus reveals strength in the male voices (and some unsteadiness in the female ones), but side two, containing the gypsy dances and relatively little solo singing, is the most effective part of the set.

Technically, the recording is entirely satisfactory. The package includes a synopsis and the English translation of four extended vocal excerpts. The two sides of the inner fold are devoted to the complete libretto in Russian—a gesture I am sure will endear Monitor to all Cyrillic scholars. *G.J.*

**RACHMANINOFF: *Prince Rostislav; The Rock; Vocalise*.** U.S.S.R. Symphony Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL SR-4052 \$6.98.

Performance: **Strong**  
Recording: **Very good**

In 1891, when Sergei Rachmaninoff was eighteen, he turned to a ballad by Tolstoy to write a "poem for orchestra" called *Prince Rostislav*. It seems there was this prince who was killed in battle and wound up at the bottom of the Dnieper River, where he was comforted by some water nymphs who kept combing his hair. On this dubious theme the young pupil of  
*(Continued on page 117)*



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Arensky wrote a piece of music that not only evokes the eerie underwater mood of its setting in yearning melody and rich orchestral sound, but foreshadows the great tone poems to come, especially the hypnotic *Isle of the Dead* of 1907. Yet the work is tentative and unrealized. But *The Rock*, written only two years after *Prince Rostislav*, is as solid as its title. Rachmaninoff never cleared up the program of *The Rock*: is it about a little cloud spending the night on the crest of a giant mountain, as in Lermontov's poem of the same title, or does it have to do with a fragile girl (the golden cloud) who spends a night at an inn listening to the life story of a gruff, middle-aged man (the rock) as in a certain tale by Chekhov? Either way, the music is moving and persuasive in the idiom the composer had already made his own. To round out the program there's an extended arrangement of the haunting *Vocalise* originally written for voice but usually dressed nowadays in orchestral

degree of refinement and ensemble precision to keep the action moving at an ebullient clip, but the totality is laudable: most of his tempos are well judged, all the important arias are exemplary in presentation, and in the delightful intermezzo of "*La Tempesta*" he whips up quite a storm.

Sherrill Milnes is a youthful-sounding and exuberant Barber, far more idiomatic and more natural than Hermann Prey in the recent and disappointing DG set. As Rosina, Beverly Sills is full of charm and temperament. She knows how to enliven her dialogues with subtle touches, and her singing here is on the level of her current best. I don't think she should treat Rossini's music with quite so much freedom: surely the composer's own florid layout of Rosina's part in the "*Dunque io son*" duet

is good enough and ornate enough without requiring additional embellishments, but at least Miss Sills has the technique to bring off whatever she attempts.

I am somewhat less enthusiastic about Nicolai Gedda's Almaviva. At some moments he is far above all other recorded interpreters, for he offers tonal substance to go with the requisite elegant phrasing, but his still sensuous voice is not as steady as it once was, nor is it always pure in intonation. As for the florid requirements, Mr. Gedda bravely sings the part as written, but some fearsome passagework gets delivered with only reasonable accuracy.

Ruggero Raimondi's Don Basilio could use a little more weight and pomposity, but in terms of sheer singing it is superb, and Renato



SHERRILL MILNES, NICOLAI GEDDA

*An exuberant, truly Italian-sounding Barber*

garb. The performances are strong — although Rozhdestvensky's treatment of *The Rock* in an earlier recording on the same label is even more colorful. P.K.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**ROSSINI: *The Barber of Seville*.** Nicolai Gedda (tenor), Almaviva: Beverly Sills (soprano), Rosina; Sherrill Milnes (baritone), Figaro: Renato Capecchi (baritone), Don Bartolo: Ruggero Raimondi (bass), Don Basilio; Joseph Galiano (tenor), Fiorello; Michael Rippon (baritone), Ambrogio; Fedora Barbieri (mezzo-soprano), Berta. John Aldis Choir; London Symphony Orchestra. James Levine cond. ANGEL SCLX 3761 three discs \$20.94.

Performance: **Sparkling**  
Recording: **Very good**

There are many good things about Angel's new *Barber*. It is, above all, a bubbly and exuberant performance and a truly Italian-sounding one: the "international" stars blend with their Italian colleagues delightfully. This means that the dialogues are delivered with the same idiomatic care as the arias and ensembles. Conductor Levine must take credit for much of this, and particularly for sustaining a lively, youthful spirit throughout. He rushes a few *allegros* and sacrifices a certain

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Capecchi's agile and comically expressive Bartolo is his worthy partner. Casting Fedora Barbieri in the role of Berta may have seemed inspired, but, alas, she sings very badly.

This is a very complete *Barber*. All the dialogues are here, uncut, and so is Almaviva's difficult scene in Act II, culminating in the aria "Cessa di più resistere." There is even an interpolated soprano aria from the earlier (1815) *Sigismondo*. (It is stylistically right and gets a de luxe treatment from Miss Sills.) While all this "completeness" is impressive, the opera runs some two hours and fifty minutes in this edition. This being the approximate length of *Aida* and *La Gioconda*, I submit that we are perhaps being offered too much of a good thing.

There are some unusually informative annotations by Charles Osborne with the set. The sound is fine, though some balances are odd, as, for example, Gedda's distant placement vis-à-vis Miss Sills in the Lesson Scene. In sum, I would not judge this set clearly superior to London 1381, RCA 6143, or Angel 3638, but it is in the same high class. G.J.

**SCHUBERT: String Quartets Nos. 13, 14 ("Death and the Maiden"), and 15 (see Choosing Sides, page 102)**

**SCHUBERT-LISZT: Das Wandern; Der Müller und der Bach; Liebesbotschaft; Horch! Horch! Die Lerch! (see Best of the Month, page 72)**

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**SCHUMANN: Kreisleriana, Op. 16; Humoreske, Op. 20.** Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano). LONDON CS 6859 \$6.98.

Performance: **Volatile**  
Recording: **Somewhat variable**

Ashkenazy dares all here in attempting to get to the heart of what impelled Schumann to write *Kreisleriana* and yet to stay within the bounds of the actual printed notes. His is a performance of great passion and brilliance leavened with the utmost tenderness. Certainly, it is one of the few great readings of this difficult work ever committed to disc. The Florestan-Eusebius dualities of the *Humoreske* are tackled with equal *brio* and tenderness, and, on the whole, I find the recorded sound a bit more full-bodied and sonically precise than in the *Kreisleriana*. The opening and No. 7 in that work sound somewhat washed-out in their more dense and brilliant moments because there is more evident room reverberation than in the *Humoreske*. Even with its minor technical flaws, however, this is an outstanding disc, a must for all Schumann buffs and *aficionados* of the Romantic keyboard repertoire. D.H.

**STILL: From the Black Belt; Darker America.** Music for Westchester Symphony Orchestra, Siegfried Landau cond. KAY: *Six Dances for String Orchestra*. Westphalian Symphony Orchestra, Recklinghausen, Paul Freeman cond. TURNABOUT TV-S-34546 \$3.98.

Performance: **Lively**  
Recording: **Very good**

Here is a program of music by two black American composers that is longer on charm than on militancy. The eighty-year-old William Grant Still has been known for some years as the "dean of Afro-American composers." He worked as an arranger for W. C.

Handy, yet he never became a jazz musician. He studied under Varèse, but the experience never altered his open, innocent style. Efforts like his *Afro-American Symphony* and his opera *Troubled Island* brought him fame in the Thirties and Forties, but the works on this record were written in the Twenties. *Darker America* is a tone poem for chamber orchestra that depicts the power of prayer to raise the black spirit from defeat to triumph. Composed in 1924, it is a persuasive piece sketched out in clean powerful lines. *From the Black Belt* is a dance suite of miniatures that live up to their programmatic titles: *Lil' Scamp; Honeysuckle; Dance; Mah Bones Is Creakin'; Blue; Brown Girl; and Clap Yo' Hans'*. These short items were written in 1926 "frankly to amuse and please," and they still do.

Tucson-born Ulysses Kay, now fifty-seven, got lessons on the trumpet after his uncle, the great jazz trumpeter King Oliver, prescribed them when Kay was hospitalized as a boy, but Kay's direction has had little to do with jazz. Indeed, there is nothing "ethnic" about his work, and that's as true of these six dances as it is of his operas, symphonies, concertos, and chamber music. The suite is unmistakably American, however, as it proceeds from a cheery schottische to an elegant waltz, a serene round dance, a glittering polka, a noble promenade, and a final galop. The musical accent, never Southern, might be traced to Roy Harris or Aaron Copland, but the inventions are entirely Kay's own, and utterly attractive. All these works receive lively readings and are well recorded. P.K.

**R. STRAUSS: Death and Transfiguration, Op. 24 (see HINDEMITH)**

**TCHAIKOVSKY: Piano Concerto No. 2, in G Major, Op. 44.** Sylvia Kersenbaum (piano); Orchestre National de la ORTF, Jean Martinon cond. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY □ CSQ 2076 \$6.98.

Performance: **Mostly urgent and impassioned**  
Recording: **Loud and clear**

Until now the most nearly complete stereo version of the Tchaikovsky G Major Concerto has been that by Soviet pianist Igor Zhukov with Gennady Rozhdestvensky conducting the Moscow Philharmonic, but that Melodiya/Angel recording is marred by overbalancing in favor of the piano as well as by Zhukov's generally hell-for-leather approach.

Argentine virtuoso Sylvia Kersenbaum and conductor Jean Martinon offer us Tchaikovsky's Op. 44 absolutely complete. Their new Connoisseur Society version includes the slow movement and its important solo violin and cello parts as written by Tchaikovsky himself—as opposed to the Siloti edition, drastically cut and rewritten, that is all too often used in performance and recording. Indeed, it is the extended slow movement—a virtual chamber concerto—that comes off best here. Miss Kersenbaum has speed and strength to burn, and she plays the concerto with great gusto and with M. Martinon's enthusiastic cooperation. Aside from the fact that I do agree, to some extent, with those who insist that the level of Tchaikovsky's musical invention is not sufficient to sustain the length of the work, my one criticism of this performance has to do with pacing: I would have liked a more stately "Ballet Imperial" treatment of the opening pages and more



PAULA ROBISON: setting the record straight about the virtuoso flute

verve in the finale. The sonics are clear and bright, almost aggressively so, and quadraphonic (SQ) playback pleasingly enhances the overall ambience. *D.H.*

**COLLECTIONS**

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**PAULA ROBISON:** *Flute Music of the Romantic Era*. **Godard:** *Suite de Trois Morceaux, Op. 116*. **Genin:** "Carnival of Venice" Variations. **Boehm:** *Introduction and Variations on "Nel Cor Più," Op. 4*. **Hummel:** *Sonata in D Major*. **Gaubert:** *Nocturne; Allegro Scherzando*. Paula Robison (flute); Samuel Sanders (piano). VANGUARD VSD 71207 \$6.98.

Performance: **Virtuosic**  
Recording: **Close up**

Since the nineteenth century, the primary instruments of musical virtuosity have been the piano and the violin, and between them they have so preoccupied connoisseurs of musical high-wire acrobatics that the virtuosic traditions of other instruments have been largely overlooked. The flute is among those suffering unjust neglect, and here to set the record straight is a perfectly luscious new recording of Romantic-era flute music by a luscious-looking flutist named Paula Robison. The music not only dazzles the ear but offers, as some virtuoso exercises do not, some genuine nourishment besides.

The most ambitious item in this carefully assembled concert is a twenty-minute sonata for flute and piano by Johann Nepomuk Hummel, who didn't play the flute himself but certainly knew how to write for it. Hummel moved through the musical world of the eighteenth century in a flurry of associations with the celebrities of his time. Among his champions were Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven—with whom he had a falling out but whose early music Hummel's tends to resemble. The Sonata in D Major is a fully realized work of his maturity, a solidly structured piece that challenges the gifts not only of the flute player who performs it but of the pianist as well. It opens with an *Allegro con brio* in conventional sonata form but with unconventional harmonic forays in its development. A serene, quite Beethoven-like Andante follows, lead-

ing into a swift yet pastoral Rondo. The performance is at once utterly subtle and totally exciting.

For years I thought the only piece Benjamin Louis Paul Godard had written was the *Berceuse* from *Jocelyn* they used to play for us in music-appreciation class, but it seems this nineteenth-century Frenchman was far more prolific than that. His *Suite de Trois Morceaux* is one of hundreds of his compositions—operas, violin concertos, a symphony, more than a hundred songs, and some delightful chamber pieces like this one, which was originally scored for flute and orchestra. Miss Robison makes the most of her opportunities in the opening Allegretto to take off in bird-song arabesques, then charms us for several breathtaking minutes in an ensuing *Idyll*, and is not unconscious of the wit in the closing Waltz, with its sly quote from Waldteufel's *Les Patineurs*.

The rest of the concert is relatively lightweight but equally beguiling, though it is, of course, quite flashy, coming as it does from the pens of composers who were flute virtuosos themselves. There's a spectacular series of variations on "Nel Cor Più," by Theobald Boehm, who in the early nineteenth century helped to develop the modern flute on which Paula Robison performs her wizardries, and another set on the famous *Carnival of Venice* theme, replete with pyrotechnics. A pair of short pieces by Philippe Gaubert (1879-1941) brings the program to a colorful close.

The heroine of the album, who studied under Julius Baker and recently became a resident artist with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, more than lives up to her growing reputation on this delightful disc, and the support she receives from pianist Samuel Sanders shouldn't do his reputation any harm either. But what has happened to Vanguard's once-lovely surfaces? *P.K.*

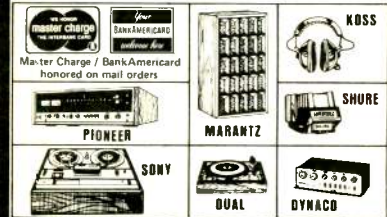
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**ANDRÉS SEGOVIA:** *The Intimate Guitar*. **Weiss:** *Bourrée*. **Benda:** *Sonatina in D Major; Sonatina in D Minor*. **J.S. Bach:** *Three Movements from the Cello Suite No. 1*. **Scarlatti:** *Two Sonatas*. **Sor:** *Andante in C Minor; Minuet in C Major; Minuet in A Major; Minuet in C Major*. **Asencio:** *Dipso*. **Ponce:** *Prelude in E*

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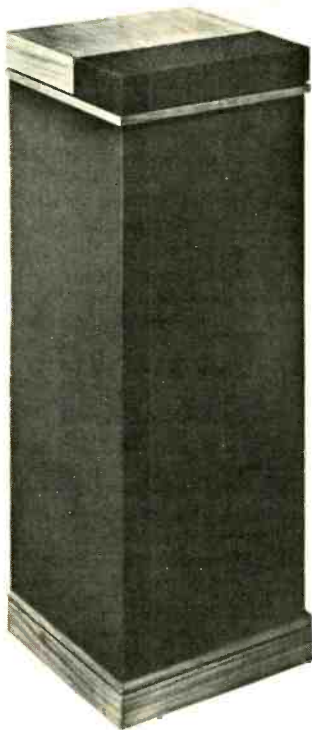
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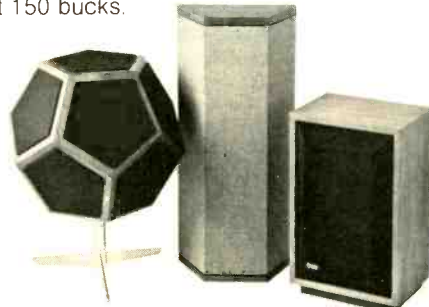


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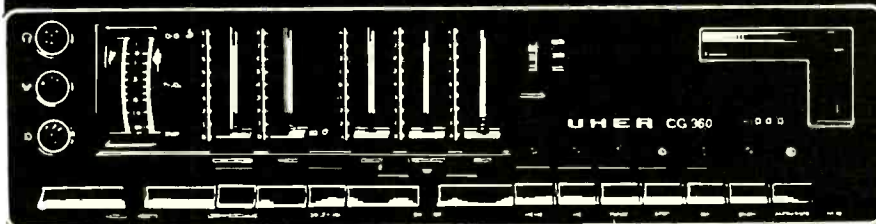
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Major: Andrés Segovia (guitar). RCA ARL1-0864 \$6.98, ARS1-0864 \$7.98, ARK1-0864 \$7.98.

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

Intimate is surely the word for the guitar of Segovia, which insinuates its way into the blood stream almost as if the sounds of his subtle strumming had bypassed the ears. But Segovia has recorded so much, and we are so well acquainted with his special musical accent by this time, that a new album seems almost, at first glance, a superfluity. Still, there are two reasons to keep adding to one's Segovia collection: first, the exceptionally good recording he is getting from RCA these days—it is as though several thicknesses of veil had been lifted from the sound since the old Decca attempts; and second, the unexpected nooks and crannies the maestro explores to add to his repertoire. For example, take the compositions of Sylvius Leopold Weiss, regarded as the greatest lutenist of the eighteenth century: the *Bourrée* introduced here has exceptional charm. The winsome sonatas of Georg Benda were written as accompaniments for the spoken word, but, with Segovia on hand, words are not only unnecessary, they would come as an impertinence. As the program proceeds from Segovia's transcription of three movements from a Bach cello suite to a couple of Scarlatti sonatas, a miniature suite by Sor, a gloss on the fifth word ("I thirst") of Christ on the cross by Vicente Asencio, and a delicate Prelude in E by Manuel Ponce, the spell woven by the world's greatest living guitarist is ever more binding. Fortunate it is for us that, at eighty-two, he is still recording. We thought we knew him: he proves once again to be even better than we thought. P.K.

**ROBERT SYLVESTER: Cello Recital. Ysaÿe: Sonata for Unaccompanied Cello, Op. 28. Hindemith: Sonata, Op. 25, No. 3. Wellesz: Sonata, Op. 30. Crumb: Sonata.** Robert Sylvester (cello). DESTO DC-7169 \$6.98.

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

Robert Sylvester has performed in a number of chamber-music recordings, but I believe this is his first solo venture. It is an impressive one, not only as a demonstration of his performing skill but in terms of the imaginative repertoire. George Crumb's tight-knit, surprisingly expressive sonata was composed in 1955, the other three works in the Twenties: all are decidedly worth hearing—and hearing again. Egon Wellesz's 1921 sonata (the longest of the four works presented here, though the only one cast in a single movement) is especially rich in display opportunities, the Ysaÿe of 1928 an intriguing corollary to that composer's set of sonatas for violin solo. Sylvester's liner notes tell us little about any of the works, but the performances leave little unsaid. Handsome, lifelike sound. R.F.

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manina. *La Fanciulla del West*: *Ch'ella mi creda*. **Giordano**: *Andrea Chénier*: *Un di all'azzurro spazio*. **Ponchielli**: *La Gioconda*: *Cielo e mar*. **Leoncavallo**: *Pagliacci*: *Vesti la giubba*. **Bizet**: *The Pearl Fishers*: *Je crois entendre*. *Carmen*: *Air de fleur*. **Meyerbeer**: *L'Africaine*: *O paradis*. **Massenet**: *Le Cid*: *O souverain, o juge, o père*. **Méhul**: *Joseph*: *Champs paternels*. **Halévy**: *La Juive*: *Rachel! Quand du Seigneur*. And seventeen other arias, songs, and Hebrew prayers. Richard Tucker (tenor); orchestras conducted by Fausto Cleva, Nello Santi, Pierre Dervaux, Emil Cooper, Alfredo Antonini, Franz Allers, Sholom Secunda, and others. COLUMBIA D3M 33448 three discs \$20.94.

Performance: **The best of Tucker**  
 Record ng: **Good to excellent**

This three-disc set has been compiled from no less than fifteen different LP sources ranging over more than twenty years. It is obvious that unusual care has been lavished on the project, and the result is a thoughtfully prepared, eminently representative, and dignified testimonial to Richard Tucker, the man and the artist.

In keeping with the late tenor's own artistic profile, the largest group of selections comes from Italian opera, beginning with a relatively early (1949) *Rigoletto* excerpt and going to the *Luisa Miller* aria recorded in 1964, a souvenir of one of Tucker's last roles. This group offers singing of such consistently high quality that every one of these excerpts may be ranked with the best versions in recorded history. The French repertoire was less congenial to Tucker only because he did not possess the idiomatic rightness of sound and style, which one seldom finds in singers who are not native to it (Richard Crooks and Nicolai Gedda come to mind as exceptions). On the other hand, how many exponents of stylish Gallicism could match the gripping tension of Tucker's "*Rachel! Quand du Seigneur*" or that firmness of sound coupled with the caressing legato of his "*O paradis*"?

Old Italian airs of Giordani and Torelli are sung with a flowing line and sensitive restraint; lighter Italian songs of Rossini, Falvo, and Bixio come across with fine lyric abandon and convincing Mediterranean zest; and the Viennese bits by Lehár, Heuberger, and Siczynski are sung as well as anybody can sing them in English translation. There are three Broadway songs (*You'll Never Walk Alone*, *Sunrise*, *Sunset*, and *The Exodus Song*) that take on a golden sheen, and Tucker's mastery of the cantorial repertoire here finds new affirmation. And framing the entire program between the twin spiritual peaks of *Ingemisco* and *Kol Nidre* was sheer inspiration.

This tribute displays singing of amazing consistency. Here was a voice that developed from a light lyric sound to darker, dramatic sonority naturally and gradually, guided by good teachers and governed by the artist's own seriousness and sound judgment. Richard Tucker was a serious and thorough artist whose technique was sound and who sang with a pure intonation and excellent enunciation. He left no recorded examples unworthy of his art: surely, the present collection commemorates him at his best. A special twenty-page booklet that comes with the set contains tributes from colleagues, photographs, and good, informative notes by Alix B. Williamson. (The selection erroneously identified on side five as "*Dicitencello vuie*" is really Bixio's "*Torna, piccina*.")

G.J.

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SR1075

## Introducing the Staff...

Since readers from time to time understandably display a natural human curiosity about the backgrounds of the writers and editors who bend their ears each month in these pages, we will be offering, in issues to come, a series of capsule biographies and autobiographies designed to satisfy that expressed need and at the same time to circumvent some of the hazards of mere speculation.

—Ed.



Production Editor

# Paulette Weiss

WIDE-EYED and puppy-ignorant of the ways of the world upon graduation from Brooklyn College in 1970 with a B.A., *cum laude*, in English literature, I found my talents unappreciated—nay, ignored—by employment agencies. Refusing merely to type for my supper, I criss-crossed city streets for several months and grew ever more hungry. Had it not been for SR Managing Editor Bill Livingstone's understanding nature, I might today have the symbols "J K L :'" as permanent intaglios on the fingers of my right hand.

Biochemical research had been my first career choice, but lack of deep commitment to the field caused my withdrawal from a two-year major, also at Brooklyn. The catalyst of this decision was a white laboratory mouse named Johnny Weismuller, whose required death and dissection were thwarted by his mysterious disappearance from my lab table and subsequent reappearance, safe and happy, at my home. The fascination with living things has remained, however, and my upper West Side apartment is filled with a variety of plants, some ugly fish, and a pair of boisterous, charming tabbies named The Pink and The Black, who persistently try to devour the former two edibles. I, in

turn, consume biological texts with gusto, and am often found helplessly following Konrad Lorenz books about.

Although I was for three years a licensed teacher, teaching was not to be my vocation either. Urged on by Czechoslovakian-born parents seeking stability for their American offspring, I had enrolled in one education course only to emerge semi-blinded by the glare of flashing engagement rings. "Why," thought I at this juncture, "can't I pursue something impractical but beloved?" Always a voracious reader (with heavy emphasis on science fiction, poetry, and, in the morning, cereal boxes), I toyed with the idea of a literary career. But first, the Big Decision—would it be the Average Life or the Unusual? Others might have consulted a professional counselor: I decided to leap out of a plane at 2,500 feet. Here's the rationale: if I jumped and lived, I was destined to be Unusual; if I chickened out, I was Average; if I jumped out and my 'chute failed to open, I was dead. Simple. I jumped, I lived, I was, to quote Mel Brooks, "thrilled and delighted."

AND so I dropped in on STEREO REVIEW, to become (after an apprenticeship of one year) simultaneously its first female editor and youngest staff member. Adjustments to the situation were soon made by all. I proudly claim responsibility for introducing denim and comfort to my sartorially benighted colleagues, and for bringing them a tiny breeze of the winds of Women's Lib raging outside. In its turn, SR grabbed me by my puppy collar, civilized me, and made me grow. I was taught editing techniques and through the "Installation of the Month" feature was given a first opportunity to write for a national publication. Encouraged by this, I undertook freelance writing assignments, mostly about stereo equipment, for *Rock* and other four-letter magazines. More prosaic are the essential responsibilities of this production editor's in-house routine, including traffic control of material going to and coming from the printer, design and editing of selected page layouts, picture research, and occasional proffreading.

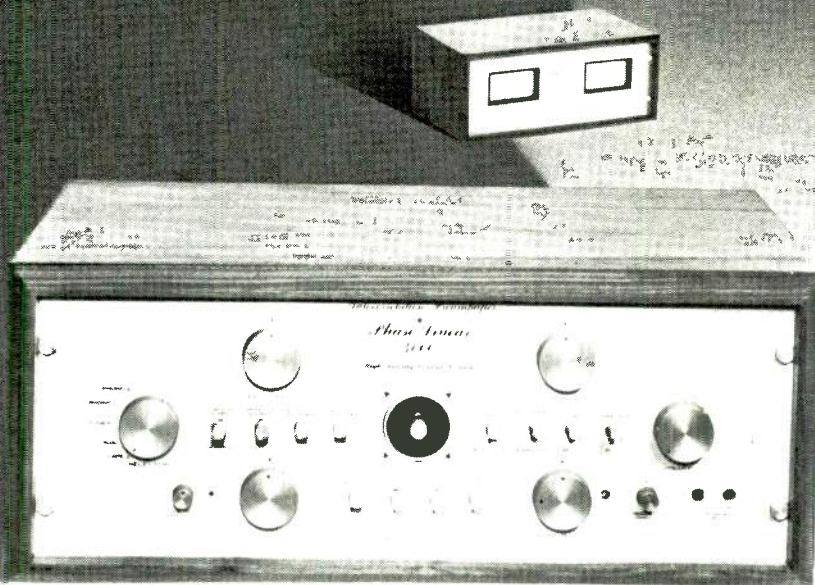
In 1973 I built my own integrated amplifier, became a Certified Audio Consultant, and now can toy with equipment innards and electrocute myself with the best of 'em. Which is why WNYC radio invited me to be a guest on its half-hour "Men of Hi-Fi" talk show (*must* change that title) in February of this year.

I have lived in every borough of New York except Staten Island, but my interests consume so much time that I have rarely been found at home wherever it has been. To ameliorate this situation, my cats have been trained to answer the phone courteously and take messages in my absence. Always a good swimmer, I have dunked the bod in many seas of the world. Tennis serves to limber the biceps, bicycling and ice-skating the gluteus maximus, and disco dancing covers the rest. I dabble in gourmet cooking, but eat out often. My goal in life musically is complete mastery of Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* transcribed for kazoo.

—Paulette Weiss

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Sorry, but when it comes to our Phase Linear 4000, modesty fails us. How else would you describe a preamplifier that actually:

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- *Vanishes into virtual inaudibility* all hum, noise and hiss inherent in most tapes, records, and FM broadcasts.
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**Active Equalizer:** 6 dB/octave boost below 50 Hz.

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**Warranty:** Three years, parts and labor.

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THE POWERFUL DIFFERENCE

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Doc Severinsen & Daughter Nancy

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