

MAGNAVISION:
A USER'S REPORT

APRIL 1979 • \$1.25

Stereo Review®

IN STORE FOR 1979: NEW PRODUCTS AT THE JAPAN AUDIO FAIR

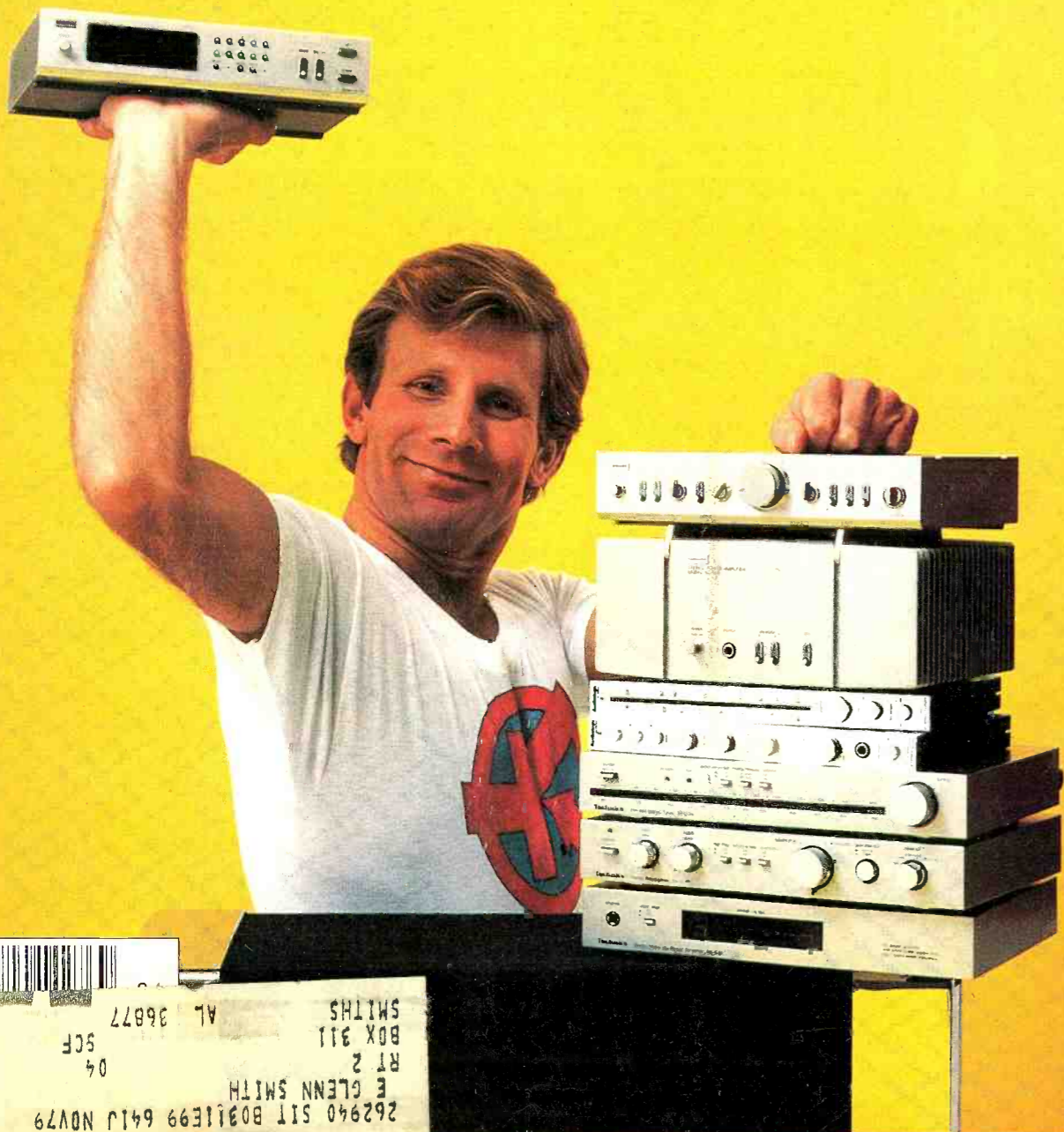
A LITTLE TALK WITH FRANK ZAPPA • BEE GEES RETROSPECTIVE

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS: ADS Model 10 Acoustic Dimension Synthesizer

Gale GS401A Speaker System • Harman Kardon hk670 Receiver

Phase Linear Model 700 Series Two Power Amplifier • Revox B790 Record Player

REVERSING A TREND: THE NEW MAXISOUND MINICOMPONENTS



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AND SO IS THE FIGHT ABOUT TUNERS.

At one time the struggle between amplifiers was won by the amp that had the most muscle. And the tuner that brought in the most stations also brought in the most acclaim.

Today, there's one series of amplifiers whose technology has put it in a class by itself. And now, with Pioneer's new TX 9800 tuner it's met its match.

While other tuners offer features that just sound great, every feature in Pioneer's TX 9800 helps to produce great sound.

Unlike ordinary tuners that are content with ordinary circuitry, the TX 9800 has a new Quadrature Discriminator Transformer that works with Pioneer's exclusive PA 3001-A integrated circuit to reduce distortion to 0.05% at 1 KHz and raise the signal-to-noise ratio to 83 dB. Whew!

Many of today's tuners use sophisticated low pass filters to remove the 19 KHz pilot signal that's present in every stereo broadcast. But while they're effective in removing the pilot signal, they're also effective in removing some of the music.

The TX 9800 has Automatic Pilot Canceling Circuitry that makes sure every part of the music is heard all of the time. And that distortion is veritably unheard of.

The crowning achievement of most tuners today is the sensitivity of their front end. And though it's much to their credit to bring in weak stations, it means nothing unless they can do it without spurious noise or other interference.

The TX 9800's front end has three dual gate MOSFET's that work with our five gang variable capacitor to give you an FM sensitivity of 8.8 dBf. And also make sure that your favorite music is not disturbed by what's playing elsewhere on the dial.



SIGNAL STRENGTH AND CENTER TUNING METERS FOR A DRIFT-FREE PERFORMANCE.



INSTANTANEOUS FLUROSCAN METERING THAT LETS YOU WATCH EVERY PERFORMANCE WHILE YOU HEAR IT.

And while most tuners today give you one band width for all FM stations, the TX 9800 gives you two. For both AM and FM. A wide band that lets you bring in strong stations loud and clear. And a narrow one that finds even the weakest station on a crowded dial and brings it in without any interference.

All told, these scientific innovations sound mighty impressive. But they wouldn't sound like much without an even more impressive tuning system.

The TX 9800 has a specially designed Quartz Sampling Lock Tuning System, that fortunately, is a lot easier to operate than pronounce.

Simply rotate the tuning dial to your desired station. When the station is tuned exactly right a "tune" light comes on. By releasing the tuning dial you automatically lock onto that broadcast. And automatically eliminate FM drift.

By now, it must be obvious that the same thinking that went into Pioneer's new amplifiers has also gone into their new line of tuners.

So just as Pioneer ended the class struggle between amps, they won the fight between tuners. With a technical knockout.

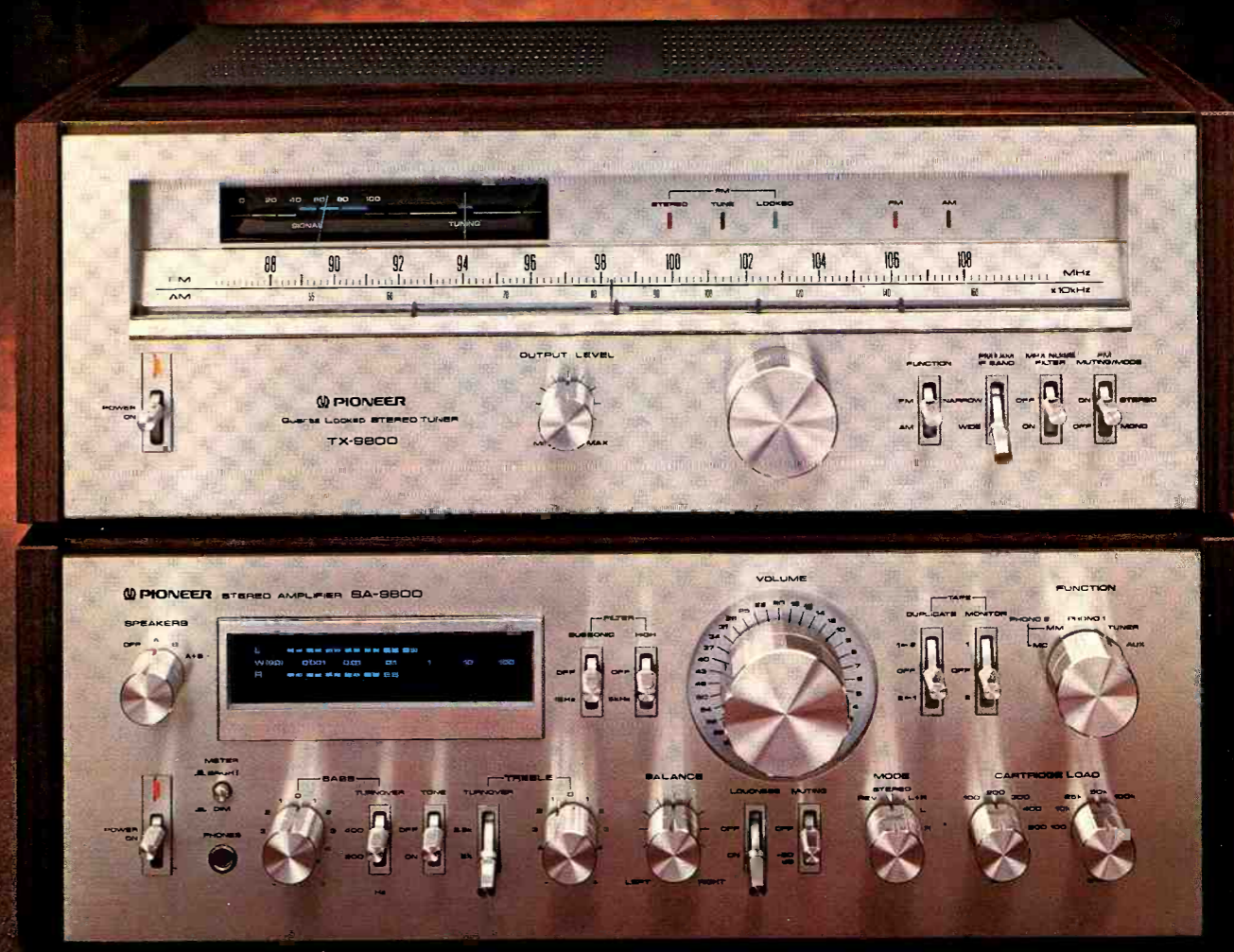
PIONEER

We bring it back alive.

©1978 U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp.

High Fidelity Components,

85 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074.

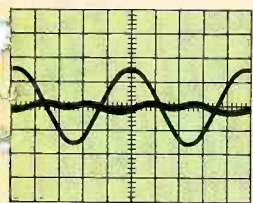


THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE CLASSES IS OVER.

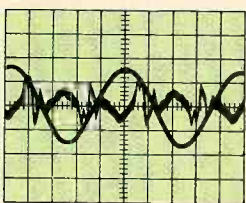
For years people have clashed over which amplifiers are best. Class A or Class B. Expensive Non-switching Class A amplifiers are known to offer the lowest levels of distortion. At the same time, they also offer the highest operating temperatures. And while Switching Class B amplifiers increase efficiency, they also increase distortion.

So if you're not paying through the nose for a heat-producing Class A amplifier, you'll be paying through the ear for a distortion-producing Class B.

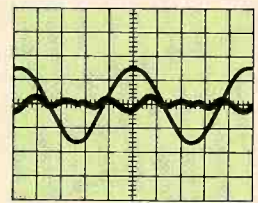
At Pioneer, we believe most of today's Class A and Class B amplifiers are pretty much in the same class. The class below Pioneer's SA 9800.



CLASS A AMPLIFIER.
LEAST DISTORTION
BUT MOST HEAT.



CLASS B AMPLIFIER.
MOST DISTORTION
BUT LESS HEAT.



SA-9800.
LESS DISTORTION, LESS
HEAT, AND MORE POWER.

Pioneer's Non-switching SA 9800 offers the efficiency found in the finest Class B amplifiers. With a distortion level found in

the finest Class A. An unheard of 0.005% at 10-20,000 hertz.

And while you're certain to find conventional power transistors in most conventional amplifiers, you won't find them in the SA 9800. You'll find specially developed RET (Ring Emitter Transistors) transistors that greatly increase frequency response. So instead of getting distortion at high frequencies, you get clean clear sound. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Instead of slow-to-react VU meters that give you average readings or more sophisticated LED's that give you limited resolution, the SA 9800 offers a Fluroscan metering system that is so fast and so precise it instantaneously follows every peak in the power to make sure you're never bothered by overload or clipping distortion.

And while most amplifiers try to impress you with all the things they do, the SA 9800 can even impress you with the one thing it simply doesn't do. It doesn't add anything to the sound it reproduces. An impressive 110dB S/N ratio is proof of it.

While these features alone are enough to outclass most popular amplifiers, the SA 9800 also offers features like DC phono and equalizer sections and DC flat and power amps that eliminate phase and transient distortion. Cartridge load selectors that let you get the most out of every cartridge. And independent left and right channel power supplies.

Obviously, it took revolutionary technology to build the SA 9800. But the same technology and skillful engineering that went into the SA 9800 also goes into every amplifier in Pioneer's new series.

At Pioneer, we're certain that others will soon be entering the class of 9800. And though they all may be built along similar lines, in terms of value Pioneer will always be in a class by itself.

PIONEER®
We bring it back alive.

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85 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074.



INTRODUCING THE EMPIRE EDR.9 PHONO CARTRIDGE. IT SOUNDS AS GOOD ON A RECORD AS IT DOES ON PAPER.

It was inevitable . . .

With all the rapid developments being made in today's high fidelity technology, the tremendous advance in audible performance in Empire's new EDR.9 phono cartridge was bound to happen. And bound to come from Empire, as we have been designing and manufacturing the finest phono cartridges for over 18 years.

Until now, all phono cartridges were designed in the lab to achieve certain engineering characteristics and requirements. These lab characteristics and requirements took priority over actual listening tests because it was considered more important that the cartridges "measure right" or "test right"—so almost everyone was satisfied.

Empire's EDR.9 (for Extended Dynamic Response) has broken with this tradition, and is the first phono cartridge that not only meets the highest technological and design specifications—but also our

demanding listening tests—on an equal basis. In effect, it bridges the gap between the ideal blueprint and the actual sound.

The EDR.9 utilizes an L. A. C. (Large Area Contact) 0.9 stylus based upon—and named after—E. I. A. Standard RS-238B. This new design, resulting in a smaller radius and larger contact area, has a pressure index of 0.9, an improvement of almost six times the typical elliptical stylus and four times over the newest designs recently introduced by several other cartridge manufacturers. The result is that less pressure is applied to the vulnerable record groove, at the same time extending the bandwidth—including the important overtones and harmonic details.

In addition, Empire's exclusive, patented 3-Element Double Damped stylus assembly acts as an equalizer. This eliminates the high "Q" mechanical resonances typical of other stylus assemblies, producing a flatter response, and lessening wear and tear on the record groove.

We could go into more technical detail, describing pole rods that are laminated, rather than just one piece, so as to reduce losses in the magnetic structure, resulting in flatter high frequency response with less distortion. Or how the EDR.9 weighs one gram less than previous Empire phono cartridges, making it a perfect match for today's advanced low mass tonearms.

But more important, as the EDR.9 cartridge represents a new approach to cartridge design, we ask that you consider it in a slightly different way as well. Send for our free technical brochure on the EDR.9, and then visit your audio dealer and listen. Don't go by specs alone.

That's because the new Empire EDR.9 is the first phono cartridge that not only meets the highest technological and design specifications—but also our demanding listening tests.

Empire Scientific Corp. **EMPIRE**
Garden City, N.Y. 11530

FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW

Stereo Review®

APRIL 1979 • VOLUME 42 • NUMBER 4

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COVER: Design by Borys Patchowsky; photo by Bruce Pendleton. See page 77.

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The first high-technology record cleaner was the Discwasher System. Four scientific revisions later, the Discwasher is literally years ahead of all other devices.

WITH PRIORITY TECHNOLOGY:

Discwasher D3 Fluid is proven by lab tests to be the safest active cleaning fluid for record care. But a good fluid is not enough. The Discwasher System is also a *precision removal system* that uses capillary action with slanted micro-fibers to lift dust, dirt, and dissolved debris off the record, rather than pushing them around like "dry" and "constant humidity" methods. The real dimensions of record care are safety plus integrated function.

WITH PROVEN VALUE:

The uniquely styled Discwasher handle is constructed of hand-rubbed walnut which will long outlast "plastic wonders". This easily held handle is lightweight because of an integral cavity which conveniently holds the D3 Fluid bottle. A special brush to clean the directional-fiber Discwasher pad is included without charge, and also fits inside the handle cavity.

WITH GENUINE SATISFACTION:


Only Discwasher gives immediate performance, long-term record safety, pleasing physical characteristics and a price that hasn't changed in five years.

Seek out the Discwasher System, by name. Only Discwasher delivers technology, value and satisfaction.

CIRCLE NO. 15 ON READER SERVICE CARD

YOUR RECORDS DESERVE SUPERIOR CARE: SEEK OUT THE DISCWASHER® SYSTEM



 **discwasher, inc.**
Columbia, MO 65201



Stereo Review BULLETIN

Edited by William Livingstone

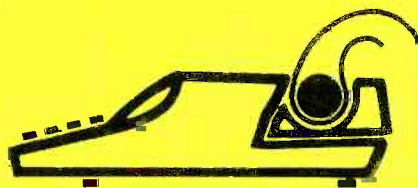
• **STEREO AM DEVELOPMENTS:** The Federal Communications Commission is now in the final stage of preparation for a ruling on AM stereo standards. Having issued a "Notice of Proposed Rulemaking" in October, the Commission will now make a final decision on which of the five proposed systems will be adopted and issue a standard and order probably sometime later this year. Meanwhile, the Institute of High Fidelity, in reply to the notice of rulemaking, has requested that the FCC designate a date before which stereo AM transmissions could not legally begin. The intent of the request is to "allow for an orderly marketplace transition" from current mono AM products to components equipped for stereo AM. The Institute suggests that a reasonable effective date would be six months from the date that a final FCC order is issued.

• **GOOD NEWS FOR GREASERS:** Michael McKean (Lenny) and David Lander (Squiggy), who were responsible (as the Credibility Gap) for the classic underground comedy album "A Great Gift Idea" and have since thrilled millions as the second bananas on Laverne and Shirley, are returning to vinyl. Casablanca Records has signed the duo (as Lenny and the Squigtones), and their debut album, recorded in live performance at the Roxy in Hollywood, is expected momentarily.

• **TANDBERG IS ALIVE AND WELL** and living in Oslo, contrary to rumors of imminent financial collapse that have circulated in the audio industry. Although the company did pass through a period of financial difficulty in the past several months, the high-fidelity and educational divisions have been recapitalized and given long-term loan guarantees by the Norwegian government. According to company spokesmen, U.S. delivery, sales, and service activities will continue uninterrupted.

• **BEETHOVEN'S FIDELIO**, with Bruno Walter conducting and Kirsten Flagstad as Leonore, has been released as the sixth in the Metropolitan Opera's series of Historic Broadcast Recordings. The recording is taken from the Texaco/Metropolitan Opera broadcast of February 22, 1941, and includes René Maison as Florestan and Alexander Kipnis as Rocco. It is available only as a gift to contributors of \$125 or more to the Metropolitan Opera Fund, Box 930, New York, N.Y. 10023.

• **STRAIGHT-LINE TRACKING (SLT) TURNTABLES:** Aiwa will introduce a servo-driven unit at the June 1979 Chicago Consumer Electronics Show. Mitsubishi has shown a number of units in Japan that are now being "seriously considered" for introduction here in June. Pioneer notes that it has no plans to bring in its highly sophisticated multiple-servo-controlled SLT table under its own name, but both Series 20 and Phase Linear are reportedly interested in importing the unit. Meanwhile, CEC, a major supplier of turntables and arms to the European market, has developed a line of five SLT turntables, including two fully automatic (but not multiplay) units, which have already been shown to European buyers. CEC's plans for U.S. distribution are not definite.



Stereo Review

BULLETIN

Edited by William Livingstone

● UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU to send your comments on radio-frequency interference (RFI) by CB, ham radio, and other interference sources to the FCC. The agency has issued a "Notice of Inquiry" on the subject, inviting public commentary; the move stems from the more than 200,000 complaints of RFI received by the FCC in the past three years. Among other points, the inquiry will examine the questions of whether audio manufacturers should be required to build in special anti-RFI shielding and filtering (with its potential expense and deleterious effect on listening quality) and whether any responsibility should fall on the sources of interference. To make your viewpoint known, write to: Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 1919 "M" Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20554, mentioning General Docket 78-369, by May 1, 1979. For a letter to be considered as a formal comment, an original and five copies must be submitted; an informal comment, however, may be in any form.

● METAL-PARTICLE TAPE STANDARDS reached the tentative-agreement stage at a conference of the Electronic Industries Association of Japan (EIAJ). Although the participants have been asked not to discuss the technical particulars of the agreement, final details are expected to be resolved at the next meeting of the conference, to be followed by a formal announcement of the standards later this spring.

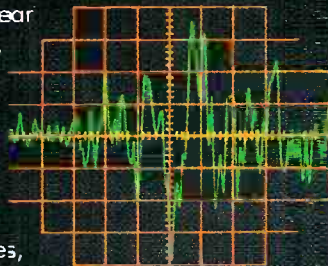
● ODD COUPLES: The Clash, the last major English punk band to reach these shores, is touring the U.S. in the company of r-&-b legend Bo Diddley. Elvis Costello, not to be outdone, has enlisted Carl (Blue Suede Shoes) Perkins as his opening act in the States. And in the songwriting department, everybody's favorite eccentric, Lou Reed, let it be known recently that he has been collaborating with, of all people, perennial contender and noted romantic Nils Lofgren.

● DIGITAL DEVELOPMENTS: Among new LP's recorded using the latest digital equipment are "Anita Kerr Does Wonders" (Century CRD-1160), an album of Stevie Wonder songs recorded using Sony's PCM-1600 digital system, and Copland's Appalachian Spring (Sound 80 Records S80-DLR-101), performed by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and recorded on the 3M digital system. Four studios now have 3M recorders, and both CBS and Polygram have acquired Sony systems.

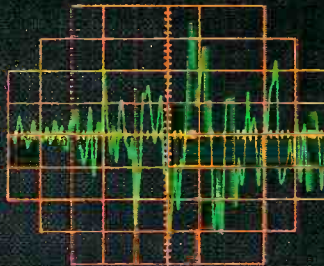
● THERE IS NOTHING LIKE A DAME! For extraordinary contributions to the British Commonwealth, Queen Elizabeth has made singers Joan Sutherland ("Ah! Non giunge") and Gracie Fields (The Biggest Aspidistra in the World) Dame Commanders of the Order of the British Empire. On the honors list along with Dame Joan and Dame Gracie was conductor Charles Mackerras, who was knighted and is now Sir Charles. Pop singer Olivia Newton-John was made an Officer of the OBE. When she learned of it, Ms. Newton-John said, "The Queen's generosity... left me speechless, thrilled, and delighted." Her current MCA album "Totally Hot" has been certified platinum by the RIAA.

While our competitors were listening to Technics Linear Phase speakers, we introduced phase two

When Technics introduced Linear Phase speakers two years ago, we took the audio world by surprise. And why not. After all, Technics Linear Phase speakers were the first speakers to actually show you waveform fidelity. Not simply with tone bursts and sine waves, but by actually comparing the waveforms of live musical instruments



Piano Waveform.



Piano Waveform reproduced by SB-7070.

to the output waveforms of our Linear Phase speakers. Now with the 3-way SB-6060 and 4-way SB-7070 (shown below), Technics takes you to phase two. Because compared to our first Linear Phase speakers both give you wider frequency extension, flatter frequency response and even more phase linearity, which means even better waveform fidelity.

How did we make such good speakers even better? We started with BASS (Basic Acoustic Simulation System), an IBM 370-based interactive computer system. With it, Technics engineers can do what they only dreamed of doing in the past: Calculate the sound pressure and distortion characteristics of transducers without physically building and measuring countless prototypes.

Next we took these computer-derived drivers and combined them with Technics' unique phase-controlling crossover network. And of course we staggered the drivers to align their acoustic centers precisely.

It's easy to see the result of all this technology. Just compare the waveforms. On the left is a waveform of a live piano. On the right, the piano as reproduced by the SB-7070. That's waveform fidelity.

Listen to the 4-way SB-7070. What you'll hear is its smooth transition between low, midrange and high frequencies. Then notice the bass response. It's deep and tight. With much more punch, better definition and even less IM distortion than its predecessor. That's because when the upper bass

frequencies are handled by a separate driver, the woofer does a much better job at handling the lower bass frequencies.

You'll also hear vocals that are smooth and natural.

That's because the SB-7070's high-midrange driver was designed with "free edge"

construction to avoid coloration of the critical upper-midrange frequencies.

And by adding a new, smaller tweeter with improved dispersion characteristics, the SB-7070's high-end frequency response was extended to 32 kHz.

Technics 3-way SB-6060 and 4-way SB-7070. For music that sounds like it was originally played. Live.



All cabinetry is simulated wood.

Technics
Professional Series

Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



POSTPONING LIFE

In saluting the imminent arrival of the Digital Recording Era in this column in December, I observed that one of its secondary gratifications (better sound is of course the primary one) would be the explosion of new recording activity it would set off—another wholesale replacement of the classical catalog such as we witnessed in the mono-to-stereo changeover starting in the late Fifties. I should have realized that this would raise the Dread Specter of Obsolescence in some minds, and, indeed, one reader wrote to ask whether it makes any sense to buy conventional analog records now when they are going to be made obsolete in only a few years.

My answer to that question is yes, it certainly does, the principal reason being that musical history, like all other kinds, does not stand still. At the time of the changeover from 78- to 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm discs and again at the advent of stereo a great number of valuable perform-

ers and their equally valuable performances were inevitably left behind; we could not have duplicated them even had we wanted to, for many of the artists involved were past their prime and others had long since been booked into the celestial choir. It therefore seems to me that an astute collector will begin right now examining the catalog with an eye to preserving for his library those priceless analog recordings that will not be rerecorded digitally by the same artists for the two reasons just cited above. There will be no digital recordings by Callas, Schwarzkopf, Rubinstein, or Stokowski, for example, and who knows when we shall hear their likes again?

In addition, the transition from analog to digital recording is likely to prove much slower than that from, say, mono to stereo. The equipment involved is very costly and quite likely to remain so. This means that many smaller companies will not be able to afford it,

so they will continue to produce analog recordings. Larger companies are likely to proceed slowly in the digital direction not only to develop the new recording, mixing, and editing techniques required, but also to feel out what prices for the discs ought to be and where maximum market impact can be registered (record making is still, after all, a *business*). And, too, they are not likely, at first, to lavish this expensive technique on just any act that manages to make it into a studio; in many cases, the older method will be "good enough." Analog recordings may, in fact, be around long enough to inspire the creation of a whole new generation of signal processors to deal with their pesky noise problems.

Finally, although this digital/analog prodigy has just slipped onto our turntables, it would appear that its technological successor, the completely digital disc (digitally recorded and digitally reproduced) is right now waiting in the wings. It is therefore possible that some farsighted manufacturer may already have decided simply to skip the half-step and aim for the complete transition instead—two obsolescences for the price of one. The question then becomes, "Shall I refuse to buy analog or digital/analog recordings until the digital/digital disc reaches the market?" My answer to that would have to be another question: "How long do you want to postpone your life?"

THE speed of technological change in this century has not only been extraordinarily fast but is accelerating. Though it is true that many—perhaps most—people have welcomed the changes with open arms, others have responded by tightening their grip on the buggy whip. I have a friend who postponed buying black-and-white TV "because color is coming." Color TV is here, but now he's waiting for the perfection of the large-screen projection system. I find that as incomprehensible as Auntie Mame would, and I'm sure she won't mind my paraphrase: "Life is a concert, and some poor souls are sitting there with ear muffs on."

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

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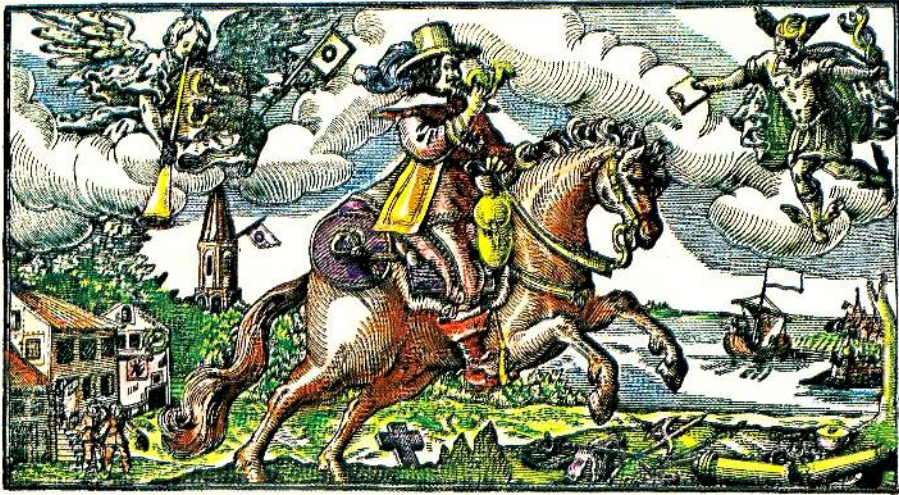
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Beverly Sills

● I enjoyed February's cover story on Beverly Sills, and I think STEREO REVIEW could not have chosen a more deserving recipient for the 1979 Certificate of Merit award. Miss Sills' name is a household word in an affectionate way that has not been equaled by any other opera star for years. The general public, for the most part uninformed about opera and partially deaf from constant exposure to rock, at least knows *who* she is and thinks of her kindly. I doubt, however, that she has brought many previously uninterested listeners to opera or that, as William Livingstone put it, "since the death of Enrico Caruso, no singer of any nationality—not even Maria Callas—has brought opera more to the consciousness of the general American public than Beverly Sills."

In 1934 the popular Metropolitan Opera star Grace Moore made a phenomenally successful film, *One Night of Love*, in which she performed generous chunks of *La Traviata*, *Carmen*, and *Madama Butterfly*. It was one of the top ten money-makers of the year, won a special Academy Award, and made Miss Moore a top box-office star and a figure of popular adulation in a way that was possible only for film stars in the Thirties. For the next few years she balanced her career between the movies, opera, and concerts, then concentrated on opera exclusively. The vast popularity of *One Night of Love* brought many to see her live performances, for in those days, of course, there was no TV and recordings were few and far between. In the years it was in circulation—it was reissued again and again—*One Night of Love* must have been seen by millions of viewers in this country and around the world. It still turns up on TV now and again, and it can be recommended for the best use of operatic music in a film to date.

Besides Grace Moore, other singers popularized opera to an extent unequalled today: for instance, Nelson Eddy, Gladys Swarthout, Lily Pons, Lawrence Tibbett, and, above all, Jeanette MacDonald—a true film superstar who performed operatic music in a way the general public found interesting and exciting. Just about the first record I owned was of Jeanette singing arias from *Louise* and *Romeo and Juliet* (I still have it).

So hurray for Beverly Sills! Long may she wave, and best of luck to her at the New York City Opera. But let's not forget her forerunners in the operatic-popularity sweepstakes.

WILLIAM D. HOSKING
Detroit, Mich.

As Mr. Hosking rightly points out, all that was before the days of TV. Millions may have seen, say, One Night of Love in its many turns around the circuit, but their number still wouldn't match that of those who caught Miss Sills in just one of her many Tonight Show appearances.

● STEREO REVIEW showed outstanding taste in giving the 1978 Certificate of Merit to Beverly Sills. I have been a Sills devotee for almost ten years and own almost everything she's recorded. I particularly cherish an experience several years ago when, after seeing and hearing her Lucia at the New York City Opera, I followed a crowd of well wishers into her dressing room. Miss Sills had just finished a demanding performance, but this lovely lady stood and greeted everyone—smiling, chatting, signing autographs, joking, and spreading warmth and good cheer all around.

Beverly Sills will be missed as a performer, but how marvelous that she will be in a position to carry opera into new and promising directions in the future. She is a national treasure, and I am so pleased that STEREO REVIEW recognized it before she reached her "golden years."

JOE BRONSTEIN
Rochester, N.Y.

● Thank you for William Livingstone's interview with Beverly Sills in the February issue. The article certainly made Miss Sills appear to be a breath of fresh air of the sort the world needs so very often. As someone once said, and as has been many times repeated, it is in giving that we receive. Perhaps that is the secret of Miss Sills' success in her life and work.

BR. EUGENE PATENAUDE
Rock Hill, S.C.

● The Certificate of Merit awarded to Beverly Sills was certainly much deserved. The

world of music has been well served by Miss Sills for many years; may good luck and much success be hers in her new and challenging career as director of the New York City Opera.

GERALDINE SEGAL
Randallstown, Md.

Consistent Chicago

● Yes, those of us who are fans of Chicago sometimes feel annoyed with the sameness of their music (which Rick Mitz complained about in his February review of "Hot Streets"), but we also enjoy the consistency of their sound. Whether it's chocolate ice cream or pizza or music, if you like it, why change it?

ANTHONY BELLINO
Bayshore, N.Y.

Opinions of Clash

● After reading Steve Simels' review of "Give 'Em Enough Rope" by the Clash (February issue), I went out and purchased the album. I expected to hear a band in "the early Who/Kinks tradition" who would remind me of Mott the Hoople (Steve's other comparison). What they sounded like was the New York Dolls. The lyrics are buried by poor production and a frenetic rhythm section. Tell Steve that I'm old enough to remember the Sixties too, so I gave the album to my little sister.

TOM RUZZA
Unita, N.Y.

Mr. Simels replies: Well, at least one member of the family will be dancing.

More Digital!

● Being an optimist by nature, but usually a dissatisfied one, I ventured \$15 to audition the Telarc digital-master recording by the Cleveland Symphonic Winds described by David Hall in a January review. Though not a fan of wind-band music, I must say *bravissimo!* for a very significant improvement in musical reproduction. I hope the big record companies out there are listening: *Give me more!*

J. M. RATHBUN
Cumberland, Wis.

Installing Cartridges

● I have a problem I am sure is shared by others who, like me, enjoy reading about and studying product specifications, test reports, and new developments in the audio field. I read about new turntables with no wow, no flutter, quartz-locked speed control, direct drive, little strobe lights, special heavy platters (or special light ones), etc. So I spend lots of perfectly good dollars to buy one of them, and I love it.

I read about, study, and audition the fantastic new cartridges with millinewtons of force, tracking angles adjusted within minutes of a degree, dual magnets, moving magnets, moving coils, sapphire cantilevers, exotic stylus configurations, antistatic gizmos, great channel separation and response curves... even tiny dust brooms on 'em! And once again I

(Continued on page 13)

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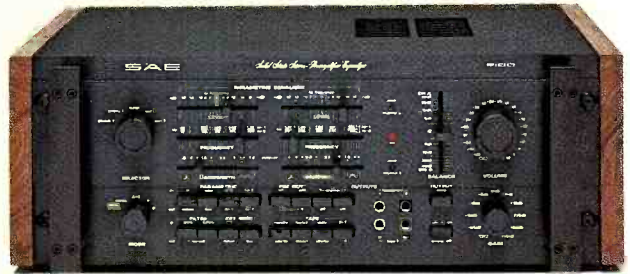
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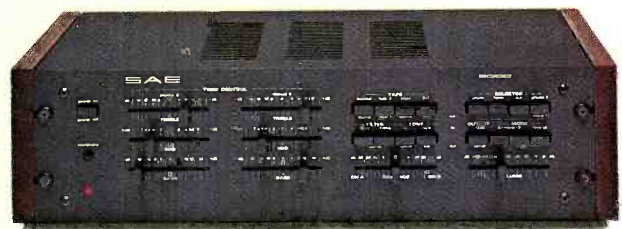
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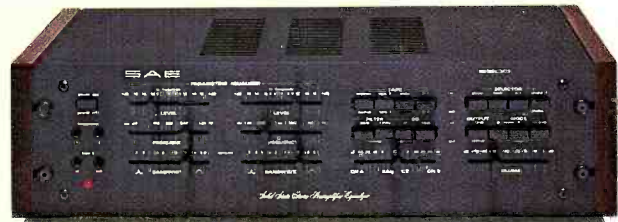
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spend lots of money for one, complete with broom and a nifty box, and I love it.

But—and here's the rub—mounting my lovely new cartridge on my lovely new turntable is something else entirely! The cartridge manufacturer has kindly included an assortment of shims, clips, and absurd little nuts and bolts. The little devil's even got its own charts! I am not a total klutz—I can usually open a can of soup without getting any of it on me—but *this* is a job for a watchmaker. Finally I get the little bugger bolted down, and then come the nagging questions: Is it on straight? Did I use the right shim? Are the connecting terminals too large or is it that the clips are too small? Did I ruin the whole thing when I forced the former onto the latter? Will that big drop of sweat that fell from my forehead and soaked into the cartridge hurt anything?

You get the idea—the big question is whether we audiophiles are to be forever cast adrift in a sea of technology with only our midget screwdrivers for comfort. I wish some audio manufacturer would take an engineer off the project of trying to fit a half-dozen LED's onto their latest model and put him to work designing an integral cartridge and head shell, or else a head shell that's genuinely universal. In the meantime, I wish STEREO REVIEW would do an article about mounting these little devils.

DAN SNYDER
Fredericktown, Ohio

Technical Director Larry Klein replies: We are in complete sympathy with Mr. Snyder's complaint. The average audio consumer may have to go through the travail of cartridge mounting every year or so; the STEREO REVIEW Technical Department goes through it many times a month. There are, in fact, several integral cartridge/head-shells currently on the market that will fit the four-pin bayonet sockets at the ends of several Japanese- and European-made tone arms, but a universal cartridge-mount/pin arrangement is a long way off. There are some encouraging signs, however: cartridges are getting smaller and lighter, and such miniaturization should make it easier to design some sort of universal mount—assuming that the cartridge manufacturers have the will to do so. I promise to bring the question up at the next meeting of the IHF Standards Committee, but I doubt that I'll be able to report any happy news about this in the very near future.

Ginger Baker

● In the February "Letters," Charles Popple asked whatever happened to Ginger Baker. According to Logan and Woffinden's *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Rock*, Baker gave up his Air Force wings to pursue a growing interest in African music. In 1971 he bought a plot of land in Akeja, Nigeria, on which to build his own recording studio. For a couple of years he performed with Fela Ransome-Kuti and briefly led a Nigerian band, Salt, quitting in January 1973 when he opened the studio for business. (Paul McCartney and Wings' "Band on the Run" was recorded there later in that year.) In 1974 Baker formed a group called the Baker Gurvitz Army with Adrian and Paul Gurvitz. They made three albums: "Baker Gurvitz Army" (Janus/Vertigo), "Elysian Encounter" (Atco/Mountain), and "Hearts on Fire" (Atco/Mountain). In

January 1977 Sire Records released an album titled "Eleven Sides of Baker."

Now here's my own "whatever happened to . . ." query: Does anyone know what became of Giles, Giles, and Fripp (of "The Cheerful Insanity of Giles, Giles, and Fripp")? Hmm . . . I didn't think so.

DANNY C. LAIL
Shelby, N.C.

Pop "Standards"

● In replying to a letter (December issue) that questioned the aptness of calling Marvin Hamlisch, instead of John Williams, "Hollywood's first real superstar composer," the

Editor said that Hamlisch is a superstar because he writes "standards." To me, "standard" means normal or ordinary, and that automatically puts Williams in the limelight, because he is anything but an ordinary and normal composer; he is absolutely brilliant.

KURT KOINER
New York, N.Y.

The Editor replies: Mr. Koiner appears not to be familiar with the use of the word "standard" as it refers to popular songs. The Random House dictionary puts it this way: "a popular song that is held in continuing esteem and is commonly used as the basis of jazz arrangements or improvisations." Think of something like, say, Tea for Two as a good ex-

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ample of a "standard." Such songs make their composers a lot of money, of course, and one can hardly blame Mr. Hamlich for wanting to write some. I didn't say, by the way, that he actually had written any yet—it's too early to tell—only that his ambition to do so makes his film music call attention to itself and stand out in a way that John Williams' does not.

Springsteen Rethought

● When Steve Simels reviewed Bruce Springsteen's "Darkness on the Edge of Town" last August, he said, "Ask me again about this one in six months." So, the stipulated period being up, I'm asking: what do you think of it now, Steve?

DENNIS LOCKARD
Hughesville, Pa.

Mr. Simels replies: On the one hand, I find it overly mannered, impossibly histrionic, unnecessarily stark, and in the case of one cut, Streets of Fire, all but unlistenable. On the other hand, any album that contains Badlands, Candy's Room, Racing in the Street, and Promised Land is certainly not all bad.

Southside Johnny

● After buying Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes' latest album, "Hearts of Stone," and hearing them play the Rochester, New York, War Memorial, I have to write

and offer the band my compliments via STEREO REVIEW. Steve Simels said it best in his January interview with Southside Johnny: "They remain . . . the best working band in America." I haven't seen "the future of rock-and-roll," but I have seen and heard some music of the past mixed wonderfully with the present, and I certainly had a party boogying, boppin', and rockin' and rollin' with Southside Johnny. (I also really like the way La Bomba moves, and I can't neglect to mention Steve Van Zandt, whose writing, arranging, producing, singing, and guitar playing are all excellent.)

PAUL DECKER
Hilton, N.Y.

● I bought my first-ever copy of STEREO REVIEW—the January issue—because I wanted to read Steve Simels' piece on Southside Johnny. At the time I figured it would be a one-time-only thing, just that issue then never again. However, I was very pleased with the article and favorably impressed with the magazine as a whole, so I am taking out a subscription. As for Southside Johnny, he has revitalized my faith in New Jersey. Now, how about someone building rest-room facilities for the New Jersey Turnpike?

THERESE KING
Woburn, Mass.

Simon Barere

● I was happy to see the December review by Eric Salzman of an album of recordings by

the late Simon Barere; about half the titles on it used to be available on a Remington LP from the Fifties. Barere was truly a remarkable pianist, and I hope that someone will reissue his great performance of Liszt's *Spanish Rhapsody*. By the way, I suspect that the birthdate of 1869 given in the review was a misprint and that Mr. Salzman really meant it to be 1896.

DAVID ADLER
Clark, N.J.

He did indeed, and we regret the error.

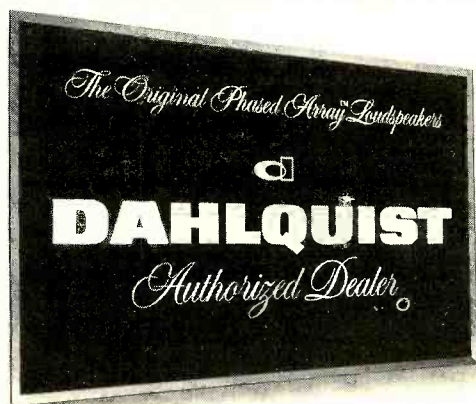
Videotaped Opera

● I suffered an unforgivable lapse of mental continuity and erased half of my videotape of the Met's *Otello*. Is there anybody out there who can dub in the Beta-X2 format and who has that production? I need from Act III, Scene 6 on—Iago has just told Cassio that he had better hide if he doesn't want to be caught by Otello (trumpets are fanfaring) and Otello is about to enter and say, "Come la ucciderò?" to Iago.

Is there any organization of [video] opera collectors? I think there might be some market for videotaped operas, and somebody—maybe the Met itself—could enter it cheaply. At least the sound fidelity would be better than my local station provides (it sounds like their compressor is on most the time).

JAMES WATKINSON
531 Warm Springs
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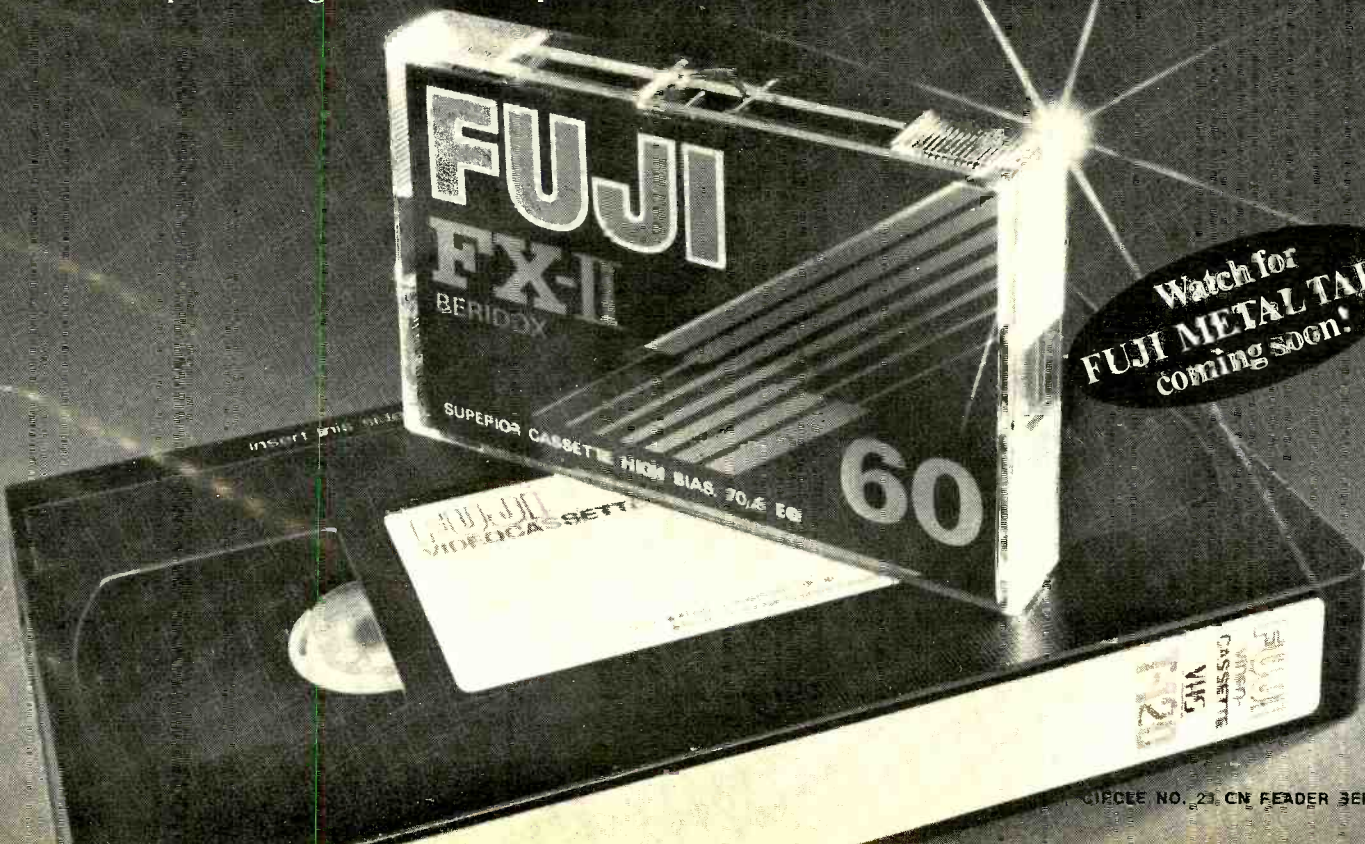
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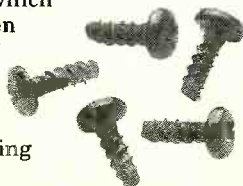
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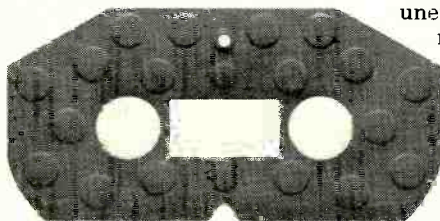
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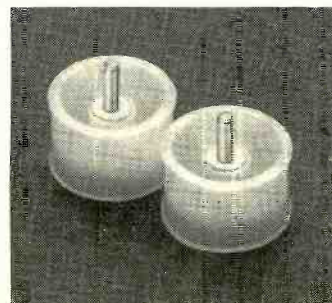
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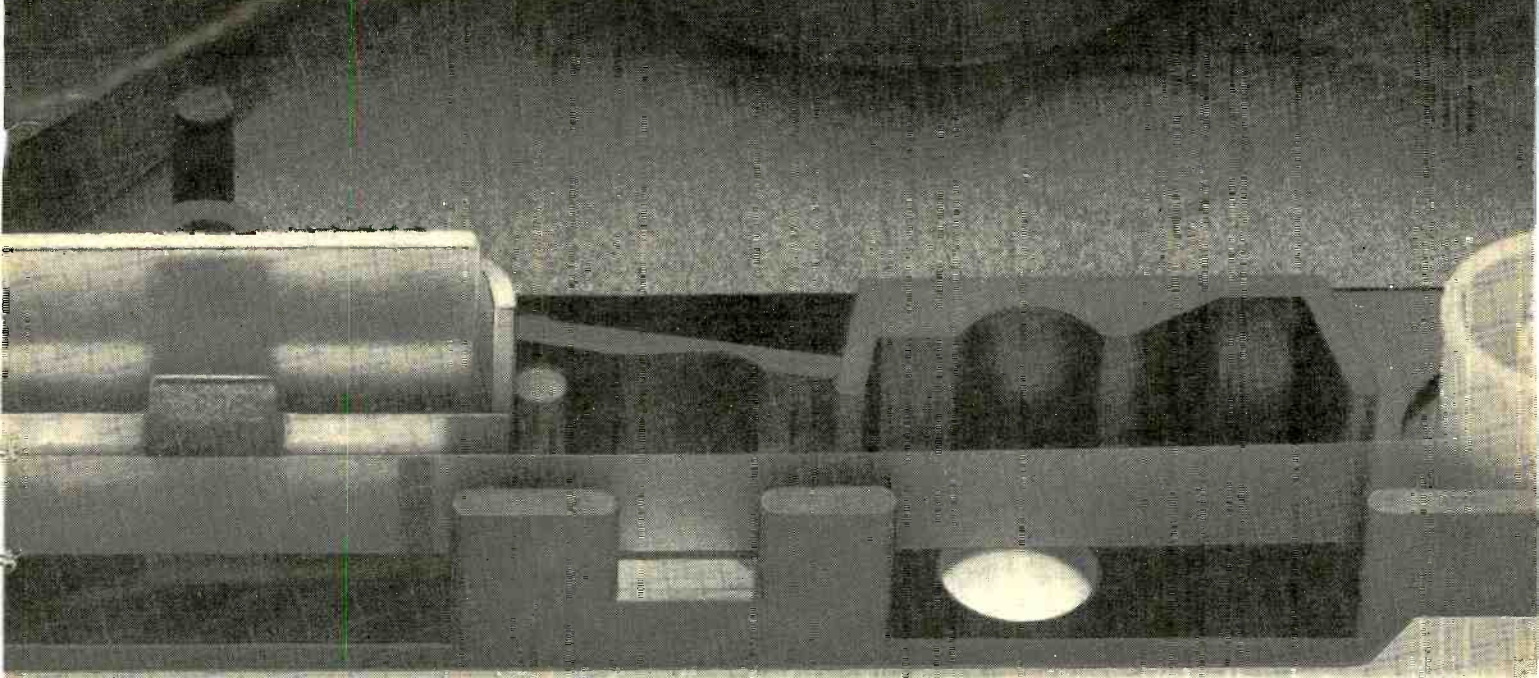


The Rollers Our Delrin rollers are tapered and flanged, so the tape won't move up and down on its path across the heads. This assures a smooth transport and prevents tape damage.

The Pins In every cassette we make, we use stainless steel roller pins to minimize friction and avert wow and flutter and channel loss. Some other manufacturers "cheat" by using plastic pins in some of their less expensive cassettes. We don't.

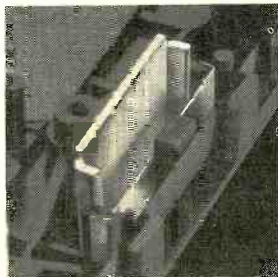


sounds better better.



The Pressure Pad

Our sophisticated pressure pad maintains tape contact at dead center on the head gap. Our interlocking pin system anchors the pad assembly to the shell and prevents lateral movement of the pad, which could affect sound quality.



The Shield We use an expensive shield to protect your recordings from stray magnetism that could mar them. Some manufacturers try to "get by" with a thinner, less expensive shield. We don't.

The Window Our tape checking window is designed to be large enough for you to see all the tape, so you can keep track of your recordings.

The Label We've even put a lot of thought into the label we put on our cassettes. Ours is made from a special non-blur quality paper. You can write on it with a felt-tip pen, a ballpoint, whatever. Its size, thickness and placement are carefully designed and executed so as not to upset the cassette's azimuth alignment.

The Inspections When it comes to quality control, TDK goes to extremes. Each cassette is subject to thousands of separate inspections. If it doesn't measure up on every one of these, we discard it. Our zeal may seem extreme, but it is this commitment

to quality which allowed us to offer the first full lifetime warranty in the cassette business—more than 10 years ago: In the unlikely event that any TDK cassette ever fails to perform due to a defect in materials or workmanship, simply return it to your local dealer or to TDK for a free replacement. It took guts to pioneer that warranty, but our cassettes have the guts—and the reliability—to back it up.

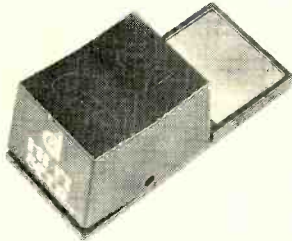
A Machine for All Your Machines Now that we've told you how we move our tape, let us remind you about our tape. SA, the first non-chrome high bias cassette, is the reference tape most quality manufacturers use to align their decks before they leave the factory. It's also the number one-selling high bias cassette in America. For critical music recording, it is unsurpassed. AD is the normal bias tape with the "hot high end." It requires no special bias setting, which is why it is the best cassette for use in your car, where highs are

hard to come by, as well as at home. Whatever your recording needs, TDK makes a tape that offers the ultimate in sound quality. But it's our super precision shell and mechanism that make sure all that sound gets from our tape to your ears, year after year. TDK Electronics Corp., Garden City, NY 11530



 **TDK**
The machine for your machine.

New Products latest audio equipment and accessories



Discwasher's Latest Audio Accessories

□ Discwasher has introduced several new audio accessories, among them a flashlight-mirror assembly called the Hi-Fi Seer Audio Equipment Illuminator that is intended for examining the rear panels of shelf- or rack-mounted components. The battery-powered device illuminates in three directions and has a positive-locking on/off switch. Dimensions are approximately 2½ x 1 x 1 inch. Price: \$7. The DiscKeeper is a walnut record rack that uses a compression bar to hold records in a vertical position. The compression bar pulls forward to allow the user to flip through the albums. Wall-mounting hardware is included, and DiscKeepers can also be stacked, installed back-to-back, or rack mounted. Price: \$65 each. The Model DC-1 pad cleaner (shown) stores in the handle of Discwasher record-care pads and is used to clean the pile of the pad fabric. The device is included with all Discwasher pads, or it may be purchased separately for 69¢.

Circle 120 on reader service card



LT Sound Time Delay Is Both Mechanical And Electronic

□ LT Sound's TAD-4 is a reverberation synthesizer that uses dual delay elements—an electronic charge-coupled device and a mechanical spring-type transducer—to achieve delay times of up to 240 milliseconds. According to LT, the combined use of a spring to simulate multiple short-term reflections and an active device for longer, concert-hall reverberation provides an unusually accurate re-creation of live listening conditions. Specifications for the TAD-4 include a delay dy-

namic range of 80 dB, distortion below 0.9 per cent at 1,000 Hz, a delay range of 20 to 240 milliseconds, and a linear frequency response for the delayed output within 1.5 dB. Bandwidth of the delayed output ranges between 2.8 kHz (for a 240-millisecond delay) and 10 kHz (for a 20- to 67-millisecond delay). The TAD-4 can be used with four-channel systems, since both rear and front channels can be delayed. The front panel has direct, echo, and reverb level controls for both front and rear channels, as well as master controls for delay time, echo repeat, high-frequency rolloff, and reverb equalization. Dimensions are approximately 19 x 2 x 7½ inches. Price: \$495. More information and a recorded "soundsheet" with examples of delay effects are available for \$1 from: LT Sound, Dept. SR, P.O. Box 1061, Decatur, Ga. 30031.

Circle 121 on reader service card



Burhoe Announces New Tweeter

□ The Burhoe Acoustics "Blue" speaker is a three-way vented system utilizing a 10-inch bass driver and two inverted-dome tweeters of 1½ and 1¼ inches. The 1¼-inch unit has a proprietary "bi-radial" dome profile said to extend frequency response to 26,000 Hz within a tolerance of 2 dB. Both of the tweeters utilize magnetic fluid in their voice-coil gaps. Power-handling capability of the Blue system is 100 watts; minimum recommended amplifier power is 20 watts. Impedance is 8 ohms. Crossover frequencies are 1,000 and 2,000 Hz, with the crossover network introducing slopes of 6 dB per octave. Controls for both tweeters permit a continuous range of adjustment for the 1½-inch unit and 9 dB of adjustment for the 1¼-inch driver. Frequency response is specified as 30 to 26,000 Hz ±3 dB. Cabinet finish is walnut veneer. Dimensions are 24¼ x 14¼ x 10½ inches. Price: \$250.

Circle 122 on reader service card



A Moderate-price Single-band Expander from dbx

□ The dbx Model 1BX is a single-band linear dynamic-range expander using much the same design approach as the company's larger 3BX three-band expander. The 1BX is capable of range expansion of up to 50 per cent: that is, a 10-dB change in input level will result in up to a 15-dB change in output level, depending on the setting of the unit's front-panel expansion-ratio control. The front panel also has controls for expansion threshold (the level at which the expansion effect begins to take place), a ten-LED display to show changes in gain, a power switch and pilot lamp, a tape-monitor switch, and a PRE/POST switch that permits the user to expand source material before or after it is fed to a tape deck. Specifications for the 1BX include a transition or threshold-level range of 30 millivolts to 3 volts, a frequency response of 20 to 20,000 Hz ±0.5 dB, total harmonic and intermodulation distortion of 0.15 per cent or less, and a maximum output level of 6 volts rms. Dimensions are 11 x 3¾ x 10½ inches. Price: \$245.

Circle 123 on reader service card



Rotel Integrated Amplifier Features LED Power Metering

□ Rotel's RA-2040 integrated amplifier is a 120-watt-per-channel direct-coupled unit with a number of unusual controls and performance features. The amplifier uses a power-output circuit that automatically converts to class-A operation at output levels below 5 watts, with conventional class-AB operation at higher levels. It has three phono switch po-

(Continued on page 20)

The most powerful argument for our new receiver is not just power.



True, it's tempting to be swept up by our power.

150 watts per channel minimum RMS at 8 ohms, from 20Hz to 20kHz, with no more than 0.07% Total Harmonic Distortion, is nothing to sneeze at.

But raw power means nothing. What's important is how that power is delivered. In the case of the STR-V7, it's brought to you by Sony in a very classy package.

You get a combination of features and controls that are impressive on their own—but almost unheard of in a single machine.

To start with, we've built in a Dolby system, for decoding Dolbyized FM broadcasts.

The advantages of our tuner,

though, need no decoding. They include a normal and narrow FM IF bandwidth selector. It makes life simple for people in areas where their signals are crowded together elbow to elbow.

In our preamp section, the V7 comes equipped with a special phono EQ circuitry. Thanks to Sony's high IQ, it allows for direct connection of a low-output, moving-coil cartridge phono source. Without calling for an external step-up transformer or pre-preamp.

When you're gifted with as much power as the V7, you need a way to keep track of it. This receiver keeps tabs with two power-output meters, monitoring the power being fed to the speakers. So overload can't result from oversight.

And all that power comes from our direct coupled DC power amp. And our power is stable, thanks to a high-efficiency, high regulation toroidal-coil transformer.

There's a lot more to the STR-V7 than power. This receiver takes the best that contemporary technology has to offer, and offers it in a single machine.

Other manufacturers may have the power to bring you power. But only Sony has the power to bring you more than just power.

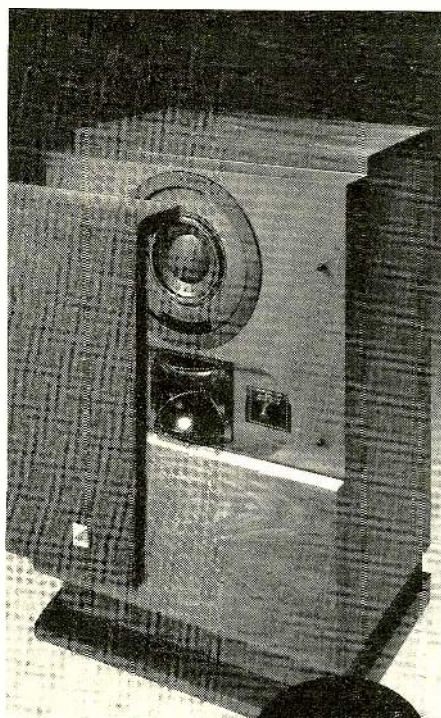
SONY® AUDIO

© 1978 Sony Industries, a division of Sony Corp. of America, 9 West 57, N.Y., N.Y. 10019. Sony is a trademark of Sony Corp.

CIRCLE NO. 55 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories



We build a speaker that sounds like music

It can accurately reproduce the 120+ dB peaks that are found in some live music. That's more than just being able to play music loud. It can accurately reproduce the music bandwidth—from below 25Hz to 20kHz. And the Interface:D's vented midrange speaker reproduces midrange sounds with the clarity and purity that allows precise localization of sound sources—both lateral and front-to-back.

The Interface:D is the only commercially available speaker we know of that can meet these criteria. Audition them at your Interface dealer.



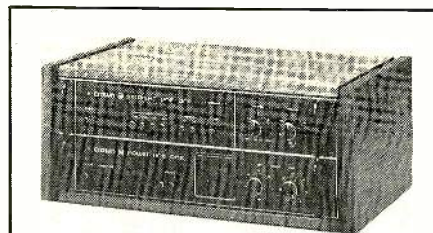
Electro-Voice
a gulton company
600 Cecil Street
Buchanan Michigan 49107.

Interface:D™

sitions, the third of which connects a built-in moving-coil pre-preamplifier; the input resistance and capacitance of the first position can be adjusted to suit a variety of cartridges by two front-panel rotary switches. The RA-2040 also has a front-panel display using thirteen LED's per channel to monitor power output.

Specifications of the amplifier include total-harmonic and intermodulation distortion figures of less than 0.01 per cent, a phono-section signal-to-noise ratio of 80 dB, a phono-overload level of 450 millivolts for the conventional phono inputs, and a rated frequency response of 0 to 200 kHz. The tone controls provide ± 10 dB of adjustment at 100 and 10,000 Hz. Infrasonic (12-dB-per-octave attenuation below 15 Hz) and ultrasonic (12-dB-per-octave attenuation above 24 kHz) filters can also be switched from the front panel. Dimensions are approximately 19 x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches. The unit is rack mountable and comes with rack handles. Price: \$880.

Circle 124 on reader service card



Crown Introduces a Matched Preamp and Medium-power Amp

□ Crown has developed two electronic components—a preamplifier and a 50-watt-per-channel power amplifier—characterized by relatively simple control functions. The preamplifier, called the Straight Line One because it lacks tone controls and processes the signal through a minimum of stages, utilizes a separate phono-gain module intended to be placed near the turntable. The phono module is powered through an umbilical cord from the preamp's rear panel and provides the first stage of phono amplification before the signal is routed through any substantial length of cable. According to Crown, this arrangement results in improved noise performance and resistance to radio-frequency interference (RFI). Additional anti-RFI circuits are built into the phono module. The front panel of the Straight Line One has volume and balance controls (both of the stepped-attenuator type with detents at 2-dB intervals), two tape-monitor circuits, a four-pushbutton input selector, a power switch, and two LED overload indicators that light to show excessive drive-level conditions at any stage of the preamplifier. Total harmonic distortion is rated at less than 0.0003 per cent and intermodulation distortion at less than 0.00055 per cent. The phono module has an RIAA frequency response accurate to within ± 0.5 dB, a signal-to-noise ratio of 94 dB, and an input overload at 1,000 Hz of between 33 and 330 millivolts, depending upon gain setting. Dimensions are 19 x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Price: \$549. Additional phono modules (usable only with the Straight Line One) are available for \$225 each.

The Power Line One power amplifier is of class A + AB design, and it is rated at 50 watts per channel with less than 0.005 per cent total harmonic and less than 0.00095 per cent intermodulation distortion. Like all the current Crown power amplifiers, the Power Line One incorporates an input-output-comparator (IOC) circuit designed to monitor the output of the amplifier and to illuminate a LED when either channel has distortion exceeding specifications. In addition to the IOC circuit, this amplifier also has a front-panel peak-reading LED display to permit the listener to observe actual power levels. Addi-

(Continued on page 22)



Pedestal-style Speaker Stands From Sweden

□ Devlin Audio International has introduced three steel speaker stands made by Curb, a Swedish firm. The Model 10 (center above) is a nickel-finish tubular unit standing 14 inches high and capable of supporting loudspeakers weighing up to 30 pounds. The Model 20 (right), also nickel finished, stands 13 inches high and will support up to 75 pounds. The Model 30 (left) is finished with black epoxy paint; it, too, supports up to 75 pounds and is 13 inches high. All the stands assemble without tools and have protective pads to prevent scratching the speaker cabinet; screw mounting may be necessary, however, to assure complete stability. Prices: Model 10, \$49.95 per pair; Model 20, \$59.95 per pair; Model 30, \$69.95 per pair. For further information write to Devlin Audio International, Dept. SR, South Strafford, Vt. 05070.

Circle 125 on reader service card

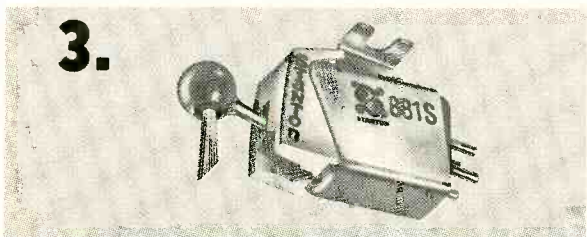
What do you get when you put together...



A tonearm worth \$150 ...
(with UNIPOISE® patented single pivot point suspension)

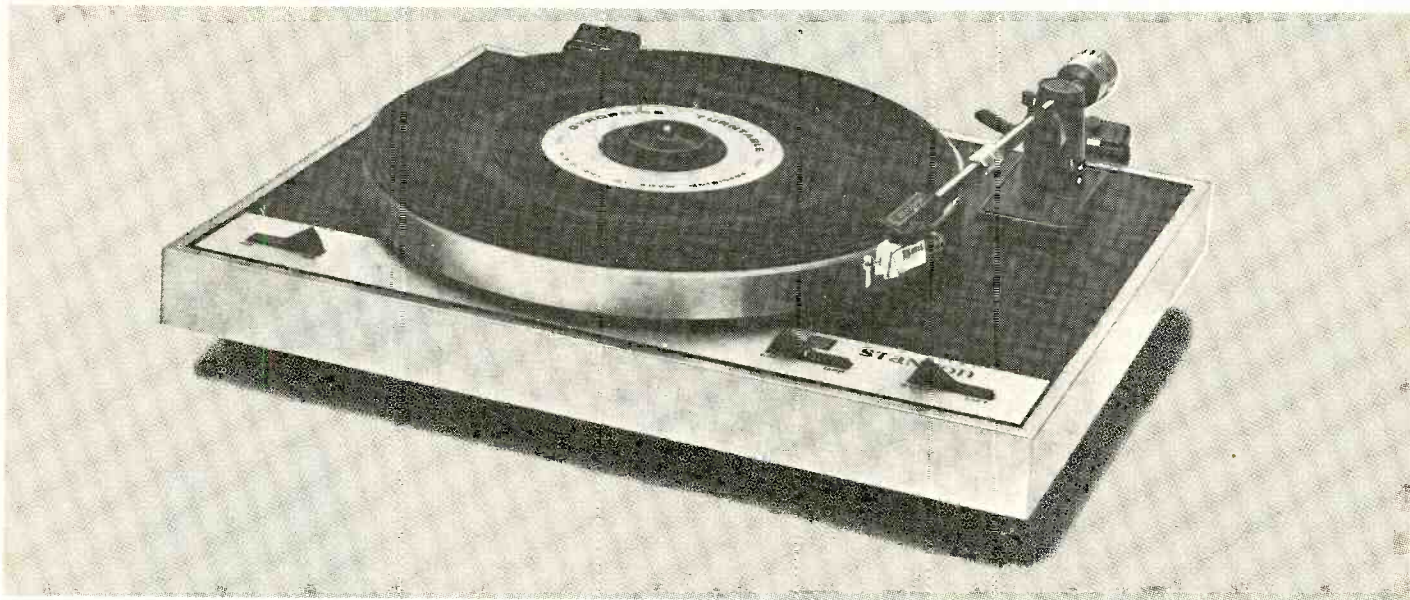


A turntable worth \$200 ...
(with GYROPOISE® exclusive patented magnetic suspension)



A cartridge worth \$150 ...
(Professional Calibration Standard with patented STEREOHEDRON® stylus tip)

Stanton's NEW 8005 turntable system!



Stanton's handsome new low profile Turntable has unequalled features:

1. The Gyropoise® platter actually floats on air. This magnetic suspension eliminates vertical friction and almost complete acoustical isolation is insured.
2. Unipoise® tonearm with patented single point suspension reduces lateral and vertical friction to a minimum.
3. Automatic stop and lift-off on some models ... manual operation on others.
4. Each Turntable comes with a top-of-the-line calibrated Stanton cartridge (881S or 681 Triple-E).

5. The Universal Cartridge Adapter Head accommodates all cartridges (a free Adapter Head comes with each turntable).

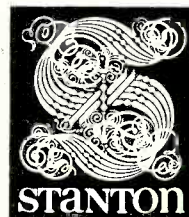
6. Other features:

- a) Precision ground belt drive
- b) Tracking force and anti-skate mechanism
- c) Viscous damped cueing
- d) Die cast aluminum platter
- e) Hinged dust cover adjustable to any position

For further information write:

Stanton Magnetics, Inc.
Terminal Drive, Plainview, N.Y. 11803

... "The choice of the Professionals"™



New Products

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tional front-panel features include a head-
phone jack, switches for power and two pairs
of loudspeakers, and a rotary gain control for
each channel. Dimensions are 19 x 3½ x 12¼
inches. Price: \$479. Both the Straight Line
One and the Power Line One are rack-mount-
able units finished in matte black with silver
trim. Optional walnut-veneer cabinets to hold
either unit singly (Model 3RL, \$40) or both
together as shown (Model 7RL, \$55) are also
available.

Circle 126 on reader service card

system with a 126-square-inch area, and the
Model 290 is an 8-inch system also having a
126-square-inch area. Nominal impedance of
all units is 8 ohms, and efficiency is specified
as 97 dB for an input of 12 watts. Minimum
recommended power is 35 watts for the Mod-
els 320, 310, and 300, and 25 watts for the
Model 290. Dimensions are 43½ x 21¾ x 9½
inches for the 320, 38 x 17¾ x 9½ inches for
the 310, 24½ x 14¾ x 7½ inches for the 290.
Prices: 320, \$499; 310, \$349; 300, \$199; 290,
\$139. For more information write to BTM
Manufacturing Co., Dept. SR, 2005 Lincoln
Avenue, Pasadena, Calif. 91103.

Circle 127 on reader service card



Self-energizing
Hybrid Electrostatic
Speakers from BTM



Fuji Videocassettes
Now Available in
All Three Formats

□ Fuji, a prime supplier of professional TV
videotape, has introduced Beta-format video-
cassettes in four lengths. Thus, Fuji now
manufactures videocassettes in all three pop-
ular formats: U-Matic, VHS, and Beta. All
Fuji videocassettes have plasticized contain-
ers, which are said to eliminate the problem of
dropouts caused by the paper dust often
found with other types of packaging for tape
products. Prices for the Beta-format cassettes
are: L-500, \$16.95; L-370, \$14.95; L-250,
\$12.95; L-125, \$10.95. Prices for VHS cas-
settes are: T-120, \$25.50; T-60, \$18.35; T-30,
\$15.50. Prices for U-Matic cassettes are:
KCA-60, \$36; KCA-30, \$28; KCA-20, \$26.50;
KCA-15, \$24.75; KCA-10, \$22; KCS-20,
\$26.50; KCS-10, \$22.

Fuji has also announced the completion of
pilot runs of pure-metal-particle audio-cas-
sette tape in its Japanese factory. Commercial
introduction of the new tape is expected
sometime early this spring, and prices for the
various lengths will be announced shortly.

Circle 128 on reader service card

(Continued on page 24)

Success is great, but...

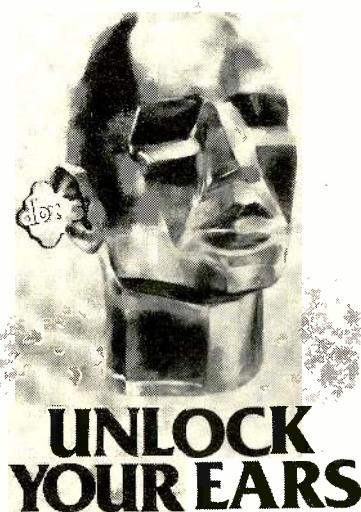
The response to our introduc-
tion of the new 1BX and 2BX
Dynamic Range Expanders has
been phenomenal. Too much so,
since many of you haven't been
able to find them in stock at
your dbx dealer.

We want to take this opportu-
nity to tell you that we've en-
larged our production facilities
to meet your demand for dbx
expansion. But even as we
produce more, our exhaustive
quality assurance procedures
take as much time as ever. So,
while dbx expanders may be
in short supply, please remem-
ber that good things are worth
waiting for.

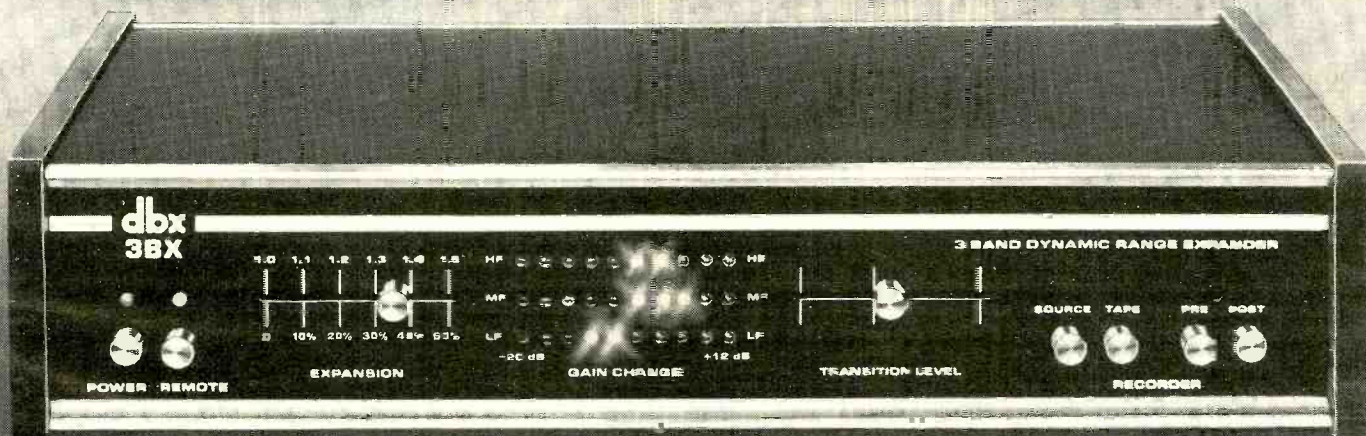
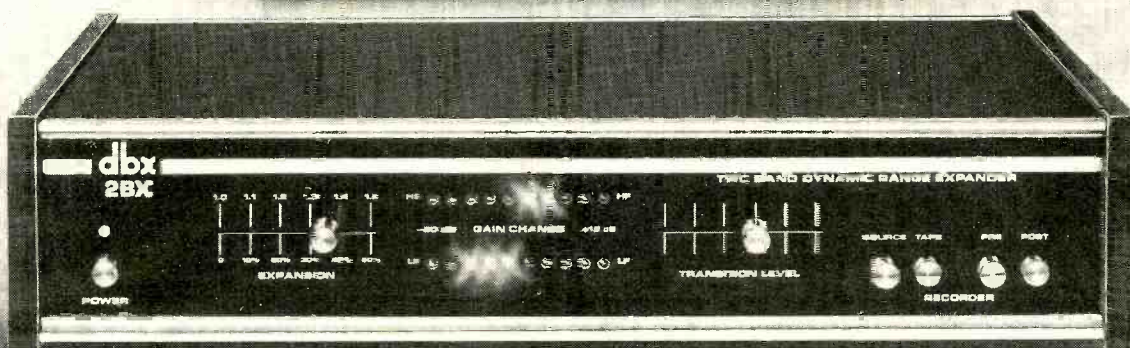
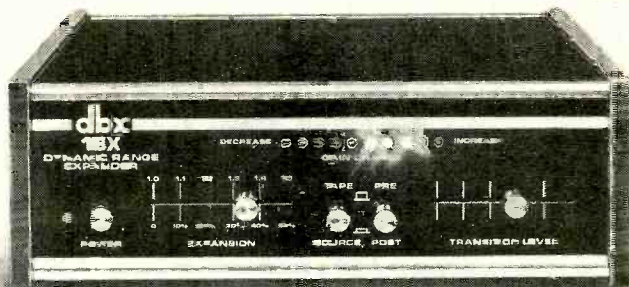
The 1BX and 2BX (along
with their top-of-the-line part-
ner, the 3BX) will hopefully be
back on your dealers' shelves by
the time you read this.

And we hope our expansion
will be able to keep up with
your demands.

dbx dbx, Incorporated
71 Chapel St.
Newton, MA 02195
(617) 964-3210



Restore the impact of "live" ...easy as 1-2-3.



No matter how accurate your stereo system is, it's only as good as the records and tapes you play on it—and they leave much to be desired. The recording process does some terrible things to live music, and one of the worst is robbing it of dynamic range, the key element which gives music its impact.

Fortunately dbx has developed a whole line of linear dynamic range expanders which can restore lost dynamic range.

1BX. The 1BX is the most sophisticated one-band expander on the market. Its RMS level detector incorporates an infrasonic filter to prevent mis-tracking caused by turntable rumble and record warp.

2BX. The 2BX divides the frequency spectrum into two bands and expands each separately. It doesn't allow the bass to influence the vocals or mid-range instruments, and in strongly percussive music, that's important.

3BX. The 3BX is the state-of-the-art, but with the introduction of the 3BX-R Remote Control option, it's more flexible and more fun than ever. The 3BX divides music into three frequency bands. Low bass will not influence the midrange. And midrange crescendi will not boost low level highs, so operation is virtually inaudible. For complex musical material, the 3BX is the best way to restore dynamic range.

All dbx expanders have design features in common. All utilize true RMS level detection. All feature a program-dependent release time, for natural, life-like sound. All are true stereo expanders that maintain rock-solid stereo imaging. And all dbx linear expanders have a pleasant benefit—up to 20 dB of noise reduction.

The 3BX is still the standard. But now there is a family of dbx expanders designed to bring any system one step closer to "live."

dbx

UNLOCK YOUR EARS.

dbx, Incorporated, 71 Chapel Street, Newton, MA 02195 (617) 964-3210.

CIRCLE NO. 12 ON READER SERVICE CARD

FREE

details... A DIFFERENT KIND OF RECORD CLUB

You can now own every record or tape that you may ever want... at tremendous savings and with no continuing purchase obligations. You can get valuable free dividend certificates, you can get quick service and all the 100% iron-clad guarantees you want.

Now you can stop price increases that leave you with less music for your record and tape budget. You can guarantee yourself more music for less money through membership in Discount Music Club.

Look at these benefits:

TREMENDOUS SAVINGS

on every record and tape in print—no "agree-to-purchase" obligations of any kind.

DISCOUNTS OF 43% TO 73% off mfg. suggested list... special catalog features hundreds of titles and artists.

ALL LABELS AVAILABLE

including most imports through special custom ordering service. If we don't stock it we'll get it for you.

SCHWANN CATALOG

lists thousands of titles; classical, pop, jazz, ballet, opera, musical shows, folk, rock, vocal, instrumental, country, etc.

DISCOUNT DIVIDEND CERTIFICATES

Dividend Gifts—Every shipment carries a dividend gift or dividend certificate. Certificates redeemable immediately for extra discounts.

NEWSLETTERS

happenings in the world of music; concerts, critiques, new releases... special super-sale listings at discounts of up to 73%.

DISCOUNT ACCESSORY GUIDE

Diamond needles, cloths, tape cleaners, etc. Discount Music Club is your complete one stop music and accessory buying service.

QUICK SERVICE

same day shipping on many orders... rarely later than the next several days. Partial shipments always made in the event of unforeseen delay... all at no extra cost to you.

100% IRON-CLAD GUARANTEES

on all products and services. Everything is guaranteed factory fresh and free of defects or damages of any sort. Your total satisfaction is unconditionally guaranteed.

Discount Music Club is a no-obligation membership club that guarantees tremendous discounts on all stereo records and tapes and lets you buy what you want... when you want... or not at all if you choose.

These are just a few of the money-saving reasons to write for free details. You can't lose so why not fill out and mail the coupon below for immediate information.

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650 Main Street, New Rochelle, N.Y. 10801

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ADDRESS

CITY

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CIRCLE NO. 13 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Products

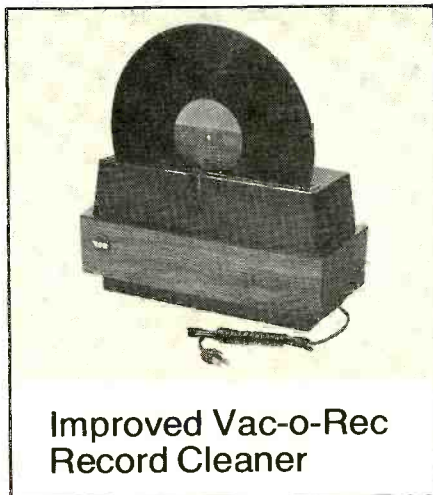
latest audio equipment and accessories



Neosonic's New Tangential-tracking Record Cleaner

Neosonic recently introduced the Lencomatic record cleaner, which is intended for installation on the top inner surface of a record-player dust cover. It has a carbon-fiber and natural-hair brush that tracks records tangentially. A spring-loaded arrangement automatically returns the brush assembly to its rest position each time the dust cover is lifted. The device attaches to a dust cover with adhesive discs, and a template is supplied to assure accurate mounting. A conductive turntable mat said to reduce static charge on the record surface comes with the Lencomatic. Price: \$19.95. For further information, write to Neosonic, Dept. SR, 180 Miller Place, Hicksville, N.Y. 11801.

Circle 129 on reader service card

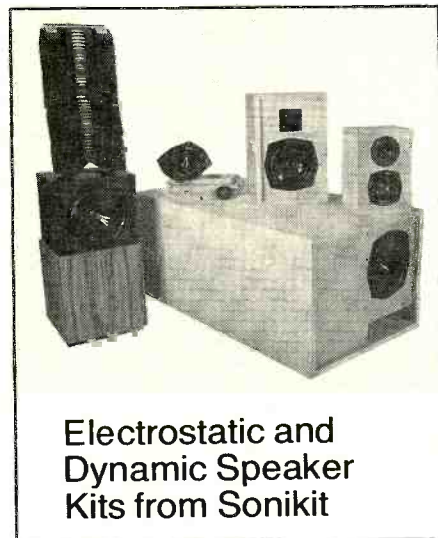


Improved Vac-o-Rec Record Cleaner

Vac-o-Rec has introduced two new record-cleaning machines, the Models 145 and 1100 (shown), that work on the same principle as the company's original Model 100. To use the Vac-o-Rec machines, the record to be cleaned is inserted into a narrow slot; it is

then rotated at a relatively high speed by an internal motor while mohair brushes pressing against both surfaces of the disc dislodge dust, which is picked up by a vacuum pump. The entire cleaning process takes less than thirty seconds, and a static-reduction circuit is included to reduce disc-borne static charge. The Model 145 is the company's new basic record-cleaning machine; it is usable with both 7- and 12-inch discs and is finished in matte black plastic. The Model 1100 has a more powerful motor, a removable, washable filter, and a wood-grain plastic finish. Prices: Model 145, \$34.95; Model 1100, \$44.95.

Circle 130 on reader service card

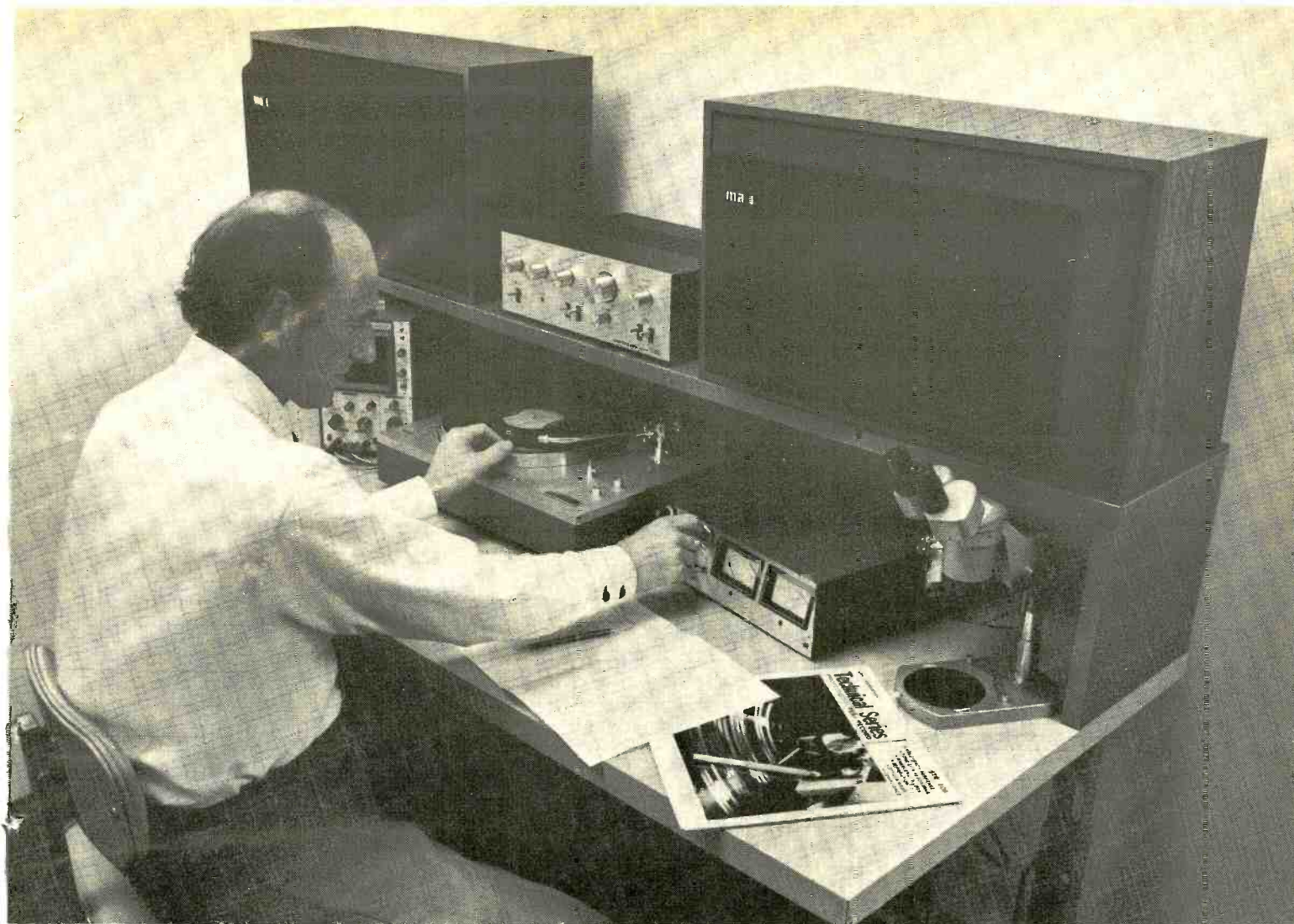


Electrostatic and Dynamic Speaker Kits from Sonikit

Sonikit offers a wide variety of monitor-style loudspeakers, many patterned after British designs, in kit form. The complete kits include all of the components necessary to assemble a finished system: drivers, crossover components, connective wiring, and birch-veneer enclosures that have been designed to be assembled in the home using ordinary hand tools and adhesives supplied with the kit. Sonikit speakers are also available without enclosures in what is referred to as "semi-kit" form. Models offered range from the B/2 Mini-Monitor, a two-way compact speaker using a 5-inch bass driver and 1-inch soft-dome treble unit (\$360 per pair in complete kit form), to the JansZen Z40, a hybrid dynamic-electrostatic combination employing a Bextrene bass driver, a 10-inch passive radiator, and four electrostatic panels, all mounted in a columnar configuration (\$800 per system in complete kit form). A wide variety of bookshelf systems, transmission-line designs, and a subwoofer are also in the Sonikit line. For more information write: Sonikit, 1173 65th Street, Dept. SR, Oakland, Calif. 94608.

Circle 131 on reader service card

(Continued on page 26)



Next best will cost you \$5.00

The demand for Micro-Acoustics cartridge clinics is so great, we simply can't keep up.

So we've done the next best thing.

But a word about the best thing first. If you've ever been to a Micro-Acoustics Clinic in your dealer's showroom, you know that it involves the most comprehensive examination of a cartridge ever devised. When you leave, you clearly understand what your cartridge is doing, and, alas, what it is not. You become aware, for example, not only how faithfully your cartridge is tracking the groove, but how it performs in many critical areas such as square wave and transient ability, IM distortion and capacitance effects.

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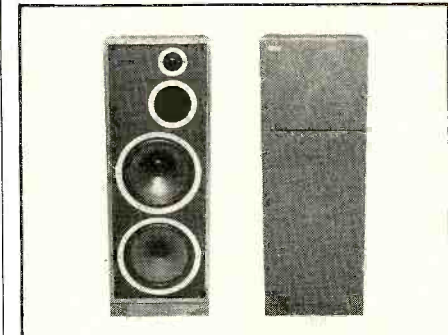
latest audio equipment and accessories



Heppner's New "Heavyweight" Car Speaker

□ The Heppner Manufacturing Co., an Illinois firm that makes loudspeaker drivers, recently introduced a new line of car speakers headed by the "Tri-Pac." The Tri-Pac—dubbed the "heavyweight" because of its 28-ounce woofer magnet—is a three-way system with a 6- by 9-inch woofer, a 3-inch mid-range driver, and a 1-inch dome tweeter. The latter two drivers are mounted on a metal plate suspended in front of the woofer cone. Efficiency is rated at 104 dB for a 1-watt input (measured at a distance of 0.5 meter) and frequency response as 35 to 20,000 Hz. Dimensions are 9 x 4 1/2 x 6 inches. Price: \$50.

Circle 132 on reader service card



Three-way Speaker From Celestion Has Passive Radiator

□ Celestion, a British manufacturer, has introduced their new top-of-the-line three-way loudspeaker, the Model 662. The 662 has a 12-inch fiber-cone bass driver, a 12-inch passive radiator, a 2-inch plastic-dome mid-range, and a 3/4-inch plastic-dome treble unit, with cross-over frequencies of 700 and 4,500 Hz. All four units have cast-metal frames with flush-mounted, machined fronts for rigidity and reduction of stray diffraction effects. The grille assembly of the speaker is also said to have

been designed to minimize diffraction. Frequency response of the Model 662 is specified as 38 to 20,000 Hz ±3 dB into a hemispherical room load. Minimum power requirement is 20 watts, and maximum rated input power is 160 watts on musical program material. Sensitivity is 90 dB output (measured at one meter) for a 2.9-watt input, and nominal impedance is 8 ohms. Dimensions are approximately 4 1/8 x 15 3/4 x 11 1/8 inches. Cabinet finish is either American walnut or elm. Price: \$749.50.

Circle 133 on reader service card



Belt-driven Automatic Turntable From Radio Shack

□ Radio Shack's Realistic LAB-250 turntable has fully automatic arm-return and shutoff functions. It is a belt-driven unit using a four-pole synchronous motor to maintain constant speed. The wow and flutter figure for this configuration is 0.09 per cent, and rumble is -67 dB (measured using the European DIN-B standard). The 33 1/2- and 45-rpm speeds are selectable by a top-panel switch. The tone arm of the LAB-250 is S-shaped and has a stylus-to-pivot length of approximately 8 1/2 inches; the head shell attaches to the arm with a standard four-pin bayonet connector. The entire turntable is acoustically isolated from external vibration by four resilient "feet." The LAB-250 comes complete with a factory-mounted magnetic cartridge. Dimensions are 16 7/8 x 6 1/8 x 1 1/8 inches, and the base is finished in walnut-grain vinyl. Price: \$129.95.

Circle 134 on reader service card

NOTICE: All product descriptions and specifications quoted in these columns are based on materials supplied by the manufacturer.

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M-4 Our passion for pure tonality reaches toward perfection in the M-4 stereo power amp. To deliver the clearest, most musical sound possible, we built it with DC circuitry in a dual mono amp configuration. The dual mono amp configuration results in dramatically reduced cross-talk for dramatically enhanced listening pleasure.

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Signal-to-noise ratio is, (please hold the applause) an utterly silent 115dB.

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Audio/Video News

By John
Kois

Author Kois about to place a videodisc on the turntable of the Magnavision player. The large center hole in the disc makes for convenient handling.



MAGNAVISON: HOW WELL DOES IT WORK?

FIRST-KID-ON-THE-BLOCK status used to come easily. Two cereal-box tops and a quarter mailed quickly to Battle Creek, Michigan, did the trick. No more. To become the first among my peers to own a videodisc player meant negotiating a logistical labyrinth worthy of the Italian postal system.

The Magnavision videodisc player (Model 8000) went on sale in Atlanta, Georgia, on Friday, December 15. Moments after Rich's Department Store's doors opened, the item was officially out-of-stock. As a media event, success was immediate, with coverage ranging from wire-service reports to a spot on that day's *Today Show* (although Betty Furness has yet to tell us which parts of the videodisc player are unsafe if swallowed).

From the commercial point of view, the event was something less than capitalism at its most efficient. The consumer has been teased with promises of videodisc players since 1970. This particular unit was first promised in the fall of 1976. When Magnavox finally put the first units on sale last December, only fifty were available, all of them in Atlanta. Nationwide distribution is not scheduled to begin until late this year or early in 1980.

Word had leaked out late in November of Magnavision's impending sale in Atlanta, but no one seemed to know *where* in Atlanta, or exactly when. Magnavox would only say "No comment," since they had a New York City press conference scheduled for December 15 (presumably the day the units would go on sale) and didn't want to spoil the surprise. Calls placed to video-hardware buyers at Atlanta's leading department stores were also fruitless, though we did learn that jobs would be endangered if the information were divulged. Days of additional sleuthing led us finally to Rich's on Atlanta's Peachtree Road. The morning of the sale, our man in Atlanta arrived on the scene at 4 a.m., six hours before Rich's opening. He was *tenth* in line. A store employee gave him a number to protect his position. While waiting, he was offered up to \$500 cash for his place in line; people had flown in from all over the country for a chance at the videodisc player. Unfortunately for many of them, Rich's turned out to have only twenty-three of the fifty units supposed to be offered. They had started with more, but some staff people apparently snapped up half

of them before the machines went on sale to the public.

At 10 a.m. the doors parted. Our man found his way to Rich's video department, picked out and paid for a Magnavision player plus a fistful of prerecorded discs, and—to prevent parking-lot mayhem and the attendant bad publicity—was escorted to his car.

Even set up in an office that boasts about \$20,000 worth of audio equipment, a Panasonic large-screen projection TV, half a dozen videocassette decks, and a considerable assortment of technical bric-a-brac, the Magnavision videodisc player easily became the center of attention. Its sleek look and versatility in operation elicited enough "oohs" and "aahs" to make the entire Atlanta adventure worthwhile.

In appearance and features, the new Magnavox unit does not seem to differ from the hand-built prototypes demonstrated several years ago. What has changed are the prices: Magnavision players retail for \$695, rather more than the \$500 tag promised in 1976, and the software has undergone a similar appreciation, from the promised \$2 to \$10 per disc to the current \$5 to \$16. Whether prices will go up further or come down in the future depends on competitive pressures (when other manufacturers launch their own videodisc units) and on consumer demand. Some believe videodisc collections will become as commonplace and extensive as phonograph-record collections are today. Others see the videodisc as an expensive gimmick, more limited in capabilities (because the consumer can't record on it) than videotape, with sales limited to ardent videophiles.

Unpredictable, also, is what will happen when other manufacturers, following Magnavox's lead, introduce products with the inevitable refinements. It can be dangerous to be first in the field with a new technology, as Sony demonstrated when they beat everyone to market with their Beta-format videocassette recorder only to find it eclipsed within a few years by the late-blooming but more popular VHS format.

Our first (and necessarily tentative) impression of the Magnavox videodisc player, however, is that even in this gadget-satiated age it is an impressive piece of equipment that well

represents a technology whose full potential is awesome to contemplate.

The 12-inch videodiscs are optically recorded, and playback is accomplished with a low-power red laser beam. Although the Magnavision unit functions somewhat like a record player (which also retrieves information from a recorded disc), the absence of anything like a stylus assembly "tracking" the disc allows for a wide range of unique features. In addition to its normal play mode, the Magnavision unit also allows for normal play in reverse, forward or reverse search (you can scan an entire 30-minute videodisc in either direction in approximately 30 seconds), forward or reverse still viewing (moving in either direction a single frame at a time), and forward or reverse slow-motion play (with a variable-speed dial allowing everything from almost normal speed to motion so slow you can nap between frames). All modes except normal play (forward) mute the soundtrack. Switching from function to function is instantaneous, without any annoying picture breakup in the process. An index switch displays a five-digit frame count on the TV screen; this works in all modes and is particularly valuable for finding a particular frame of the recording.

Two audio channels can be played along with the picture, either combined for mono sound through your TV's speaker or in stereo if jacked into an external audio system. The dual channels allow two distinct tracks of audio information to be recorded simultaneously, and besides ordinary stereo soundtracks, some *bilingual* discs are already available.

There are approximately 55,000 frames per half-hour side of each videodisc. Since each frame can be viewed separately, the information storage and retrieval possibilities are intriguing. For instance, with three hundred pages per book as an average, a single two-sided videodisc could hold and play back, page by page, the entire contents of 366 books.

In use, the videodisc spins at 1,800 rpm. Since a hard-edge disc moving that fast could cut like a buzz saw through almost anything it came in contact with, the disc must be locked into the unit before the player will start and the top lip will not open for disc removal until the motor has braked to a stop. Consequently, the unit has no disc changer; changing discs is a strictly manual operation—a small annoyance when viewing a multidisc program. According to Magnavox, however, two-hour discs—long enough to accommodate most movies—will be available shortly.

The videodisc picture had excellent color, though compared with an original video tape it had a touch more graininess and a tiny bit more video "noise" than we would have liked. Perhaps we expected too much—and possibly the product will get better. In any case, these imperfections did not lessen our viewing pleasure to any significant degree.

Overall, the Magnavision is a remarkably simple unit to operate, even to the point of being goof-proof. It appears to be well built, though it will take hundreds of hours of play—which it will get!—to determine if its beauty is more than skin deep. □

John Kois edits Gadget Newsletter, which tests and reports on new consumer products. For a free sample copy, write Gadget, 116 West 14th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011.

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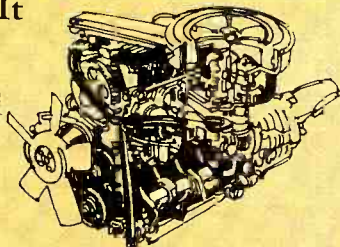
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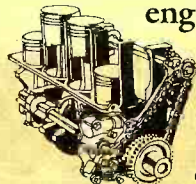
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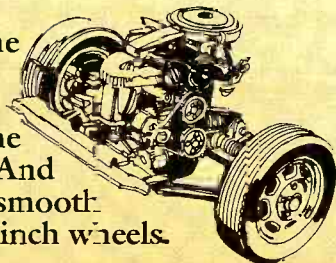
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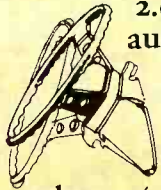
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CIRCLE NO. 70 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein



Class Actions

Q. *I thought I understood the operation classes specified for some of the new amplifiers, but now I'm not sure. For example, one of the high-end manufacturers is making a big thing out of his amp's class-AB operation. Don't nearly all of today's amplifiers operate in class AB?*

CHARLES FOSTER
Boston, Mass.

A. You are correct—most of today's amplifier output stages are biased to operate somewhere between the class-A and class-B modes, and they are therefore categorized class AB. In a nutshell, class A provides inefficient (hence usually lower-power) operation, but with relatively low distortion. Class B provides good efficiency and higher power, but much higher distortion. The manufacturer who makes a big point of advertising his units as being in class AB has unfortunately chosen a misleading term to describe its operation. As I understand his amplifier, it operates in the class-A mode for low-power signals and converts to class AB for signals requiring high power, thus realizing the theoretical advantages of both modes. It seems to me that the most exact description for the unit would be "class A/AB"—but perhaps such an approach is too complicated to appeal to the talented but usually resolutely nontechnical people who write ads.

Resonant Disc Noises

Q. *Record "surface noise" is such a vague term. How can I distinguish between the continuous tracing noises produced when the stylus moves along the record grooves from noises caused by dirt and pressing imperfections? Even with excellent equipment I still hear a kind of resonant dragging or scraping sound that is exacerbated (and modulated) by disc warps. I have been unable to find a discussion of this type of noise. Can you tell me where it comes from?*

NORMAN GOLDSTEIN
Oakland, Calif.

A. Record noise can be divided into two categories: there are the Rice-Crispy noises—snap, crackle, and pop—and (to use a more technical description) the broad-spec-

trum noise heard as a rushing, a hiss, or a swish. The pops and clicks result from dirt, scratches, bubbles in the vinyl, electrostatic discharges, and other causes. The broad-spectrum noise can originate from a noisy master tape or problems during the cutting, mastering, and/or pressing of the disc. Worn records can produce both types of noise.

Oddly enough, Mr. Goldstein's record-noise complaint falls into neither of the above categories. It seems likely that the noise is caused rather by intermittent contact between the body of his phono cartridge and the record surface. I must assume that his record-player installation does not permit edge-on viewing of the record while it is being played; otherwise he would have discovered the source of the problem himself.

In pursuit of a cure, Mr. Goldstein should first check the tracking force of his tone arm to make sure it is not higher than recommended for the cartridge being used. Too high a force will push the stylus back into the cartridge body. An external stylus-force gauge—rather than the one built into the tone arm or turntable—should be used since the internal gauge may have gone off calibration.

Assuming that the stylus force is within the correct range, the next suspect is the stylus assembly itself. Stylus suspensions are subject to fatigue, which reduces their ability to support the cartridge body at the proper distance above the record surface even when the proper tracking force is used. Replacement is the answer here, and I believe that most cartridge companies will supply one at no charge if the cartridge is not too far outside its warranty period.

If the problem persists, the next possibility to investigate is the way the phono cartridge is mounted in the tone-arm head shell and the way the arm is mounted on the record player (assuming it is adjustable). Phono-cartridge manufacturers usually provide a "reference surface" on the top or bottom of their products to serve as a guide to proper installation. When the cartridge is on the record in playing position, this reference surface should be exactly parallel to the disc surface. If there is any slight deviation from parallelism, it should be in the direction of having the cartridge's rear end (where the pins are) higher than its front. Some cartridges come boxed with shims to help achieve that condition.

Last, and least likely, there is the possibil-

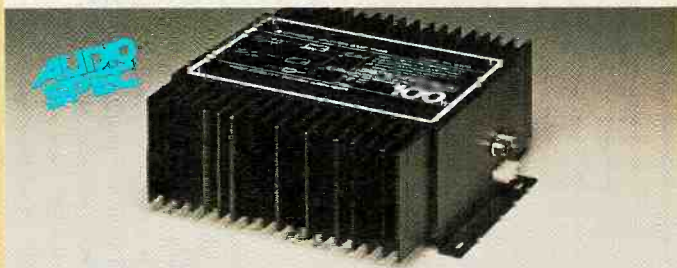
(Continued on page 36)

Superb* Awesome** Outrageous***

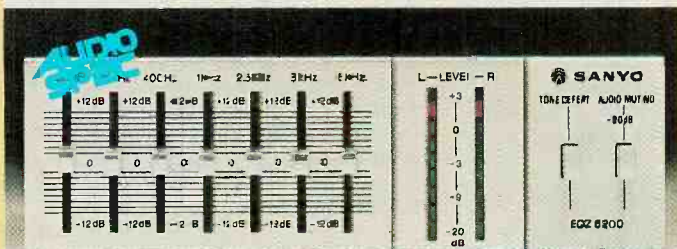
Great car stereo sound used to be an all-or-nothing affair. Either you blew a bundle, or you settled for second best. Now meet the Sanyo Expandables. Car components engineered to let you work your way up from "superb" to "outrageous." In steps that your budget can handle.



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EQZ6200 Graphic Equalizer. 7 frequency bands with 12dB boost or cut. LED signal level meters. Auto muting & equalizer defeat. \$69.95†

*Step 1: "Superb."

Start off your system with one of Sanyo's new AUDIO/SPEC car stereos and a pair of Sanyo speakers. You'll get great specs, great sound, and the superior engineering of the world's largest tape equipment manufacturer.

Some models give you Dolby noise reduction, Sendust Alloy heads (for all tapes *including metal particle*), and electronic tuning with digital readout of frequency, time, and date. You can also get super-low distortion preamp level outputs — highly recommended for Step 2.

**Step 2: "Awesome."

Whenever you're ready to really *feel* the music, get hold of an AUDIO/SPEC high fidelity power amplifier. We've got four models, with 25 to 60 watts RMS per channel into 4 ohms. *All rated per FTC home hi-fi specs, with full 20-20,000Hz power bandwidth and no more than 0.05% total harmonic distortion!* Some have a unique motor-driven fader for balancing front and rear speakers.

The amplifiers accept preamp level or high level (speaker) inputs, so they'll work with just about any radio/tape unit. Awesome!

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If nothing less than the ultimate will do, plug in a Sanyo AUDIO/SPEC graphic equalizer between your radio/tape player and the power amp. With 7 bands of precise control, you can customize the sound to fit your taste and your car's acoustics. In seconds, you can actually "re-engineer" any recording to bring out any vocal or instrumental range. Hear it, and you'll be hooked!

The Sanyo Expandables are at better auto sound dealers now. Check out the features and the phenomenal sound, and start planning *your* Expandable system.

Then watch it grow on you.

The Sanyo Expandables: great sound that grows on you.

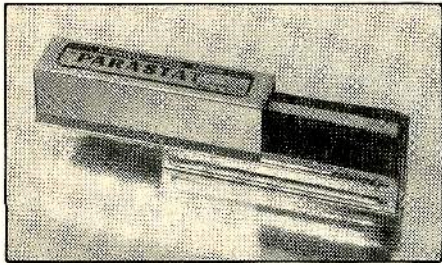
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your records are
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With some systems you pour liquid on your records (and rub it into the grooves), while with others you brush the dirt around (and rub it into the grooves). The Watts Parastat is neither of these.

By placing a plush velvet pad on either side of a soft nylon brush and adding a drop or two of Parastatik® fluid, a remarkably efficient system is created.

The brush bristles lift the rubbish to the surface. The pads collect and remove it. And the Parastatik® fluid supplies just the right degree of humidity to relax dust collecting static without leaving any kind of film or deposit behind.

No other system does so much for your records in so little time.

So when you want the best, ask for the original. The Parastat, by Cecil Watts.

Cecil E. Watts Ltd

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Audio Q. and A. . . .

ity that the cartridge is "microphonic," meaning that its internal elements are loose enough that vibration or shock will cause them to shift position and generate noise.

Speaking of microphonics, some attention has recently been focused on the "problem" of record and platter vibration as a source of distortion. The record's part of the problem comes about because of today's very skinny discs and the way they are supported on some record mats. Obviously, a very lightweight disc placed on a turntable mat that supports it only by its outer rim becomes a diaphragm that will pick up sound vibration. And a phono-cartridge stylus resting on that record will respond to that spurious vibration as though it were musical material in the grooves. You can check out the sensitivity of your record-player setup to this problem by putting a typically thin disc on your turntable and, without the platter revolving, positioning the stylus about 3 inches into the grooved area of the disc. Switch to phono and, while wearing a pair of sealing-type headphones (if they are available), slowly turn up the volume while some friends are making noise or while loudly playing a portable radio close to the record. If little or nothing is heard through the phones then you're not likely to have a problem. Otherwise, you had best replace (or cover) the turntable mat with one that provides more support and/or mechanical damping of the disc. Most inexpensive foam mats will do the job nicely.

Authorized Performances

Q. *Most of the records and prerecorded tapes I own have a statement somewhere on the liner that says something to the effect of: "Unauthorized copying, public performance, or broadcast of this recording is prohibited." Do radio stations have to get authorization each time a record is broadcast?*

PATRICK C. REMY
Quebec, Canada

A. Radio and television stations, concert halls, and, in fact, all places where music is performed or broadcast are licensed by the organizations that collect and disburse the royalties owed to composers and publishers. The three organizations—ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC—base the licensing fees they charge on rather complex formulas. For example, discos and night clubs are supposed to pay fees based on the size of the establishment, the number of nights they are open, the hours during which music is played, and even the cost of drinks. Radio-station fees are arrived at more simply: they are based on a percentage of the station's gross advertising income. On the other hand, a performance in a concert hall is liable for a fee of roughly a penny per seat. The television networks, by virtue of their size, negotiate individual arrangements with the licensing organizations, paying a flat—and substantial—fee.

After the operating expenses of the licensing organization are deducted, the money derived from these fees is distributed—half to the composers and half to the publishers. The specific apportioning of the money that comes in from radio stations and clubs is determined

by the results of extensive surveys of who has played what, and how many times, made by the licensing organizations. If the whole system sounds terribly complex, that's because it is. Even professionals are sometimes baffled by some aspects of the procedure.

Note that the licensing arrangements described here apply only to composers and publishers. Performers and accompanists have their own equally complicated rules and deals made in conjunction with a whole different set of collecting and auditing agencies. The object of all this is, of course, to get at least some of the money that the public pays for musical entertainment back to those who originate it.

The Expert's Expert

Q. *I've been reading and learning from "Audio Q. and A." for years, and I finally have something I'd like an answer to. Who do you go to when you have a question?*

M. HODGES
Garden City, Kan.

A. I hope not too many readers mistakenly believe me to be a sort of walking hi-fi memory bank possessing complete information on all audio matters, large and small. The know-how I do have is the result of having been involved in audio since the early Fifties and having done everything from showroom selling to servicing and design work. But today the audio field has become so complex and specialized—and at the same time so broad—that no one can be expected to know everything about all the available components and technologies. I'm not at all surprised, therefore, when the chief engineer of a major phono-cartridge company asks me to recommend loudspeakers for their cartridge-auditioning setup, or when a speaker manufacturer wants suggestions for a top-quality turntable and cartridge.

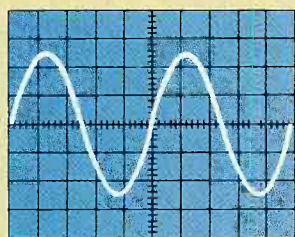
The major advantage that I (and those in a similar position) have over the average audiophile—aside from three decades of experience in the field—is my easy access to the real experts in each of the audio areas. By "real experts" I mean those engineers who are involved in the day-to-day struggle to design and produce the products that you find on dealers' shelves. When there's a question from a reader for which I have no ready answer—or when I'm not absolutely sure the response that comes to mind is correct—I'll get an answer (or a confirmation of mine) from one or more of my available experts. (If the answer originates with them, I usually give credit; if they simply confirm my own view, I don't.)

A bit of personal philosophy bearing on the business of "having answers" is very much to the point here. A major part of wisdom, it seems to me, is knowing exactly when you know and when you don't know. And at the point that your knowledge falters, your mouth or typewriter should stop—and your research start. Those few individuals who for reasons of ego or avarice regularly propagate in print their ignorance (or views based on their ignorance) do a terrible disservice both to the hi-fi industry and to the audiophiles they purport to advise. In any case, the moral is that you don't have to know everything in order to avoid mistakes; you only need to know exactly what you *don't* know.

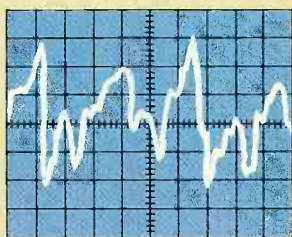
Many amps can deliver pure sound. The Sansui AU-919 delivers pure music.



Today's audio engineering has reached the point where you can select among a number of affordable high-power amplifiers that have virtually no "total harmonic distortion." That's good. But THD measurements only indicate an amplifier's response to a pure, continuously repeating, steady-state test signal (below, left). They don't tell you how the amp responds to the never-repeating, rapidly-changing transient waveforms of real music (below, right). And only an amplifier designed to reproduce the demanding dynamics of music signals can satisfy the critical audiophile. An amp like the Sansui AU-919.



SINE WAVE



DYNAMIC MUSIC SIGNALS

Because low THD without low TIM is like sound without music, the Sansui AU-919 is designed to respond well to both simple sine-wave test signals and also to handle the jagged, pulsive edges required for realistic reproduction of music—without imparting that harsh, metallic quality known as "transient intermodulation distortion" (TIM).

The Sansui AU-919 sounds better than conventional amps because Sansui developed a unique (patent pending) circuit that is capable of achieving both low THD and low TIM simultaneously.

Our DD/DC (Diamond Differential/DC)* circuitry provides the extremely high drive current necessary to use proper amounts of negative feedback to reduce conventionally-measured THD (no more than 0.008%, 5Hz-20,000Hz into 8 ohms at 100 watts, min. RMS) without compromising our extraordinary 200V/ μ Sec slew rate, ensuring vanishingly-low TIM, as well. The power amplifier frequency response extends from zero Hz to 500,000Hz.

Since ultimate tonal quality depends on more than the power amplifier alone, Sansui also uses its DD/DC* circuitry in the phono equalizer section—where current demands are also particularly high—to prevent TIM. ICL (input capacitorless) FET circuits are used throughout the AU-919, and a "jump switch" is provided that will let you run pure DC from the Aux. input to the output.

Visit your authorized Sansui dealer today, and he'll show you a lot more that the AU-919 has to offer. Like twin-detector protection circuitry and our Penta-Power Supply system. Two-deck monitoring/recording/dubbing facilities. And a high-performance ICL/FET pre-preamp for moving-coil cartridges.

Then listen to the AU-919 with the most demanding music you can find. You'll hear the way the music should sound. Like music. Not just like sound.

*Diamond Differential/DC, Sansui's (patent pending) totally symmetrical double ended circuitry with eight transistors. Is named for its Diamond-shaped schematic representation.

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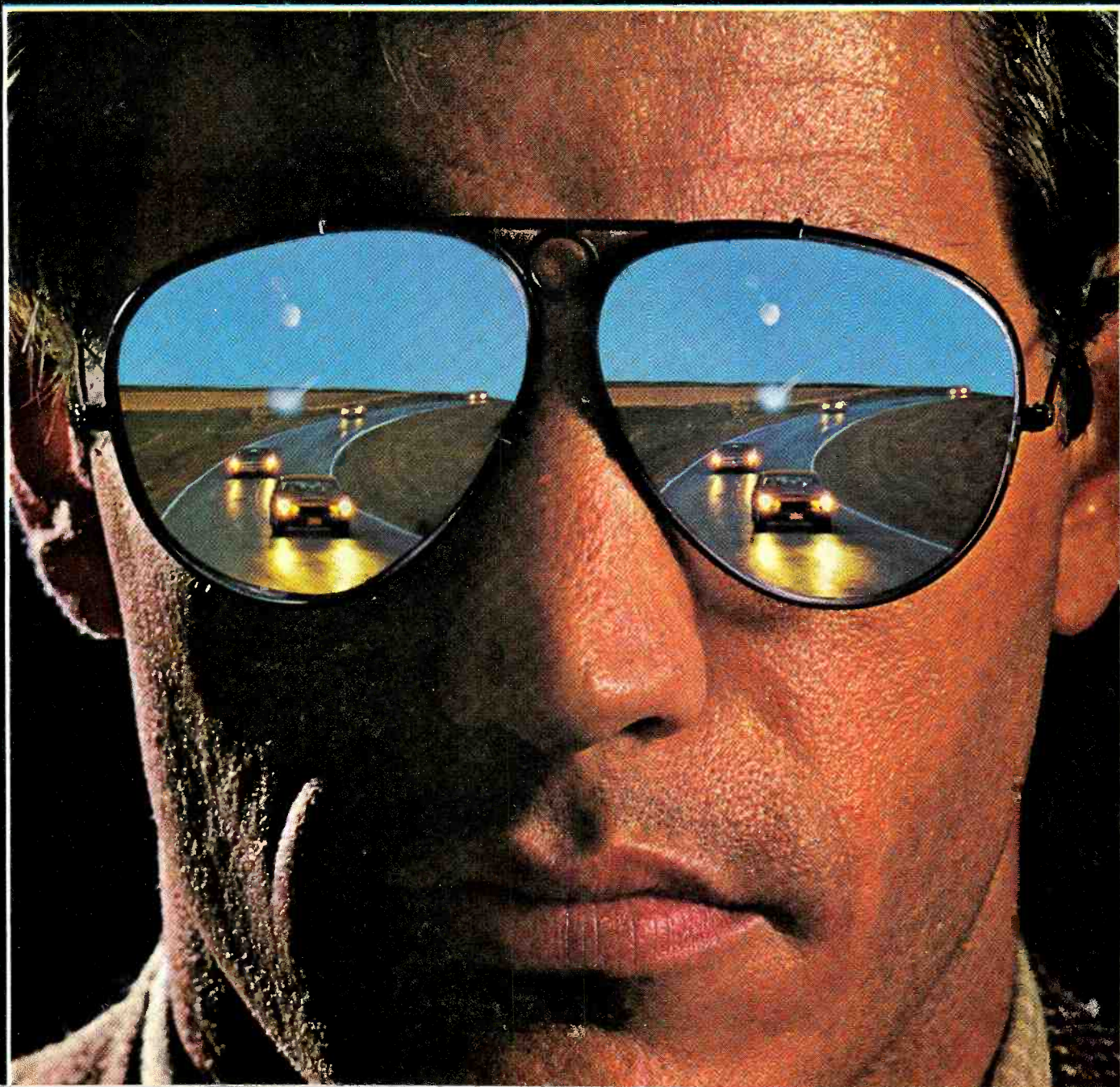
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THE SPARKOMATIC SOUND. CAR STEREO FOR THE TRAVELIN' MAN DRIVEN TO PERFECTION.

Sparkomatic car stereo has taken its directions directly from you, the travelin' man. The result is a redefinition of sound and style for the auto audiophile. A new generation of car stereo loaded with high-performance high fidelity features. And engineered with such extraordinarily efficient reception and sound reproduction capabilities that comparison to high

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Sparkomatic's *ears of experience* have produced perfection in high performance high fidelity. So if you're a travelin' man looking for the ultimate in sound, visit a Sparkomatic dealer to see and hear our full line of 20 styles from basic models to state-of-the-art High Power digital units.



SS 100. If you're a travelin' man who gets down to basics by going under-dash with your car sound, Sparkomatic's continuous play 8-track car stereo installs compactly and easily. Accurate slide controls for volume, tone and balance, program selector and program indicator lights are featured. (An under-dash cassette SS 200, is also available.) The sound of these Sparkomatic under-dash units is outstanding—and that's an understatement.



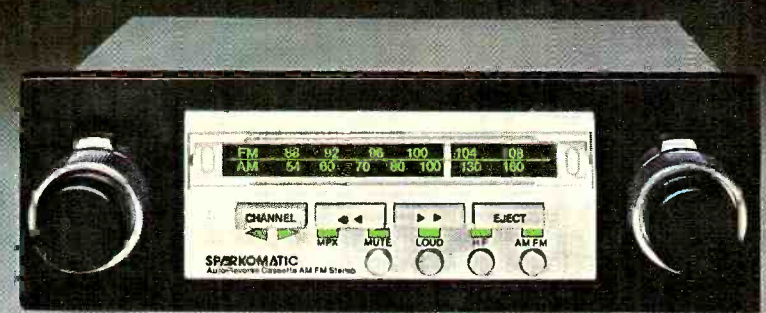
SS 100

SR 301. To the travelin' man who says car stereo should look and sound sensational, we say Sparkomatic SR 301 cassette AM/FM stereo (or SR 201 8-track model). They're unmatched in eye and ear appeal even by much higher priced car stereos. And features abound, like balance and fader controls, FM muting, rotary controls for volume, tone and tuning, automatic key-off and push-button eject, locking fast forward and rewind and 10 watts of power. If you're into pure listening pleasure, Sparkomatic talks your language.



SR 301

SR 330. Any travelin' man with a passion for performance and a lust for good looks will respond to Sparkomatic's auto reverse cassette AM/FM stereo SR 330 (or SR 210 8-track AM/FM stereo). This is all out car stereo sound that sits proudly in your dash like a high performance music machine should. Expect no less than feather touch electronic controls, separate bass, treble, balance and fader adjustability and an array of cassette handling features. Under the skin there's the guts of 12 watts of power. Whatever you like to hear, Sparkomatic's got your number here.



SR 330

SR 2400. For the travelin' man in touch with the times, High Power car high fidelity should make your adrenalin flow. Sparkomatic's SR 2400 model digital 8-track AM/FM stereo with a precise digital clock is super-charged sound. (Other High Power models also available). A full 45 watts of clear audio power over an incredibly wide dynamic range qualifies these stereo machines as the optimum in auto audio. Highly advanced high fidelity features include feather touch electronic controls for all major functions and sophisticated tape handling capabilities. When you want to turn up the power, Sparkomatic is the name to turn to.



SR 2400

SPARKOMATIC
For the Travelin' Man™

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CIRCLE NO. 59 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Audio Basics

By Ralph Hodges



SIGNAL PROCESSING—1

I HAVE never seen a formal definition of *audio-signal processing*, and it is unlikely that the description I'm about to offer will meet with universal approval. Nonetheless: the term "signal processing" covers just about anything you might possibly do to an audio signal (when it is in electrical form) short of turning it off (there are, of course, whole families of signal processors that do just that, but for periods so brief that the interruptions are imperceptible). Included among the possibilities are altering the signal's frequency balance and response with tone controls or filters, shifting its phase in various ways, turning selected parts of it up or down in level, and, in the professional sphere of activities, modulating it with an imposed time base, with other signals, or even with itself.

In home audio systems, tone controls and filters are the most familiar signal processors, and they are generally the simplest. As a rule, the treble control boosts or cuts the high frequencies to the user's taste and the bass control does the same for the low frequencies. But beyond that there are important differences. Some tone controls act only at the extremely high (perhaps above 7,000 Hz) and low (essentially below 150 Hz) frequencies, others affect a broad swath of the signal at the two ends of the spectrum, and many nowadays can be switched to do either. A mid-range tone control, which can introduce a bump or a depression right in the center of the audio-frequency range (usually at 1,000 Hz), is often encountered as well—but not so often as it might have been a few years ago.

Tone controls are intended to compensate for frequency-response problems that occur in various types of recorded or broadcast program material. Some manufacturers spend considerable time designing tone controls that affect those specific frequencies at which they hear trouble on the program material they usually listen to. In your evaluation of the tone controls of an amplifier or receiver, you might therefore be well advised to take this into account—in the context of the program material you usually listen to.

Filters differ as well. When they are provided (and used), it is for the purpose of removing high-frequency (record-surface noise, etc.) and low-frequency (turntable and record rumble) sonic irritants from the signal—some-

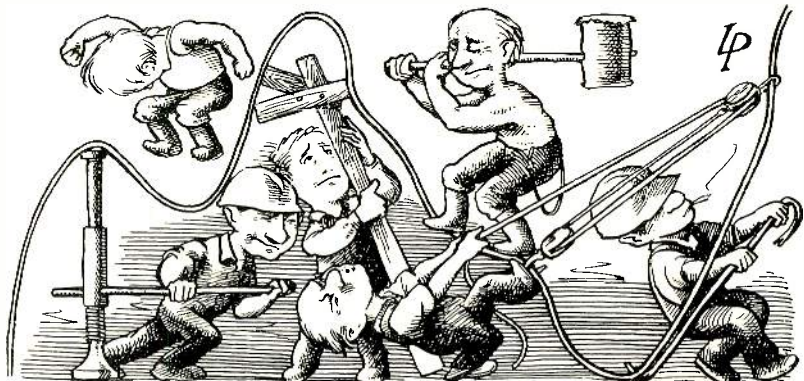
thing they can do only by removing parts of the signal as well. The best (and most complex) filters are designed to affect the noise as much as possible and the signal as little as possible. This means employing a filter characteristic that acts abruptly, shearing the frequency response of the system off very steeply above or below whatever noise frequency the manufacturer considers most crucial. Inferior filters have attenuation "slopes" that are less steep (6 dB per octave, as opposed to 12 or even 18 dB per octave), and must therefore remove more of the mid-range portion of the signal if they are to be as effective as more complex filters are at the frequency extremes. Product test reports almost invariably note the slopes of any filters present and comment on their efficacy. As might be expected, the better filters tend to be found on the more expensive equipment.

MULTIBAND equalizers can be used as tone controls or filters or both, and some of them excel in these applications. Instead of merely tilting the high- and low-frequency ends of the audio spectrum up or down, multiband equalizers can administer individual treatment to more selectively defined sections of the frequency range—for example, low lows, mid lows, the mid-range itself, mid highs, and high highs in the case of a comparatively simple "five-band" equalizer. Each band will have its own control—usually a slide potentiometer—that can be used to elevate or depress (in level) the group of fre-

quencies assigned to it. In a five-band equalizer, each control affects a range of frequencies about two octaves wide. There are also ten-band equalizers (one octave per control) and some which cut the audio range into even thinner slices. But with these last we're beginning to get into the area of professional studio equipment.

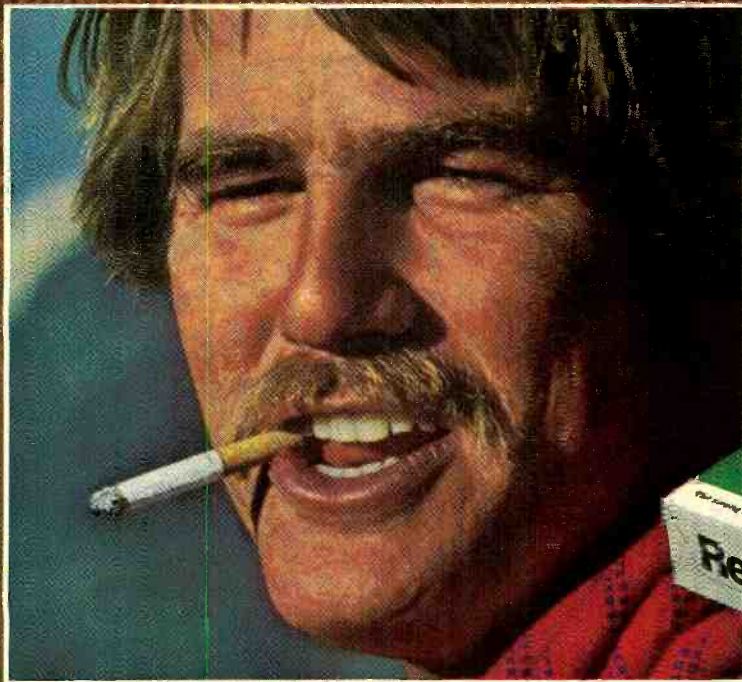
With an equalizer's intrinsic flexibility it is possible to make quite complex alterations in a system's frequency response, creating a response curve with a multitude of peaks, dips, and other contours. Certainly there are many recordings that will profit from some frequency adjustments, but when a disc *must* have it in order to sound acceptable, it might be better to discard it. For many users, an equalizer serves best for "equalizing out" frequency-response irregularities in the *speaker systems and/or the listening room*. This is not to say that an equalizer can make a bad speaker or room sound like a good one. But it can help in touching up small faults in an otherwise acceptable system and listening environment. Adjusting an equalizer to do this requires experience and experimentation. For various reasons, some rooms seem to resist the ministrations of an equalizer altogether; any attempt to "fix" one problem creates or uncovers another that is at least as objectionable. Thus, there are really no hard-and-fast procedures you can resort to in making adjustments. (Professional sound men equipped with suitable instruments can usually manage systematic equalizer adjustments, but these presuppose acoustic conditions rarely met with in the typical home.)

THE *parametric* equalizer is now becoming readily available, and it expands the flexibility of the equalization concept considerably. A very simple parametric unit would have three controls. One would determine the height or the depth of the hump or depression introduced into the frequency-response curve. Another would determine how sharp or broad the hump or depression is to be. And the third would move the hump/depression up and down in frequency so that it could be positioned precisely where wanted. (Conventional multiband equalizers give you very little command over the function of the second control, and as for locating the precise frequency at which the adjustment takes place, you've simply got to hope that one of the multiband's fixed-frequency controls corresponds to it.) Most of today's parametrics are somewhat more elaborate than the example cited above, giving you multiple sets of these three-control "blocks" so that you can make multiple adjustments as required. □



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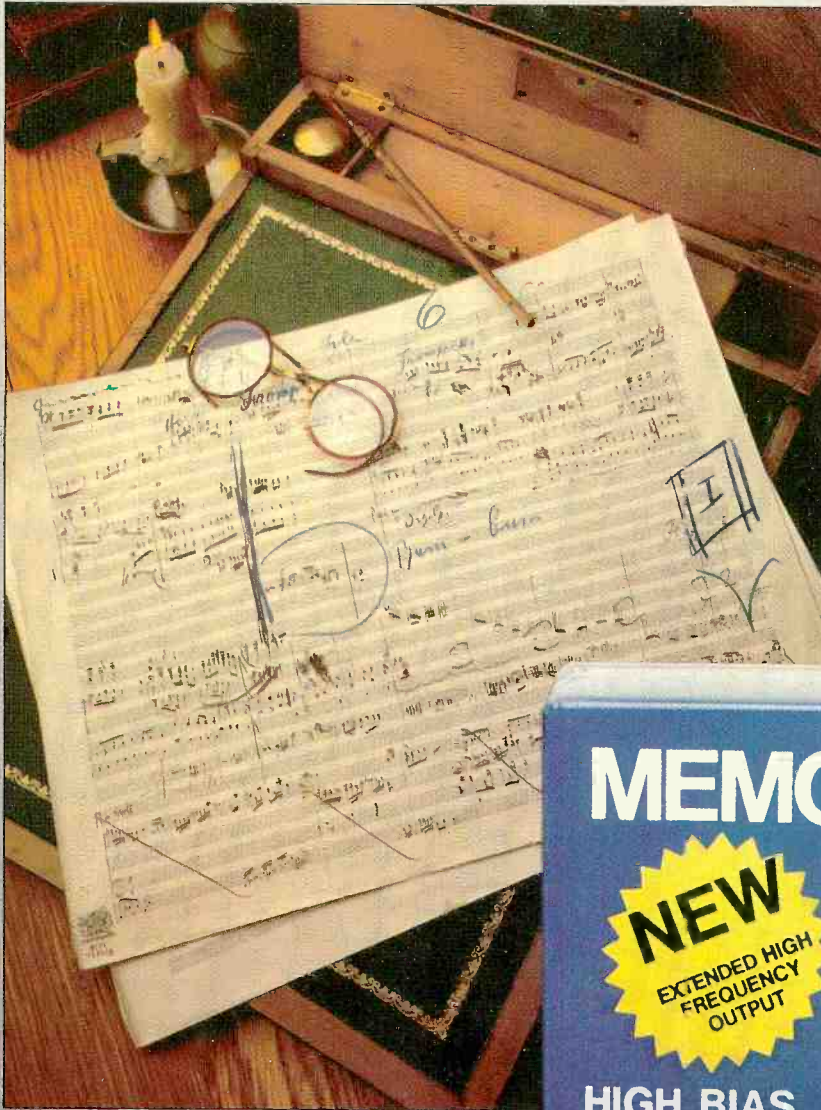
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We're convinced you'll have a new favorite.

New MEMOREX HIGH BIAS is made with an exclusive ferrite crystal oxide formulation. No high bias tape delivers greater high frequency fidelity with less noise, plus truer response across the entire frequency range.

In short, you can't find a high bias cassette that gives you truer reproduction.

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Is it live, or is it Memorex?



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Tape Talk

By Craig Stark

STEREO REVIEW's tape expert pauses at the door to paradise: the raw-tape department of a Japanese hi-fi store.



MICROPHONE SELECTION—2

IN the February issue I discussed the microphone types (dynamic, electret, condenser) and directional patterns (omnidirectional, cardioid, and figure-eight) you must choose among when selecting mikes suitable for your individual recording requirements. This month I'll take up three microphone characteristics that relate to the electrical interface between the mike and your tape deck or mixer. These are impedance, balanced vs. unbalanced cable connections, and sensitivity.

All microphone cables have some electrical capacitance, and the longer the cable, the greater the capacitance. Cable capacitance tends to cause treble losses; the higher the frequency, the greater the loss. The frequency at which a given cable capacitance will begin to introduce significant loss is determined by the impedance of the microphone it's connected to. The lower the microphone impedance, the longer the cable you can use between the mike and mixer or recorder input before appreciable treble losses occur. Thus, while with low-impedance (Lo-Z) mikes rated in the 50- to 250-ohm range you can use cable runs of up to about 200 feet safely, with a high-impedance (Hi-Z) mike rated at 10,000 to 20,000 ohms a cable run over 15 feet long will produce some high-end response loss. Typical medium-impedance mikes, in the 500- to 1,000-ohm range, should be okay with cable runs of up to about 35 feet.

Just as professionals invariably choose low-impedance microphones, they also invariably select "balanced-line" instead of "unbalanced" operation. The difference is that in a balanced cable there are two signal conductors plus the outer braided shield, whereas an unbalanced cable (like the ordinary shielded

cables used with home hi-fi components) has a single inner conductor for one of the two signal leads and uses the outer braided shield itself for shielding against hum and as the other signal conductor. Balanced lines are essentially immune to pickup of a.c. hum from power lines, motors, lighting arrangements, etc., but, with long runs of unbalanced line, hum and buzz can be a problem. Balanced microphone cables are generally terminated either in a three-pin "Cannon-type" plug (pin number 1 is shield, 2 is "signal hot," and 3 is "signal cold") or in a 1/4-inch "stereo" phone plug (the tip is "signal hot," the ring is "signal cold," and the sleeve is for the shield). Unbalanced microphone cables usually use a regular 1/4-inch phone plug, with the center conductor connected to the tip and the shield to the sleeve. Professional microphones are usually supplied without plugs, but they do come with instructions for proper wiring.

Fortunately, many of the higher-price recorders and mixers whose inputs are designed for unbalanced cables with 1/4-inch phone plugs will accept a 1/4-inch stereo-plug (balanced-line) mike feed and will automatically ground the "ring" part of the plug along with the sleeve. You then lose the true balanced-line configuration and its noise-reducing advantages, but this does permit you to choose a microphone designed for balanced-line operation (high-quality mikes usually are) and plug it in—if your recorder's input impedance is correct for it. If, on the other hand, you want to use Lo-Z balanced-line microphones with a recorder or mixer having a Hi-Z unbalanced input, you must buy an accessory microphone "matching" transformer (generally about \$20), which is connected at the deck end of

the cable, not at the microphone end. (One reason professional-quality mixers cost so much more than typical audiophile models is that the former invariably include these costly microphone input transformers.)

Finally, we come to the question of picking a microphone whose output level is compatible with the input sensitivity of your recorder. Even a brief look at parts-house catalogs or manufacturers' specification sheets will disclose a bewildering array of negative numbers—all the way from about -35 dB to about -145 dB—for microphone sensitivity (signal output for a given acoustic input, that is), which is sometimes expressed with reference to microbars, sometimes in terms of dynes per square centimeter, and other times in terms of pascals. (While few of us who use microphones have degrees in math or physics, most of those who write microphone specs seem to delight in showing that they do!)

SINCE your aim is to use your microphones with your recorder rather than demonstrate your prowess with a scientific calculator, do insist, before buying, that you be allowed to return a mike whose output proves incompatible with your recorder's input. Here's a kind of rough and ready check, which can be performed either at home or in a dealer's showroom, that will give you a fair idea of output-level suitability.

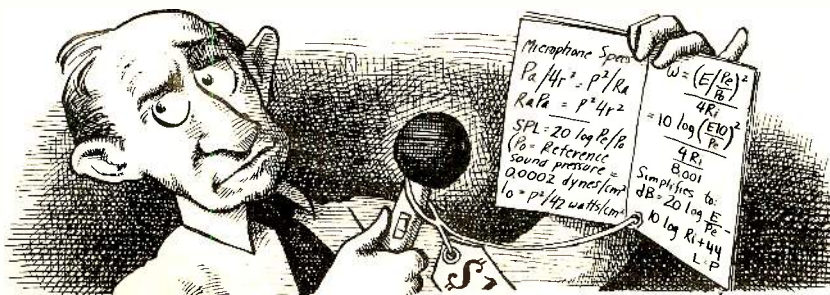
1. Set up the microphone in front of a loudspeaker, just as if the latter were an instrument you intended to record. Plug the microphone into your tape deck, making sure that your amplifier's tape switch is in source position so you won't create an unholy howling.

2. Play a piece of music from FM or disc through the speaker at a very loud level—a level that you judge is as loud as the microphone would pick up at a live performance.

3. Slowly increase the recording level to the point where your meter is running into the red area and note the setting of the recording-level control. (If your deck has both a master recording-level control and a mike-level control, set the master control at the level you would normally use for dubbing from FM or discs, then use the mike-level control.)

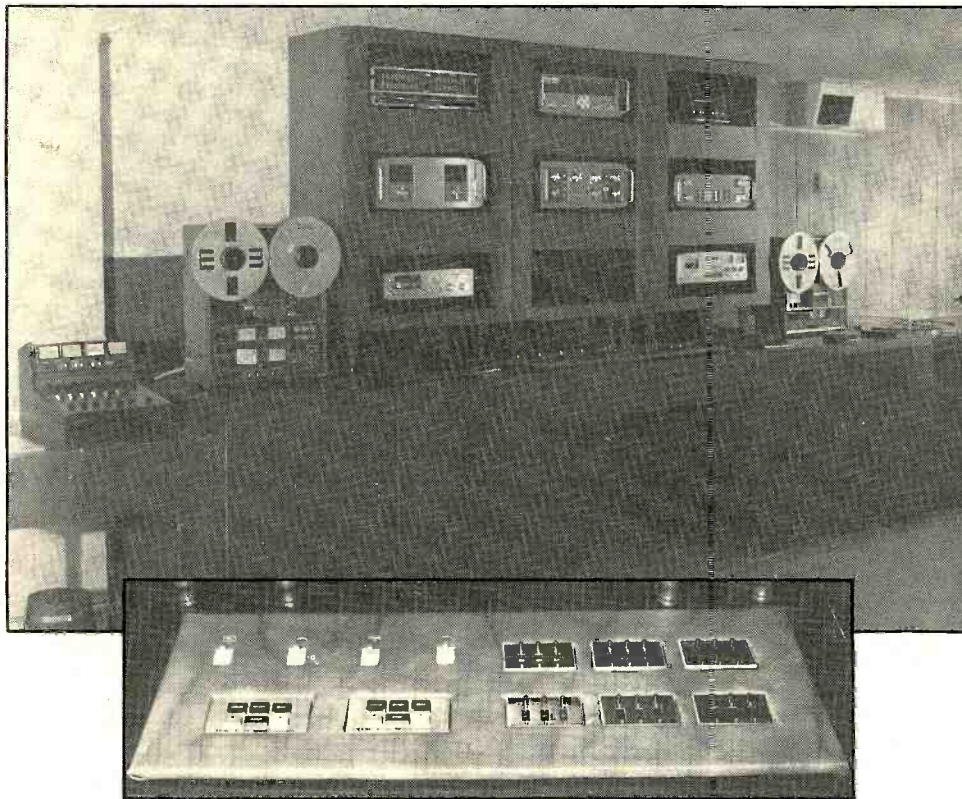
4. If you find that you've barely turned up the mike-level control (for example, less than one quarter of its available rotation, or a ten o'clock position), the microphone you're testing probably has too much output for your recorder and may overload its input stage even before the signal gets to the level control.

5. On the other hand, if you've had to advance the record control very much over its half-way rotation (beyond two o'clock, for example), the mike probably has too little output for your deck. You can double-check this by turning the music off and, wearing headphones, gradually turning up the mike-level control in a quiet room until you find the point where the hiss level suddenly begins to rise rapidly. (This is in addition to the normal room noise the mike is picking up.) From that point upward on the control you're going to have trouble making live recordings with your deck. The output of a microphone when picking up live music levels should drive your meters into the red before you reach this point. As this test suggests, the position of the mike-level control that indicates good mike-to-tape-recorder compatibility should optimally fall somewhere between eleven o'clock and two o'clock. □



Installation of the Month

By Gary Stock



IN the tradition of the great estate homes of England's country counties, Israel Hill of Rochester, New York, has built a "music room" devoted totally to the recording and reproduction of music. The room contains a Baldwin Hamilton Studio piano, a Hammond B2 electronic organ, and the fully equipped studio-style music system shown above.

Mr. Hill and his wife Doris designed the cabinetry that houses the system primarily to facilitate home recording activities. Constructed of $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch high-density particle board covered in a high-pressure woodgrain laminate, the cabinet is in three sections bolted together, the facing on the upper sections swinging open to give access to the components. The apertures for the components are all of the same size; velvet cut to size is used to fill the spaces between the components and the aperture edges, thus giving a smooth appearance to the console front. The entire cabinet is placed 14 inches away from the back wall to permit temporary changes in signal-path connections for special recording or playback applications.

The Hills' equipment includes (top row, left to right) a Soundcraftsmen RP2201-R graphic equalizer, a Phase Linear 5000 Series II tuner, and a dbx 124 noise-reduction system plus (center row, left to right) a Phase Linear 400

Series II power amplifier, a 4000 Series II preamplifier, and a 6000 Series II analog delay system. These components serve, along with the Altec Model 15 loudspeakers used for monitoring purposes, as the playback components for the system.

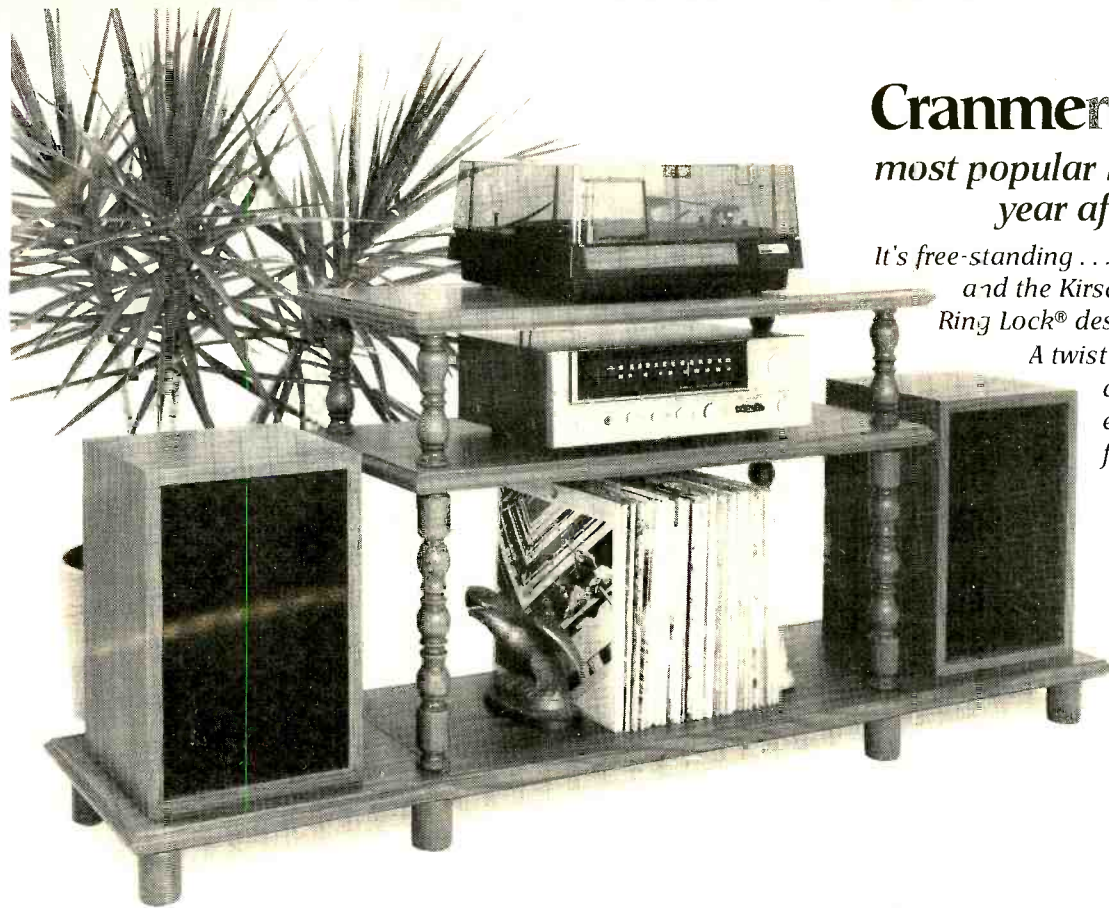
For recording and dubbing purposes, the system uses (bottom row, left to right) an Akai CR-83D eight-track cartridge deck, an Akai GXC-710D cassette deck, and (left to right on the desktop surface of the console) a Teac Model 2 stereo mixer with a Teac MB-20 meter bridge, a Teac 3340S four-channel open-reel recorder (capable of sel-sync overdubbing), and a Teac A3300SX-2T two-channel open-reel mastering recorder. A Pioneer PL-570 turntable equipped with a Stanton 881S cartridge (shown at far right) is used for disc playback.

THE lower center section of the console houses a master control panel (inset photograph). The panel contains remote-control facilities for both of the Teac open-reel recorders (lower left), master power-control switches for all of the components (right), and controls for panel lighting (upper left). The surface of the panel is covered in a resilient gold vinyl similar to the "soft" console surfaces found in many professional studios.

Ancillary components in the Hills' system include Koss headphones, microphones and stands from Audio-Technica, Electro-Voice, and Realistic, tape demagnetizing and cleaning tools, and a sound-pressure-level meter.

MANY of the features of this system are indicative of an increasing level of sophistication in home recording setups. Noise-reduction and signal-processing outboards (such as the dbx unit, analog delay system, and graphic equalizer found in the Hills' system) are in virtually universal use in pro studios. Significantly, the use of a recording "chain" in which multiple tracks are recorded, mixed into two-channel form, and then dubbed onto a two-channel mastering recorder (as is done in this system with the two Teac recorders and Teac mixer) is a technique, developed in professional studios, that has only recently been brought into the home.

The Hills' studio is an excellent example of what has come to be known as a "semi-pro" recording system: it lacks some of the extremely exotic features and equipment of a full-blown studio, yet it has capabilities well beyond those of a conventional music system—including, we would suspect, the ability to produce master tapes that would do many a professional recording engineer proud. □



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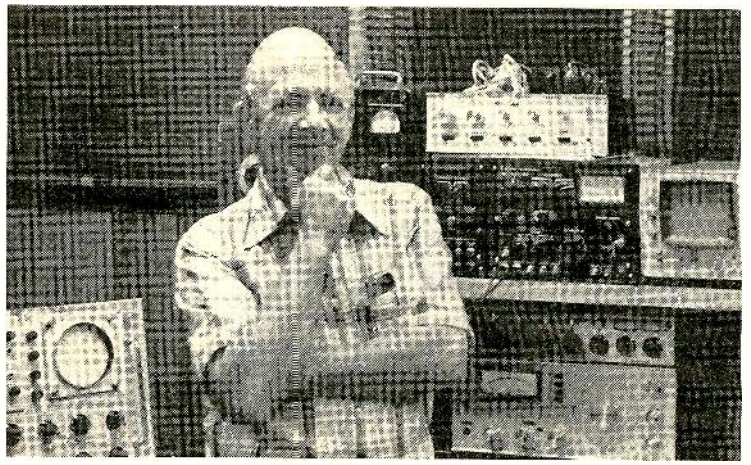
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CIRCLE NO. 30 ON READER SERVICE CARD

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Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



● Does "Reference" Mean Best? ●

FROM time to time I am reminded that some readers do not understand what is meant by the term "reference" when it is applied to a component or a test condition. For example, in the past I have been taken to task by those who did not understand our test procedure because the "reference" speaker we used for many years in our (now discontinued) simulated "live-vs.-recorded" listening tests was "merely" a modified AR-5. More recently, I mentioned that we are currently using a Design Acoustics D-12 as one of our calibrated references for acoustic measurements, and it wouldn't surprise me if some people complain that it too is not worthy of that "status," either because of its age, quality, or lack of phase coherence.

But a *reference* is merely something with which other things can be compared—nothing more, nothing less. It most emphatically is *not*, per se, something whose performance or other characteristics are the "best" or "state of the art." If that were so, no hi-fi reference could enjoy its status for long, since new and improved products (in terms of measurements, if not sound) come along constantly.

For example, in a regulated power supply, the reference voltage that ultimately determines the very stable output voltage of the supply is usually the drop across a special diode through which a constant current is passed. The *actual* voltage across the diode is relatively unimportant, and one need know it only approximately when designing the supply. What is important is that it remain constant with the passage of time and under all expected operating conditions.

A reference can not only be a performance characteristic, it need not even be a *good* one, nor even one that would be minimally tolerable in the normal operation of the device in question. Consider the "reference" maximum recording level of a tape deck, which is defined as that which produces 3 per cent third-harmonic distortion in the playback output. No one would want to listen to that level of distortion for long, let alone think of it as "good," but it is convenient for purposes of definition. Similarly, in checking the older IHF usable-sensitivity rating of an FM tuner, we determine the input level that gives -30 dB (3.2 per cent) of combined distortion and

noise in the tuner's outputs. That is certainly *not* a tolerable listening condition, yet the reference is accepted without question for what it is—which is *not* an implication that 3 per cent distortion is the state of the art for FM tuners.

If you wish to determine the relative accuracy of a loudspeaker's audio reproduction, it is convenient to have a "reference sound"—that is, a *known* or *calibrated* output, not necessarily a "perfect" one—with which to compare it. In our current acoustic-measurement procedure, we use two reference speakers. A specially modified AR-LST serves as our 2π (hemispherical or 180-degree horizontal dispersion) reference, and a Design Acoustics D-12 is our 4π (spherical or 360-degree horizontal dispersion) reference. The precise frequency response (to be exact, the total power output plotted against frequency) of each of these two individual speakers—the actual AR-LST and D-12 units we use—has been measured for us by an outside laboratory. We *know* the performance of these speakers, which is not to say anything one way or another about their listening quality, phase response, degree of distortion, sensitivity, and so forth. Whatever anyone may feel about the quality of these speakers as music *reproducers* (we happen to think they are both very good) is beside the point; for us, their *only* function is to calibrate our test room for measuring other speakers.

As it happens, both our reference speakers have a very uniform power output over a very large part of the audio range (± 3 dB from 500 to 20,000 Hz). Furthermore, repeated tests over the years have shown that they have not significantly changed their characteristics with time. Knowing the actual response curves of these speakers, we measure them in our test room. Naturally, their measured response there is different (with both systems it slopes downward above about 2,000 Hz) because of absorption by the room surfaces and furnishings. We have drawn curves of the *differences* between the "absolute" calibrated response curves of these speakers (as measured for us by the independent laboratory) and the curves produced in our test room. We then use these "difference" curves to "correct" the response measurements made on other speakers tested in the *same* room. By this procedure we obtain something quite close to the actual, room-independent total power-output responses of the speakers we are evaluating for test reports.

We have found that our 2π calibration using our hand-trimmed and modified AR-LST has worked very well with all of the speakers we have had occasion to measure in our current test room since it was built two and a half years ago. Our use of the calibrated Design Acoustics D-12 in our tests of the D-12A reported on in the last issue was inspired by curiosity. Since we already had the D-12 on hand, we wanted to see how it compared with the new speaker, and we also took the opportunity to recheck our previous room calibration (with the AR-LST) against the calibration provided by the omnidirectional D-12. As we said last month, the results using both reference speakers were gratifyingly close, and this cross check of our two references seems to us to confirm the validity of our speaker test method.

To sum up: it is important that the significance of a reference in *any* measurement be understood. No voltmeter, signal generator, or scale would have any value if its readings could not be compared with some reference quantity or standard. All that "reference" means is a *characteristic that is known and remains constant over time*. Nothing else. I am, therefore, sometimes amused at the misuse of

Tested This Month

●
Harman Kardon hk670 Receiver
ADS Model 10 Acoustic Dimension
Synthesizer
Gale GS401A Speaker System
Phase Linear Model 700 Series Two
Power Amplifier
Revox B790 Record Player

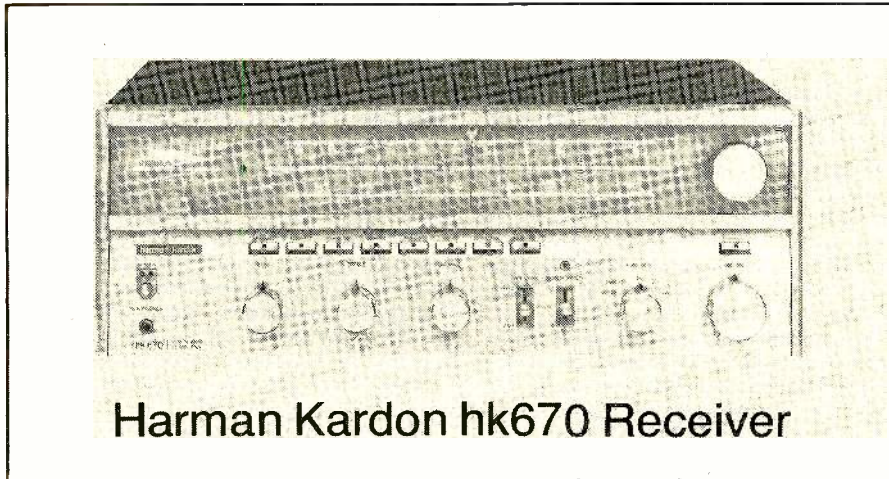
this term by some manufacturers of products ranging from phono cartridges to speakers. None—not a single one—of these products is intrinsically a reference for anything, al-

though they can certainly be calibrated and employed as such. To call a speaker that will be used for listening to music at home a "reference," for instance, is ludicrous. Perhaps

the product in question really is a reference for its manufacturer, but in view of the cost of establishing a true reference, I cannot imagine attempting to sell one at a hi-fi store!

Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



HARMAN KARDON'S hk670 is a medium-power AM/FM stereo receiver with direct-coupled amplifiers. It is rated to deliver 60 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads between 20 and 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.06 per cent total harmonic distortion (THD). The distortion at 1,000 Hz and 60 watts is rated at only 0.03 per cent.

The hk670 has been designed according to the wide-band approach espoused by Harman Kardon for many years (long before it became fashionable). It has a rated rise time of 2.5 microseconds and a slew rate of 65 volts per microsecond. The FM-tuner section boasts some equally impressive specifications, including distortion of 0.05 per cent in mono and 0.08 per cent in stereo.

The hk670 has a distinctive appearance, with a large dial area spanning the entire upper part of the front panel. The AM and FM dial scales are brightly lit in yellow-white when the receiver is on (in contrast to the greens, blues, and even reds used on most tuners and receivers). At the top of the red dial pointer is a small green light that glows when an FM station is tuned in. The receiver's single tuning meter is a triple-function indicator that Harman Kardon calls an "SMQ" (strength, multipath, quieting) meter. Although it reads up-scale like an ordinary signal-strength meter, it also responds to the noise in the received signal. This feature has been included on some previous receivers from this company, and it is claimed to facilitate more accurate tuning than conventional meter systems. Multipath distortion is indicated by a fluctuation of the pointer during program modulation.

Below the dial is a row of eight rectangular pushbuttons with small lights in their centers to indicate when they are engaged. Two of these switch between the two pairs of speaker outputs and another two control the SUBSONIC and HIGH CUT filters. The rest are used to bypass the tone-control circuits, parallel the two channels for mono operation, switch on the FM muting, and convert the 75-microsecond de-emphasis to the 25-microsecond de-emphasis required when using an external Dolby adapter. At the right of the panel, another, similar pushbutton controls the LOUDNESS compensation circuit.

The other controls are across the bottom of the panel. A small pushbutton power switch at the far left has two red pilot lights above it and a stereo-headphone jack below it. The bass, treble, and balance control knobs have small protruding arrows that clearly show where they are set (each is detented at its center). A pair of three-position lever switches controls the tape-recording functions. The TAPE COPY switch interconnects two decks for dubbing from either machine to the other. The TAPE MONITOR switch connects the amplifier to the selected source program or to the playback outputs of either tape deck. A rotary FUNCTION switch selects the program source: PHONO, STEREO FM (which is an automatic stereo/mono mode), FM (mono only), AM, or AUX. At the far right of the panel is a large VOLUME knob; above it in the dial area is a similar-size TUNING knob.

The speaker connectors in the rear of the receiver are insulated spring clips. Also in the rear are terminals for a 300-ohm FM antenna and a wire AM antenna, a hinged ferrite-rod

AM antenna, and a small control shaft for adjusting the FM interstation-noise muting threshold. One of the two a.c. convenience outlets is switched. There is no provision for electrically separating the power amplifier from the rest of the receiver. In its standard metal case, the hk670 measures 18½ inches wide, 6¼ inches high, and 14 inches deep, and it weighs 26 pounds. Price: \$569. An optional walnut case is \$50 extra, and walnut end caps for the metal case are \$12 a pair.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The hk670 became only slightly warm during the FTC-mandated one-hour preconditioning period. The receiver's outputs clipped at 74.4 watts per channel into 8 ohms (IHF clipping headroom = 0.94 dB). The output into 4 and 16 ohms at clipping was 112.4 and 43 watts, respectively. The IHF dynamic headroom was 1.05 dB, corresponding to a short-term output of 76.5 watts into 8 ohms. The closeness of the clipping- and dynamic-headroom ratings indicates the use of well regulated power supplies in the hk670.

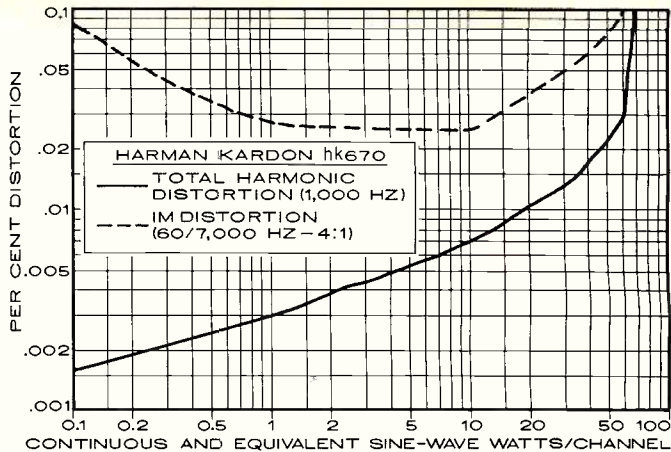
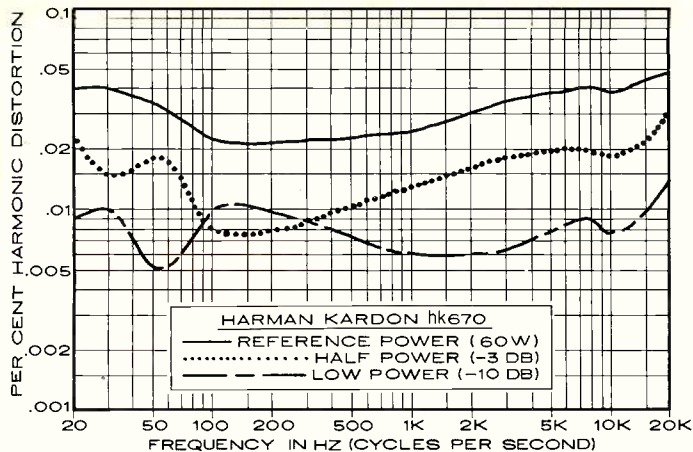
The harmonic distortion of the hk670 at 1,000 Hz was extraordinarily low at most usable power levels. From less than 0.002 per cent at 0.1 watt, it increased smoothly to 0.003 per cent at 1 watt, 0.01 per cent at 20 watts, and 0.028 per cent at the rated 60 watts. The intermodulation distortion was about 0.028 per cent at power outputs from 1 to 10 watts. It increased at lower and higher outputs, to 0.08 per cent at 0.1 watt and 0.095 per cent at 60 watts.

At rated power, harmonic distortion was under 0.03 per cent through the mid frequencies, rising to 0.04 per cent at 20 Hz and 0.05 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At reduced power, the distortion was consistently lower than at full power, with typical readings between 0.006 and 0.01 per cent over the entire audio band at normal listening levels.

The IHF reference power output of 1 watt was obtained with an input of 50 millivolts (AUX) and 0.85 millivolt (PHONO). The respective A-weighted noise levels, referred to 1 watt, were -80.7 and -77 dB. The phono preamplifier overloaded at a good 240 millivolts at 1,000 Hz; the overload levels at 20 and 20,000 Hz, when converted to equivalent 1,000-Hz values, were about the same. The phono-input impedance was measured as 47,000 ohms in parallel with 125 picofarads. The IHF slew factor was in excess of 25 (our measurement limit).

The bass tone control had a sliding turnover frequency: at half settings the response was

(Continued overleaf)



affected only below 100 Hz, but at maximum or minimum control positions the effect began at about 400 Hz. The treble control, on the other hand, began to show its effects between 1,000 and 2,000 Hz, and the shape of its response curve changed as the control was moved from center. At half setting, for example, it produced a "shelf" in the response, affecting all frequencies above 1,000 Hz equally, but at extreme settings the boost or cut was substantial, reaching ± 16 dB at 20,000 Hz.

The high-cut filter appeared to have been designed for a 12-dB-per-octave slope (which was never fully achieved in the audio band) and a -3-dB frequency of about 4,000 Hz. The subsonic filter's response was down 3 dB at 20 Hz; we could not measure its slope below that frequency. The loudness compensation boosted both low and high frequencies (the latter only slightly) as the volume control was turned down. The phono equalization was within ± 0.5 dB of the RIAA characteristic from 50 to 20,000 Hz and down about 2 dB at 20 Hz. It was not affected significantly when measured through the inductance of a phono cartridge.

The FM tuner section had a usable sensitivity of 11 dBf (2 microvolts) in mono, and the stereo sensitivity was determined by the switching threshold of 31.5 dBf. The 50-dB quieting level was achieved at 12.8 dBf (2.5 microvolts) in mono and 35 dBf in stereo. The ultimate quieting was an excellent 79 dB in mono and 70.5 dB in stereo (at a 65-dBf or 1,000-microvolt input). The tuner distortion at 65 dBf was 0.1 per cent in mono and 0.034 per cent in stereo (the latter is actually less than the known distortion in our signal generator, and hence indicates some cancellation of the distortion in the signal by the distortion of the tuner). We noted, however, that the distortion reached a broad minimum at about 45 dBf in mono and 65 dBf in stereo, increasing slightly at higher signal levels (to 0.3 per cent at 95 dBf in mono). The tuning point for minimum measured distortion was quite critical, and it could not be achieved consistently when we tuned for a maximum indication on the SMQ meter. The meter calibrations (on a scale of 10) tend to favor low-level signals, with a mid-scale reading requiring only a 29-dBf (15 microvolts) input and a reading of 9 being reached with 49 dBf (150 microvolts). Increases beyond 57 dBf (400 microvolts) had no further effect on the meter reading.

The hk670 evidently has a very effective

system for removing the 19-kHz pilot carrier from its audio circuits (no schematic was supplied, so we do not know if it uses a filter or a canceling circuit). The frequency response was almost ruler-flat—within +0.1, -0.2 dB from 30 to 10,000 Hz, rising to +0.4 dB at 15,000 Hz. In spite of the fully maintained high-frequency response, the 19-kHz leakage into the audio was a very low -69 dB. The tuner hum was an inaudible -71 dB.

The stereo channel separation of the hk670 was very uniform with frequency and completely symmetrical between channels. It was 45 dB through most of the mid-range, falling to 35 dB at 30 Hz and 38 dB at 15,000 Hz. The FM muting threshold was set at 12.8 dBf at the factory, but it could be adjusted by a rear-panel control between 11.5 and 46 dBf.

The capture ratio was 1.43 dB at a 45-dBf input and 1.5 dB at 65 dBf. AM-rejection measurements at these signal levels were, respectively, 48 and 60 dB. The image rejection was 73 dB. Alternate-channel selectivity was 65.2 dB, and adjacent-channel selectivity was 8.6 dB. The frequency response of the AM tuner section was down 4 dB at 20 Hz and 6 dB at 4,000 Hz.

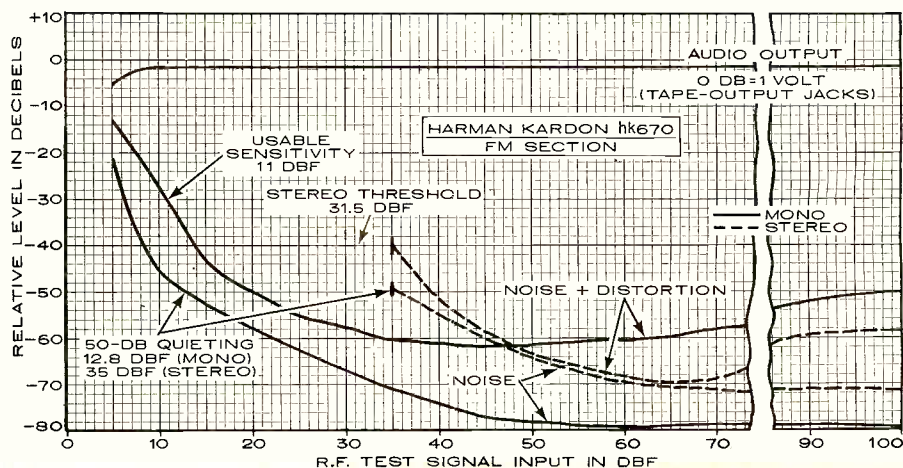
● **Comment.** Our measurements of the hk670 showed it to be an absolutely first-rate receiver, with audio and FM distortion levels that until recently were found only in the most expensive and esoteric components. Its other performance characteristics were of comparable excellence.

Harman Kardon stresses the sound qualities of their products, and we certainly found no reason to disagree. The hk670 sounded very much like other top-quality receivers and combinations of tuners and amplifiers with which we compared it. We noted that the "Twin Power" aspect featured by H-K consists only of separate rectifiers and filters for the two channels, all operating from a common power transformer. Purists may carp at this; our experience has been that the use of one, two, or three power transformers has little effect on an amplifier's performance, just on its weight, bulk, and cost.

Our overall reaction to the hk670 as a product derives principally from its "feel," from how well it did what is expected of it, and from whatever flaws and omissions we could discover in it. The final verdict was overwhelmingly positive—that is, from an operational standpoint, this is as smooth, easy-handling, and fine-sounding a receiver as we have ever had the opportunity to use.

The controls are positive in their action, and their markings are exceptionally legible. Although the scale of the FM dial is calibrated only at 1-MHz intervals, it is long, linear, and accurate enough that one can estimate frequencies to 0.1 MHz with assurance. It is important, however, that the logging scale below it (marked 1 to 10) not be confused with the FM scale markings. And although the hk670 has good, flexible tape-recording facilities (and can be set to dub tapes while one is lis-

(Continued on page 50)



See It. Feel It. Just About Taste It.

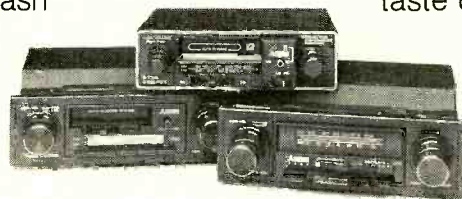


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tening to another program), it does not have a separate preamplifier output and power-amplifier input. This can be a definite inconvenience for some users.

The tuning is noncritical (even though one may not achieve the 0.1 per cent or lower distortion we obtained in the laboratory, the actual distortion is certain to be less than that built into the received signal and completely negligible from a listening standpoint). The muting is literally perfect, with not a trace of noise or modulation as one tunes on or off a station, and there is just enough delay in the unmuting to make the program emerge softly

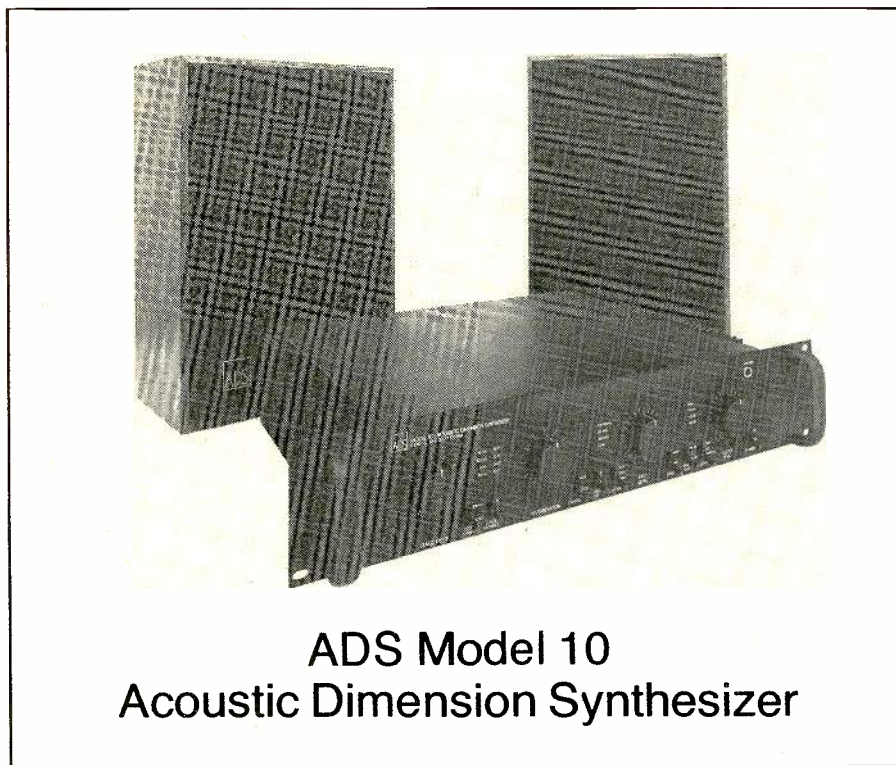
from a silent background. The factory-set muting threshold will not keep anyone from hearing any signal of listenable quality (and the same can be said of the stereo threshold, which roughly corresponds to the 50-dB quieting sensitivity). The same smoothness and silence of operation is carried over into the on/off power switching, which provides a delay of a couple of seconds after the receiver is turned on before any sound is heard.

The multipath-distortion meter indication was very effective, in contrast to the many other "multipath indicators" we have seen that seem to respond only when the distortion

can be heard easily enough and therefore doesn't need a meter to indicate it. The meter of the hk670 is stationary only when there is no multipath condition, and it wiggles visibly even when the level of multipath distortion is well below audibility.

Harman Kardon appears to have done almost everything exactly "right" in the design and execution of the hk670. Any criticisms we might care to make would be rather minor. There is no question that the hk670 is a fine receiver and a fine value in its price range.

Circle 134 on reader service card



In the few years that high-quality time-delay accessories have been available for home use, they have been widely recognized for the enhanced sense of realism they can impart to reproduced music. For many people they provide the kind of "you-are-there" ambiance that was promised (but rarely delivered) by quadraphonic reproduction. A time-delay installation shares with a quadraphonic system the need for an additional stereo amplifier (or a single four-channel amplifier) and a second pair of speakers, which, of course, makes it rather expensive. But the owners of such systems consider the money well spent.

One of the qualities that distinguishes a live musical performance from its reproduction in a different environment is the ambiance of the concert hall. Whether a sound source is live or reproduced, it reaches the listeners' ears

by a number of different paths. The first arrival, the direct sound, is used by the brain to localize the source. This is followed by a number of later-arriving sounds, delayed because they have been reflected from room-boundary surfaces and objects within the room. They arrive at the listening position at various times and usually with a lower strength and narrower bandwidth than the direct sound. These late-arriving sounds convey to the brain a sense of the size of the room in which they were originally propagated.

Such a mix of direct and reflected sounds exists in different proportions in every concert hall and recording studio, as well as in every home listening room. In general, rooms of different dimensions and acoustic treatments will have very different ambiance characteristics. Because home listening rooms are usually much smaller than concert halls, the time

delays at home are much smaller than those in many original recording locations (sound travels one foot in about one millisecond). No matter how effectively the concert-hall ambiance is recorded (and a skilled recording engineer can often capture it with impressive success), when the reproduced sound comes only from the front the illusion of reality is severely diminished.

The purpose of a time-delay system, as its name suggests, is to delay the stereo signals and then reproduce them through additional speakers located toward the rear of the room. If this is done properly, one can create a remarkably effective sonic illusion of a large concert hall in a normal-size room.

Time delay in home systems is usually achieved electronically, using either analog (the so-called "bucket-brigade" devices) or digital circuitry. Each system has its adherents who claim certain advantages for their choice. With either system, success depends on the correct choice of delay times and the relative amplitudes of the differently delayed signals when they are combined to form the rear-channel program. It is possible, both theoretically and practically, to obtain excellent—or indifferent—results from either system. It is interesting to note that all presently manufactured home time-delay systems sell for very nearly the same price, regardless of whether they use analog or digital circuitry.

The ADS Model 10 Acoustic Dimension Synthesizer is the first product of its type from ADS. Most time-delay units require an external stereo power amplifier and a pair of rear speakers. ADS has built an amplifier (rated at 100 watts per channel into 4 ohms) into the Model 10 and provided a pair of small, high-quality speakers (Model ADS L10) to form a complete package that occupies a minimum of space and offers a high degree of operating versatility.

The ADS Model 10 control unit has a flat black finish and resembles an integrated amplifier (which, of course, it also is). The heat-sink fins are on the left and right sides of the unit, leaving the rear for the signal connections. On the front panel, the most prominent controls are four large knobs: STAGE DEPTH controls the amount of delayed signal mixed into the front-channel outputs, helping to "open up" mono and acoustically dead

(Continued on page 54)

ESS Wins On Campus



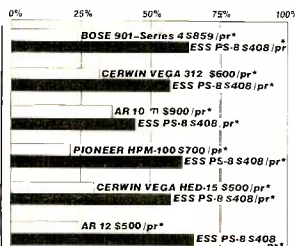
In comparative tests, students attending U.C.L.A. judge ESS superior to JBL, Bose, Pioneer, AR, and Cerwin Vega.

In a recent blind listening test involving hundreds of students attending U.C.L.A., ESS speakers were judged superior in overall performance to other top speaker brands, sometimes by margins of nearly 3 to 1. The controlled test was conducted under the supervision of an independent national testing laboratory.



The participants compared ESS against comparably priced models from Bose, JBL, Pioneer, AR and Cerwin Vega, in an environment designed to simulate home listening conditions. Loudness differences were electronically equalized.

For three continuous days, groups of up to 30 students listened, without knowledge of the speaker model or brand, to the same musical material played on all the



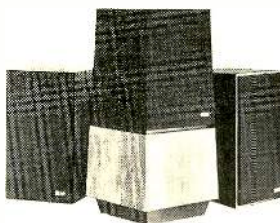
speakers. They were then asked to choose which speaker, in their opinion, sounded best. Tests were conducted for clarity, accuracy and freedom from distortion.

Students repeatedly selected ESS speakers in 13 out of 14 head-on comparison tests—even, as the graph above reveals, when compared to far more expensive competitive brand models.

ESS project technicians acknowledged that they were not surprised. "We would not have conducted such controlled, precisely monitored tests, had we not been confident of the superiority of the ESS Heil Air Motion Transformer." The Heil Air Motion Transformer midrange tweeter, invented by Dr. Oskar

Heil, creator of the FET, is a unique principle of sound reproduction licensed exclusively to ESS. By squeezing the air instead of pushing it, the Heil achieves degrees of clarity, linearity and airiness unattainable with conventional drivers."

ESS will be conducting the same comparison test on college campuses across the nation. Watch for the dramatic results from the University of Wisconsin at Madison to be unveiled in coming weeks. Or better yet, visit your local ESS dealer and ask him to let you take the ESS Listening Test personally. See if you, too, can't hear the difference.



Take the ESS Listening Test yourself

ESS
sound as clear as light

*Suggested Retail Price



Power!

That's the Jensen Car Stereo Triax® II.
That's the thrill of being there.

Power is right! 100 watts! Now, all the energy and intensity that went into the original performance comes through the Jensen Triax II 3-way speaker.

This incredible 100 watt capability gives the Triax II an unparalleled clarity of sound throughout the entire spectrum.

What gives the Triax II its great power handling and sound reproduction? For starters, the piezoelectric solid state tweeter with low mass and incredible power handling capabilities. It starts reproducing crystal clear high frequency signals at 6,000 Hz... and keeps going well past the range of human audibility.

The 6" x 9" woofer of the Triax II boasts a new large diameter barium ferrite 20 oz. magnet. Which means better heat dissipation and more efficiency for clearer, truer sound at higher listening levels.

A new high power 1½" voice coil on the Triax II translates into less distortion and the ability to achieve higher sound pressure levels.

The midrange unit of this remarkable speaker produces smoother sound with better transient response, less distortion and higher power handling... thanks to its large 2.3 magnet structure.

And the Triax II is fully compatible with the advanced bi-amplified power sources for outstanding clarity and separation.

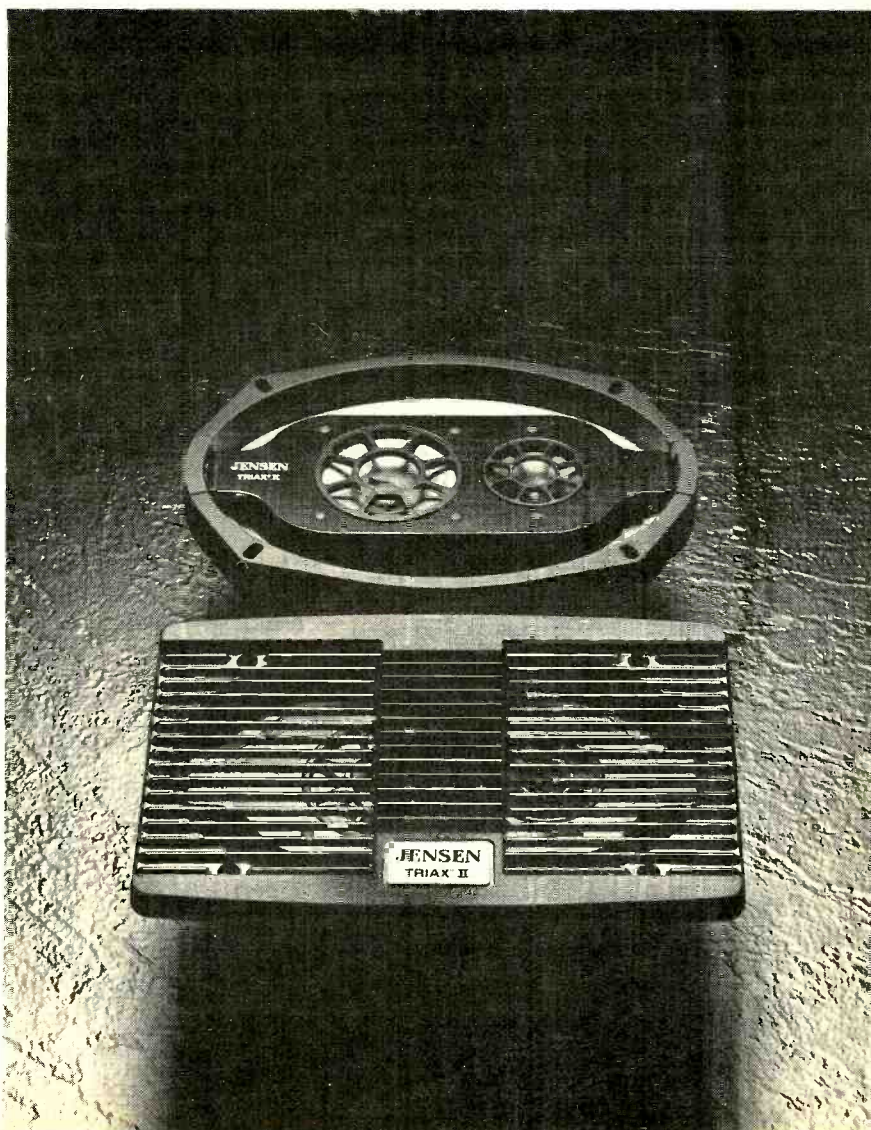
So go to the concert. Hear the Jensen Triax II. That's the thrill of being there.

JENSEN
The thrill of being there.

For more information, write Jensen Sound Laboratories, Division of Pemcor, Inc., 4136 N. United Parkway, Schiller Park, Illinois 60176.

® "Triaxial" and "Triax" are registered trademarks identifying the patented 3-way speaker systems of Jensen Sound Laboratories, Division of Pemcor, Inc. (U.S. patent #4,122,315).

CIRCLE NO. 28 ON READER SERVICE CARD



HOW IT WORKS

THE ADS Model 10 uses digital time-delay circuitry featuring a proprietary form of "delta modulation." Every four microseconds the analog program is sampled and its instantaneous amplitude is compared to a reference voltage. Depending on whether the signal level is greater or less than the reference voltage, a digital "1" or "0" is generated, and the reference voltage is adjusted so as to follow the changes in signal level, never differing from it by an amount greater than that of one of the corrective steps.

The series of "1" and "0" pulses is passed through a chain of 25,000 digital shift registers. The pulses are moved from one register to the next at a clock rate of 250,000 Hz, so that the most delayed output emerges 100 milliseconds after it enters the delay circuitry. Actually, the output pulses are taken from the shift regis-

ters at twelve places along the line, in three groups of four outputs each, enabling each of the three time delays to be set to one of four different lengths by means of the front-panel controls.

Each delayed pulse train passes through a digital-to-analog decoder where the inverse of the encoding process takes place and a delayed analog program is re-created. The three delayed signals are mixed in controllable ratios to form a single delayed output signal (which can be channeled back to the inputs to a degree controlled by a front-panel REVERBERATION knob). The combined signals, including the effects of any recirculated signals, are amplified and heard through the rear speakers. Although there is considerably more signal processing than this involved, the basic operation of the ADS Model 10 is much as we have described.

stereo recordings; REVERBERATION controls the amount of recycled delayed sound that is included in the outputs to the rear speakers; INPUT LEVEL is used in conjunction with four LED indicators to set the signal level for optimum circuit operation without distortion or noise; and OUTPUT LEVEL adjusts the volume of the rear channels in relation to that of the front speakers.

The other controls consist of nine small toggle switches along the lower portion of the panel. In its MONO setting, the SOURCE AMBIENCE switch provides delayed outputs from any kind of input material, including mono. In the switch's STEREO position, the delay circuits respond only to the difference between the left- and right-channel inputs. A center-located signal, whether from a mono program or from, say, a radio announcer midway between stereo microphones, is heard from the front speakers in the normal manner with little or no delayed output. This feature, unique to the ADS system, greatly reduces the "voice-in-a-cave" effect on center-located vocals when the time delay is set to give good results with stereo music.

The STAGE DISTANCE switch operates in conjunction with four LED's above it. It has three positions and is spring-loaded to remain in its neutral center position when not being operated. Each upward movement of the switch advances the initial (shortest) time delay by one step, and each downward movement decreases the delay by one step. The selected initial delay is indicated by the corresponding LED's lighting up. The four delays are identified on the panel in terms of the apparent distance from the listener to the stage: 10, 24, 33, and 45 feet. (When the ADS Model 10 is first powered, it always comes on at the 33-foot setting, which is generally suitable for a wide variety of program material.) The CHARACTER switch has WIDE and CLOSE settings that adjust the spacing in time between the multiple signals within each group of delayed signals.

The HALL SIZE control operates like the STAGE DISTANCE switch, varying the lengths of the two longer time-delay paths simultane-

ously. Its four LED's are marked CLUB, SM. HALL, LG. HALL, and CATHEDRAL to suggest the size of the environments they simulate (the unit initially comes on at the LG. HALL setting). Normally, HALL SIZE is set to be appropriate for the STAGE DISTANCE so as to provide the most natural effect. The CONTOUR switch controls the high-frequency response of the delayed signals (the front outputs are exactly what is received from the primary signal source and are passed on unmodified to the front amplifier and speakers). The high-frequency response of the delayed channels can be set to 5,000, 8,000, or 13,000 Hz. The 8,000-Hz range is suggested as being suitable for most program material.

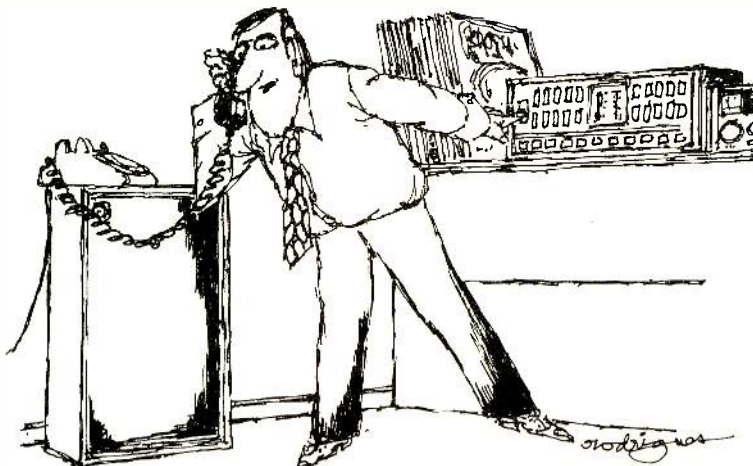
The INPUT switch selects either the MAIN signal (the normal mode of operation, with the ADS Model 10 connected between the pre-amplifier and the power amplifier) or the TAPE input (used only if the Model 10 is connected in the tape-monitoring path of the main amplifier; this is not a recommended connection unless there is no access to the connection from preamplifier to power amplifier).

The three-position FRONT LEVEL switch works in conjunction with the INPUT LEVEL knob to set the level of the delayed sound in the correct relationship to the front-channel levels. The OUTPUT switch connects either the AMBIENCE (delayed) or the DIRECT (undelayed) program to the rear speakers, or shuts them off entirely. The final control is the POWER switch. The Model 10 has special circuits that prevent turn-on or turn-off transients from reaching the speakers. There is a front-panel headphone jack suitable for driving headphones with impedances of 8 ohms or higher. Plugging in phones mutes all the speaker outputs (including the front speakers), and the headphone-output signal contains a mixture of direct and delayed sound.

The internal amplifiers of the Model 10 are rated at 100 watts per channel into 4-ohm loads from 30 to 30,000 Hz with no more than 0.08 per cent total harmonic distortion. The speakers are two-way acoustic suspension types with a 7-inch woofer and a 1-inch dome tweeter in rosewood-veneer cabinets that can be mounted either on the wall or the floor.

The ADS Model 10 is 15¾ inches wide (19 inches with the optional rack-mounting panel), 12 inches deep, and 3½ inches high. It weighs 23½ pounds. Each ADS L10 speaker is 9¾ inches wide, 15 inches high, and 6½ inches deep and weighs 12½ pounds. Price: \$1,000 complete with speakers. The time-delay portion of the ADS Model 10 is now available separately (as the Model 10 01), without the power amplifier or the speakers, for \$675.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** As might be imagined, the ADS Model 10 is far more complex electronically than it appears to be on the surface or from the once-over-lightly description we have given of its features. Attempting to verify its voluminous specifications by measurement would be exceedingly time-consuming—and also pointless, because the success or failure of a product such as this depends mostly on *subjective* reaction to its performance. And, in any case, no one besides an expert in the design of these devices would be able to interpret the test data properly. We therefore limited our bench tests to checking a few of the more obvious characteristics of the ADS Model 10 and depended on extended listening and use tests to appraise its strengths and weaknesses. (Continued on page 56)



"Now Herb, listen to the difference when I switch in the equalizer. . . ."



maxell

1

Our 7" reel is designed to gather tape. Not dust.

Something as insignificant as a speck of dust can mess up a perfectly good recording.

So at Maxell, we've developed an ingenious device that keeps dust

from collecting on our tape. Our take-up reel.

Instead of gaping holes that let dust in, our specially molded polystyrene design actually forces dust out.

So if your take-up reel is picking up more than it should, pick up ours.

You'll find it comes attached to something even more impressive.

Our tape.

maxell

CIRCLE NO. 32 ON READER SERVICE CARD

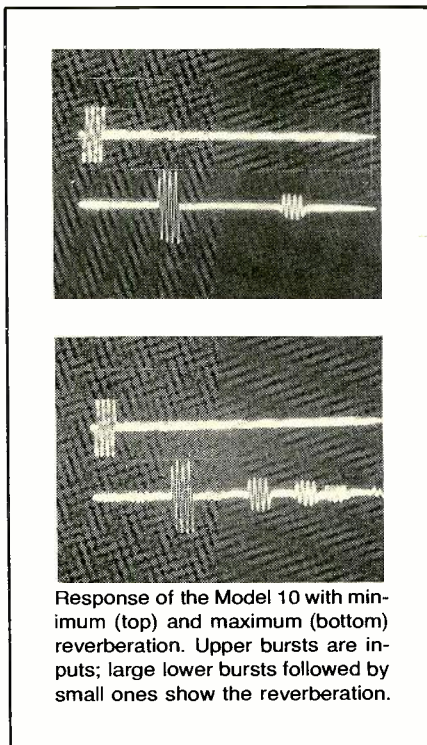
Maxell Corporation of America, 50 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074.

We discovered early in our tests that this unit has a much wider frequency response in its delayed channels than most of the other time-delay accessories on the market (most others cut off rapidly above 6,000 to 8,000 Hz, and some do not reach even that high). The high-frequency response of the ADS Model 10 is not affected by the delay settings, and it reached 12,000 Hz or more at the -3-dB point with the *CONTOUR* switch at its widest setting. Although there were response "ripples" at lower frequencies due to interaction of the many delayed components, the overall useful bandwidth of the delayed program extended from 20 to beyond 13,000 Hz.

The accompanying oscilloscope photos show the unit's tone-burst performance with the *REVERBERATION* control at its minimum and maximum settings. In each photo the upper trace is the four-cycle tone-burst input signal and the bottom trace the delayed output. The reverberation (recycling) action creates a multiplicity of bursts at different levels and times from the single input burst.

The distortion (at 1,000 Hz) in the delayed output was 0.14 per cent at a 1-volt level (from the low-level outputs in the rear of the unit), and the unweighted signal-to-noise ratio was 66 db referred to 1 volt, which corresponds quite closely with the manufacturer's weighted specification taken at full rated output. Our only measurement of the power amplifier was to confirm that it could deliver at least 100 watts per channel to 4-ohm loads (which it did easily). Sound quality was clearly excellent, far more than equal to the task of supplying the delayed-channel output. Although in a properly adjusted system the delayed signals are not, as a rule, audible separately, they *are* present at a considerable level, which is why the amplifier for the rear speakers should be at least half as powerful as that for the front ones. The inaudibility of the delayed program as such is a psychoacoustic phenomenon—the rear-channel material, although reproduced at a lower level, is very much there!

We also confirmed ADS' design claim that the delayed outputs of the Model 10 were completely noncoherent. Even with a mono input signal supplied to both channels, the two rear outputs had a random phase relationship to each other. Such noncoherency enhances the realism of stereo reproduction and makes a world of difference with mono programs. This is one of the features that distinguish the Model 10 from most analog delay



Response of the Model 10 with minimum (top) and maximum (bottom) reverberation. Upper bursts are inputs; large lower bursts followed by small ones show the reverberation.

devices, which have coherent signals in the two rear outputs.

● *Comment.* We operated the ADS Model 10 in two separate music systems installed in rooms that are acoustically very dissimilar. In each case, it was connected between the preamplifier and power amplifier (one of the systems used a receiver that had the necessary connection facilities).

Thanks to the complete and informative instruction manual, setting up and adjusting the Model 10 was relatively simple. Nevertheless, it is important to run through the controls and their effects several times to be sure that their functions are clearly understood. The actions of the controls are not necessarily obvious from their labels, and it is unlikely that one could get full use of this system without carefully reading the instructions (which, incidentally, are particularly well done).

We have used, and lived with, time-delay units of both the analog and digital types for a

couple of years, an experience that made us very much aware of the most important rule of time-delay enhancement: *if the rear speakers can be heard as distinct sound sources, they are too loud!* The rear volume level should be set to the point where the signal can just be heard from a normal listening location, and then it should be turned down a little more. (Note that switching it off entirely will invariably cause the sound to become dull and lifeless, and to collapse toward the front of the room.)

How does the ADS Model 10 differ from other time-delay systems we have used (which includes just about every one on the market)? For one thing, no matter how carelessly its controls are set, it is very difficult to create a grossly unnatural effect. When the full potential of the Model 10 is understood, a totally unobtrusive, natural ambiance can be achieved—and once you've experienced it, it's very difficult to give up.

This is not to say that very similar results cannot be produced with some competing systems. By its very psychoacoustic nature, time-delay enhancement is completely subjective, and no one set of conditions will be "right" for everyone's ears or setup. The ADS Model 10 provides more options in its adjustments than most competing products and thus may appear more formidable at first glance. However, given the automatic "presets" of the device (which are correct for most conditions), no problem will be experienced by even a first-time user. In any case, the settings are noncritical enough that there is no need to be too concerned with their "correctness." If the total sound effect seems right, enjoy it; it might possibly be improved by further experimentation with the controls, but it will never be degraded.

Our only gripe about the ADS Model 10 concerns the tight placement of the tiny toggle switches and knobs, which can easily be moved inadvertently. We found it necessary to look closely at the panel when making any control adjustments—reaching toward the remembered location of a knob or switch was just as likely to result in something else's being changed.

The little ADS L10 speakers that come with the ADS Model 10 have excellent sound quality and can be placed unobtrusively almost anywhere in a room. Experimenting with speaker placement is an important part of setting up a successful enhancement system (or, for that matter, any kind of audio system), and we found that in one room the sound was best with the L10 speakers lying on their backs, facing upward. Wherever they were placed, we found their sound to be smooth and therefore well matched to that of most good main speaker systems.

One of the most appealing features of the ADS system for us was the effectiveness of its "voice-restoration" circuit. We have always found the transition from a time-delayed "real-sounding" musical program to an announcer's unnaturally echoey voice to be jarring, and as a result we have tended with other systems to use less delay time and reverberation than the *music* could benefit from. In that regard, the ADS system works almost perfectly: it does not completely eliminate reverberation from speaking voices, but it does reduce such reverberation to a point where it seems consistent with the hall ambiance that is created for the music.

(Continued on page 58)



"Wait a minute. . . . Are you trying to tell me you have to re-equalize for that box of lasagna?"

This new tuner, amplifier and turntable are all by LUX.

We'll leave the speakers up to you.

The tuner and integrated amplifier are from LUX's new Studio Standard Series, our newest and most modestly priced line of separates. Their features and performance, however, are anything but modest.

The T-4 tuner, for example, has LUX's exclusive Accutouch tuning system. The knob physically locks at every station that exceeds the muting threshold—from 5 to 300 μ s. LUX's closed-lock-loop tuning circuit is precisely referenced to the station's carrier frequency for lowest-distortion reception. And the i.f. bandwidth is adjustable—wide (normal) or narrow—to accommo-

date station density throughout the FM band.

The L-5 integrated amplifier has a DC direct-coupled power amplifier section with frequency response extending from 5 Hz to 100 kHz, $\pm 0, -1$ dB. Bass and treble tone controls have switchable turnover frequencies, plus total tone defeat. Subsonic filter in addition to low and high-cut filters. And when tape decks are not in use, a special switch totally disconnects them from the amplifier, preventing loading which causes preamp distortion.

The PD-272 is LUX's lowest-priced turntable. Its servo-controlled

direct-drive brushless DC motor is totally free of the cogging (pulsing) that plagues many other direct-drive motors. And the straight, statically-balanced tonearm has a nested tube construction and internal damping that deal very effectively with resonance. Another feature: the vertical pivots extend through the arm, minimizing lateral play.

Altogether, these three components will deliver a clean, virtually distortion-free signal to your speakers. We'll leave that final decision to you and your LUX dealer—whose taste is as high in speakers as in electronics and turntables.

LUX Audio of America, Ltd.

60 Dupont Street, Plainville, New York 12803 • In Canada: White Electronics Development Corp., Ontario

Luxman T-4 AM/FM stereo tuner. Usable sensitivity, 10.3 dBf (1.8 μ V); 50-dB quieting sensitivity, 14.7 dBf (2.8 μ V); S/N: 75 dB. Alternate-channel selectivity, 85 dB (narrow), 40 dB (wide). THD (at 1 kHz) 0.08% (wide). (Luxman T-2, AM/FM stereo tuner, similar to T-4, less Accutouch and CLL.)

Luxman L-5 integrated amplifier. 60 watts per channel minimum continuous power into 8 ohms, 20-20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.33% total harmonic or intermodulation distortion. Damping factor: 80 at 1 kHz (8 ohms). Phono signal-to-noise ratio better than 92 dB (IHF-A re 10 mV input). (Luxman L-3, similar, but 35 watts per channel, 20 Hz-20 kHz, 0.04% THD.)

Luxman PD-272. 12" die-cast aluminum platter with high density mat, 3.96 lbs. Detachable hinged cover, adjustable isolating feet. Separate pitch control ($\pm 4\%$), each speed. Rumble: better than 70 dB (DIN B); wow and flutter: better than 0.03% (WRMS).



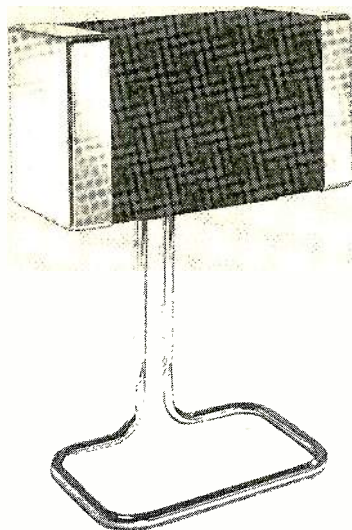
To summarize, the ADS Model 10 is one of the most versatile (quite possibly *the* most versatile) of the currently available time-delay accessories. As a result it is not quite as simple to use as some other time-delay units, but once it has been adjusted for a particular in-

stallation there should be little need to change any control settings except the delay times and reverberation mix. Considering its overall quality and its fine built-in amplifier and accompanying speakers, the ADS Model 10 is actually very competitively priced. For those

who already have a suitable rear-channel stereo amplifier and speakers, the new Model 10 01 version that comes without these components should be especially attractive.

Circle 135 on reader service card

Gale GS401A Speaker System



THE Gale GS401A three-way loudspeaker system houses two 8-inch acoustic-suspension woofers that cross over at 475 Hz to a 4-inch cone mid-range in a sealed sub-enclosure. The second crossover, at 5,000 Hz, is to a ¾-inch dome tweeter, also in a separate sealed sub-enclosure. Like all acoustic-suspension systems, the GS401A is relatively inefficient. It is rated to produce a 96-dB sound-pressure level (SPL) at a 1-meter distance when driven by 21 watts input. The system impedance is nominally 4 to 8 ohms. Although the GS401A is designed for use with amplifiers rated to deliver from 40 to 200 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads, Gale cautions that it is not meant to reproduce sustained very-high-level sounds such as those from electronic synthesizers, guitars, or organs. Like almost all speakers designed for home use, the Gale GS401A should not be used at discothèque levels or for studio monitoring at outputs in excess of 95 dB.

The mid-range and high-frequency drivers are separately protected by quick-blowing fuses whose housings are recessed into the rear of the cabinet. The input terminals are binding posts on ¾-inch centers suitable for use with standard dual banana-plug connectors as well as with stripped wire ends. There are separate level-balance adjustments for the mid- and high-frequency drivers. These are continuous controls with index lines at their "normal" settings. The instruction manual points out, however, that each control is individually calibrated during final test to pro-

duce a "flat" overall response when the knob is set to correspond with the index line. As a result, little or no further adjustment may be possible in one direction with one or both of these controls.

Gale also states that the speaker's free-field response, as measured in the British G.E.C. Hirst Research Center, is 55 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB and that the typical response in an average room should be from 35 to 20,000 Hz ± 5 dB.

The Gale GS401A has a distinctive appearance, with bright chrome end caps and a black grille cloth covering three of the larger sides. (The same system is also available as the GS401C, which has a more conventional-appearing walnut-veneer wood cabinet.) The GS401A is about 23¾ inches wide, 13 inches high, and 10¾ inches deep. It weighs almost 50 pounds. Although the speaker can be installed either horizontally or vertically (the two woofers are symmetrically placed about the centrally located mid-range and high-frequency driver), Gale recommends horizontal installation at least 20 inches from the floor and suggests experimenting to determine the optimum location in any given room. Price: \$525. An optional metal stand, to support the speaker horizontally at the correct height, is available for \$75.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** We measured the reverberant-field response of the Gale GS401A with the level controls set to their maximum, normal, and minimum positions. On the test units, the normal and maximum

settings were so close that the difference they produced in the response curves was negligible. Splicing these curves to the close-miked woofer response, we obtained composite response curves for the maximum/normal settings and the minimum setting.

One of the most obvious features of the GS401A response curve was the flat woofer output. There was almost no bass peak and a total variation of only ± 1 dB from 55 to 350 Hz. The output fell off at 12 dB per octave at frequencies below 55 Hz, and it decreased smoothly above 500 Hz, reaching its minimum at about 3,500 Hz and rising linearly from there on. The flattest overall response was obtained with the normal and maximum control settings, which produced an overall variation of only ± 3.5 dB from 40 to 20,000 Hz. This agreed quite closely with Gale's specifications, although we measured somewhat better bass response than they claim (our woofer measurement is equivalent to an anechoic response). The minimum settings of the level controls exaggerated the upper mid-range depression in the response curve, and it is difficult to imagine any circumstances that would require their use.

Reverberant-field measurements showed that the dispersion of the GS401A in the forward hemisphere was virtually perfect. There was negligible difference between response curves made on axis and 30 degrees off axis all the way up to 20,000 Hz. The effective dispersion was comparable to what we have measured from some presumably "omnidirectional" speakers.

The bass distortion was measured with drive levels of 1 and 10 watts (based on a 4-ohm impedance). At the lower power, the distortion was almost unmeasurably low at frequencies above 70 Hz (in the range of 0.1 to 0.25 per cent). It increased to about 2 per cent at 40 Hz and 6.3 per cent at 30 Hz. Increasing the drive to 10 watts had only a slight effect in the 60- to 100-Hz range. Below those frequencies it resulted in distortion readings of 2.5 per cent at 50 Hz, 5 per cent at 40 Hz, and 14 per cent at 30 Hz.

The sensitivity of the Gale GS401A was almost exactly as rated. When we drove it with 2.83 volts of random noise in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz, the sound-pressure level measured at 1 meter from the center of the grille was 85 dB. This corresponds (within 0.5 dB) to the rated "efficiency" of the system. The impedance curve reached its minimum of 4 ohms at 20, 4,000, and 15,000 Hz. Its maximum of 14 ohms was measured at 400 Hz, and at most frequencies it was in the vicinity of 8 ohms. This confirms the validity of Gale's "4 to 8 ohm" rating, though we would consider this a 4-ohm system from the standpoint of amplifier loading. (Continued on page 62)

**"The skills you learn in the Army Guard
do a lot of people a lot of good."**

Arthur Ashe

Arthur Ashe, Wimbledon Champion



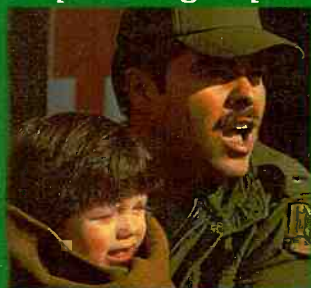
Communications. Paramedicine. Handling heavy equipment. Or whatever. The skill you need to get the job you want, you can learn in the Army National Guard. And once you've got it, you get to use it in a lot of very important ways.

Maybe it's evacuating flood victims with troop transports. Or using a tank to haul eighteen-wheelers out of snow drifts during a blizzard.

That's the way it is in the Guard. You use what you've got in a lot of unexpected ways. Doing anything you can to help people in trouble. People right in your hometown.

It's the kind of work that'll keep you on your toes. You don't forget the valuable skills you learn in the Guard. You don't get the chance. Because there's always somebody somewhere who needs you.

See your local Army National Guard recruiter. Or call toll-free 800-638-7600 (except in Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands). In Maryland, call 728-3388.

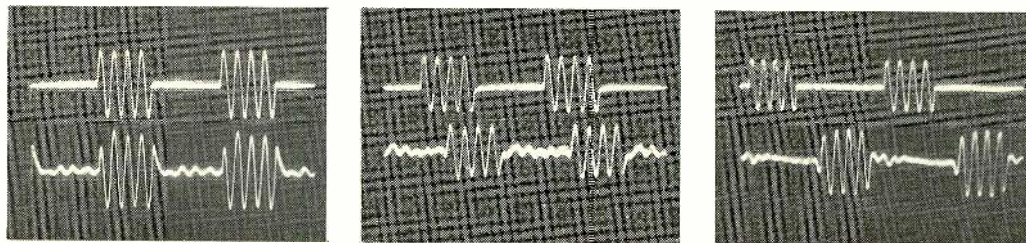


**Help Somebody.
Including Yourself.**



The Guard belongs.

The exceptional tone-burst response of the Gale GS401A is illustrated at (left to right) 100, 1,000 and 10,000 Hz. The upper trace is the input signal.



In tone-burst tests, the Gale GS401A displayed some surprising properties. For one thing, the tone bursts were virtually perfect at every frequency, with little or no sign of the interference effects that usually make it necessary to find specific frequencies and microphone positions in order to obtain a reasonable-looking output from a multidriver speaker system. Wherever we moved the microphone, from a few inches to a few feet from the speaker, and whatever frequency we used, the bursts had almost ideal shapes, with no ringing, slow start-up, or other faults.

At this point, we began to wonder whether this implied some special degree of phase coherence (although Gale makes no mention of that subject in their literature, and nothing in the appearance of the speaker suggests any unusual physical arrangement of the drivers). We then drove the speaker with a 500-Hz square wave. To our surprise, the acoustic-output waveform was recognizable as that of a square wave. We do not know what significance this has, but it is certainly worthy of special mention, if only because this is the first conventional speaker we have measured

that has been able to produce a recognizable square wave in a "live"-room measurement. Incidentally, several so-called "phase-coherent" systems that we have tested have failed completely in this test.

● **Comment.** The tests should suggest to anyone who had not heard the Gale GS401A that it is at the very least an exceptionally good loudspeaker system.

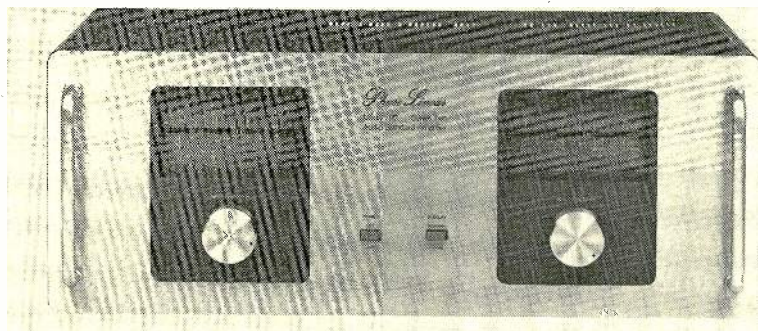
The GS401A has a smoothness and lack of unpleasant coloration that set it apart from most other speakers. One does not have to "get used to" its sound (at least, we did not). From the first moment it was obvious that this was not "just another speaker." It has no boom, no stridency, and no other colorations that we could hear. Its only possible flaw (in our view) is a slightly depressed upper mid-range that never causes the sound to move forward in the listening room. It all seems to be happening "up front," just behind the plane of the speakers, with none of the projection that often occurs with speakers having an accentuated mid-range response.

We also felt on first hearing that the sound

might be on the soft, or heavy, side. However, when the program contained highs, they came through with crystalline clarity. This speaker treats the high-frequency end of the spectrum the way a good acoustic-suspension speaker treats the low bass—if the program contains nothing at those frequencies, then nothing comes out of the speaker. This accuracy can be disturbing to people who are used to coloration in speaker sound (and think something is missing when they don't hear it), but to our ears it is a major "plus factor" for the GS401A.

We listened to the Gale GS401A systems by themselves and in comparison with some other very fine speakers. Sometimes the systems sounded so much alike that one could not make a reasonable choice between them, but when there was a difference it was generally in favor of the Gales. Without any obvious gimmicks or new design criteria, Gale has created an exceptionally accurate and listenable speaker. Furthermore, it looked as good to our eyes as it sounded to our ears!

Circle 136 on reader service card



Phase Linear Model 700 Series Two Power Amplifier

PHASE LINEAR's Model 700 power amplifier was the first amplifier for home use that could deliver more than 350 clean watts per

channel to 8-ohm speakers. Since then (almost seven years), a few rivals (very few) have appeared—always at much higher

prices—but the Model 700 was carried in the Phase Linear line until quite recently.

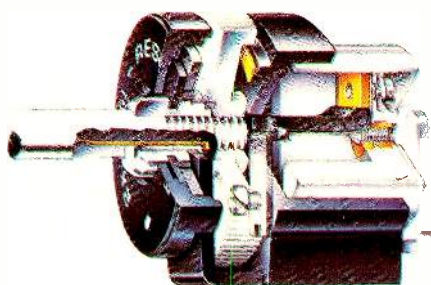
In the last year or two, most of the Phase Linear line has been restyled and somewhat re-engineered, and in its new form the old "700" is now called the Model 700 Series Two. From the front, the amplifier bears little resemblance to the earlier version. The panel has slightly rounded corners and is fitted with handles that simplify lifting its 45-pound off-center weight (like the original 700, the Series Two has its power transformer at the left rear side of the amplifier).

The meters that monitored the output levels of the two channels (and which were much too slow to follow program peaks) have been replaced by a pair of horizontal LED displays with logarithmic scales that cover a range of more than 40 dB. Each is calibrated from 0.035 to 350 watts (and beyond that to +3 dB, or about 700 watts). A front-panel pushbutton switch increases the display sensitivity by 20 dB to cover from a fraction of a milliwatt to 3.5 watts. The LED circuit has a very fast response and a slow decay so that a continual visual display of peak program power is pro-

(Continued on page 64)

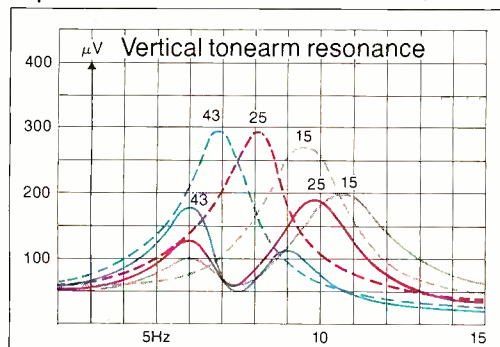
If the bass isn't as clean as you'd like...

The problem may be your tonearm. Not your amplifier or speakers.



Cutaway view of anti-resonance counterbalance. (A feature of Dual models 604, 621, 721 and 1246)

Solid lines show effectiveness of anti-resonance filters in damping resonant amplitudes of three different cartridges (compliance 15, 25 and 43 x 10⁻⁶ cm/dyne). Broken lines show higher resonant amplitudes with conventional counterbalance.



These are specially tuned to damp resonant energy in the tonearm/cartridge system and chassis.

The startling effectiveness of these filters in lowering the resonant amplitude of three cartridges having different compliances can be seen in the graph. Whether the improvement in the bass is subtle or obvious to you depends on the other components and your listening environment.

We've prepared a technical paper on this subject which we'll send to you if you write us directly. You may discover that you don't have to replace your amplifier or speakers after all.

If you've been wondering why your high-powered amplifier and great speaker system don't deliver deep bass as cleanly as you'd like—especially at high listening levels—the problem may well be the effects of resonance on the stylus.

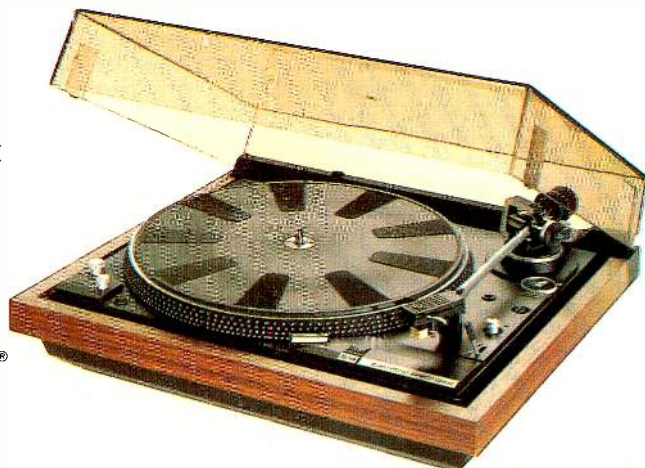
Ideally, the stylus should move only in response to the contours of the record groove. But in reality, the stylus tip also responds to various resonances: its own (with the stylus shank) and the combined resonance of the tonearm/cartridge system.

These subsonic frequencies, though inaudible in themselves, can have very audible effects. Especially with warped records. They can drain amplifier power and cause excessive movements of the low frequency driver. They can cause the tonearm to vibrate and even to momentarily leave the groove. All of which results in audible distortion.

Competent tonearm designers know all this and do their best with materials, masses and compliances to establish the inevitable resonances at the least harmful frequencies (usually between 8 and 10 Hz) and with the lowest possible amplitudes.

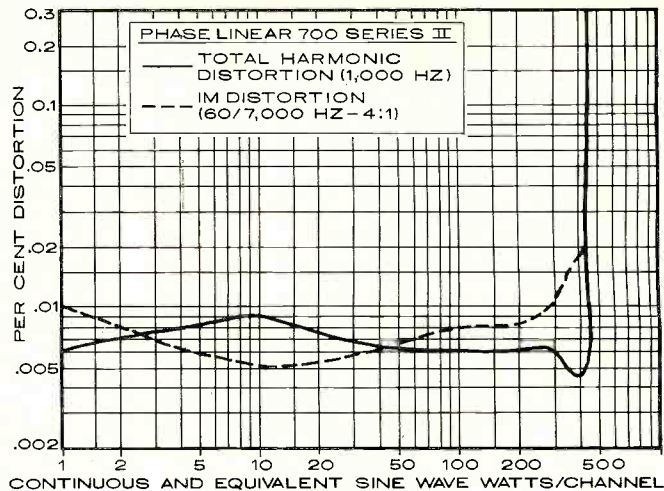
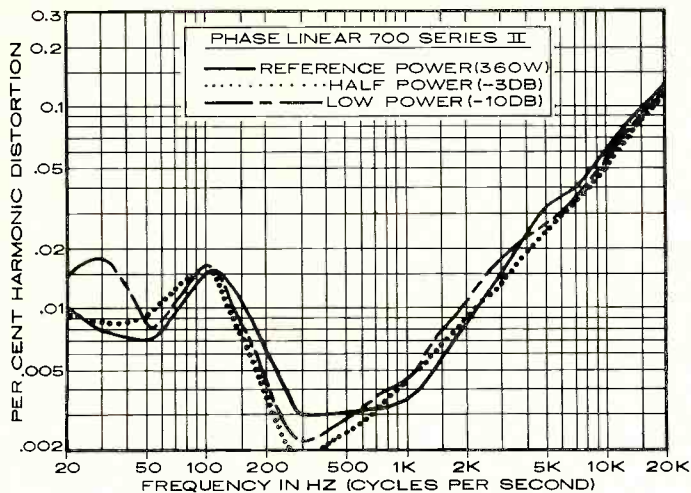
Dual's tonearm designers have taken a significant step beyond this.

The unique counterbalances of our direct-drive models (604, 621 and 721) and our top belt-drive multiple-play model (1246) contain two mechanical anti-resonance filters.



For the life of your records

United Audio, 120 So. Columbus Ave., Mt. Vernon, NY 10553



vided. If even a very brief overload occurs, a group of LED's at the right end of the scale blinks on and off for a few seconds.

Although we have not compared the circuits of the earlier Model 700 and the Series Two, they appear to be basically similar. The amplifier is fully direct coupled, from input to speakers, but a NORMAL/DIRECT switch in the rear inserts a capacitor in the input circuit to minimize the chance of damaging the speakers if there is d.c. in the input signal to the amplifier. The power rating has been increased very slightly, to 360 watts into 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz, and the distortion rating has been reduced to 0.09 per cent.

In addition to the power-display range switch and the power switch, the only front-panel controls are two knobs for level adjustment. Most of the rear of the amplifier is taken up by the huge power transformer and the heat-sink fins. There are also the rather closely grouped binding-post speaker outputs, phono-jack inputs, the NORMAL/DIRECT input switch, a switched a.c. socket for powering an accessory fan, and five fuse holders (four for the output circuit and one for the a.c. line).

Accessory wooden side panels (in oak or walnut) and a brushed-aluminum top cover are available for the Model 700 Series Two, as well as a rack-mounting panel and a cooling-fan assembly that is suggested for heavy-duty service. The Phase Linear Model 700 Series Two is 19 inches wide, 7 inches high, and 10 inches deep (12½ inches deep with the fan installed). It weighs 45 pounds. Price: \$880. Wooden sides/cover, \$40. Fan, \$24.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** When we tested the original Phase Linear Model 700 about seven years ago, the FTC ruling on amplifier power ratings had not been issued. The ruling resulted in the "beefing up" of many high-power amplifiers. Phase Linear's included, to withstand the severe heating conditions imposed by the "preconditioning" operation at one-third rated power for one hour.

The Model 700 Series Two specifically requires the cooling fan accessory for this type of testing. Even with it, the thermal-protection circuit cycled on and off regularly, with a duty cycle of five minutes on and 1½ minutes off when we drove both channels to one-third power into 8 ohms. To accumulate the required one hour of operation, we had to run the amplifier for 1 hour and 20 minutes.

At the end of that time, the amplifier was very hot. Nevertheless, it seemed to suffer no ill effects from this treatment. The outputs clipped at 473 watts per channel (IHF clipping headroom = 1.18 dB) and the IHF dynamic-headroom rating of 1.48 dB corresponded to a short-term output of 506 watts per channel into 8 ohms at the clipping point. We could not measure the amplifier with 4-ohm loads, since the 10-amp line fuse blew before we reached the clipping point. The minimum recommended amplifier load is 4 ohms; this should be quite safe for music program material, but not for continuous sine-wave test signals unless adequate cooling is provided. An input of 79 millivolts was required to drive the amplifier to the IHF reference power output of 1 watt, and the A-weighted output noise was 77 dB below 1 watt.

The distortion characteristics were very much like those of the early Model 700 we had tested. At rated power or less, the distortion was typically between 0.002 and 0.01 per cent from 20 to 2,000 Hz, and it increased smoothly with frequency to 0.05 per cent at 10,000 Hz and about 0.13 per cent at 20,000 Hz (this fails to match the specified 0.09 per cent by 0.04 per cent, but it is *not* a significant discrepancy). We were concerned that the very high operating temperature of the amplifier during the tests might have affected its performance, so we repeated the high-frequency distortion measurements when it cooled. We also tested a second amplifier in the same manner. The results were essentially similar.

Although there are a number of possible explanations for the 0.04 per cent difference between the measurement made by Phase Linear and that made by Hirsch-Houck Labs, there is absolutely no difference between them from a user's standpoint. This is an extremely low-distortion amplifier, with less than 0.01 per cent distortion under almost any conceivable operating conditions.

The increasing distortion at high frequencies is indicative of the limited power bandwidth of the output transistors. We measured the IHF slew factor as 2, which is an additional confirmation of this condition. The frequency response at low power levels was flat within +0, -0.5 db from 20 to 20,000 Hz, falling to -3 dB from 5 and 10 Hz and at 50,000 Hz.

The harmonic distortion at 1,000 Hz was typically between 0.006 and 0.009 per cent from 0.1 to 450 watts output, just before clip-

ping occurred. The intermodulation distortion was in the same range, 0.005 to 0.01 per cent from 1 watt to 300 watts, rising to 0.02 per cent at 450 watts and 150 milliwatts.

Phase Linear has taken pains to eliminate switching transients from the output of the Model 700 Series Two, since any substantial clicks or thumps from such a powerful amplifier could be fatal to one's speakers. They have done well, although the instruction manual mentions a small "thump" a few seconds after the amplifier is switched off. It proved to be barely audible and would be no threat to any speaker used with this amplifier.

The LED power display is a great improvement over the meters used in the earlier model. It gives a clear indication of power level at ordinary listening volumes as well as when the amplifier is being driven to its limits. It is, however, merely an indicator and not an accurate power meter. At an indicated 0 dB (360 watts), which caused the overload lights to flash, the actual output was 231 watts into 8 ohms. Similarly, at an indicated 175 watts (-3 dB) the actual output was 128 watts. At lower power levels the error was in the opposite direction, so that at an indicated output of 35 watts the true power was 38 watts, and at 3.5 watts it was really 7.2 watts. Finally, at the lowest reading of 0.035 watt, the power output was 0.04 watt. There was enough hysteresis in the operation of the lights that the actual errors could be considerably different from (better or worse than) those mentioned, although we tried to be as accurate as possible in our measurement.

● **Comment.** Our initial highly favorable impressions of the early Phase Linear Model 700 were further reinforced by our experience with the Series Two, which in most respects seems to be the same as its predecessor. It is a real brute of an amplifier, yet without unnecessary weight or bulk. It is clearly at its best driving inefficient home speaker systems, preferably 8-ohm types. In such service, we cannot imagine ever running out of power!

We drove AR-LST (4-ohm) systems with the Series Two, and needless to say it loafed along, never becoming more than moderately warm at any reasonable listening levels. Nevertheless, if it is driven to much higher than average levels (say, 10 to 100 watts) for extended periods, it can become very hot. The accessory fan is an obvious solution, although

(Continued on page 66)

THE JVC RECEIVER.

Every bit as revolutionary as they look, and then some.

In our case, looks are never deceiving. Because all our new DC integrated stereo receivers combine unprecedented, revolutionary styling with unique electronic design features that reflect JVC's more than 50 years' experience in audio development and innovation.

DC Power Amplifier Design

All four new JVC receivers feature DC amplifier circuitry. They offer virtually distortion-free performance (0.03% THD) throughout the entire audible spectrum. As a result, the sound you hear is clearer, cleaner and crisper. In addition, your speakers are protected with the Triple Power Protection circuit and you can monitor output wattage with dual power meters. Choose from 120, 85, 60 and 35 watts/channel.*

SEA all the way

All four receivers offer JVC's exclusive built-in SEA five-zone graphic equalizer for more complete control of



the music spectrum than conventional tone controls. You can attenuate or accentuate any of five separate musical bands, and as an added feature, we've incorporated a special button so that the SEA circuit can be switched to your tape deck.

Pushbutton Source Selectors

A horizontal panel of pushbuttons provides total control over all functions. And brilliantly illuminated LEDs instantly indicate the program source. Professional-type slider controls set volume and balance. Combine all these exclusive features with high sensitivity and tuning precision, thumb control tuning wheel and accurate dual-metering and you'll see just how revolutionary the new JVC DC integrated stereo receivers are. Play one at your JVC dealer soon.

JVC High Fidelity Division, US JVC Corp., 58-75 Queens Mtdown Expressway, Maspeth, NY 11378. In Canada: JVC Electronics of Canada, Ltd., Ont.



JR-S 401 (top); JR-S 201 (bottom left) & JR-S 301 (bottom right).

JVC



JR-S501 * @ 8 Chms, both channels driven from 20Hz-20 KHz, with no more than 0.03% THD.

CIRCLE NO. 29 ON FEADER SERVICE CARD

we found it slightly too noisy for our liking.

We also tried to use the amplifier with its optional wooden side panels and cover, but our experience left us with some doubts about the practical value of that combination, handsome though it is. First of all, it is quite difficult to make the speaker output connections to the amplifier when the side panels are in place. The top cover, which is slotted over the heat-sink fins, blocks the openings over the power transistors—the hottest part of the entire amplifier. We could not operate the amplifier when it was so enclosed without an excessive temperature rise (eventually triggering the thermal protective circuit).

Installing the fan solved that problem, but it introduced the matter of its noise, which we

found objectionable. Presumably the only reason to use the side panels and cover is to make the amplifier more attractive when it is in the open and visible to listeners; so placed, however, the fan noise might be unacceptable to many people. On the other hand, if the amplifier is located out of sight, the fan noise might not be a problem—but then neither would there be any need for the decorative accessories!

Leaving aside questions of cosmetics, we found the sonic performance of the Phase Linear Model 700 Series Two to be absolutely first-rate. Having no hang-ups about slew-induced distortion (which we do not believe to be a significant factor in home music reproduction), we were not bothered by the unit's

high-frequency power limitations. We fed hundreds of clean watts into speakers that could handle that power, and we enjoyed experiencing the clean sound-pressure levels that approximated those of live music. To do that, one needs a great deal of amplifier power, assuming speakers of "normal" efficiency, and the Phase Linear Model 700 Series Two is one of the most attractive and least expensive ways to achieve that result. Considering the inflation over the last seven years, the cost of the Series Two in real terms is certainly no more than that of its predecessor, making it still something of a bargain among super-power amplifiers.

Circle 137 on reader service card



Revox B790 Record Player

THE Revox B790 record player, coming from a company principally associated with superb tape recorders for the consumer and semiprofessional markets, is really a very logical extension of that manufacturer's product line. Precision mechanical workmanship is a requirement for both tape recorders and record players, and the Revox name has become almost synonymous with craftsmanship in consumer products.

Revox electronic components (amplifiers and tuners) consistently exhibit innovative and unconventional engineering and design, and the new B790 record player follows in that tradition. It is completely integrated, with a two-speed quartz-controlled direct-drive motor, a unique servo-controlled radial tone arm, and an Ortofon VMS20E cartridge. The integrated design of the B790 insures that every part will function compatibly with the others, and it has also made it possible for this highly sophisticated and internally complex

record player to be essentially foolproof.

The motor of the B790 is similar to those used for the capstan drives in some Revox tape recorders. Normally, it is phase-locked to a signal derived from a 3.27-MHz quartz-crystal oscillator. The speed is constantly displayed (as 33.33 or 45.00 rpm) on a four-digit LED readout. There is also a vernier speed adjustment that is activated when the VAR control button is touched. It replaces the crystal-controlled reference signal with a variable-frequency signal controlled by a small thumbwheel next to the digital readout. This arrangement provides a nominal ± 7 per cent adjustment of either basic speed. In all cases, the actual speed is shown on the readout with a resolution and accuracy of 0.01 rpm.

The tone arm and cartridge are completely concealed from view by a rectangular metal cover. When the record player is off, the arm structure is parallel to the right side of the base (the cartridge end facing the user), thus

leaving the platter surface clear for loading or removing records. The B790 is turned on by pressing the POWER switch at the right side of the control panel, which extends across the full front of the record player outside the area protected by the hinged plastic dust cover (so that all controls are accessible while a record is being played). After a record is placed on the rubber mat, the entire arm structure rotates 90 degrees clockwise to its playing position. The cartridge (raised above the record surface) is now located over the lead-in groove of a 12-inch disc, and the turntable platter starts turning at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm (if 45 rpm is desired, the "45" button is touched momentarily). In a couple of seconds the readout stabilizes and shows that the selected speed has been achieved.

The tone arm and cartridge of the Revox B790 are not only concealed from view, they are never touched by the user. They are controlled by a group of three pushbuttons at the right of the panel. Arrows above the buttons show their functions. Two are used to move the arm assembly across the record surface. They must be held down throughout the entire traverse cycle. Releasing a button causes the arm to stop instantly. (The cartridge is always lifted from the record before any arm motion occurs, even if a button is pressed while a record is being played.) To play a record, the center button is touched, gently lowering the cartridge to the record. A second touch lifts it, with absolutely no shift in lateral position. For very small lateral arm-position shifts, a light tap on one of the outer buttons will move it left or right approximately one groove width.

The cartridge can be seen from the front while the arm is in the playing position; for ease in cueing, a light in the arm base illuminates the record surface whenever the cartridge is raised. At the end of a record, the cartridge is lifted and swiftly returned to its rest position just outside the edge of the platter, and the motor shuts off. To remove the record, the entire arm housing is first pivoted back to its original rest position.

The cartridge platform is driven by a servomotor through a cord similar to a dial cord. The platform is free to move slightly in the lateral plane, and an optical sensor responds

to any departure from tangency by sending an error signal to the servomotor that drives the arm. This system keeps lateral tracking error to less than 0.5 degree. Any cartridge movement that exceeds the normal tracking rate across a record (such as occurs when the stylus reaches the record's run-out groove) operates an optically controlled servomechanism that lifts the cartridge from the record instantly and returns it to its rest position before stopping the turntable. The action is so fast that the arm housing can be grasped while a record is playing and swung out of its normal position without damaging the stylus or the record—or even making a sound through the speakers! The instant the arm is moved, the lift-and-return action is initiated.

The stylus comes in contact with a soft brush extending from the motorboard every time the B790's arm housing is moved between its rest and play positions, which helps keep it free of dust and lint accumulations. The cartridge's electrical output is muted at all times except when it is tracking a record, so that there is never an unwanted sound from the operation of the arm mechanism or while cleaning the stylus. When the turntable shuts off, electronic braking stops the platter.

The cartridge-carrying part of the arm is very short, placing the stylus about 1.5 inches from the vertical pivot and reducing the effective arm mass to an absolute minimum. This gives the pickup an exceptional ability to track warped or eccentric records, although the short length risks vertical-wow effects with severely warped records. The vertical tracking force is factory-set at 1.5 grams. Although other cartridges can be substituted for the VMS20E (there are a few dimensional restrictions), such a change is quite complex and should be made only by an authorized Revox service facility. The removable stylus assembly of the VMS20E, however, can be replaced easily by the user.

Physically, the Revox B790 is both unconventional-looking and handsome. It is finished in dark gray with black control buttons. The tinted-plastic dust cover is shaped so that the cover can be raised to a 45-degree angle for loading or unloading records even if the record player is installed flush against a wall. The specifications of the Revox B790 are quite complete and include a speed-accuracy rating of 0.01 per cent, flutter less than 0.1 per cent unweighted and 0.05 per cent with DIN weighting, and rumble better than -68 dB with DIN B weighting. With its cover closed, the B790 is about 18 inches wide, 5½ inches high, and 15 inches deep; it weighs 24¼ pounds. Price: \$799.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Mechanically, the B790 worked to perfection. Its speeds were exact (the inherent accuracy of the quartz reference was far better than that of the test records we used to check the speeds!). The vernier speed adjustment had a range of +6.3 to -7.8 per cent. The turntable rumble was -38 dB in an unweighted measurement and -63 dB with ARLL weighting (both better than average for direct-drive turntables). A spectrum analysis of the rumble showed one noise concentration at 15 Hz, with the rest of the energy distributed randomly. The flutter was 0.055 per cent wrms and ±0.07 per cent in a weighted peak (DIN) measurement.

The arm/cartridge resonance was at 15 Hz and fairly well damped (which could have

been inferred from the rumble spectrum). The response was affected slightly (-1 dB) at frequencies as high as 35 Hz. It returned to normal at 25 Hz and rose to +3 dB in the 15-Hz region, dropping rapidly at lower frequencies. The arm moved across a 12-inch record in about 5 seconds. It was easy to use the control buttons to cue the pickup to any desired part of the record—actually easier than it is to do by hand with a conventional tone arm.

We did not make complete measurements on the VMS20E cartridge. In tracking tests, it played the 30-cm/sec, 1,000-Hz tones of one record with no signs of visible waveform distortion, let alone clipping. The German Hi Fi Institute record was playable at its 70-micron level with no audible distortion; there was a trace of mistracking at the 80-micron level (the cartridge is rated to track 70 microns at 1.5 grams force).

Our collection of warped records proved to be no problem for the B790. It played *all* of them with ease. Not only did the cartridge have little or no tendency to bounce off the record on a warp, it also never shifted laterally. This was especially noticeable when we repeatedly raised and lowered the cartridge; it unflinchingly replayed the same groove.

The entire record-playing section of the B790 (the turntable and arm on their mounting board) is floated from the base on soft springs. This gives the record player exceptional immunity to external shock and vibration effects. Since the control panel is on the main section of the base, its operation cannot jar the pickup.

● **Comment.** Many of the radial-arm record players we have used in the past seemed very promising but somehow failed to establish themselves in the marketplace. In some cases we could see potentially troublesome areas even when nothing objectionable showed up in our tests. Some of these machines were so complex or required such critical setup adjustments that their usefulness as *consumer* products was open to question.

In our search for possible design flaws in the B790, we came across only one candidate: the instruction manual (which is very complete) warns that the stylus could contact one of the ribs of the turntable mat if it were lowered with no record on the platter. So do not operate the B790 without a record on the platter, and keep the uninitiated away from its controls! Aside from this minor matter, we were completely satisfied with the B790 during an extended period of use. It is undeniably handsome, surprisingly compact, and (so far as we could see from examining its tone-arm servomechanism) about as uncomplicated and unfussy as a machine of its type can be. By the standards of a few years ago it is expensive, but by present-day criteria it does not seem to be priced at all out of line for a superior record player. The only objection we can imagine being leveled against it concerns its inability to accept different cartridges readily. Those people who are irrevocably committed to some other type of cartridge, for whatever reason, will probably not be interested in the B790. But other audiophiles could hardly ask for a finer all-around record player than the Revox B790. It is one of the most sophisticated and thoughtfully human-engineered pieces of record-playing machinery that we have seen. A nice job in every way!

Circle 138 on reader service card

FOR THE RECORD



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Samarium-cobalt magnets, crystalline aligned diamonds and an array of cantilever constructions are but a few of the latest advances employed in Nagatron cartridges to deliver the clear transients and tonal clarity available from your record grooves.

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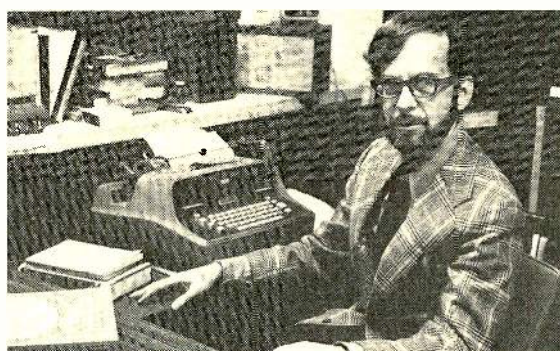
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makes it such a popular
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Going on Record

By James
Goodfriend



HISTORY IS BUNK (ALMOST)

THE MUSICAL COMPANION, edited by A. L. Bacharach and J. R. Pearce, is a venerable (first published in 1934), well-known, and entertaining British book whose first American edition came out just last year (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978, \$14.95). Despite its prim title and its conventional arrangement and presentation of material, *The Musical Companion* is really a treasure house of highhanded opinions, prejudices, snobberies, personal enthusiasms, and all those other things that make a book entertaining. It is also, even in its "American" edition, very British indeed. I offer here no review of the book, merely a fond mention. It has gotten me riled enough on a number of topics to cite it as an excellent source of perturbation (as well as the more expected information) to those looking for same.

A lion's share of the book's highhanded opinions and prejudices is contained in "An Essay on Listening and Performance" by the late Eric Blom, who was, among other things, editor of the fifth edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Blom suggests, for example, in this essay reprinted from the 1934 edition, that lieder might just as well be sung in English versions instead of printing the translations in the program, that Chopin recitals had best be avoided, that jazz is not rhythmic at all but rigidly metrical (even in 1934 such a view seems to presuppose an unwillingness to listen), and so on.

But what I want to take out after here is his view that "there is much music, even great

music, that does not become palatable until one has learned the fine art of placing it mentally into a picture of its period," that to appreciate Purcell "it is necessary to come to know something of Baroque architecture and painting and sculpture," that the way to find delight in Scarlatti lies through reading Smollett and studying the drawings of Rowlandson. Granted, these are the opinions of another age, but they (and similar opinions by others) have led to an interdisciplinary style of thinking (so prevalent today, particularly in academia), which holds that everything is dependent on everything else and the direct perception of a work of art by an unprepared listener (or viewer) is all but impossible. Nonsense!

MUSIC always gets the short end of the stick in such matters, perhaps because it is difficult to say anything intelligent about it unless you know something about it (and even then, maybe not), whereas with architecture you can always murmur something about the scale, and with painting something about the colors. People are forever telling us (like Blom) that Gothic music is indigestible unless one first looks at Gothic cathedrals, or that the proper precondition to listening to Impressionist music is studying Impressionist paintings (which is not only nonsense but *wrong*). No one has ever told me, however, that I could not possibly understand the ceiling paintings of Battista Tiepolo without first listening to Vivaldi, or that the Baroque archi-

ecture of Fischer von Erlach is incomprehensible without the music of Bach to support it. Why not?

I suppose because music is abstract, and therefore difficult, and painting and architecture are concrete (pardon), and therefore easy, and you don't use something difficult to explain something easy. But, theoretically at least, if Thomas Rowlandson or Tobias Smollett (!) are any "explanation" of Domenico Scarlatti at all, then Vivaldi is certainly an "explanation" of Tiepolo. They even worked in the same city at the same time.

Certainly, one can make a mental *connection* between the music of Vivaldi and the painting of Tiepolo (particularly since they were contemporaries), and, I suppose, someone can make a connection of a sort between the drawings of Rowlandson and the sonatas of Scarlatti (their lives overlapped by a single year), but who do you match up with Rembrandt? Heinrich Schütz? Jean-Baptiste Lully? Arcangelo Corelli? Hardly. The music just doesn't sound the way the pictures look. No, the invariable answer to that question is Beethoven or Brahms. But Rembrandt was a Baroque painter 'and died in 1669. Beethoven was a Classical composer and was born in 1770. Brahms was a Romantic composer and was born in 1833. Clearly, there is some connection here that has nothing to do with history or historical style. There are many who will say that the music *does* sound the way the pictures look.

I am pushing things to make a point. The point is not that architecture, painting, and literature have *nothing* to tell us about music (nor that music has nothing to tell us about the other arts), but that the connections are far less clear-cut, far more subjective and tenuous than they might at first seem. The way to appreciate Purcell is not to know Baroque architecture, but to be sufficiently familiar with Purcell's musical language to be able to hear how beautiful it is. Clearly, the way to achieve that end is to listen to a lot of Purcell—and to the music of his contemporaries, predecessors, and successors for comparison. Drawing parallels with other arts, contemporary or not, is secondary.

Of course there are *some* parallels, for the aesthetic ideas of the Baroque modified the style of all the arts, many of them in pointedly similar ways. But the intellectual understanding of such aesthetic ideas and their ramifications does not lead to emotional appreciation. You have to like the stuff *first*. You have to feel sensually that something is beautiful before any understanding of why, how, and in what way it is beautiful can become anything more than an academic exercise. "Since feeling is first," wrote the poet E. E. Cummings. It is.

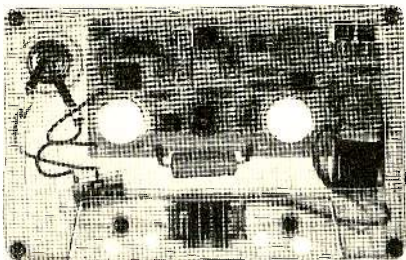
AND SO I will continue to base my delight in music on my perception of the music itself. I have listened to enough Baroque music that I do not find its language foreign to my own time frame at all. And when I develop a musical hatred, I will cultivate it as a taste I do not like, and not attribute it to my lack of knowledge of the paintings of Repin or of Muscovite architecture. If it is to be overcome it should be through musical means. *Then* I can add to it all the additional pleasure that comes from knowing the art-historical matrix. If all this stamps me as an *amateur* rather than a scholar, so be it. I'd rather love art than classify it any day. □



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The Pop Beat

By Paulette
Weiss



THE LIZARD KING LIVES

THE first, and only, time I saw Jim Morrison in concert was in the very early Seventies. Back then, there was no doubt in my mind that he was God—not *the* God of the Bible, but most certainly the God of Rock-'n'-Roll. From his explosive entrance—a leap to center stage from the backstage shadows—to his equally abrupt departure underscored by Ray Manzarek's sinister, throbbing organ accompaniment, Morrison's performance fit his "Lizard King" image perfectly. Since then, time and maturity have changed my perspective on the man, but not my respect for him as both an extraordinary performer and a true original.

His band, the Doors—Morrison on vocals, Manzarek on keyboards, Robbie Krieger on guitar, John Densmore on drums—was one of the most popular American rock bands of the late Sixties, and one of the most influential. Morrison touched a whole generation of contemporary performers, perhaps Patti Smith most deeply. During his life he was much loved and much hated: loved by his fans, who hysterically crashed through police barricades to reach him, and hated by many of their parents, who formed decency leagues to protest his use of obscene language, both verbal and body.

In his great days, Morrison on stage was unpredictable and unforgettable. Wearing the tight leather pants that helped earn him the "Lizard King" epithet, he would fall to the floor as if shot, or he would cap a theatrical moment of silence within a song with a heart-stopping scream. As alcohol and drugs came to rule his performances toward the end of his career, his antics grew more embarrassing and got him arrested on charges ranging from lewdness to inciting to riot. (He died of what was generally accepted as cardiac arrest in 1971.) But in his prime, his theatrics were the focal point of the Doors' music.

Even had he lived and continued to perform, the passions Morrison aroused would almost certainly have cooled. What he originated in the Sixties has become commonplace in the sophisticated Seventies. But memories of his past accomplishments have remained strong with a large segment of the modern rock audience, and this is proved by the enormous interest in "An American Prayer" (Elektra 5E-502), a posthumously produced

album made up of tapes of Morrison reading his poems, lyrics, and stories with back-up music provided by the three surviving members of the band. The album went onto the pop charts immediately when it was released last December, though it was never a heavy contender for the Top Ten.

"It won't zoom up to Number One," Ray Manzarek said shortly after its release, "but I think it will have a long life. Five, ten years from now it will still be just as valid as it is today."

But is "American Prayer" valid today? Can new music by the Doors tacked onto a monologue recorded more than eight years ago do justice to Morrison? Even if it were artistically successful, why release a rock-based disc with literary ambitions at a time when literacy itself seems to be dying, when young rock fans often can't (and often aren't required to) read, let alone deal with the complexities of poetry?

The truth is that "American Prayer" sounds more than a bit old-fashioned, faintly reminiscent of beat poetry read in the dark coffee houses of the Fifties. Yet it is a strangely moving, strikingly cohesive, and,

JIM MORRISON
Unpredictable and unforgettable



above all, *entertaining* album for reasons that go beyond mere nostalgia. Interspersed with Morrison's voice and the new music are snippets of tapes made at his concerts (including crowd noises) and two previously recorded songs. The editing throughout is simply superb. Particularly effective is a chilling segment featuring a telephone conversation in which Morrison confesses to having murdered someone, his words punctuated by lines from the ominous *Riders on the Storm* originally recorded for the 1971 album "L.A. Woman" (Elektra 75011).

"We were quite aware that kids don't read, and we wanted to make this album a soundtrack to a movie, a movie the listener makes up in his own mind," Manzarek continued. "This thing was a *bitch* to cut. [From inception to completion the project took three years.] We had compiled maybe five hours of Jim talking, Jim reading poetry, Jim's in-between raps at concerts. It was like doing a jigsaw puzzle with no guiding picture on the cover. It's amazing how well some of it works. It's partly because of a communal consciousness within the band.

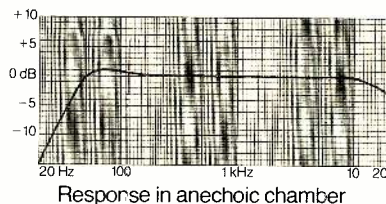
"A perfect example of this happened a long time ago when we were recording *When the Music's Over*, which is a long, improvisational theater piece. There we were with studio time booked, and Jim was gone on one of his midnight creeps. There were certain parts of the song that were set and certain parts where we'd totally follow Jim. So when we put the instrumental tracks down, we tried to approximate what we thought Jim might do. He finally came by to do the vocal overdub, and we sat there with every finger and toe crossed. He did it in two takes. He put his brain on automatic and followed what we had done perfectly. It was almost miraculous."

A sense of the affectionate admiration Morrison's colleagues had for him permeates the new album, making it an especially warm tribute. "John and Robbie and I were like the Shaman's band," Manzarek said. "Whenever the Shaman would go into his trance, the rest of the tribe would sit around and play rattles and drums, keeping the rhythm going. That's what we did in *Light My Fire*, kept that rhythm going over and over." And that's what they did in the new album. That rhythm runs throughout "American Prayer," picked out Indian-fashion with rattles and drums, and the ritual nature of the whole disc is emphasized by an introduction in which Morrison shouts, "The ceremony is about to begin." Despite the album's construction as an integrated whole, certain passages, such as *Ghost Song* and *Roadhouse Blues*, have been excerpted and played on rock stations, and they hold up well on their own.

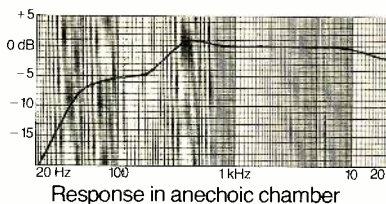
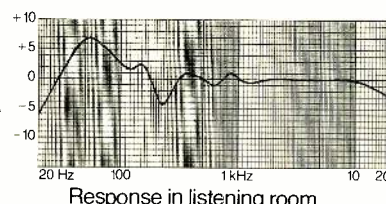
THE DOORS originated their brand of entertainment in 1966. Back then no one had heard a rock organ like Ray's, and no one had screamed of death, failed love, sex, and terror as Jim did. But what was truly disturbing then has been reduced almost to parody in the Seventies by such performers as Alice Cooper and Kiss.

"What a strange, boring, money-grubbing, sensationalistic time this is," Manzarek exclaimed, "sensationalistic in a pathetic way!" His observation underlines the value of this voice from the past. "An American Prayer" is a fitting memorial to the man who helped shape, for better or for worse, the music known as rock. □

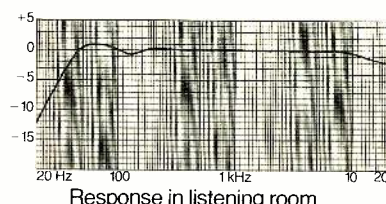
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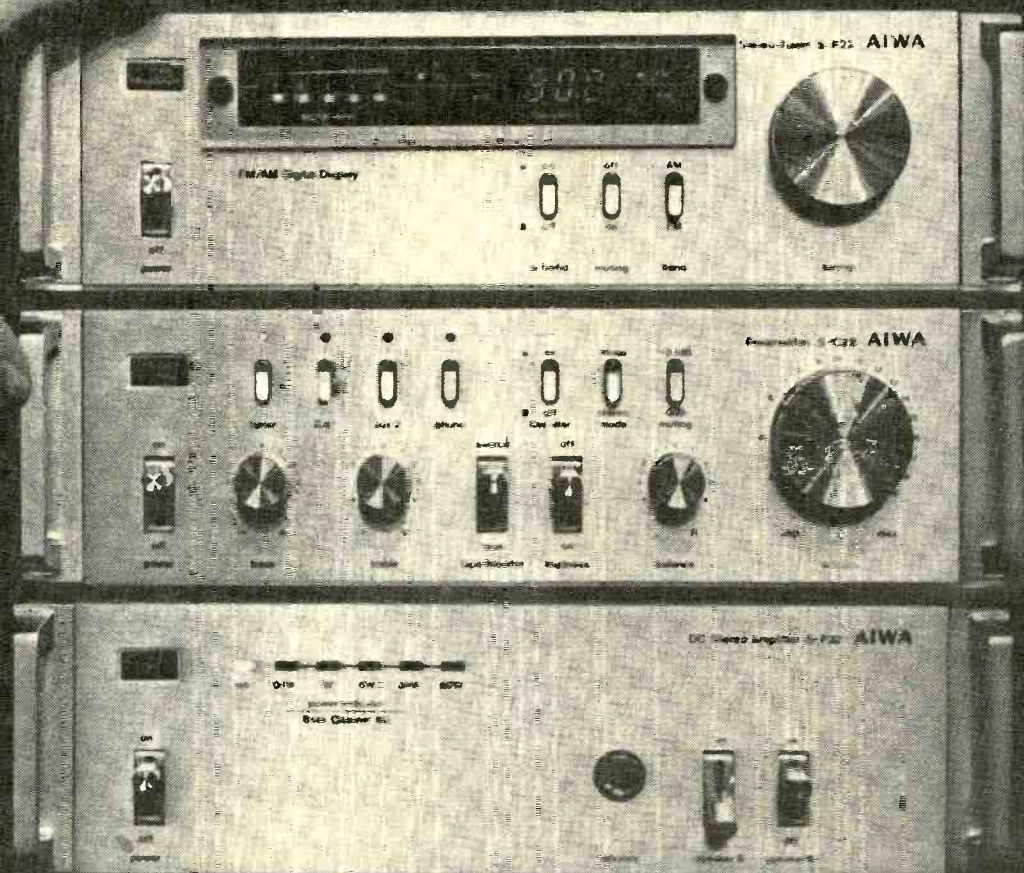
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JAPAN AUDIO FAIR

An advance look at a large
part of the 1979 hi-fi product lineup



By Peter Mitchell

Aiwa's stereo tuner S-F22, preamplifier S-C22, and direct-coupled amplifier S-F22 are examples of Japan's new "minicomponent" trend (note the little rack handles). See page 77 for details.

DURING the second week in October last year, over 200,000 visitors crowded six large exhibit buildings in the Harumi International Fairground located on a man-made peninsula jutting into Tokyo Bay. Many of them were there to attend the 27th Japan Audio Fair, held in conjunction with the 1978 Japan Electronics Show. Within the exhibit complex approximately three hundred manufacturers displayed their latest products to attending dealers, members of the press, and crowds of audiophiles (while the Electronics Show is strictly a trade show for the members of the industry, the Audio Fair is also open to the public).

I attended both shows as part of a group tour organized by Dempa Publications, a Tokyo-based publisher of several Japanese and English-language trade magazines and newspapers. The tour also included brief visits to audio factories in Tokyo, Yokohama, and Osaka. By a stroke of luck the end of this trip coincided with the start of the Taiwan Electronics Show in Taipei, providing a chance for a look at the burgeoning electronics industry of the Republic of China, which some Japanese industry leaders view as a potential threat to Japan's present world-wide dominance of the consumer electronics business.

The Audio Fair provides an advance

look at a large part of the 1979 hi-fi product line-up, since many of the products which were introduced in the Far East in October will make their first appearance in the U.S. at dealer trade shows during the spring and summer (especially the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago early in June) and will begin to be delivered to retail dealers during the summer and autumn of 1979. But the show, the factory visits, and discussions with manufacturers also provided a larger perspective, from the point of view of the major Japanese manufacturers, on the trends that will dominate the hi-fi market, both here and in the Far East, during the next several years.

The Audio Market

To the major Japanese hi-fi manufacturers, audio is a business, not a hobby. This is not the trivial truism it may seem. Many American and British hi-fi companies, especially those specializing in "esoteric" audiophile products, were started and are still controlled by engineers and hobbyists who, believing that they had found a way to make more highly refined products, formed companies to manufacture them. In such companies the introduction of new products usually awaits an opportunity to incorporate a significant technical advance. But a number of the major Japanese manufacturers are into hi-fi the way General Motors is into cars. The major Japanese audio manufacturers have impressive research and development centers creating potentially interesting product ideas, but they also invest a great deal of money and manpower in market analysis to determine *what* will sell. And new-product decisions are shaped at least as much by market analysis as by advancing technology.

During a factory visit, Technics presented to visiting U.S. observers an explicit review of their vision of the hi-fi market—a view that dovetails neatly with the views expressed by other major manufacturers and illuminates the selection of new products shown at the fair. As they see it, the best opportunities for growth of the hi-fi business are in three areas:

● **The marriage of audio with video.** Within the domestic Japanese market this specifically involves marketing audio components for the reception and decoding of *stereo* television sound right now. This is expected to evolve ultimately into the concept of the complete component home-entertainment theater: video discs and tapes, as well as broadcasts, all with wide-range stereo sound reproduced via stereo components and the picture viewed on large-screen projection TV. Meanwhile, the tie-in between audio and video is expected to yield both marketing and technical advantages. For instance, in the U.S. about 98 per cent of homes have TV sets, while only a comparatively small

number have component audio systems; if the introduction of stereo TV sound were to persuade even a third of the TV-set owners to purchase audio components to reproduce TV sound better, that would represent an enormous jump in audio-component sales. The important technical tie-in between audio and video, of course, is based on the fact that the technology of video disc and tape systems is easily adaptable to the requirements of digital audio.

● **An expanded environment for stereo sound.** The complexity of conventional stereo components limits their mass appeal, and in most homes the size of stereo gear limits its use to just one room—and even there it may fit in rather awkwardly. Therefore stereo components can be increased in appeal simply by making them somewhat simpler (easier for non-hobbyists to use) and smaller (easier to fit into a variety of living environments). Most of the Japanese manufacturers are introducing diminutive "mini" speakers and "mini" components intended to bring high-quality stereo sound to bedrooms, kitchens, vacation cottages, vans, mobile homes, and even to upper-class living rooms where bulkier equipment would clash with the decor. Major Japanese manufacturers are also expanding into the professional audio field to market equipment for "community" sound systems: disco systems, live-performance sound reinforcement, church audio systems, clubs. And further marketing opportunities are envisioned for audio applications in medicine, for sensorial education of infants, for new classes of portable equipment—and, of course, for increasing both the quality and diversity of automotive stereo components.

● **The era of super-fi.** So far this view of hi-fi's future has focused on ways of expanding the market without necessarily improving the achievable quality of sound reproduction. The concluding category is centered on digital technology: digital recording and playback, digital signal processing, and the use of digital control circuitry such as microprocessors to achieve greater operating convenience as well as significantly better sound quality.

With this perspective on the market as seen by the major Japanese manufacturers, we can now look more knowledgeably at the specific products and trends revealed at the Audio Fair.

Video

Since Expo '70, Japan's NHK-TV has been conducting periodic experimental bilingual television broadcasts with two separate sound channels. On September 28, 1978, Japan became the first nation officially to authorize routine TV broadcasting with two-channel sound; at the broadcast station's discretion the second channel may be used either for a second language or for stereophony. So, for the domestic Japanese market, the most important news at the Audio Fair was the proliferation of stereo TV-sound tuners from nearly every major manufacturer. But these won't make it to the U.S. for at least two or three years, since our FCC is not expected to approve a method for stereo TV-sound broadcasting before 1981 or 1982 (Pioneer has nonetheless already introduced a monophonic version of its TV-sound tuner here, and other manufacturers may do so as well).

Incidentally, the groundwork for wide-band stereo TV sound has already been laid in this country: the Public Broadcasting Service is using a satellite for network relays, and since January 1978 AT&T has been employing a diplexing system to piggyback network audio with the video rather than relaying it separately via low-fidelity phone lines. Thus, full-bandwidth low-distortion sound is now available from network TV, and the only barrier to stereo TV sound is the development and FCC authorization of a scheme to send it from your local TV station to your receiving antenna and unscramble it in your home. The Japanese have adopted a multiplexing scheme similar to that employed in conventional stereo FM broadcasting. While in Tokyo I enjoyed an excellent series of live symphonic and chamber-music TV broadcasts in prime time on NHK-TV, plus a portion of a baseball game with crowd noise in stereo. Numerous bilingual (usually Japanese/English) broad-

JAPAN...

casts are also available. (For that sort of program you listen to channel A or B.)

Of course, if you are receiving stereo TV-sound broadcasts, you will want your videocassette recorder to tape both channels of sound with the picture. Videocassette recorders presently available in the U.S. are mono machines, but Toshiba and Sanyo showed Beta-format videocassette recorders (VCR's) with stereo-sound recording, and others are reportedly in the works. As is the case with audio cassettes, the new videocassettes will have compatible sound tracks playable on either mono or stereo machines; in the Toshiba stereo VCR, for instance, the audio head is in the same place as in earlier Beta-format recorders; the standard 1-millimeter audio track is replaced by two tracks, each 0.35 millimeter wide, with a guard band between them to maintain channel separation.

Logically, the next step is the total component video system. In addition to TV audio tuners, Technics, Pioneer, and Sanyo introduced separate video tuners intended to feed pictures to a simple "monitor"—a TV set devoid of tuning controls, r.f. stages, audio circuits, and other parts that would be redundant. Sanyo, Sharp, Panasonic, and others showed large-screen projection TV systems, all employing separate projection tubes for red, blue, and green in order to achieve maximum brightness and resolution rather than the less costly (and less effective) one-tube approach. Another novelty which attracted a lot of attention (even though it is not quite new, having been shown in Europe a couple of years ago) was the "picture in a picture": a small black-and-white picture nestled in the corner of a full-size color-TV screen. The secondary picture can be used to monitor programming on a second channel or can be fed from a closed-circuit camera to show activity in your children's playroom, your front hall, etc. Video cameras, both black-and-white and color, were present in great profusion. The color-camera displays were impressive in demonstrating the color fidelity of the systems; one manufacturer set up a comparison between an aquarium tank filled with tropical fish and a live replay of the scene using his camera and color monitor, while another used brightly attired trampoline acrobats for the same purpose.

Despite the popularity of videocassette systems, Pioneer believes its best bet for market leadership lies in the videodisc. The Pioneer exhibit was dominated by a display of the Discovision system manufactured for MCA by Pioneer; the color-TV picture was impressively free of the grain that most videotapes exhibit, the color fidelity was excellent, and of course the picture was delightfully free of any trace of ghosts.

Digital

Technically, the Japanese are ready to bring digital audio to market. Digital-disc

players were shown by Pioneer, Sony, Technics, and Denon, and most of the major manufacturers have shown prototype adapters which convert any videocassette recorder into a digital audio tape recorder. Like the tape systems, the digital-disc systems are basically video players with adapter circuits; thus the Pioneer/MCA videodisc player can be used interchangeably to play TV programs or, by connecting a simple adapter box, digital audio records. The virtues of digital recording are well known: 85 to 90 dB dynamic range, vanishingly low distortion and flutter, frequency response dead flat from d.c. to 20,000 Hz, no inner-groove distortion, no cartridge mistracking at high levels, no surface noise—indeed, the demonstrations I have heard at various times and places have all been stunning.

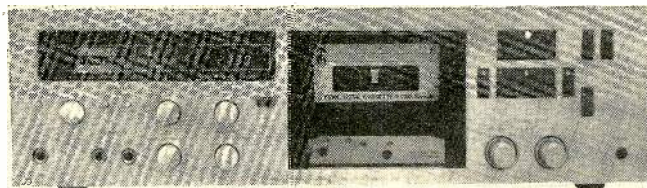
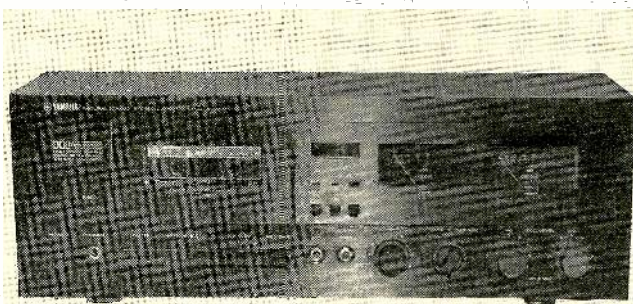
The only important barrier to the marketing of digital audio equipment is the problem of achieving sufficient standardization, so that recordings made on one manufacturer's system will be playable on others. I asked several manufacturers about their marketing plans for their digital audio hardware, and their response was that they are awaiting only the adoption of uniform standards to ensure compatibility. About a year ago the Audio Engineering Society formed a Digital Audio Standards Committee which was ex-

cotape adapter/encoders to develop their own compatible standard. All of the various prototype VCR adapters already employ the same digital sampling rate (44.056 kHz), and all use some form of thirteen-bit pulse-code-modulation (PCM) encoding, so with a little cooperative effort a common encoding format could be adopted. Digital-disc systems, however, may not be readily united into a common format; the digital-disc players that have been publicly demonstrated differ not only in their encoding formats but also in the physical characteristics of the discs and hence the playback mechanisms used to reproduce them. And comparable differences naturally exist in the physical characteristics of the various videocassette systems as well.

Tape

Not surprisingly, the most-promoted innovation in recording at the fair was pure-metal tape: 3M, TDK, and Fuji were displaying pure-metal tapes said to be similar in performance and in bias requirements. Prototype cassette machines designed to employ the tape were shown by Toshiba, Sansui, Luxman, Sanyo, JVC, Yamaha, and possibly some others I might have missed. The Yamaha X-21 prototype was also the

Yamaha's prototype X-21 cassette deck (top) has optional 3¾-ips speed and pure-metal-tape compatibility. Lux's new pure-metal-ready deck operates at 1½ ips.



pected to formulate voluntary standards for both professional and consumer digital recording formats. But at its November 1978 meeting in New York the society adopted a go-slow policy on standards, making it more likely that manufacturers may proceed to market their equipment and take a chance on the public's tolerance of the mutual incompatibilities of competing systems.

Actually, it would not be too difficult for the various Japanese manufacturers of vid-

only cassette machine in evidence that could employ a 3¾-ips tape speed, but Yamaha's representatives made it clear that this exhibit was intended only to show what *can* be done to elevate the performance of the cassette medium by combining metal tape and doubled tape speed; they have no plans to offer the machine for sale. When I asked executives of JVC and other leading recorder manufacturers about plans to market two-speed cassette machines as B.I.C. has done,

they agreed that the Philips license under which they make cassette recorders permits only the standard 1 7/8 ips. So they intend to focus on ways to upgrade performance at that speed.

One of these ways involves new noise-reduction systems. The interest sparked by direct-to-disc, digital, and pure-metal-tape recording systems has made it clear there is a market for recorders having greater signal-to-noise ratios than the 65 dB or so that is common to Dolbyized cassette decks and non-Dolby high-speed open-reel machines.

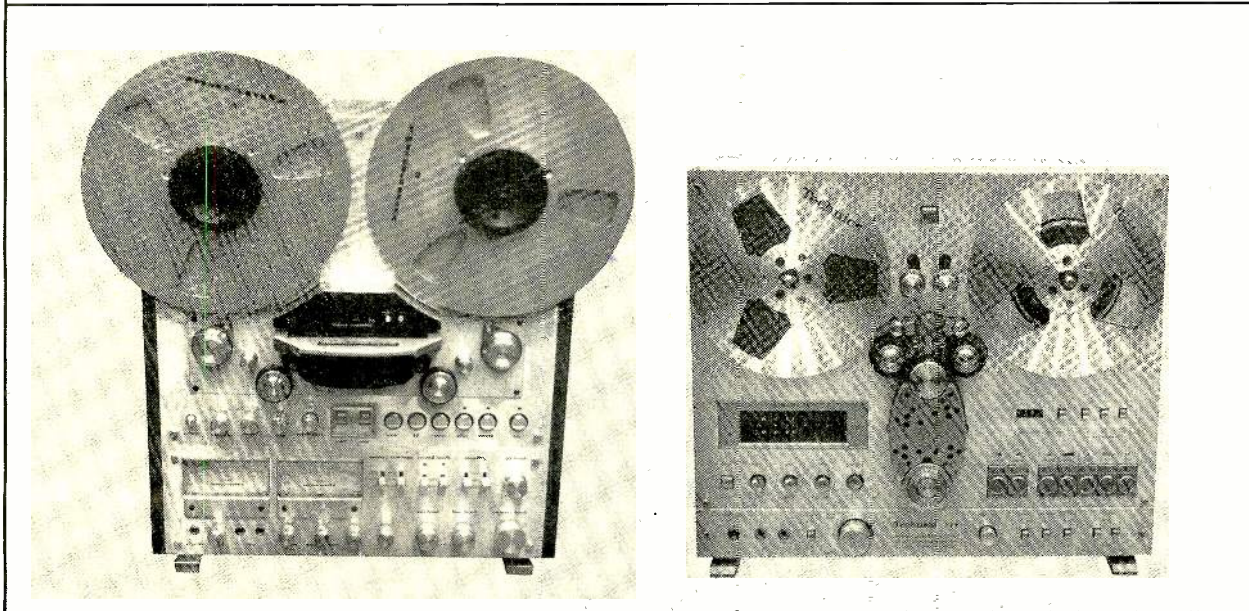
Hz. The top machine in the JVC group (KD-A8, \$750) also features an impressive tape calibration system—a microprocessor which automatically records various test frequencies and fine-tunes the recorder's bias, equalization, and levels to match the tape. (A Hitachi cassette deck with a similar automatic tape-matching processor was unveiled in Europe several months ago.)

Microprocessors used as automatic program locators were also in evidence in new recorders from Sony and Technics; by keeping track of the intervals of silence between

dence at the Audio Fair, an efficient-looking portable from Sony. Among new open-reel tape-deck entries, only one 7-inch-reel machine drew attention: the Technics RS-777, featuring a superb isolated-loop tape transport for very low levels of flutter and modulation noise. But large semiprofessional tape decks with 10 1/2-inch reels continue to be popular with Japanese audiophiles, judging from the number of decks on display at the show and in retail stores in Tokyo and Osaka. Among such machines that caught my eye: the massive \$4,500 Teac F-1 with its

The Marantz 7700 (left) offers a full array of editing, bias, and equalization controls, plus a dual-capstan transport

with 10 1/2-inch-reel capacity. Technics' 7-inch-reel RS-777 features the company's proprietary isolated-loop transport.



In the U.S., dbx has found a ready market for its wide-range compander systems, and at least five recorder manufacturers—Toshiba, Sanyo, N.A.D., Nakamichi, and JVC—have different (and incompatible) compander systems, either for inclusion within their new cassette models or for sale as outboard accessories. Toshiba's ADRES (Automatic Dynamic Range Expansion System), available both as an outboard unit and built into the top-of-the-line Toshiba cassette models, employs a 1.5:1 compression-expansion ratio, with equalization intended to eliminate any audible noise modulation ("breathing"). Sanyo's NR5500 is a 2:1 compander. And Nakamichi has become the first licensee of the "High-Com" compander based on the professional Telcom noise-reduction system developed in Germany. All of these promise a dynamic range of 80 dB or more with conventional cassettes at the standard 1 7/8-ips tape speed.

JVC exhibited not one but three cassette decks designed for metal-particle tape and employing an "X-cut" SA (sendust alloy) head; the X-cut configuration contours the flux through the head, substantially eliminating the low-frequency bumps and ripples that most tape decks exhibit to yield response that can be equalized flat to below 15

selections, they display the selection number on the front panel and can be directed to cue and play selections in any desired order. The most visible trend in the new generation of cassette decks, however, is the continuing disappearance of moving-needle meters. A few could still be found, but most new cassette models at every price level were sporting luminescent peak-reading level readouts—red LED "ladders," blue-green fluorescent bar graphs, or multicolor liquid-crystal displays. Another evident trend is the provision of remote control, via either a long cable or a wireless transmitter.

Yamaha introduced two attention-getting cassette decks. The K-2 bids for "best buy" status in its class: at a list price of about \$400 it offers three-head recording using co-housed record and playback heads, double Dolby circuits for simultaneous recording and playback monitoring, and a sound-on-sound/echo control that mixes the delayed playback signal with the input to add echoes or reverberation to sound, among other features. The \$550 K-1 has a special head made with a vacuum process and a control that fine-tunes the highest frequencies of the recording equalization.

Interest in the Elcaset continues to decline; only one new Elcaset deck was in evi-

electronics in a separate console; the Marantz 7700 with impressively smooth tape handling, three speeds, and a comprehensive array of controls for bias and equalization, servicing adjustments, and editing; the remote-control Denon DH-510; and the Akai GX-635D with direct-drive capstan and bidirectional recording and playback.

Record Players

With few exceptions, this seems to be a year of refinement rather than revolution in the record-playing field. Quartz-locked direct-drive turntables and moving-coil cartridges continue to proliferate. A few products stood out from the crowd. For instance, Kenwood displayed a turntable whose base was a half-ton seismic platform; obviously not a commercial product, it was described as a reference standard for judging the immunity of practical turntable designs to vibrational disturbance. The commercial product which did result from this study is the Kenwood R-6197 "Master" turntable with a 22-pound platter, a 330-pound base, and a light but rigid tone arm with special internal damping.

Pioneer showed a slightly less massive but visually imposing black turntable system

JAPAN...

with a radial-tracking tone arm and remote control. And the Marantz entry was a two-armed affair with not a speck of wood in its construction, the platter and base consisting of alternating layers of brass and plate glass. Sansui has developed a tone arm whose mass distribution causes vibration in the arm to be self-canceling at the tip; thus any vibration (such as acoustic feedback) applied to the base of the arm will leave the stylus tip unmoved and so should not affect the signal produced by the cartridge.

Of the many moving-coil cartridges shown at the fair perhaps the most notable

tuners at much lower prices than formerly. Whether for this reason or some other, many digital tuners were introduced at prices in the \$300 to \$400 range. And most of the new tuners which are non-digital include some form of "servo-lock" automatic fine tuning serving the same purpose as digital tuning—namely, to ensure that the tuner homes in on the lowest-distortion tuning point at the center of a station's channel with no possibility of being mistuned.

The most conspicuous new-product category is the "mini" (or "micro") component; nearly every major manufacturer introduced a family of them. (For more information on these, see Larry Klein's comments on the facing page.) Among full-size components, rack mounting, either as an option or standard, has become almost universal, and the standard colors continue to be white/silver and black (some manufacturers offer

distortion) at power levels up to three watts or so, moving into class B only for those times when an amplifier is called on to deliver larger amounts of power. Sony is one of several Japanese manufacturers offering an amplifier which can be switched by the user to offer either class-A operation with modest power output or so-called class B with high power available. (Actually, no high-fidelity amplifier operates in *pure* class B, since doing so would generate large amounts of crossover distortion every time the waveform switched from positive to negative.) Among audiophile-class super-amplifiers, Technics offers a "class A+" and JVC introduced a "class Super-A" design; both involve the use of a dynamically varying bias on the output transistors, combining the efficiency of class-B operation with the freedom from crossover switching that class A yields. Pioneer introduced a floating-bias amp of its own design, calling it a "non-switching" amplifier to avoid the semantic arguments over the "true" definition of what constitutes class-A operation; a Pioneer representative claimed that their floating-bias circuit costs very little more to manufacture than a conventional quasi-class-B circuit. The Pioneer exhibit included a comparative oscilloscope display of the residual distortion waveforms of a conventional quasi-class-B amplifier (the Pioneer 8500/II), a pure class-A unit (Pioneer's Series Twenty Model M-22), and the new non-switching amplifier, illustrating that the new circuit was as free of crossover distortion (and, indeed, other forms of distortion) as the pure class-A design, but without the latter's costly inefficiency.

Speakers

At a show, listening to unfamiliar recordings in acoustically abnormal environments, it is difficult to judge the quality of loudspeakers, so I can report only that most of the loudspeakers demonstrated at the Audio Fair seemed basically similar in design to earlier products by the same companies, and in most cases no claims of radically improved performance were being made. The only genuinely impressive demonstration was in the Onkyo room, where the new Onkyo SL-1 subwoofer system was generating awesomely deep, clean, and powerful bass fundamentals. The \$800 SL-1 contains its own built-in 75-watt PWM (pulse-width-modulation) amplifier driving an 8-inch acoustic-suspension woofer mounted in a subcabinet sealed within the SL-1. The acoustic pressure produced within the SL-1's main cabinet by the 8-inch cone provides the driving force for the flat, freely suspended 15-inch diaphragm; since the system is sealed, the operation is analogous to that of a hydraulic booster. Pressure generated by the small driver is applied pneumatically to the large 15-inch diaphragm, which therefore is driven over its entire surface, minimizing cone-breakup problems. The motion of the 15-inch flat diaphragm is then imparted to the air in the listening room.

Several flat-panel loudspeaker systems drew attention at the fair. Starting with the more-or-less conventional approach, Stax showed two new full-range electrostatic designs whose smooth sound befitted their



Pioneer's Linear 1 direct-drive turntable uses a straight-line-tracking arm with multiple servomechanisms controlling both tone-arm movement and tracking force.

was the Yamaha MC-1S, employing a tapered beryllium cantilever, a dual-magnet system said to yield a more linear magnetic field than the usual single-magnet construction, and coils which are not really coils at all but are manufactured using integrated-circuit techniques; each "coil" is a microscopic bit of IC substrate in which a fine spiral conductive pattern has been photo-etched. The result, according to Yamaha's Japanese-language brochure, is ruler-flat frequency response and outstanding channel separation: as much as 35 dB at mid-frequencies and 30 dB at 15,000 Hz. The JVC MC-1 cartridge is somewhat similar in its construction.

Tuners and Amplifiers

Digital circuitry is making impressive inroads into tuner design. Matsushita announced the development of a family of IC's that perform all of the functions required for digital frequency-synthesis tuning in both the FM and AM bands. Since they will be generally available, this will permit the construction of frequency-synthesizing

you both), though Marantz and a few other companies are beginning to bring back the yellow-gold hue popular in the 1950's. Moving-needle meters are disappearing from amplifiers to be replaced by LED or luminescent bar-graph output-power displays. A built-in pre-preamplifier for moving-coil cartridges is now standard in most high-end integrated amplifiers and preamps.

Japanese design engineers evidently remain convinced of the importance of "ultrafast" wide-frequency-response amplifiers. Pioneer introduced a line of integrated amplifiers employing ring-emitter transistors capable of delivering full power up to about 100 kHz with very low distortion, while Kenwood and Sansui were using oscilloscope displays to document the ability of their amplifier to handle full-power ultrasonic square waves with ease, indicating that their claimed slew rates exceeding 150 volts per microsecond are likely to be valid.

The Pioneer integrated amplifiers referred to above also are described as operating in Class AB, which in Pioneer's definition means that they behave as class-A amplifiers (totally free of any trace of crossover

ONE of the unexpected bonuses of a recent trip to Japan (courtesy TDK) was my first opportunity to wander about on my own in the Akihabara "radio-row" district in Tokyo for the better part of a day. In Akihabara there are perhaps three hundred stores, shops, and stalls engaged in wheeling and dealing in electronic hardware. In one flea-market area I found everything from half-assembled, factory-surplus brand-name tape-deck chassis to color-patterned resistor-capacitor displays that looked good enough to eat. Other stores on side streets specialized in wire, knobs, chassis, and other electronic items. And, of course, there are the strictly audio stores that far exceed, in their profusion of products and depth of stock, anything I've seen anywhere else in the world. At first glance some of these enterprises seem to have on display every model by every Japanese manufacturer—and dozens by U.S. manufacturers as well.

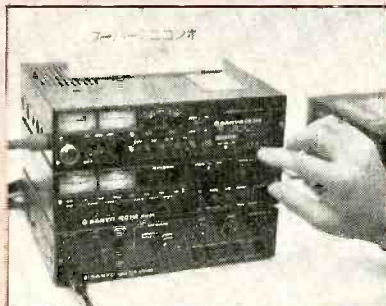
The audio shops are therefore a kind of hi-fi show—but with a big difference. You can be sure that anything that is on display there is long past the prototype stage and that it represents at least a moderate investment in engineering and assembly-line tooling. The blue-sky, hand-made components commonly on display at Japanese audio fairs (intended in many cases only to demonstrate a manufacturer's capability) won't be seen in audio stores. Nor will those components that represent a manufacturer's testing of the marketplace, nor those that do not lend themselves easily to mass production.

Since the new components on the audio dealers' shelves represent the here-and-now of the Japanese homeland audio business, they usually provide somewhat more substantial clues to the equipment about to be seen in the U.S. than an audio fair would. Take, for instance, the new (and slightly confusing) Japanese interest in so-called "minicomponents."* Virtually every major manufacturer has produced a full line of these components, including preamplifiers, power amplifiers, integrated amplifiers, tuners, and cassette decks. At the time of my mid-November visit, most manufacturers seemed to have no more than a half-dozen or so different minicomponents in their lines, but if the "mini" category is successful in Japan—it's still too early to tell—then more (and somewhat different) products are inevitable.

There is a certain aesthetic charm to the minicomponents that I find hard to resist. The urge to turn their knobs and push their buttons is not unlike the urge to pet a puppy. But what of the performance aspect? The power ratings of the miniamps seem to peak at about 60 watts

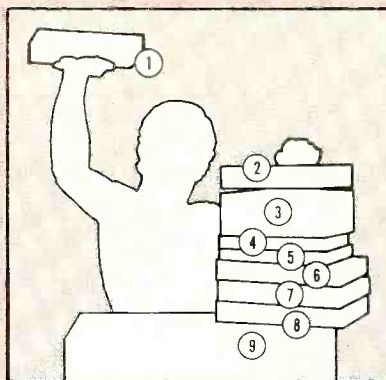
*You'll see it both ways, but "mini" (as in "miniature") is to be preferred to the more common "micro" (as in "microscopic") for obvious reasons.

THE NEW mini COMPONENTS



Sanyo's minicomponents: top to bottom, cassette deck, digital tuner, and amplifier.

per channel or so, with a few above and many below that rating. The minituners, in general, employ the latest technology, with digital displays, quartz-controlled frequency synthesis, digital memories, and so forth. The minipreamps range from those with conventional switching and flexibility to a few models with digi-



THIS MONTH'S COVER

Easily hefting an example of his work, the diminutive but powerful Mr. Transistor holds aloft a Toshiba F15 tuner (1) while a Gale GS401A speaker (9) supports a Toshiba C15 preamplifier (2), a Toshiba M15 power amplifier (3), a Randix Audiologic LX40T tuner (4) with matched LX40A integrated amplifier, a Technics ST-C01 tuner (6), a Technics SU-C01 preamplifier (7), and a Technics SE-C01 power amplifier (8).

tal control circuits. The cassette decks are more or less full-feature, front-loading units with a tendency to incorporate electronic or microprocessor transport controls rather than mechanical ones. All in all, a good-looking, technically up-to-date (and, I suspect, fine-performing) group of components.

One intriguing aspect of this new development is the fact that minicomponent electronics have already inspired a significant increase in the population of minispeakers. This has a surface logicity from the standpoints of aesthetic consistency and space saving, but in the technical sense it is slightly nutty. Everything else being equal in performance, the smaller the speaker system, the more power is needed to drive it. A minispeaker system with a reasonable bass response might require an amplifier with a power output of 50 watts per channel to realize its full potential. The same performance could be obtained from a somewhat larger speaker system being driven by a 20- or 30-watt amplifier. In addition, the power-handling capability of a minispeaker is almost always more limited than that of a larger model—it not only *won't* play as loud for a given input signal, but it *can't* play as loud (with any signal) as a larger speaker. (This does not mean that the new Japanese minispeakers are necessarily inferior to those already here under a variety of brand names; my comments are directed to the minispeaker category in general.) Aside from these "efficiency" and power-handling considerations, the sound produced by some of the minispeakers now available can be nothing less than startlingly good when driven by an adequately powered amplifier.

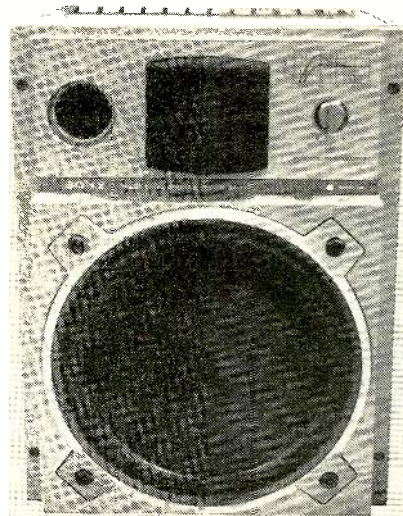
In respect to all components except power amplifiers, I see no reason why a mini should be any more expensive than a component of conventional size. The mini should provide a cost saving on chassis metalwork and shipping, of course, but I've been told that these savings may be negated because the small units are somewhat more difficult to assemble and use more expensive miniaturized parts. In the light of many visits I've made to electronic assembly plants here and abroad, I tend to doubt both propositions. It is conceivable, however, that the mini amplifiers have an extra expense involved in their high-frequency switching-type miniaturized power supplies.

I await the arrival of more minicomponents on these shores with interest. A few have already been introduced (see this month's cover), but they represent but a drop from a very large Japanese bucket. Potential importers of the units are probably all bothered by the same unanswered question: is it possible to successfully go against the "bigger is better" bias that characterizes so much of American life? —Larry Klein

headphone amplifiers to assist in playing the recordings back; and antistatic record-care preparations with delightfully euphonic brand names. Orsonic showed the Atlas SG-1 Side Force Checker (\$70) which measures the residual error in your tone arm's

LED's the energy level in each octave of the musical spectrum, is a convenient and versatile device for assessing the response of tape recorders, speakers, and the acoustics of the room, while the equalizer provides the corrections which may be needed to arrive at uniform response. The spectrum analyzer is also an instructive tool, of course, as it reveals the sometimes-surprising distribution of energy in musical sounds.

The self-powered two-way Sony SA10F, with an internal amplifier, is one of the first speaker systems of this type to be developed in Japan. The control at the upper right contours the deep-bass response to compensate for variations in room acoustics.



Now that we've seen what is Over There, the big question is, when will it all get Over Here? The answer, if past experience is any guide, may well be *never* for many of the products shown. For reasons best known to themselves, Japanese manufacturers have in the past tended to keep their most esoteric products at home, devoting their export energies to those components that might be expected to find quick high-volume sales abroad. Just recently, selected pieces of Japanese esoterica began to make quiet appearances in the most exclusive U.S. audio salons, but there is much more where they came from that has yet to be seen.

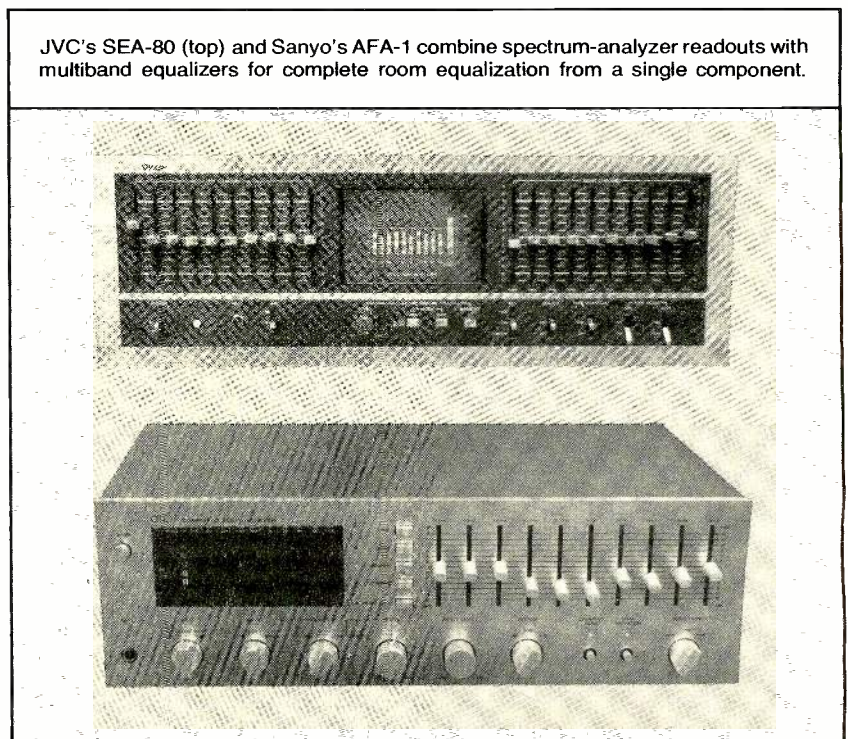
As for the more traditional Japanese export products—receivers, integrated amplifiers, box speakers, and all the rest—we can confidently expect them to begin arriving on these shores almost as fast as boats and planes can bring them. Many will no doubt turn up at the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show, imminent as this is being written. Others may wait for Chicago's CES in June. But whatever the timetable, they are definitely in our future. □

high prices. A more unusual approach was taken in the "Dynapeats No. 1" speaker by Sawafuji; in appearance it is simply a piece of transparent Plexiglas, about 2½ feet wide and 5 feet tall, with a grille mounted in its center. The grille conceals the heart of the speaker: a pleated Mylar diaphragm, with a linear voice-coil embedded in it, being driven by line arrays of bar magnets. Similarities to both the U.S. Magneplanar and Heil drivers can be found in the design; the large Plexiglas sheet is, of course, just a baffle to separate the front and back outputs of this dipole radiator. Finally, Sony and Pioneer were showing speaker systems with flat-panel diaphragms that looked similar to each other, though there may be important differences revealed only to those who could read the Japanese-language descriptions available at the fair. Sony's drivers were called "A.P.M.," while Pioneer's—neatly associating themselves with the sonic excellence that digital PCM recording implies—were identified as "P.C.M." drivers: *Plane Complex Membrane*.

skating-force compensation while a record is actually being played.

Luxman, Sanyo, and JVC introduced a new product category likely to prove very popular: the "equanalyzer," a graphic equalizer and octave-band real-time spectrum analyzer combined in the same chassis. The analyzer, displaying on banks of

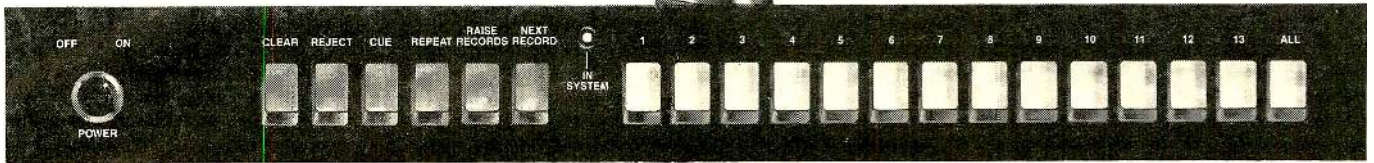
JVC's SEA-80 (top) and Sanyo's AFA-1 combine spectrum-analyzer readouts with multiband equalizers for complete room equalization from a single component.



Accessories

A great many accessory products are available to Japanese audiophiles, few of which have been exported to the U.S. so far. Among these are a vast array of digital timers of varying degrees of complexity (and price) for activating tape recorders and other parts of a stereo system at designated times; remote-control units for tape recorders, some using infrared transmitter/receiver systems; tone-arm head shells of assorted materials which are said to affect or correct the coloration of the sound in subtle ways; dummy heads for binaural recordings, plus

6 records have never been lowered, lifted, programmed and played like this before. Even remotely.



You touch a few buttons.

A record lowers gently on to the platter. The tonearm lifts, glides silently over the record. Past the first track, the second track, the third track, and lowers to play the fourth track. The music you wanted to hear first.

The quality of the sound is something you've never experienced before.

Suddenly, with the Accutrac® +6, you enter a whole new world of music enjoyment.

Because when you're at the computerized feather touch controls of the Accutrac +6 you'll realize it's more than just a turntable.

It's an experience.

Its features go far beyond your imagination.

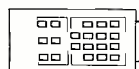
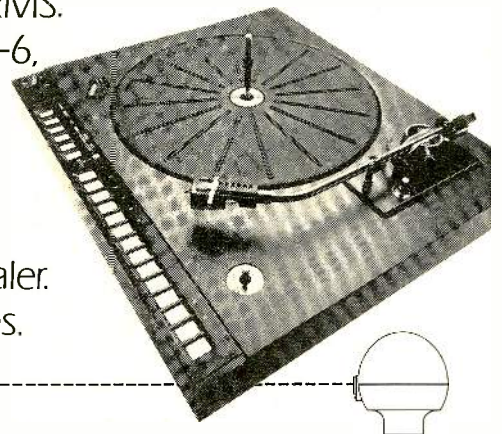
A computerized track selector lets you hear the tracks you like, in any order you like, even skip the tracks you don't like, on all six records.

The Accuglide® Spindle is like a record elevator. It doesn't drop your records, so there's "no plop." It even raises all six back up when you're through playing.

And the Accutrac +6 is available with a remote transmitter which lets you control everything from across the room. On some models, there's even remote volume control. The specs are also remarkable. Rumble is better than -66dB (Din 45539B). Wow and flutter are less than .04% WRMS.

With the computer technology of the Accutrac +6, the operation of a turntable has never been easier. And the micro-electronics eliminates hundreds of mechanical parts to achieve new levels of reliability and performance.

Experience the Accutrac +6 at your Accutrac dealer. You're not going to believe your ears or your eyes.



Accutrac® +6

It plays on your emotions.

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PARANOIA can be a lot of fun, especially if it turns out to be justified (or as A. J. Weberman, the guy who used to poke around in Bob Dylan's garbage, observed, "Just because you don't think they're out to get you doesn't mean they're not"). That, it seems to me, is why the children of the Sixties, who responded to their parents' paranoia (There's a Commie Under Every Bed) by growing one of their own (There's a C.I.A. Agent in Every Woodpile), have become so blasé about the sensational revelations of the Sev-

ely based his entire career on the idea that the Universe is rigged; and New Yorkers in particular have gotten mucho yucks out of a variety of paranoid graffiti artists, from the anonymous wacko who spray-paints warnings about leprosy in Times Square to the great William H. Depperman, the ex-Yippie who plasters the subways with hand-lettered posters linking the Rockefellers and Hong Kong film mogul Run Run Shaw as prime movers behind both the Kennedy assassinations and the death of kung-fu star Bruce Lee.

seems constitutionally incapable of re-directing the mockery back toward himself; he gets off lots of good lines, to be sure, but never at the expense of Frank Zappa.

The following excerpts from our conversation, alternately witty, scathing, scatological, and thoughtful, should give you an idea of what I mean. I should add, by the way, that although we did not get along particularly well—at one point he called me a pinhead and I'm sure he meant it—I still respect the man as much as I respect anyone in



A little visit with **FRANK ZAPPA**

By Steve Simels

enties—from Watergate to Chile to the Bullet from the Grassy Knoll—that they shrug off each fresh outrage with a bored yawn and a dip in a hot tub. After all, what could possibly, at this point, surprise a generation that has endured persecutions worthy of Jean Valjean in an attempt to make the world safe for *cannabis sativa*, only to discover that red-baiting Senator Joe McCarthy was not only a morphine addict (!) but got the stuff personally from Harry J. Anslinger (!!), the Federal Narcotics Bureau chief responsible for the whole "Assassin of Youth" PR campaign? I may have a limited imagination, but I can't see how even the most lurid hallucinatory vision could top that one for paranoid surrealism.

Not only is paranoia fun, but in its lesser manifestations it's also an eminently useful commodity, producing some great comedy of both the intentional and unintentional varieties. Jackie Mason, for example, once remarked that he didn't like to go to football games because when the players huddled he was positive they were talking about him; Woody Allen has practical-

In other words, not only is paranoia my generations's own brand of slapstick, it's our birthright. We're paranoid, by God, and proud of it. But what has any of this got to do with Frank Zappa, whom I interviewed (for want of a better word) recently? Quite a bit, probably; the politics of paranoia go a long way, I think, toward explaining both his work over the last fifteen years and the special relationship he has with his extraordinarily loyal audience. Zappa is both a child of the times, obsessed with technology and with the elimination of the distinctions between pop and serious culture, and a fascinating throwback to the nineteenth-century stereotype of the eccentric genius. In fact, if there is anyone, upon sober reflection, he reminds me of, it's not his beloved Edgard Varèse, or even a charming weirdo like Erik Satie, but rather the ever unpopular Max Reger, who was brilliant, iron-willed, and convinced that he was beset from all sides by enemies and fools. Like Reger, Zappa is capable of being pointedly amusing and abrasive (his favorite word for other people's work is "swill"), but he

pop music. After all, he plays a mean guitar.

● On just having hosted *Saturday Night Live*:

"It's a very difficult thing to do; they never make it easy on anyone who hosts the show. All the direction and attention goes to the sketches. They're not called skits—they become *incensed* if you call them skits—and it's all designed to accommodate the people who are regulars on the show, so anybody who goes on there to host is at a severe disadvantage. Because they never tell you what camera is on, and you're not supposed to memorize your script because they're rewriting right up to air time. And so you're looking at the cue cards, and unless you're used to acting live on TV, you haven't got a prayer, you'll be looking at the wrong camera. It was really hard.

"And the other thing that happened was—and I didn't find out about it until the day after the show—that the first day I went there for the meetings with them they didn't like me and wanted to get rid of me. But no one said anything

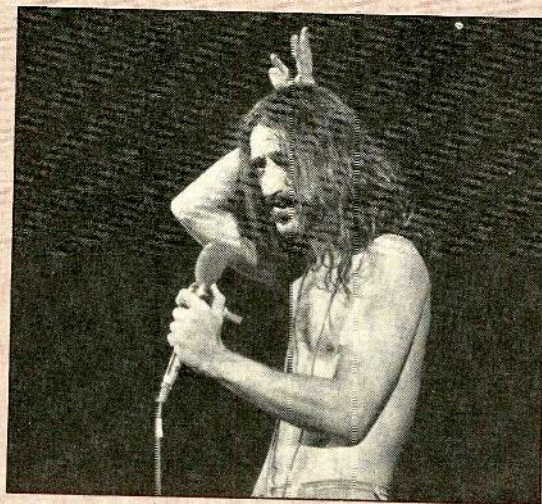
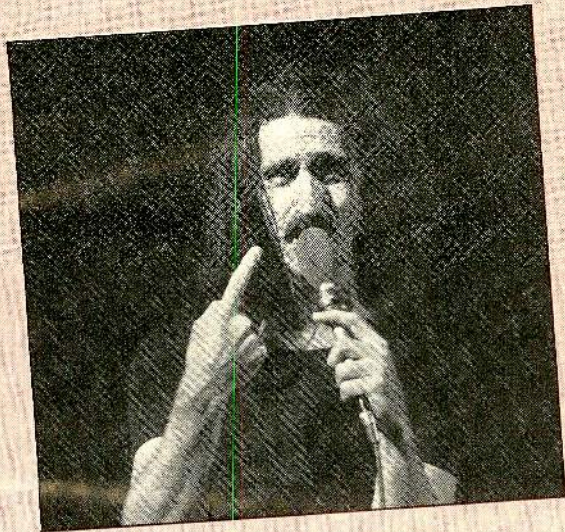
to my face while I was working on the thing. So they had written dialogue for me to say that I wouldn't normally say; they wouldn't let me write any of my own stuff.

"I think I'd be a fantastic television personality. I think I'd be a real good interviewer if I had a talk show, or a variety show. I'd be really good at it. But just to get up there and be the dumbbell in *A Night on Freak Mountain* . . . I mean, sure, I'll do that for a laugh, but I'm not gonna build a life on it."

branches, and old Mercury stuff; there's some Penderecki, some Roger Sessions, all that kind of stuff. And I think that the audience that buys my records would probably give it a whirl. Whether they'd like it or not is another question, but they'd give it a try if it was brought to their attention in the proper way. What I was gonna suggest was packaging the stuff in covers that look a little more intriguing to that particular market. Maybe racking the stuff in a special section of the store, so that maybe twelve selections that were gon-

nerds who have only one thing in mind: how to make themselves look good.

"They could [sic] care less for the people who make the music, or do the actual work of touring. And there's always this attempt to make it look like, 'Oh well, this is all shit really, and since I'm dealing with a really pure art form, then fuck all these guys who play rock-and-roll. Like, I'm an intellectual, and of course you're an intellectual too; you *read*. You're not just sitting in a hockey rink listening to rock-and-roll, you're a *reading* person. So we'll just



Photos: Chuck Pulin

● **On starting his own label, distributed by Phonogram:**

"There's a certain amount of advantage to it because then I don't have to take any responsibility by identification for the other normal stuff they release. If they do something that's in bad taste in *my* eyes, then I don't have to be identified with it.

"One of the reasons for going with Phonogram is that they have a huge catalog of contemporary music and it needs to be repackaged. I've already had discussions with them; if they'll let me take all that stuff and release it on my label, I think I could help make the stuff sell.

"Last year, when I first had the discussion with the president of the company, he thought it would probably be a good idea, but after making so much money on 'Saturday Night Fever' it sort of slipped his mind. When I brought it up again after the deal was actually signed, he said, 'Did I say that? Well, if I said it we should probably do it.' There's really not much interest there.

"It's from all their European

na be released all at once in repackaged covers could be identified in one part of the store, and tie that in with ads that show all twelve items. And spend some money to advertise it as contemporary music. Because they never do."

● **On the English music press and rock criticism generally:**

"If I were to be a bigoted individual, I would probably select the English as the target of my bigotry. The English press happen to be the most loathesome group of people I've ever had to deal with in show business. It's not just trendiness; they're so fucking two-faced and snotty. The concept behind what they write, the motivations for writing, and the whole attitude they have toward the people they write about—I really could live without it. They make me sick.

"People who write about me don't know anything about me. And to make matters worse, they don't know anything about writing either; people should be *licensed* to operate a typewriter. And so the image of me that goes out is all through the eyes of these

communicate with each other and bypass all this musical swill that's going on because the printed word is *Where It's At*."

"This kind of subliminal attitude that permeates all of rock journalism is one of the things that makes me sick. Because these guys aren't even competent to do it; the people that write that stuff aren't competent to pull that gag off. When was the last time you read anything in any of those [rock] publications that dealt with the music? It's all peripheral.

"I am a multidimensional person. I have a great respect and admiration for r-&-b, and dumbbell music, and electronic music, and symphonic music, and all that stuff. It appeals to me. I like to function in all those media. I feel comfortable in each and every one of them, and I'm just going to go ahead and write the music to suit me, and it is what it is. If it's *Louie Louie* one day, and something else the next, what's the difference? It's there for me to enjoy it, and after I enjoy it, if there's anybody else that happens to like it, that's a bonus." (Continued overleaf)

FRANK ZAPPA

"I did two things that were definitely a no-no then. One, making fun of the Beatles . . . two, I made fun of hippies."

● **On charges of thinly veiled condescension toward his public, especially in his early albums:**

"Nothing that I've ever done is planned to be misinterpreted. And I always know before I do anything, including this interview, that it's subject to misinterpretation, erroneous transcription, and editorial tweekage. The final ultimate blow is when the guy reads it and doesn't know what the fuck I'm talking about.

"Now let's take it point by point. 'Freak Out' [his 1966 debut effort with the Mothers of Invention] was never an instruction manual for anyone to go out and behave in a weird way. If you take all the lyrics on the album and see what they say, as opposed to what the liner notes say, then you find that you don't have anything to talk about. Because what you're referring to as the contents of the album is really a reference to a definition of the term 'Freak Out' as included on the jacket cover.

"Now in terms of the third album ['We're Only in It for the Money,' with the infamous 'Sgt. Pepper' cover parody] biting the hand that feeds, and 'oh! the ingratitude'—here's the way it goes. Anybody who turns into a hippie instead of a freak is not doing anything suggested by the 'Freak Out' album. By 1967 the hippie movement had been so media-ated and tweeked that . . . I mean, Flower Power was a sham, it was a merchandising thing by then, with poster shops and bimbos walking around with acid-glazed eyes and fistfuls of any kind of green object with a flower on the end of it they could get hold of waving it at a policeman, and they thought they were the Brave New World. Now I thought that was stupid, and I would be the first person to tell them it was stupid, and when I did that, I lost a large segment of the audience we had accumulated from the first two albums.

"If you stop and think about it, putting out an album like that would be a very courageous thing in the middle of hippie hysteria. I did two things that were definitely a no-no then. One, making fun of the Beatles, and you couldn't do that; and two, I made fun of hippies, and you couldn't do that ei-

ther. All the other satirical comments in the first two albums had been directed toward their parents, and none of those kids wanted to hear anything about themselves. Looking at it now, maybe it was an easy target. But you try it in 1967."

● **On orchestral writing:**

"I started writing orchestra music before I started collecting r-&-b, when I was fourteen. I've still got all that stuff. But the problem with writing orchestra music is the people that play it. There's never enough money to have proper rehearsals, so that a new piece can get as good a performance as an old piece the orchestra already knows. I mean, there's plenty of good versions of Beethoven's Fifth, because the fuckers have been playing it for hundreds of years. But there aren't that many good performances of new pieces because usually the rhythmic difficulties exceed what was required by the older repertoire, and if there's one thing that musicians are always bad at, it's rhythm. I swear to God, they can't count. If you can find an orchestra that plays together, it's a miracle.

"I still like to hear orchestra music, and I still write it; in fact, I have two copyists on yearly salary who are copying my stuff, and I go around delivering scores to orchestras. I'm available.

"But let me give an idea of what that entails. They attempted to commission me in L.A. one time like this: 'If you will buy two concert grand pianos and donate them to UCLA, then we will commission you to write some music for these instruments, and we will con-

descend to play it.' Real crass, when you stop and think how much two concert grands cost, and how they figure 'Well, we'll give it two rehearsals and get this shit out of the way, and get the pianos and run with it.' That pisses me right off.

"And always, if I present a score to somebody, they always want to know if there's a possibility that the group is available to make an appearance at the concert, y'know, just to put a little extra grease on it and sell a few more tickets. And then, still, all they talk about is two or three rehearsals. Like when we did *200 Motels* with the L.A. Philharmonic, 14,000 people came to that concert, which was the largest audience they had that year. They were all very impressed. Well, I had to pay the copying bills. Which were ten thousand dollars. Why should I have to pay for it? I really write good.

"I'm in a peculiar position because a composer who wasn't working in the world of rock-and-roll who might not have access to the kinds of facilities that I do would never be approached by these business people. Like I doubt that they'd go up to Elliott Carter and say 'If you will buy They don't do that.'"

● **On his future:**

"Generally, I will continue to operate in the areas that I operate in, except that some of them may become more important. I can't see myself in a garage; I can see myself in a basement.

"I'm elder, that's for sure, but I'm not much of a statesman. I just do my work." □

Portrait of the Artiste: Zappa (center), with date, peers bemusedly into the camera of rock paparazzo F. Stoppe Fitzgerald while being accosted by panhandlers.





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Stereo Review Throws a Party...

to celebrate its Record of the Year Awards for 1978 at New York's St. Regis Hotel on January 8. There were twelve awards and twenty-four honorable mentions (see February 1979 issue) to fuel the festivities, in addition to the magazine's Award of Merit (for outstanding contributions to the quality of American musical life) to operatic superstar Beverly Sills, who is seen (1) accepting the framed certificate from Joel Grey (currently starring on Broadway in the musical *Grand Tour*) as STEREO REVIEW's publisher Edgar Hopper looks on. (2) Publisher Hopper presents Miss Sills with the original cover art for the February issue, the work of celebrated caricaturist Al Hirschfeld. (3) Miss Sills with (unmistakably) her mother, Mrs. Morris Silverman; (4) with (left) John Mazzola, president of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and (center) William Livingstone, STEREO REVIEW's Executive Editor; (5) with singer (the inimitable) Hildegard; (6) with Joel Grey and Julius Rudel, director of New York City Opera; (7) with Metropolitan Opera colleague, bass Donald Gramm; and (8) with Ethel Merman, First Lady of the American Musical Theater.

At (9), the indefatigable Merm charms James Roy, concert-music administrator with Broadcast Music Inc. (10) Julius Rudel chats with Paul Myers, Columbia Records Group's vice president of a-&-r. (11) Spencer Davis, head of a-&-r for Island Records, gets the word from Dee Anthony, manager of superstars (Peters Frampton and Allen, for example). (12) Publisher Hopper with Paulette Weiss, STEREO REVIEW's Popular Music Editor, music-biz attorney Richard Roemer, and London Records' disco star Zuléma. (13) Left to right, Ken Page, Mark Fergusson, Charlaïne

Woodard, and Armelina McQueen, all on their best behavior and all (except Mark, who is Charlaïne's cousin) stars of the smash Broadway hit (and STEREO REVIEW award winner) *Ain't Misbehavin'*. (14) Three *éminences grises* from RCA are spell-bound by STEREO REVIEW's William Livingstone: left to right, Red Seal producer Peter Dälheim, producer Richard Mohr, and executive producer Jack Pfeiffer. (15) Left to right, bottom, publicist Jody Uttal, Betsy Volck, publicist with Arista, and Linda Steiner, a-&-r department of Chrysalis; standing, publicist Gary Kenton, Pop Music Editor Weiss, and Cal Stiles, publicist with Versatile Records. (16) STEREO REVIEW award winner Peter Allen (center) accepts the congratulations of John Harrison, Production Editor, and publicist Jennifer Edelman. (17) Left to right are cabaret singer Peter Dean, Claude Reed of BD&B Public Relations, Pop Music Editor Weiss, Contributing Editor Paul Kresh, and Frankie McCormack, director of archives for New York's Songwriters' Hall of Fame. (18) A circle of admirers: Publisher Hopper with wife Jan, singers John Corsaut and Mary Jennings (formerly of the City Opera), guest of honor Sills, and mezzo Joanna Simon. (19) Actor Russell Nype, columnist/actress Ruth Warrick (Phoebé Tyler in TV's daytime serial *All My Children*), and STEREO REVIEW Editor William Anderson. (20) Charles Bourgeois of the Newport Jazz Festival and cabaret artist Barbara Lea congratulate *Ain't Misbehavin'*'s Charlaïne Woodard. (21) Music Editor James Goodfriend and wife Carol with Judy and (Contributing Editor) Igor Kipnis. (Credits: Russell Eliot Reif—1, 2, 8, 11, 12, 16, 18; Bill Anderson—3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 14, 19, 21; Erka Davidson—10, 13, 15, 17, 20) —Ed.





THE easiest way to make sense of the rise and fall and rise and fall and rise of the Bee Gees is to go back to 1967 when they arrived on the scene—in England and America—and think about *hair*. Hair was one of the most important things around in 1967. There was a cultural revolution going on, and the length of your hair answered the cliché question “Which side are you on?” before it was asked.

In the past, “longhair” was a semi-derisive term used to put down classical musicians and intellectuals in general—oddballs, according to the thinking of the shorthairs, who were by and large anti-intellectual and pro-throw-away product, musical product includ-

bandleader and was pushing this, but he didn't have to push much. The lads made their debut in 1956 in their early home town of Manchester, England. They had been booked to mime a record, but they dropped and cracked it on the way to the theater; so, being troupers, they sang themselves.

By then they had discovered that they sang naturally in harmony, the way some siblings automatically do. The family moved to Australia in 1958, and by 1960, when Barry was fourteen, the trio had a thirty-minute television show in Brisbane. Even then, the Gibbs were writing their own songs, and even now they will tell you they consider themselves first of all song-

possible futures for the Bee Gees, but it also suggested that their talent was short-haired—pop all the way.

But there were the Beatles. A lot of people thought it was the Beatles singing *Mining Disaster* at first. This similarity—in harmonic sound and spirit and in affinity for melody—raised high expectations for the Bee Gees, and they were not equipped to live up to some of them. One of the characteristics the Beatles and Bob Dylan had given long-haired rock was an emphasis on words. Despite their assertion, “Words are all I have to take your heart away,” the Bee Gees did not have—and still do not have—much of a way with words. When they made the songs impersonal, as in the vignettes, they could do a passable-to-good lyric (although the one for *Massachusetts* is basically inane-and-disjointed), but when they got personal they seemed to know how to do only one thing, wallow in self-pity. Back in Australia, they'd done one called *I Don't Know Why I Bother with Myself*. They had found that the world was round and of course it rained every day, and that was about the size of it. What they really had were melodies, good, old-time, straight, lush ones. What they needed was what they've got now, an audience that's not into words.

Under the shadow of the Beatles, Pink Floyd, the Who, and other long-hairs, the Bee Gees' own musical personality blurred progressively through “Horizontal” (a good crying album), “Idea,” and the original two-record Atco version of “Odessa” (now out again, on RSO, in one-disc form). They became increasingly vague about what it was they were trying to do. And then they split up. The end of the Bee Gees' Phase One came with Robin's solo album, “Robin's Reign.” Barry and Maurice, still calling themselves the Bee Gees, countered with “Cucumber Castle.” Each was about as bad as “Odessa.” And then Barry and Maurice split up. *Their* solo albums are still in cans somewhere.

PHASE TWO started when they all got back together to make (on speed, they now say) the beautifully melodic and lyrically innocuous hit single *Lonely Days* and then the album “Two Years On.” Then they did the melodious and innocuous hit *How Can You Mend a Broken Heart* and the albums “Trafalgar” and “To Whom It May Concern” (which contained the melodic and innocuous *Run to Me*, which *should* have

BEE GEES ...

a retrospective by Noel Coppage

ed. But suddenly, in 1967, it became fashionable for rock musicians not only to become long-haired but to try to produce something that might last longer than a month *and* to seek praise for it from those former outcasts, the intellectuals. The rock musicians who made this sort of thing fashionable were the Beatles. They were forever to haunt the Bee Gees.

Thinking about hair, you begin to realize that the Bee Gees haven't changed to fit the times quite as much as the times have changed to fit them: the thing that's different about them now, and is paying off (!), is that the Gibb brothers finally realize short-haired rock is what they're good at and ought to perfect. The Gibbs have, in fact, been fairly straight (spiritually short-haired) all along, strictly a pop act when they clicked at all, and their enormous commercial success of late partly reflects how the shiny-sloppy straightness of the late Seventies jibes with theirs. They were never cultural politicians at heart but troupers, which means people preoccupied with show biz. They started miming to records into broom-handle-and-tin-can microphones when Barry was nine and the twins, Maurice and Robin, were six and a half. Their father, Hugh, was a

writers. Over the next six years they recorded several singles; they had thirteen flops and one hit, *Spicks and Specks*, which broke, legend has it, just when they were on the boat bound for England.

Just how malleable the youngsters were then shows in their first album, the 1967 Atco “Bee Gees' 1st,” which is largely a reflection of various AM and FM radio influences. Nonetheless, its three best songs—*New York Mining Disaster 1941*, *To Love Somebody*, and *I Can't See Nobody*—represented three facets of a genuine individuality, three song types the Gibbs would return to again and again. *Mining Disaster* was a vignette, a cryptic slice of life, as was *Massachusetts* in the second album (“Horizontal”), *I've Gotta Get a Message to You* in the third album (“Idea”), and *Come Home Johnny Bride* (among others) in the fourth (“Life in a Tin Can”). Barry wrote *To Love Somebody* for Otis Redding, and it tried hard (as most of Barry's writing today does) to show soul and rhythm-and-blues influences. And *I Can't See Nobody* was the first good example of what England called “the crying songs,” in which Robin's throbbing vibrato is usually prominent. So the first album not only suggested two or three



*Robin Barry and Maurice Gibb:
they decided to join the air force
(photo: RSO Records).*

BEE GEES...

"I figure there are about a dozen ways to use falsetto that have never been tried before . . . I'm going to find every last one of them."

been a single). During this phase, 1971-1972, their work was extremely spotty; these were their worst albums. The emphasis in those days was on albums that stood up reasonably well as thirty-five or forty minutes of music, but the Bee Gees—even more than in Phase One—were still making the old, straight kind of album with a hit song and a lot of padding. They were, as usual, out of step with the times, only more so.

PHASE Three started when Robert Stigwood, their long-time manager, formed his own record label, RSO, and the Gibb brothers did something to reform their attitudes. They got into step with where the times had just been, but the thing was they did it with a new energy. The first result wasn't commercial, nor was the second, but "Life in a Tin Can" and "Mr. Natural" were among the most important mistakes they ever made.

"Tin Can" was—too late—an album. By 1973 pop taste had started to swing back again toward the short-cropped three-minute song, but this one had mostly long ones (it was, however—finally—a fairly decent stab at long-haired rock). The lyrics weren't deep, but they weren't bubblegum either, and there were no throwaways, no atrocities like *The Earnest of Being George* or most of the stuff in "To Whom It May Concern." Commercially, it was a dud, but it was a pattern breaker; it marked the first time a sampling of Bee Gees non-hits had been listenable. In Phases One and Two, the public was always right about their songs; their hits were worth listening to and their non-hits were, by and large, junk.

If "Tin Can" was a cul-de-sac, aside from the focus of energy it managed, "Mr. Natural" was a transitional album. Arif Mardin, who had worked with such soul acts as Aretha Franklin and the Rascals, came in to produce it and no doubt shoved the boys toward the r-&b sound they were soon to embrace with gusto. *Down the Road* had a disco beat, and *Throw a Penny, Heavy*

Breathing, and the title song connect the "old" and "new" Bee Gees, having both the melodic feel and a new feel for how the times move. The album shows Barry limbering up and getting pointed in the direction of *Stayin' Alive*.

Phase Three got off to a slow start commercially, but then juggernauts are not famous for their acceleration. The thing finally hit full speed with "Main Course," the second collaboration with Mardin, in which the album went platinum and two songs, *Nights on Broadway* and *Jive Talkin'*, went to number one on the charts. It was in the chorus of *Broadway* that Barry, dubbing some ad libs, hit upon the falsetto sound now so ubiquitous throughout the Robert Stigwood Organization and beyond. Later, in "Children of the World" (platinum album with two gold, number-one singles), he grew bolder with it, and then in the *Saturday Night Fever* music he really let it fly. He has been

quoted as saying, "I figure there are about a dozen ways to use falsetto that have never been tried before. Believe me, I'm going to find every last one of them."

I believe him. To melodies that sweep along before an idiot beat, to lyrics that just pass the time, add one more element the times call for, or at least will tolerate: castrato voices. I believe Barry will run the falsetto into the ground, but on "Saturday Night Fever" (a platinum album *fourteen times over*), at least, it was just right. I don't know anyone who doesn't like *Stayin' Alive*. Its admirers include both punks and diehard longhairs who never permitted themselves to like any other disco tune. After all, we all *do* live in this time which moves in a certain way, and that tune caught the style perfectly. A short-haired tune for short-haired times, yes, but we're talking about styled, not barbered. It and its companions went nearly perfectly with the



BEE GEES ON DISC

A COMPLETE discography of the Bee Gees' work would be ponderous and of dubious value, since everything older than "Main Course" (with the exception of the reissue of half of the original "Odessa") is out of print. However, I do recommend scouting out a couple of the older albums, "Horizontal" (for its crying songs) and "Idea" (for its vignette songs and futile attempts at long-haired rock); I've found both in secondhand record stores. Less likely to turn up, but recommended, is "Life in a Tin Can" (RSO SO-870)—an example of the road

not taken. "Mr. Natural" is also off the market (*surely* it will be reissued), but I'm pretty sure it, too, can be found at secondhand stores.

If you don't want to spend that much, and want new recordings only, "Bee Gees Gold, Volume 1" is a good sampling of the "old" Bee Gees' work, especially seeing as how their hits were their best songs. The "Here At Last . . . Live" album (RSO RS-2-3901) is, of course, a sampler of their stuff old and new. —N.C.

HORIZONTAL. *World; And the Sun Will Shine; Lemons Never Forget; Really and Sincerely; Birdie Told Me; With the Sun in My Eyes; Massachussets; Harry Bruff; Day Time Girl; The Earnest of Be-*

movie and with John Travolta (who's making a good living at living in the Fifties and the Seventies at the same time) and Yvonne Elliman and the other personalities involved, so it (and the Gibbs) cashed in accordingly.

With "Fever," "Children," "Main Course," and the 1977 "Here At Last . . . Bee Gees . . . Live" all on the market at the same time, not to mention Barry's songs for Samantha Sang and little brother Andy Gibb (both of whom seem to aspire mainly to sound just like Barry), plus the bastard version of "Odessa" (God knows why, with "Mr. Natural" off the market), the *Grease* connection, the *Sgt. Pepper* connection, the hit single *Too Much Heaven* (donated to UNICEF), and a few other odds and ends, the Bee Gees spent 1978 and threaten to spend 1979 selling records at the clip of one million a week.

Nobody has ever seen anything like it. Success succeeds so well that you

won't hear many people point out that, hits or not, *Jive Talkin'*, *You Should Be Dancin'*, *Boogie Child*, and their ilk are nothing but puff, nothing but jive. As in Phases One and Two, the Bee Gees seem willing to blur their personalities if that is what it takes to get the strokes a trouper craves. (It is not *all* blur, of course: *Nights on Broadway* is quintessential Bee Gees with an updated beat.) In any case, they are getting so many strokes right now they can shrug off the stigma of being in *Sgt. Pepper*, widely celebrated as one of the worst movies ever made. They can probably shrug off even the irony of being haunted by the (nonexistent) Beatles again. This was the first non-Gibb material they ever messed with, and look what happened. But the album sold even if the movie didn't—and even though the album was, at its best, limp, dim, and irrelevant.

Changing times are the biggest threat to the Bee Gees' lofty status. The kind

of style that culminated in the *Saturday Night Fever* music (which Barry wrote, speaking of being in step with the times, *before* he read the script) more than likely won't last. Neither will the now-popular zest for uptown Saturday night decadence with recycled Fifties trappings (Barry also wrote the title song for the *Grease* movie without knowing how the story went), nor the high tolerance for trivia and disco, which came in and will leave together. Right now the Bee Gees are making catchy trivia, the perfect music to take with a grain of salt. But building new falsettos twelve ways may prove to be a little *too* trivial.

EVEN if times stay the same, the Bee Gees are going to find out how much harder it is to manage success than to manage failure (as Oscar Wilde said, the only thing worse than *not* getting what you want is getting what you want). How *does* one top *Stayin' Alive*? The Bee Gees are in the position of having to stay on top of the present, wherever it turns. But many of their new fans are nine to eleven years old, fickle little critters who would swoon back to Shaun Cassidy or Andy Gibb (or their replacements) at the drop of a record jacket.

And, of course, if hair becomes important again, the times will teach the Bee Gees how Neil Sedaka felt in 1967. But that wouldn't necessarily wipe them out. We must keep in mind that since the Bee Gees are not committed to disco and grease music, they are not dependent on it. They are committed only to being troupers. They can adjust *away* from disco and grease just as they adjusted *to* them. They can still write melodies and, even amidst a falsetto mania, they can still harmonize. And they can always count on *some* demand for short-haired rock on AM radio, which is now their domain.

They will never rival Jackson Browne or Randy Newman as lyricists, and they'll probably never come any closer to making good long-haired music than *I Started a Joke* or parts of "Life in a Tin Can." Some of their tunes will stay around for quite a while because the melodies are so fetching, but with the possible exception of *Stayin' Alive* and barring some new surge of crying-song creativity, I think those will be mostly their older tunes. I don't predict another cultural revolution, but given the action-reaction scheme of things, I wouldn't exactly be *surprised* by one. And there, at least commercially, the Bee Gees have a big thing going for them: juggernauts are famous for their inertia. It takes a while to get them stopped. □



ing *George*; *The Change Is Made*; *Horizontal*. Atco SD-33-233.

IDEA. *Let There Be Love*; *Kitty Can*; *In the Summer of His Years*; *Indian Gin and Whisky Dry*; *Down to Earth*; *I've Gotta Get a Message to You*; *Idea*; *When the Swallows Fly*; *I Have Decided to Join the Air Force*; *I Started the Joke*; *Kilburn Towers*; *Swan Song*. Atco SD-33-253.

MR. NATURAL. *Charade*; *Throw a Penny*; *Down the Road*; *Voices*; *Give a Hand, Take a Hand*; *Dogs*; *Mr. Natural*; *Lost in Your Love*; *I Can't Let You Go*; *Heavy Breathing*; *Had a Lot of Love Last Night*. RSO SO-4800.

CHILDREN OF THE WORLD. *You Should Be Dancing*; *You Stepped into My Life*; *Love So Right*; *Lovers*; *Can't*

Keep a Good Man Down; *Boogie Child*; *Love Me*; *Subway*; *The Way It Was*; *Children of the World*. RSO RS-1-3003.

BEE GEES GOLD, VOL. 1. *How Can You Mend a Broken Heart*; *Holiday*; *To Love Somebody*; *Massachusetts*; *Words*; *Lonely Days*; *Run to Me*; *I've Gotta Get a Message to You*; *My World*; *I Can't See Nobody*; *I Started the Joke*; *New York Mining Disaster 1941*. RSO RS-1-3006.

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER. The Bee Gees, Yvonne Elliman, Tavares, and other musicians. *Stayin' Alive*; *How Deep Is Your Love*; *Night Fever*; *More Than a Woman*; *Jive Talkin'*; *You Should Be Dancing*; *If I Can't Have You*. RSO RS-2-4001.

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



Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa pleads in vain with Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony, for help before his defeat at the battle of Legnano.

Philips Presents a Splendid First Stereo Recording Of Verdi's Exciting *Battaglia di Legnano*

VERDI'S *La Battaglia di Legnano* was written in 1848, when Italy was ablaze with revolutionary fervor and the composer was totally committed to the cause of Italian unity. Salvatore Cammarano, the librettist of his *Alzira* (and librettist-to-be of *Luisa Miller* and *Il Trovatore*), supplied the ardent verses that, coupled with Verdi's throbbing melodies, assured the opera's enthusiastic reception at the Rome première on January 27, 1849. Though the plot depicted events in the late twelfth century, focusing on the defeat of the German invader Frederick Barbarossa at Legnano in 1176,

the contemporary relevance was clear enough for the censors to ban Verdi's opera from Italian stages until the country's unification in 1861.

While not on the level of *Nabucco* (1842) and *Macbeth* (1847), *La Battaglia di Legnano* ranks fairly high among the early Verdi operas. Cammarano's libretto is admirably concise; if patriotic sentiment seems to dominate all other emotion to an excessive degree, we must consider the intensely turbulent year of the opera's origin (Julian Budden's annotations provide a detailed historical background). Verdi's score offers interesting pre-echoes

of *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *Il Trovatore*, and even of *Don Carlo* in an ominous conspiratorial scene. Since personal relationships here play a role secondary to patriotic fervor, it is not surprising that Verdi's inspiration reaches its peak in the martial and choral episodes (the overture, by the way, is very effective and deserves to be better known).

It is rather ironic that this opera, so full of anti-German sentiments, was recorded in Vienna, a fact curiously concealed by the album credits, which identify the ORF Symphony Orchestra and Chorus without disclosing that they are from the Österreichische Rundfunk. Under the leadership of Lamberto Gardelli, that eminent Verdi-an, the orchestra plays extremely well; the burning excitement of Verdi's music is communicated without undue em-



Doug McKenzie

CHARLES ROSEN
AND WYN MORRIS:
*smoothness, spontaneity,
and enlivening give and take.*

phasis being placed on its raw, brassy vigor. As a result, a subtler, more "mature" Verdi emerges than would be the case were there a less knowing conductor at the helm. The chorus delivers its stirring music with a rich tone and altogether commendable, if not entirely precise, enunciation.

In the role of Arrigo, a super-patriot who is falsely accused of betraying a friend's trust (like Riccardo in *A Masked Ball*), José Carreras does not always sound comfortable at high dynamic levels, but he is unstinting in his generous tone and ardent style. The role of the friend, Rolando, is admirably sung by Matteo Manuguerra. Katia Ricciarelli does remarkably well in the role of Lida; it is not very well delineated dramatically, but it is extremely taxing vocally, with much exposed singing in a high tessitura. The cast is rounded out by a cardboard villain, Emperor Barbarossa himself, and some Italian patriots. Nicola Ghiuselev's woolly tone cannot project an imperial image with the required strength, but the other singers range from adequate to quite good.

This is the opera's first stereo recording, and the venerable Cetra/Everest mono set can now be retired without regret. Another laudable achievement by Philips in pursuit of its goal of recording the complete Verdi.

—George Jellinek

VERDI: *La Battaglia di Legnano*. Katia Ricciarelli (soprano), Lida; José Carreras (tenor), Arrigo; Matteo Manuguerra (baritone), Rolando; Nicola Ghiuselev (bass), Federico Barbarossa; Jonathan Summers (baritone), Marcovaldo; Ann Murray (mezzo-soprano),

Imelda; Hannes Lichtenberger and Dimitri Kavrakos (basses), Two Consuls; others. ORF Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Lamberto Gardelli cond. PHILIPS 6700 120 two discs \$17.98, © 7699 081 \$17.98.

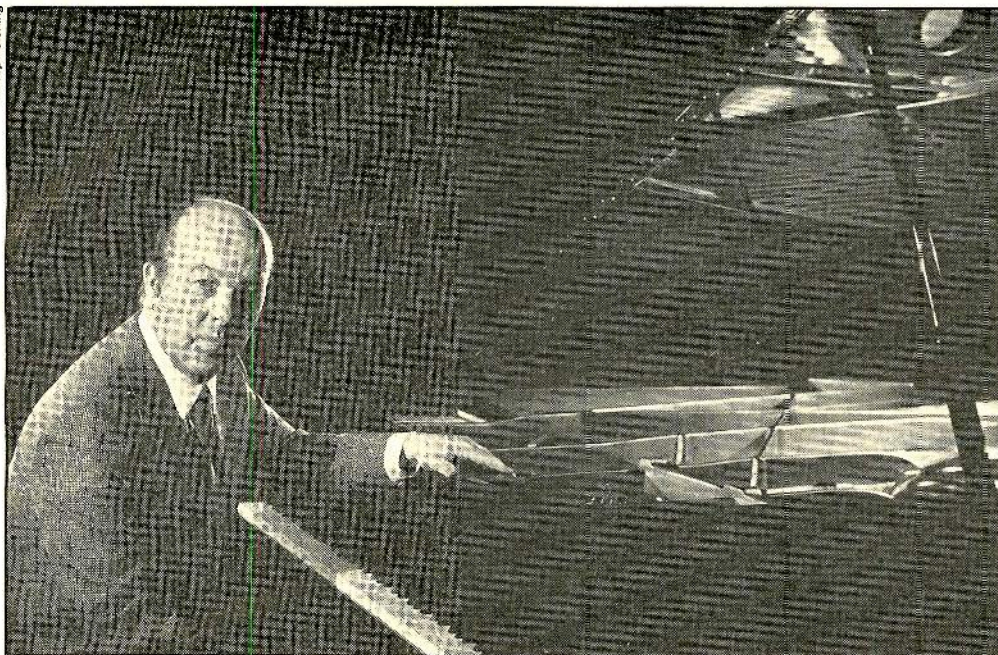
Rosen and Morris: A Joyous Realization Of the Qualities of The Beethoven Fourth

CHARLES ROSEN tends to be regarded by a large segment of the public as an intellectual musician, the sort of pianist who plays Schoenberg, Elliott Carter, and the late Beethoven sonatas, who writes philosophical books on music, takes part in musicological congresses, and of course annotates his own recordings. While there is ample evidence to convict him on all these counts, there is none to support any inference of a drily clinical or dispassionate approach to music-making on his part, and his new recording of Beethoven's Fourth Concerto, with Wyn Morris conducting the Symphonica of London, is a triumph, not of mere scholarship, but—in the best "art that conceals art" tradition—of the sort of direct musical communicativeness usually associated with a more instinctive approach.

There is no celebration of self in this

performance, and no reverential gestures, either: the balance of elegance and warmth of heart, of serenity and humor, throughout the performance represents no interpretive overlay, one feels, but simply a joyous realization of the qualities that characterize the work. The playing itself is very smooth but in no wise glittery, rich in detail but without a trace of the self-consciousness that might disturb the fine, spontaneous-sounding momentum. Wyn Morris' handling of the orchestral part is as freshly thought out and convincing as his recent *Eroica* (Peters International PLE-020), and, perhaps more to the point, the enlivening give-and-take made possible by the deep mutuality of approach on the part of both soloist and conductor gives off an aura of delighted fulfillment which the listener can hardly help sharing. Much about this performance, I think, might carry listeners old enough to remember back to the time when all recording was "direct-to-disc" and performances were not assembled by the tape editor—when (at least it seemed so at the time) the few musicians privileged to record such a masterwork seemed to know all its secrets.

If my enthusiasm for the Rosen/Morris collaboration seems rather undetailed, it is simply because it is the kind of performance that is not to be explained or described by citation of particular elements, but which as a whole cannot fail to leave the deepest—and happiest—impression. What can be specified is that Rosen plays the first of Beethoven's cadenzas for the first movement and sounds as if he



IVAN MORAVEC:
*nothing is thrown away,
 every detail is given
 individual weight and nuance.*

were improvising it himself in a transport of inspired oneness with the spirit of the work; that the orchestra sounds every bit as involved; and that the sound is quite good. I can't think of any concerto recording that has given me more pleasure in the last few years, and I'm sure there is none among the current versions of this work that I would place above this new one.

—Richard Freed

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No. 4, in G Major, Op. 58.* Charles Rosen (piano); Symphonica of London, Wyn Morris cond. PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLE 110 \$6.98.

Moravec and Neumann: The Richest of All Performances of the Schumann Concerto

SCHUMANN'S A Minor Piano Concerto is not only one of the great masterpieces of the repertoire but one of the great touchstones as well. One can tell a lot about a pianist from his performance of it. It is not an easy piece for pianists to ignore, and most of the major ones have had a shot at recording it at one time or another, producing a quantity of high-level renditions that is matched by few other works. However, it is not the quantity and quality

of the many recordings that are impressive, but the great variety of the interpretations. Poetic, intellectual, classical, romantic, inward, extroverted, and all-out virtuoso approaches all have something to bring to the music which, purely as an arrangement of notes, "works" so well as to leave ample room for interpretive latitude.

Such an introduction seems necessary because the latest recording of the Schumann concerto—by Ivan Moravec with the Czech Philharmonic conducted by Václav Neumann on the Supraphon label—is a rendition like none I have ever heard before. How to describe it? Well, one might say it seems to have more *notes* in it than any other performance. Now, obviously, the artists play the same score that everybody else does, but one is made to hear more of it—counterpoint, inner voices, bass accents, accompanimental figurations—so that the whole work seems immeasurably richer in musical material. As a result, the time scale of the music seems to lengthen and one gets pulled more and more into it. There is here, particularly on Moravec's part, ample fire, ample virtuosity, ample poetry, ample lyricism, and much beautiful sound, but the major characteristic of the performance is richness: nothing is thrown away, nothing is submerged, every detail is given its individual weight and nuance and integrated into the fabric.

Moravec does not make it all sound easy. The very approach sets up a tension at the beginning of the concerto—the tension inherent in any attempt to do something tremendously difficult

and do it perfectly—which is not resolved until the very end of the concerto. The triumph at the end—because one has felt the tension throughout, manipulated in different ways through the opening, the slow movement, and the finale—is overwhelming. It is, on the one hand, a lesson in what the Romantic solo concerto is all about and, on the other hand, a representation of the work as chamber music on the grandest possible scale.

The Franck Symphonic Variations too, offered here to fill out the second side, is not your usual light-handed, lighthearted French performance, but one that probes every expressive nuance. If the interpretation has a flaw it is that it exposes the work's inherent propensity merely to stop rather than to end.

Doubtless there are better orchestras in the world today than the Czech Philharmonic, and better and more renowned conductors than Neumann, but it is hard to see how their contributions here could be improved upon. What Moravec offers is what I have come, over the years, finally to recognize as a typical Moravec performance, what makes him, for me, one of the greatest pianists in the world today. The Czech recording engineers have done nobly (a little overbalance in favor of the piano is evident at moments in the first movement), and playback in SQ four-channel adds a bit more depth. Only the necessity of breaking the Schumann concerto between the second and third movements produces any real drawback to this issue, but I do not see, checking the timings, how the mu-

sic could have been arranged otherwise. The Schumann concerto is not a work to be known through a single recording, no matter how good, but this record is basic in any library.

—James Goodfriend

SCHUMANN: *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54*. FRANCK: *Symphonic Variations for Piano and Orchestra*. Ivan Moravec (piano); Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Václav Neumann cond. SUPRAPHON 4 10 2073 \$8.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

The Grateful Dead: Bringing It All Back to the Solar Plexus

“WELL,” I thought, picking up “Shakedown Street,” the new Grateful Dead album, “here comes a cool head trip.” The Dead, as everyone knows, have refined and refined and aimed higher and higher until it would seem they couldn’t hit the solar plexus with a blunderbuss. But what’s this? A cover drawing—not a painting or lithograph or anything elegant, but a nitty-gritty drawing of Shakedown Street (which looks something like the Haight after the hippies moved out and the sickies moved in) by Gilbert Shelton, whose dogs look even meaner than Le-Roy Brown. And what’s this legend on the back? “Produced by Lowell George.” Hmm.

And, by George, sure enough, it turns out that the Dead are trying to get back to where they once were, playing actual rock-and-roll. George has given the recording an extremely crisp sound—a rim shot becomes almost a threat at times. He starts the boys off with the familiar-neglected *Good Lovin’*, gets Bob Weir to throw himself into singing as he hasn’t done in years, and even has Jerry Garcia sounding engrossed in a belly-level shot.

It’s still *refined*, of course, and oh-so-disciplined, and it’s still eclectic, with Donna Godchaux’s vocals providing a delicate dimension that has to be accommodated. But it’s also pretty good rock-and-roll, its title song suggesting that the good stuff (and maybe the “good” audience) is still there if you look for it (Shakedown Street “used to be the heart of town,” it says. “Don’t tell me this town ain’t got no heart/You

just got to look around”). At other pivotal points in the album are songs at once sort of new and sort of familiar, such staples in the world of rock as *Fire on the Mountain*, reminiscent of, but different from, a couple of tunes by the same name; *I Need a Miracle*, in which the thing becomes how Weir propels it; *Stagger Lee*, as rewritten by Garcia and lyricist Robert Hunter; or *All New Minglewood Blues*, whose tune isn’t rewritten much on paper but is redefined somewhat in the tight, uniquely Dead way it’s played.

Oh, the thing’s a little dry in spots, as every Dead album since “Workingman’s Dead” has been, but anyone who thinks he’s got the band safely dismissed as a bunch of intellectual noodlers is going to be pleasantly surprised. And it doesn’t sound like nostalgia for the late Sixties, either. Shakedown Street, by both Shelton and the Dead, comes off as a late-Seventies street. It sounds like the Dead are saying not that this is what they did but that this is what they *do*. It’s the closest to spontaneity they’ve come in a long time.

—Noel Coppage

GRATEFUL DEAD: *Shakedown Street*. Grateful Dead (vocals and instrumentals). *Good Lovin’*; *France*; *Shakedown Street*; *Serengeti*; *Fire on the Mountain*; *I Need a Miracle*; *From the Heart of Me*; *Stagger Lee*; *All New Minglewood Blues*; *If I Had the World to Give*. ARISTA AB 4198 \$7.98, © AT8 4198 \$7.98, © ATC 4198 \$7.98.

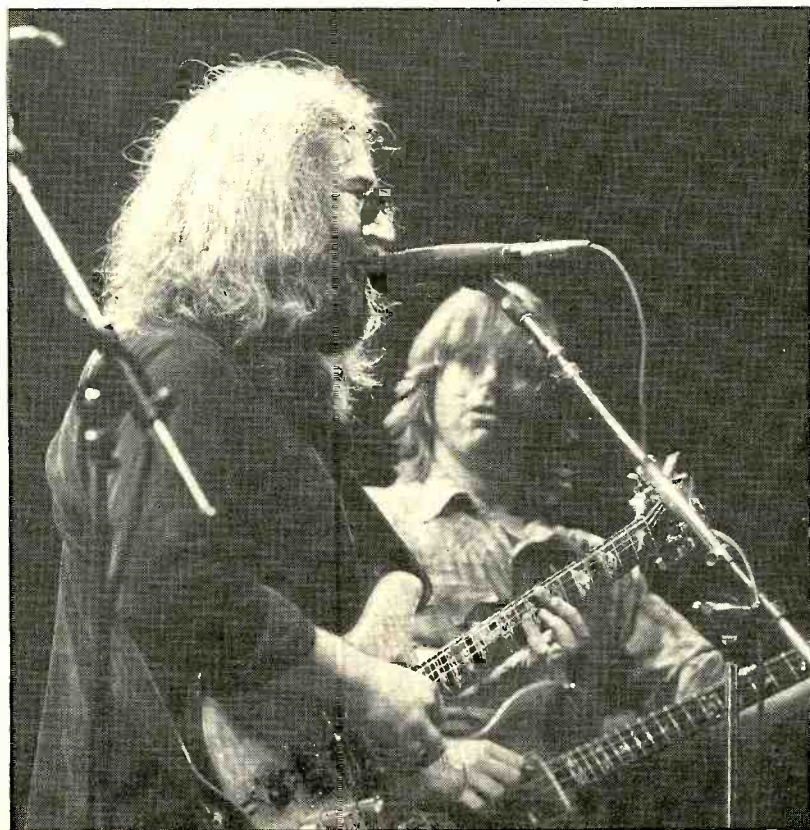
Peabo Bryson: A New Talent to Give Established Performers A Run for Their Money

EVERY now and then a new artist seems to just bubble up out of the vinyl caldron unheralded, with nothing for a calling card but his talent. Peabo Bryson, a young man with multiple gifts and an odd first name, is such an artist, and “Reaching for the Sky,” his debut album for Capitol, got the enthusiastic reception it deserved from both critics and public.

His second album is “Crosswinds,” carefully understated in its physical presentation—two simple, straightforward photographs of the singer, open-shirted in a casual white suit, together with a listing of the songs—in order to focus attention on the music. Bryson’s tenor voice is powerful, seamlessly smooth, and marvelously fluent, perhaps the best to make itself heard on the soul scene in years, and the material—Bryson’s own—is beautifully designed to show it off.

He has an active imagination that can lend distinction even to the inevitable disco track, plus a deep-grounded musicality that enables him to ride a melody like an expert surfer does a breaking

The Grateful Dead get back to rock-and-roll



Joseph Sia

PEABO BRYSON: *the best voice on the soul scene?*HELEN MERRILL: *innocent approach, wise delivery*

wave. He is at his best here in ballads, particularly *I'm So Into You*, which he sings with a blend of sensitivity and playful sensuality that inspires little thrills of delight. A well-rounded musician, he played the keyboards for the album, provided the horn and background-vocal arrangements, and co-produced it with veteran orchestrator Johnny Pate. The accompaniment throughout is tastefully unobtrusive, wisely staying out of the way of Bryson's stunning vocals. This is only as it should be, for he is a subtle artist, avoiding overstatement and repetition, concentrating instead on creating mood, building his dramatic climaxes through carefully scaled emotional intensity rather than fashionably thunderous overkill.

Whether Bryson will turn out to be an innovator in the style, if not on the level, of Stevie Wonder only time will tell, but he is bound, with such a beginning, to give at least a few well-known performers a run for their money if he continues to jog so stylishly along this exceptionally promising track.

—Phyl Garland

PEABO BRYSON: *Crosswinds*. Peabo Bryson (vocals and keyboards); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Crosswinds*; *I'm So Into You*; *Smile*; *She's Woman*; *Spread Your Wings*; *Love Is Watching You*; *Point of View*; *Don't Touch Me*. CAPITOL ST-11875 \$6.98, © 8XT-11875 \$7.98, © 4XT-11875 \$7.98.

Helen Merrill: Rather Like Finding A Ten-carat Diamond In the Reissue Bin

SINGER Helen Merrill's "Something Special," first released several years ago, has now happily been reissued on the MMO Group's Inner City label. If you run across it while rummaging through the browser racks at your local record store or flipping through a lucky friend's collection, grab it and run to the nearest turntable. It is an extraordinary album by an extraordinarily gifted singer who takes so completely fresh and original a view of her material that she may make the casual listener accustomed to run-of-the-mill music-making just slightly uncomfortable—the way you might feel, incredulous and slightly guilty—on finding a ten-carat diamond ring in a trash bin.

Collaborating in a program with such jazz impeccables as Thad Jones, Jim Hall, Ron Carter, Peter Laroca, Arnie Wise, and Dick Katz on such gems of the standard repertoire as *Deep in a Dream*, *Here's That Rainy Day*, *You're My Thrill*, and *What Is This Thing Called Love?*, Helen Merrill discovers and illumines one entirely unexpected

new facet after another. For instance, her second chorus on *What Is This Thing Called Love?*, in which she provides a kind of vocal devil's trill against the cornet of Thad Jones, and the way she bends and cajoles the lyric of *You're My Thrill* into some kind of dark rapture from the underground of sexual longing, and her long, lazy vocal line in *It Don't Mean a Thing*—all are the essence of superior jazz music-making. She's disarmingly relaxed, yet in perfect control; innocent in her approach, yet wise in her delivery. Most important, she is the kind of musician whose art is not limited to the over-trained sensibilities of an adoring cult.

"Something Special" may not be the best *new* record of the month; it is, however, something much more: one of those timeless, priceless, classic recordings that will be reappearing again and again through the years in one label incarnation after another. But why wait? Why not get it right now? I mean, is there anything *wrong* with instant gratification?

—Peter Reilly

HELEN MERRILL: *Something Special*. Helen Merrill (vocals); Thad Jones (cornet); Jim Hall (guitar); Ron Carter (bass); Dick Katz (piano); Pete Laroca, Arnie Wise (drums). *It Don't Mean a Thing*; *You're My Thrill*; *Here's That Rainy Day*; *Baltimore Oriole*; *Don't Explain*; *What Is This Thing Called Love?*; *The Winter of My Discontent*; *Day Dream*; *Deep in a Dream*. INNER CITY IC 1060 \$7.98.



POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by CHRIS ALBERTSON • EDWARD BUXBAUM • NOEL COPPAGE • PHYL GARLAND
PAUL KRESH • PETER REILLY • STEVE SIMELS • JOEL VANCE

THE JOE BROOKS GROUP. Joe Brooks, Jerry Keller, Ron Dante, others (vocals); Joe Brooks, Kenny Ascher (keyboards); other musicians. *I Will Shine On; Woman; California; When It's Over; Slidin'; Rag Doll*; and five others. ATLANTIC SD 19206 \$7.98, © TP 19206 \$7.97, © CS 19206 \$7.97.

Performance: **Emotional**
Recording: **Smooth**

The songs on this new album seem to be a series of sketches to accompany Joe Brooks' hit composition, *You Light Up My Life*. By the time he and his group get to that song, at the end of side one, its impact has been drained by the themes and variations upon it that have gone before. Side two is more of the same. Whether or not these songs were written before or after *You Light Up My Life* isn't really the point. The point is that Brooks has found a formula and refuses to let go of it. Almost everything builds the same slow way to the same full-voiced, rhapsodic climax. Brooks himself (in his one lead vocal, *Rag Doll*, which also happens to be the only song here that he didn't write) and the seven other singers who alternately take the lead all exhibit a vocal style that is tremulous, whispery, and breathily emotional enough to enter in the Melina Mercouri/Liza Minnelli/Dustin Hoffman Glad To Be Sad Sweepstakes, where the prize is a good cry and dinner for one at the Heartbreak Hotel coffee shoppe. P.R.

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓒ = stereo cassette
- Ⓛ = quadraphonic disc
- Ⓛ = digital-master recording
- Ⓛ = direct-to-disc recording

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

PEABO BRYSON: *Crosswinds* (see *Best of the Month*, page 94)

GLEN CAMPBELL: *Basic*. Glen Campbell (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *I See Love; Let's All Sing a Song About It; Can You Fool; Stranger in the Mirror*; and seven others. CAPITOL SW-11722 \$7.98, © 8XW-11722 \$7.98, © 4XW-11722 \$7.98.

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

Glen Campbell seems to have gone "Basic" in more than one way—he's given up the shellac he used to use as a hair spray, and his hair actually looks as if it might move in both photos of him here. This thoroughly satisfying album is a plunge into the songs of Michael Smotherman rounded out with a go at the bagpipes in an instrumental titled, with Celtic mystery, *Gráfhadh Mé Thú*. If you've heard one bagpipe player, you've heard 'em all as far as I'm concerned, so I can't venture any opinion on how well Campbell plays the pipes. But his guitar work throughout is as musicianly and fine as it ever was, and his vocals still have that phlegmatic sincerity that finally got him to Phoenix and to the top all those years ago. He probably has a chart hit here in *Can You Fool*, a juicy little scenario about a fool and the Cruel Woman He Can't Forget. Smotherman's lyrics often have a literate lilt to them, and Campbell shows an unaccustomed abandon in such things as *Stranger in the Mirror* and his really passionate (for him, anyway) rendering of *I See Love*. Easily one of the better Glen Campbell albums of recent years. P.R.

JESSI COLTER: *That's the Way a Cowboy Rocks and Rolls*. Jessi Colter (vocals, piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Black Haired Boy; I Was Kinda Crazy; Hold Back the Tears*; and seven others. CAPITOL ST-11863 \$7.98, © 8XT-11863 \$7.98, © 4XT-11863 \$7.98.

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

Don't be put off by the dumb title; unless you can't stand Jessi Colter's voice at all, you're

going to like this. It's pretty much a rock album, with tunes by the likes of J. J. Cale and Neil Young and instrumentation based on the whatever's-right theory. The tunes are mostly quite good, and even when they're not, strictly speaking, good, they have quirkiness or a touch of the outrageous or something else to recommend them. One of these last is *My Cowboy's Last Ride*, written by Jessi and Waylon's chum Johnny Cash, in which what she aims to do is plug the sumbitch. Then there's the deft melody thievery pulled off in *Black Haired Boy* (good poets steal, T. S. Eliot said). And there are two or three just plain pretty ones, not exactly rock and not exactly country or anything else. One of those is the title song and another is Neil Young's *Hold Back the Tears*. I spend so much time on the songs here because I don't recall another album for which Colter has selected songs instead of writing them. As a singer, she's still a lot more of a stylist than an interpreter, but this album is put together with such know-how that it overcomes that. N.C.

CRAZY HORSE: *Crazy Moon*. Crazy Horse (vocals and instrumentals); Neil Young (guitar); other musicians. *She's Hot; Going Down Again; Lost and Lonely Feelin'; Dancin' Lady; End of the Line; New Orleans*; and five others. RCA AFL1-3054 \$7.98, © AFS1-3054 \$7.98, © AFK1-3054 \$7.98.

Performance: **Medium-warm**
Recording: **Average**

Neil Young's old back-up band, or what's left of it—Ralph Molina and Billy Talbot, plus newcomer Frank Sampedro—is here regrouped with Young as a sideman playing lead guitar on five tunes. That's about the main attraction of this one, too, since the tunes range from ragged to average rockers and the singing and playing, aside from Young's own distinctive style, are of adequate bar-band quality only. The printed lyrics have guitar-chord notations above them, an interesting feature, but in spot checking them I found that at least a couple of tunes aren't played in the key indicated, for whatever that's worth. For whatever this is worth, I agree that Crazy Horse is

too good a name for a band to let it die, and it may keep them alive. But they sure could use some health. So much of the writing here is obviously and self-consciously Young-influenced, yet so patently inferior to Young's own run-of-the-mill songwriting, that it makes you want to shake somebody by the shoulders. Crazy Horse *would* make somebody a nice back-up band. N.C.

NEIL DIAMOND: *You Don't Bring Me Flowers*. Neil Diamond (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Diamond Girls; Forever in Blue Jeans; Remember Me; Memphis Flyer; Say Maybe*; and five others. COLUMBIA FC 35625 \$8.98, Ⓟ FCA 35625 \$8.98, © FCT 35625 \$8.98.

Performance: **Oleomargarine**
Recording: **Gorgeous**

Neil Diamond has acquired a vast audience over the years from his recordings and sold-out stints in Las Vegas, and he will probably enlarge it even more if his million-plus deal for the film remake of *The Jazz Singer* finally comes through. In the meantime, this album is another chrome-plated, classily commercial excursion that ought to keep his fans happy. But the only time I seem to hear a real person emerge here is in the title-track duet with the formidable Barbra Streisand. The rest, particularly *Forever in Blue Jeans* and the weighty *Mothers and Daughters, Fathers and Sons*, is more of the same slick "sensitivity," garish sentimentality, and preening showmanship that I've come to associate with any Diamond performance. Everything he does falls on my ear as cynically fabricated and calculated for effect. The production by Bob Gaudio provides state-of-the-art MOR sound that surrounds Diamond gorgeously, if that's what you like. P.R.

EMERSON, LAKE & PALMER: *Love Beach*. Emerson, Lake & Palmer (vocals and instrumentals). *All I Want Is You; Love Beach; Taste of My Love; The Gambler; For You; Canario*; and four others. ATLANTIC SD 19211 \$7.98, Ⓟ TP 19211 \$7.97, © CS 19211 \$7.97.

Performance: **Baroque piffle**
Recording: **Good**

This would appear to be, at least in part, ELP's response to Power Pop. Most of the songs here, particularly Greg Lake's songs on side one, are short, vaguely melodic, and reasonably unornamented. But when you get down to it, really, ELP has always been the most openly commercial and silliest of the big-gun "progressive" bands (remember *Nut-rocker?*). If you doubt me, check out their new surf-music romp through Rodrigo's *Fantasia para un Gentilhombre*, which is hardly any more serious than Emerson's demolition of Leonard Bernstein's *America* with the Nice back in 1968.

Actually, "Love Beach," with its muddled-headed romanticism (*All I Want Is You*) and accessibility (*The Gambler*) is more likely a reaction to the Top-40 Technoflash of groups like Styx and Kansas, who have been reaping big bucks of late by mating ELP's performance style with melodies worthy of chewing-gum commercials. As such, I have no doubt that this album will be the Unholy Three's largest seller ever, since it is fully as banal as anything churned out by their imitators. What's more, it comes complete with a

full-color ad for all sorts of related paraphernalia. That's right—you, too, can own a pair of Emerson, Lake & Palmer jogging shorts. Who said these guys have no class? S.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STEVE FORBERT: *Alive on Arrival*. Steve Forbert (vocals, guitar, harmonica); Steve Burgh (guitar); Barry Lazarowitz (drums); Hugh McDonald (bass); other musicians. *Goin' Down to Laurel; Steve Forbert's Midsummer Night's Toast; Thinkin'; What Kinda Guy?*; and six others. NEMPEROR 35538 \$7.98, Ⓟ JZA 35538 \$7.98, © JZT 35538 \$7.98.

Performance: **Interesting**
Recording: **Nice**

Now here's something unexpected: the first New Wave folkie. Although Steve Forbert made his reputation by opening for some New York punk heavies and living to tell the tale, in both visual and musical style he's an almost total throwback to the early-Sixties West Village stereotype of the romantic kid with a gui-

tar; he's got the same cherubic vulnerability that Dylan, in particular, had in the old days.

Secondhand or not, Forbert's good, and although his debut album betrays some youthful inexperience, it's ambitious enough to keep you interested. The voice itself is arresting, with a whiskey-soaked rasp that for some odd reason reminds me of Rod Stewart minus the macho bluster, and he's assembled a nice little band here that sounds both vaguely country and a bit like Dylan's "Blonde on Blonde" outfit. The songs tend to be more self-absorbed than is good for them; the kid knows he's a contender and he isn't above letting us know that he knows. But most of the time he has enough charm to get away with it, and he is a mere twenty-three, after all, so he can probably be excused. Besides, you have to root for him if only because he's probably the one musician to have played CBGB's whose knowledge of Woody Guthrie extends beyond having seen David Carradine in *Bound for Glory*. Someone to watch. S.S.

(Continued overleaf)



Tonio K: Mindfood

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I give you . . . the greatest album ever recorded!

I can hear you already—nitpickers, musicologists, the small-minded, owners of *Book of Lists* toilet paper. What, you cry, of Dennis Brain playing the Mozart horn concertos? What of Miles Davis' "Sketches of Spain," B. B. King's "Live at the Regal," Bruno Walter's Mahler Fourth, "Sgt. Pepper," and John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme"? Not to mention Nervous Norvus' *Transfusion*, John Wayne's "America: Why I Love Her," and the Singing Dogs' *Jingle Bells*.

Oh, all right. So I lied. But, honestly, it's the kind of lie that "Life in the Foodchain" inspires even in as responsible a critic as me. Its creator, Tonio K., is easily *twice* as angry as Elvis Costello and about six times funnier, and though he spent this decade's middle

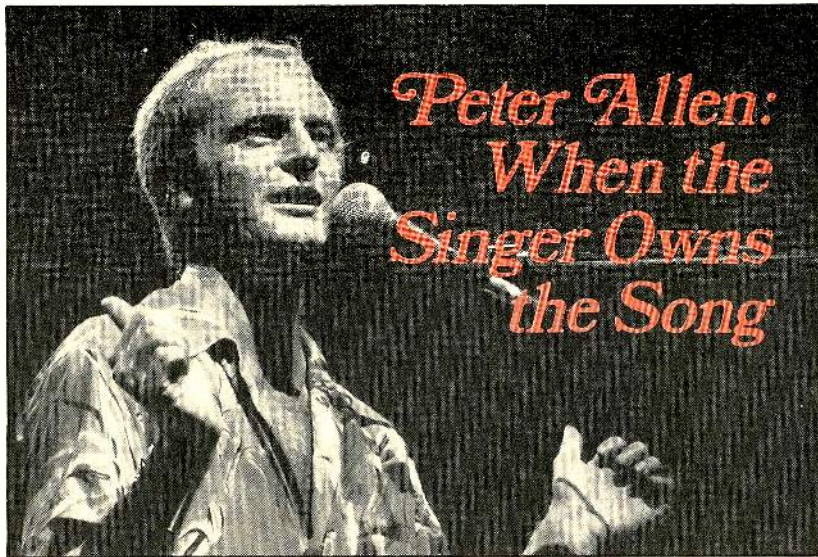
years in a Southern California booby hatch, rest assured that his songs sound nothing like James Taylor's. What they sound like, actually, is Loudon Wainwright if he'd O.D.'d on the absurdity of American life and then been drafted as the lead singer for Led Zeppelin. Beyond that, it's hard to describe the songs because to do so, or to quote the lyrics (tempting, tempting!), would be like giving away the one-liners in a Woody Allen film.

LET me simply say, then, that Tonio K. thinks that humor is a *serious* business, and that the next big dance craze will be *The Funky Western Civilization*. Let me also say that he is the only rocker in memory whose album contains a cameo vocal appearance by Joan of Arc, that his music is bone-crushing rock-and-roll as manic as any punk band's but infinitely more sophisticated, that his lyrics are so absurdly literate and corrosively cynical that they have reduced me to rolling on the floor from the mere reading of them. To hear them declaimed by Tonio in his marvelously twisted voice while the band conducts an aural demolition derby behind him is the most exciting experience I expect to have in my living room for the remainder of this year.

The bottom line? Tonio K., if not the future, is certainly at least the George Metesky of rock-and-roll. As a matter of fact, I think I'll have to take back my earlier disclaimer: *this is the greatest album ever recorded*.

—Steve Simels

TONIO K.: *Life in the Foodchain*. Tonio K. (vocals and guitar); Albert Lee (guitar); Earl Slick (guitar); other musicians. *Life in the Foodchain; The Funky Western Civilization; Willie and the Pigman; The Ballad of the Night the Clocks All Quit (and the Government Failed); American Love Affair; How Come I Can't See You in My Mirror?; Better Late Than Never; A Lover's Plea; H-A-T-R-E-D*. FULL MOON/EPIC JE 35545 \$7.98, Ⓟ JEA 35545 \$7.98, © JET 35545 \$7.98.



PETER ALLEN's new "I Could Have Been a Sailor" is a profoundly unprofound album about the pleasures, sad and sweet, of being alive. Like his last (breakthrough) album, "It Is Time for Peter Allen," it is permeated with a refreshingly open-eyed zest for a world in which it is not permitted to drown the capricious larcenies of the heart in the sour wine of self-pity.

That Peter Allen has been around, and then some, is as plain as the furrows in his brow. But it's equally plain from his performances that he hasn't retreated into Ironic Detachment to excuse himself from further experience. Instead, as his work in this and his previous album demonstrates, he has chosen to open up a deep channel of sympathetic communication between himself and his listeners. Many of the tracks here have the intimacy of a dialogue between close friends; when Allen sings, you know he's singing to *you* whether or not you've experienced the situation he's singing about.

PRACTICALLY everyone, I would imagine, can find him- or herself in a song such as *I Could Have Been a Sailor*. The could-have-been daydreams begin as early as adolescence and continue as late as second childhood, and Allen's gentle, wistful account of his own regrets casts a spell as effective as that of any well-told children's story. That he is able to be both the adult telling the story and the child listening to it within the same song is one of the reasons his work is so compelling. This compassionate duality of understanding runs through many of his songs: in *Don't Leave Me Now*, where he is both the cynical one-night-stander and the prisoner of his lonely need; in *We've Come to an Understanding*, about an "open" marriage in which two overly hip people see their relationship as a series of questions—"Can we make it?/Can you take it?/If you can't/Can we fake it?"; and in his already famous *Don't Cry Out Loud* (presented here in its first studio recording), which is as touching as watching a child struggling to hold back tears.

Not all of Allen's subjects are so universal. *Two Boys*, for instance, concerns two broth-

ers ("One of them excelled at ball/The other never played at all") and a sad little tale that has less to do with homosexuality than it does with a family's failure at communication, and *Angels with Dirty Faces* suggests the anarchic sexuality of a rock group's week-end house party. But always there is that hook of interest, that involvement in the emotional life of others, that Allen is able to fine-tune into listener sympathy.

No fine tuning is necessary, however, for the adrenalin-filled, pulse-swelling abandonment of Allen's *Don't Wish Too Hard* ("You might get it . . ."). He sang it on his last album in a live performance, but here it's been expanded, revised, and reorchestrated into what is probably the best disco track you're going to hear for at least several months. If you don't think you're a combination of Travolta and Baryshnikov about eight bars into it, you've probably got terminal Charley horse.

To be sure, not everything here is going to knock you down. *Paris at 21*, for example, is a lightly sketched pastel about being homesick for places you've never been—in this case Paris in 1921 at the age of twenty-one. And *If You Were Wondering*, though murmuringly reassuring and distinctively performed, is a little less than riveting—perhaps because of the high-powered company it keeps.

THE production, split between Marvin Hamlish and Mike Post, is so good, so professional, so perfectly tailored to Allen's style that it's almost invisible. Not once could I think of any other way any of these songs possibly could sound. And that, as all the world knows, is the unique sign of genuine vocal artistry—when the singer owns the song.

—Peter Reilly

PETER ALLEN: *I Could Have Been a Sailor*. Peter Allen (vocals, piano); orchestra. *I Could Have Been a Sailor; Don't Wish Too Hard; Two Boys; Angels with Dirty Faces; Don't Cry Out Loud; If You Were Wondering; Don't Leave Me Now; I'd Rather Leave While I'm in Love; We've Come to an Understanding; Paris at 21.* A&M SP 4739 \$7.98, © AAM 4739 \$7.98, © AAM 4739 \$7.98.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE J. GEILS BAND: *Sanctuary*. The J. Geils Band (vocals and instrumentals). *I Could Hurt You; One Last Kiss; Take It Back; Sanctuary; Wild Man; I Can't Believe You;* and three others. EMI/AMERICA SO-17006 \$7.98, © 8XO-17006 \$7.98, © 4XO-17006 \$7.98.

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

It's nice to have the J. Geils Band back the way they used to be—a combo playing Saturday-night boogie blues so hot the customers knock over their chairs as they jump up to dance. The Geils group tried to go the cosmic route with their past few albums and nearly blew their career. Fortunately, they came to their senses in time. A band whose talent is for slinging corned-beef hash should stay out of the caviar business. J. Geils has wised up, and their hash here is thick, steamy, and tasty. *One Last Kiss* is the hit single, but I like *I Could Hurt You* and *Jus' Can't Stop Me* even better. Welcome back, boys. J.V.

JAPAN: *Obscure Alternatives*. Japan (vocals and instrumentals). *Sometimes I Feel So Low; Automatic Gun; Rhodesia; Love Is Infectious; Deviation;* and three others. ARIOLA SW 50047 \$7.98, © 8XW-50047 \$7.98, © 4XW-50047 \$7.98.

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

The cover art on this makes the group Japan, which comes from England, look like punk rockers from Beverly Hills (where Ariola America Records is based). This geographical confusion hardly matters, anyway, since their music seems to come from outer space. "Obscure Alternatives" is certainly not very cohesive, with vocals and some lyrics that seem punkish and primitive backed by "experimental"—in the laboratory sense—instrumentals. Much of it is virtually tuneless, but every now and then it turns synthesizer-lyrical on you. Whatever it is at any moment, it's not very exciting. Japan—this group, that is—seems to have invented nothing new, and the old elements they fuse together *sound* like old elements fused together. N.C.

JEAN-MICHEL JARRE: *Equinoxe*. Jean-Michel Jarre (synthesizers, computers, sequencers). *Equinoxe (Parts 1-8)*. POLYDOR PD-1-6175 \$7.98, © 8T-1-6175 \$7.98, © CT-1-6175 \$7.98.

Performance: **Intense chi-chi**
Recording: **Inescapable**

If you've got a lot of time and a burning desire to be "in" you might as well give this album a try. Perhaps you'll get more out of Jean-Michel Jarre and his swarming army of heaving, throbbing, and ticking electronics than I did. He's rather fashionable now, and it took him from January until August of 1978 to record the eight parts of "Equinoxe," his second album. That's one a month—obviously he isn't too pressed for time either. He recorded it all in his private studio in Paris, pausing only long enough, apparently, to have his portrait snapped by Helmut Newton. The result

(Continued on page 104)

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Bee Gees vs. Falsettophobes

LET'S talk about Chipmunks. No, not the real kind; frankly, I wouldn't know a real one from a squirrel, unless the little vermin actually looked like Disney's Chip and Dale. I mean the recording-star Chipmunks. "Who?" ask our younger readers. Well, it's like this, kids. In the late Fifties (you remember *them* from *Happy Days*, of course) a gent named David Seville did a novelty Christmas single in which he sparred verbally with three of the tiny rodents (named Alvin, Simon, and Theodore) who were, in actuality, overdubbed and speeded-up permutations of his own voice. The disc sold by the millions, spawned several successful follow-ups (featuring jazzy instrumental B-sides with titles like *Almost Good* and *Mediocre*), and created an industry. For a while there, it seemed the public just couldn't get enough of the furry trio's close high harmony, so reminiscent of the Four Freshmen on belladonna. Eventually, they even got their own TV show. But Seville died a few years back, and they did a quick fade. Today their memory is kept alive only by the most crazed partisans of pop cultural arcana, the kind of wackos who would kill for a 16-millimeter print of *My Mother, the Car*, write fanzine articles on Bob Denver, and form punk bands.

I wouldn't bother you with this bit of history, to tell the truth, except that I've got "Spirits Having Flown," the new Bee Gees album, before me, and it's dawned on me at last: the brothers Gibb are unquestionably the Chipmunks' spiritual heirs. The parallels, in fact, are almost too obvious. They too sound utterly inhuman, sing in close high harmony, and sell records by the millions. They're on TV a lot (their own show must be in the cards at this point), have already faded away once,

and undoubtedly will again. Their records, including this one, are amusing and utterly dispensable. Hell, they even look like Chipmunks (especially Robin).

I feel constrained to point out, at this juncture, that this isn't the usual rocker's diatribe about the dreaded Disco Menace. I like lots of disco records. Donna Summers' *I Feel Love* is great pop, the Stones' *Miss You* is a great Chicago blues, Alicia Bridges' *I Love the Night Life* is a classic r-&-b performance by any standard, and even the Bee Gees' stuff from *Saturday Night Fever* was inspired and atmospheric city music. True, there are very real dangers and limitations inherent in both the genre and the lifestyle it espouses, but to reject "Spirits Having Flown" out of hand simply because of That Beat is to miss the point. Face it: Ian Dury's *Wake Up and Make Love to Me* is disco, and he's got certifiable New Wave credentials. So disco is certainly not the issue.

The Bee Gees falsetto is, however, and this is where we get back into Chipmunk territory. There is nothing implicitly *wrong* with pop falsetto. But contrast Maurice, Barry, and Robin's variety with the two most influential falsettos of the Sixties, Smokey Robinson and Brian Wilson. Smokey was so soulful he could reduce grown men to tears, and Brian could break your heart while he was rhapsodizing over a skateboard. Has even the most wild-eyed lackey of Robert Stigwood ever made a similar claim for the Bee Gees? Consider: what is the sound of a Chipmunk who has been rejected by his girl friend? The same as that of a Chipmunk who is sublimely happy. What is the sound of a Bee Gee whose loved ones have been wiped out in a mining disaster? That's right, folks, the same as that

of a Bee Gee with an album that has just shipped platinum.

I don't want to wind up blaming all of society's ills on a trio of expatriates from Australia. "Spirits Having Flown" is, after all, simply a formula follow-up, albeit an uninspired one, and to criticize the lads for not really having anything to say is unfair: they're not writing for an audience that *wants* them to say anything. But their staggering level of success with a music that is at heart so antihuman, both conceptually and simply in its sound, is one of the more depressing phenomena of the Seventies. After all, these guys aren't one-shots (on which level they would have been tolerable, even enjoyable)—they're a monolith.

Which is to say that any right-thinking individual who spies this album at his or her local record store should ignore it in favor of "The Chipmunks' Greatest Hits," a copy of which is certain to be lurking in the bargain bin. Remember—there's nothing like the real thing. —Steve Simels

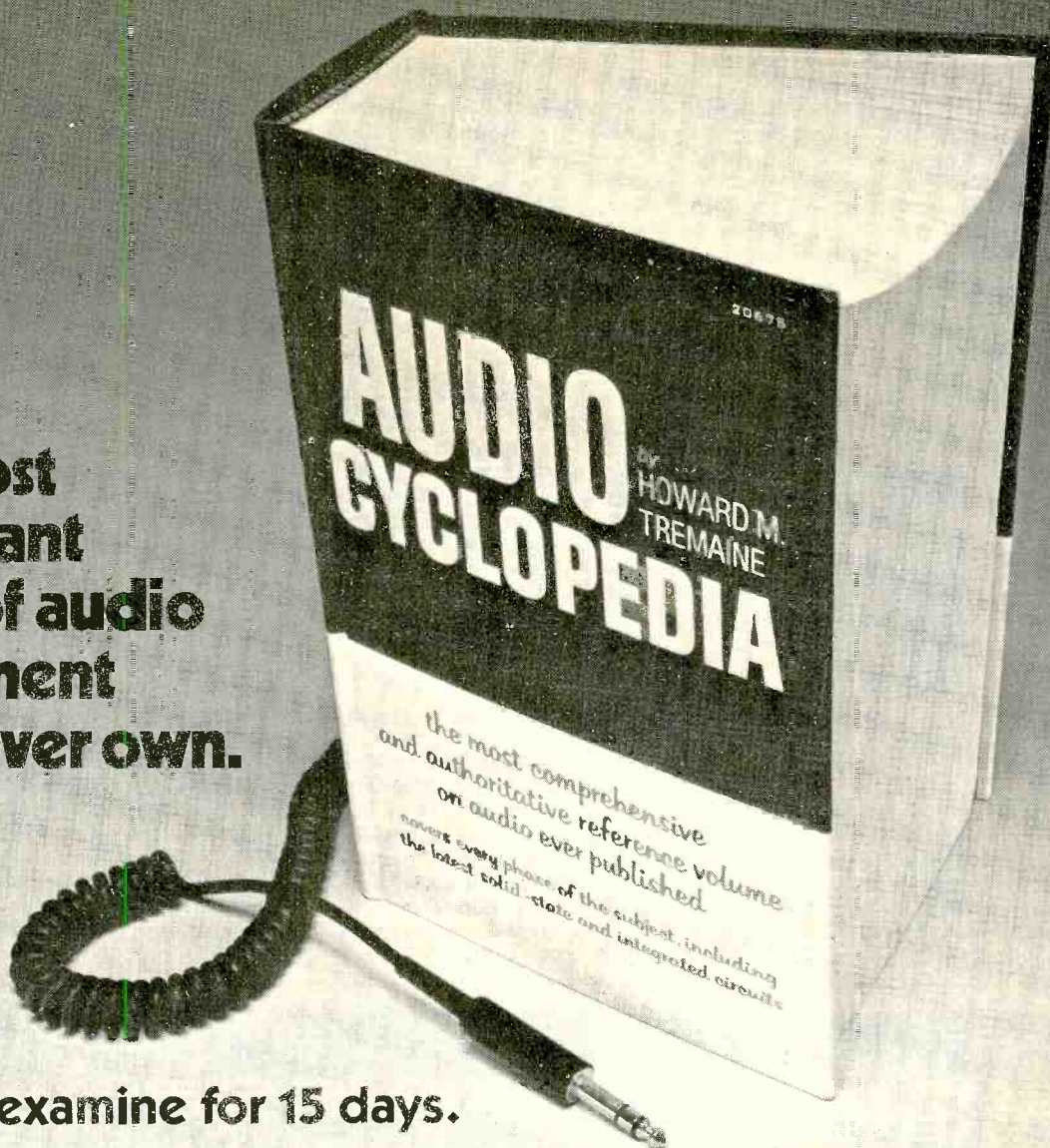
* * *

FOLLOWING up the *Saturday Night Fever* music figured to be no small job, but one did expect, at least, that the Bee Gees would compete with their own past by throwing out some catchy tunes. The kind of music they're dealing in nowadays doesn't absolutely demand them, but they sure help; the fact that the Bee Gees have a better knack for melody than do the black groups they imitate is a standout fact in their recent success. But catchy tunes are not the rule in the new "Spirits Having Flown" album. The hit *Too Much Heaven* has one, and *Love You Inside Out* almost has one, but mostly the album has other priorities.

Those don't have much to do with the lyrics, which are as banal as usual; they have mostly to do with arrangements, vocal and instrumental. Barry Gibb holding court in the studio is what the album is about. Even in *Too Much Heaven*, which has enough intrinsic charm to make it dressed any which way, Barry has all but gone ape on the layered falsetto sound. In songs that depend on finesse (as most in this batch do), he has provided some cunning effects indeed, especially instrumentally. But listening to it is a shallow experience, even shallower than usual. You can get studio magic and no tunes on almost any Todd Rundgren album; from the Bee Gees one wants *tunes*. And I, for one, could use a break from those damned falsettos once in a while. I think if Barry had spent half the time writing that he spent tinkering with falsettos, the boys might have had their worthy follow-up to *Fever*. As it is, the new effort has more production finesse than one can justify on most good pop tunes, short-lived as those are, and on these mediocre ones the elaborate packaging becomes almost ludicrous. —Noel Coppage

THE BEE GEES: *Spirits Having Flown*. Barry, Robin, and Maurice Gibb (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Tragedy*; *Too Much Heaven*; *Love You Inside Out*; *Reaching Out*; *Spirits (Having Flown)*; *Search, Find*; *Stop (Think Again)*; *Living Together*; *I'm Satisfied*; *Until*. RSO RS-1-3041 \$7.98. © 8T-1-3041 \$7.98, © CP-1-3041 \$7.98.

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is one of those darkly shadowed, "intense-glare" jobs that make the subject look as if he would scare hell out of Muhammad Ali himself if they met on an ill-lit street.

I guess the photo's supposed to be a clue that we should all serious-up for what's on the album. Well, there are seven synthesizers, several sequencers, a couple of computers, and something called a Vocoder E.M.S., which is used to produce what sounded to me dismayingly like a Mighty Wurlitzer having a nervous breakdown. I found the whole recital just too twitchy to be entertaining. The only real excitement came toward the end of part four, when a series of sinister little hisses had me running around checking out the electrical wiring, the refrigerator, and the electric range until I realized that Meestair Jarre was having hees leetle zhoke weez me!

P.R.

MELISSA MANCHESTER: *Don't Cry Out Loud*. Melissa Manchester (vocals, piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Such a Morning; Bad Weather; Caravan; Almost Everything; Singin' from My Soul*; and five others. ARISTA AB 4186 \$7.98, Ⓢ AT8 4186 \$7.98, Ⓢ ATC 4186 \$7.98.

Performance: **One very fine track**
Recording: **Good**

If anything else on this album matched Melissa Manchester's performance of the title song, Peter Allen and Carole Bayer Sager's *Don't Cry Out Loud*, then perhaps I'd be prepared to alter my dim view of her work. In that one track she jumps to vivid life as a singing actress, bringing the vitality and the fresh-

ness of immediate experience to the bitter-sweet lyrics and using her big voice to communicate mood and color. But the other songs here, many of which she wrote herself, are standard Manchester—diet-munchy scraps of "feelings," "moments," and "insights" that sound like overheard conversations between superannuated teenyboppers on the down escalator at Alexander's department store. Still, she does catch fire on that title track, which gives me a little hope for more of the same next time.

P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BOB MARLEY AND THE WAILERS: *Baby-Ion by Bus*. Bob Marley and the Wailers (vocals and instrumentals). *Positive Vibration; Punky Reggae Party; Exodus; Stir It Up; Concrete Jungle; Kinky Reggae; Lively Up Yourself*; and seven others. ISLAND ISLD 11 two discs \$12.98, Ⓢ J8A 11 \$12.98, Ⓢ J5A 11 \$12.98.

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

Though I've never been a member of Bob Marley's cult following, this album, with its rich variety of songs, might well convert me into a fellow traveler at least, if not a stalwart. These four sides, recorded on tours of Europe, the United States, and Canada, capture the thrust and vigor of Marley's live performances along with the expected audience response. The album is better than some of his others at giving a sense of the personal fire he projects, and it seems to contain only peak

moments culled from many performances, with all duds and dullness deleted.

The main appeal for nonbelievers like me is Marley's obvious integration of blues, soul, and rock elements into his particular brand of reggae. Perhaps this dilutes his native Caribbean music in the view of purists, but it endows it with an exceptionally broad base and uncommon conceptual breadth. And the splendid manner in which the I-Threes chant away in the background drives it all home. The music's power transcends categories. Mr. Marley, you have got yourself a new fan.

P.G.

PATRICK MORAZ. Patrick Moraz (keyboards, vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Jungles of the World; Temples of Joy; The Conflict; Primitivisation*; and three others. CHARISMA CA-1-2201 \$7.98, Ⓢ 8T-1-2201 \$7.98, Ⓢ CT-1-2201 \$7.98.

Performance: **Ridiculous**
Recording: **Overloaded**

Patrick Moraz is now keyboardist for the reincarnated Moody Blues, who may or may not be making a real comeback. It is appropriate for Moraz to join them, since he specializes in the presumptuous audio goo and the pompous, naïve, abstract moralizing that originally made the Moodies successful.

This album, cut before Moraz joined the Moodies, features him on every conceivable keyboard instrument and its synthesizer mutant, with the rhythm supplied by Djalma Correia playing a variety of "ethnic Brazilian

(Continued on page 108)

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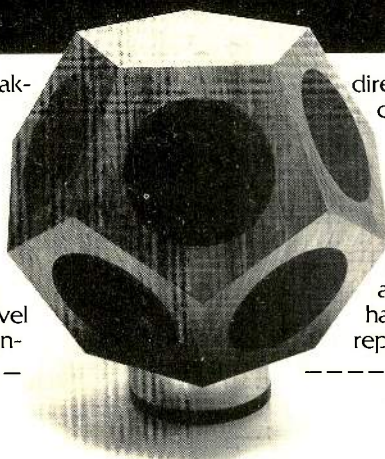
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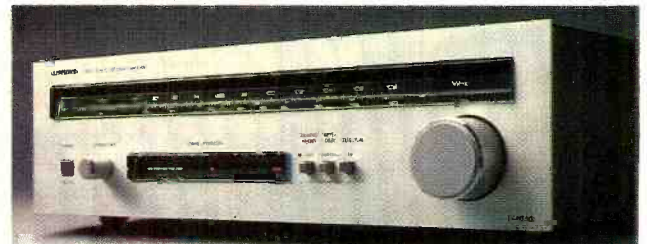
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Alice Cooper: Inside Wonderland



DOES Alice Cooper take *anything* seriously? You bet your Budweiser. He's a little like another famous drinking man of this century, Jud Fry of *Oklahoma!*, as described by Curley: "He loved everythin' and everybody, only... he never let on. And nobody ever knowed it." Alice Cooper is serious, for example, about his new album, "From the Inside," only he's trying not to let on.

Put aside for a moment the fancy jacket with its fold-out doors and cuckoo's-nest pictures (I understand Warner Brothers may drop it anyway, it's so expensive); to dwell too much on that is to play "let's pretend" with Alice Cooper. Just look at the lyrics. Listen to the vocals. Unlike all that stuff about blowing up the high school—or, for that matter, about going bonkers—the language here is not a put-on, and though Cooper never peddled himself as a singer (and, indeed, isn't much of one), he does muster a certain intensity. It is an album a person in his (pardon the expression) *right mind* could take seriously.

The tone of the lyrics probably has something to do with the fact that Cooper brought Bernie Taupin in to help write *all* the lyrics, in addition to various other songwriters to help with various songs. This looks odd at first, since the songs supposedly are so personal. The album holds so tight to its theme (about being committed to a mental institution) that it seems it should be, and does sound like, a one-man effort. But then you realize the songs aren't *exactly* personal, for it isn't *exactly* Alice Cooper's story.

COOPER started out as a punked-up American answer to Glitter Rock. Like David Bowie before him (and, in another more humorous and therefore healthier vein, like Martin Mull), Cooper did not purport to present music as an end in itself but as a part of theater. He gave not musical performances but *stage shows* designed to shock (live snakes, decapitated dolls, and all the rest). This meant he did not have A Talent to fall back on, as a musician does, but only his own intelligence. Maybe that's part of why he drank so much.

At any rate, having been raised with the Norman Lear idea of the entertainment value of candor, Alice turned his drinking into another piece of the act (ha-ha), a shift characteristic of heavy drinkers from W. C. Fields to Dean Martin. At the same time, there was something about the way the Sixties generation grew up that caused young Americans to join Alice in bending elbows in record numbers. We quickly reached new highs in alcoholism among kids in their teens and twenties. The alcohol culture had made a comeback with a vengeance, and Alice Cooper was something of a symbol of that comeback. Maybe it didn't have far to come back *from*; the grass culture and Far Eastern passivity went over with a few flower children, but alcohol is more of an up-and-doing drug and the majority of people here feel a stronger affinity for Western ways, in which hellfire and brimstone are only part of the punishment for getting out of line. Take the hangover away and an important cultural link is severed.

Ah, the guilt, the delicious guilt. If there are any flower children left, they'll probably say all this rehashing of crime and punishment is not part of the solution but part of the prob-

lem. But one of the things about us Westerners is that we don't mind too much what a thing is made out of as long as it is well made. So we love even a well-made confession—as long as it isn't boring.

And, truth to tell, much of the time this one isn't. Cooper has taken a slice of his past—as in "All of my life was a laugh and a joke/A drink and a smoke/And then I passed out on the floor/Or a friend/Again and again and again and again," as he says in a song called *Serious*—and made a decent piece of work of it. The band sounds tight, as his band did at first despite the theatrics, and the intensity of Cooper's vocals make them adequate. Not ideal, of course—he still seems rather limited in the range and subtlety of emotion he can project. And he still tends to settle too often for a mundane melody. But it's the most *interesting* Alice Cooper record I've heard.

Some songs actually seem to be about alcohol rather than the psycho ward, but the centerpiece probably is *The Quiet Room*, where they allow no shoelaces and no sharp objects: "I can't get these damned wrists to bleed," Alice screams. You can say it's show biz (you can't ignore the cover forever, and you do sense there's a new shock threshold that live snakes and dead dolls can't reach), and you're right; it is. But that doesn't negate the fact that Cooper is saying, more straightforwardly than he has before, that he's been 'bucked, that he's been scorned, that he's been *punished*.

Cooper is sharp enough to know that even greater shocks are needed now in show business. I gather this from seeing him on television. The TV camera is a great instrument for telling us who's actually got wit and who's merely reading someone else's wit on cue cards, and it seems obvious to me Cooper has wit. And he did hedge his bet with the cover and a couple of flashes of macabre humor in the grooves, so that (theoretically anyway) he comes out looking hip whether you take him seriously or not.

BUT, again, look at the lyrics and listen to the vocals. Regardless of whether he ought to have been taken seriously in the past or whether he will be in the future (a whole 'nother subject; you *know* how boring reformed drunks can be), at least a part of him did honestly try to get something said here. To have said it directly about booze might temporarily have seemed better propaganda (or preaching, or what have you), but it probably would have yielded an inferior record. Even though he has stylized the subject of insanity in the past with show-biz high-jinks, the evidence is that he did, this time, deal seriously with something serious. I'll drink, in moderation, to that.

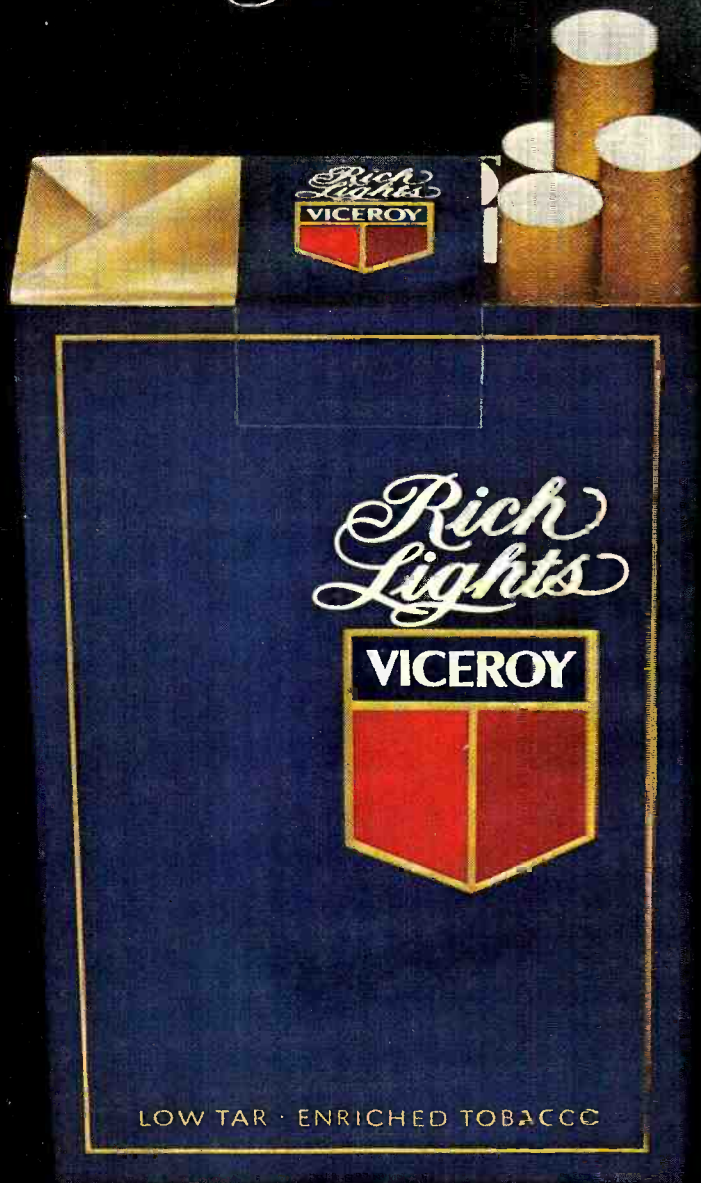
—Noel Coppage

ALICE COOPER: *From the Inside*. Alice Cooper (vocals); Dick Wagner (guitar); Ken Passarelli (bass); Rick Shlosser (drums); David Foster (keyboards); other musicians. *From the Inside*; *Wish I Were Born in Beverly Hills*; *The Quiet Room*; *Nurse Rozetta*; *Millie and Billie*; *Serious*; *How You Gonna See Me Now*; *For Veronica's Sake*; *Jackknife Johnny*; *Inmates (We're All Crazy)*. WARNER BROS. BSK 3263 \$7.98, © M8 3263 \$7.98, © M5 3263 \$7.98.

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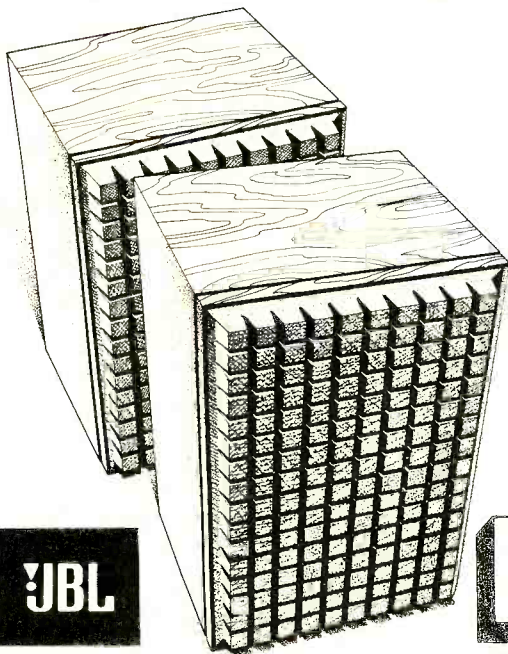
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instruments" and sixteen gentlemen described as "the percussionists of Rio de Janeiro" (what did Moraz do, call central casting?). If that weren't suspicious enough, Moraz gives the game away in his liner notes: "There is a motivation behind this album . . . the struggle between the primitive world—represented by acoustic instruments . . . and an encroaching civilized world—represented by electronic instruments." Now don't that make your teeth sweat?

There are two high points on the album. The first is at the end of side one in a cut called *The Conflict* when, with synthesizers going crazy, there is the sudden sound of an explosion. It is meant to be dramatic, but the effect is as hilarious as Stan Freeberg's audio satire on Les Paul's 1950's echo-chamber version of *The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise* (the guitar overdubs were played at increasing speed, accelerating to chaos, until Freeberg yelled "Run for your lives!" just before the big boom). The second high point is the closing cut on side two, titled (gosh!) *Realization*, in which the forces of primitive and civilized music merge into—you guessed it—a dance tune suitable for mild disco at home. It is as if Moraz, seeking to build a better mousetrap, spent years of research before discovering cheese. I can just see the percussionists of Rio collecting their paychecks and staggering out the studio door doubled over with laughter. What's the Portuguese slang equivalent of "jive turkey"?

J.V.

JIM MORRISON: *An American Prayer* (see *The Pop Beat*, page 70)

WILLIE NELSON: *Willie and Family Live.*

Willie Nelson (vocals, guitar); Bobbie Nelson (piano); Paul English (drums); Bee Spears (bass); Mickey Raphael (harmonica); Emmylou Harris, Johnny Paycheck (vocals); other musicians. *Whiskey River*; *Stay a Little Longer*; *Crazy*; *Night Life*; *Good Hearted Woman*; *Red Headed Stranger Medley*; *Bloody Mary Morning*; *I'm a Memory*; *Mr. Record Man*; *Hello Walls*; *Uncloudy Day*; *I Gotta Get Drunk*; and seventeen others. COLUMBIA KC2 35642 two discs \$11.98, © K2A 35642 \$11.98, © K2T 35642 \$11.98.

Performance: **Variable**

Recording: **Good remote**

This was recorded at Lake Tahoe during Willie Nelson's tour last year, but it sounds almost exactly like the concert I heard in Louisville. Willie performs differently from song to song, ranging from absent-minded to very caring. He hurries the program along with hardly a pause for applause between songs (and not even that during the six-and-a-half-song *Red Headed Stranger* medley). This puts a lot of songs in the album and is probably good for spontaneity in the band, but it does give you the idea that some things are being dashed off to get them out of the way. *Good Hearted Woman*, for example: I can see how a complex man like Nelson could tire of doing a song as simple as that one every night.

When Willie does pause to chat briefly, though, it's twice as effective; long pauses almost always sink live albums, and few other performers do a better job of avoiding them. And when he does obviously attend to a song, such as Rodney Crowell's *Till I Gain Control Again*, it's apparent that Willie's been grow-

(Continued on page 110)

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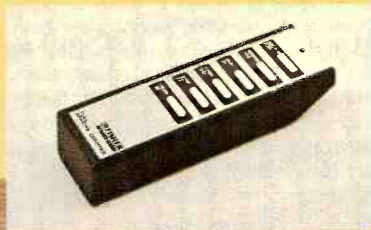
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THE NEVILLE BROTHERS: the charm and lilt of a New Orleans attitude toward pop

ing into a subtler, smarter singer right under our noses. I know of no other singer who can come as close to making *everybody* listen to the words as Willie can; his style appears artless, but it is actually about as artless as a Picasso drawing. He can really draw you in, and so can the charming, off-the-wall way he plays the guitar, monkeys around with the beat, leads the band, and does any number of other things. Enough of those, plus Emmylou Harris and Johnny Paycheck, show up here to justify having it, and then some. It isn't going to sound much like any of your studio Willie Nelson albums anyway, same songs or not. After you get it, you may find, like me, that you have to take it in segments—but *do* get it.

N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE NEVILLE BROTHERS. The Neville Brothers (vocals and instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. *Dancin' Jones*; *Washable Ink*; *All Nights*, *All Right*; *Audience for My Pain*; *Break Away*; and five others. CAPITOL ST-11865 \$7.98, © 8XT-11865 \$7.98, © 4XT-11865 \$7.98.

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

Allen Toussaint and Dr. John are probably the two best-known New Orleans pop musicians, but the Crescent City has produced a number of notable folks dealing in gumbo soul. Among them are Arthur Neville, former keyboardist for the Meters (a terrific quartet that scored as a solo act and also acted as back-up musicians for Toussaint and many other New Orleans artists), and Aaron Neville, who had a hit single, *Tell It Like It Is*, in 1969. They are joined by their brothers Cyril and Charles in this, the quartet's debut album—and it's just delicious.

The Neville Brothers provide some fine examples of the charm, ease, and lilt that results when the New Orleans attitude is applied to commercial pop. Charles Neville has contributed three tempting songs to the album—*Vieux Carré Rouge*, *Speed of Light*, and *Break Away* (the last dealing in voodoo). Gerry Goffin, a topflight writer for nearly thirty years, collaborated with keyboardist Barry Goldberg on *Audience for My Pain*, about a

man unable to start a new relationship because he's still seriously wounded from the last one. *I'll Take My Chances* is a semi-disco number in which the brothers sound something like K.C. and the Sunshine Band. But the knockout cut is *Washable Ink* by John Hiatt. The rhythm and instrumentation are a mixture of Latin and Caribbean, and only after you have been (easily) enticed into the song and stop to hear the lyrics again do you realize it's a song about absolute despair. The Nevilles' vocal treatment of *Washable Ink* is subtle and understanding, and I hope it will be the single from the album—it's a long shot, but so was Procul Harum's *A Whiter Shade of Pale*.

There are some good dancing numbers, too—*All Nights*, *All Right* by Weldon Dean Parks and *Dancin' Jones*, which those legendary pros Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller had a hand in writing. The album was produced by another great pro, Jack Nitzsche, whose production and arranging savvy have been utilized by—among many others—the Rolling Stones and Leo Kottke. I think the cover could have been better done, but the performances, the production, and the writing mark this as one of the best albums released this year. Here's hoping Capitol will wake up to this sleeper and apply some promotional clout.

J.V.

JOHNNY PAYCHECK: *Armed and Crazy*. Johnny Paycheck (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Friend, Lover, Wife*; *Armed and Crazy*; *Mainline*; *Leave It to Me*; *Me and the IRS*; and five others. EPIC KE 35444 \$7.98, © EA 35444 \$7.98, © ET 35444 \$7.98.

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

Even after his comeback from the doldrums, Johnny Paycheck has maintained his image as a voice of the common man touched with a little extra wildness. David Allan Coe's image is largely an expansion of Paycheck's, which is one reason why Paycheck was so effective with Coe's *Take This Job and Shove It*. On "Armed and Crazy" Paycheck tells the IRS he's mad as hell. He tells them to "take the 1040 form and put it where the sun don't shine." Of course, anyone who'd record a song called *Thanks to the Cuthouse (I'm in the*

Doghouse with You) doesn't figure to be angry *all* the time, and vacillating from anger to humor is what Paycheck does best. He's a little lost on a straight love song, or anything else that's too slow, so this album is uneven. If you need someone to articulate that you're mad as hell or a little wild at heart, it'll be useful. But as an album among albums, it's strictly for Paycheck fans.

N.C.

POINTER SISTERS: *Energy*. Pointer Sisters (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Lay It on the Line*; *Dirty Work*; *As I Come of Age*; *Happiness*; *Fire*; *Angry Eyes*; *Everybody Is a Star*; *Echoes of Love*; and three others. PLANET P-1 \$6.98, © PT-1 \$7.98, © PC-1 \$7.98.

Performance: **Diffuse**
Recording: **Satisfactory**

Uncertainty has dogged the path of the Pointer Sisters in recent years. After a momentous blast-off that elevated them to the highest ranks of camp, they have drifted about in search of a musical direction. This album is proof that they haven't yet found one. Though there are interesting indications of stylistic versatility to be found here, ranging from straight-ahead rock to countryish selections with a dash of funk here and there, a distinctive sound does not emerge. Furthermore, they have abandoned what used to be their forte: fast-paced, jazzed-up vocal gymnastics with bursts of brilliance. They've also moved away from their roots in blues, r-&-b, and jazz to favor good but unsuitable material by such writers as Stephen Stills, Bruce Springsteen, Kenny Loggins, and Jim Messina. Allen Toussaint's *Happiness* stands out as being more appropriate for the Pointer Sisters' voices and musical style. They seem to be moving closer to midstream with this record, and while that approach might gain them some new fans, the sounds here ring a bit untrue to my ears.

P.G.

LOU REED: *Live/Take No Prisoners*. Lou Reed (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Sweet Jane*; *I Wanna Be Black*; *Satellite of Love*; *Pale Blue Eyes*; *I'm Waiting for My Man*; *Walk on the Wild Side*; and four others. ARISTA AL 8502 two discs \$7.98, © A8T 8502 \$7.98, © ACT 8502 \$7.98.

Performance: **Er, interesting**
Recording: **Nice**

Well, I never saw the Velvet Underground (actually, I did see the version fronted by Dougy Yule, which doesn't count), but they tell me it was pretty fabulous, and on the basis of the two live Velvets LP's, both of which are minor classics, I'd be inclined to agree. I have seen Lou Reed live, however, and that's another kettle of fish entirely. Who can forget, for example, his first solo tour, when he was backed by a pubescent Long Island garage band that made faces behind his back? Or when, *circa* "Sally Can't Dance," he played the Felt Forum and mimed shooting-up during *Heroin* while his fans screamed, "Who are you kidding, Lou?" Or the time he hired the best mainstream heavy-metal band in the world and then proceeded to sleepwalk his way through the vocals? In short, Reed's career as a live performer has been about as ridiculous as most of his solo albums.

Then last year he cut the crap and put out "Street Hassle," an album as moving and uncompromising as anything he had done during

(Continued on page 112)

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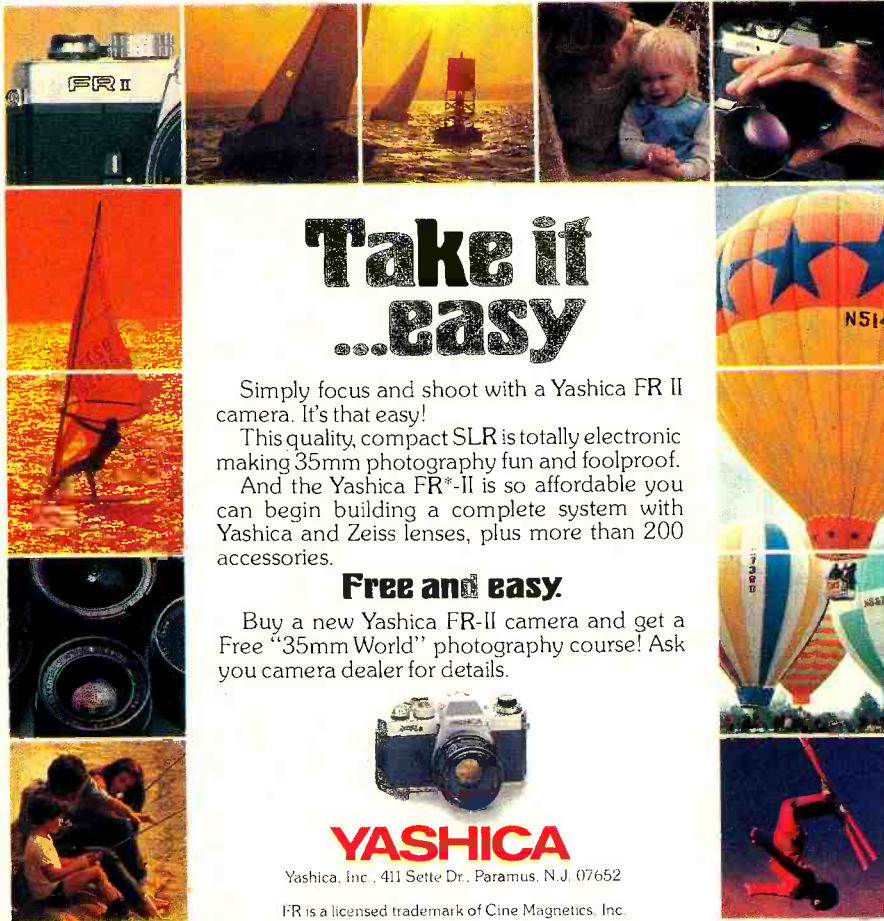


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his Velvets days. Taking that as the measure of his current work, I attended the concerts that form the basis of this new live set with considerable expectations. Suckered again. The show I saw was, to be charitable, an extremely uneven affair, and so, I'm afraid, is the album. On the plus side, the band seems to understand him better than any he's worked with in years and Reed has resumed playing eccentric but engrossing lead guitar. On the debit side, he seems to think a lot of his songs are pretty funny; in fact, he seems to want to become the Henny Youngman of sleaze, as witness some of the confrontations with the audience during *Walk on the Wild Side*. And you have to wonder why the Reverend Jesse Jackson is taking off after the Stones' *Some Girls* while Reed is still getting away with the scurrilous *I Wanna Be Black*.

It all comes down, finally, to what you want from the guy. Me, I'll stick with my Velvets records and hope that "Street Hassle" wasn't a fluke. S.S.

KENNY ROGERS: *The Gambler*. Kenny Rogers (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *She Believes In Me*; *The Gambler*; *Tennessee Bottle*; *King of Oak Street*; *Making Music for Money*; *Morgana Jones*; and five others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA934-H \$7.98, © EA934-H \$7.98, © CA934-H \$7.98.

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

In one flying leap from his last album, for which he installed himself, at least in the cover photo, at the center of a rented family so wholesome it would make a Norman Rockwell painting look sordid, Kenny Rogers now presents himself as "The Gambler" with another elaborate cover photo and foldout poster. More time and money seem to be spent on Rogers' album covers than on what goes inside them, since this record is still another mealy pancake partially stuck to the griddle. On and on he drones through one folk-type (formula A, version B) song after another for what seems like *hours* of hummin' and strummin'. There is one grotesque oddity here; called *A Little More Like Me (The Crucifixion)*, it's a heavy-handed attempt to update the Gospels, and it's gross beyond belief. P.R.

TODD RUNDGREN: *Back to the Bars*. Todd Rundgren (vocals, guitar, keyboards); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Real Man*; *Love of the Common Man*; *The Verb "To Love"*; *The Range War*; *Black and White*; *The Last Ride*; *Cliché*; *Black Maria*; *Zen Archer*; *Initiation*; and thirteen others. BEARSVILLE 2 BRX 6986 two discs \$12.98, © J8A 6986 \$12.98, © J5A 6986 \$12.98.

Performance: **Tuneless and tedious**
Recording: **Very good remixed remote**

I don't know. This was recorded live at the Bottom Line in New York, the Roxy in L.A., and the Agora in Cleveland. Are those what you think of as bars? In what I think of as bars, they wouldn't have allowed this kind of thing to go on and on the way it does here. They just aren't that polite in my bars. They would have *talked* over it, preventing a relatively expensive evening from becoming a complete waste. Everyone I play this album for at home talks over it (although some admire the cover and the production). I do too.

(Continued on page 116)

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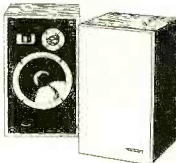
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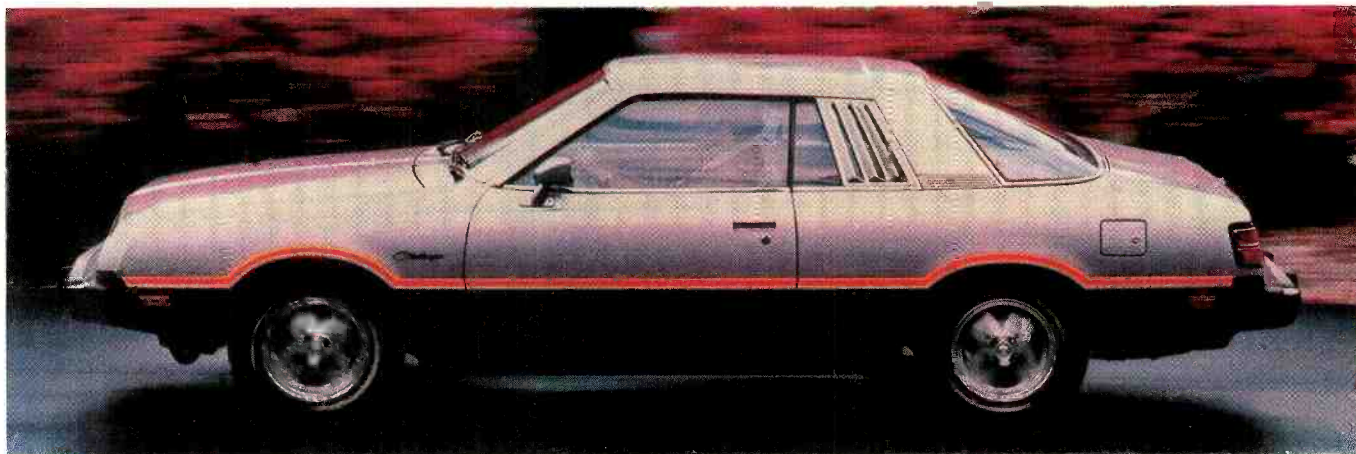


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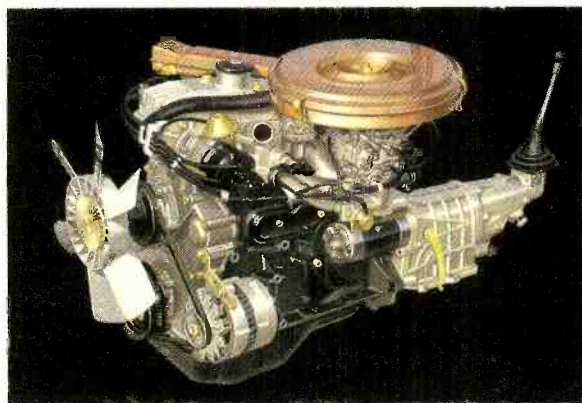
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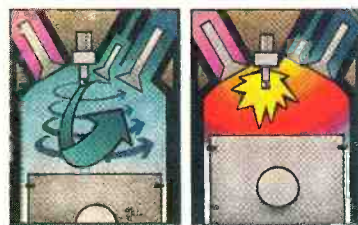
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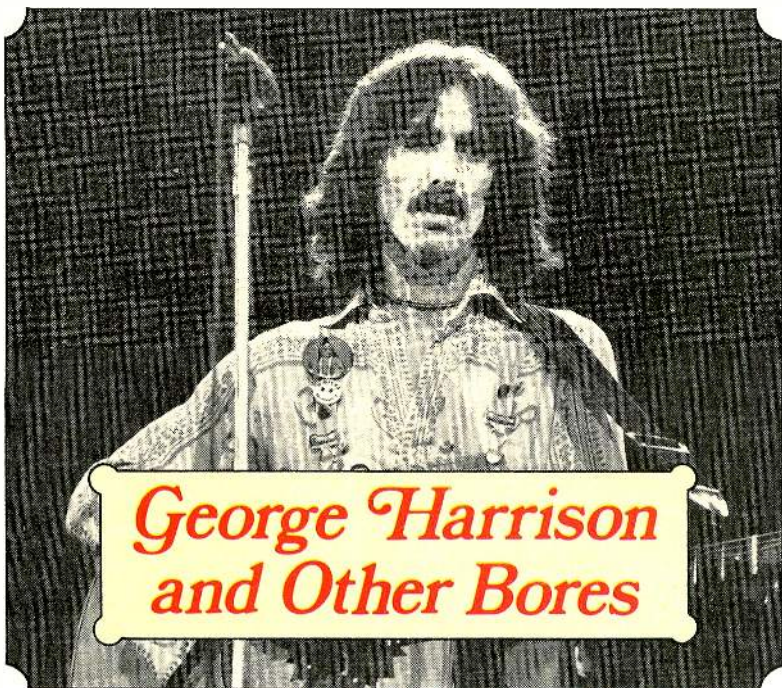


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Chuck Rubin

George Harrison and Other Bores

BELIEVE it or not, I'm a pretty nice guy. I love animals (two cats at home), I brake for Moonies (well, maybe I'm flexible on that one), and every Christmas I weep at the end of Channel Five's annual screening of Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*. I mean, when Jimmy Stewart, Donna Reed, and the rest of the cast sing *Auld Lang Syne* I absolutely go to pieces. Yes, now it can be told—I'm as sentimental a twit as anyone I know, my admiration for Elvis Costello notwithstanding.

That admitted, I think it's grossly unfair of the miserable buggers to keep doing it to me, the miserable buggers in question being the musician heroes of my rock-and-roll youth, and the doing it being making these awful albums that leave me wondering if maybe what made me love their early work wasn't the music at all, but simply being seventeen. (I don't really believe that, of course—it strikes me as dubious that in ten years today's kids will still be as enamored of "Frampton Comes Alive" as I am of, say, "The Rolling Stones Now.") Meanwhile, every year or so some of my old heroes insist on unleashing shiny new state-of-the-art vinyl excrecences that momentarily get my hopes up (a fan, like hope, springs eternal) and then depress me utterly for weeks on end—a phenomenon that probably helps account for the large sales of imports by obscure English New Wavers. What have I—a zealot who has worn out five different copies of "Rubber Soul"—ever done, I ask you, to deserve such base treatment?

Damned if I know, but one-fourth of the Beatles and three-fifths of the Byrds, the two groups that meant the most to me in the days when a disco was a Latin record store, apparently think they owe it to me. Hence the two albums now before me, imaginatively titled "George Harrison" and "McGuinn, Clark, & Hillman." It's a toss-up which is the more pathetic of the two. The surprising thing about that, of course, is that I am still capable of being surprised at it.

Actually, given how sadly his stock has dropped over the years, I am almost disposed to say something nice about George's effort, and to be fair it is an improvement over such debacles as "Dark Horse" and "Extra Texture." Co-producer Russ Titelman has given it a superficial gloss that is mildly appealing in a background-music sort of way, and he has apparently declared a moratorium on plugs for Sri Krishna in the lyrics. Still, though no one stuck in the material world could expect George to come up with any really new ideas at this stage of the game (yes, sports fans, he's still playing the same solo he thrilled you with in *My Sweet Lord* way back in 1970), it does seem rather strange that he hasn't made even a tentative bow in the direction of Power Pop.

Considering that the Beatles practically invented the genre cultivated by such current biggies as Cheap Trick, you'd think he'd be inclined to bring it all back home, if only as a marketing ploy to shore up his credibility. But no, except for *Faster*, and then only vaguely, the stuff here is as MOR-creamy and lifeless as everything else he's done since "All Things Must Pass." I guess you have to give George points for the integrity to maintain his chowderheaded ignorance of or indifference to the realities of the pop climate (it's probably a weird combination of both), because he's still doing cut-and-paste games with his Beatles stuff. *Here Comes the Sun* is blatantly recycled here as—get ready—*Here Comes the Moon*. That in itself should tell you all you need to know about the declining state of George's creative powers, but for what it's worth it should be added that the whole album is probably slick enough (in the Eric Clapton/Stephen Bishop/Toto/Top-40 sense) to revive his career commercially, and since that was doubtless the only consideration motivating anybody concerned with the project, you could say it's a success on its own terms. I won't, however.

Although George's record is merely a tepid bore trying to be as inoffensive and suitable for FM as possible, "McGuinn, Clark, & Hillman" is the most unconscionable sellout in recent memory. As an incorrigible fan I hope they get very rich from it, which they never did as Byrds. David Crosby is richer than Croesus from Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, and Mike Clarke is finally making a decent living from Firefall, so I can understand and even sympathize with MC&H's desire to finally rake in cash commensurate with the Byrds' enormous contributions to American music. But this piffle is an insult to anybody who ever loved them, and if you think I'm just being petty, I suggest you take a listen. What you'll hear are perfumery harmonies, vacuous life-is-a-circle philosophizing, disco rhythms, and a band dominated not by Roger McGuinn's visionary twelve-string but by George Terry, the hack who (you may recall) provided a similar service for a somnambulant Eric Clapton.

I know that a stylistic rethinking was in order—Chris Hillman has a recurrent nightmare about winding up his career playing Byrds oldies in Holiday Inns—but surely mediocre California pop mush was too easy a solution. Consider this: Gene Clark has every bit as lived-in a voice as Waylon Jennings', and Hillman and McGuinn know as much about country music as anybody treading the boards in rock-and-roll. So instead of Hillman's bland solo albums (this new record boasts his old producers), why couldn't the jumping-off point for MC&H as a band have been the blistering George Jones honky-tonk that appeared briefly on McGuinn's last album? Think about it: they could have satisfied both their souls and their fans.

Well, somewhere along the line they decided to satisfy their wallets instead; I suppose they remembered that hard-country records rarely go platinum, whereas this one probably will. As with George's, it's so carefully calculated to appeal to the broadest radio audience that you can practically hear the market-research computer whirring in the background. Like I said, the old fan in me perversely wants MC&H to succeed despite everything. But if this is the way the band that made "Fifth Dimension" and "The Notorious Byrd Brothers" will make their transition into the Eighties, then, in the immortal words of Rick Nelson, I'd rather drive a truck.

—Steve Simels

GEORGE HARRISON. George Harrison (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Love Comes to Everyone; Not Guilty; Here Comes the Moon; Soft-Hearted Hana; Blow Away; Faster; Dark Sweet Lady; Your Love Is Forever; Soft Touch; If You Believe.* DARK HORSE DHK 3255 \$7.98, © M8 3255 \$7.98, © M5 3255 \$7.98.

MCQUINN, CLARK, & HILLMAN. Roger McGuinn, Gene Clark, Chris Hillman (vocals and instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. *Long Long Time; Little Mama; Don't You Write Her Off; Surrender to Me; Backstage Pass; Stopping Traffic; Feelin' Higher; Sad Boy; Release Me Girl; Bye Bye Baby.* CAPITOL SW-11910 \$7.98, © 8XW-11910 \$7.98, © 4XW-11910 \$7.98.

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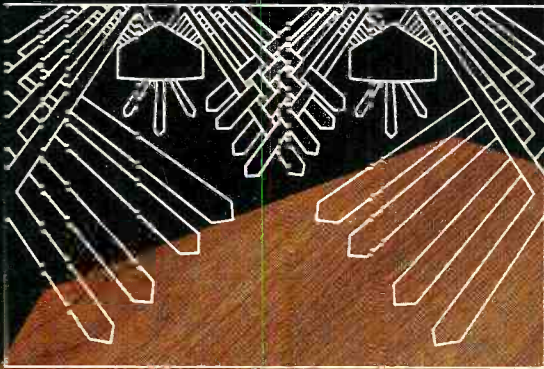
cipal effects can be isolated to specific types of frequency imbalances.

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Rundgren seems to have some potential as a singer, but he's so infatuated with vocal mannerisms he's copped from various other people and he gets so engrossed in dressing up the tuneless songs he writes that most of what you get here are vocal and instrumental sound effects. A fairly mundane melody, such as the one to *I Saw the Light*, looms large here. Also, there's something about several of his lyrics and the commentary between songs that suggests the audience is being patronized. I get the feeling that Rundgren has "discovered" that a superficial treatment of almost anything will do; he tends not to offer any real insight into a subject but merely to exercise some of its catchwords. I presume we're supposed to salivate on cue. Sorry. My

mouth is as dry as most of this so-called music. N.C.

CAT STEVENS: *Back to Earth*. Cat Stevens (vocals, piano, guitar); Jean Roussel (piano); Dave Mattacks (drums); Bruce Lynch (bass); other musicians. *Just Another Night; Daytime; Bad Brakes; Randy; The Artist*; and five others. A&M SP 4735 \$7.98, © AAM 4735 \$7.95, © AAM 4735 \$7.95.

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

Cat Stevens was very big indeed when he was seen as a sort of English street-folkie complement to progressive rock. Then he started changing directions and got a little too preten-

tious and grandiose for the times. He's been slinking back, in a zig-zag path, in recent outings, and if the title of this album carries a "coming down" connotation, it also connotes getting one's feet on the ground. In theory anyway. Actually, you can find in the album a sort of trilogy of Stevens modes: *Just Another Night* and *Daytime* start it off in his "hit" mode (the gentle, "Teaser and the Firecat" era mode), then *Bad Brakes* calls up the grandiose period (forecast in *Daytime*), and then there's some stuff—*Last Love Song*, the instrumental *Nascimento*, and *Father*—that edge in a direction suggested in "Numbers," his other-planet Pythagorean Fairy Tale album, Stevens' own kind of move in the jazz-folk direction they've experimented with in England more than here. And then *New York Times* takes you back into the dramatic dynamics and high volume of the grandiose period, and that phases back into the oldest, gentlest period in the last song, *Never*. A cycle, or at least a circle.

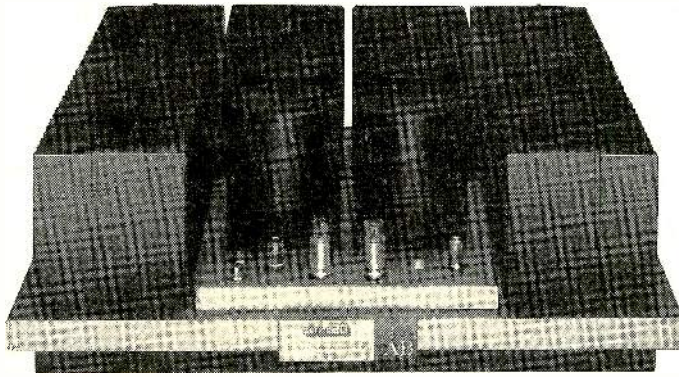
The new third of this circle, though, suggests possibilities for Stevens. The album would be better, in fact, if he'd bulged that part of it; *Last Love Song* is one of the three best in the bunch. And, although I'd count *Just Another Night* and *Never* as the other two (I liked the early Cat Stevens), I must say the writing in them seems a little bit labored. In his first mode, Stevens seemed a lot better off when he wrote fast and impulsively; the harder he worked at it the more it sounded like hard work. He seems to have a feel for the flow of a jazzy tune, and his rather sudden singing style goes better with its softening effect than with the bombast and heavy pauses. This might be a way to come back without slinking, if his affinity for this new direction is as reliable as it seems. Anyway, here's evidence that there is still some raw talent left in Cat Stevens. N.C.

TANYA TUCKER: *TNT*. Tanya Tucker (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Lover Goodbye; If You Feel It; The River and the Wind; Angel from Montgomery*; and six others. MCA MCA-3066 \$7.98, © MCAT-3066 \$7.98, © MCAC-3066 \$7.98.

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

Remember Tanya Tucker? Sweet little thing who wrote *Delta Dawn* and all them other keen-eyed, sharp-eared songs about small-town life? Well, Lordamighty, if she ain't gone Big City in the worst way. First off, there's the pictures of her here where she's got orange hair. She's wearing leather pants on the cover and what looks like a sprayed-on jump suit on the inside (which could be mistaken for a *Playboy* centerfold any day of the week), and she's holding these sticks of dynamite in all sorts of suggestive poses. She's just as scandalizin' on the record, too, caterwaulin' her way through other people's songs like *Lover Goodbye* and *If You Feel It* in a shameless manner. It's not half bad for a rock-'n'-roller, but it sure don't sound like little Tanya used to. She tries gettin' back in decent people's graces by singin' one of her own songs, *I'm the Singer, You're the Song*, but that didn't cut no ice with me—or with the Mrs. The Mrs. made me burn the record right in front of her eyes. (Still got the album cover though—out in the tool shed.) P.R.

(Continued on page 118)



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DISCO



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DAN HARTMAN: *Instant Replay*. Dan Hartman (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Instant Replay; Chocolate Box; Time and Space*; and three others. BLUE SKY JZ 35641 \$7.98, © JZA 35641 \$7.98, ©-JZT 35641 \$7.98.

Performance: **Star quality**
Recording: **Excellent**

We've all seen it happen time and time again: a disco single makes good, the single gets transferred to an LP, additional songs are added, and the by-then passé title hit turns out to be the only thing in the whole album worth hearing.

Well, two things make this release by Dan Hartman and his merry back-up musicians different. First, the title hit is such a fabulous disco number that even after months of play it still works, but they are a letdown after the great material on the disc's first side. The last two songs give Hartman more of a chance to vocalize, soulfully in *Love Is a Natural* and with folk-rock directness in *Time and Space*. They show he's versatile and talented, with an appealing voice and the ability to put lots of good feelings into even a weak lyric. We may have a new male disco star in our midst, folks. **E.B.**

PARLIAMENT: *Motor-Booty Affair*. Parliament (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Mr. Wiggles; Rumpofsteelskin; Liquid Sunshine; One of those Funky Things*; and four others. CASABLANCA NBLP 7125 \$7.98, © NBL8 7125 \$7.98, © NBL5 7125 \$7.98.

Performance: **Freaky**
Recording: **Fine**

Parliament's latest excursion into funk explores some new territory, although the basic elements of the songs are familiar: a strutting, get-down-and-boogie beat; hypnotic, swaying melodies; double-entendre lyrics. What's been added are tricky arrangements and overdubbing of spoken commentaries. The statements that rise above the music are very self-assertively black and overdone to the point of monotony. Worse, everyone is so busy doing his or her own thing—singing, talking, taking off into solo instrumental or vocal riffs—that I kept thinking I was hearing two or three records playing at once.

It works only in flashes. A trippy echo-chamber voice, for example, introduces us to *Mr. Wiggles* ("May we funk you?"), who warns us that "Motor-Booty Affair" is no ordinary funk, but the funk Olympics. A solid melody starts to heat things up, but Mr. Wiggles never shuts up, the tune never emerges, and the whole song becomes just an intro to the album. Similarly, a song called *Water Sign* has something interesting going on in the background, but it's never given half a chance. *Aqua Boogie*—despite the screams of "I hate water, put me down, you're all wet" that punctuate it—struts enough to become the best track on the album. For the rest, it's all too freaky for me. **E.B.**

PEACHES & HERB: *2 Hot*. Peaches and Herb (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *We've Got Love; Shake Your Groove Thing; Reunited; Love It Up Tonight; Four's a Traffic Jam*; and three others. POLYDOR PD-1-6172 \$7.98, © 8T-1-6172 \$7.98, © CT-1-6172 \$7.98.

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

Ordinarily, I have an aversion to grown women who sing or speak in high, baby voices, but I can overlook this trait in Peaches (Francine

Hurd) because of the first-rate pop music she makes with Herb (Herb Fame). This duo has been together since the early Sixties, when they were dubbed the "Sweethearts of Soul," and they obviously still have a good thing going. They mesh perfectly, not only in terms of vocal tone, but in basic rhythmic thrust and interpretation of lyrics. They sing with an exceptionally convincing quality on the intimate numbers here, *Reunited* and *Four's a Traffic Jam*. There's nothing brilliant in the lyrics, stock fare about men and women breaking up and making up, but their intensely personal style of delivery makes these corny little song-stories come alive. Some of this is standard disco fare, but the entire album, even the hit single *Shake Your Groove Thing*, is a lively romper with better-than-average musical development. Well done, gang. **P.G.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SIDE EFFECT: *Rainbow Visions*. Side Effect (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Peace of Mind; Disco Junction; She's a Lady; Rainbow Visions; Falling in Love Again*; and three others. FANTASY F-9569 \$7.98, © 8160-9569H \$7.95, © 5160-9569H \$7.95.

Performance: **A fresh sound**
Recording: **Very good**

The three men and one woman who call themselves Side Effect sing with admirable verve and polish, but what lifts this album above the mob is the combination of first-rate instrumentals and imaginative arrangements, all of which have been supervised by producers Wayne Henderson and Augie Johnson. "Rainbow Visions" is one of the few pop albums I've heard of late on which there is evident understanding of the importance of making music as compared to mere sound. The horns not only punctuate the vocals but have voices of their own, and in *Disco Junction*, one of the best tracks, they get off some of the best lines. There is a careful balance of slow and faster-paced numbers here, though the tempo tends toward the invitingly cool. Side Effect's ingredients make up a winning formula. **P.G.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE THREE DEGREES: *New Dimensions*. The Three Degrees (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Giving Up, Giving In; Looking for Love; The Runner*; and three others. ARIOLA SW 50044 \$7.98, © TP 50044 \$7.98, © CS 50044 \$7.98.

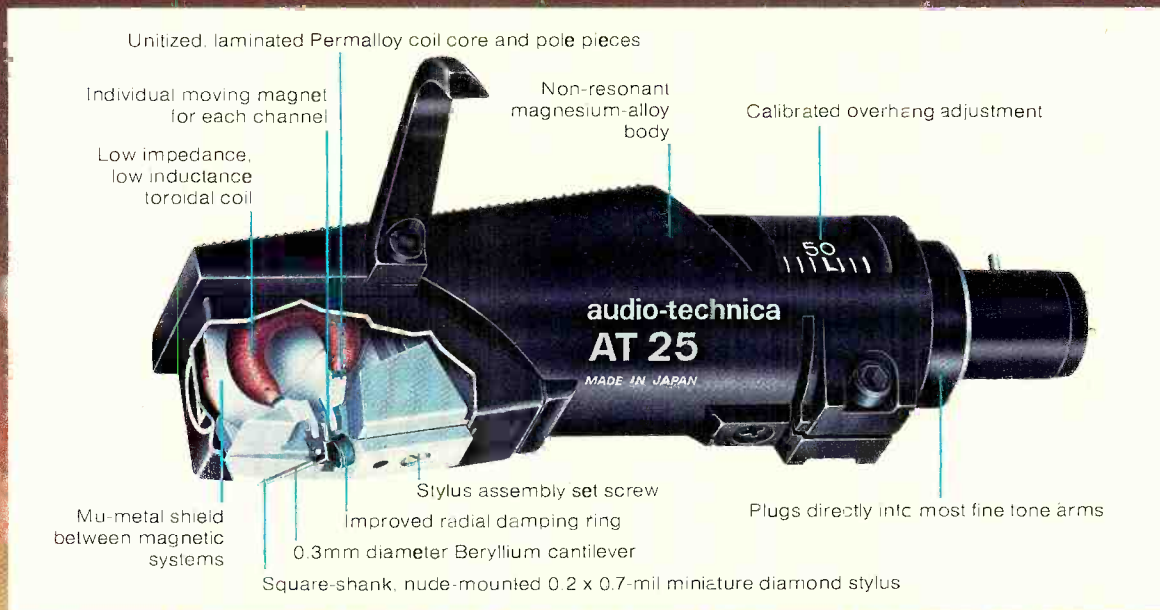
Performance: **Wonderful**
Recording: **Topnotch**

This is my kind of disco. Composers Giorgio Moroder and Pete Bellotte have again teamed up with Munich-based engineer Jurgen Koppers to produce a dance, dance, dance record that is fun all the way. The shift from the spacy ending in the album's first song, *Giving Up, Giving In*, to the flattened, up-front sound of the opening of the second song, *Looking for Love*, is what disco records are all about. There's a complete change in mood, so you can move into a different kind of dancing, but there's absolutely no break in the dance beat itself. *Looking for Love* is a dynamite song that's arranged like something from Donna Summer's "Once Upon a Time" album and is every bit as effective. Listen to the second **(Continued on page 120)**



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half, when the "Ooh, looking for love" refrain runs in counterpoint with a driving brass section. Wow!

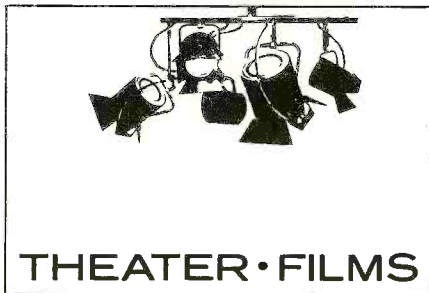
There's a lot more, too. For Sunday tea-dances, there's the infectiously happy, hard driving *Falling in Love Again*; for some heavier action there's *The Runner*; for romance, you can slow-bump your way through *Woman in Love*. Every song benefits from well-planned, dense arrangements that mix big-band horn sections, close vocal harmonies, electronics, and a never-flagging beat. It's all done with the kind of musical imagination that's needed to keep disco lively. Hats off to everybody concerned.

E.B.

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- **MACHINE:** *There But For the Grace of God Go I*. RCA PD 11457 disco disc \$3.98.
- **SISTER SLEDGE:** *We Are Family*. ATLANTIC SD 5209 \$7.98, © TP 5209 \$7.98, © CS 5209 \$7.98.

(List compiled by John Harrison.)



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

NOEL COWARD AND MARY MARTIN: *Together with Music*. Original-soundtrack recording. Noel Coward and Mary Martin (vocals); Peter Matz (piano); orchestra, Tutti Camerata cond. *Ninety Minutes Is a Long, Long Time; Together with Music; I Only Have Eyes for You; I Get a Kick Out of You; Les Filles de Cadiz; Uncle Harry; Nina; Mad Dogs and Englishmen*; and seventeen others. DRG © DARC-2-1103 two discs \$15.98.

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

Once upon a time, dear children of the Age of Tape, what you saw on a television screen was being performed live in a studio by the people you were watching. And so it happened that on Saturday evening, October 22, 1955, Miss Mary Martin in a Mainbocher gown met Mr. Noel Coward in a tuxedo on a CBS set to put on a ninety-minute Ford Star

Jubilee "color spectacular" before an invited audience that included Margot Fonteyn and William Faulkner. There were no dancers, no chorus, no "guest stars." Even the orchestra conducted by Tutti Camerata and the piano played by Peter Matz were out of view. What did Coward and Martin do for ninety minutes? Why, they traded clever insults and memories, sang songs separately and together. And if you don't believe they held their viewers across the nation spellbound, just listen to this two-record set drawn from the soundtrack of that remarkable occasion. Except for four commercials and the announcer's introduction, you'll hear it all, and it's all worth hearing.

The censors, who had a lot of power in those days, must have been nervous and confused that night because they made the singers change the phrase "four-letter words" in Cole Porter's *Anything Goes* to "three-letter words," and Mary Martin was required to sing what annotator Stanley Green refers to as a "laundered version" of *My Heart Belongs to Daddy*. On the other hand, Coward got away with all the racy references in a song about his ex-missionary Uncle Harry, and in *I Get a Kick Out of You* Miss Martin was allowed to retain the line about sniffing cocaine. The performers must have been a little nervous, too, since they'd been quarreling at rehearsals over the song *Together with Music*, which Coward had written for the show but which Martin had insisted he change because she had felt it wasn't romantic enough. But when they were on, the world was theirs.

(Continued on page 124)



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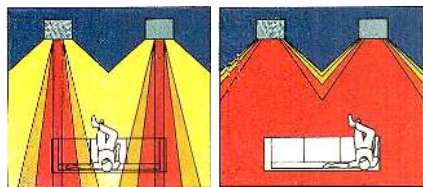
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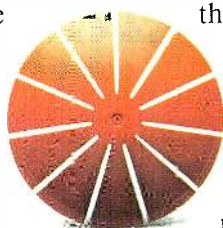
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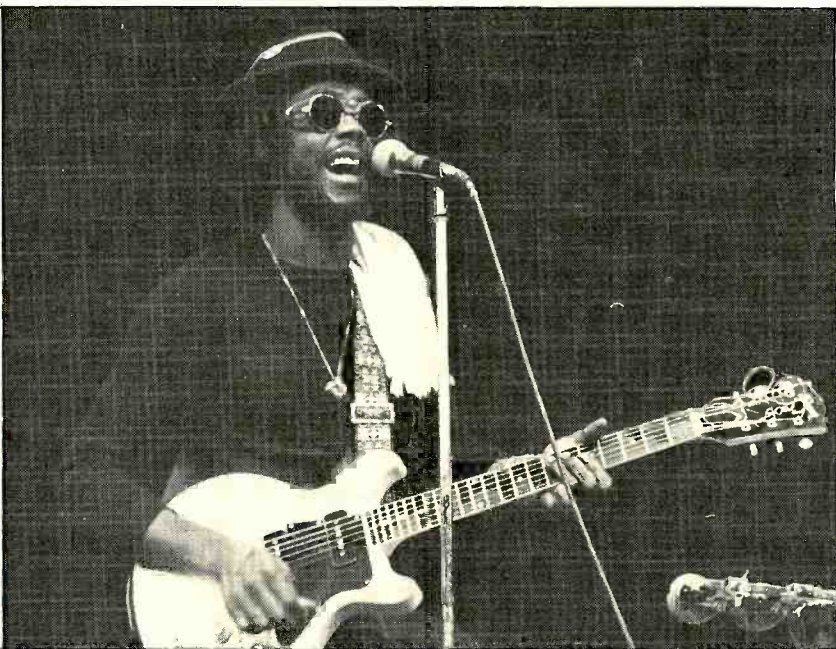


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Whatever Happened to Reggae?

PETER TOSH:
almost total appeasement



Joseph Sisa

JUST about three years ago a lot of people had high hopes for the future of reggae in the American pop music market. As far as many of us were concerned, such possibilities couldn't have presented themselves at a better time. It was becoming obvious to us that American soul music would soon disappear, to be replaced by the all-engulfing monoboogity thump of disco. But traditional American soul-music values—heart, passion, iconoclasm, non-automated intensity—seemed to thrive in reggae, which drew heavily on James Brown, Otis Redding, Stax-Volt, and New Orleans rhythm-and-blues, all the while managing to contribute its own subtle, inimitable lilt as well.

And the more disco seemed to narrow down to one totalitarian beat, the more reggae seemed to revel in diversity. Toots and the Maytals' gutbucket churn, Bob Marley's velvet knife, Burning Spear's hypnotic (some would say narcotic) chants, the Mighty Diamonds' Smokey Robinson harmonizings, the wild neopsychedelic clatter and ricochet of dub—all these served, for a little while, to disguise the fact that, when you got right down to it, most reggae artists didn't really have very much to say, at least not to American audiences. Sure, all that stuff about Marcus Garvey, Haile Selassie, repatriation on the Black Star liners, and the gospel of Jah Rastafari in general was exotic, and joking white connoisseurs had plenty of fun bandying it about for a while. But the Rastafarians themselves were absolutely serious. Most American black listeners were about as interested in reggae as they were in Delta blues; they considered it a reminder of pre-emancipation nappyheads in chains, and what could the attention of whites to Rastafarian liturgy ever be but patronizing?

In an age of formulation, reggae soon became one of the tritest formulas of all. It took only time for all but its most fanatical adherents to realize that this was a movement that wasn't moving anywhere in particular, that the articles of faith it was so adamant about

were simplistic and redundant, and that, like most punk, reggae didn't travel very well.

Bob Marley recognized all these limitations a year or so sooner than the rest of us, and, starting with "Rastaman Vibration" in 1976 (the year reggae began to go down the drain), increasingly watered down his music as well as his mystical politics until by 1978's "Kaya" he was an international superstar dispensing innocuous little ditties about how warm the sun felt on the back of the neck.

A LOT of people felt that Marley had sold out, and for proof pointed to the differences between his 1977 album "Exodus" and the concurrently released "Equal Rights" by Peter Tosh, himself an ex-member of Marley's Wailers and author of the latter's classic *Get Up, Stand Up*. Where Marley offered sunshine panaceas or, at best, rambled vaguely about "righteousness" vs. "guiltiness," Tosh was flat-out militant. But everybody knows just about how interested most late-Seventies Americans of whatever color are in "protest" music of any kind, so unfortunately, if not unpredictably, "Equal Rights" didn't sell.

It should perhaps come as no surprise, then, that "Bush Doctor," Tosh's newest record, and his first under the patronage of the Rolling Stones, is pure, 100 per cent pap. I doubt that the Stones are to blame for this; I imagine they'd have been more than pleased to have a dispenser of revolutionary anthems on their label, if only to shore up their own sagging radical credentials. No, credit for euphemizing his militance into virtually total appeasement must go to Tosh himself. After all, he produced this set, along with guitarist Robbie Shakespeare. Undoubtedly some listeners will take as a subtle shift in Rastafarian doctrine Tosh's change from unflinching aggression and grim reality to what is little more than macho self-aggrandizement (*I'm the Toughest*) and pleasantly trivial tunes in a setting so bland it ought to be called postcard reggae.

One must wonder if it was Jah's inspiration that caused Tosh to use birdcall sound effects à la Martin Denny for the third time in three albums—they even show up in two cuts here, *Pick Myself Up* and *Creation*, the latter a strummed autoharp spiritual which also features thunder, lightning, and rain and is so astonishingly corny it could've been on an old Harry Belafonte album. The title cut is more or less a reprise of Tosh's 1975 Jamaican hit *Legalize It*, with its catalog of marijuana's (mostly questionable) medical and social virtues. Despite the cute, uncredited I-Threes type of vocal back-up (it runs through most of the album), this track fails to transcend its clichés in the way its prototype so effectively did. As for the other songs, a single duet with Mick Jagger on an old Temptations number, *Don't Look Back*, is about the only respite from relentless, run-on Rasta preachments on a level so numbingly banal as to transcend even Marley's recent output: "Now my brothers/You got to be good/Just do what you know is right/Don't be badminded" . . . and so forth.

TOSH is not the first hard-core reggae artist to sell out. Like Marley and the rest, he has a readymade excuse: the more listeners in the pop mainstream this garners him, the more potential converts to the gospel of Rastafari he wins. But if drivelt like the stuff quoted at the end of the preceding paragraph doesn't drive you straight into the Babylonian arms of *Boogie Oogie Oogie* disco, then nothing will.

—Lester Bangs

PETER TOSH: *Bush Doctor*. Peter Tosh (rhythm and acoustic guitars, clavinet, autoharp, vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. (*You Got to Walk and*) *Don't Look Back*; *Pick Myself Up*; *I'm the Toughest!*; *Soon Come*; "Moses"—*The Prophets*; *Bush Doctor*; *Stand Firm*; *Dem Ha Fe Get a Beat en*; *Creation*. ROLLING STONES COC 39109 \$7.98, TP 39109 \$7.97, CS 39109 \$7.97.



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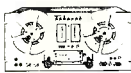
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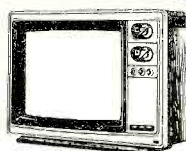
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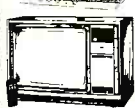
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Coward was at his most urbane, singing sentimental ballads and witty satirical ones, everything from *I'll See You Again* to a speeded-up version of *Mad Dogs and Englishmen* that had been bringing down the house in a Las Vegas club where he'd been busy perfecting his act. Martin brought back all the hit songs from *South Pacific*, made a marvelous mockery of *One Fine Day* from Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, and showed off her French in Delibes' *Les Filles de Cadiz*. Then the two of them joined in a final medley that culminated in nothing less than *The Continental*. Coward's London *sang-froid* and the artfully artless charm of the Texas-born Martin were perfectly matched, and the music they made is never for one moment tiresome. A sustained delight. P.K.

EUBIE! (Eubie Blake). Original-cast recording. Lonnie McNeil, Linnie Godfrey, Janet Powell, Jeffrey V. Thompson, Alaina Reed, Gregory Hines, Ethel Beatty, Mel Johnson Jr., Terry Burrell, Marion Ramsey, Maurice Hines, others (vocals); orchestra, Vicki Carter cond. WARNER BROS. HS 3267 \$8.98, © W8 3267 \$8.98, © W5 3267 \$8.98.

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

Eubie Blake, pianist and composer, is now ninety-six years old and has been musically active since he was a teenager. His two best-known melodies are *I'm Just Wild About Harry* and the gorgeous *Memories of You*. His catalog (he is still composing) is enormous. In a recent newspaper interview he said he has enough material for half a dozen revues like *Eubie!* If that material is ever presented on stage, I hope it receives better treatment than the songs included in this recording of the Broadway production of *Eubie!*

Both ballads and up-tempo numbers are murdered by a monolithic, hammy, this-is-Broadway approach. The arrangements and performances are of the sledgehammer variety, for which I assume stage director Julianne Boyd (who conceived the revue) and musical director Vicki Carter are responsible. Although it is laudable and heartening that Blake is being saluted for his talent and achievements (*Shuffle Along*, with music by Blake and lyrics by Noble Sissle, was a smash hit when it opened in 1921 and became a landmark in theatrical history), the bludgeoning of seventeen of Blake's excellent songs into showbiz pulp is hardly cause for applause. Eubie Blake ought to sue for defamation of talent. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TOO MANY GIRLS (Richard Rodgers-Lorenz Hart). Nancy Andrews, Johnny Desmond, Nancy Grennan, Ken Parks, Estelle Parsons, Anthony Perkins, Arthur Siegel, Jerry Wyatt (vocals); chorus and orchestra, Dennis Deal cond. PAINTED SMILES PS 1368 \$7.98 (from Painted Smiles Records, 116 Nassau Street, New York, N.Y. 10038).

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

Ben Bagley, who for some years now has been dredging up the nation's more obscure popular songs of the past from an apparently bottomless reservoir, comes up this time with the entire score of a half-forgotten musical. *Too Many Girls* was a Rodgers and Hart col-



NOEL COWARD: *London sang-froid* at a 1962 recording session.

lege-football comedy of the kind that livened up our stage and screen in the days before World War Two. Despite events in Europe, the urgent question on Broadway was whether four former all-American football heroes at Pottawatomie College could protect the innocence of an heiress named Connie. When the George Abbott production opened at the Imperial Theatre in New York on October 18, 1939, people in the cast making their Broadway debuts included Eddie Bracken, Van Johnson, Vera Ellen, Dorothy Kilgallen, and, of all people, Desi Arnaz.

In Bagley's revamped cast are Estelle Parsons as Connie, Nancy Andrews as Talullah Lou (who by the end of Act Two no longer wears the beanie that has been the official sign of her virginity), and Nancy Grennan as Eileen, a saucy snippet of a coed. In the quartet of ex-football champs disguised as students there's Anthony Perkins as Clint Kelley, Johnny Desmond as Manuelito (the Desi Arnaz role—you had to have at least one Latin number in a show in those days), Jerry Wyatt as Jojo, and Ken Parks as Al. Then there's Pepe, who is Manuelito's hot-blooded love interest, with Nancy Andrews wearing a South-of-the-Border accent for Pepe's big number, *Spic and Spanish*. Johnny Desmond sings the other Latin item, *She Could Shake the Maracas*, and he's no slouch either. Grennan and Parks get to sing the lovely ballad *You're Nearer*, but only Judy Garland ever did it full justice. The big hit from *Too Many Girls* was, hands down, *I Didn't Know What Time It Was*. Tony Perkins sings it appealingly, though I wish his voice were just a little bit bigger to match the size of the ballad.

But the performer who has the most fun with the vintage material assigned to her and is the most fun to hear is Estelle Parsons as Connie, the rich man's protected daughter, especially when she sings *My Prince*. And then there's the school anthem, anticipating *Buckle Down Winssocki*, with lines like "You made a lot o' me, Pottawatomie." If reality is getting you down, I can think of no safer place to retreat than Pottawatomie for an hour of clever lyrics and hummable tunes affectionately and effectively revived. P.K.

(Continued on page 127)

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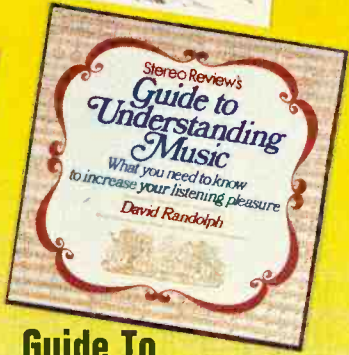
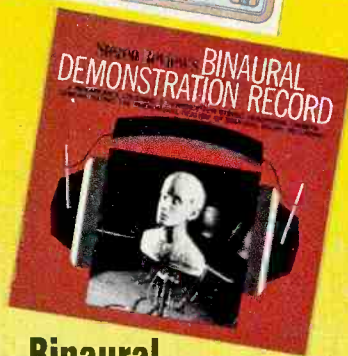
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Performance: **Authentic**

Recording: **Very good**

This is the seventh Chieftains record to be released in this country (the first on Columbia), and like its predecessors it features the music of Ireland played with inimitable lilt and enormous emphasis on traditional instruments. There are seven Chieftains, including two Séans, and they play such instruments as the bodhrán and uilleán pipes like nobody's business. On this album they supply a generous measure of reels, slip jigs, and polkas, as well as miniature tone poems based on ancient Irish tunes and bearing such titles as *Friel's Kitchen* and *The Fairies' Lamentation and Dance*. After a while the energy of it all grows a bit wearying, County Clare seems to close in on one, and the pieces begin to sound rather alike. But there's no question that the Chieftains are the real article, and they remain unrivaled at doing what they do. P.K.

SHIP IN THE CLOUDS—OLD TIME INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC. Andy Cahan (vocals, banjo); Laura Fishleder (guitar); Lisa Ornstein (fiddle). *Ship in the Clouds; Rolling River; Molly Put the Kettle On; Liquor Seller; Elkhorn Ridge; Jimmy Johnson Pass the Jug Around the Hill; Tildy Moore; Prettiest Girl in the Country;* and twelve others. FOLKWAYS FTS 31062 \$7.98.

Performance: **Authentic**

Recording: **Very good**

A sophomore guitarist, a junior banjo player, and a graduate who plays the fiddle—all from Oberlin College—got together to make this record of old-time instrumental music from places like the Ozarks, Pocahontas County, West Virginia, the backwoods of Kentucky, and the hills of Tennessee. Andy Cahan, who took up the bluegrass banjo after he saw the movie *Deliverance*, provides a couple of vocals where needed and strums his banjo buoyantly throughout. Guitarist Laura Fishleder, who has been playing the instrument since she was nine, plays it splendidly here. Lisa Ornstein, who is a research expert as well as an expert fiddler, is the alumna in the group and does some fine solo turns. If, 'long around the middle of side two, you begin to wish you had never heard of Molly or Polly or bluegrass music altogether, and could sneak in a little Scarlatti for relief, that's in the very nature of listening to folk-music records—always a bit too much of a good thing. P.K.

(Continued overleaf)



Ruth Rubin

A Mitzvah: Yiddish Folksongs

Ask anybody in New York City for help in tracking down some piece of information about Jewish music or where to locate the score of a particular Yiddish song and the name Ruth Rubin is bound to come up. Ms. Rubin has been collecting, recording, teaching, lecturing, and writing about Jewish music for many years, and the tapes she has assembled can be found in the Library of Congress in Washington, the Lincoln Center Library and YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York, the National Museum of Canada in Ottawa, and the Haifa Museum in Israel. Her *Voices of a People* (A. S. Barnes, 1964), containing about five hundred Jewish songs, adds up to a kind of history of Jewish culture in song.

On a new Folkways record Ms. Rubin sings—without any accompaniment at all—eighteen songs out of the hundreds she knows. There are songs children of the ghetto sang at play in Eastern Europe a hundred years ago and occupational songs that the tailor murmured as he sewed or the baker chanted as he kneaded. There are lullabies, wedding songs, work songs, soldiers' songs, love songs, songs of parting, and nonsense songs written in the mixed-up languages of people who spoke Yiddish at home and German or Russian in public, along with the fractured English of early Jewish immigrants to America. Most affecting of all is the song of a little boy named Ziamele, bereft and alone in the

Warsaw ghetto under Nazi rule. He has lost his mother and father, his sister Esterl has vanished, and "somewhere near a little tree/Somewhere near a fence/Lies my brother Shloyme/Slain by a German." Ruth Rubin conveys the character of the little boy, as she does all the others, without artifice or affectation, most movingly. Her voice is no great musical instrument, but there is a sweetness and sincerity in it that wins one over.

After a while, though, the terrible Folkways surface noise makes one begin to long for a little more color to back up these wisps of melody. That longing is requited by Pearl Rottenberg and the bearded members of a four-piece orchestra in a program of Yiddish songs on the NAMA label cheerfully titled "Mazltov!" (good luck, congratulations). They are to be congratulated for putting together as lively and varied a program as anyone could wish, made up of songs that reveal the sort of lives led by the people who once sang them. In her enlightening and entertaining notes, Rottenberg credits the composers of a number of songs long thought to be anonymously composed folk material; she also annotates a wedding song with descriptions of wedding customs and offers a glossary for listeners who know no Yiddish but would like to know, for example, what these *tfln* are that Rabbi Elimelekh takes off when he's feeling merry.

In addition to the Yiddish songs, "Mazltov!" includes several in Hebrew and two in Russian, just for variety, along with a couple of purely instrumental interludes featuring such instruments as the cymbalom, the accordion, and the clarinet—all played adroitly. Rottenberg's low-register alto is not an instrument quite ready for the Met either, but she can make you laugh or cry with it, and what she can't manage her musicians can. Both records come with complete texts in the original languages and adequately lucid translations in English. —Paul Kresh

YIDDISH FOLK SONGS. Ruth Rubin (vocals). *Mikhalku; Oksn; Ay-Lye-Lyu-Lye-Lyu-Lye; Er Hot Mir Tsugezot; Mit a Nodl, Oh a Nodl; Lid Fun Beker Yingl; Hot Zikh Mir Di Zip Tsezipt; Ot Azoy Neyt a Shnayder; Vey Dem Tain; Iz Geven Amol a Pastukhl; In a Finsterer Sho, Mame; Ale Vasserlekh; Vos Hostu Mir Opgeton; Dortn, Dortn, Ibern Vasserl; Di Mame Iz Gegangen; O'Brien; Baym Obsheyd; Yeder Ruft Mikh Ziamele.* FOLKWAYS FW 87320 \$7.98.

MAZLTOV! Pearl Rottenberg (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Mazltov; Yankl Shuster; Moyshela, Mayn Fraynd; Doinä; Oyfn Pripestshik; Di Mezinke Oysgegebn; Hana 'ava Babanot; Der Rebe Elimelekh; Git Mir Op Mazltov; Nama Freylekhs Medley; Erev Ba; Undzer Nigndl; Fisher Lid; Tabovskiy Chastushki; Uyizhal Dalyokü Myilü; A Heymisher Bulgar.* NAMA 3 \$6 (plus 75¢ handling charge from NAMA Orchestra, c/o David Owens, 2367 Glendon Avenue, West Los Angeles, Calif. 90064).

“. . . a kind of history of Jewish culture in song.”

JAZZ



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI: *Finesse*. Toshiko Akiyoshi (piano); Monty Budwig (bass); Jake Hanna (drums). *Count Your Blessings*; *Solvejg's Song*; *Mr. Jelly Lord*; *Warning! Success May Be Hazardous to Your Health*; and four others. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-69 \$7.98.

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

Toshiko Akiyoshi, who is co-leader, with husband Lew Tabackin, of what may well be the finest big band in the land, started out as a pianist. I was never as impressed with her keyboard work as I have been with her recent arrangements for the big band, but this new trio album gives me second thoughts; the lady is superb here as well. "Finesse," with Monty Budwig and Jake Hanna in the supporting roles, has the lyrical, gentle-fingered Ms. Akiyoshi weaving delicate new threads into mostly old material that jazz artists rarely tackle these days. The range is wide, from Ferde Grofé's *Count Your Blessings* and Victor Young's *Love Letters* to Grieg's *Solvejg's Song*, a wonderful updated treatment of Jelly Roll Morton's *Mr. Jelly Lord*, and a couple of originals. There is occasionally a trace of Art Tatum and Bud Powell in Toshiko's playing, but overall she is as much her own individual here as when she communicates through the Akiyoshi/Tabackin band. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LOUIE BELLSON: *Prime Time*. Louie Bellson (drums); Blue Mitchell (trumpet); Pete Christlieb (tenor saxophone); Ross Tompkins (piano); John Williams (bass); other musicians. *Step Lightly*; *Thrash-In*; *Cotton Tail*; *Let Me Dream*; and four others. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-64 \$7.98.

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

"Prime Time" is drummer Louie Bellson's third album for Concord Jazz, a dedicated, fast-growing California label whose imposing catalog matches generally outstanding performances with uniformly excellent technical quality. One has come to expect something special from a Concord Jazz release, and this Bellson collection of quintet and septet sides lives up to those expectations.

Trumpeter Blue Mitchell, who came into prominence as a member of Horace Silver's group between 1958 and 1964, made some sadly misguided and overproduced treks to the land of semipop on the Mainstream and Blue Note labels a few years back, but here he is in his element again. On side one, the quintet side, he fires clean, clear notes rapidly and logically on the uptempo tunes—*Step Lightly*, *Space Ship II*, and Ellington's *Cotton*

Tail—and cuddles with lyrical tenderness Benny Golson's *I Remember Clifford*, his featured third of a lovely ballad medley. Sharing the front line with Mitchell is tenor saxophonist Pete Christlieb, a thirty-three-year-old Californian who often performs with Bellson but mostly buries his considerable talent in studio work or in Doc Severinsen's *Tonight Show* orchestra. Christlieb can articulate at any tempo; his interpretation of Marian McPartland's *With You in Mind*, in the ballad medley, is one of the album's most eloquent statements, and his exchange with Mitchell on *Cotton Tail* proves him an equal to his better-known colleague.

Guitarist Bob Bain and percussionist Emil Richards join the group on side two, which also has pianist Ross Tompkins switching to an electric keyboard. The flavor is strictly south-of-the-border, ranging from *Let Me Dream*, a polite bossa nova by Bellson, to



LOUIE BELLSON

As tasteful and unobtrusive as ever

Blue Mitchell's slightly more adventuresome, Brazilian-tinged *Collaborations*. But though side two is good, it doesn't measure up to side one. Throughout the album there is excellent support from bassist John Williams and from Tompkins, who also solos most effectively on *Cotton Tail* and his featured ballad number, *What's New*. Louie Bellson himself is as tasteful and unobtrusive as ever. "Prime Time" is a generous serving of prime jazz. C.A.

CHICK COREA: *Secret Agent*. Chick Corea (keyboards); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *The Golden Dawn*; *Slinky*; *Mirage*; *Bagatelle #4*; *Fickle Funk*; and four others. POLYDOR PD-1-6176 \$7.98, © 8T-1-6176 \$7.98, © CT-1-6176 \$7.98.

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

Chick Corea is one of those maddening neopop jazz musicians with talent and technique who, seeking "fusion," surrender to mediocrity. Now, granted, a "serious" jazz musician doesn't have much choice: either he stays pure and plays stuff that only true believers want to hear or he dilutes his music to gain popularity (and often can't live with himself

as a result). Corea tries to strike a happy medium, but it doesn't work. "Secret Agent," like his other recent albums, is permeated with uneasy compromises and clichés. His synthesizer flappedoodle is entertaining on *The Golden Dawn*, but the outer-space vocals by Gayle Moran on *Drifting* and *Glebe St. Blues*, as well as Al Jarreau's vocal on *Hot News Blues*, are typical of the indulgent nonsense of jazz singing that passes itself off as spirituality. Ah, but then . . . but then there is a brief and fascinating encounter with Corea when he's not fooling around: *Mirage*, with Jim Pugh's multitracked trombone and Corea's synthesizers, is an eerie, moving interlude that lasts only two minutes and eleven seconds but contains more music than all the rest of the album. It may be Corea's way of keeping the faith against a better day, come when it will. J.V.

JOHNNY GUARNIERI: *Stealin' Apples—Johnny Guarneri Plays Fats Waller*. Johnny Guarneri (piano, vocals). *Ain't Misbehavin'*; *I'm Not Worrying*; *Keepin' Out of Mischief Now*; *Alligator Crawl*; *Jitterbug Waltz*; *Moppin' and Boppin'*; and six others. TAZ-JAZ TJZ-1002 \$7.98.

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

Johnny Guarneri is a facile and ingratiating pianist who in recent years has been specializing in "stride," the style he most loved as a young man despite his service in the swing bands of Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Lester Young, and Lionel Hampton. Stride is a muscular, frisky style developed by black pianists in New York during and after the ragtime era; one of its most famous exponents was Fats Waller, who is now receiving the attention he deserves. "Stealin' Apples" is thus a triple vindication of Waller, Guarneri, and stride piano.

As on his previous albums, Guarneri is better with ballads since with up-tempo numbers he tends to emphasize speed and dexterity for their own sake. Fortunately, most of the selections here are taken at medium tempos. The exceptions are *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Viper's Drag*, and *Stealin' Apples*, all of which start out with verve then blither away into mere fustian. But his interpretations of *Keepin' Out of Mischief Now* and *Jitterbug Waltz* are excellent.

Guarneri also performs a valuable service here by introducing two "lost" Waller melodies, *I'm Not Worrying* and *I Found You Out*. The first is in the Waller catalog; the prodigal Fats knocked it out for Clarence Williams, the early black music publisher and entrepreneur who made Waller's *Squeeze Me* a national hit. The second is now attributed to Waller even though the official credits for the words and music belong, respectively, to Charles O'Flynn and Phil Ponce (Waller's manager in the Thirties), probably because of Fats' bad habit of turning out songs for quick money without bothering to secure the copyrights. Guarneri is to be commended for "rescuing" these songs (and I hope he finds some more), and his playing is just fine, but he should never have tried to sing them in Fats' vocal style! J.V.

HELEN MERRILL: *Something Special* (see *Best of the Month*, page 95)

(Continued on page 130)

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Raymond Ross

Chet Baker

Twenty Years of Pacific Jazz

RICHARD BOCK started his Los Angeles-based Pacific Jazz label in the summer of 1952. His first recording session, a one-mike affair in a Laurel Canyon living room, didn't seem like much, but it laid the foundation for a company that would successfully mirror West Coast jazz activities for the next two decades.

Pacific Jazz might have died an early death if Bock hadn't hit pay dirt almost immediately by recording Gerry Mulligan and an unknown twenty-three-year-old trumpeter named Chet Baker. Mulligan's past associations (particularly with Miles Davis) had already gained him some reputation in jazz circles, but Baker, fresh out of the Army, had none. By the end of 1953, Bock's recordings of these two musicians—both jointly and individually—had proved instrumental in catapulting them to international stardom. Their enormously successful, highly original pianoless quartet had made the cover of *Time*, readers of *Down Beat* had placed them first in that magazine's annual poll, and their massive following stretched far beyond the jazz market. What more could any record label ask?

As so often happens with successful jazz labels, Pacific Jazz (which also became

World-Pacific) was eventually absorbed by a larger company, United Artists Music Company, which, in turn, became part of a conglomerate called Transamerica Corporation, the same folks who diluted Blue Note Records beyond recognition. Be that as it may, the company has now released four single albums containing Pacific Jazz/World-Pacific recordings made between 1953 and 1969, and it has had the good sense to put Richard Bock in charge of production. The Fifties and Sixties are represented by two albums each, the selections appear in near-chronological order, and the sleeves contain Bock's own informative remarks on each selection as well as discographical data.

"JAZZ: The 50's, Volume I" does not, as one might suspect, begin with the first Mulligan recording (though it was originally issued), but rather with *Five Brothers*, recorded by his quartet (with Chet Baker) almost a year later. I suppose technical quality was the determining factor, for the sound on all four albums is excellent, and so is the music. The first volume is devoted to smaller groups, from quartets to an octet led by trumpeter Cy Touff; it's a wonderful collection from which

I am hard put to select highlights, but mention ought to be made of Chet Baker's fluent, fast-paced reading of Jerome Kern's *All the Things You Are* and the tenor work of Bud Shank and Bill Perkins on another standard, *It Had to Be You*, which is further enhanced by a fine rhythm section led by pianist Hampton Hawes.

The years 1956 to 1959 are covered in "The 50's, Volume II," which represents a period that saw the prospering label add some very impressive names to its roster. Guitarist Jim Hall is heard within the unique framework of the Chico Hamilton Quintet, playing *Topsy* from the Basie repertoire, and leading his own trio (with the late Carl Perkins on piano) in a mellow rendering of *Things Ain't What They Used to Be*. Chet Baker reappears on two fine tracks, *To Mickey's Memory* and *Love Nest*, the former with a quintet that included Bobby Timmons, the latter with a formidable rhythm section (Russ Freeman, Leroy Vinnegar, and Shelly Manne) that spurs Baker's muted trumpet to dazzling heights. There is also a good track from the Montgomery Brothers' 1959 date that marked the recording debut of Wes Montgomery and Freddie Hubbard, both of whom solo with strong hints of things to come, and there's a swinging *Four and One More* by the Gerry Mulligan Sax Section, an impressive reed lineup that includes Zoot Sims, Allen Eager, Lee Konitz, and Al Cohn. The album ends with Gil Evans' impressive big-band arrangement of *St. Louis Blues* featuring Cannonball Adderley, but for some strange reason the track fades out at the beginning of Evans' piano solo, cutting it forty-six seconds short!

ON "Jazz: The 60's, Volume I" the sound of Pacific Jazz undergoes a change. Reaction to cool jazz had set in in the form of a funkier, church-oriented style that came to be known as "soul music," but it bore little resemblance to the music called that today. Blues-rooted pianists were popular in those early Sixties, as were funky organists; Riverside had Junior Mance, Columbia had Ray Bryant, Prestige had Shirley Scott, and Pacific Jazz had Les McCann and Richard "Groove" Holmes. Many critics viewed this development with dismay, regarding it as rank commercialization, but in light of today's fusion funk I think we would all welcome it back. Certainly what Les McCann was doing almost twenty years ago—as exemplified here by *One More Hamhock Please* and *A Little 3/4 for God and Co.*—would win any critic's vote if put up against his current performances. Also heard in this set is trumpeter Carmell Jones on *Viva Tirado* with the Gerald Wilson Orchestra and, to greater advantage, on *New Groove* with a Bud Shank quintet. *New Groove*, a Shank composition, wasn't really so new, for it follows all too closely the groove etched in 1958 by Art Blakey's *Blues March*. Hearing the Jazz Crusaders' *That's It* and *Young Rabbits* again, I realized that a fading memory had made me chalk them off as a lesser jazz group than they really were, and hearing Dizzy Gillespie's *Man from Monterey* fade away I also realized that my memory wasn't failing me completely—the fade is new.

"The 60's, Volume II" covers the years 1965 to 1969 and is dominated by big bands,

though it does contain two excellent Jazz Crusaders tracks, a gently swinging *Rosetta* by the Joe Pass Quartet, and *Portraits*, a 1967 experiment with odd time signatures by pianist Roger Kellaway and saxophonist Tom Scott. There are good tracks by the big bands of Gerald Wilson and Buddy Rich, the most interesting being Wilson's *Hypomode Del Sol*, featuring violinist Jean-Luc Ponty in extraordinarily good form, but this track has also been cruelly abbreviated. If his recent records have given you doubts about George Duke's ability as a jazz pianist, his performance of *Bluesnee* with the Gerald Wilson Orchestra will convince you otherwise. Remember the days when jazz men used to move forward?

Except for cutting some of the tracks short, which is as inexcusable as it is inexplicable, Richard Bock has done a good job of assembling a cross section of Pacific Jazz's two prolific decades. But many of the sessions represented here deserve to be issued in their entirety. Let's hope that happens soon.

—Chris Albertson

JAZZ: THE 50'S, VOLUME I. Gerry Mulligan Quartet and Quintet: *Five Brothers*; *Red Door*. Chet Baker Quartet and Sextet: *All the Things You Are*; *Tommy Hawk*. Bud Shank and Shorty Rogers: *Shank's Pranks*. Bud Shank and Laurindo Almeida: *Carinosa*. Clifford Brown: *Tiny Capers*. Bud Shank and Bob Brookmeyer: *Low Life*. Bud Shank and Bill Perkins: *It Had to Be You*; *Fluted Columns*. Cy Touff Octet: *Keester Parade*. Jack Sheldon Quintet with Joe Maini: *Contour*. PACIFIC JAZZ © PJ-LA892-H \$7.98.

JAZZ: THE 50'S, VOLUME II. Art Pepper Nine: *Po Po*. Chico Hamilton Quintet: *Topsy*. Chet Baker Quartet and Crew: *To Mickey's Memory*; *Love Nest*. Jim Hall Trio: *Things Ain't What They Used to Be*. Bob Brookmeyer Quintet: *Louisiana*. Wes Montgomery: *Bock to Bock*. Gerry Mulligan Sax Section: *Four and One More*. Gil Evans and Cannonball Adderley: *St. Louis Blues*. PACIFIC JAZZ © PJ-LA894-H \$7.98.

JAZZ: THE 60'S, VOLUME I. Les McCann and Bobby Hutcherson: *One More Hamhock Please*. Wes Montgomery and Harold Land: *Far Wes*. Groove Holmes with Les McCann and Ben Webster: *Good Groove*. Les McCann and Stanley Turrentine: *A Little 3/4 for God and Co.* Jazz Crusaders: *That's It*; *Young Rabbits*. Gerald Wilson Orchestra: *Viva Tirado*. Bud Shank and Carmell Jones: *New Groove*. Les McCann Ltd. and Joe Pass: *Bernie's Tune*. Dizzy Gillespie and Gil Fuller Orchestra: *Man from Monterey*. PACIFIC JAZZ PJ-LA893-H \$7.98, © EA893-H \$7.98, © CA893-H \$7.98.

JAZZ: THE 60'S, VOLUME II. Gerald Wilson Orchestra: *Lighthouse Blues*; *Bluesnee*. Joe Pass Quartet: *Rosetta*. Jazz Crusaders: *Milestones*; *Promises, Promises*. Bud Shank and the Sax Section: *On a Clear Day (You Can See Forever)*. Buddy Rich Orchestra: *Big Swing Face*; *Group Shot*. Roger Kellaway Quartet: *Portrait*. Jean-Luc Ponty and the Gerald Wilson Orchestra: *Hypomode Del Sol*. PACIFIC JAZZ PJ-LA895-H \$7.98, © EA895-H \$7.98, © CA895-H \$7.98.



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CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • PAUL KRESH
STODDARD LINCOLN • ERIC SALZMAN

BEETHOVEN: *Missa Solemnis*, Op. 123. Anna Tomova-Sintow (soprano); Patricia Payne (contralto); Robert Tear (tenor); Robert Lloyd (baritone); London Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 6747 484 two discs \$17.96, © 7699 086 \$17.96.

Performance: **Grand**
Recording: **Glorious haze**

This is a restrained, grand, and moving performance recorded on a monumental scale. My objection to the Gothic Cathedral approach is that the chorus is relegated to an acoustic never-never land instead of being right up front. Perhaps this is some kind of religious-music piety. Or maybe it's the way the English like their choral sound—big and resonant. Or perhaps it is an attempt to cover up the immense and endless difficulty of the choral writing (but that would be like one of those out-of-voice opera sopranos who suddenly turns her back on the audience when the high notes come).

Actually, the London Symphony Chorus seems to be quite a respectable choral ensemble, and I'm certain we could stand to hear them a bit more clearly—particularly the sopranos, who suffer the most by having their high frequencies swallowed up. I feel the same way about the orchestra: the sound is attractive, but it needs more presence. We do hear the superb group of soloists reasonably well (most recording engineers do grasp the

concept and importance of soloists). And they are all most musical, expressive, and fully equal to the vocal demands.

Colin Davis has laid out this performance on an epic scale. By holding back much of the time he allows not only expressive phrasing but also a tremendous effect of power in those places that burst forth. It is an object lesson in the power of care and restraint. But I think these qualities would have emerged even more convincingly if we could have been let in on some of the orchestral and choral details as well as the grand line. This *Missa Solemnis* is very definitely a performance, if not a recording, of special merit.

E.S.

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No. 4*, in G Major, Op. 58 (see Best of the Month, page 92)

BERG: *Chamber Concerto for Piano, Violin, and Thirteen Winds*. LIGETI: *Chamber Concerto for Thirteen Instruments*. Loránt Szücs (piano); László Kótvé (violin); Budapest Chamber Ensemble, András Mihály cond. HUNGAROTON SLPX 11807 \$7.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

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

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BERG: *Chamber Concerto for Piano, Violin, and Thirteen Winds*; *Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano*, Op. 5; *Piano Sonata*, Op. 1. Daniel Barenboim (piano); Pinchas Zukerman (violin); Antony Pay (clarinet); Ensemble InterContemporain, Pierre Boulez cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 007 \$8.98.

Performance: **Exceptional**
Recording: **Close, detailed**

Berg's chamber concerto is at once a passionate and a very intellectually organized piece of music—much more complex in many ways than anything of Webern or Schoenberg. Time has robbed the piece of its terrors, for performers at least. The more remarkable of these two new recordings from a cultural-historical point of view is the Hungarian one. Hun-

gary was musically one of the most "advanced" countries in Europe before World War II, and it has recently begun to regain an important position. György Ligeti, for instance, whose impressive chamber concerto is a tour de force of European avant-garde music, has created all his mature work outside his native country, and it is only in the last decade that his works have been performed there. Now we have an excellent Hungarian recording of his chamber concerto paired with a lively, sympathetic reading of the Berg concerto—most likely one of its forebears.

Admirable as that disc is, however, there can be no doubt that the Boulez/Barenboim/Zukerman performances for Deutsche Grammophon set a new standard in the playing of this kind of music. This is Expressionism without tears: clarity and contemporary virtuosity combined with the full range of expression that the music demands. The Ensemble InterContemporain is part of Boulez's grand Paris project for twentieth-century music, and it is a very fine group indeed. But the stroke of genius was to get Barenboim and Zukerman, two arch-exponents of romanticism, to play in the Berg concerto. It is on the money. The performance is moving and crystalline—and it even makes sense out of the long and difficult finale. Furthermore, Barenboim—alone in the sonata and with the excellent clarinetist Antony Pay in the *Four Pieces*—gives beautiful performances of some early Berg, making the connections between late Romanticism and "atonal" Expressionism quite clear. Berg's Chamber Concerto is not as accessible as his Violin Concerto, but in the hands of performers like these it could almost become a repertoire item! E.S.

BOLLING: *Suite for Violin and Jazz Piano*. Pinchas Zukerman (violin); Claude Bolling (piano); Max Hediguer (bass); Marcel Sabiani (drums). COLUMBIA M 35128 \$7.98, © MT 35128 \$7.98, © MA 35128 \$7.98.

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

This is the third time that the French jazz pianist Claude Bolling has essayed a concert

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- ⓐ = stereo cassette
- = quadraphonic disc
- Ⓛ = digital-master recording
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Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

piece for himself and a well-known classical soloist. The first was the Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano for Jean-Pierre Rampal and the second the Concerto for Classical Guitar and Jazz Piano for Alexander Lagoya. The current work was commissioned by Pinchas Zukerman on the same lines as its predecessors. Note the title. The principal problem in putting jazz and classical music together is that these are not so much different styles of music as styles of playing. Bolling's writing for Zukerman, relatively straight (generally somewhere between Baroque, Schumann at his most Baroque, and salon music), alternates with jazzy piano flings (more or less with drums and bass). Another problem is that traditional jazz styles (and Bolling is very much a traditionalist) are, like the pop songs on which they are often based, short-breathed, composed of short, clear, definite phrases in a clear key. This does not adapt well to long forms, and Bolling's suite (like many such fusion pieces) is too sectional; it is even sectional within the sections, like musical Chinese boxes. The music is wildly eclectic; the movement titles—*Romance, Caprice, Gavotte, Tango* (with viola), *Slavonic Dance* (with a swing), *Ragtime, Valse Lente*, and *Hora*—give the idea. It is all brilliantly played here, and it is all a lot of fun, but, as much as I love a mish-mash, I must concede that the lack of artistic unity hurts. E.S.

BRAHMS: String Quartets: No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 51, No. 1; No. 2, in A Minor, Op. 51, No. 2; No. 3, in B-flat Major, Op. 67. Alban Berg Quartet, Vienna. TELEFUNKEN 6.35447EK two discs \$17.96.

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

If the Alban Berg Quartet were to rename itself the Johannes Brahms Quartet, the performances recorded here would be all the explanation necessary. I know of no other versions of the Brahms quartets on records, either individually or collectively, that are more moving, richer in detail, or more beautifully recorded. But despite all this, as a whole package this expensive set is no prize. The performers, the engineers, and the listener are all ill-served by the gratuitously inconvenient layout, which not only requires a turnover for each of the three works but actually puts portions of the twenty-six-and-a-half-minute Quartet No. 2 on different discs. I simply can't see the necessity—at any price—of splitting up a work less than thirty minutes long, let alone putting it on parts of two separate discs. This is not what the long-playing record was developed for, and it would seem to represent an almost contemptuous disregard for musical sense as well as for convenience to the listener. There are other fine performances, nearly as well recorded, that are both more convenient and more economical. The Budapest Quartet, in one of its most successful stereo recordings, put each expansively performed quartet on a single side in Columbia M2S 734, with Rudolf Serkin joining in for the Schumann Piano Quintet on side four. The Weller Quartet's attractive presentation of the Op. 51 pair on London STS 15245 might be complemented by the Fine Arts Quartet's Op. 67 on Everest SDBR-3266 (backed by the Schubert A Minor), at a total cost of less than half that of the Telefunken set. But if the side breaks don't bother you, the Alban Berg Quartet's Brahms is something to hear. R.F.

BRAHMS: Symphonies: No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 68; No. 2, in D Major, Op. 72; No. 3, in F Major, Op. 90; No. 4, in E Minor, Op. 98. Tragic Overture, Op. 81. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2711 022 four discs \$35.92, © 3371 041 \$35.92.

Performance: **Super-polished**
Recording: **Good**

In terms of repertoire, this new cycle of the Brahms symphonies under Herbert von Karajan's baton differs from the 1964 model only in that a weighty and highly dramatic reading of the *Tragic Overture* is added as a filler to the disc containing the Symphony No. 3. I find only a few minor points of interpretive difference. As before, the opening movement of the First comes off with splendid power and body. The string playing of the Berliners in the andante is simply gorgeous. The third movement (marked *Un poco allegretto*) gets a tauter treatment than before, but the super-theatrical treatment of the already sufficiently dramatic introduction to the finale is somewhat less than convincing. Karajan has always had a good way with the light and shade of the Second Symphony, though I still take issue with his rather slack handling of the first-movement coda and with the lack of momentum in the turbulent middle section of the slow movement. The delicious *allegretto* is a virtuosic challenge for the Berlin players,

who do it just marvelously. The finale here goes, if anything, even more swiftly than in 1964, but the last chords, like those of the First Symphony, are unduly prolonged.

The Third and Fourth Symphonies fare best of all, retaining all the best interpretive aspects of the 1964 readings—sustained power, long line, elegant detail, a convincing coherence. The recorded sound is the major plus here: there is a notable gain in overall orchestral body and in presence for the entire string section. Given the wide choice of fine Brahms symphony recordings currently available—there's one of each to suit almost any taste—my suggestion would be to wait for these new Karajan recordings to be released singly and then to acquire at least the one with the Third Symphony and the *Tragic Overture*, and possibly the Fourth as well. D.H.

BRAY: The Indian Princess, or La Belle Sauvage (excerpts). TAYLOR: The Ethiop, or The Child of the Desert (excerpts). Susan Belling, Debra Vanderlinde, Michael Best, R. Sebastian Russ, Charles Long, others (soloists); Federal Music Society Opera Company Chorus and Orchestra, John Baldon cond. NEW WORLD NW 232 \$8.98.

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

John Bray's *The Indian Princess* and Raynor Taylor's *The Ethiop* are two early musical



Angel/EMI Records

Cantelli: Still a Musical Presence

GUIDO CANTELLI'S conducting career lasted only eleven years, but the music world still talks about him. He was twenty-five when he conducted his first big symphony concert with the orchestra of La Scala in Milan in 1945. In 1948, Arturo Toscanini attended a re-

hearsal for another of Cantelli's Milan concerts and saw an heir in the making. He brought him back to America for a debut with the NBC Symphony in January 1949 and made the young conductor his protégé. On November 24, 1956, at the age of thirty-six, Cantelli died in a plane crash at Orly Airport in Paris. To the day of the old maestro's own death the next year, no one told him about it, putting him off with some story about a back ailment that was keeping Cantelli in Europe.

CANTELLI recorded the Franck symphony on April 6, 1954, in Carnegie Hall, just two days after Toscanini gave his final concert. It was one of the few times the NBC Symphony was recorded in stereo, and it is a splendid memento of a remarkable talent. The piece is a kind of musical catechism that alternately storms and sighs, cycling and recycling its themes, asking and answering. On records it often falls flat because of miscalculations of timing or overstatement. Franck was a great organist and used the orchestra much like a gigantic pipe organ; only Leopold Stokowski seems to have understood this and to have emphasized it in his recordings of the work. Beecham seemed best to catch its drama. Cantelli conducts it as his mentor might have—had he ever condescended to—tautly, unsentimentally, with every passage in splendid balance with every other, its full-blooded song proclaimed with a wistful, subtle spirituality. The recorded sound seems almost ahead of its time. —Paul Kresh

FRANCK: Symphony in D Minor. NBC Symphony Orchestra, Guido Cantelli cond. RCA ARL1-3005 \$7.98, © ARK1-3005 \$7.98.



Courtesy of Neely Bruce

A.P. Heinrich's "Condor"

ANTHONY PHILIP HEINRICH (1781-1861) was an eccentric and prolific composer of Austrian origin who immigrated to America and wrote an immense quantity of music, from songs to symphonies, much of which remains unperformed and unpublished. Nevertheless, he cut quite a swath in his day, and a Boston critic hailed him as "the Beethoven of America." He was an all-out Romantic with a strong penchant for "program" music, covering everything from the landing of the Pilgrims to Indian tribal ceremonies and the flight of the wild passenger pigeons. His most ambitious musico-pictorial effort was the descriptive symphony to be heard on a New World recording by the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra—the first complete performance of this extraordinary work.

Heinrich had a keen interest in ornithology, one no doubt nourished by his friendship with John James Audubon, whose portrait of the great condor adorns the elaborate liner notes by David Barron. The condor certainly looks impressive and it is, in fact, the largest of all birds of prey, with a wing spread of nine to ten feet. But an ornithologist wrote in 1831 that condors "are birds of slow flight and raise themselves from the ground with great difficulty . . . [and] their want of courage is denoted by their crouching attitude and the humility of their demeanor."

Romanticism has its own flights, however, and Heinrich imagined "The Ornithological Combat of Kings" as an empyrean contest between "The Condor of the Andes and the Eagle of the Cordilleras." It's curious, though, that in the titles of the four movements only the condor is mentioned—never the eagle. Heinrich is quite obviously glorifying the condor in the *Finale: vivace brillante* of his symphony.

When an earlier, incomplete version of this "Grand Symphony" was performed at Graz (Austria) in 1836, a critic wrote: "Your reviewer dares not maintain that this composition will please every ear." I subscribe to that statement. Some listeners are turned off by

Heinrich because they can't figure out where (or how) to "place" him. He seems both curiously old-fashioned and strangely original. For myself, having listened to his music repeatedly over the past ten years or so, I would agree with the Graz critic that "something peculiar in its design and treatment distinguishes it from everything that has yet come into our sphere of enjoyment."

As the first recording of a major orchestral work by Heinrich, this New World release is certainly a landmark in American music, but I regret that the entire recording was not devoted to Heinrich's music, including, for example, the *Columbiad* (No. 1 of *Artistic Perplexities*) for small orchestra, with its brilliant variations on *Yankee Doodle* and *Hail Columbia*, or *The Mighty Niagara*, a symphonic poem performed by the Buffalo Philharmonic in 1976. A selection of Heinrich's piano music arrestingly played by Neely Bruce is available on Vanguard 71178, however.

GOTTSCHALK'S symphony in two movements, *Night in the Tropics*, was composed while he was living in the West Indies, probably in 1858-1859, and the first complete performance took place in Havana in 1861. It was not heard in the United States until 1955. The first movement is lyrical, in the 6/8 meter typical of Hispano-Cuban music; the second evokes a fiesta with the dance rhythm of the rumba, emphasized by a battery of bamboula drums. The two-piano version heard on this recording is not by Gottschalk but by his friend N. R. Espadero as arranged by John Kirkpatrick. The result is charming, but I certainly miss those bamboula drums!

—Gilbert Chase

HEINRICH: *The Ornithological Combat of Kings, or The Condor of the Andes and the Eagle of the Cordilleras.* Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Christopher Keene cond. **GOTTSCHALK: *Night in the Tropics.*** Anthony and Joseph Paratore (pianos). NEW WORLD NW 208 \$8.98.

plays whose revival here in abridged form offers a different idea from the popular one about the kind of music Americans were enjoying in the first and second decades of the nineteenth century. Productions of both operas filled the Chestnut Theatre in Philadelphia with well-dressed patrons (*The Indian Princess* opened in 1806, *The Ethiop* in 1814). The casts were mainly English, with backgrounds in the English theater, and so, with its Handelian choruses, was the music; Bray was born in England in 1782, Taylor around 1747. And although *The Indian Princess* deals with so American a subject as the landing of Captain John Smith's ships on the Powhatan River and the betrayal of her Indian fiancé by the fickle Pocahontas, it eventually made its way to London after its American première.

The Ethiop, originally billed as a "New Grand Romantick Drama," takes place in Baghdad and is a comedy centering around the adventures of the Caliph Haroun Al-Raschid, who has come to town in disguise in order to enter the ranks of a band that is seeking to overthrow him. There's also a subplot about a Christian couple trying to make a living by selling forbidden bottles of liquor to the Moslems. In both operas, only the lower-class characters sing; the upper crust confines itself to dialogue. Taylor was somewhat more sophisticated than Bray, but the music in both cases makes up in charm for what it might lack in originality. With the aid of texts which fill you in on the action between numbers and provide the lyrics of the extracts that are sung, it is possible to follow the plot lines and enjoy the music with little confusion.

The soloists here are all just fine, especially Michael Best as Percy in *The Indian Princess* and Debra Vanderlinde as Zoe, the liquor salesman's wife, in *The Ethiop*. The notes, by Victor Fell Yellin, are very informative, and the entire package is most intelligently put together. P.K.

BRITTEN: *Les Illuminations* (see Collections—Maggie Teyte)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHARPENTIER: *Midnight Mass on French Christmas Carols; Sonate à Six.* Boston Camerata, Joel Cohen cond. DESMAR DSM 1016G \$7.98.

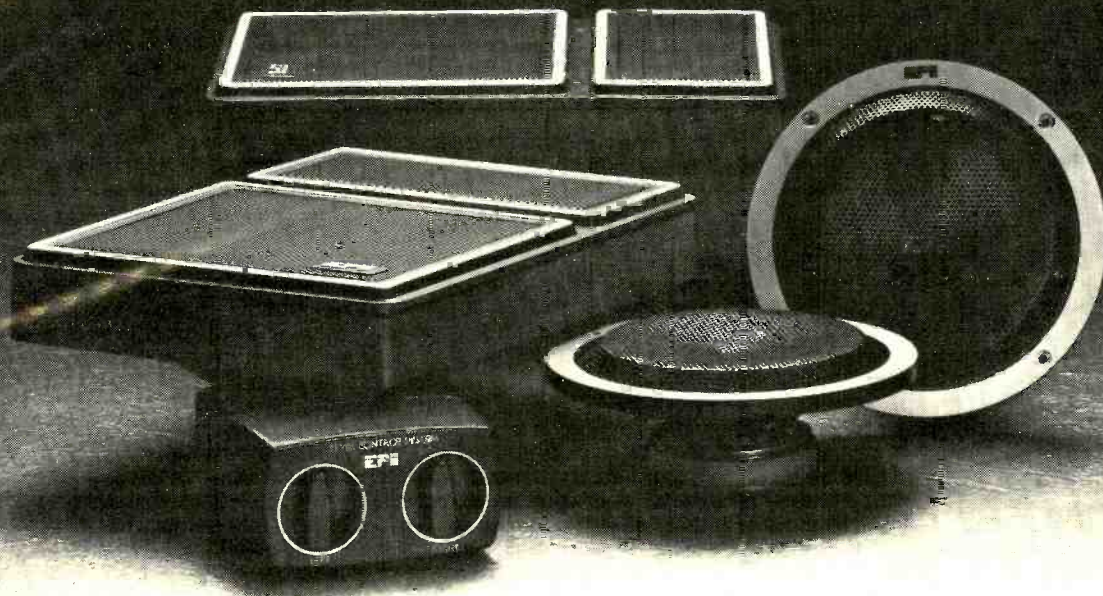
Performance: **Charming**
Recording: **Fine**

Although the *Messe de Minuit* might not be Charpentier's most profound work, it is certainly one of the most delightful concoctions of Christmas carols and original music ever adapted to the liturgy. Eschewing the colossal French church style to which the work is frequently subjected, the Boston Camerata here offers it as intimate chamber music. The sonorities produced by the dozen or so singers, complemented by slightly fewer musicians playing Baroque instruments, are light and clear. The reading is a relaxed and graceful one; the French Baroque manner of performance is adhered to strictly, but with taste rather than academic exaggeration. The judicious use of *notes inégales* lends the jaunty music a natural swing, and the precisely executed ornaments are used to enhance the melodic lines rather than for mere brilliance. Although the instrumental ensemble may seem rather thin during the ritornellos, the overall

(Continued on page 136)

"both curiously old-fashioned and strangely original"

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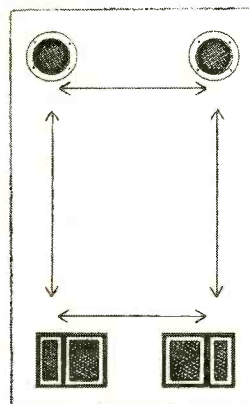
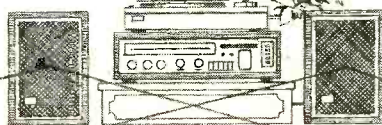
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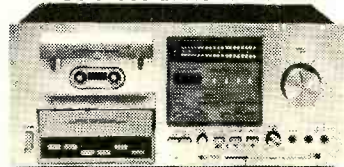


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freshness of the performance easily compensates for this.

A bonus is the *Sonate à Six*, an unusual work that combines ensemble and solo work in an engaging fashion. The performance is not as strong as that of the Mass, but it offers a rare opportunity to hear a side of Charpentier hitherto unrepresented on discs. S.L.

COPLAND: *El Salón México* (see GROFÉ)

DEBUSSY: *Pelléas et Mélisande* (see Collections—Maggie Teyte)

DEBUSSY: *Songs* (see Collections—Yolanda Marcoulescu)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DVOŘÁK: *Piano Trio No. 4, in E Minor, Op. 90 ("Dumky")*. SUK: *Elegy for Piano Trio, Op. 23*. Suk Trio. DENON/PCM OX-7134-ND \$14 (from the Discwasher Group, 1407 North Providence Road, Columbia, Mo. 65201).

Performance: **Idiomatic**
 Recording: **Stunning**

With this recording, made in Prague last May, the Suk Trio completes the cycle of the Dvořák piano trios undertaken jointly by Denon and Supraphon, with the Japanese company recording digitally and the Czechs in quadraphony (Denon released the Opp. 21 and 26 trios last year on OX-7114-ND, Op. 65 on OX-7122-ND). The performance here is fully as idiomatic, heartfelt, and elegant as one would expect from this distinguished ensemble, and the PCM digital recording is as exceptionally lifelike as it has been all through the series. The *Dumky* Trio is given a fine performance by the Yuval Trio on Deutsche Grammophon 2530 594, and the Israeli team gets it all on one side, with room for the Smetana trio on the other. But the Suk Trio is still more persuasive, I think, and at the end of side two there is an intriguing novelty in the form of the brief *Elegy* by Josef Suk (grandfather of the Suk Trio's violinist Josef Suk and son-in-law of Dvořák). It is not an "important" work, perhaps, but it is a sweetly appealing one and does not appear to be available elsewhere at present. Good as DG's sound is, Denon's is quite in a class by itself.

R.F.

DVOŘÁK: *Symphony No. 9, in E Minor, Op. 95 ("From the New World")*. Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA ARL1-2949 \$7.98, Ⓢ ARS1-2949 \$7.98, © ARK1-2949 \$7.98.

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

Ormandy and the Philadelphians are in top form here, and so is the RCA production staff. The result is a Dvořák *New World* performed and interpreted with great affection and ravishingly lovely tonal quality (the first two movements are outstanding in this respect). I'd like a somewhat tighter scherzo, though the enchanting *sousedská* episode is a joy to the ear. The finale, too, well played as it is, could use some of the fierce urgency brought to it by Rafael Kubelik, for one. In all, beautiful but a bit too placid. D.H.

FRANÇAIX: *Suite for Unaccompanied Flute* (see ROREM)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

FRANCK: *Pièce Héroïque. Three Chorales: No. 1, in E Major; No. 2, in B Minor; No. 3, in A Minor*. Frederick Swann (organ). GOTHIC 87879801 \$7.98 (from Gothic Records, Inc., P.O. Box 533, Murray Hill Station, New York, N.Y. 10016).

Performance: **Impressive**
 Recording: **Handsome**

The curiously uneven inspiration of César Franck's muse is well illustrated in the juxtaposition here of the bombastic *Pièce Héroïque* (1878), dating from the period encompassed by *Rédemption* and *Le Chasseur Maudit*, with the three organ chorales from 1890, the last year of his life. The chorales represent the quintessence of his mature musical language and are his finest works for the instrument of which he was a renowned master. The E Major Chorale is a bit drawn out for my taste, but the B Minor, with its pas-sacaglia element, is one of the great masterpieces of the post-Bach repertoire. The A Minor is the most immediately effective of the three and is only slightly less arresting as a whole than the B Minor.

It was fascinating to compare this disc track for track with the memorable 1957 Mercury recording of the same music by Marcel Dupré on the Aeolian Skinner organ at St. Thomas' Church in New York. Frederick Swann, playing the rebuilt Aeolian Skinner instrument at New York's Riverside Church, offers performances of equally commanding authority in state-of-the-art sound. Swann seems more rhythmically taut and classically oriented in his approach to both works, but to some extent this is almost forced by the acoustics of Riverside Church, which despite its large interior has a shorter reverberation time than St. Thomas'. I also find the textures and balances in the Swann performances cleaner and more just, and here again room acoustics come into the picture. St. Thomas has a somewhat cavernous coloration that can make balances, such as those between the line and accompaniment figures in the E Major Chorale, extremely difficult to manage. This problem does not seem to arise at Riverside; I prefer St. Thomas for a live performance, but Riverside seems to work better for recording.

Interpretively, Dupré took a more flamboyant, Lisztian approach than Swann does, and his performances, especially of the B Minor, are real blockbusters. Swann tends to hold his thunder in check for the true culminations of each piece, but he certainly does not spare it then. Although I would not willingly part with the Dupré disc, I can say without hesitation that this new one is an achievement of high distinction on every count. D.H.

FRANCK: *Symphonic Variations for Piano and Orchestra* (see Best of the Month, page 93)

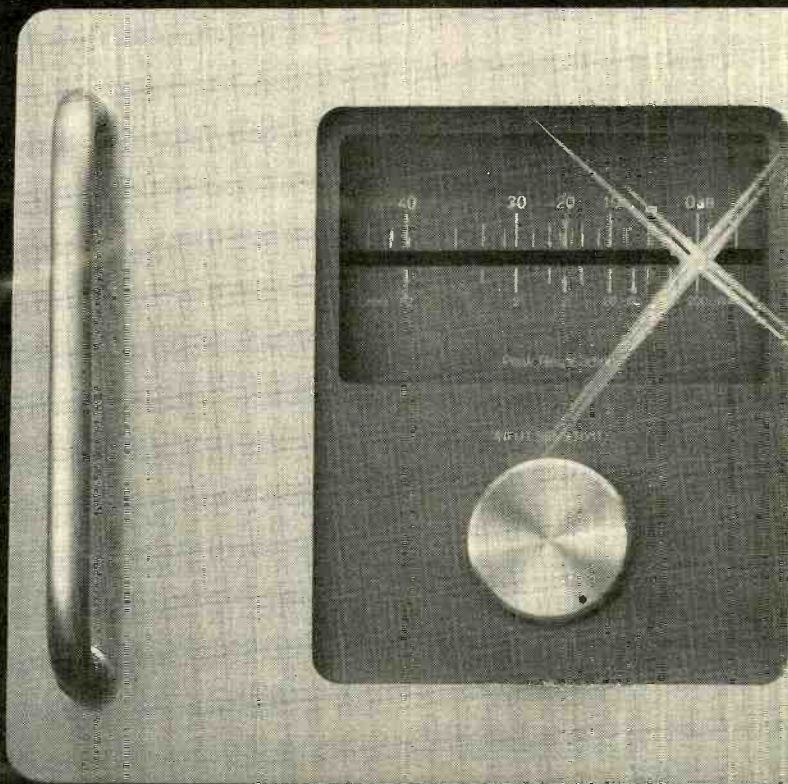
RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GROFÉ: *Grand Canyon Suite*. COPLAND: *El Salón México*. Utah Symphony, Maurice Abravanel cond. ANGEL S-37314 \$7.98, © 4XS-37314 \$7.98.

Performance: **Stunning and stylish**
 Recording: **Superb**

The Utah Symphony may not be the mightiest of American orchestras, but it is understand-
 (Continued on page 138)

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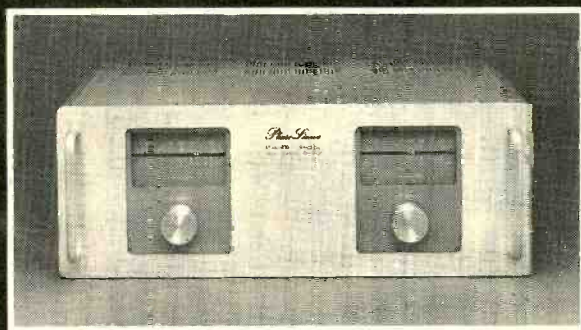
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ably one of the busiest, and under the baton of its Greek-born conductor Maurice Abravanel it has made some brilliant and extraordinarily satisfying recordings. Abravanel has been especially active in championing the cause of our native music, and he does an outstanding job with the two popular American works here. The *Grand Canyon Suite*, despite the erosion from overexposure through the years since its premiere in Chicago in 1931, remains an enjoyable tonal portrait of scenic grandeur. The Utah's approach is particularly kind—through restraint—to some of the more sentimental passages, such as the "Sunset" before the rather literal "Cloudburst" at the end. And what a storm that is! Even Toscanini never coaxed more out of those fierce winds and torrents of orchestral rain.

Copland's *El Salón México* has also been committed to discs many times, but here, too, Abravanel, who has recorded it before, offers an especially vivid sonic picture. In both works, he is more sensitive than many other conductors to the comic spirit of certain passages—Grofé's hee-hawing burro in "On the Trail," for example, and the lewd and leering piccolo that introduces the wild dance leading to the climax of Copland's brief but dashing Mexican souvenir.

P.K.

HANDEL: Opera and Oratorio Arias. *Alexander's Feast: Revenge, Timotheus cries. Xerxes: Omnia mai fu. Samson: Honour and arms. Saul: With rage I shall burst. Belshazzar: Oppressed with never-ceasing grief. Ottone: Dopo l'orrore. Berenice: Si, tra i ceppi. Susanna: Peace, crown'd with roses. Agrippina: Pur ritorno a rimirarvi. Solomon: When the sun o'er yonder hills.* Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Hedwig Bilgram (organ, harpsichord); Munich Chamber Orchestra, Hans Stadlmair cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 979 \$8.98.

Performance: **A noble try**

Recording: **Excellent**

This wisely chosen collection represents Handel in his early Italian period (*Agrippina*, 1709), in the later Italian operas written for London audiences (*Ottone, Berenice, Xerxes*), and, finally, in the large-scale English oratorios of the 1740's. Much of the music is magnificent: the elaborate arias, particularly those from the later years, are introduced by eloquent and expressive recitatives, and the orchestral writing is unflinchingly colorful.

There is no doubt in my mind that Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau knows how these challenging arias ought to be sung, and there are mo-

ments—particularly in the thoughtful recitatives and reflective arias—when he is able to realize his intentions. But the wide range, the hazardous ornamentations, and the occasional need for a heroic tone quality are requirements that are now beyond him. The difficulty of this material must not be understated, and, I suppose, Fischer-Dieskau deserves praise for even attempting to cope with it, but the results cannot be termed successful. The orchestral execution, on the other hand, is excellent, and it is captured with admirable crispness and clarity.

G.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HANDEL: Water Music. Collegium Aureum, Franz Joseph Maier cond. QUINTESSENCE PMC-7085 \$3.98.

Performance: **Vital**

Recording: **Vibrant**

HANDEL: Water Music. Academy of Ancient Music, Christopher Hogwood cond. L'OT-SEAU-LYRE OSLO 543 \$8.98, © KDSLCL 543 \$8.98.

Performance: **Academic**

Recording: **Muffled**

Both of these versions of Handel's magnificent *Water Music* boast the original instrumentation and lay claim to authentic performance practice. That the two readings are quite different proves that there is no single solution to the problem of authenticity. Perhaps they merely reflect the differences in taste between 1972 (the Collegium Aureum) and 1978 (the Academy of Ancient Music).

Franz Joseph Maier's reading with the Collegium Aureum is in the grand manner, gestures are more than life size, the ornamentation is lavish, and the sonorities are rich and full-bodied. Christopher Hogwood, on the other hand, is more concerned with the smaller detail of fine articulation; the Academy of Ancient Music presents the work as chamber music, and the sonorities seem thin for the content. The Collegium Aureum sounds like a group of mature performers who have played together for a long time. They are not afraid to project their exuberance and joy. The Academy of Ancient Music is a group of capable musicians who certainly believe in authentic performance practice, but they seem a bit intimidated by it and somewhat short on the experience of playing together. Frankly, if I were Handel trying to capture the attention of the King of England while he was floating down the Thames on a barge, I would choose the Collegium Aureum.

S.L.

HARRIS: Trio for Piano, Violin, and Cello (see IVES)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HAYDN: String Trios, Op. 53 (Hob. XVI 40-42): No. 1, in G Major; No. 2, in B-flat Major; No. 3, in D Major. **SCHOENBERG: String Trio, Op. 45.** Los Angeles String Trio. DESMAR DSM 1020G \$8.98.

Performance: **Nice**

Recording: **Very close**

Schoenberg and Haydn may seem like a strange pairing, but in fact there is much sense in it. Haydn stands at the beginning of the development that Schoenberg brought to

(Continued on page 140)

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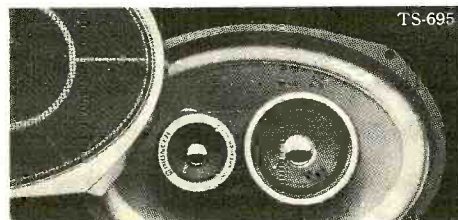
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CALENDAR OF CLASSICAL COMPOSERS

BACK by popular demand and updated from its original (1966) printing, Music Editor James Goodfriend's Calendar of Classical Composers is a listing of the most important composers from the year 1400 to the present, grouped according to the stylistic periods—Renaissance, Baroque, Classic, Romantic, *etc.*—in which they worked. This 12 x 24-inch aid, guide, and complement to your music listening is printed in color on heavy, non-reflecting stock suitable, as they say, for framing. A key to the calendar, consisting of capsule accounts of the principal stylistic characteristics of each musical period, is included. The whole will be sent rolled in a mailing tube to prevent creases; we pay postage. All you do is send 50¢ to:

Calendar of Classical Composers
Stereo Review, 1 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

its end. Indeed, Schoenberg's strange and haunting string trio was one of his very last works, written in physical suffering and, to some extent, as an expression of it. The external of this work are difficult, but its impact is great.

The Haydn trios, on the other hand, are as deceptively simple as the Schoenberg is deceptively difficult. These works, published in 1788, are versions of three piano sonatas that apparently were written earlier (although there is also the possibility that the string versions are earlier or at least were in Haydn's mind from the start). They are wonderful works of Haydn's maturity, and in many ways they are better as chamber-ensemble music than solo-recital vehicles. Like the Schoenberg, they are excellently performed by the fine Los Angeles players—Kathleen Lenski (violin), Paul Polivnick (viola), and Jeffrey Solow (cello). The recording is very clean and very close-up. E.S.

HERRMANN: *Moby Dick*. John Amis (tenor), Ishmael; David Kelly (bass), Ahab; Robert Bowman (tenor), Starbuck, Pip; Michael Rippon (bass), First and Second Sailors; Aeolian Singers; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernard Herrmann cond. UNICORN UNI-72015 \$8.98.

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

The song of the humpback whale inspired Alan Hovhaness to write his curious work for whales and orchestra, *And God Created Great Whales*; the prose of Herman Melville, which at times approaches the condition of music itself, moved Benjamin Britten to compose his haunting opera *Billy Budd*. Britten had E. M. Forster and Eric Crozier to prepare his libretto, but when Bernard Herrmann decided to base a cantata for male chorus, soloists, and orchestra on Melville's *Moby Dick*, he settled on the author's own prose. Choosing, with W. Clark Harrington, passages from the book "to make a logical sequence of narrative, dramatic and philosophic excerpts"—excerpts he later found it necessary to condense—he put together a piece of music of considerable atmospheric strength and lyric appeal.

Like *Billy Budd*, Herrmann's cantata is enveloped in orchestral sea music, the sound of the large orchestra made larger still through the use of "thunder drums." The spirit of the book emerges in a series of tonal pictures: sailors chanting a hymn in a New Bedford church to an orchestral accompaniment, by the Pequod's crew, like something played on "a huge harmonium"; Ahab's monologues in which he swears revenge on the white whale with "a wrinkled brow and a crooked jaw"; an orchestral interlude in the form of a "bachchanalian hornpipe" prompted by a passage in the chapter called "Midnight Foc'sle"; a symphonic interlude depicting the Pacific on a "clear steel blue day"; and the final pursuit of the captain's cetaceous nemesis.

Herrmann was trying, he said, to set "great literature to music." He certainly wrote a muscular score, which here is brilliantly performed and recorded. If occasionally the listener longs for a few visual scenes to round out the sound of this cantata, it is perhaps because Herrmann was more a master at writing music of exactly the right quality to accompany movie action than a composer of works intrinsically exciting on their own. In

(Continued on page 142)

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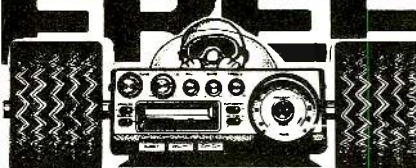
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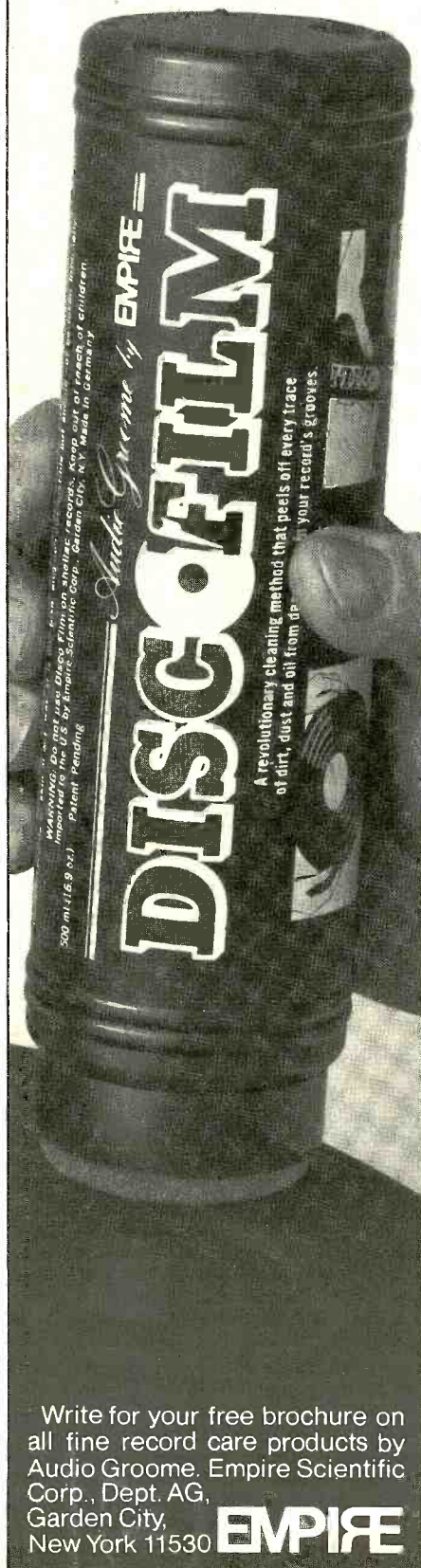
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Moby Dick, the words do this job for him most of the time. There are moments, as during the hymn in the whaler's chapel, in the hornpipe scherzo, and in the final frenzied pages in the pursuit of the whale, when the score does indeed rise to the challenge of its subject matter, becoming, in its own right, an affecting musical experience. But the entire cantata cannot be described that way. P.K.

D'INDY: *Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 29.* Leland Munger (clarinet); Paul Olefsky (cello); William Race (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3857 \$5.20 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling from the Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

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

In reviewing the Montagnana Trio's recording of this work (Delos DEL 25431) a year ago, I observed that, although I am generally enthusiastic about D'Indy's music, I found his Op. 29 "simply dullish work." I did not look forward to hearing it again, but I am glad I did hear this new MHS release, for it has caused me to revise my estimate of the Trio in B-flat Major. It may not be a masterpiece, but it is certainly attractive, exhibiting many of the characteristics of D'Indy's more familiar compositions and with a most agreeable wit in the scherzo (called *Divertissement*). The music comes to life at once in this fluent performance, and its charm never fades. What accounts for the difference between this presentation and the one on Delos is, most of all, the greater animation shown here. The music moves along inspiringly, and there is also a real sense of involvement on the performers' part; they seem to believe in the work, and they make it easy to share their conviction. The recording is close-up and a little on the dry side but otherwise exceptionally realistic and well balanced. It's a welcome addition to the catalog—but we *still* need new recordings of the Second Symphony and *Istar*. R.F.

IVES: *Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano.* **HARRIS: *Trio for Piano, Violin, and Cello.*** New England Trio. HNH 4070 \$7.98.

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

This HNH disc holds the fifth commercial recording of the Charles Ives trio, and this version of it is distinguished by, among other things, the very full and illuminating notes written by Jeffrey Wasson in cooperation with Ives authority and interpreter John Kirkpatrick. The first movement of the trio is, as Wasson indicates, a study in "interface." The opening twenty-seven measures are for cello and piano right-hand, the next twenty-four are for violin and piano left-hand, and for the conclusion the two passages are repeated together. The middle movement (titled "This Scherzo Is a Joke") is a hilarious collage of Yale songs and other pop tunes of the day (bits and pieces of the same musical material turn up in the "Hawthorne" movement of the *Concord Piano Sonata*, in the second movement of the Fourth Symphony, and elsewhere in Ives' oeuvre). The finale is a highly evocative "Sunday service" piece combining dramatic and poetic elements with great effectiveness (the hymn tune *Rock of Ages* plays a major role throughout in various guises).

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In general, the New England Trio (Sally Mays, piano; John Knight, violin; Lawrence Lenseke, cello) adopts a more openly lyrical approach to this music than did Paul Zukofsky, Robert Sylvester, and Gilbert Kalish when they recorded it for Columbia in 1970. The approach works best in the last movement, but for the scherzo I prefer the tauter, more sinewy playing on the Columbia disc. The HNH recording has a slight edge over Columbia's in tonal body and room ambience.

I had great hopes for this recording of the Roy Harris trio, which here makes its first appearance on disc since a 1953 issue from the University of Oklahoma. The work represents an early stage of Harris' attempt to amalgamate the Anglo-Celtic *melos*, with its tendency toward variation, and the structural solidity to be gained from such Baroque patterns as the *passacaglia*, *fugue*, and *canon*. As it emerges from this performance, though, the trio seems like a somewhat labored exercise—prompted, perhaps, by the work Harris had been doing at the time (with M. D. Herter Norton) in transcribing Bach's *The Art of the Fugue* for string quartet. As with the Ives trio, the recorded sound here is full-bodied, but it lacks something in tonal bloom. *D.H.*

LIGETI: *Chamber Concerto for Thirteen Instruments* (see BERG)

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 2, in C Minor ("Resurrection")*. Elizabeth Ander (soprano); Alfreda Hodgson (mezzo-soprano); Ambrosian Singers; Symphonica of London, Wyn Morris cond. PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLE 064/5 two discs \$15.96.

Performance: **Intimate**
Recording: **Likewise**

Wyn Morris has given us some excellent Mahler performances on various labels, and now he is committed to completing the symphonic cycle, with the Fifth already released in England in addition to this new recording of the Second. While Morris' feeling for the Mahler idiom is never in doubt here, his version of the Second Symphony will not appeal to everyone. It is not a ceremonial concept that he offers, but an extremely intimate one—intimate, many listeners are sure to feel, at the expense of the work's drama. The opening *Totenfeier* is taken not only broadly, but with such a relaxed air that the obsequies seem like a family event rather than a public one. The second and third movements are beautifully played, but with the same absence of the accustomed intensity; they pass by as reverie-like interludes, without making much of an impression. However, the understatement serves the *Urlicht* rather well, I think, for surely this simple text should be set off in just this sort of intimate frame; Alfreda Hodgson sings it most touchingly, though her vibrato does make one apprehensive in the passages with long-held notes (I suspect it wouldn't have been conspicuous at all if she hadn't been miked so close). In the finale she and Elizabeth Ander blend beautifully, and the close miking leaves no detail of the score hidden. Here Morris galvanizes his forces into a thoroughly convincing statement of music that is often made to sound shallow through overinflation; the affection and intimacy that characterize the earlier portions of his reading now deepen into glowing affirmation. The intimacy, indeed, is emphasized

(Continued on page 148)

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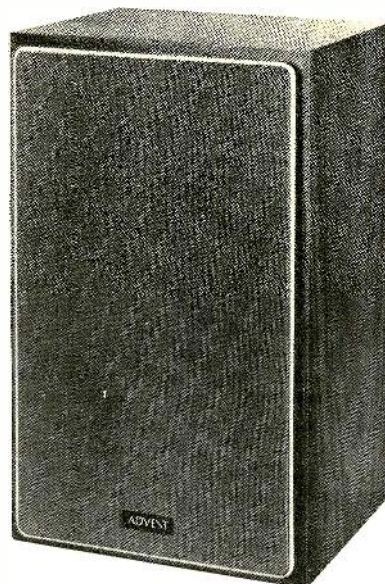
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THE NEW WORLD QUARTET: Josef Yankeliev (left), George Woshakiwsky, William Patterson, and Ross Harbaugh (seated).

The New World Quartet: Explorations

COMPOSERS who migrated westward across the Atlantic Ocean, mostly because of political upheavals in Europe in the Thirties (followed, of course, by the Second World War), have been as potent a force in American music as the immigrant members of the Bauhaus were in architecture and the visual arts. In electing to explore the work of such composers, the New World Quartet (artists in residence with the Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra of Michigan since 1975) had a notion that is both canny and artistically illuminating: canny because a string quartet that is relatively new on the scene can most easily call attention to itself with previously unrecorded repertoire; illuminating because of the useful perspective it can open up on the music both of the immigrants and of their new compatriots.

As it turned out, the new Vox set titled "New World Composers from the Old World" is more striking for its canniness than its illumination. Except for three short and relatively unimportant pieces by Stravinsky, none of the works included are otherwise represented in the current catalog, so the programmers have batted close to a thousand for unfamiliarity value. However, again with a few exceptions (perhaps two or three), judged as music the pieces are not very exciting.

The Stravinsky items (from 1922) are effective, but since effects are almost all they contain, that is the least one could expect. I find Ernest Bloch's Third Quartet (1953) a rather grandiloquent work, overly full of posturing rhetorical passages in octave unison; it's nowhere near the strongest of his five essays in the medium. Carlos Surinach's quartet from 1975 is more tautly argued and fresher in its rhythmic language, but the musical material is actually rather commonplace and, despite the flamenco associations, the composer's harmonic language is not especially arresting. The weakest work on the album is Erich Korngold's Quartet No. 2, written in 1937. It combines the worst of several worlds: frankly popular in aim, it deliberately eschews any sort of profundity, and its attempts to be tunelessly totally miss memorability and end by sounding merely banal.

The quartet that Miklós Rózsa composed in 1950 is an altogether better piece of work. He easily outshines his fellow film-composer with this confection of atmospheric modal harmonies, spiky Hungarian rhythms in the scherzo, and night-music evocations that might be described as "Bartók without tears" (but should not be scorned on that account). This is by far the best concert music by Rózsa that I have heard, and on its own, relatively undemand-

ing level it is well worth listening to. There is, indeed, a good deal more modest charm to be found in it than in Paul Hindemith's infinitely cleverer E-flat Major Quartet of 1943. Hindemith was sometimes unjustly accused of aridity, but he came mighty close to it in this piece. Even here, though, there are rewards in the unflinching fluency of the string writing and the magisterial ease of the counterpoint.

The "sleeper" in this set seems to me to be the Quartet No. 2 of Alexander Tcherepnin, who was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1899 and spent most of the last thirty years of his life (he died in 1977) in the U.S., for much of that time a professor of piano and composition at De Paul University in Chicago. Written in 1927, the quartet is laid out in three tense, spare movements (at ten and a half minutes it is the shortest piece on the album except for Stravinsky's). Elements of neo-Classicism are blended with an unobtrusive yet at times surprisingly intense vein of romance. There's nothing world-shaking about this quartet, but the composer's inspiration is genuine and his craftsmanship was fully equal to its task.

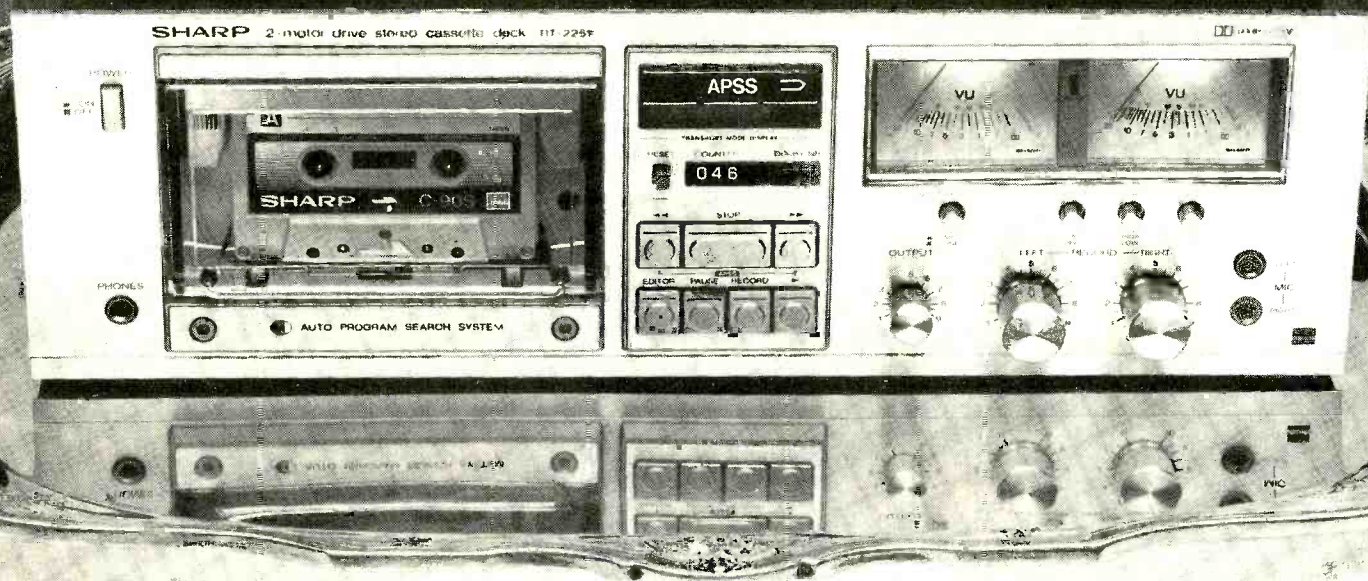
The Tcherepnin piece also benefits from the best performance in the set. The New World Quartet is clearly an excellent group-in-the-making (although the cellist—at least as recorded—doesn't seem to be quite a tonal match for his colleagues), and they respond generously to Tcherepnin's sharply etched lines and strong, if understated, emotions. The performers and composers alike deserve better presentation than they receive in the rather careless and not very perceptive notes (the Hindemith quartet, for instance, is incorrectly called his Sixth, when it was actually his Fifth).

DESPITE such flaws, this is an instructive and enjoyable release that might with profit be followed by a second or even a third volume constructed along the same lines. Quite apart from such already recorded New World quartets by Old World composers as Schoenberg's Fourth, Husa's Third, and Rieti's Third and Fourth, and leaving out of account such uneven bodies of work as Milhaud's last half-dozen, it would surely be worthwhile to investigate Fitelberg's Fifth Quartet, Křenek's Seventh, Labunski's Second, Martinů's Second, Martinů's Sixth, Rathaus' Fourth and Fifth, Toch's Twelfth and Thirteenth, Wagenaar's Second, Third, and Fourth, Weigl's Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth, and several others by Bloch—all of which fall within the terms of reference at least as well as those chosen for this first outing. The whole idea is beguiling, even if some of the music unearthed here is more or less pedestrian. And the Tcherepnin, at least, is well worth investigating for its purely musical satisfactions.

—Bernard Jacobson

NEW WORLD COMPOSERS FROM THE OLD WORLD. Surinach: *String Quartet*. Hindemith: *String Quartet No. 5, in E-flat Major*. Bloch: *String Quartet No. 3*. Tcherepnin: *String Quartet No. 2, Op. 40*. Stravinsky: *Three Pieces for String Quartet*. Rózsa: *String Quartet, Op. 22*. Korngold: *String Quartet No. 2, in E-flat Major, Op. 26*. New World Quartet. Vox SVBX-5109 three discs \$11.95.

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in the choral contribution, for in place of the mammoth chorus usually heard in this work we have the Ambrosian Singers, whose chamber-choir sound permits individual voices to stand out.

I found the performance convincing in its way, even refreshing, and, while I would hesitate to recommend it as a first choice among the several fine recordings of the Mahler Second, I think collectors who are serious enough about Mahler to want more than a single version of it might find this one most attractive for alternating with their "basic" favorites.

R.F.

PISTON: *Sonata for Flute and Piano* (see ROREM)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PROKOFIEV: *Symphony No. 1, in D Major, Op. 25 ("Classical"); Symphony No. 7, in C-sharp Minor, Op. 131.* London Symphony Orchestra, André Previn cond. ANGEL S-37523 \$7.98.

Performance: **Elegant First**
Recording: **Very good**

Here is the third current disc to couple the first and last of Prokofiev's symphonies, an apt pairing since each is in its own way "classical" in procedure and spirit. Whereas the First Symphony is all high-spirited stylization, the Seventh applies Classical symphonic procedures to substance of touching lyrical

nostalgia, the kind of substance found in the ballet scores of the composer's maturity.

It is André Previn's handling of the oft-abused *Classical* Symphony that calls for the "Special Merit" rating. I don't remember hearing, either in concert or on records, another such remarkable amalgam of utter clarity and youthful freshness as Previn and his London players achieve here. Every inner voice of the first-movement development emerges with crystalline beauty and no trace of cold calculation. The purity of violin intonation in the slow-movement melody would do credit to Koussevitzky's Bostonians in their heyday, as would the lovely details of subtle rhythmic accentuation. The trio of the famous third-movement gavotte is another high spot. The finale could use a shade more urgency, perhaps, but there is much to be said for not turning this brilliant movement into a mere virtuosic race.

Previn lavishes the same care on the Seventh Symphony, but here I definitely prefer the greater urgency that Gennady Rozhdestvensky brings to the piece. Previn's slowish pacing of the opening movement tends to break up the music's long lyrical line rather than making it cohere. For the finale, he uses the later alternative "up-beat" ending rather than the elegiac close of the original version, which Rozhdestvensky uses. The recording throughout is both bright and warm. D.H.

RAVEL: *Songs* (see Collections—Yolanda Marcoulescu)

REICH: *Music for Eighteen Musicians.* Steve Reich (piano, marimba); ensemble, Steve Reich cond. ECM ECM-1-1129 \$7.98, © M8E 1129 \$7.98, © MSE 1129 \$7.98.

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

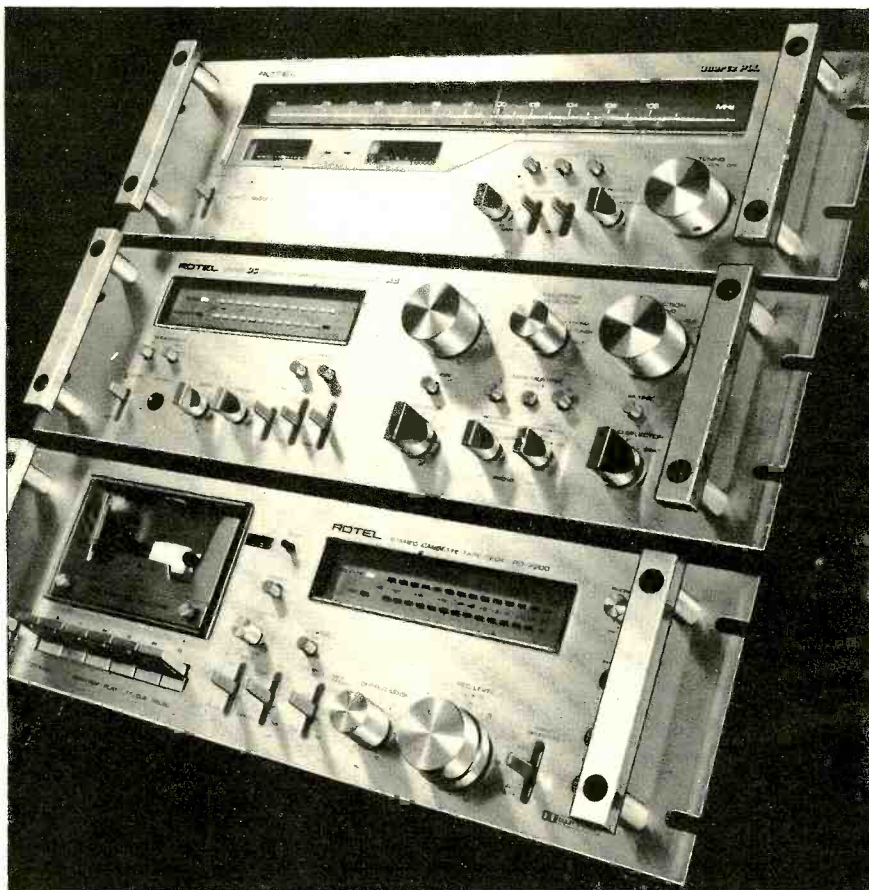
This is Steve Reich at his most charming—it's almost easy-listening pop! A great deal has been made out of the fact that this music, unlike his earlier work, has real changes. Not to worry. This is classic Reichian pulsating, slow-change, hypnotic phase music, but with a rhythmic bounce, a sonic ease, and an occasional sudden and gratifying change of texture. The sound is somewhere between gameplan, certain African ensembles, and, well, a kind of spacy pop. Artful and decorative. E.S.

RESPIGHI: *Il Tramonto* (see Collections—Cathryn Ballinger)

ROREM: *Romeo and Juliet.* **PISTON:** *Sonata for Flute and Piano.* **FRANÇAIX:** *Suite for Unaccompanied Flute.* Ingrid Dingfelder (flute); Herbert Levine (guitar, in Rorem only); Anita Gordon (piano, in Piston only). COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC. CRI SD 394 \$7.95.

Performance: **Committed**
Recording: **Handsome**

Ingrid Dingfelder continues her productive survey of "Contemporary Flute Music" (as this collection is headed) with another work composed for her by Ned Rorem, a by no means overexposed classic by the late Walter Piston, and a charming little six-movement suite composed by Jean Françaix in 1962. *Romeo and Juliet*, composed in mid-1977 and introduced the following March by the performers in this recording, is in terms of sonority alone even more intriguing than Rorem's



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recent *Book of Hours* for flute and harp. Rorem writes that his "sole intent was to invent a work that would graciously exploit both flute and guitar as individuals, and as a pair." The work is in eight brief sections whose headings reflect the romantic rather than dramatic aspect of Shakespeare's tragedy, and the music is accordingly intimate and expressive in character. Proprietary commitment informs the performance, and similar zeal and skill are brought to bear on the two earlier pieces on side two; all three works are handsomely recorded. A most attractive addition to the discography of both the flute and the music of our century. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RZEWSKI: *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!* Ursula Oppens (piano). VANGUARD VSD 71248 \$7.98.

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

El Pueblo Unido Jamás Será Vencido! (*The People United Will Never Be Defeated!*) by Sergio Ortega and Quilapayun is the most famous song to have come out of the Chilean new-song movement, and since the overthrow of the Allende government it has become a kind of symbol or anthem of the Chilean resistance movement. Frederic Rzewski is perhaps the most important and interesting of a number of avant-garde composers who have turned to openly political subjects while incorporating traditional means of expression in a contemporary style. Rzewski's stunningly beautiful set of thirty-six variations on *El Pueblo Unido* . . . are securely in the late-Romantic line of Brahms and Busoni. Certainly there are things here that could only have been written by someone who had been through the avant-garde tumult of the Sixties. Nevertheless, as wide as these variations range—and this is a fifty-minute work set forth on a huge canvas—the basics of melody, harmony, and phrasing are never left far behind. Clarity and intensity—in decided contrast to modern-art "cool"—are the twin poles of this magnetic music.

The other salient characteristic is virtuosity. Rzewski himself is no mean pianist. The first piece I ever heard by him was a big, crazy piano piece he played himself. He has never lost touch with the keyboard as a primary means of expression (he has been very involved with improvisation in recent years), and this has borne fruit in his recent large-scale piano works. The brilliant and expressive colors of this piece are very strikingly realized in the superb performance by Ursula Oppens. It is a very engaging and moving performance on the grand scale—something one hardly expects to encounter in new music these days. Daring, stimulating, and very well done. E.S.

SCHOENBERG: *String Trio, Op. 45* (see HAYDN)

SCHUMANN: *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54* (see *Best of the Month*, page 93)

SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 1, in E Minor, Op. 39. Karelia Suite, Op. 11: Intermezzo; Alla Marcia.* Symphony Orchestra, Robert Kajanus cond. EVEREST SDBR 3422 \$4.98.

SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 2, in D Major, Op.*

43. Symphony orchestra, Robert Kajanus cond. EVEREST SDBR 3428 \$4.98.

Performances: **Uniquely authoritative**
Recordings: **Effectively reprocessed**

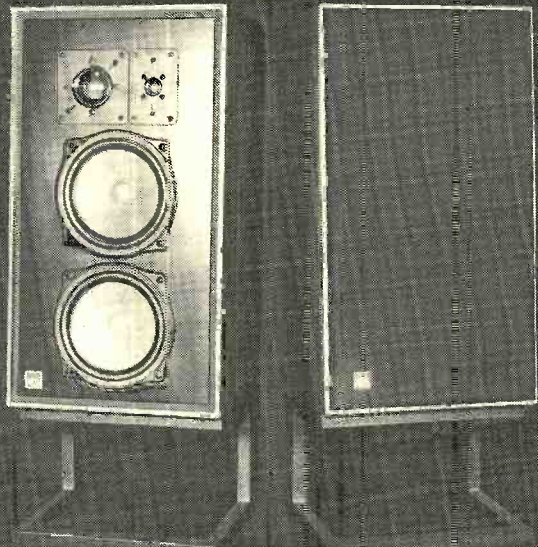
Robert Kajanus (1856-1933) was an eminent Finnish conductor who predated Sibelius as a composer on Finnish national themes. It was the symphonic poem *Aino* by Kajanus that inspired the younger Sibelius to his first major *Kalevala*-based score, the choral-orchestral symphony *Kullervo*. Subsequently Kajanus gave up his own composing career in order to further, as interpreter, that of Sibelius. The first recordings of any Sibelius symphonies were done by Kajanus, sponsored by the Finnish government, in May 1930 in London.

Two years later he returned to London and, with the London Symphony Orchestra, recorded for English Columbia the Fifth Symphony, *Tapiola*, *Pohjola's Daughter*, and the suite from the incidental music for *Belshazzar's Feast*.

I grew up with the Kajanus recordings of the First and Second Symphonies, and even after forty-five years I have yet to encounter a more powerful reading of the First. Together with the *Tapiola* recording it gives a real idea of Kajanus' caliber as a Sibelius interpreter. His reading of the Second Symphony is revelatory in its own way, especially in the brisk tempo adopted for the opening movement, but the orchestral playing is less highly charged. The *Karelia* pieces, which served as

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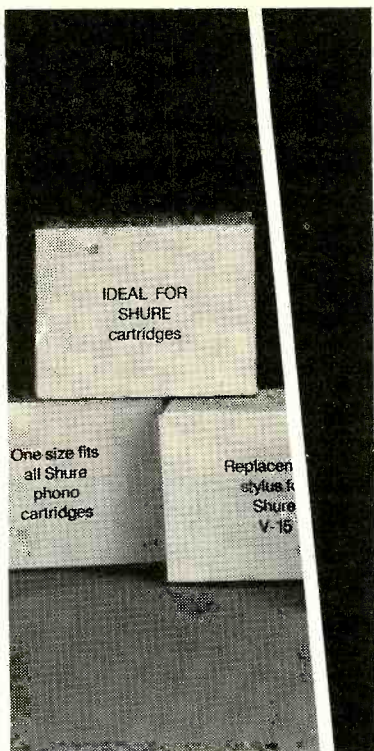
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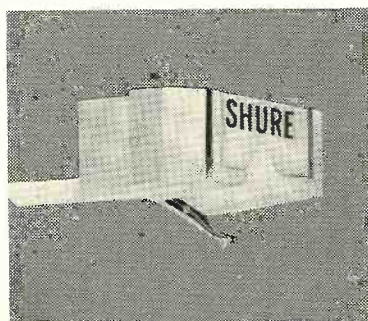
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fillers for the original issues of the symphonies, are done with marvelous dash.

The task of resurrecting this unique interpretive legacy was begun in 1971 by Scandia Records in Finland as part of its "Historic Sibelius" series, but it was not until 1973-1974 that Anthony Griffith undertook to restore the entire body of 78-rpm Kajanus recordings for the EMI World Records series. Thus far, only his remasterings of the First Symphony, the *Karelia* excerpts, *Pohjola's Daughter*, and *Belshazzar's Feast* have been issued in this country (on the Turnabout label). So while the Everest reissue of the First Symphony has a competitor in the still-available Turnabout THS-65045, that of the Second is as yet a merchandising "first." Everest seems to have worked from its own tapes of the 78's (the editing of the side breaks is cruder than on Turnabout/EMI), and in both the symphonies and the *Karelia* music the sound is less transparent and brilliant than Griffith achieved. However, the balance within the available frequency range is definitely closer to that of the originals. Although the records are not marked as being reprocessed in artificial stereo, they do sound better in stereo than in mono playback.

Some sour notes must be sounded concerning Everest's packaging: not a word about Kajanus appears in the liner notes, the performances are all misattributed to the London Symphony Orchestra, and the conductor's name is misspelled on the labels and jacket of the Second Symphony release. D.H.

R. STRAUSS: *Don Quixote, Op. 35; Don Juan, Op. 20.* Tibor de Machula (cello); Klaas Boon (viola); Theo Olof (violin); Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, Bernard Haitink cond. PHILIPS 9500 440 \$8.98, © 7300 647 \$8.98.

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

The *Don Juan* here is the same performance issued in 1974 as a filler for Haitink's reading of the Elgar *Enigma* Variations, and it is still one of the very best around in terms of revelation of detail and first-rate sonics. The *Don Quixote*, too, offers splendid sonics, fine performance by soloists and orchestra alike, and fascinating detail work. What it lacks, for me, is force of character—genuine fantasy of the sort that emerged from the reading by Paul Tortelier and Rudolf Kempe (it was issued here on Seraphim and has now unaccountably been deleted). Of the recordings presently listed in Schwann, I prefer this new Haitink to the somewhat overdrawn Rostropovich/Karajan treatment, but I would be inclined to award the palm to the fine budget-price Odyssey disc with Fournier, Szell, and the Cleveland Orchestra. D.H.

R. STRAUSS: *Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40.* Cleveland Orchestra, Lorin Maazel cond. COLUMBIA □ M 34566 \$7.98, © MT 34566 \$7.98.

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

R. STRAUSS: *Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40.* Dresden State Orchestra, Rudolf Kempe cond. SERAPHIM S-60315 \$3.98, © 4XG-60315 \$4.98.

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

Lorin Maazel's reading of *Ein Heldenleben* is notable for its transparency of texture and

wealth of fascinating detail. He soft-pedals the bombast and makes the most of the music's extroverted, lyrical aspects. The absolutely superb playing of the Clevelanders and the splendidly open recording by the Columbia production team add to the sonic beauties. Concertmaster Daniel Majeske is marvelously volatile in the fiercely exacting solo-violin part, the woodwinds do a great job in individually characterizing the critics, and the principal clarinet covers himself with glory in the great solo preceding the battle scene (which is definitely enhanced by four-channel playback).

The comprehensive recorded survey of Strauss' orchestral output by the late Rudolf Kempe continues to find its way into the American listings on the Angel and Seraphim labels (but why did Angel delete Kempe's *Don Quixote*?), and this 1974 *Ein Heldenleben* is an outstanding value at \$3.98. Kempe's hero is a virile, muscular fellow, and his critics are a gang rather than the sharply limned individuals in Maazel's reading. The solo violin is decidedly less interesting than in the Cleveland record. However, from the battle scene onward, and most especially in the later pages, Kempe and his orchestra show us what great Straussians they really are. If the Dresdeners fail to match the finesse of the Cleveland players, they do get closer to the heart of the more introspective pages of the music, and there is some great playing from the first-chair trumpet. D.H.

ŠUK: *Elegy for Piano Trio, Op. 23* (see DVOŘÁK)

TAYLOR: *The Ethiop, or The Child of the Desert* (see BRAY)

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy Overture; Francesca da Rimini, Op. 32.* London Philharmonic Orchestra, Mstislav Rostropovich cond. ANGEL □ S-37528 \$7.98.

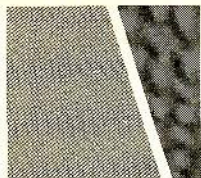
Performance: **Grand**
Recording: **Impressive**

Maestro Rostropovich projects Tchaikovsky's tonal dramas against a very broad and deep sonic backdrop and builds up his interpretations to match. I prefer a somewhat more tightly knit reading of *Romeo and Juliet*, but Rostropovich's approach does open up new and somewhat terrifying vistas in the rather sprawling *Francesca da Rimini*. Dante's windswept second circle of Hell has seldom seemed as horrific as it does here, particularly in four-channel playback, and the London Philharmonic's first-chair clarinetist does himself proud in the famous solo episode representing Francesca's sad tale of adulterous love. There are, of course, any number of recorded performances of both works from which to choose, but this is one of the few single-disc couplings listed in Schwann, and certainly Rostropovich's *Francesca* is worth acquiring for its interpretative insights. D.H.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *String Quartets: No. 1, in D Major, Op. 11; No. 2, in F Major, Op. 22; No. 3, in E-flat Minor, Op. 30.* Gabrieli Quartet. LONDON STS 15424/5 two discs \$8.96.

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

All of Tchaikovsky's string quartets were composed before the three major symphonies
(Continued on page 152)



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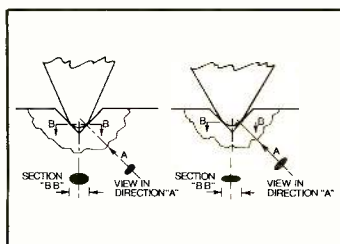
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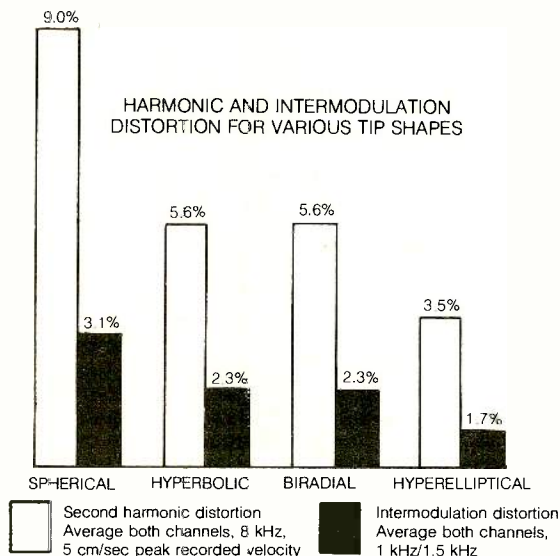


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of his maturity. The D Major Quartet, with its justly popular *Andante cantabile* movement, has a lightweight quasi-Mendelssohnian quality, and, as the Gabrieli Quartet performs it, the scherzo has special charm. The F Major Quartet strikes me as musically the most substantial and interesting of the three, standing up best under repeated hearings. The dissonant elements in the opening of the first movement and the whole of the slow movement, with its highly effective coda, are the high points. The fugato element in the polonaise-style finale anticipates the corresponding movement of Tchaikovsky's Third Symphony (the "Polish"). Despite its serious intent as a memorial to Tchaikovsky's violinist colleague Ferdinand Laub, the E-flat Minor Quartet seems only intermittently inspired, though there are fascinating string sonorities in the somber slow movement and the terse scherzo has much to recommend it. At the price, these expert and well-recorded performances are a first-rate value. *D.H.*

THOMPSON: *The Testament of Freedom; Symphony No. 1.* Utah Chorale (in *Testament*); Alexander Shreiner (organ, in symphony); Utah Symphony, Maurice Abravanel cond. ANGEL S-37315 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good symphony, stodgy Testament**
Recording: **Spacious**

The most salient aspects of American composer Randall Thompson are, it seems to me, his flair for expert, highly effective choral writing and his delightful wit and urbanity. The latter shows up best, perhaps, in his Second Symphony, a minor masterpiece that was marvelously recorded on Columbia by Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic in 1970 but is now unfortunately deleted.

Thompson's *The Testament of Freedom* can be—when performed by, say, Serge Koussevitsky with the Harvard Glee Club and the Boston Symphony (I remember those 78-rpm discs) or the Eastman School of Music forces under Howard Hanson—a splendidly stirring piece of civic music. The deeply moving texts for men's chorus from the writings of Thomas Jefferson can stir American souls in much the same way that the patriotic texts for Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* can affect a contemporary Russian. Regrettably, however, Maurice Abravanel simply fails to give the music the rhythmic vitality it needs. (If you can lay your hands on the deleted Mercury recording with Hanson, MG 50073, you will understand exactly what I mean. Get *that* disc, though; the recent remastering of the recording for the Eastman School's own ERA label is disappointing, since excessive mid-range pre-emphasis thins out the bass altogether too much.)

Thompson's First Symphony seems an odd piece on first hearing because it is "unsymphonic"—for instance, it makes no use of sonata form. The jacket notes fail to explain the reasons for this, but in his article "The Music of Randall Thompson" (*Musical Quarterly*, January 1949), Elliott Forbes tells us that this symphony was an outgrowth of the composer's setting of two odes of Horace for soloist, chorus, and orchestra (they were planned as a sequel to his *Five Odes of Horace* completed in 1924). Thompson evidently despaired of the new odes' ever coming to performance and therefore in 1929 rescored them for orchestra alone as the First Symphony. Musi-

cally, the work provides a pleasing if somewhat diffuse listening experience, but it's no match for its 1931 successor. Before discovering the First Symphony's poetic basis, I noted elements of both jazz-age Manhattan and ancient Rome (bell figures and modal harmonies), and now I am curious to hear the original version. The Utah Symphony's performance here seems capable, and the recording is very spacious, but it, too, is a little diffuse. *D.H.*

VERDI: *La Battaglia di Legnano* (see *Best of the Month*, page 91)

VERDI: *Nabucco*. Matteo Manuguerra (baritone), Nabucco; Veriano Luchetti (tenor), Ismaele; Nicolai Ghiurov (bass), Zaccaria; Renata Scotto (soprano), Abigail; Elena Obraztsova (mezzo-soprano), Fenena; Robert Lloyd (bass), High Priest; others. Ambrosian Opera Chorus; Philharmonia Orchestra, Riccardo Muti cond. ANGEL □ SCLX-3850 three discs \$23.94, © 4X3X-3850 \$23.94.

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

Nabucco stands high among the early Verdi operas. With its powerful choruses, strongly etched characters, and imaginative use of the orchestra it surpasses not only the two Verdi operas that preceded it but several later ones as well. There is, moreover, a strong sense of the *risorgimento* thinly concealed among the Biblical happenings, and this patriotic undertone has assured the opera's continuous appeal, at least for Italian audiences.

The new Angel set has much to commend it, but not enough to replace the 1966 London recording with Tito Gobbi and Elena Suliotis in the principal roles and Lamberto Gardelli conducting. Riccardo Muti captures the opera's raw vigor excitingly, with sharp rhythmic accents and a keen ear for orchestral nuance. But he leads like a drillmaster: hard-driving, almost obsessed with speed and loudness. His tempos for the finales of Act I and Act II, Scene 1, are nothing short of hysterical. Gardelli's less frenetic pacing is no less exciting, with more sensitively judged climaxes. It must be said, however, that the Philharmonia plays beautifully, responding even to Muti's unreasonable wishes.

In the title role, Matteo Manuguerra sings with a good sense of style and firm, well-focused tones, but without Tito Gobbi's magnetic presence, kaleidoscopic range of color, and uncanny ability to illuminate every meaningful phrase. Renata Scotto responds to Abigail's turbulent character with strong theatricality, but the part severely taxes the artist's vocal resources at both extremes of her range. In the final scene, though, she sings with poignant beauty. By contrast, Elena Suliotis seems to have reveled in the role's formidable demands. What a pity that she faded away so soon after that brilliant promise.

The role of Zaccaria is, in its way, no less demanding, with *bel canto* passages alternating with fiery outbursts ranging up and down the scale. Nicolai Ghiurov is rich-toned and eloquent, though rather less so than he was in his 1970 recital disc (London 26146). The fiery dramatic gifts of Elena Obraztsova are barely utilized here, but she is distinctly superior to her London counterpart. Veriano Luchetti is also excellent in the modest role of Ismaele. Love plays a small role in *Nabucco*—it is all

(Continued on page 154)

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about faith, power, and patriotism. The chorus is all-important, and the Ambrosians do justice to Verdi's magnificent music whenever the conductor allows them enough time to breathe. Riccardo Muti pursues the path of a committed Verdian, but at too breathless a pace. G.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

VIEUXTEMPS: Violin Concerto No. 4, in D Minor, Op. 31; Violin Concerto No. 5, in A Minor, Op. 37. Itzhak Perlman (violin); Orchestre de Paris, Daniel Barenboim cond. ANGEL S-37484 \$7.98.

Performance: **Near perfection**
 Recording: **Excellent**

The Vieuxtemps concertos, particularly No. 4, used to be standbys of the violin repertoire; they never quite disappeared, and it is fitting that they come back to prominence through the strong fingers and grand style of Itzhak Perlman. In truth, the Fourth is an exceptional work of real stature—far above the Wieniawski Second or other surviving Romantic flim-flam. The work has tremendous dignity, with the quality of some romantic bardic tale in which the violin plays the protagonist. Perlman (and conductor Daniel Barenboim) take it all perfectly seriously and make a lot of good music.

The Fifth does not really measure up to its predecessor, although it is a strong work and is equally well played here. It is the Fourth, both for its sustained power and for the superb performance (and recording), that deserves top billing. Perlman's playing is as near perfection as I ever expected to hear in these supposedly evil times for the violin. Even Heifetz—who played and recorded these works—did no better! E.S.

VIVALDI: Twelve Concertos, Op. 9 ("La Cetra"). Iona Brown (violin); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Iona Brown cond. ARGO D99D 3 three discs \$26.94, © K99K 3 \$26.94.

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

Some of the most demanding music Vivaldi ever penned for the violin is to be found in his set of twelve concertos, Op. 9 (*La Cetra*). Rarely offered a moment's relaxation, the violin soloist faces a plethora of exhausting scales, arpeggios, intricate divisions, double- and triple-stopping, and, in several movements, *scordatura* (abnormal tuning of the instrument). While the pyrotechnics are at times dazzling, the general musical effect is more often than not boring—a little goes a long way. The five concertos in minor keys are serious works and display moments of true inspiration, but the seven in major keys are marred by the master's worst habits: too much repetition, endless sequences, and dull harmonies.

Iona Brown, in the double role of violin soloist and director of the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, achieves technical perfection in this performance. But that is what the trouble is: there is nothing *but* technical perfection here. All the notes are just as they appear on the printed page, the music spins on and on, but nothing *happens*. Although such virtuosity is admirable, it is just not enough to bring *La Cetra* to life. This recorded performance is, by the way, also available as part of a ten-record set by the Academy (Argo

D101D 10) that includes the complete *L'Estro Armonico* (Op. 3), *La Stravaganza* (Op. 4), *The Four Seasons* from Op. 8, and a variety of concertos for strings and winds. Several of these have been reviewed earlier as individual releases; all are under the direction of Neville Marriner and sound the better for it. S.L.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

WEBER: Grand Duo Concertant, Op. 48; Seven Variations in B-flat Major, Op. 33; Introduction, Theme, and Variations, Op. Posth. Jerome Bunke (clarinet); Hidemitsu Hayashi (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3332 \$5.20 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling from the Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

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

This disc comprises all the music Weber composed for clarinet and piano and represents the first recording of the *Introduction, Theme, and Variations*, a work unearthed only thirty-five years ago and thought to be roughly contemporaneous with the Op. 33 variations on a theme from Weber's opera *Silvana*, composed in 1811. It is equally characteristic of the composer, and it would be hard to imagine it or either of the other works here in better hands. The adorable *Grand Duo Concertant* of 1816 has received half a dozen performances on records in the last few years, but none of them has so brilliantly captured the spirit of the work as this one. Jerome Bunke has a sure and fluent technique, a handsome command of tone, and both the flair and the enthusiasm for Weber's good-humored style necessary for full and joyous realization of all three pieces. Hidemitsu Hayashi displays similar skill and sympathy in the keyboard music Weber wrote for himself, and his playing of the two solo variations in Op. 33 makes one want to hear more of him. Bunke's virtuosity in the Op. 33 variations is downright amazing, suggesting in some passages that there must be at least two clarinetists playing. He seems to be having enough fun for two, at any rate, and the listener may expect the same dividend of pleasure from these marvelous performances, which may be said to represent a Weberian ideal. The recording itself is excellent, the surfaces immaculate. R.F.

WUORINEN: Percussion Symphony. New Jersey Percussion Ensemble, Charles Wuorinen cond. NONESUCH H-71353 \$6.98.

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

Charles Wuorinen is just about America's No. 1 incomprehensible serious music composer. Naturally he gets all the grants, awards, and recordings. This monumental Percussion Symphony has, however, a few surprising nonconformities. The three movements (yes, fast-slow-fast) are separated by two arrangements of Dufay's beautiful *Vergine Bella*. Wuorinen, who writes a kind of Gothic twelve-tone music, has always had an affinity for the highly intellectual fourteenth century; in this context, *Vergine Bella* is like a dream, a gentle blessing from an unrecapturable past. In general, Wuorinen has a feeling for percussion instruments, and this music is very listenable—especially the lively finale, which has an almost charming awkwardness.

(Continued on page 156)

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CATHRYN BALLINGER: *Recital. Respighi: Il Tramonto. Vivaldi: Arsilda, Regina di Ponto: Col piacer della mia fede. Bajazet: Sposa, son disprezzata. Handel: Ah, Mio Cor. Gluck: Paride ed Elena: O del mio dolce ardor.* Cathryn Ballinger (mezzo-soprano); I Virtuosi di Los Angeles, Mario Cajati cond. ORION ORS 77280 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Fairly good**

Cathryn Ballinger, a young mezzo with considerable recital experience on the West Coast, here discloses a warm timbre and a good technique. There is some tentativeness in her attacks and embellishments in the four Baroque arias, but the sound is pleasing and the unconventional accompaniment (harpichord, cello, and guitar) works effectively.

Respighi's *Il Tramonto* is an atmospheric setting (in Italian) of Shelley's *The Sunset*. The length of the poem, its richness of language, and its philosophical rather than dramatic subject matter would seem to make it an odd choice for musical setting, but Respighi limited the accompaniment to a string quintet and kept the strands transparent. Previous recordings by Sena Jurinac and Irmgard Seefried (both deleted) were not available to me for comparison, but Miss Ballinger and the musicians involved here make a creditable case for the work. The recording could have been more ideally balanced, however, and the liner notes should have offered Shelley's original instead of a clumsy retranslation from the Italian. *G.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MALCOLM BINNS: *The Broadwood Heritage. Handel: Suite in B-flat Major: Prelude and Minuet. Clementi: Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 12, No. 2. Haydn: Variations in F Minor (Hob. XVII/6). Beethoven: Sonata No. 27, in E Minor, Op. 90. Chopin: Barcarolle in F-sharp Major, Op. 60. Mendelssohn: Songs Without Words, Op. 62, Nos. 5 and 6.* Malcolm Binns (harpichord, piano). L'OISEAULYRE DSLO 540 \$8.98.

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

Broadwood is a name we associate especially with Beethoven, who was made a gift of a piano by this English manufacturer in 1818 and acknowledged it with the declaration, "I will regard this as an altar upon which I will place the choicest offerings of my mind to the divine Apollo." A very comprehensive annotative insert with this record gives a history of the firm, which was founded in 1728 by the Swiss immigrant Burkard Shudi (*né* Burkhardt Tschudi) and taken over by his son-in-law and former apprentice John Broadwood in 1783. It had grown into the largest piano-manufacturing company in the world by 1850, and it is still going strong at East Acton, if with a somewhat lower profile. Malcolm Binns (it is a bit confusing to have this pianist doing these things in Britain and Malcolm Bilson specializing in early-instrument keyboard performances in our own country) here uses a differ-

ent instrument for the music of each of the six composers represented. The Handel pieces are played on a 1790 harpsichord, a superb instrument that is, of course, well suited to the material. The fortepiano selected for the Clementi sonata was made three years earlier and may be the earliest such Broadwood still in playing condition. It does not sound tinny or tinkly, as one might expect, but has real pianistic glitter on top and a very solid bottom, even though the "quasi-harpichord" character that makes these instruments so intriguing to our ears is very much in evidence. The 1794 model used for the Haydn variations sounds still more like a modern piano, and in the 1819 grand piano chosen for the Beethoven the harpsichord character has all but totally disappeared, though there is a clangy texture at the top. We may assume that the Erard that Chopin used was not greatly different from the 1847 Broadwood grand on which Binns plays the barcarolle, but he may have been looking forward to refinements beyond his own time; in any event, this is the one piece on the disc that seems to me less than successful on the period instrument. The limp-sounding square piano of 1854 seems ideal for the Mendelssohn pieces.

While the different sounds of these six instruments are intriguing in themselves, the sort of mechanical action indicated by these sounds also suggests certain freedoms and restrictions on tempo, phrasing, and other articulatory concerns that may give us a clearer impression of just what the respective composers had in mind. This aspect of the record may be the most fascinating, but the performances themselves happen to be extremely sensitive and convincing ones—the Mendelssohn, Beethoven, and Clementi in particular. In terms of scholarship, documentation (the aforementioned insert, which ought not to have been left anonymous, is itself worth the price of the package to anyone interested in the piano), and all-around musicianship, this is a first-rate production. *R.F.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LEO BROUWER: *The Classics of Cuba. Ninctulmell: Variations on a Theme of Milan. Fariñas: Prelude. Gramatges: Little Suite in Homage to Ravel. Saumell: Five Contredances. Brouwer: La Espiral Eterna. Ángelo: Cantos Yoruba de Cuba. Roldán: Danza del Diablito; Two Popular Cuban Songs.* Leo Brouwer (guitar). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3839 \$5.20 (plus \$1.25 for postage and handling from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

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

Leo Brouwer was born in Havana in 1939 and taught himself music until he was seventeen, when he was able to complete his education at the New York School of Music and the University of Hartford. This nimble-fingered fellow is a disciple of the Tárrega school, and it's hard to know which to admire most: his subtle interpretations of colorful music for the guitar by other Cuban composers in a tradition that reaches back to Spain's Golden Age; or his own dazzling, inventive composition *La Espiral Eterna* (*The Never-Ending Spiral*) with its audacious sound effects, pizzicatos snapped at the pins, and floating notes sounded by his

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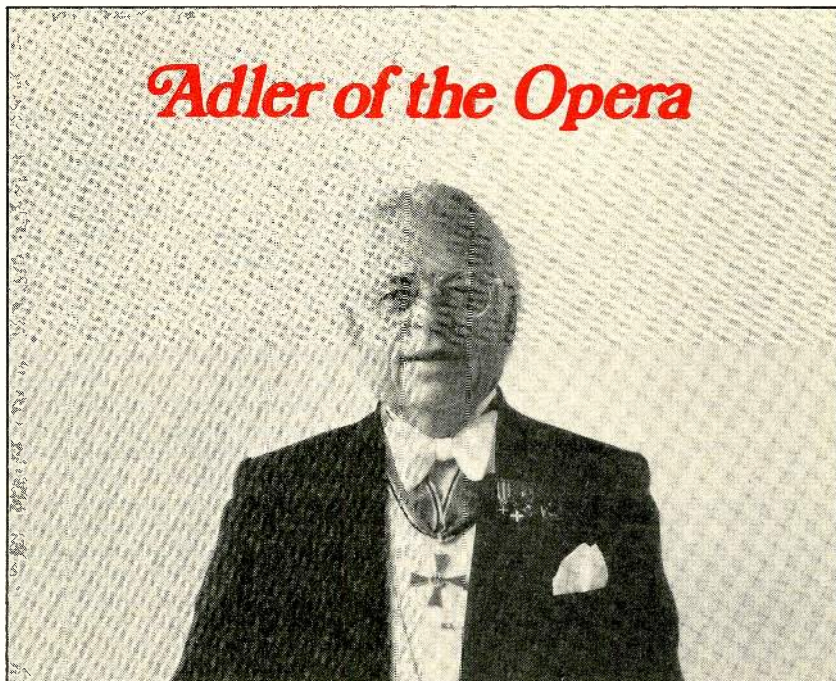
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KURT HERBERT ADLER is pictured on the cover of "Adler of the Opera" wearing formal attire and an impressive array of decorations. A boxed note on the liner says that the release is in honor of his fiftieth year of operatic activity and his twenty-fifth anniversary as general director of the San Francisco Opera, but nothing further about him appears, nor is there any explanation of the particular relevance of the six little-known works on the disc to Adler's career. (Can he have conducted them all in the opera house?) There is, however, very comprehensive information on the music itself, and it is certainly an imagina-

depressing plot if the rest of the score is as well-wrought as the overture. Like the Goldmark, it's not much on thematic allure but is gorgeously colored. Hermann Goetz's *Francesca da Rimini* was produced posthumously in 1877 (six months after Tchaikovsky's tone poem of the same title). The overture is a reminder that Goetz was one of the more interesting minor figures of his era, and Adler's handsome performance impelled me to seek out the Genesis disc (GS 1031) on which the late Edouard van Remoortel recorded it (rather less persuasively than Adler) together with two more overtures and an appealing sympho-



tive assortment—hardly the sort of thing to give even a veteran discophile many problems with duplication of titles.

The Weberish pieces that open the two sides are the most attractive of the lot. Otto Nicolai used a theme familiar to us from *Der Freischütz* in the overture to his *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and in the one here to *Der Tempelritter* (introduced in 1840, it was based on Scott's *Ivanhoe*) we find the actual flavor of Weber plus more than a few pre-echoes of *Tannhäuser*, which Wagner produced five years later. Weber himself, of course, composed the music for *Die Drei Pintos* (which is to have its American premiere this June), but it was Mahler who put it together, fashioning the charming intermezzo recorded here from Weber's sketches for the unfinished opera. Goldmark's *Merlin Overture* (1886) is the longest piece on the disc, dramatic in feeling and superbly colored, but without the melodic richness the composer displayed in *Sakuntala*. *The Queen of Sheba*, or the adorable *Rustic Wedding* Symphony. There are plain "post-echoes" of *Tannhäuser* here, and of *Tristan* as well, not unlike those in the contemporary *Gwendoline* of Chabrier. Franz Schreker's *Die Gezeichneten* (*The Branded*, 1918) might be worth investigating despite its

ny by Goetz. Hugo Wolf's short opera *Der Corregidor*, which has had something of a cult following, has been recorded in full once or twice; its overture is the least interesting segment of this collection, but it is also the briefest and easy enough to listen to.

All six pieces are given expert, flavorful performances; one feels that if Adler has not conducted these operas in the theater he would very much like to. The recording itself is up to London's finest standard, which is to say excellent. Such "discoveries" may not be everyone's cup of tea, but those of us who find this sort of thing intriguing must also find it heartening to have it supported by the resources of one of the giant companies. I would be happy to have a follow-up disc or two, particularly if Goldmark's *Sakuntala* were included.

—Richard Freed

KURT HERBERT ADLER: *Adler of the Opera*. Nicolai: *Der Tempelritter*, *Overture*. Schreker: *Die Gezeichneten*, *Overture*. Wolf: *Der Corregidor*, *Overture*. Weber/Mahler: *Die Drei Pintos*, *Intermezzo to Act II*. Goldmark: *Merlin*, *Overture*. Goetz: *Francesca da Rimini*, *Overture*. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Kurt Herbert Adler cond. LONDON CS 7133 \$7.98.

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hands on the neck of the instrument. There isn't a single cliché in the program, and much of it is indeed distinguished, especially the *Suite in Homage to Ravel* by Harold Gramates and the settings of dances and popular Cuban songs by Amadeo Roldán. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

YOLANDA MARCOULESCU: Songs of Debussy and Ravel. Debussy: *Green; Spleen; Chevaux de Bois; Le Jet d'Eau; Trois Chansons de France; Colloque Sentimental; Fantoche; Mandoline.* Ravel: *Sainte; Épigrammes de Clement Marot; Chanson du Rouet; Manteau de Fleurs; Noël des Jouets; Les Grands Vents; Sur l'Herbe; Ronsard à Son Âme; Rêves.* Yolanda Marcoulescu (soprano); Katja Philabaum (piano). ORION ORS 78312 \$7.98.

Performance: **Expert**
Recording: **Fairly good**

This is Yolanda Marcoulescu's third recital of French songs, and it is every bit as admirable as the first two. By now this heretofore unheralded soprano must be ranked with the top contemporary exponents of the French song.

The songs of Debussy and Ravel break away from traditional paths: in them the poetry speaks *through* music instead of being shaped by it. Thus, an interpreter must have the gift of fully assimilating the poetic content in order to communicate it with utter naturalness. Such an aptitude is rarely possessed by artists to whom the French language is not native, but England's Maggie Teyte had it and so does Bucharest-born Yolanda Marcoulescu. The Debussy songs in the present recital particularly bring Teyte to mind, both because she recorded some of them and because the Roumanian soprano personalizes her renditions with a Teyte-like warmth and endearing tone quality. The Ravel songs here are so rarely encountered that they amount to discoveries. Written over a considerable span of time (1896-1927), they are exquisitely wrought miniatures, at times evocative of medieval atmosphere, artful, harmonically adventurous, though of slight substance.

There are a few strident top notes, but the soprano's intonation is as impressive as her clarity of articulation. As she was in the previous Orion discs, Katja Philabaum is a capable accompanist, but she is not favored with the best sound reproduction. G.J.

SYLVIA SASS: Operetta Songs. Kálmán: *Csardas Princess: Sylvia's Entrance Song.* Countess Maritza: *Maritza's Entrance Song.* Lehár: *Giuditta: Song. The Merry Widow: Vilja's Song.* Johann Strauss: *The Gypsy Baron: Saffi's Song.* Millöcker: *Dubarry: Jeanne's Song.* Offenbach: *La Belle Hélène: Romance.* Fall: *Madame Pompadour's Entrance Song.* Tchaikovsky: *Glorious Lady: Romance.* Sylvia Sass (soprano); Hungarian Radio and Television Chorus and Orchestra, András Sebestyén cond. QUALITON SLPX 16607 \$7.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Good, with reservations**
Recording: **Could be better**

Operetta is far from extinct in Continental Europe, so this repertoire is within easy reach for a well-trained soprano. And these songs are not learned just for a recording session, to be forgotten thereafter—local radio and tele-

vision stations in Central Europe are eager outlets for them. In any case, the songs included here are familiar to all operetta fans. The only title that seemed momentarily strange to me was the Tchaikovsky (*I would translate it from the Hungarian as "The Triumphant Woman"*) rather than "*Glorious Lady*"), which turned out to be a vocal arrangement of *Chant Sans Paroles*, Op. 2, No. 3. Since the music for the songs is familiar, the Hungarian language in which they are sung will not be an obstacle to enjoyment.

Young, beautiful, and extremely gifted, Sylvia Sass has covered a lot of ground in a few short years. Her recent press notices seem to reflect the opinion that she may have been pushed too far too soon. On this occasion she is in good vocal form, though some of her high B-naturals are not effortless, and that is a troublesome sign in so young an artist. She has evidently studied the operetta discs of Schwarzkopf (as she has studied the opera discs of Callas) and knows how to phrase insinuatingly, making excellent use of her high *piano* tones. There are charm and a great deal of skill in her singing, but there is also a bit of self-consciousness that takes away from the spontaneity this repertoire demands. Nonetheless, there is much to enjoy here, including a well-conducted, solid orchestra. The recording, though, sounds veiled, lacking brilliance and presence. G.J.

MAGGIE TEYTE: At Town Hall. Debussy: *Pelléas et Mélisande (excerpts).* Britten: *Les Illuminations, Op. 18.* Maggie Teyte (soprano); John Ranck (piano). DESMAR GHP 4003 \$8.98.

Performance: **Remarkable**
Recording: **Good for its age**

In 1945, immediately after hostilities in Europe ceased, Maggie Teyte came to the United States for a concert tour, which was eventually extended to include appearances as *Mélisande* with the New York City Opera. The Town Hall recital that yielded these recordings took place on January 15, 1948, when Teyte was sixty years old, though one would never guess it from the amazing vocal health she evidently still enjoyed.

The *Pelléas* excerpts that Teyte sings here are drawn not only from *Mélisande's* music but from that of *Pelléas*, *Arkel*, *Yniold*, and *Geneviève* as well. She makes no attempt to change her basic vocal colors in the sequence, and yet she succeeds in suggesting the different characters through subtle alterations of *manner*. It is a remarkable tour de force, particularly in the Fountain Scene (Act IV), which calls for tightly interwoven exchanges between *Pelléas* and *Mélisande*. Teyte's supreme mastery of Debussy's song/speech (she studied the music with Debussy himself, after all) is evident here, and it carries over as well in her reading of Britten's masterly setting of Rimbaud's bold and bizarre *Les Illuminations*. In the latter, though, the high tessitura makes clear articulation difficult.

Maggie Teyte's representation on records was never ample enough to match her artistic stature, and we must be grateful for this unexpected souvenir of her art, which preserves for us the crystalline simplicity and absolute security with which she interpreted this elusive repertoire. The music, however, is only partially served here; pianist John Ranck is a fine accompanist, but in both works an orchestra is essential. G.J.

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