

# Stereo Review

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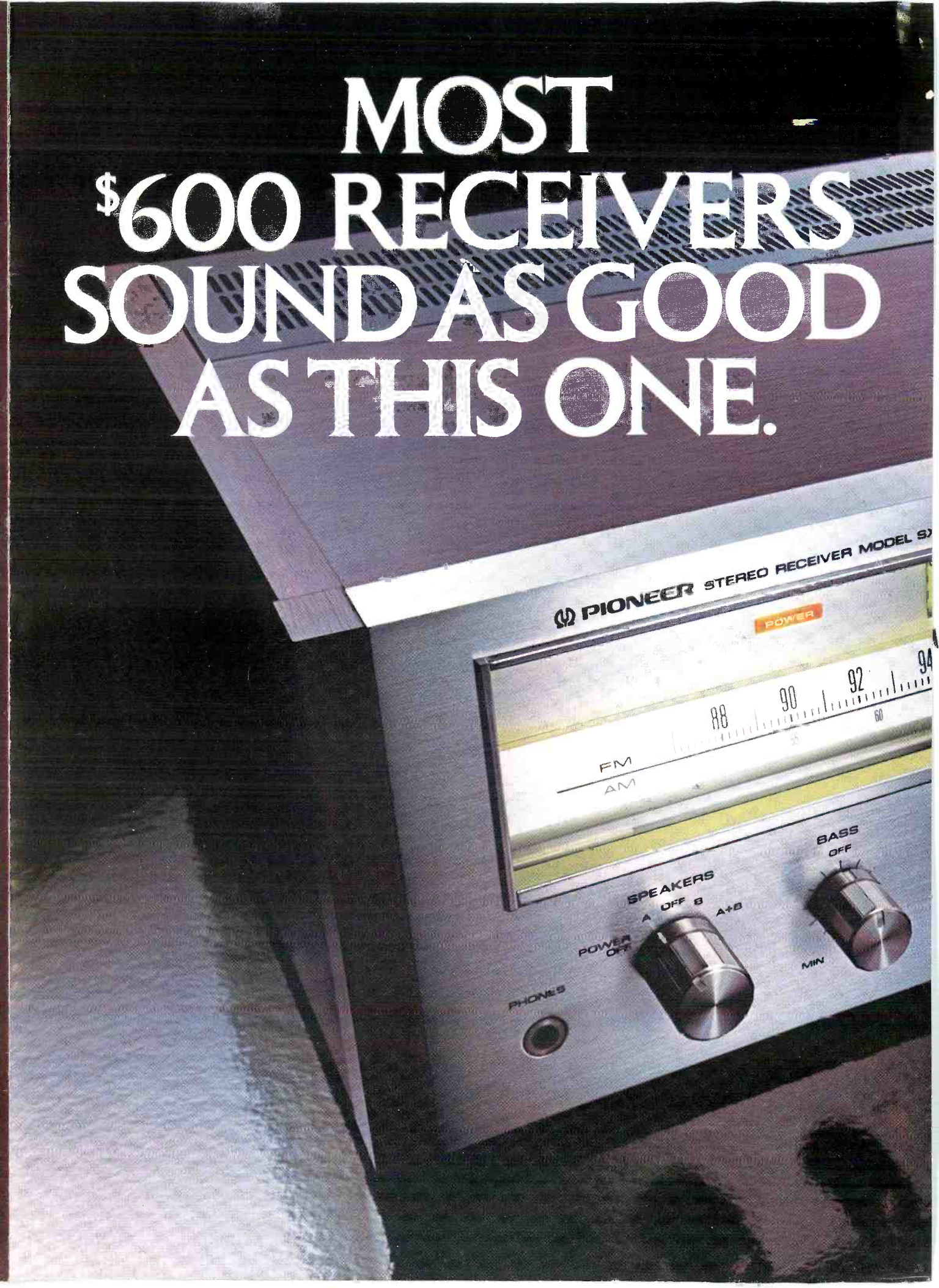
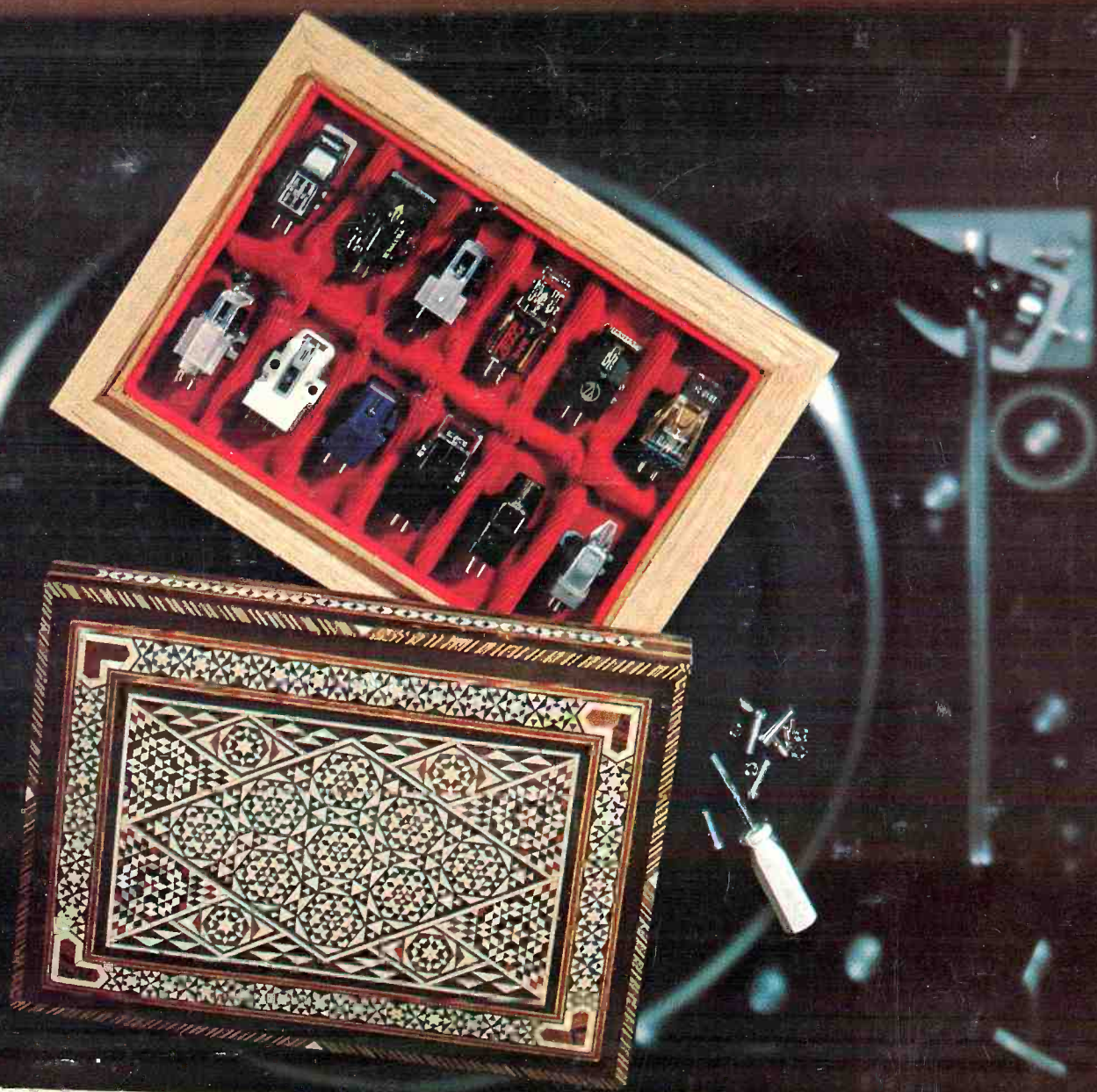
JANUARY 1977 • ONE DOLLAR

**Phono Cartridges: Julian Hirsch's short course for buyers**  
**"Small-label" Folk and Jazz: the best is often hard to find**  
**Music for Classical Guitar: a roundup of recent recordings**

### Equipment Test Reports

- JVC IR-S600 AM/FM Stereo Receiver
- Marantz Model 1250 Integrated Stereo Amplifier
- KLH Model 354 Speaker System
- Micro Seiki DDX-1000 Turntable and MA-505 Tone Arm

**MOST  
\$600 RECEIVERS  
SOUND AS GOOD  
AS THIS ONE.**



The average \$600 receiver sounds as good as the new Pioneer SX-650 until you start listening to prices.

If \$600 is your kind of price, an SX-650 should qualify as your kind of receiver. Not only will it give you the kind of features and sound quality you'd expect for that kind of money; it'll also leave you with roughly half your receiver budget unexpectedly unspent.

But suppose your idea of a receiver price is somewhere under \$300\*. The SX-650 is going to sound better to you than anything you thought you could afford. Because it has more power, a wider frequency range, less distortion, and far greater versatility than most other receivers in that category.

All this might sound a little extravagant; but an authentic breakthrough, an achievement like the SX-650, doesn't happen often. We've learned that when our promises seem to sound especially rich, the best thing to do is simply review the facts.

It's a fact that the SX-650 provides a continuous power output of 35 watts per channel, min. RMS into 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.3% total harmonic distortion. It also delivers each instrument and voice at its intended level, balanced within  $\pm 0.3\%$  of the RIAA curve.

The facts of its stereo separation, selectivity and sensitivity, however, must be experienced: numbers are impressive, but sometimes only hearing is believing.

You'll also be impressed by what you don't hear from the SX-650. You won't hear an assortment of background noises, or the thousand miscellaneous acoustic devils that live in the limbo between FM stations on lesser receivers.

On your next visit to a high fidelity dealer, listen to a Pioneer SX-650 with any reasonably accurate speakers.

You'll find either its price or its performance amazing. Depending on which you hear first.

**PIONEER**

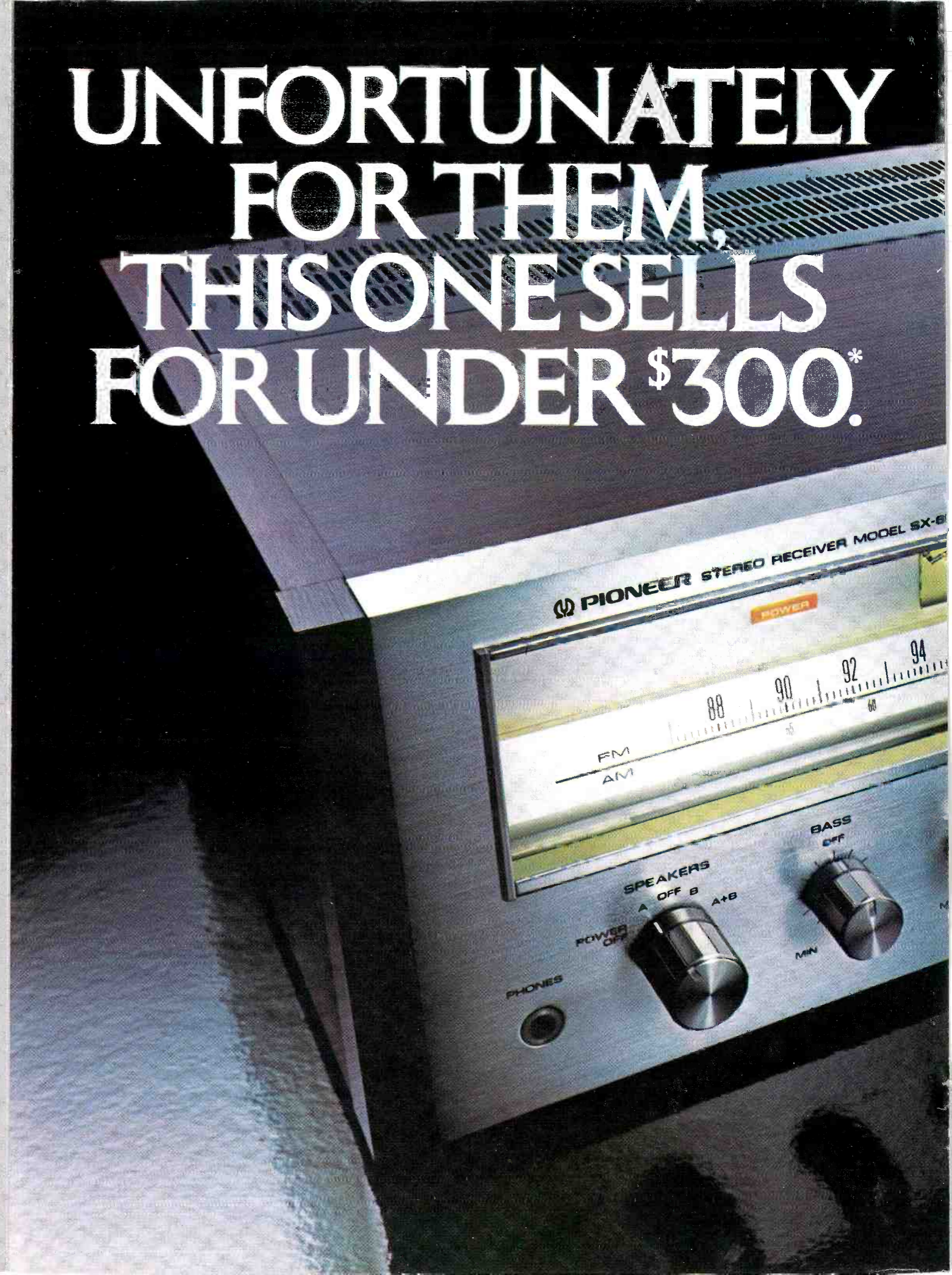
U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 75 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, New Jersey 07074.

\*For informational purposes only, the SX-650 is priced under \$300. The actual resale price will be set by the individual Pioneer dealer at his option.

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CIRCLE NO 52 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# UNFORTUNATELY FOR THEM, THIS ONE SELLS FOR UNDER \$300.\*





# Empire's Blueprint for Better Listening--

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The advantages of Empire are threefold. One, your records will last longer. Unlike other magnetic cartridges, Empire's moving iron design allows our diamond stylus to float free of its magnets and coils. This imposes much less weight on the record surface and insures longer record life.

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Three, Empire uses 4 poles, 4 coils, and 3 magnets (more than any other cartridge) for better balance and hum rejection. The end result is great listening. Audition one for yourself or write for our free brochure, "How To Get The Most Out Of Your Records." After you compare our performance specifications we think you'll agree that, for the money, you can't do better than Empire.

Empire Scientific Corp., Garden City, New York 11530



**EMPIRE**  
Already your system sounds better.

MODEL & STYLUS COLOR	4000 D/III	4000 D/II	4000 D/I	2000Z	2000 E/III	2000 E/II	2000 E/I	2000 E	2000
FREQUENCY RESPONSE	10Hz-50KHz ± 3 db	15Hz-50KHz ± 3 db	15Hz-45KHz ± 3 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 1 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 2 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 2 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db
TRACKING FORCE RANGE	¾-1¼ gm	¾-1½ gm	1-1¾ gm	¾-1¼ gm	¾-1½ gm	¾-1½ gm	1-2 gm	1¼-2½ gm	1½-3 gm
SEPARATION: 15Hz to 1KHz 1KHz to 20KHz 20KHz to 50KHz 20 Hz to 500Hz 500Hz to 15KHz 15KHz to 20KHz	28 db 23 db 15 db	26 db 21 db 15 db	24 db 20 db 15 db	20 db 30 db 25 db	20 db 28 db 20 db	20 db 25 db 18 db	18 db 23 db 15 db	18 db 23 db 15 db	16 db 21 db 13 db
I. M. DISTORTION @ 3.54 cm/sec	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.08% 2KHz-20KHz	.1% 2KHz-20KHz	.15% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz
STYLUS	.2 mil bi-radial	.2 mil bi-radial	.2 mil bi-radial	.2 x .7 mil elliptical	.2 x .7 mil elliptical	.2 x .7 mil elliptical	.2 x .7 mil elliptical	.3 x .7 mil elliptical	.7 mil radius spherical
EFFECTIVE TIP MASS	.4 milligram	.4 milligram	.4 milligram	.2 milligram	.6 milligram	.6 milligram	.6 milligram	.9 milligram	1 milligram
COMPLIANCE	30x10 <sup>-6</sup> cm/dyne	30x10 <sup>-6</sup> cm/dyne	30x10 <sup>-6</sup> cm/dyne	30x10 <sup>-6</sup> cm/dyne	20x10 <sup>-6</sup> cm/dyne	18x10 <sup>-6</sup> cm/dyne	17x10 <sup>-6</sup> cm/dyne	16x10 <sup>-6</sup> cm/dyne	14x10 <sup>-6</sup> cm/dyne
TRACKING ABILITY	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1 gm	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1¼ gm	30 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1½ gm	38 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ .9 gm	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1 gm	28 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1¼ gm	28 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1½ gm	28 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1¾ gm	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 2 gm
CHANNEL BALANCE	within 1 db @ 1KHz	within 1 db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz	within ¾ db @ 1KHz	within 1 db @ 1KHz	within 1¼ db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz
INPUT LOAD	100K ohms/ channel	100K ohms/ channel	100K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel
TOTAL CAPACITANCE	under 100 pf/channel	under 100 pf/channel	under 100 pf/channel	300 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel
OUTPUT @ 3.54 cm/sec	3 mv/channel	3 mv/channel	3 mv/channel	3 mv/channel	4.5 mv/channel	4.5 mv/channel	7 mv/channel	7 mv/channel	7 mv/channel

FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW

# Stereo Review®

JANUARY 1977 • VOLUME 38 • NUMBER 1

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COVER: Design by Borys Patchowsky; photo by Bruce Pendleton.

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# Editorially Speaking

By William Anderson



## FISHER HALL: A VERY PALPABLE HIT

FOR at least as long as we've been able to count, mankind has been fond of the mystical number three: three Graces, three Fates, three Furies, the Trinity in several religions—and three strikes in the game of baseball. That last, though it may sit a little oddly in the context, is an example of a particularly powerful notion: a cat may have nine lives, but it seems to be a firm rule that three strikes is all the rest of us get (maybe all we deserve) whatever the game may be.

The building of multimillion-dollar concert halls is certainly far from being a "game," but when the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts announced last spring that Avery Fisher Hall was to undergo another revamping over the summer months to correct its notoriously unprepossessing acoustics, no one doubted that this was the hall's third and last chance. Music Editor James Goodfriend covered the matter of that announcement in his "Going on Record" column in July. The hall reopened on schedule October 19, and no one has been able to see the smiles for the canary feathers

since. To be brief, the consensus of amateurs and professionals alike is that Fisher Hall looks good, feels good, and sounds good.

Even before the inaugural concert started, the very timbre of the audience's excited chatter hinted that something new was going on psychoacoustically. Despite its still-impressive size, the hall seemed warmer, more inviting, more intimate than before; gone was the off-putting coldness of the old hall, the funnel/tunnel/isolation-chamber effects, the cotton-in-the-ears dead spots, the unpredictable vagaries of frequency response. The concert began with *The Star-Spangled Banner*, hardly a piece to judge any hall by, but it did indicate how high enthusiasm was already running—even the monotones sang out like Baby June.

Next came Nathan Milstein, soloist in the Brahms Violin Concerto, a work I usually think of, in my accustomed synaesthetic style, as a very ripe Burgundy, garnet-red and glowing richly like heavy velvet. But Milstein's Brahms comes out of another bottle

entirely, for the limpid, patrician clarity of his tone put me more in mind of silks, satins, and golden Moselles. Interestingly, this comes very close to the language I would use to describe the hall's new acoustics: bright, clear, sparkling, a shortish reverberation time, and an evenly distributed frequency response with the suggestion of a dip on the bass end. My seat was center-orchestra, and reports from some other ears I trust indicate that bass response is richer in the first-tier balcony seats. Which is as it should be: any concert hall in a position to brag about its sound ought to offer some slight variations for the benefit of different palates. After intermission came Stravinsky's *Firebird*, reinforcing the impression made by the Brahms: this is a hall in which you can hear *everything*—murk, mud, and mumble have been banished and clarity, cleanliness, and articulation have taken their place.

Non-New Yorkers will not be getting a chance to hear what the hall sounds like as soon as some might like: a recording program will require considerable preparations, an enlarged stage area and a period of careful experimentation among them. But maybe that's only ironic justice: the Philharmonic's "live" patrons are just now beginning to enjoy a sound quality previously available only to buyers of its recordings.

REGULAR readers will note the absence this month of Martin Bookspan's "Basic Repertoire" and Irving Kolodin's "Choosing Sides" columns. Reader interest in the Basic Rep has declined of late, and we think we know why: how "basic" can a list 180-odd items long be? We will therefore be trying a new tack in this area, covering some of the old ground—and some new as well—with "Basic Library" articles. We have put Mr. Kolodin to work on some of these; his piece on the Mahler symphonies in October was the first, and he has already worked up another, a Basic Library of Chamber Music which will appear in an early issue. Also in the works is Richard Freed's annual updating of *The Whole Basic Rep*; watch for the announcement in a month or so.

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Circulation Office  
P.O. Box 2771, Boulder, Colorado 80323

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Model 6200/\$199.95\*

Model 6100/\$129.95\*

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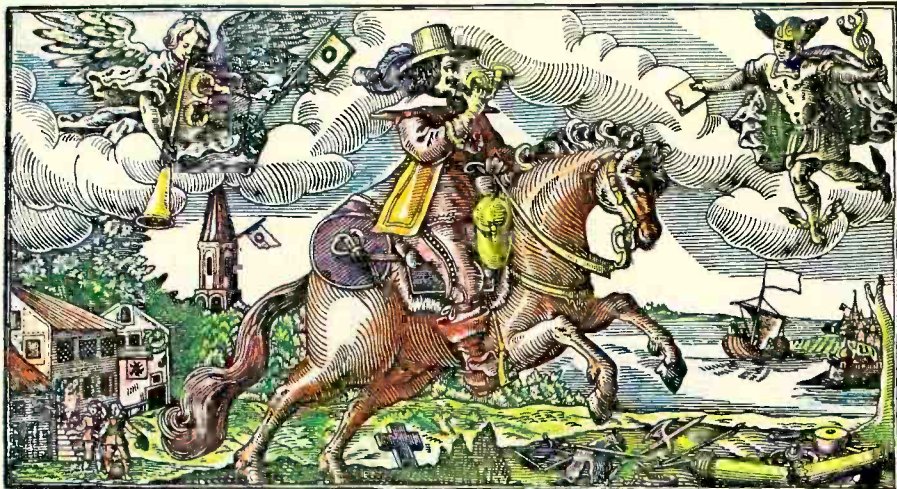
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Ronstadt

● I would like to thank Noel Coppage for the revealing and extremely interesting cover story on Linda Ronstadt (November). She is one of the few artists today who can transfer the experiences of life into song and transmit every nuance of the pain or pleasure of them to her audiences; this is what makes her so special. I am pleased to see that someone has at last managed to capture the *mind* that makes her music instead of the body that complements it. She is more than worth traveling hundreds of miles to see, and after hearing her latest album there are very few places I wouldn't go to see her. Linda Ronstadt and her music are something very, very special.

KARL J. ZUK  
Queens Village, N.Y.

● I have just finished reading your article on Linda Ronstadt (November), and I must say that Noel Coppage is one great writer. I know Linda Ronstadt's father very well, and have played with him a few times nonprofessionally. I've said to him many times how much his daughter is like him. She has taken her father's style and her own talents and become a beautiful lady.

JOHN PHELON GREEN II  
Tucson, Ariz.

● I enjoyed the fantastic November issue thoroughly from beginning to end, but I was especially pleased with the Linda Ronstadt interview. I agree wholeheartedly with Noel Coppage on his review of her latest album, "Hasten Down the Wind." Buddy Holly's *That'll Be the Day* is a good song, but it isn't one of her best displays of meaningful emotion. Her real image is best brought out in the emphatic way she sings *Lose Again, Give One Heart*, and *Try Me Again*. I'm glad Linda Ronstadt is finally being taken seriously.

CRAIG STREMKE  
Milwaukee, Wis.

### Vocal Impressions

● Picky, picky, picky! Tell Noel Coppage to leave reviews of the Steve Miller Band and Orleans to Joel Vance. From the reviews in your November issue, you'd never know

these albums offer straight-ahead, basic rock 'n' roll with a good beat. On the other hand, I can appreciate Joel Vance's not liking a whole Aerosmith album. Still, these kids do know where a tune's "hook" is, so lighten up. Joel stepped in it in the same issue by incorrectly crediting George Benson's vocal phrasing to Stevie Wonder. In fact, Benson's *whole voice* came off Donnie Hathaway. Wonder owes Donny too, of course; Donny sang like that ten years ago when he was with the Ric Powell Trio.

RICH LEE  
St. Petersburg, Fla.

### No Redeeming Value

● I have had it. Your critics are simply too impudent, incompetent, and unintelligent to deserve one more second of my attention. Without going into specifics (I know I'll only catch some wise rhetorical reply proclaiming the inherent element of subjectivity in music criticism and the latent superiority of STEREO REVIEW's critics), I request that you do one of two things: fire Noel Coppage and Joel Vance *immediately* or cancel my subscription with haste. Vance's Nixonian narrow-mindedness as shamelessly exhibited in his comments on Jeff Beck's "Wired" album and Coppage's *ad absurdum* remarks concerning Gordon Lightfoot were positively the last straws. Lest you cease letting these two hacks assault their audience's sensibilities with utter nonsense, I fear your otherwise excellent magazine will be labeled obscene—*i.e.*, having no socially redeeming value.

TONY ROCCO  
Austin, Tex.

### Tone-deafness

● I am writing because of the statement in the November editorial to the effect that some people "grew to contented, tone-deaf adulthood in households filled with music." My question is this: Can a tone-deaf person derive any enjoyment from music? The reason I ask is that a teacher in college told me that I was tone-deaf, but I do love music and do spend the major portion of my leisure-time budget on records and the improvement of my

audio system. Whatever the answer, I will continue to do the same, but I am interested in this subject and would appreciate your comments. I can pick out, *very slowly*, a few simple tunes on the guitar and harmonica but my musical ability is almost nil.

RANDALL PETERS  
Ringgold, Ga.

*The Editor replies: I must apologize to Mr. Peters and other tone-deaf readers for a careless phrase; my reference, of course, was not to those who are literally tone-deaf but those who are (or appear to be) untouched by music's charms. Can the tone-deaf enjoy music? Absolutely. There is, first of all, more to music than tone alone; a friend of mine, for example, totally deaf since childhood, is an enthusiastic and accomplished dancer who picks up the rhythm from the dance floor through his feet. Beyond that, there is the nature of tone-deafness itself, which has to do principally with the ability to duplicate with the voice the frequency of sounds that impinge on the ear. This is a motor skill, and in my experience it appears, like other motor talents, to different degrees in different individuals and over a range running from the fantastic to the minuscule. But this ability to duplicate tones physically is not connected (again, in my experience) to aesthetic appreciation either positively or negatively. I have known those who were able to carry a tune perfectly but were quite indifferent to music; I have known others who could not, as the old tag has it, "carry a tune in a basket" but who delighted in music nonetheless, who were further perfectly capable of detecting a fault of intonation in a singer, an out-of-tune violin, or a wrong note on the piano. (Those who are not tone-deaf themselves might try listening to the many gradations of tone-deafness they can hear around them at community sings, in church congregations, or at symphony-hall and ball-game attacks on The Star-Spangled Banner; in most cases, the loudest, most enthusiastic voices are farthest off the tune.) The exact nature of music and of the musical response are profound mysteries that have thus far eluded—thank God!—either explanation or justification, leaving us a universal, uncircumscribed latitude in which to take our pleasure without let, hindrance, or inhibition of tone-deafness or anything else. I, for one, hope it stays that way.*

## Billy Joel

● Thank you for the article interview (October) with Billy Joel, a man with excellent keyboard and writing talents. He doesn't seem to be one of those artists who play games; he just puts himself in front of an audience and gets better as the night progresses. I saw him in concert, and in a short time he had everyone (all age levels) on their feet cheering.

DON BARESE  
Hamden, Conn.

## Caruso Dubbings

● Concerning Larry Klein's November Audio News column on Caruso dubbings: the current problem seems to be not in equalization so much as wow and flutter added by the dubbing turntable. RCA, Seraphim, and others should choose a turntable for improved speed stability and design an adequate variable speed control if it doesn't have one (the

# Is it live, or is it Memorex?



The amplified voice of Ella Fitzgerald can shatter a glass. And anything Ella can do, Memorex cassette tape with MRX<sub>2</sub> Oxide can do.

If you record your own music, Memorex can make all the difference in the world.

**MEMOREX** Recording Tape.  
Is it live, or is it Memorex?

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## Saving the best for last.

The chances are good that when you first bought a stereo system, it was a "package" that included a receiver, 2 speakers, and a record player with cartridge. But how much time was spent selecting the cartridge? Most probably it was just a minor element of the package. Even if it had a famous name, it probably was not a truly first-rank model.

Yet the cartridge is more important than that. It can limit the ability of the entire hi-fi chain to properly reproduce your records. It can affect how many times you will enjoy your favorite records without noise and distortion. And it can determine whether you can play and enjoy the new four-channel CD-4 records.

Consider the advantages of adding an Audio-Technica AT15Sa to your present system. You start with response from 5 to 45,000 Hz. Ruler flat in the audio range for stereo, with extended response that assures excellent CD-4 playback if desired. Tracking is superb at all frequencies and distortion is extremely low. The sound is balanced, transparent, effortless. Stereo separation is outstanding, even at 10kHz and higher where others fall short. Our Dual Magnet design\* assures it.

And the AT15Sa has a genuine nude-mounted Shibata stylus. Which adds a host of advantages. Like longer record life. Better performance from many older, worn records. Exact tracing of high frequencies, especially at crowded inner grooves. And tracking capability—at a reasonable 1-2 grams—that outperforms and outlasts elliptical styli trying to track at less than a gram.

We're so certain that an AT15Sa will improve your present system that we'd like to challenge you. Take several of your favorite records to an Audio-Technica dealer. Have him compare the sound of your present cartridge (or any other) with the AT15Sa. Listen. We think you'll be impressed. And convinced.

\*T.M. Audio-Technica Dual Magnet cartridges protected by U.S. Patent Nos. 3,720,796 and 3,761,647.

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Very possibly the  
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you'll ever  
need.**



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Available in Canada from Superior Electronics, Inc.

Gale and Fons machines do). Wow and flutter are very low on 78-rpm originals.

If a scientific approach to equalization is wanted, why not run lab tests on examples of the original recording equipment, ideally in the original studios? One could measure frequency curves, distortion, wow and flutter, and so forth by playing test tones into the horn, recording them on shellac via the metal masters, and playing the record back (on a low-flutter turntable!).

GORDON GETTY  
San Francisco, Calif.

*Larry Klein replies: I simply can't believe that modern studio playback turntables have a speed stability that is inferior to the recording turntables used by Caruso. The problem I heard was in short-term, not long-term, speed variation, and a variable speed control won't help that.*

*Mr. Getty's suggestion about making a reference recording in the original studio is technically a good idea. But even if the physical structures still existed, how could one know if they were acoustically unchanged or—more important—what specific recording equipment was used at any particular session?*

## Mahler

● Thank you for the article on the Mahler symphonies by Irving Kolodin in the October issue. I wish STEREO REVIEW would do all the great composers this way. It was so good to read his comments on why he chose the ones he did, for one can no longer go in and preview the records one wants to buy, and this is the next best thing. In the regular reviews, too, the reviewers should give their choices and why at the end of their reviews.

BOB YARYAN  
Oakland, Calif.

## Decoders

● In his October Audio Basics column, Ralph Hodges states that the CBS SQL-200 decoder is "not commercially available." I was recently advised by Benjamin Bauer of CBS Technology Center that the SQL-200 and the advanced SQL-400 with more powerful logic are available in kit form from the Photolume Company, 118 East 28th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016.

JACK FROST  
Sumas, Wash.

*Ralph Hodges replies: Exactly right, although we might point out that Photolume came into the picture some time after the column was written. Reportedly the SQL-400 is not yet available, although it may well be by the time you read this. The SQL-200 is, however, and it is priced at about \$75 for the kit.*

## Carpenters

● I have resigned myself to being one of your few female readers—a thirteen-year-old one at that! In the year or so that I've been reading STEREO REVIEW, the few times you've mentioned the Carpenters you've never had a good thing to say. "Mush." "Preparation H." What next?! So what if ballads are considered "mush," or if they come out with an "oldie"? If you enjoy songs like *Goofus*

they are ageless, and some people (like me) do like oatmeal.

LAURIE HARP  
Berea, Ohio

## Jane Olivor

● James Goodfriend described Jane Olivor's performance very well in his November review of "First Night." She's got a good voice and a good personality, though she's got to do something about her outfits. But the problems of new entertainers are sometimes what makes them famous; I think she will make it and become an M.O.R. star. "She's just too good" to be wasted.

GEORGE ROIG  
Miami, Fla.

## Roots

● The editor's "Musical Roots" column in November nicely complemented E. D. Hoaglan's letter on Nelson Eddy. Belonging as I do to an older generation, I received great satisfaction from the letter and the column since I too was nurtured on the "pop" music of earlier times. The thoughtful comments of those who reviewed the albums mentioned in the editorial were gratifying to me for the dignity they gave to that part of our musical heritage.

VINCENT ELWORTHY  
St. Louis, Mo.

## Elcaset

● I presently have one tape deck and three portable cassette recorders, but after reading Larry Klein's excellent presentation of the elcaset in the October issue, I will certainly buy an elcaset recorder or deck when it becomes available next year. This new format offers film makers as well as audiophiles a more readily edited and potentially higher-fidelity sound capability.

A. GALE BORDEN  
Port Washington, N. Y.

## AM Tuners

● I see now, after having read September's account of the Chicago hi-fi show, that the majority of new receivers for 1977 will still contain AM tuner sections. How many audiophiles actually listen to poor-quality AM on their \$500 or \$5,000 music systems? Why don't the manufacturers leave out the AM tuner sections and bring down the prices?

MARK SCHMIDT  
Little Silver, N.J.

*Larry Klein replies: The answer is that leaving out the AM tuner section would not bring down the price, since the AM tuner represents so little in cost and effort—and that is the source of the problem in the first place.*

## Erratum

● In the November report on the Nakamichi 600 cassette deck, the wrong model number was shown on the frequency-response curves. The curves shown on page 40 were for the Nakamichi 600; the 500 designation was in error.

CIRCLE NO. 7 ON READER SERVICE CARD →

You can study the growing consumer reports in your favorite hi-fi magazine. Objective, informative, helpful

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But it isn't until you actually listen to an Avid speaker system for yourself that you learn why they have won such unprecedented critical acclaim.

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design, engineering, and craftsmanship that have made Avid the most accurate speakers in their price range.

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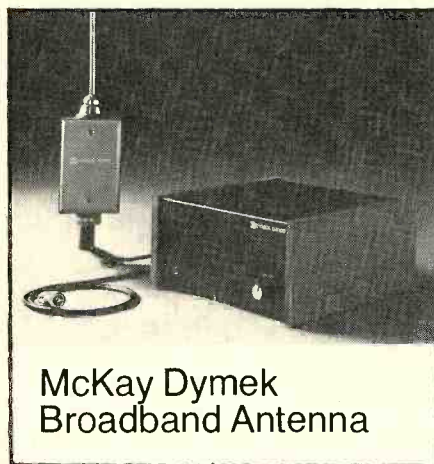


**Robins' Eight-track  
Tape Cleaner**

□ The Robins "Soundtrack Scrubber" contains a mildly abrasive polyester belt designed to clean the tape within an eight-track cartridge. In operation, the device's specially shaped end is inserted into the loading slot of an eight-track record/player, and the tape cartridge to be cleaned is in turn inserted into the Scrubber's other end. A linkage within the Scrubber drives the cartridge from the machine's capstan, and the tape is pressed against the polyester belt and cleaned as it cycles through the cartridge.

The Soundtrack Scrubber's cleaning belt is sufficiently long to clean about two hundred cartridges. After each cartridge, the belt is advanced a little to bring an unsoiled spot into contact with the tape. A refill spool of cleaning belt is supplied with the device. The Soundtrack Scrubber, Robins catalog No. 30-001, costs \$11.99.

*Circle 115 on reader service card*

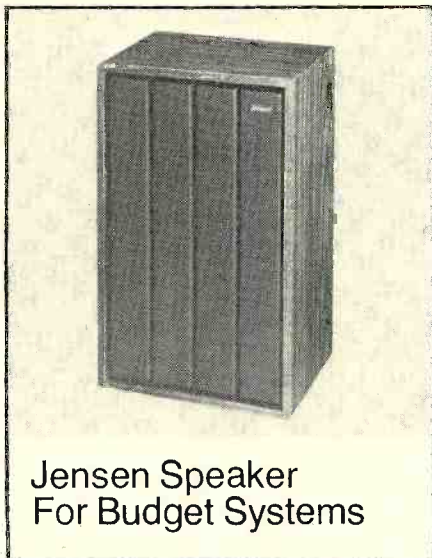


**McKay Dymek  
Broadband Antenna**

□ The DA 100 is a preamplified antenna covering the radio spectrum from 50 kHz to 30 MHz, including the AM band. It consists of a collapsible 4-foot whip antenna mounted on a small weatherproof box and a separate a.c.-powered electronics module. The antenna itself is to be installed in some (preferably) high place outside. The electronics unit is located indoors.

The performance of the DA 100 is said to equal or exceed that of the usual long-wire antenna typical in such applications. It is an omnidirectional device having an output impedance of 50 ohms. The electronics module measures 9 x 5 x 9. Price: \$125 by direct order from the factory only.

*Circle 116 on reader service card*



**Jensen Speaker  
For Budget Systems**

□ At about \$60, Jensen's Model 20 is intended for audio installations of modest cost or as remote speakers. The 8-ohm system has an 8-inch air-suspension woofer and a 2-inch cone tweeter to provide a stated frequency range of 35 to 20,000 Hz. The manufacturer advises that at least 10 watts of amplifier power per channel is required to drive the system. The maximum power rating is 40 watts. The Model 20 has dimensions of 18¼ x 11 x 8½ inches and weighs 18 pounds. Finish is walnut-grain vinyl with a sculpted grille.

*Circle 117 on reader service card*



**Technics Turntable  
Has Professional  
Features**

□ The Technics "Professional" series of products has been augmented by the SP-10MkII, successor to the SP-10 direct-drive

turntable. The new turntable, intended for the broadcast industry as well as the audiophile market, has a start-up time of one-quarter second at 33½ rpm, permitting reliable cueing from standstill. A combination of mechanical and electronic braking systems stops the platter in 0.3 second and prevents it from rotating while stopped.

The three-speed (33½, 45, and 78 rpm) SP-10MkII has a direct-drive motor with speed referenced to a quartz-crystal oscillator and servo-controlled by a phase-locked loop. Speed drift is a maximum of ±0.002 per cent under any likely load or drag conditions. Weighted rms wow and flutter are 0.025 per cent, and rumble is -50 dB by the DIN A standard, -70 dB by DIN B. The full-size platter weighs about 6½ pounds. The electronics for the turntable are contained in a separate power unit, and the main controls (solenoid assisted) are duplicated in a remote-control box supplied. The turntable's dimensions are about 14½ x 14½ x 4 inches. Approximate price: \$700.

*Circle 118 on reader service card*



**Mid-price Receiver  
From Pioneer**

□ The Model SX-750 occupies approximately the middle ground in Pioneer's new line of AM/FM stereo receivers. Maximum rated output into 8 ohms is 50 watts per channel, 20 to 20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.1 per cent harmonic or intermodulation distortion. Noise is -70 dB for the phono inputs and -90 dB for high-level inputs. The FM section's usable sensitivity is 10.7 dBf (1.9 microvolts); 50-dB quieting sensitivity is 17.2 dBf (4 microvolts). Other FM specifications include: capture ratio, 1 dB; AM suppression, 55 dB; alternate-channel selectivity, 80 dB; spurious-response rejection, 90 dB. FM frequency response is 30 to 15,000 Hz +0.2, -2 dB, and stereo separation is 30 dB throughout that range.

The SX-750 is distinguished by the silver and white styling of the latest Pioneer receivers. The basic controls—volume, balance, bass, and treble—are augmented by lever switches for tone-control defeat, high-cut filter, loudness compensation, mode, and tape monitoring and dubbing. There is a stereo-headphone jack and a front-panel microphone

*(Continued on page 16)*

Experience the genius of the "great musician of all time"  
—as you may never have experienced it before

**TIME LIFE RECORDS** **The Definitive Beethoven Collection**

As your introduction to **THE BEETHOVEN BICENTENNIAL SERIES** listen to the first 6 symphonies for 10 days free!



Over the years there have been many record albums devoted to various works of the immortal Ludwig van Beethoven. But there has never been a complete collection of all his works. That is why TIME-LIFE RECORDS assembled this magnificent collection in 17 volumes that contain every important work the master ever wrote—even some rare vocal pieces never before available! It's the BEETHOVEN BICENTENNIAL COLLECTION, recorded by the famous Deutsche Grammophon Company of Germany.

This feast of Beethoven is performed by such world-renowned artists as Conductor Herbert von Karajan, supreme interpreter of Beethoven's symphonic works; the great violinist Yehudi Menuhin; opera's greatest dramatic soprano, Birgit Nilsson; Wilhelm Kempff, dean of Continental pianists; silken-toned cellist Pierre Fournier; Britain's brilliant Amadeus Quartet; and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

10-day free audition: To introduce you to this incomparable collection we invite you to audition Volume 1, the first six symphonies plus the popular Leonore Overture No. 3, for 10 days FREE. These selections were performed by the renowned Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Herbert von Karajan. Highlighted in Volume 1 are:

- SYMPHONY NO. 3 in E Flat Major—the "Eroica."
- SYMPHONY NO. 5 in C Minor—The opening is probably Beethoven's most well-known theme.
- SYMPHONY NO. 6 in F Major—the "Pastoral."

Only the beginning: If you decide to keep the five records of Volume 1 for the low price of \$19.95 plus shipping and handling, you become entitled, as a subscriber, to audition approximately every other month, future albums in this fantastic 17-volume Beethoven collection for the same low price. Some of the magnificent works contained in future volumes are:

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- EGMONT—the complete incidental music to the heroic drama by Goethe.
- The 16 Quartets—showing Beethoven's evolution from the classical style of Haydn and Mozart to the highly original and exciting style of the last five quartets.

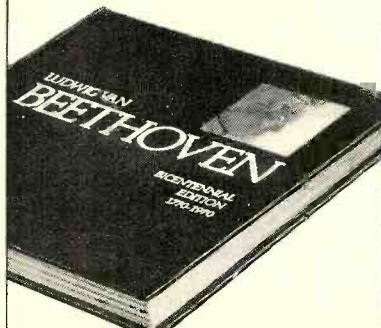
No risk or obligation: To receive Volume 1 for 10-day free audition, return the post-paid card. If you decide to keep it, we will include, free, the giant book on Beethoven described at right. You are under no obligation to purchase any minimum number of volumes and you may cancel your subscription at any time. Mail the attached card or use the coupon at right.

Beethoven's achievements are a reflection of the man himself, for his music is like a diary into which he poured his life, his desires, his regrets, his furies, his melancholies, and his loves. Beethoven was at constant odds with his society—a society steeped in a stormy world of revolution. He transposed his own personal struggle to the scale of the whole human race, and dreamed of bringing to it joy and universal brotherhood.



**PLUS a FREE Beethoven Volume** (published at \$29.50)

This huge, handsome commemorative volume—now out of print—covers the master and his work in rich detail. Includes much material never available to the public before. 267 pages, 269 illustrations in color, and black and white—music scores, paintings, drawings, manuscripts, etc.



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Yes, I would like to examine the first album of the *Beethoven Bicentennial Collection*. Please send it to me—together with my free \$29.50 Beethoven book—for 10 days' free examination and enter my subscription to the *Beethoven Bicentennial Collection*. If I decide to keep the first album, I will pay \$19.95 plus shipping and handling. I then will receive future albums in the *Beethoven Bicentennial Collection*, shipped an album at a time approximately every other month. Each is \$19.95 plus shipping and handling and comes on a 10-day free-examination basis. There is no minimum number of albums that I must buy, and I may cancel my subscription at any time simply by notifying you.

If I do not choose to keep the first album, I will return the album and the book within 10 days, my subscription will be canceled and I will not be under any further obligation.

RBAAM8

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# New Products latest audio equipment and accessories

input. Most of the input and output connectors are mounted on a horizontal shelf in the rear of the receiver. A walnut-grain vinyl top and walnut-veneer side panels decorate the SX-750, which has approximate dimensions of 19 x 6 x 14½ inches. Approximate price: \$400.

Circle 119 on reader service card



## Dry Lubricant For Records

□ Ball Corporation's "Sound Guard" is a dry lubricant, in liquid spray form, intended to be applied to records and then spread around with a buffing pad to leave a film about five millionths of an inch thick. The film is said to reduce stylus friction—and hence record wear—and to lessen the anti-skating requirements of record players. It is also said to subdue certain types of surface noise.

The trade name for the lubricant is "Vac-Kote," a substance developed by the Ball Corporation for use on space vehicles. Reportedly, it adheres to the vinylite material of records but not to itself, so that build-up of the substance in record grooves is avoided. One application will last for a number of playings, according to the manufacturer. Sound Guard fluid sufficient for treating about twenty records comes packaged with a pump-spray applicator and a buffing pad. Price: \$7.

Circle 120 on reader service card



## Threshold Class-A Power Amplifier

□ A dynamic biasing circuit enables the new Threshold 800A stereo power amplifier to per-

form as a Class-A device without entailing the high heat and power dissipation usual with Class-A designs. The circuit is a high-speed configuration that is able to follow rapid variations in the input signal and alter the bias accordingly to keep the output transistors in the most linear portion of their transfer characteristic. Under low-signal conditions the bias is reduced enough to limit quiescent current (and hence idling power consumption) to comparatively reasonable amounts.

Though thermal requirements are therefore less than they would be for a comparable amplifier without dynamic bias, they are still substantial. The 800A has twenty-four output transistors per channel, and it is cooled by a two-speed fan. The amplifier incorporates a number of protective devices, including comparator circuits that switch the amplifier off when the output waveform deviates too much from that of the input.

Rated power output is 200 watts per channel (8 ohms) from 20 to 20,000 Hz with a maximum of 0.1 per cent harmonic and intermodulation distortion, decreasing at lower power levels. Power consumption at idle is approximately 300 watts. Front-panel facilities include large meters that read average output levels, gain controls, an indicator light to show the status of the thermal circuit breakers, and a "Saturation Control" that sets the threshold of a passive limiter. The limiter is designed to prevent "hard" clipping by rounding the waveform peaks and thus inhibiting the production of high-order distortion products. The amplifier measures approximately 19 x 8¾ x 18¼ inches overall and weighs about 90 pounds. Price \$2,165.

Circle 121 on reader service card



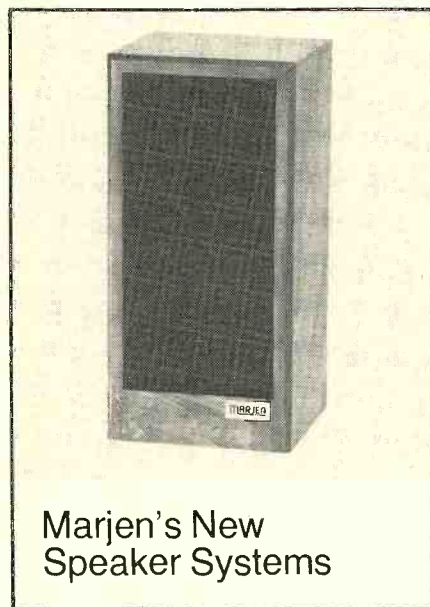
## Moving-coil Cartridge with Replaceable Stylus

□ Superex will be U.S. distributor for the Satin moving-coil cartridges, a line consisting of three models, all of which have user-replaceable styli. The stylus assembly itself consists of the diamond tip, the cantilever, and the pivot/suspension. It is attached to the main body of the cartridge by a magnetic clasp, and the cantilever engages a small metal yoke to which the coils are joined.

The Satin M-117 has a 0.5-mil conical (spherical) stylus; the M-177E is fitted with a

0.2 x 0.8-mil elliptical stylus, and the M-177X has a 0.1 x 2.5-mil Shibata stylus. Frequency response extends from 10 to 25,000 Hz for the M-177, to 40,000 Hz for the M-177E, and to 45,000 Hz for the M-177X. Said to be able to drive most magnetic-phono inputs directly (without the transformer or pre-amplifier usually required for moving-coil cartridges), the three pickups have outputs between 3 and 3.5 millivolts for a recorded velocity of 5 centimeters per second. For the E and X models, tracking-force range is 0.5 to 1.5 grams; the spherical model's range is 0.75 to 2 grams. All three cartridges weigh 9 grams. Prices: M-177, \$140; M-177E, \$170; M-177X, \$190. Replacement styli are, respectively, \$60, \$90, and \$120. Superex also offers a resistive network (\$30) made by Satin that goes between cartridge and preamplifier, and which is said to provide optimum cartridge damping.

Circle 122 on reader service card



## Marjen's New Speaker Systems

□ A relatively new company, Marjen, has brought out a line of three speaker systems, all employing 8-inch woofers and 2-inch cone tweeters in various configurations. A representative system, the Model I, has a single woofer and two such tweeters for a rated frequency response of 44 to 20,000 Hz ±3 dB. The crossover frequency is 2,000 Hz. Recommended amplifier power into the system's nominal 8-ohm impedance is 10 watts minimum and 75 watts maximum.

High-frequency output is adjustable on the Model I by means of pushbuttons that provide a ±3-dB alteration around a designated "flat" setting. The enclosure, measuring 22 x 10½ x 10½ inches, is constructed of solid and veneered pine; grille cloths are available in black or natural. Price: \$139. The Marjen Models II and III (\$169 and \$249, respectively), have generally similar specifications and features

(Continued on page 18)



# JVC builds in what other receivers leave out. A graphic equalizer.



The only way you can equal the realistic sound capability of JVC's modestly priced S300 stereo receiver, is by adding an expensive, but highly versatile graphic equalizer, to another receiver.

For the price of a conventional receiver in its price range, the S300 has built-in JVC's exclusive graphic equalizer system. With five zone controls to cover the entire musical range. While most high priced receivers offer bass and treble controls, and some include a third for midrange, none approach the precision and flexibility of the SEA graphic equalizer system developed and patented by JVC.

### 371,293 ways to hear better sound.

By adjusting the five detent tone controls covering the frequency range at 40Hz, 250Hz, 1,000Hz, 5,000Hz and 15,000Hz, you can create 371,293 different sounds. A feat never before achieved (with a stereo receiver) outside a professional recording studio. But, then, the S300 is a JVC professional.

### Get better performance from your components and listening room.

Why do you need such tremendous variations in tone? Quite simply, they help you to overcome the shortcomings of the acoustics in your listening room: they also can help you to compensate for the deficiencies in old or poor recordings.

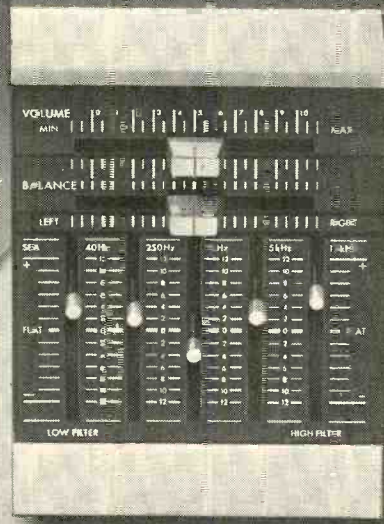
Finally, they can do wonders for the frequency response of your speakers, and where you place them.

SEA is really quite easy to use. For example, the 40Hz switch reduces record hum or rumble, and it can add greater clarity to the ultra low bass of an organ.

The problem of booming speakers is simply handled with the 250Hz switch. And in the important midranges, the 1,000Hz control adds new dimension to the vocals of your favorite rock performers, while the 5,000Hz switch brings out the best in Jascha Heifetz. You can even reduce tape hiss and diminish the harsh sound of a phono cartridge at high frequencies, with the 15,000Hz control. Then, to double check any adjustment, SEA works with a tone cancellation switch which permits you to instantly compare your setting with a perfectly flat response.

### SEA adjusts the sound of your system to the size of your room.

You see, small rooms tend to emphasize high frequencies, while large ones accentuate the lows. But the ingenious SEA allows you to compensate for room size



and furnishings—so your system can perform the way it was meant to, wherever you are.

While most manufacturers reserve unique features for their top of the line model, JVC has included SEA in three of its receivers. The S300, the S400, and, of course, the top professional—the S600.

When you hear these receivers at your JVC dealer (call toll-free 800-221-7502 for his name), think of them as two components in one. In fact, it's like having all the benefits of a graphic equalizer... without buying one.

# JVC

JVC America, Inc.  
58-75 Queens Midtown Expressway,  
Maspeth, N.Y. 11378 (212) 476-8300

# New Products latest audio equipment and accessories

with additional tweeters and (Model III) woofers.

Circle 123 on reader service card



□ The latest catalog of Heathkit products runs to 96 pages and describes several hundred electronic and electronics-related kits, many of which are designed to be assembled by totally inexperienced constructors. The Heath product line includes audio equipment (receivers, amplifiers, tuners, tape machines, equalizers, mixers, and speaker systems) spanning a broad range of prices, as well as already-assembled turntables, phono cartridges, and headphones. There are also television sets, console radios, musical-instrument amplifiers, and electric organs, all in kit form, together with test equipment, marine and amateur-radio electronics, and automotive and hobby accessories. Catalogs are free from: Heath Company, Dept. 350-04 SR, Benton Harbor, Mich. 49022.



**New Four-channel Tape Deck by Akai**

□ A moderately priced four-channel tape deck with track-synchronization facilities (Akai's term is "Quadra-Sync") is being in-

troduced by Akai America as the GX-270DSS. The Quadra-Sync feature permits synchronized recording on all four channels in *sequence*, enabling the user to "build up" a final recording from separate parts recorded at different times and to replace some parts with others without affecting the rest of the material.

The three-motor, two-speed (7½ and 3¾ ips) transport takes 7-inch reels and is solenoid switched. Automatic reverse is provided for playing back stereo tapes, and a pitch control (which operates in both record and playback modes) varies tape speed over a range of ±5 per cent. Microphone/line mixing works by two-section knobs for each input channel, with the front sections controlling microphone levels and the rear the line levels.

The machine's record-playback frequency response is 30 to 21,000 Hz ±3 dB at 7½ ips and 30 to 15,000 Hz ±3 dB at 3¾ ips, both with low-noise tape. For a 0-dB recording level, harmonic distortion is under 1 per cent; signal-to-noise ratio exceeds 54 dB for a 0-dB recording level. Wow and flutter are less than 0.07 per cent at 7½ ips. The GX-270DSS, which comes in a wood case, has dimensions of 17½ x 18½ x 7½ inches. Price: approximately \$900.

Circle 124 on reader service card



**Kenwood Turntable With Anti-resonance Resin-concrete Base**

□ The semi-automatic KD-2055 has a base molded of Kenwood's new "ARC" (anti-resonance resin concrete) material, a mixture of limestone, glass powder, and polyester resin. The high-density base has substantial mass and a high degree of internal damping, both of which are said to reduce audio-frequency vibration and acoustic feedback. The ARC material resembles polished marble.

The principal automatic feature of the two-speed (33½ and 45 rpm) KD-2055 is an end-of-record tone-arm return that also functions (when a pushbutton is pressed) to interrupt

play at any point on a record. There is also a damped tone-arm cueing mechanism. The KD-2055's arm is a tubular S-shaped design with adjustable anti-skating.

The full-size platter is belt-driven, with wow and flutter of less than 0.06 per cent and a rumble level lower than -65 dB. Dimensions (with the hinged dust cover supplied) are about 19 x 14¼ x 5¾ inches. Approximate price: \$140.

Circle 125 on reader service card



**Allison's Fourth Speaker System**

□ The line of "Stabilized Radiation Loading" speaker systems from Allison Acoustics continues with the Model Four, which is designed for shelf installation. The Allison practice of positioning the woofer as close as possible to the nearest room boundary is achieved in the Model Four with a top-firing woofer of 8-inch diameter. Two of the manufacturer's "Convex Diaphragm" tweeters are used, one on each of two angled side panels. The system is meant to be installed with its back abutting a wall.

Crossover frequency of the Allison: Four is 2,000 Hz, and the system has a minimum impedance of 6.5 ohms (8 ohms nominal). Minimum recommended amplifier power is 30 watts per channel; a 70-watt peak input is said to produce an acoustic output of at least 0.5 acoustic watt over most of the frequency range. A three-position switch adjusts the frequency balance of the system from nominally flat to gradual high-frequency rolloff, simulating the overall balance of a typical concert hall. Overall dimensions are approximately 19½ x 11 x 10 inches; finish is oiled walnut. Price: about \$175.

Circle 126 on reader service card

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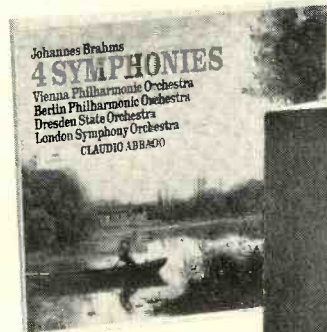
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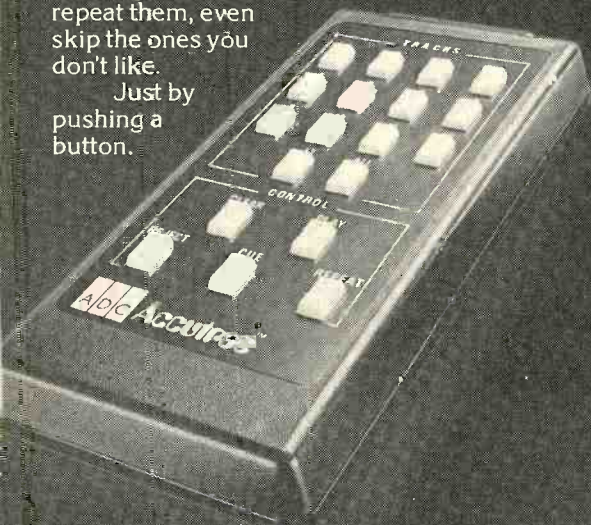
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Suppose you want to hear selections 5, 3 and 7. Simply press the buttons marked 5, 3 and 7. In fact, you can pre-set the sequence with any combination of up to 24 commands.

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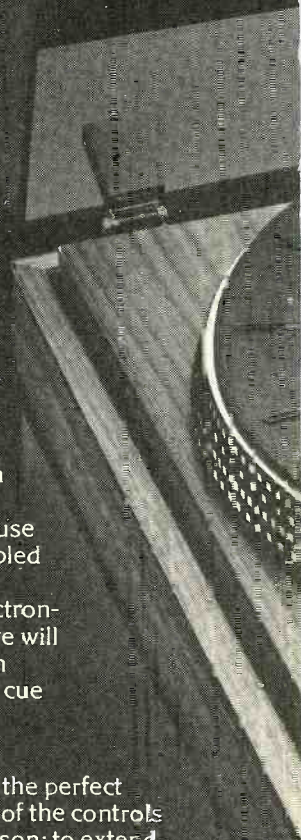
And it does it with absolute freedom, because the servo-motor that drives the tonearm is decoupled the instant the stylus goes into play.

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# Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein

Technical Editor



## Four-channel Cassettes

**Q.** *I seem to remember that you wrote in a Q & A not too long ago that four-channel matrix (SQ or QS) cassettes wouldn't decode reliably if they are made on one cassette machine and played back on another. Yet Ralph Hodges in his Angel cassette story in the October issue wrote about four-channel SQ prerecorded cassettes and said that they decoded very well. Who's right?*

CHARLES BROGAN  
Patterson, N.J.

**A.** We both are. Decoding problems can arise because the phase relationships between the two channels—which embody the rear-channel encoding—have to be maintained accurately in recording and playback in order for the decoder to reconstitute the original four channels properly. The normal and random phase differences between the duplicator's recording-head gaps and the playback-head gaps in the home machines would be enough to confuse the decoder—at least to some degree. If you were to copy an SQ disc onto a cassette, the same head gaps in your machine would usually serve both the record and playback functions and no discrepancy would occur other than that caused by tape skewing within the cassette itself.

The fact that the Angel discs and prerecorded cassettes were indistinguishable from each other in respect to the rear-channel effect I don't find to be terribly significant since, as the article stated, the rear channels were simply supplying an ambiance (hall sound) signal with no specific directionality. In such a case, I would suggest that it really doesn't matter audibly if the directionality of the left and right rear channels are confused or lose separation. And, as a matter of fact, my experience has been that the recent artificial synthesized reverberation or ambiance time-delay systems such as the Audio Pulse Model One or the Sound Concepts SD-50 can do a far more satisfactory job of providing "hall sound" on stereo material than any commercial four-channel disc or tape that I have heard up to this time.

## FM Hiss

**Q.** *I have a stereo tuner and I usually hear hiss in the stereo mode. Since I hear no hiss in mono I assume that the noise is generated*

*by the multiplex circuits. Can a noise-reduction unit be connected between my tuner and amplifier to reduce hiss?*

CHARLES ALBERT  
San Antonio, Tex.

**A.** First of all, the hiss is *not* generated by the multiplex circuits in your tuner. From your description, it appears that the stereo broadcasts reaching your tuner are too weak for your tuner to be "quieted." With stereo FM reception, it takes more signal at the antenna terminals to achieve as low a noise level as heard in mono FM, which is why your mono reception is hiss-free. It would make sense for you to: (1) check your tuner's sensitivity specifications to determine if they are adequate for your location; (2) determine if your specific tuner lives up to its specifications—it may need overhaul or alignment; and (3) determine if your antenna is adequate for tuner and location (your dealer or the tuner's manufacturer should be able to answer all three of these questions for you.) I suspect that your investigations will lead you to the conclusion that as far as FM hiss is concerned, it will make more sense to get a better tuner and/or antenna system than a noise-reduction unit.

## Old Kit Overhaul

**Q.** *I was recently given an old stereo tube power amplifier that I would like to use with a reverb unit for my rear channels. The former owner of the amplifier said that he built it from a kit and it was working fine when he retired it in favor of a transistor job about five years ago. However, when I hooked it up it seemed very sensitive to vibration: tapping the chassis caused hum and crackling in the speakers. Also, the input-level controls and switches are very noisy when rotated. Is the unit worth fixing, or should it be junked?*

ALLAN THOMSON  
Los Angeles, Calif.

**A.** It's hard to know. A Dynakit or a Heathkit is usually worth fixing; some other brands/units may not be. Your logical first step is to test the tubes. When each tube is in the tester, tap it gently several times. If the tester reading changes or the "short" light flashes, reject the tube. Also be prepared to replace any tube that tests very "weak." Each pair of the large output tubes should

also show the same approximate readings on the tube-tester meter to ensure proper output-stage balance.

The second step, which will probably eliminate most of the hum and static, is to tighten all screws and nuts holding down the printed-circuit boards, the terminal strips, input jacks, transformers, and so forth, to the chassis. In most kit amplifiers, these nuts and bolts loosen with time—or perhaps they were not adequately tightened originally. Proper electrical grounding of many sections of the circuit depends on having these components in firm mechanical—meaning electrical—contact with the chassis.

You will probably find two or more tubular filter capacitors (cylindrical objects, perhaps 2 to 3 inches tall) with one end fitted into cutouts in the chassis or in a metal or plastic supporting plate. If screws are holding the mounting plates, it's important that they be tight. If the capacitors are held in place by having their prongs twisted through slots in the metal chassis, be sure they are securely locked and soldered into place.

As for the noisy controls, a shot of spray from a TV-tuner cleaner spray (available from any radio or electronics parts store) will cure that problem. The spray hose should be positioned so that the fluid gets *into* the control. After spraying, rapidly rotate the control several times. It might not be a bad idea to spray a little cleaner into the tube sockets also to help remove any oxidation from the tube pins and the socket contacts. You should also inspect all the soldered connections carefully. Any that look suspicious—particularly those that have several wires going to one lug or solder point—should be resoldered.

If the above suggestions do not solve the problem and you are not competent to go further on your own, a professional audio repairman is your best bet. However, I would suggest you get an estimate on the job first, since his legitimate service charges may exceed the value of the amplifier to you.

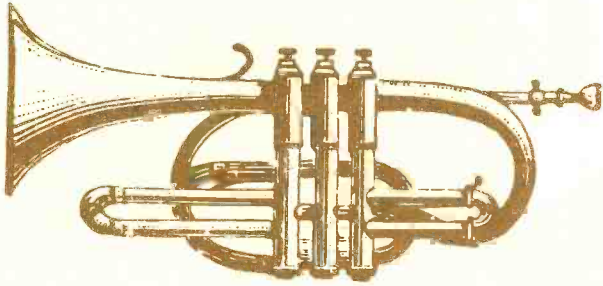
## R.C.A.F. vs. FM

**Q.** *The other day I was listening to my favorite FM station while doing my Royal Canadian Air Force exercises in the center of the living room. I noticed that every time I kicked my legs, I would hear a blast of interference; when I was motionless everything sounded fine. Since I presume I do not generate electrical signals which would interfere with the reception over a rather good system, I hope you can explain this phenomenon to me.*

ELLEN MILHAN  
New York City, N.Y.

**A.** As you've discovered, the *type* of exercise performed in proximity to a tuner can affect its reception. FM generally will be unaffected by less vigorous activity such as Yoga procedures that require, for example, relaxing one's pancreas. (I was unable to do that trick in a class I once attended since at the time I was not sure just where my pancreas was located.) Although you are not *generating* interfering signals, you are interfering with the FM signal reaching the tuner's antenna terminals for the same reasons that a TV picture will sometimes be affected when a viewer moves about the room.

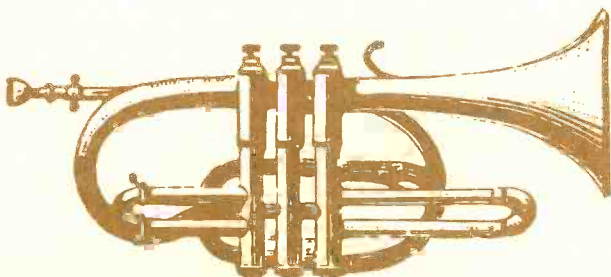
If you are tuned to a weak or distant station—or if your antenna is somehow inadequate—  
(Continued on page 26)



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125 watts/channel, min. RMS with both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20Hz to 20kHz, with no more than 0.1% total harmonic distortion.

### THD Distortion

less than 0.1% at rated min. RMS power output (70Hz : 7kHz = 4 : 1, SMPTE method)

### Frequency Response (1 watt):

10Hz to 30kHz  $\pm 1$  dB from A.J.K. to speaker terminals

### RIAA Phono Equalization

$\pm 0.3$  dB, 30Hz to 15kHz

### Phono 1, 2 Sensitivity/Impedance:

2.5mV/50k ohms

### Phono 1, 2 Maximum Input Capability:

180mV at 1kHz, less than 0.2% total harmonic distortion.

### Hum and Noise:

better than 80 dB (Aux, Tape Monitor)  
better than 70 dB (Phono)

## FM SECTION

### IHF Sensitivity:

9.8 dBf (1.7 $\mu$ V)

### 50 dB IHF Quieting Sensitivity:

Mono: 14 dBf (3 $\mu$ V)

Stereo: 36.3 dBf (36 $\mu$ V)

### Signal-to-noise ratio:

better than 70 dB

### Total Harmonic Distortion:

Mono: less than 0.2%

Stereo: less than 0.3%

### Alternate Channel Selectivity:

Better than 85 dB

### Spurious Response Ratio (IHF)

better than 85 dB

### Stereo Separation:

better than 40 dB

### Frequency Response:

30Hz to 15kHz, +0.5, -2.0 dB

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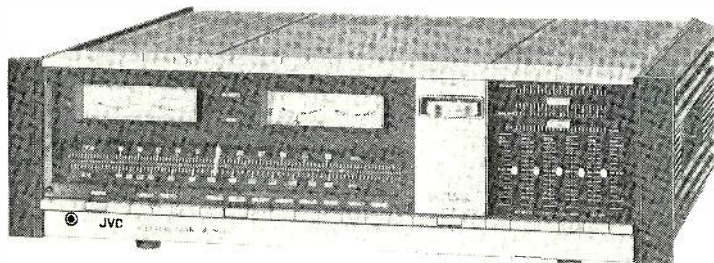
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# Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

## JVC JR-S600 AM/FM Stereo Receiver



**T**HE most powerful receiver in the current JVC line is the JR-S600, rated to deliver 110 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads between 20 and 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.1 per cent total harmonic distortion (THD). Backing up this power is a preamplifier fitted with the JVC SEA (Sound Effect Amplifier) graphic-equalizer system instead of conventional tone controls.

The FM/AM tuner section of the JR-S600 makes liberal use of integrated circuits, including a phase-locked-loop (PLL) multiplex demodulator, a quadrature detector for FM, and an AM tuner employing a single IC. The FM section has a built-in "noise-reduction" circuit, apparently a form of JVC's ANRS system, for decoding Dolbyized FM signals.

The JR-S600 features the radically different styling of the new JVC line. The front panel is finished for the most part in black, with aluminum accents. The dial scales, slanted slightly backward, are near the bottom of the panel. Above them are two pairs of meters that are lit in blue when the receiver is on. Two are conventional tuning meters, reading relative signal strength for AM and FM plus FM channel-center tuning. The other pair, calibrated in watts delivered to 8-ohm loads, monitors the amplifier outputs. Their logarithmic scales cover a range from well under 0.25 to over 110 watts. Illuminated legends appear in blue between the meter groups to indicate FM STEREO

reception and when the noise-reducing circuit (NR) is switched on.

The sole occupant of an aluminum panel section to the right of the dial area is a horizontal tuning control—actually the rim of a flywheel drive protruding slightly from the panel (there is a second flywheel within the receiver). The right section of the panel is devoted to the five vertical slider controls for the SEA circuit, which vary the response over a nominal  $\pm 10$ -dB range at center frequencies of 40, 250, 1,000, 5,000, and 15,000 Hz. Above them is a slider balance control with a center detent and a slider volume control, both oriented horizontally.

The other operating controls form a row of aluminum-finish pushbuttons across the full width of the panel just below the dial and SEA area. They include power and speaker switches (the latter for separate control of two pairs of speakers) and program selectors for AM, FM, PHONO 1, PHONO 2, and AUX sources. There are separate monitor buttons for two tape decks and a DUBBING button that cross-connects the machines for copying a tape from either one to the other.

Below the tuning wheel, the continuing row of pushbuttons includes the FM MUTING switch, FM NR switch, and the MONO switch. The buttons below the SEA controls switch in the 1 ODDNESS compensation and the LOW and HIGH filters; the SEA DEFEAT bypasses the en-

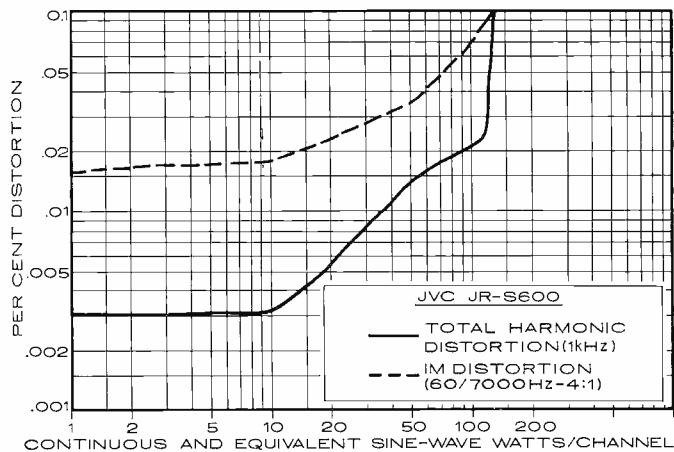
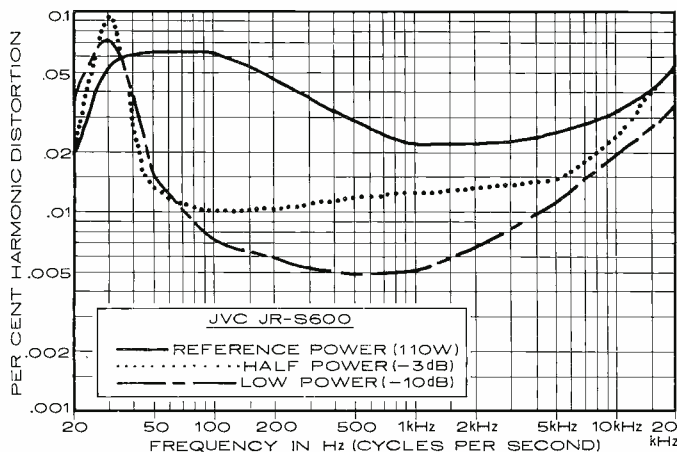
tire SEA circuit. A stereo headphone jack is located just below the power switch at the lower left of the panel.

On the rear apron of the JR-S600, in addition to the various signal inputs and outputs, are antenna terminals for 75- and 300-ohm FM antennas and a wire AM antenna, as well as the pivoted AM ferrite-rod antenna. There are separate preamplifier outputs and main-amplifier inputs, joined by jumper links, and an FM detector output for possible use with a future four-channel discrete FM adapter. The TAPE 2 connectors are duplicated by a DIN socket. The insulated pushbutton speaker connectors require only that the stripped end of the wire be inserted in a small hole, where it is clamped when the button is released. One of the two a.c. outlets is switched.

The JVC JR-S600, as one would expect in a unit with its power rating, is rather large and heavy. It is 22 inches wide, 17 inches deep, and 6 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches high; it weighs about 41 pounds. The side panels of the receiver are molded of ribbed plastic, styled to resemble metal heat-sink fins. However, their principal noncosmetic function is to serve as handles for lifting the receiver, and they are very well suited to that purpose. Price: \$750.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Following the standard preconditioning period (during which the top of the cabinet became quite hot), the amplifier delivered 128 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads at the clipping point. The 4-ohm output was 173 watts, and at 16 ohms it was 85 watts. At 1,000 Hz, the THD was below our measurement limit of 0.003 per cent until the output exceeded 10 watts. It measured 0.0056 per cent at 20 watts, 0.025 per cent at 120 watts, and 0.1 per cent at 130 watts (approximately the clipping point). The intermodulation distortion (IM) was under 0.02 per cent up to about 15 watts, reaching

*(Continued on page 44)*



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only company to date that has advertised a high-fidelity product working in this manner. Class-D amplification is a pulsed system that takes advantage of the fact that the heat dissipation in a transistor is lowest when it is either fully on or fully off (in a normal amplifier, it is usually *between* those states). The signal handled by the class-D amplifier is a continuous stream of narrow pulses occurring at a frequency far above the audible range (typically several hundred kilohertz). Switching transistors are used instead of the conventional linear types generally found in audio amplifiers.

The pulses serve as a carrier for the audio modulation, which can be applied in any of several ways. Pulse-width modulation is probably the easiest to under-

stand. The audio waveform is used to vary the width of the pulses passing through the amplifier. For example, as the waveform goes increasingly positive, it can be used to widen the pulses; the negative portion of the audio signal can be used to make the pulses narrower. The actual power dissipated within the amplifier is constant during this process.

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To restore the audio signal at a high power level before it goes to the speakers, only a low-pass filter in the amplifier output is necessary. Such a filter will pass the slow variations in average output ("slow" meaning at an audio rate) while excluding the ultrasonic pulses from the speakers. To the extent that the modulation can be performed linearly (and it can be made *very* linear), the distortion of the amplifier can be made almost as low as desired.

The advantages of the class-D system are obvious. For a given audio power output a class-D amplifier can be much smaller, lighter, and cooler than a conventional design. On the negative side, the presence of very powerful high-frequency pulses makes it necessary to control the radiation of harmonics that could interfere with radio and TV reception. No doubt there are other technical difficulties to be overcome as well, and these

have contributed to preventing a wholesale adoption of the class-D approach. The very newest "class" in amplifier operation is a development by Hitachi. They originally called it "class E" but have now shifted the nomenclature to "class G." The class-G amplifier uses, in effect, a low-power and a high-power output stage operating together in such a way that each works with relatively high efficiency. At low signal levels the low-power stage drives the speakers; the transition to the more powerful output transistors (which operate from a separate, higher-voltage power supply) takes place smoothly at the point where it becomes advantageous to do so. The result is an amplifier with a much higher overall efficiency than a conventional class-B

Superficially, the new Quad 405 "current dumping" amplifier would seem to be based on a similar concept, though with a bit of a difference. In essence, it employs a highly linear class-A amplifier to supply the voltage (and presumably the current associated with low-power outputs) to the speakers. A more powerful class-B amplifier is used to supply the heavy currents needed at high power levels. The aim was to effectively eliminate crossover distortion in a fairly powerful amplifier (about 100 watts per channel) without going to class-A operation. We have not seen the Quad amplifier, but judging from what we have read about it, it does its job effectively and it is a very lightweight unit as well (it weighs about 20 pounds).

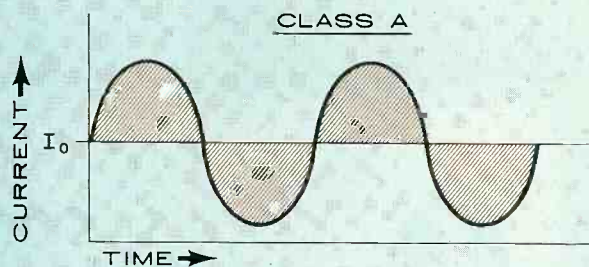


Figure 1. In a class-A amplifier the output transistor(s) is "on" and conducting throughout the full excursion of the signal waveform. The quiescent (no-signal) current is relatively high.

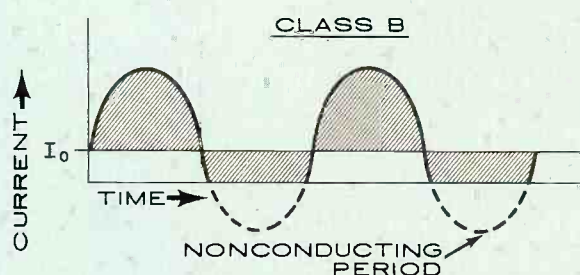


Figure 2. Each output transistor in a class-B design works for just over half the waveform's excursion. At about the halfway point another transistor cuts in to handle the other half-cycle.

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device, and this brings immediate dividends to the consumer in reduced weight, size, and power consumption. Through appropriate design, the one-third-power operating point can be placed in the most efficient portion of the amplifier's operating range, thus obviating the need for the over-designed heat sinks required to meet the FTC rules with a conventional amplifier. The operating area where the signals from the two stages combine is a potential source of distortion (it is similar to crossover distortion, though it does not tend to occur at the zero-voltage axis), but Hitachi was able, by means of an inexpensive circuit modification, to eliminate this almost entirely. The result is an amplifier whose distortion is at least as low as that of any comparable conventional amplifier.

This approach is not entirely new, since something similar was attempted in the ill-fated Mattes amplifier back around 1965. It used the low-power driver stages to feed the speakers at low levels and transferred the output to the more powerful class-B outputs as the signal increased. In a sense, it was an idea that was ahead of its technological time, for the low reliability of the semiconductors available at that time proved to be its undoing.

A relatively new approach to the "class" question in amplifier operation is being employed by a few manufacturers. Special monitoring circuits automatically adjust the bias applied to the output stage in accordance with the power-output demands of the audio signal. The amplifier is therefore operating, from moment to moment, closest to the class that, in the view of the designer, produces the desired results. In general, the amplifier's operating characteristics are shifted to approach class A or class B, depending upon the signal.

If you feel that the question of "which class is best" is left unanswered, you are quite correct. Some amplifiers may in truth have audible advantages, but we have never encountered an amplifier whose superior characteristics—when there were any—were clearly linked to a specific mode of operation. There are many ways to design an amplifier, and I'm sure that the advocates of each technique can provide specific reasons for their particular approach. Perhaps it need not be repeated, but in *all* areas of high fidelity audiophiles should keep their eyes and ears fixed on *results achieved* rather than on the techniques used to achieve them. □

# Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



● **CLASS A, B, C, D . . . AND G AMPLIFIERS:** Most people interested in audio components have by now heard the terms "class A" and "class B" applied to amplifiers. In the last couple of years, the "class-D" amplifier has received some publicity, and more recently we have heard about Hitachi's "class-G" amplifier. These alphabetical classifications describe the electrical operating conditions of an amplifier, whether tube or transistor, and particularly how the signal waveform is handled from beginning to end of a full cycle.

Purely from the standpoint of linearity (inherent absence of waveform distortion), class-A operation is superior to the others. The tube (or transistor) is biased so that current flows in it throughout the entire signal cycle. Figure 1 illustrates this condition, in which the current drawn (at full signal output) varies between somewhere near zero and approximately twice the quiescent or no-signal level ( $I_0$ ) for the duration of the cycle. Since the current curve is symmetrical with respect to  $I_0$ , the average current passing through the tube or transistor is constant whether or not there is a signal present.

Under no-signal or very-low-signal conditions (which is the way high-fidelity amplifiers operate much of the time), the efficiency of a class-A amplifier is essentially zero, meaning that there is a constant power-supply input with little or no signal output (this is analogous to the miles per gallon achieved by a car standing with its motor idling). But even at full power, the class-A amplifier is less than 33 per cent efficient. This is no problem in preamplifier or other low-level stages which consume little power, but it requires huge power supplies and heat sinks for the output stages of a powerful solid-state amplifier.

In class-B operation, the output device conducts for at least half of each full cycle. This is shown in Figure 2, in which the quiescent current  $I_0$  is quite small

compared with the maximum drawn at the positive signal peak. When the signal waveform goes slightly negative, the output transistor is cut off so that it draws little or no current, and the output waveform is clipped accordingly. This is obviously a severely distorted condition, but if a second transistor is operated during the negative half-cycle of the signal waveform and the two outputs are combined, the resulting waveform is a reasonable replica of the input signal. (This mode of operation, called "push pull," is used in virtually every audio power amplifier designed for home music systems, whatever its class.)

Since the power-supply current ( $I_0$ ) through the output transistors under no-signal conditions is much less than in class-A operation, a class-B amplifier runs relatively cool when not driven very hard. And, at full power, it is about twice as efficient as a class-A amplifier. The result is high power capability without the cost, size, weight, and current-consumption penalties exacted by class-A operation. Many amplifiers are operated with their biasing set between the class-A and class-B conditions, and these class-AB (or simply class-B) circuits are by far the most used in high-fidelity amplifiers.

Insofar as its output devices are linear and perfectly matched in their characteristics, the distortion of a class-B amplifier stage need not be any greater than that of a class-A amplifier. Such perfection

does not exist in real life, of course, and there is always therefore some mismatch between the two halves of the waveform at low values of the signal waveform, where the transition from one side to the other of the push-pull pair takes place. This can be minimized by biasing the stage toward class-A operation, but such biasing reduces both output and efficiency. The inevitable mismatch gives rise to the effect known as "crossover distortion," which appears as a notch or jog in the waveform near where it crosses the zero-voltage axis. These small discontinuities are widely believed to be most responsible for the kind of distortion heard in transistor equipment. That point remains debatable, but we can all agree that any distortion is undesirable.

A third operating condition, known as class C, is widely (and mostly) used in radio-frequency transmitters and therefore need not concern us unduly here. Briefly, a class-C stage conducts for less than half the signal cycle. In audio terms, this represents almost total distortion, but in a transmitter the class-C stage serves its purpose very well.

The current Federal Trade Commission regulations on the rating of amplifier power have made the industry painfully aware that the one-third full-power preconditioning level is uncomfortably close to the 40 per cent area where class-B amplifiers are least efficient. In order for many amplifiers to meet the 1-hour, one-third-power requirement, it has been necessary to grossly overdesign their cooling systems; this has meant very large heat sinks and (in some high-power units) fans. Clearly, a more efficient amplifier would be a boon to both manufacturer and consumer, for it would make possible a smaller, lighter, cooler, and (one hopes) cheaper product.

One such approach is generally referred to as "class D," and it has been proposed for some years. Although various manufacturers are reported to be working on such systems, Infinity is the

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## Tested This Month

JVC JR-S600 AM/FM Receiver  
Marantz 1250 Integrated Amp  
KLH Model 354 Speaker System  
Micro Seiki DDX-1000 Turntable  
and MA-505 Tone Arm

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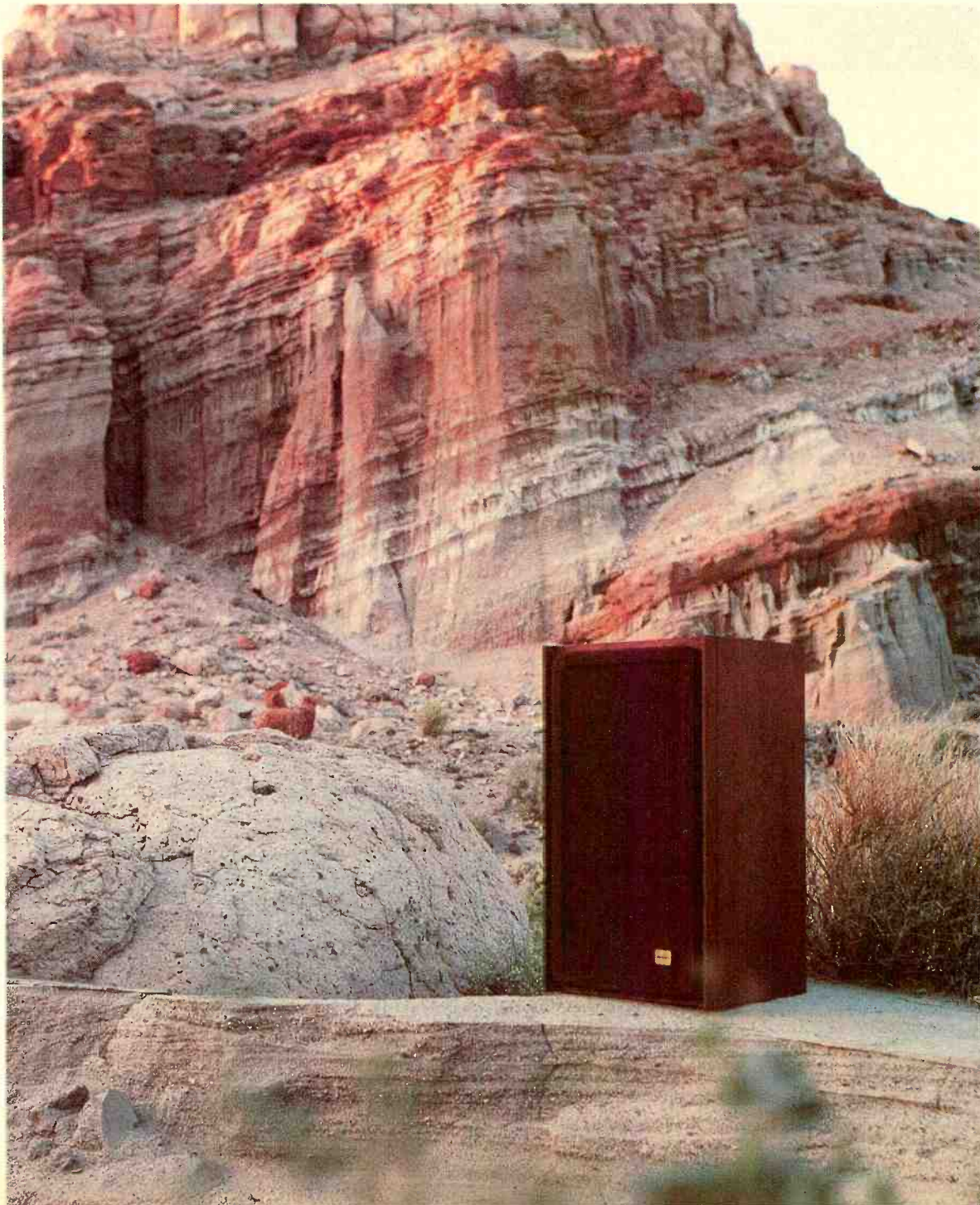
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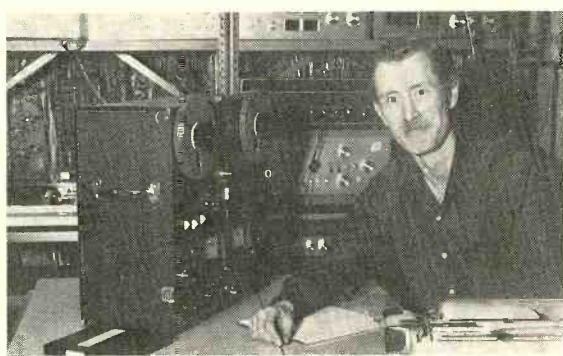
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## Tape Horizons

By Craig Stark



### SYNC AND SWIM

ONE of the questions readers often ask me is to explain the difference between the "sound-on-sound" and "multi-sync" (also known as "Sel-Sync," "Simul-Sync," and other trade names) provisions found on many of today's open-reel tape decks. While both features are designed to permit you to create a composite out of individually recorded parts (that is, separate tape tracks), the two approaches are fundamentally different.

First for sound-on-sound. Suppose Smith is set to play three different parts of a pop number: an acoustic guitar, a Hammond organ, and an electric guitar. His friend Jones will be on the drums but can't come over until later. If you use a regular three-head stereo tape machine, you must go the sound-on-sound route, and you end up with mono, not stereo.

You start by recording Smith's acoustic guitar on the left channel (track one). Then, when he's ready to add the organ part, Smith must listen (via headphones, probably) to the track he has just laid down in order to stay in time with the already recorded guitar. Ah, but right away you have problems—several, in fact. First of all, if Smith merely listens to track one and records on track two, he won't be in time with himself *on the tape*. The playback head he listens to is physically at least an inch or so away from the record head laying down the organ track, and that's the distance by which the recorded organ will be out of synchronization with the guitar—amounting to a significant fraction of a second at 7½ or even 15 ips. And second, of course, if you use track one for the guitar and track two for the organ, where do the electric guitar and drums go?

The sound-on-sound technique is a solution to both difficulties, although perhaps not the *best* solution, as we shall see. It involves *re*-recording the contents of track one as you record the organ. This is accomplished by putting the

track-one channel into the playback mode, connecting its output to the line input of track two (the track-two microphone input is used for the organ), and recording the two inputs simultaneously, using the mike/line mixing facilities to adjust their relative balance.

If the balance and playing are good, you now no longer need the original track one, so to get Smith's third part, the electronic guitar, you have him listen to a playback of the right channel, which you simultaneously re-record along with his new part, back onto track one. This leaves track two available for the drums, and the job is done.

All this re-recording exacts a price, however. Any frequency-response variations in the record-playback of your deck are magnified with each recording generation, as are tape hiss, wow, flutter, modulation noise, and the like. Further, while the "mix" may seem good initially between parts one and two, when three is added you might decide that number one should have been more prominent—but there's no going back to it at that point.

"Multi-sync," an important feature of four-channel decks in particular, eliminates these problems by switching just those sections of the *record* head where tracks have already been laid down into temporary playback use. There's likely to be a slight loss of playback fidelity in the "sync" mode (most record heads are not really optimum for playback), but you need only enough fidelity for Smith and Jones to hear the beat and stick with it. With a four-channel machine each instrument gets its own track, and all wind up in sync. The final mixdown—customarily onto a second, stereo recorder and usually using "pan pots" to "place" each track within the left-to-right stereo panorama—is the only re-recording step, and if balances or placements aren't right the first time, the original tracks are still there for a second or third try.

dealing somehow with the difficulties, and solving the problem of reliable interconnecting cables. (4) Above all, duplicating the test conditions specified by the FCC so that designs can be tested (the problems of creating a uniform reference r.f. field of carefully controlled strength are giving pause even to the FCC at the moment).

Add to these some concerns reflecting the special nature of the high-fidelity industry. For example, can the cost of all the above be paid for by a product such as a preamplifier, which is not designed to sell at a remarkably high profit margin and which will probably not be sold in great quantities anyway? Some audio manufacturers oppose bandwidth limiting in their products on aesthetic/philosophical grounds; what will be their reaction when they are called upon to insert r.f. traps and filters? There is, in fact, some evidence that conventional r.f. filtering techniques have in the past been responsible for a degradation in the performance of devices such as phono preamplifiers.

The problems of the audio industry will, of course, become the problems of the audio consumer in time. Prices will go up whether you require heavy r.f. suppression in your location or not since the manufacturer will not be permitted to manufacture any but r.f.-suppressive units. It is likely that some compromises in performance, measurable if not audible, will characterize at least the first equipment built to meet the proposed regulations. Separate components and add-on accessories will present difficulties when interfaced, with who-knows-what result. Other advances in the state of the art will inevitably be held back as efforts are diverted to r.f. interference. And, on top of all this, CB'ers broadcasting at illegal power levels with readily available linear amplifiers may still come crashing through your curtain of protection and into your living room. Indeed, many wonder whether the coming onslaught of radio energy can effectively be shielded against or filtered out by any practical, general "fix" (as opposed to specific cures for specific cases).

**T**HE situation, in a nutshell, is this: The audio industry would of course like to eliminate RFI completely, but many of its members would like to work toward this goal in their own way, perhaps with specific rather than blanket cures. (The question of whether they can be trusted to do this, and with all deliberate speed, remains a question, of course.) They would also like—without much hope of getting their wish fulfilled—to see the existing laws on illegal CB transmissions and equipment more vigorously enforced. Also, they wonder whether the indiscriminate licensing of CB operators, with its potential for throwing the television and home-entertainment equipment of millions into chaos, can really be in the interest of the greater good. We wonder also.

The issue is a complex one. Probably it cannot be argued on moral grounds, although it's undeniably tempting to try to do so. What will probably help most right now, while things are pending in the Congress, is the weight of public opinion. So if you have opinions on this issue or any of its aspects, you're urged to make contact with your legislators in Washington. Your calls and letters will be doubly appreciated because, unless I miss my guess, the good senators and congressmen are just as disturbed (and even more mystified) about all this as you and I.

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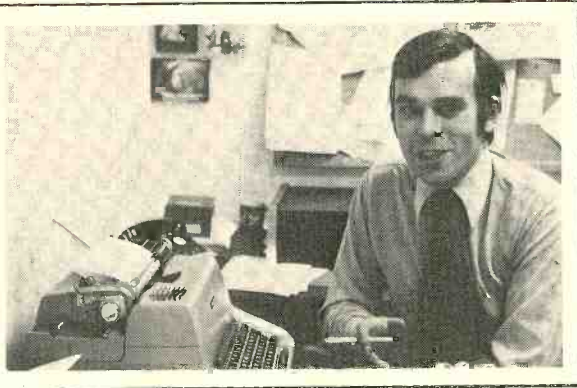


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# Audio Basics

By Ralph Hodges



## THE GREATER GOOD

SEVERAL months from now, STEREO REVIEW will be featuring a story on radio-frequency interference (RFI) in audio systems, which shows promise of becoming even more of a problem for audiophiles than it is right now. In the meantime, this is a good time and place to bring up an aspect of the RFI situation that the article will only touch on—the legal aspect.

In a remarkably short time, the emergence of strange voices saying odd things from the speakers of an audio system switched to the phono or tape input has progressed from being an astonishing novelty to a commonplace, full-fledged nuisance. Not that such interference was unheard of up till a few years ago; rather, listeners afflicted with it often didn't know what they were hearing, since it consisted in many cases of unidentifiable noises. But now the citizens-band blitz of speech transmissions (tending to be heard, often quite distinctly, as speech when they get into an audio system) has clearly identified the culprit, and tempers are beginning to flare.

To the audiophile newly conscious of RFI, it is a specter of considerable menace: an intolerable invasion of his privacy, a persistent violation of his guaranteed rights to pursue his own private, law-abiding activities within the sanctity of his own home. The fact that the CB'ers, doing their "rubber-ducky 10-4" number piggyback on your Mozart, are oblivious to their interference with other people's pleasure only adds insult to the injury and helps explain why many generally mild-mannered audiophiles are often on a very short fuse where this subject is concerned.

When the lot next door is suddenly converted into a boiler factory, a homeowner hardly expects the government to tell him to get ear-plugs or move. Nor does the pollution-conscious citizen anticipate advice on how to choose a gas mask when he complains to city hall about harmful industrial emissions. Is it possible that the government will remain indifferent when the sanctity of an individual's audio system is invaded in as sudden, as imperious a fashion? In a word, yes. The rules say, in effect, that broadcasters and other r.f. sources operating within constraints imposed by the FCC have the right to continue unimpeded by concern for interference with your audio system. If you have a piece of equipment that is acting as an involuntary re-

ceptor of such broadcasts (no matter whether it is a multi-kilobuck stereo system, a cheap table record player, or a gold filling), it is a matter strictly between you and—if you can get him involved—the manufacturer of your equipment.

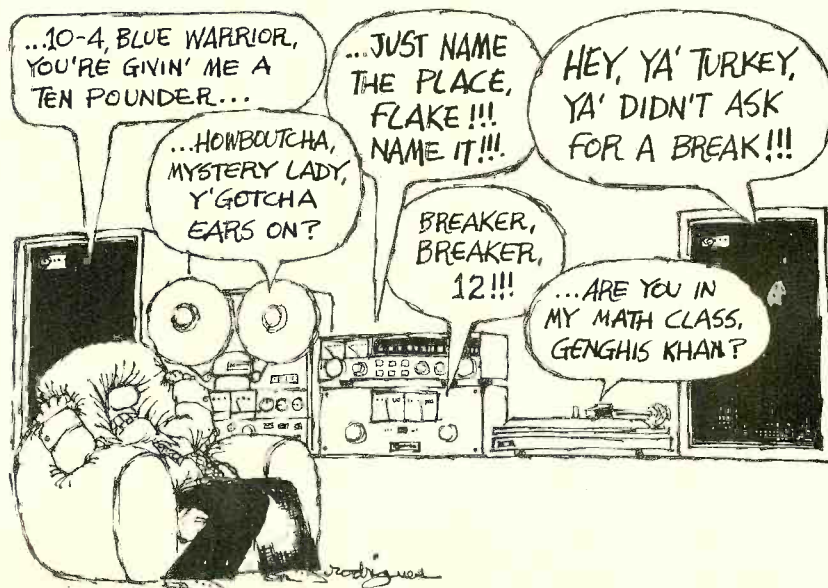
Presumably this rule was enacted in the interest of the greater good, and indeed the case for commercial and certain types of amateur radio broadcasts being invaluable public services is as strong—or as weak—as ever. But many question whether a radio medium such as CB, used heavily for personal chitchat (and as a means of thwarting traffic laws) is really worthy of such protection. However, as radio amateurs point out, CB is only *one* of many interference sources, even if it is now the most obvious and widespread. The goal, they say, should be to eliminate *all* interference effects, no matter from where. What about that?

By the time you read this, the Goldwater-Vanick bill, languishing from inattention in the 1976 Congress, will almost certainly have expired. However, the consensus is that it will just as certainly be reintroduced in a simi-

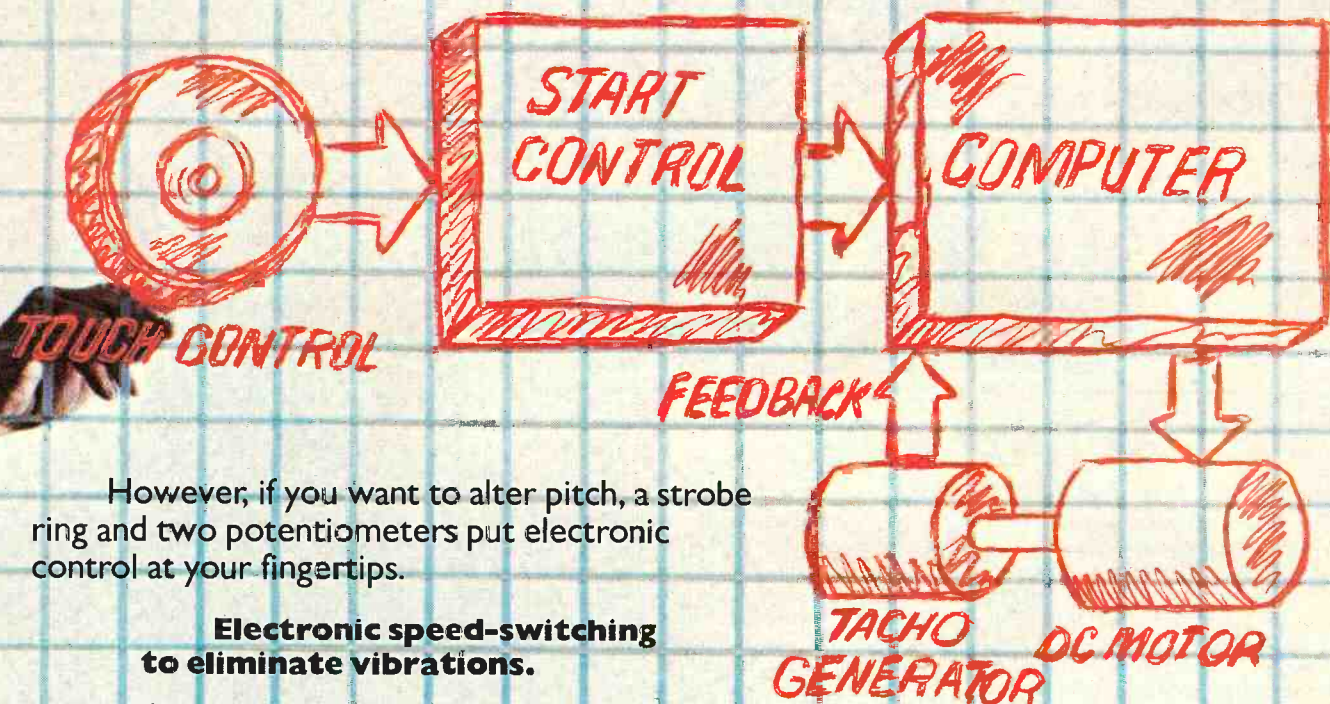
lar form during 1977, and with a good deal more Congressional support. The G-V bill proposes several changes in the Federal Communications Act, the charter under which all forms of radio and radio-related communications operate in this country. One change would tighten up the restrictions on spurious radiation from any device capable of emitting r.f. energy (affecting only devices *yet to be produced*, of course). Another would mandate "the use of protective components in audio and visual electronic equipment which are capable of reducing interference to such equipment from radio-frequency energy." The intent of the bill is to empower the FCC to create standards under which equipment not complying with said standards cannot legally be sold or otherwise trafficked in. As a matter of fact, according to the strictest interpretation of the bill, noncomplying equipment cannot even be *used*.

So far there's been little jubilation over the government's plan to, in effect, outlaw RFI. Television manufacturers (TV sets tend to suffer from CB interference on several VHF channels) feel the proposed restrictions on the various sources of spurious radiation are not stringent enough. Other victims (and perpetrators) of interference have their own tales of woe. Bobbing around in this sea of controversy are the manufacturers of audio equipment—particularly of amplifiers, preamplifiers, and the like. For them, the only likely prospect is the bleak one of having to erect ever-stronger technical fortifications against a mounting deluge of radio energy, and perhaps having to do so in ways that are not sympathetic either technically (quality cost) or economically (dollar cost) to their general design philosophies.

A few conversations at random with audio-industry spokesmen have turned up the following difficulties they believe they face: (1) Finding and hiring experts in interference and coordinating their work with that of the existing engineering staff to create feasible, *affordable* designs. (2) Redesigning circuits and hence rearranging assembly lines for the insertion of r.f. suppression devices, possibly even redesigning chassis to improve their shielding. (3) Determining *in advance* what is likely to happen when their equipment is connected to other manufacturers' equipment,



## COMPUTER CONSTANTLY MAINTAINS SPEED

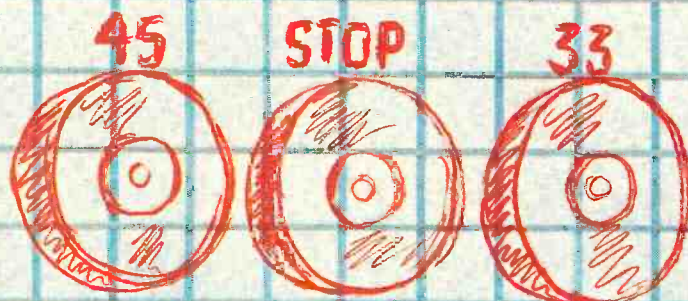


However, if you want to alter pitch, a strobe ring and two potentiometers put electronic control at your fingertips.

### Electronic speed-switching to eliminate vibrations.

Before Philips, starting, stopping and switching turntable speed from 33 to 45 rpm, were all done mechanically. The GA 212 controls all three functions electronically.

You don't push the GA 212's buttons (and maybe give the stylus the shakes), you merely touch them, featherlightly. No mechanical pressure, no vibrations.



### ELECTRONIC TOUCH CONTROLS ELIMINATE VIBRATIONS

To further immunize this remarkable turntable against mechanical and acoustic feedback, Philips engineers float the platter and tonearm on a cushioned subchassis, while rigidly mounting the motor to the main chassis. Only a shock-absorbing belt connects platter and motor. The precision-ground belt also reduces rumble to inaudibility.

### Photoelectronic shut-off stops stutters before they start.

Even to shut off the motor at the end of a record, Philips has replaced mechanics with electronics. Or, rather, with electronics and optics. For the GA 212 shuts itself off—simply and silently—by interrupting a light beam with a hidden lever that parallels the tonearm.

The tonearm, not so incidentally, is a fitting and flawless companion for the turntable. In engineering the arm, Philips eschewed seductive curves and played it straight. Because straight is the shortest (least mass) distance between two points. And less mass means less resonance.

Of course, the arm's geometry, adjustments and controls are as advanced as the motor's controls. And you know how advanced those are.

# PHILIPS

**HIGH-FIDELITY LABORATORIES**

For the name and address of your nearest franchised Philips dealer, call 800-243-6100, day or night, toll-free. (In Conn.: 1-800-882-6500.)

# THE ELECTRONIC TURNTABLE.

**An electronic computer controls the speed; electronic circuits control everything else.**

Electronic devices are more accurate and more reliable than even the most sophisticated mechanical device.

But you know that. What you may not know is that now the precision of electronics has been put to work in a turntable in ways electronics have never been used before.



The Philips GA 212 Electronic Turntable. More than mechanical. Less than \$170.\*

The turntable is the Philips GA 212 Electronic. It gets its go from a low-rpm, servo-controlled d.c. motor, much the way the best (read: expensive) turntables do. But then the GA 212 goes the best one better.

## **A computer to control the servo-control.**

To ensure constant, accurate speed, the GA 212 regulates its motor with a mini-computer. The computer corrects even the slightest variations in speed at the speed of light. Electronically.

Wow, flutter and drift are so low as to be virtually undetectable; cartridge tracking forces, stylus/groove friction, cleaning-brush drag and line-voltage fluctuations leave the GA 212's precise speed unaffected.

\*Optional with dealer.



# Power Plus.

## The Scott R336 Receiver.



Power is important. But power alone is not enough. That's why the popular Scott R336 gives you all the power you need. Plus the performance features you expect.

The Scott R336 provides 42 watts minimum continuous RMS power output per channel. More than enough for most listeners. And both channels are driven into 8 ohms from 20 Hz to 20 kHz with no more than 0.3% total harmonic distortion.

Power? Sure. But check these important performance features many other receivers in this medium price range have sacrificed.

**IM distortion (lower than 0.15%).** Far below the average. Provides cleaner sound and eliminates listening fatigue.

**Signal strength and center channel tuning meters.** Provide simultaneous visual indication of correct tuning and optimum signal strength.

**Phase locked loop multiplex section.** Maintains superior stereo separation. Remains in alignment for the life of the receiver.

**FET RF stage.** Assures higher sensitivity and overload immunity.

**Log-linear taper volume control with detents.** Spreads out volume levels. Provides finer control at low-to-moderate levels.

**Clutched bass and treble controls with detents.** Allow altering the frequency response of one channel without affecting the other. Systems can be "custom balanced" to compensate for room acoustics, decor or speaker placement.

**Separate high-frequency noise filter.** Permits cleaning up of noisy tapes, discs or broadcasts.

**Three position FM de-emphasis switch.** Permits proper reception of domestic, Dolbyized or European broadcasts.

**Two completely independent tape monitors.** Allow two tape recorders to be used simultaneously for direct tape-to-tape copying without passing through the receiver's electronics.

**FM Muting.** Silences interstation hiss while the tuner scans the frequency spectrum.

**Pretuned LC notch filters in the multiplex.** Reduce interference to a minimum.

**Signal strength meter circuit.** Employs two point sampling for wider dynamic range.

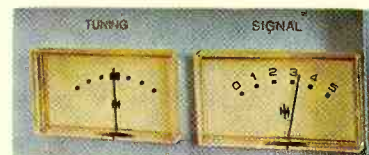
**Over 120 db IF gain.** Assures better limiting and better AM rejection.

**Instantaneous electronic protection circuit in the output stage.** Employs voltage/current sensing to prevent output transistor failure and speaker damage.

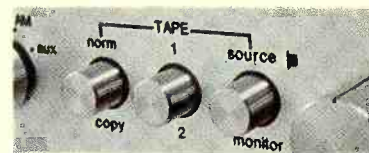
**AM section designed around a tuned RF amplifier using J-FET.** Improves signal-to-noise ratio.



Clutched bass and treble controls with detents.



Signal strength and center channel tuning meters.



Two completely independent tape monitors.

And the Scott R336 is backed by a three-year, parts and labor limited warranty. Another very important plus.

For specifications on our complete line of audio components, write or call H.H. Scott, Inc. Corporate Headquarters: 20 Commerce Way, Woburn, MA 01801, (617) 933-8800. In Canada: Paco Electronics, Ltd., Quebec, Canada. In Europe: Syma International S.A., 419 avenue Louise, Brussels, Belgium.

 **SCOTT**  
The Name to listen to.

Receivers / Tuners / Amplifiers / Turntables / Speakers

CIRCLE NO. 100 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# WITH BSR, YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY EXTRA FOR THE EXTRAS.

Only BSR gives you much more without making you pay more.

With the 200 BAX you get the base, dust cover, three different spindles and a stylus wear indicator at no extra charge.

We also include an ADC induced magnet cartridge; so unique it's patented.

That's more than you get from Dual, Garrard or BIC.

And that's just the beginning. The BSR belt drives have built-in features that make records sound better and last longer: like a viscous damped cueing

lever, calibrated force adjustment and anti-skate control.

The prices are much lower than you'd expect. Under \$140 for the 200 BAX, under \$110 for the 100 BAX and under \$100 for the 20 BPX.\*

Sure, you could spend more for a turntable. But even then, you might not get as much as you get from BSR.

For full details, see your dealer or write: Consumer Products Group, BSR (USA) Ltd., Blauvelt, N. Y. 10913.

**BSR** YOU COULD PAY MUCH MORE,  
BUT NOT GET AS MUCH.



\*Suggested manufacturer's retail price.

CIRCLE NO. 9 ON READER SERVICE CARD

quate—movement in a room may at times reduce the FM signal strength sufficiently for the tuner to fall below its quieting level. This will produce the “blast of interference” you heard. The cure? Make sure that your antenna is properly oriented for best reception of the desired station and that both its leads are connected. If you are using a 300-ohm flatline folded-dipole antenna such as is supplied with many tuners and receivers, try reorienting it. If you've simply taped it into place stretched out against the back of the equipment cabinet, there's perhaps a 50 per cent chance that you can improve its signal pickup by reorientation. Sometimes you can get improved results simply by letting it hang loose behind your cabinet or shelves.

## Matrix Phase Shift

**Q.** Proper phase relationships are an important factor in the acoustical reproduction of a signal, as evidenced by their consideration in speaker design and installation. Yet it is precisely these phase differences that are used to carry four-channel information in the SQ matrix process. Can we not therefore expect some sort of deterioration when playing an SQ recording through a two-channel sound system, compared with the results obtained from a conventional stereo record?

KENNETH SAX  
Chicago, Ill.

**A.** As is my practice when dealing with matters outside my area of know-how (which seems to contract as the audio field expands), I forwarded Mr. Sax's question to Benjamin Bauer who, as the inventor of the SQ system, should, I felt, have a ready answer, he did. Mr. Bauer writes as follows:

“The debate as to the effect of phase on the quality of sound has been going on since a century ago, when Helmholtz pronounced that phase has no effect on sound. The very existence of this debate over so long a period suggests that the effect, if any, is tenuous. We have established that carefully tailored phase-shift networks have no audible effect whatsoever on the quality of signal. I refer specifically to the so-called all-pass “psi-networks” in which the function of phase angle vs. log frequency is a straight line. Such networks have been used for years in recording and broadcasting without any listener's ever knowing it. Nevertheless, prior to using them in quadraphony, we tested them with sine waves, square waves, impulsive sounds, speech, classical music, and popular music using a panel of expert listeners. Our panel was unable to hear any difference with or without these networks in the circuit.

The relative phase shifts between channels of a stereo or a matrixed quadraphonic program are in a different category. They do cause changes—sometimes beneficial, sometimes deleterious—in the sound of the program. In the SQ system the front channels, which carry the sounds of the front stage, are recorded strictly in-phase as in a conventional stereo disc, and this accounts, in part, for the ideal compatibility of the SQ system. The back channels are recorded at a relative 90-degree phase angle which gives them a feeling of depth, and this accounts for the improved quality of SQ records even when reproduced on a stereo system.

It should be noted that the phase shifts in loudspeakers resulting from improperly designed crossover networks or drivers are a different matter, and the nature of their phase-shift functions is taken into consideration by experienced speaker designers.”

# Beauty in sound. By Fuji.

Every Fuji cassette means beauty and purity in sound. No hiss, no dropouts. Widest frequency response and dynamic range. Total reliability. Fuji high-fidelity cassettes such as the FX will give you the best performance possible on your tape recorder. Already widely recognized by experts as the finest cassette in the world. Fuji. The cassette of the pro.



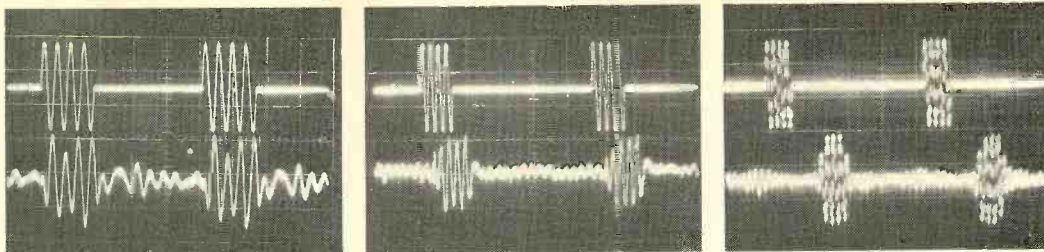
**FUJI**

Fuji Photo Film U.S.A., Inc., The Empire State Building, New York, N.Y. 10001

CIRCLE NO. 23 ON READER SERVICE CARD



The fine tone-burst response of the KLH 354 is illustrated by these photos at (left to right) 100, 2,000, and 10,000 Hz, with the input signal shown immediately above.



10 watts into an 8-ohm load, and with the input adjusted to maintain a constant acoustic sound-pressure level (SPL) output equivalent to a 90-dB SPL at 100 Hz measured at a 1-meter distance from the speaker mounting plane. The distortion at 1 watt was very low—under 1 per cent from 100 to 60 Hz, rising to 6 per cent at 30 Hz and about 15 per cent at 20 Hz. At a 10-watt drive level, the distortion was 2 per cent at 60 Hz, and it was just under 10 per cent at 30 Hz. The constant SPL measurement gave distortion readings very similar to those measured at 10 watts, except for slightly higher distortion below 40 Hz.

The impedance of the KLH Model 354 was about 10 ohms over most of its frequency range, with a minimum of 5 ohms between 80 and 200 Hz and a rise to 30 ohms at 40 Hz. Its efficiency was slightly higher than we have measured on some other acoustic-suspension systems, and it produced a 90-dB SPL at a distance of 1 meter when driven by 1 watt of random noise in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz. The tone-burst response was good, with

no signs of erratic response or sustained ringing (the energy appearing between the 100-Hz bursts in the photo at left above is the result of room reflections).

In the simulated live-vs.-recorded listening test, the KLH Model 354 lived up to the promise of its measured performance. With the level controls in their flat positions, the duplication of the original sound was nearly perfect. The controls' effect is slight, suitable for subtle correction of tonal balance, but not so great that one can inadvertently (or deliberately) destroy the carefully balanced frequency response built into the system.

● **Comment.** We found the KLH Model 354 to be both a neutral-sounding and a highly musical-sounding speaker. These might seem to be redundant or even contradictory descriptions, but they are not in this context. The middle- and high-frequency sound of the speaker is about as uniform and free of coloration as that of any conventional dynamic speaker we know of. There are others, of

course, including some at considerably lower prices than the Model 354, that can do about as well in this frequency range (although the dispersion of the high frequencies from the Model 354, as judged by listening to pink noise as we walked past the speaker, was exceptionally good). However, it was the bass performance of the Model 354 that distinguished it from other fine speakers with which we compared it, and this is in the tradition of the best acoustic suspension systems—a tradition which has not always been followed in other speakers of that general type. The Model 354 does not impart any heaviness, boominess, or other unnatural quality to the sound, but when *real* bass is present in the program, real bass is what you hear.

In its totality, the KLH Model 354 offers a rare combination of smooth, extended frequency response, low distortion, reasonably high efficiency, good power-handling ability, and wide polar dispersion. It is an excellent loudspeaker at an attractive price.

Circle 107 on reader service card

## Micro Seiki DDX-1000 Turntable and MA-505 Tone Arm



**T**HE Micro Seiki DDX-1000 turntable is a high-quality, two-speed, direct-drive, servo-controlled unit. Its unconventional appearance derives from the fact that, instead of being mounted on a motorboard and a wooden base, it is supported by three symmetrically placed aluminum struts emerging radially from the motor housing. The full-size (12-inch) aluminum platter, which weighs about 6 pounds, rests on the motor and hides it from view, so that the only visible parts are the three mounting supports and the platter. A

neon lamp located just outside the platter's edge illuminates the two rows of raised stroboscope bars around its periphery.

Below each mounting strut is a rubber "foot" coupled to the strut through a "shock absorber" or compliant damped suspension. A large knurled wheel adjusts the height of each foot individually over a range of about  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch for turntable leveling.

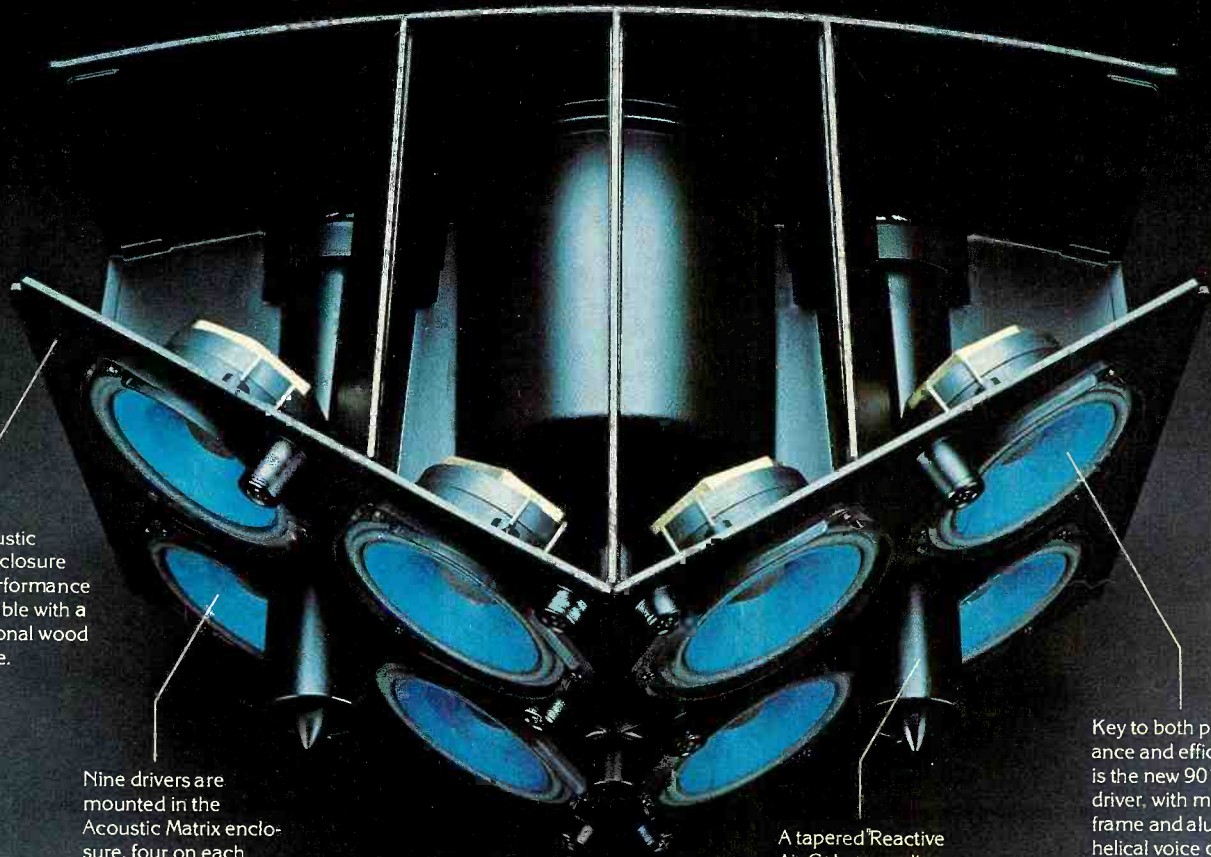
The DDX-1000 turntable connects to an external control box through a 3½-foot cable. The box, which is about 8½ x 4 x 3 inches, has

a panel with four buttons and two knobs. A push-on/push-off button controls the power to the unit. A light touch on either of the two speed-selector buttons sets the platter in motion at 33⅓ or 45 rpm and also lights a red LED near the button. Above each speed selector is its own vernier adjustment knob with a nominal range of  $\pm 6$  per cent. Between them is a STOP button which turns off the motor but leaves a red LED glowing to show that the power is still on.

A black plastic cap, extending about an inch above each mounting strut, serves as a cover for the shock absorber and as a mounting post for a tone arm. A special arm-mounting plate is supplied with a universal cutout adaptable to most separate tone arms. (An optional arm-mounting plate is available with an elongated cutout for the SME 3009 arm.) A hole at the other end slips over the mounting post, and the plate locks firmly into position with a set screw. The mounting plate can be rotated to place the arm base from 7¼ to 9¼ inches from the turntable center, enabling stylus overhang to be set readily. Since there are three mounting posts, it is possible to install up to three tone arms simultaneously on the DDX-1000.

Micro Seiki also makes a high-quality, dynamically balanced tone arm, the Model

# A speaker unlike any other.



The Acoustic Matrix enclosure yields performance unattainable with a conventional wood enclosure.

Nine drivers are mounted in the Acoustic Matrix enclosure, four on each rear panel and one facing forward.

A tapered Reactive Air Column radiates the lowest bass from the four drivers on each rear panel.

Key to both performance and efficiency is the new 901 III driver, with molded frame and aluminum helical voice coil.

## Introducing the Bose 901<sup>®</sup> Series III.

In 1968, Bose introduced an unconventional loud-speaker system: the legendary Bose 901. Now, we are introducing a new speaker of revolutionary concept, design, materials, and performance: the Bose 901 Series III.

### What you will hear.

You will be struck by a sense of immediacy and presence, spaciousness of sound, and accurate stereo image almost anywhere in the room. Equally startling are the realism and accuracy of the timbre of each instrument, the clarity and dynamic range of the deepest bass

notes, and the precise definition of individual instruments.

### Efficiency

Most dramatic, however, is the remarkable efficiency with which this level of performance is achieved: the new 901 Series III can produce the same volume of sound with a 15 watt amplifier as the original 901 with a 50 watt amplifier. This dramatic breakthrough in the basic economics of high-fidelity makes it possible to put together a high performance component system at a lower price than was previously possible, even though the 901 Series III is a more expensive speaker than its predecessor.

### Technology

Spectacular performance and efficiency are the results of proven Bose design concepts and technological innovations that include the unique, injection-molded Acoustic Matrix<sup>™</sup> enclosure and a new, ultra-high-efficiency driver.

At the same time, the 901 Series III is (as is the original 901), a Direct/Reflecting<sup>®</sup> speaker with a separate electronic equalizer.

To appreciate the spectacular performance of the Bose 901 Series III, simply ask a Bose dealer to play the 901 III in comparison to any other speaker, regardless of size or price.

For a full color 901 III

brochure, write Bose, Box SR1, The Mountain, Framingham, Mass. 01701. For the nearest Bose dealer, call (800) 447-4700. In Illinois call (800) 322-4400.



## **BOSE**<sup>®</sup>

The Mountain, Framingham, Mass. 01701.

dB at 5 Hz, effectively removing the rumble frequencies found in today's better turntables. The loudness compensation boosted both low and high frequencies. The RIAA equalization error was within the tolerances of our test instruments—less than  $\pm 0.25$  dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz and, on an extended measurement, within  $\pm 0.4$  dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz. The equalization was not significantly altered by the inductances of representative phono cartridges; the typical effect on response was a smooth rise with increasing frequency to a maximum of +1 dB at 20,000 Hz.

The Marantz Model 1250 has relatively high gain, requiring only 49 millivolts at a high-level input (or 0.5 millivolt at a phono input) for a reference output of 10 watts. The noise level, referred to 10 watts, was -80 dB through the high-level inputs and -75.5 dB through the phono inputs. This represents excellent low-noise performance since our measurement is unweighted and is made with a normally terminated input instead of the shorted input often used. The microphone input had about the same sensitivity as the phono input (0.55 millivolt) with a -67-dB noise level, reflecting the flat microphone-amplifier response instead of the high-frequency roll-off of the phono circuit's RIAA equalization.

The phono inputs overloaded at 300 millivolts, one of the best figures we have measured and especially noteworthy in view of the amplifier's high gain. The microphone

overload was at 360 millivolts, making inadvertent overload and distortion an unlikely possibility. The conservative design approach of the Marantz Model 1250 is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that its main amplifiers require only a 1.7-volt input to drive them to the clipping point (1.43 volts for rated output), yet the preamplifier section can deliver 13 volts (rated 10 volts) before it clips! Apart from the huge reserve margin this gives to the amplifier, it means that the power amplifier can be driven by just about any preamplifier or accessory device and that the preamplifier in the Model 1250 can in turn drive just about anything without exceeding its capabilities.

⊗ **Comment.** On the rare occasions when we come across a product as outstanding as the Marantz Model 1250, we make an extra effort (since nothing is perfect) to find a weak spot. Try as we might, we could not fault the amplifier. No test, either by measurement or by use, revealed any respect in which it fell short of its potential. This may not mean that it is perfect, but it does mean that we couldn't find any limitations.

The operating controls have a smoothness and positive "feel" that are consistent with the image of quality associated with a top-end amplifier from one of the most highly respected names in the industry. There are no unwanted noises, switching transients, or the like when anything is pushed or turned. The amplifier's protective relay does not connect

the speakers until all turn-on transients have subsided, and it disconnects them first when it is shut off. For all practical purposes it is a noise-free amplifier.

For those who are impressed by transient response and slew-rate performance (we have some reservations about their significance to the listener), we can say that the rise time of the amplifier, including the preamplifier section, is about 1 microsecond and that the slew rate is about 30 volts per microsecond. Clearly there have been no sacrifices in these respects in the design of the Model 1250.

We suspect that the true appeal of the Marantz Model 1250 will be to the advanced tape recordist, who will appreciate its remarkable taping flexibility. The possibility of controlling and using three separate programs simultaneously through the same control amplifier is a little mind-boggling, but it works, and very well. The RECORD SELECTOR controls are so logically marked and designed that their use becomes almost automatic after a brief period of familiarization.

When it is considered that most integrated amplifiers whose electrical performance compares with that of the Marantz Model 1250 not only lack its complete operating flexibility but are more expensive, it begins to appear that the Marantz Model 1250 is something of a "best buy" for those who are in the market for a powerful, state-of-the-art amplifier that is distinctly different from its competition.

Circle 106 on reader service card

## KLH Model 354 Speaker System



THE KLH Deluxe Dedicated loudspeaker series is headed by the Model 354, a three-way, floor-standing acoustic-suspension system. A 12-inch woofer is teamed with a 4½-inch mid-range driver and a 2¼-inch cone tweeter. The middle- and high-frequency drivers have a pair of three-position level switches (in the rear of the cabinet) that provide a slight decrease or increase of output in their respective frequency ranges relative to the normal or "flat" response.

According to KLH, the Model 354 is somewhat more efficient than has been the rule for other acoustic-suspension speakers of this type. A minimum amplifier rating of 25 watts per channel is recommended, but the speaker can be used safely with amplifiers capable of delivering up to 175 watts per channel.

The cabinet of the KLH Model 354 is constructed of high-density particle board finished with a walnut wood veneer. The speaker mounting board is normally con-

cealed by a black fabric grille. Removing the grille reveals that the front of the speaker is finished in walnut like its other surfaces, with four black "Hedlock" grille fasteners in the corners to secure the grille.

The KLH Model 354 is 26 inches high, 14 inches wide, and 12⅝ inches deep; it weighs slightly under 50 pounds. An optional walnut-finish pedestal (\$25 per pair) raises the cabinet three inches from the floor. The Model 354, like the other KLH speakers, is covered by a five-year warranty including parts and labor. Price: \$250.

⊗ **Laboratory Measurements.** Our frequency-response measurements were made with the tweeter and mid-range level switches in their center, or flat, positions. Combining the curves obtained from a quasi-reverberant field measurement at frequencies above 300 Hz with a closely miked measurement at lower frequencies, we obtained a frequency-response curve which was notably uniform over the full measurement range of 20 to 15,000 Hz. Except for a bass rise of about 5 dB centered at about 50 Hz, the smoothed response curve was flat within  $\pm 2.5$  dB over the full range (including the bass rise, it was still an exceptionally good  $\pm 3.5$  dB).

Low-frequency distortion was measured under two different conditions: at a constant input level corresponding either to 1 watt or to

(Continued on page 50)

# Both of these decks will improve the sound of your cassettes. One even improves your tuner.

Introducing the RS-671AUS and the RS-677US with Dolby<sup>®</sup> FM. Both decks will dramatically improve the sound of your cassettes. But with the RS-677US you'll also get a dramatic improvement in the sound of your tuner. Like a quieter FM S/N ratio. Increased dynamic range. Even better FM reception.

And to improve the sound of your cassettes both units employ a two-motor drive system. Including an electronically controlled DC motor used exclusively for capstan drive. The results: 0.075% (WRMS) wow and flutter for the RS-671AUS. And 0.07% (WRMS) for the RS-677US.

You also get a quiet S/N ratio of -65dB (CrO<sub>2</sub> tape, above 5kHz). As well as lower distortion and excellent transient response. The reasons: A Technics low-noise pre-amplifier. Selected low-noise transistors. And Dolby.

And both decks also give you an extremely wide frequency response of 30 Hz - 17kHz

(CrO<sub>2</sub> tape). Thanks to the exceptionally narrow gap of our patented HPF heads.

You'll also get quiet, highly accurate recordings, with plenty of dynamic range, because both decks have peak check VU meters. So you can precisely set recording levels for the barest minimum of overload distortion, especially when recording from live sources.

Both decks have memory rewind. Fast-acting silent electronic switching. A lockable pause control. Mike/line mixing. A CrO<sub>2</sub> tape selector. And with the RS-671AUS, you'll get selectors for high and low bias. And with the RS-677US, memory play and solenoid activated remote control.

So when you're ready to improve your system, the RS-671AUS and the RS-677US are ready for you.

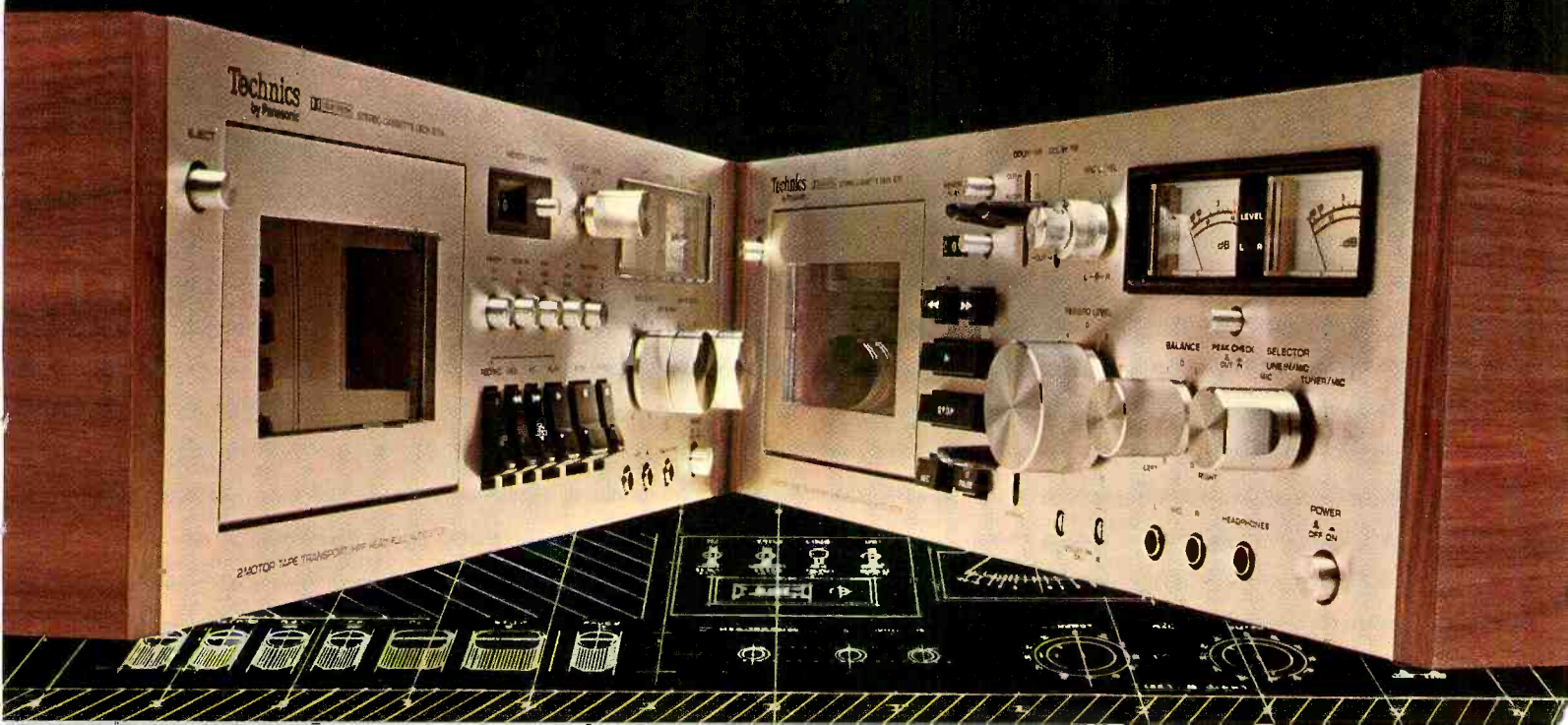
\*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc. Cabinetry is simulated wood.



Solenoid Remote Control.

## Technics

by Panasonic



some can dub in either direction. A few can even do this while playing a different program through the loudspeakers. However, with the Marantz Model 1250 it is possible to record a program from one source on one recorder, another program from a different source on the second machine, and still listen to a third program through the speakers!

The electrical-performance specifications of the Marantz Model 1250 are equally impressive, if not quite as novel. It is rated to deliver 125 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads between 20 and 20,000 Hz with less than 0.1 per cent total harmonic distortion. We will not attempt to repeat the full list of specifications included in the instruction manual for the amplifier; suffice it to say that they are representative of the finest contemporary amplifier performance.

The Marantz Model 1250 is a rather compact unit, especially considering its power and versatility. It is only 15 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches wide x 12 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches deep x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches high, although it weighs a solid 40.7 pounds. In appearance it resembles the lower-power Marantz amplifiers. The panel is finished in satin gold with matching knobs, pushbuttons, and slider controls. In the center of the panel are six vertical sliders that provide bass, mid-range, and treble tone-control action for the left and right channels. Each slider is lightly detented at eleven positions. Below them is a horizontal BALANCE slider detented at its center.

To the right of the tone controls are the mode selector and volume-control knobs. The former connects the signal channels and the amplifier channels for stereo, reversed stereo, L + R (mono) through both speakers, and either left or right channels through both speakers. Above these knobs are six pushbuttons that affect the amplifier's frequency-response characteristics. The TONE DEFEAT button bypasses the tone-control circuits.

ed include PHONO 1, PHONO 2/MIC, TUNER, and AUX. Across the bottom of the panel, from left to right, are the two microphone jacks and two tape DUBBING jacks (each handles both channels, so that one serves as a recording output and the other as a playback input) for use with tape decks that are not permanently connected to the system. These jacks disable and replace the rear TAPE 2 circuits when plugs are inserted into them. The two SPEAKERS pushbuttons separately connect two pairs of speakers to the amplifier outputs. Finally, there is a headphone jack and a power pushbutton (a blue pilot light is located in the top center of the panel).

We have saved until last the unique RECORD SELECTOR switch facilities that give the Model 1250 its unparalleled versatility. They are actually separate rotary input-signal selectors for the two tape decks controlled by the Model 1250. When both are set to their DIRECT position, the amplifier functions like almost any other, with the program selected by the main input buttons appearing at both tape-recording outputs as well as at the amplifier outputs. Monitoring (or playback) from either recorder is selected in the usual manner with the tape-monitor buttons. The PHONO position on either record-selector knob connects the corresponding recorder for dubbing from either phono input, depending on which input pushbutton has been depressed. Each record-selector knob also has TUNER and AUX settings plus a TAPE COPY position. If deck number 1 is set to TAPE COPY, it records the playback from deck number 2, and vice versa. It must be appreciated that unless the recorders are switched to the DIRECT setting, these record-selector functions are entirely independent of the input-selector buttons that determine the program being heard through the speakers.

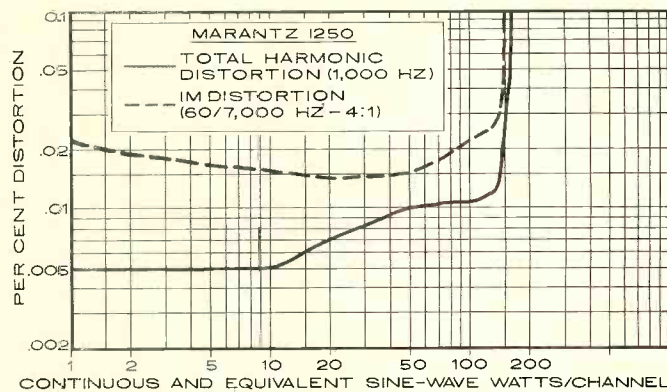
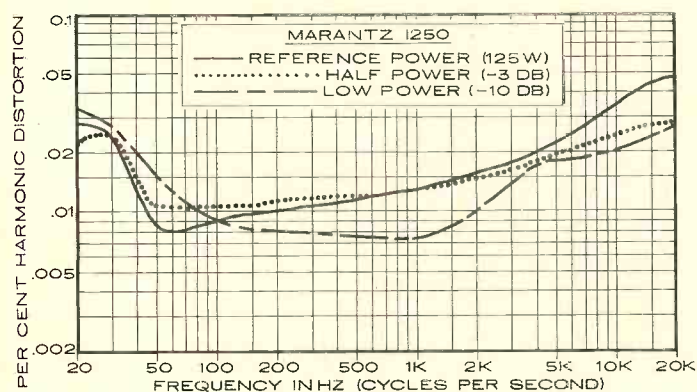
In the rear of the Model 1250, together with

supplied for connection to a Marantz tuner having a built-in oscilloscope display (any external oscilloscope could be used, of course). The spring-loaded speaker-output terminals are designed to receive the stripped ends of the wires, clamping them firmly when the spring is released. As would be expected from an amplifier with such elaborate input facilities, the Marantz Model 1250 has a goodly number of a.c. convenience outlets—six in all, with two of them switched. Suggested price: \$699.95. An optional walnut-veneer cabinet costs \$42.50.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Following the usual one-hour preconditioning period at one-third rated power, the outputs of the Marantz Model 1250 clipped at 162 watts per channel into 8 ohms at 1,000 Hz. The outputs for 4 and 16 ohms were, respectively, 242 and 90 watts per channel.

At 1,000 Hz, total harmonic distortion (THD) was 0.005 per cent or less at outputs up to 10 watts, rising slowly to 0.012 per cent at 130 watts and 0.06 per cent at 160 watts just before clipping occurred. The intermodulation distortion (IM) was less than 0.025 per cent from 1 watt to the rated 125-watt output, reaching 0.058 per cent at 150 watts. It also rose slightly at very low power levels—to 0.19 per cent at 10 milliwatts. At rated output, the THD was essentially less than 0.04 per cent from 20 to 20,000 Hz (approaching 0.01 per cent over much of that range). The distortion did not change significantly at lower power levels.

The tone-control characteristics had the expected shapes, closely matching Marantz's specifications. Using the 250- and 4,000-Hz turnover frequencies resulted in a flat response between 150 and 5,000 Hz even at the extreme control settings, which changed the output by about  $\pm 8$  to  $\pm 10$  dB at the frequen-



Two TURNOVER buttons change the bass and treble turnover frequencies from their normal 500 and 2,000 Hz to 250 and 4,000 Hz. This makes it possible to modify the response at the frequency extremes (where it is usually needed) without affecting the mid-range. The FILTER buttons introduce 12-dB-per-octave attenuation rates below 30 Hz and above 9,000 Hz. The LOUDNESS button activates the loudness compensation in the volume-control circuit.

At the upper left of the panel are the four input-selector buttons and two tape-monitor buttons for the tape decks connected to the amplifier. The program sources accommodat-

ed the inputs and outputs, there are separate PRE OUT and MAIN IN jacks. These, too, are unconventional in that they are joined without external jumpers or use of a special switch. Instead, plugging a standard phono plug into one of the MAIN IN jacks disconnects that power-amplifier channel from the preamplifier output and connects it to the new source. Presumably, if one wished to use the Model 1250 as a preamplifier alone, one could insert shorting plugs into the two MAIN IN jacks and take the outputs from the PRE OUT jacks.

A DIN socket duplicates the functions of each of the groups of tape-recording jacks. Left- and right-channel SCOPE outputs are

cy extremes of 20 and 20,000 Hz. The mid-range control action was centered at about 900 Hz with a maximum range of  $\pm 7.5$  dB. Although it affected a wide range of frequencies (from about 100 to 5,000 Hz), its limited range prevented it from creating a grossly unnatural effect.

The filters had the rated 12-dB-per-octave slopes, and in their effects were as close to ideal as conventional fixed filters can be. The high-frequency cut-off (the -3-dB point) was at about 8,000 Hz, while the low-frequency cut-off was below 30 Hz. The low filter reduced the output by 12 dB at 15 Hz and by 30

(Continued on page 48)

# RESEARCH DELIVERS

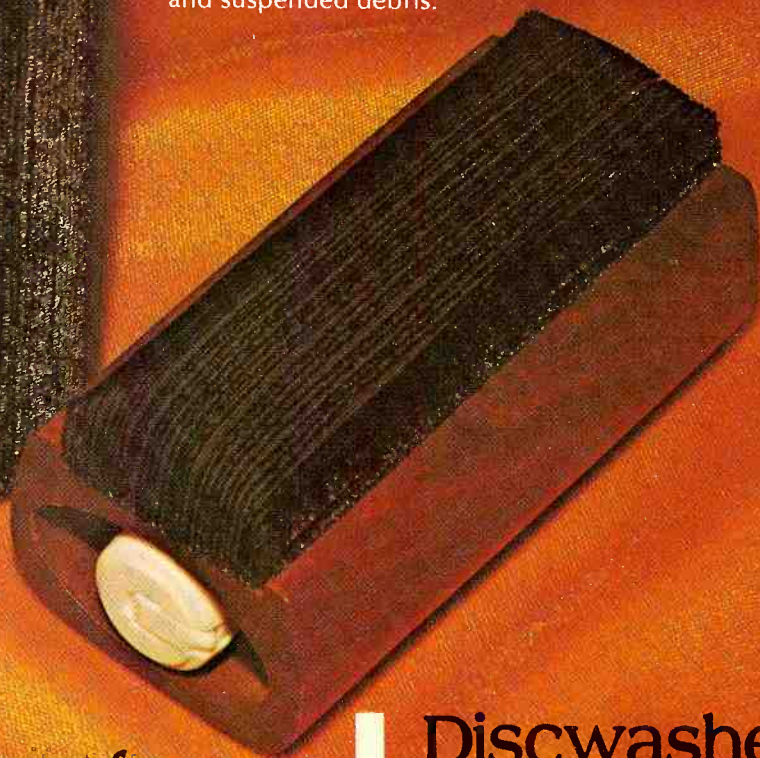
## A Quantum Jump in Record Care

### New D3 Fluid

1. Unmatched activity plus safety to vinyl additives (the critical compounds of longevity).
2. A secret non-adhering anti-static system that is measured in parts-per-billion!
3. A special chemical "release system" (pat. pend.) that allows suspended contaminants to pull away from critical micro-grooves.

### The Systems Approach Of the Discwasher Brush

D3 plus the patented directional micro-fibers and absorbent backing remove—rather than line up—all dust and suspended debris.



Research Delivers from



**Discwasher  
Group**

1407 N. PROVIDENCE  
COLUMBIA, MO 65201

0.05 per cent at 75 watts and 0.1 per cent at 125 watts. The IM rose somewhat at very low power levels to a maximum of 0.45 per cent at 10 milliwatts.

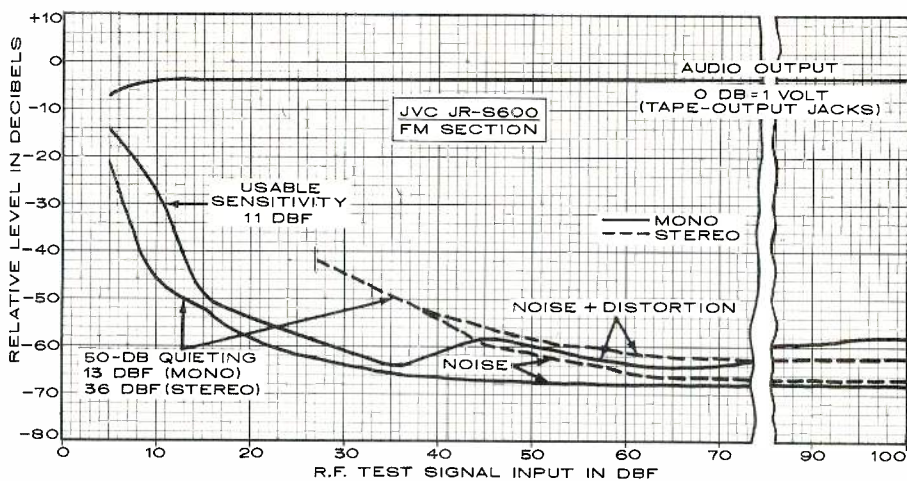
At the rated 110 watts output, the THD was about 0.06 per cent below 100 and at 20,000 Hz, but it decreased to about 0.025 per cent between 500 and 3,000 Hz. At lower power outputs the distortion was substantially lower, typically between 0.005 and 0.015 per cent.

The SEA tone controls provided the versatility one would expect from a five-band graphic equalizer. Obviously they can create a greater variety of useful frequency-response curves than is practicable with more conventional tone controls, and they have the further advantage that the knob positions outline the approximate frequency-response curve.

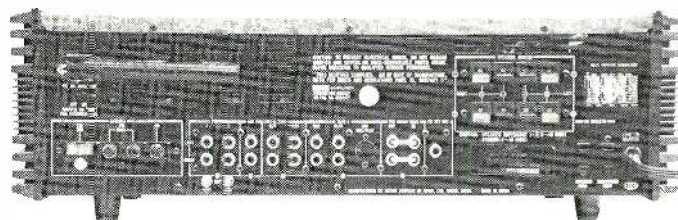
The switched filters had marginally adequate 6-dB-per-octave slopes, with their -3-dB frequencies being approximately 100 and 4,000 Hz. The loudness compensation boosted both low and high frequencies at low settings of the volume control. The extended RIAA phono equalization was accurate within  $\pm 1$  dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz, and it was within  $\pm 0.5$  dB over the defined range of 50 to 15,000 Hz. There was a slight interaction with the phono-cartridge inductance, causing an increase in output at frequencies above 10,000 Hz. The effect was slight, however, amounting to about 1.5 dB at 15,000 Hz and 4 dB at 20,000 Hz.

The audio sensitivity for a 10-watt reference output was 62 millivolts (mV) through the AUX inputs, with a very low -77-dB noise level. The phono sensitivity was quite high, 0.62 mV, yet the noise was a low -74 dB and the phono preamplifier overloaded at a very high 280-mV input.

The FM tuner section had a usable sensitivity (in mono) of 11 dBf or 2 microvolts ( $\mu$ V). The stereo sensitivity was set by the switching threshold at 27 dBf (12  $\mu$ V). Quieting sensitivity (50 dB) in mono was 13 dBf (2.5  $\mu$ V) with 1 per cent THD. In stereo, it was 36 dBf (35  $\mu$ V) with 0.37 per cent THD. The ultimate S/N at 65 dBf (1,000  $\mu$ V) input was 68 dB in mono and 67 dB in stereo. The respective distortions at that level were 0.06 and 0.085 per cent. The stereo distortion with 100 per cent out-of-phase (L-R) modulation was 0.11 per cent at 100 Hz, 0.036 per cent at 1,000 Hz, and 0.079 per cent at 6,000 Hz.



The response characteristics of the SEA equalizer are charted at the upper right of the JR-S600's rear panel.



The FM frequency response was flat within  $\pm 0.5$  dB from 30 to 12,000 Hz and was down 2 dB at 15,000 Hz. The phase-locked-loop multiplex circuit showed its effectiveness in the outstanding stereo channel separation, which exceeded 40 dB from 40 to 3,000 Hz and was at least 30 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. The AM frequency response was down 6 dB at 75 and 3,800 Hz.

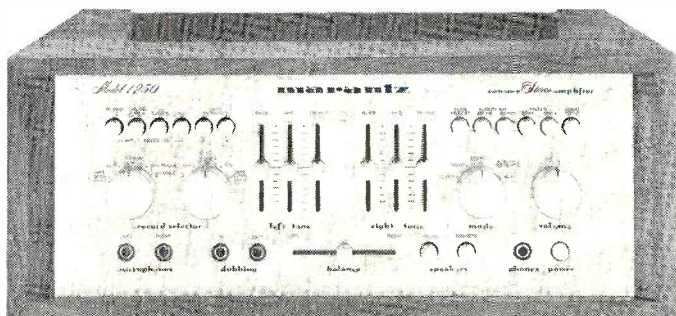
The other FM-tuner characteristics were also very good. The capture ratio was 1.36 dB at 65 dBf (1.33 dB at 45 dBf), with 65 dB of AM suppression (although the latter decreased to 52 dB at a 45-dBf input). The image rejection at 98 MHz was 83 dB. Alternate-channel selectivity was a very good 88 dB, and adjacent-channel selectivity was 6.5 dB. The muting threshold was the same as the stereo-switching threshold—27 dBf (12  $\mu$ V). Pilot carrier leakage at 19 kHz was a low -75 dB, and hum was -69 dB. The FM muting worked well, but we often heard a "thump"

when tuning on or off a station, which might be hazardous to small light-duty speakers if the volume were set too high.

In our tests, JVC's FM noise reduction worked about as well as the conventional Dolby FM decoding circuits, meaning that it reduced but did not eliminate FM noise.

● **Comment.** In its basic operating qualities, the JVC JR-S600 leaves little to be desired. It has an excellent FM tuner, an audio amplifier whose power output and distortion characteristics rival or exceed those of many fine separate amplifiers, and a "tone control" system whose versatility could be exceeded only by a much more complex octave-band equalizer. Add to these qualities an outstandingly quiet audio section and one of the highest phono-overload capabilities in the business, and the result is clearly one of the handful of top-ranking receivers on the market.

Circle 105 on reader service card

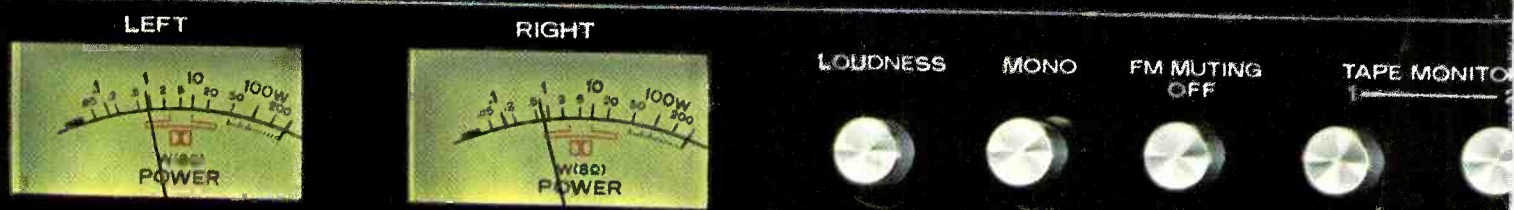
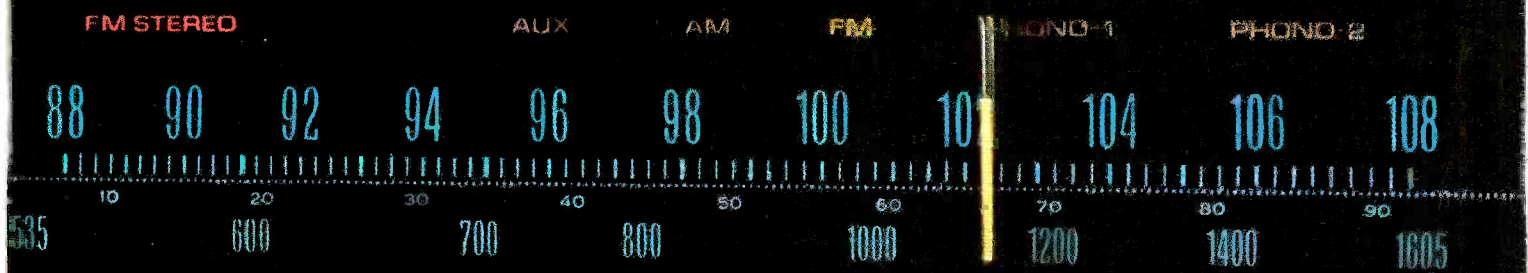


## Marantz Model 1250 Integrated Stereo Amplifier

As well as being the most powerful integrated amplifier to bear the Marantz name, the Model 1250 has the distinction of including a unique tape-recording capability unlike any other we have seen. Many amplifiers and de luxe receivers have internal switching for copying from one tape deck to another, and

(Continued on page 46)

# Big as life.





MHz  
kHz



METER  
REC CAL TONE  
OFF ON

POWER LEVEL  
DOLBY NR LEVEL



REC-1  
REC-2  
SYSTEM

SELECTOR  
PHONO-1 FM AUTO AM  
PHONO-2 AUX

MIC LEVEL  
MIC



# new top receivers.

SPECIFICATIONS	9090 DB	8080 DB	7090	7070	6060	5050
Power Output Min RMS per channel, both channels driven into 8 ohms at rated Total Harmonic Distortion.	125 watts @0.1% THD	85 watts @0.1% THD	110 watts @0.2% THD	60 watts @0.3% THD	40 watts @0.4% THD	30 watts @0.5% THD
FM Sensitivity	9.8 dBf	9.8 dBf	9.8 dBf	10.3 dBf	10.8 dBf	11.2 dBf
Dolby™ Circuitry	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Twin Power Meters	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

9090 and 9090 DB, walnut veneer. All other cabinets, simulated walnut grain.

MODEL 9090.  
Two power output meters. Two tuning meters.  
Triple tone controls. Turnover switches with tone defeat.  
-20 dB muting switch. Mic-mixing with mic level control.  
Two stereo headphone jacks.

MODEL 5050.  
Two tuning meters.  
Mic-mixing with mic level control.  
High filter. Speaker Selector.



MODEL 6060.  
Two tuning meters.  
-20 dB muting switch.  
Mic-mixing with mic level control.  
High and low filters.  
Speaker selector.

MODEL 7070.  
Two power output meters.  
Two tuning meters.  
Triple tone controls.  
Mic-mixing with mic level control.  
-20 dB muting switch.  
7 position tape/play switch.  
Speaker selector.

Dolby, Dolbyized are trademarks of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.

CIRCLE NO. 38 ON READER SERVICE CARD

MA-505, that we tested in conjunction with the DDX-1000. The MA-505 has an S-shaped tubular aluminum arm with a low-mass cartridge shell attached by a bayonet connector. The arm and cartridge mass are balanced by a threaded counterweight, and vertical tracking force is applied by a spring within the arm.

The anti-skating knob, near the tracking-force adjustment, shifts the position of a wire relative to the arm axis so that the tracking-force spring exerts a component of force tending to rotate the arm toward the outside of the record. There are separate reference settings for elliptical and conical styli; once set, the anti-skating torque varies in direct proportion to the tracking-force setting. A separate lateral balance weight compensates for any tendency of the S-shaped arm to move when the turntable is tilted.

Extending from the arm base is a lever that adjusts the height of the arm assembly to match that of the turntable. Another lever op-

at frequencies of 15 Hz or higher. Because of this, applying ARLL audibility weighting, which reduces the contribution of the lower frequencies, resulted in a reading of -63 dB, which is typical of the better direct-drive turntables on the market.

The mounting shock absorbers isolated the turntable against vibration more effectively than most conventional turntable suspensions. However, the unit was most sensitive at about 75 Hz, a frequency easily excited by any speaker system. Though better than average, the acoustic-feedback isolation of the DDX-1000 was therefore, according to our test techniques, not quite as good as its unusual mounting system might suggest. On the other hand, Micro Seiki states that the very low center of gravity of the DDX-1000, combined with the design of the mounting feet, provides high resistance to lateral vibration. Since our test technique applies only a vertical vibration component, it could not properly evaluate this characteristic.

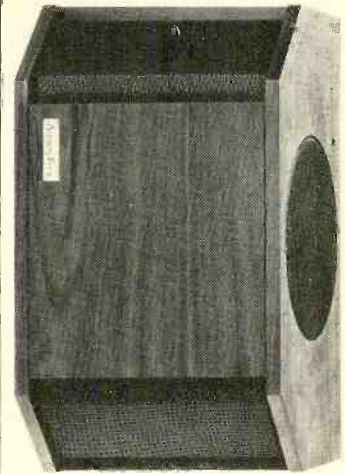
The tone-arm tracking error was low—less than 0.4 degree per inch of radius (and usually much less). Its tracking-force calibrations were extremely accurate, with an error of less than 0.02 gram at any setting. The anti-skating compensation, like that of most arms we have tested, was slightly low when playing high-velocity test recordings. However, it was close enough to the optimum value to be considered satisfactory. The cueing system was very smooth, and the arm drifted outward only one or two groove widths during its descent. The low-frequency resonance with the Shure cartridge was at 8 Hz, an indication that the arm mass was relatively low. The capacitance of the signal cables and arm wiring was 80 picofarads per channel, which is compatible with the requirements of CD-4 cartridges.

● **Comment.** The measured performance of the Micro Seiki components speaks for itself. This turntable and arm clearly belong in the top ranks of record-playing components. To us, the most striking characteristic of both components (aside from styling considerations) is their ruggedness and superb finish. The turntable support structure, like most of the DDX-1000, is a heavy piece of machined aluminum, and the leveling system is simple and effective (though we wish a bubble level had been provided on one of the struts for other arms that might require leveling). In handling the turntable and its controls one has the distinct impression that it would go on working forever without loss of performance or breakdown. This is, of course, purely a "gut" reaction, but nothing in our evaluation of the turntable gave us any reason to doubt its validity.

The MA-505 arm is also a handsomely finished device, easy to set up and handle in spite of (or perhaps because of) its apparent complexity. As the instruction manual points out, the tracking-force and anti-skating settings can be adjusted while playing a record without skipping a groove, a feat not possible on most arms. Overall, we would rank it among the best arms available.

The Micro Seiki DDX-1000 turntable and MA-505 tone arm make a hard-to-beat combination for anyone who appreciates fine workmanship as well as good performance—and who has the means to indulge such appreciation. And the turntable itself will also attract those who wish to make direct comparisons of different arms and cartridges.

Circle 108 on reader service card



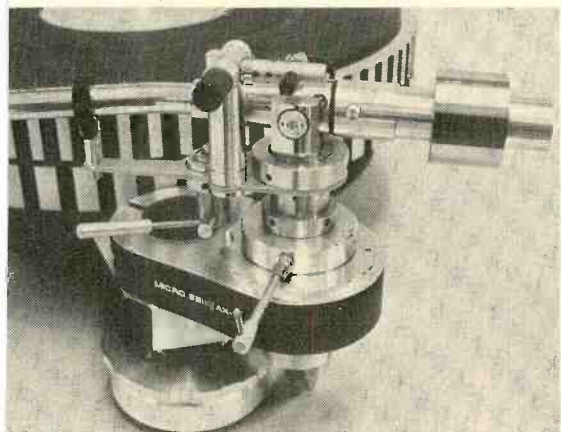
# ALLISON: FOUR

Allison dealers are now demonstrating the Allison:Four, the first "bookshelf" loudspeaker system with Stabilized Radiation Loading\*. This unique design minimizes the large variations in middle-bass power output produced in conventional systems by reflected impedance from room boundaries. In uniformity of bass power delivered to a real listening room, the new model FOUR's only peers are the larger and more expensive Allison three-way systems. The FOUR is a two-way system with a crossover frequency of 2,000 Hz. But its extreme low-frequency response is the same as that of the Allison:Two, and it is

\*Patents pending  
\*\*Higher in the South and West because of freight cost.

ALLISON ACOUSTICS 7 Tech Circle, Natick, Massachusetts 01760

fully equivalent to other Allison systems in high-frequency range, smoothness, and omni-directional dispersion in the forward hemisphere. These factors give the Allison:Four great flexibility in room placement without performance compromise. It can be placed on a table or shelf, or hung on a wall using the wall-mounting hardware supplied with it. A stereo pair can be located on the same wall, on adjacent walls, or even on opposite walls away from the main listening area; there is no requirement that the systems face toward the area. The Allison:Four's price is \$175.00\*\*. Descriptive literature, complete specifications, a statement of Full Warranty, and a list of dealers are available on request.



The stylus-force dial (the larger black knob in photo) is located on the pivot structure above the tone arm and has a scale precisely calibrated from 0.5 to 3 grams at intervals of 0.1 gram.

erates the damped cueing mechanism, and there is an integral arm rest with a lock. A braid-covered signal cable, about 4 feet long, plugs into a socket in the base of the arm.

The DDX-1000 turntable has a "nationally advertised value" of less than \$600. The MA-505 arm's "value" is less than \$150.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Micro Seiki MA-505 arm was installed on the DDX-1000 turntable and a Shure V-15 Type III cartridge was mounted in the arm shell. The apparently complex series of setup adjustments on the arm actually made its installation simple and straightforward.

The turntable speeds were not affected measurably by line-voltage changes between 95 and 135 volts; they could be varied over a  $\pm 6$  per cent range by the vernier controls. The platter reached operating speed about 2 seconds after one of the buttons was touched. The flutter (wrms) was 0.025 per cent, the lowest figure we have measured on a turntable and probably the residual level of the DIN test record used for this measurement.

Unweighted rumble was -33 dB, and spectrum analysis showed that it was predominantly at 10 Hz with a broad distribution at lower frequencies. However, the higher-frequency rumble components dropped off rapidly, being 20 to 30 dB below the 10-Hz level

You may have noticed that few turntable manufacturers call your attention to the critical role of the tonearm in record playback. Dual is an exception.

For years, we have been pointing out that the fidelity of reproduction and record life are significantly influenced by every aspect of tonearm design. Whatever the shape, materials, or mechanics of a tonearm, the goal is always the same: to maintain the cartridge in the correct geometric relationship to the groove and to permit the stylus to follow the contours of the groove freely and accurately. Whenever the stylus cannot follow groove undulations, it will gouge its own way. And as we have frequently reminded you, there is no way to repair a damaged record.

# Why we want you to know more about tonearms. And why others may not.

Every tonearm designer should consider geometry, mass, balance, resonance and bearing friction. However, despite the simple fact that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, some designers are more concerned with appearance. Hence, the curved tonearm, whose deviations from optimum design simply add mass, reduce rigidity and increase the likelihood of resonance. Which is why all Dual tonearms are straight.

Dual engineers have always designed for optimum performance, which depends on more than external shape. Stylus force is applied through a long coiled spring centered around the vertical pivot, and its accuracy is maintained independently of record warp or turntable level. So is the dynamic balance of the tonearm. And the anti-skating system is not only calibrated separately for all stylus types, but is self-compensating for groove diameter.

You might keep all this in mind when you are considering your next turntable. Chances are you'll want it to be a Dual.



**United Audio Products**, 120 So. Columbus Ave., Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10553  
Exclusive U.S. Distribution Agency for Dual

The **Dual CS721**. Fully automatic single/play with continuous repeat. DC, brushless electronic, direct-drive motor. Vertical Tonearm Control, anti-resonance filters, adjustable cue-control height and descent speed, 10% electronic pitch control, illuminated strobe. Less than \$400, including base and cover. **Dual CS704**, similar, but with semi-automatic tonearm, lead-in groove sensor. Less than \$310, including base and cover.

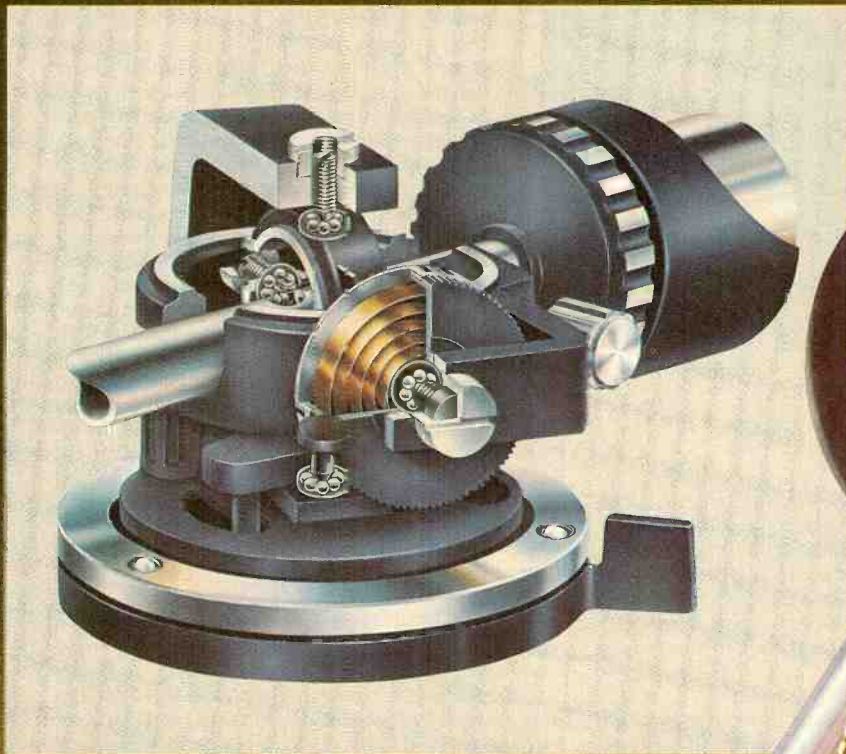
#### Specifications (DIN B):

Dual CS721: Rumble, >72dB; Wow and flutter, <math>\pm 0.03\%</math>

Dual CS704: Rumble, >70dB; Wow and flutter, <math>\pm 0.03\%</math>



Dual CS721



Gimbal-mounted Dual tonearms pivot horizontally and vertically on identical sets of pivot points and high-precision low-friction bearings. The metal of the pivot point is first hardened and then honed, a process which produces microscopically smooth surfaces. The ball-bearing races are only 0.157 inch in diameter. Bearing friction: vertical, <math>\lt; 0.007</math> gram; horizontal, <math>\lt; 0.015</math> gram.

Stylus force, applied by long coiled spring around vertical pivot, remains perpendicular to record even if turntable is not level.

The curved tonearm may appear longer than the Dual tonearm, but both actually have the identical effective length and horizontal tracking angle.



Actual size of Dual tube (A) and typical curved tonearm (B). For the same effective length, straight Dual tonearm has lower mass and resonance yet greater rigidity.

The Dual 1249. Fully automatic, single-play/multi-play plus continuous repeat. Belt-drive. 12" dynamically-balanced platter, 6% pitch-control, illuminated strobe. Less than \$230.

Other full-size belt-drive models include: Dual 502, semi-automatic. Less than \$160. Dual 510, semi-automatic, with lead-in groove sensor. Less than \$200.

**Specifications (DIN B):**

Rumble, >65dB; Wow and flutter, <math>\lt; \pm 0.05\%</math>



Dual 1249

# Going on Record

By James Goodfriend



## RIP-OFFS: ONE MORE TIME

FOLLOWING several columns on the subject and numerous other mentions of it in these pages, letters and cards about musical rip-offs have been buzzing about our offices like flies in the marketplace on a summer afternoon. I have been asked to reinforce my condemnation of rock plagiarizing from the classics, and I have been asked to condemn plagiarism in the case of classical composers as well ("pinching folk melodies"). I have been asked with what justification I condemn such as Emerson, Lake and Palmer when the results of what they do are so invaluable (?), and when, it is assumed, I would defend the equivalent practice in the context of classical music. I have been told to accept the whole thing as a natural condition of music—and of the world—and I have been asked to please shut up about it all.

I have a certain sympathy with that last request, but the buzzing around the office doesn't permit it. Besides, I think, on the basis of the letters received, there is an awful lot of confusion on the issue. I am no pundit, but I think I see the situation clearly enough to function possibly as an arbiter.

Point one: plagiarism, as a matter of morality, is the use of someone else's invention without giving him the proper credit. A rip-off is the same thing. But it is also a rip-off, even if credit is given, if what is done with the other man's work is to make it less than it was before you got your hands on it. Handel, who was probably the greatest appropriator of other people's ideas in the history of music, in-

variably improved whatever he took. A few popular composers have managed to produce something on about the same level as the original work they took it from, but most have merely managed to whittle an inferior pop song or rock composition from what was originally a masterpiece. That is a rip-off, category two.

WHICH leads us to point two: using somebody else's melody is not necessarily a rip-off; it depends upon how it is used and why. Deliberate quotation, for example, is not plagiarism, for the listener is expected to recognize the source and to react to its placement in a new context. Thus Tchaikovsky did not plagiarize the *Marseillaise* in his *Overture 1812*, and Berlioz did not plagiarize the *Dies irae* in his *Symphonie Fantastique*, and the Beatles did not plagiarize the *Marseillaise*, in *The Mood*, and *Greensleeves* in *All You Need Is Love* (thank you, Steve Simels).

Nor are variations on a theme whose source is acknowledged necessarily plagiarism. No one in his right mind would contend that Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* is a steal from Tallis, or that Delius' *Brigg Fair* is a rip-off of that rather well-known folk song. Ditto Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*, Kodály's *Dances from Galánta*, all the Bach chorales, and innumerable other pieces. And certainly the very titles of Copland's *Billy the Kid* and *El Salón México* and Tchaikovsky's *Capriccio Italien* openly acknowledge their composers' debts to folk

songs. No one is trying to get away with anything here.

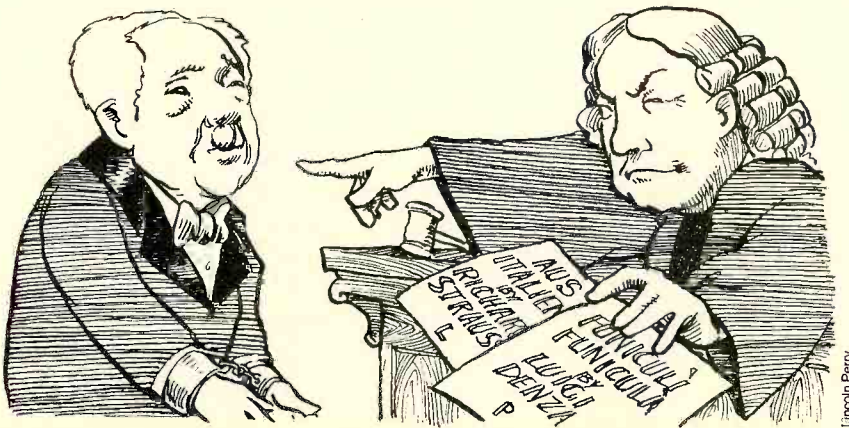
Point three: even beyond acknowledgment of sources, or lacking it altogether, plagiarism is rarely an issue in classical music because what is involved is invariably a melody, and melody is only a part of a classical work. Only one instance of real classical plagiarism comes easily to mind. Giovanni Bononcini submitted to the Academy of Ancient Music in London as his own composition a madrigal that proved to be a simple transcript of a work by Antonio Lotti. He was found out and roundly disgraced. Had he taken merely Lotti's melody no one would have cared. Had Emerson, Lake and Palmer taken merely a melody no one would have cared. They might even have been praised for what they did with it—if they did anything with it.

But what Emerson, Lake and Palmer, Waldo de los Rios, and other hacks have lifted is not melodies but entire compositions, to which they have added little except a rhythm section, changing virtually nothing but the instrumentation and the length. This is clear-cut plagiarism when composer credit is claimed for the final product, and generally a rip-off, in the second sense, even when it is not. When the original work happens still to be in copyright, it is legal plagiarism as well (as in *The Barbarian*).

And so, point four: using somebody else's melody if it's copyrighted and you don't have permission and he catches you at it, is legally plagiarism. Here it doesn't matter at all how you treat the melody, what you make of it, or why you did it. You can feel morally pure and still get clipped for damages, for the law is not interested in aesthetics but in ownership. It happened to Richard Strauss. He quoted what he naively thought was a folk song in his *Aus Italien*. The song was *Funiculi Funicula*, and it was written by Luigi Denza only six years before. Denza sued and won; Strauss paid.

In popular music, a fair number of songwriters have ended up paying royalties to other songwriters, and many more would have but that the copyright on the earlier work (if there ever was one) had run out. That doesn't mean that pop musicians are more dishonest than classical musicians. Rather, it goes back to two things. The first is, as mentioned before, that in classical music the melody is only a part of the work, whereas in a pop song the melody is the music. And second, that it's sometimes impossible to tell, in the misty state called inspiration, whether you are creating something or merely remembering something.

AND so we come to the unconscious rip-off, and classical music, I admit, is big on that: Beethoven's *Eroica* theme appeared first in Mozart's *Bastien et Bastienne*, and the "Ode to Joy" theme in a minor sacred work by Mozart. Debussy's *La Damoiselle Élue* features a theme from Grieg's Piano Concerto. And most sublime (and pitiful), the half-mad Robert Schumann wrote down a theme he said was dictated by angels; sadly, it turned out to be an imperfectly remembered melody from his own Violin Concerto. Still, not all such anticipations are causal, and the line between memory and coincidence is also difficult to draw. If one really wanted to force the issue he could take up what my friend Leonard Altman occasionally proposes—with a wicked look in his eye—as a fit subject for a Ph.D. thesis: *Bach Precedents in the Dead Sea Scrolls*.



Lincoln Perry

When your taste grows  
up, so should your  
cigarette.

What you want from a cigarette changes.  
Once I smoked just to be like everybody else. Now I  
know what smoking's all about. I smoke for taste.  
And Winston's real taste is what I want.  
Winston is for real.

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

19 mg. "tar", 1.3 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette,  
FTC Report APR. '76.

# The Pop Beat

By Steve Simels



## NEXT BIG THING: HAWAIIAN?

IN my capacity as Popular Music Editor here at what Joel Vance (in a thinly disguised ploy to get himself a raise) refers to as the "Best of All Possible Music Magazines," I have, over the course of the last few years, received a lot of interesting letters from readers. Some are remarkably thoughtful reflections on things we've published (believe me, there are a lot of armchair rock critics out there who could put us professionals to shame), some are angry-fan outbursts, some are threats, and a few are propositions (my favorite is the one from a girl in Arizona who informed me, pithily, "Face it, Steve, I'm a doll"). But recently I received one with a question in it that, to put it mildly, threw me for a loop.

"Where," the correspondent inquired, "do you think pop music is going in the next few years?"

After spending a few sleepless nights wrestling with that question and coming up with nothing more cogent than "to hell in a handcart," I admitted that I was licked, and so, tail between my legs, I availed myself of the sage advice of James Goodfriend, STEREO REVIEW's Music Editor. Jim may have noticed that I was unkempt, disheveled, and mumbling incoherently, but, as this is how I appear on most good days, he waited for me to make the first move.

"Jim," I finally cried in desperation, "they're on to me. The readers want to know where pop music is going, and I haven't a clue. What do I tell them?"

Jim smiled at me with the air of a Borgia prince reaching for his poison ring.

"Hawaiian music."

"Hawaiian music?" I repeated, feeling like Dustin Hoffman in *The Graduate*.

"Sure," he said. "For the last thirty years, every time things have gotten slow in the record business, some executive predicts that Hawaiian music will be the Next Big Thing. It never fails."

Now, I don't know if Jim was aware that Don Ho (of *Tiny Bubbles* fame) has just gotten his very own daytime show on ABC, but the bizarre thing is that he just may be right. In fact, Hawaiian music is just as reasonable a prediction for the N.B.T. as reggae, jazz-rock, c-&-w, or anything else you could care to name for the simple reason that it is highly unlikely that anything will be the Next Big

Thing in pop while we are still young enough to enjoy it.

That sounds awfully pessimistic, I know, but consider the facts. For starters, here we are closing in on the end of the Seventies, and as yet we have not witnessed the emergence of any truly pervasive new musical styles or of any individual artists capable of exerting an



DON HO  
*An Hawaiian harbinger?*

across-the-boards influence on both music and pop culture. Two of the most visible stars of the decade, for example—David Bowie and Bette Midler—have been commercially successful, and they have been influential in the sense that they have inspired a host of imitators, but neither one of them, after the initial novelty wore off, could be said to have changed the way we live. The most that could be said about them—and of all Seventies stars, from Springsteen to Elton to the Eagles to Patti Smith, which is certainly a mixed bag—is that they've given us new wrinkles, small refinements of things that have gone before. They've pursued their own visions, to be sure, but they are hardly revolutionaries.

Second, all of the profound social and musical changes of the recent past—the emer-

gence of the big bands and then the crooners in the Thirties and Forties, the rise of rock-and-roll in the Fifties, the whatever-the-hell-it-was of the Sixties—have been largely youth-oriented phenomena. There are, however, a lot fewer teenagers today, percentage-wise, than there were ten years ago; their buying power, quite aside from the state of our national economy, has consequently decreased; and by all accounts they are, as a group, despite the dizzying developments of the last few years, a singularly jaded and complacent lot. Depending on the degree of your scorn for youthful folly, that may or may not give you hope, but it is unlikely that we will be seeing soon again a bunch of kids ripping out theater seats after hearing a new song.

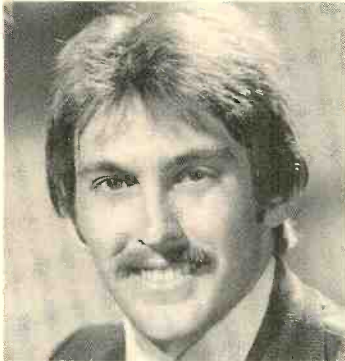
WHAT we can expect, I think, is more of what we've been getting lately—disco. It may or may not be significant, but it is at least interesting that the only "new" music peculiar to the Seventies with any broad commercial appeal is *dance* music, music addressed not to the head (or even the heart) but to the feet, to the automatic motor response that is the real engine behind any dance craze. But its acceptance has been so easy, so natural, and so unhurried (even though many of its promoters are hurrying for the Big Bucks) that it is unlikely to be building up any kind of aesthetic backlash.

Last, and most crucial, the record industry in 1977 has grown to the point where, to put it simply, an Elton John is worth more to MCA than a *Jaws*. With stakes like that, the music moguls are understandably unwilling to risk money on anything not demonstrably marketable. An expensive flop like the notorious Martha Reeves album Richard Perry produced is to be avoided like another *Great Gatsby*, and that is a situation not exactly conducive to the greening of whatever boat-rocking young geniuses are still lurking out there in the musical wilds. At the same time, the number of people buying records has increased so that only a small segment of the total audience is necessary to support—profitably—almost any kind of artist. The c-&-w folk don't listen to jazz, discomaniacs couldn't care less about John Denver, Frampton fans won't scream for Earth, Wind and Fire, and Eagles rooters aren't in the Kiss army, yet they all sell. The result is an incredibly compartmentalized listening audience, with everyone blissfully unaware of what his neighbors are into, and that kind of parochialism, while profitable for record companies and artists, is unhealthy even in the short run, most unlikely to produce any cross-fertilization or significant new musical discoveries.

So where do we go from here? The answer seems obvious: headfirst into The Bland. Audiences are unwilling to stretch their ears, young people regard music as a kind of background activity slightly less important than television, and the record companies can't afford to take chances (they never really wanted to anyway). Certainly there are and will continue to be exceptions; we will have a few fluke successes and a surprise breakthrough or two. But these will only prove the rule, and barring something catastrophic like a war or a depression or the Second Coming, it's hard to imagine the overall picture changing in any significant way. Hawaiian music? Why not? Do you really think it's such a leap from the New Decadence to Grass Skirt Chic?



# Find out why three bright young men left banking, teaching and insurance to sell Lanier dictating equipment.



**Richard Marks**  
Former Banking Supervisor

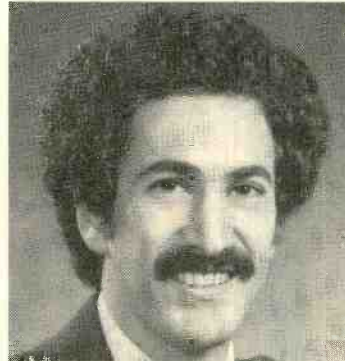
"I never thought I was the type to be in sales. I have a master's in marketing and I saw myself in administration. But I also saw that things moved very slowly at the bank. Especially salaries and promotions.

**"A friend suggested Lanier."**

"So I looked into their record. They introduced seven new products in just four years. They had taken on IBM, Dictaphone and Norelco—and won. Lanier was a fast-moving, aggressive company. This year they even expanded into the automatic typewriter business.

**"I liked what I saw."**

"So I went to work for Lanier. I've been here 15 months, and so far I've doubled what I was making at the bank. I feel like I'm really getting ahead. And there's room to grow. They're looking for management from within. I feel like I've got a career at Lanier, not just a job."



**Paul Lieberman**  
Former Teacher

"After several years of teaching, I was ready for a change. I wanted to work with a wider variety of people. More-aggressive people. Real professionals.

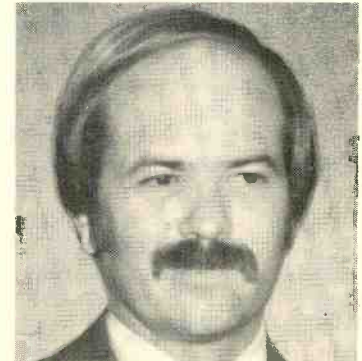
**"I found them at Lanier."**

"The first thing that impressed me was the way Lanier introduced me to their company. They gave me a chance to spend a day in the field with a salesman, so I really got a feel for the business. Nobody comes to work here with rose-colored glasses.

**"Then there was the training program."**

"To me this was a real in-depth opportunity to become a professional—as a salesman and a word processing consultant. That kind of support shows they really care about your future.

"I've been with Lanier for a year, and I haven't been disappointed. In the opportunities, or the people."



**Ron Raven**  
Former Insurance Salesman

"One thing about life insurance, nobody really relishes the thought.

"With dictating equipment, you've got something people really like to hear about. Dictating is six times faster than writing. It can make anybody more productive.

**"With Lanier, you've got the best and most complete line of products in the business."**

"Lanier put standard cassette dictation in the office. They pioneered centralized input systems. Technology like that gives you a real edge on the competition. Which may be why Lanier has tripled their sales in less than five years.

**"At Lanier, what you make is directly dependent on what you do."**

"Your successes show up in your paycheck."

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**A**s an audio component, the phono cartridge has a somewhat ambiguous status. For some it is a mere afterthought, "the thing with the needle" at the end of the tone arm that they paid a penny extra for when they bought their turntable. But the informed consumer knows that the performance of the cartridge is crucial to the long- and short-term quality of record reproduction. The truth is that regardless of the quality of the rest of the system, the ultimate "sound" of a phonograph record can be no better than the performance of the cartridge permits. On the other hand, almost all cartridges sold for use in high-fidelity component systems are good enough to extract reasonable quality from the majority of records. But because audible differences between cartridges are usually subtle (which is *not* to say insignificant) what is heard is therefore open to highly subjective interpretation.

Much of the mystique that has grown up around the phono cartridge arises from the fact that it has a well-nigh impossible task to perform, yet it manages to function with remarkable near-success. Though totally accurate and *complete* measurement of all the factors that control the sonic performance of a cartridge is probably not beyond technology's means, we aren't quite sure about what to measure—or the significance of the measurements we do make. This, of course, invites the exercise of personal opinions and prejudices. All cartridge manufacturers are fully aware of the numerous factors that complicate design. To note a few examples (in typical engineering language): torsional and transverse resonances in the stylus cantilever; interaction between the effective moving mass of the stylus system and the record's plastic compliance; the pros and cons of various transducing systems (the part of the cartridge that converts the physical stylus motion to an electrical output signal); and many more. This is not the place to catalog all these difficulties or the ingenious ways cartridge designers have found to get around them. Instead, what we're seeking is a sensible approach to cartridge buying that takes these problematic factors into account *where* they count.

**C**ARTRIDGES are analogous to loudspeakers in their function, both being electromechanical transducers, though operating in opposite directions. As is true with the speaker, cartridge design involves considerable art in combination with science. Also as with speakers, each cartridge design involves certain "trade-offs" that have been made to achieve particular performance goals. What meaning do these compro-

mises have for the cartridge buyer, and how much influence should they have on his thinking before he goes about selecting a suitable cartridge for his music system? The answers to these questions will be more useful with the help of a little background information, especially about the types of cartridges available and their key features.

magnetic material (not an actual magnet) is moved by the stylus system to vary the distribution of magnetic flux between the fixed coils. A subcategory of the moving-iron design is the "induced-magnet" type, in which the magnetic flux from one or more fixed magnets is induced into a magnetic element attached to the cantilever.

# PHONO CARTRIDGES

## A short course for buyers

By Julian D. Hirsch

### Cartridge Types

Almost all high-quality cartridges are *magnetic*, and they depend on variations in the strength of a magnetic field impinging on a coil of wire to generate an output voltage. The majority use fixed coils having hundreds of turns of fine wire. In *moving-magnet* cartridges, a tiny magnet on the stylus cantilever (the minuscule metal tube or solid bar that connects the diamond tip at one end to the generating assembly at the other end) wiggles about under the influence of the stylus motion, thus inducing a voltage in the fixed coils. In *moving-iron* cartridges (also known as variable-reluctance), the magnet (or magnets) is more powerful and is fixed in the body of the cartridge. A piece of

Most major cartridge manufacturers use one of these generating systems throughout their entire product line. Although each type has its theoretical advantages, the degree to which they are realized in practice varies with the manufacturer.

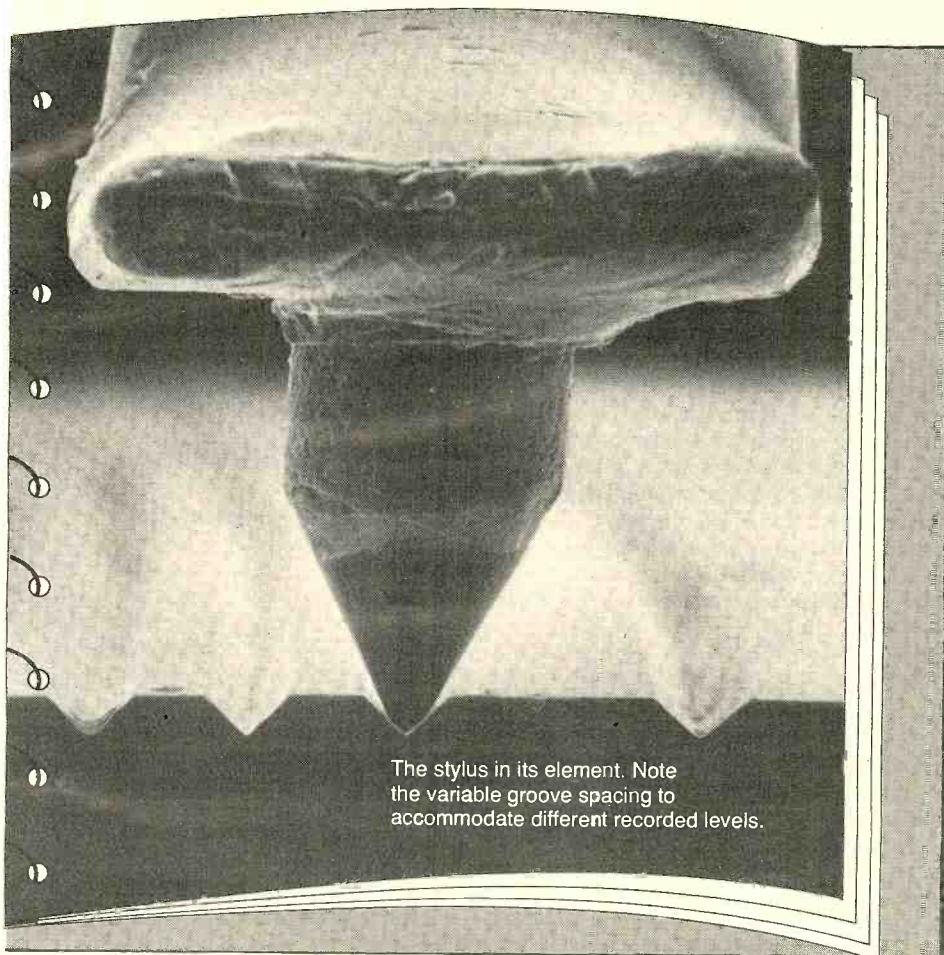
For many years, special sonic qualities have been attributed to the moving-coil cartridge. Although there may be a very slight *theoretical* advantage (in lower distortion) to the movement of a coil in a fixed magnetic field (as opposed to the variation of a field through a fixed coil), the moving-coil cartridge has compensating disadvantages. The need to wind an extremely small multi-turn coil (actually, two coils at right angles to each other) on a tiny bobbin makes moving-coil cartridges somewhat more expensive than most other

types. Their output voltage is usually much lower than that of other magnetic cartridges (with a few notable exceptions), and in most cases a special step-up transformer or a "pre-preamplifier" or "head amplifier" is needed to increase the signal output to the point where it is compatible with the phonograph input requirements of typical pream-

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The stylus in its element. Note the variable groove spacing to accommodate different recorded levels.

plifiers. These accessory devices, in addition to being expensive, can degrade the signal-to-noise ratio of the system if not carefully designed and installed. Finally, stylus replacement usually requires return of the entire cartridge to the factory or to an authorized service facility.

In spite of these negative aspects, the fact remains that the moving-coil cartridge is today more popular than ever, and it is considered by many record-playing purists to be the best available type. At least two explanations come to mind (there are doubtless more). First, some moving-coil cartridges have a relatively short, direct coupling from the stylus to the coils, minimizing the effects of cantilever resonances on performance. Second, other types of magnetic cartridges are de-

signed with a complementary action between their mechanical stylus resonance and the electrical resonance of their generating systems (determined by the interaction of the coil inductance with the total circuit capacitance) to produce a flat overall frequency response. When properly executed this can result in an impressively flat meas-

ured response curve, but it does not eliminate the effects of the mechanical stylus resonance (usually in the uppermost audible octave or just above it). The process is analogous to attempting to eliminate a speaker resonance with frequency equalization; the response curve can be flattened, but the resonance (with many of its side effects) is still there. Some people claim that this is responsible for a variety of audible flaws in record reproduction; others are less positive of its audible significance. No one denies, however, that the situation exists; the only argument is about its importance to the listener.

## The Stylus

A large part of a cartridge's performance (perhaps the most important part) is determined by something outside the cartridge body itself: the stylus. This is a carefully shaped and polished piece of diamond almost too small to see with the unaided eye. It must faithfully follow the microscopic undulations of groove walls whose scale is minute even compared to that of invisible dust particles. This is the almost impossible task mentioned earlier, since it is not reasonable to expect a stylus tip whose dimensions are larger than the recorded wavelength to follow the groove modulation accurately. In spite of this, the stylus manages to trace the complex record groove with remarkable accuracy.

Elliptical styli, now common at all but the lowest price levels, present a smaller radius (that is, a "sharper" edge) to the groove wall, and this improves the tracing of high frequencies. A variation of the elliptical stylus is used in CD-4 cartridges, which must reproduce frequencies up to 45,000 Hz—more than twice the highest frequency usually found on stereo records. These special shapes, known by various names such as Shibata, Pramanik, Quadrilateral, Hyperbolic, etc., not only have a very small edge radius to trace ultrasonic frequencies; they also have an elongated contact span in the vertical direction that distributes the tracking force over a larger area of the groove wall in the interest of reducing record wear.

**T**HE question of how to select a cartridge for your own system is no easier to answer definitively than the question of what speaker to buy or which neck-

# PHONO CARTRIDGES...

tie; in all three cases subjective factors are disconcertingly significant. However, there are some guidelines that, if followed, can help prevent an expensive mistake.

## Tone Arm and Tracking Force

The phono cartridge is as dependent on its tone arm as the speaker driver is on its enclosure. Fortunately, the matching of a cartridge to a tone arm is not nearly so critical as the speaker case, but a *serious* mismatch can be as damaging to the sonic result as an ill-designed enclosure.

If, like most people, you buy an integrated record player, the installation instructions will often specify a range of tracking forces over which the unit's arm will operate properly. Even if no such information appears explicitly, it can sometimes be inferred with reasonable accuracy from the range of tracking-force adjustment provided by the arm. Make sure that the recommended force range of the tone arm encompasses the range of forces suggested by the cartridge manufacturer. Cartridges are specified over a range of forces (0.75 to 1.5 grams, for example) for several reasons. In a well-designed tone arm the cartridge can operate closer to its minimum rated force than in an arm having excessive pivot friction, incorrect anti-skating compensation, or so much mass that it cannot negotiate

the warps and ripples of an average record. In an inadequate arm extra force is needed to keep the stylus in reliable contact with the groove walls.

The tracking force of a cartridge is also related to the maximum recorded level it is to play. A record with low-to-moderate recorded levels can be tracked by almost any cartridge used at its minimum force. However, some records with extremely high groove velocities can tax the abilities of the finest cartridges used at their *maximum* rated forces. This is why the test records used by the laboratories to evaluate cartridges include extremely high velocity sections beyond the capability of practically any cartridge to track without distortion. Obviously, one cannot determine the limits of performance of a component without having a signal source that exceeds those limits.

Unless you have a good reason for doing otherwise, it is a good policy to operate any cartridge slightly above its recommended minimum tracking force (but never beyond the rated maximum force). The difference in record or stylus wear compared to operation at the minimum rated force will be small or insignificant, but the chances of having your musical enjoyment (as well as the records themselves) ruined by the "shattering" sound created by mistracking (the stylus' loss of secure contact with the groove wall) will be less.

If you study the specifications and prices of cartridges carefully, you will find that the range of tracking forces tends to go down as the price goes up, although there are numerous overlaps and a few seeming contradictions. Low tracking force is desirable from the standpoint of record and stylus wear. Although it does not, in itself, have much to do with sound quality, a number of related parameters (such as sty-

lus mass, which must be low to permit low tracking force) have a lot to do with quality. In fact, *the recommended tracking force is about as good a guide to overall cartridge quality as any published rating* (the lower the better, in general), assuming that the recommendation is honest and accurate. Note, however, that the tracking forces of CD-4 cartridges (if not the pressure on the groove walls) are often 50 to 100 per cent greater than those for stereo cartridges, and for good reason.

As with all the other components of a music system, it makes sense to match the quality of the cartridge to that of the record player. Even if a \$200 moving-coil cartridge *can* be used in your \$100 record player, you would probably be better off selecting a cartridge in the \$30 to \$40 range. This is especially true if the rest of your system includes a modestly priced amplifier or receiver and compatible speakers in the under-\$100 range. It is unlikely that the investment in an expensive cartridge would pay dividends in sound quality unless the rest of the system were of comparable quality.

It should be equally obvious that a low-price cartridge (in today's market, one with a list price of \$30 or so) will usually not match the sound quality of a more expensive one. Such a high-tracking-force cartridge is suitable for a low-price record player, but it would be a poor choice for a \$300 direct-drive unit, for example. In the \$50 to \$60 range, cartridges become very good, often rivaling much more expensive models, and they can be used to advantage in record players selling for \$150 or more. If you decide on a de luxe cartridge, one priced from \$70 to \$100 or more, be prepared to make a comparable (substantial) investment in a top-quality record player as well as in an

Fig. 1. The conical (or spherical) stylus has been in use since the advent of the microgroove. This one has apparently been ground to full roundness only at its tip. Magnification: 1,000X.

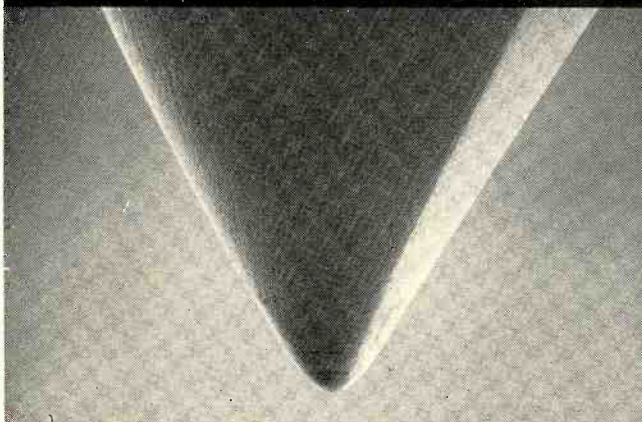


Fig. 2. The latest evolutionary form of stylus is shown tracing the fine groove walls of a CD-4 record. Sharper curvature at contact regions can be seen clearly. Magnification: 2,000X.



equivalent amplifier and speakers (note that top quality does not inevitably mean top price, however).

## Cartridge Specs

Do not be overly concerned about cartridge performance specifications. They can be used to compare models from a single manufacturer and as a rough guide otherwise, but the lack of universal standards for testing and rating cartridges makes it a risky business to compare competing brand models merely on the basis of advertised ratings. Any cartridge will be rated to cover the audible frequency range with a moderate variation (perhaps  $\pm 3$  to  $\pm 4$  dB on lower-price models to as little as  $\pm 1$  dB on some of the finest ones). The same situation exists with crosstalk, or channel separation, which should be at least 20 dB in the mid-range (and preferably at least 10 dB in the 10,000- to 15,000-Hz range, where it is rarely specified). Almost any cartridge can meet these requirements, and some are far better, but that does not mean that their separation is *audibly* better.

The general similarity in rated performance of many cartridges suggests that they might sound pretty much alike. To a first approximation they do, which makes the task of selection both easier and more difficult: easier because it is harder to make a serious mistake (provided the tracking-force rating of the cartridge is compatible with that of the tone arm); more difficult because the subtle audible differences which may be important to you simply may not appear on the specification sheet—at least not in any clear-cut manner. In other words, if you are truly critical in your sonic tastes, there is no substitute for listening for yourself.

Some of these differences, as de-

scribed by those who are able to hear and appreciate them, include such scarcely definable qualities as transparency, definition, a sense of "air" or ambience in the sound, superior stereo imaging, "sweetness," and the like. You should be warned again that, as of the moment, these qualities are not susceptible of proof, they are heard differently by different people, and they may in fact often be an expression of uncritical enthusiasm on the part of those who claim to hear them. This is not to denigrate the more esoteric, subjective aspects of sound evaluation. However, it is all too easy to "psych" one's self

### FOCUS ON STYLUS

THE phono stylus does its work in a world whose dimensions are so small that they defy the probing of ordinary optical microscopes. Conventional photography simply cannot provide sufficient detail or depth of field on this sub-Lilliputian scale, but the scanning electron microscope, a rather exotic laboratory instrument and research tool, can—as the remarkable photographs (courtesy of Stanton Magnetics) on these pages amply demonstrate. —Ralph Hodges

into hearing what one wishes to hear. Since the final judgment is ultimately in the mind's ear, this is of course a perfectly reasonable basis for selecting a cartridge—or any other component, for that matter. But don't expect to find these qualities defined in laboratory test reports or the manufacturers' numerical specifications (as opposed to advertising literature).

## Cartridge and Amplifier

So far, we have been considering only the *mechanical* compatibility of the phono cartridge with the tone arm and a bit of the *economic* basis for cartridge selection. There is, in addition, an *electrical* interface to be considered, that between the cartridge and the amplifier. A considerable degree of standardization exists here, fortunately, making for easy matching of most cartridges to most amplifiers, but you should know that there is at least the outside possibility of an incompatible combination.

As pointed out earlier, magnetic cartridges in general depend on the load capacitance and resistance to equalize their outputs electrically for flat frequency response at high frequencies. This load is provided by the phono-cartridge inputs of the amplifier as well as the cables that connect the cartridge to them. A cartridge termination of 47,000 ohms (nominally 50,000 ohms) has long been accepted as a standard. Some amplifiers can be switched to load the cartridge with other resistances (such as 25,000 or 100,000 ohms) that result in a slight modification of the cartridge's response.

In recent years we have become more aware of the importance of the *capacitive* part of the cartridge load in determining final response. It is not very critical, and most cartridges work well with the typical circuit capacitance of 250 to 300 picofarads (pF). A few cartridges, however, should have a load of 400 to 500 pF for best results. Most CD-4 cartridges, on the other hand, should be loaded with not more than 100 pF (special cables are used to connect the tone arm to the amplifier to achieve this). (overleaf)

Fig. 3. Note how the CD-4 stylus "fits" the angle of the groove walls to make contact over a line running up the wall rather than just at a single point. Magnification: 1,000X.

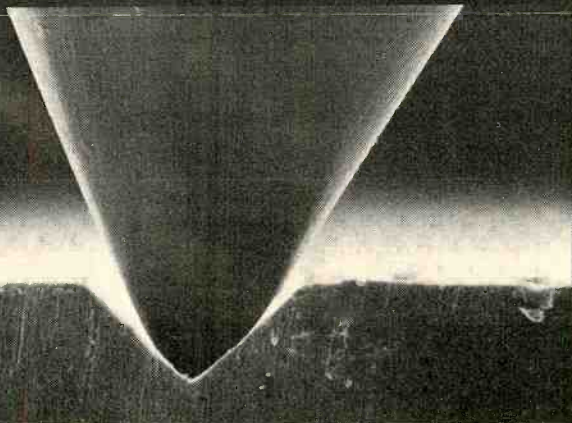
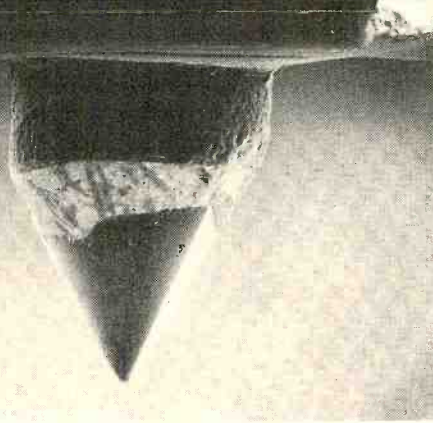


Fig. 4. Styli are attached in various ways. Here cement bonds the CD-4 tip to a base which is then affixed to the cantilever. Some styli are cemented directly or wedged into a tiny hole.



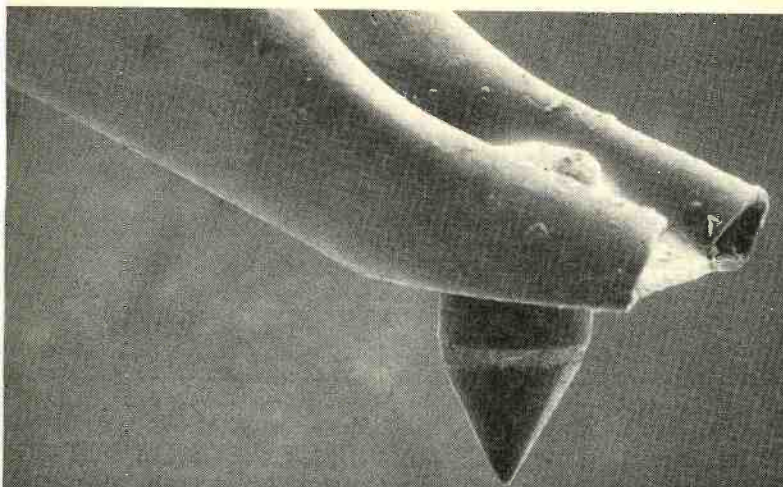


Fig. 5. The base of this stylus tip passes through the cantilever end (crimped for strength) where it is cemented in place. Note the dust the microscope reveals. Magnification: 50X.



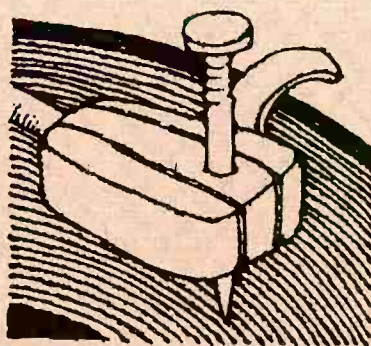
Fig. 6. Under 2,000X magnification a stylus does not appear smooth. "Craters" caused by the diamond dust used as polish are too small to affect performance and disappear after use.

Unfortunately, the consumer has no way of knowing what the effective load capacitance is, and it can vary widely depending on the record player's arm wiring, the connecting cables, and the amplifier's own input capacitance. For most purposes you can use the record-

player manufacturer's figures for his arm-wiring capacitance as a guide, and our laboratory test reports on tone arms always include an actual measurement of this parameter. Since the audible effects of capacitance changes are usually about as subtle as those distin-

guishing the sound of one cartridge from another, many people simply ignore the matter. For others, it can be crucial. For example, the cartridge-coil inductance, interacting with some preamplifier circuits, can cause a gain (or a loss) of several decibels in the

## INTRODUCING THE DAZZLETRACK MODEL PC-1 PHONO CARTRIDGE



ENTIRELY a figment of our journalistic imagination, the Dazzletrack PC-1 has been created to provide some insight into the technical language used today in describing phono-cartridge performance. A study of its *thoroughly mediocre* specifications (and the explanatory footnotes below them) should give the reader a general understanding of what the numbers—singly and collectively—can tell him about a cartridge and what they cannot.

There are cartridge manufacturers who have come up with a few specifications that are all their own, attempts to define aspects of performance they consider particularly important. In some cases they have backed

their special ratings with impressive research and validation, so that any consumer can see for himself what is being measured, how, and why. The Dazzletrack Company tends to be a little conservative in this respect, listing only one specification not found on most other spec sheets (see below), and that one a bit obscure and of dubious value. Also remember that, so far, no one in the world outside of Dazzletrack knows how these specifications were derived, since there are few standard test procedures in the phono-cartridge world. Perhaps they can be compared directly with the specifications of other manufacturers but, then again, perhaps not.

**1. Frequency response: 10 to 22,000 Hz  $\pm 4$  dB.** Hardly an imposing specification. A frequency-response curve would be helpful in determining whether the largest variations occur at the frequency extremes (possibly tolerable) or in the middle of the audible-frequency range (undesirable).

**2. Channel separation: 15 dB.** No frequency is given, so we can assume that the test frequency was 1,000 Hz. Stereo separation of 15 dB is probably adequate, but there will no doubt be a tendency for separation to deteriorate at higher frequencies.

**3. Channel balance: within 3 dB.** This means that the outputs of the two channels are matched to within at least 3 dB of each other. This specification *should* be directly comparable with those given by other manufacturers. However, it is not of overwhelming importance, although you may have to offset your balance control to compensate for channel-balance inadequacies.

**4. Stylus: 0.3 x 0.7-mil elliptical.** The stylus has an elliptical shape with a relatively mild edge curvature. Still, for tracking forces above 2 grams, a less "sharp" 0.5-mil spherical stylus might be expected by some to result in reduced record wear.

range of 10,000 Hz and well beyond.

Nowadays, amplifier phono inputs usually carry both a sensitivity and an overload rating. The latter is the maximum input the phono preamplifier can tolerate before overload distortion occurs. The former is the input, in millivolts at 1,000 Hz, required to drive the amplifier to its rated power output (in our lab tests, we define the sensitivity as the input needed for a reference power output of 10 watts, which is generally lower than the rated-output sensitivity). There can be a wide latitude in matching this figure with the cartridge's rated output, which is usually based on a standard reference recorded velocity (perhaps 3.5 to 5 centimeters per second). In most cases, a two-to-one mismatch in either direction can be tolerated, and with a good amplifier the permissible spread between the two voltages can be much greater than that. In other words, if the cartridge's nominal output is 3 millivolts, it can almost certainly be used with amplifiers whose phono sensitivity is between 1.5 and 6 millivolts. In fact, the only problem likely to be encountered with an even higher (numerically) sensitivity rating is a slightly poorer signal-to-noise ratio. The overload rating of an amplifier, on the other hand, should be at least

twenty times the cartridge's rated output; many feel it should be even larger.

One of the few areas of possible trouble in matching cartridges and amplifiers lies in the use of the lower-price cartridges (whose outputs can be as high as 7 to 10 millivolts) with inexpensive amplifiers whose phono sections can sometimes be overloaded by signals as low as 50 or 60 millivolts (fortunately, even the *least* expensive amplifiers these days are usually better than that). Another is the use of a typical moving-coil cartridge whose output into the preamplifier may be only a small fraction of a millivolt. In this case, a step-up transformer or booster amplifier may have to be used between the cartridge and the amplifier to obtain an adequate loudness level and signal-to-noise ratio. A pre-preamplifier can be quite expensive, an inferior one could noticeably increase the hiss level, and if transformers are used instead, they must be carefully positioned to avoid hum pickup.

## Quadraphonic Cartridges

Although four-channel stereo is no longer as prominent in audio headlines as it has been, the reports of its demise

are somewhat exaggerated. Matrixed quadraphonic records are, as far as disc-tracing is concerned, no different from stereo records, and the cartridge requirements are therefore the same as for stereo. "Discrete" CD-4 records, on the other hand, must be played with a special cartridge—even in two-channel stereo, if you wish to avoid destroying the ultrasonic content that is responsible for their four-channel performance. This means that the cartridge should have a Shibata or a similarly shaped stylus. Some four-channel cartridges are quite expensive, and in many cases their stereo performance is not on a par with that available from much less expensive stereo cartridges. On the other hand, a few recent ones—most of them still costly—are truly excellent stereo reproducers as well. Let your present and future listening plans be your guide here. If you are positive that discrete four-channel discs are not for you, you can save a lot of money and perhaps get better sound by selecting one of the better stereo cartridges. But if you suspect you'll want your system to grow along with new developments, a CD-4/stereo model might be worth considering right now. Certainly it cannot impair your compatibility in the future.

**5. Compliance: lateral,  $12 \times 10^{-6}$  cm/dyne; vertical,  $8 \times 10^{-6}$  cm/dyne.** Comparatively low static-compliance figures in the lateral and vertical directions indicate that the stylus is rather stiff and might have trouble tracking large low-frequency groove modulations successfully.

**6. Effective tip mass: 0.8 milligram.** A high effective tip mass (and this is high for a premium cartridge) indicates that the stylus has plenty of inertia, and hence will probably have difficulty negotiating high-velocity high frequencies without mistracking. Increasing the tracking force should help up to a point, but it is not certain how much.

**7. Recommended tracking force: 1 to 3 grams.** Considering the PC-1's low compliance and high tip mass, a 1-gram tracking force seems optimistic. Perhaps the manufacturer means the stylus will stay in the groove at 1 gram, but so might a safety pin in a good tone arm. The wise user should expect to apply something close to the 3-gram maximum. Even then, state-of-the-art performance cannot be expected on heavily recorded passages.

**8. Output: 5 mV at 3.54 cm/sec.** The cartridge yields plenty of output from a reference recorded velocity. In fact, it

might be too much for a phono preamplifier that lacks a generous overload margin.

**9. Recommended load: 47,000 ohms.** This is the standard load provided by virtually all phono-preamp inputs. CD-4 cartridges generally specify a 100,000-ohm load, which is the termination provided by the CD-4 demodulators into which they are presumably plugged.

**10. Optimum total capacitance: 250 pF.** The total capacitance is the sum of the capacitances of the phono inputs plus the interconnecting cables and arm wiring. You may have to make some inquiries to find out what these are in your system, but even a sizable mismatch will not make a great audible difference.

**11. Inductance: 650 millihenries.** From the inductance of the coils an expert might be able to judge how the frequency response of the cartridge will change with different resistive and capacitive loads, but that is a job for an engineer, not an audiophile.

**12. D.C. resistance: 950 ohms.** Likewise, from the d.c. resistance of the cartridge and certain known characteristics of the phono preamplifier certain generalizations about the noise per-

formance of the system might be made. But, again, by experts only.

**13. Vertical tracking angle: 20 degrees.** This is now standard, and it is gradually superseding the previous 15-degree standard. The difference between 15 and 20 degrees will have no practical significance for most audio systems, however.

**14. Elastic rebound characteristic (ERC): 4.7 millimeters.** A little something extra from Dazzletrack: a spec no one else gives you. This one is meant to indicate how high the cartridge will bounce when dropped onto a flat marble surface from a distance of 1 meter. Clearly the PC-1 would not make a good golf ball. But be on the lookout for other unfamiliar specifications and acronyms that may supply valid and useful information once they are understood.

**15. Weight: 10 grams.** The PC-1 is a hefty little package, and its ample mass could very well undo the benefits of an expensive low-mass tone arm. Also, some arms do not have a sufficiently heavy counterweight to balance such a cartridge. All in all, it would be best to consider using the Dazzletrack PC-1 cartridge only as part of a modest system—if at all! —Ralph Hodges



# PLAQUES MARK THE SPOT: A COLLECTION OF MUSICAL LANDMARKS

*Sissieretta Jones (1869-1933),  
an operatic soprano, was honored  
in her native city, Portsmouth, Va.*



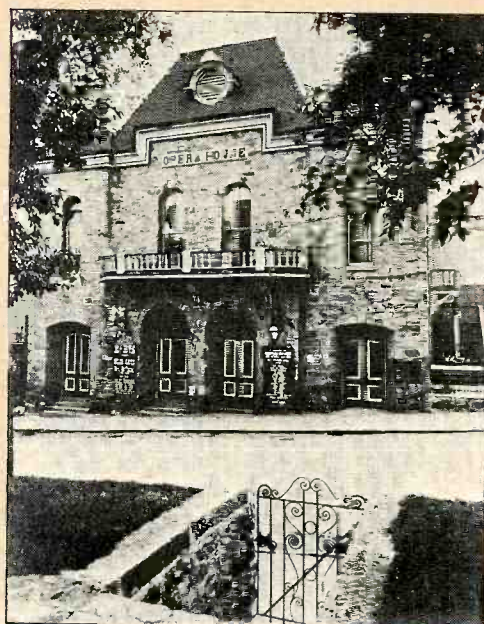
Hampton Institute/reproduced by Neuben Burrell



*A plaque marks the Florence, Ala., birthplace of  
W.C. Handy (1873-1958), "Father of the Blues."*



*The Shed at Tanglewood, Mass., received a plaque  
honoring conductor Serge Koussevitzky (1874-  
1951), founder of the Berkshire Music Center.*



*The Central City Opera House in  
Central City, Colo., was built in  
1878 and since 1932 has been the  
site of a summer music festival.  
Douglas Moore's opera *The Ballad of  
Baby Doe* was premiered there in 1956.*

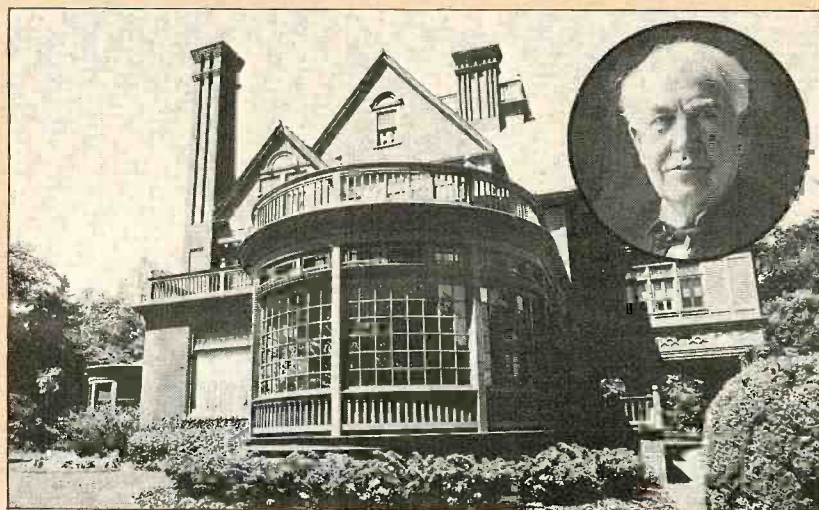






American music was honored in many ways during the Bicentennial celebrations. As part of the National Music Council's Bicentennial Parade of American Music, financed by a grant from Exxon, bronze plaques were installed at two hundred sites across the

country in recognition of important musical events or the contributions of prominent composers, performers, or educators. The people and places shown on these two pages are a representative sampling of those selected for recognition in the plaque program.



In West Orange, N.J., a plaque was put on the home of Thomas Edison (1847-1931), inventor of the phonograph.

A plaque in Honolulu commemorates songwriter Lydia Liliuokalani (1838-1917), the last Queen of Hawaii.



Celebrating New York's "Street of Song" were Merle Montgomery of the National Music Council, Richard Knowles of Exxon, W. C. Handy's daughter Katherine Handy Lewis, publisher Leonard Feist, and noted songwriter Sammy Cahn.



In Arlington, Vt., the home of the composer Carl Ruggles (1876-1971), which was once a schoolhouse, was designated a musical landmark.

Except where otherwise indicated, all photos courtesy of Exxon.



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### FR-1080 AUTOMATIC RETURN TWO-SPEED TURNTABLE

Four-pole synchronous motor. One-touch operation with automatic tonearm return. Statically-balanced S-shaped tonearm. Shock-mounted, low resonance cabinet with detachable hinged dustcover.



### FR-5080S DIRECT-DRIVE AUTOMATIC TURNTABLE

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CIRCLE NO. 75 ON READER SERVICE CARD

If it is true, as Frederic Grunfeld says in the preface to his *Art and Times of the Guitar*, that there are twenty million guitars in circulation in the United States, then we must once again be in the grip of the passion that the French call "la guitaromanie."

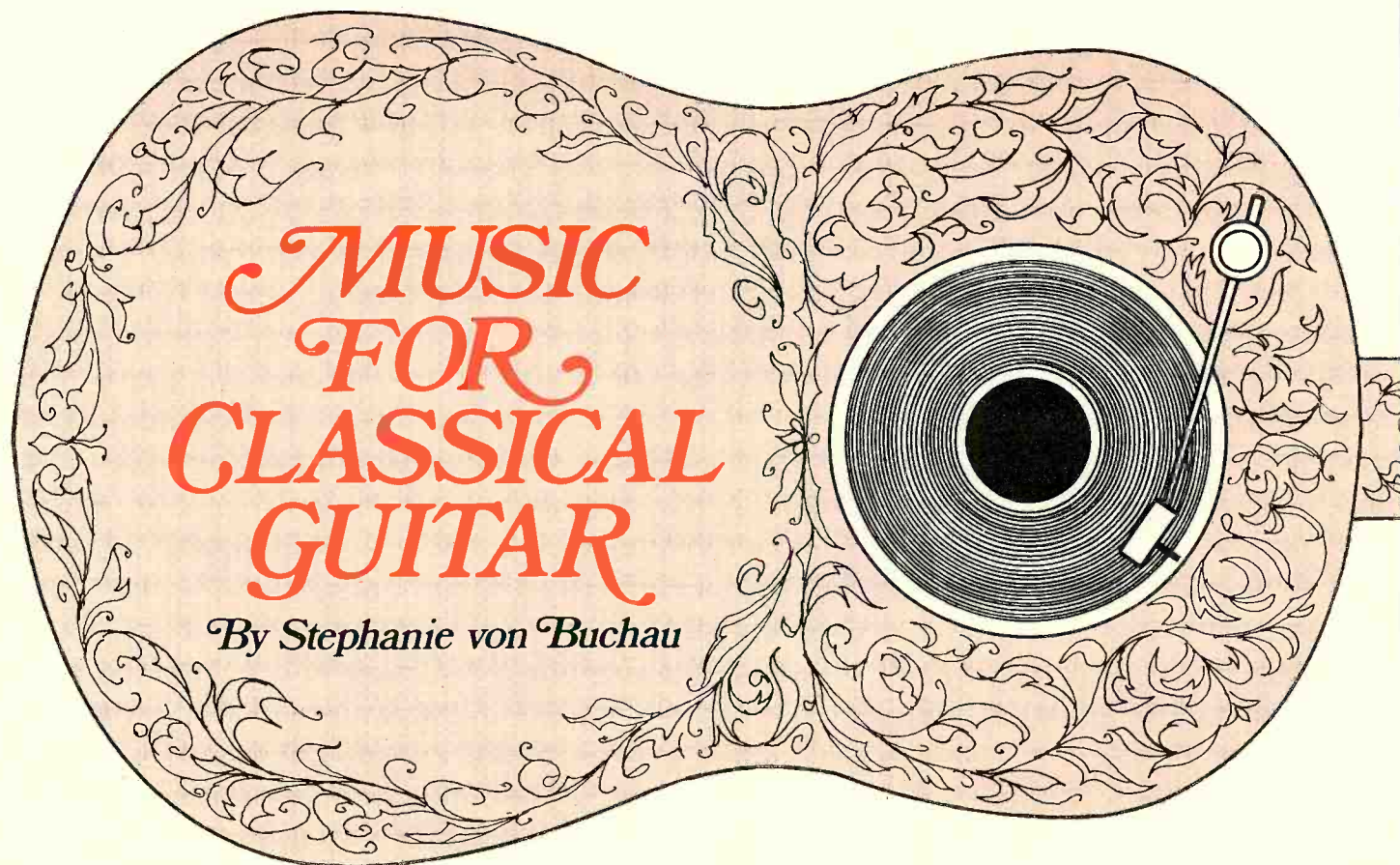
Since the guitar is one of the most difficult instruments to master—though anyone can easily learn to play a few chords—it is doubtful that even one million of those twenty million guitars are played well. Still, interest in playing the instrument naturally leads to inter-

cine, that "classical music is good for you," and partly because the well-played classical guitar is so dulcet that some people automatically assume it is lacking in emotional depth. When I was first learning to play, I remember having my efforts dismissed by a fellow critic who complained that classical guitar music "had no guts."

When the Western world became technologically oriented in the late nineteenth century, the popularity of handwork diminished and with it the popularity of the guitar, one of the very

The fact is that the instrument, which was played by Mary Queen of Scots, Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII, Rossini, Schubert, Weber, and Berlioz, is capable of an enormous technical and emotional range which audiences, performers, and composers are coming more and more to recognize.

Andrés Segovia, the acknowledged leader of the twentieth-century guitar revival, has inspired many Spanish and Latin American composers to write works for him. Julian Bream and John Williams have had the same effect on



est in hearing it played. But here the young guitarist often runs into a mental roadblock. His contemporaries, while rightly applauding the talents of B.B. King, Eric Clapton, and John McLaughlin, tend to dismiss serious music written for the classical, or Spanish, guitar, a medium-sized, womanly-shaped, six-string instrument that is always played (by classical artists) with the fingers themselves, never with a pick or plectrum.

This dismissal is made partly out of ignorance, partly out of revolt against those music educators who insist, as though it were some evil-tasting medi-

few musical instruments played directly with both hands with no intervening bows, keys, pedals, or other mechanical devices. Because of this decline in popularity, most of the existing repertoire of serious guitar music comes from an earlier period (roughly 1550-1900) when recognizable tonalities or modalities, prepared and resolved dissonance, and modest dynamics were the general rule.

For these reasons classical guitar music may seem to fervent modernists (classical or popular) to "lack guts," but that is just a mid-twentieth-century aesthetic position, not immutable fact.

contemporary British composers. As composers become more convinced of the guitar's potentiality for serious musical expression, so do more performers. The increasing number of guitarists a generation younger than Bream and two or three generations removed from Segovia attests to this conviction.

Since there is nothing in armchair listening more stimulating than hearing someone play an instrument that you play yourself, recording companies readily see the wisdom of producing records (particularly records that don't cost a great deal to make) for the owners of those twenty million guitars.

Consequently, over the last several years there has been a marked increase in the number of classical guitar recordings released. Master instrumentalists naturally head the lists, but recording activity is not limited to just the big names, for many young guitarists are being given a chance to show what they can do also.

**T**HOUGH he is just thirty, Ángel Romero hardly qualifies as a "young guitarist"—he made his debut when he was six as soloist with Los Romeros, the family quartet which includes his father, Celedonio, and his two older brothers. Recently, Ángel has made his solo recording debut with two important albums: "Classical Virtuoso" (Angel S-36093) and "Spanish Virtuoso" (Angel S-36094).

In the classical pieces Romero displays a crisp, bell-like tone. The big numbers in the album are Mauro Giuliani's Grand Overture, Op. 61 (Bream and Siegfried Behrend have also re-

ers), his range of coloristic effects in pieces such as Albéniz's *Córdoba* and Granados' *La Maja de Goya*, and the slightly astringent harmonics in Turina's *Fandanguillo* are joined to technical virtuosity in Tárrega's *Estudio Brillante*, a work in which the treble melody floats serenely over swift bass figurations.

Ángel also appears with his older brother Pepe playing Rodrigo's *Concierto Madrigal* on Philips 6500 918. It is a work written especially for the two brothers in 1968, and it is not so much a concerto as it is a series of variations on a theme—"Felices ojos míos" from an anonymous madrigal—which sets two guitars against a full orchestra, in this case that of the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Its yeasty Renaissance feeling is emphasized by brass fanfares, lively dance rhythms, and the variation in which the guitars are pitted against the piccolo, flute, oboe, and trumpet. The slow movement, *Arieta*, is perhaps too extended for some

Bach's Lute Suite in G Minor (BWV 995, transposed for guitar to A Minor) and Scarlatti sonatas (transcribed from the keyboard works), cleanly but in a rather subdued, "correct" manner, as if she were afraid to impose her own personality on such eminent masters. But the album is more than rescued by the fact that most of it is devoted to unusual compositions by obscure contemporary composers: Julio Sagreras, Eduardo Sainz de la Maza, João Guimarães, Francisco Calleja, and Henri Tomasi.

These delightful works, plus two Albéniz sketches, are vignettes depicting Spanish and Latin American life: hummingbirds, bells at dawn, Brazilian street dances, a mule driver in the Andes. Ms. Boyd discovers the individual character in each piece through her highly imaginative playing. Her technique is flawless in rapid figurations such as the tremolo in Sainz de la Maza's *Campanas del Alba* or the one in Calleja's *Canción Triste*. Her

## A semi-occasional roundup of new recordings

corded it), Fernando Sor's Variations on a Theme by Mozart, and a series of dances by Gaspar Sanz (1640-1710). Romero's playing is less resonant than Bream's, but no less accurate. In the Grand Overture, where the bass consists of rapidly repeated notes, Romero manages to sound rather as if he had ten fingers on his right hand. Beethoven, who is reported to have called the guitar a "miniature orchestra," would have approved.

Sor's variations on "*Das klinget so herrlich*" from *The Magic Flute* are played with charm and a secure virtuosity, while the Spanish rhythms of the Sanz pieces are perceptively related to one another with musicianly understanding. The album also includes four Scarlatti sonatas transcribed by Romero from keyboard originals.

The "Spanish Virtuoso" recording is subtitled "Romantic Music for Guitar," and Romero takes advantage of this invitation to reveal a seductive, honey-and-lemon tone. His rubato (those elegant hesitations that steal time from some notes and add it to oth-

tastes, but Rodrigo's richly romantic string writing is as certain to appeal here as it does in the popular *Aranjuez* concerto.

Liona Boyd, blond and beautiful, smiles a Mona Lisa smile from the jacket of her debut album for London

"Beethoven, who is reported to have called the guitar a 'miniature orchestra,' would have approved."

Records ("Classical Guitar," CS 7015). It is hard to believe she is for real until one looks at her hands. They are the hands of the serious guitarist: the long, bony, spatulate fingers and the prominent veins indicating that intense muscular development has pared away subcutaneous fat. Ms. Boyd plays the inevitable debut pieces, selections from

sensitivity to color, her phrasing of the haunting melodies, her rhythmic vigor, and (particularly) her sweet tone are recorded with life-like fidelity.

Liona Boyd studied with Alexandre Lagoya, the great French guitarist whose "Viva Lagoya!" (Philips 6833 159) is one of the most stimulating solo albums I've heard in years. Like his pupil, Lagoya essays part of the Bach Lute Suite BWV 995 (the Prelude and Presto), but with all the difference in the world. Where Ms. Boyd is somewhat timid, Lagoya attacks with dash, *élan*, and exhilarating technical freedom, with the result that we hear every strand of the polyphony standing alone, we feel the rhythmic muscle and drive of the Presto. Bach is followed by a superbly mellow, mature performance of Handel's Sarabande in D (the title theme of Kubrick's film *Barry Lyndon*) and a magisterial reading of Silvius Weiss' Passacaglia, a dance form with variations on a ground bass.

Lagoya's performing magnetism carries over to the flip side with two of the most popular pieces in the guitar reper-

## CLASSICAL GUITAR

toire: Albéniz's *Asturias (Leyenda)* and Tárrega's *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*. The pedal drone and flamenco elements of *Asturias* are well mixed with Lagoya's coloristic gift, while his noble tremolo is exploited for deep emotional impact in *Recuerdos*. The side ends with spirited accounts of Villa-Lobos' Etude No. 11 and Torroba's *Nocturno*. [See also Claude Bolling's Concerto for Classic Guitar and Jazz Piano, reviewed on page 112, in which Lagoya is a soloist.]

and by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, composers whose extensive association with the guitar has led many people to think of them as Spanish rather than Italian.

I heard the Behrends (speaker Claudia Brodzinska on the DG disc is the guitarist's wife) perform Bussotti's pop song *ultima rara?* (sic) at the Goethe Institute in San Francisco several years ago; it was one of the most provocative experiences I have ever had at a guitar recital. The work's dynamic and melodic gestures are fragmentary and self-contained. There is no gradual rise to a climax; the piece could stop anywhere (in fact, Behrend's earlier recording of it—now deleted—is three

Ruiz-Pipó's *Tablas* (2530 585),\* and Odon Alonso and the Orquesta Sinfónica of Spanish Radio TV accompany him in concertos by Salvador Bacarisse and Ernesto Halffter (2530 326). The guitar parts in the Ohana and Ruiz-Pipó works owe their improvisatory character to the *cante jondo* of Andalusian flamenco. Bacarisse's concerto is conservative in a melodic, classical idiom; Halffter's work stresses polyphony and rhythmic variety. Yepes' playing of all four works is introspective and artistically immaculate.

**T**HE immense popularity of Julian Bream, whose platform manner is to me the most beguiling of all of today's



Ángel Romero

Ken Veaster/Angel Records



Liona Boyd

David Falconer/London Records



Julian Bream

RCA Records

**D**EUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON keeps two fine guitarists before the public: Narciso Yepes and Siegfried Behrend. Neither is a particularly charismatic performer, but what they lack in showmanship they make up for with their sympathetic interest in adventurous repertoire. Behrend's "Chitarra Italiana" album (DG 2530 561) spans four centuries, from anonymous early lute music to music of the avant-garde composer Sylvano Bussotti (b. 1931). Behrend favors a clean, slightly metallic guitar tone, and his lute imitations are often uncanny. He also plays music by Mauro Giuliani (the ubiquitous Op. 61)

minutes longer than this 1974 version). Mme. Behrend shrieks, gulps, sobs, yelps, sighs, groans, yawns, laughs, cackles, and moans the vocal part. The previous recording, with Bussotti himself as speaker, may be slightly preferable because the guitar is more forward, but this performance is quite sufficiently hair-raising.

Narciso Yepes' two latest Deutsche Grammophon albums unearth four contemporary Spanish concertos, all of which he plays on a ten-string guitar of his own invention. With Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos and the London Symphony, Yepes performs Mauricio Ohana's *Tres Gráficos* and Antonio

concert artists, has not closed his inquiring mind to further explorations. His musical sympathies stretch from Dowland through transcriptions of piano pieces by Debussy to contemporary composers. It was for Bream that Benjamin Britten wrote the *Nocturnal*, a fiendishly difficult guitar solo which has become a modern classic. Bream's latest adventure is a concerto by his compatriot Lennox Berkeley (RCA ARL1-1181). It is a quiet, sophisticated work in three movements scored for winds, horns, and strings. Its essentially English character is defined by characteristic harmonic subtleties and pastoral nuances, and few guitarists could

surpass Bream's eloquent refinement in the solo part. It's a pity, however, that RCA didn't think it appropriate to put something more unusual on the other side than Rodrigo's overworked *Concierto de Aranjuez*. Bream's previous solo album (RCA ARL1-0711) introduced Giuliani's *Le Rossiniane*, variations based on opera themes on which the guitarist did a bit of surgery to produce two wildly virtuosic vehicles. The second side is given over to Sor's gracious Grand Sonata, Op. 25, played (for a welcome change) in its entirety.

John Williams, whose duet albums with Bream (RCA LSC-3257 and ARL1-0456) turn the friendly rivalry of fingerboard champions into jousts of

tar" (Columbia MS 6939), Williams again demonstrates that tenderness is one of his strong suits in the lovely *Paduana* by Esaias Reusner (1636-1679). Bach's Prelude, Fugue and Allegro is kept moving with no perceptible breaks by Williams' fluent left hand; works by Mudarra and Praetorius are delineated with a pungent, lute-like tone; and Villa-Lobos' Prelude No. 4, one of the most familiar pieces in the guitar repertoire, is presented with all its delicate harmonics intact.

Williams opens "Virtuoso Variations" (Columbia MS 7195) with a transcription (by Williams) of the Chaconne from Bach's Violin Partita No. 2. Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (and

uliani's decorative complications nicely in their place, never obscuring the main musical subject. [Williams' latest guitar record, a group of Scarlatti sonatas and Villa-Lobos preludes, is reviewed by Eric Salzman on page 126.]

**G**UITAR lovers are fortunate that surveys of contemporary guitar recordings must continue to include the latest by Andrés Segovia, the father of the twentieth-century guitar renaissance. Like Pablo Casals, whom he resembles physically as well as spiritually, Segovia is a romantic. His guitar tone is warm and opulent, his bel canto phrasing sings with the heart's simplicity. Among the more interesting contempo-



John Williams

Columbia Records



Andrés Segovia

Decca Records

#### DO IT YOURSELF

**T**HE best way to get a feeling for the difficulties and subtleties of the classical guitar is to learn to play it yourself. Frederick Noad, guitarist and scholar, has edited three beautifully researched volumes of guitar music, *The Renaissance Guitar*, *The Baroque Guitar*, and *The Classical Guitar* (available in music stores or by mail from Music Sales Corp., 33 West 60th Street, New York, N.Y. 10023, \$6.95 each). They contain many of the pieces in the albums included in this roundup of recent guitar recordings. Even if you don't play, it is instructive to read along as Romero, Williams, or Behrend negotiates the virtuoso passages in Giuliani's Op. 61 or Variations on a Theme of Handel, Dowland's Queen Elizabeth's Galliard, Mudarra's *Fantasia*, Narváez's *Guárdame las Vacas*, or Roncalli's *Gavotte and Gigue* from the *Capricci Armonici*. As pure pleasure imperceptibly merges with the learning experience, there comes, imperceptibly, a deeper understanding of this exquisite musical art. —S.v.B.

wit, is a thirty-five-year-old Australian who teaches at London's Royal College of Music. Williams is a technical wizard in every aspect of guitar playing, but, as his notes to "Virtuoso Music for Guitar" (Columbia MS 6696) point out, virtuosity does not necessarily mean "fast and loud." He proves it with his tenderly expressive handling of the limpid melodies of Paganini's Sonata in A, which he arranged for solo guitar from its original guitar and violin scoring. And in the vivacious Partita by Stephen Dodgson, Williams' all-but-electric energy quickens the music's perpetual motion.

On "More Virtuoso Music for Gui-

perhaps others as well) has called the Chaconne "the single greatest piece of music ever written." The twenty-nine variations of this monumental work give Williams no apparent difficulties. His playing goes well beyond mere technical considerations, plumbing structural depths and rising to emotional heights. For the rest of the program, two Dowland galliards and Sor's "Mozart" Variations are joined by Giuliani's captivating Variations on a Theme by Handel, actually the famous *Harmonious Blacksmith* from the Harpsichord Suite in E. Williams plays the theme and its five variations with an engaging directness that keeps Gi-

rary Spanish and Latin American works on Segovia's freshly recorded "Intimate Guitar," Volume I (RCA ARL1-0864) and Volume II (RCA ARL1-1323), are a set of variations by José Muñoz Molleda, a Basque folk song by Padre J. S. San Sebastián, *Dipso* by Vicente Asencio, and Manuel M. Ponce's Prelude in E. Certain of Segovia's performance practices (especially in Bach) and fingering techniques have been updated by younger guitarists, but the old master's playing has retained much of its imperious character well into his eightieth year, and he is still the source to which his artistic descendants repair for inspiration. □



Lindsay Perry



# SMALL LABELS

## HAVE A LOT TO OFFER IN FOLK, JAZZ, AND BLUES

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**W**E wanted to put out the records the other companies wouldn't put out. When we found out how cheaply we could start, we just went ahead and did it." That was six years ago. The amount of money involved was \$1,000. With that cash, Ken Irwin and Bill Nowlin founded Rounder Records. At this writing, Rounder has released nearly one hundred albums.

Much the same story could be told about any of hundreds of small record companies. Someone who was not satisfied with what was otherwise being made available took it upon himself or herself to do the job, and another label was born.

Folkways is in many ways the granddaddy of the "small" labels. Certainly it is the company most mentioned by those who run the newer labels as the example they followed. Folkways has issued more than 1,500 titles since its founding just after World War II, and all of them remain indefinitely in print. Its catalog has remained a model of taste, quality, and diversity.

Founder Moses Asch is today in his early seventies, but he is still actively releasing records of every conceivable type: ethnic, spoken-word, jazz, sounds of nature, and folk music from virtually every part of the world. And Asch's attitude is very much one that has been adopted by those who followed in his footsteps: "I'm dedicated to keep on issuing. My competitors concentrate on what moves best. I can't do that." Asch readily admits that it is the Seeger, Guthrie, and Leadbelly albums that sell the best year in, year out. But that has not kept him from making available discs he feels are musically or socially valid or of historical significance, despite the probability of small sales.

This is not to say that Asch, or any of the other people operating small labels, is not a businessman. Some Folkways releases, for example, are geared primarily to the needs of libraries and educational institutions on a standing-order basis, a special but dependable source of income. Others are more likely to be "commercial," in the Seeger-Guthrie-Leadbelly vein, and these Asch will quite sensibly do his best to direct to stores around the country by way of a number of local distribution companies which buy at wholesale from Folkways.

It should also be kept in mind that production costs for the kinds of records we are talking about are relatively low. The small labels either own and operate their own usually unprepossessing recording studios or they lease time from other small labels that do maintain their own facilities. And most of the music is recorded "live," which is to say that musicians and vocalists perform as they would in concert and the mikes take it down all at once. (Commercial pop music, in contrast, has become a studio art in many instances, with instruments and voices added one at a time to a master tape, followed by hours and hours of mixing and editing.)

Other expenses are minimized too. Little is spent on advertising or promotion. A few free copies are mailed to reviewers who are known to be interested in a particular field, copies are sent to sympathetic radio stations, and an occasional ad is placed in a specialized newspaper, magazine, or festival book. Word-of-mouth and, frequently, mail-

ings to past customers tend to be the most significant factors in spreading the news of new releases.

But one area in which production costs are greater for the small labels—and here again Asch was the pioneer—is in packaging, for while most of these companies stick to two-color covers, many include elaborate booklets with lyrics, background information, photos, and other pertinent data with their albums. Nearly every Folkways album comes with its own booklet, whether four pages on one sheet or sixteen pages enclosed in its own pocket inside the record jacket, and many of the newer labels emulate that example.

**I**n view of this background, and of the attitude that has brought about the development of ever-increasing numbers of new small labels in the first place, it is plain to see that artistic control is of prominent concern. For instance, most Philo records of North American folk music bear the inscription "Philo Records encourages the artist to assume full creative control of his or her album. This record is as conceived by the artist." This policy is typical of most of the small labels. There are those at the major record companies who might object at this point that *their* artists have total control too. But the degree of involvement is different. At most of these small companies the "staff" is the owner and a spouse or one or two friends, and they all deal with the artist personally at every level of production. Also, while some of the owners of the smaller labels might enjoy earning a gold or platinum record (signifying sales of 500,000 or a million albums, respectively), few will be disappointed at the fact that they never reach that point, for that is simply not why they are in business. (overleaf)

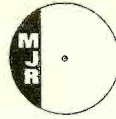
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BY IRA MAYER

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**SPIVEY RECORDS**



**JAZZology**



There will also be a few disgruntled artists who, because of situations that didn't work out for them, will insist that the "total control" so frequently spoken about doesn't really exist. In looking through the records that have been made available by these small companies, though, an unbiased observer will find few of which an artist might be ashamed and an enormous number of which an artist might well be proud. Contrast that with the number of LP's released by major companies that it would be best to recycle immediately upon release.

**T**RULY, these little labels do have something to offer. But how does the prospective buyer get to it? Just listening to the radio or even browsing through the majority of "full line" record shops around the country, one might never discover the wealth of folk, jazz, blues, and traditional country material that has been put on record. The *Schwann Catalog* lists many small independent labels, but that source is not definitive even for the major labels. Nor can it help you track down a particular item in an offbeat area. If you are looking for a selection of Cajun music, for example, or should you want to find out what is the latest on the avant-garde jazz front, you're going to have some trouble unless you know where to *begin* to look. And the salesman at your local record store is not likely to be of much help these days. Therefore, in the interest of providing the reader with a little introduction to the whole field, of turning over, so to speak, the first spade in this garden of recorded delights, an examination of some of the more interesting, more important labels follows. But please remember that it is an *introduction only*, that a complete listing, even if it were possible in these cramped quarters (it is not), is *the very furthest thing from our minds*.

## Catalog Sources

While descriptions of some individual specialty labels appear below, the bulk of information on small record companies can be found in several well-organized and extensive catalogs. Most of the labels have their own catalogs, and most sell their records by mail and at concerts and festivals as well as through selected stores. But there are

also three mail-order houses which publish general catalogs. These are indispensable to the serious enthusiast of folk, jazz, blues, and traditional country music.

□ **New Music Distribution Service**, 6 West 95th Street, New York, N.Y. 10025. A division of the Jazz Composers Orchestra Association, NMDS is a nonprofit organization made up predominantly of avant-garde jazz and classical musicians who perform, issue records of their own, and run the mail-order



service. It is the latter that supports many of JCOA's own projects. The catalog—free for the asking—lists approximately one hundred labels and more than four times that number of records. Some are what would be referred to in publishing terms as "vanity press" items. Others are individual listings from companies that release records of other than avant-garde music.

□ **Roundup**, 186 Willow Avenue, Somerville, Mass. 02144. Irwin and Nowlin, who started Rounder Records, did so with political as well as musical motives. Rounder was set up as a collective, and anyone who worked with Irwin, Nowlin, or Marion Leighton (who joined early on) was a member. And everything was done by the members. "When we started we barely knew what an invoice was," Nowlin has stated on several occasions. Irwin, a political scientist, taught for the first few years in order to pay the rent, while the others—activists themselves—handled Rounder. The mail-

order business for other labels—Rounder-house, in its first incarnation—was founded in the hopes of generating income to support Rounder's efforts. It has become more of a service, though, than a money maker.

Roundup became the name in the fall of 1975 when the operation was moved from Irwin, Nowlin, and Leighton's living room to a warehouse. Outside employees were hired for the first time about a year later. "We don't emphasize the collective aspect nearly as much as we used to," Nowlin explains. "We run things today 99.9 per cent the way any other record company or distributor would." The current Roundup catalog includes two hundred labels and several thousand discs. The concentration is on North American folk music, but Roundup carries the entire catalogs of some companies whose own reaches extend beyond that boundary. Of late it has also added a number of jazz labels.

□ **J & F Southern Record Sales**, 42 North Lake Avenue, Pasadena, Calif. 91101. In this case there is a store behind the catalogs, but owners John Harmer and Frank Scott, avid record collectors themselves, are dedicated to serving the needs of the mail-order customer. There are four separate catalogs, a bimonthly magazine, and periodic mailings about special purchases and auctions. The catalogs: blues, gospel, and rhythm-and-blues; bluegrass, old-timey, American folk, and western swing; folk music of the British Isles; and 45's and EP's. Each includes domestic and imported records, and there is frequently a one- or two-line blurb describing the selection. The magazine, *J & F Record Special*, is taken up mostly by intelligent reviews of recent releases with some news and auction information. (In the matter of auctions, special mailings and the magazine are sent to foreign addresses earlier than to American addresses so that everyone interested in limited-availability items has an equal chance at acquiring them.) The J & F catalogs, because they are organized according to category and then subdivided by label, are tremendously informative and useful.

## Individual Labels

The label descriptions that follow, in alphabetical order, are an arbitrary grouping of folk- and jazz-oriented companies. The emphasis is on folk partly because there are more labels devoted to that genre and partly because many of the jazz labels consist of one or two LP's by a given artist. Also, there is much avant-garde and contemporary jazz being issued on labels *distributed* by major companies—ECM (Keith Jarrett, Gary Burton, Jan Garbarek) via Polydor, and Freedom (Cecil Taylor, Roswell Rudd, Dewey Red-



Rounder  
Records

FAMOUS  
DOOR

CHOICE

man) through Arista. Interestingly, both of these are European labels which have been more successful in the United States than most American-based companies.

□ **Arhoolie**, 10341 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, Calif. 94530. The catalog offers contemporary and traditional blues from the likes of Mance Lipscomb, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Clifton Chenier, and Bukka White, as well as several fine anthologies organized along geographical lines. It is run by blues lover Chris Strachwitz.

□ **Biograph**, P.O. Box 109, Canaan, N.Y. 12029. Arnold Caplin's label has amassed a considerable amount of historically important blues and early jazz material, some culled from the Columbia vaults, some from various out-of-print catalogs. Blind Lemon Jefferson, Ma Rainey, Ethel Waters, Reverend Gary Davis, and Leadbelly are among those represented, along with contemporary bluesman Johnny Shines and progressive bluegrassers Bottle Hill. There are also about a dozen LP's of piano-roll recordings by or of Fats Waller, Scott Joplin, and Eubie Blake, among others.

□ **Choice Records**, 245 Tilley Place, Sea Cliff, N.Y. 11579. Gerry Macdonald's Choice label specializes in what used to be called modern jazz. Among the many fine artists on the Choice roster are Zoot Sims, Toots Thielemans ("Captured Alive," Choice CRS 1007), and Jimmy Giuffre.

□ **County**, P.O. Box 191, Floyd, Va. 24091. String-band music as it developed during the Twenties and Thirties is the mainstay of this label, with the Delmore Brothers, Wade Mainer and the Sons of the Mountaineers, and Charlie Poole leading the way. Contemporary recordings of traditional bluegrass and old-timey artists are also released on County, with Red Allen and the Kentuckians, the Lilly Brothers, the Stanley Brothers, and long-time Bill Monroe fiddler Kenny Baker heading the list.

□ **Delmark**, 4243 North Lincoln Avenue, Chicago, Ill. 60618. The Chicago blues as played by Roosevelt Sykes, Junior Wells, T-Bone Walker, and Mighty Joe Young are all that concern this most respectable outfit. Additional classics come from Sleepy John Estes and Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup, the latter being the man from whom Elvis Presley learned *Hound Dog*.

□ **Eubie Blake Music (EBM)**, 284-A Stuyvesant Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11221. At the age of ninety-three Blake continues to perform and record the ragtime songs associated with him since just after the turn of the century. The man who, with Noble Sissle, wrote *I'm Just Wild About Harry* and other classics has his own label dedicated to the preservation of his music. John Arpin, a fine

Canadian ragtime pianist and jazz historian, has also recorded for EBM.

□ **Famous Door**, 40-08 155th Street, Flushing, N.Y. 11354. Harry Lim's Famous Door label is dedicated, in the company's own words, to producing "jazz records of the finest quality, using the most up-to-date recording techniques and equipment and the best pressings obtainable." Famous Door's specialty is mainstream jazz; a representative recent release features John Bunch, Urbie Green, and Milt Hinton ("John's Bunch," Famous Door HL-107). Like all the label's releases, it is available by mail for \$7.50.



□ **Flying Fish**, 3320 North Halstead, Chicago, Ill. 60657. Begun by Bruce Kaplan, who spent a brief period with the Rounder collective, Flying Fish features the talents of John Hartford, Norman Blake, and Tut Taylor in solo outings. There is also an outstanding double-record set titled "Hillbilly Jazz," a latter-day country-swing effort with Vassar Clements, David Bromberg, and some of their friends, which is something of an underground classic.

□ **Folk-Legacy**, Sharon, Conn. 06069. Sandy and Caroline Paton, performers themselves, concentrate their recording activities on contemporary interpreters of traditional music, though the early part of their catalog does include a few field recordings. Rosalie Sorrels was at her finest when she made her Folk-Legacy album (she has since recorded for several other labels), and Gordon Bok's recordings of Maine sea lore are excellent additions to any folk library. "The New Golden Ring," in two volumes, is a collec-

tion of songs performed by the Patons and such friends as Bok, Michael Cooney, Joe Hickerson, and Ed Trickett; it serves as an excellent introduction to their respective talents. Trickett, a hammered-dulcimer player and singer, is heard to beautiful advantage on his own LP, "The Telling Takes Me Home." A few of Folk-Legacy's albums include songs by the early American composer William Billings among the folk songs.

□ **Folkways**, 43 West 61st Street, New York, N.Y. 10023. The company's catalog is an education in and of itself, and no one else stocks the whole thing. There are records on handwriting analysis, hypnotism, and Senator Joseph McCarthy, along with the most extensive collection of Americana available on record. Of special note are the six-record "Anthology of American Folk Music," spanning the full spectrum of traditional country and blues with such artists as the Carter Family, Mississippi John Hurt, Charlie Poole, Bascom Lamar Lunsford, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and Uncle Dave Macon; Pete Seeger's four-volume "American Favorite Ballads"; "Berkeley Farms," a collection of old-timey string-band music; and any of the black music anthologies, many recorded at the height of the civil-rights movement and reflecting the crossing of traditional forms with contemporary needs and consciousness. Too, there are dozens of LP's of international folk music and a good variety of early-jazz anthologies.

□ **Halcyon**, 302 Clinton Street, Bellmore, N.Y. 11710. Founded in the late Sixties, Halcyon is the brainchild of jazz pianist Marian McPartland. Not surprisingly, the bulk of the label's catalog consists of jazz piano recordings, many featuring Ms. McPartland either on her own ("Solo Concert at Haverford," Halcyon 111) or teamed with such venerable artists as Teddy Wilson, Joe Venuti, and her ex-husband, cornetist Jimmy McPartland.

□ **Improvising Artists**, 26 Jane Street, New York, N.Y. 10014. Improvising Artists is run by avant-garde jazzman Paul Bley, who has worked with Ornette Coleman, Charles Mingus, and the Jazz Composers Orchestra Association, among others. In aim, it is somewhat similar to the more widely distributed ECM label. Among the artists represented in the Improvising Artists catalog are such major contemporary jazz figures as Sam Rivers, Ran Blake, Charlie Haden, and, of course, Bley himself. "Quiet Song," Improvising Artists 373839, on which he is joined by Bill Connors and Jimmy Giuffre, is particularly recommended.

□ **Jazzology**, P.O. Box 748, Columbia, S.C. 29202. Jazzology is one of the oldest of the small independents, founded in 1949 by George Buck, Sr., and now run by his son George Jr. As the name implies, it is primarily dedicated to traditional, classic jazz, and the company has an enormous catalog of



new releases and reissues. Jazzology has done a superb job of documenting on records the work of older but still functioning jazzmen, survivors of the great tradition; their numerous recordings of the great New Orleans clarinetist George Lewis (1900-1969) are a splendid case in point. Jazzology puts out a nice, folksy little publication, a 1966 issue of which was dedicated to the memory of their late "faithful and beloved Cocker spaniel dog Bootsie." The loss was undoubtedly felt, but it apparently hasn't adversely affected the label.

□ **JCOA**, 6 West 95th Street, New York, N.Y. 10025. Founders Michael Mantler and Carla Bley got the JCOA label off to a brilliant start with two critically acclaimed sets: Mantler's "Jazz Composer's Orchestra," with Cecil Taylor, and Bley's three-record opus "Escalator over the Hill." (Mantler and Bley now record for their own Watt label.) The thin line between classical and jazz in the realm of the avant-garde makes it most difficult to categorize either work, and, as with Don Cherry, Roswell Rudd, or any of the other JCOA artists, a high level of sophistication must be brought to the music by the listener.

□ **Master Jazz**, Box 579, Lenox Hill Station, New York, N.Y. 10021. Master Jazz, founded and run by jazz buff William Weilbacher, has an extensive catalog of jazz releases, some new (produced for the label) and some old. Most notable among the latter is a reissue series comprising all the Mainstream sessions produced for English Decca in the Fifties by Stanley Dance, featuring, among others, albums by Rex Stewart and Bud Johnson. There is also a nifty series called "Master Jazz Piano," Volume I of which earned a STEREO REVIEW Record of the Year Award for 1970, and there are some fine Earl Hines discs among many others:

□ **Paredon**, P.O. Box 889, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11202. Political activist and singer Barbara Dane is the force behind Paredon, a distinctly political label. The catalog includes such titles as "Che Guevara Speaks," the three-record "The Second Declaration of Havana" (the 1962 speech by Fidel Castro with printed text in Spanish and English), and "FTA: Songs of the GI Resistance," sung by Dane.

□ **People's Music**, 220-10 Hempstead Boulevard, Queens Village, N.Y. 11429. Though I've avoided those labels limited to one or two releases, People's Music is included because of the number of people represented on its two People's Victory Orchestra and Chorus LP's, "Weltschmerzen" and "The School." As with Bley's "Escalator over the Hill," a wide variety of jazz and rock personalities participate, and the results are strikingly original, if not to everyone's taste.

□ **Philo**, The Barn, North Ferrisburg, Vt. 05473. Philo is one of the most interesting of

the folk labels because of the scope of its endeavors. Located in Vermont, the company feels the Canadian influence heavily, and there are excellent French-Canadian recordings by Montreal accordionist Phillipe Bruneau and fiddler Louis Beaudoin. Bruce "Utah" Phillips and Mary McCaslin have put out two excellent albums each; Phillips, a Wobbly organizer and train lover, and McCaslin, a sweet-voiced country singer/writer, both bring things a little closer to home. Many of the other Northeast folk labels use the facilities of the Earth Audio Techniques Studio run by Philo for recording their own artists.

□ **Rebel**, Route 12, Asbury, W.Va. 24916. Similar to County, but limited to the contemporary vein, Rebel is open to modern developments in the basic bluegrass form. The Country Gentlemen and the Seldom Scene, generally considered progressive bluegrass bands, are probably Rebel's most popular groups. Both County and Rebel can usually be found on sale at booths at bluegrass and folk festivals.

□ **Rounder**, 186 Willow Avenue, Somerville, Mass. 02144. Though it is relatively young, Rounder has done an impressive job of reissuing some Library of Congress recordings (an excellent set from labor-activist singer Aunt Molly Jackson) and some rare country blues (Blind Alfred Reed's Depression songs under the title "How Can a Poor Man Stand Such Times and Live?"). Rounder, however, is also active with contemporary folk idioms and artists from the bluegrass-jazz-country swing fusion of Tony Trischka and Breakfast Special to the thirteen-year-old 1975 fiddle and guitar champion Mark O'Connor. The latter is assisted by John Hartford, Norman Blake,

and others. Recording quality and packaging care are above the average, and the taste is impeccable.

□ **Spivey Records**, 65 Grand Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205. Spivey was founded by the late Victoria Spivey, a well-known blues singer who recorded for Okeh in the Twenties and was featured in the Warner Brothers film *Hallelujah*. Spivey was one of the first to record the young Bob Dylan (she appears on the cover of Dylan's "New Morning"), and two cuts that predate his signing with Columbia (Dylan providing harmonica accompaniment for Big Joe Williams) are available on "Three Kings and a Queen" (Spivey 1004). Other albums in the label's small catalog include performances by Roosevelt Sykes and Lonnie Johnson as well as a reissue of some of Miss Spivey's best Okeh work.

□ **Strata East**, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010. This is the label responsible for establishing Gil Scott-Heron and Brian Jackson as major forces in contemporary black musical poetry. Their "Winter in America" sold very well and continues to be the duo's strongest work. (They now record for Arista.) Additional Strata albums come from Clifford Jordan, Pharoah Sanders, Cecil Payne, Stanley Cowell, and Sonny Fortune, among others, and the emphasis is clearly on the jazz end of the spectrum.

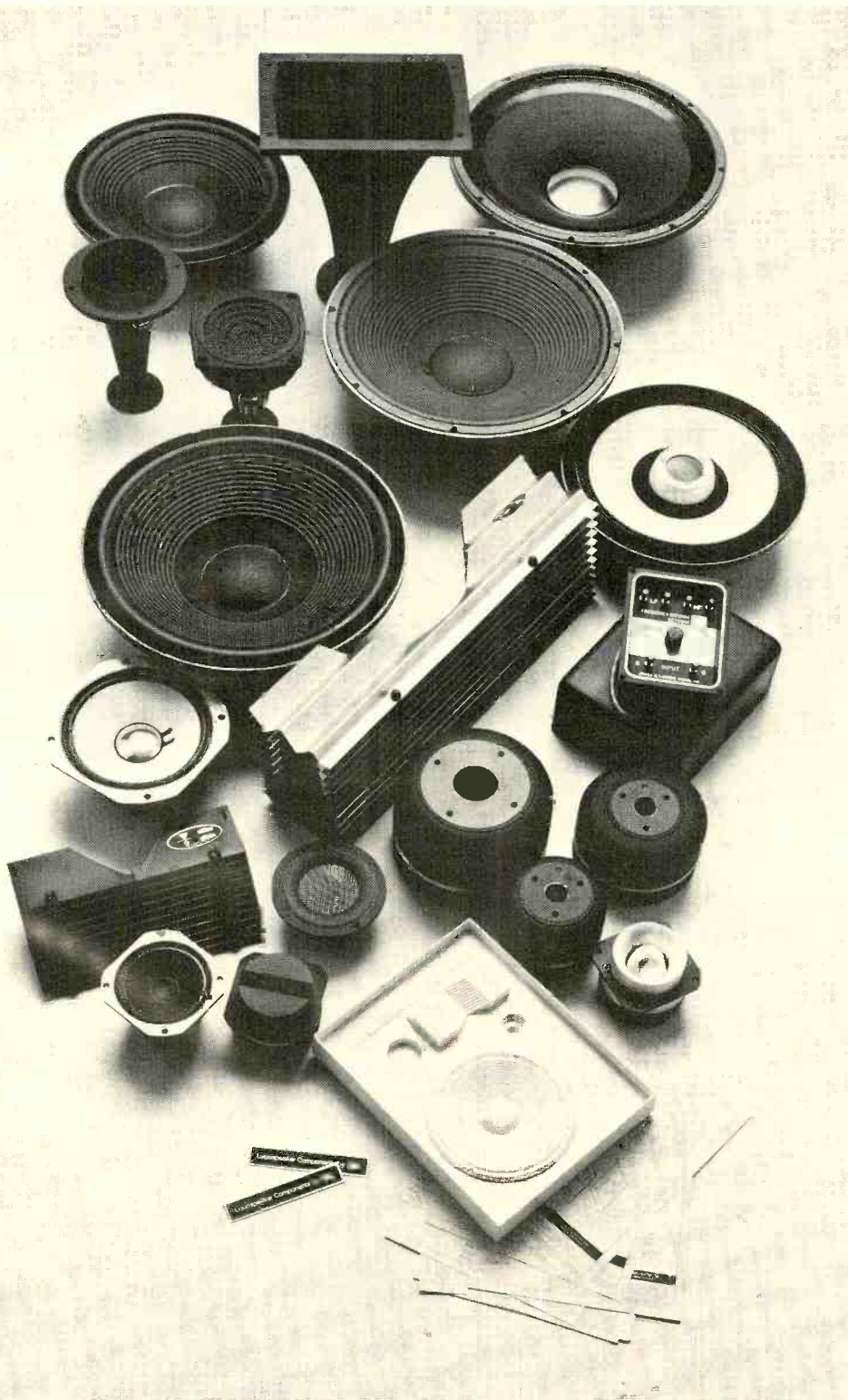
□ **Takoma**, P.O. Box 5369, Santa Monica, Calif. 90405. Guitarist John Fahey, who crosses traditional folk guitar idioms with classical technique, records his own music along with that of his protégé Leo Kottke, dobro player Mike Auldridge, and other friends. Fahey's own "The New Possibility," featuring solo guitar renditions of traditional Christmas songs, is a masterpiece.

□ **Yazoo/Blue Goose**, 245 Waverly Place, New York, N.Y. 10014. Yazoo releases are devoted primarily to reissues of old blues, country, and novelty 78's in LP form; Blue Goose takes on contemporary blues and old-timey artists. In the former category one is as likely to come across Blind Willie McTell or Charlie Paton as Cliff Edwards, better known as "Ukulele Ike" and the voice behind Jiminy Cricket. The Blue Goose catalog is highlighted by LP's from Larry Johnson, an exceptional blues interpreter, and Roy Bookbinder, a combination bluesman and novelty writer. Much of the cover art is done by underground cartoonist R. Crumb, whose own Cheap Suit Serenaders have released two LP's and a 78 (yes!) on Blue Goose. Both labels were developed by Nick Perls.

**T**HERE are hundreds of other labels, far more than can be listed here. Most of them are highly specialized and cater to a select clientele, and finding out about them is a matter of meeting other people with similar interests, subscribing to special-interest magazines, and getting your name on mailing lists. With catalogs from NMDS, Roundup, and J & F for starters, or those available through writing to any of the above-mentioned companies, you may find yourself in the midst of a whole new world of recorded music that would have interested you long ago had you only known it was there— or where to find it. □

*Ira Mayer, who has written on music for the New York Times and the Village Voice, is the reviews editor for Record World, a prominent recording-industry trade publication.*

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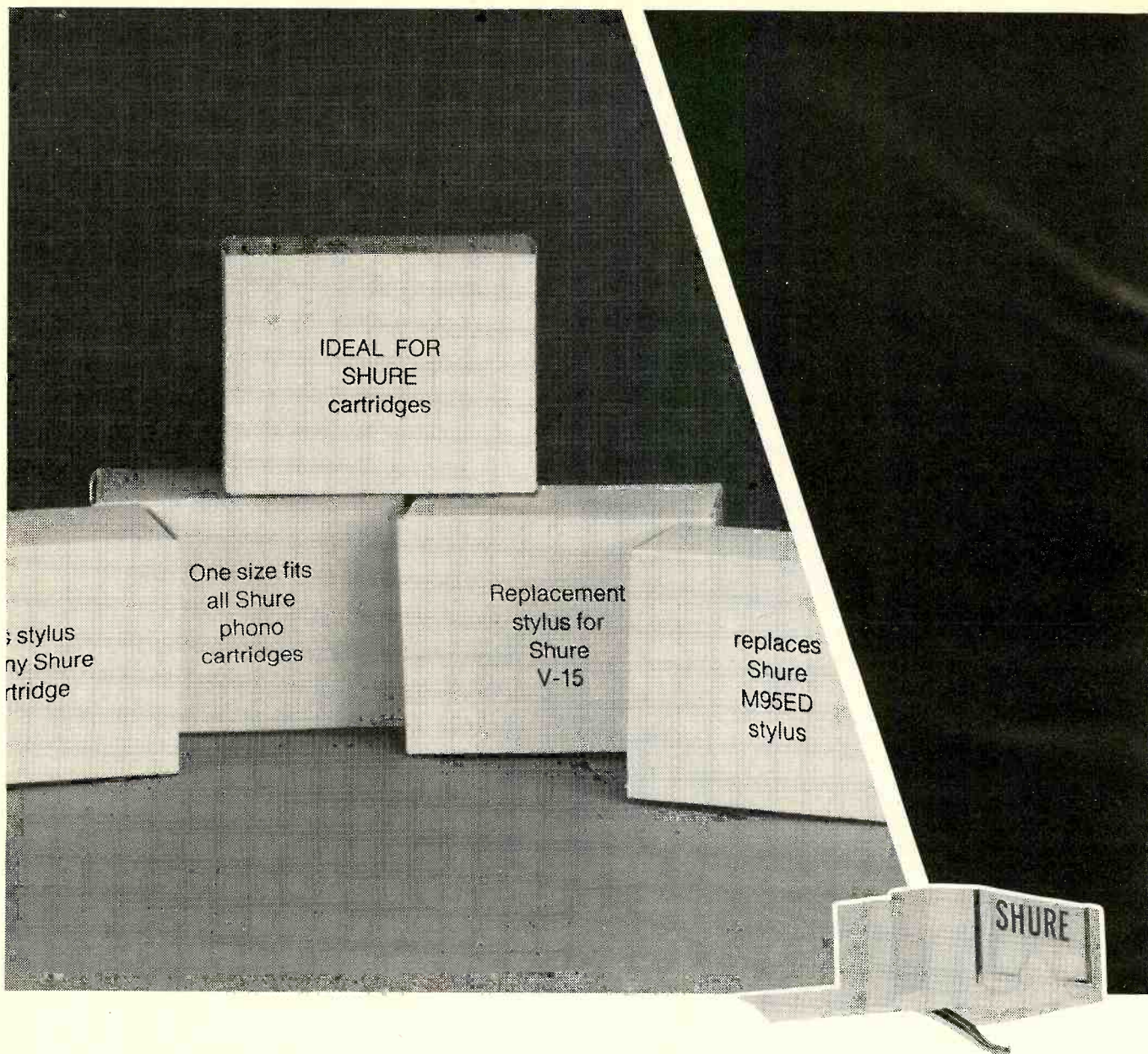
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# STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

# BEST OF THE MONTH



SPRING

“For me, for now,  
the ultimate  
reading of  
Vivaldi’s *Seasons*”

AUTUMN



Bellmann Archive

**H**OWEVER much it is overplayed and over-recorded, Vivaldi’s *Seasons* will always delight an audience and challenge a performer. The cycle is, after all, a masterpiece unique in the repertoire, certified by a deserved and unquestioned popularity, and it will therefore continue to remain fresh in good performances. Conductor Trevor Pinnock has turned in such a performance in a new release on the CRD label, a superb account from every point of view.

The most striking feature here is the use of low-pitch instruments, originals from the eighteenth century or copies of them. Although the sound might at first seem somewhat flat and colorless compared with some of the whiz-bang treatments the work has suffered on disc in the past, one soon grows accustomed to it and begins gradually to realize how marvelously subtle and delicate Vivaldi’s string writing is. This, in turn, brings out the finer programmatic qualities of a work which, when performed on modern instruments, often seems rather crude and even naïve. This is apparent from the very first “bird” solo of the “Spring” section, and it is consistently demonstrated right through to the frenzied tumult of the final storm of “Winter.” Never have I heard so convincing a reading of the “fountain” passage in “Spring,” or such delicate sounds as those produced by the “zephyrs” in “Summer.” And, for the first time, the faithful dog in “Spring” stands out from the suave violin cantilena and the murmuring breezes.

Ensembles of old instruments frequently sound as if they were hampered by instrumental limitations—they either just barely get the notes out, or one senses that they are frustrated in not being able to express themselves as fully as they could on modern instruments. Not so with the English Consort: not only are they technically perfect, but they bring out



SUMMER

the full *expressive* capability of their instruments as well. They are aided in this by Mr. Pinnock’s carefully wrought interpretation: the conductor scrupulously observes all of Vivaldi’s original dynamic markings, but he is not afraid to use effective crescendos

WINTER



and diminuendos (as well as the traditionally accepted terrace dynamics of the period) where a more modern sensibility indicates. Nor is he afraid of tempo changes. (No drunkard keeps a steady tempo, let alone running game—but both are “characters” to be dealt with in the tale of *The Seasons*.) Such tempo changes, although effective for programmatic purposes, can upset the balance of a Baroque movement in which tempo is an important factor in maintaining a single “affection,” but Mr. Pinnock seems to be able to accommodate variations in tempo and still maintain the thrust of the movement as a whole.

Violinist Simon Standage is as much at home in the Baroque as conductor Pinnock. He presents the concertos as the brilliant virtuoso pieces they are, indulging so successfully in some fine ornamentation of the slow movements that one wishes he had done more of it. What he does do, however, is far from formulaic; it gives us a more than fair notion of what Vivaldi's bare melodic lines could—and doubtless were—turned into in his time.

In short, this is for me, for now, the ultimate reading of *The Seasons*. Both the sonorities of the old instruments and the interpretation bring new light to the work, making it well worth adding to one's record library even though it may already be “well-seasoned.”

—Stoddard Lincoln

**VIVALDI: *The Seasons*.** Simon Standage (violin); English Consort, Trevor Pinnock cond. CRD 1025 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors, P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

## The Nighthawks: There's More To the Blues Than the Form

**T**HE Nighthawks are a pugnacious and delightful combo who make love to rock and blues rather than trying to wrestle them to the ground. Where most combos and bands assume they are dealing with the rich content of the blues by dealing with its limited form, the Nighthawks score because they reverse the process. The blues, like a coconut, is hairy and hard on the outside, but the meat inside is mighty sweet, and the Nighthawks know how to get at it.

Mark Wenner's harmonica and Jim Thackery's guitar are instruments of pure delight. Wenner's understanding and use of the harmonica, though grounded in urban blues, takes the instrument beyond its traditional roles in blues and folk; he has a fine romantic streak in him, and an independence of thought in solo ideas and construction of choruses. Thackery's hot and steamy solos are economic and exciting; he plays what is *right* to play, with occasional decoration, but he avoids the bluster-and-fast-finger syndrome that makes so many rock and blues guitarists annoying and wasteful.

The three wildest cuts on this live album are *Shake and Fingerpop*, *Nineteen Years Old*, and an all-stops-out

*Shake Your Moneymaker*. The audience yells, stomps, whistles, and presumably shakes its moneymakers. They've got a right to: the Nighthawks are *allll* right and mighty tight.

—Joel Vance

**THE NIGHTHAWKS: *Nighthawks Live*.** Mark Wenner (harmonica, vocals); Jim Thackery (guitar, vocals); Jan Zukowski (bass, vocals); Pete Ragusa (drums). *Jailhouse Rock*; *Hound Dog*; *Can't Get Next to You*; *Shake and Fingerpop*; *Whammer Jammer*; *Tripe Face Boogie*; *Nineteen Years Old*; *Shake Your Moneymaker*. ADELPHI AD 4410 \$6.95.

## Jules Massenet's *Esclarmonde*: The French Understand These Things . . .

**C**OMPLETED in 1888 at the peak of Jules Massenet's creative inspiration (between *Manon*, 1884, and *Werther*, 1892), *Esclarmonde* was written for Sybil Sanderson, an American soprano of captivating beauty and remarkable vocal endowments. The opera enjoyed great success for a while but failed to enter the international repertoire; after 1934 it seems to have disappeared from the stages of France and Belgium as well.

The team of Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngé is responsible for the opera's return to currency in a sweep that began with a San Francisco revival (October 1974), continued with the recording I am about to discuss (London, July 1975), and led to a Metropolitan Opera production (November 1976), all three built around the same principals and an almost unchanging cast.

Though *Esclarmonde* is strongly indebted to Wagner, this influence should not be overemphasized. For one thing, Massenet's orchestration, for all its fleeting Wagnerian touches, is characteristically French in sound and transparency. Furthermore, Massenet no more abandoned the conventional arias and ensembles in this opera than he did in *Manon* and *Thais*, nor did he surrender to Wagnerian overstatement: his expression is concise, elegantly proportioned, and (so far as the murky and involved story makes possible) reasonably clear.

According to one Massenet biographer, *Esclarmonde* is a “bewilderingly eclectic” opera. It is eclectic, without a doubt, but one is amused rather than

*Nighthawks Ragusa, Zukowski, Thackery, and Wenner*



Photo David Blackwell



bewildered on encountering, as the story unfolds, reminders of *Armide*, *Il Trovatore*, *Les Troyens*, *Lohengrin*, *Die Walküre*, *Parsifal*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and even anticipations of *Turandot*. The libretto by Alfred Blau and Louis de Gramont contains dashes of all these seasonings added to a knightly tale about the Byzantine princess Esclarmonde, a dabbler in the magical arts who becomes infatuated with and eventually seduces the Chevalier Roland—whose heroism, suffering, and ultimate triumph are also described. That magical French mixture of religion and eroticism that lies at the core of so many successful operas (*Manon*, *Thaïs*, *Hérodiade*, *Samson et Dalila*, and others) works well in this instance too. Massenet's music, sensuous and at times richly evocative of medieval mysteries, fits the poetic text elegantly, and the opera's rescue from oblivion is eminently justified for these reasons as well as for the quality of the recorded performance.

The elusive and mysterious character of Esclarmonde is a good choice for Joan Sutherland, whose singing style is usually rendered somewhat mystical by cloudy enunciation anyway. It is a demanding role calling for extended lyric passages *à la Manon* alternating with the sort of dizzying ascents and high staccatos we usually associate with Mozart's Queen of the Night. Miss Sutherland sensibly ignores the high F and G in *alt* the music actually calls for, settling for a number of high D's delivered clearly and firmly. In all, her voice is in admirable shape, pure and full-bodied, and her technique is as good as ever.

Giacomo Aragall's part is less demandingly written, most of it lying in the tenor's attractive and effective upper mid-range, but the higher demands, when they do occur, are also met with a free and ringing top. Except for an awkward passage in the Epilogue, where the tessitura lies in the register "break," he sounds youthful and heroic, as the role requires, and sings with intelligence and sensitivity. The supporting cast is also good: Louis Quilico is strong and secure as the fanatical Bishop, Clifford Grant is sonorous in his solemn pronouncements, and Huguette Tourangeau supports her fine singing with exemplary enunciation.

Richard Bonyngé must know this music better than anyone living. His leadership is justly paced, sensitive, and considerate of the singers' needs—so considerate, in fact, that some of the composer's *forte* markings seem to have been sacrificed to this concern, though without any major detriment to the overall effort. Where the performance falls somewhat short is in the area

of precision and incisiveness; choral tone and accuracy, in particular, are not always what they should be. Technically, the sound is satisfactory if in no way exceptional.

Works plucked from opera's capacious *oubliette* seldom prove to be transcendental masterpieces, and *Esclarmonde* is no exception. But it is viable, colorful, and enjoyable, with a marvelous second act in which Scene I ends with a Tristanesque *Liebesnacht* followed by a Scene II that is all morning-after languor. The French understand these things. . . .

—George Jellinek

**MASSENET: *Esclarmonde*.** Joan Sutherland (soprano), Esclarmonde; Giacomo Aragall (tenor), Roland; Clifford Grant (bass), the Emperor Phorcas; Louis Quilico (baritone), the Bishop of Blois; Huguette Tourangeau (mezzo-soprano), Parséis; Ryland Davies (tenor), Énéas; Robert Lloyd (bass), Cléomer; others. John Alldis Choir and National Philharmonic Orchestra, Richard Bonyngé cond. LONDON OSA 13118 three discs \$20.94.



Roland (Aragall) at the feet of Esclarmonde (Sutherland)

## Ry Cooder's "Chicken Skin Music" Revitalizes Some Still Lively Roots

HAVING chosen to make himself a dynamic in the folk process, Ry Cooder keeps tracking our music back to its roots and showing us that the little devils are still alive. He plays source music with respect and understanding, but he also plays it his own way. In "Chicken Skin Music" for Reprise he mixes Tex-Mex instrumentation with white-country and Leadbelly songs, Hawaiian styles with such manufactured pieces as *Yellow Roses* and *Chloe* (*Chloe!* He does it as an instrumental—the words would be just too dang Spike Jones much—but bringing it up in the first place is a typically sly Cooder stroke), and gospel with various seemingly incongruous elements, and it all



MELOS QUARTET OF STUTTGART:  
*Wilhelm Melcher, first violin;*  
*Gerhard Voss, second violin;*  
*Hermann Voss, viola; and*  
*Peter Buck, cello*

comes out with its flavor not only intact but spiced up like you just wouldn't believe.

All this music—just about all of Cooder's chosen music—is from poor people. Spiritually, therefore, it doesn't want to be dressed up lavishly or expensively but *colorfully*, the way that Staggerlee-type character in *I Got Mine* would dress. Cooder understands this perfectly. He never plays fancy licks for their own sake and he never seems to bend his vision for the sake of selling a few more records. "Chicken Skin Music" has a jagged, free-for-all sound that deepens your impression of what life must have been like for the people behind the music.

Cooder's singing, which seemed to reach nearly its full maturity about one album back, is sure and sympathetic, but it has its own integrity. The songs, like their sources, represent a variety of styles and approaches (this album is, in a quiet way, wildly experimental) but they're all going to the same place. One experiment—putting a bolero beat and Flaco Jimenez's slightly overplayed diatonic accordion to *He'll Have to Go*, an old country song popularized by Jim Reeves—comes off only half-baked; he needed to live with that idea a little longer. But less likely-appearing experiments have worked out beautifully, and in all Cooder makes quite a coherent and detailed statement about himself. You may find yourself mentally underlining long passages of it.

—Noel Coppage

**RY COODER:** *Chicken Skin Music.* Ry Cooder (vocals, guitar, mandolin, mandola, bajo sexto, accordion); Milt Holland (per-

cussion); Chris Ethridge (bass); Gabby Pahinui (Hawaiian steel guitar); Atta Isaacs (guitar); Flaco Jimenez (accordion); other musicians. *The Bourgeois Blues: I Got Mine; Always Lift Him Up; He'll Have to Go; Smack Dab in the Middle; Stand by Me; Yellow Roses; Chloe; Goodnight Irene.* REPRISE MS 2254 \$6.98, © M8-2254 \$7.98, © M5-2254 \$7.98.

## Formal Integrity and Astonishing Substance In Luigi Cherubini's Six String Quartets

**L**UIGI CHERUBINI, productive to the end of his long life (1760-1842), was a working contemporary of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, Weber, Mendelssohn, and Schumann. In his own time he was regarded as highly as they; Beethoven himself spoke of him as the greatest of his contemporaries. Cherubini is remembered today for but a handful of works—*Medea*, the two Requiems, the Symphony in D Major, and perhaps the Overture to *Anacreon*. The idea of associating his name with chamber music is one that would never occur to most of us, and for that reason alone the Deutsche Grammophon Archiv set of his six string quartets is an intriguing release. One might have thought one or

two of these works would have been an adequate sampling, but after hearing the splendid performances by the Mehos Quartet of Stuttgart one is inclined to replace the word "intriguing" with "important."

The quartets, all mature works, are fascinating for the influences suggested here and there (not always supportably), but still more for their formal integrity and frequently astonishing substance. For example: No. 1, in E-flat, composed in 1814, is notable for a remarkable scherzo whose main section echoes the particular Spanish style identified with Boccherini and whose trio even more sharply "pre-echoes" Mendelssohn. And No. 2, in C, is immediately recognizable as the same music as the aforementioned Symphony in D; Cherubini adapted the orchestral work of 1815 some fourteen years later, replacing the original slow movement with a *Lento* whose greater depth and expressiveness are more effective in the chamber-music context.

The first two quartets were separated by fifteen years, the second and third by five, but then Cherubini went on to produce a quartet each year from 1834 through 1837. Each of these final four is, to a greater or lesser degree, striking for its parallels with the style of Beethoven in his late quartets—works with which, as Ludwig Finscher observes in his annotation, "Cherubini was probably unfamiliar." There is, in any event, no suggestion of imitation, but simply of resemblance; the style seems as natural and uncontrived on Cherubini's part as on Beethoven's. Quartet No. 4, in E Major, is a masterwork by any measure: the theatrical echoes one



Far left, Ry Cooder:  
a dynamic in the folk process

Near left, Fraser MacPherson:  
fluid, full-bodied tenor sax

might have heard (or imagined) in the earlier works are entirely absent now, and in their place is a dramatic tension achievable only in the most intense and intimate chamber works. That tension is enhanced here by a subtle scheme of thematic relationships and a wholly original finale in which the drama is deepened rather than resolved. The Fifth Quartet, in F, reverts in part to the more ingratiating style of the earlier works, with the *Rasumovsky* set rather than the later Beethoven works as possible models (Finscher considers the finale of Beethoven's Op. 59, No. 3, the "definite source of inspiration" for this work's finale). The Sixth, in A Minor, is again different; it is cooler and more serene than its predecessors, yet not without drama—a conscious summing-up, it would seem (as it does to Finscher), of Cherubini's entire creative life as he worked through the second half of his eighth decade.

The performances are communicative in the best sense, exuding an air of real affection and deep commitment. The recorded sound is near-perfect in its clarity and balance, and in the accompanying booklet Finscher's invaluable notes are augmented by an essay by Wilhelm Melcher (leader of the Melos Quartet) on the sources and interpretation of the quartets, with several musical examples. This music is a good deal more than a "novelty," as anyone already acquainted with the quartets of Beethoven, Schubert, *et al.* will delight in discovering.

—Richard Freed

**CHERUBINI:** *String Quartets: No. 1, in E-flat Major; No. 2, in C Major; No. 3, in D Mi-*

*nor; No. 4, in E Major; No. 5, in F Major; No. 6, in A Minor.* Melos Quartet of Stuttgart. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIV 2723 044 three discs \$23.94.

## At the Planetarium in Vancouver, B. C.: Fraser MacPherson's Good, Live Jazz

**I**F you live in the Vancouver, B.C., area, chances are you've heard the music of Fraser MacPherson, Oliver Gannon, and Wyatt Ruther. If not—and if you like your jazz served ever so mellow and swinging—I strongly suggest that you track these men down and catch their next appearance. At this point I should confess that I had never heard of MacPherson, Gannon, and Ruther until I received for review an album on the West End label, so I really don't know if they play together regularly. Judging by the rapport in evidence on the record, however, I'm quite willing right now to lay a little money on it.

The album—a consolation to those of us who are at a geographical disadvantage—captures MacPherson and his colleagues in concert at Vancouver's MacMillan Planetarium on an inspired Monday evening in December of 1975. Fraser MacPherson's tenor style is

Getz-based, he plays with the fluidity—and, occasionally, the phrasing—of Lester Young, and he has the full-bodied tone of Don Byas. Like Charlie Christian, Oliver Gannon plays an amplified guitar, which—unlike the electric guitar—retains some of the tonal qualities of its Spanish ancestor. His touch is delicate, his technique is flawless, and he has the soulfulness of Django Reinhardt—an obvious influence. Not surprisingly, then, Gannon solos extensively on *Django*, John Lewis' hauntingly beautiful tribute to the late Belgian guitarist. It is a tune that suffers not at all from being lovingly nudged along by MacPherson's tenor, and throughout the album Wyatt Ruther's acoustic bass is the perfect complement.

The three players don't break any new ground, but they plant a little new life in the old, and they do it so tastefully and with such obvious love that you simply have to be moved. The album appears to be a private release, the kind that usually ends up in somebody's basement, stacked up in cartons and collecting dust for want of proper distribution and promotion, but if that happens to "Fraser—Live at the Planetarium" there is simply no justice.

—Chris Albertson

**FRASER MACPHERSON:** *Fraser—Live at the Planetarium.* Fraser MacPherson (tenor saxophone); Oliver Gannon (guitar); Wyatt Ruther (bass). *I'm Getting Sentimental Over You; Li'l Darlin'; Lush Life; My Funny Valentine; Tangerine; Django; I Cried for You.* WEST END 101 \$7.95 (from Record Search, 1294 Gladwin Drive, N. Vancouver, B.C., Canada).



# POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

**ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL: *Wheelin' and Dealin'*.** Asleep at the Wheel (vocals and instrumentals); Johnny Gimble (fiddle, mandolin); Joel Sonnier (accordion); other musicians. *Route 66; Miles and Miles of Texas; The Trouble with Lovin' Today; Shout Wa Hey; Blues for Dixie;* and five others. CAPITOL ST-11546 \$6.98, Ⓣ 8XT-11546 \$7.98, Ⓞ 4XT-11546 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good and stylized**  
Recording: **Very good**

Asleep at the Wheel is pretty much Bob Wills' Texas Playboys revisited; it's the best country swing band there is, probably, which makes it a slave to form and formula. Country swing, or "hillbilly jazz," seems to me theoretical music. Your head can tell you it's "good," but your heart doesn't tell you a damned thing—the stuff is cold, dry, academic. Dan Hicks used the precision of it as a forum for his offbeat sense of humor, and I liked that, some of it, while it lasted. Asleep at the Wheel plays it straight, being "funny" in prescribed ways on schedule but mostly being clean and machine-like. I realize in an academic sort of way that it's possible to have a set of prejudices so different from mine that you'd like having this done to music, but I can't imagine what that would feel like. Maybe someday I'll be so cool I'll play this recording on my own time, but I have no inclination to do that now. N.C.

**BEE GEES: *Children of the World.*** Barry Gibb (vocals, guitar); Robin Gibb (vocals);

Maurice Gibb (vocals, bass); Blue Weaver (keyboards); other musicians. *You Should Be Dancing; You Stepped into My Life; Love So Right; Lovers; Boogie Child; Love Me;* and four others. RSO RS-1-3003 \$6.98, Ⓣ 8T1-3003 \$7.98, Ⓞ CT1-3003 \$7.98.

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

The Bee Gees have turned themselves into a disco band. I assume that means either that their attention span has become fragmented and spasm-wracked the way their music (pardon the expression) has, or they think your attention span has gone bust. There are those who claim a steady diet of television can do that to a race. And then there is this new vocabulary around now that has to do with how the right hemisphere of the brain, which handles the hunches, intuition, instantaneous, nonlinear, and unwordable concepts, etc., is taking over in Western man from the left half where logic and empirical thinking reside. Or you can fit an album like this into a slightly messy thesis tying disco to Marshall McLuhan. So go ahead—I'd much rather hear the thesis than this album. I doubt if anyone is supposed to listen to it; it seems to be Muzak for the feet, and not happy feet either, but bored feet, jaded feet. Make pop music this impersonal—particularly if you're a band with a strong reputation for nice old harmonized schlock—and the words in it about love, or anything else human, are a travesty. This is my idea of decadence, which is boring. Beyond that, the Gibb brothers have snatched up a style that has no use for the mostly melodic special gifts they have. I've seldom seen a group work so hard at throwing away its uniqueness. N.C.

**BUCKEYE POLITICIANS: *Look at Me Now.*** Buckeye Politicians (vocals and instrumentals). *Only You; Getaway; Unity; Take My Hand; I'll Be Home;* and five others. UTOPIA BUL1-1823 \$6.98, Ⓣ BUS1-1823 \$7.98, Ⓞ BUK1-1823 \$7.98.

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

All the high-tension excitement produced by this six-man group can't quite hide the fact

that their material, mostly written by lead vocalist and guitarist Rosco (that's it, just Rosco), is as earthbound as a lead balloon. The musical blend is often sensational; it ranges from gospel to rhythm-and-blues to jazz to quasi-classical, and it is all performed at white heat. But despite the expert sound and fury, a certain boredom eventually creeps in. You have to have something to set your fireworks *against*. These are Roman candles at high noon. P.R.

**CHER: *I'd Rather Believe in You.*** Cher (vocals); orchestra. *Knock on Wood; Spring; Borrowed Time; Flashback; It's a Cryin' Shame;* and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2898 \$6.98, Ⓣ M8 2898 \$7.98, Ⓞ M5 2898 \$7.98.

Performance: **Boring**  
Recording: **Elaborate**

Here's Cher, looking just great—and sounding just awful. Singing lessons won't help, the fussily elaborate arranging and conducting here by Michael Omartian certainly don't help, nor, apparently, will anything *ever* help until she learns somehow to project her special kind of flip, sexy, impertinent charm *vocally*. Her records must sell to the all-day hair-curler set who just can't get enough of her in movie magazines and her TV variety show. There's no question that in many respects Cher is a star in the old-time razzle-dazzle sense, but on recordings she is just a gorgeous bore. P.R.

**RY COODER: *Chicken Skin Music*** (see Best of the Month, page 83)

**DEADLY NIGHTSHADE: *F & W—The Deadly Nightshade.*** Deadly Nightshade (Helen Hooke, Anne Bowen, and Pamela Brandt, guitars); Funky & Western (vocals and instrumentals). *Comin' Thru; I'm Feelin' Fine; Murphy's Bar; No Chicken Today;* and seven others. PHANTOM BPL1-1370 \$6.98, Ⓣ BPS1-1370 \$7.98, Ⓞ BPK1-1370 \$7.98.

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

Here's a tidy trio of girl-persons, benign enough despite their Agatha Christie-ish

## 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.

name, running through a group of their own songs. *Ain't I a Woman* is about the best of them—"I stand on no more auction blocks or other pedestals"—a bit hard-breathing but nonetheless effective. *No Chicken Today* is a rowdily amusing caper about four waitresses in an eatery who neatly skewer a "hard-drivin' diesel cowboy" and his lecherous ideas. Most of the album is good fun, but man(person)-oh-man(person), have we come a long way from the days of the Andrews Sisters! P.R.

**BRYAN FERRY: *Let's Stick Together*.** Bryan Ferry (vocals, keyboards, harmonica); Chris Spedding (guitar); Paul Thompson (drums); Chris Mercer (tenor sax); John Wetton (bass); other musicians. *Let's Stick Together; Casanova; Sea Breezes; Shame, Shame, Shame; 2 HB; The Price of Love; Chance Meeting*; and four others. ATLANTIC SD 18187 \$6.98, © TP 18187 \$7.98, © CS 18187 \$7.98.

Performance: **Very good**  
Recording: **Sumptuous**

Bryan Ferry is an interesting songwriter who's coming into his own now, apparently getting past the fear of making what he has to say coherent. There are five of his own songs here, not a clinker among them, each one hinting at a fresh individualism. He's also picked out a bright sampling of other people's songs and assembled an agile little studio band. The only thing that bothers me is his singing, which, stylistically, is still blobbing from one shape to another. The easiest way for him to do it makes him sound too much like Marc Bolan (Ha! You'd already forgotten T-Rex, eh? Good for you!), which is to say unnecessarily ugly. Here he risks some other approaches, but they seem peremptory, as if he has no clear idea of what he sounds like. He does seem to be trying to get beyond mannerisms, though, and communicates a jaunty feel for several of these tunes, and the band picks up on that. Ferry has a good ear, which he should now train upon himself and work his problem out. This album, contrasted with some he's been involved with in the past, should prove to him that he doesn't have to do something silly to get your attention. N.C.

**DAVID FORMAN.** David Forman (vocals, piano, guitar); orchestra. *Dream of a Child; Treachery; Rosalie; The Seven Sisters; Endless Waters*; and six others. ARISTA AL 4084 \$6.98, © 8301-4084 H \$7.98, © 5301-4084 H \$7.98.

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

David Forman dispenses heavy-handed, blues-inflected music with lyrics, most of which he provided, that are gummy with a weighty "meaning" and "sensitivity." Most of his vocal performances have a throaty, drained sound that fairly well fits such things as *Dream of a Child* ("When I was a boy I dreamed of Phillip Marlowe/He took me as his partner, took me as his friend . . .") and *Treachery* ("You take my life, then you are free . . ."). On *If It Take All Night*, however, he suddenly adopts an archly coy falsetto that sounds like a cross between Butterfly McQueen and the Maharishi. It's probably just Forman's attempt at "lightness," but it isn't any more successful than his attempts at "seriousness." P.R.

(Continued overleaf)

## Don McLean: Simply Terrific



United Artists Records

**D**ON MCLEAN, one of the pop world's Real People, has deliberately kept a very low profile since his initial smash hit *American Pie* in 1971. That's a sign of a lot of good things: his taste and self-possession, his healthy disdain for the wheeler-dealer cannibals of the music biz, his confidence that his work is strong enough to speak for itself, and his evident intention to stay around for a long, long time, focusing his energies on creating rather than exploiting himself (and his public) as a get-rich-quick Personality.

McLean's latest United Artists release "Solo" is a stunning retrospective of his work. In it, he sings twenty-seven of his (and others') songs in that oddly affecting voice of his, punching through credibly with the drama of *Masters of War*, toying teasingly with the gentle fantasy of *Wonderful Baby*, and ironically narrating *The Legend of Andrew McCrew* without ever lapsing into one of those character impersonations so many pop performer-composers offer us as proof of

He sings alone here, accompanied only by his own banjo or guitar, and the resulting intimacy gives even more power to performances of this mostly familiar material. The tracks were picked up from appearances McLean made in Manchester, Bristol, and Oxford, and the responses of the English audiences are uniformly respectful and enthusiastic: pin-drop quiet during the performance, a slight breathless pause at the finish, and then bursts of appreciative applause. There is none of that wah-hoo! yippee!! look-Ma-I'm-at-a-rock-concert!!! exhibitionistic racket so often heard on live recordings. That's probably because McLean's audiences seem actually to *listen* to him, as well they might—he has much to say and he says it well.

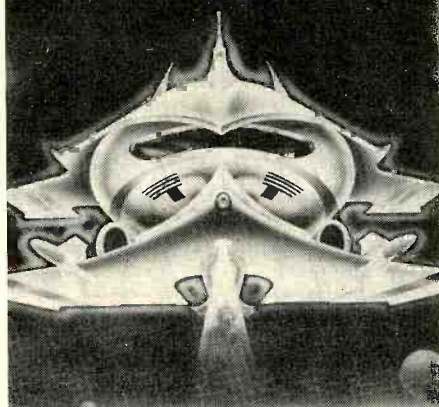
McLean is already an important artist, and everything points to his becoming a recognized major force in pop music within the next couple of years, United Artists willing. That's only *one* reason why you should have this album. All the other reasons you can figure out for yourself while you listen to it. He is, simply, terrific. —Peter Reilly

Everything points to  
his becoming a major  
force in pop music . . .

their "seriousness." We'll never know, for example, just where Bob Dylan picked up that hokey Okie accent or what, precisely, it is supposed to add to his performances. McLean has the enormous good sense to stay himself, and he therefore becomes that much more convincing.

**DON MCLEAN: *Solo*.** Don McLean (vocals, banjo, guitar). *Masters of War; Lovesick Blues; American Pie; On the Amazon; Circus Song; Empty Chairs; Till Tomorrow; Magdalene Lane; Wonderful Baby; Where Were You Baby; Geordie's Lost His Penker; Babylon; And I Love You So; Mactavish Is Dead; Cripple Creek/Muleskinner Blues; Great Big Man; Bronco Bill's Lament; Happy Trails; Birthday Song; Over the Waterfall/Arkansas Traveler; Castles in the Air; Homeless Brother; Three Flights Up; Winter Has Me in Its Grip; The Legend of Andrew McCrew; Driedel; Vincent (Starry Starry Night)*. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA652-H2 two discs \$9.98, © UA-EA652-J \$9.98, © UA-CA652-J \$9.98.

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baritone with the  
grace of experience

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**ARLO GUTHRIE: *Amigo*.** Arlo Guthrie (vocals, guitar); Russ Kunkel (drums); Bob Glaub (bass); Waddy Wachtel (guitar); Jai Winding (keyboards); other musicians. *Guabi Guabi; Darkest Hour; Massachusetts; Victor Jara; Patriots' Dream; Grocery Blues; Walking Song;* and four others. REPRIS MS 2239 \$6.98, © M8 2239 \$7.98, © M5 2239 \$7.98.

Performance: **Very good**

Recording: **Very good**

Arlo Guthrie projects one of the most appealing personalities I can imagine. He is perfectly in tune with the kind of humor that washes best with his generation, and that attends the way he extends Woody's social consciousness into modern times. He has Woody's gentleness and persistence and his own feel for irony, and his head has not been turned by commercial bonanza or even by motorcycles, much. Here he seems not terribly ambitious, but his album takes on a little more charm each time I play it. It's a little warmer—which string arrangements reflect but don't cause—than his studio albums usually are, a little more like the way he seems in real life. And I do believe he's singing better. What happens, when an album stays out of the way as this one does, is you don't sit there evaluating Arlo, you sit there and spend some time with him. This one just lets his humor and his healthy skepticism come through in addition to being surprisingly varied and tuneful and pretty well produced. It has personality, in a word, and that's precisely what I like about Arlo. N.C.

**DARYL HALL/JOHN OATES: *Bigger Than Both of Us*.** Daryl Hall and John Oates (vocals and instrumentals); orchestra. *Crazy Eyes; Rich Girl; Falling; Kerry; Room to Breathe;* and four others. RCA APL1-1467 \$6.98, © APS1-1467 \$7.98, © APK1-1467 \$7.98.

Performance: **Entertaining**

Recording: **Good**

This lively, danceable music augmented with forgettable lyrics goes down with all the ease of a melting Smith Bros. cough drop. Hall and Oates write most of their own material, and

their obvious purpose is to please, which they do. Aside from *You'll Never Learn*, a grim but very well-done little number about self-destruction, the album is an energetic, skillful piece of pop entertainment—ephemeral as a producer's promise but still gratifying for the moment. P.R.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**RICHIE HAVENS: *The End of the Beginning*.** Richie Havens (vocals, guitar, piano); William D. Smith (keyboards, vocals); Booker T. Jones (keyboards); Steve Cropper (guitar); Donald "Duck" Dunn (bass); other musicians. *I'm Not in Love; We Can't Hide It Anymore; Dreaming As One; You Can Close Your Eyes; I Was Educated by Myself;* and five others. A&M SP-4598 \$6.98, © 4598 \$7.98, © 4598 \$7.98.

Performance: **Excellent**

Recording: **Clean**

Richie Havens' bonded whiskey baritone has seldom been put to as good a use as it is on this album, nor assigned to such generally tasty material wrapped in such evocative arrangements. Havens' ability as a balladeer is especially well displayed on *I'm Not in Love*, a strong tune from that excellent British group 10cc, and on James Taylor's *You Can Close Your Eyes*. The arrangements for eight of the ten selections are by keyboardist-writer-singer William D. "Smitty" Smith, the former captain of the (alas!) defunct Canadian group Motherlode. Smith is a first-rate talent with a highly personal style. The remaining two arrangements are by rock's original chamber-music group, Booker T. & the MG's (sadly missing their original drummer, the late Al Jackson, Jr.).

The performances by Havens and his backers are low-key and mellow, even on the up-tempo selections, and they're presented with the calm assurance that the remarkable talents assembled dispense with the grace of experience. Ah, there's nothing like a pro, and pros together are welcome indeed. J.V.

**LABELLE: *Chameleon*.** Patti LaBelle, Sara Dash, Nona Hendryx (vocals); instrumental  
(Continued on page 92)

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CIRCLE NO. 32 ON READER SERVICE CARD

## Russ Columbo, "Radio's Valentino"



UP International

**T**HE saxophone and its human equivalent, the crooner, filled the airwaves all through the Thirties. The chief practitioners of the art of mooning and moaning love songs into the microphone were Rudy Vallee, Bing Crosby, and Russ Columbo. In 1931, Al Dubin and Joe Burke wrote a song about the whole thing, which Morte Goode quotes in the fascinating booklet that accompanies RCA's recent Columbo collection, "A Legendary Performer": "Who always sings about a couple 'neath the stars above?/Crosby, Columbo and Vallee./And though I call it nonsense they insist it is love,/Crosby, Columbo and Vallee. . . ."

Russ Columbo, who studied violin as a child in Los Angeles, started his career fiddling "emotion" music for Pola Negri on the sets of silent movies. He looked a lot like Valentino, who was Negri's screen lover at

elting pistol from his collection, accidentally shot Columbo in the eye. The whole of the entertainment world kept the news of his death from his mother, who had just suffered a heart attack. Reports of his imaginary successes abroad were read to her regularly by the family, and she went to her grave ten years later without ever knowing her son was dead.

So much for the legend; how does the *voice* of this once-popular crooner hold up today? The original recordings, dating back to 1931 and 1932, provide the singer's murmurous pipes with lush settings in the sumptuous manner of the period. Big studio orchestras led by Nat Shilkret and Marlin Skiles back his daydreamy treatments of *I Don't Know Why*, *All of Me*, *Time on My Hands*, and other heartfelt ballads of the period. From his violin-playing days Columbo borrowed the trick of supplying a kind of vocal obbligato when repeating a chorus; it's still effective. And some of the songs he sings on this carefully remastered disc he wrote or collaborated on himself—haunting old-time favorites of a sentimental nature including *You Call It Madness*, *My Love*, and *Prisoner of Love*. All this may be faintly embarrassing to today's resolutely tough-minded Spartans, but to me it's as relaxing as a nice hot bath. Columbo never displayed the *soignée* detachment of Vallee or the sly humor of Crosby, but when it came to putting over a schmaltzy serenade he was tops in his class. Even the modern liberated woman may find something here to swoon over. —Paul Kresh

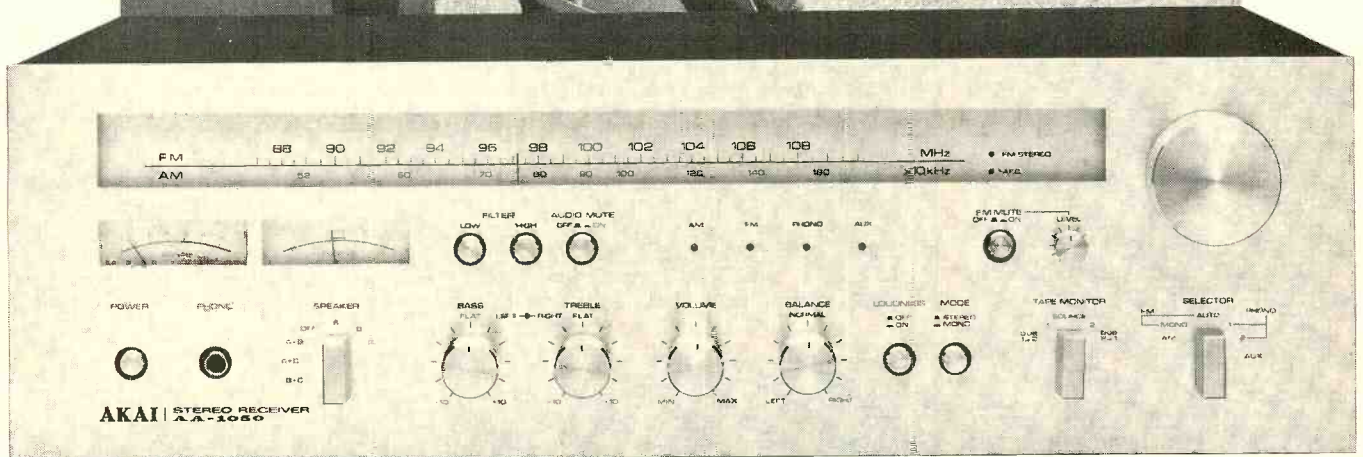
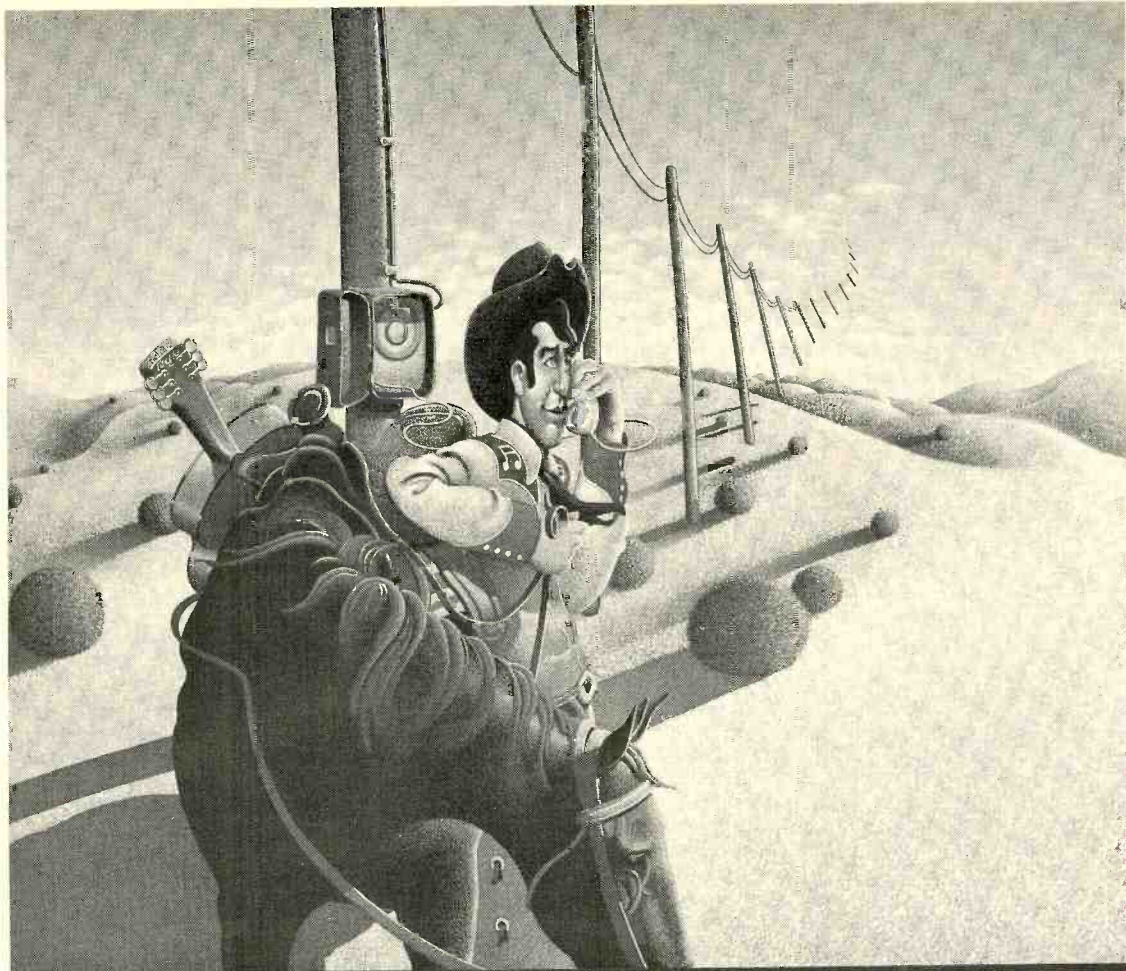
... he was tops at putting over a schmaltzy serenade

the time, and he later replaced the screen actor in her boudoir. By 1929 he was playing the violin and sharing vocal stints with Bing Crosby and a band at the Cocoanut Grove in Hollywood. He went on to sing in movies and night clubs billed as—what else?—"Radio's Valentino," eventually replacing Bing Crosby on NBC's *Blue Network*. Meanwhile, there was a whole series of love affairs, culminating in the celebrated one with Carole Lombard and a fictitious liaison with Garbo dreamed up by his manager. At twenty-six, he was visiting his friend Lansing Brown, a Hollywood photographer, when Brown, demonstrating a du-

**RUSS COLUMBO: A Legendary Performer.** Russ Columbo (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *I Don't Know Why*; *You Call It Madness*; *Time on My Hands*; *Prisoner of Love*; *Where the Blue of the Night*; *Just Friends*; *Save the Last Dance for Me*; *All of Me*; *Auf Wiedersehen, My Dear*; *Paradise*; *Just Another Dream of You*; *My Love*. RCA CPL1-1756(e) \$7.98, © CPS1-1756 \$8.98, © CPK1-1756 \$8.98.

STEREO REVIEW





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accompaniment. *Get You Somebody New; Come into My Life; Isn't It a Shame; Who's Watching the Watcher?; Chameleon;* and three others. EPIC PE 34189 \$6.98, Ⓜ PEA 34189 \$7.98, © PET 34189 \$7.98.

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

Labelle is a vocal trio fronted by Patti LaBelle, an experienced performer of meteoric vocals who possesses an unusual range. What occasionally makes the group notable, aside from Ms. LaBelle's tonsil artillery, is the original material by trio member Nona Hendryx and the gusto the ladies give to the delivery of her songs, some of them paeans to outer space, some comments on things mortal and fallible.

Three excellent examples in the present album are *Who's Watching the Watcher, A Man in a Trenchcoat (Voodoo)*, and *Going Down Makes Me Shiver*. The first parallels the sentiments of a line from an Ayn Rand novel: "Beware of those who ask you to make sacrifices, because someone is always collecting on the sacrifices." The second is a charming and slightly spooky fantasy about a young girl's initiation into something that is never directly defined. The third number is also open to interpretation (*hoo boy!*) as to subject matter: a guess that it's about baptism and religious conversion is just as good as one that it concerns erotic delights. Ms. Hendryx is one of the more interesting writers around these days; she isn't always as good as these three tunes show her to be, but her score is better than average. She is, perhaps, the trio's most valuable asset.

As performers, Labelle have polish and craft, but they sometimes operate on the premise that a scream will do for a whisper and there are moments when they spoil the best of their material with shrieking folderol. Exuberance is fine, ladies, but *please* watch the decibels!

J.V.

**LYNYRD SKYNYRD: *One More from the Road.*** Lynyrd Skynyrd (vocals and instrumentals). *Workin' for MCA; I Ain't the One; Saturday Night Special; Sweet Home Alabama; The Needle and the Spoon; Crossroads; Free Bird;* and seven others. MCA

MCA2-6001 two discs \$7.98, Ⓜ MCAT2-6001 \$9.98, © MCAC2-6001 \$9.98.

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

This is a well-drilled outfit, and I admire precision of execution in bands, but technique can't make up for pale material. Listening to the first few cuts of this double-disc live album is okay—you can admire the crispness and zip of the band's delivery—but shortly thereafter things get dull: the material doesn't improve, and the rendering of it sounds more and more mechanical. At the end of the fourth side, I applauded—with relief.

J.V.

**MANHATTAN TRANSFER: *Coming Out.*** Manhattan Transfer (vocals); orchestra. *Chanson d'Amour; Scotch and Soda; S.O.S.; Poinciana; Helpless;* and six others. ATLANTIC SD 18183 \$6.98, Ⓜ TP 18183 \$7.98, © CS 18183 \$7.98.

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

Gawd! But we'd all be *dead* with boredom if it weren't for groups like the Manhattan Transfer, wouldn't we? I mean, they make everything such *fun*, and at just the right noise level so we don't really have to listen to them. Yes, the favorite group of the Fun Crowd is back, sleek and glossy as patent leather, and their recent TV exposure (where just *anyone* could see them) doesn't seem to have affected their chic composure one iota. No rough edges at all here, just beautifully produced (by Richard Perry), superbly engineered jive coasting of the sort that probably only technically good performers are capable of—and Tim Hauser, Laurel Massé, Alan Paul, and Janis Siegel are technically good performers. Anyway, you've *got* to have this new one. After all, Ringo shows up playing his drum on *Zindy Lou* and *S.O.S.*, and we all know what fun he is. . . .

P.R.

**THE WALTER MURPHY BAND: *A Fifth of Beethoven.*** Walter Murphy (composer, adapter, arranger, conductor); orchestra. *A Fifth of Beethoven; Flight '76; Russian Dressing; Night Fall; California Strut;* and five others. (Continued on page 96)



Labelle caught in an exuberant moment: airborne Nona Hendryx (left) and Patti LaBelle with down-to-earth Sara Dash

Martha Swope/EPIC

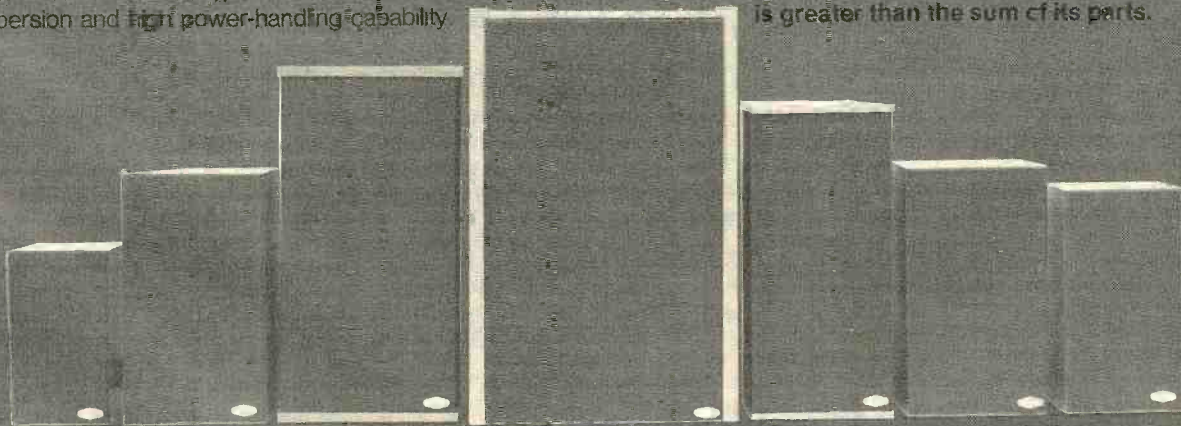
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CIRCLE NO. 33 ON READER SERVICE CARD

PATTI PAGE was waltzing—Tennessee style—off the charts and Les Paul and Mary Ford were giving us *How High the Moon* in the second week of May 1951 when Stevland Morris was born. Few black artists had access to the national charts in those days, though much of the music that *did* make it was directly traceable to black roots. Twelve years later, when Stevland—as Little Stevie Wonder—made his vinyl debut with *I Call It Pretty Music*, Ruby and the Romantics topped the charts briefly with a “soul version” of *Our Day Will Come*, but in the main the radio stations—the holders of the keys—locked most black artists out in favor of white derivatives. *I Call It Pretty Music* didn’t make any of the charts, but it gained Stevie Wonder some attention and marked the start of an illustrious career that has made the blind singer something of a cult figure, one whose record releases are as eagerly awaited by black people as Bob Dylan’s used to be by white people. And if Wonder’s youth and blindness were factors contributing to his early success, genuine artistry has long since taken over.

By the end of 1963, more singles—most notably *Fingertips*—and an album entitled “Twelve-Year-Old Genius” had endeared Little Stevie Wonder to a vast, mostly black audience. Packaged and choreographed in characteristic Motown fashion, he became a headliner on the soul circuit, playing the harmonica and singing about puppy love. By the end of the Sixties, Wonder had emerged as Motown’s most original property, with a string of hits including *Uptight* (1966), *I Was Made to Love Her* (1967), *You Met Your Match* (1968), and *For Once in My Life* and *My Cherie Amour* (1969). As these songs attest, Stevie Wonder—no longer “Little”—developed tremendously as an artist between 1963 and 1969, but he was to grow even more with the arrival of a new decade.

UNLIKE many Motown acts, Wonder resisted regimentation and consistently expanded his horizons. After studying composition and theory at the University of Southern California, he began to reveal in his music, if not his lyrics, a degree of sophistication and maturity that belied his tender age. No longer restricted to three-minute chart contenders, his compositions became longer and more complex, and with his 1971 release of the album “Where I’m Coming From” (Tamla TS308) he reached a turning point similar to that which the Beatles had previously marked with their “Revolver” album. Subsequent album releases—“Talking Book” (1972), “Innervisions” (1973), and “Fulfillingness’ First Finale” (1974)—put Stevie Wonder in a class by himself, gained him a more mature audience, and won him the respect of an industry that in 1974 awarded him four Grammys.

The release of a new Stevie Wonder album came to be looked upon as a special event, but all of 1975 and most of 1976 went by without a release from the *Wunderkind*, which of course considerably heightened the amount of attention given to his new “Songs in the Key of Life” when it finally saw daylight recently. Was it worth the wait? Well, perhaps the question should be, is it worth the *weight*? The album contains twenty-one songs totaling one hour, forty-four minutes, and thirty-eight seconds of playing time; they are spread over

two twelve-inch and one seven-inch 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm discs. That is a generous portion by anybody’s standards, but one that is praiseworthy only if the material presented on all that vinyl warrants so much of one’s time. In this case it doesn’t.

Let me point out right away that I am a Stevie Wonder fan. In fact, I went out and bought this album as soon as it became avail-

## The Extraordinary Stevie Wonder



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able, and buying albums is something people on my end of the record business rarely do. Though I confess to being disappointed, I must add that I don’t feel the expenditure was a total waste—the album, besides representing the latest work of an important artist, does contain material of musical value, and, had I been given the opportunity to hear it beforehand, I would still have bought it.

Starting at the top of the program, side one provided me with my first disappointments. *Village Ghetto Land* attempts, in semi-baroque Beatles fashion, a social comment, but it is on an embarrassing high-school level; an instrumental aptly named *Contusion*

sounds like a bad Weather Report out-take; *Sir Duke* seems to have something to do with Ellington, Basie, (Glenn?) Miller, and someone the printed lyrics call Sachimo (*sic*); and there are two other songs of Love and God that are best forgotten. *I Wish*, a highly rhythmic, catchy recollection of childhood, starts off the second side in a more promising vein, but, with the exception of that and *Past Paradise*—featuring the twenty-four voices of a Hare Krishna chorus and the West Los Angeles Church of God Choir—this side, too, is dispensable.

The Wonder of the Sixties opens side three with *Isn’t She Lovely*—and she would be, if she didn’t go on so interminably. There follows a mildly interesting six and a half minutes called *Joy Inside My Tears*, but it is followed by a wretched eight and a half minutes of *Black Man*. This pits no less than forty-three vocal participants against one of those “we-all-must-live-together” message songs; the theme is tiresomely common, and this example is among the worst examples. Much has been said and written lately about pop lyrics as “poetry,” but reading Wonder’s lyrics in the accompanying booklet I was struck by their puerility—and they do seem to be a little worse this time around. However, Stevie Wonder usually manages to rise above even the most inane lyrics, so their inadequacy is less noticeable in the listening.

The song *As* here must be considered Wonder’s *pièce de résistance*, for it is a marvelously infectious, exciting song that will surely be remembered long after most of the others are forgotten. It leads right into *Another Star*, a spirited song of love—and Stevie Wonder’s new album finally comes alive. But look, we’ve reached the end of side four, and, though there is something arresting about the tango rhythm of *Ebony Eyes* (one of the four selections on the seven-inch “bonus record”), the party is, I’m afraid, over.

In the final analysis, “Songs in the Key of Life” is a disappointment, but bear in mind that we have come to expect the extraordinary from Stevie Wonder. If this album does not live up to expectations, much of it is still noteworthy when measured against most of the other pop offerings of the day. The ingredients for an exceptional single album are here, but like its accompanying booklet (on one page alone 176 people are acknowledged by name) this latest Stevie Wonder offering is marred by excess.

—Chris Albertson

**STEVIE WONDER: *Songs in the Key of Life*.** Stevie Wonder (lead vocals, keyboards, and harmonica); various musicians, including Hank Redd (reeds), Bobbi Humphrey (flute), Herbie Hancock and Ronnie Foster (keyboards), George Benson (guitar). *Love’s in Need of Love Today*; *Have a Talk with God*; *Village Ghetto Land*; *Contusion*; *Sir Duke*; *I Wish*; *Knocks Me off My Feet*; *Pastime Paradise*; *Summer Soft*; *Ordinary Pain*; *Isn’t She Lovely*; *Joy Inside My Tears*; *Black Man*; *Ngiculela—Es Una Historia—I Am Singing*; *If It’s Magic*; *As*; *Another Star*; *Saturn*; *Ebony Eyes*; *All Day Sucker*; *Easy Goin’ Evening (My Mama’s Call)*. TAMLA T13-340C2 two twelve-inch discs plus one seven-inch 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm “bonus” record \$13.98, © T15-340ET \$15.98, © T15-340EC \$15.98.

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Performance: "Ludwig! You've finally made the discos!!"  
Recording: Loud

That anything as bad, as hokey, as incredibly clumsy as Walter Murphy's disco "adaptation" of a theme from Beethoven's Fifth could hit as high on the charts as it has would seem to challenge reality. But reality it is. It is also a gruesome reality that this album has been released featuring a parade of such globs of *wurst* as Murphy's *Flight '76*, an "adaptation" of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumblebee*; *Russian Dressing*, "based on" Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1; and *Night Fall*, a karate chop on a Chopin pre-

lude. There are some Murphy "originals" included here, such as *California Strut* and (dig this one, Clyde) *Suite Love Symphony*. The ripped-off composers and Mr. Murphy will survive all of this—but will we? P.R.

**ANNE MURRAY: *Keeping in Touch*.** Anne Murray (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Things; Caress Me Pretty Music; Dancin' All Night Long; Sweet Music Man; Sunday School to Broadway*; and five others. CAPITOL ST-11559 \$6.98, © 8XT-11559 \$7.98, © 4XT-11559 \$7.98.

Performance: A good girl kept down  
Recording: Very good

Anne Murray has as attractive a voice as I have heard any season, and, on the basis of

her many previous records, I am sure she is thoroughly capable of putting over any good song in her vibrant, quasi-country way. Unfortunately, there aren't many good songs to put over on this particular program. The album really should have been titled "Songs for (by?) Losers." There's one about a ship that's never going to come in, one that mutters gloomily that there will be "ten thousand tears till I dry my eyes," one about the painful memories of a long-dead love affair brought on by hearing a "golden oldie" on the radio. When the ballads aren't downbeat, they are downright truculent, as is *Sweet Music Man*, in which a pop singer is berated for the dastardly act of changing the dedication of one of his songs from his old girl to a new one. It isn't only that the songs are downers in subject matter, but that their quality seems to match. Once only does Murray get the chance to show the warmth of her personality and her marked ability to make persuasive music: in a song called *Shine!*, which just happens to be about smiling away the day instead of, as on the rest of this sullen record, sobbing through the night. There may be something to say for positive thinking after all. P.K.

**THE NIGHTHAWKS: *Nighthawks Live*** (see Best of the Month, page 82)

**OZARK MOUNTAIN DAREDEVILS: *Men from Earth*.** Ozark Mountain Daredevils (vocals and instrumentals). *Fly Away Home; You Know Like I Know; Breakaway (from These Chains); The Red Plum; Mountain Range; Noah*; and four others. A&M SP-4601 \$6.98, © 4601 \$7.98, © 4601 \$7.98.

Performance: Disappointing  
Recording: Very good

Just as I couldn't get over my delight with one side of their last album ("Car over the Lake," A&M SP-4549), so I find it hard to shake off my disappointment with both sides of the Daredevils' present release. Though the band is still commendable for its arrangements and its execution of instrumental portions, the material is a stock-market plunge below the value of some of the songs on the previous effort, and the singers mewl and whine where they should croon and bawl. I hope they come up with something better next time. *Much better.* J.V.

**DOLLY PARTON: *All I Can Do*.** Dolly Parton (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *All I Can Do; The Fire That Keeps You Warm; I'm a Drifter; Falling Out of Love with Me; Preacher Tom; Hey, Lucky Lady*; and three others. RCA APL1-1665 \$6.98, © APS1-1665 \$7.98, © APK1-1665 \$7.98.

Performance: Less than she can do  
Recording: Good

Dolly Parton finally is getting the recognition she's deserved for years as one of the most engaging, stylish, and convincing musicians in any genre, but the songs in this album are almost mindless compared to what she *can* do. *I'm a Drifter* has a nice sound to it, and what it has to say is mostly beyond words; you listen that way and it works. *Shattered Image* is a fair example of how Parton can say a little and imply a lot and of how deftly she handles metaphor. But I feel uneasy with a Dolly Parton album in which the strongest, most moving song was written by someone else—*Boulder to Birmingham*, by Bill Danoff and Emmylou (Continued on page 98)

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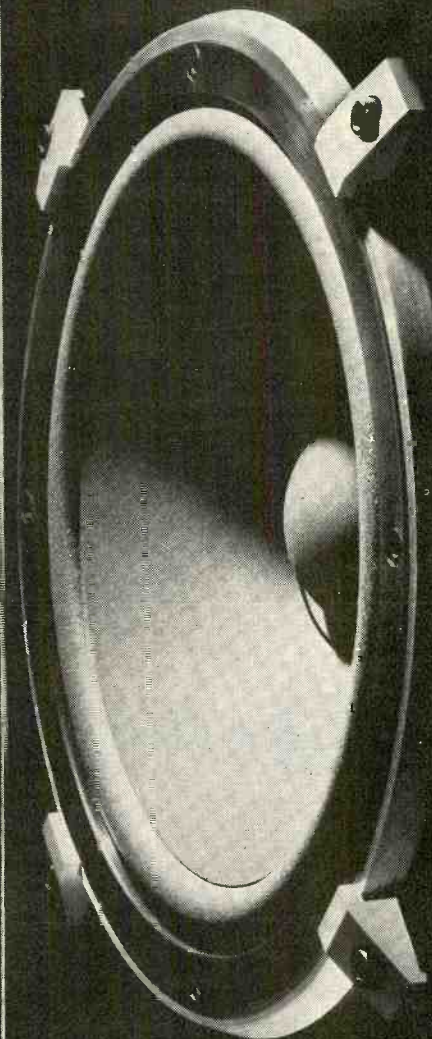


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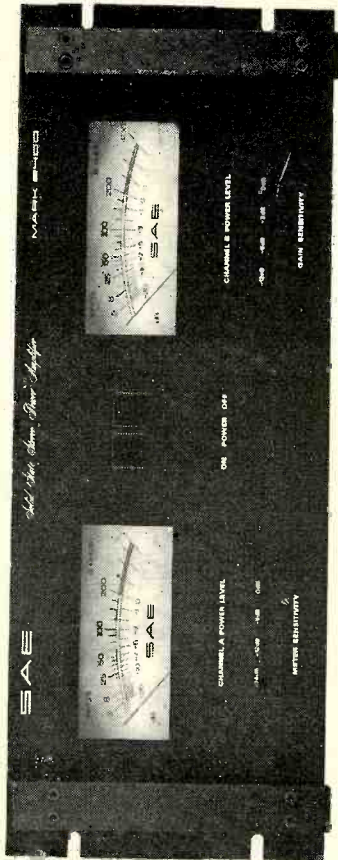
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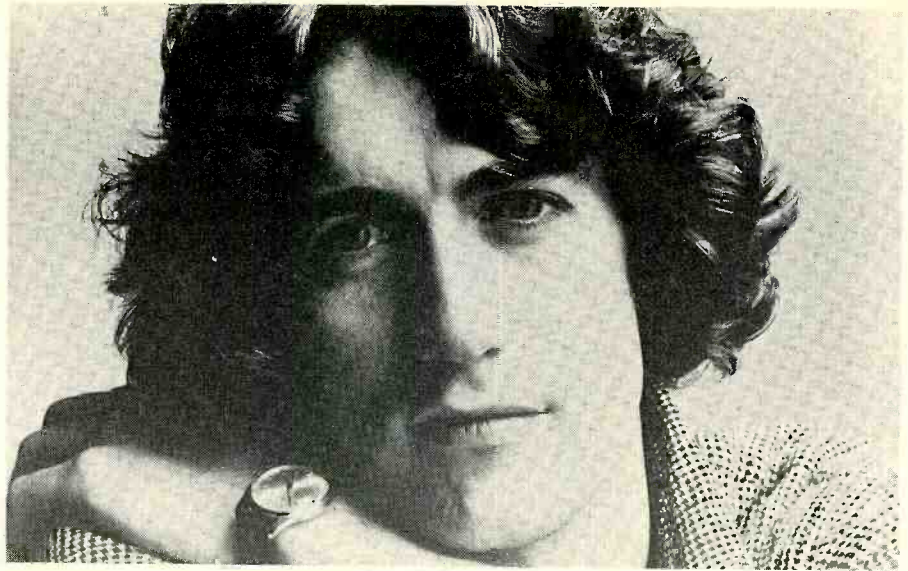
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Chrysalis

BRIAN PROTHEROE  
 Songs with the surreal quality of a Magritte painting

Harris—even though I realize the mountain grace in Parton's singing helps make it moving. Her own songs here are sometimes catchy, always performed well, but disappointingly shallow. She's a hunch player, I suspect. This sounds as if she was too tired or rushed to really sort those rascals out and play them. N.C.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BRIAN PROTHEROE: *I/You*.** Brian Protheroe (vocals); orchestra. *I/You; Battling Annie; Evil Eye; Lucille; Hotel*; and five others. CHRYSALIS CHR 1108 \$6.98.

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

Brian Protheroe's work here is interesting, intelligent, and imaginative. His songs often have the quality of a Magritte painting: the commonplace rendered with absolute fidelity but transformed by a surreal repetition or juxtaposition of the unexpected. *Battling Annie*, for instance, is about a mysterious and fearsome lady at a typical English county fair—described in atmospheric detail—who challenges young men to box with her. Young Billy ("He was a shy boy") decides to give it a try. Once in the ring he is floored, literally, simply by Annie's request, "Billy, look at me. . . ." Well, authentic sirens never do have to lay a glove on their victims, do they? Then there is the eerie, vaporous charm of *Hotel*, a series of *non sequiturs* that is like some sort of half-remembered dream of displacement. Granted, Protheroe's talent is a special one, but it is consistently intriguing and involving, and his voice fits his material perfectly. This is an album for those who can think and listen . . . er . . . spatially. P.R.

**MARTY ROBBINS: *El Paso City*.** Marty Robbins (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *El Paso City; Ava Maria Morales; Kin to the Wind; Way Out There*; and six others. COLUMBIA KC 34303 \$5.98, © CA 34303 \$7.98.

Performance: **Dull in the saddle**  
 Recording: **Good**

Marty Robbins sings synthetic ballads of the Texas border, each outfitted with a plot suffi-

cient for a full-length Western horse-opera, in a sleepy voice and to bucolic accompaniments that lope along at the gait of a doped-up horse. One is about a cowboy in El Paso who comes back to life to avenge his murder by a rival in love; another deals with the disillusionment of a girl named Ave Maria Morales when she finds out that the rancher she adores has been supplementing his \$30-a-month pay with dubious enterprises. The plots are good, but the dirge-like pace, the singer's monotonous way with a stanza, and the exaggerated arrangements sway the listener to sleep in his saddle along the lonesome trail to Long Yawn. P.K.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**ROD STEWART: *A Night on the Town*.** Rod Stewart (vocals); the Garage Band (instrumentals); other musicians. *Tonight's the Night; The First Cut Is the Deepest; Fool for You; The Killing of Georgie; The Balltrap*; and four others. WARNER BROS. BS 2938 \$6.98, © M8 2938 \$7.98, © M5 2938 \$7.98.

Performance: **Agreeably tense**  
 Recording: **Good**

Part of the appeal of Rod Stewart is you can sense he's self-conscious about the contrived way he looks and sounds and you can sometimes sense the struggle going on within him over what to do about it. Wearing a white suit but no shirt and singing the boyishly leering *Tonight's the Night* (which lets it slip that the chick, as Rod would call her, is a virgin, as if the detailed description of slobbering anticipation weren't enough without some ultimate gimmick) are two things to do about it. Not, in principle, *bad* things, either, since they amount to fighting the grossness of one's demons with a little grossness of one's own—facing them, anyway.

Then too, Stewart has associated with some of the better musicians in rock and has developed some attitudes about quality and some musical judgments that collide, sometimes, in the excesses in the way he styles himself. All this has to go through the final filter, his physical limitations: his voice is so simply distinctive and singular that it isn't very versatile. A movie producer wouldn't hire Andy Devine to play the headmaster of a snobbish Eastern



academy, and you wouldn't want Rod Stewart to sing certain words and melodies. Here he works well within those limitations, tossing off an occasional potboiler for the kiddie aspect of his audience, but exercising a rather fine care and control over song selection and production. The result is a sketch from a limited palette. Look for line instead of color and you may decide this is a durable album. *N.C.*

**STRAWBS: *Deep Cuts*.** Strawbs (vocals and instrumentals). *I Only Want My Love to Grow in You; Turn Me Round; Hard, Hard Winter; My Friend Peter; The Soldier's Tale; Simple Visions*; and four others. OYSTER OY-1-1603 \$6.98, Ⓜ 8T-1-1603 \$7.98, Ⓢ CT-1-1603 \$7.98.

Performance: **Prissy**  
Recording: **Clean**

If we ever get out of this depressing era of lousy rock music still trying to live off its reputation from the Sixties, we may be able to take comfort in the fact that the era at least produced some remarkable album-cover photographs and paintings. I hope, for their sakes, that the painters and photographers have retained the rights of possession to their works; they might be valuable someday.

The album cover for "Deep Cuts" is a case in point. It would be a disservice to the painting to describe it, so I suggest you go to your record store and see it for yourself. You need not buy the album unless you intend to be a pop-art collector, for the ersatz music inside is limp and conceited. The songs, as usual these days, depend on the rock mystique and The Musician as Hero, since they cannot stand by themselves. Greeting-card versifiers have written better lyrics, and tone-deaf whistlers in the shower have come up with better melodies. The vocals are smug and glottal.

*J.V.*

**TANYA TUCKER: *Here's Some Love*.** Tanya Tucker (vocals); orchestra. *Short Cut; The Gospel Singer; Holding On; Comin' Home Alone; I Use the Soap*; and four others. MCA MCA-2213 \$6.98.

Performance: **Very professional**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Here is Tanya Tucker offering another of her essays in absolute, on-the-button professionalism. She's matched by the arranging perfectionisms of Bergen White and the super-efficient soundless hum of Jerry Crutchfield's production. If all that sounds a bit cut and dried, I'm afraid that's because it is. Tucker's strongest appeal, since her astonishing youthful debut several years ago, has been her complete understanding and communication of the real and basic feelings and emotions that even the average c-&-w lyric is all about. But of late her albums have been getting fancier and fancier, with the result that such things here as the title song and *Round and Round the Bottle* evoke only admiration at the way she performs them instead of that old familiar down-home heart tug. What she hopes to gain by all of this *haute* professionalism is hard to guess. What she's lost is pretty obvious. *P.R.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**JESSE WINCHESTER: *Let the Rough Side Drag*.** Jesse Winchester (vocals, guitar, keyboards, flute); Marty Harris (bass); Chris Castle (drums); Bob Cohen (guitar); Ron Dann (steel guitar); other musicians. *Let the Rough*

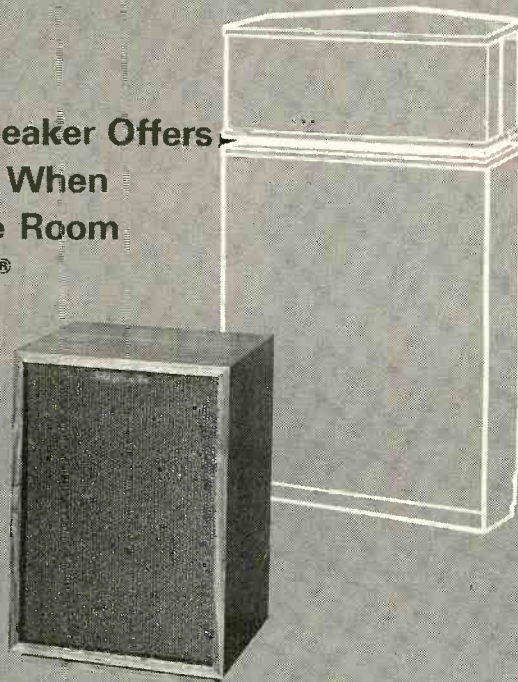
*Side Drag; Damned If You Do; Step by Step; Lay Down Your Burden; Everybody Knows but Me; Blow On, Chilly Wind; Working in the Vineyard; How About You*; and four others. BEARSVILLE BR 6964 \$6.98, Ⓜ M8 6964 \$7.98, Ⓢ M5 6964 \$7.98.

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

Jesse Winchester is one of those songwriters whose words sometimes have a special sparkle behind them and whose tunes generally can be relied upon to go somewhere. He hasn't been consistently at top form, though, and the depth of some of his albums, as they age, seems to be spotted in certain songs. I'm not sure how this one will age, but it seems to have its depth spread about pretty well. I nev-

er get a major revelation from it and don't know exactly why I keep expecting one, but *Step by Step* has that sparkle ("... Jacob's ladder gets slippery at the top... And many a happy-go-lucky saint has made that long, long drop"), some lovely twists on your basic blues tune, and such sidemen as Paul Butterfield brought in to flesh out Winchester's sound a bit. The production still has the characteristic spartan quality, though; it has a little more muscle here, but no suggestion of fat. *The Brand New Tennessee Waltz* is redone in a warm, sentimental way; all the other songs are new, and there's something—something short of a major revelation, but something—worth waiting for in almost every one. The overall tone or feeling of it is slightly abstract: I suspect it would be more concrete if

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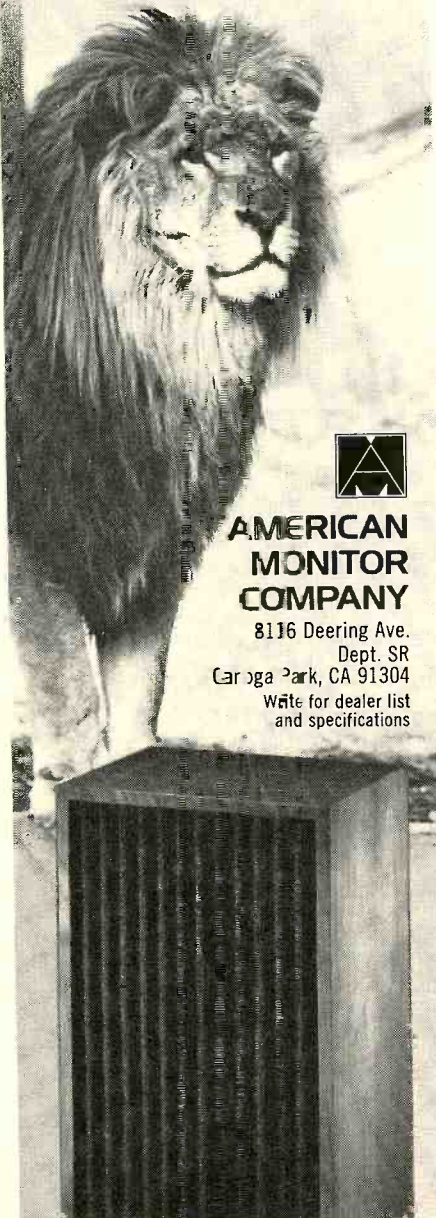


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we could get Winchester, a Vietnam War draft exile, back in the U.S.A. and closer to his sources. This shows, though, that he isn't merely killing time up in Montreal; he's keeping his eyes open. N.C.



**NORMAN BLAKE: *Old and New.*** Norman Blake (vocals, guitar, mandolin, fiddle, viola); Tut Taylor (dobro); James Bryan (fiddle); Ben Pedigo (banjo); Nancy Blake (cello, viola, bass). *Widow's Creek; Bristol in the Bottle; Billy Gray; Forked Deer; Rubagfre; Cuckoo's Nest; Witch of the Wave; My Old Home on the Green Mountain Side*; and nine others. FLYING FISH 010 \$6.98.

Performance: **Mostly agreeable**  
Recording: **Good**

Norman Blake strums a sassy guitar and sings folk songs in rural arrangements devised by himself and his colleagues, who play the dobro, fiddle, and banjo along with such less backwoods instruments as the viola, cello, and bass. Blake also writes "folk songs" (as if there weren't already enough of them) which sound just as rustic as the real thing. When he and his friends are whooping it up to a whirlwind finish in such instrumental numbers as his own *Rubagfre* and the traditional *Cuckoo's Nest*, their excitement is contagious, and when Blake sings such time-honored material as *My Old Home on the Green Mountain Side*, the going is still agreeable though the idiom and the singing style are almost painfully familiar. When he starts mourning the passing of the "iron horse," though, and the takeover of the tracks by freeways in *Railroad Days*, the results are simply dismal. One interesting ballad Blake resurrects here is *Sweet Heaven*, with its chorus of "Let her go, let her go, God bless her" and the lines, "She may search this wide world over/She'll never find a friend as true as me," which all these years I had supposed traced their origin to the *St. James Infirmary Blues*. Something blue turns out to be something borrowed. P.K.

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MEXICO—FIESTAS OF CHIAPAS AND OAXACA.** Various musicians recorded on location by David Lewiston. *Son Suenta N'ahual San Lorenzo; El Chinito; Bats'i Son Martomail; La Jota; Son Sventa Ch'ul Na; Valse Chiapanecas; K'in Suenta Ch'ul Me'tik Kwadulupe; Son Sventa Cajvaltic; Christmas in Oaxaca; Nuoco; Son Alegre; Carreta de Flores; Cantares de Mi Tierra; Danza de la Malincha.* NONESUCH H-72070 \$3.96.

Performance: **Exciting**  
Recording: **Remarkable**

It is December in the town of Nabenchauc. At

the fiesta in honor of Mother Guadalupe, musicians lead the long procession of religious officials in glorious robes and women carrying flowers. The town bell resounds while reeds and flutes pipe strange melodies and a *tambor* pounds out a rousing rhythm. Suddenly the earth is shaken when fireworks explode to waken the rain god, exhorting him to send water to the parched ground. That's how this remarkable recording of fiesta music from the regions of Chiapas and Oaxaca opens. Then come tunes beaten out on marimbas with rubber-headed hammers, a song for a church wedding, a *jota* from Carranza, a native waltz, music for priests to drink wine by, family songs, music for flute and percussion to accompany the progress of a flower cart in a parade. The climax is *Christmas in Oaxaca*, as children chant carols, floats from nearby villages go by in splendor, and the merry-makers approach the main plaza—the Zocalo—as a brass band resounds.

Never have the color and variety of Southern Mexico been so authentically and excitingly captured as in this field recording brought back by David Lewiston and his field advisor, Walter F. Morris. Flutes, drums, harp, guitar, the sound of fireworks, a tortoise-shell instrument struck with deer antlers, local singers, and lines of marchers join in an authentic aural spectacular to prove once again that there is more to the music of Mexico than a mariachi band. A worthy addition to the distinguished Nonesuch Explorer Series. P.K.

## TEXAS-MEXICAN BORDER MUSIC, VOL.

5. Orquesta Colonial: *Cielito Lindo*. Mariachi Coculense Rodriguez: *La Cuatro Milpas*. El Trio Alegre: *Peor es Nada*. Orquesta Fronteriza: *Adios Amor Mio*. Lydia Mendoza: *Panchita; Se Murio la Cucaracha*. Mariachi Acosta: *Ojitos Chinos y Negros*. And nine others. FOLKLYRIC © 9007 \$6.98.

Performance: **Variable**  
Recording: **Variable restored mono**

This collection of sixteen tracks recorded between 1927 and 1940 is a retrospective survey of the small string bands that played a mixture of Mexican, American, and European music which can loosely be termed "chicano" or multicultural folk. A few of the melodies, such as *Cielito Lindo* with its "ay-yi-yi-yi" chorus, are familiar. The performances, like the aural quality of the recordings (the jacket says they were "originally made monorally") are variable. The disciplined bands sound a bit too polite, and the amateur, street-corner groups sound like Tia Juana versions of the Grand Old Opry (the rhythm guitarists have a common difficulty with under-tuning, so that they are always a trifle flat). But there are many fine moments in nearly all the selections. Part of the joy of listening to Latin music is to hear to what degree the performers balance the two greatest elements of the style: dignity and passion. Mexican music is especially rich in examples where the balance tilts toward one or the other, whether according to plan or not.

Producer/editor Chris Strachwitz has contributed detailed and highly interesting liner notes. While few people are likely to be fascinated with this border music to the point of excluding everything else from their collections, a sample of music such as this is certainly worth having. J.V.

(Continued on page 104)

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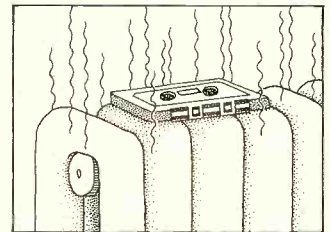
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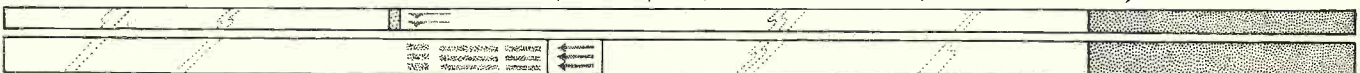


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RCA

Director Sherrin, singers McKenzie and Martin, pianist Higgs, singer Kernan

## Side by Side by Sondheim

THE new RCA album "Side by Side by Sondheim" is a tribute, bouquet, what-have-you to the work of Stephen Sondheim, probably the most gifted and productive creative force now at work in the American lyric theater. It is a collection of songs from an astonishing career that began—at the top—with *West Side Story* (he was then only twenty-five years old) and has continued on to the recent *Pacific Overtures*.

The release is a recorded version of the "musical entertainment" first presented at London's Mermaid Theatre last year by three young English performers. In the recent past we've also had original-cast recordings, from that same stage, of evenings devoted to the works of Noël Coward and Cole Porter. If this last go with Sondheim is the least successful of the three, it is so for reasons that have little to do with the quality of his work or with Ned Sherrin's direction of his three talented performers. It has to do, oddly enough, with the problem of translation. Just as the plays of Montherlant are so very much the quintessence of all that is *French* that they are, even in English, rather mystifying experiences for British or American audiences, so Sondheim's work is so characteristic a dissection of the overexposed nerve endings and quirky responses of the genus "New Yorker" that any transplantation, either geographical or simply out of the context of such strong "books" as *Gypsy*, *West Side Story*, or *A Little Night Music*, is likely to disorient the audience from a necessary frame of reference.

Further, as Sondheim himself observes in the album's liner notes, "I like writing songs that take place in dramatic situations within the proscenium arch. I'm not particularly interested in art songs or pop songs that stand on their own." I am prepared to take him at his word on that, for the songs in this album don't work nearly as well as the Coward and Porter songs do in theirs. Those two *were*, of course, interested in the popular song as a kind of vernacular "art song," sharing both the determination and the ability to create "hits" that could sustain themselves apart from the shows they were written for.

Again, Porter and Coward were charter members of what used to be called the International Set, a rather motley crew, to be sure, but one quite serious in its determination to shake off any lingering traces of Victorian provincialism—or any other kind, for that matter. Their particular brand of gossamer sophistication and arch playfulness traveled beautifully—it was equally at home in New York or London or, indeed, anywhere that speakers of English thirsted for the champagne sparkle of their cheerful fatalism.

Sondheim, on the other hand, coldly brilliant, rigidly committed to intelligence-above-all, and with the eye and ear (and heart) of a night-desk detective sergeant laying out the evidence in a crime of passion, is hardly a lighthearted boulevardier. He is New York. He is also—dare one say it?—more than a little provincial in being trapped in the very small, very select, very social reaches of New York's upper Bohemia. So much of his work reflects the attitudes of that milieu: at once

... somewhat adrift in  
the new-worldly scorch  
of Sondheim's lyrics

clever and mistrustful, intelligent yet oddly disdainful, crisp and chic but still wildly, unpredictably (and only temporarily) sentimental. Perhaps one remark he makes in the liner notes will clarify this: "Bach was an acquired taste for me, Mozart I don't understand. It doesn't reach me." (Yet one of his most successful shows is named after one of Mozart's most "reachable" musical entertainments.) "I admire it, but I don't like it." Admires it but doesn't like it! God, how that detachment comes through in his songs for such characters as Rose in *Gypsy*, Leona in *Do I Hear a*

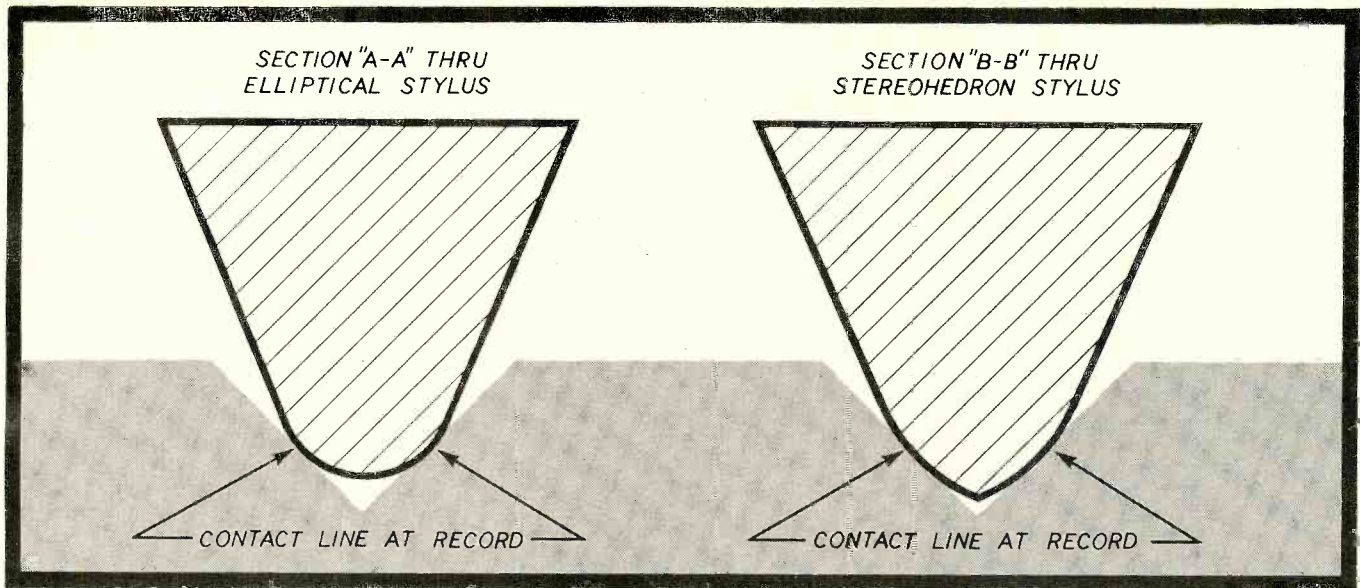
*Waltz?*, and in practically every song he wrote for every character in both *Follies* and *Company*! There is much understanding—no, *comprehension*—but little pity, gentleness, or compassion in Sondheim's work.

Performers Millicent Martin, Julia McKenzie, and David Kernan seem somewhat adrift in the (for them) new-worldly scorch of Sondheim's lyrics. Everything goes well enough when, for instance, Millicent Martin can have a jolly romp through *I'm Still Here*, a hymn to a Hollywood dragoness that enlivened *Follies*, or when Kernan and McKenzie trot through *We're Gonna Be All Right*, a cheerful (the music is Richard Rodgers') number about a young couple counting their blessings. But when the program gets around to the Real Stuff, the brooding anger of *You Could Drive a Person Crazy*, *Everybody Says Don't*, *There Won't Be Trumpets*, or even the obsessional *Losing My Mind*, then the company is as out of its depth as three schoolchildren doing a Strindberg play. If you really listen to Sondheim's lyrics—and you *have* to listen, they are that good—then you know that his is a very dark talent indeed, that it needs a very specific kind of instinctive, indigenous, New York performance to put it across. Otherwise, the result is what we get here: singing actors trying to fake emotions that are utterly foreign to them.

THE success or failure of this particular album makes no real difference, for Sondheim is still, if for no more than his mastery of lyric techniques (and there is a great deal more), one of the contemporary greats. But what he does is quite special, traveling a course that is parallel to without being a part of the mainstream of the American musical theater. This is not, in other words, the kind of place you want to show up at without a firm invitation.

—Peter Reilly

**STEPHEN SONDEHEIM: *Side by Side by Sondheim*.** Millicent Martin, Julia McKenzie, David Kernan (vocals); Tim Higgs, Stuart Pedlar (pianos). RCA CBL2-1851 two discs \$12.98, © CBS2-1851 \$9.98, © CBK2-1851 \$9.98.



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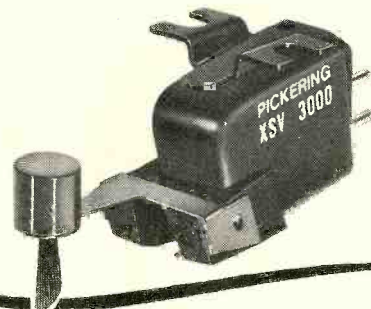
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## JAZZ



**SIDNEY BECHET: *Sidney Bechet Album*.** Sidney Bechet (soprano sax); Wild Bill Davison, Oran "Hot Lips" Page (trumpet); Albert Nicholas, Mezz Mezzrow (clarinet); Jimmy Archey (trombone); Ralph Sutton, Sammy Price (piano); Danny Barker (guitar); "Pops" Foster (bass); Sidney Catlett, "Baby" Dodds (drums). *Baby, Won't You Please Come Home; Sheik of Araby; Dardanella; I Never Knew; House Party; Perdido Street Stomp;* and four others. SAGAPAN 6900 \$6.98 (available from CMS Records, 14 Warren Street, New York, N.Y. 10007).

Performance: **Uninspired**

Recording: **Variable reprocessed mono**

Sidney Bechet was a distinguished jazz reedman from New Orleans who settled in New York in the 1920's and spent the latter part of his life in France, where he was adored. He was adept at several instruments but was best known for his playing of the soprano saxophone, which he "invented" for jazz purposes as his contemporary Joe Venuti "invented" the violin and Eddie Lang the guitar as a melody instrument.

Unfortunately, this collection of odd pickup sessions from the 1940's doesn't display Bechet to much advantage. He plays as a sideman in some excellent company, but the performances don't have much energy; the music is rather tired and tinny neo-Dixieland. Occasionally one of the players sounds interested—trumpeter Oran "Hot Lips" Page has a fine solo on *House Party*—but things generally just grind along and muddle through. The selections on the second side of the album unfortunately feature Milton "Mezz" Mezzrow, a clarinetist of limited ability but with a talent for self-advertisement and a line of jive about the Meaning of Jazz that caused him to be revered by French jazz intellectuals. Mezzrow's playing on these sessions is dull—when it isn't ghastly.

There is some comic relief, however, in the hilariously stuffy and overwritten liner notes, the mauve prose of which is rendered by an English jazz intellectual. European fans and critics of America's Only Native Musical Art Form, Inc. tend to approach the subject of jazz as an apocryphal chapter of Genesis and the musicians as so many Adams and Noahs. Bechet was a fine musician, but his memory is better served by many of the other recordings he made throughout his long and productive career.

J.V.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**ART BLAKEY: *Jazz Messengers '70*.** Art Blakey (drums); Bill Hardman (trumpet); Carlos Garnett (tenor saxophone); Joanne Brackeen (piano); Jon Arnet (bass). *Moanin'; Blues March; Whisper Not;* and four others. CATALYST CAT-7902 \$6.98 (from Spring-

board International, 947 U.S. Highway 1, Rahway, N.J. 07065).

Performance: **The Messengers deliver**  
Recording: **Good remote**

Art Blakey's first Jazz Messengers began their delivery of effervescent romps in 1955 with an album recorded by Blue Note at the Cafe Bohemia. Blakey had actually used the Jazz Messengers name as early as 1947, but the group of 1955 is generally regarded as the one that began the long succession of Messengers. The horns on that auspicious occasion were played by Kenny Dorham and Hank Mobley, but the replacements that followed—Donald Byrd, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, Benny Golson, and Wayne Shorter among them—were no less impressive.

This is the only existing recording of a 1970 Jazz Messenger group featuring the horns of trumpeter Bill Hardman, who has been an on-and-off Messenger since 1956, and tenor saxophonist Carlos Garnett, who has since made his mark—on alto and soprano sax as well—with Mingus, Miles, Norman Connors, and (since 1974) his own group. The recording was made in Japan and has not previously been available in this country. Going on the premise that the audience is less likely to have been



Art Blakey today: he keeps the Jazz Messengers young

overexposed to his staple repertoire than the folks at home, a bandleader tends to serve a more familiar menu at overseas concerts. Thus, with the exception of Garnett's *What the World Needs Now Is Peace and Love*, what we hear here are new (well, six-year-old) versions of tunes that have been in the Blakey repertoire since the Fifties. But the fifty-eight-year-old drummer's ear for budding talent has kept the Jazz Messengers young for all these years, and the periodic infusion of new blood has given the group an ever *au courant* sound. The version of *Night in Tunisia* heard here is therefore significantly different, stylistically, from the 1954 Messenger version, and neither can be said to repeat what was offered in the performances recorded in '57, '59, and '60. While I prefer the 1958 *Blues March* (on Blue Note, with Lee Morgan, Benny Golson, and Bobby Timmons), the present version of *It's Only a Paper Moon* is a step above the one made ten years earlier with Morgan and Wayne Shorter.

Pianist Joanne Brackeen—whose predecessors include Horace Silver, Bobby Timmons, and Cedar Walton—has matured considerably since this concert took place, but she need not

(Continued on page 106)

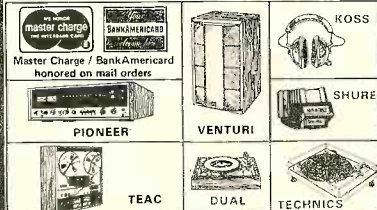
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# If you're surprised to learn that tubes solve some amplifier problems best, you have something to learn about amplifiers. And about LUX.

It may seem courageously retrogressive for a company to introduce a *tube* amplifier—even a highly advanced type—to the semiconductor audio world of 1976. Especially for a company only recently established in the U.S. market with a comprehensive line of solid-state amplifiers and tuners. But for LUX, it is simply consistent with our philosophy: whatever path may lead to improvement in the accuracy of music reproduction will be explored by our audiophile/engineers. Whether it leads to transistors or tubes.

Certainly, transistors are not about to be obsoleted by tubes. However, there are some amplifier problems that tubes still handle better than transistors. Overloading is one such problem.

When a solid-state amplifier is driven beyond its rated power, it clips abruptly. Engineers call it "hard" clipping. The term is apt, as the sound from the spurious high-order odd harmonics is raspy and irritating. Further, if the overall circuitry is not stable, and the protective circuits not very well-designed, the distortion is extended in time beyond the moment of overload. Drive a tube amplifier beyond its rated power and it too clips the waveform, but gently and smoothly. This "soft" clipping introduces much smaller amounts of odd harmonics. The distortion is far less irritating, hence less noticeable.

Notch (or crossover) distortion, present in many transistor amplifiers, is another source of spurious high-order odd harmonics. It occurs when the transistor output circuits are not able to follow the musical waveform accurately at the points where it changes from positive to negative and back again. Since notch distortion, unlike clipping, is at a constant level regardless of the power the amplifier is delivering, the ratio of this distortion to signal is worse at lower power. The gritty quality heard from many transistor amplifiers, particularly when they are playing at low levels, is usually due to crossover distortion.

Of course, tubes also have *their* limitations. Especially

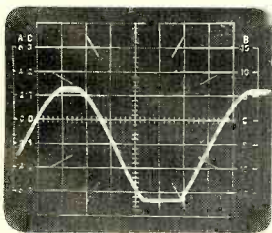
conventional tubes. The only tube previously capable of high-power amplification—the pentode—has inherently higher levels of distortion than the triode. Existing lower-distortion triode tubes cannot deliver sufficiently high power as a simple push-pull pair. But LUX, together with NEC engineers, has developed the first of a new breed of triode tube, the 8045G, which with other related technological advances, makes possible a high-power, low-distortion triode amplifier—the Luxman MB-3045. Among the differences in this new triode: the plate-electrode uses a special bonded metal with high heat-radiation characteristics. Also, the fin structure further aids heat dissipation.

LUX also developed a low-distortion high-voltage driver tube, the 6240G, capable of delivering over 200 volts of audio signal to the output triodes. Also, a new output transformer (LUX's long-time special area of expertise) has been designed to take optimal advantage of the triode configuration feeding it. The quadrafilair winding and core technology of this transformer represents another breakthrough. Overall, from input to output, the use of advanced design direct-coupled and self-balancing differential amplifier stages ensures stability and minimum phase shift.

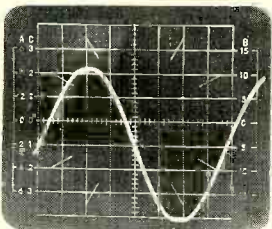
The MB-3045 produces a minimum of 50 watts continuous power into 4, 8, or 16 ohms, at any frequency from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with total harmonic distortion no more than 0.3%. As the MB-3045 is monophonic, a pair of them connected to a stereophonic preamplifier will not be subject to stereo power-supply interaction.

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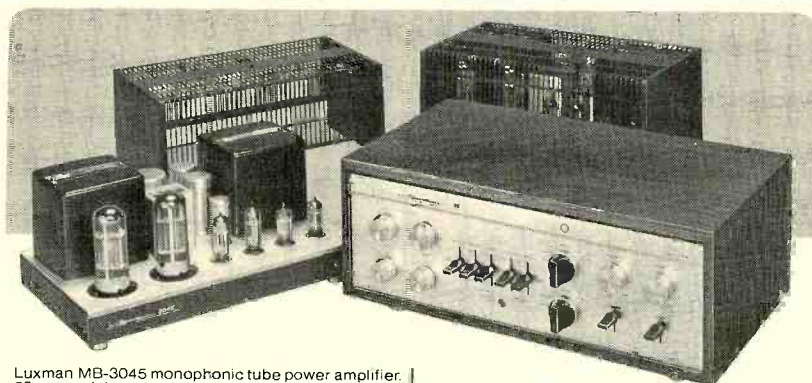
You'll find both at our carefully selected LUX dealers who will be pleased to demonstrate them for you. And any of the other dozen or so LUX models. It's why they're LUX dealers in the first place.



When a typical transistorized amplifier tries to deliver more power than it can, the top and bottom edges of the waveform "clip" sharply and abruptly, and not always symmetrically. Result: high-order harmonic distortion, raspy and irritating.



When a tube amplifier, such as the Luxman MB-3045, is driven into overload, the "clipping" is softer, with more rounded edges to the waveform. The resulting distortion is much less audibly bothersome.



Luxman MB-3045 monophonic tube power amplifier. 50 watts minimum continuous power into 4, 8, or 16 ohms, 20-20 kHz; total harmonic distortion no more than 0.3%. Frequency response: 10 to 40 kHz,  $\pm 1$  dB. Signal to noise ratio: 95 dB. Variable sensitivity, control for matching gain to any preamplifier. \$445.00 each.  
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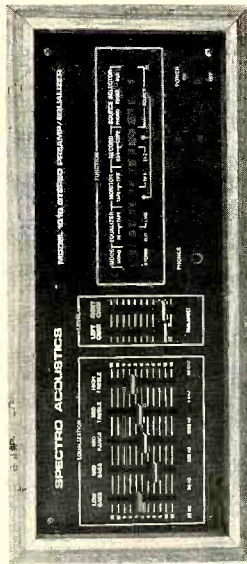
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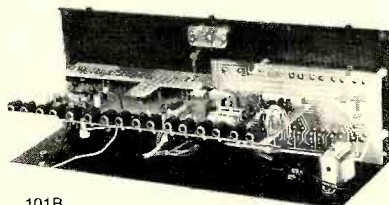
Phono Stage—Within 0.5dB of true RIAA equalization, 20Hz to 20kHz, typically within 0.1dB

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be embarrassed by her work here. Bill Hardman is another musician whose growth has not been stunted, and rarely have I heard him play as effectively as in this welcome delivery by Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. C.A.

**CLAUDE BOLLING AND ALEXANDRE LA-GOYA: *Concerto for Classic Guitar and Jazz Piano*** (see Classical Reviews—BOLLING)

**DUKE ELLINGTON: *His Most Important Second War Concert***. Duke Ellington and His Orchestra. *Ring Dem Bells; The Star Spangled Banner; Moon Mist; Black, Brown and Beige (excerpts)*; and eight others. SAGAPAN PAN 6902 \$6.98 (from CMS Records, Inc., 14 Warren Street, New York, N.Y. 10007).

Performance: **Good vintage Duke**  
Recording: **Low-fidelity mock stereo**

The date was December 11, 1943. It was the Ellington orchestra's second Carnegie Hall concert, and someone was there to preserve it on acetate discs while the recording industry hibernated under the now famous AF of M ban. Judging by a 1967 release of this material on a Swedish bootleg album, whoever made the original recording did a better job of it than the Sagapan people did of mastering—there is an annoying rumble throughout this edition, and the so-called stereo processing only muddles things further.

The music, however, is good—except of course, for *The Star Spangled Banner*, which even Ellington can't salvage—and there is a fine crew to spark it. Just why this concert is regarded by the Sagapan people as more important than the band's previous one at Carnegie Hall escapes me, but no Ellington collection should be without it, for it does represent an edition of the Ellington band not available on any commercial recordings, and it has some fine solos by Johnny Hodges, Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton, Taft Jordan, and other Ellington regulars.

Finally, even if you *hate* Ellington's music, you must read a Mr. Colin Grogan's absolutely incredible piece, "The Saga History of Jazz," which appears on the back cover of this album and is like no other history of jazz you've ever read. Jazz literature is rife with nonsense and dribble, but this tops them all for naïveté and conjecture. C.A.

**FRASER MACPHERSON: *Fraser—Live at the Planetarium*** (see Best of the Month, page 85)

**PAT METHENY: *Bright Size Life***. Pat Metheny (guitars); Jaco Pastorius (bass); Bob Moses (drums). *Sirabhorn; Midwestern Night's Dream; Round Trip/Broadway Blues*; and five others. ECM ECM-1-1073 \$6.98, © 8T-1-1073 \$7.98, © CT-1-1073 \$7.98.

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

Guitarist Pat Metheny is from Missouri, and I have enjoyed his playing as a member of vibist Gary Burton's group, but I am somewhat disappointed in this, his recording debut as a leader. The support from bassist Jaco Pastorius and drummer Bob Moses is excellent; Moses, of course, is a long-time associate of Burton's, and Pastorius recently made his first album as a leader. But put them all together—that is, Metheny, Pastorius, and Moses—and the result seems to be three talented musicians in search of something they can't find, at least not here. C.A.

**JEAN LUC PONTY/STEPHANE GRAPPELLI: *Ponty/Grappelli***. Jean Luc Ponty and Stéphane Grappelli (violins and violas); rhythm section. *Bowing-Bowing; Valerie; Memorial Jam for Stuff Smith*; and two others. INNER CITY IC 1005 \$6.98 (from Inner City Records, 43 West 61st Street, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Mostly boring**  
Recording: **Good**

I have had a fondness for Stéphane Grappelli's playing ever since I first heard a record by the Quintet of the Hot Club of France, and of all the modern jazz violinists no one comes close to Jean Luc Ponty for that magic combination of imagination, swing, and vitality. Given all that, I should really love this album, but, as it is, I love only parts of it—small parts where the two violinists (who also double on violas) get a chance to play without too much interference from the stereotyped, electrified (in the literal sense) rhythm section. As I say, the album has its moments, very good moments, but. . . . C.A.

**STEVE REID: *Nova***. Steve Reid (drums); Ahmed Abdullah (trumpet); Joe Rigby (reeds); Les Walker (keyboards); Luis Angel Falcon, Richard Williams (bass). *Lions of Juda; Long Time Black; Sixth House*; and two others. MUSTEVIC SOUND MS 2 001 \$5.98 (from Mustevic Sound, Inc., 193-18 120th Avenue, New York, N.Y. 11412).

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

As the major labels move farther and farther away from jazz and sink deeper and deeper into that stagnant pool of electronically generated "sounds," more and more dedicated musicians are finding it necessary to finance, record, and release their own albums in order to be heard as they want to be heard. Such ventures rarely bring the artist a measurable financial reward, but they do give him the satisfaction of having a record done his way and of knowing that possible profits won't have to be shared with a faceless corporation or someone whose *only* interest is a material one.

The uncredited notes for this album are hopelessly amateurish, but I am happy to report that the music is not. In fact, this is a very worthwhile album of what can perhaps best be described as "loft jazz," a term that may not mean much to you unless you have had the experience of taking in the music currently thriving in the lofts of New York's Lower East Side. Steve Reid has drawn praise from some of the newer critics, but I don't find his drumming exceptional—good, perhaps very good, but not exceptional. Trumpeter Ahmed Abdullah, on the other hand, *does* have a quality that stands out; his name is new to me, and chances are that it's new to him, but I don't think I have heard his playing before. Les Walker's acoustic (*sic*) piano work, generally much better than his organ playing, is most effective on *Sixth House*. I'm sorry that we only get a total of thirty minutes in this album and I wish the engineer hadn't ended each selection quite so abruptly, but I hope Steve Reid and his colleagues soon come back with more. C.A.

**JACK REILLY: *Tributes***. Jack Reilly (piano). *Someone to Watch Over Me; Nablá; Suffering*; and seven others. CAROUSEL CLP 1002  
(Continued on page 108)



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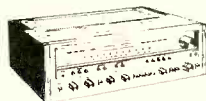
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\$6.98 (from Carousel Records, 125 Prospect Park West, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215).

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

This is, as far as I know, Jack Reilly's second album. Recorded last April, it contains more of his own compositions, dedicated to composers and artists whom he obviously admires: Leonard Bernstein, Anton Webern, John Coltrane, Lee Konitz, "Zoot Simms" (sic). The pieces—ranging from *Nabla*, a one-and-a-half-minute tribute to Alban Berg, to the ten-minute *In Memoriam/Ben Webster*—contain only flashes of original thought. Mr. Reilly, who counts David Hollander, Hall Overton, and George Russell among his mentors, has obviously done a great deal of listening, and he seems to have absorbed styles and techniques rather well, but there is a lack of feeling in what he does. In my review of Reilly's previous album ("Blue-Sean-Green," Carousel ATM-1001) I found that he had more to offer as a composer and stated that I would like to hear his music played by a less formal performer. That still goes—Reilly is simply too rigid for his own good works. C.A.

**BUD SHANK: *Sunshine Express*.** Bud Shank (flute, alto saxophone); Bobby Shew (cornet, trumpet, flugelhorn); Mike Wofford (piano); Fred Atwood (bass); Larry Bunker (drums). *John C.*; *Flim Flam*; *Here's That Rainy Day*; and four others. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-20 \$6.98 (from Concord Jazz, Inc., P.O. Box 845, Concord, Calif. 94522).

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

Bud Shank has been on the professional music scene some thirty years. He was born in Ohio, but he moved to the West Coast in the late Forties and soon became identified with that vaguely defined arm of jazz allegedly peculiar to California. He is an excellent composer/arranger as well as a fine performer whose work you can hear on many and varied albums recorded under the leadership of such performers as Maria Muldaur, Harry Nilsson, Andy Williams, and Julie London. He also participates—more fittingly—on albums by the excellent L.A. Four, of which he is one. Shank's past associations have included the bands of Stan Kenton, Gerry Mulligan, and

Gerald Wilson, and he has had distinguished albums of his own, but this is his first in quite a while.

The five musicians here sound like more, which may be the result of added tracks but could also be an aural illusion caused by the apparent use of an echo chamber for the ensemble passages. I wish Shank, who produced the album himself, had given us a more realistic presence. Even so, this is a fine album with good, hummable if somewhat strait-laced arrangements and excellent solos. Bud Shank's work is characteristically tasteful, and I especially like his faster-than-usual treatment of *Here's That Rainy Day*. And trumpeter Bobby Shew, whom I had not heard of before, bears watching. The album is worth acquiring, and it is also, I hope, an overture to more by Shank. C.A.

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**SONNY STITT: *Forecast: Sonny & Red*.** Sonny Stitt (tenor saxophone); Red Holloway (alto and tenor saxophones); Art Hillary (piano); Larry Gales (bass); Clarence Johnston (drums). *You Don't Know What Love Is/I'm Getting Sentimental Over You*; *Lester Leaps In*; and four others. CATALYST CAT-7608 \$6.98 (from Springboard International, 947 U.S. Highway 1, Rahway, N.J. 07065).

Performance: **Cooking**  
Recording: **Very good**

Sonny Stitt's recent album on the Flying Dutchman label ("Stomp Off Let's Go," BDL1-1538) was an ill-conceived, sloppy mess for which he here makes amends. Teaming up with saxophonist James "Red" Holloway, Stitt really *does* stomp off this time, evoking fond memories of another saxophone team, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis and Johnny Griffin. If you liked the excitement created by Davis and Griffin on those Prestige and Jazzland albums of the very early Sixties, you will undoubtedly receive this album favorably.

*The Way You Look Tonight*, *Lester Leaps In*, and *All God's Chillun Got Rhythm* are neck-and-neck romps from the first to the last bar, but the album also contains some very fine, relaxed blues and ballad work. Pianist Art Hillary and the rhythm section cook comfortably at any speed. As far as I'm concerned this team is welcome any time. C.A.



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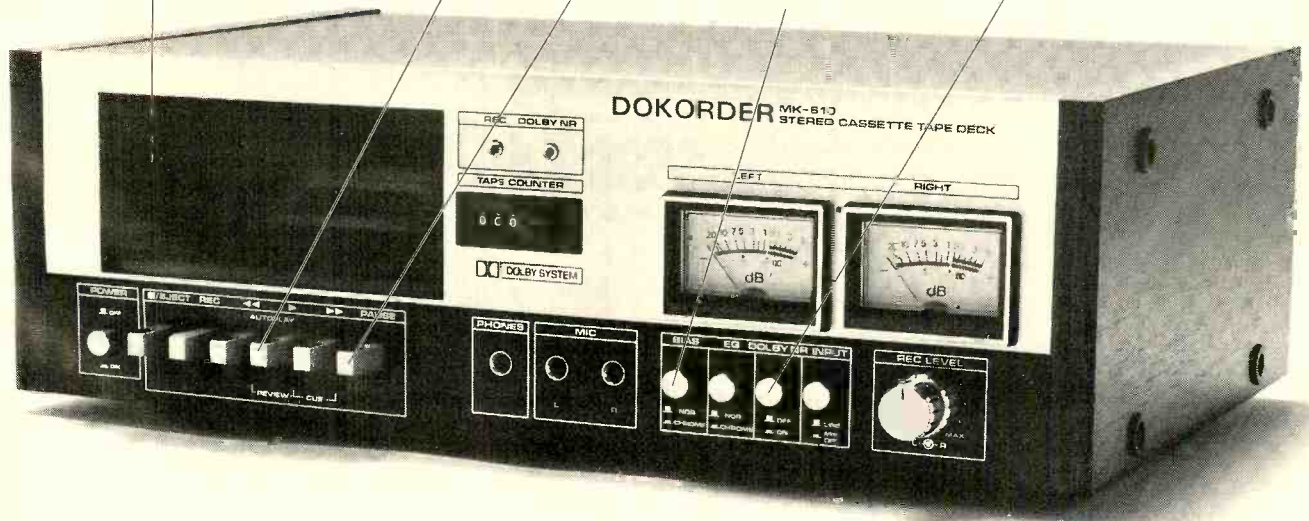
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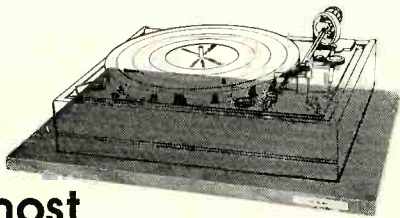
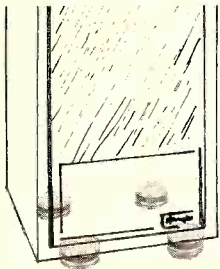
Man with horn:  
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## Latin Jazz: Dizzie & Machito

**T**HOUGH he's a lot better known as one of the leaders of the bebop movement, Dizzie Gillespie was also a key figure in the joyous music called Latin jazz. Afro-Cuban jazz, as it was called in the late Forties, was the product of a very fertile era for both jazz and Latin dance music. Machito's big band of the middle and late Forties was as important in the hot New York Latin style that has come to be called salsa as Gillespie's was in bop, with a sound built by musical director Mario Bauza out of ten years' experience in Thirties black swing bands—including a stint playing alongside Gillespie in the trumpet section of Cab Calloway's band.

Latin jazz, an instrumental hybrid combining jazz solos and ensemble work with salsa-style rhythm sections, is an exciting music, enriching the full-blooded complexity of Afro-Cuban percussion with bop's harmonic adventurousness. Gillespie and the Machito-Bauza team weren't its only creators; Stan Kenton, for one, was doing on the West Coast much of what they were doing on the East. But it was Gillespie who, in the year or so during which he featured conga-player Chano

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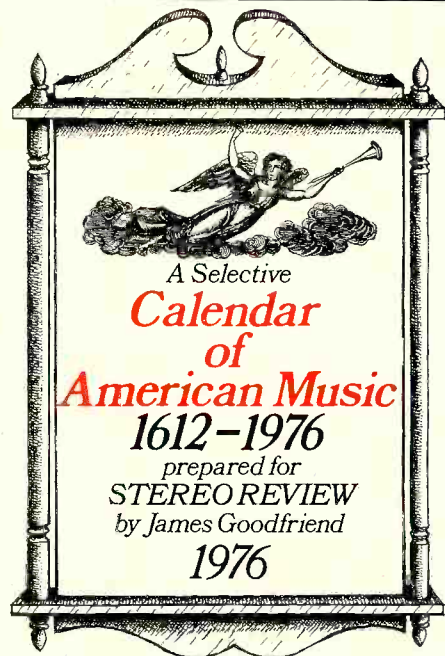
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Pozo with his big band, gave Latin jazz prestige in the East Coast bop scene.

Unlike their jazz counterparts—and Ellington aside—Latin-jazz arrangers soon developed a taste for extended suites, a natural one given the possibilities for contrasting movements presented by Cuban music's many different rhythms. Among the most important of these arrangers was Arturo "Chico" O'Farrill, a Cuban jazz freak who came to the States in 1948. O'Farrill wrote *Manteca Suite* for Gillespie in 1949 and *Afro-Jazz Suite* the year afterward for a session produced by Norman Granz in which Machito's band backed Charlie Parker, Flip Phillips, and Buddy Rich.

ALL in all, when Mario Bauza suggested last year that Granz's Pablo label record a couple of O'Farrill suites with Gillespie fronting Machito, he was suggesting a real reunion of the heavies. But the resulting "Afro-Cuban Jazz Moods" is not merely Nostalgia Time, though it is in the eclectic tradition of Latin-jazz suites at their most idiosyncratic. It's a splendidly ambitious work whose harmonic writing ranges from early big-band section punch to occasional tone clusters and a little serialism. Its overall sound highlights the classic Machito brass-sax-and-percussion big-band sound, though a synthesizer supplies an effective tonal garnish. At times grandiosity creeps in, but O'Farrill's willingness to take risks gives him a richness lost by men too

afraid of being vulgar, and his loftier aspirations are balanced by a solid base in Cuban rhythms and melodies.

Unlike Johnny Richards in his 1956 *Cuban Fire* suite for Stan Kenton, O'Farrill doesn't base each movement on a different rhythm, but alternates rhythms for contrast and progression within each section, setting a traditional Cuban *guaguancó* against a basic syncopated Latin-jazz six-eight, flicking from a building brass break into a light *montuno* piano vamp like a fish moving from shade to sunlight. Above it all Gillespie soars and dances, never making obvious concessions to the "non-jazz" context, darting in and out of the brass, chopping across or floating freely over the percussion patterns with the ease of a man who has soaked himself in Latin music for nearly forty years.

Latin-jazz suites vanished along with the big band—possibly for a lot of reasons and certainly because big bands got too costly. But recently there have been signs of a revival. The linchpin of Eddie Palmieri's Grammy-winning "Sun of Latin Music" album, *Un Día Bonito*, moves from introduction to climax like a dance-band number, but its long free-form prelude and contrasting percussion, vocal, and orchestral sections give it the feel of more extended works. Bandleader/conga-player Ray Barretto's new rock-and-jazz experiments have also included a salsa suite that he has played a couple of times in concert, though he has not yet recorded it.

Some of the older Latin-jazz suites are still available on record. The classic *Afro-Jazz Suite* and *Manteca Suite*, alas, are not, though they certainly should be. But Stan Kenton has reissued his recording of Johnny Richards' *Cuban Fire* on his Creative World label (ST 1008). Richards, who studied with Arnold Schoenberg, wrote for Gillespie as well as Kenton, and *Cuban Fire*, which has six movements based on Cuban rhythms and plenty of classical elements, makes particularly interesting listening alongside the new Pablo release. A less ambitious work, Perez Prado's *Concerto para Bongó*, is also still around on West Side Latino LS61005. Like "Afro-Cuban Jazz Moods" and *Cuban Fire*, it is strongly brass-and-percussion oriented, but with Latin percussion rather than jazz solos.

THE Latin-jazz suites were a real attempt at a pan-Afro-American extended form, and though they could be overblown at times, at their best they had a sweep as well as an excitement that's missing nowadays. Check them out. And start with this one.

—John Storm Roberts

**DIZZIE GILLESPIE AND MACHITO:** *Afro-Cuban Jazz Moods*. Dizzie Gillespie (trumpet); Machito and His Orchestra, Arturo "Chico" O'Farrill arr. *Oro, Incienso y Mirra; Three Afro-Cuban Jazz Moods*. PABLO 2310-771 \$7.98, © S10-771 \$7.98, © K10-771 \$7.98.

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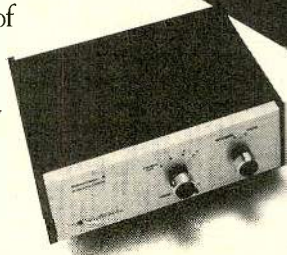


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## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BEETHOVEN:** *Military March in D Major (WoO 24); Twelve German Dances (WoO 8); Minuet of Congratulations (WoO 142); Turkish March from "The Ruins of Athens," Op. 113.* **MOZART:** *March in D Major (K. 408, No. 2); March in C Major (K. 408, No. 3); Five Contredanses (K. 609); Two Minuets with Contredanses (K. 463); Contredanse La Bataille (K. 535); Six German Dances (K. 509).* Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Edo de Waart cond. PHILIPS 9500 080 \$7.98.

Performance: **Stylish**  
Recording: **First-rate**

It is not very original to fall back on Wolf's "*Auch kleine Dinge*" by way of describing this marvelous collection, but that is what comes to mind. The music consists entirely of "little things," but they are miniatures compounded of such taste, such charm, and such happy inventiveness that the matter of dimension is no matter at all. Edo de Waart brings out all these qualities in the most stylish and enlivening readings, and Philips' first-rate recording lets us all but see how much the musicians are enjoying themselves. The Beethoven side is especially welcome, for there is no other complete recording of the German Dances (with the wonderful posthorn finale) available in this country at present, the Minuet of Congratulations has not been around (as far as I know) since Charles Munch's RCA 78, and the Turkish March is much more stun-

ning here than in the Berlin Philharmonic Wind Group's version (Deutsche Grammophon 139045). The Mozart side will raise duplication problems for many collectors, and the K. 509 set is somewhat abbreviated, but neither consideration is likely to bother anyone who hears this disc. It's a gem. R.F.

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BEETHOVEN:** *Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 61.* Josef Suk (violin); New Philharmonia Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult cond. VANGUARD SRV 353-SD \$3.98.

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

Although Josef Suk is very highly regarded in Europe and is much recorded, he is barely known to the American public. Hence this recording of the Beethoven violin concerto, given the formidable competition it faces in the catalog, may not attract much attention. It should, for this is a beautifully proportioned, altogether masterly performance, conforming extremely well to Boult's customary rock-solid orchestral framework. There is a massive, serene, lovingly detailed view, which is perhaps a shade unsmiling in the Rondo, but which cannot fail to delight in its totality. The sound—of English EMI origin—is warmly resonant. Mr. Suk plays the unfamiliar but stylistically appropriate (indeed, Kreisler-like) cadenzas of Vaša Přihoda, an eminent Bohemian violinist of an earlier generation. G.J.

**BOLLING:** *Concerto for Classic Guitar and Jazz Piano.* Claude Bolling (piano); Alexandre Lagoya (guitar); Michel Gaudry (bass); Marcel Sabiani (drums). RCA FRL1-0149 \$6.98.

Performance: **Mexico meets Mississippi in France**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Claude Bolling, now forty-six, studied guitar and piano as a child, and at fifteen he entered an amateur contest sponsored by the Hot Club of France. He was unsuccessful that time, but his luck changed three years later when he brought a traditional jazz band into

the competition. This led to a series of recordings on various French labels during which the band underwent a transformation from a New Orleans style to early Ellington to modern swing. Bolling's emulation of the 1930's Ellington style—which led to some recordings featuring cornettist Rex Stewart—met with enormous success in Europe during the late Forties and brought praise from Duke himself. In recent years, Bolling has devoted much of his time to arranging for such diverse singers (and non-singers) as Charles Trenet, Brigitte Bardot, and Liza Minnelli, and to composing film and television scores. He has also turned to composing extended works that blend jazz and Baroque elements in the form of an instrumental dialogue. One of these, the Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano, featuring flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal and himself, appeared on the American Columbia label (M 33233) in 1975.

The present work was suggested by guitarist Alexandre Lagoya after he heard Bolling's Sonata for Two Pianos performed on the radio. That the concerto contains pleasing, even beautiful passages cannot be denied, but Baroque music and jazz are such obvious—and, by now, old—partners that there don't seem to be any new roads to explore in that direction, or, if there are, Bolling has chosen the beaten path. Sections employing South American and Mexican themes suffer from the same triteness. The performance itself is not displeasing, but the music—like so many jazz-classic amalgams—comes out being neither fish nor fowl. I would rather hear Lagoya perform a classical guitar work than what he does here, and I much prefer Bolling's "Original Ragtime" album (Columbia PC 33277) to this one. Chris Albertson

**BRAHMS:** *Four Ballades, Op. 10; Fantasias, Op. 116.* Emil Gilels (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 656 \$7.98.

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

There is a delicacy in these performances that approaches wanness. This is particularly disturbing in the Ballades, which cry out for a firm, bardic treatment. Side two—a set of lyr-

### Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
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The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

ic poems—fares better, and the recorded sound is better as well. E.S.

**BRAHMS: Piano Concerto No. 1, in D Minor, Op. 15.** Artur Rubinstein (piano); Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON CS 7018 \$6.98, © 5-7018 \$7.98.

Performance: **Rubinstein valedictory?**  
Recording: **Close-miked soloist**

Those who saw on public TV Artur Rubinstein's performance of Brahms' heaven-storming youthful masterpiece will have a fine souvenir in this, the old master's first recording not from RCA or EMI. As in the television broadcast, the miking of the soloist is on the close side; even a Rubinstein can hardly be expected to produce the dynamic range at age ninety that he did twenty-two years earlier in his fire-eating interpretation of the concerto with Reiner and the Chicago Symphony (RCA LM 1831). But for a man of his age, and with failing eyesight as well, Rubinstein can still do wonderful things with and for the music. There is a rather leisurely and ruminative traversal of the opening movement, followed by a slow movement that increases in its intensity of expressive phrasing to a point of almost unbearable poignance in the final five minutes. Much the same happens in the finale in the quasi-cadenza episodes for solo piano. Mehta is a truly affectionate collaborator and brings to the ordinarily dry fugato section of the finale a delightful sense of play. And yet, for all the sentiment attached to this particular recorded performance, I still hope we shall see an RCA reissue of the 1954 Chicago tour de force. D.H.

**BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 7, in E Major.** Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein cond. UNICORN © UNI 111 \$6.98.

Performance: **Good**  
Recording: **Historic, vintage 1928**

I grew up with this performance as released on 78-rpm gold-seal Brunswick pressings, heavy surface noise and all. It was, even then, a finely proportioned, lyrical reading, though its drama was diluted by somewhat dim and glassy violin tone. Unicorn has transferred the performance to LP format as part of its project of documenting Horenstein's interpretations. Not much could be done about the dim violins, but it is good to hear it without the heavy surface noise. And it is a welcome and valuable bit of historical preservation, for this was the first electrical recording of a Bruckner symphony in its entirety, preceding the Ormandy one by some eight years. D.H.

**CHÁVEZ: Piano Concerto.** Eugene List (piano); Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Carlos Chávez cond. WESTMINSTER WGS-8324 \$3.49.

Performance: **Good, but not good enough**  
Recording: **Likewise**

With still-vivid memories of the 1942 broadcast première of the Chávez Piano Concerto, I snatched the first copy of this recording I could get my hands on when it was first issued by Westminster in 1964. I was bitterly disappointed by an all-too-careful rendition and so-so recorded sound—with none of the heroic intensity I remembered from twenty-two years before.

Westminster's reissue offers a considerably improved sonic picture, however, thanks to an excellent job of reprocessing and the re-

sulting richer, more spacious, and more detailed texture. Even so, the music deserves better than this. The Viennese players seem ill at ease with the music, and the recording does not begin to approach today's standard in capturing percussion detail. List's performance is done with great care, but not with the fire he brought to it in 1942 and which the highly virtuosic music truly deserves. D.H.

**CHERUBINI: String Quartets Nos. 1-6 (see Best of the Month, page 84)**

**CHOPIN: Etudes, Opp. 10 and 25.** Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano). SAGA 5293 \$6.98.

Performance: **Elegant**  
Recording: **Dated**

Saga is a budget label in England; it is a bit of a jolt to find it imported at what we regard here as full price, though this particular disc would have been a treasure at almost any price until about a year ago, even with the phony stereo. These are apparently the same recordings that were available here more than fifteen years ago on MK imports from the U.S.S.R. and turned up a bit later on the Bruno label. For all the occasional patches of muddy sound and crunchy surfaces, it was an exciting release then, identifying the young pianist as a master. The disc's appeal is severely diminished now, though, because only a year ago London issued Ashkenazy's new recording of the études (CS-6844), in which he not only benefits from immeasurably superior sonics but also shows even greater poetry and depth than in these earlier performances, elegant though they remain. R.F.

**COOLIDGE: Rhapsody for Harp and Orchestra; New England Autumn; Pioneer Dances; Spirituals in Sunshine and Shadow.** Westphalian Symphony Orchestra, Siegfried Landau cond. TURNABOUT QTV-S 34635 \$3.98.

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

The conscientious music-lover is always threatened by the feeling that he might be missing something. Peggy Stuart Coolidge? Born in Massachusetts in 1913, she wrote her first song when she was nine, took piano lessons, and planned a career as a concert pianist. Then, in 1937, she started writing scores for ballets and films, orchestral suites, and tone poems. Her work has been compared to Gershwin's and Copland's, but in reality the music on this disc tends to make one think of her more as a kind of American Eric Coates; it also bears strong affinities to the "serious" contributions of Morton Gould. The latter particularly comes to mind when one hears her *Spirituals in Sunshine and Shadow*. Like Gould's *Spirituals*, this is a suite of works inspired by black Americana. A strongly appealing piece, with a pleasant transparency in the scoring, it lacks the sinews of the Gould treatment, but it is even more intriguingly orchestrated.

The Pioneer Dances have that outdoorsy ring we have come to associate with such offerings, but the wholesomeness sounds rather secondhand and self-conscious. The Rhapsody for Harp and Orchestra and *New England Autumn*, with one movement devoted to a regional sunrise and the other to a country fair, are long on mood and atmosphere but short on the kind of substance that might keep the impressionist colors from

(Continued overleaf)

## Lazar Berman's "Appassionata"



Leitwasser/Deutsche Grammophon

**P**IANIST Lazar Berman is a true Beethovenian. He works close to the idea and lets the piece pour out of a central conception with incredible energy. Except in its demonic intensity, there is nothing especially "romantic" about this way of playing, nor is it structurally weak. Quite the contrary, the foundation is

Just wait until you  
hear the Presto . . .

firm, the superstructure powerful. The trick is in the marshaling of forces, the disposal of energy.

Berman is not a "careful" pianist; there is no tiptoeing-through-the-tulips here. There is, on the contrary, an almost spur-of-the-moment quality that I like—no Hamlet-like agonizing over every note, but rather a very direct reliving of intense experience, Beethoven presented as the narrative-dramatic composer he most essentially was.

The sound is clear—and clangorous. It is not beautiful, but it's not bad for the playing either. Just wait until you hear the Presto of the *Appassionata*. —Eric Salzman

**BETHOVEN: Sonata No. 23, in F Minor, Op. 57 ("Appassionata"); Sonata No. 18, in E-flat Major, Op. 31, No. 3.** Lazar Berman (piano). COLUMBIA M 34218 \$6.98, © MA 34218 \$7.98, © MT 34218 \$7.98.



Michael Gray

PEGGY STUART COOLIDGE  
Unusually pleasant, appealing music

floating off into space. All four pieces receive buoyant, agreeable performances, and they are especially alive in QS playback. All make for unusually pleasant listening. P.K.

**ELGAR: *Enigma Variations, Op. 36.*** Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski cond. ***Serenade in E Minor for String Orchestra, Op. 20; Elegy for Strings, Op. 58.*** Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Ainslee Cox cond. LONDON SPC 21136 \$6.98.

Performance: **Idiosyncratic**  
Recording: **Very good**

Stokowski wrote of his "mystical" view of the *Enigma Variations* in a 1929 letter to the

composer which is reproduced on the liner of this release, and that is probably the key to the performance so richly captured by London/Decca during a Prague concert in September 1972. There is nothing one might call stereotyped and little that is "traditional" in Stokowski's reading, which is characterized instead by highly individual touches that even the great conductor's most devoted admirers are likely to find more fussy than insightful. Almost every other recorded performance of the *Enigma Variations* is more persuasive by virtue of greater robustness where called for and greater contrast between the respective variations. Ainslee Cox is individualistic to a lesser degree in moving along so determinedly in the *Serenade*—as if religiously opposed to the idea of trading on the work's charm. The brief *Elegy* comes off best, but it too may be heard to better advantage in other Elgar collections. Since one of my own recent liner notes contained a grievous error, I am not about to thunder with righteousness about the ones here, but the brief notes are studded with misleading statements. R.F.

**GINASTERA: *Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 37.*** Hilde Somer (piano); UCI Symphony Orchestra, Alvaro Cassuto cond. ***Quintet for Piano and Strings.*** Hilde Somer (piano); Arnold Black, Alicia Edelberg (violins); Jacob Glick (viola); Seymour Barab (cello). ORION ORS 76241 \$6.98.

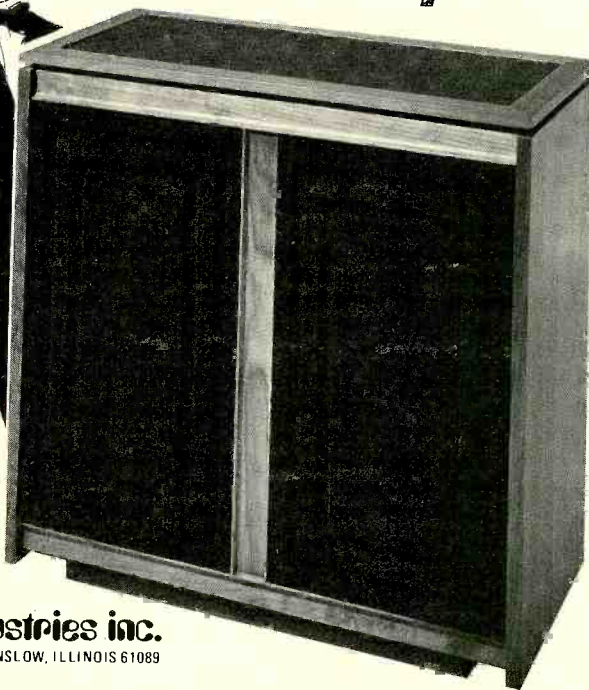
Performance: **Committed**  
Recording: **Crisp**

Ginastera describes his Second Piano Concerto as a work of "tragic and fantastic nature."

It was written in 1972 for Hilde Somer, whose performance of the First Concerto had pleased the composer; she introduced it with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, which commissioned it. The orchestral writing is rather sparse through most of the four movements, with percussion instruments frequently prominent. In his violin concerto Ginastera wrote an "Evocation of Paganini"; the first movement of the new piano concerto is a set of "32 Variations on a Chord by Beethoven" (taken from the finale of the Ninth Symphony), and in the concluding movement Ginastera cites a theme from the end of Chopin's Second Sonata. The two inner movements—a "Scherzo for the Left Hand" and an adagio headed *Quasi una fantasia*—exude what might be called Ginastera's own counterpart to Bartók's "night music." In all, the concerto is a strong piece, but one that not every listener will find digestible on a single hearing. Somer's proprietary zeal should be more than enough to draw anyone back for further aural exploration, and she is well supported by the very able UCI (University of California at Irvine) Symphony Orchestra under the Portuguese composer-conductor Alvaro Cassuto.

The piano quintet is nearly a decade older than the Second Concerto, and it has circulated more, but this is apparently the first recording for both works; both benefit from genuinely committed performances. If the instrumentation sounds richer in the chamber work, it is both because the four string players are given somewhat fuller partnership than the orchestra enjoys in the concerto and because of the greater presence and more

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equable balance in the recording of the quintet, taped by Marc Aubort in Charlemont, Massachusetts, following a performance in the Mohawk Trail Concerts there. The documentation includes the composer's own notes on the concerto and Nicolas Slonimsky's on the quintet. R.F.

**HAYDN:** *Cello Concerto in C Major (Hob. VIIb:1); Cello Concerto in D Major (Hob. VIIb:2)*. Mstislav Rostropovich (cello); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Mstislav Rostropovich cond. ANGEL □ S-37193 \$6.98.

Performance: **Opulent**  
Recording: **Close-up**

The C Major Concerto is a work Rostropovich has embraced enthusiastically and plays frequently. In his dual role as both soloist and conductor he gives it an opulent performance, if not the most stylish one on all counts. The intense expressiveness in the slow movement is surely overdrawn by half, but in general the cellist's exuberance and his downright gorgeous playing make this a pleasurable side. No harpsichord is heard; no one will miss it, though it would have been appropriate in this work of the 1760's, and there is one in the picture in Rostropovich's earlier recording of the concerto (London CS-6419), which was conducted by Benjamin Britten, who also provided him with the cadenzas he still plays.

The other side of this disc is less appealing. Rostropovich gives us the authentic version of the more familiar D Major Concerto rather than the Gevaert edition we always used to hear, but he gets in the way of the music by fussing too much with dynamics and rhythms. His habit of stretching individual note values and inserting gratuitous little crescendos and diminuendos becomes as distressing as his unwillingness to hold to a given tempo. These traits are especially obtrusive in the slow movement and finale (which follows here without a pause), the latter so labored and fussed over that it has no spring. The cadenzas are not attractive. In short: too much Rostropovich, too little Haydn. Angel's sound is close-up but clean, the Academy (for which Iona Brown is listed, confusingly, as "director") in fine fettle.

Philips really should reinstate Maurice Gendron's recordings of these concertos; his clean, straightforward elegance is just what is needed. In the meantime, I would be happier with the similarly elegant Pierre Fournier in this coupling (DG 139.358), even though Rudolf Baumgartner's conducting is rather lackluster and there are cuts in the first movement of the D Major. R.F.

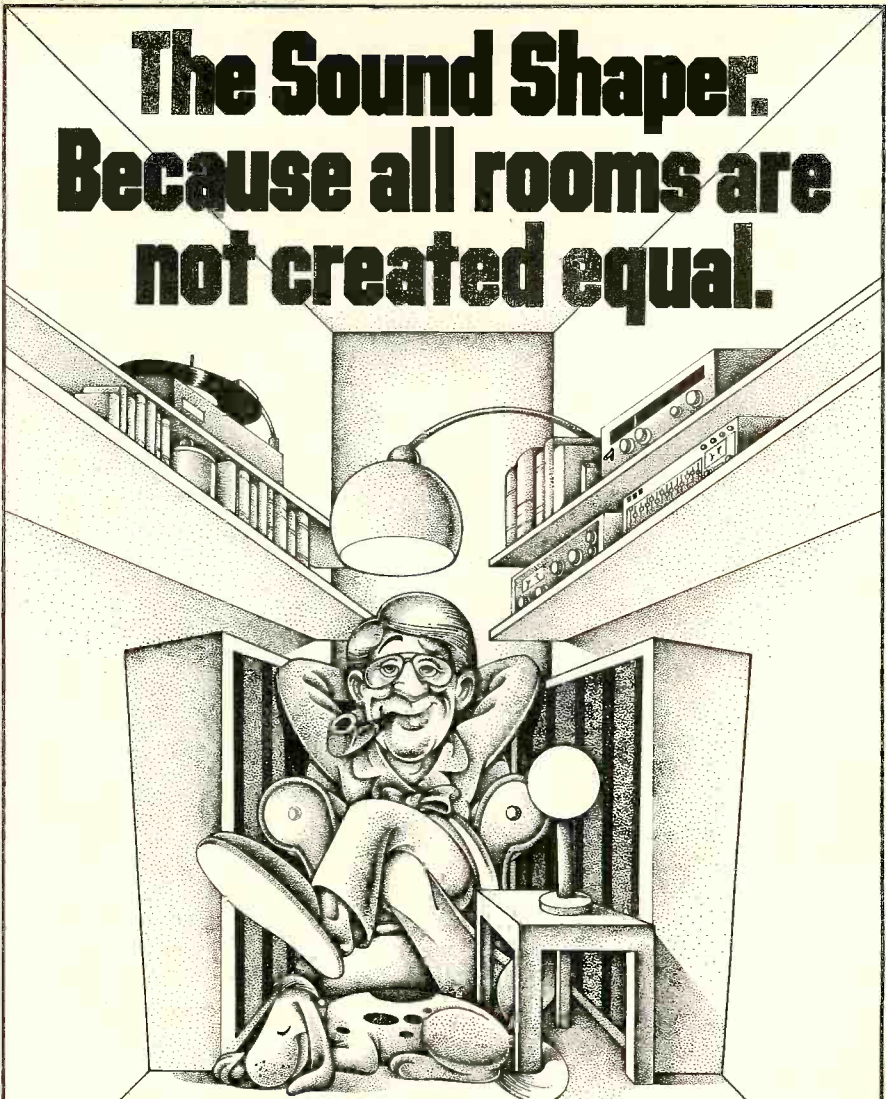
**KASTALSKY:** *Four Motets* (see RACHMANINOFF)

**MASSENET:** *Esclarmonde* (see Best of the Month, page 82)

**MENDELSSOHN:** *Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64*. **TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35*. Ruggiero Ricci (violin); Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Jean Fournet cond. LONDON SPC-21116 \$6.98.

**MENDELSSOHN:** *Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64*. **MOZART:** *Violin Concerto No. 3, in G Major (K. 216)*. Leonid Kogan (violin); Paris Conservatoire Orchestra, Constantin (Continued on page 118)

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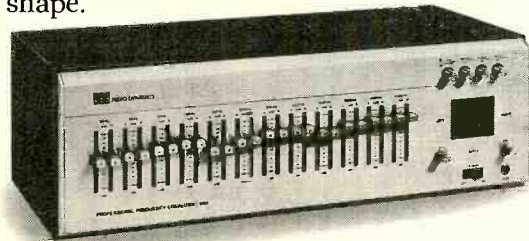
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Swedish Information Service



HUGO ALFVÉN

## The Symphonies of Sweden's Hugo Alfvén

ALTHOUGH he is known to most American listeners solely through his deservedly popular Swedish Rhapsody No. 1, *Midsommarvaka* (*Midsummer Vigil*), Hugo Alfvén (1872-1960) has not been exactly a stranger to alert and curious record buyers over here. In the Fifties Westminster issued the composer's own recording of *Midsommarvaka* as taped by Swedish Society Discofil, together with the Swedish Rhapsody No. 2 (*Dalecarlian Rhapsody*) and the ballet scores *Bergakungen* (*The Mountain King*) and *The Prodigal Son*. Even so, were one to judge Alfvén solely on the basis of these works, the inclination would be to dismiss him as an appealing but minor master of the nationalist-romantic persuasion. It is just what would probably happen to Dvořák if we knew only the Slavonic Dances, the Slavonic Rhapsodies, and the Scherzo Capriccioso.

Now, however, thanks to the enterprise of HNH Distributors of Evanston, Illinois, in making available here the 1962-1972 Swedish Society Discofil recordings of Alfvén's symphonies, listeners on this side of the Atlantic can become better acquainted with the Swedish composer. On the evidence, he was, if not a master to be ranked with Sibelius and Nielsen, still a creative figure of very considerable stature.

Alfvén's First Symphony was first performed in 1897, just three years after Carl Nielsen's first essay in the medium and two

years before Sibelius'. Like Nielsen, the twenty-four-year-old Alfvén had been a violinist in the opera orchestra, and his First Symphony, like Nielsen's, has stylistic elements in common with Dvořák and with Grieg's compatriot Johan Svendsen. The spirit of the piece, not unexpectedly, contrasts *Sturm und Drang* and the idyllic, and Swedish dance music comes winningly to the fore in the finale.

It is the Second Symphony of 1899, though, that demonstrates what Alfvén might have accomplished had he chosen to pursue this direction unrelentingly. The Second is an often fascinating and vital score, replete with boldly original touches. The Dvořák element is still present in the first movement, but in what follows Alfvén really let go, producing a slow movement of strong thematic substance and a powerful fugue-textured central section, a minor/major scherzo full of restless energy and brilliant orchestral writing, and a remarkable prelude-and-fugue finale that makes powerful use of an old Swedish chorale.

BUT Alfvén did *not* choose to pursue the path hinted at in the Second Symphony, and between it and the Third Symphony came the famous *Midsommarvaka* and the atmospherically romantic *Legend of the Skerries*, whose richness of harmonic texture suggests the influence of Richard Strauss. The Symphony No. 3, composed in Italy during the summer

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of 1907, is sunny and lightweight; the serene slow movement has a distinct Swedish folk flavor, and the scherzo is a brilliant neo-Mendelssohn affair.

In the Fourth Symphony (1918-1919), Alfvén essayed a decidedly more ambitious canvas in which Richard Straussian textures serve as tonal warp for a continuously woven symphonic narrative of idyllic and tragic love. Where Nielsen in the slow movement of his Third Symphony (1912) used an off-stage soprano-and-tenor vocalise to heighten the atmosphere, Alfvén used the device intermittently throughout his symphony in thematically functional and highly dramatic ways. The work as a whole is unified by a distinctive germinal motive.

In 1942 Alfvén completed the first movement of his most ambitious symphony, his Fifth, and the movement was performed alone as a seventieth-birthday commemoration. The remaining three movements waited another decade for completion, and the entire work was performed in Stockholm on April 30, 1952, to mark the composer's eightieth birthday. However, Alfvén was not happy with the finished product and withdrew all but the first movement. Having heard the broadcast acetates from this occasion, I rather wish he had elected to keep the fascinating *danse macabre* scherzo. This, together with the massive first movement, is death-haunted yet curiously de-

fiant music, a poignant testament of sorts whose spirit is reminiscent of Gustav Mahler.

It must be said with some regret that the symphonies of Alfvén, for all their brilliance, for all their many fine pages, are no match for those of Sibelius or Nielsen in terms of a sustained line of development or of consistently arresting and powerful substance. They are,

*On the evidence, he  
was a creative figure  
of considerable stature*

however, extremely beautiful and appealing music on their own, somewhat lesser, terms. As for the recorded performances on the five discs considered here, the readings are one and all noteworthy in their authenticity and conviction. Those of veteran conductor Nils Grevillius (1893-1970) are marred to some degree by the rather dead acoustic of the Stockholm Konserthus recording locale, but the Stig Westerberg and Leif Segerstam discs boast first-rate sonics throughout. Forced to a

choice, I would recommend the Second Symphony first, with no reservations whatever, and would supplement it with the excerpt from the Symphony No. 5. —David Hall

**ALFVÉN: Symphony No. 1, in F Minor, Op. 7.** Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Stig Westerberg cond. SWEDISH SOCIETY DISCOFIL SLT 33213 \$7.98.

**ALFVÉN: Symphony No. 2, in D Major, Op. 11.** Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Leif Segerstam cond. SWEDISH SOCIETY DISCOFIL SLT 33211 \$7.98.

**ALFVÉN: Symphony No. 3, in E-flat Major, Op. 23.** Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Nils Grevillius cond. SWEDISH SOCIETY DISCOFIL SLT 33161 \$7.98.

**ALFVÉN: Symphony No. 4, in C Minor, Op. 39 ("From the Seacoast").** Gunilla af Malmberg (soprano); Sven Erik Vikström (tenor); Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Nils Grevillius cond. SWEDISH SOCIETY DISCOFIL SLT 33186 \$7.98.

**ALFVÉN: Symphony No. 5, in A Minor, Op. 55, First Movement; A Legend of the Skerries, Op. 20.** Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Stig Westerberg cond. SWEDISH SOCIETY DISCOFIL SLT 33174 \$7.98.

(All discs may be ordered from HNH Distributors, P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204.)

Silvestri cond. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY  
CS-2111 \$6.98.

Performances: **Both good, Kogan warmer**  
Recordings: **Both good, London brighter**

There is some fine fiddling on both of these discs, but neither of them would displace a pre-existing first choice among recordings of any of the respective concertos. Ricci faces more than a half-dozen competing versions of the same coupling, including those of Heifetz, Milstein, and Stern, which offer a greater feeling of "lift" in the playing, more distinguished orchestral collaboration, and a more natural balance within the orchestra.

Kogan's Mendelssohn does have "lift" and rather more warmth than Ricci's. The 1960 sound does not show its age, but Silvestri is not as alert a partner here as in the splendid Tchaikovsky performance he and Kogan recorded at the same time (Seraphim S-60075); he lets too many details go by and actually lags behind his soloist at times. The Mozart side is a more successful collaboration, though here Kogan himself has a somewhat heavier touch than in his earlier version with Otto Ackermann. In their own right, both of these new issues are enjoyable, but the competition is too formidable. R.F.

**MOZART: Marches and Dances** (see BEE-  
THOVEN)

**MOZART: Der Schauspieldirektor (K. 486).**  
Ruth Welting (soprano), Madame Herz; Ileana Cotrubas (soprano), Mlle. Silberklang; Anthony Rolfe Johnson (tenor), Monsieur Vogelsang; Clifford Grant (bass), Monsieur Buff.

**Lo Sposo Deluso (K. 430).** Felicity Palmer (soprano), Eugenia; Ileana Cotrubas (soprano); Bettina; Anthony Rolfe Johnson (tenor), Don Asdrubale; Robert Tear (tenor), Pulcherio; Clifford Grant (bass), Bocconio. London Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 9500 011 \$7.98, © 7300 472 \$7.98.

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

Here is a worthy addition to the Mozart operatic shelf: two rather unfamiliar works spanning the period between *Die Entführung* (1782) and *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1786). *Der Schauspieldirektor* (*The Impresario*) is a one-act *Singspiel* that was composed for a courtly event on an always timely subject (the vanity and rivalries of opera singers) chosen by the emperor himself. *Lo Sposo Deluso*, for which Lorenzo da Ponte might have been the librettist, is an opera buffa that has survived only in fragments (two arias on the disc have been orchestrated by Erik Smith). By usual Mozartian standards both are minor achievements, yet they are not insignificant. Both reveal intermittent flashes of brilliant inspiration as well as anticipations of the masterpieces to come.

*Der Schauspieldirektor* has been recorded several times, but right now the only other available version is included as a filler with DG's complete *Entführung* set (2709 051). Both versions omit the connecting dialogue—a sensible solution to the problem of rendering all the music complete on one record side. Davis favors brisker pacing than does Karl Böhm on DG, but the choice is difficult between two excellent orchestral treat-



MATTEO MANUGUERRA  
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ments. The familiar overture is sparkingly performed and the singers are good in both sets. DG's Reri Grist handles Madame Herz's tricky vocal line with more assurance than Philips' Ruth Welting, but the latter realizes more of the part's comic character.

*Lo Sposo Deluso* has a soprano aria that anticipates the resolute character and the wide interval leaps of Fiordiligi's "Come scoglio" (*Così Fan Tutte*) and concludes with a delightful final ensemble. Davis again excels, and the singers, though not quite as impressive as in *Der Schauspieldirektor*, are never less than acceptable. The Italian text, however, is not handled very idiomatically. G.J.

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**MOZART: Violin Concerto No. 3, in G Major**  
(see MENDELSSOHN)

**PUCCINI: Tosca.** Galina Vishnevskaya (soprano), Tosca; Franco Bonisolli (tenor), Cavaradossi; Matteo Manuguerra (baritone), Baron Scarpia; Antonio Zerbini (bass), Angelotti; Mario Guggia (tenor), Spoletta; Guido Mazzini (baritone), Sacristan; Domenico Versaci Medici (bass), Sciarrone; Giacomo Bertasi (bass), Jailer. Orchestre National de France, Mstislav Rostropovich cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 087 two discs \$15.96.

Performance: **Uneven**  
Recording: **Not the best**

If I read the annotations correctly, conductor Rostropovich and the musical score of Puccini's *Tosca* met for the first time professionally on the occasion of this recording. This tells us a great deal about the way things are done nowadays, and the results, under the circumstances, are not surprising. This is a reading without any serious mishaps, to be sure, but it is no more than a "reading." Act I, in particular, is uninteresting: the orchestral playing lacks incisiveness and dynamic contrasts, the Angelotti episodes come and go without sufficient tension, and the extended love duet sounds tentative. The second and third acts move more convincingly, but suffer from such eccentricities as the unduly slow pacing of the crucial *andante sostenuto* passage preparatory to the stabbing (Act II) and the exaggerated downward slide the strings are persuaded to do in the slow march that leads to Cavaradossi's execution.

Among the singers, the standout is baritone Matteo Manuguerra, an absolutely first-rate Scarpia, who succeeds in a vital characterization through expressive use of his malleable voice without resorting to theatrical effects. Galina Vishnevskaya is a superb singing actress with many individual touches that make dramatic sense; her delivery of the famous line "*E avanti a lui tremava tutta Roma*" is refreshingly original. Vocally, alas, she is erratic: her finely shaded, inward "*Vissi d'arte*" and other thoughtful passages are offset by extended stretches of shrill and off-pitch singing above the staff. Franco Bonisolli is also inconsistent in matters of style and intonation, though he can modulate his voice sensitively at times and the material he works with is of solid timbre and good extension.

Except for the Sacristan, who is only adequate, the supporting singers are good, including the unnamed boy soprano in the third act. The engineering, however, is disappointing in its overall low-level sound and ineffective placement of the orchestra in the total perspective. *G.J.*

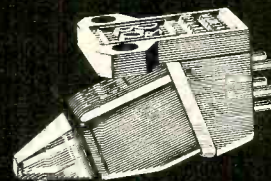
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Performance: **Highly polished**  
Recording: **Good**

This is the third recording within the last few years of the fifteen choral chants from old Slavic liturgy that Sergei Rachmaninoff composed and published in 1915 under the title  
(Continued on page 126)

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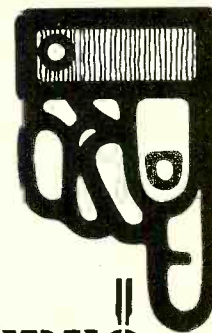
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*Vespers*. These are solemn, frequently austere, a *cappella* hymns, most of them moving at a slow tempo, but the expert harmonization enhances the melodies with a richness that triumphs over the threat of monotony.

The English choir under Wyn Morris' skillful leadership offers singing of great beauty, rich-toned and sensitively shaded. The overall effect is that of a perfectly drilled and highly refined ensemble. A previous and deservedly much-praised version by the USSR Chorus under Aleksander Sveshnikov (Melodiya/Angel 4124) approaches the music in a similarly cultivated manner but with more drama, stressing wider dynamic contrasts and more vigorous and incisive attacks. Significantly, the English choir cannot muster those cavernous Russian basses who make the low organ-

point ending (B-flat) of Chant No. 5 so unforgettable. And yet I have nothing but admiration for the superb singing displayed in the Philips set, not only by the chorus but by the two fine soloists as well.

The Melodiya set spreads out the *Vespers* rather ungenerously over four sides. Philips devotes the fourth side to four motets by Alexander Kastalsky, Rachmaninoff's older contemporary. A pioneer in Russian choral music, Kastalsky is interesting for his fusion of liturgical and folk elements. Admittedly, this is somewhat specialized repertoire, yet I think that many lovers of singing will be delighted and moved by it. G.J.

**RAVEL: *Le Tombeau de Couperin*** (see STRAVINSKY)

**SCARLATTI** (tr. Williams): *Sonatas in E Major* (L. 23), *A Major* (L. 238), *A Minor* (L. 429), *A Major* (L. 485), *D Minor* (L. 108), and *D Major* (orig. C Major, L. 104). **VILLA-LOBOS: *Five Preludes***. John Williams (guitar). COLUMBIA M 34198 \$6.98, © MT 34198 \$7.98.

Performance: **Outstanding Villa-Lobos**  
Recording: **Fine**

This is one of those records with the wrong side up. The Villa-Lobos preludes, exquisite, idiomatic, superbly played guitar music, are the stellar attraction. The idea of playing Scarlatti sonatas on the guitar is appealing in principle—Scarlatti was influenced by Spanish guitar music—but not too successful in practice. The most basic problem is range. The Scarlatti sonatas make striking use of the crisp, plucked, treble sound of the harpsichord. On the guitar, basically a sweet, baritone instrument, everything sounds an octave low—an octave *too* low for the music—and all of Williams' wizardry cannot put it right. E.S.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**SCHUMANN: *Concerto Without Orchestra*** (*Sonata No. 3, in F Minor*), *Op. 14*. **SCRIBIN: *Sonata No. 5, Op. 53***. Vladimir Horowitz (piano). RCA ARL1-1766 \$6.98.

Performance: **Monumental**  
Recording: **Live?**

**SCHUMANN: *Concerto Without Orchestra*** (*Sonata No. 3, in F Minor*), *Op. 14; Impromptus on a Theme by Clara Wieck, Op. 5*. Jean-Philippe Collard (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY S 2081 \$6.98.

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

Schumann's so-called "Concerto Without Orchestra"—a title bestowed by a nervous publisher—is probably best known for the tempo directions in the finale. Schumann marked the movement "As fast as possible," and then, on at least two later occasions, the performer is told to speed up! Actually, however, these directions are more than an amusing gaffe or exaggeration. The striving toward the superhuman, the sublime, is extraordinary in this work. No wonder pianists have been frightened off in droves. Even Horowitz used to play only the slow movement—a set of variations on a theme of Clara Schumann. He is quite right, however, when he says that these pages are much more beautiful within the context of the whole sonata.

Horowitz performed this monumental work on his 1975-1976 tour, and this recording—paired with the even more off-beat Scriabin sonata—is billed as a "celebration" of that tour. But the circumstances of the recordings go unmentioned, and, except for the rather uniformly mediocre quality of the piano sound, there is no evidence that they are real live "live" recordings (as opposed to invited-audience performances for the express purposes of recording). Nevertheless, the desired result is achieved: music of exceptional interest in recorded performances of great expressive impact.

Jean-Philippe Collard is a young French pianist who tackles Schumann with energy and skill but without the depth that Horowitz brings. There are many good things to be said about Collard's recording. The pairing is more apropos (Schumann's early and charming

(Continued on page 128)



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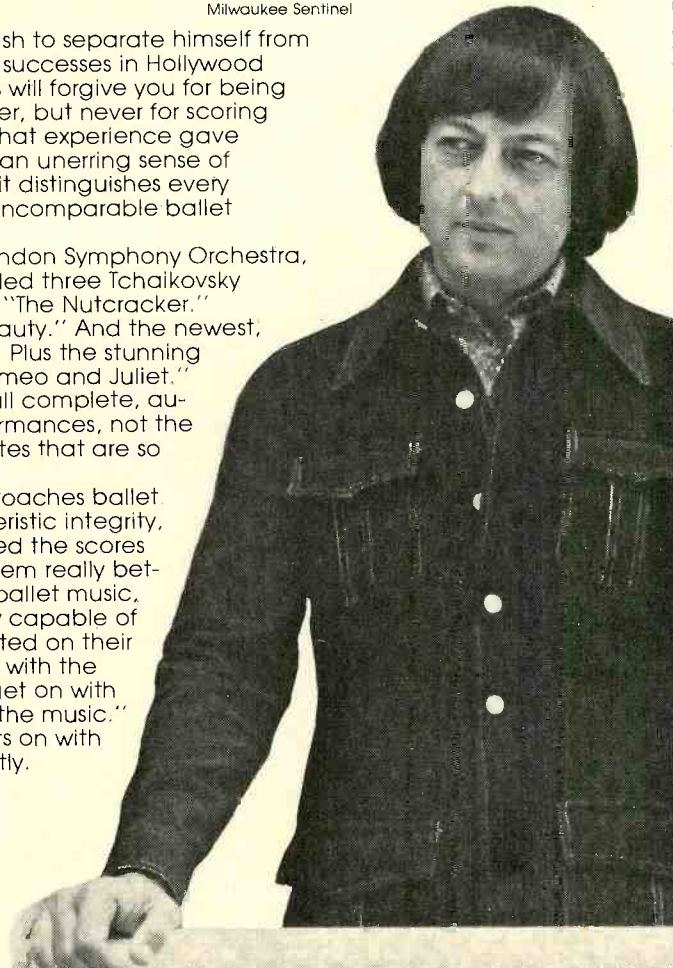
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homage to his future wife makes a nice addendum to the sonata's slow movement), and the quality of the piano sound (Pathé-Marconi in origin) is a good deal better than RCA's. Colard's version of the scherzo is livelier and perhaps more convincing than Horowitz's, and the young Frenchman's version of the slow movement is most attractive. Even his finale, although more straightforward and less romantic, has real sweep. But the comparison of the first movements gives all the advantage to Horowitz. Horowitz makes the music sing, breathe, laugh, and cry, and that's what it must do to live. E.S.

SCRIABIN: *Sonata No. 5, Op. 53* (see SCHUMANN)

### RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

STRAVINSKY: *Divertimento, Suite from "Le Baiser de la Fée"; Suite Italienne from "Pulcinella" after Pergolesi; Duo Concertant.* Itzhak Perlman (violin); Bruno Canino (piano). ANGEL S-37115 \$6.98.

STRAVINSKY: *Suite d'après des Thèmes, Fragments et Morceaux de Giambattista Pergolesi; Variation d'Apollon; Berceuse and Scherzo from "The Firebird"; Chanson Russe from "Mavra"; Ballad from "Le Baiser de la Fée; Danse Russe from "Petrouchka."* Eudice Shapiro (violin); Ralph Berkowitz (piano). CRYSTAL S302 \$6.98.

Performances: **Good to excellent**  
Recordings: **Angel superior**

It comes as a surprise that Stravinsky wrote so much solo violin music. In fact, most of it is in the form of arrangements, either written by Stravinsky himself or sanctioned by him. Much of this music was created for a famous series of performances and tours in the 1930's with the American violinist Samuel Dushkin. But Stravinsky made an arrangement for violin and piano of music from *Pulcinella* as early as 1925 for the violinist Paul Kochanski. It is this suite, not the more elaborate *Suite Italienne*, that has been recorded—presumably for the first time—by Eudice Shapiro. The *Variation d'Apollon* from the Balanchine ballet was arranged by Joseph Szigeti with the composer's blessing. The other four pieces on Miss Shapiro's record are Stravinsky-Dushkin collaborations. Eudice Shapiro had a long and successful collaboration with Stravinsky in Los Angeles, and, although she is not as well known elsewhere as she might be, Stravinsky's admiration for her playing was obviously well founded. These are attractive performances which show Stravinsky at his most appealing.

It is somewhat unfortunate that Miss Shapiro's recording arrived in tandem with Itzhak Perlman's. Perlman's playing is superb, his repertoire larger in scale and more "serious" (and more attractively recorded). The *Duo Concertant*, the only original work Stravinsky composed for the medium, is a serious, lyrical, somewhat labored work that almost accomplishes something in Perlman's performance. The *Divertimento*—the music is from the ballet *Le Baiser de la Fée*, which is itself a take-off on themes of Tchaikovsky—comes off dangerously close to old-fashioned salon-music schmaltz. And the *Suite Italienne*—Pergolesi in the Dushkin version—emerges as a large-scale work, the most attractive on the record. All of this is immensely well played

(Continued on page 130)

STEREO REVIEW

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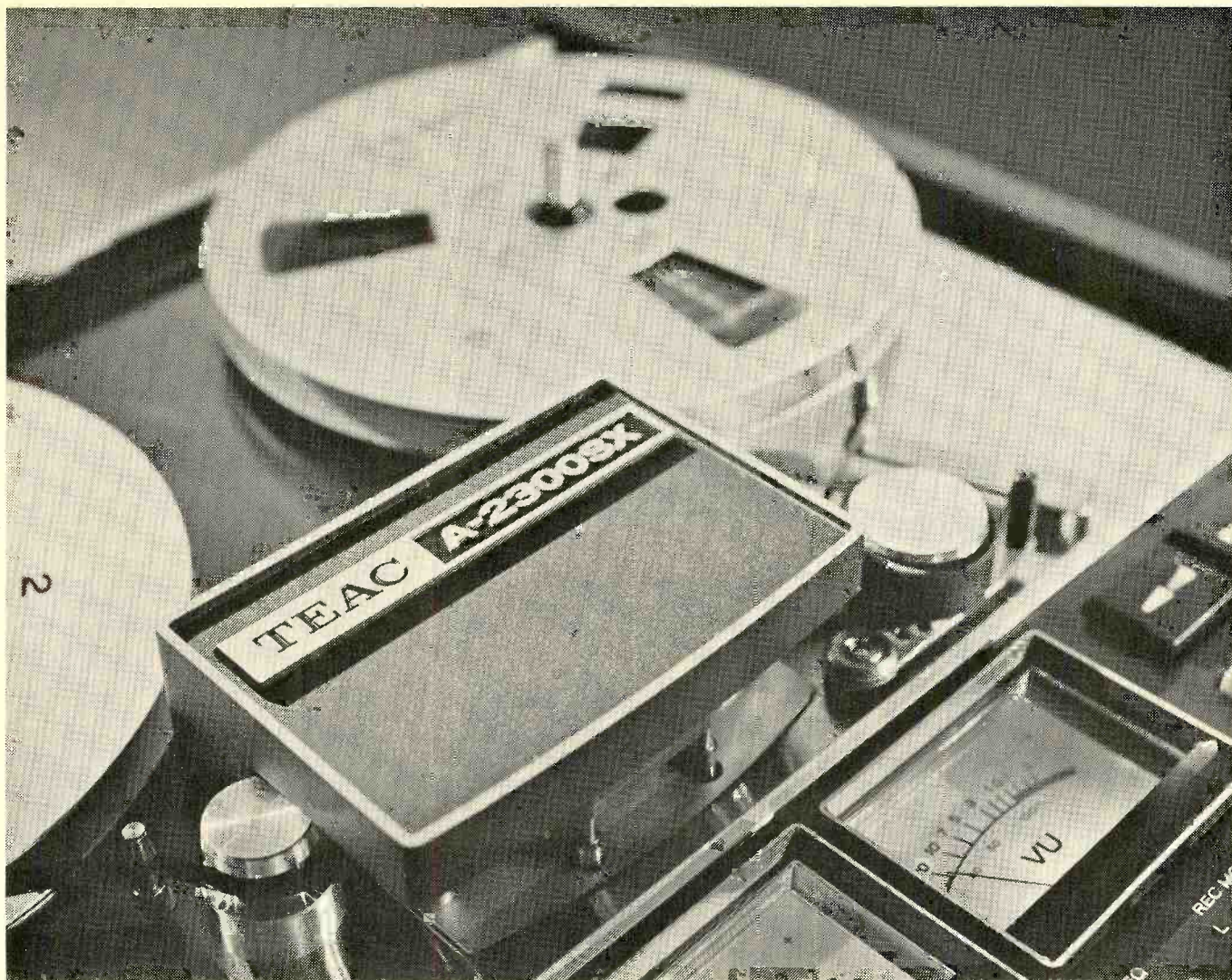
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### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STRAVINSKY: *Three Movements from Petrouchka*. RAVEL: *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. Alexis Weissenberg (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS-2114 \$6.98.

Performance: **Brilliant**  
Recording: **Brittle**

*Petrouchka* started out as a work for piano and orchestra, and even in its final, balletic form the piano plays an important role. So it was not really farfetched that, in 1922, Stravinsky made a set of piano pieces from the score (for Artur Rubinstein, who, I believe, never performed it). The hard-edged qualities of Stravinsky's imagination are particularly strong in this performance. The *Petrouchka* we know and love is overlaid with a rich Rimsky-like orchestration, but there's none of that here; the bones are laid bare in this brilliant, biting, ironic performance.

*Le Tombeau de Couperin* has a similar history in reverse. It started out as a piano work and ended up as an orchestral suite. The composer's orchestration lends a softness and a beauty that must be coaxed out of the piano version. Weissenberg, however, is the neo-Classicist *par excellence*, and it is this side of Ravel—high culture, homage to the great past, wit and clarity, individuality tempered by good taste and a certain *sang-froid*—that is emphasized here. E.S.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TALLIS: *Motets*. *O Nata lux de lumine; Gaude gloriosa; Ecce tempus idoneum; Loquebantur variis linguis; Spem in alium; If ye love me; Hear the voice and prayer; Lamentations I*. The Clerkes of Oxenford, David Wulstan cond. SERAPHIM S 60256 \$3.98.

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

Ranging from the simple but disarming "*O Nata lux de lumine*" to the intricate sonorities of the forty-voice motet "*Spem in alium*," this disc presents the splendors of Thomas

Tallis as no previous record has done. The ravishing music contrasts full-bodied choral sounds with a long, sinuous tracery peculiar to the early English Renaissance. Also very English are the all but excruciating cross-relations that endow the sweet triadic sound with a surprising bite.

The women singers here have been carefully trained to sound like boys, and the overall sound of the Clerkes is clear and serene, a quality intensified by the ambiance of the Merton College Chapel, Oxford, and beautifully caught by the recording engineers. David Wulstan moves the music along with well-chosen tempos and articulates the highly wrought lines in such a way that the imitative writing is clearly heard. This in turn lends the music a compositional tightness that is rarely heard in performance. The magnificence of this music and the exquisite performance so accurately caught on this disc will surely put Tallis on the map as an outstanding early Renaissance choral composer. S.L.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35* (see MENDELSSOHN)

VILLA-LOBOS: *Five Preludes* (see SCARLATTI)

VIVALDI: *The Seasons* (see Best of the Month, page 81)

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

VIVALDI: *Twelve Concertos, Op. 7*. Salvatore Accardo (violin); Heinz Holliger (oboe); I Musici. PHILIPS 6700 100 two discs \$15.96.

Performance: **Electric**  
Recording: **Sharp**

Like so many of my colleagues, I enjoyed an initial enthusiasm and delight in the concertos of Vivaldi and then became so glutted with them that the very name of the composer evoked black thoughts and, on occasion, bad language. But Vivaldi is not to be escaped, and in my recent listening, admittedly forced, I have come to realize that it was not the composer I disliked but rather the many bad performances to which I had been subjected. Vivaldi's music, with its unquenchable drive and verve, requires technical perfection and, above all, an almost exaggerated rhythmic vi-

tality. Certainly one of the finest ensembles playing today with those qualities is I Musici.

There is at the present time a strong trend to reinstate old instruments for the performance of early music. When in the hands of knowledgeable and fine musicians, the old instruments are, of course, ideal. But there will always be fine ensembles that prefer and will continue to play modern instruments. Unfortunately, purists often turn their noses up at them and forget that their message is a valid one and, at times, stronger than the waves emitted by the old-instrument outfits. I Musici have built up a tradition in their performances of Baroque music, and they doggedly stick to the instruments they know and play superbly. Through the years they have gradually evolved a musically effective style for this repertoire, and the fruits of that effort come out in their full glory in this recording of Vivaldi's Op. 7. The group's tone is rich and vibrant, technically they are spot on, their ensemble is superb, and, above all, they have that rhythmic vitality so necessary for the music. They are also blessed with a top-drawer virtuoso, violinist Salvatore Accardo, whose technique is modern, to be sure, but who also has a sense of style that renders his playing clean and articulate. We never have to worry about Romantic mannerisms here, but we can still enjoy Romantic lyricism within the bonds of Baroque taste. In this album we are also fortunate to have Heinz Holliger turn in exciting performances of the two oboe concertos.

As for Vivaldi, there are some arid moments of sequences and formula, but there are more moments of sheer animal excitement and lyric beauty. As was the case with I Musici's earlier recording of the master's Opp. 11 and 12, we can revel in the music and judge it for what it is. This recording should serve to return errant Vivaldi lovers to the fold. S.L.

**COLLECTIONS**

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**LUCIANO PAVAROTTI: O Holy Night.**  
*Adam: O Holy Night. Stradella: Pietà Signore.*  
*Franck: Panis Angelicus. Mercadante: Parola Quinta. Schubert: Ave Maria. Yon: Gesù Bambino. Bach-Gounod: Ave Maria. Schubert (arr. Melichar): Mille cherubini in coro. Bizet: Agnus Dei. Berlioz: Requiem: Sanctus. Wade: Adeste Fidelis.* Luciano Pavarotti (tenor); Wandsworth Boys' Choir and London Voices; National Philharmonic Orchestra, Kurt Herbert Adler cond. LONDON OS 26437 \$6.98.

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

As Pavarotti's voice matures, it is becoming a bit darker and heavier, but his ability to express feeling remains unchanged. Although he rises to almost operatic passion in some of the selections here, such as Mercadante's *Parola Quinta*, he can still fine his voice down for the tenderness required by the lullaby *Mille cherubini in coro*. The eleven selections on this well-planned album provide variety of mood, and some unfamiliar numbers are interspersed among the old favorites. Pavarotti sings them all with great sincerity. Vocal support by the Wandsworth Boys' Choir and London Voices and accompaniment by the National Philharmonic provide a suitable background.

So few of the items on the album are actually associated with Christmas that it might be

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tor; Publisher: Edgar W. Hopper, One Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016; Editor: William Anderson, One Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016; Managing Editor: William Livingstone, One Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016. 7. Owner: Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, One Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016; Ziff Corporation, One Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. 8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: None.

titled "Pavarotti in Favorite Sacred Songs." Still, his performance of Adolphe Adam's *O Holy Night* so powerfully evokes the season that it makes me smell pine needles, incense, and burning candles. The album is like a particularly beautiful Christmas card that will give pleasure all year long. My urge to sing along throughout was all but irresistible.

William Livingstone

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1. Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors and Counter Sales	44,971	52,458
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RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TO DRIVE THE COLD WINTER AWAY.

Anon: *Branle de l'Official; Pavane, Good King Wenceslas; The Dressed Ship; Staines Morris; Here we come a-wassailing; Green Garters; Fandango; Edi beo thu; Salterello; Alle (psal-lite cum) luya; Rosa das rosas; Ductia; As I lay; La Manfredina; All hail to the days; I saw three ships; God rest you merry gentlemen. Praetorius: Tanz der Bauern und Tanz der Buaerinnen; Feuertanz; Schreittanz; Die Windmühle; Dorftanz; Schiffertanz; Tanz der Fischer; Aufmarsch. Dowland: Captain Digo-rie Piper's Galliard; King of Denmark's Gal-liard. Sothcott: Fanfare. St. George's Can-zona, John Sothcott cond. CRD 1019 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).*

Performance: **Charming**  
Recording: **True**

Choosing a program of early music requires knowledge, skill, and taste, for without these qualities there can result an aimless procession of one-minute pieces that will bore any listener through sheer diffusiveness. Two concepts will work: music centered around a particular composer or place, and music centered around an intriguing theme. "To Drive the Cold Winter Away" belongs to the latter class and is conceived as a "fireside presentation" of music to dispell the dolors of winter. The subheadings, which break up the sequence, include "Entry of the Minstrels and Waits," "Festivities in the Tavern," "A Medieval Holiday," "Festivities at the Manor," and "To Entertain a King." The overall results are utterly charming, and one can put the record on for a session of varied fun. The program consists of mostly anonymous and traditional works ranging from the thirteenth to the early seventeenth centuries. Original instruments are used, and the sound is extremely folksy with the use of sharp percussion and drone basses. The singing is done in natural voice. Here, then, is a feast of early music programmed for the listener, not the scholar. We need more records like this, to delight rather than to teach.

S.L.

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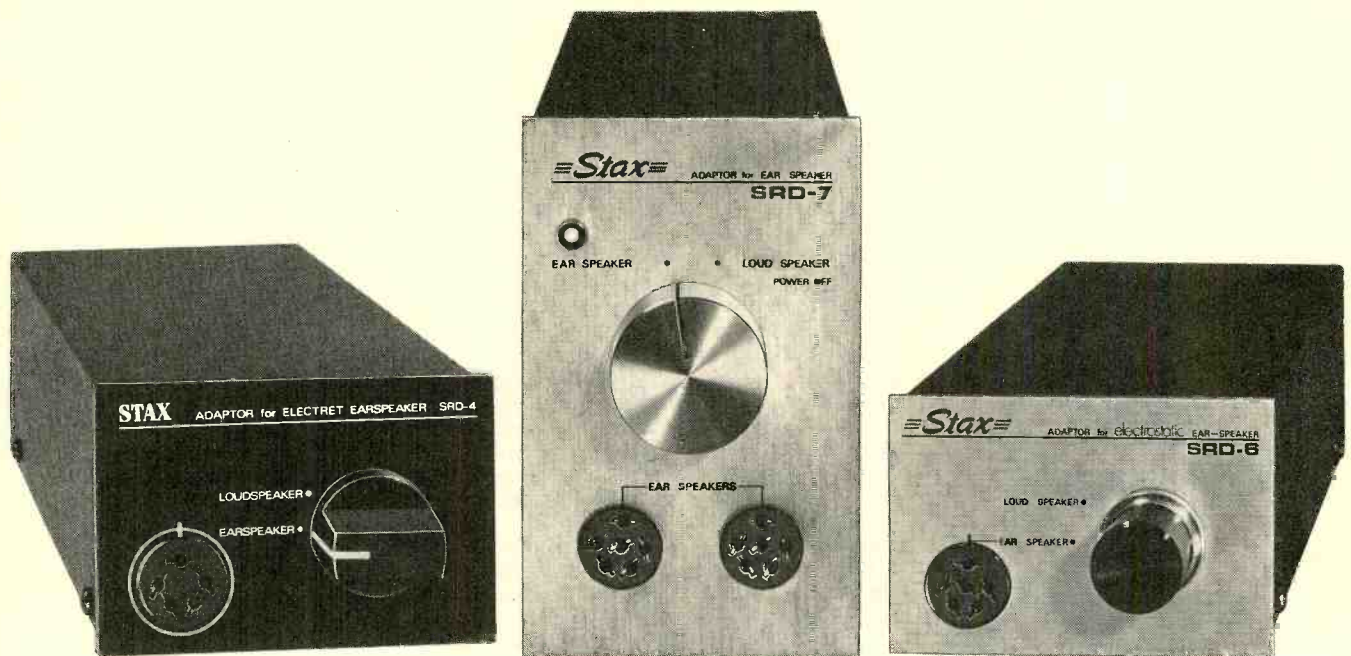
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## Introducing the Staff . . .

When a personal opinion, particularly a publicly expressed one, grates on our nerves, one of the commoner responses is to ask, either under or at the top of our voices, just who that so-and-so thinks he or she is. The question is asked of STEREO REVIEW with respect to our regular contributors and staff many times each month, and in this column we endeavor to supply the answers. —Ed.



Contributing Editor

# Lincoln Perry

I WAS taught great respect for things; it was much less clear how *people* were to be treated. It seemed almost a law of nature that records be handled by the edges only, but it was much harder to get a hold on human nature. Finger oil, I was told at an early age, corrodes and destroys discs. Good Lord, what happens when *people* touch each other? The I/Thou dichotomy continues to baffle me.

It gradually became clear that folks were not like the wonderfully pure and rational Heathkits I assembled as a youth. No instruction manual with sequential steps, no way to stick a voltmeter in here or there to find the trouble. I discovered drawing as a way of creating and controlling worlds of my own. Anthropomorphized animals populated my societies; they were static and orderly like things, but they behaved like us humans, building things and fighting each other. They were fleshed out considerably when Walt Kelly appeared as the patron saint of my childhood. Here was a handle on humanity! I never questioned the reality of his beautifully drawn characters, and in fact I con-

tinue to meet and befriend the Pogo Possums and Albert Alligators of this world.

In high school I found that powerful antagonists, teachers and the like, could be made ridiculous in clandestine caricatures. I could have my voodoo revenge armed with pencil pins, but the magic didn't work very well without an audience. So I was doomed to hurl cartoon spleen obsessively and impotently at such favorite villains as LBJ and RMN without much effect, despite occasional publication in my college paper, the *Columbia Spectator*.

Constantly doodling in my classes at Columbia, I would have to decipher profusely illustrated notebooks at test time. Each semester my resolve to take coherent notes was shaken as little maniacal-looking people crept into the margins and eventually laid claim to entire pages. My education was also tempered by the student strikes of the late Sixties. Was it my great respect for things that made the sight of expensive telephone equipment being ripped out of the floor of college president Grayson Kirk's office (finger oil on Ma Bell!) seem more shocking than the injustice to persons that was supposedly being protested?

However, intuitively sensing that the old I/Thou split could be mediated through the visual arts, I began to paint pictures of people interacting. To finance my graduate study in painting I dragged a portfolio of caricatures all over hell and half of Madison Avenue. My naive expectations seemed immediately exceeded when I sold a spot illustration to *Life* magazine. Leapin' lizards, all that money for two hours' work! Reality dashed my dreams of the easy existence, for *Life* died with the next issue. I was lucky enough to land in the office of Borys Patchowsky, Art Director for this magazine, who kindly advised me not to show my nervousness ("Art directors don't like anxiety . . ."), and a very warm and enjoyable relationship with the folks at STEREO REVIEW was born.

I HAVE been spared the freezing artist's garget thanks to my illustrations and a job teaching painting at the University of New Hampshire at Durham. But more than once I've found icicles hanging from the faucet in my kitchen. It mysteriously manages to be colder inside than out, and one needs a propane torch to get a glass of water. Apart from that, all is snug, safe, and sound up here in the boondocks—provisionally, of course, given the fact that we're surrounded by volatility in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, with nuclear bombs galore at the Navy and Air Force bases and an atomic reactor to be built nearby. I remember the concentric circles around Times Square telling us suburbanites how quickly we would be destroyed by a nuclear explosion, but those nagging doubts somehow don't bother me here.

In the meantime, I continue to mull over the difference between things and people, drawings of life and life itself. Incidentally, in case there is some doubt as to my *musical* credentials, I've been known to play a favorite record devotedly until everyone around me is ready to destroy it with greasy finger oil. —Lincoln Perry

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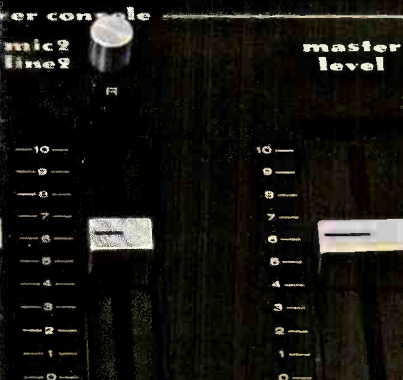
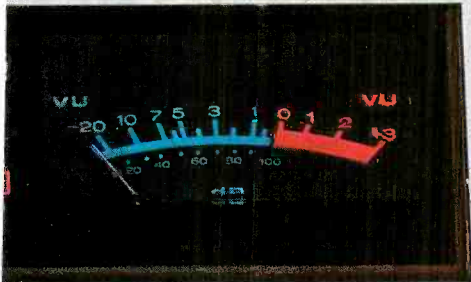
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