

Dylan • Victoria de los Angeles  
Arthur Fiedler • Hoagy Carmichael

NOVEMBER 1979 • \$1.25

# Stereo Review

**National Public Radio's new satellite FM-broadcasting system**

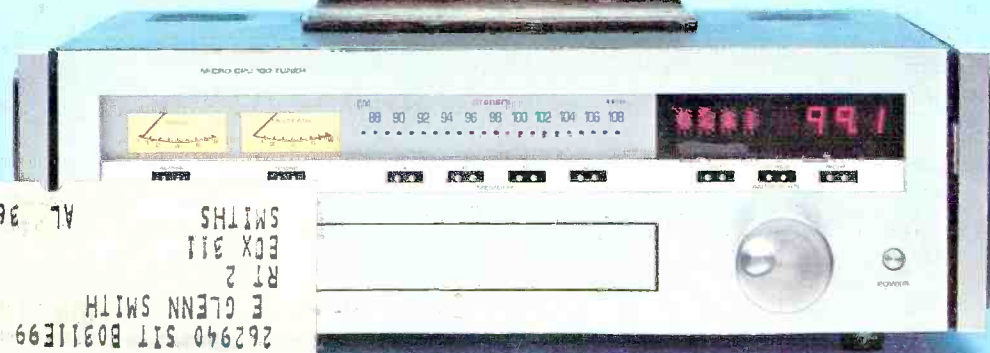
Outlaw Willie Nelson discusses his burgeoning movie career

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS: Akai GX-635D Stereo Tape Deck

dbx Model 21 Disc Decoder • GAS Thalia II Preamplifier

Luxman Model L-11 Integrated Amplifier • Acoustique 3A Andante Speaker System

**Why does most FM sound so lousy despite today's fabulous receivers?**



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Stereo Review

## UNDER LABORATORY CONDITIONS, FEW HIGH PRICED TURNTABLES SOUND AS GOOD AS THIS ONE.



# UNDER REAL CONDITIONS, NONE DO.

For years, people have been selecting turntables based on specs obtained in a lab, without knowing what kind of sound they'll obtain in their homes.

And while a few turntables today look as good as Pioneer's PL-630 on paper, you'd be hard pressed to find one that sounds as good in your living room.

## A SUSPENSION SYSTEM THAT ELIMINATES SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL.

In your home, simply walking across the floor can cause the stylus to skate across your records.

And acoustic feedback can make even the most lively piece of music sound dull and lifeless.

Pioneer's PL-630, however, has a free floating suspension system that isolates the platter and tone arm from the rest of the turntable. So that while the base may vibrate, the platter and tone arm won't. Which means you don't have to tip-toe across the floor just to prevent vibration. And you can turn your music up loud enough to rattle the walls without fear of rattling the turntable.



When the base of the PL-630 vibrates, the platter and tone arm don't.

## A DIRECT DRIVE MOTOR THAT WON'T DETERIORATE WITH OLD AGE.

All DC direct drive motors start out to be incredibly accurate.

Unfortunately, they don't always stay that way.

After a while, the quality of sound could deteriorate because the motor is left exposed and free to collect dust and foreign objects.

This is not the case with the PL-630. Unlike most of the competition, its motor is totally enclosed. Which means that the incredible wow and flutter figure of 0.025% will still be an incredible 0.025% years from now. And so will the 0.002% speed accuracy.

What's more, the electronic circuitry of this Quartz PLL Hall element system constantly monitors itself. When it senses the slightest deviation in speed, it corrects itself. By just switching the quartz "lock" on, you lock onto the correct speed, so you're assured of accurate platter speed at all times and under all conditions.

And because of its extremely high torque, the PL-630 reaches full platter speed in a mere third of a revolution.

But more importantly, it stops almost as quickly as it starts. Reverse current is fed into the drive system eliminating both excessive wear on the turntable and the need for a brake.



Spring loaded tone arm pivots help improve sensitivity.

The electronic brain of the PL-630.

## ONLY ONE THING COMES THROUGH THE TONE ARM. MUSIC.

The tone arm of the PL-630 rests on a massive die-cast aluminum base.

And while other tone arms may rest on a similar base few, if any, are mounted to it in a similar manner. Instead of piano wire or cheap plastic casings that vibrate, the PL-630's tone arm is gimbaled on spring mounted pivot bearings. This not only reduces tracking error due to tone arm pivot wear, but increases the overall performance of the turntable.

Which brings us to the magnesium headshell. It has far better acoustical properties than the headshell you'll find on most turntables. This new construction reduces the chances of hearing any howling or distortion.

## FEATURES OUR COMPETITORS PRETEND THEY'VE NEVER HEARD OF.

Our platter mat is concave so that even if your records are slightly warped, they'll sound like they aren't.

Our spindle is only 0.8 microns larger than most, but it can make a big difference in keeping your records perfectly centered.

And our massive platter is less vulnerable to fluctuations in speed than smaller platters that come with most turntables.

Even the way the platter is coupled to the motor is unique. It doesn't have bearings. It's precision machined to a tapered fit so that it's less likely to wobble.

And while you'll find a strobe on most direct drive turntables, you won't find one on the PL-630. Simply because there's no need for one. Instead, there's a pitch display that gives you visual confirmation of accurate speed.

You'll also find super sensitive controls that even shut off the power automatically when the tone arm comes to rest.

If you're beginning to get the idea that Pioneer's PL-630 would sound great in your home, we suggest you go to your nearest Pioneer dealer.

After all, you may not live in a sound room, but it doesn't mean your living room can't sound like one:

 **PIONEER®**  
We bring it back alive.





THE PL-630.



FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW (ISSN 0039-1220)

# Stereo Review®

NOVEMBER 1979 • VOLUME 43 • NUMBER 5

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COVER: Design by Borys Patchowsky; photo by Bruce Pendleton. The tuner is Draco Laboratories' Micro CPU (tested by Hirsch-Houck Labs in January 1978 at the time the tuner was being distributed by Sherwood). The vintage magnetic speaker (maker unknown) is from the collection of Fred Petras, who says it speaks, but only when prodded by the tenderest of voltage inputs.

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# INVESTMENT LETTER



POSTULATE: YOUR RECORDS ARE VALUABLE AIDS TO PLEASURE AND RELAXATION.  
POSTULATE: YOUR RECORD INVESTMENT TOTALS MORE THAN \$1000 (ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS), AND SHOULD BE PROTECTED.  
SUPPORTING DATA: REPLACEMENT COSTS ARE ESCALATING; SOME SPECIMENS UNAVAILABLE.


SUPPORTING DATA: DUST IS THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE ELEMENT TO RECORDS. DUST SETTLES ON ALL RECORDS AND MAY BE WELDED IN BY THE TRACKING STYLUS.

PROSPECTUS: THE DISCWASHER D3 RECORD CLEANING SYSTEM, WITH UNIQUE UNIDIRECTIONAL MICRO-FIBERS, LIFTS OFF DUST--RATHER THAN JUST LINING IT UP. RESULTS ARE VISUAL, SONIC AND CLEARLY PROTECTIVE OF INVESTMENT. COST OF SYSTEM IS ONLY \$15 (FIFTEEN DOLLARS). HAS LIFETIME MILLED WALNUT HANDLE AND INCLUDES DC-1 PAD CLEANER.

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# Stereo Review BULLETIN

Edited by William Livingstone

● **NEW RECORD PRICES:** To counteract this year's slump in popular record sales, the first in the LP era, such labels as Columbia, MCA, and Capitol have reduced prices on some pop albums from \$7.98 to \$5.98. Available at the lower price are selected new releases and albums from the existing catalog. Sales of classical records have held firm, and their prices continue to rise. Columbia Masterworks have gone up from \$7.98 to \$8.98 per disc and Deutsche Grammophon and Philips from \$8.98 to \$9.98. List prices in the review section of this magazine were correct at press time; other changes are expected during the rest of the year.

● **WILL THE POPE GO PLATINUM?** Pope John Paul II (bass) can be heard on Crystal Records' new album "The Pope in Poland" (056 CRY 275) singing with the Krakow Symphony Orchestra and a student chorus. Among the six folk and religious songs on the disc is The Moment of the Entire Life, written by the Pope himself. Orders for the record already exceed half a million copies worldwide, so it is no Polish joke. The original German pressing is available from the German News Co., 218 East 86th St., New York, N.Y. 10028, for \$9.98 postpaid.

● **"DISCO" IS A DIRTY WORD TO SOME PEOPLE,** but that allegedly is not the reason the Disco Department at Warner Bros. Records was renamed the Dance Music Department. According to division head Ray Caviano, the name was changed because "expanding musical tastes and trends for the future show us that America wants to dance to all forms of music, including disco, new wave, rock, r-&-b, reggae, jazz, and fusion."

● **NEW VHS VIDEOCASSETTE RECORDERS** with two audio channels, now being developed by several Japanese manufacturers, will incorporate the Dolby B-type system of noise reduction for improved sound. JVC, inventors of the VHS system, as well as Akai, Hitachi, Matsushita, Mitsubishi, and Sharp, who together manufacture all VHS recorders under their own and other brand names, have agreed to make Dolby noise reduction a standard feature of the new two-channel VHS format. The first models in this format have been announced in Japan, where there are now television broadcasts in stereo.

● **STEREO SOUND FOR TV WAS ENDORSED** by a large majority of the U.S. consumers who were polled in an independent survey sponsored by General Telephone and Electronics earlier this year. Of those interviewed, 87 per cent said they would definitely or probably buy TV sets with stereo sound regardless of price.

● **THE C-QUAM SYSTEM FOR BROADCASTING AND RECEIVING STEREO AM** will be demonstrated to the public for the first time at the Hi-Fi Music Show in Chicago, November 8-11, by Sherwood in conjunction with Motorola. In endorsing Compatible Quadrature Modulation (C-Quam for short) Sherwood claims that the system has such advantages over competing systems as superior area coverage, insensitivity to interference, absence of negative modulation problems, and compatibility with existing mono AM receivers. If the FCC chooses C-Quam, Sherwood could incorporate it into receivers as early as the second quarter of 1980.

● **THE SMALLEST HI-FI TURNTABLE** with a full-size platter has been produced by Technics to mark the tenth anniversary of the direct-drive turntable. In depth and width the SL-10 measures the same as a standard record jacket, and it is 3½ inches high. Incorporating technology developed for the Visc videodisc system, the SL-10 employs a servo-controlled linear-tracking tone arm housed in its nonremovable dust cover. It should be on the market by March of next year.

● **OUTSTANDING MUSICAL TELECASTS ON PBS** this month include Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra and Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Emil Gilels) by the New York Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta conducting, on November 14. Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra will present Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2 November 21. A new series on pop lyricists, Song by Song, will honor E. Y. "Yip" Harburg November 26. "Live from the Met" on November 27 will be Kurt Weill's Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny with a stellar cast; James Levine will conduct. On November 28, Poulenc's opera La Voix Humaine (Karan Armstrong, soprano, Dino Anagnost conducting) is paired with Jean Cocteau's play The Human Voice with Liv Ullman. Check local listings; load VTR.

# Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



## EAR TRAINING

ANY hobbyist decently up to his neck in his specialty has to be prepared to deal good-naturedly with the jibes of unsympathetic unbelievers. Skiers, joggers, stamp collectors, and audiophiles alike grin and bear it when outsiders pooh-pooh their incomprehensibly single-minded dedication to patently foolish pleasures. Usually, that is. At least one audio enthusiast, evidently fed up with uxorial carping, fought back by sicking his wife on STEREO REVIEW when she questioned the necessity of upgrading his system regularly with "newer, more specialized, and more expensive [!] components. . . . How much of the appeal of such a system," she wants to know, "is based on infatuation with gadgetry, desire for prestige, or the result of good old manufacturers' hype?"

So far as gadgetry is concerned, I would say quite a good deal, but that same natural, irresistible infatuation is what lies behind the

tradition of the Yankee tinkerer in this country (not that it is exclusive either to Yankees or to this country), a tradition that has given us Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and an alphabet's worth of others (there may be a difference in degree, but not in kind). And at least the infatuation in this case is not with automobiles, power cruisers, or airplanes, in which upgrading (to say nothing of original cost) proceeds on steeper pitches.

Desire for prestige? Some, but not a whole lot. There is a little satisfaction to be gained from one-upping an audiophile friend or two—particularly if they have been unfeelingly claiming sonic superiority for their own systems—but it simply doesn't work when the audience one is trying to impress doesn't even know the difference. Then, too, the kind of audio equipment one has is at least a *semi-private* affair—one doesn't, in other words, get a

chance to wear it (or ride in it) in public. Let us say, then, that there is a good deal less prestige-seeking involved here than there is in publicly sporting objects bearing other peoples' names—Gucci on the handbag, Vuitton on the luggage, St. Laurent on the scarf, Mercedes on the car. Manufacturers' hype? Well, there is such a thing as persuasive language, thank God, or nobody would ever be able to sell anything to anybody, whether it be goods, ideas, or salvation. But it is important to realize that what audio manufacturers are selling *actually, measurably exists*—and there, I think, is the crux of the matter.

Sonophiles, melomanes, audio nuts—whatever you want to call them—undergo a very concentrated kind of ear training in the course of pursuing their hobby, with the result that they become acutely sensitized to dynamics, frequency, phase, and a host of their intermarried cousins. They become, in other words, connoisseurs of sound, addicts of perfection. Though it is true that the higher you go on the price scale, the smaller the measurable and audible increments of improvement, they are nonetheless there, and for the discriminating ear they are worth seeking out. (That makes the audio game no different—once you get into the big leagues—from any other.) And though living at this very high level of discrimination can get expensive, the advanced hobbyist in any field—whether it be vintage wines, first editions, or master prints—should be able to feel that there are no *artificial* limits being placed on him.

Interestingly, the *real* limits are now apparently in the process of being raised for audiophiles. For some time, discs and tapes have been technologically inferior to the electronic hardware they have to be played on. The Eighties, however, should see the perfection of digital recording and playback techniques, with the result that manufacturers of electronic equipment and (especially) speakers will have to deal with a whole new world of psychoacoustic possibilities. The prospects are good for a really serious general upgrading.

## Stereo Review

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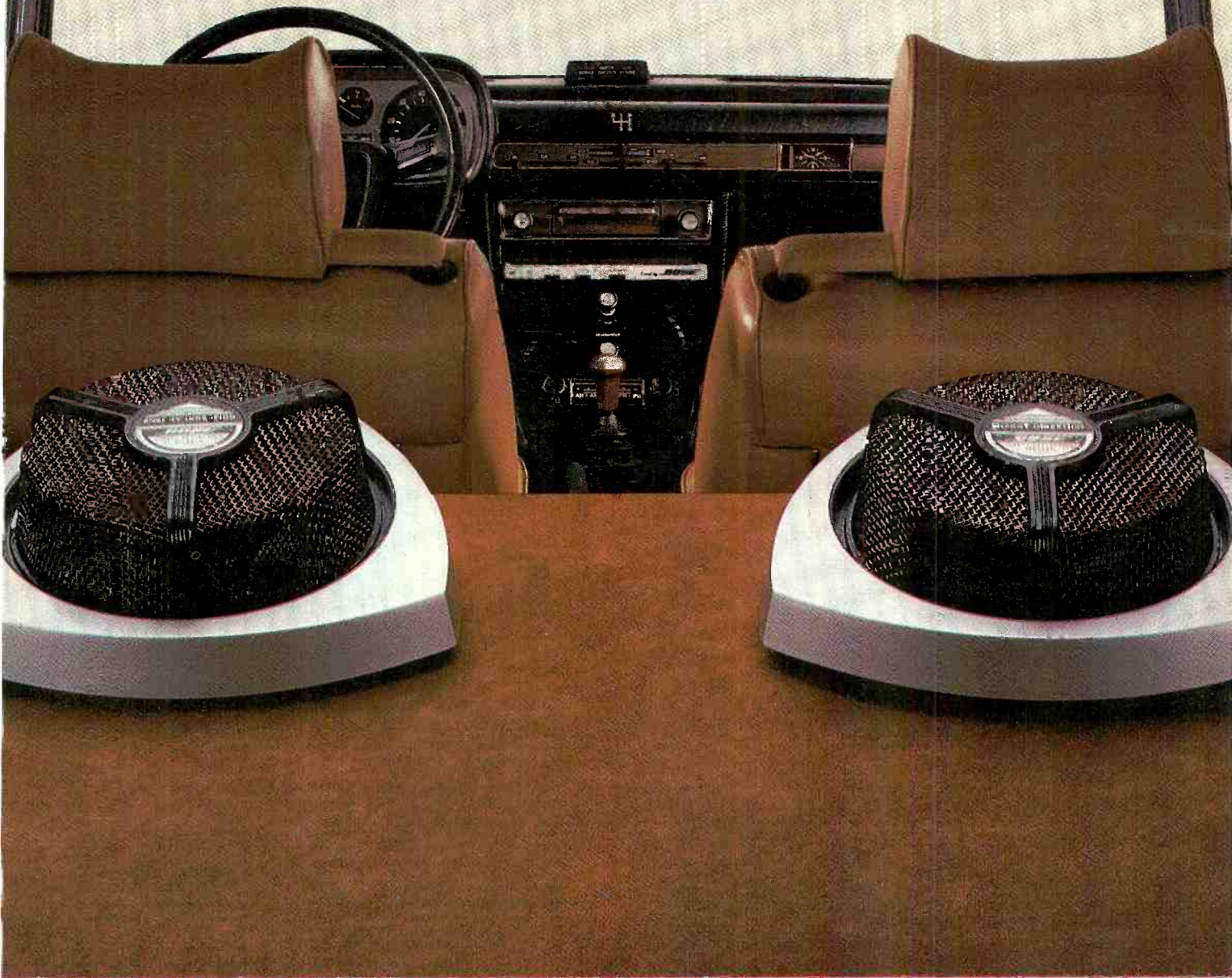


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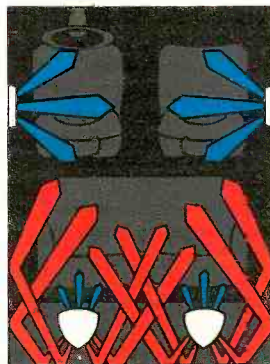


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You hear plenty of loud, clear sound to fill your car with music.

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Covered by patent rights issued and pending.

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The speakers are full-range drivers similar to those developed for the legendary Bose 901® system. But specially engineered for the car.

The Bose Model 1401 Direct/Reflecting® car stereo surrounds you with sound.

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# Why JVC's new metal decks knock out your ears and not your wallet.



## Free tape.

Even though we knocked out the hi-fi world last year with the world's first true metal-compatible deck, we're not the only company that sells them now. So we've decided to stay one jump ahead by offering you SIX metal compatible models from \$299 to \$749.\* Each packed with a free Metafine C-46 metal particle cassette.

One reason we're doing this is because our metal-compatible, KD-Series decks perform so well with conventional tape, you might never get around to buying a metal tape!

But pop the Metafine cassette in and you'll hear the difference. Suddenly you've gained 6dB output level, 10dB signal-to-noise and at least 3000 Hz of high end. Even more with our computerized KD-A8!

## Features like Sen-Alloy™ and Super-ANRS even at \$299.\*

Our key to metal tape performance is all in our heads. Super-hard, low-distortion Sen-Alloy heads different from any other manufacturer's. When we toss in our unique Super-ANRS noise reduction system that adds 10dB S/N at 5kHz and our

famous Multi-Peak recording indicators, you get a knock-out sound.

And all in decks starting at less than \$300.\*

## T-shirts and posters at your JVC dealers.

The arrival of a whole line of decks this good for prices this reasonable is worth celebrating. So we've cutfitted participating



dealers with free posters and even some limited edition T-shirts, all with our knock-out Technical Knockout graphic.

Just walk in and ask to hear a comparison of conventional oxide performance versus metal

particle tape in a JVC KD-A3, A5, A6, or A8. (The three-head KD-A77 and two-color fluorescent meter A7 will be in the stores by December.)

Where do you go to hear for yourself just how much better metal sounds than oxide?

## Call 800-221-7502 and get knocked out.

That's the toll-free number that tells you where you'll find your nearest participating JVC dealer. (In New York, call 212-476-8300.) Drop in to see and hear the technical knock-outs, including the top-of-the-line KD-A8. It features B.E.S.T., the computerized bias/equalization/sensitivity tuning system that fine-tunes the deck to any tape  $\pm 1/2$  dB, special "X-cut" heads that add another octave of bass, (flat all the way down to 25Hz!), solenoid operation, Multi-Peak recording indicators, and a host of other audiophilia.

Stop in and take advantage of the free metal tape with each deck, and free posters and T-shirts, while supplies last.

But stunning as JVC's new metal decks are, free offers like these won't last for long.

**Now you're ready for JVC.**

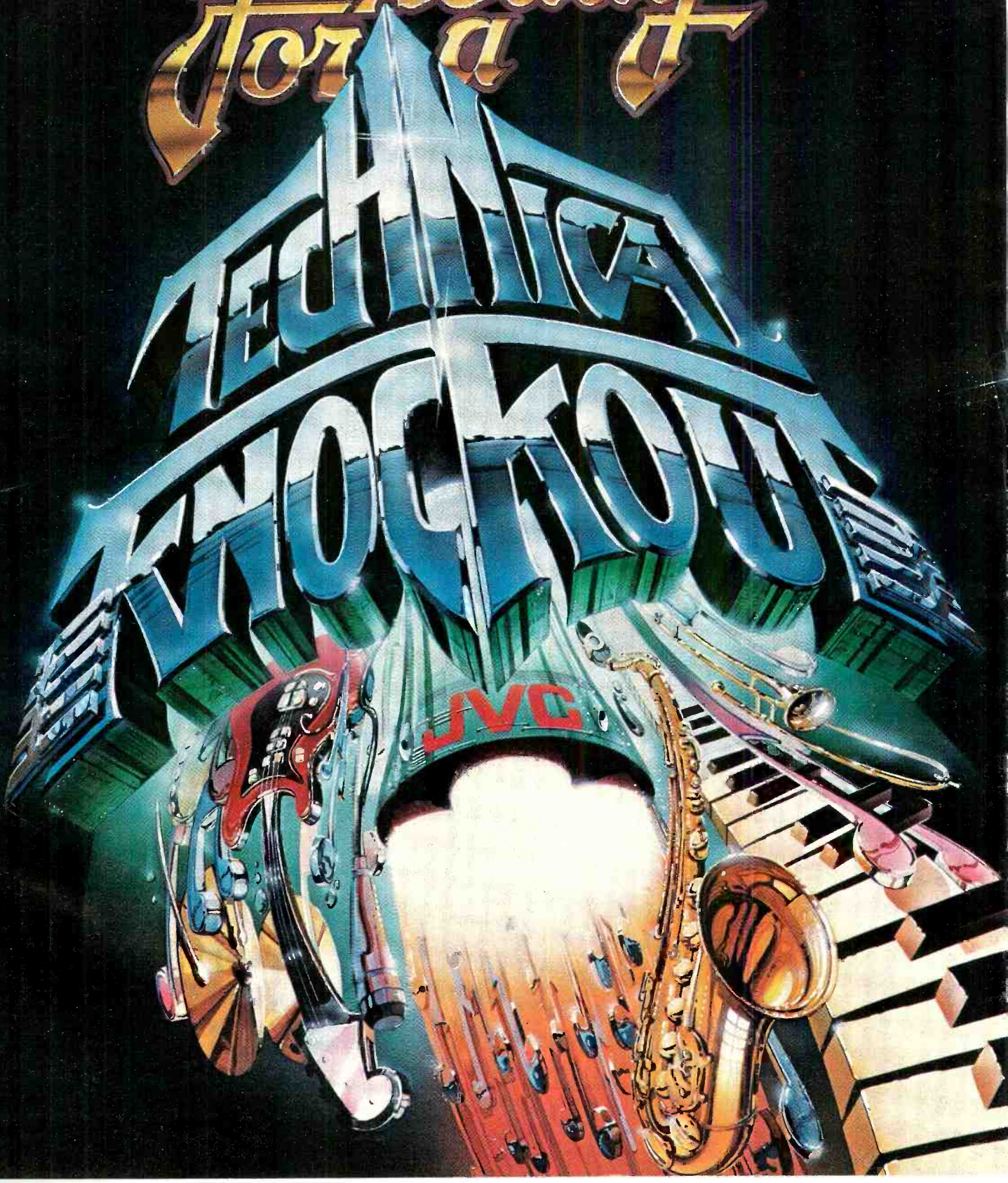
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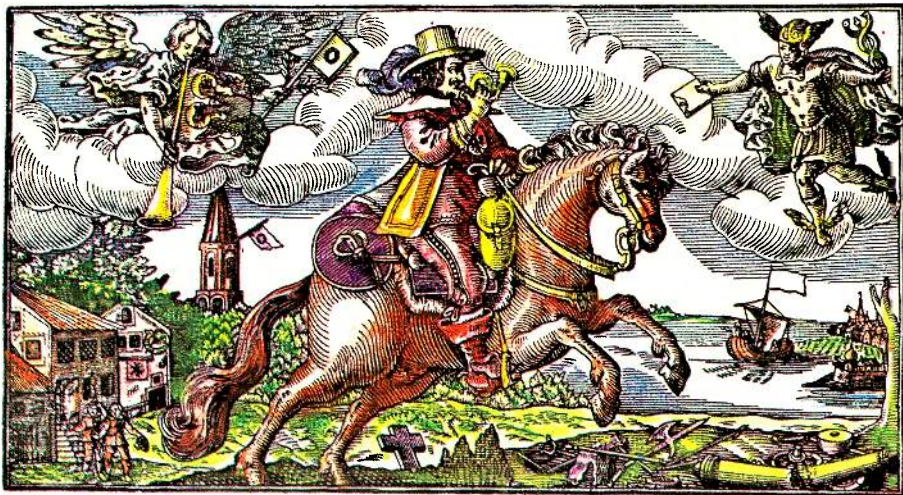


KD-A8 with B.E.S.T., KD-A3, KD-A5

Shown: KD-A8 with B.E.S.T., KD-A5, KD-A3.  
\*Suggested Retail Price.

Get  
ready  
for a





## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Young Composers

● It is perhaps arrogant of me to respond to William Anderson's "Advice to Young Composers" (September), since I supplied him with several of the bombs he so pinpointedly dropped in answering the question, "What set of circumstances produced the great composers of the past, and why don't we have those circumstances today?" You see, I am the "young Californian" he met at BMI's awards ceremony this year.

Mr. Anderson's observations are brilliant and extremely amusing. Furthermore, I agree with every one of them. Looking at it from an arrogant point of view, however, I would answer the two-part question thusly: "There were none, and we do." It is completely unclear to me why anyone would think that a particular century's circumstances or situation or octane rating could have any effect on whether or not it produces great composers.

Mr. Anderson's closing comments did strike a sensitive nerve, though if his suggestions on how to become "great" are valid, I haven't got far to go. I do work for an insurance company and certainly do not plan to teach. I still use Greek titles occasionally, but only when overcome by desperation. I have not and will not ever set Lao-tse to music, though I must admit to having used Edgar Allan Poe once. I do not yet have the money to go to New Zealand, but perhaps selling my TV and stereo will put me over the edge. And I have run my credit-card debts past their limits just so my cash flow disintegrates every once in a while and I feel hungry. It is difficult to keep all this machinery clicking, however, and I do sometimes catch myself getting comfortable and only writing music that I want to. But I'm trying.

JEFF COTTON  
Inglewood, Calif.

### Willie and Leon

● I was quietly sipping my afternoon beverage and reading Noel Coppage's highly opinionated review (in the September issue) of Willie Nelson and Leon Russell's "One for the Road" when I was assaulted by the sentence, "Stormy Weather sung by Willie is al-

most as tired and schmaltzy as it is sung by anyone else."

My first reaction (like in the Martin Mull song) was to throw my drink across the lawn. My second thought was to rip out the page, make a paper airplane from it, and set it on fire in tribute to the forthcoming *Airport '80*. Then I decided to write a letter to the editor.

Willie and Leon's album is a welcome change from the norm and an attempt at a combination of styles that I think works very well. "One for the Road" is a good, healthy pitch for the wide open spaces as well as relaxing listening with such as *Stormy Weather*, *Danny Boy*, and *Faraway Places*. *Heartbreak Hotel* is also currently heading for No. 1. I rest my case in the hands of the people.

ROBERT D. WILLIAMSON  
Knoxville, Tenn.

● Noel Coppage's review of the double-disc Willie Nelson/Leon Russell "One for the Road" puts the album squarely where it belongs but does nothing to shed light on the mysterious doings of the producers. (Why didn't they just split the package up and separately release the half with Willie's and Leon's bands and the half that Noel called "Stardust, Phase II"?) Hell, Willie and Leon must have had a lot of fun with their set, and that does come across. But such company as Maria Muldaur and Bonnie Raitt (on *Trouble in Mind*) deserve to have their pretty hands shook, don't they? Also, I'm puzzled by Noel's reference to Leon's c-&-w album "Hank Wilson's Back." Could this be a "cover" for "Jackie Williams' Front"?

RON WANDER  
San Francisco, Calif.

*Popular Music Editor Paulette Weiss replies: Bonnie Raitt's pretty hands played slide guitar on Trouble and Maria Muldaur contributed background vocals to it. "Hank Wilson's Back," Russell's album of country standards, was released on the Shelter label in 1974.*

### Minnie Riperton

● I'd like to thank Phyl Garland for her excellent review in August of Minnie Riperton's last album, "Minnie." No doubt about it, it's

one of the best albums of the year. Tragedy seems to strike just when you're at the top, and I'm sure Minnie's death was a terrible blow to all the people who knew and worked with her. It will be hard to find another talent like hers, for she was gifted in every way.

GEORGE E. ROIG  
Miami, Fla.

### Quadraphiles

● I would like to second Sumner Kernan's suggestion about digital quad in the September "Letters." In fact, I agree with everything he said. Quad may have been a "flash in the audio pan" to some, but it has "lit up" my entire record collection and still influences my buying. Even if all quad records and tapes disappear from the stores tomorrow, I will never feel sorry I am equipped for it, because I have much better sound than I ever had with two-channel stereo.

IRVIN SASSAMAN  
Tamaqua, Pa.

● I agree with Sumner Kernan about Richard Freed's nauseating comment regarding quadraphonics in June's "The Pizzicato Polka and the Digital Waltz." I, too, am a "quadraphile," and I felt slighted by Mr. Freed's irresponsible and inaccurate statement about London/Decca's "abstention" from "quadraphonicism." Granted, that company has never released quadraphonic discs, but there are several quad tapes, both eight-track and open-reel, on the London, Parrot, Dream, and Threshold labels.

Like Mr. Kernan, I play everything through an SQ decoder (an Audionics of Oregon Space and Image Composer with Tate DES circuitry), and the results must be heard to be appreciated. Four-channel separation in the SQ mode is the equivalent of a discrete master tape's, and the enhancement of two-channel material is equally spectacular. Anyone who still has doubts about quad should try listening with one of these units. It'll make a believer of him.

JAY L. RUDKO  
Great Falls, Mont.

### Idomeneo

● George Jellinek, in his interesting observations on Mozart's *Idomeneo* in the September issue, is deceived by a not uncommon error. *Idomeneo* is not "impractically long." I was responsible for a production in 1961 in which we attempted to reproduce exactly the original Munich premiere, without cuts of any kind in either the numbers or the *secco* recitatives. The running time exclusive of the two intermissions was three hours, sixteen minutes—very little or no longer than *Don Giovanni*, *Così*, or *Figaro*. In my opinion the plethora of "performing editions" of *Idomeneo* is the result of infrangible convictions in the hearts of conductors and directors that operatic masterpieces can survive revival only with the aid of their own refurbishing and improvements.

DAY THORPE  
Blue Hill, Me.

*George Jellinek replies: I am not "deceived" in this instance. I may be wrong, but if I were to consider staging Idomeneo, I would find it*  
(Continued on page 12)

# Tomorrow is here early.

Now, a line of audio components which is truly ahead of its time. Introducing the SAE TWO R6 and R9 Receivers, matching T7 Tuner and A7 Integrated Amplifier, and C4 Cassette Deck—a collection of engineering masterpieces meticulously blending unique features with impressive specifications.

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"impractically long." That Don Giovanni or Figaro (or, for that matter, Don Carlo or Tris-tan) are as long or even longer is a different matter altogether.

rupted by the need to reverse the tape. Is there any rational explanation for this?

ALAN L. MORGENSTERN  
Portland, Ore.

*Certainly: letting non-musicians determine side breaks. This habit was (largely) broken in the disc department thanks to the howls of critics and consumers over the years, but pre-recorded tape does not yet inspire the same level of seriousness.*

● One great disappointment I suffer in purchasing prerecorded cassettes is the almost universal habit of aping the disc version in respect to where the sides are divided. I must admit ignorance about the economics of cas-

sette production, but it seems to me that the additional cost of recording a complete selection on one side of the tape should be minimal. If Advent can do it, why can't others?

W. N. ZIPLAW  
Vienna, Va.

## Side Breaks

● A few years ago I purchased the RCA cassette recording of *The Barber of Seville* (RK 6143) and was amazed to find that arias ended abruptly when the tape ran out and continued on the other side. Last week I bought the RCA cassette of the Schubert Quintet in C Major, Op. 163 (ARK1-1154), and was really shocked when the magnificent adagio—one of the masterpieces of the literature—was inter-

## 'Neath the Arches

● As an erstwhile burger flipper, I feel obliged to correct Paulette Weiss' August "Pop Beat" column. First, *You Deserve a Break Today* was not the first McDonald's jingle but was preceded by *McDonald's Is My Kind of Place*. And second, the name of the company is McDonald's, not "MacDonald's." Honest! Go down and look at your local Golden Arches if you don't believe me.

STEPHEN P. RENWICK  
Portland, Me.

## Discophobia

● Disco is a bad joke that's gone entirely too far. I don't wish to inflict my personal tastes in music on anyone at any time; likewise, I don't wish to be constantly subjected to an idiom I find degenerate and totally lacking in redeeming musical qualities. Yet in any urban environment, where can one go to escape?

More alarming than its inferior musical qualities is the artificial, superficial, and unhealthy lifestyle that disco promotes, wherein control of one's senses and intellect are surrendered to an electronically crafted and packaged mass movement. The long-term effect of exposure to the sound levels typical of disco is a threat that only time will reveal. As a medium of entertainment, disco far surpasses television in the negation of choice.

JAMES R. LINDSEY  
Chicago, Ill.

*The Editor replies: It would be as easy as it is tempting to take Mr. Lindsey's letter, change the date, and substitute "jazz" for "disco" throughout, or change the date again and substitute "rock." Without changing anything else, we would have typical generational responses to those earlier musical styles. But even disco shall pass away, to be replaced by who knows what? We have reason to suspect, however, that it will be at once the delight of youth and the despair of their rock- and disco-raised parents, who once more will ask the question: Whatever happened to real music?*

## Back Issues

● Is there a market for back issues of *STEREO REVIEW* and *Hi Fi/Stereo Review*? I have nearly complete sets in mint condition from 1960 to 1974.

KATHERINE V. ROOT  
10 McInroy Street  
Wellsboro, Pa. 16901

● I have a complete set of the first ten years of *STEREO REVIEW* (under that and previous names), from Volume 1, No. 1, through Volume 22, No. 1. All copies are in very good condition. Is anyone interested?

H. ROBERT MORRIS  
4 Turnmore Court  
Silver Spring, Md. 20906

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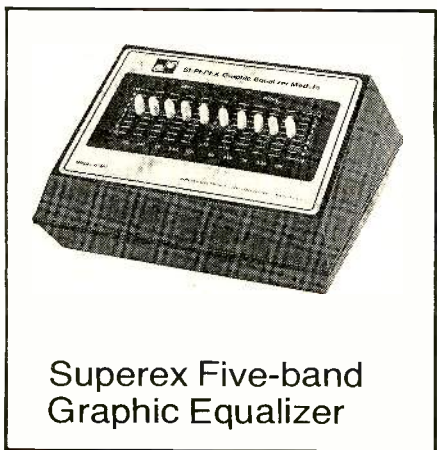
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CIRCLE NO. 79 ON READER SERVICE CARD



## A New Three-way Minispeaker from Custom Craft

□ Largest of the minispeakers in Custom Craft's "Dimension Lab Series" of both small and full-size speakers is the three-way MK-VIII. Incorporating an 8-inch woofer with special surround for low free-air resonance, a 5-inch midrange driver separately enclosed within the cabinet, and a 1-inch dome tweeter, the MK-VIII's crossover points are 1,500 and 4,000 Hz, with a system impedance of 4 ohms. Frequency response is rated at 57 to 20,000 Hz  $\pm 3$  dB, and efficiency is 94 dB (sound-pressure level at 1 meter with a 1-watt input). Minimum recommended input power is 10 watts; maximum, 50 watts. The cabinet is  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch solid walnut measuring 14½ x 10 x 6½ inches; weight is 17 pounds. Price: \$199. For more information, write to Custom Craft, Dept. SR, 819 South Kraemer Boulevard, Placentia, Calif. 92670.



## Superex Five-band Graphic Equalizer

□ Superex, a New York manufacturer of stereophones, has entered the electronics field with the introduction of their GEM-1 graphic equalizer, a five-band-per-channel unit housed in a small, lightweight plastic case. The GEM-1 permits  $\pm 12$  dB of adjustment at 60, 240, 1,000, 3,500, and 10,000 Hz, with separate controls for each channel. The center position of each slide control is detent-

ed. Supplied with the equalizer are a number of program cards that, when properly cut out and slid onto the equalizer faceplate, move the slider controls into predetermined positions and thereby effectively "program" the equalizer for various response curves.

Specifications of the GEM-1 include a harmonic-distortion rating at 1,000 Hz of 0.02 per cent or less, a rated output of 2 volts rms, and a signal-to-noise ratio of 92 dB at rated output. Three switches on the rear panel of the unit control signal routing, permit tape-recording and tape-playback equalization, and provide a tape-monitor loop to replace the one lost when the equalizer is connected to most receivers or amplifiers. The unit has a plug-in power supply in a separate sub-enclosure. Dimensions are 6¼ x 4¾ x 2¾ inches. Price: \$89.95. For further information write to Superex Electronics, Dept. SR, 151 Ludlow Street, Yonkers, N.Y. 10705.



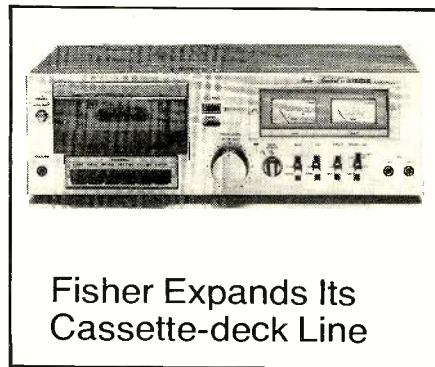
## Quartz-lock Sanyo Turntable with Low-mass Tone Arm

□ Sanyo's Plus Q25 is a two-speed semiautomatic turntable that uses a quartz-controlled direct-drive motor. It has a straight-shaft tone arm of unusually low mass and friction and a nonresonant base molded of a proprietary compound.

The Q25's drive motor is a brushless unit with twenty poles and thirty slots for uniform torque and reduced "cogging" effect. The platter weighs 2.2 pounds; wow and flutter is specified as 0.03 per cent or less. The tone arm has a straight aluminum tube and an ABS head shell with a plug-in connector fastened by a knurled set-screw. Arm length is 194 millimeters, arm mass (without a cartridge fitted) is 9.7 grams, and bearing friction is 10 milligrams or less in both planes. The turntable's suspension is of the platform type and uses four compliant feet.

Additional features include a strobe light and associated platter markings, controls mounted on an angled panel so that they may be operated with the dust cover down, and a dense rubber platter mat. Dimensions are 17¾ x 5½ x 15½ inches. Price: \$179.95.

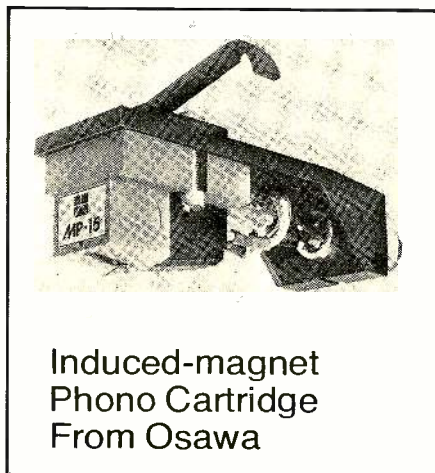
Circle 120 on reader service card



## Fisher Expands Its Cassette-deck Line

□ Featured among the new Fisher cassette decks is the CR 4016, a two-head, two-speed (1½ and 3¾ ips), front-loading unit with Dolby noise reduction as well as two-position bias and equalization switches for various tape types. There is also a front-panel headphone jack. Frequency response at the higher speed is 40 to 18,000 Hz  $\pm 3$  dB, extending to 19,000 Hz with CrO<sub>2</sub> tape. Signal-to-noise ratio without Dolby is 50 dB; the Dolby circuits reduce it to 60 dB (both figures CCIR weighted). Wow and flutter are 0.1 per cent rms at 1½ ips and 0.09 per cent rms at 3¾ ips. Weighing 16 pounds, the CR 4016 measures 17½ x 9½ x 5¼ inches. Price: \$250.

Circle 121 on reader service card



## Induced-magnet Phono Cartridge From Osawa

□ Osawa's MP-15 operates on the induced-magnet principle, using a moving permalloy yoke modulating a magnetic field provided by a cobalt magnet and picked up by the cartridge's internal coils. The body of the cartridge is a plastic casting reinforced with fiber glass. The MP-15 has a 0.3 x 0.7-mil elliptical stylus on an aluminum-alloy cantilever said to provide high rigidity and low mass. Frequency response is 20 to 20,000 Hz, and channel separation is 24 dB at 1,000 Hz. Priced at \$150, the MP-15 is also available premounted in an Osawa head shell for \$175.

Circle 122 on reader service card

(Continued on page 17)



# Technics

From the grandest opera to the Grand Ole Opry. A lot of FM stations play a lot of different music yet still have one thing in common: The need for uncommonly accurate turntables. That's why so many FM stations use Technics direct drive turntables.

That professionals use Technics direct drive turntables is really not surprising. What is, is that now you can get professional performance in Technics quartz-synthesizer MK2 Series: The SL-1800 manual, the SL-1700 semi-automatic and the SL-1600 fully automatic.

Wow & Flutter	Rumble	Speed Accuracy	Start-up Time
0.025% WRMS	-78 DIN B	$\pm 0.002\%$	1/4 rotation

As you can see, they all have impressive performance. But with Technics MK2 Series, you also get impressive advances in electronics. Like a quartz-synthesizer pitch control. As you vary the pitch it's instantaneously displayed by 13 LED's in exact 1% increments. That makes life easy.

So does the SL-1600 MK2's infrared disc-size sensor. Just place a disc on the platter, press the start button and immediately an infrared ray activates the micro-computer. Then the Technics precision gimbal-suspension tonearm automatically sets down in the lead-in groove.

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The MK2 Series. You don't have to be a radio station to afford performance good enough for a radio station.

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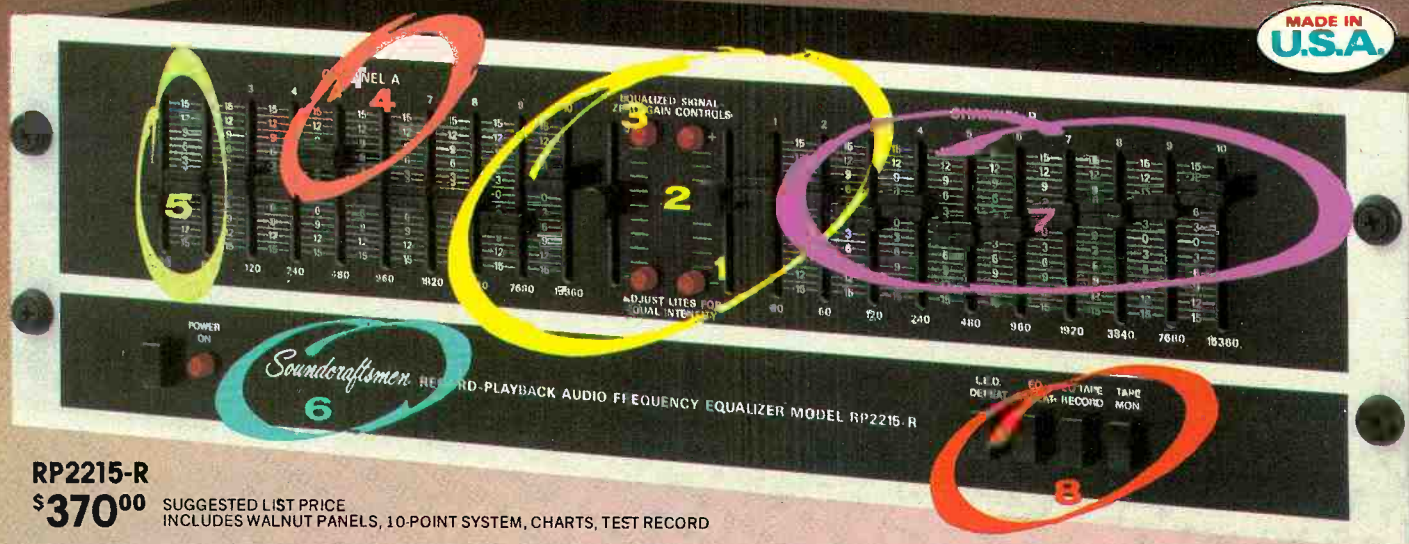
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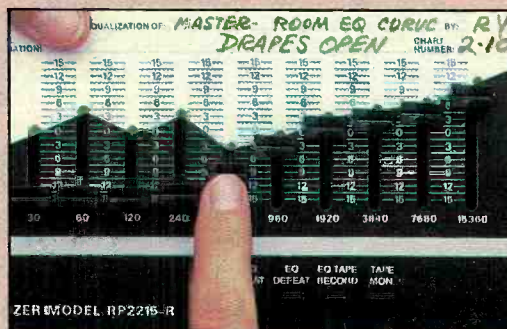
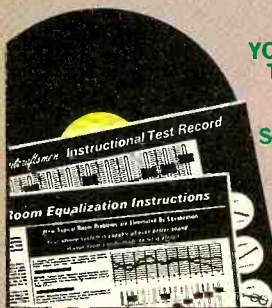
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Record recorded and designed exclusively for SOUND-CRAFTSMEN equalizers. Without any expensive test equipment or technical knowledge you can quickly tune the acoustics of your room to  $\pm 2$  dB, just by following the announcer's step-by-step directions.



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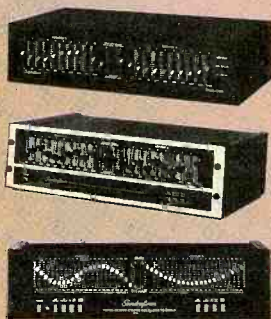
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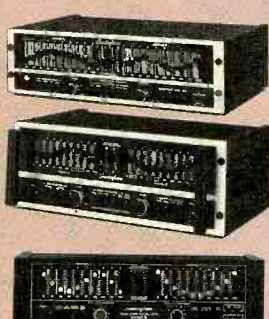
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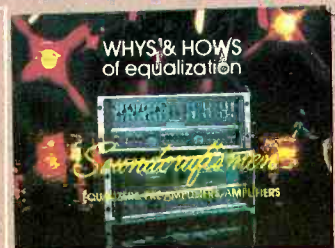
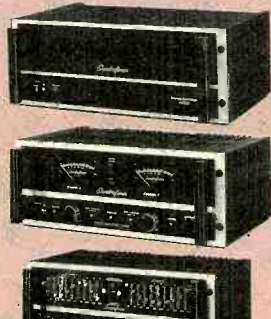
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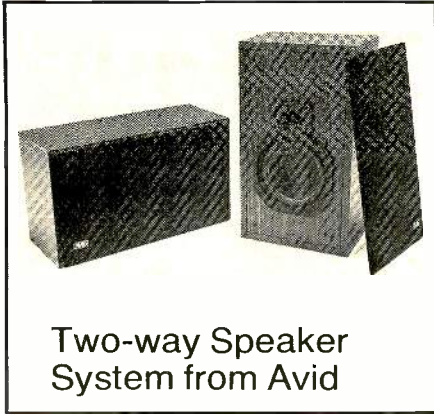
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# New Products

## latest audio equipment and accessories



Two-way Speaker System from Avid

□ The Avid 110 is a two-way acoustic-suspension system containing an 8-inch woofer and a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter; the crossover is at 2,500 Hz. Incorporated in the system are special "couplers" said to minimize diffraction effects. Impedance is 8 ohms and frequency response is 48 to 20,000 Hz  $\pm 3$  dB. Efficiency is 88 dB (sound-pressure level at 1 meter with a 1-watt input), with a maximum recommended power input of 100 watts. The cabinet is walnut-grain, vinyl-covered particle board with a dark brown grille. The system measures 21 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 12 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 9 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches and weighs 28 pounds. Price: \$135.

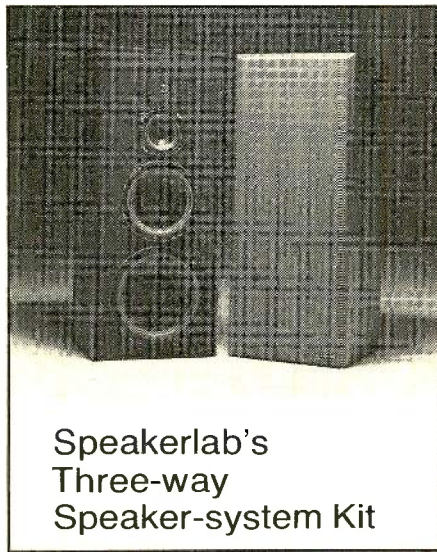
Circle 123 on reader service card



Monster Cable For Loudspeakers

□ Said to optimize the connections between an amplifier and loudspeakers, Monster Cable consists of more than five hundred very thin copper strands wound in a manner resembling rope, the whole clad in a clear vinyl insulator.

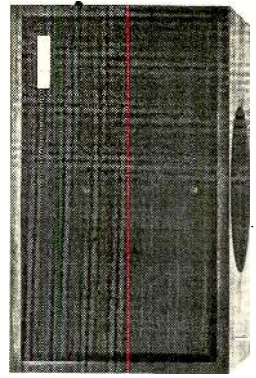
Monster Cable's electrical characteristics (per foot) are: 0.003 ohm resistance, 21 picofarads capacitance, and 0.23 microhenries series inductance. The cable is  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide and oval shaped. It is available in a variety of pre-cut lengths (terminating in spade lugs coated with a noncorroding finish) or cut to order by dealers. Prices start at \$20 for a pair of 15-foot double-conductor cables. Gold-plated terminations are available on custom-cut cable orders. For more information, write to Monster Cable, Dept. SR, 101 Townsend Street, San Francisco, Calif. 94107.



Speakerlab's Three-way Speaker-system Kit

□ The Speakerlab Model 30 is a three-way speaker system employing four drivers: one 8- and one 10-inch woofer, a 5-inch cone midrange, and a 1-inch dome tweeter. An unusual electrical configuration is used to establish the relationship between the two woofers. At very low frequencies, a network shifts part of the signal away from the larger woofer, which then behaves as a passive radiator. Crossover points are 750 and 4,000 Hz, and there are three-position switches to control relative levels of the midrange and tweeter. Impedance is 8 ohms; an input of 1 watt produces a sound-pressure level of 91 dB at 1 meter. Power-handling capacity is 350 watts, with a recommended minimum amplifier power of 25 watts. The system measures 50 x 32 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 28 inches and weighs 70 pounds assembled. The Model S30s is \$245 for the four drivers, crossover, and enclosure plans; the S30u is \$285 for a complete kit (estimated 2-hour construction time) that includes a walnut-grain, vinyl-finish enclosure with grille, damping material, etc.; the S30k is \$330 and the same as the S30u, except that the enclosure has a walnut-veneer finish. For more information, write to Speakerlab, Dept. SR, 735 North Northlake Way, Seattle, Wash. 98103.

(Continued overleaf)



Full specifications available on request

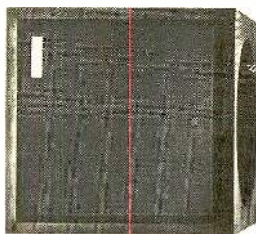
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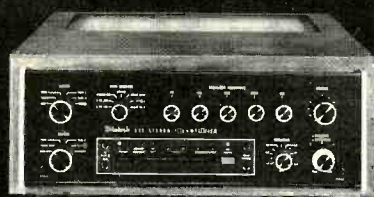


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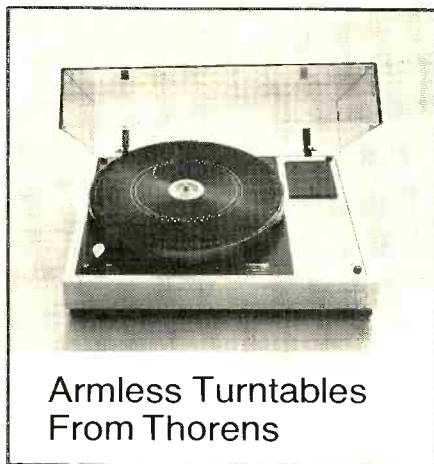
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## New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories



Armless Turntables From Thorens

□ For audiophiles wishing to install their own tone arms, Thorens supplies the TD-160 II B turntable with a blank wooden board to be cut out for arm installation. Predrilled boards will also be available for the more popular arms. Belt-driven at switchable speeds of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  and 45 rpm, the 7.1-pound turntable platter is 12 inches in diameter. For protection from acoustic feedback and external disturbances, the turntable and tone-arm mounting board are on an independent subchassis mechanically isolated from the main chassis as well as the drive system and controls. Specifications of the TD-160 II B include a wow-and-flutter rating better than 0.06 per cent (DIN) and rumble of -65 dB (DIN). Dimensions with the dust cover are approximately 17 x 14 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 6 inches, and weight is 20 pounds. Price: \$295.

Circle 124 on reader service card



Mesa Introduces Subwoofers for Cars

□ Extending the subwoofer concept to automobiles, Mesa Electronics has announced their "Bass Booster" mobile loudspeakers. Designed to reproduce only the lowest bass

information, the Bass Boosters are said to function well with any existing car speaker system of moderate efficiency. For door mounting, a 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch round flush-mount unit is available; there is a 6 x 9-inch rectangular unit (shown) for rear-ledge mounting. Power-handling capacity of the round speakers is rated at 15 watts, with a frequency response of 42 to 200 Hz; the rectangular speakers are rated at 30 watts, with a frequency response of 37 to 200 Hz. Both sizes are supplied with a crossover network and 30 feet of cable. Price for the 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch units is \$64.95 per pair; the 6 x 9-inch speakers are \$69.95 per pair. For more information, write to Mesa Electronics Sales, Ltd., Dept. SR, 2940 Malmo Drive, Arlington Heights, Ill. 60005.



Beyer Electrostatic Headphones and Power Supply

□ The Beyer ET 1000S is Beyer's first electrostatic headphone system. It uses an open-back design with broad ear cushions that rest on the surface of the ear rather than surrounding it. The unit's power supply, the N 1000, drives the headphone elements and supplies the required polarizing voltages; it will perform these functions for two pairs of headphones simultaneously. Frequency response of the system is from 10 to 25,000 Hz, maximum output level is 115 dB at 1,000 Hz, and the length of the cord that connects the headphones to the power supply is 8 feet. Price: \$279, power supply included. Extra ET 1000 headphones without power supply are \$159.95 each. For further information write to Burns Audiotechnics, Dept SR, 5-05 Burns Avenue, Hicksville, N.Y. 11801.

(Continued on page 20)

# Wharfedale. First and everlasting.



The Wharfedale E's are the newest speakers in an unequalled tradition of excellence that goes back to the early days of music reproduction.

In those days, our speakers—like the unique sand-filled designs of Gilbert Briggs—were received with wide acclaim despite the limited technical resources of that era. Today's Wharfedale E's benefit from our space-age technology, and hold a special position of leadership in acoustic engineering.

The design goal for America's Wharfedale E's was to achieve that elusive combination of crystal-like clarity, strong bass and extremely high efficiency. We met this objective

using computer optimization and holographic research, developing speakers with extremely wide dynamic range and no coloration. They've won the praise of lovers of every kind of music. And seem destined to keep that praise for years to come.

A Wharfedale E can fill a room with just a couple of watts. Or handle hundreds for unusually large areas. At any level, with any music, you won't detect any of the harshness or roughness inherent in lesser speakers.

Each Wharfedale E goes through a stringent Quality Control procedure that rejects all but the most perfect speakers. Those that pass represent

the highest attainable audio technology, enhanced by the skills of old-world craftsmen who make each pair of perfectly matched hand-rubbed, fine wood veneer cabinets.

Many speaker makers have come and gone in the nearly 50 years since the first Wharfedale was made. And when you listen to the E's you'll know why Wharfedale lasts.

The new E90 measures 45-3/8" H x 15-3/16" W x 14-3/4" D and has a typical frequency response of 30–18,000Hz  $\pm$ 3dB. The E70 is 32" x 13-1/2" x 14" with frequency response from 35–18,000Hz  $\pm$ 3dB. The E50 measures 25" x 13-1/2" x 13-1/2" with a frequency response of 40–18,000Hz  $\pm$ 3dB. The new E30 is 22-3/4" x 13-3/16" x 10-5/16" with a 45–18,000Hz  $\pm$ 3dB frequency response. Efficiency is 94dB at 1 watt and 1 meter for the E30, and 95dB for the other models.



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BASF Pro II or III C-90	\$2.39	Scotch 212 1800 ft.	\$4.35
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TDK D C-90	\$1.68		
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TDK AD C-60	\$1.74		
TDK AD C-90	\$2.52		
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KP-250 w/FM Stereo	\$103.75	SPEAKERS	
KP-500 w/Supertuner	\$134.95	TS-M2 Tweeter with Adjust. Level (20 watts)	\$29.95 pr
KP-665	\$92.95	TS-185 5 1/4" Coaxial Door Mounts (20 watts)	\$45.95 pr
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8-TRACK IN-DASH W/RADIO		TS-X9 2-Way Surface Mounts (20 watts)	\$69.95 pr
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# New Products

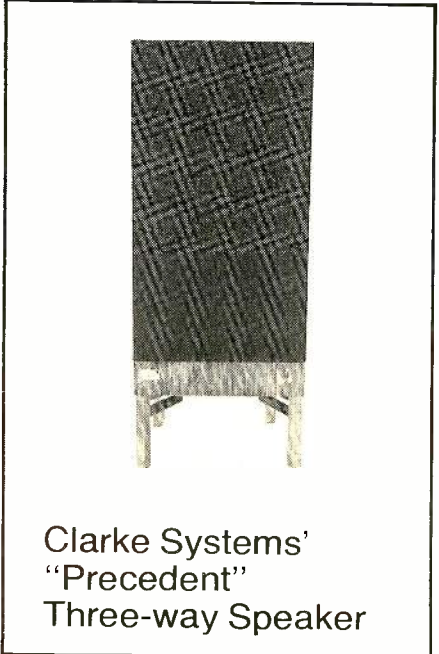
## latest audio equipment and accessories



**New Cartridge From Pickering**

□ Pickering has expanded its "Stereo-hedron" series of phono cartridges with the Model XSV/4000. Its stylus is a nude stereo-hedron, and a low-mass samarium-cobalt magnet is used as the generating element. Frequency response is rated at 10 to 36,000 Hz, and channel separation is 35 dB at 1,000 Hz. With the built-in 1-gram brush in place, the recommended tracking-force setting is 2 grams for an effective force of 1 gram on the record. Nominal output voltage is 0.7 mV/cm/ sec. Price: \$140.

Circle 125 on reader service card

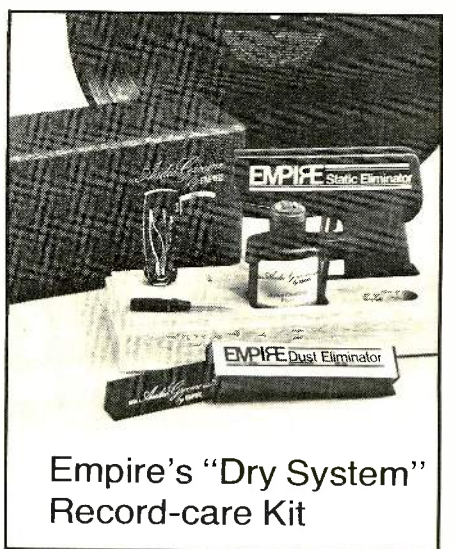


**Clarke Systems' "Precedent" Three-way Speaker**

□ Clarke Systems, a new Connecticut company, has recently introduced the "Precedent," a three-way acoustic-suspension speaker. Among its distinctive features is a tubular absorption element, placed behind the speaker's 5-inch midrange driver, that isolates the midrange from the other drivers and absorbs much of its rear output, thus preventing internal cabinet reflections from being re-radiated through the driver's cone. The "Precedent" also uses a 12-inch roll-surround

bass driver and a 1-inch fabric-dome treble unit, with crossover points established at 500 and 5,000 Hz.

Frequency response of the speaker is 28 to 20,000 Hz, sensitivity is 89 dB (measured at 1 meter) for a 1-watt input, and power-handling capacity is 70 watts rms. The speaker has a nominal 8-ohm impedance and a minimum power requirement of 20 watts. Dimensions of the cabinet, which is finished in a golden-brown chestnut veneer, are 31 x 15 x 13 1/2 inches. Price: \$299. Write Clarke Systems, Dept. SR, 359 C Governor's Highway, South Windsor, Conn. 06074.



**Empire's "Dry System" Record-care Kit**

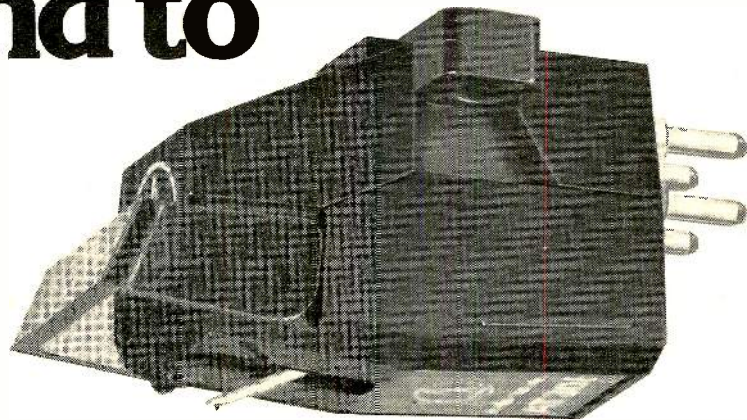
□ As part of its "Audio Groome" line, Empire Scientific has introduced the "Dry System" record-care kit for cleaning both records and styli. Included is the "Static Eliminator," a gun-shaped device intended to neutralize the dust-attracting static charges that build up on record surfaces, a record brush with electrically conductive bristles to remove both dirt and any static charge holding it, and a bottle of stylus-cleaning fluid with a brush applicator. As a convenience for owners of more than one phono cartridge, a universal head shell designed to fit most European and Japanese tone arms is also included, along with a screwdriver, cartridge-mounting hardware, and instructions. The Dry System is packaged in a mahogany base with a black vinyl cover. Price: \$79.95.

Circle 126 on reader service card

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

Domestic inflation and fluctuations in the value of the dollar overseas affect the price of merchandise imported into this country. Therefore, please be aware that the prices quoted in this issue are subject to change.

# At last a moving coil cartridge you can recommend to your best friend!

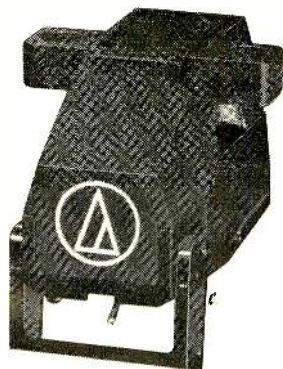


**New AT30E Stereo Phono Cartridge with Vector-Aligned™ Dual Moving MicroCoils™ and user-replaceable Stylus**

The subtle, yet unique characteristics of moving coil cartridges have had their admirers for years. A top-quality moving coil cartridge exhibits remarkable sonic clarity and transparency. This performance can be attributed to the very low mass, and low inductance of the tiny coils used to sense the stylus motion.

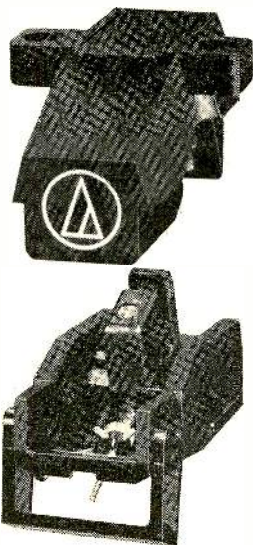
But until now, moving coil cartridge popularity has been limited by three major problems which seemed almost inherent to moving coil designs.

1) It seemed impossible to make a user-replaceable stylus assembly without compromising performance; 2) most moving coil cartridges exhibited relatively low tracking ability due to rather stiff cantilever mounting systems; and 3) output of the cartridge was below the level needed for commonly available amplifier inputs.



Introducing the new Audio-Technica AT30E and the end to all three problems! Our design approach is simple and

direct. Rather than locate the coils in the cartridge body, they are integral with the stylus assembly. If the stylus becomes worn or damaged, the *entire* moving system, coils and all, is simply unplugged and replaced, just like a moving magnet cartridge. Large, gold-plated connectors insure loss-free connections so vital at the low voltages generated by a good moving coil cartridge. The result is easy field replacement with no penalty in terms of performance.



Careful research indicated that good tracking and moving coil design were not incompatible. By controlling effective mass and utilizing a radial damping system similar to our famed Dual Magnet™ cartridges, we have achieved

excellent tracking ability throughout the audio range. Compliance is individually controlled during manufacture of each assembly to optimize performance. This extra step, impossible with most other designs, coupled with our unique radial damping ring, insures excellent tracking of the high-energy modulation found in many of the top-quality recordings now available.

Each coil is located in the ideal geometric relationship to reproduce "its" side of the record groove. This Vector-Aligned™ design assures excellent stereo separation, minimum moving mass, and the highest possible efficiency. It's a design concept which is exclusive to Audio-Technica, and a major contributor to the outstanding performance of the AT30E.

We can't take credit for solving the low output problem. The AT30E output is similar to many other fine moving coil cartridges. But an increasing number of amplifiers and receivers are featuring built-in "pre-preamplifiers" or "head amplifiers" to accommodate moving coil cartridges directly. Thus the new systems buyer can make a cartridge choice based on sonic characteristics rather than on input compatibility.

In addition, Audio-Technica offers the Model AT630 Transformer for matching to conventional amplifier inputs.

The new Audio-Technica AT30E Dual Moving MicroCoil Stereo Phono Cartridge. With the introduction of this remarkable new design, every important barrier to full enjoyment of the moving coil listening experience has been removed. Progress in sound reproduction from Audio-Technica... a leader in advanced technology.

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# Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein

Technical Director Klein discusses an experimental ribbon tweeter with Ray Newman, chief loudspeaker engineer of Electro-Voice.



## A.C. Plug Orientation

**Q.** The instruction manuals for several of my new components suggest that I orient the a.c. plugs in the wall sockets for least hum. However, nothing I do seems to make any difference. Can you explain exactly what the plug orientation is supposed to accomplish electrically?

CLIFFORD BAUM  
Patterson, N.J.

**A.** Unless all your equipment comes with three-prong grounded a.c. plugs and your a.c. wall outlets have the mating receptacles, there's an even chance that the metal chassis of your equipment will be electrically closer to the "hot" side of the a.c. line than to the ground side. The consequence of your equipment's being plugged in the "wrong" way may be (1) nothing, (2) hum, or (3) shock hazard, depending on the internal a.c.-line "leakage" of the individual components.

If you feel a slight "tingle" as you brush your fingertips over the panels of any of your components, it would be wise to check the "polarization" of your a.c. plugs. You can do this easily using an inexpensive neon tester available at any hardware or electrical parts store.

Here's how to determine whether your components' a.c. plugs are oriented properly with reference to "ground." First find a known electrical ground. If any of your wall outlets accept three-prong plugs directly (without an adaptor), the off-center, U-shaped hole *should* be a ground—but it isn't always. To check whether it is, insert one of the probes of the neon tester into the supposed ground hole and plug the other probe alternately into the two other slots. Be careful not to touch the uninsulated probe lead. If the U-shaped hole really is an electrical ground, the tester will glow when connected to one of the slots (it doesn't matter which) and the "ground," but not when connected to the other. If there's no glow from either slot, the grounding connection has been omitted. This sometimes happens in older houses in which the outlets may have been replaced with a modern, three-conductor receptacle even though no means of grounding it was readily available.

If you don't have three-conductor receptacles, however, you may still have an electrical

ground right at that same outlet box (this would be the case with premium-quality wiring done before 1962). To check for this, touch one test probe to the metal screw that holds the cover plate in place and insert the other alternately into each of the two regular plug slots. (Be sure to scrape off any paint on the screw so you get a good connection.) If the test light glows strongly when plugged into either one of the slots, then the metal screw head will serve as your grounded test point. Otherwise, you may have to run a wire to a ground clamp attached to a cold-water pipe (electrical supply stores have inexpensive ground clamps). To avoid shock, be careful not to touch any ground and your equipment simultaneously until everything is safely grounded.

Now unplug all audio cables as well as any separate ground connections. You needn't disconnect your loudspeakers, however. Connect a length of insulated wire between one probe of the neon tester and the ground test point as shown in the diagram below. With a component plugged in and turned on, see if the tester glows when its other probe is touched to the metal chassis of the component. If it does, reverse the a.c. plug in the wall socket and try again. This time it will probably not glow, in which case this is the way to leave the plug inserted for proper grounding. Code the plug and socket with a bit of tape so that you can reconnect it in the same way if it becomes unplugged.

Repeat this procedure with each of your components, including the turntable. If a given piece of gear doesn't light the neon bulb when plugged in either way, then it really

doesn't matter which way that plug is inserted. However, if it glows both ways, pick the position with the dimmer glow.

Next, reinstall the audio cables between components and check whether the hum level of your system as a whole would benefit from a wire run between the ground point at the wall socket and the chassis ground terminal on your receiver or preamp. If you have any components with three-prong plugs and your wall receptacles are grounded, this connection is likely to be made automatically through the line cord. If not, switch to phono, turn the bass up, the treble down, and the volume to a level at which hum is clearly audible. If the additional ground wire to your chassis-ground test point results in lower hum, fasten it there permanently.

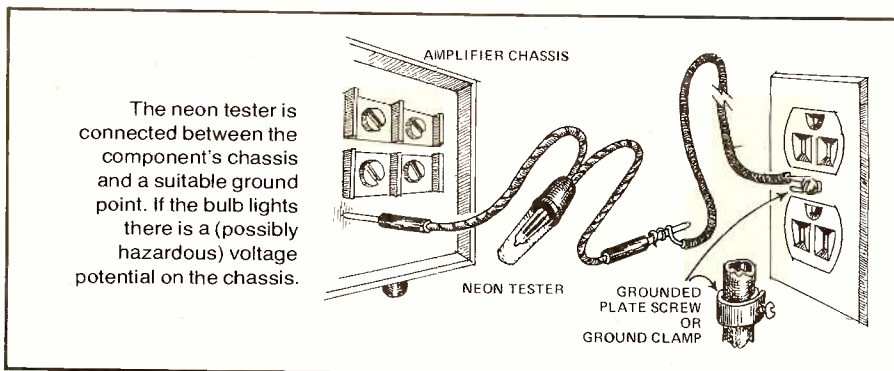
## Mono Cancellation

**Q.** My single-play turntable has acted strangely ever since I bought it. Everything sounds fine when my amplifier is set to stereo, but when I switch to mono for playing some of my old discs, I lose volume and the tone is peculiar. My amplifier works correctly with another turntable setup. Do you have any idea what's wrong—or where?

A. SCHWARTZ  
San Remo, Calif.

**A.** The symptoms you describe would occur if the ground lead and signal lead of one channel were interchanged. When your amplifier is set to the stereo mode, the fact that one channel is reversed in phase apparently is not audible. But when your amplifier is switched to mono, the two channels are combined and the out-of-phase condition causes cancellation. Check the connections to the cartridge in the tone-arm head shell. If the color-coding seems correct but the problem persists, try deliberately reversing the "hot" and ground cartridge-terminal connections for the right channel. If your problem disappears, you need go no further. If the mono cancellation is eliminated but you now hear hum, restore the original right-channel connections and switch the *left* channel's hot and ground leads at the cartridge terminals. If *that* doesn't cure the problem without hum, either the cartridge or the internal wiring of the player is at fault.

Because the number of questions we receive each month is greater than we can reply to individually, only those letters selected for use in this column can be answered. Sorry!



The neon tester is connected between the component's chassis and a suitable ground point. If the bulb lights there is a (possibly hazardous) voltage potential on the chassis.

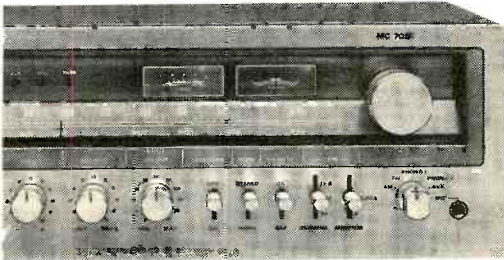


# Zenith Audio Components. Specs, specs & more specs.

You know the Zenith name means great television. Now it means great audio, too. Check out some of the specs.

## SPECS ON POWER

Zenith's MC7051 receiver delivers 40 watts per channel minimum. With both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz, there's only 0.05% or less Total Harmonic Distortion.



The pre-amp section provides excellent tone with a minimum of distortion. There are Hi and Lo filters. A loudness switch. Two-way tape monitor. And much more.

The tuner has IC's and ceramic filters to help eliminate noise and station interference. A Phase-Locked Loop MPX-IC gives pinpoint stereo separation by locking onto the stereo signal of the station you select.

## SPECS ON SOUND

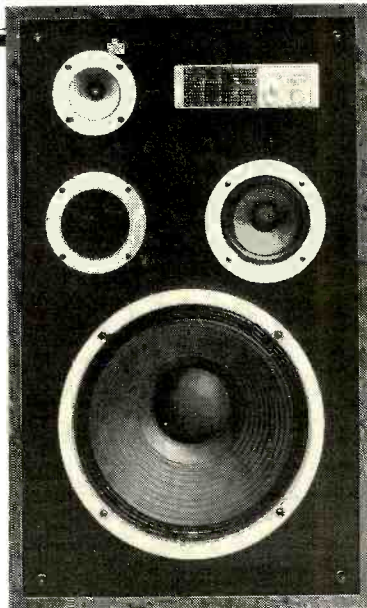


Allegro 4000 speakers are so efficient that comparable-sized air suspension speakers need twice the amplifier power to match their sound reproduction.

They're accurate, too. As illustrated here, the Allegro 4000 response curve is so flat, it hardly looks like a curve at all.

The Allegro 4000 has a 12-inch cone type woofer with a high excursion phenolic voice coil. A

\*Dolby is a registered trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.



midrange with a 5-inch cone in its own subenclosure. And a brilliant 3½-inch horn tweeter.

Allegro 4000's, like all Allegro speakers, also feature a tuned port that uses air pumped by the woofer to extend and reinforce the bass response. And helps reduce distortion.

And for final fine tuning, the treble and midrange controls are right up front.

## SPECS ON DIRECT DRIVE

Zenith's MC9050 direct-drive, semi-automatic turntable eliminates "cogging" because torque remains constant. You get no hesitation. And better than -70dB of rumble. At 0.03% WRMS, wow and flutter are virtually eliminated.

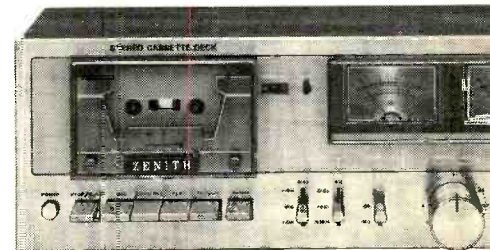


The raised platter is heavy die-cast and lathe-cut aluminum weighing nearly three pounds. The tone arm is a highly sensitive, static-balanced S shape made of tubular aluminum for a gentle tracking force. Combined with a high quality magnetic cartridge, you get excellent performance and tracking.

The MC9050 also includes strobe, anti-skate control and bidirectional hydraulically-damped cueing.

## SPECS ON TAPE

For fast start ups, Zenith's MC9070 Stereo Cassette Deck depends on a reliable high-torque, frequency-governed DC motor. There are three-position bias and equalization switches that assure you optimum frequency response on any type of tape: 30 to 15,000 Hz on normal, 30 to 15,000 Hz on CrO<sub>2</sub> and 30 to 16,000 Hz on FeCr.



You get twin VU meters. And you can set the level for each channel during record.

To make your recording and playback even better, we included a Dolby\* Noise Reduction system.

## THERE'S MORE TO ZENITH THAN SPECS, SPECS, SPECS

What really counts is the sound. So stop by your nearby Zenith dealer and listen closely to the full line of components he has to offer. And let your ears be the final judge.

**ZENITH**  
The quality goes in before the name goes on®

# Audio. The Flipside of Zenith.

CIRCLE NO. 84 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# TEAC TODAY:

On paper, the specifications\* look unbelievable: 80dB signal-to-noise ratio, 95dB dynamic range and 15dB more headroom than you've ever had. The sound is so noise-free, it's scary. And once you listen to the audio performance of the A-550RX, you'll know that cassette recording will never be the same.

You'll hear signal without noise or hiss. Louder louds and softer softs. And you'll never have to be bothered by tape saturation again. All this because the A-550RX is the only mid-priced cassette deck ever to include integral dbx\*\* noise elimination plus complete metal tape capabilities.

A few years ago, the dbx system helped revolutionize professional recording. Now the same technol-

ogy is helping us move cassette performance into a new era.

On the A-550RX, dbx II gives you broadband noise elimination and dramatically improved dynamic range. Signal articulation that's better defined than anything you've ever heard from a cassette tape.

And the A-550RX doesn't stop there. Its electronics and heads are designed to handle the new metal tape formulations. Which means you get the unprecedented performance of dbx II with the additional improvements provided by metal tape. The all-time low in tape noise. The all-time high in dynamic range.

Peak reading dB level

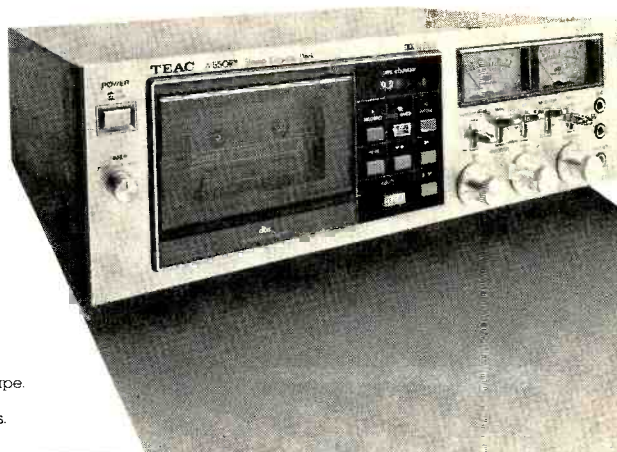
meters help you get as much signal on tape as possible without distortion. And clutched record level controls let you make adjustments faster and easier.

To make sure you have complete compatibility with your current tape library, the A-550RX has Dolby NR† as well.

Full logic micro-switches control the high-stability transport. The A-550RX accepts our RC-90 remote control unit. And rack mounting hardware is available optionally.

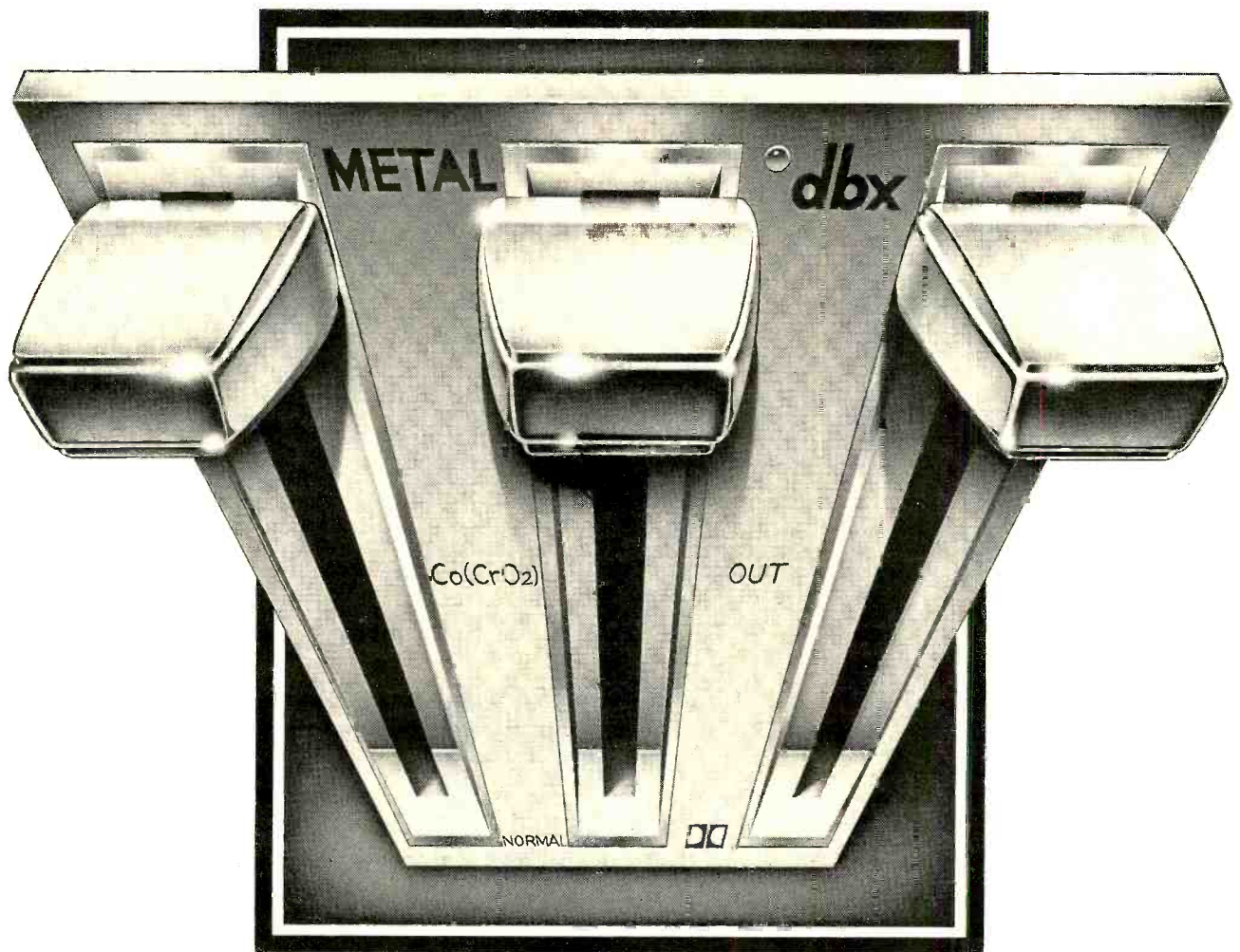
So listen to something you've never heard before. The amazing A-550RX. You'll hear completely noise-free cassette recordings with the broadest dynamic range available.

## TEAC®



\*Measurements made with metal particle tape.  
 \*\*dbx is a trademark of dbx, Inc.  
 †Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories.

# THE ALL-TIME LOW IN TAPE NOISE.



# Audio Basics

By Robert  
Greene

FM infant:  
Pilot Radio's  
\$29.95 Pilotuner,  
circa 1952



## IN THE BEGINNING

**T**HIS being my first "Audio Basics" column, I'm going to be basic indeed and go back to the beginning of component hi-fi (even a bit earlier) as I remember it. These are my recollections, remember, so I'll thank you not to disturb them with corrections! The point is only to give some idea of how things were to those of you too young to remember cactus needles and Capeharts, and perhaps to jog a few pleasant memories for the (oh, God!) old-timers like me.

Back in the Forties, the way to have good sound in your home was, if you were adequately affluent, to own a Capehart, the (then) mighty Rolls-Royce of console radio-phonographs . . . unless you were an electronics hobbyist, in which case you might design and build your own equipment. A few such hobbyists, men like Avery Fisher and Herman Hosmer Scott, turned their avocation into small (and eventually large) businesses, thereby beginning what was to become this country's hi-fi industry.

Exactly when the term "high fidelity" came into being I'm not sure, but the H. A. Hartley Co. of London claims to have coined it in 1927 to describe their loudspeakers. I am sure, though, that the first hi-fi speaker this audiophile became aware of was a Jensen 12-inch coaxial circa 1947.

Enthusiasts haunted radio-parts houses, argued about the relative merits of triode vs. pentode tubes in the amplifier output stage, and swore that a given output transformer produced cleaner sound than another. Everything was built from scratch, either from home-grown designs or those published in the radio magazines of the day.

It was not wise in those days to drop the head of a record-player tone arm on one's hand, for the weight behind the steel needle (not yet a "stylus") could drive it through to the bone. To reduce surface noise, one used cactus needles instead of steel—and owned a sandpaper-on-a-wheel device to sharpen them after playing each record side. *Real living* was having a Pfanstiehl needle, which had a black metal shaft with a flattened section claimed to improve the sound. The point was osmium, good for perhaps 1,000 plays.

The records themselves were 78s that played for 3 to 5 minutes per side. Ten-inch popular discs sold for 35 cents; the impressive

Victor Red Seal records were \$1. And they weren't too bad. British Decca's FFRR (full-frequency-range recording) discs had achieved excellent sound quality, and RCA was already using vinyl for special releases (such as a ruby-red transparent issue of Toscanini recordings).

In 1948 the first LPs came from Columbia. They were all in blue, flapped envelopes (no cardboard sleeves yet) and did little to improve sound quality, being merely copies of 78s edited together (sometimes audibly). The selling point was the convenience of increased playing time and decreased storage space. Since there was nothing pre-existing on which to play them, Columbia produced new players as well as adapters for 78-rpm turntables. That older table might well have been a \$10, 10-inch G.I. (General Industries) unit covered with flocking that looked like felt and was rim-driven via a rubber idler wheel by a single-speed, four-pole motor. The really



posh system had a Rek-O-Kut turntable with a Gray arm, or perhaps a Garrard changer—brown, British, and built like a tank.

The cartridge was usually a "crystal," a piezoelectric device in which a piece of Rochelle salt generated a small voltage when flexed by the needle. It might have been by Shure or Webster but was most likely an Astatic. The needle, probably from Recoton, was held in place with a knurled setscrew. The earliest magnetic cartridge generally

available was the G.E. variable reluctance. It sold for about six dollars, and the "needle" was sapphire-tipped. The stylus pressure was 12 to 14 grams, and since the output was only about 10 millivolts (crystals put out 1 volt), a preamplifier was required. This was a little chassis (about 3½ inches square with a single 6SC7 tube) that also provided the special equalization required by the magnetic cartridge. In due course models appeared with 0.001-inch diamond or sapphire styli for LPs. There was also one with turn-around styli for both sizes. The turning around was done with a spring-loaded knob on a vertical shaft. And stylus pressure was reduced—all the way down to about 6 grams.

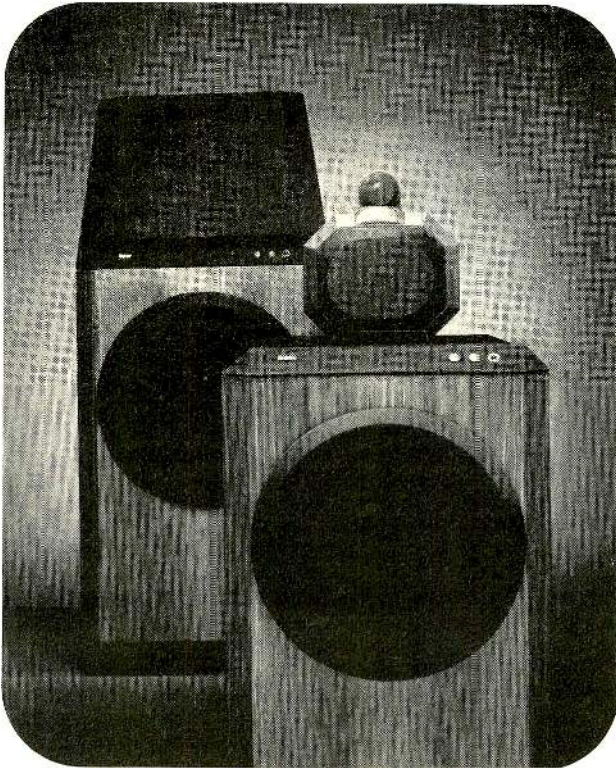
**A**T about this time the public was becoming aware of FM as a superior kind of radio broadcasting. Major Edwin Armstrong, its inventor, had been touting it since the 1939 completion of his experimental station, W2XMN, just outside New York City in Alpine, New Jersey. Broadcasting of music—live music—was nothing new. The big bands of the day all did "remotes" from wherever they might be performing, and the Sunday afternoon broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic on CBS from Carnegie Hall and of the NBC Symphony from Studio 8H in the RCA Building were mainstays. They were all limited, however, to the narrow frequency range used by AM broadcasters.

One of the first FM tuners to be produced commercially was the Meissner FM "Receptor," an eight-tube unit in a small wooden box that looked like a table radio. Pilot Radio brought out a similar device, the \$29.95 "Pilotuner," at about the same time. Radio could finally be heard even in thunderstorms without annoying static. But the superior quality of the signal would begin to be appreciated only as wide-range audio equipment became commercially available. And people like Fisher and Scott were starting to accomplish this in the post-war Forties. By the early Fifties, most amplifiers boasted power outputs of 10 to 20 watts, with distortion ratings ranging from an exceptional 0.1 to 1 per cent and with virtually flat response from 20 to 20,000 cycles per second (use of the word hertz for cycles came many years later). The most powerful was the 50-watt McIntosh at \$250 for the 60-pound power amp alone. Other popular names were Craftsmen (on a chrome-plated chassis), Brook (with an all-triode 30 watt), and (Victor) Brociner, best known for innovative speaker-system designs using British Lowther drivers. And everything was in mono, of course.

Most of the speakers still weren't sold in cabinets, but as speaker chassis to be mounted in a cabinet—or in a wall, closet, or what-have-you. University had a very wide line of units to use in making up your own simple or complex system, as did Altec, Bozak, Jensen, Stephens, and Electro-Voice, some of which made large finished systems as well. Bookshelf units didn't become popular until the mid-Fifties, when Edgar Villchur introduced the AR acoustic-suspension system.

And so it went. High fidelity was a great hobby back then—and it's even greater now. With today's improved equipment anyone, with or without experience, can have the kind of audio only visionaries dreamt of twenty five years ago—and for lots less money. I can't think of anything else in modern life that can make that claim. □

# INTRODUCING THE B&W 801. THE END OF THE BEGINNING.



**S**peaker design, as any engineer will tell you, traditionally involves compromises and trade-offs. Visions of perfection sacrificed to practical considerations.

But does it have to be this way? B&W doesn't think so and they've designed the loudspeaker to prove it, the B&W 801.

## **No more compromises.**

With the 801, B&W engineers have broken with conventional design practices, not to mention conventional technology, to create a loudspeaker that surpasses, in every audible respect, the finest currently available.

The outstanding performance of the B&W 801 is directly traceable to a massive investment in research and development. From the computer models employed in its design to the laser interferometry used to measure

the behavior of its individual components, this landmark in loudspeaker technology represents an uncompromising commitment to excellence.

Critically matched drive units using new materials and fabrication techniques are employed throughout. A computer optimized, 4th-order crossover network maintains uniform sound pressure/frequency response and correct phase characteristics. In addition, a unique electronic overload protection device continually senses the voltage applied to each driver and if safe values are exceeded, cuts off the signal. A convenient reset button restores operation.

The striking two-part enclosure has been precisely matched to the individual drive units with a staggered, in-line driver configuration insuring wide horizontal dispersion and the time arrival correction needed to yield a coherent wavefront. Finally, the enclosure has been contoured to minimize secondary diffraction effects.

## **For the discerning few.**

To be sure, the 801 isn't for everyone. Both price and limited production effectively preclude widespread use. However, if you are unwilling to settle for anything less than a supremely accurate loudspeaker fully capable of recreating every nuance of the original performance, the B&W 801 is for you.

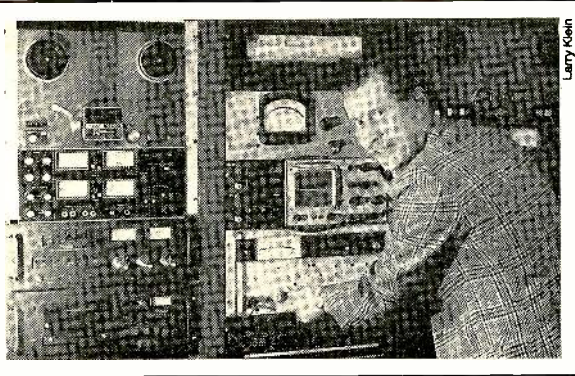
A visit to your B&W audio specialist will prove conclusively that the B&W 801 represents a quantum leap in loudspeaker technology—a singular end to the beginning.

For additional information write: Anglo American Audio Co., Inc., P.O. Box 653, Buffalo, N.Y. 14240. In Canada: Remcron Electronics Ltd.

## **B&W Loudspeakers. The next step up.**

# Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



## Bass Bumps and Fringing

**Q.** Every time I see a graph of the frequency response of a tape recorder, the bass end shows a pattern of ups and downs that varies more widely than any other section of the curve. Also, more often than not, when recorders are checked in their playback-only mode they seem to have a rising bass response. Why?

LEWIS KIRK  
Bangor, Maine

**A.** Actually, the answers to both your questions have to do with imperfections in the behavior of the tape head during playback. The undulating pattern of bass response you observe (see the graph below) in an overall record-playback-frequency-response curve is *not* recorded on the tape, but develops as the tape passes across the playback head. The specific wavelengths (frequencies) at which the hills and dales occur depend on the lengths of the head's pole pieces, the size of the head face, and even on the shielding of the head; the severity of these so-called "head bumps" is affected by the "wrap" of the tape around the head as well as by the shape of the head's pole pieces. Thus, while low-frequency irregularities are to some degree unavoidable, careful attention to head design can certainly reduce the effect to the point of inaudibility, if not unmeasurability.

The gradual, steady rise in bass response that you usually see in a recorder's playback-only graph comes about because the calibrated tapes used to check the recorder are almost always full-track—that is, recorded across the entire width of the tape—while audiophile

decks are almost invariably quarter-track (or, at most, half-track) stereo. At low frequencies, the playback head tends to respond not only to the recorded area scanned by the gap between its pole pieces but to some of the magnetic flux outside its gap. If the test tape were recorded in a quarter-track format, there wouldn't be any recorded signal at the fringes of the playback head gap, so response would be flat. But with full-track recordings there is a signal at the fringes of the gap that gets added to the signal right at the gap, and the response then tends to rise.

Again, how much "fringing" effect a given head displays is determined at least in part by the head's geometry and its shielding, so you can't just apply a standard "correction factor" for all quarter-track heads playing full-track tapes. Since the effect isn't usually so extreme as to throw the recorder out of the customary  $\pm 3$ -dB specification, reviewers often make no attempt to compensate for it. Hence, the tapes show an apparent (but not real) rise in playback bass response.

## Two Heads or Three?

**Q.** I've read that the reason a deck with separate record and playback heads is better than one that uses the same head for record and playback is that in the former the manufacturer can "optimize" the size of the head gaps for the two different functions. Why is there a difference? What is the optimum gap size for record and for playback? Also, what is a "sandwich" head?

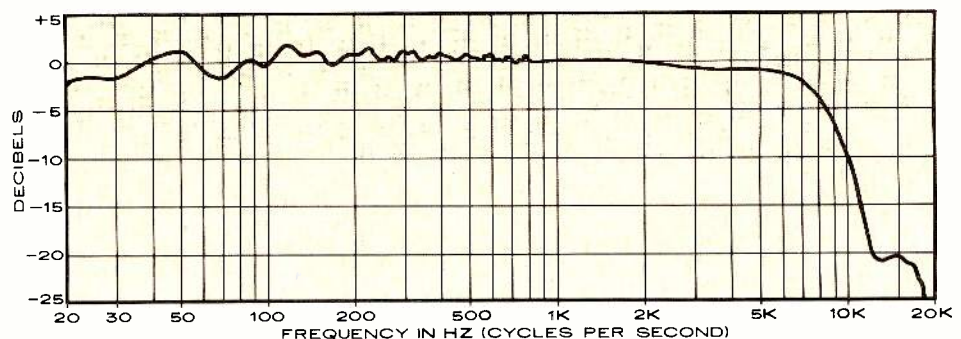
DAVE RUBIN  
College Park, Md.

**A.** A "sandwich head" is one in which two separate head assemblies (one for record, one for playback) are physically placed in a single head case with a shield (the "filling" in the sandwich) between them to prevent interaction. This type of construction is frequently used in three-head cassette recorders because when the original design of the cassette was standardized by Philips it did not include openings for separate record and playback heads. Thus, physically mounting separate erase, record, and playback heads in a cassette deck requires a good deal of mechanical ingenuity—though many manufacturers have found ways to do it. The sandwich head does involve some compromises, but because the separate record and playback gaps are so close to each other inside the single head case, the technical advantages of three-head operation are obtained without having to readjust the record-head azimuth (perpendicularity) for each recording. If this is not done, in a machine using three separate heads, high-frequency losses occur because of tape skew within the cassette itself.

But what are the advantages of designing separate gaps (whether you put them in one case or two) for record and for playback? In general, a playback head gap should be very narrow (that is, its pole pieces should be spaced very close to each other) in order to minimize high-frequency losses. If you want to obtain frequency response out to 20,000 Hz at cassette speed, for example, the optimum gap length is less than 1 micrometer (one millionth of a meter—roughly 39 millionths of an inch). On the other hand, using normal head-design techniques, a head with that narrow a gap, when used as a record head, will not be able to put out a magnetic field that can penetrate the full depth of the tape's oxide coating (normally about 5 micrometers, or 200 microinches, thick). The usual industry rule of thumb is: for best recording results, head-gap width should be equal to the thickness of the oxide layer. So, in this case, there is a 5-to-1 ratio between an "ideal" gap for recording and an "ideal" gap for playback. Obviously, then, when the same head is used for both functions there has to be some compromise in its design.

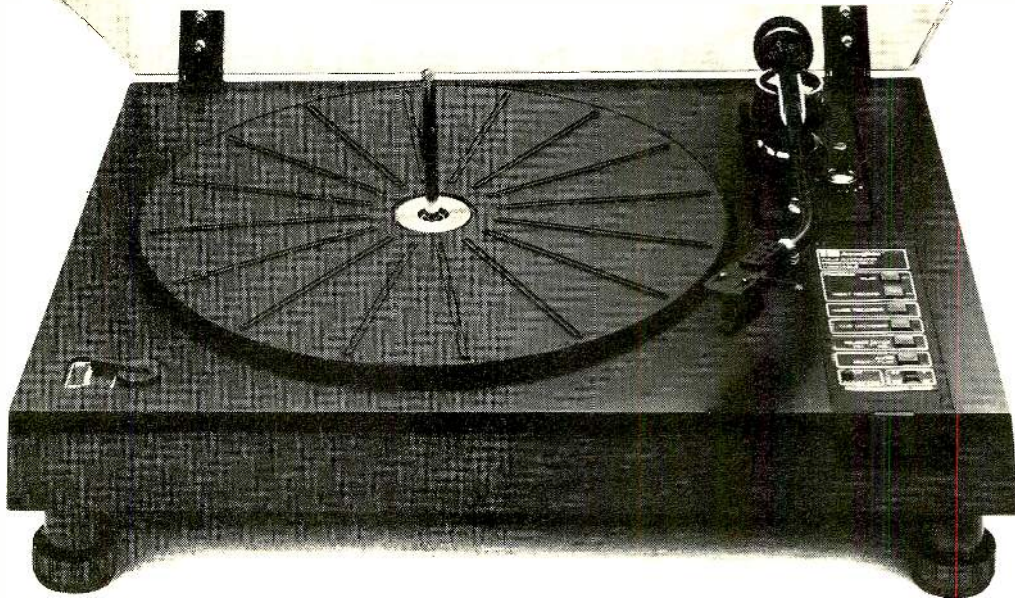
There are techniques that will permit a dual-function head to penetrate a thicker oxide coating than its gap width indicates it should be able to. At the risk of a bit more tape hiss, you can compensate for a slightly wider-than-ideal head gap in the playback mode by using a little treble boost to compensate for the gap loss. But, in general, for the best possible results the recording and playback functions should operate with separate head gaps whether they are in separate heads or sandwiched into one housing.

The frequency-response undulations in this typical cassette-deck playback curve are called "head bumps." Such aberrations are produced by mechanical and magnetic interactions between the playback head and the relatively long wavelengths of the low-frequency signals on the tape.



# Introducing Accuglide™. The computerized remote control turntable.

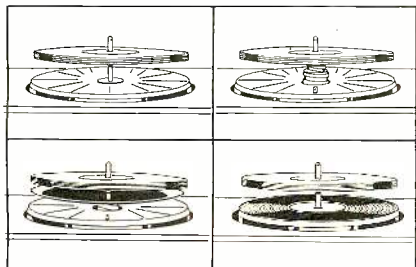
It provides hours of viewing pleasure.  
(You read it right. Viewing pleasure.)



Even before you enjoy listening to Accuglide,™ you're going to want to spend time just watching it. Because Accuglide performs like no other turntable you've ever seen.

Watch Accuglide's unique rotary spindle raise and lower your records like an elevator. So your hard rock doesn't drop on "Madame Butterfly."

You'll see Accuglide's spindle rotate its way to the top to pick up your record, carefully lower it, then gently place it onto the platter. Unlike other multiplay turntables, it doesn't drop them.



In fact, no other record changing system is as gentle. So your records couldn't be in better hands. Not even your own.

BSR (USA) LTD Blauvelt, NY 10913

Accuglide's remote control lets you play the "Hallelujah Chorus" from across your living room. Hallelujah!

Now, listening to relaxing music can really be relaxing. Thanks to Accuglide's remote control you can play your favorite music without jumping up and down.

In fact, you can even raise and lower the volume from 40 feet away. So you won't be hassled by your neighbors if you want to play a hustle at 11 PM.

Play it again, Sam, is only one of 27 commands you can give Accuglide.

Simply press the right buttons on the Accuglide turntable or its remote control, and Accuglide's built-in computer stores up to 27 different commands.

So, you can change a record, reject it (you didn't like that one

anyway), raise the tone arm (so you can answer the phone), then resume play without missing a beat, repeat it (because now you want to hear it without any interruptions), then raise your records back to starting position so you can start all over again.

Accuglide's tubular "J" shaped tone arm is superbly balanced for exceptional tracking. And comes with a precision ADC magnetic cartridge with elliptical diamond stylus. Plus, the belt-drive Accuglide has the kind of specs you'd expect to find in the finest turntables. Like Wow and Flutter that's less than .04% WRMS and Rumble that's better than -66dB (DIN 45539B).

And if you think all this sounds good, how does this sound?

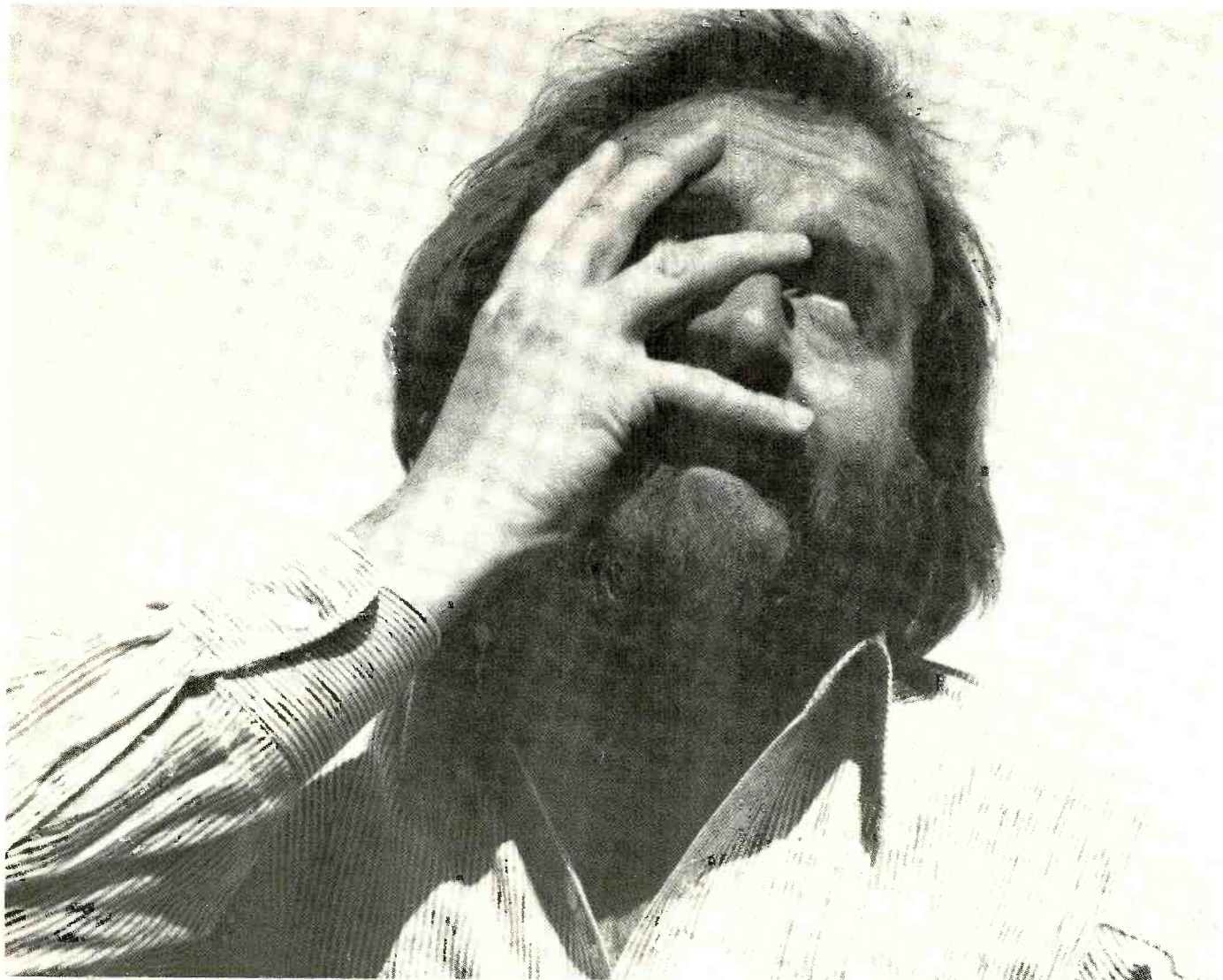
You can have all this viewing and listening pleasure for a song.



**BSR Accuglide™** The computerized remote control turntable.

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# Bought expensive speakers?



## Better not listen to ours!

However, if you're looking for incredible sounding speakers

at an affordable price, by all means do! You will find that for less money than you planned on spending you can get much better sounding speakers than you dreamed you could ever afford. Polk Audio loudspeakers have received worldwide praise because people recognize that they offer remarkable value. Critical acclaim such as the following makes it clear why Polk speakers have become famous for offering the best possible sound for the money.

"Polk Audio is a small, Maryland-based company whose speakers enjoy an enviable reputation among audiophiles who would prefer to own such exotica as the Beveridge System 2SW-1 (\$7000 per pair) or Pyramid Metronome (\$5200 per pair) but don't have the golden wallets to match their golden ears!" *The Complete Buyer's Guide to Stereo/Hi-Fi Equipment*

"Audio experts know that the price of a speaker is not always directly proportional to its quality. Nowhere at CES was that fact more dramatically demonstrated than in room 900 of the Pick Congress where the folks from Polk Audio of Baltimore were demonstrating their speaker line..." *High Fidelity Trade News*

"They (Polk 10's) are a high definition speaker system deserving the very best associated electronics. And at their price, they are simply a steal!" *Audio Advisor-Audiogram*

Polk Audio loudspeakers, starting around \$125 each, are available at the world's finest hi-fi stores. Write us for complete information on our products and the location of the Polk Audio dealer nearest you.

Polk Audio Inc. 1205 S. Carey St., Baltimore, Md. 21230 Dept. B10

Distributed in Canada by Edon Acoustics — Ottawa



Monitor 5

Monitor 7

Monitor 10

Real-Time Array 12  
Reference Monitor System

**polkaudio**<sup>®</sup>  
Monitor Series Loudspeakers

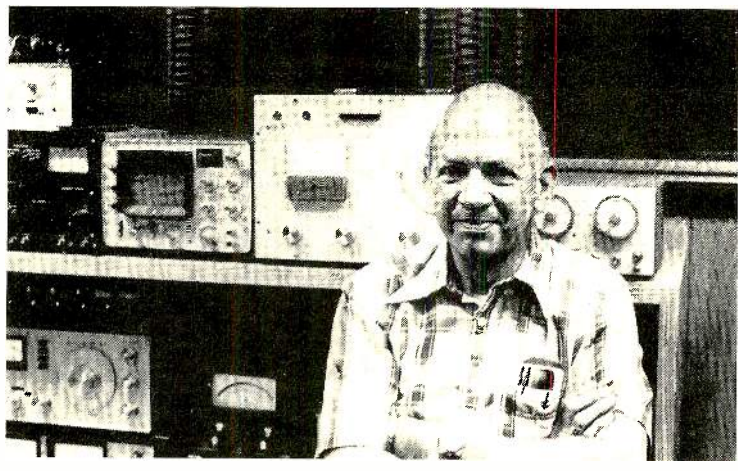
INCREDIBLE SOUND - AFFORDABLE PRICE

CIRCLE NO 52 ON READER SERVICE CARD



# Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



## ● Test Samples: How Representative Are They? ●

**W**E normally test products drawn, like those on your dealer's shelves, from a manufacturer's regular production. This is the ideal procedure for consumer product evaluation. However, unlike Consumers Union, which buys test samples at retail outlets, we request them from the manufacturer and ask that the sample submitted be checked to ensure that it meets *his* performance standards and that he send us a copy of his test data for cross-checking against our own tests and measurements.

This is intended to expedite our work, since any odd test results can be immediately compared with the manufacturer's own data on the same sample. Questions can be resolved without wasting time either in extensive tests of a defective product or in rechecking test results that differ only because our procedures differ from those used by the manufacturer. Unfortunately, only a small percentage of manufacturers comply fully with our request for test data.

We do not, of course, ask (or wish) on the one hand that the test sample sent to us be specifically adjusted or optimized in any way, and it would seem unlikely on the other hand that a manufacturer would send in a review sample that barely met his own specifications. But it does happen, and more often than most audiophiles would believe.

Neither we nor the manufacturer can guarantee that every production unit will be identical to our test sample (in fact, we can almost guarantee that it will *not*), but any differences should lie within normal production tolerances. This is one reason why tests of a certain product in STEREO REVIEW may show slightly different results than tests of the same model (but not of the same unit) made in another test laboratory.

A special case arises when a manufacturer is about to release a new model which will—he hopes—reach the dealers at the same time that his advertising campaign in the audio magazines reaches their readers. There is a normal “lead time” of at least three months, and usually longer, between our test of a product and the time the report is published. Clearly, if a manufacturer wishes to have product reviews appear more or less simultaneously with the advertising for his new product, the review samples must be sent out well in advance of regular shipments. Sometimes a product is “new” only in the United States market and has been sold in Japan or elsewhere for some time. In that case, early samples can come from regular production, although they may differ in minor details, such as panel markings, color, nomenclature, or the clarity of the instruction manual, from the ones that will later be sold in this country.

**H**OWEVER, suppose a product is really “new” and will not go into full production until shortly before it is to be delivered to dealer stocks. How can a manufacturer have it reviewed and the review published in time to coordinate with his promotion? And why would STEREO REVIEW *want* to publish such an early review, since there is always the risk that the product—because of unexpected production difficulties—may not show up on the dealer's shelves for months?

The last question is easy to answer: most audiophiles are terribly interested in “what's new” and like to keep abreast of developments. And so the benefit to the magazine is that early coverage of particularly interesting new products helps maintain reader interest.

The only way to achieve this sort of timing is for us to test a preproduction or “pilot-run”

sample. A “pilot-run” is a limited-production setup designed to “prove out” the suitability of the design for full-scale assembly-line production. Such a unit is often indistinguishable from future regular production in its physical and electrical characteristics and performance. Occasionally there are minor cosmetic changes between the preproduction and full-production stages. There also may be minor internal changes of component values, although any substantial circuit redesign at this point is expensive and can delay production for months because of the normal six- to eight-week lead time in obtaining parts.

Our experience has been that a test of a preproduction sample is as likely to reveal its basic strengths and weaknesses as one of a final model. We do make allowances for such things as stiff or loose control action or other mechanical or cosmetic flaws that are obviously not intentional or inherent. These are called to the attention of the manufacturer, and this often proves helpful to him in producing a more satisfactory product.

One step earlier than the “preproduction” unit is the “prototype.” This is often a hand-built sample constructed in the engineering department or in a special prototype-assembly section. Although a prototype may resemble a final model in its external appearance and even in its basic circuits, there are certain to be numerous detail differences in construction between it and a full production model. However, most of the performance ratings and specifications have been established and met at the prototype stage.

If the prototype has been checked out for us, as requested, it can be just as suitable for our purposes as a later production sample. The chief problem here, however, lies in the

*(Continued on page 36)*

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## Tested This Month

Akai GX-635D Stereo Tape Deck • dbx Model 21 Disc Decoder  
GAS Thalia II Preamplifier • Luxman Model L-11 Integrated Amplifier  
Acoustique 3A Andante Speaker System

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# Satchmo lives!

Hear the brilliant, brassy music that makes Louis Armstrong the greatest jazzman of them all! In sound so clear, you have to hear it to believe it.

You never heard sounds like this come out of a horn! Driving and climactic. Bright and glittering. Soulful and sad. Louis Armstrong was the most exciting, original, influential jazzman of them all! And now TIME-LIFE RECORDS gets his music together as never before in the most incredible Louis Armstrong album ever—your introduction to the most comprehensive jazz series ever assembled.

You'll hear the explosive Armstrong horn...the gravelly Armstrong voice swinging through 40 legendary jazz recordings. You'll hear Satchmo match sounds with all-time greats like Bessie Smith, Sidney Bechet, Kid Ory. You'll hear him transform standards like *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Stardust* into jazz classics.

And you'll hear it all for 10 days free as your introduction to TIME-LIFE RECORDS' spectacular new series—GIANTS OF JAZZ!

## Listen to Satchmo for 10 days FREE!

TIME-LIFE RECORDS, Time & Life Building, Chicago, IL 60611

**YES!** I would like to audition *Louis Armstrong*, my introduction to GIANTS OF JAZZ. Please send me this three-record album along with John Chilton's *Who's Who of Jazz*, and enter my subscription to GIANTS OF JAZZ. If I decide to keep *Louis Armstrong*, I will pay \$19.95 (\$24.95 in Canada) plus shipping and handling, and the book will be mine to keep at no additional cost. I will then receive future albums (each one containing three 12-inch records) from GIANTS OF JAZZ, shipped one album at a time approximately every other month. Each album will cost \$19.95 (\$24.95 in Canada) plus shipping and handling and will come on the same 10-day free-audition basis. There is no minimum number of albums that I must buy and I may cancel my subscription at any time simply by notifying you. If I do not choose to keep *Louis Armstrong* and the accompanying book, I will return the complete package within 10 days, my subscription for future albums will be canceled and I will be under no further obligation.

Check here if you want two tape cassettes and book instead of records. (\$2 extra). RVAG23

Check here if you want two eight-track tape cartridges and book instead of records. (\$2 extra). RUAG24

Name \_\_\_\_\_

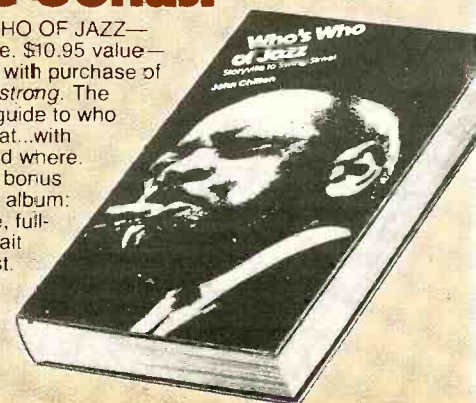
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RPAGW2

## Free bonus!

WHO'S WHO OF JAZZ— a 370-page, \$10.95 value— yours free with purchase of *Louis Armstrong*. The definitive guide to who played what...with whom...and where. Plus extra bonus with every album: a framable, full-color portrait of the artist.



# Listen to legendary performances of America's most original music! Billie and Satchmo...The Duke and Benny...and more, more, more!

**Album after album of vintage originals that you could never assemble on your own!**

Now, TIME-LIFE RECORDS introduces the most spectacular and comprehensive collection of jazz recordings ever assembled. The greatest performers! Their greatest performances! GIANTS OF JAZZ features brilliant artists like Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Coleman Hawkins, Duke Ellington, Bix Beiderbecke, Earl Hines. Plus the great instrumentalists and singers.

It includes recordings that are virtually unobtainable—some from private collections—some that were never even issued.

**Original recordings of legendary performances! Restored in their brilliant original sound!**

These landmark albums draw on vintage material from such labels as Vocation, Decca, Okeh, Brunswick, Gennett, Victor and Columbia. Each recording has been reproduced in the original monaural sound—no electronic gimmickry, no rechanneling. (Engineers at Columbia Records have developed a system of restoration unparalleled in the industry to restore the hundreds of classic recordings in GIANTS OF JAZZ.) Mail coupon today!

**Your choice of 12-inch LPs, tape cartridges, or cassettes.**

## Louis Armstrong swings and soars through 40 all-time greatest original recordings!

*Dipper Mouth Blues* (1923); *Copenhagen* (1924); *Cake Walking Babies From Home*, *Gut Bucket Blues*, *Cold in Hand Blues*, *My Heart* (1925); *Heebie Jeebies*, *Georgia Bo Bo*, *Cornet Chop Suey*, *Static Strut* (1926); *Wild Man Blues*, *Potato Head Blues*, *Ory's Creole Trombone*, *I'm Not Rough*, *Savoy Blues*, *Willie the Weeper* (1927); *Wes' End Blues*, *Tight Like This*, *Muggles* (1928); *Knockin' a Jug*, *Dallas Blues*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *That Rhythm Man*, *Mahogany Hall S'omp*, (*What Did I Go to Be So*) *Black and Blue*, *Some of These Days* (1929); *My Sweet*, *Sweethearts on Parade* (1930); *Some Sweet Day* (1933); *Song of the Vipers*, *On the Sunny Side of the Street* (1934); *When the Saints Go Marching In*, *Jubilee* (1938); *2-19 Blues*, *Marie* (1940); *Pennies from Heaven* (1947); *That's for Me* (1950).



**GIANTS OF JAZZ**

**TIME LIFE RECORDS**

**Audition Louis Armstrong for 10 days FREE!**



**Just Released!**

nature of the quality-control (QC) procedures applied to a product in different stages of its manufacture. All reputable manufacturers of high-fidelity components apply exhaustive QC to their regular production. I have visited a number of their plants, here and abroad, and have invariably been impressed by the thoroughness of QC procedures. From the incoming raw material and purchased parts to the final item packed for shipment, everything is checked repeatedly and little is left to chance. That is why it is now the rule, rather than the exception, for the equipment reaching us (and the consumer) to work properly and meet its specifications.

Some QC procedures are in effect at the pilot-run stage, but weaknesses of design or construction can slip by and run afoul of our test procedures. However, it is unlikely that prototypes have been subjected to extensive QC and we often find these units to be "bad news." We can almost count on some unexpected snag in our tests, some failure of the product to meet specifications, or even an outright failure or "DOA." All of this takes double and triple the normal amount of testing time. Also, instructional literature, specifications, and prices are usually omitted when we receive prototypes. When one shows up on our doorstep, there's a bit of a sinking feeling accompanied by a sense of *déjà vu*. Why let ourselves in once again for the potential troubles of prototype testing? For no other reason than that reader fascination with the newest interesting products!

- **Prototype:** the first, the original, hand-made working model of a unit put together on the designer's bench (there may be more than one of these, and the design—both physical and electronic—may not yet be absolutely final).

- **Preproduction models:** these are units from a "pilot run" whose purpose is to check out the design's suitability for large-scale assembly-line manufacturing. Often very minor changes here can result in better or more consistent performance.

- **Production models:** these are the units that come off the functioning, day-to-day production line to be packaged and shipped to dealers. Nonetheless, changes in parts values and in the internal electronic design may continue to be made throughout the market life of the product.

I have received letters from readers who are disturbed at the possibility that I have tested a specially "doctored" sample and express doubts that they will be able to buy a production model that is as good. Our experience is that the "earlier" the origin of a prod-

uct, the worse it is likely to be, and the more trouble it will give us in our tests. Even a regular production sample, if it has been "tweaked up" by an engineer or technician to test marginally better than normal, is likely to be the worse for it. Some such products have received poorer reports from me than they would have if they had been shipped out in their normal state—to say nothing of leaving me with doubts about the good sense of the companies involved. A regular production sample will almost always be better than a hand-built model or a unit that was specially adjusted for our benefit. I hope that this will allay some of the doubts expressed by people who fear that test laboratories are sometimes reporting on "ringers."

To summarize: testing a product in advance of regular production is advantageous to the manufacturer, whose advertising and delivery schedules can be more effectively coordinated and whose engineering department can often make minor corrections of weaknesses that have been revealed by our tests. And it is advantageous to STEREO REVIEW journalistically, in that we are providing detailed information to our readers about newsworthy products beyond that which appears in preliminary advertisements and new-product announcements. The only party who does not benefit directly is yours truly, who must often do twice or three times the normal amount of test work to evaluate an incompletely documented or otherwise unfinished product. But it is all in a good cause, so . . .

## Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



FOR a small but solid core of recording enthusiasts, the open-reel tape machine continues to be the device of choice, offering potentially higher performance, greater flexibility, and—in the view of some—the most ap-

pealing mix of "professional" and "consumer" features. The Akai GX-635D provides an excellent example of such features combined in a mid-price deck. It is capable of accommodating studio-type 10½-inch reels, yet it oper-

ates in the normal home quarter-track stereo format at tape speeds of 3¾ and 7½ ips and provides auto reverse in both the playback and record modes.

The GX-635D uses three motors: one each for the reels and a third servo-controlled a.c. motor that directly drives the capstan, eliminating the need for belts and speed-reducing pulleys. On either side of the centrally placed capstan are two complete sets of record, playback, and erase heads (a total of six in all). The record and playback heads use Akai's "GX" (glass and crystal) construction, which is said to minimize wear—a genuine concern at open-reel speeds. Because the two sets of heads are symmetrically located with respect to the capstan, equal performance can be achieved in either direction of tape travel with full source/tape monitoring. At either end of the head nest are large, rubber-covered, low-inertia rollers, each of which works in conjunction with a spring-loaded, oil-damped tension arm. The tension arms lock out of the way during tape threading, and the right-hand roller operates a tape counter that reads directly (at 7½ ips) in minutes and seconds—far more useful than the usual counters, which register only revolutions of the take-up (or supply) reel and whose readings vary accord-

(Continued on page 38)



## Introducing the Bose® Spatial Control™ Receiver

The first and only receiver that lets you control the spatial distribution of sound. Focused and intimate for a soloist. Broad and spacious for a symphony.

The first and only receiver that puts you in command of every performance with six separate amplifiers. Instead of the usual two.

The first and only receiver that allows you to play equalized and unequalized speakers. Simultaneously.

The first receiver with built-in 901® Series IV equalization. That connects automatically when 901 speakers are playing.



*When used with 901 Series III or IV speakers, special circuitry shifts energy between rear-facing speaker panels at your command to control the spatial distribution of sound from spacious (red) to intimate (blue).*

The first receiver with expansion capability limited only by your imagination. With special switching logic to reconnect at the touch of a button, four power amplifiers, two headphone amplifiers, a 901 Series IV equalizer, special Spatial Control™ circuitry. And special provision for connecting time delay units for your ultimate future system.

To begin to appreciate the capabilities of the Bose Spatial Control™ Receiver, visit a friend who owns one, or an authorized Bose dealer. You have to hear it to believe what it can do.

**BOSE®**  
Better sound through research

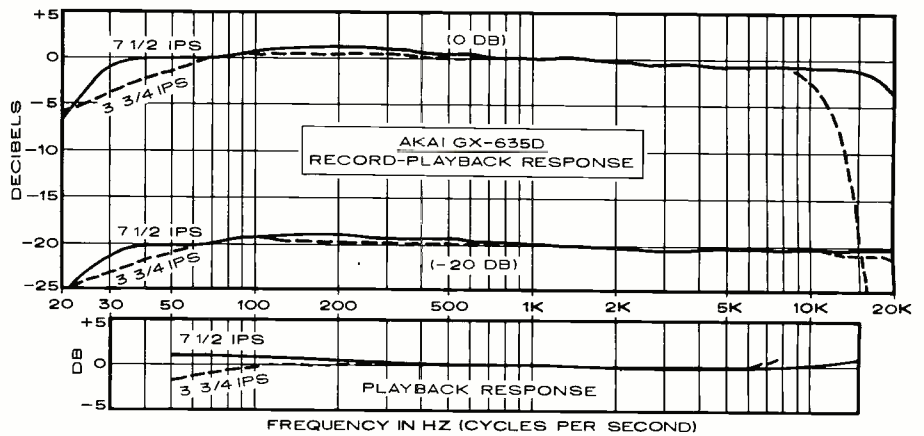
Covered by pending patent rights  
Cabinet is walnut veneer

ing to the amount of tape on the reel. The tension arms are equipped with contacts to activate the auto-reverse functions when they sense a piece of special foil attached to the tape backing.

Below the head nest are a power switch and a three-position switch that sets the machine either to play just to the end of the tape in one direction, to complete one entire forward-reverse cycle, or to play continuously. (While the GX-635D can record bidirectionally, it must start recording in the "forward" direction. Further, if the deck is in the record rather than the play mode, it will halt at the end of one complete forward-reverse cycle, even if set for continuous operation, to prevent accidental erasure.) Adjacent to the three-position switch is a button to select the proper tension for 10½-inch or smaller reels and an orange button, with associated flashing LED indicator, that temporarily mutes the signal during recording, permitting the insertion of pauses between selections. Beneath these controls are a pair of illuminated VU-type meters calibrated from -20 to +5.

Under the head nest on the right side are pushbuttons that control the logic-activated solenoids for the transport functions: REWIND, STOP, FAST FORWARD, RECORD, PAUSE, PLAY FORWARD, and PLAY REVERSE; the last four of these have associated LED indicators. Below the transport buttons are two large, dual-concentric controls for mixing microphone and line-level inputs. Each of these is equipped with an adjustable "memory stop" ring so that during fade-down and fade-up operations one can easily return to a predetermined setting.

At the bottom of the front panel is a head-phone jack with volume control (the control also affects the rear line-output jacks but not the VU-meter readings); a source/tape monitor switch; a timer-start switch; and four pushbuttons to set tape speed, bias for two types of tape, and left- and right-channel RECORD MODE safety switches. Standard phone



jacks are also on the front panel to accommodate medium-impedance (600-ohm) microphones. The rear panel has the customary phono-jack line inputs and an eleven-pin socket for connecting a remote-control accessory (\$57.75).

The Akai GX-635D measures approximately 17½ inches wide, 19 inches high, and 10 inches deep, and it weighs about 46½ pounds. Price: \$995. The same unit is available as the Model GX-635DB, with built-in Dolby-B noise reduction, for an additional \$100.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The instruction manual that comes with the GX-635D divides many of the currently popular audiophile tapes into two groups: low-noise and wide-range, for which there are corresponding bias-selection pushbuttons on the machine. The test material that came with our sample indicated that its "low-noise" position had been adjusted for 3M 176 (equivalent to 3M 211, which we used) and its "wide-range" position for Maxell UD (which we also used). In checking the effect of switching between the

two bias positions with a variety of tapes, we found that the difference was rather slight—perhaps 2 dB at 20,000 Hz. With the wide-range position, a very slightly better signal-to-noise ratio could be obtained with 3M 206; arguably the best overall performance seemed to be with Memorex Quantum used in the low-noise position! All of this suggests that, while the audible differences are not great, users should not hesitate to experiment somewhat to find the best combination of tape and bias-switch setting for a given tape.

We checked the playback frequency response with Ampex test tapes. As the accompanying graph indicates, response was commendably flat throughout the range of our calibrated sources. More commendable: even at the highest frequency on the tape (15,000 Hz at 7½ ips) the response discrepancy between forward and reverse was less than 1 dB.

A line-level input of 55 millivolts was sufficient to produce a 0-VU indication on the meters, and obtainable output at this level was 775 millivolts, as specified. Using the recommended 600-ohm source impedance for the microphone input, 0.024 millivolt produced a 0-dB reading, and overload of the microphone section did not occur until an input of 55 millivolts was applied.

Since the forward and reverse record-playback responses matched so closely, a composite trace of the two directions is shown in the graph. At a -20-dB level, response was down less than 2 dB at 20,000 Hz with any of the tapes tested and at either speed; indeed, at 7½ ips the sharp cutoff did not take place until approximately 26,000 Hz—well beyond the scale of our chart paper. At a 0-VU recording level, however, the difference between the two speeds showed up very clearly. The 3¾-ips performance was not markedly better than that of a top-rated cassette deck, but at 7½ ips the response was down only about 4 dB at 20,000 Hz.

The playback distortion of a 1,000-Hz tone recorded at a 0-VU level ranged from 0.2 to 0.4 per cent, depending on tape and speed. The 3 per cent distortion point was not reached until an input of between +9 and +10 dB was supplied, and the resulting signal-to-noise ratios (plus or minus a decibel or so for different tapes) averaged approximately 62 dB (unweighted), 68 dB (A-weighted), and 64 dB (CCIR/ARM-weighted) at the 7½-ips speed. At 3¾ ips the figures averaged about 4 db lower. Noise from the microphone inputs added a maximum of 5 dB, less than that at normal control settings. (Continued on page 40)



**NO RUM REFLECTS  
PUERTO RICO  
LIKE RONRICO.**



Puerto Rico is the Rum Island, the world's foremost rum-producing region. And Ronrico is the rum—authentic Puerto Rican rum since 1860. Ronrico's smooth, light taste has been the pride of six generations of Puerto Rican rum masters. One sip will tell you why.

**RONRICO: AUTHENTIC  
RUM OF PUERTO RICO.**



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750 ML (25.4 FL. OZ.)

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1860

**PUERTO RICAN  
RUM**

*This rum is produced and bottled only in Puerto Rico,  
reflecting over 144 years of skill and dedication  
in the making of every drop.*

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Fast-forward and rewind times were 100 seconds for 1,800 feet of tape on a 7-inch reel. The tape pack, though not wound perfectly, showed no signs of overly tight or loose winding. The range of the pitch control somewhat exceeded  $\pm 7$  per cent. The metering, though highly legible, was a slight disappointment. The 0-VU indication was referred to the old "Ampex Operating Level" of 185 nanoWebers/meter (well below the capacity of today's best tapes). Presumably this low level com-

pensates for the rather slow response time of the meters, which underread by 20 to 30 per cent relative to true VU characteristics.

● **Comment.** The Akai GX-635D proved a more than capable performer not only on our test bench but in our listening tests. Tape handling was smooth and positive, even with the heavy load of 10½-inch reels. The plastic reel adaptors for large reels are ingeniously designed to accommodate both the thicker plas-

tic and the thinner aluminum hubs. The turn-around cycle from forward to reverse was somewhat slow (taking between three and four seconds), yet even this had its redeeming aspect in that no combination of "fast button" exercises could induce the deck to snarl or snap a tape. And, overall, the sound quality far exceeded that needed for dubbing any source material we could find.

Circle 140 on reader service card



**T**HE dbx noise-reduction (more accurately, noise-prevention) system has earned itself a solid place in professional recording circles as well as among advanced home recordists. Like the Dolby system, the dbx process employs signal compression at the recording end and a complementary expansion in reproduction. Other than that, the two systems have little in common.

The dbx compression and expansion takes place across the entire audio-frequency band, and at all levels. This is in contrast to Dolby B, which affects only high frequencies, and at low levels. Some high-frequency pre-emphasis and de-emphasis are used in the dbx process, but basically it is not frequency or level sensitive. The fact that it is not level sensitive simplifies its use, since it is not necessary to match signal levels carefully in encoding and decoding to obtain the correct results.

Several years ago, dbx demonstrated some specially encoded phonograph records that could be played through a matching dbx decoder to expand the dynamic range of phonograph reproduction by some 30 dB. The results were spectacular, but a limited record repertoire and expensive decoders prevented the format from being more than a technical curiosity at that time.

Now, however, dbx has launched a determined effort in the disc area. Several of their recent home and semiprofessional encoder/decoder devices (Models 122, 124, 128) have a "dbx Disc Decode" switch, and with the si-

multaneous announcement of the new dbx record series and a new low-price dbx disc decoder, the Model 21, it is apparent that dbx means business.

Unlike Dolby-B-processed tapes, the dbx-encoded discs are utterly unlistenable (shrill and noisy) unless played through a proper decoder. A low-price decoder was vital to the acceptance of the dbx disc system, and the dbx Model 21 answers that need. It is a 2:1 expander, complementing the compression that was used in cutting the disc masters and including the necessary high-frequency de-emphasis. It is designed to function only as a decoder and is connected into the tape-monitoring path of an amplifier or between a preamplifier and power amplifier. It has no level controls or other adjustments, and it can deliver up to 4 volts rms output with no more than 0.2 per cent total harmonic distortion.

The dbx Model 21 is compact, measuring 8¾ inches wide, 2¾ inches high, and 6¾ inches deep. It is powered from the 120-volt a.c. line and can be left on continuously or switched by the amplifier power switch. Its walnut-finish wood side panels contrast with the black front panel and silver markings. One of its two pushbuttons switches the decoding circuits in or out of the signal path (the latter for playing standard discs in the event that the decoder is between the preamplifier and power amplifier). The other button is a tape-monitor switch, replacing the one in the amplifier when the decoder is connected at that point.

A screwdriver adjustment in the rear matches the playback level from a non-dbx disc to that of an encoded disc.

The dbx process halves the dynamic range of a program before it is recorded on a master disc, so that if there's a 100-dB dynamic range in the original program it becomes 50 dB on the record. In playback, the program is expanded to the original 100 dB, which also reduces the record noise by about 30 dB, making it completely inaudible. To make the system work properly and unobtrusively, it was necessary to design some very refined detectors, and the compression/expansion time constants were carefully selected and closely matched. This part of the design process had been worked out earlier in the development of the dbx tape systems, so that relatively little more had to be done to create the Model 21 disc decoder. Owners of the other dbx units with a "dbx Disc Decode" switch can use them to decode a dbx disc.

To overcome the "chicken or egg" problem (which was one of the factors that limited the commercial viability of the earlier dbx disc releases), dbx searched for suitable recorded material that could be remastered with the dbx process and released for public sale. In their search, emphasis was placed on recordings whose master tapes were as free as possible of noise and distortion, since the final records could be no better than the master tapes. Preference was also given to recordings that were originally made with either dbx or Dolby noise reduction, as well as to direct-to-disc and digital recordings.

A number of suitable master tapes were located, and contractual arrangements were made with the record companies owning them. The labels represented in the initial series include Vox, Desmar, Sine Qua Non, Orion, Desto, and Chalfont. A number of others will be added in future releases. With dbx assuming the costs, the master tapes (rather than second-generation copies) were used to cut new disc masters through dbx encoders. The discs were processed conventionally, with dbx buying them and assuming the role of distributor (although the record companies are free to market the dbx discs through other channels if they wish). By removing the financial risk from the release of the dbx discs, dbx hopes to spur their acceptance and establish the system as a bona fide record medium.

In the first phase of the program, dbx expects to release some twenty-five albums by the end of 1979 and to reach a total of one  
(Continued on page 42)



# Crystal-clear reasons for receiver-size separates.

If you're trying to choose between a receiver and separate components, we have a suggestion: Settle for both.

Now you can have the compact size of a receiver with the quality of separates.

Sony's new ST-J60 tuner and TA-F40 amplifier are a slim, dynamic duo no larger than a medium-size receiver but with crystalline, powerful separate-component qualities.

The tuner is quartz-crystal locked with a digital synthesizer for drift-free stability and speedy touch tuning. Distortion is virtually non-existent and our slim-line music lover is an FM specialist.

Convenient auto tuning lets you preset eight stations. Simply press the appropriate button and an LED light blinks as the tuner searches for the "memorized" station.

Two other buttons let you manually scan the broadcast scale in either direction. And a Calibrated Tone feature assists you when recording with a tape deck.

Our new thin-line TA-F40 integrated amplifier snuggles up to its tuner partner for extremely clean, noise-free sound in a beautifully sized package.

Total harmonic distortion (THD) is one of the lowest in this class of amplifiers. Fifty watts per channel

surge through a newly developed Pulse Power Supply (PPS). And Sony's exclusive Heat Sink with Heat Pipe ingeniously drains away heat to reduce distortion.



a high-performance MC cartridge with your turntable.

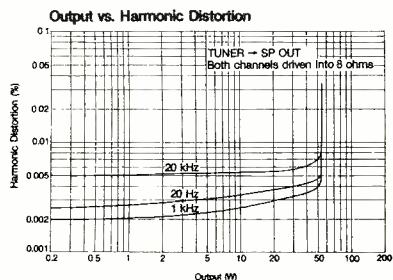
Sony's new, compact, performance-engineered ST-J60 tuner and TA-F40 amplifier. Two crystal-clear reasons to settle for everything.



ST-J60

TA-F40

LED peak power indicators pinpoint output in six steps for each channel. Light-touch function switches give you smooth control for any stereo mission. And the TA-F40 is so quiet you can even use



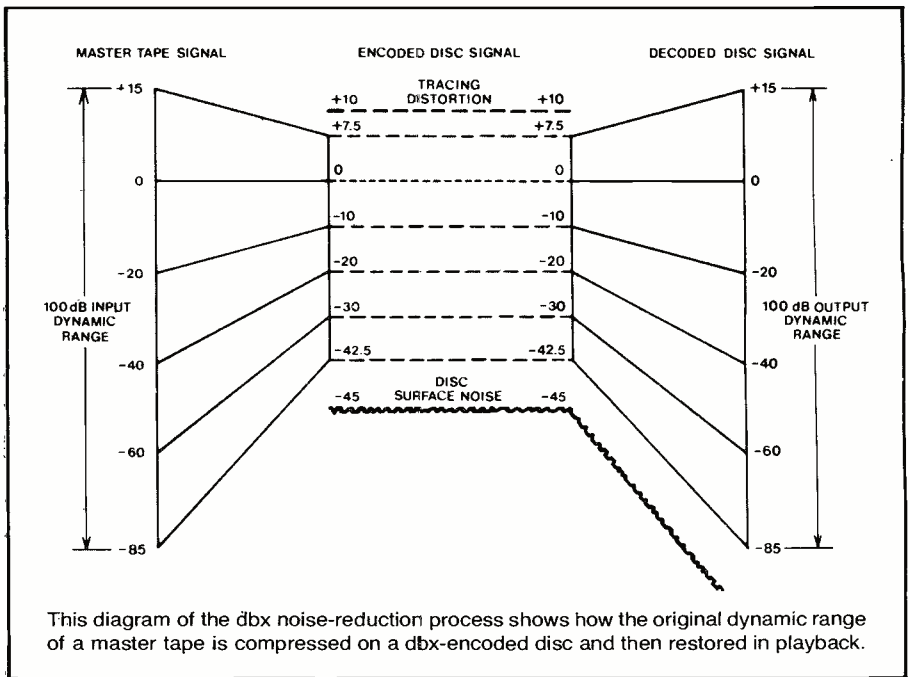
# SONY

hundred albums by the end of 1980. The records, which are priced at \$8, \$12, or \$16, depending on the original label, can be purchased from dbx dealers (a special demonstration record made for dbx by Mark Levinson is priced at \$20). The dbx Model 21 decoder is \$109.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Conventional performance measurements on the dbx Model 21 are not possible. The only specification that can theoretically be checked without using a dbx-encoded input signal is the output noise level of -100 dB referred to 1 volt (A weighted). Since that is some 20 dB lower than our minimum measurement capability, we evaluated the Model 21 and the dbx discs entirely by listening.

● **Comment.** At the time the decoder became available to us, only about six of the dbx discs had been released. Those few records were played many times as we listened critically for flaws in the dbx system. Our task was difficult indeed, for the system is remarkably accurate in its operation; the subjective effect is so stunning that it is not easy to concentrate on listening for flaws instead of enjoying disc reproduction the likes of which we have experienced only once before—with the earlier dbx discs!

The most striking thing about the sound from the dbx discs is the *total* absence of the usual record noises—hiss, rumble, grain mold, and the like. The noise is not merely low, it is *absent!* The dynamic range—about 90 dB—of the decoded records far transcends that of any other program material prepared for the home. So far, only digital recordings have achieved this total absence of noise, but they are not yet available in *digital form* for home listening. There are other differences between an all-digital recording and a dbx-encoded recording, and they probably should



not be compared except in respect to their dynamic ranges, which are roughly equivalent.

With record noise eliminated, the remaining noise is that of the master tape, and at times it can be surprisingly audible. No doubt it would be submerged in the record noise of a conventional disc, but, as often happens, when one form of noise or distortion is removed, the "layers" below it become audible. Unfortunately, none of the dbx discs we received came from digitally taped masters—that would have been a sensational combination!

When the pickup is lowered to the record,

there may be a slight thump, but following that absolutely nothing can be heard as the stylus follows the lead-in groove, even at maximum gain with one's ear pressed to the speaker. The explanatory insert accompanying each dbx disc cautions against setting the playback volume higher than usual in an attempt to hear noise, since speakers could be damaged by the sudden application of full power from the program material. As we found out in our first experience with the dbx discs, it can also be hazardous to one's hearing and nervous system.

Depending on the recording, the music may suddenly emerge from the silent background or the hiss of the master tape may precede it by a second or two. The latter effect tends to dilute the overwhelming impact of the sound coming from silence, reminding us that true perfection has not yet been achieved. If the program comes on simultaneously with the hiss, or if the hiss is exceptionally low, nothing interferes with the illusion of reality, since the tape hiss is usually masked during the program. Still, it is present, whether consciously heard or not, and this may well be one of the major distinctions between analog recordings, no matter how good, and digital-tape masters.

Because the dynamic range of the material has been compressed previous to its recording on the disc, it has been possible to reduce the peak recorded velocity cut into the disc substantially without incurring a penalty in noise. It is also no longer necessary to use signal limiters or compressors in the recording process, so the *natural* dynamics of the program can be preserved. This, together with the lowered distortion in playback from the velocity reduction and the 30-dB noise reduction, makes it possible for a dbx-encoded disc to have considerably higher fidelity than a conventional recording, all else being equal.

It is natural to wonder whether the complementary compression and expansion processes can be so accurately matched that their presence cannot be detected. We do not have a definitive answer to that question. Under

(Continued on page 44)



"We regret that this evening's performance of Arrigo Boito's *Mefistofele* with the Antwerp Boys' Choir has been canceled due to acne . . ."

# The facts are stacked for Sony's metalists.

Metal's mellow. Metal sings. Metal soars in frequency response and rockets the dynamic range upwards.

The new metal tapes are a multi-decibel boost to serious ears. But it takes a very special cassette deck to give you this higher-fi.

Two special "metalists" from Sony: The new TC-K65 and the new TC-K55II.

## Head Facts

Sony's new Sendust & Ferrite heads in our new decks are uniquely composed of ideal electro-magnetic properties to give you maximum performance with any tape. Regular-fi, chrome, FeCr or metal.

Sendust, Ferrite and a head gap spacer of extremely hard quartz are engineered together for a mirror-like surface, long head life, sharp gap edges and no asymmetrical wear.



## Two-Motor Facts

A linear-torque BSL (Brushless & Slotless) motor precisely maintains the all-important capstan speed. And an FG Servo-controlled motor drives the supply and take-up reels.

The BSL motor, in a major design breakthrough, has no slots to cause uneven torque distribution.



## Microcomputer Facts

Sony's new microcomputer logic control lets you speed through any operation sequence by merely pressing the appropriate feather-touch bar.

This digital technology in each of our



decks even allows you to record at any moment during playback.

## Other Facts

Other distinguished features: The TC-K65 has a Random Music Sensor (RMS) that lets you preprogram any desired selections in any desired order.

A computer-like display signals your selections in bright LED lights. Clearly revolutionary LED Peak

Meters display recording and playback levels with sixteen digits per channel. These new meters "hold" peak levels and respond instantly for truer recording.

The TC-K55II utilizes two large VU meters, and a five-element LED display indicates peak levels for more accurate recording.

The new Sony TC-K65 and the new Sony TC-K55II. The facts are in.



TC-K65

TC-K55II

# SONY®

normal listening conditions, no trace of modulation noise or any other anomalies that might be expected to accompany the encode/decode process could be heard (in the past, we have occasionally been able to hear these effects when using dbx devices with tape recorders). It is worth noting that dbx has courageously included both solo-piano and duo-piano recordings among their initial releases, and these should be the most revealing of background-noise modulation.

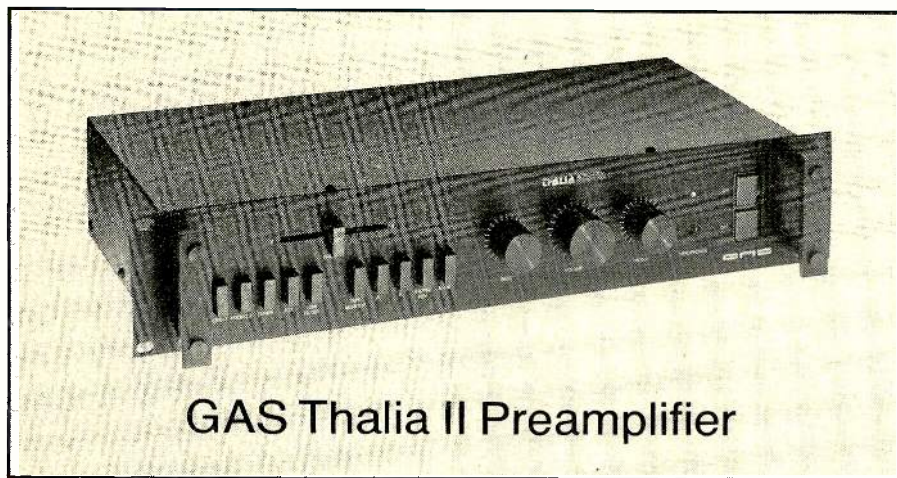
We found that unnatural effects can be heard—if at all—only when playing the material at a very high volume and with extremely

low ambient noise in the room. Once or twice we suspected that we could hear a slight “chuff” of noise going up or down with the piano notes as they emerged from the silent background. However, we feel that listening at high volume with one’s ear glued to the speaker in a soundproofed room is hardly “normal listening,” and so far as we are concerned the system works without audible flaws.

In conclusion, we feel that the dbx disc system is—or at least has the potential to be—a major advance and a logical extension of analog recording that achieves some of the

promised benefits of digital recording at a vastly lower cost to the consumer (though the discs are slightly more expensive than conventional records). We would hardly claim that it is the equal of all-digital recording and playback in any respect (including price), but once you have listened to dbx discs through the Model 21 decoder, it is very difficult to be satisfied with conventional records again. We look forward to hearing future dbx releases, especially those that will originate from digital tape masters.

Circle 141 on reader service card



GAS Thalia II Preamplifier

**T**HE GAS (Great American Sound Company) Thalia II stereo preamplifier is an improved version of the original Thalia, to which it is identical in external appearance. According to the manufacturer, the internal changes are numerous, including: (1) a “soft” turn-on and turn-off power supply that eliminates switching thumps without the use of a relay, (2) servo-controlled phono and line amplifiers to prevent d.c. offset voltages from appearing at the tape and main outputs, (3) computer-designed RIAA-equalization circuitry to conform to the latest (November 1978) revision of the RIAA standard, (4) a level control using discrete precision resistors to maintain channel balance within 0.5 dB at all volume settings, (5) a very low output impedance that enables the Thalia II to drive low-impedance headphones directly, and (6) a heavy-duty power switch that can control external equipment of up to 1,500 watts.

Except for three knobs and a horizontal BALANCE slider control, all the front-panel controls of the Thalia II are pushbuttons. The knobs are a volume control and two slightly smaller bass and treble tone controls. All the control knobs are detented, with the tone controls each having ten positions of boost or cut and the volume control having twenty-two positions spaced at 2-dB intervals over much of its operating range. The balance control has a center detent.

At the right of the panel are two large

square pushbuttons, marked ON and OFF, which control the power to the preamplifier and its switched outlets. Next to them is a headphone jack and a small pilot light. At the left of the panel, below the balance control, are ten pushbuttons. Four of them select the input source: PHONO 1, PHONO 2, TUNER, and AUX. Others insert the low filter (an infrasonic filter) in the signal path and mute the output by dropping the volume about 20 dB. The TAPE MONITOR button controls the single tape deck that can be connected to the Thalia II, and the three remaining buttons determine the operating mode of the preamplifier. With all three out, it is connected for stereo. The STEREO REV pushbutton interchanges the left and right channels (marked A and B). Engaging either the A or the B button connects that channel input to both outputs, and pressing both gives a summed mono output.

The rear apron of the GAS Thalia II contains the signal-input and output jacks (there are two parallel pairs of main outputs), a ground binding post, and three a.c. outlets, two of them switched.

The Thalia II is finished completely in flat black, with black control knobs and pushbuttons. The panel is slotted for mounting in a standard EIA rack. The preamplifier is 19 inches wide, 3½ inches high, and 10 inches deep. It weighs about 15 pounds. Suggested retail price is \$399 (with optional handles, \$419).

● **Laboratory Measurements.** In general, our measurements closely matched the test data supplied by the Thalia’s manufacturer. The sensitivity for a reference output of 0.5 volt (per IHF-A-202, 1978) was 47 millivolts (mV) through a high-level input and 0.75 mV through a phono input. The output noise was below our 100-microvolt minimum measurement ability, or better than 94 dB below a 0.5-volt output, through either high-level or phono inputs. The phono-overload level was 235 mV (the “worst” case being at 20 Hz, where the overload occurred at 25.5 mV, equivalent to 235 mV at 1,000 Hz). The high-level inputs were not overloaded by the 10-volt maximum output of our signal generator.

The distortion of the Thalia II was less than 0.001 per cent at a 0.1-volt output. At a 5-volt output the distortion was between 0.0027 and 0.0045 per cent, depending on frequency, from 20 to 20,000 Hz. The output clipped at about 15 volts at all frequencies when driving the IHF standard load of 10,000 ohms in parallel with 1,000 picofarads. The headphone volume was very good with 200-ohm phones. The measured phono-preamplifier input load was 47,000 ohms in parallel with 100 picofarads, as rated.

The tone-control response curves had the familiar characteristic of a variable bass-turnover frequency (from about 30 to 200 Hz), and a family of treble curves hinged at about 3,500 Hz. Although the maximum control range was about ±10 dB at 20,000 Hz and ±14 dB at 20 Hz, locating the hinge or turnover frequencies well away from the midrange gave the tone controls an effect much more subtle than most. It is unlikely that one could create a grossly unbalanced effect by misusing them, and we would consider them among the better tone controls we have used. The midrange response, from 300 to 3,000 Hz, was virtually unaffected by the tone-control settings no matter how extreme. The RIAA phono equalization was accurate within ±0.5 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz. There was no measurable change in the phono response when it was measured through the inductance of a phono cartridge. The low filter reduced the 20-Hz output by about 1 dB, and we did not measure its effect below that frequency.

● **Comment.** The GAS Thalia II departs from several current trends in preamplifier design. (Continued on page 46)

# ACCURACY. JBL LAYS IT ON THE LINE.

Why do so many stars and studios use JBL's? And more discs\* than any other speaker?

Accuracy is the answer. The music as performed. That's the sound the pros insist on. No wonder 7 of the 10 top albums in 1978 were recorded,

mixed or mastered on JBL's.\*\* And that's the sound we demand in every speaker in our line. JBL speakers are designed

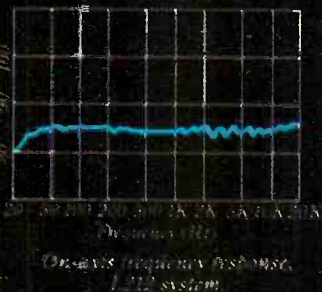
to match the music as played. Clear and lifelike.

We can state this with some pride since we create our speakers from the ground up. Concept, design, individual components—all are created at our plant and tested against stringent engineering specifications. Rigorous quality control is applied every step of the way.

We could go into more technical detail

but we want to keep our message short and sweet. The reason so many stars, studios and professional installations prefer our speakers is JBL accuracy. Their living depends on how good they sound. So if you question your own ears, trust theirs.

James B. Lansing Sound, Inc., 8500 Balboa Boulevard, Northridge, CA 91329.



**FIRST**   
**WITH THE**  
**PROS.**



\*Billboard Disco Survey, 1978.  
\*\*Recording Institute of America Survey.

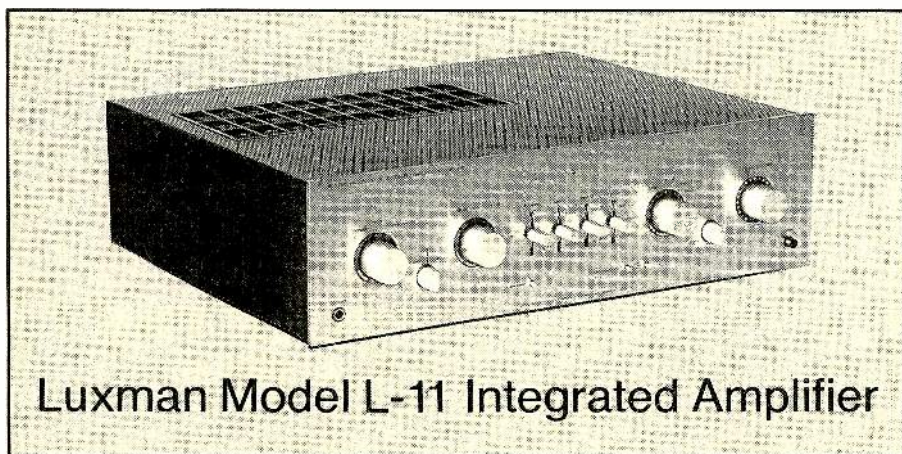
sign. For example, it is designed to control only one tape deck and lacks such features as selectable phono-cartridge loads and multicolored light displays. There is also no choice of tone-control turnover frequencies, but the control design makes that feature unnecessary.

All in all, the Thalia II presents a plain,

functional, and "no-nonsense" appearance, contrasting sharply with the *Star Wars* school of audio design. It is also an honestly designed product that lives up to the claims made for it in full measure. Not only is the distortion truly negligible, but the noise levels in the preamplifier outputs are unmeasurable

as well as inaudible. There were no switching noise transients, and all the controls had a fine positive "feel." In our view, the Thalia II is an excellent preamplifier by any standard of performance and a real value for the money.

Circle 142 on reader service card



Luxman Model L-11 Integrated Amplifier

LUXMAN high-fidelity products offer unconventional design and styling and superb performance, usually at a rather high price. Lux Corporation clearly has some definite ideas regarding audio-component design, and as a result no Luxman product could ever be confused with competitive models.

An excellent illustration of the Lux philosophy in action is the new Model L-11 "Real-time Processed DC Integrated Amplifier." The exact derivation of that name is not clear to us, but the special qualities of the L-11 certainly are. It is an integrated amplifier, d.c. coupled (except for the phono preamp) from high-level inputs to speaker outputs and rated to deliver 100 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads at frequencies between 20 and 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.02 per cent total harmonic distortion.

A cursory glance at the front panel of the L-11 may suggest that it has conventional control functions, but that is not the case. For example, it has no tone controls in the standard sense; instead, a single knob marked LINEAR FREQUENCY EQUALIZER has five settings that either provide a flat frequency response or tilt the entire audio spectrum up or down with increasing frequency. The control markings of UP TILT and DOWN TILT are self-explanatory. The Lux designers apparently feel that the tonal balance of many programs tends to favor one end of the frequency range at the expense of the other, so that a simple tilt of the otherwise flat response curve can achieve a useful correction. The amount of compensation available from this circuit is slight—less than  $\pm 3$  dB at the frequency extremes. Clearly, its designers intended it to provide subtle corrections to the tonal balance rather than to alter the overall sound character of a program.

The only other audible-frequency compensator is a LOW BOOST circuit, operated by a small button on the panel (Lux typically uses very small controls for the lesser-used functions to avoid a cluttered-looking panel, a policy of which we thoroughly approve). According to the instruction manual, the LOW BOOST is a sort of loudness-compensation system, boosting the response below about 100 Hz at lower volume-control settings.

The volume knob, at the right of the panel, operates a smooth, nondetented control. At the left of the panel is a knob of similar size for speaker selection, with positions for OFF, MAIN, REMOTE, and MAIN & REMOTE. A headphone jack is located nearby. The only other full-size knob on the panel is the input-function selector, with settings for AUX, TUNER, PHONO 1, and PHONO 2. The last setting occupies two switch positions, marked MM and MC. The MM (moving-magnet) mode of PHONO 2 is identical to PHONO 1, and it can be used with all moving-magnet or moving-iron cartridges. When an optional Lux transformer is plugged into a socket in the rear of the amplifier, the MC position of PHONO 2 can be used for a low-output, moving-coil cartridge. (Two transformer models are offered: the Model 8020, which increases the cartridge-output voltage by a factor of ten, and the Model 8030, which increases it by a factor of thirty. Both transformers have a similar construction, with a toroidal core, pure silver wire for primary windings, and multiple magnetic shields. Our test sample of the L-11 was furnished with a Model 8030 transformer.)

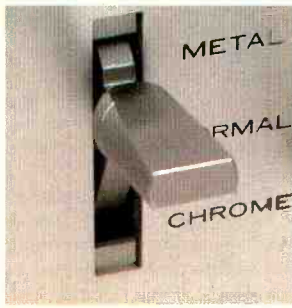
Returning to the front panel of the amplifier, two small knobs operate the mode selector (STEREO, MONO, REVERSE STEREO) and the BALANCE control (center detented). Three three-position lever switches in the center of

the panel control various tape-recording functions, including dubbing from either of two tape decks to the other and monitoring the playback from either (or listening to the normal program source while dubbing is going on). A fourth switch controls a subsonic filter. In its center position the response of the amplifier is flat to d.c. The other settings introduce rolloffs below 10 or 20 Hz.

Two small pushbuttons change the resistance of the PHONO 1 and PHONO 2 inputs from the normal 50,000 ohms to 100,000 ohms. A larger pushbutton serves as the power switch, and a white pilot light also indicates the operation of both the protection and the signal-delay circuits (blinking on and off while they are activated). The amplifier outputs are not connected to the speakers until 10 to 15 seconds after power is applied in order to prevent any voltage transients from reaching the speakers. If a significant d.c.-voltage component appears at the speaker terminals, the circuit instantly disconnects the speakers (this is especially important in a d.c.-coupled amplifier such as this, since a small d.c. voltage from one of its signal sources will be amplified and appear at the speaker outputs).

The rear apron of the Luxman Model L-11 contains insulated screw-type speaker terminals, the various input and output jacks (including a DIN socket duplicating the TAPE 2 jacks), and three a.c. convenience outlets, one of which is not switched. There are holders for the speaker-protection fuses and a large socket for the optional MC step-up transformer. A slide switch marked GENERAL SPEAKER/ELECTROSTATIC SP rolls off the low-frequency response of the amplifier in the electrostatic position (independently of the front-panel SUBSONIC filter switch). The reason for this feature is not explained in the manual. The Luxman Model L-11 is a relatively compact amplifier measuring 17¼ inches wide, 15½ inches deep, and 5 inches high, but it weighs a solid 41 pounds. The suggested retail price is \$945. The Models 8020 and 8030 moving-coil-cartridge transformers are each \$195.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Luxman Model L-11 is constructed with its power transistors and their very heavy heat sink completely enclosed within the perforated metal case of the amplifier. The heat sink is designed as a "chimney" with free air flow (by convection) entering from under the amplifier and exiting at the top. Its effectiveness was demonstrated by the fact that at no time during our preconditioning period or subsequent testing did any part of the amplifier case become uncomfortably warm to the touch. (Continued on page 48)



# For \$450\*, you deserve more than just a switch.

There are other cassette decks at this price that can handle metal tape.

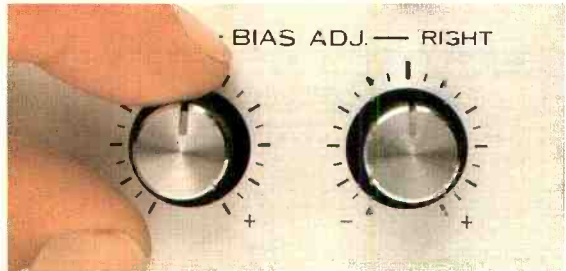
But only the new Kenwood KX-1060 can get the most out of every metal tape. And every other kind of tape as well. The reason is our simplified adjustable bias control with built-in oscillator that allows you to calibrate the deck to a specific tape for optimum results. It's one more "hands on" feature that really lets you get the most out of your deck.

And when it comes to performance, you'll appreciate the KX-1060 even more. The three ferrite heads have been designed for better playback sensitivity and remarkable frequency response (30-18,000 Hz  $\pm$ 3dB with chrome or metal tape).

To eliminate a common problem on other manufacturers' three head decks, we've increased our tape-to-head contact. This maintains constant output and high frequency response. At .045% (WRMS), wow and flutter has practically been engineered out. Signal-to-noise is an outstanding 65dB. Not to mention Kenwood's Double Dolby\*\* for true monitoring right off the tape for extreme accuracy in recording.

At Kenwood, we think that metal tape is the future of ultimate-quality recordings. With the KX-1060, you can take full advantage of any metal tape and get the very best performance possible.

See your Kenwood dealer and get your hands on one soon.



Simplified adjustable bias control with built-in oscillator lets you get optimum results with any kind or brand of tape.

## KENWOOD®

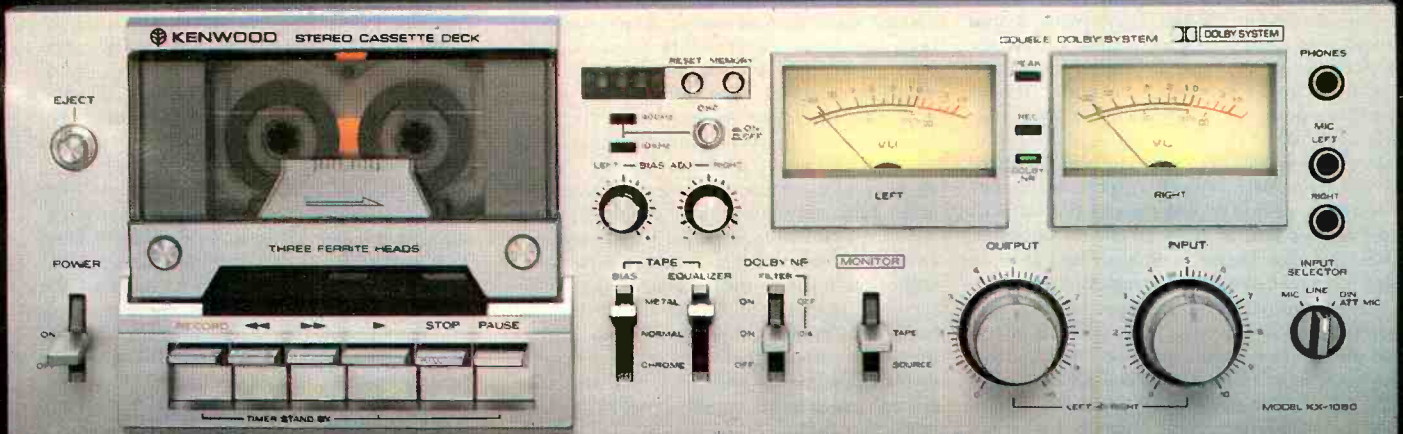
For the Kenwood dealer nearest you, see your Yellow Pages, or write Kenwood, P.O. Box 6213, Carson, CA 90749.

In Canada: Magnasonic Canada, Ltd.

\*Nationally advertised value.

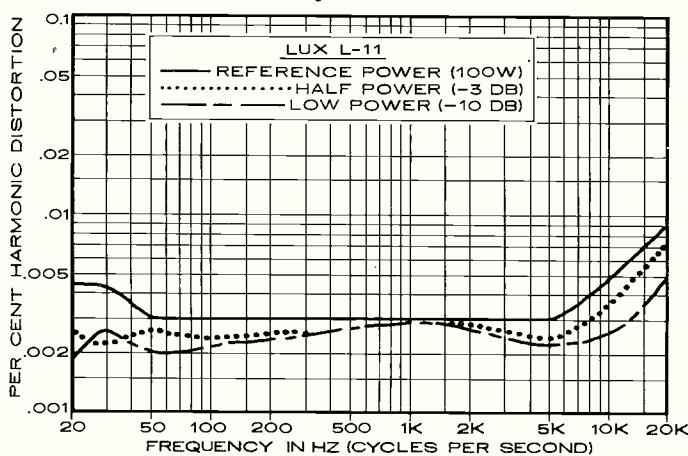
Actual prices are established by Kenwood dealers.

\*\*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.



The power output at 1,000 Hz, with both channels driving 8-ohm loads, was 130 watts per channel at clipping. The distortion was a constant 0.003 per cent from 1 to 120 watts, reaching 0.14 per cent at the clipping point. When we drove 4-ohm loads (for which the amplifier is not specifically rated, although it can drive two pairs of 8-ohm speakers) the distortion was slightly but insignificantly higher, increasing from 0.0036 per cent at 1 watt to a maximum of 0.045 per cent at 100 watts before dropping again to 0.01 per cent between 130 and 170 watts. The 4-ohm power at clipping was 185 watts.

In accordance with our revised test procedure, we also measured the performance of the L-11 amplifier driving 2-ohm loads. The distortion was a constant 0.008 per cent from 1 to 70 watts. At the 100-watt test level the speaker-protection fuses blew, since the amplifier was being asked to deliver an output current far beyond its design capabilities.



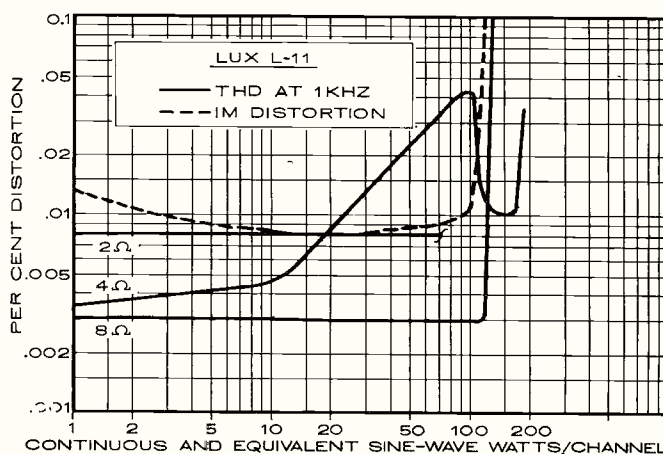
The 8-ohm IHF clipping headroom was 1.14 dB, based on the 130-watt output and the amplifier's rating of 100 watts. The IHF dynamic headroom (rated at 2 dB) was measured as 1.93 dB, corresponding to an output of 156 watts for 20 milliseconds out of each half-second period. Into 4 ohms, the dynamic output was 260 watts per channel, and into 2 ohms it was an impressive 341 watts per channel at the clipping point. (This measurement could be made without blowing the fuses because of the short duty cycle of the tone-burst test signal.) No decibel rating can be assigned for these load impedances because the amplifier is rated only into 8 ohms.

The distortion of the L-11 (with 8-ohm loads) was nearly independent of frequency as well as power output. Between 50 and 5,000 Hz, it was between 0.002 and 0.003 per cent for power outputs from 10 to 100 watts, and even at 20 Hz the full-power distortion was a mere 0.0045 per cent. The high-frequency distortion rose smoothly to a maximum of 0.0087 per cent at 20,000 Hz and 100 watts (it was always less at reduced power outputs). The IHF slew factor, which is rated at more than 5, exceeded our measurement limit of 25.

At maximum gain, an input of 13.5 millivolts (mV) at the AUX jacks or 0.19 mV at the phono (MM) inputs was sufficient to drive the amplifier to a reference output of 1 watt. The A-weighted noise level, under IHF standard test conditions, was respectively -86.8

and -80.8 dB for the AUX and phono inputs. The phono preamplifier overloaded with a 175-mV input at 1,000 Hz (and at equivalent or greater levels at 20 and 20,000 Hz). The measured phono (MM) input termination was 54,000 ohms in parallel with a capacitance of 120 picofarads.

The linear frequency equalizer had approximately the rated characteristics. Beginning at about 200 Hz, the LOW BOOST button boosted the response to a maximum of almost 6 dB between 20 and 40 Hz. The amount of boost was not related to the volume-control setting, contrary to the statement in the instruction manual. The subsonic-filter response was -3 dB at 13 Hz in the 10-Hz position and at 26 Hz in the 20-Hz position of the switch. The ultimate slope of the cutoff characteristic appeared to be 12 dB per octave at frequencies below 10 Hz. The RIAA phono equalization was extremely accurate, varying less than 0.5 dB overall from 20 to 20,000 Hz (this is about the



inherent accuracy and resolution of our RIAA testing setup). When measured through the inductance of a phono cartridge, the phono response showed a slight, broad rise at frequencies above about 8,000 Hz, with a maximum amplitude of about 1 dB.

● **Comment.** We listened to the Luxman Model L-11 with FM tuner and phono sources using both moving-magnet and moving-coil cartridges. With the Model 8030 transformer, we used an Ortofon MC30 cartridge, one of those for which Lux recommends this transformer. The results were excellent. The entire system was so quiet that even at maximum volume there was no audible hum and only a faint hiss from the speakers when using the MC phono input. A volume-control setting of about one o'clock was sufficient for a very loud listening level. At that gain setting, and through the high-level inputs at maximum volume, there was absolute silence in the absence of program. However, we could see little value in having the phono-input resistance switchable, especially by front-panel controls. In our view, switchable capacitance values (with the controls in the rear) would be far more useful. The Model L-11 performed in an ideal manner, in every respect, with no undesired side effects or peculiarities, no electrical noise of any kind, and the silky-smooth mechanical operation we always find in Lux products.

In spite of its great subtlety, the linear frequency equalizer produces clearly audible effects. It was surprising to find that even a single step of the control made a definite change in the audio quality, even though it boosted the highs by 1 dB at most and reduced the lows by the same amount (or vice versa). Although Lux certainly did not intend their equalizer to do the same job as conventional tone controls, we found it to be at least as useful. Most tone controls, if misused (or badly designed), can easily destroy the frequency balance of a program and wipe out the best efforts of a speaker designer or a recording engineer. Lux's linear frequency equalizer approach, however, can never do injury to either. We occasionally found that we preferred one or another of its settings, but as a rule it could be left in the "flat" position and forgotten, just as we do with any tone control. A similar situation exists with respect to the LOW BOOST; it can be heard, and with some

speakers or programs it might be beneficial. Having speakers with adequate bass response, we rarely, if ever, heard any benefit from the slight added "bottom" contributed by this feature.

As the test results show, the Luxman L-11 is a "state-of-the-art" amplifier in every sense of that overworked phrase. Together with its elegance of design, this could partly justify its considerable price. Intrigued by the weight of the amplifier, we removed its cover and found that much of that weight was in the huge toroidal power transformer and the massive heat sink, which between them also occupied a large part of the space within the unit. Both these items are costly as well as heavy. In addition, we saw other reasons for the high price of the amplifier. It has considerably more hand wiring than is usual, much of it in the form of extensive runs of shielded cables between the front-panel controls and the rear-panel connectors and the circuit boards.

This form of assembly makes it possible to pack a very husky amplifier into a small package (the interior of the L-11 is densely filled with components), yet it keeps the amplifier cooler than many lower-power units of the same or larger size. Unfortunately, it does not lend itself to automated assembly procedures. The price of the L-11 reflects this factor perhaps as much as it does the impeccable workmanship and component quality that is evident throughout. (Continued on page 51)



# Technics

It's simple. Just get into Technics SU-8011 stereo amplifier, ST-8011 AM/FM stereo tuner and SH-8010 stereo frequency equalizer. You'll get a lot of performance out of them, without pouring a lot of money into them.

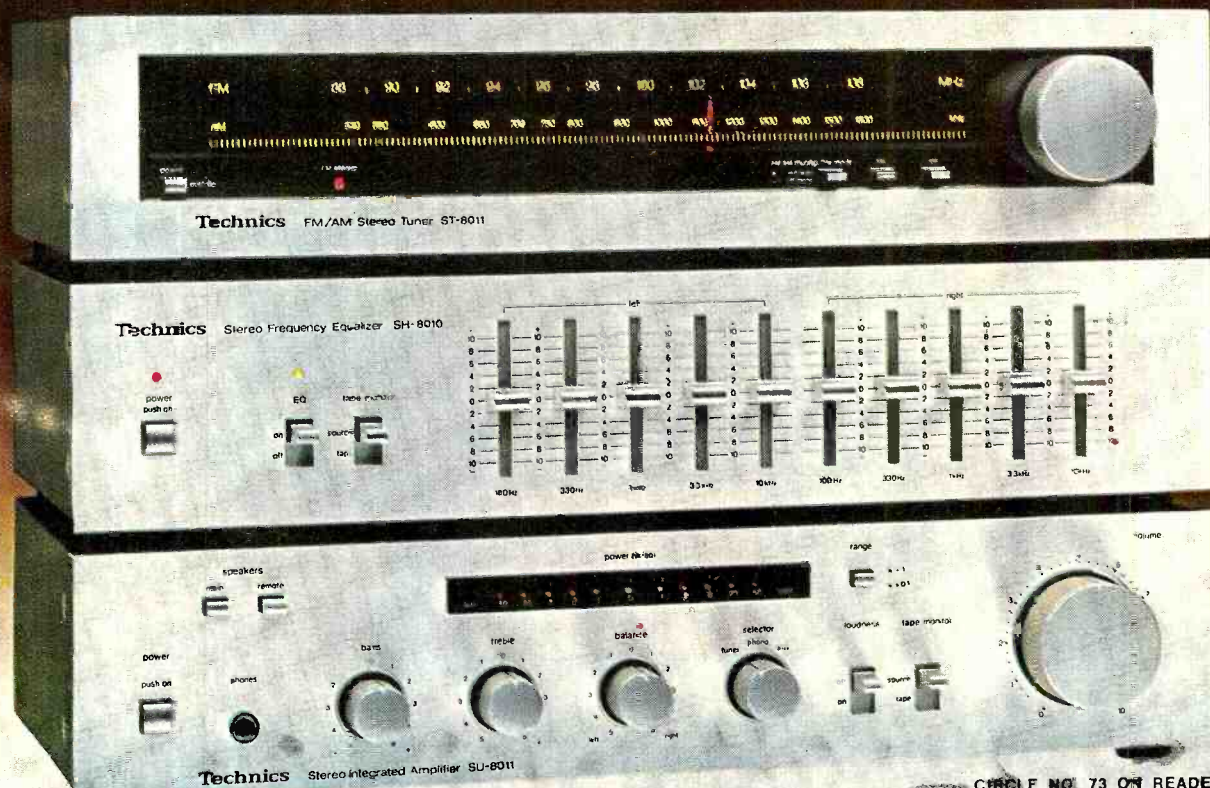
Try our SU-8011 amplifier on for size. You'll get a lot more than 25 watts RMS per channel, into 8 ohms from 20 Hz to 20 kHz, with no more than 0.08% total harmonic distortion. A lot more. Like 13,600 microfarads worth of high-capacitance filtering for plenty of reserve power. Like a two-stage direct-coupled phono equalizer with the kind of S/N ratio (80 dB) that doesn't know the meaning of noise. And if fast-acting LED peak-power indicators that let your eyes share the performance your ears hear.

With our ST-8011 AM/FM stereo tuner, your eyes get in on the act on, too. Take its tuning indicator for example. It not only tells you what station you're tuned to, it also tells you how well you're receiving it. Two green LED's indicate ideal signal strength, while one LED tells you the stereo quieting level is at least 50 dB. You also get a frequency response of 27 Hz to 15 kHz (+1, -2 dB) and a 50 dB stereo quieting sensitivity of 38.6 dBf.

But whether you're listening to your favorite station or your favorite records, our SH-8010 stereo frequency equalizer will let you make the most of each. By dividing the audio range into 5 bands with each center frequency set 1.6 octaves apart, you can tailor the sound to match your speakers, your room and your own taste. You can also add tops to the highs, bottoms to the lows, or vice versa, by as much as 12 dB.

Technics SU-8011 amp, ST-8011 tuner and SH-8010 equalizer. It's as easy to get into their performance as it is to keep out of debt.

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Myer Emco (202) 293-9100

# Threshold

Once again, Threshold creates an original amplifier technology



Early in 1976 Threshold introduced the 800A, incorporating the first dynamic class A bias for increased efficiency. This patented concept quickly brought attributes of an amplifier's operating mode to the forefront of attention. Now, four years later, JVC, SAE, Technics, and others are promoting their circuits that achieve, as did the 800A, more efficient class A transfer functions.

During these four years Threshold has developed an entirely new technology characterized by virtual elimination, at the source, of those conditions that cause a tube, transistor or FET to operate in a nonlinear fashion.

Moving beyond a "class" designation, the Threshold STASIS principle is the genesis for amplifiers whose signal processing integrity can be considered without error. The STASIS 1 is the first of these amplifiers and provides, without recourse to loop feedback, an unprecedented level of signal integrity. The term STASIS is derived from the amplifier's unique configuration in which both current and voltage parameters are virtually unchanging for signal bearing transistors. A condition of STASIS. Since all the nonlinearities of a gain device result from fluctuating voltage and/or current, holding these factors in STASIS turns such a device into a perfect system.

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better, but in company with other quality components it will certainly do justice to the finest recordings.

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## Acoustique 3A Andante Speaker System

**T**HE Andante loudspeaker is manufactured in France and distributed in North America by Acoustique 3A International, Inc. of Montreal, Canada. The woofer of the compact, high-performance, three-way system is driven by a built-in 150-watt amplifier, and there is bridge-derived, negative-feedback control of the cone movement. When the speaker is driven, its impedance changes dynamically, and the balance of the bridge is altered so that it gives an error-signal output voltage. This signal is amplified and then integrated twice in order to make it correspond electrically to an acoustic-pressure speaker-output signal. It is subsequently fed back to the input of the built-in power amplifier that drives the woofer.

The process is considerably more complex than we have described, but in essence the amplifier and feedback arrangement is designed to force the 8½-inch-diameter woofer cone to behave like an ideal radiator without the resonances or the frequency-response irregularities normally associated with a dynamic speaker. The input signal is amplified only in the bass range, up to 400 Hz, where there is a conventional passive (12-dB-per-octave) crossover to a 2-inch dome-type mid-range radiator. At 6,000 Hz there is a similar crossover to a planar tweeter whose flat plastic diaphragm has a ribbon conductor bonded to it, like the conductors in a printed circuit board. It is suspended in a powerful magnetic field, and when a current is passed through

the "voice coil," the diaphragm surface is driven uniformly, radiating its sound output through a group of narrow slits in the metal front plate. The tweeter response is rated at 5,000 to 45,000 Hz  $\pm 2$  dB, with high sensitivity and the ability to handle as much as 60 watts of input without damage or excessive distortion. The Andante is a relatively efficient system, rated for use with amplifiers delivering from 5 to 100 watts per channel. The nominal impedance of the Andante system is 8 ohms.

Like some other feedback speakers, the Andante does not depend on the usual relationship between enclosure volume and woofer parameters to determine the low-frequency response. The woofer enclosure is only large enough to hold the speaker itself (plus the sound-absorbing material that lines the inside of the cabinet). Most of the available cabinet volume is devoted to the electronic section, whose metal "chassis" forms the back plate of the cabinet and also serves as a heat-radiating surface for the power output transistors. The Andante is meant to be plugged into a 120-volt a.c. power source, which can be "live" at all times. Its amplifier is turned on by the presence of any signal at the speaker terminals, and it shuts off automatically about 2 minutes after the signal ceases. A small pilot light can be seen through the black grille cloth when the speaker system is on.

The Andante speaker system is 18 inches high, 12 inches wide, and 8 inches deep. Its

wooden cabinet is finished in walnut veneer. The slightly curved grille is easily removed, revealing the speakers and a knob that attenuates the drive to its internal bass amplifier when the system is used with a high-power external amplifier. On the metal rear panel of the speaker is a four-position switch that adjusts the woofer level relative to the other drivers to compensate for speaker placement in corners or against a wall and on the floor or in a mid-wall position. A pair of narrow slits in the rear of the woofer enclosure provide an acoustical resistance as part of the woofer loading (they do not radiate any sound and are not analogous to the port in a vented system). Despite its small size, the Andante is surprisingly heavy, weighing 48 pounds. The suggested retail price is \$829 per speaker.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Andante speakers were placed about 3 feet off the floor and close to the back wall of the room. The smoothed response in the reverberant field of the room was spliced to a close-miked woofer response to form a composite frequency-response curve. Although it did not appear in the anechoic-response curve supplied with each speaker, our measurement showed a slight "bump" in the response at about 500 Hz. Depending on the setting of the bass balance switch, this could also appear as a "shelf" between the woofer and higher-frequency response curves. The bass response was flat within  $\pm 2.5$  dB from 40 to 600 Hz and rolled off at 12 dB per octave below about 40 Hz (the low-frequency response of the system is deliberately attenuated, we were told, to prevent distortion or damage from overdriving the woofer).

Above 600 Hz the response was flat (within  $\pm 1$  dB) up to 10,000 Hz, rising to about  $\pm 5$  dB in the range between 15,000 and 20,000 Hz. We extended our measurements to 40,000 Hz, since the manufacturer claims a response to that frequency. Our room is not calibrated above 20,000 Hz, but the Andante's output was quite strong to about 30,000 Hz, even in the reverberant field some 12 feet from the speakers.

The directivity of the planar tweeter was visible in our response curves as a difference between the left and right speaker outputs (the latter being about 30 degrees off axis, the former in an on-axis measurement). The difference was 5 to 7 dB at frequencies above 11,000 or 12,000 Hz, which is not unusual among the speakers we have tested (although those with very wide dispersion usually do not show any significant difference between left and right speakers). We also observed a measurable absorption of high frequencies by the grille cloth, amounting to about 1 or 2 dB in the range from 7,000 to 15,000 Hz.

(Continued overleaf)

The overall frequency response of the Andante in our measurement environment was within  $\pm 3$  dB from 40 to 20,000 Hz, which is excellent by any standards. The system sensitivity was high, so that an input of 2.83 volts of random noise in an octave centered at 1,000 Hz produced a 90-dB sound-pressure level at a distance of 1 meter from the speaker (this was really a measurement of the mid-range driver alone, since neither the woofer nor the tweeter contributes any useful output at that frequency).

With a 2.83-volt input (1 watt into 8 ohms) the woofer distortion rose from about 1 per cent at 100 Hz to a maximum of about 5 per cent in the 27- to 45-Hz range, reaching 8 per cent at 25 Hz. A tenfold increase in driving power resulted in much higher distortion at all frequencies, increasing from 2 per cent at 100 Hz to 20 per cent at 30 Hz. However, because of the high efficiency of the Andante system, a 1-watt drive signal produced a very loud listening level.

The impedance characteristic of the Andante is unlike that of other speakers because the woofer is effectively isolated from the external amplifier by its own built-in amplifier. Starting from about 600 ohms at 20 Hz, the impedance dropped steadily to a minimum of about 6 ohms at 2,000 Hz, rose to 18 ohms at 7,000 Hz, and fell again to 8 ohms at 20,000 Hz. The external driving amplifier really "sees" only the midrange and treble drivers and supplies negligible power at frequencies under 500 Hz. The tone-burst response of the system was very good at all frequencies.

An input signal of only 15 millivolts at 1,000 Hz was sufficient to turn on the speaker's built-in amplifier, and about 2 minutes after the signal was removed the speaker turned itself off silently and unobtrusively (the audibility of the turn-on depends on the characteristics of the driving amplifier; usually we heard no more than a soft thump). After a period of operation, even at low



Andante speaker system with grille removed. Note tight driver spacing; the planar tweeter is at upper right.

If one did not know its size, the impression would certainly be of an exceptionally smooth, integrated sound, clean and unusually free of distortion or strain at any level. Without a doubt a blindfolded listener would estimate the size of the speaker to be many times its true size. It simply sounds *big* and there seems to be no practical limit to how loud it can play!

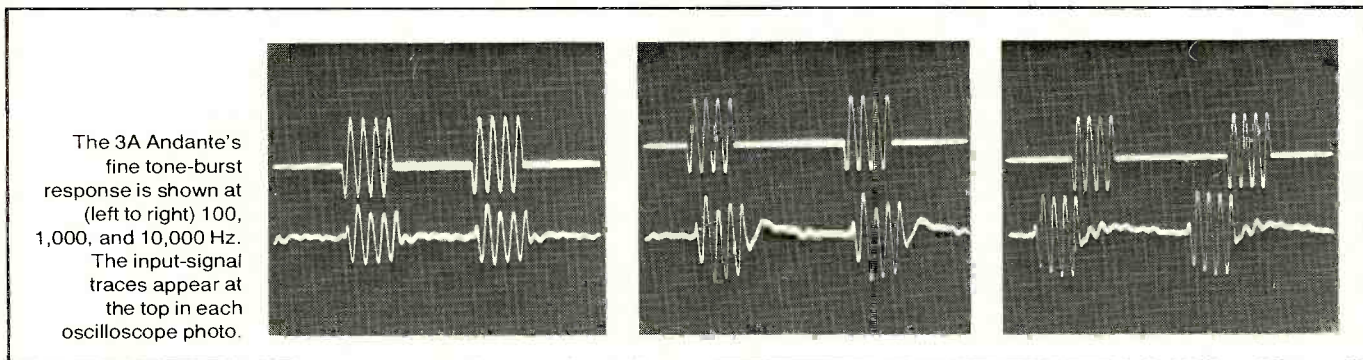
Actually, of course, it *does* have its limits, but we were never able to reach them with a 200-watt-per-channel amplifier. We never blew anything out, nor did we ever hear a sign of overload distortion from the speakers except when we deliberately overdrove the

particularly on transient sounds such as bass drums. The effect is as much physical as audible, and it is difficult to credit it to a box of this size. No speaker with a 0.6-cubic-foot internal volume has any business sounding like a room-filling monster, but this one does, and it also manages to sound more "natural" than most large systems we have heard.

To our surprise, the background-hiss level (from records and FM) was audibly lower through the Andante than with several other speakers with which we compared it. All of them had excellent measured high-frequency response, not unlike that of the Andante, but the difference in subjective hiss level was striking. We don't have a definitive explanation for this effect, but it certainly does *not* involve any lack of highs!

Lengthy attempts to describe the sound of this speaker (or any other) would be fruitless. You may or may not prefer its sound to that of some other favorite speaker, and in any case it would probably sound different in your room than in ours. We can only say that in respect to clarity, smoothness, wide frequency range, and the ability to play at prodigious levels without distortion, the Acoustique 3A Andante is one of the top speaker systems on the market.

Unfortunately, no properly assembled English-language instruction booklet was supplied with our test speakers (most of the material is in French). Without guidance from the importer, we probably would not have been able to appreciate the special qualities (or limitations) of this remarkable speaker. We also found that the signal-sensing switch of the Andante can be turned on by a high-level r.f. field such as exists near a transmitting antenna. When we keyed our amateur radio transmitter (about 200 watts on 7 MHz), it turned on the speakers and produced some annoying sounds from the rectified r.f. signal. If this should happen to you, it might be necessary to switch off the primary power to the speakers when they are



The 3A Andante's fine tone-burst response is shown at (left to right) 100, 1,000, and 10,000 Hz. The input-signal traces appear at the top in each oscilloscope photo.

levels, the metal plate on the back of the speaker became quite warm. When we drove the speakers hard (a very natural way to operate them, because of the superb way they handled high-level signals without distortion) the back plate became too hot to touch comfortably for more than a second or two (though not so hot as to be a hazard to person or property).

● **Comment.** It is difficult to be totally objective about the sound of the Andante system.

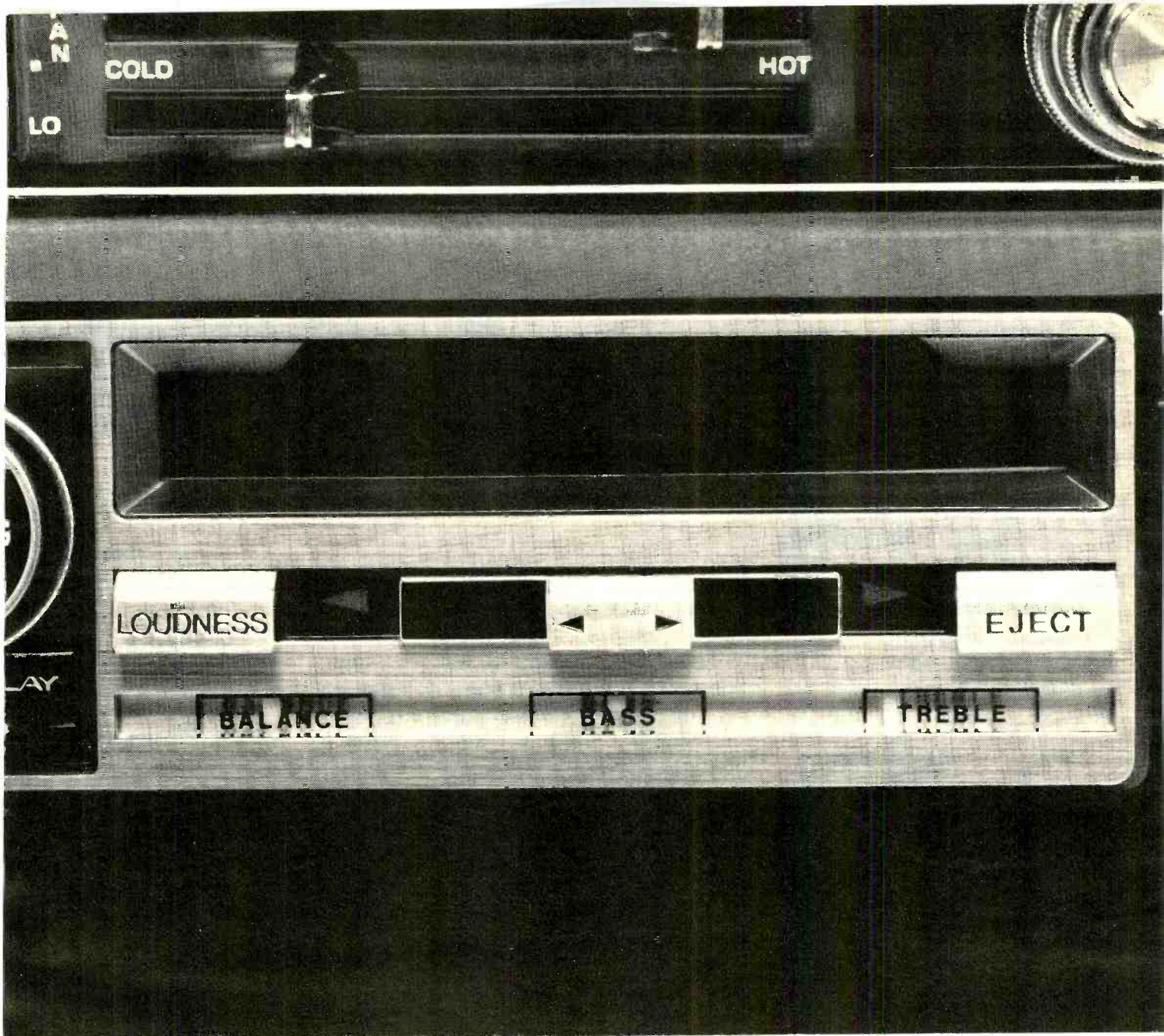
woofers with organ-pedal material plus heavy bass boost so as to hear for ourselves what happened when the speaker's amplifier reached its limits (which occurs before the woofer itself is in jeopardy). This brutal treatment was suggested by the importer as a demonstration of the ruggedness of his product. We were convinced! The sound at overload, incidentally, is unmistakably unpleasant and is not likely to be encountered in any practical listening situation.

The Andante had an astonishing impact,

not in use (and possibly to add r.f. filters in the line from the amplifier to the speaker at the speaker terminals).

As we see it, the only real drawback of these speakers is their price, which is high by any standard. To be sure, it is not out of line for the sound of the speakers, but it might seem high for an unobtrusive little box that could go unnoticed in many a living room—until it was turned on!

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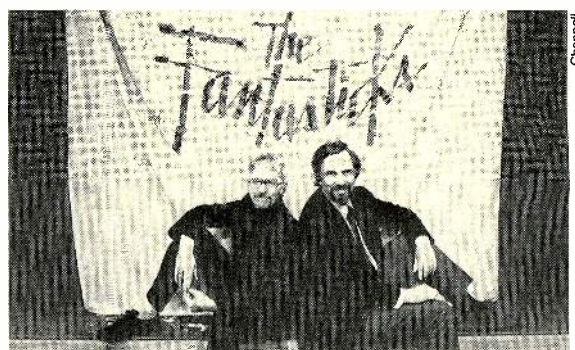
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CIRCLE NO. 10 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# The Pop Beat

By Paulette Weiss



Creators of *The Fantasticks*: lyricist Tom Jones (left) and composer Harvey Schmidt

## TWENTY FANTASTICK YEARS

**D**URING the early Sixties in New York, kids from Brooklyn dressed in black turtleneck sweaters filled the coffeehouses of Greenwich Village, singing their songs and reading their poetry to kindred spirits, who were usually kids from Queens dressed in black turtlenecks. Besides these coffeehouse entertainments, the Village also offered a variety of Off-Broadway theater.

The Off-Broadway season of 1959-1960 featured (in addition to playwright Edward Albee's debut with *The Zoo Story*) the opening of *The Fantasticks*, a small-scale musical that has made theater history by becoming America's longest-running show and the world's longest-running musical. When it opened at the tiny 153-seat Sullivan Street Theater, most critics dismissed *The Fantasticks*. With only nine characters (now eight), it is an intimate show played in a simple stage setting, and its slim plot, based on Edmond Rostand's play *Les Romanesques* (1894), deals with young love and disillusionment. But the apparently fragile story and its supporting score, which includes thirteen endearing, timeless songs by lyricist Tom Jones and composer Harvey Schmidt, have attained an unequalled longevity.

*The Fantasticks* has had nearly 8,000 performances in its original theater, and there have been 5,850 other productions in the United States and 262 in fifty-four foreign countries. And yet this year, when I attended the performance that began the show's twentieth-anniversary season, its freshness and universality were as apparent to me as the time I first saw it fourteen years ago.

The plot is simple. Two dotting fathers have erected a wall between their properties to insure that the son of one of them and the daughter of the other will fall in love. El Gallo, a villain for hire, is commissioned to stage the Girl's abduction, giving the Boy the opportunity to do battle and become her hero. Their innocence and illusions fade away as the narrator/villain guides the young couple down the sad road to mature wisdom.

The original cast, including Jerry Orbach as El Gallo, Rita Gardner as the Girl, Kenneth Nelson as the Boy, William Larsen as the Boy's Father, and Hugh Thomas as the Girl's Father, have since moved on. In fact, since those early days, the entire cast at the Sul-

livan has turned over more than twenty times. Word Baker still directs, Julian Stein continues as musical director, and Lorre Noto, the original producer, remains in that role and now also plays the Boy's Father.

It was Noto who held the musical together in those early days of lukewarm critical reception and losses at the box office. He sank his last penny into the production and rounded up the fifty-six other investors whose initial \$16,500 has since earned a net profit of \$1,847,500 (that's over 10,000 per cent). Noto also persuaded a number of celebrities to support the show by endorsing it and talking about it. Movie star Esther Williams even worked as an usher one evening in order to see a sold-out performance.

**T**o commemorate the twentieth-anniversary season of *The Fantasticks* at the end of this summer, MGM rereleased the original-cast album (SE-3872) in special repackaging. The recording has been continuously available since 1960 (same label, same serial number), and it has become the best-selling album derived from an Off-Broadway show. The new jacket, which has artwork by composer Schmidt (who also did the cover of the first album), proudly proclaims that *The Fantasticks* is the longest-running musical in the world. The liner notes have been updated and abbreviated somewhat, and there is a new inside photograph showing the young Jerry Orbach and lyricist Tom Jones himself (then billed as Thomas Bruce) in the role of the Actor.

The container may be new, but the thing contained is vintage 1960, as heady and bubbly as when it was first recorded. Among the thirteen songs are two that have become standards—*Try to Remember* and *Soon It's Gonna Rain*—and the lilting, beautiful *They Were You* should have become one. Like the plot and staging of *The Fantasticks*, the orchestration of the score is simple and effective, using only piano, harp, bass, percussion, and cello. From the opening piano chords to the vocal finale, this record is an anniversary present that not only entertains, but also moves the listener in some inner place that current shows rarely reach for and almost never touch. The poetry may be gone from those Greenwich Village coffeehouses, but it lives on here, and it's fantastick. □



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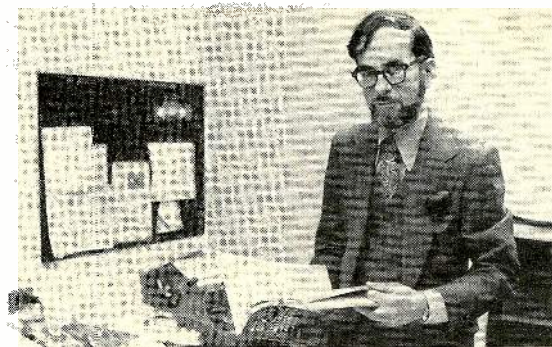
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CIRCLE NO. 34 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# Going on Record

By James Goodfriend



## WEBERN, BERG, AND . . .

THE time has long been ripe for the appearance of biographies in English of members of the "Second Viennese School" of composers: Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, Anton von Webern. Though their music has its detractors (there are always detractors; Brahms still has his), it is recognized as some of the most important of our century and has, for better or worse, influenced virtually all music that has succeeded it.

Biographies sometimes throw new light on music, but even when they do not, they give us the man and the background and allow us to compare what we have divined of the composer's personality from his music with what the facts of his life show it to have been. This is no small thing. And so one should welcome unconditionally Hans Moldenhauer's *Anton von Webern, A Chronicle of His Life and Work* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1979, \$25) and Karen Monson's *Alban Berg* (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1979, \$15) as real contributions to our understanding of music in the twentieth century.

One should, that is, but for the peculiar nature of the situation: the relationship of Schoenberg, the teacher, to Berg and Webern, the pupils, seems to defeat the conventional biographical approach. For Schoenberg was more than a conventional teacher to the two. Less so in the case of Berg, more so in the case of Webern. Schoenberg was the puppet master who pulled the strings. Berg would probably never have made it as a professional composer without Schoenberg, and Webern, up to the time Schoenberg was forced to leave Germany, could very nearly not get from one day to the next without his teacher's telling him how to do so.

Schoenberg emerges from the Webern biography as a virtually incomprehensible force of destiny, though encountered only in bits and snatches. Moldenhauer's exhaustive, 800-page book is, naturally, filled with documents; but it is simply not enough to read Webern's missives to Schoenberg without knowing what it was that Schoenberg said, or did, or wrote that set Webern off. The master emerges from the Berg biography as a less mysterious being, but also as less important than, at least for a time, he was. Probably only Schoenberg knew how Berg, a slightly snobbish, highly romantic, and sensitive dilet-

tante, almost overnight became a composer of palpable masterpieces.

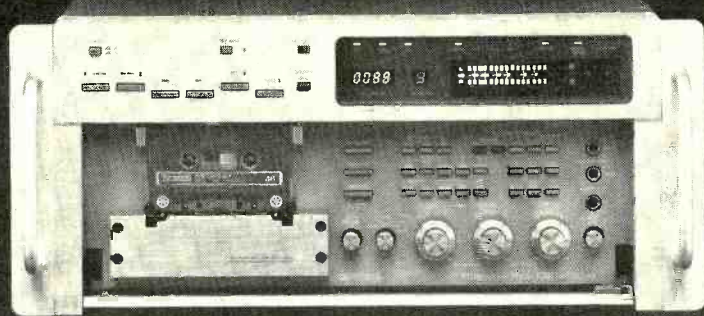
And so two major biographical efforts give us only two-thirds of what is, after all, potentially one of the most fascinating stories in musical history. One waits, as with Berg's incomplete *Lulu*, not so much for the missing piece itself, but for the whole opera, integrated, interpreted, and played out in full.

Of the two books we have, there is little question that Moldenhauer's *Webern* is the more valuable. It is a work of primary scholarship based on personal contact with Webern's survivors and on all the surviving written material, and it will be the standard source for factual material for all time. Its arrangement (alternating chapters deal with the life, others deal with the works) is perfectly logical for reference, but it makes for confusing and repetitive reading. Webern's personality emerges gradually from the book in all its paradoxical musical sophistication and worldly naïveté, and it both reinforces and contradicts what his music seems to say about him. To Webern, to be German was to be right, tradition was everything in music, any authority was better than none, the technical construction of a piece (particularly a twelve-tone piece) was the business of neither the audience nor the performer, but the expression had to be understood absolutely correctly. Such are the things one learns from Moldenhauer, and though evaluation and interpretation are left largely to the reader, the longiloquent factual material coupled with the laconic music, now available on Columbia M4 35193, puts us in touch with an odd, sometimes infuriating, but unique creative mind.

KAREN MONSON'S *Alban Berg* is a more readable book than Moldenhauer's, and a more interpretive one, but it brings us less close to Berg than Moldenhauer's brings us to Webern. There is judgment in it and new information (Berg's later love affair, the programmatic nature of the *Lyric Suite*). But there is also an inconsistency of level, a feeling of hurry, a sense that certain important matters have not been thought through, and, at moments, a contrived style of presentation. It's too bad, really. But Monson does tell the story, and the story is important, as anyone who has heard the music must agree. □



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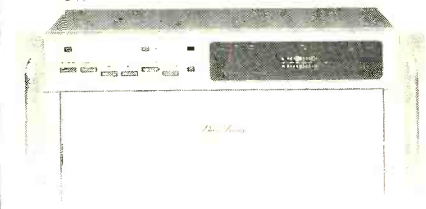
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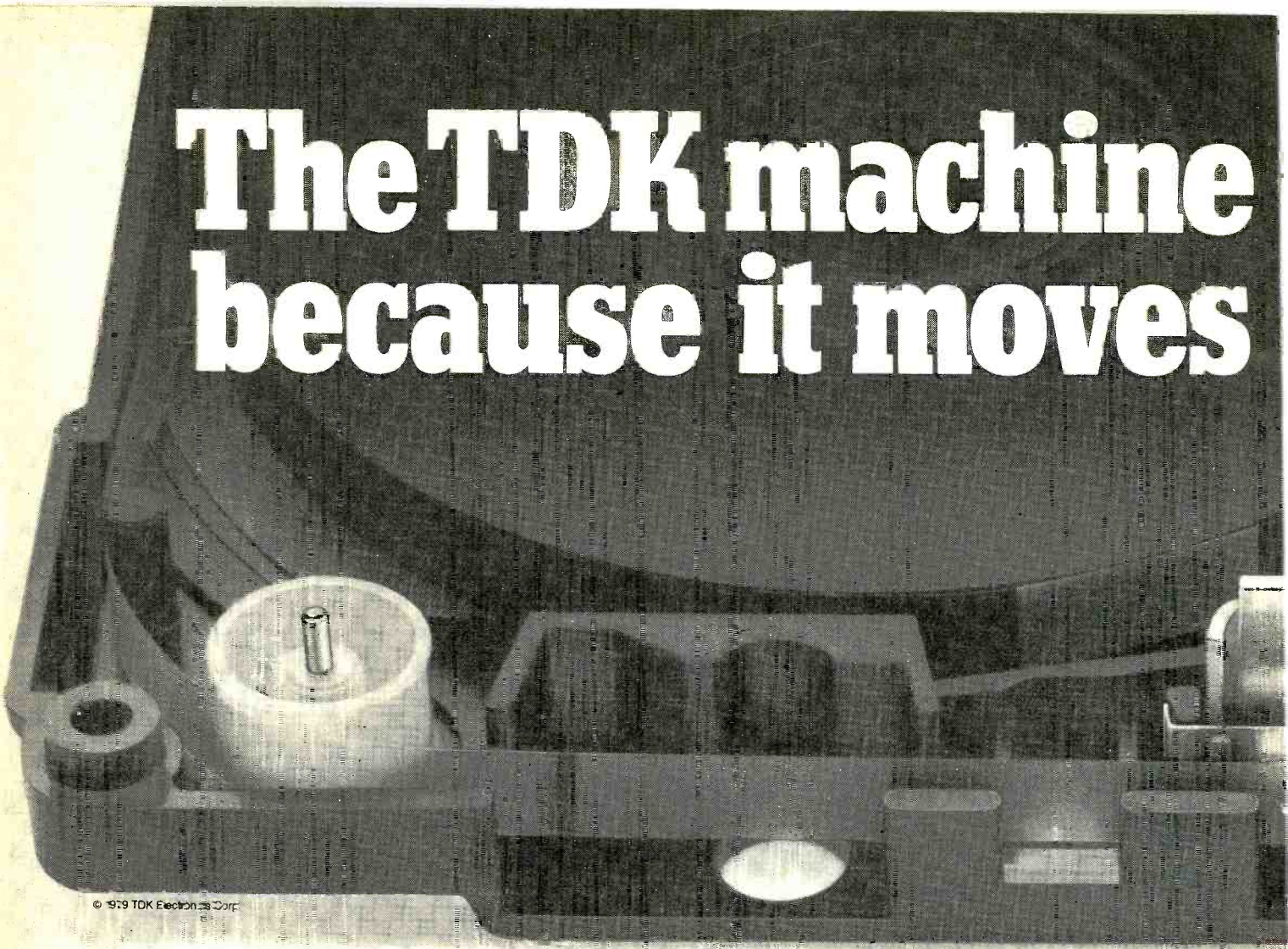
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# The TDK machine because it moves



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At TDK, we're proud of our reputation as the leader in recording tape technology. We got that reputation by paying attention to all the little details other manufacturers sometimes skim over. But there's more to a cassette than just tape. There's a shell to house that tape, and a mechanism that has the function of transporting the tape across the heads. Unless that mechanism does its job evenly and precisely, the best tape in the world won't perform properly, and you won't get all the sound you paid for.

The TDK cassette shell and mechanism are every bit as good as our tape. And when you begin to understand the time and effort we've spent in perfecting them, you'll appreciate that our engineers wouldn't put TDK tape in anything less than the most advanced and reliable cassette available.

**The Shell** Our precision-molded cassette shells are made by continuously monitored injection molding that creates a mirror-image parallel match, to insure against signal



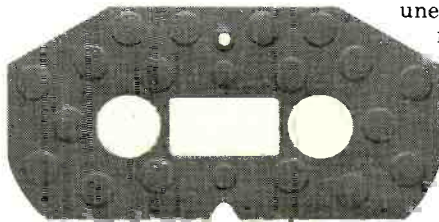
overlap, channel or sensitivity loss from A to B sides. We make these shells from high impact styrene, which resists temperature extremes and sudden stress better than regular styrene or clear plastic.

**The Screws** Our cassettes use five screws instead of four for warp-free mating of the cassette halves. We carefully



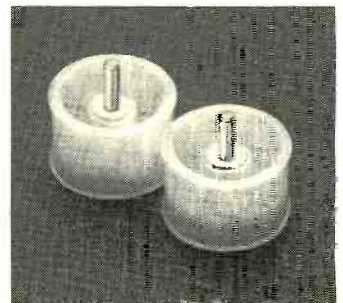
torque those screws to achieve computer-controlled stress equilibrium. That way, the shell is impervious to dust, and the halves are parallel to a tolerance of a few microns.

**The Liner Sheet** Our ingenious and unique bubble liner sheet makes the tape follow a consistent running angle with gentle fingertip-like embossed cushions. It prevents uneven tape winding and minimizes the friction that can lead to tape damage. Also our cassettes will not squeak or squeal during operation.



**The Rollers** Our guide rollers are 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.

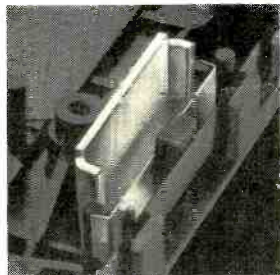


# sounds better better.



## 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.

# FM BROADCAST QUALITY

Why must audiophiles with sophisticated, state-of-the-art, digital-synthesized FM tuners put up with a signal that is inferior to what is possible with current broadcasting technology?

By Robert Orban



If you are a critical listener, you have doubtless heard a difference between a given record played on your turntable and the same record played over FM. The difference may be very subtle or it may be grossly obvious, but rarely will the broadcast version of a disc sound *identical* to the same disc played at home. What accounts for this difference?

Although a mono FM signal can theoretically embody audio frequencies up to 75 kHz without incurring the wrath of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the stereo-FM system currently used in the United States and many other parts of the world is *absolutely* limited by the broadcasting technique to a bandwidth of 19 kHz—which is only 1 kHz short of the accepted 20- to 20,000-Hz audio bandwidth. If the broadcaster were to attempt to transmit audio frequencies above 19 kHz, they would come through as a very nasty form of distortion called “aliasing.” The FCC, however, requires only that the FM station be able to broadcast an audio signal reaching up to 15 kHz. So in order to avoid aliasing distortion, every competently designed stereo-FM transmitter has built-in low-pass filters that chop off the high-frequency response somewhere slightly below 19 kHz—usually in the range of 15 to 17 kHz. Ignoring the other factors for the moment, the high-frequency loss produced by the filtering of the broadcast signal can range from the subtle to the inaudible, depending upon the quality of the disc, the playback cartridges, the listener’s speakers, the accuracy of the de-emphasis network in the receiving tuner, and so forth.

Far more important to listening quality than this bandwidth restriction is the problem of multipath distortion. Most people find it inconvenient or impracticable to install a highly directional outdoor antenna with rotor and coaxial cable. Those who use the 300-ohm twin-lead folded dipole often supplied with tuners or receivers are usually not getting the full low-distortion performance their units are capable of simply because of the multipath distortion caused by inadequate antenna directivity and orientation. In fact, even simple, easily reoriented “rabbit ears” are preferable to a fixed dipole.

In addition, even the slightest mistuning can make a considerable difference in the distortion of a receiver. This is one reason why some form of automatic frequency control is appearing in new and sophisticated forms in many tuners and receivers. Together with a proper antenna, it guarantees that you will be reproducing the broadcast sig-

nal as accurately as possible. And, for the same reason, manufacturers are increasingly turning to digital and crystal-controlled tuning as well.

## The Ratings Battle

But what about the *real* source of the program, the broadcasting policies of the station itself? In the past six or seven years, FM has made the difficult transition from a “class” to a “mass” audience. FM stations, as a group, are at last making money, since the size of the FM audience is finally comparable to (perhaps even greater than) the AM audience.

The amount of money that can be made by an FM station depends on what is known as the “book”—the station’s ratings, as determined by a statistical sampling of the total potential audience. Unsophisticated local adver-

“The owner will be at a commercial disadvantage if his insistence on broadcast quality shapes his audience in such a way that it is less appealing to advertisers.”

tisers can often be sold on the basis of their “feelings” about the station’s format and programming, or even by using the old “support your local station” ploy. National advertisers, however, are a little harder to persuade. Air time for commercials touting autos, airlines, beer, and deodorants are bought by hard-nosed media buyers in major advertising agencies, and the first thing these buyers want to see is the “book.” They are primarily interested in something called “demographics,” how many people in each of a number of categories (age, sex, income level) in a given market area listen to the station, during what time period—and for how long before switching to another station. Demographics, in short, means all the statistical information that goes into helping an advertiser decide just where to spend his money. To both advertiser and broadcaster, FM is a highly competitive business.

But what, you ask, does that have to do with audio quality? Simply put, if you are one of those owners who regards a station as a “property” that is designed, like shopping centers or steel

mills, to produce maximum profit, then your attitude toward it is likely to be quite different from that of another owner who is interested in broadcast quality, who considers that his license is, in a way, a public trust. The first owner, in the interest of increasing ratings and bettering the appeal of his demographics, will be willing to compromise broadcast quality in order to reach those goals. The second owner will almost certainly be at a commercial disadvantage if his insistence on broadcast quality shapes his audience—in both numbers and kind—in such a way that it is less appealing to advertisers.

The effort to enhance ratings and demographics frequently involves “equalizing” the original tonal balance of the broadcast tapes or records for greater “listenability,” whatever that may mean to the engineer inflicting it on his listeners. Such tampering with the signal is likely to make the station sound crisper on car radios, table radios, and the ubiquitous portables, but it can also make the signal unbearably strident, piercing, and fatiguing when heard on a high-quality home system. Fortunately, this equalization can sometimes be “undone” in the home—if an octave-band equalizer is part of your setup and you have the skill and inclination to adjust it carefully.

Far more disturbing than equalization, however, is the excessive use of *compression* and *limiting*. Unless the compressors or limiters are part of a “complementary” noise-reduction system (such as Dolby or dbx), the damage they do cannot be effectively undone by the listener at home. In addition, broadcast compressors and limiters, particularly those not designed to work with each other, can cause an astonishingly large number of offensive side effects as they operate to make the program sound “louder” by increasing the average modulation level. These include “pumping” (a listener hears the volume level constantly rising and falling), “breathing” (excessive and sudden amplification of tape hiss or surface noise during quiet parts of the music or during pauses), “hole-punching” (a loud transient, like a drum beat, is followed by an instant of low volume and then by another of higher volume), or simply a general impression of sonic unnaturalness or strain.

After such a list of horrors, it may come as a surprise that I, along with many others working in the broadcast field, feel that compression and limiting, if applied correctly and in moderation, can often *increase* FM listening enjoyment even on quality component systems. It is unfortunate for listeners

that in the early Sixties a line of commercial compression/limiting equipment for FM broadcasting was introduced that became *extremely* popular—and that it was capable of producing absolutely hideous results if overdriven or misadjusted. Much of today's prejudice against compression and limiting can be blamed on this equipment, even though it was in many ways a significant improvement over preceding designs. The list of compressor/limiter sins against the signal include *none* which cannot be dealt with by competent design and by restraint on the part of station managers and operating engineers. The use of 6 to 10 dB of combined compression and limiting *can* be made extremely subtle as far as its effect on the ear is concerned. And when the low-level passages in music are increased in volume 6 to 10 dB they can be heard much more comfortably in an automobile (typically a very noisy environment) as well as at moderate volumes in the home.

Most people in the United States play the radio as a background for other activities (Europeans, oddly enough, tend to use their radios for serious listening far more than Americans do, perhaps because records are comparatively so much more expensive there than they are here). It is, of course, important to take this simple fact into account, and a sensitive broadcaster will vary the amount of compression and limiting according to the type of music being played (more for obvious background music or Top-40 hits, less for "album-oriented" rock or concert music) and even according to the time of day (more compression should be used in daytime, when background listening is likely to be the case, less in the evening, when concentrated, serious listening is going on).

### Pre-emphasis "Curse"

Considerable concern has been expressed in recent years over the effects of the 75-microsecond pre-emphasis required by the Federal Communications Commission for all FM broadcasts. Basically, this means that stations are required by law to provide a specific treble *boost* before transmission; when the complementary built-in treble *rolloff* in the listener's receiver restores flat response, it simultaneously reduces high-frequency transmission noise by about 11 dB.

The problem is that in 1947, when the rule was introduced, records and tapes had very little high-frequency content by today's standards. The 75-microsecond high-frequency boost could therefore be accommodated without overmodulating the transmitter (which can cause interference with adjacent stations and/or receiver distortion). Unfortunately, today's records have so much high-frequency energy that if they were to be broadcast "as is," the 75-microsecond boost could easily produce illegal overmodulation. The broadcaster has three basic means of dealing with this problem. The first is simply turning down the overall level (the average modulation) of his audio signal to accommodate the greater high-frequency energy. Because of intense market competition, however, most broadcasters would be appalled at the prospect of (in their view) thus emasculating the signal, of deliberately making it less loud than that of their competitors.

The second means of accommodating the treble boost is clipping. This is similar to the clipping that takes place in an overdriven amplifier, and it involves chopping off the high-frequency peaks that would otherwise cause overmodulation. Like amplifier clipping, this process can cause harmonic and intermodulation distortion, but the audible effect is not as severe because the receiver's subsequent de-emphasis of the treble rolls off the spurious high-frequency harmonics. Although IM distortion is audible (the sound becomes rather "gritty") when clipping is excessive, it is usually masked psychoacoustically if it is present to only a moderate degree.

The third way of dealing with the pre-emphasis problem is high-frequency limiting. This involves introducing a *dynamic* high-frequency filter into the audio chain. Unlike a scratch filter, which has fixed characteristics, the dynamic high-frequency filter reacts to the content of the program material: when little high-frequency energy is present, no filtering occurs; when large amounts of high-frequency energy are present, the filter cuts down on the highs sufficiently to prevent transmitter overmodulation. Although such limiters don't introduce audible harmonic or IM distortion if properly designed, they can cause audible *dulling* of the program, particularly when they are the *sole* means of overmodulation control.

These, then, are the problems of the FM broadcaster who uses audio processing. He walks a tightrope, balancing the audiophile's concerns against those of the larger audience that listens on technically inferior

equipment. His signal must be loud enough to compete with others on the band, yet it must retain enough dynamic range that musical values are not totally destroyed. And he must do this while looking over his shoulder at his ratings and their effect, positive or negative, on his advertisers.

Is there a way out of this dilemma? Fortunately, there is. Continuing research in the area of broadcast equipment and particularly into the design of compressors and limiters has resulted in equipment that offers exciting promise of improved FM-broadcast quality for the Eighties (see accompanying box on the Optimod-FM audio processing system). It comes at a time when other FM developments, in particular the new Public Broadcasting Satellite program, are about to add a whole new dimension to an activity that has fascinated Americans for over half a century now.

### OPTIMOD-FM AND DOLBY PROCESSING

**A**BOUT three years ago, Orban Associates introduced a new FM audio-processing unit designed to solve many of the problems associated with previous processing techniques. This device, which is called Optimod-FM, is, in effect, a complete system containing the functions of five separate devices: compressor, limiter, high-frequency limiter, clipper, and stereo multiplex generator. By using the systems approach, the various functions of all of these signal processors can be optimized for maximum effectiveness and compatibility.

One particular aspect of the system is worth noting: the available compression using Optimod-FM is limited to a maximum of 15 dB, which assures that a station *cannot* overcompress the program. In addition, careful psychoacoustical "tuning" of the dynamic characteristics of the compressor/limiter circuits virtually eliminate the irritating audible effects that prejudiced so many musically sensitive people against audio compression in FM broadcasting.

The pre-emphasis problem has been dealt with by combining high-frequency limiting and clipping in such a way as to exploit the advantages of both. The high-frequency limiter is actually a program-controlled, variable-pre-emphasis filter followed by a clipper; the filter applies only as much high-frequency rolloff as is required to reduce

## The Outlook

The foregoing discussion has focused on signal processing at the station, which is the single most important factor in determining audio quality. However, the recent availability of broadcast-type (which is to say *rugged* and *rapid-start*) turntables and phono cartridges with superlative performance, plus a general upgrading of broadcast tape-cartridge performance, and the general application of modern low-noise, low-distortion electronics to areas other than signal processing also help the revolution along; the improvements in these areas can easily be heard on the air.

The broadcasting trade magazine *Broadcast Management/Engineering* devoted a good part of its October 1977 issue to the article "Audio for the 80's: A New Standard of Quality," observing in its introduction that "audio qual-

ity will be pushed far upward in the next few years at a rapid rate, an upgrading on a scale unlike anything the industry has known." After profiling eight "big-time," quality-oriented FM stations, the article went on to point out that the broadcast hardware needed for such an upgrading is now available to those stations whose management is willing to take advantage of it.

Two or three years ago it seemed that many stations were finally realizing that better radio could improve ratings. And the major myth brought over from AM radio—that a louder signal, regardless of quality, attracts more listeners—appeared to be losing its strength. However, even though perhaps 50 per cent of the FM stations in the United States broadcast with the Optimod-FM system, over the past two years there appears to have been substantial backsliding toward the old AM anything-for-ratings philosophy. The

loudness war has escalated, and quality is once again being sacrificed in pursuit of listeners—in many instances by adding other compression devices *ahead* of the Optimod-FM system. Since excessive signal processing is now the rule in many of the major market areas, the audiophile, even with his sophisticated and expensive state-of-the-art, digital-synthesized FM tuner, is likely to be listening to a signal very much inferior to what is possible with current broadcasting technology. This trend is bound to reverse itself—but when? Is it too much to hope that the new PBS satellite facilities will have a salutary competitive effect on the sound-quality policies of commercial broadcasting? □

**Robert Orban** is chief engineer at Orban Associates, Inc.; perhaps 50 per cent of the FM radio stations in the United States use products that are made by his company.

to inaudible levels the distortion introduced by the clipper. The success of this approach is immediately apparent in the listening: program material is dulled either not at all or only very slightly, and the sound is clean, transparent, and distortion-free. Without a direct A/B comparison with the source, moreover, the effect on the highs is not likely to be noticed.

The stereo-multiplex generator section of the Optimod-FM device is unconventional in that it returns to the original idea of matrix generation of the encoded stereo signal. In receivers, matrix-type decoders have now been universally supplanted by "switching" decoders, and at the broadcast end analogous "switching" stereo generators have become almost as universal. However, advances in circuit design now permit improved high-frequency separation using the matrix approach. Optimod-FM provides separation throughout the entire system (including audio processing) that typically exceeds 60 dB at 1 kHz and approximately 50 dB even at 15 kHz.

**A**s most readers are probably aware, the Dolby-B noise-reduction system has been applied to the problem of 75-microsecond pre-emphasis in broadcasting. In this context, it can be considered a high-frequency compressor with characteristics so chosen that they can be precisely "undone" in a complementary manner with a Dolby decoder at the listener's receiver. At the station, the transmitter pre-emphasis is reduced from 75 to 25 microseconds, which increases the high-frequency power-handling capability of the modulation system and also makes the sound acceptable on

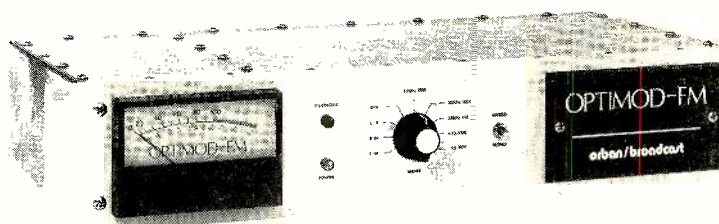
standard (75-microsecond) receivers not equipped with Dolby-B decoders.

The Optimod-FM system used with Dolby encoding provides a noise reduction of about 5 dB with a Dolby-decoding receiver as compared with normal (non-Dolby) reception. And an increase in high-frequency energy is also heard on some program material in comparison to a properly adjusted Optimod-FM 75-microsecond system without Dolby encoding/decoding. Unfortunately, many stations find that there is a price to be paid for the advantages of the Dolby-B FM system: if the station's signal has been compressed to the point that the Dolby encoder (which operates on low-level high frequencies) is never activated, then listeners will hear a substantially duller sound on *non-Dolby* receivers than the sound of identical program material not Dolby encoded. This situation has caused many broadcasters to resist adoption of Dolby-FM broadcasting, but this resistance can be expected to decrease when sufficient numbers of Dolby-equipped receivers exist to make Dolby listeners a signifi-

cant portion of the total audience—demographics rears its ugly head again!

Although it is ordinarily used without compression, the Dolby-FM system requires a "transmitter-protection limiter" to prevent operator error from overmodulating the transmitter. Unfortunately, conventional limiters can degrade the quality of the Dolby-FM transmission. The Optimod-FM unit was designed (with the assistance of Dolby Labs) to interface correctly with a Dolby-FM broadcast encoder at the broadcaster's option. When Dolby is employed with Optimod-FM, another 2 to 3 dB of noise reduction can be obtained because the more precise overmodulation control provided by Optimod-FM permits a higher average level without increased compression.

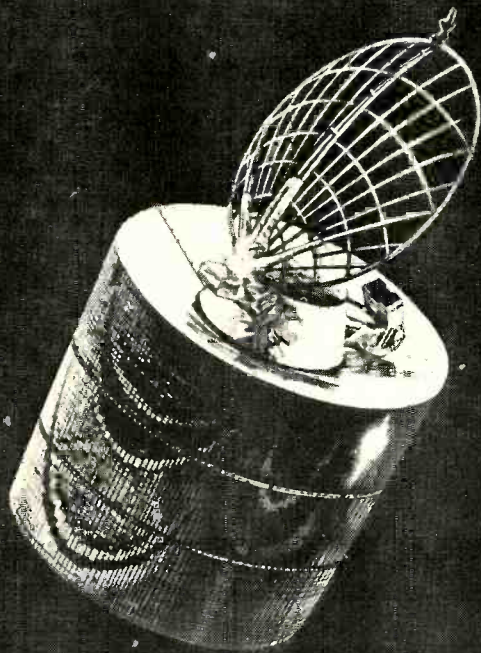
**S**OME broadcasters have incorrectly perceived Optimod-FM and Dolby-FM as rival systems. However, they do different jobs and are perfectly compatible and complementary: using the two together can result in optimum noise reduction and optimum audio quality. —R.O.



The only two controls readily available on the Optimod-FM unit's front panel are a stereo/mono toggle and a nine-position switch that selects the meter reading.

# FM BROADCASTING VIA NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO SATELLITE

Your FM tuner never had it so good



## NPR: THE SOFTWARE

By Eric Salzman

**D**o you know Alfredo Tucci's *Rato Interesse*? No? The touching story is set in the Italian quarter of Louisville (Kentucky). Alfredo wants to buy wall-to-wall carpeting for Angelina but can't afford the interest rate on the loan. Outraged, Perugino the carpet seller heads to Washington singing the famous "Businessman's Lament" aria. There he meets his arch-rival Luigi, president of World Wide Wallets of Geneva. Perugino is afraid that if the interest rate isn't lowered his business will fail, but Luigi tells the American leaders that if they don't raise the interest rate the dollar will suffer abroad. What a conflict! What lyricism, what dramatic intensity!

If you happened to tune in to National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* one afternoon a couple of months ago you would

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## NPR: THE HARDWARE

By Robert Greene

**W**ould you like to have high-quality stereo-FM programs available to you from any part of the country instead of just your own locality? Until recently there was not much chance of that, since FM signals reach no further than "line-of-sight." Well, it's going to be happening, perhaps by the time you read this.

One of the organizations involved in the new transmission system that is needed to achieve long-distance FM is National Public Radio (NPR), originators of noncommercial radio broadcasts. NPR is to radio what PBS (Public Broadcasting System) is to television, and it is made up of a network of about two hundred noncommercial radio stations that provide a variety of programming to their respective localities. Until now the only interconnections have been via a narrow-band telephone line (voice-frequency quality only, and used for news programming), and the U.S. Postal Service (used to mail tapes of other broadcast material around the country).



actually have heard this touching melodrama—not a joke at all, but an amusing and effective way of illustrating a point about the economy. It's the sort of thing that National Public Radio does and does well. This opera parody on a news program is a perfectly sensible conjunction for a broadcasting service that provides both culture and information in a creative way. Public radio is the FM equivalent of public television, but, with a fraction of the funds, it has far outstripped its more glamorous sister medium in terms of liveliness and originality.

If this sounds like an unabashed plug for public radio, it is. Don't expect objectivity in this corner. I've been working at National Public Radio for the past two years, producing a variety of things from short commentaries to full-length original operas, and I like it. I had previously put in some of the best years of my life—a good part of the Sixties—as music director of one of the Pacifica group of noncommercial, listener-supported radio stations (WBAI in New York), and it was a very idealistic place. When I left in 1972, Pacifica had begun a long, slow decline, and I never expected to return to broadcasting on a regular basis. But National Public Radio has picked up the torch.

Public radio in this country is actually two things. It is, first of all, almost a thousand nonprofit FM stations scattered around the country; their broadcast power ranges from

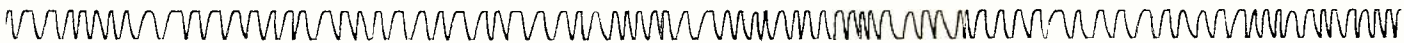
5 or 10 watts to over 100,000 watts. It is also NPR, National Public Radio, a Washington-based programming and coordinating agency supported mostly by tax dollars. About 230 stations qualify for NPR membership by virtue of size, hours on the air, and professional staff. Public funding for these stations and for NPR comes through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which also helps support public television and is in turn funded by Congress. This complex and costly system was set up to minimize political interference; both CPB and NPR are, in theory, private entities supported by public funds. Clear?

**C**URIOSLY, this system has hamstrung public television (which has no national program service) but not radio. This has something to do with the general resurgence of radio as an entertainment medium, but it is also due to its far lower cost and to some enlightened direction from the top. Frank Mankiewicz, author, journalist, former Kennedy aide, and current president of NPR, has a simple formula for making it work: find talented, creative people and give them elbow room. "I really do believe that radio is the newer, younger medium today," says Mankiewicz. "People with talent and creative ideas about broadcasting come into public radio because there isn't any other place for them to go."

In most parts of the world, *all* radio is public radio—government owned and operated. And there was a time even in this country when the question of private broadcasting was in doubt; that old radical-socialist Herbert Hoover himself supported public ownership of the air waves! In the end, however, there was only public regulation of private enterprise; the government stayed out of the broadcasting business. Nevertheless, public radio in this country is almost as old as broadcasting itself. Station WHA, still a leader, was established at the University of Wisconsin in 1919. To this day many, if not most, of the public broadcasting stations are university affiliated. "Educational broadcasting" is what it used to be called until the late 1960s. That was when the Carnegie Commission recommended that Congress create the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and get public radio and television established on a national basis. Starting operations in 1970, NPR is now producing between fifty and fifty-five hours of programs a week, mostly distributed to member stations by phone lines or on tape. This system will change dramatically in 1980 when the whole public-radio system "goes satellite."

The heart of broadcasting is, of course, programming—software, not hardware—and the list of current and future offerings is so impressive that it warrants a bit of time

*(Continued overleaf)*



But in January 1979, the Federal Communications Commission gave its approval to NPR for another interconnection: the linking of their stations via satellite. Construction of the system began in May and will take about one year to complete, though partial service is scheduled (as of this writing) to be available about October 1. The stations involved will be able to pick up not only the "feed" from the Main Origination Terminal (MOT) in Bren Mar, Virginia (near Washington), but also programs from fifteen other NPR stations to be equipped as Regional Origination Terminals in selected cities coast-to-coast. Eventually, each NPR station will be able to choose the program it wants from a wide variety of material from all over the country, not just a single program as in current commercial radio and television. The stations with satellite transmitting capability (as well as the MOT in Virginia) are known as "uplinks." They will not communicate directly with each other but by a (very) long-distance microwave-relay arrangement at the center of which is Western Union Telegraph Company's Westar I satellite.

One of the purposes of this system is improvement of the transmission quality of NPR's distribution to permit high-fidelity transmission of mono and stereo (and perhaps, in time, quad) programs to all stations; the audio bandwidth of the system is 15,000 Hz throughout. It is estimated that the cost of construction of the ground terminals and MOT will be \$18.2 million, the bulk of which will be provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).

Terms of CPB's seven-year contract with Western Union for its satellite service call for the use of two leased program channels initially. Because the left and right sides of a stereo program in this system are handled separately rather than being multiplexed as in standard broadcast practice (though actual broadcasting will remain unchanged), this means one stereo or two mono channels. By the end of 1979 four channels should be operational for four mono, two stereo, or one quad transmission—or various combinations of them. CPB also has options that permit increasing the service to twelve or, if the demand should warrant, twenty channels. Leasing of additional channels will also be permitted by the contract should the need arise, such as for special events, elections, and the like. One of the more interesting opportunities presented by the new system will be joint public-radio/public-television simulcasts. The audio of many PBS television programs will become available on NPR in stereo and even, possibly, in a quadraphonic format.

The Westar I satellite is in orbit: a distance above the earth where the centrifugal force of its own revolution about the earth is exactly balanced by the pull of the earth's gravity. The satellite is in the plane of the equator, and since at 22,300 miles distance it revolves in the same 24-hour period as the earth rotates, it remains fixed relative to the earth, hanging over a geographic point so that it can be used as a "platform" for a microwave repeater.

Because of the great distance involved, noise becomes a serious problem. To cope

with it, special low-noise amplifiers and companders providing about a 29-dB improvement in signal over noise have been designed. It is expected that NPR will deliver a high-quality signal with a signal-to-noise ratio of at least 67 dB.

Each of the signals transmitted to the satellite will be on a carrier frequency of about 6 GHz (1 gigahertz = 1 billion hertz). The satellite's transponder receives the signal, converts it to 4 GHz, and transmits it back to earth. The program material is impressed on the microwave carriers by ordinary frequency modulation.

The antenna used at each NPR ground station will be a parabolic (dish) reflector with a diameter of 4.5 meters. Specialized isolation techniques permit using the same antenna for both transmitting and receiving purposes.

**F**INALLY, this system of broadcasting by satellite will not be exclusive to National Public Radio. As reported in STEREO REVIEW's "Bulletin" in August, station WFMT in Chicago will be the first station to have its entire program schedule distributed nationally by satellite. The satellite in this case is RCA's Satcom I, and distribution is being handled by United Video, Inc., of Tulsa, Oklahoma. The retransmitted signal will not be going to local radio stations but to cable systems whose subscribers will have the options of having their cable hooked up to FM as well as TV receivers. Also planning their own variations on this use of satellites are the Mutual Broadcasting System, the AP and UPI news services, and Muzak. □

and space. Besides *All Things Considered*—one and a half hours, on weekdays, an hour on weekends, of literate, informative, entertaining news and features—NPR is about to inaugurate a daily two-hour morning news service. (NPR will also broadcast the SALT-II ratification debates from the U.S. Senate, only the second time radio broadcasts have emanated from the floor of that august chamber. The first? The Panama Canal treaty debates on—right—National Public Radio.)

- **Drama?** *Masterpiece Radio Theater*, produced at WGBH in Boston, offers BBC and original American productions. *Earplay*, from Madison, Wisconsin, produces new American plays, some of which have gone from public radio to Broadway (Arthur Kopit's *Wings*, for example). There's a storytelling festival produced by WNYC in New York and *The Spider's Web*, a children's story series, from WGBH. But the most unlikely project, and the one most likely to gain national attention, is a thirteen-week science-fiction series called—no kidding—*Star Wars*. And it is no cheap rip-off: the original movie people are involved in it in a serious way, and so is the BBC, which has put up half the money.

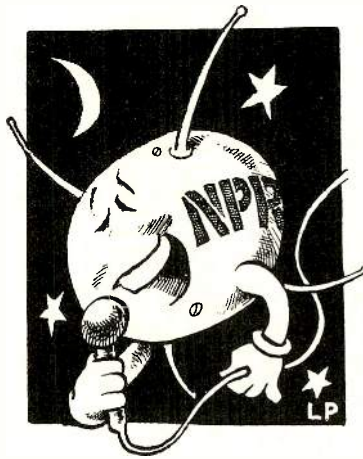
- **Music?** You bet. Some people think that *Jazz Alive* with Billy Taylor is the best jazz show in the country; it's "live on tape," and the current lineup includes Mel Tormé, Gerry Mulligan, Max Roach, Archie Shepp, Elvin Jones, and a host of younger talents. *Folk Festival USA* similarly travels all over the country finding performers and performances to broadcast: the New Lost City Ramblers, the Western Regional Folk Festival, the Indiana Old Time Musicians Gathering, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, Stefan Grossman and John Renbourn, the Arkansas Folk Festival, the Chieftains, the Horseshoe Bend Bluegrass Festival . . . well, you get the idea.

- **Classical music?** Of course. A large percentage of the public radio stations in this country are essentially devoted to classical music—"fine arts" stations, they like to call themselves. Much of the local programming is, of course, recorded music, but NPR's network programs are virtually all live on tape. Here's some of this season's line-up:

The third complete San Francisco Opera season broadcasts include a *Gioconda* with Luciano Pavarotti and Renata Scotto (the first time in these roles for both); a triple bill consisting of Poulenc's *La Voix Humaine* with Magda Olivero, Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero*, and Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* with Giuseppe Taddei; a *Flying Dutchman* with Simon Estes; Rossini's *Tancredi* with Marilyn Horne; *Roberto Devereux* with Montserrat Caballé; a *Forza del Destino* with Leontyne Price and Marti Talvela; a *Così Fan Tutte* with Thomas Stewart and Pilar Lorenzar; *The Girl of the Golden West* with Carol Neblett and Plácido Domingo; and an *Elek-*

*tra* with Leonie Rysenek and Christa Ludwig. If all that isn't enough, there will be three productions of the Vienna Opera (the Bernstein *Fidelio* and a *Figaro* and an *Ariadne* directed by Karl Böhm) live from the Kennedy Center.

Orchestral concerts include the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Giulini, the Cincinnati and Indianapolis Symphonies under John Nelson, the Berlin Philharmonic under Böhm, the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande under Antal Dorati, the Berlin Radio Symphony under Erich Leinsdorf, the Polish Chamber Orchestra, and radio orchestras from Stuttgart, Finland, Denmark, and the Netherlands. There are recitals by Lazar Berman, the Smetana Trio, the New York Vocal Arts Ensemble, and the Concord String Quartet (which will play all six quartets of George Rochberg, including the three written and named for the Concord). There is a whole week of programming recorded in



Cuba in conjunction with the fifty-fifth anniversary of the Havana Philharmonic (now known as the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Cuba). *The American Music Sampler* has a series on the American popular song with Alec Wilder and friends (they include Mabel Mercer, Thelma Carpenter, Barbara Lea, and the late Teddi King) as well as contemporary and avant-garde works by younger composers. There are *thirteen* programs about the concert guitar, with an impressive list of performers, and both the Friedheim and Rockefeller Foundation competitions (chamber-music composition and voice, respectively) from Kennedy Center. And, oh yes, two theater operas—*Civilization and Its Discontents* and *The Passion of Simple Simon*, both by Michael Sahl and Eric Salzman—especially realized for radio.

Not all of this, by any means, comes out of central control. In fact, an increasing amount of original programming comes from member stations and is then distributed nationally by NPR in Washington. As one might expect, a few of the more dynamic stations around the country lead the way: WGBH-FM in Boston (their radio is as good as their television), KUSC at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, and that old pioneer, WHA in Madison. New York's WNYC (AM and FM) is an interesting case. One of the earliest public-radio stations (dating from the Twenties) and one of

the few to be affiliated with a municipality instead of a university, WNYC had its heyday in the era of Mayor Fiorello La Guardia and subsequently settled down to a pleasant, innocuous senility. Now, however, New York's Mayor Koch has appointed Mary Perot Nichols (formerly an editor at the *Village Voice*) to revitalize the station. It has become a full-fledged affiliate of National Public Radio and is slowly but surely upgrading its sound and its mission.

Any problems in paradise? A few. The number-one problem is the usual one: insufficient money. Unfortunately, public radio and television must share the same pie, and it isn't very difficult to guess who gets the bigger slice. NPR director Mankiewicz recently asked the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for an extra \$3.5 million out of the public-television budget (public radio gets a little over \$30 million from CPB as compared to more than \$100 million for the television system, which also gets another \$50 million from corporations and foundations). He didn't get it. And finances are unlikely to get any easier in the next few years with the whole NPR system bursting at the seams. The solution is probably more outside funding of the foundation/corporation sort.

**T**HERE is often a dynamic in the development of institutions that defies rational explanation. Whatever the reason, there is an unconstrained field for creativity and talent in public radio right now that is exhilarating. Interestingly, there is also a high level of audience response. Meaningful figures on public-radio listening are exceedingly difficult to come by, though the numbers, already in the millions, are certainly climbing. But public-radio people from Mankiewicz on down refuse to play the numbers game. Instead, they point to a high level of listener response: public-radio listeners are letter writers (I find it remarkable that they will take the considerable trouble to find out who and where to write to). People in public radio, moreover, have a sense of mission. They are interested in quality of listenership, not quantity—at least not *mere* quantity. Fred Calland, NPR's chief classical-music guru, has been at NPR from its inception; he is also one of the system's most popular programmers and the recipient of the (affectionate) title of Resident Smart-Ass. He likes to point out that NPR exists not to make money or to perpetuate itself, but only to fulfill its mandate: "You can say, 'Hey, let's do a program of new works,' and you can go and do it without having it okayed by twenty-five executives, a board of directors, and a listener survey. If everybody cared as much about the construction of their souls as they do about oozing at the armpits, we would be in a golden age and wouldn't have to worry about public broadcasting. Until that day, we have something to do."

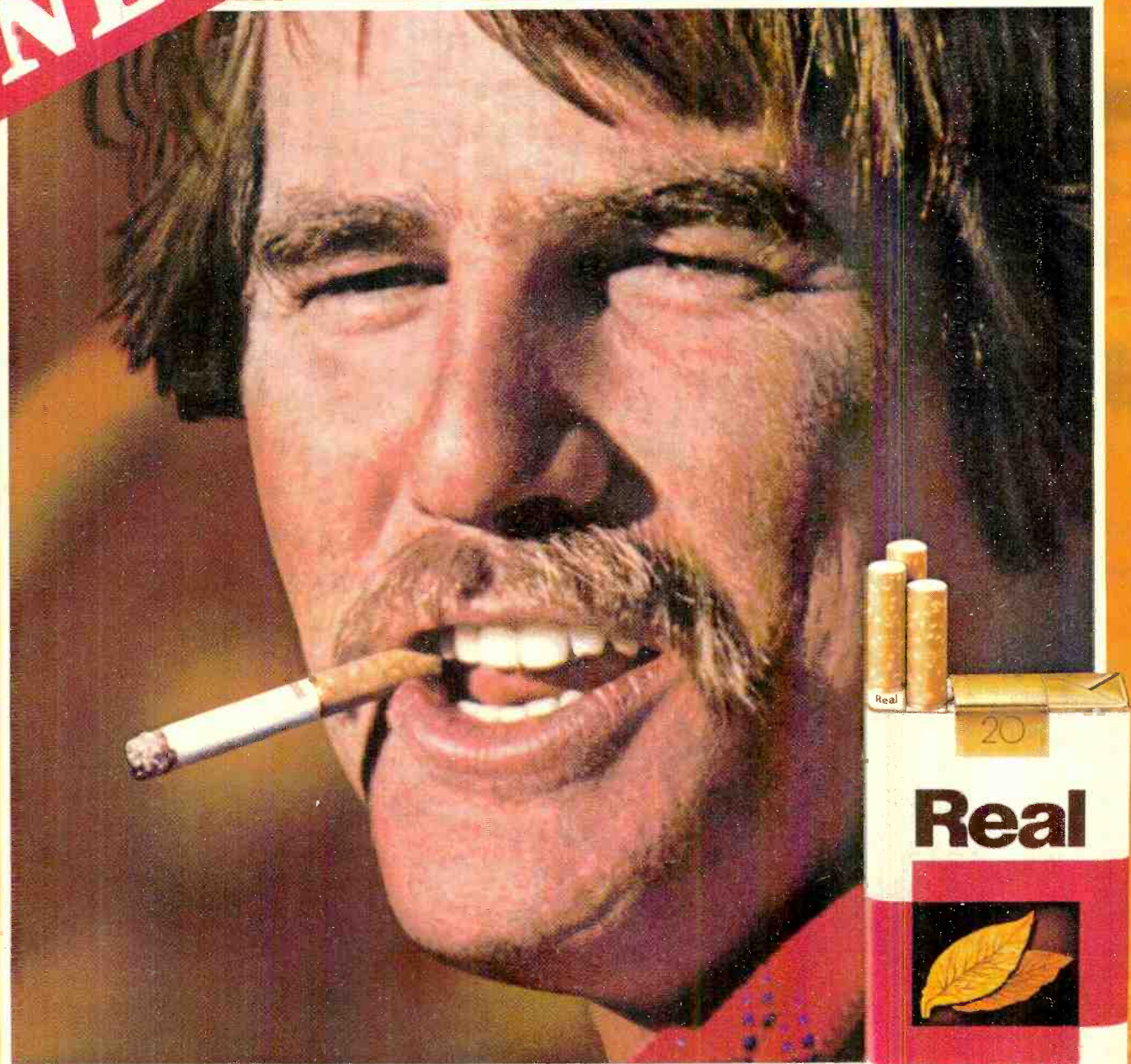
Steve Rathe, executive producer of *Jazz Alive*, *Folk Festival USA*, and the Sahl/Salzman operas, has a simpler view: "Mission, hell! Working at NPR and in public radio has been for me like living in a candy store. Each time we finish a project, there are two more sitting waiting on the next shelf."

There just aren't very many workplaces these days you can say *that* about. □

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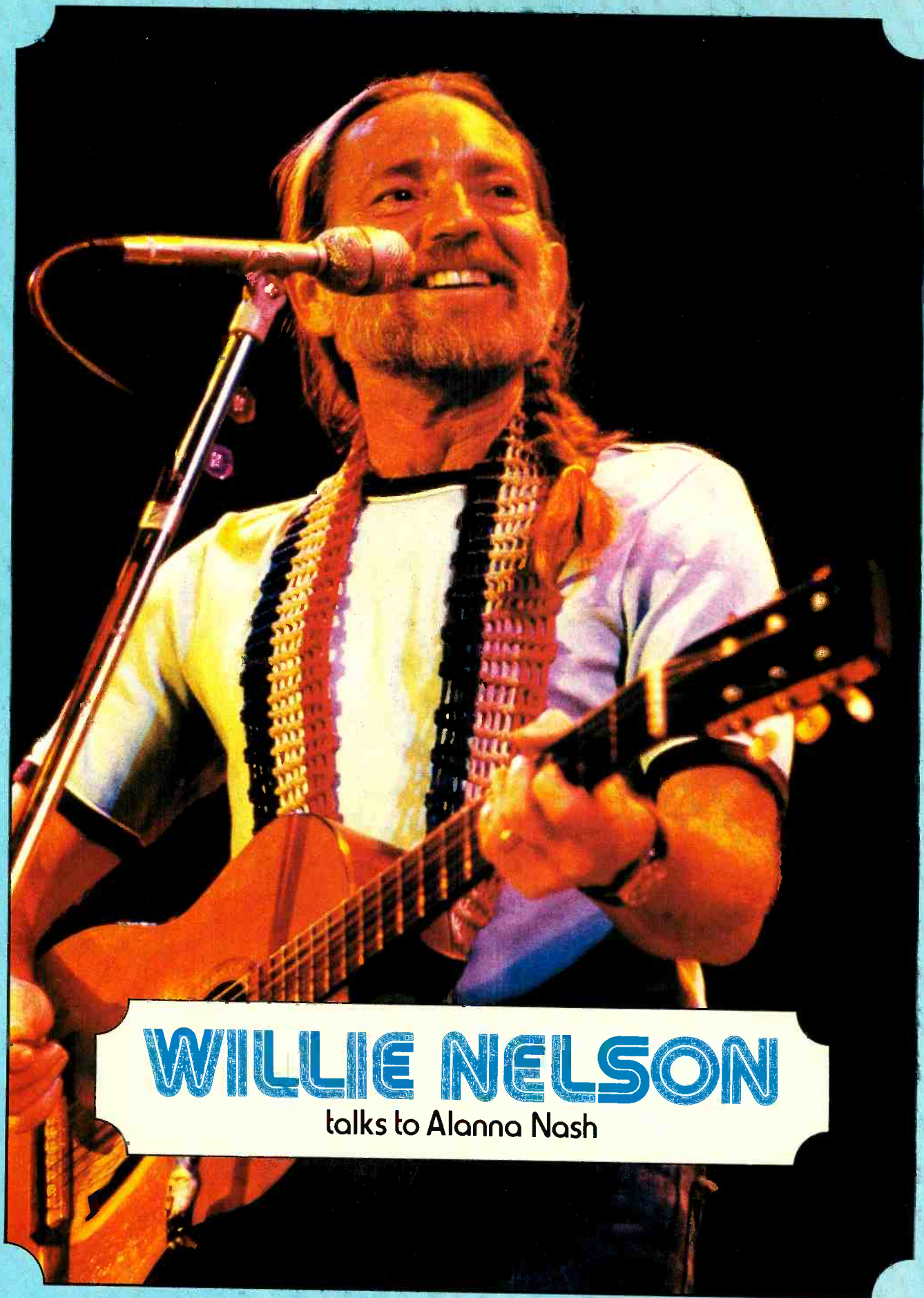


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# WILLIE NELSON

talks to Alanna Nash

**E**IGHT years ago, when his house burned down, Willie Nelson left Nashville—to which he'd come in 1959—to return to his native Texas. The way he tells it, nobody much cared, certainly not RCA, his record company at that time. He had made eighteen or so albums, but he wasn't rich. The record company's executives seemed to have little faith in him as a vocalist, feeling that his peculiar, haunting baritone was just too alien to the prevailingly smooth and sweet "Nashville sound." Nelson wasn't bitter, but he was frustrated.

"These people had things goin' their own way, and they were successful doin' it the way they were doin' it," he recounts. "Here I was, some upstart from Texas come runnin' up here, runnin' around sayin', 'Well, this is the way I want to do it.' I'd probably have reacted the way they did. They didn't have any idea that I knew what I was talkin' about. I have no idea who they were, really. They were always nameless, always in New York or somewhere. There was a computer somewhere that hated me, I think!"

Nelson had stuck it out for a long time in Music City, playing bass for Ray Price and watching the songs he had written for himself—*Crazy*, *Night Life*, *Hello, Walls*, and *Funny (How Time Slips Away)*—become major hits for other artists. The money from songwriting started rolling in, but as far as performing was concerned it came down to doing it Nashville's way or cutting out for Texas. There, even if he didn't make a million dollars, he could do things *his* way. Nelson chose Texas, and not even he knew that there was an audience waiting for him, an audience made up of hippies and rednecks, liberals and conservatives, oldsters and youngsters bound together only by their attraction to the curious and highly personal blend of country, blues, gospel, honky-tonk, Western, and Texas swing that made up the music of Willie Nelson.

**A** YEAR after he left Nashville, Nelson returned there to record "Yesterday's Wine," a concept album he still considers his best work. But RCA was not able to market it successfully, so he went to New York and Atlantic Records to do "Shotgun Willie" (1973) and the critically acclaimed "Phases and Stages" (1974), which sold 400,000 copies. With that, Columbia Records offered him a contract that gave him just what he wanted: total artistic control. The result was "Red Headed Stranger," the brilliant theme album of love and murder. Columbia reportedly

had reservations about the album's sparse instrumentation and wanted to overdub strings, but Nelson reminded them of the creative-control clause and they did it his way. In the end, they had a best seller on both the country and rock charts, and the cult that had sprung up in Texas (where Nelson worshippers wore "Matthew, Mark, Luke and Willie" T-shirts and turned out 60,000 strong for his annual Fourth of July picnics) began to spread. Suddenly, the hottest things in country music were Willie Nelson, the "new breed" of singer/songwriter, and what someone quickly termed the "Austin Sound."

Wasn't he just once, in all those years of struggle, tempted to compromise a little to get ahead? "No," he answers, "I can honestly say I wasn't, because I got mad somewhere along the way and decided I would *not* do it, and it got to be fun, not doin' it. I mean, not compromising got to be a thing with me, maybe to the point where we went overboard in the other direction. We were doin' okay, the way we were goin'. We weren't gettin' rich, but we were eatin'."

**I**F "Red Headed Stranger" was Nelson's breakthrough album (a single from it, Fred Rose's *Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain*, became a freak hit), the one that secured his superstardom was RCA's "Wanted: The Outlaws," released in 1976. In addition to Nelson, it featured Waylon Jennings, Jessi Colter, and Tompall Glaser in what RCA saw as a sampling of "Nashville rebel" music. Although the company hoped it would be a winner, nobody foresaw what was to happen: "Wanted: The Outlaws" sold like Gatorade at a chili cook-off, becoming the first country album *ever* to go platinum, selling more than a million units. Nelson and Jennings now had a new reputation to maintain—that of hairy, rough-living, hell-raising, dope-smoking rebels who just coincidentally happened to have refused to be told how to make music.

The myth took hold. Not only about Jennings and Nelson but about the Austin Sound. "I don't believe in the Austin myth," says Nelson. "I don't believe the Nashville myth or the New York myth. I think there are good musicians all over the world makin' music. Now, there might be some towns where good musicians gather more than they do in other towns. Austin is that place, for sure. There's probably more good bands playing live music in Austin than in any other city in the country. The climate is good, the attitude of the people is good, the attitude

toward strangers is good, and it's just a nice place to go. And about the 'outlaw' thing," he muses, "a lot of people misinterpreted the label to start with—or maybe they didn't." He laughs. "I don't mind. It was funny then—it's funny now."

Funny or not, Nelson suddenly became very salable. It's no wonder, then, that the powers that be became apoplectic when their "outlaw" decided to record a gospel album, then a collection of songs by the late Lefty Frizzell, and, finally, "Stardust," an album of pop standards that included, besides the title song, *Georgia on My Mind* (another old Hoagy Carmichael hit), *Blue Skies*, *September Song*, *Moonlight in Vermont*—in all, Nelson's ten favorite boyhood songs. If Nashville couldn't figure out just what he was up to, Nelson knew he was on safe ground. He had become one of the few artists whose following was so secure that he could record virtually anything and be assured it would do well. "Stardust" was no exception, and Nelson had another platinum album.

"I never had any doubts about how it would do," he relates, "because those were songs that I've been doin' for people every night nearly all my life. I knew that people liked 'em, and I knew I could do 'Stardust' and turn around and do any kind of music. Those people didn't know whether the songs were country or pop, because there had never been such divisions in Texas. They just knew they liked the music, and they'd sit out there and drink a beer and dance to *Stardust* or *You Are My Sunshine*."

"When I got into the record end of the business, I found out they had music sliced up into a bunch of different categories. That was very confusing to me—I had to start slicin' up what I knew: 'Well, you can't play this one, 'cause it's not country,' or 'You can't play that one, 'cause it's not commercial.' There's a lot of people who still live under the illusion that music is sliced up, but it's not. A 'G' is a 'G.' A quarter note is a quarter note. Whoever's doin' it makes it different, I think."

**C**ERTAINLY that's true of Nelson, who has been credited with bridging the gap between country and rock with his progressive country style. "Well, that's a nice thought," he observes in his ever-humble manner. "Whether it's true or not, I don't know. I may have been partly responsible, but there's been guys doin' it all along. When Leon Russell came out with 'Hank Wilson's Back,' that helped a lot too. There was a lot of Leon Russell rock-and-roll fans

# WILLIE NELSON

who listened to country music for the first time. Leon laid the groundwork for guys like me."

Nelson's admiration for Russell becomes apparent when he discusses their joint spring and summer tour and "One for the Road," their recent double album of—you guessed it—pop and country standards.

"Leon and I have been friends for years," he told me aboard his bus outside a Lexington, Kentucky, hall. "I'd been trying to figure out a way to make records with him for a long time. I finally talked him into doin' one with me. Leon is just a genius, that's all. We've got a mutual admiration society goin', and I'm in awe every night of the tour."

**L**AST July Nelson took his plaintive sound to Las Vegas to play Caesar's Palace. In his jeans, T-shirt, and pig-tails, he might seem an unlikely candidate for Vegas, but he has been playing the town for twenty years—and Tahoe and Reno too. Does he appeal to the same crowd that comes to see Anthony Newley and Shecky Greene? "Ordinarily the people who go to the shows out there are just vacationers," he answers. "But it's not just an old-people's hangout any more. I think a lot of young people feel like they can go there and have a good time, too."

The Las Vegas date was not the only thing that interrupted Nelson's concerts with Russell. Nelson has been in and out of the recording studio, putting finishing touches on his upcoming album of Kris Kristofferson songs. He also recently cut some tunes with country great George Jones, who reportedly opted for dubbing in his parts rather than trying to keep up with Nelson's phrasing and his singing ahead of or behind the beat, something he picked up from the Sinatra records he listened to while growing up. Still to come, Nelson says, is a "Son of Stardust" album with Booker T. Jones and "Pretty Paper," a Christmas album. Then, too, he hopes to finish another of his concept albums, "The Convict and the Rose."

Some have suggested that the reason Nelson has relied so heavily on other artists' songs lately is that he suffers from a severe writer's block. Nelson doesn't exactly deny it.

"I go for a long time when I think, 'Well, I'll never write nothin' else. I've written my last song.'" He laughs. "And then another idea will come

along. Sometimes I'll get on kicks and write about only one thing. I got on house songs for a long time. Every song I'd write would be about a house. *Hello, Walls* was one of 'em. You're probably not familiar with the rest of 'em—*Hello, Roof, Hello, Car*. . . . But I don't worry about it when I don't write. Because I know *eventually* I'll write."

In the unlikely event that Willie Nelson's magic streak ends and the public suddenly tires of him, he has another career waiting in the wings. He's just completed his first movie role, as Robert Redford's manager in *The Electric Horseman*. Before it premieres in December, Nelson should already have begun shooting *Sad Songs and*

... filming lasts maybe ten to twelve weeks . . . when we start this next movie, I'm planning on playing on weekends so I won't have to go three months without playing some kind of music. I'd go crazy."

*Waltzes*, a film he describes as "just an ol' movie about a guy with a band on the road." Next year, he hopes to do another film, *The Songwriter*, but by that time production should have started on the movie version of his "Red Headed Stranger." "I really had a movie in mind from the beginning," he says of the record album on which the film is based. "I felt like I was writin' a soundtrack when I did it."

What kind of a job does Nelson think he did on his first acting assignment? "Oh, I thought I was good," he says quickly. "I thought I was *real* good." He breaks into an embarrassed laugh. "No, I really did," he adds. "It wasn't as hard physically as doing one-nighters. Only thing is, when you do the shows, you get the audience response immediately. You've got to wait a long time on these movies, I found out. Another bad thing is that filming lasts maybe ten to twelve weeks. Durin' that time I don't play as much, and I miss it. But when we start this next movie, I'm plannin' on playin' on weekends so I won't have to go three months without

playin' some kind of music. I'd go crazy."

With such heavy concentration on films, Nelson is likely to be the target for one of the criticisms leveled at his good friend Kris Kristofferson—that he has nurtured his movie career at the expense of his music. "Oh, I'm sure I'll be criticized, whatever I do," says Nelson. "But while they're talkin' about me, they're lettin' somebody else rest. I just want to play cowboys, is all. I've been wantin' to be in the movies ever since I saw Gene Autry in there, singin' and pickin'. And Roy Rogers and all those guys—Don 'Red' Barry, Lash LaRue. I guess I was like every other kid. I wanted to be in the movies." But Nelson stresses he's being careful. "I gotta wait and see how I do in this stuff. I'm gonna look at this first movie, I think, before I get into the second one. I'm kinda anxious to see how they turn out."

**O**NE thing he's not anxious about—only excited—is the authorized biography of him being written by *Newsweek* columnist Pete Axthelm and possibly to be turned into a film. With such good fortune coming his way at last, perhaps it's not surprising that Nelson says he can't think of anything to do with his life that he's not already doing, except maybe play some guitar with B. B. King or record albums with Ray Charles and Rita Coolidge.

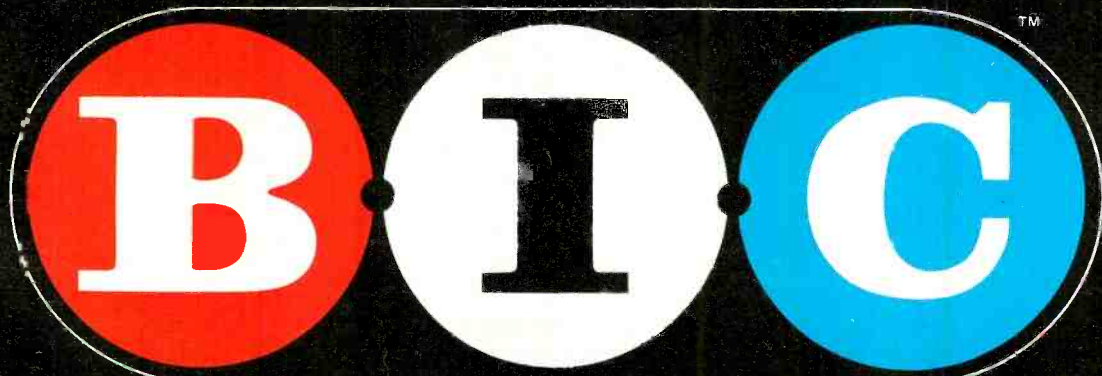
Still, in the lulls between shows at \$50,000 a crack, does he ever think back to the years when, instead of owning homes in Austin, Aspen, and Malibu, he was worried about the rent? Can he remember playing bars so mean that the owners strung chicken wire across the bandstand to keep performers safe from flying beer bottles?

"I think about those days when the places were smaller and the crowds were smaller and the reaction was smaller," he says with a short laugh, "but I don't really want to go back. And I wonder about why it all got so big. I guess it's because of the energy from the young people. When that much energy gets behind any project, it's got to skyrocket. And there's millions of those kids out there who buy records, and that audience all of a sudden became a country-music audience. I don't know why they chose me. I really don't. But I'm not gonna question it. I'm just gonna enjoy it." □

*Alanna Nash, a country-music specialist, is a regular critic on the Louisville Courier-Journal. Her book on Dolly Parton, Dolly, was published by Reed Books, Los Angeles.*

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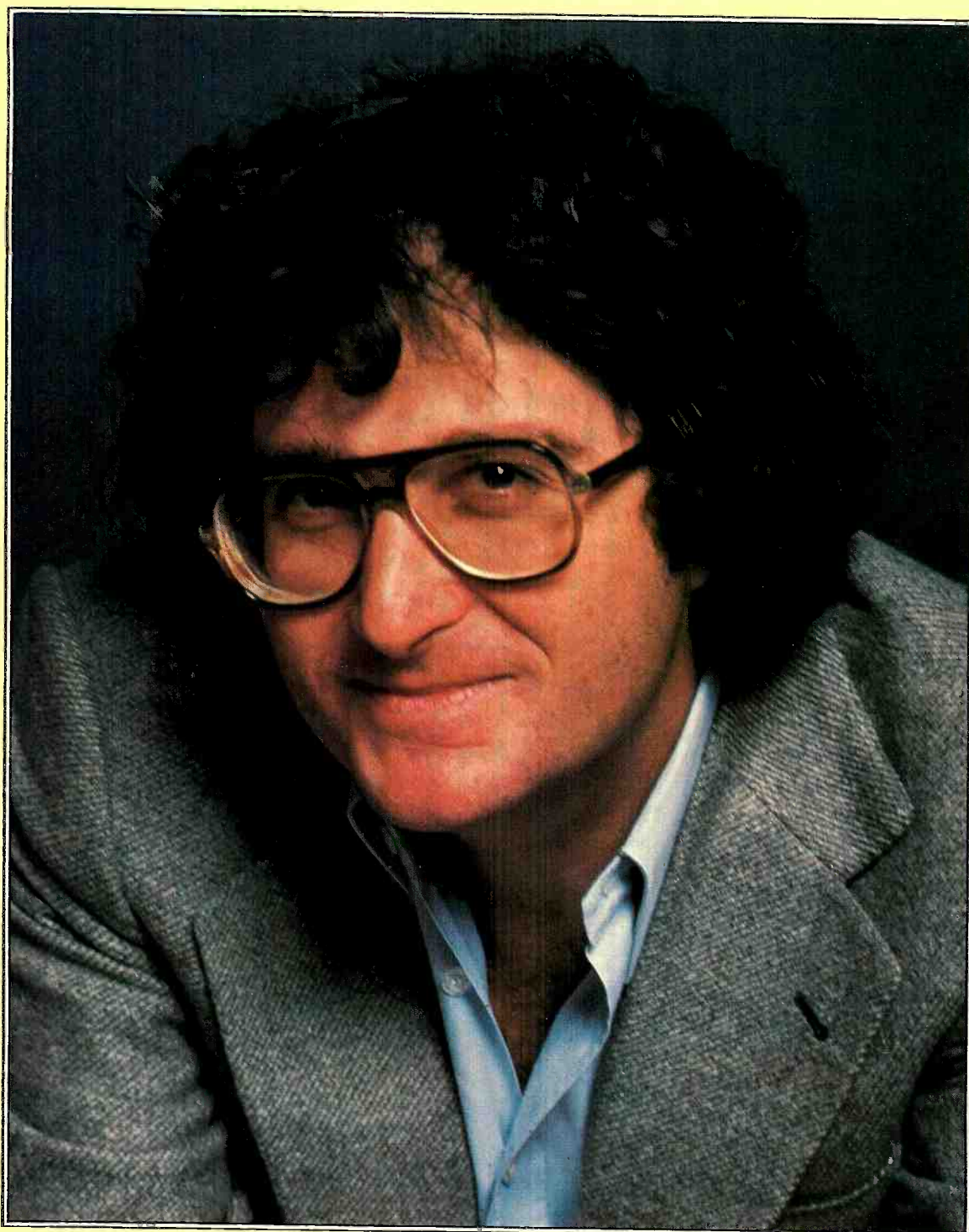
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Randy Newman  
(Photo: Warner Bros.)



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



## • Randy Newman's Movie Music •

**I**F I think that Randy Newman is the best songwriter of our time—and I do—it's not because I see him as the modern representative of the great traditions of Franz Schubert or Hugo Wolf, of Irving Berlin or Noël Coward, but just because he does what he does so well that I can't think of anyone today who writes *any* kind of songs better. The slight negative element in that praise can be ignored, but anyone who gets the idea that I find something *different* about Newman's songs is on the right track.

Musically, Newman's songs have almost exclusively American roots: jazz, rock, ragtime, barbershop, hymn tunes, folk songs, parlor songs, spirituals, blues, film music—you name it. Their lyrics have American references: slavery, gangs, middle America, church, the circus, violence, perversion, the movies, prejudice, nostalgia, the common man (nice list, no?). This they share with many other songs of our time (popular, not classical). What they share with a *few* other songs of our time is artistic quality. But what they, at least as a body, seem to share with *no* other songs of our time is a kind of theatrical objectivity, the "once-removed" quality of the writer or filmmaker who is less interested in expressing himself than he is in interpreting his world. Newman's songs are the musical numbers for films that have never been made.

The thing you have to ask yourself with virtually any Randy Newman song is, "Who is singing?" Because it's never Randy Newman who's singing; it's a sick old man or a good ol' boy, a hood or a psychopath, a farmer or a politician, and, just once in a while, a singer-songwriter whose name just happens to be Randy Newman. And it's the combination of the character and the song that creates the scene and makes the whole thing meaningful. This is nothing

new; it's how opera is written and how great musical shows are written. But Newman's "opera" has never been written in full; there are only these isolated characters from the great human comedy who appear to us for a few moments and sing us their songs. The amazing thing about Newman is as much the range of his understanding as it is the consistency of his dramatic and artistic success.

"Born Again," his latest, shows the same approach, but there are differences between this album and the other recent ones. The comfortable nostalgic

"... It may not be comfortable, but it's art, and even if it doesn't last for a thousand years, it's the best we've got now."

glow of historical Americana is largely absent here; there are no strings in the arrangements, no brass choir, no barbershop harmonies, little, in fact, in the way of real tunes. There *is* a synthesizer on eight of the eleven numbers, which will tell you something, because it's not in there just to perform as a cheap substitute for strings. In general,

**RANDY NEWMAN:** *Born Again*. Randy Newman (vocals, piano, Fender Rhodes); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *It's Money That I Love*; *The Story of a Rock and Roll Band*; *Mr. Sheep*; *Pretty Boy*; *They Just Got Married*; *Ghosts*; *Spies*; *The Girls in My Life (Part I)*; *Half a Man*; *William Brown*; *Pants*. WARNER BROS. HS 3346 \$8.98, © W8 3346 \$8.98, © W5 3346 \$8.98.

this is an album of a more recent America than Newman usually interprets. It is also a tough album—even, in places, an exceedingly nasty one. *Mr. Sheep*, for example, gives us a crowd of potential muggers taunting their victim, and *Pretty Boy* the warnings of a local gang to an outsider who has just invaded their turf. The cinematic qualities of these songs are almost palpable.

The "anthem" of this album, the *Short People* of it, the *Rednecks* of it, is obviously intended to be *It's Money That I Love*—and that's the ironic tie-in to the "Born Again" title and the cover with Newman as an executive with green dollar signs painted over his eyes. Who's singing *that* song? A lot of us are today ("Used to worry about the poor/But I don't worry anymore"), just as a lot of us, maybe not the same ones, sang *Rednecks* and *Short People*. But the anthem could also be the closer, *Pants* ("Gonna take off my pants . . ./And your mama can't stop me/And your papa can't stop me/And the police can't stop me/No one can stop me"), rendered by Newman in a voice so patently psychopathic you want to quick-throw a net over the speaker. What would happen with that as a single, blasted over a thousand radio stations a dozen times a day?

There's a lot more on the album that's worth talking about; it's easy to run off at the mouth about Newman. There are rock references and film references. There's a sick-old-man song (*Ghosts*), and an "old, old story" song, told with the kind of brutal matter-of-factness that identifies people of the "me" generation. And there's one of Newman's typical paranoid songs, *Spies* ("They even got 'em in Chicago"). Throughout, Newman performs brilliantly. It may not be comfortable, but it's art, and even if it doesn't last for a thousand years, it's the best we've got now. —James Goodfriend

## Cory Daye's Solo: An Engaging Album of Uncommon Rhythmic and Lyrical Freshness

"CORY AND ME" is a record album of hard-to-describe richness. I could start with the songs, I suppose: a wonderfully mixed bag united by musical quality and a rhythmic and lyrical freshness that is all too uncommon these days. Take *Wiggle and Giggle All Night*, for instance. This jazz-calyпсо gem reworks the oldest theme (sex) with stuff like this: "I met this crazy guy from Texas/Said his father was a Mexi-/Can, his mother was the purest Cherokee./It was the little part of her in him/That made him such an Indian./But he was all American to me." (Go ahead, read it *aloud*; it's wonderful!)

And I could move on to the arrangements. Cory, her back-up boys and girls, and the musicians mix it *all up*, and it comes out fabulous. There's scat pitted against bebop, disco inflected with jazz, and just plain musical excitement, as in the sensational chorus of *Keep the Ball Rollin'*. My favorite moment of all is the album's disco single *Green Light*. The song opens (and closes) with the phrase "give him that, give him that, give him that green light" sung almost subliminally below the music and then gradually emerging from the texture as the song opens up wider and wider. This is pop music-making of a high order, and terrific disco as well.

Then there's the engineering, the best today's technology can provide. The music in "Cory and Me" is complex and layered, the sound texture varying all over the lot. Yet everything is balanced, everything is *hearable*. But mostly there is Cory Daye. She used to be the lead vocalist in Dr. Buzzard's Savannah Dance Band (RCA AFL1-2402), where she showed herself to be an interesting, if oddball, singer. She sings in this solo debut with wit, intelligence, and skill, far surpassing her earlier work with the Savannah Band. And she did the vocal arrangements (the instrumental arrangements are by Joe Delia).

So Cory Daye has come up with one of the year's most engaging pop albums. Disco fans may object to the non-disco elements that run through it, but there's plenty for them to enjoy in *Green Light* and *Pow Wow*. The rest can celebrate the making of good, unpretentious, delightful music.

—Edward Buxbaum



CORY DAYE: wit, intelligence, and skill (that's Me at right)

**CORY DAYE: *Cory and Me*.** Cory Daye (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Green Light*; *Pow Wow*; *Rhythm Death*; *Wiggle and Giggle All Night*; *Rainy Day Boy*; *Single Again*; *What Time Does the Balloon Go Up*; *Be Bop Betty a/k/a Co Co Ree*; *Keep the Ball Rollin'*. NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL BXL1-3408 \$7.98, © BXS1-3408 \$7.98, © BXK1-3408 \$7.98.

## The Cleveland Quartet's Beethoven: Intensity, Flexibility—and Gorgeous Sound

THE Cleveland Quartet is now ten years old and well established as a quartet in the great tradition—maybe even *the* quartet (*pace* Juilliard, *pace* Tokyo). They have the solidity and virtuosity of the modern style together with a good head about the music and a

willingness to let it be shaped—as it should be—outside the strict demands of the metronome.

One of the tragic things about classical music today is that we have almost lost the traditional idea of *ensemble*, in the sense that a rock group or a dance or theater company, rehearsing and performing together day after day, week in, week out, becomes an ensemble. The string quartet is the major exception, and groups such as the Cleveland, with their consummate ensemble, deeply studied and deeply felt, are therefore especially important in our musical life. String quartets can actually play ensemble *rubatos*; they can articulate together and create big, expressive forms out of shared ideas and feelings. That's what the Cleveland does, anyway, and hats off to them!

It is a tribute to this still-young ensemble that they have taken on the Beethoven quartets slowly over the years, spending months studying each work and only gradually introducing them into their performing repertoire. Just recently they have rounded out their Beethoven cycle in performance, and they are now in the process of re-

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cording it. RCA's new four-disc set—the second of three such in progress—comprises the three quartets commissioned by Count Rasoumovsky, the odd Op. 74, and the F Minor Quartet, Op. 95, sometimes called (apparently even by Beethoven himself) the "Serious." One of the set's outstanding features is that the players take Beethoven's controversial metronome marks seriously: indeed, the last movement of their tour de force Third Rasoumovsky must be heard to be believed. The beginning of Op. 95 is almost as astonishing (they don't quite hit the prescribed half-note = 92, and they let up on tempo—in good romantic style—for the contrasting material).

There's a lot to praise here: big phrases made out of articulations and big, dramatic forms built up out of phrases (and right from the top: listen to the First Rasoumovsky's opening movement). Once in a while I found myself actually wishing that the quartet would stick their bows out even a little further in matters of tempo variations, rubato, and ritard, but perhaps the more moderate choices are better for a documentary medium like recording. These performances are full of intensity and flexibility with never a hint of self-indulgence, romantic excess, or, for that matter, academicism or overstudy. The string sound is gorgeous and beautifully recorded, although the

heavy-breathing level seems high even for an intimate chamber-music recording. Maybe it makes the recording sound more Live or Sexier or something (didn't they use to have a separate mike to catch Glenn Gould's singing?). Never mind; the real heavy breathing is where it counts—in the music.

—Eric Salzman

**BEETHOVEN:** *String Quartets: No. 7 in F Major, No. 8 in E Minor, and No. 9 in C Major, Op. 59, Nos. 1-3 ("Rasoumovsky"); No. 10 in E-flat Major, Op. 74 ("Harp"); No. 11 in F Minor, Op. 95.* Cleveland Quartet. RCA ARL4-3070 four discs \$31.92.

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## First Recording: Richard Strauss' Quicksilver Opera *Die Schweigsame Frau*

**R**ICHARD STRAUSS began sketching out his opera *Die Schweigsame Frau* in 1932 while putting the finishing touches on *Arabella*. Fired by a new libretto submitted by the renowned au-

thor Stefan Zweig, he was eager to get going on the fast-moving comedy which had been freely adapted from Ben Jonson's *Epicoene*. Strauss had every reason to believe that in Zweig he had found an ideal replacement for Hugo von Hofmannsthal, librettist for six of his operas, who had died suddenly in 1929. Zweig was not only skillful, but deferential and accommodating as well.

The opera was successfully presented in Dresden in 1935, but by that time the Nazis were in power. Zweig was a Jew, and Strauss' protestations were useless: *Die Schweigsame Frau* was banned after the second performance. Details of the political events surrounding the première are interestingly set forth in the annotations to the opera's long-delayed first recording on the Angel label, one which may help to fulfill the prediction Strauss made to Zweig: "You can rest assured, the opera will be a total success, if perhaps only in the twenty-first century."

Zweig's libretto is a work of considerable literary merit. Jonson's bawdy tale was changed quite radically and the action moved forward into the eighteenth century, but much of its salty language was retained. It bears more than a casual resemblance to the plot of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*: just substitute Don Pasquale for the retired Admiral Morosus, Ernesto for the dis-



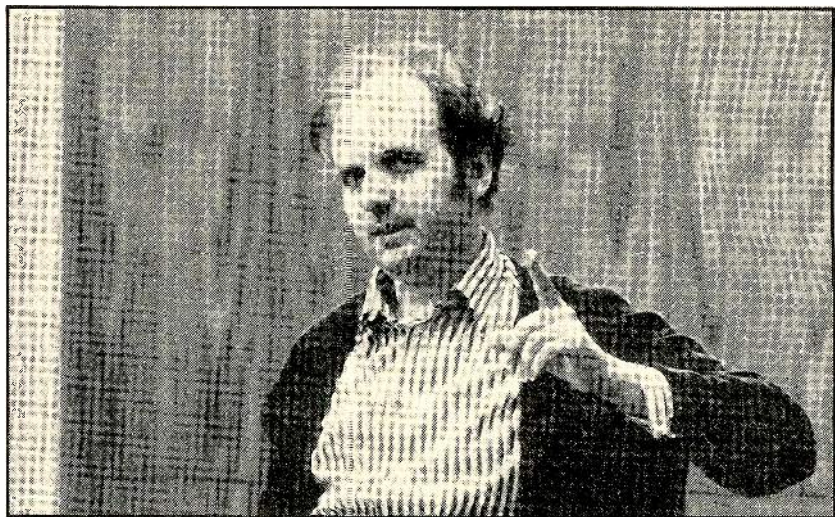
THE CLEVELAND QUARTET:  
the real heavy breathing  
is in the music

inherited and amorous nephew Henry, Norina for Aminta, and Malatesta for the Barber (shades of Beaumarchais!). The deception practiced here on Morosus, however, is more elaborate than that suffered by Don Pasquale. Aminta is an actress-singer—a member of a touring opera company, in fact, for whom play-acting is a professional challenge. With the cooperation of her colleagues, the ruse is played out on a truly grand scale. Zweig's text is rather wordy (hardly a hindrance so far as Strauss was concerned, for he was used to Hofmannsthal's verbosity), but not really repetitious and certainly never dull.

Strauss was seventy when he wrote *Die Schweigsame Frau*. He told Zweig, "I am not blessed with long melodies as Mozart was; I only get as far as short themes. But what I do know is how to turn a theme, paraphrase it, extract everything that is in it, and I believe nobody today can do this as well as I can." Indeed he could, and no one has emerged in the past forty years to surpass him at it. The melodies in this opera are shortwinded. Though they soar hauntingly at times (notably in the lyrical conclusion of Act II), at others they tease more than they delight. But the music is endlessly inventive and kaleidoscopically colorful, ranging from typical "Straussian richness" to a chamber-music transparency recalling *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

If *Der Rosenkavalier* is Strauss' *Figaro* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten* his *Zauberflöte*, *Die Schweigsame Frau* may safely be called his *Così Fan Tutte* on the strength of its jewel-like, exquisitely wrought ensembles. It is a virtuosic opera, and conductor Marek Janowski performs it in a virtuosic manner, with precise execution dovetailing countless delicate details. The ensemble precision alone is a splendid achievement for a score of such quicksilver qualities.

The cast is, by and large, very good. The role of Aminta calls for Zerbinetta's high tessitura and the kind of fancifully embellished line of which Strauss was perhaps a bit too fond. Jeanette Scovotti's voice seems limited in volume (or perhaps it is only distantly miked), but she sings neatly and accurately and portrays the character with liveliness. The light tenor part of Henry is also treacherously written, but Eberhard Büchner handles it well. Neither Theo Adam (Morosus) nor Wolfgang Schöne (Barber) would win any bel canto prizes, but both are outstanding singing actors enjoying their parts to the hilt. The part of Morosus, incidentally, calls for a bass voice of exceptional extension; Adam manages its un-



MAREK JANOWSKI: precise execution by a virtuoso

reasonable demands creditably, low D-flats and all.

The recorded repertoire has been significantly enriched by the addition of *Die Schweigsame Frau*—not a great Richard Strauss opera, but certainly a good one, and blessed with possibly the best libretto of the twentieth century. Its author, a refugee from the Nazis, died by his own hand in 1942.

—George Jellinek

**RICHARD STRAUSS:** *Die Schweigsame Frau (The Silent Woman)*. Theo Adam (bass), Sir Morosus; Annelies Burmeister (contralto), Housekeeper; Wolfgang Schöne (baritone), the Barber; Eberhard Büchner (tenor), Henry Morosus; Jeanette Scovotti (soprano), Aminta; Carola Nossek (soprano), Isotta; Trudeliese Schmidt (mezzosoprano), Carlotta; Klaus Hirte (baritone), Morbio; Werner Haseleu (bass), Vanozzi; Helmut Berger-Tuna (bass), Farfallo. Chorus of the Dresden State Opera; Dresden State Orchestra, Marek Janowski cond. ANGEL SZCX-3867 three discs \$27.94.

## Maria Muldaur: Artistically Red-hot In an Album Worth Shouting About

As of right now, Maria Muldaur is at much the same point Linda Ronstadt was about five years ago: known and respected within the profession itself, the heroine of a smallish group of regular, record-buying admirers, but still without the mass audience she deserves. This may all change, radically

and happily, with the release of "Open Your Eyes," her newest Warner Bros. album.

Muldaur first came to attention more than a few years ago when she sang with the KweSkin Jug Band (Linda started much, much further down with something called the Stone Ponies), and since going solo she has made several albums that may have had some dazzling single tracks—her one hit so far has been the three-years-ago *Midnight at the Oasis*—but did not fully reflect all sides of an elegant musical talent. "Open Your Eyes" does, from the deliberately and unselfconsciously market-oriented title song (done with the same dry humor and charm Art Garfunkel showed in his recent "Fate for Breakfast" album), to a lovely and rasping *Lover Man*, performed with a bluesy, shaking-with-passion intensity that might sound foolish coming from any other contemporary pop singer, to the let-it-all-hang-out nostalgia rock of *(No More) Dancin' in the Streets*. In short, this album demonstrates that Muldaur is—right here, right now—artistically red-hot, and if she doesn't knock you down with her sensitive, sensual reading of *Birds Fly South (When Winter Comes)*, with Stevie Wonder playing superb harmonica as he weaves in and out of a gorgeously limpid arrangement by producers Patrick Henderson and David Nichtern, then you have no blood left in you and you shouldn't be listening to records anyway.

Burning-question time: Has She Arrived? Yes—and then some. Actually, she made her big leap with *Oasis*, but it hasn't been until now that she's given us a complete album that can justifiably be shouted about from beginning to end. "Open Your Eyes" needs no special Certificate of Approval to be en-

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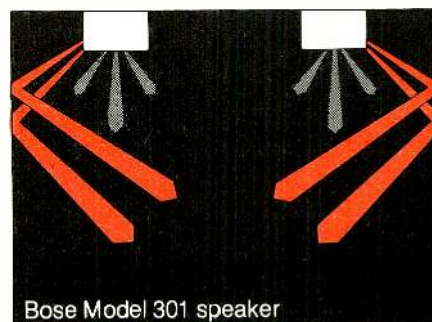
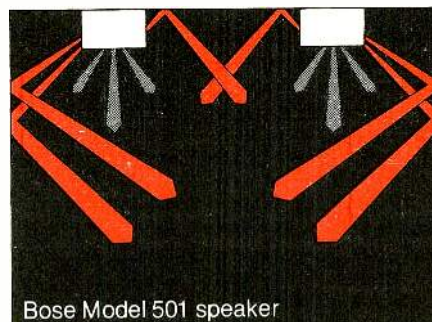
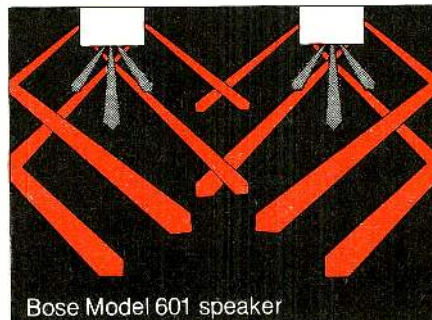
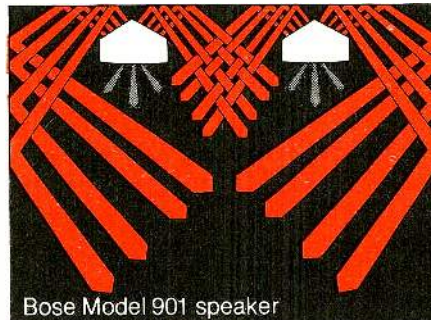
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joyed; it is pure rambunctious delight, overflowing with musicianship, an album that ought to please almost everyone. Ronstadt's eventual breakthrough wasn't any real surprise to anyone in the business, and Maria Muldaur's new, firm-footed stardom won't astonish any of the sharper ears that have been listening to and admiring her for years either. So this is another of those double-barreled successes: great expectations fulfilled for those who knew it all along, and a real discovery for those who didn't.

—Peter Reilly

**MARIA MULDAUR:** *Open Your Eyes*. Maria Muldaur (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Fall in Love Again*; *Finally Made Love to a Man*; *Birds Fly South (When Winter Comes)*; *Heart of Fire*; *Lover Man (Oh Where Can You Be)*; *Open Your*

arc's new digitally recorded Moussorgsky disc comes the closest yet, in my experience, to realizing the fabulous potential of the latest recording technology.

The disc starts off with the *Night on Bald Mountain*, actually a Rimsky-Korsakov composition put together from Moussorgsky materials. It's a good warmer-upper, but even in the fine recorded performance it gets here it does not quite prepare us for the performance of the *Pictures at an Exhibition* (in Maurice Ravel's arrangement) that follows. To begin with, Ravel's orchestration in this instance is far more phonogenic than Rimsky's, and from the very opening *Promenade* statement, one senses that things are really going to go right. The microphoning has clearly been arranged to capture

*Tuileries* comes off musically with the greatest elegance, and the *Bydlo* cattle-wagon episode, complete with first-rate solo tuba, is almost palpably real as it moves across the stereo stage and into the distance. And as for the *Chicks in Their Shells*, it is a real dazzler not only for orchestral virtuosity but for its superb sonics. In the *Two Polish Jews* there is nary a trace of the pre-echo that heralds, in most recordings, the entrance of the domineering party. The quarreling womenfolk in *Limoges Market Place* fare especially well here by virtue of conductor Lorin Maazel's flair for capturing Moussorgsky's speech rhythms. In *Catacombs* and the *Hut on Fowl's Legs*, the most telling parts are not so much the big bow-wow bits as the quiet episodes that require the most subtle orchestral coloration.

The concluding *Great Gate of Kiev* is all one might expect, but with a significant difference from most other interpretations: Maazel takes a solemn rather than a festive view of the music, as though to remind us that Moussorgsky did, after all, compose the work as a memorial to his architect-painter friend Victor Hartmann. All told, this is in every respect an exceptional sonic realization of the Moussorgsky/Ravel *Pictures*. The price tag is stiff, but perhaps not too high for what may prove to be a historic disc, comparable in its way and in its time to the one produced (and featuring the same music) by Mercury in Chicago's Orchestra Hall nearly twenty-nine years ago.

—David Hall

**MOUSSORGSKY:** *Pictures at an Exhibition* (arr. Ravel); *A Night on Bald Mountain* (arr. Rimsky-Korsakov). Cleveland Orchestra, Lorin Maazel cond. TELARC 0042 \$17.98.



MARIA MULDAUR: great expectations fulfilled

*Eyes*; *(No More) Dancin' in the Streets*; *Elo-na*; *Clean Up Woman*; *Love Is Everything*. WARNER BROS. BSK 3305 \$7.98, 03 M5 3305 \$7.98, 04 M5 3305 \$7.98.

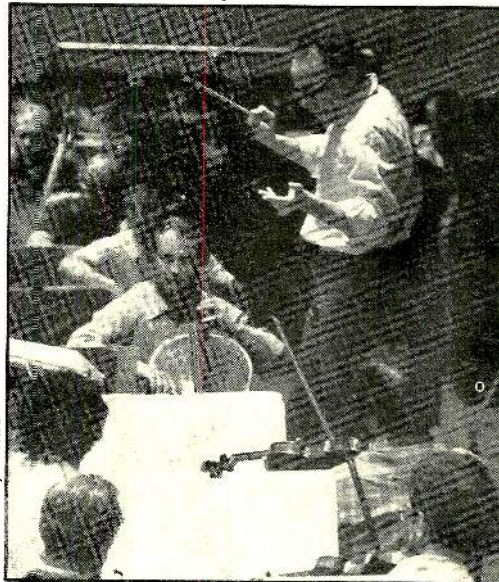
## Realizing the Fabulous Potential of Digital Recording in Moussorgsky's *Pictures*

As a combination of spectacular repertoire-as-sound, superb performances by a major American orchestra, first-rate interpretation, and true loving care lavished on every stage of the recording process from initial microphone setup to finished disc, Tel-

arc's new digitally recorded Moussorgsky disc comes the closest yet, in my experience, to realizing the fabulous potential of the latest recording technology. The disc starts off with the *Night on Bald Mountain*, actually a Rimsky-Korsakov composition put together from Moussorgsky materials. It's a good warmer-upper, but even in the fine recorded performance it gets here it does not quite prepare us for the performance of the *Pictures at an Exhibition* (in Maurice Ravel's arrangement) that follows. To begin with, Ravel's orchestration in this instance is far more phonogenic than Rimsky's, and from the very opening *Promenade* statement, one senses that things are really going to go right. The microphoning has clearly been arranged to capture the sound of the Cleveland Orchestra in its *totality*, yet without slighting detail where it is needed. Further, and most important, the recording ambience is ideal for the music: Cleveland's Masonic Auditorium, which, when properly handled, is one of the finest recording locales anywhere. As the music progresses through the *Gnomus* episode—violent contrasts of dynamics and of frequency extremes from bass drum to whipcrack—one is aware of everything's being exactly in place: excellent instrumental localization, solid low-percussion transients, and a handsomely extended high end that allows cymbals and snare drums to sound freely with no "choking up."

Again, the quiet lyricism of *Il Vecchio Castello* offers opportunity to appreciate how digital mastering, with its absence of spurious background noise, brings out the fine detail and subtle differences in sonic perspective. The evocation of children playing in

Conductor Lorin Maazel



Alan Pechansky/Billboard

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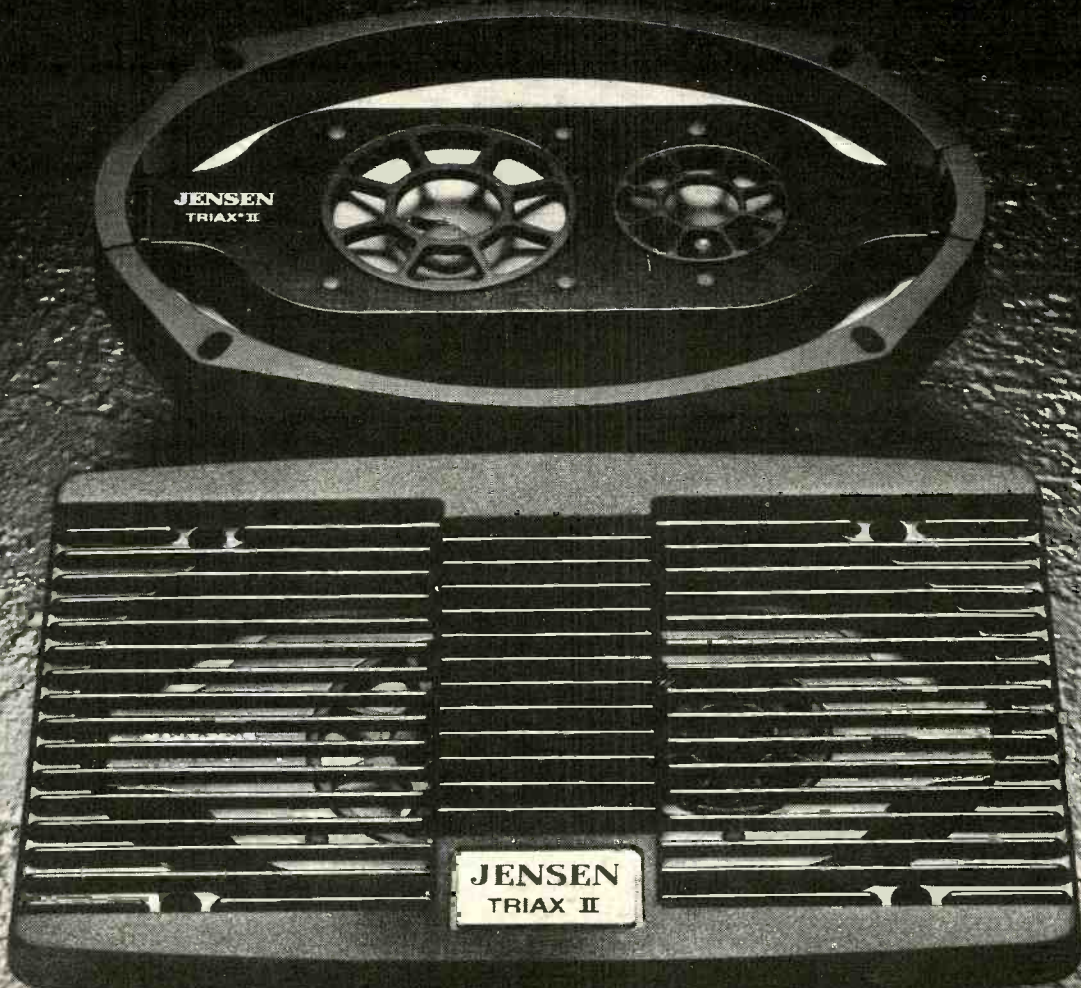
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# CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • PAUL KRESH  
STODDARD LINCOLN • ERIC SALZMAN

**J. S. BACH:** *Chaconne* (see Collections—Michael Newman)

**J. S. BACH:** *Six Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord (BWV 1014-1019)*. Henryk Szeryng (violin); Helmut Walcha (harpsichord). PHILIPS 6768 029 two discs \$19.96.

Performance: **Lush**  
Recording: **Perfection**

Although it is modish today to prefer Bach played on authentic instruments according to historically correct performance practice, it is refreshing to hear a fine violinist of the romantic school playing Bach according to his own lights. Henryk Szeryng's tone is lush, his lines seamless and molded by dynamics rather than articulation. It is exquisite playing no matter how one looks at it.

The only difficulty with this type of violin playing is that it is incompatible with the harpsichord. The rich violin tone obscures the harpsichord sound, so that when the two instruments have equal lines, the harpsichord can only shadow the violin. Also, the two instruments necessarily phrase differently, and the difference is often jarring. There is no such conflict, however, in movements where the two instruments are given differentiated material. In such cases (for instance, the first movements of the B Minor and E Major Sonatas and the two slow movements of the C Minor), the two musicians are free to ex-

plore the natures of their respective instruments and parts, which they do to ravishing effect. In all, though, the Bach sonatas pose all but insoluble problems of phrasing and balance performed as they are here. Szeryng would probably be better served by a pianist as partner, playing in the same romantic manner. But that will not happen until we get over some of our rigidity of thinking about performance practice and give primary importance to making music whatever the style. S.L.

**BALAKIREV:** *Symphony No. 2, in D Minor*.  
**GLAZOUNOV:** *Cortège Solennel, Op. 91*.  
Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky cond. COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M 35155 \$8.98.

Performance: **Dedicated**  
Recording: **Spacious**

Mily Balakirev, though mentor to many other composers, was fitful in his own productivity. The 1860s saw initial versions of his most colorful and influential scores, but only after a decade of coping with depression and religious obsession did he return to composing, at first revising early works, then going on to write solo-piano works, a piano concerto, and the Second Symphony. I have relistened to the early pieces and to the two symphonies, and I find myself somewhat less enthusiastic about Balakirev as a symphonist than as a musical story teller with a flair for atmospheric orchestral coloration, but there are splendid moments in all the works.

The D Minor Symphony gets off to an intriguing start with a first movement that almost anticipates the symphonic waltz manner of Carl Nielsen's *Sinfonia Espansiva*, but the development of the material is not nearly so organic. The *Alla Cosacca* scherzo was intended originally for the First Symphony and shows the composer at his colorful and brilliant best. The *Romanza* slow movement is like second-drawer Tchaikovsky in substance; despite a couple of handsome climaxes, it fails to ring true. The finale starts off as a brilliant polonaise in the best festive tradition, but the intrusion of the slow-movement main theme turns out to be just that,

robbing the movement of cumulative impact. In this 1973 recording, though, Gennady Rozhdestvensky and his Moscow players make the music sound perhaps better than it is, aided by spacious and full-bodied sonics.

The Glazounov *Cortège Solennel* is an effective ceremonial opus in Ye Olde Slavic manner. The recorded performance here sounds identical with that still available on Melodiya/Angel SR-40225 as a filler for the Glazounov *Scènes de Ballet*. D.H.

**BEETHOVEN:** *String Quartets: Nos. 7-9, Op. 59, Nos. 1-3; No. 10, Op. 74; No. 11, Op. 95* (see Best of the Month, page 74)

**BEETHOVEN:** *Symphony No. 3, in E-flat Major, Op. 55 ("Eroica")*. Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 123 \$9.98, © 3301 123 \$9.98.

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

Having heard Giulini and his Los Angeles orchestra in a tensionless and thoroughly inspiring *Eroica* in Washington last May, I was not eager to hear their recording of the work. The recording, however, gives a much happier impression of both conductor and orchestra and a provocative one of the familiar symphony itself. There is no aimlessness but a reassuring precision in the playing and a similarly reassuring feeling of forward thrust to sustain Giulini's unusually slow tempos. His interpretation is indeed a "thoughtful" one, in sharp contrast to more overtly dramatic approaches. With both slow tempos and repeats, this is one of the longest *Eroicas* on record. It may not register with a single hearing, and even after a dozen it will not be everyone's cup of tea, but it does have the ring of sincerity (if not Ultimate Truth) and is not marred by grotesqueries like those that disfigured Giulini's recent Schubert recordings.

The first movement runs more than twenty minutes, and it is as free of histrionics as it is unhurried. The Funeral March, extremely deliberate in pacing, is no ceremonial gesture but an intensely personal one, with climaxes

#### Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = open-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓒ = stereo cassette
- = quadrasonic 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.

# 101 years after Tchaikovsky composed it, Perlman recorded it with The Philadelphia. It was worth the wait.

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You undoubtedly already have a recording of the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto. But when you hear this one, combining the joy of Perlman and the wonder of The Philadelphia under Ormandy, you'll probably agree you've never really heard it before.

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Foster Hiestez: Jeannie with the  
Light Brown Hair - & More  
Sanders (soprano)



A companion release, *Encores*, offers a delightful and all-new program of timeless favorites.

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that really work. The scherzo is very tidy but rather dry, with dynamic contrasts that seem a little self-conscious. Drama is unleashed, rather unexpectedly, in the well-organized finale, seen here not merely as a release of the tension built up earlier but also as its logical consequence.

I find myself responding more readily to the more galvanic *Eroica* conducted by Wyn Morris (Peters PLE-020), the still more dramatic new one by Karajan (Deutsche Grammophon 2531 103), and the solid account by Karl Böhm (DG 2530 437). But Giulini's ought to be heard, and I suspect that collectors who like to have more than a single version of such "basic" works will find a place for it. One remarkable feature of the new disc is that the Funeral March is unbroken, though the playing time of the side is nearly thirty-eight minutes; the output level is low, but there is no appreciable distortion. The sound on both sides is well up to DG's current standards.

R.F.

**BRAHMS: *German Requiem, Op. 45; Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a.*** Kiri Te Kanawa (soprano); Bernd Weikl (baritone); Chicago Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, Georg Solti cond. LONDON OSA 12114 two discs \$17.96.

Performance: **Good to outstanding**  
Recording: **Good, but lacks depth**

When Georg Solti first recorded Brahms' German Requiem nearly twenty-five years ago, during his tenure at the Frankfurt Opera, Robert Shaw and the young Herbert von Karajan were his only competition. Today Schwann lists eight other versions, including two by Karajan and the 1962 recording by Otto Klemperer that for me still sets the interpretive standard.

I was surprised to discover that in his new recording Solti takes an even statelier view of the music, the first and last movements especially, than did Klemperer, who was notorious for his slow tempos. The monumental movements come off best here, thanks to superb choral work and highly effective pacing and tempo contrast. Both the soloists are good, but Bernd Weikl offers no match for Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's eloquent delivery of "*Herr, lehre doch mich*" in the Klemperer recording, and Kiri Te Kanawa does not equal Elisabeth Schwarzkopf in her prime. The new release has a more full-bodied sound than the Klemperer recording, the text is more intelligible, and the chorus is well up front, but not at the expense of orchestral balance. What is missing, however, is the stereo depth perspective so evident in the older recording.

The filler side is the real gem of the album. For Solti and his Chicagoans present the most exciting and brilliant performance of the Haydn Variations since the incomparable 1936 reading by Toscanini and the New York Philharmonic. I hope it will soon be available as part of a single-disc pairing.

D.H.

**BRUCKNER: *String Quintet in F Major.***  
**WOLF: *Italian Serenade.*** Enrique Santiago (viola, in Bruckner); Melos Quartet. TURNABOUT TVC 37005 \$3.98.

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

This must have been the first recording the Melos Quartet made, or at least the first issued in this country; it was released more

than ten years ago as Candide CE 31014, and I regretted its later deletion because it was quite the finest Bruckner quintet in stereo at that time. Last year, however, London gave us an attractive version of the quintet, together with the Intermezzo in D Minor that Bruckner composed as an alternative scherzo for the work (using the same trio as the original scherzo), played by the Vienna Philharmonia Quintet (STS-15400), and for the most part I prefer the Viennese version. Both outer movements of the quintet have a little more solidity on London, and the tempo of the scherzo is clearly too slow in the Melos performance; the phrasing lacks point in that movement, too, I'm afraid. But—and this is a major reservation—the Turnabout team is more persuasive in the adagio, which is quite rightly considered the heart of the work. Moreover, while the intermezzo has little more than curiosity value to recommend it, Wolf's delightful *Italian Serenade* has a great deal more, and it receives a first-class performance here. Both discs are recorded well enough (the Turnabout benefits from a slight boost in the midrange) and both teams perform the original version of the last movement of the quintet, which is more powerful than the revised form in which we usually hear it.

R.F.

**CHÁVEZ: *Piano Concerto.*** María Teresa Rodríguez (piano); New Philharmonia Orchestra, Eduardo Mata cond. ***Preludes Nos. 1, 2, 5, 8, and 10.*** María Teresa Rodríguez (piano). RCA ARL1-3341 \$8.98, © ARK1-3341 \$8.98.

Performance: **Good**  
Recording: **Lacks space**

I had high hopes that this new recording of the Chávez Piano Concerto would be an improvement over the 1964 Westminster issue with Eugene List (who played the world première in 1942 with the New York Philharmonic under Mitropoulos) and the Vienna State Opera Orchestra under the direction of the composer. I was not happy with the sonics on that disc and did not feel that the Vienna players really had the music in their fingers. The RCA performance with Mexican virtuoso María Teresa Rodríguez and Mexican conductor Eduardo Mata strikes me as sharper and more sure-handed on all counts. But what is missing is the epic, almost Brahmsian dimension (*not style!*) of the piece as I still remember it from the broadcast of the 1942 performance. No doubt a more spacious acoustic envelope would have accomplished just that, as well as bringing more impact to the crucial orchestral percussion. But Rodríguez and Mata do bring a more convincing momentum to the introduction than List and Chávez, and they are somewhat more deliberate in the ensuing allegro. Textures emerge with greater clarity in the almost hieratic slow movement, with its prominent role for the harp, and the finale is cracklingly brilliant.

The five items from the 1937 set of preludes emphasize for me the "Mexican Bartók" aspect of Chávez, ranging as they do from the austere No. 1 through the charming No. 5—canonic in berceuse style—to the bracingly motoric No. 10. Rodríguez's pianism is impeccable in them.

We're not likely to get another recording of the Chávez Piano Concerto in the immediate future, so if you're convinced—as I am—of

(Continued on page 86)

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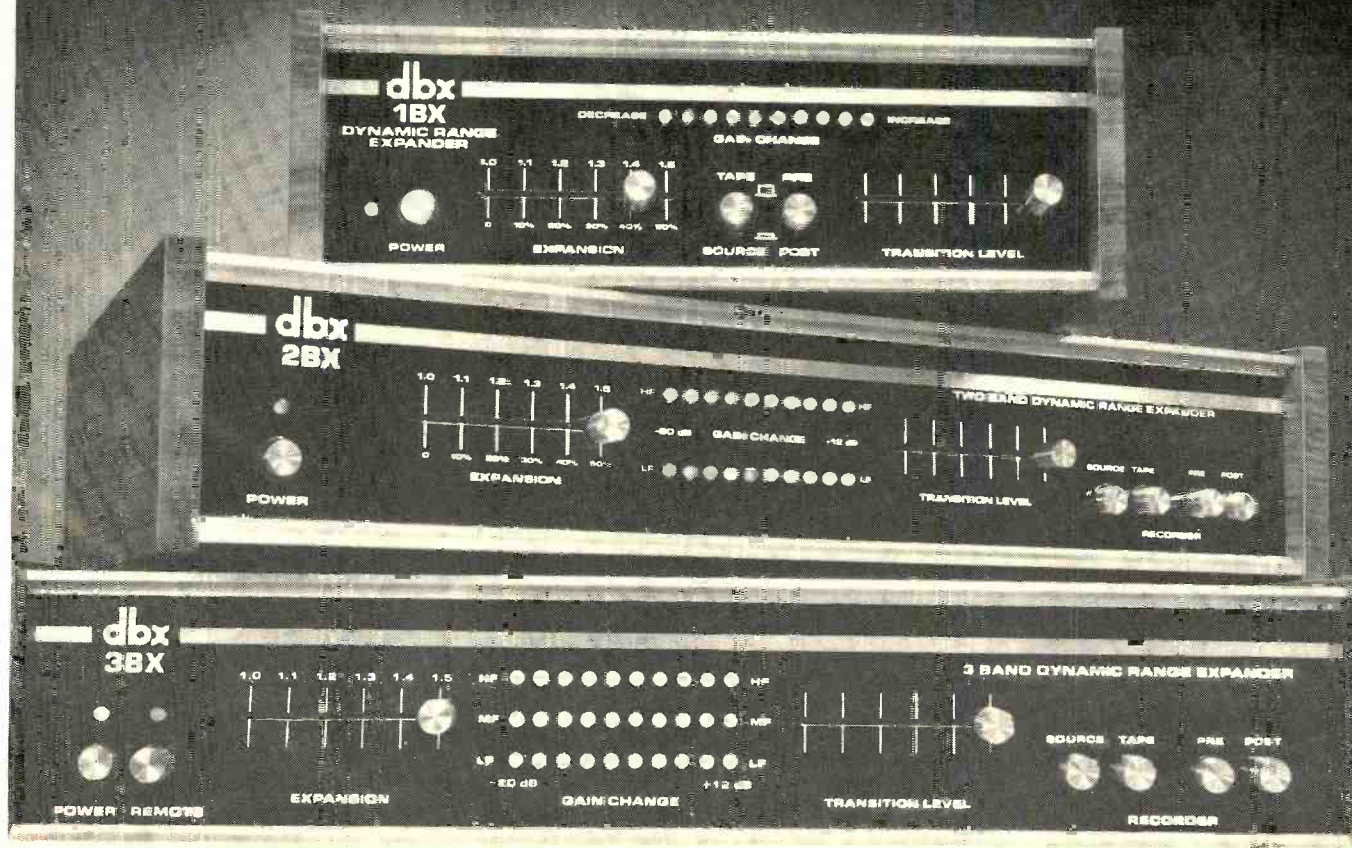
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In the RCA issue, which is excellently pressed on distinctive red vinyl, it is the element of exquisite detail that impresses me most, with sharply defined localization and handsome sonic framing of individual instrumental groups within the orchestra. The second movement lends itself perfectly to this approach, and I don't think I've ever heard a more effective sonic realization anywhere of this delightful music. As orchestral performance, it is about the last word in elegance. Also singularly striking is the spooky episode that immediately precedes the final climax.

Too often it emerges as a confused muddle, but RCA's twenty-six microphones and Eugene Ormandy's sovereign command over his virtuoso players make every strand of texture audible.

**O**n the minus side, what I miss in Ormandy's reading is a genuine sense of rhythmic urgency in the end movements (except in the very last pages) and the gut passion needed to give the great slow movement its full due. As for the recording itself, I find myself wanting more of a sense of the orchestra as a whole and not such a constant parade of almost intrusive detail. My bias being what it is—in favor of having the *conductor* control the balance rather than the engineering-production staff—I find myself inclined toward the view that the technical advantages of digital recording should lead us to more simplified microphone setups rather than more complex ones and hasten a return to the concept of the conductor as the controlling force in what emerges on the master tape. —David Hall

**BARTÓK: Concerto for Orchestra.** Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA ARC1-3421 \$9.98.

the importance of this piece and of Chávez as a creative figure, at least acquire this disc as a benchmark toward an eventual total realization of this remarkable score. D.H.

**COLERIDGE-TAYLOR: Twenty-four Negro Melodies, Op. 59. STILL: Seven Traceries.** Frances Walker (piano). ORION ORS 78305/6 two discs \$15.96.

Performance: **Taut, controlled**  
Recording: **Very good**

"What Brahms has done for the Hungarian folk music, Dvořák for the Bohemian, and Grieg for the Norwegian, I have tried to do for these Negro Melodies," wrote Samuel Coleridge-Taylor when these twenty-four pieces were published in London in 1904. The

son of a black doctor from Sierra Leone and a white English mother, he was going on thirty at the time and had already made a considerable reputation in Britain as conductor of the Handel Society and composer of a cantata based on Longfellow's *Hiawatha*.

What Coleridge-Taylor actually tried to do with these deft and subtle pieces, each a set of variations following the statement of the original melody, was to bring black music into the drawing room. The first seven are based on melodies from various parts of Africa, each, in his own words, "amplified, harmonized and altered." The eighth takes off from the familiar West Indian dance *The Bamboula*, and it is interesting to compare this composer's elegant, subdued treatment of the theme with Gottschalk's flamboyant setting. The rest of

the suite is based on American black spirituals, some of them affectingly treated, all of them inventively.

William Grant Still was born in 1895 and died just last year. He studied under George W. Chadwick and Edgard Varèse after he graduated from Oberlin College, but the charming miniatures that make up *Seven Traceries* sound as if they owe more to the influences of Scriabin and Debussy. Still wrote a great many stunning works in the last half-century, but none more exquisite than these. Out of the mists of the initial work, called *Cloud Cradles*, emerges a series of delicate and dreamy musical impressions, ending with a brief "conversation piece, abounding in pungent witticisms and clever satire." The short suite is composed throughout with remarkable skill and economy.

Frances Walker plays this music in a style that is taut, reticent, and always under firm control. The recording was sponsored by the Theophilus-Rosa Foundation for Blacks in the Fine Arts. P.K.

**COPLAND: Symphony No. 3.** Philharmonia Orchestra, Aaron Copland cond. COLUMBIA M 35113 \$8.98.

Performance: **Big**  
Recording: **Superb**

There have always seemed to be two Aaron Coplands: the introverted composer of the Piano Variations and *Inscape*, and the extrovert Copland of those outdoorsy, expansive, high-spirited ballet scores for *Rodeo* and *Billy the Kid* and the jazzy paces of the Piano Concerto. In the Third Symphony, written in 1942 on a commission from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, the two Coplands seem to merge into one. It is a big, ambitious piece—in part because Koussevitzky, as Copland put it, "liked music in the grand manner." When Virgil Thomson reviewed the symphony in 1947, he said he was not convinced "that the feelings expressed in the work are entirely spontaneous and personal." In an interview with Philip Ramey three decades later (printed with the notes for this album), Copland replies: "My friend Virgil has never been one for the grand manner. He is, after all, an Anglo-Saxon character from the Middle West, and that's a very different thing from coming from a long line of Jewish prophets."

Grand and self-consciously prophetic in tone as this symphony is, and despite the curse of its unmistakably Forties sound, it still sings today with considerable eloquence. If it remains perhaps a bit too big for its britches, it sounds more alive now than most of the other music American composers were turning out at the time it was written. The Third Symphony has been recorded a number of times by others, notably Bernstein and Dorati, and once before by Copland, but never with such rich sound and superb control of its varying moods and rhythms as in this new version. The disc surfaces, incidentally, are surprisingly clean for a U.S. pressing. P.K.

**GLAZUNOV: Cortège Solennel, Op. 91** (see BALAKIREV)

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**GRIEG: Ballade in G Minor, Op. 24; Folk Album Leaves, Op. 28; Scenes from Four Life, Op. 19.** Eva Knardahl (piano). Bis LP-110

(Continued on page 88)



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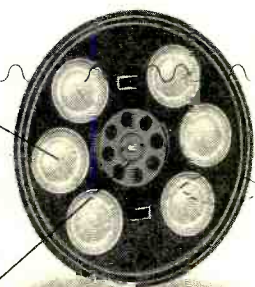
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Performance: **Just right**  
Recording: **Superb**

Eva Knardahl has now passed the midpoint of her projected twelve-disc survey of Grieg's piano music, and this disc, Volume 7, strikes me as the most satisfying so far. To say that her handling of the big, sprawling *Ballade* is "idiomatic" is not merely to suggest that she makes this piece based on a Norwegian folk song sound Norwegian to our North American ears, but also that she is deep inside the personal idiom of Edvard Grieg. The drama of each of the fourteen variations is realized

in full, and yet the sequence flows so seamlessly that it seems a single tale told in one expansively improvised phrase. The second of the three *Scenes from Folk Life (Folkelivsbilder)* is "The Bridal Procession Passes By," better known in Halvorsen's orchestral setting, for use in *Peer Gynt*, under the title *Norwegian Bridal Procession*. Its predecessor is a "Mountain Dance" based on a folk tune (Grieg accused Lalo of "theft" when the tune turned up in the latter's *Rapsodie Norvégienne*, and long after they both died it turned up yet again in Stravinsky's *Four Norwegian Moods*); both pieces are cited in the final portion of the last of the set, "Carnival Scene." This enchanting suite and the four *Albumblätter* are brought to life here

with the same sure instinct and sympathetic involvement that make the *Ballade* so convincing. Eva Knardahl finds Grieg's pulsebeat in every one of these pieces, and it must make us wonder why such music hasn't been part of our "basic" piano repertoire. The piano sound is superb. **R.F.**

**HANDEL: Concerti Grossi, Op. 3, Nos. 1-6, and Op. 6, Nos. 1-12.** La Grande Écurie et la Chambre du Roy, Jean-Claude Malgoire cond. ODYSSEY Y4 35234 four discs \$15.98.

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

Jean-Claude Malgoire's reading of these splendid works is tremendously satisfying; La Grande Écurie et la Chambre du Roy emits a solid sound and plays in a sober fashion that allows the music to stand on its own two feet. The observance of Baroque performance practice is evident in the minute articulations and in the use of conventional rhythmic observations and added ornamentation, much of which is very fine indeed. Some of the application of these devices, however, might be questioned. The use of double dotting in the first movement of Op. 12, No. 6, transforms a basically *bel canto* aria into a sort of French overture, and in the *Musette* of the same work it destroys the placid pastoral quality demanded by the title of the movement. The detached bowings are generally effective, but there are times (in the third movement of Op. 6, No. 11, for example) when Handel's lyricism cries rather for a long, legato line.

It would be nice if Odyssey told us a little more about the instruments used. La Grande Écurie usually uses authentic instruments, but in this recording the instruments sound modern. Also, the soloists, who are very good, should be credited. Nonetheless, if you don't already have a recording of Handel's concerti grossi, this is a good one at a reasonable price.

**S.L.**

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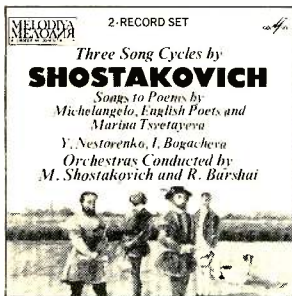
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**HARRIS: Concerto for Amplified Piano, Brass, String Bases, and Percussion.** Johana Harris (piano); members of the U.S. Air Force Academy Band, Roy Harris cond. *Tocatta for Organ and Brass; Chorale for Organ and Brass; Fantasy for Organ, Brass, and Timpani.* Thomas Harmon (organ); UCLA Brass Ensemble, James Westbrook cond. VARÈSE SARABANDE VC 81085 \$7.98.

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

Among the key musical experiences of my adolescence was my exposure to the music of Roy Harris via the Victor recording of *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* by Eugene Ormandy and the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. That and the other Harris works I heard on disc or over the radio had a heady rawness and a brawny strength I found wholly exhilarating, and the advent of the Third Symphony in 1938 seemed to me to confirm Roy Harris as the great hope for the development of a heroic American symphonic tradition.

Forty years have passed, and Harris, now in his eighty-first year, has added seven more symphonies to his essays in that genre (not to mention a veritable cornucopia of other instrumental and vocal works). However, over the past two decades, his work has remained

(Continued on page 92)

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## De los Angeles

**I**n her new Angel recital album the Spanish soprano Victoria de los Angeles is accompanied by Gerald Moore, who is generally regarded as the finest piano accompanist of the middle decades of this century and the equal partner of the great singers and instrumentalists with whom he performed. In his autobiography, *Am I Too Loud?* (Macmillan, 1962), Moore wrote of the special rewards of playing for De los Angeles. "Each concert is still more thrilling to me than the last. And when after every song she turns her dark, lustrous eyes appreciatively and—yes—affectionately in my direction, I feel it is good to be alive, to be there with her, to bask in the radiance of her adorable personality. Of course I love her, but who am I among so many?"

It is interesting to know that a recital by De los Angeles gives this kind of pleasure to her long-time collaborator because it is precisely the same effect that she has had on audiences of millions around the world for the more than thirty years that she has been an international star. At the end of a Carnegie Hall recital in the early Seventies, a young man was so overcome by enthusiasm that he leaped from the orchestra floor onto the stage, threw his arms around her, and kissed her.

De los Angeles is an exact contemporary of Renata Tebaldi and the late Maria Callas, and there are certain parallels between her career and theirs. For example, all three of them recorded Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* and *La Bohème*, but De los Angeles has sung a much wider variety of operatic roles than the others. While Callas and Tebaldi rarely ventured beyond the Italian repertoire, De los Angeles has had some of her greatest triumphs in such French works as Gounod's *Faust* and Massenet's *Manon* and *Werther*. She even sings some Mozart (the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro*) and Wagner (Elsa in *Lohengrin* at Bayreuth!). Where she differs most from Callas and Tebaldi is that she is a consummate recitalist with a song repertoire that surpasses those of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau in its range of languages, styles, and periods, from the Middle Ages to the present day.

The new De los Angeles/Moore album was recorded live at the Royal Festival Hall in London in 1964, but it has just been released for the first time. It is a superb example of the work of De los Angeles the recitalist. The twenty-one songs range from Monteverdi and Handel through Brahms and Schubert to Ralph Vaughan Williams and contemporary Spanish composers. In the excellent liner notes Frank Granville-Barker expresses regret that there are no French songs here, but with such a large repertoire to choose from there wasn't room for everything.

Her technique is so secure that it is invisible, and her voice soars forth with no apparent effort. An exceptionally flexible voice characterized by sweetness and clarity in the middle and upper range and by a mezzo warmth in the lower register, it has never sounded more beautiful to me. The songs give her ample opportunity to express different emotions—sadness, joy, humor, and coquettishness—and she is totally charming and convincing in all of them. A few purists claim that her interpretation of German lieder is not entirely idiomatic, but Moore has observed that some of the German and Austrian singers he has played for hold Schubert in such awe "that they puzzle and worry the sparkle and sunshine right out of him. Not so Victoria! she opens her heart to him, and sings. And Germany is at her feet."

**I**f I were to choose favorites from side one of this disc, they would include the two Schubert songs *Lachen und Weinen* and *Mein* along with Moore's arrangement of *Blow the Wind Southerly*. Side two is devoted to Spanish songs, and among those I would choose Montsalvatge's *Punto de Habanera*, a creole song unfamiliar to me, and Falla's well-known *Jota* from the *Seven Popular Songs*. She rewarded the enthusiastic audience at this London recital with several encores which are especially associated with her and which she sings inimitably, including Rodrigo's folk-like *De los Álamos Vengo, Madre* (*I Come from the Poplars, Mother*) and Valverde's beguiling flower-seller's song *Clavelitos* (*Carnations*).

And, as usual, to signal to the audience that the recital was over she sang *Adiós Granada*, accompanying herself on the guitar. I have never heard her sing it better.

Gerald Moore, now retired, is in splendid form on the album, and it is a treasurable souvenir of a great musical collaboration. Texts and translations are included, and the sound is fine although the master tape is fifteen years old. The price we pay for the spontaneity and immediacy of a live performance is the applause. It explodes after each song here, but it is quickly faded out by the engineer.

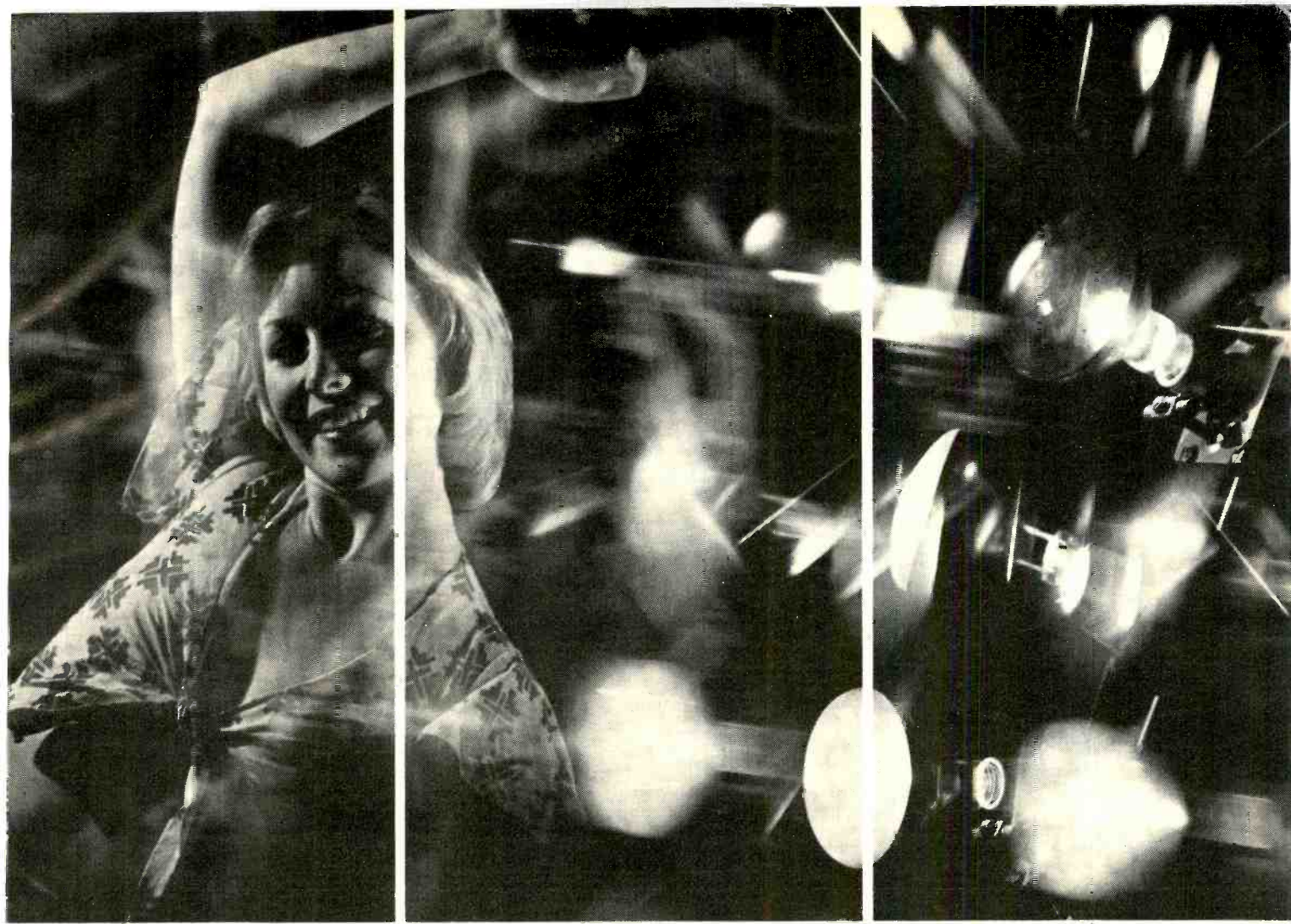
Victoria de los Angeles is performing again after a hiatus of several years in the middle 1970s. She is giving recitals all over the world and is at the New York City Opera this season singing the title role in *Carmen* for the first time in New York and the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro*. And she has made new records—Vivaldi's *Orlando Furioso* for RCA and a recital to be released shortly by Columbia. I will not swear that she can today make her voice do everything it could fifteen years ago, but in a recent concert at Avery Fisher Hall she made me believe she could.

**W**HEN I interviewed her a few months ago, I asked her how someone who seems to take such joy in singing could go for five years without singing at all. She said, "I was so burdened with personal problems that I felt I was falling down under their weight. At that time any music—so much as one note on the piano—was painful to me. I have learned to deal with those problems, and I feel one hundred per cent secure in my music. The American public has always been especially kind to me, and when the time came to resume my career, I did it first in the United States. I thought that if there was an audience anywhere that would still love and understand me, it was here, and I am grateful for the way the American public has rewarded me for that decision."

I then asked her if she could say what it is that makes audiences not only admire her musicianship and enjoy hearing her sing, but also feel such tremendous personal warmth and affection for her. "Certainly," she answered. "It is love. They know that I sing for them because I love them, and they love me in return." There is a Spanish proverb that says "Amor con amor se paga" ("Love is repaid with love"). I feel obliged to tell you that I love this artist and I love this record. I think you will too.

—William Livingstone

**VICTORIA DE LOS ANGELES: In Concert.** Monteverdi: *Ohimè! Ch'io cado ohimè!*; *Maledetto sia l'aspetto*. Handel: *Radamisto: Vanne! Sorella ingrata*. Schubert: *Lachen und Weinen*; *Mein*. Brahms: *Liebestreu*; *Vergebliches Ständchen*. Vaughan Williams: *The Roadside Fire*. Trad. (arr. Moore): *I Will Walk with My Love*; *Blow the Wind Southerly*. Rodrigo: *Canción del Grumete*; *Trovadoresca*; *De los Álamos Vengo, Madre*. Nin: *Paño Murciano*; *Asturiana*. Montsalvatge: *Punto de Habanera*. Falla: *Jota*; *Polo*. Anon.: *Una Matita de Ruda*. Valverde: *Clavelitos*. Barrera y Calleja (arr. De los Angeles): *Adiós Granada*. Victoria de los Angeles (soprano); Gerald Moore (piano). ANGEL SZ-37546 \$8.98, © 4ZS-37546 \$8.98.



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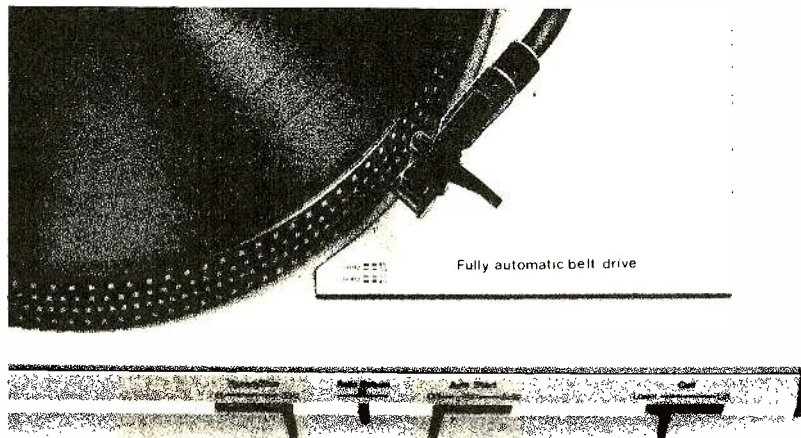
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alive for the listening public chiefly through a mere handful of works—the Third Symphony, the Fifth, the Seventh, and the Piano Quintet. Thanks in part to the Bicentennial Year, the early Harris works are now turning up in concert and on disc (including most recently a Louisville recording of *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*), and with the establishment of a Roy Harris Archive at California State University, Los Angeles, it appears that the post-1960 works will finally become available on records.

This Varèse Sarabande disc is the first major product of a collaboration with the Roy Harris Archive, and it augurs well for the future. Those familiar with Harris' Fifth Symphony, even in the somewhat inadequate Louisville recording, will recognize a kinship between that sinewy 1943 score and the toccata and the chorale for organ and brass from the same period. The sonorities of the latter pieces are grand, the largely modal harmonic texture is rich, and the lyrical polyphony represents Harris at his best, though some may find the "heavenly lengths" of the chorale a bit drawn out and the harmonic progression on the static side.

With the 1964 Fantasy for Organ, Brass, and Timpani and the Concerto for Amplified Piano, etc. of 1968, we find a new element in Harris' work, namely humor. The brash opening of the fantasy, redolent of *America* in Bernstein's *West Side Story*, and the grandiose "wild Irish" dance summation at the end are obvious instances in point. Then there are the amusing "quotes" from Debussy and others in the motoric opening toccata of the concerto, as well as the whimsical use of prepared-piano effects toward the end of the movement. The slow movement harks back to the corresponding part of the Fifth Symphony, and the finale is a brilliant three-way give and take among solo piano, brass, and timpani with a no-holds-barred ending.

All in all, I thoroughly enjoyed this disc. The organ-brass recordings done at UCLA's Royce Hall emerged imposingly from my speakers, and the 1971 studio recording of the concerto, with Harris himself conducting and his wife as the brilliant soloist, is absolutely first-rate, leading me to hope for more Harris-directed performances, especially of the Third and Fifth Symphonies. *D.H.*

**HAYDN: String Quartets, Op. 20, Nos. 1-6.** Juilliard Quartet. COLUMBIA M3 34593 three discs \$26.94.

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

Haydn's Op. 20, written in 1772, is considered to be one of the great turning points in musical history. According to H. C. Robbins Landon's always informative notes (did you know, for example, that Haydn's Op. 3, No. 5, including the famous serenade, was actually written by one Pater Romanus Hoffstetter?) show us how Haydn was consciously trying to raise the intellectual and spiritual level of his style. There are many ways in which he did this; the most obvious is undoubtedly the reintroduction of fugal counterpoint—three of these quartets have full-fledged fugal finales! But that is actually only part of it. There is here a weight, a drama, a scale, and a balance of the parts that are consistently impressive. It is fashionable to play down the role of individuals in creating histor-

(Continued on page 94)

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ical movements, but surely Haydn built a bridge between the Rococo and Classical styles as carefully and consciously as Schoenberg invented the twelve-tone method.

As to these performances, they are . . . well, remarkable. If you think that word sounds as though I were trying to avoid saying "good" or "bad," you're right. These are tightly knit, tightly packed, thought-through and worked-out performances of a very special kind. They are not idiomatic eighteenth-century Haydn (although I assume that the Juilliard's playing is different from my score because they are using a better edition). Nor is this romantic quartet playing in the old Budapest manner. But then I wouldn't call it modernistic either, just Juilliardistic. The players have a unity of purpose, a concentration, and a clarity that are truly illuminating, although the approach is often so single-minded that it becomes hard to take. It works most magnificently in the fugues. I would prefer, here and there, a bit more drama and humor, but I will say that either Haydn, I, or the Juilliard, or perhaps all of us, warmed up as we plowed through the set; Nos. 5 and 6 were the high points. E.S.

**KHACHATURIAN: *Gayne* (complete ballet).** Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Jansug Kakhidze cond. COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M3 35195 three discs \$26.98.

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

Aram Khachaturian's *Gayne*—with its beguiling Armenian folk melodies, lilting rhythms, and richly colorful orchestration—has understandably long been a popular favorite in concert halls and on records. It was not always so successful, however, and the score has a complicated history. The composer used the results of his research into the folk music of his native Armenia in *Happiness*, a three-act ballet set on a collective farm that was first presented at a music festival in Yerevan, his home town, in 1939. A revised version of the score, renamed *Gayne* after the protagonist, a young cotton picker, opened in Moscow in 1942 but received an unenthusiastic official reception. Khachaturian then extracted three "suites" of excerpts from the full ballet. Finally, in 1957, still another version, with altered ideological content and about one-third new music, was staged at the Bolshoi Ballet.

Not surprisingly, in view of this history, *Gayne* never seems to get played the same way twice on records. There are various albums of excerpts—one, on Angel, conducted by the composer—and others with the first two of the 1942 suites. Last year RCA issued a dazzling two-record set of all three suites conducted by Loris Tjeknavorian. And now we have from Columbia a three-disc set of the complete 1957 *Gayne*—all fifty numbers, from the overture and four-part prologue through the seven scenes of its three acts—performed under the direction of Jansug Kakhidze, the composer's own choice as conductor.

Heard complete, *Gayne* gains in interest through the development of its familiar themes, which compellingly change as the moods of the drama shift. But there is also a lot of musical fustian to endure in the melodramatic sections between the folk dances, which remain the most captivating elements of the score. This is a handsome presentation of the work, however, with impassioned conducting by Kakhidze, and it is good to have the complete ballet on records at last. The

performance seems to have been somewhat distantly miked, but in general the sound is sufficiently overwhelming. P.K.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MARTINŮ: *Concertino for Piano Trio and String Orchestra.*** Suk Trio; Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Václav Neumann cond. **Sinfonietta Giocosa for Piano and Small Orchestra.** Jan Panenka (piano); Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Zdeněk Košler cond. SUPRAPHON □ 4 10 2198 \$8.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Splendid**  
Recording: **Fine**

This is the first time I have come across Martinů's concertino, whose very title is a re-

minder that Beethoven actually called his own Triple Concerto a "concertino." This really is a diminutive work, though, in four very concise movements and more in the spirit of the concerto grosso. The only near parallel that occurred to me, in fact, was the Concerto Grosso No. 1 of Bloch, with which this work has a certain spiritual kinship. The concertino was written for the Hungarian Trio in just twelve days in August 1933, and the white-hot spontaneity of that creative spurt is reflected in the intensely concentrated energy that dominates the motoric outer movements and provides an undercurrent of tension in the two inner ones. With the Suk Trio functioning as *concertino*, the performance is all a composer—or listener—could ask.

The *Sinfonietta Giocosa* is a much more familiar matter, one of Martinů's most successful (Continued on page 98)



## Bamboo Curtain Music

**T**HE man who called music an international language may not have been *that* far off; certainly, it is an international *business*. Here we have a Dutch company recording an American orchestra with a Japanese conductor and two Chinese soloists in works by an American bandmaster, a Hungarian pianist, and a communist Chinese committee. You may wonder who buys records like this. I do—wonder, that is. But whatever the reason (the music was *not* recorded at a live concert in Peking), quite a lot of people are buying this one, for the record is on the classical best-selling charts.

The pipa, a traditional Chinese instrument, is a kind of four-string, fretted lute, and the soloist here, Liu Teh-hai, is an evident virtuoso of the instrument. The Concerto for

Pipa and Orchestra, a "committee work" by the pipa player, Wu Tsu-chiang, and Wang Yen-chiao (for some reason the labels list Wu alone as the composer), is a typical piece of communist institutional claptrap with "inspiring program." It is, as most such pieces are, very Western in sound; it could as easily have been a bandura concerto by a Ukrainian communist committee and I probably would not have known the difference. It would be interesting to hear Mr. Liu's artistry in some traditional Chinese pipa music (if there is any of it left in unbowdlerized form), but as for *Little Sisters of the Grassland*, one listening is quite enough.

**L**IU SHIH-KUN is apparently the Chinese People's Republic's leading pianist (Western style, at least) today, and he was runner-up to Van Cliburn in the 1958 Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow when he was eighteen. He has plenty of keyboard technique, flair, and a sense of style, and he and Seiji Ozawa give us a first-class rendition of the Liszt E-flat Concerto. This is fine if you happen to *need* a recording of the E-flat Concerto, but with records already available by such as Richter, Berman, Gutiérrez, and Argerich, I would think that most people would have already satisfied that repertorial urge. Still, there's nothing that will make Liszt's ideas sound fresher or more important than putting them up against *Little Sisters of the Grassland*, and, given the quality of the performance, I haven't been so impressed by the E-flat Concerto in years. The recording is excellent, as is the pressing.

Though I am a long-time admirer of John Philip Sousa, in the context here I simply could not listen to *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. Its inclusion perhaps made some point in concerts in Peking, but it makes no point at all in my living room. Who *plans* these records anyway?  
—James Goodfriend

**WU/WANG/LIU: *Little Sisters of the Grassland, Concerto for Pipa and Orchestra.*** **SOU-SA: *The Stars and Stripes Forever.*** **LISZT: *Piano Concerto No. 1, in E-flat Major.*** Liu Teh-hai (pipa); Liu Shih-kun (piano); Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. PHILIPS 9500 692 \$9.98, © 7300 780 \$9.98.

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## Foxy Virgil: Direct-to-disc

**R**OMANTIC-ORGAN buffs and subwoofer fanatics will have a field day with Crystal Clear's two direct-to-disc albums titled "The Fox Touch." Virgil Fox provides predominantly extroverted (and sometimes highly idiosyncratic) readings of two Bach masterpieces and a collection of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century French virtuoso showpieces. The large, modern instrument he plays is a Ruffati installed in 1977 in a Garden Grove, California, church of a contemporary design and with, in Fox's characterization, "concert hall" acoustics. The knockout recording job was supervised by producer Ed Wodenjak and engineer Bert Whyte.

Musically, Fox's super-brilliant performances of the French works come off best—though a little of this repertoire goes a long way with me (I liked the comparatively restrained Dupré Prelude and Fugue and the exciting Alain Litanies the most). As with the direct-to-disc piano records I've reviewed in re-

cent months, I find it amazing that even so redoubtable a technician as Virgil Fox can manage to play twenty minutes of this sort of music at a time with virtually no audible fluffs.

Fox's interpretation of Bach's Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue in C Major is most unusual. The conventional treatment (by E. Power Biggs, say) of the famous adagio is to start quietly and to tear the roof off at the end with the tremendous recitative and the ensuing series of chords loaded with dissonant suspensions. Fox takes exactly the opposite approach, beginning *mezzo piano* and treating the entire movement as a study in *diminuendo*, including even what would normally be considered its climax. Other interpretive points worth mentioning: the Franck *Pièce Héroïque* is taken at a pleasingly brisk pace, thereby relieving the music of some of its inherent pomposity, and the Widor toccata, one of the all-time showpieces of its kind, is played faster than I can remember ever hearing it.

**T**HE church where these discs were recorded has enough space to allow the organ to speak in full voice without overloading the room, but the reverberation time is relatively short, so the articulation of attacks and the polyphonic interweaving of lines are perfectly clear. If you want the ultimate test of what an audio system can handle in the way of combination tones from a large organ with all stops out recorded under ideal conditions, try the end of the Jongen toccata here. (My system had to say "Uncle" at this point.) On the whole, the entire production was very well handled in terms of microphone setup (there are some fine antiphonal effects) and general sonics. I do wish, however, considering the steep price tag for these discs, that Crystal Clear had taken the trouble to supply more detailed notes on the music. —David Hall

**VIRGIL FOX: *The Fox Touch, Volume 1.*** J. S. Bach: *Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue in C Major (BWV 564); Toccata and Fugue in D Minor (BWV 565).* Jongen: *Symphonic Concertante: Toccata-Finale.* Virgil Fox (organ). CRYSTAL CLEAR ⊕ CCS-7001 \$14.95.

**VIRGIL FOX: *The Fox Touch, Volume 2.*** Franck: *Pièce Héroïque.* Alain: *Litanies, Op. 79.* Widor: *Organ Symphony No. 5, in F Minor, Op. 42, No. 1: Toccata.* Dupré: *Prelude and Fugue in G Minor, Op. 7, No. 3.* Gigout: *Toccata in B Minor.* Vierne: *Organ Symphony No. 6, Op. 59: Finale.* Virgil Fox (organ). CRYSTAL CLEAR ⊕ CCS-7002 \$14.95.

ful works and a prime example of good humor in triumph over adversity. Here a more apt Beethoven likeness comes to mind: like that master's Eighth Symphony, this jolly four-movement work is without a slow movement. The performance here is as splendid as that of the concertino, and the recording is a fine example of Supraphon's current standard. R.F.

**MEDTNER: *Piano Sonata in B-flat Minor, Op. 53, No. 1 ("Romantica"). Fairy Tales: Op. 8, Nos. 1 and 2; Op. 20, Nos. 1 and 2; Op. 26, Nos. 1-4.*** Daniel Graham (piano). MUSICAL

HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3976 \$4.95 (plus \$1.25 handling charge from Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

Performance: **Good**  
Recording: **Slightly thin**

Catalog representation of Rachmaninoff's younger contemporary, friend, and fellow emigré Nikolai Medtner has been slowly increasing over the past several years, chiefly through independent American and import labels, and with this new Musical Heritage So-

ciety release there is a reasonably good sampling of Medtner's piano music available.

This appears to be a first recording of the B-flat Minor Piano Sonata (if we take into account all the works bearing the "sonata" title in Medtner's very considerable output for piano, this is No. 12 out of fourteen in all). The first movement sounds, as someone once said about Medtner's music generally, like "Rachmaninoff without the tunes," but the music does take hold with repeated hearings—and, as an expert pianist himself, Medtner's writing for the instrument is very knowing indeed. There is both expressive and structural substance to the piece, especially in the slow movement ("Meditation").

Medtner is best known for the character pieces he called *Fairy Tales*, which range from brief vignettes to full-scale sonata movements. Stylistically, there is little change from the early to the late pieces. Among the more striking of the eight recorded here are Op. 20, No. 2, with its Russian carillon figures, and Op. 26, No. 3, which (for Medtner) is unusually adventurous harmonically.

The performances by Daniel Graham are vital and straightforward. Unfortunately, his instrument has somewhat glassy tonal characteristics, so the overall sonics seem a mite thin at times. D.H.

**MOUSSORGSKY: *Pictures at an Exhibition; A Night on Bald Mountain*** (see Best of the Month, page 77)

**MOZART: *Piano Concerto No. 9, in E-flat Major (K. 271); Piano Concerto No. 21, in C Major (K. 467).*** Alexis Weissenberg (piano); Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini cond. ANGEL S-37567 \$8.98, ⊕ 4XS-37567 \$8.98.

Performance: **Elegant, fluent**  
Recording: **Very good**

"Like oil" was the way Mozart said that one of his concertos should go, and the phrase well fits these performances of K. 271 and 467. To my ears the early E-flat Major fares much the better of the two, the end movements being little miracles of suavity and effortless flow. The pacing of the slow movement, however, gives it more the character of an adagio than the specified *andantino*, and as a result the music is perhaps freighted with more pathos than Mozart intended.

Frankly, I am not happy with the reading of K. 467; elegance and grace are not enough here. Radu Lupu, to cite only one other pianist who has recently recorded the work, brings more heart and vitality to the solo part than I hear on this Angel release. Carlo Maria Giulini's conducting is impeccably musical, as always, and in terms of balance and tonal body the recorded sound is first-rate. D.H.

**NONO: . . . . . *Sofferte Onde Serene.*** . . . . Maurizio Pollini (piano). *A Floresta é Jovem e Cheja de Vida.* Lilliana Poli (soprano); Kadigia Bove, Elena Vicini, Berto Troni (voices); William O. Smith (clarinet); Bruno Canino cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 004 \$9.98.

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

. . . . . *Sofferte Onde Serene* . . . . (*Suffering Waves Yet Serene*) is a work for piano and tape written in 1976 for Maurizio Pollini. It is  
(Continued on page 100)

# Sansui is breaking up a very successful relationship. The TU-717 has a new mate: The AU-719.

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a very subdued (for Nono) elegiac work with an evident personal meaning only darkly hinted at in the program notes (and the peculiar title, which obviously refers both to Nono's Venetian home and to the requiem-like character of the work).

Nono's more familiar position as an artistic and political radical is represented by *A Floresta è Jovem e Cheja de Vida* (*The Forest Is Young and Full of Life*), and, although it is a rough, dirty, confused work, I much prefer its vitality to the rather somber and uninspired intimations of mortality in its companion. *A Floresta* dates back to 1965-1966 and is a vigorous anti-Vietnam War protest piece for soprano, voices, clarinet, copper plates (whatever they are), and tape. The two pages of texts printed in the notes include quotations in several languages from workers and revolutionaries, an early American appeal for the ending of the war, and Herman Kahn's theoretical outline for "Escalation"—all carefully laid out for live voices and tape. Unfortunately, nothing of this is distinguishable except for a few fragments (at one point a voice cries out in some anguish, "The United States of America," a line that appears nowhere in the printed texts). It is a mess, but yet it has a kind of documentary resonance, very much of its time and deeply felt. E.S.

**SCHUBERT: *Der Vierjährige Posten* (D. 190).** Peter Schreier (tenor), Duval; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone), Walther; Helen Donath (soprano), Käthchen; Willi Brokmeier (tenor), Captain; Friedrich Lenz (tenor), Veit; others. Bavarian Radio Chorus; Munich Radio Orchestra. Heinz Wallberg cond. EMI/ELECTROLA 065-30742 \$8.98 (from the German News Co., Inc., 218 East 86th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028).

**SCHUBERT: *Die Verschworenen* (D. 787).** Kurt Moll (bass), Count Heribert; Edda Moser (soprano), Countess Ludmilla; Martin Finke (tenor), Astolf; Gabriele Fuchs (soprano), Helene; Adolf Dallapozza (tenor), Udolin; Elke Schary (soprano), Isella; others. Bavarian Radio Chorus; Munich Radio Orchestra. Heinz Wallberg cond. EMI/ELECTROLA 065-30743 \$8.98 (from the German News Co., Inc., 218 East 86th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028).

Performances: **Very good**  
Recordings: **Good**

Had only one of his many attempts at opera succeeded, Franz Schubert would have been provided with the financial security that eluded him all his life. Perhaps he would have been more successful in this area if he had been less eager and more self-critical, but he chose to produce his operas and *Singspielen* rapidly, in scattershot fashion, risking (and suffering) failure, neglect, and long-term oblivion.

That oblivion, however, has been punctured at last. One of Schubert's two full-length operas, *Alfonso und Estrella*, is now available in complete form (Angel SCLX-3878, reviewed here in July), and, thanks to collaborative ventures between a leading German radio network and EMI/Electrola, three one-acters have also been released: *Die Zwillingbrüder* (*The Twin Brothers*) about two years ago, *Der Vierjährige Posten* (*The Four-year Sentry*) and *Die Verschworenen* (*The Conspirators*) more recently. Both the latter are in the *Singspiel* form,

the solo and ensemble numbers being linked with spoken dialogue. In *Der Vierjährige Posten*, the spoken passages are in verse, the libretto by the highly productive though modestly gifted Theodor Körner. The slight plot concerns the ingenious ways in which a French deserter avoids punishment. This is early Schubert (1815, contemporaneous with his Third Symphony), lightly scored, charming, certainly skillful, but revealing none of the boldness the young Schubert exhibited in his early songs.

*Die Verschworenen* (1823), however, is a different matter. Schubert never wrote an

overture for it, obviously discouraged by his failure to have it staged. The story itself—the old *Lysistrata* theme of rebellious women and absent warrior husbands—is more sophisticated than the earlier work's, and so is Schubert's handling of the orchestral resources. The vocal writing too is on a consistently high level. At times here Schubert spoofs the very conventions he so rigidly observed in his earlier efforts, but the parody is subtle and elegant. There are anticipations of Offenbach's operettas in the score, and, though librettist Ignatz Castelli's treatment of  
(Continued on page 102)



SAWALLISCH: potent and affirmative

## Má Vlast: Two Views

As a friend of mine aptly put it: if hearing Smetana's symphonic-poem cycle *Má Vlast* (*My Country*) doesn't give you at least a slight urge to march out and enlist in the Czech army, it hasn't been given a really effective performance. After all, *Má Vlast* is one of the supreme masterpieces of nationalistic music. Its rich anthems and compelling program aren't meant to serve some abstract ideal of beauty, though the work is certainly wonderfully beautiful; its purpose is to express pride in a place, its people, and its past, to celebrate the Czech national experience.

By that standard, I think Paavo Berglund's recent Angel recording of *Má Vlast* with the Dresden State Orchestra rings hollow. There is ample evidence of "objective" mastery; the Finnish conductor is singularly articulate and the Dresden orchestra is clearly among Europe's finest, East or West (those frequent comparisons with the Berlin Philharmonic are not at all out of line). But, overall, this reading fails to communicate the splendor and simple button-popping patriotism that runs through the music like a vein of gold. Berglund seems rather the cosmopolite made ill at ease by the

work's exuberance and determined to tidy it up. Some of the fault may lie with Angel's engineering team, for the pleasantly warm but rather muted sonics are too retiring for this extroverted music.

In all fairness, there are some magical moments in this recording, such as the fluid first few kilometers of the *Moldau* and the exquisite moonlight scene in the same piece, the glowing wind playing in the *più allegro* of *Blaník*, and the finely balanced tension and sensuality of *From Bohemia's Meadows and Forests*. But these alone do not a full-blooded *Má Vlast* make.

Both the Dvořák fillers on side four—the Third Slavonic Rhapsody and the *Scherzo Capriccioso*—are quite good. Dvořák this transparent and disciplined is well worth hearing, though perhaps not worth buying a two-disc set to get.

THE RCA recording of *Má Vlast* by Wolfgang Sawallisch and the Suisse Romande Orchestra shows more of the proper spirit, both interpretively and sonically. Sawallisch brings a particular intensity to the opening of *Vyšehrad*, and even if the orchestra's strings subsequently turn a bit threadbare in sound, the character of their playing is ideally exuberant; the tone poem's final ebbing away is perfectly hushed and evanescent. The *Moldau* here isn't as finely limned as Berglund's, but it has more surging warmth. *Šárka* seems somewhat undercharacterized, but I especially like the hint of detachment in Sawallisch's handling of the march-like *più moderato* passage. The two final, thematically linked tone poems, *Tábor* and *Blaník*, display a very appealing grit and tautness; they are quite properly potent and affirmative. RCA's sound throughout is bright and vivid. In sum, though this isn't the finest *Má Vlast* ever recorded—I'd probably accord that honor to the old Supraphon version by Václav Talich, or perhaps Karel Ančerl's—this is one of the better currently available versions, certainly preferable to Berglund's understated reading, and easier on the pocket-book than many. —D. R. Martin

**SMETANA: *Má Vlast*. DVOŘÁK: *Slavonic Rhapsody in A-flat Major, Op. 45, No. 3; Scherzo Capriccioso, Op. 66*.** Dresden State Orchestra, Paavo Berglund cond. ANGEL SB-3870 two discs \$17.96.

**SMETANA: *Má Vlast*.** Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Wolfgang Sawallisch cond. RCA CRL2-3242 two discs \$12.98.

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the plot could do with a lot more spice, the music makes *Die Verschworenen* eminently stageable.

Both works receive expert performances here, lovingly conducted by Heinz Wallberg. The prominent singers acquit themselves in a manner worthy of their reputations, particularly the resonant Kurt Moll. G.J.

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**SMETANA: *String Quartet No. 1, in E Minor ("From My Life"); String Quartet No. 2, in D Minor.*** Smetana Quartet. SUPRAPHON □ 4 11 2130 \$8.98 (from Qualiton Records Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

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

I don't think I have been swayed by the eponymy involved here in feeling that the Smetana Quartet has always shown a unique authority in performing Smetana's quartets. This splendid ensemble has always seemed just that much more persuasive than any other in the well-loved E Minor, and, indeed, none other seems to bother with the poignant, similarly autobiographical D Minor. These are not the same performances that circulated in the late Sixties on Crossroads 22 16 0112 but were taped afresh in February 1976. They are perhaps even more intense and affecting than the earlier ones; they are certainly more richly recorded, and this time the layout is more sensible, with each work complete on a single side (the finale of No. 1 began side two on Crossroads). These *are* the same performances that have been available for the last two or three years on Denon OX-7049-ND, and the digital two-channel edition is unquestionably cleaner and more lifelike; but Supraphon's nondigital quadrasonic recording is very good in its own right, with good definition and a full-bodied character. R.F.

**STILL: *Seven Traceries*** (see COLERIDGE-TAYLOR)

**R. STRAUSS: *Die Schweigsame Frau*** (see Best of the Month, page 75)

**VERDI: *Un Ballo in Maschera*.** José Carreras (tenor), Riccardo; Ingvar Wixell (baritone), Renato; Montserrat Caballé (soprano), Amelia; Patricia Payne (contralto), Ulrica; Sona Ghazarian (soprano), Oscar; Jonathan Summers (baritone), Silvano; Robert Lloyd (bass), Samuel; Gwynne Howell (bass), Tom; others. Orchestra and Chorus of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 6769 020 three discs \$29.94, © 7699 108 \$29.94.

Performance: **Ups and downs**  
Recording: **Excellent**

This is a strange *Ballo*, only partially fulfilling what such an illustrious cast and conductor would lead us to expect. The "strangeness" has a lot to do with Colin Davis, whose conducting I find fastidious but unidiomatic. He has a first-rate orchestra to work with and knows how to draw rich sounds, transparent textures, and expressive playing from it, but the Verdian *flow* that is unmistakably communicated by, say, Lamberto Gardelli is only intermittently present here. Davis' tempo choices are frequently too slow and at times

(Continued on page 104)

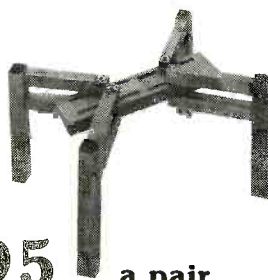
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Itzhak Perlman (left) and Vladimir Spivakov

## Fiddle Fanciers' Feast

**W**HAT a pair! Two splendid discs of virtuoso violin music played by Itzhak Perlman and Vladimir Spivakov. The Perlman disc, the by-product of a television program, has only one new item, Bazzini's devilish *Dance of the Goblins*; the other selections have been drawn from at least six previous releases. My admiration for Perlman's artistry is virtually unreserved. I know he is only human and perfectly capable of doing something that is not violinistically right, and I am willing to wait patiently for such a slip-up—but it just never seems to happen. Certainly nothing of the sort happens here. The music is all lightweight, but Perlman's warmth and intensity give it an ennobling radiance.

Vladimir Spivakov—like Perlman, in his thirties—is a somewhat different sort of artist. Compared with Perlman's rich and throbbing tone, Spivakov's seems all satin and silver, more "classical" than "romantic." His disc offers works by Schubert, Paganini, and Brahms, and the Schubert A Minor Sonatine unfolds with a cool, unhurried elegance that proves how right the composer was to call it a "sonata" (dubbing it and its two companion pieces "sonatines" was publisher Diabelli's idea). But Spivakov lacks neither technique nor temperament, as the rest of his program proves. The fanciful Joachim arrangements of four of Brahms' Hungarian Dances, with their resounding chords and chains of double

stops, pose challenges worthy of a Paganini. Spivakov dispatches them, and the two Paganini pieces as well, with unruffled ease.

Both artists enjoy exemplary accompaniments, and both recordings are excellent. These two discs are feasts for fiddle fanciers.

—George Jellinek

**ITZHAK PERLMAN: Virtuoso Violinist. Bazzini: Dance of the Goblins, Op. 25. Sarasate: Zigeunerweisen, Op. 20, No. 1; Carmen Fantasy, Op. 25. Schumann (arr. Kreisler): Romance in A Major, Op. 94, No. 2. Paganini: Caprice in A Minor, Op. 1, No. 24. Vivaldi: The Four Seasons, Op. 8, No. 4 ("Winter"): Largo. Nováček: Perpetuum Mobile. Joplin (arr. Perlman): The Rag-Time Dance. Kreisler: Liebesfreud. Wieniawski: Scherzo-Tarantelle, Op. 16. Itzhak Perlman (violin); Samuel Sanders, André Previn (piano); Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra; André Previn, Lawrence Foster, Itzhak Perlman cond. ANGEL S-37456 \$8.98, © 4XW-37456 \$8.98.**

**VLADIMIR SPIVAKOV: Recital. Schubert: Sonatine No. 2, in A Minor, Op. 137. Paganini: Cantabile in D Major, Op. 17. Paganini (arr. Spivakov): Le Streghe, Op. 8. Brahms (arr. Joachim): Hungarian Dances Nos. 2, 6, 9, 16. Vladimir Spivakov (violin); Boris Bechterelev (piano). ANGEL SZ-37574 \$8.98.**

too fast, and there are occasions (in Oscar's first-act "Volta la terrea" and in the Love Duet of Act II) when tempo changes within a number are not convincing.

The performance does have vocal attractions. Montserrat Caballé delivers some ravishing sounds, particularly in high pianissimo passages, and José Carreras, ardent and elegant as always, sings gracefully and convincingly. But neither artist is captured here in top form: Caballé's intonation falters quite frequently, and Carreras sounds tight above the staff. As for Ingvar Wixell, he offers a force-

ful, dramatically apt Renato, but his vibrato-laden, unfocused sound is somehow not the kind one wants to hear in this glorious baritone music.

The cast is further burdened by an entirely inadequate Ulrica, though the Oscar of Sona Ghazarian is good, as are the two conspirators (Gwynne Howell is tonally firmer than Robert Lloyd), and Jonathan Summers contributes a very lively cameo as Silvano, the loyal sailor.

G.J.

**WOLF: Italian Serenade (see BRUCKNER)**

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MICHAEL NEWMAN: Classical Guitarist. J. S. Bach (trans. Newman): Chaconne from Violin Partita No. 2, in D Minor. Albéniz: Torre Bermeja. Turina: Fandanguillo. Sainz de la Maza: Campañas del Alba. SHEFFIELD LAB ① 10 \$12 (from Sheffield Lab, P.O. Box 5332, Santa Barbara, Calif. 93108).**

Performance: **Impressive**

Recording: **Stunning**

This appears to be the first direct-to-disc guitar recording, and the sound is quite stunning: incredibly clean, without a hint of background noise. The perfectly on-center German pressing is of superb quality too. I am especially impressed by the dynamic range, which, though not abnormally extended, is unusually wide for the instrument. (The average signal level of the recording is also rather high, so there is some danger of reproducing the guitar sound at a much larger-than-life volume in the loudest passages; this can be easily avoided by finding a comfortable control setting for the softest passages, such as at the conclusion of the Turina piece, which then brings all the rest right into focus dynamically.) The result, despite very close miking, is extraordinarily realistic.

And what of the guitarist himself? Michael Newman, who is twenty-one years old, studied with Valdes Blain and Oscar Ghiglia, among others, and is currently on the faculty at Rutgers University. This is his first album, and a debut of this caliber would deserve considerable praise even if it were not a direct-to-disc recording, with all that that requires in terms of stamina, concentration, and poise (since editing is not possible with this technique). Any twenty-one-year-old, however, who can toss off repertoire of this sort non-stop and make virtually no mistakes has to be looked on as a phenomenon.

The program itself, barring the Bach chaconne, which is an acknowledged staple, is nothing very special, and it totals only twenty-eight minutes. The Albéniz piece is a trifling transcription, and although it is well played, one does not hear in it the rhythmic subtleties or tonal allure that mark Newman's other interpretations. But with Turina's *Fandanguillo* the guitarist definitely comes into his own. Thoroughly atmospheric and moody, it and the bittersweet *Campañas del Alba* (*Dawn Bells*) are the high points of the album. Newman's relaxed and lyrical playing, coupled with a lovely sense of dynamics, are quite irresistible here.

With the Bach, Newman is up against some formidable competition. Technically, his performance is remarkable, with only a few minor fluffs. He is good at building intensity, especially in the virtuoso sections, and there are some admirably rhetorical and, as at the return to D Minor, affecting moments that grip the ear. Very occasionally I had the impression of a momentary loss of concentration, and perhaps the end of the piece is not quite grand enough here (it seems a little too matter of fact). But, overall, there is no way this performance of the chaconne could not be termed impressive. If it is not the equal of the recordings made by Segovia, Bream, and Williams, it is certainly very close to being in that august company. And that is high praise indeed.

—Igor Kipnis



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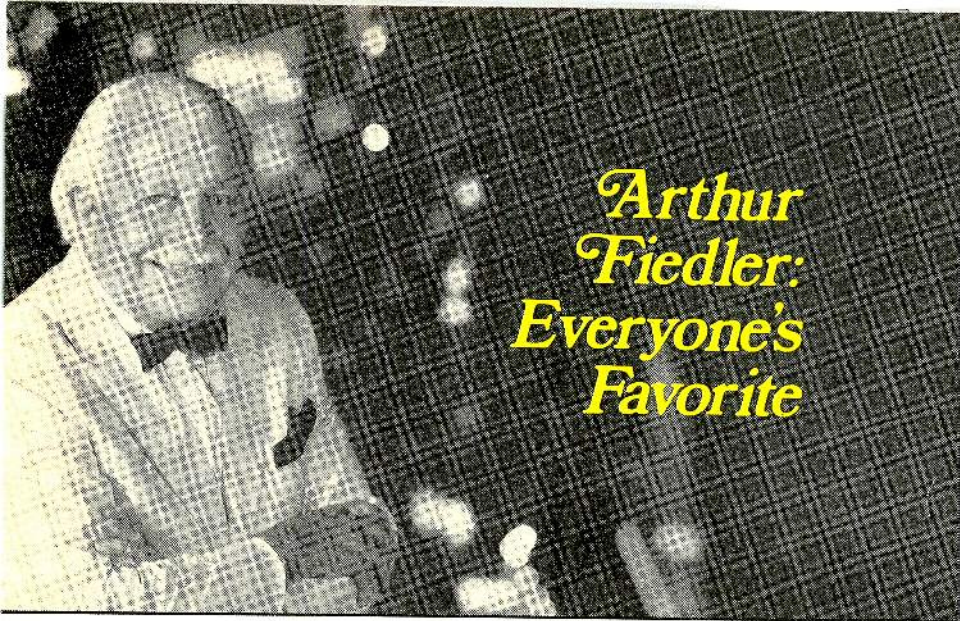


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## Arthur Fiedler: Everyone's Favorite

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**A**RTHUR FIEDLER would have been eighty-five this December 17. When he died last July, a lot of twaddle was printed and broadcast by way of "tribute," while a good deal was omitted in what appeared to be a media drive to enshrine him as a "Mr. Pops" who liked to be photographed in funny costumes and to thumb his nose at "serious" music. One of the major television networks allowed one of its "newsmen" to tell an audience of millions, with a Boston landmark behind him for support, that Arthur Fiedler created the Boston Pops when he took over the Boston Symphony Orchestra and changed its name!

Actually, Fiedler, who rarely got to conduct the Boston Symphony Orchestra (his one record with the BSO—Dvořák's *New World Symphony* and *Carnival Overture*—was issued in honor of his seventy-fifth birthday ten years ago), had more than a dozen predecessors as conductor of the Pops (one of them was the composer Alfredo Casella), but in a sense he did create the institution known to the world. Indeed, he became an institution himself, and he certainly set a record for longevity of tenure, conducting exactly fifty consecutive seasons of Boston Pops concerts. (Even Willem Mengelberg's reign over the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam wasn't that long, and Ernest Ansermet chose to retire after "only" forty-nine years as chief of the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande that he founded in 1918.) What Fiedler did create was the outdoor Esplanade Concerts, which he initiated in 1929, a year before he took over the Pops and fifteen years after he joined the BSO as a violist; he presided over this series also for a full half-century, and it was for this activity in particular that the city named a bridge for him.

Forgotten or ignored in the stories about "Superpops" were Fiedler's activities as a choral conductor and as founder-conductor of the Arthur Fiedler Sinfonietta, perhaps the only permanently constituted chamber orchestra in the country in the 1930s, with which he toured New England and made some splendid recordings. The Sinfonietta made the première recording of Hindemith's viola concerto *Der Schwanendreher*, with the composer as soloist. With organist E. Power Biggs there were works of Handel, Corelli, and Mozart. There were the big Mozart Di-

vertimento in B-flat Major, K. 287, and the Wind Serenade in C Minor, K. 388, Telemann's *Don Quichotte* suite, and such rarities as the marvelous little *Christmas Symphony* of Gaetano Maria Schiassi and a suite by Esajas Reusner (the latter with the first U.S. recording of the Pachelbel Canon as filler).

At the same time, Fiedler and the Boston Pops were turning out recordings that were recognized as more or less standard reference versions of dozens of light classics and dozens more not so light. His 78-rpm recording of Beethoven's *Consecration of the House Overture* was regarded by virtually every critic who reviewed records as superior to Toscanini's. He was the first to record Liszt's *Totentanz*, the Paderewski and Gershwin concertos, and the MacDowell Second Concerto, all with Jesús María Sanromá, and the first with Kodály's *Dances of Galánta* and Dvořák's *Husitská*.

As a teenager, while studying in Europe, Fiedler actually played in the Strauss family orchestra, conducted then by Johann Strauss III, son of the Waltz King's brother Eduard. The experience was not wasted on him. What may have been the very first entry in the Boston Pops discography was a 1935 recording of the Strauss waltz *Wo die Zitronen Blüh'n* that was regarded as "perhaps more Viennese than the Viennese." There were many more fine Strauss recordings in the four decades that followed; not all of them had the magic of that first one (the 1956 remake of the *Zitronenwalzer* on RCA LSC-2028 doesn't quite match the 1935 version, and the introduction to Josef's *Dynamiden* is chopped up on that disc, though it was intact on the now deleted mono), but just two years ago Deutsche Grammophon issued one of the best of all the Fiedler Strauss packages, which includes a remake of the waltz *Neu Wien* and the first complete version of the lesser-known *Märchen aus dem Orient* (2584 008).

**I**t's a shame there weren't remakes of more of the early Pops material and that Fiedler never got round to recording the Frescobaldi/Kindler toccata; he was one of the very few to conduct that attractive piece after Kindler's death. But it is pointless to dwell on what might have been, and we are confronted now with three discs, on different labels, which

would appear to constitute a composite valedictory gesture—one of them representing the solid concert repertoire, one an example of the latter-day "anything to be groovy" approach, and the third a stunning demonstration of Fiedler's stylish way with the music of George Gershwin.

As it happens, it is only the last of these that really qualifies as a Fiedler valediction. The Gershwin disc, on London, bears the heading "Celebrating His 50th Anniversary with the Boston Pops" and was recorded in the summer of 1978. It is a solid hour of relatively unfamiliar pieces, not one of which is entirely Gershwin's own work as presented here. The four overtures are in the by-now-standard arrangements by Don Rose that Michael Tilson Thomas recorded a couple of years ago on Columbia M 34542. Fiedler's performances of them are a little more broadly paced, more sumptuous, and, one might say, more nostalgic. From *Girl Crazy* he chose a similarly flavored little suite by Leroy Anderson instead of Rose's overture; the tunes are the same, of course, but the sly growl of the trombones introducing *I Got Rhythm* is one of those irresistible little touches that made Anderson himself a Pops regular for so long. Gregory Stone's orchestral arrangements of the three preludes for piano sound enough like Gershwin's own orchestral style to fool almost anyone, Walter Paul's festive setting of *Wintergreen for President* is more than agreeable, and Robert McBride's re-orchestration of the Second Rhapsody is more than brilliant—as is Ralph Votapek's performance of the solo part. Altogether a gorgeous record, beautifully recorded and provided with uncommonly thorough annotation by Tim McDonald.

**A**LTHOUGH the Midsong International album "Saturday Night Fiedler" was taped just a month before Fiedler's death, it appears that he was too sick to conduct the sessions himself and they were led by Harry Ellis Dickson, Fiedler's long-time assistant with the Pops, whom he called "my amanuensis for these sessions." Despite Fiedler's apparently happy participation in the form of photographs of himself in a John Travolta disco outfit (it seems an act of cruelty to have printed those pictures, not because of the costume but because of the conductor's pathetic physical condition at the time) and a letter about how much he enjoyed conducting the same material on television a month before the recording, there is little in these drab John Davis arrangements of Bach and rearrangements of five items from *Saturday Night Fever* that could be a source of pride to anyone except possibly the sound engineers. Maybe I've just passed into terminal curmudgeonhood, but this disc strikes me as no fun at all and a little depressing. I'd hate to think Arthur Fiedler really "signed out" with something like this.

The corrective, and it is a most effective one (visually as well as aurally, with a cover photograph of the robust Fiedler one prefers to remember), is a Deutsche Grammophon release titled "Fiedler's Favorite Overtures." This is actually a reissue of a 1971 recording, but the original release on DG's domestically pressed pop label (Polydor 245006) was so little noticed during its brief currency that it

comes to us now as almost new. One might think that if the four overtures offered here were really Fiedler's favorites he would have recorded them long ago and several times over, whereas he evidently did not record any of them prior to taping this collection. However, the performances suggest that these pieces were indeed not only Fiedler's favorite overtures, but his favorite music in all the world. They are downright elegant, and the music itself is fresh enough to afford the additional pleasure of discovery to most listeners.

Karl Goldmark's *Im Frühling* (*In Springtime*), an unabashed outpouring of delight in the awakening of Nature, is appropriately warmhearted and vibrant. Copland's *An Outdoor Overture* exhibits a real substance that even the composer's own performances had not quite suggested. Sullivan's *Overture di Ballo*, a piece that had never especially appealed to me, is revealed here as sheer enchantment, filled with wit and intriguing melodic and rhythmic interest. Even Shostakovich's noisy *Festive Overture*, in Fiedler's brisk but absolutely uncondescending treatment, manages to convey not only festivity of a high order but genuine dignity as well. Everywhere there is uncontrived vitality, affectionate shaping of phrases, the most subtle regard for internal balance in achieving just the right coloring.

**D**EUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON should be embarrassed about offering such unfamiliar fare without a word of annotation (opus numbers are omitted too). The Goldmark has not been on records since Frederick Stock's ancient 78 was retired, and the Sullivan has not been in our domestic catalog for years; a word or two might have been helpful. No embarrassment need be felt about any other aspect of this presentation, though. The sound itself is as grand as the performances; in the Shostakovich it compares not at all badly with Morton Gould's new digital recording of the work (Chalfont SDG-301, reviewed in the October issue). In short, "Fiedler's Favorite Overtures" are surely Fiedler's Finest, and this collection could well be Everyone's Favorite Fiedler. This conductor left no handsomer monument to himself—and none more endearing.

—Richard Freed

**I GOT RHYTHM—FIEDLER CONDUCTS GERSHWIN.** *Girl Crazy, Suite. Overtures: Oh, Kay!, Funny Face, Let 'em Eat Cake, Of Thee I Sing. Wintergreen for President; Three Preludes; Second Rhapsody.* Ralph Votapek (piano, in *Rhapsody*); Boston Pops Orchestra, Arthur Fiedler cond. LONDON SPC 21185 \$8.98.

**SATURDAY NIGHT FIEDLER.** *Saturday Night Fever Medley; Bachamania.* Boston Pops Orchestra, Harry Ellis Dickson, "aman-uensis." MIDSONG INTERNATIONAL MSI 011 \$7.98, © MS8 011 \$7.98, © MSC 011 \$7.98.

**FIEDLER'S FAVORITE OVERTURES.** Copland: *An Outdoor Overture.* Goldmark: *Im Frühling, Op. 36.* Shostakovich: *Festive Overture, Op. 96.* Sullivan: *Overture di Ballo.* Boston Pops Orchestra, Arthur Fiedler cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2584 027 \$9.98, © 3384 027 \$9.98.



We have several woodcut drawings of this old picture. If you'd like one free, just write.

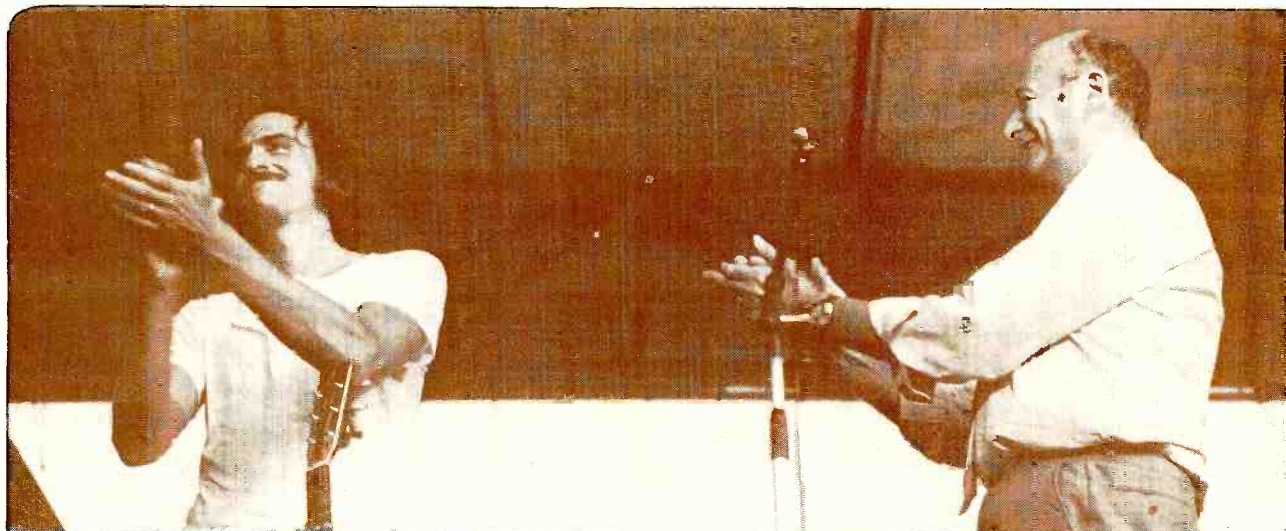
THIS OLD PICTURE reminds us that a few things have changed in Jack Daniel's Hollow. Today's grain is delivered in trucks instead of mule-drawn wagons. But our miller inspects each load as carefully as ever. And rejects it all if it's not to his standard. Another thing we still do is gentle our whiskey with charcoal mellowing. That's the process that accounts for Jack Daniel's unique smoothness. And even though it dates back to 1866, we're not about to change one part of it.



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Shen Lynn Behr

□ Any beleaguered politician worth his salt will tell you that votes are where you find them, so here's Frank Perdue look-alike Mayor Ed Koch

horning in on **JAMES TAYLOR's** recent free concert in the Big Apple's Central Park, which attracted more than 250,000 New Yorkers. Tay-

lor's latest outing is on "Flag," Columbia FC 36058; Koch's a demonstration of hipitude as a guest on *Saturday Night Live*.

# POP ROTOGRAVURE

By Steve Simels

□ Who says punks aren't All-American kids? The minor-league softball team here is in fact made up of members of New Wave standard bearers **THE A'S** ("The A's," Arista AB 4238) and

the redoubtable **RAMONES** ("Road to Ruin," Sire 6063). Fashion note: is there perhaps some comment on the state of the economy in that new out-at-the-knees look?



AV188



Fantasy

□ Still more proof that the Sixties are over: Woodstock veteran **COUNTRY JOE McDONALD** has gone Polyester Punk. Joe, whose forthcoming Fantasy album is titled "Leisure Suite," claims that the strategically placed rips in the outfit he's wearing here are not peek-a-boo but purely functional. "Polyester doesn't breathe," he explains, "so I have to provide some means for the air to circulate or I'd sweat to death on stage." And that, for the information of all you younger readers, is what my grandmother used to call a likely story.

□ You're right, that's **BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN**, backstage at the Bottom Line, hobnobbing with everybody's favorite rock-and-roll jailbait, Akron's own **RACHEL SWEET** ("Fool Around," Stiff/Columbia JC 36101). Seems somebody told the Boss that Rachel, who turned seventeen during her show that evening, would like nothing more for the occasion than a chance to meet her idol. Guess they grow up obliging in Asbury Park.

Columbia



Ron Pownall

□ Some smart cookie going around selling Girl Scouts? No, but those *are* Greater Boston area scouts in the company of Detroit madman **TED NUGENT** ("State of Shock," Epic FE 36000).

Thirty of them were on hand to greet Ted at the Bean City's Logan Airport, perhaps to hustle a few tickets to Ted's show at the Boston Garden that night. Are there any merit badges for *that*?



Charlyn Zeinik

□ Ever wonder why record prices are going up? Obviously, it's because of all those wild parties artists throw in the studio. For example, seen here contributing to the inflationary spiral are **BILLY**

**MERNIT**, **CARLY SIMON**, and **DAVID SPINOZA**, guzzling it up during sessions for Carly's lately released "Spy" (Elektra 5E-506), reviewed in these pages last month.

□ Bearsville recording artist **RANDY VAN-WARMER** ("Warmer," Bearsville 5988) poses with actress Nancy Damron in what is either a production still from a forthcoming promo film or an example of the latest fashion trend to follow in the wake of the Annie Hall craze—Shopping Bag Lady Chic.

Ida S. Langsam/Howard Bloom Organization



□ Place: the Los Angeles City National Bank. Party: a celebration of the **JACKSONS'** platinum album "Destiny" (Epic JE 35552). Guests: left to right, Michael Jackson, Graham Parker, Lene Lovich, and Lovich band-member Les Chappell. We don't know what Lovich and Chappell were up to, but Michael and Graham were comparing notes: Parker's new single, *I Want You Back*, was Michael's *very first* record, 'way back before his voice changed. (This, by the way, is one of those occasions when we regret that the photo's not in full color; Ms. Lovich's hair, they tell us, is this really *great* shade of pink.)

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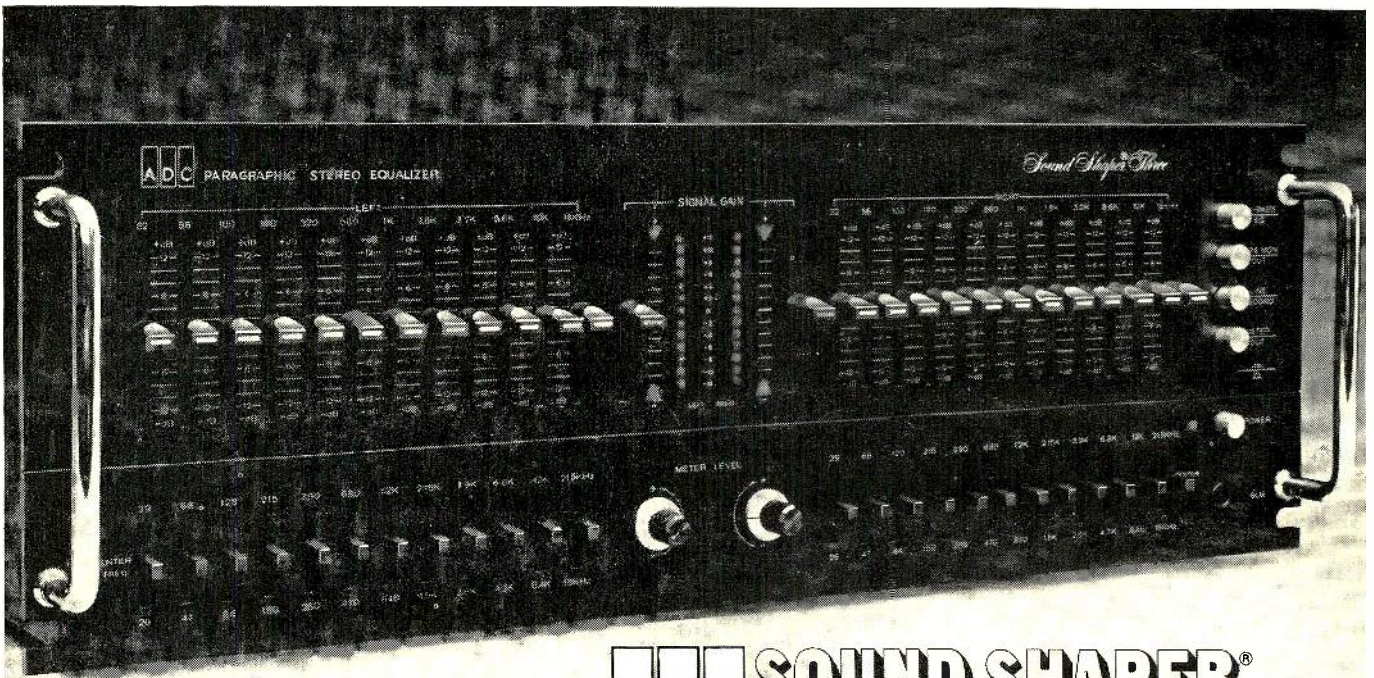
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# HOW TO TRADE UP YOUR RECEIVER, TUNER, AMP, TURNTABLE, CARTRIDGE AND SPEAKERS WITHOUT TRADING IN A THING.





# POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

**THE A'S.** The A's (vocals and instrumentals). *After Last Night; C.I.A.; Five Minutes in a Hero's Life; Words; Parasite; Artificial Love; Who's Gonna Save the World;* and four others. ARISTA AB 4238 \$7.98, © AT8 4238 \$7.98, © ATC 4238 \$7.98.

Performance: **Beside the point**  
Recording: **Good enough**

The A's are cute in the Sixties sense (they look like a slightly seedy version of Herman's Hermits), occasionally funny (check out their rehash of *Twist and Shout*), and transparently trendy. They are also the first punk band from Philadelphia to land a major record deal, which in itself should tell you something about them, considering that there hasn't been much in the way of white rock-and-roll in the City of Not So Brotherly Love since the days of Cameo-Parkway Records, Frankie Avalon, and Bobby Rydell (and, come to think of it, not so much even then).

All of which is a roundabout way of saying that the A's are to groups such as the Clash or the Cars (whose post-modernist stance they ape most strenuously) what Freddie and the Dreamers were to the Beatles or Fabian was to Elvis Presley: a sanitized, cunningly packaged, nonthreatening, low-calorie substitute. They're not without talent (*Teenage Jerkoff* is so crass it succeeds almost in spite of itself), but the talent is almost incidental. You get the

feeling that if they thought psychedelic music was going to make a big comeback they'd be dropping acid and wearing caftans and love beads by early next week. If this is really the alternative to Foreigner and Barry Manilow, I think I'd rather read a book. S.S.

**ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL: *Served Live.*** Asleep at the Wheel (vocals and instrumentals); Johnny Gimble (fiddle); Link Davis Jr. (saxophone); other musicians. *Choo Choo Ch Boogie; The Last Meal; God Bless the Child; Jumpin' at the Woodside; Am I High;* and five others. CAPITOL ST-11945 \$7.98, © 8XT-11945 \$7.98, © 4XT-11945 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good**  
Recording: **Excellent remote/remix**

Asleep at the Wheel has evolved into a squeaky-clean Texas swing band that can do other things (such as, well, *pop* swing), and this live album is more or less a pause in which they show you their licks. It has *some* of the discipline and balance of a studio album, with a slow song where an album needs it and that sort of thing, but it also gets into crowd-pleasing cartooning at the end with an audience-participation *Miles and Miles of Texas* (this was recorded in Austin) and a muddled revisionist send-up of *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*. Overall, though, "Served Live" works as a sampler, and it proves that the boys are good musicians in real life. They are a little more versatile than they appear here, but it gives you the idea. N.C.

**THE BELLAMY BROTHERS: *The Two and Only.*** David and Howard Bellamy (vocals, guitar); Dizzy Rambler Band (instrumentals). *If I Said You Had a Beautiful Body Would You Hold It Against Me; May You Never; Makin' Music Mama; Wet T-Shirt;* and six others. WARNER BROS./CURB BSK 3347 \$7.98, © M8 3347 \$7.98, © M5 3347 \$7.98.

Performance: **Ambitious synthetic**  
Recording: **Good**

The Bellamy Brothers are the country-flavored side of Ambitious Synthetic Chic in

pop music. Their one-joke ditty, *If I Said You Had a Beautiful Body Would You Hold It Against Me*, got mucho air play, at least on country stations, because it was light and had a catchy bastard-Latin beat. Their sound and themes are basically Jimmy Buffett (further simplified, and their depth is generally about an inch and a half (even the album title is unoriginal, having previously been used by Bob and Ray for their Broadway revue). Yet there is more than a suggestion here that the Bellamys want to be taken seriously—little things, such as including the relatively sophisticated "sound" song, *May You Never*, by John Martyn, paying homage to the blues with *Miss Misunderstood*, and writing lines like "Why did we die so young?/There was a French kiss waiting on a red-hot tongue," seem to spring from a desire for more than catchiness. They do a passable job of *May You Never*, they don't butcher it, but in the end they neither amplify its charm nor give it any new definition; and the rest of the album, in the end, is the same kind of so-what proposition. It's still a synthesis of sounds, not personality, that comes through. N.C.

**BING CROSBY: *Collection, Volume III.*** Bing Crosby (vocals); various orchestras. *My Angelina; Orange Blossom Time; I'm Sorry Dear; Can't We Talk It Over?; Waltzing in a Dream; Let's Try Again; Someday We'll Meet Again;* and seven others. COLUMBIA © C 35748 \$4.98.

**BING CROSBY: *Bing's Music Hall Highlights.*** Bing Crosby (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *It's Only a Paper Moon; You Brought a New Kind of Love to Me; Candle Light and Wine; Easter Parade; Nevada; Put Your Arms Around Me Honey; As Time Goes By;* and seven others. SPOKANE © 16 \$6.98 (from Spokane Records, P.O. Box 724, Redmond, Wash. 98052).

Performances: **Treasures**  
Recordings: **Very good for their time**

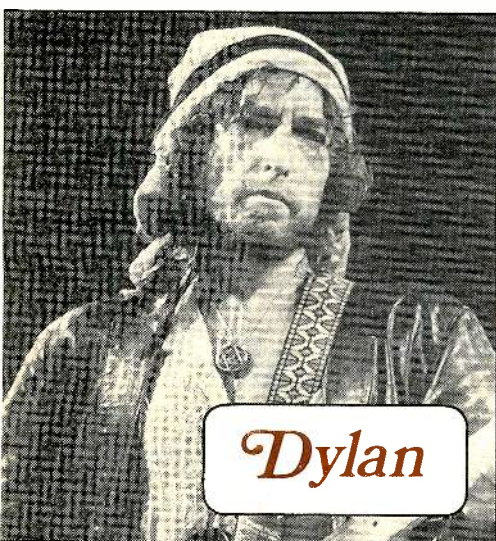
Harry Lillis Crosby—Bing to you and me—started out as a somewhat insipid crooner

#### Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = open-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓒ = stereo cassette
- = quadrasonic 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.



Charlyn Zlotnik

## Dylan

**H**ENRY THOREAU was a good guy and a really great moralizer, but when he said "Simplify, simplify," he gave us an awfully complicated set of instructions. On the surface, it would seem the way to simplify your life would be to become more self-sufficient (the way Hank did it), but in fact that means shifting from being a specialist (an accountant or dope dealer or whatever who hires plumbers, electricians, and dentists) to being a generalist, and while it may be relatively simple to learn the basic skills of self-sufficiency, *managing* those skills is something else again. Just scheduling the work of taking care of yourself is no simple task. And that's only the beginning of this simplifying business. If you try to simplify from the other direction—from the inside out—the complications are thicker than the traffic around Studio 54 before the latest gasoline price gouge. And such are the complications attending Bob Dylan's new album, "Slow Train Coming."

It doesn't *sound* anything like either of them, but it may remind you of "John Wesley Harding" or "New Morning" as it gets back to the basics—some of the basics—the way they did. It's a Muscle Shoals album, but an individualistic one, with the metallic electric keyboards of co-producer Barry Beckett and the occasional horns played off against the laconic guitar of Mark Knopfler, who—to start complicating things—is the main cog in Dire Straits, a band perceived by most to have echoes of Dylan in its sound. I had begun to think that Dire Straits' sound might be too narrow to wear well for long, but here Knopfler shows a sensitivity broader and more complex (!) than I'd imagined. The economy of his playing naturally fits Dylan's simplification effort, too, and the result—as far as the *sound* of it goes—is tight and basic and often, because it does not have the inertia of extras, quick.

But the songs themselves are so direct, so simplified, that they grant us access to only one aspect of Dylan, this one somewhat narrower than usual. What is missing is poetic ambiguity. It's extremely difficult or impossible to get the songs to say more than they say on the surface. That leaves you with what the songs are about and Dylan's way with the lan-

guage (laying aside for the moment the way he *delivers* them), and it leaves you feeling this is not quite rich enough to be a Dylan album. In short, it runs into the first thing you and I would bump into if we tried to simplify from the inside out: the tendency to edit out contradictions and wind up projecting an image that is ultimately a caricature. Do the same thing with a record album, and what you get is more like an exercise.

Yet there *is* some pretty good music in this one—basic blues-based music, much of it—and what the songs are about *is* interesting. Here and there they are about getting right with God, and they are almost fundamentalist about that. This is added to a sort of early Dylan tone reinvoked in the field of public affairs broadly defined. Some of the old outrage is there: "You've got innocent men in prison/Your insane asylums are filled . . . The rich seduce the poor/And the old are seduced by the young." And so is some of the old humor: "You can call me Bobby/You can call me Zimmy/You can call me R. J./You can call me Ray/But you're gonna have to serve somebody . . ."

Dylan being Dylan, there is enough on the surface, in the lines themselves, to keep speculators busy. Here he speaks up for Jesus, for example, and just a few years ago he went somewhat public about his Jewishness, visiting Israel and all that. Here he goes so far as to accuse us (or the world) of having pornography in the schools, and there are various ways his old liberal supporters could take that. Beyond all that, however superficially you have to take it, *When He Returns*, in which he's accompanied only by a churchy piano, is a fine piece and may eventually take its place as a big Dylan song.

**B**UT the point, to me, is still that little is planted between the lines this time. It's mostly *in* the lines and Dylan seems to be straining, often, to keep those lines taut. He even leaves in a couple of flubbed notes—flubbed not because he couldn't reach them, but because he tried to squeeze them extra hard, like the very first Dylan voice we heard—and the tense, wired-up delivery is another thing that mitigates all the simplifying. I seem to want the songs to have a few more lighthearted touches to change the pace. What we get is a backbeat-driven children's song with a bobbed-off ending, *Man Gave Names to All the Animals*, which may remind you of a folk song evolved from a spiritual. But it's merely whimsical, and what the album needs is something irreverent or maybe just something not quite so simple. Overall, this is a very well made comic book from a gent who, in the past, has made art.

—Noel Coppage

**BOB DYLAN: *Slow Train Coming*.** Bob Dylan (vocals, guitar); Barry Beckett (keyboards); Pick Withers (drums); Tim Drummond (bass); Mark Knopfler (guitar); Muscle Shoals Horns; vocal accompaniment. *Gotta Serve Somebody*; *Precious Angel*; *I Believe in You*; *Slow Train*; *Gonna Change My Way of Thinking*; *Do Right to Me Baby*; *When You Gonna Wake Up*; *Man Gave Names to All the Animals*; *When He Returns*. COLUMBIA FC 36120 \$8.98, ® FCA 36120 \$8.98, © FCT 36120 \$8.98.

with dance bands in the Twenties and rose to become one of the nation's best-loved performers, with an easygoing style as both actor and singer that kept him popular for more than half a century. When he died last year, so many tributes to him and reviews of his career were televised that it scarcely seems necessary to add any fresh encomiums; I have no doubt that record companies will still be issuing albums offering obscure examples of his work well into the twenty-first century. The two at hand include specimens dating back to 1929 (Crosby cut his first disc in 1926); the latest is from 1944.

"A Bing Crosby Collection, Volume III," the most recent of a series being assembled and annotated by Michael Brooks for Columbia, opens with a dreadfully sticky ballad, *My Angelina*, that Crosby recorded with Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra at the start of the Great Depression. A number of other Depression songs, such as *Let's Spend an Evening at Home*, with its celebration of the economies of domestic bliss, are included in the program, which bring the Crosby voice up to 1933, when he recorded *Here Is My Heart* for Harmony and *My Love* and *I'm Playing with Fire* for Brunswick. Despite the warmth of Crosby's style and the expertise of such accompanists as the Tommy Dorsey and Isham Jones bands, many of the songs in this collection are pretty dull. Still, I would not have wanted to miss *Orange Blossom Time* from MGM's *Hollywood Revue of 1929*, which was enhanced by spraying orange-blossom perfume during its performances at the larger movie palaces.

"Bing's Music Hall Highlights" offers Crosby in the Forties, in the midst of World War II, cheering up his radio listeners with little vignettes in which he and a girl he calls Judy (played by Marilyn Maxwell) recall bygone years through popular songs of what was already the past, from *Paper Moon* to *Moonlight Bay*. All are easy to take, and the sound is comparatively splendid, since Crosby was one of the first radio performers to tape his shows. The album's no match, though, for the two hours of more varied entertainment to be found in Murray Hill's bargain four-record package, "Bing Crosby and His Friends" (Murray Hill 894637). P.K.

**PHILIP D'ARROW.** Philip D'Arrow (vocals, rhythm guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Burn the Disco Down*; *I'm Barely Bruised*; *Hamburgers, Cheeseburgers*; *Alias Love*; *Suburban Bliss*; and four others. POLYDOR PD-1-6210 \$7.98, ® 8T-1-6210 \$7.98, © CT-1-6210 \$7.98.

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

Philip D'Arrow tries very hard to sound like the next Billy Joel, but the problem is that the world does not *need* a new Billy Joel, being very comfortable with the one it has already. It is all right to be influenced by originals; it is futile to try to duplicate them and presumptuous to attempt to replace them.

*Burn the Disco Down*, despite the sentiments, which some of us share, is not much more than an average sock-and-jab rock-and-roll song. Most of the rest of D'Arrow's album is filled with complaints about false women and the world at large, and there is no sensible answer to his *Angst* (largely concocted, I suspect) other than to advise him frater-

(Continued on page 114)



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nally to come to terms with the world and start meeting some decent ladies. *Suburban* [sic] *Bliss*, which is supposed to be satire, goes on for nearly five minutes denouncing people who watch television. Big deal! J.V.

**BILLY FALCON.** Billy Falcon (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Girls; Be Bop; Someday; Nowhere to Turn; Time to Smile; The Fire*; and four others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA967-H \$7.98, Ⓢ EA967-H \$7.98, © CA967-H \$7.98.

Performance: **Dumb, icky, and gross**  
Recording: **Good enough**

This is what happens when you try to use the commercial models of something as if they

were *sources*. Billy Falcon apparently looks up to Bruce Springsteen and Robert Gordon, maybe even Kim Fowley, and to punk rockers in general, but he goes on to show that music based on punk rock rather than *punkism* is not quite the "real" thing. What it is is more like zit rock. It's all about how difficult it is to be young and have this amazing, ravenous body developing, only to be pent up in school all day, etc., etc. Billy Falcon's vocals are heavily mannered, and his songs make Cheap Trick look like intellectuals. N.C.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**CRYSTAL GAYLE: *We Should Be Together*.** Crystal Gayle (vocals); Dave Kirby (guitar);

Joe Allen (bass); Charles Cochran (keyboards); Lloyd Green (steel guitar); other musicians. *Sneakin' Out the Back Door; You'll Be Loved Someday; Beyond You; The Best Thing in My Life; Time Will Prove That I'm Right; Your Kisses Will*; and four others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA969-H \$7.98, Ⓢ EA969-H \$7.98, © CA969-H \$7.98.

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

Crystal Gayle is in her prime now, and "We Should Be Together" shows there's more to her than a pretty voice—although that's *mostly* what she has. Tones so nice they transform such a workaday little song as the title number of this one. Crystal Gayle does use good material, though, good for her purpose, which is to cut a wide swath between pop and country, something she has done expertly since she first got her bearings. Gayle's taste and equipment are pointing her in the same direction, a lucky set of circumstances. A "Crystal Gayle song" is catchy-to-melodious with lyrics that are easy but not dumb; it's a song we can stand having around for a while, at least with her singing it, and once or twice in the course of an album—in this case it's *You'll Be Loved Someday*—the mixture of song and voice has a limpid loveliness that keeps one coming back to it. Thinking about country-pop crossovers and Crystal Gayle reminds me of the saying, "The word is not the thing." There is the crossover world, and then there's Crystal Gayle's crossover world, for want of a better word, a world she has created. Things go better there. N.C.

**MAX GRONENTHAL: *Whistling in the Dark*.** Max Gronenthal (vocals, keyboards); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Sailfish; Still I Wonder; You; Lookin' for a Girl; Get It Straight; I Know You're In There*; and four others. CHRYSALIS CHR 1231 \$7.98, Ⓢ 8CH 1231 \$7.98, © CCH 1231 \$7.98.

Performance: **Busy-busy**  
Recording: **Good**

It's not that new talent isn't welcome; I just wish Max Gronenthal would show more of it. He sings as much like Stevie Wonder as he can—especially on the intense high notes—but it's more sound than sentiment. His lyrics are so-so and the melodies are excuses to holler. Kenny Loggins and Michael McDonald are on board to help out with background vocals; for Gronenthal's sake, they should have taken him aside and said, "Look, Max, you're going at this all wrong. . . ." J.V.

**KISS: *Dynasty*.** Kiss (vocals and instrumentals). *Charisma; Dirty Livin'; Hard Times; Magic Touch; Save Your Love*; and four others. CASABLANCA NBLP 7512 \$7.98, Ⓢ NBL8 7512 \$7.98, © NBL5 7512 \$7.98.

Performance: **Stupid, trite, inept**  
Recording: **Average**

Well, here's another load of the same old garbage: dumb, boring, muddy-sounding, chord-saturated rock. My two prepubescent daughters readily agree that Kiss is nowhere musically—but they fought over the poster that came with the album. For reasons having nothing to do with music, Kiss has become an institution, to the point where the group is the multiple protagonist of its own TV special during the kiddie hours; society has certified (Continued on page 118)

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The Groovies' lead vocalist Chris Wilson

## The Flamin', Jumpin' Groovies

**T**HE Flamin' Groovies have been keeping the great tradition of the high-school British Invasion copy band alive for so long now (almost ten years) that time has finally caught up with them. The Sixties classics they so lovingly resurrect are back in fashion thanks to the post-punk activity of newer outfits from Cheap Trick to the Records, and that may ex-

plain why listening to their "Jumpin' in the Night" is such an unabashed pleasure.

Fact is, the various musicians who originated this stuff wouldn't, by and large, be caught dead performing in this style any more, and if you don't believe me try imagining the current McGuinn, Clark, and Hillman performing (as the Groovies do here) faithful versions of the Byrds' *5D* or *Ladyfriend*. Consequently, I am no longer troubled, as I have been with previous Groovies albums, about whether or not these spirited remakes surpass or even equal the originals. They don't, frankly, but they sound marvelously fresh for all that. And if some teenager hears the *Please Please Me* included here and consequently discovers that the Beatles were more than just Paul McCartney's old back-up band, then the Groovies have provided a valuable public service.

**A**LMOST everything on "Jumpin'" works on some level, even the Groovies' deliberately anachronistic originals. But the absolute standout is an off-the-wall version of Warren Zevon's not-so-venerable *Werewolves of London* hit, revamped with a ringing twelve-string guitar that instantly evokes every Battle of the Bands I ever attended in a drafty VFW hall. If you're too young to know what I'm talking about (and even if you're not), I urge you to acquire this album immediately; it's the perfect aural equivalent of *More American Graffiti*, and it rings far truer. It also happens to be a hell of a lot of lightweight fun.

—Steve Simels

**THE FLAMIN' GROOVIES:** *Jumpin' in the Night*. The Flamin' Groovies (vocals and instrumentals). *Jumpin' in the Night*; *Next One Crying*; *First Plane Home*; *In the U.S.A.*; *Down Down Down*; *Yes I Am*; *Werewolves of London*; *It Won't Be Wrong*; *Please Please Me*; *Tell Me Again*; *Absolutely Sweet Marie*; *5D*; *Ladyfriend*. SIRE SRK 6067 \$7.98, © M8S 6067 \$7.98, © M5S 6067 \$7.98.

Kiss as safe for children, like tabby cats. And everyone, including the children, seems to know better than to take it seriously. Kiss, therefore, is on its way to being as irrelevant as, say, Don Rickles; like Alice Cooper before them, Kiss really seems to aspire to play golf with Bob Hope and George Burns. It's the American way, I suppose. But listen to this godawful jumble of pointless noise and see if you won't join me in devising a way to pay Kiss *not* to play. Some variation on the soil-bank idea, I figure, should do it. That idea came up, you'll recall, during the *other* Eisenhower era.

N.C.

**STACY LATTISAW:** *Young and in Love*. Stacy Lattisaw (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Love Is Here Beside Us*; *Rock with Me*; *Three Wishes*; *Downtown*; and four others. COTILLION SD 5214 \$7.98, © TP 5214 \$7.98, © CS 5214 \$7.98.

Performance: **Young**  
Recording: **Hyped**

We will probably never know what moved the late Van McCoy to produce, arrange, and write most of this album featuring Stacy Lat-

tisaw, a prepubescent "discovery" who sounds like one of those brats on roller skates mimicking all the latest hits to the delight of her spaced-out parents. There are two versions offered here of little Stacy's "hit," *Young and in Love*, one ballad-style and one disco. Talk about being caught between Scylla and Charybdis!

P.R.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**LED ZEPPELIN:** *In Through the Out Door*. Led Zeppelin (vocals and instrumentals). *In the Evening*; *South Bound Suarez*; *Fool in the Rain*; *Hot Dog*; and three others. SWAN SONG SS 16002 \$8.98, © TP 16002 \$8.98, © TP 16002 \$8.98.

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

Led Zeppelin is a band I've never been able to enjoy except in small doses—for a number of reasons, one of them being Robert Plant's cartoonish macho yowling—and it was clear even to devotees that their inspiration had been flagging on their last couple of albums. (Have you listened to "Presence" much late-

ly? Didn't think so.) But the three-year hiatus since their last effort has clearly had a healthy effect on them, if only because they've been able to soak up some fresh, generally youthful influences. Their "comeback" effort, "In Through the Out Door," is, surprisingly, the most consistently listenable, inventive, and entertaining record they've ever made. It's certainly the most subtle.

The two big changes here are in Plant's vocals and Jimmy Page's deliberate downplaying of his customary steamroller guitar attack. Plant sounds restrained, delicate; he seems to have abandoned his trademark Wagnerian blues style in favor of a voice-as-instrument approach that's almost pretty, if you can believe it. Suddenly he's a first-rate, emotive, rock-and-roll singer. Page, meanwhile, has decided to integrate himself into a basically keyboard-oriented framework (there are elements of some of the artier New Wave outfits here, as well as a bit of the later Who), and when he does cut loose the effect is nearly always bracing. It may have taken him ten years to realize that less can be more, but it has been worth the wait.

The *variety* of this album is what's most impressive. There's a great, thundering riff-rocker with a nod to punk (*In the Evening*), a partly tongue-in-cheek neo-Fifties hoedown clearly influenced by labelmate Dave Edmunds' revisionist rockabilly (*Hot Dog*), and a Latinish workout (*Fool in the Rain*) that achieves the seemingly impossible synthesis of salsa and metal. Even the obligatory ten-minute epic (*Carouselambra*) comes off; for once, the whirling-dervish instrumental work and the unexpected segues impress me as musically justifiable. There's more atmosphere in this than in anything else I've heard this year from anyone.

Yes, there are moments that don't make it. *All My Love*, though beautifully played and sung, is mostly a routine ballad, and *I'm Gonna Crawl*, a James Brown-style soul number blown up to symphonic proportions, is a miscalculation—*Götterdämmerung* in Las Vegas. But by and large this is a lovely, intelligent, and genuinely exciting record from a group that previously dealt almost solely in excess. I await Led Zep's next album with genuine interest.

S.S.

**THE LITTLE RIVER BAND:** *First Under the Wire*. The Little River Band (vocals and instrumentals). *Lonesome Loser*; *Start the Rumor*; *By My Side*; *Cool Change*; *It's Not a Wonder*; *Mistress of Mine*; *Man on the Run*; and three others. CAPITOL SOO-11954 \$8.98, © 8XOO-11954 \$8.98, © 4XOO-11954 \$8.98.

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

The Little River Band, from Australia, fits right into the pleasant pap formula of our late-Seventies rock radio programming. And why not? It *does* sound like they put their thing, their sound, together from parts bought at the same store patronized by many of our American and English groups. They seem to have bought some of the same parts, in fact, as Gerry Rafferty and Meatloaf have, among others. But what the hell, it's a brave new world, and standardization counts almost as much as neatness. The LRB is neat, too; there's not a hair out of place in *this* sound, buddy. Technically, of course, it's all there, everyone is going through the right motions,

(Continued on page 120)

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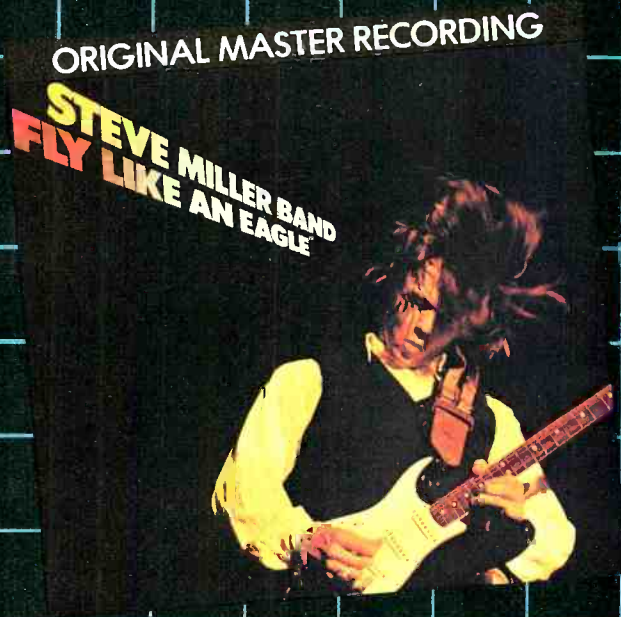
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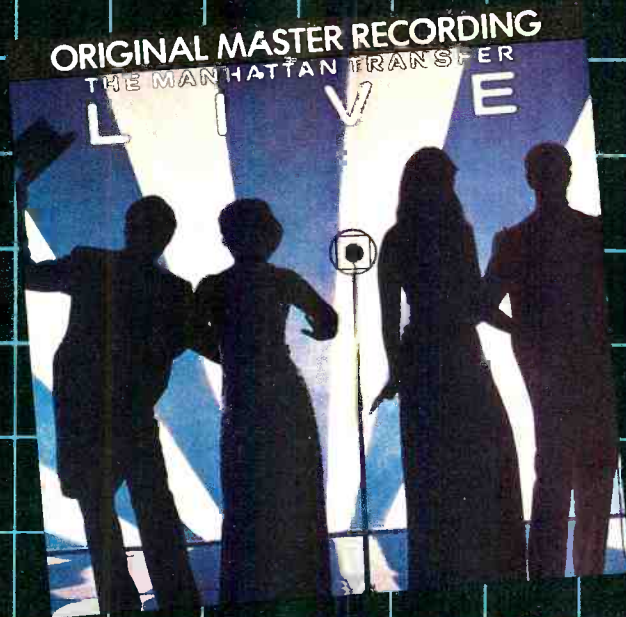
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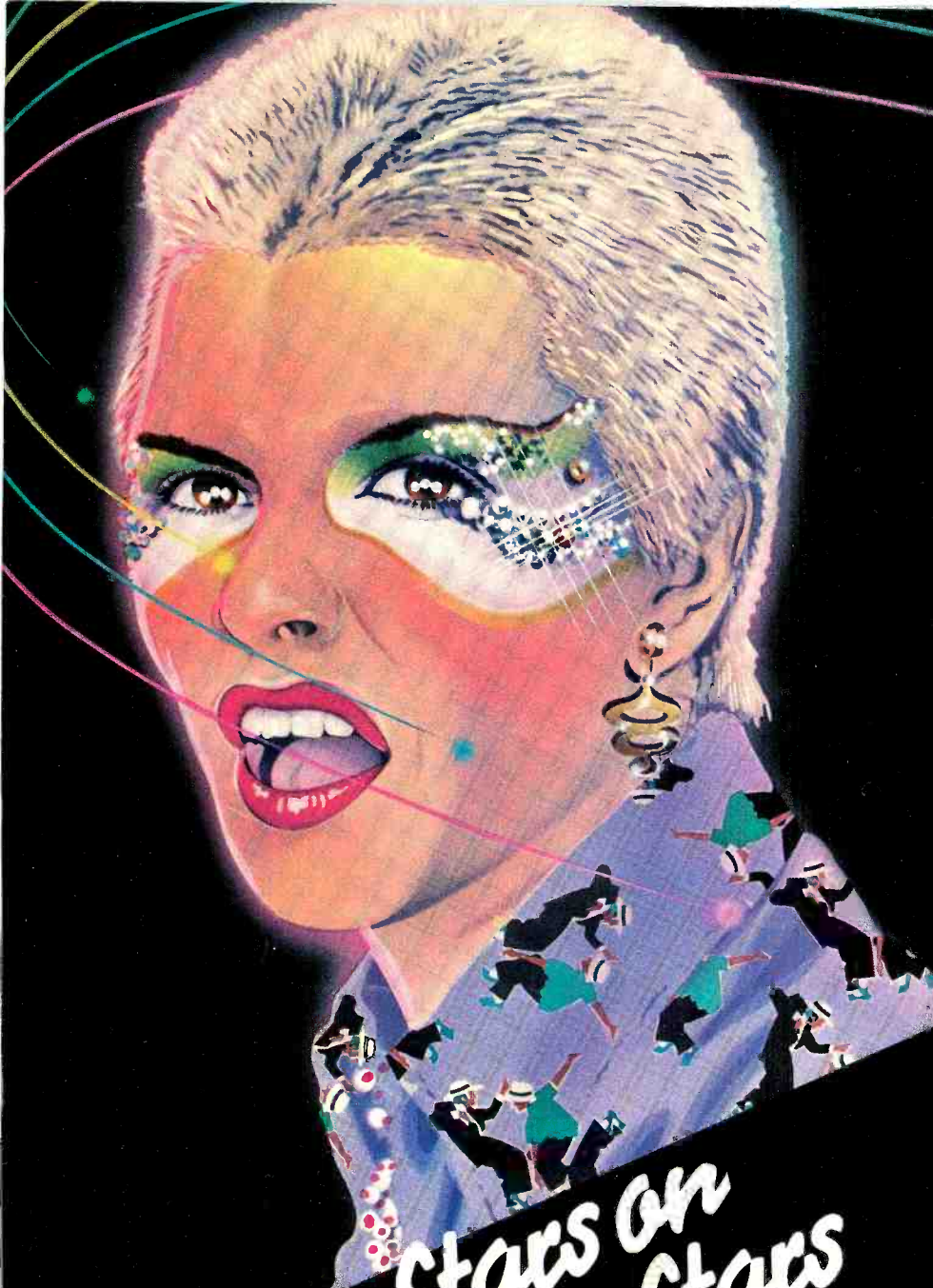
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and it's tuneful and wordy enough for the grazing attention everyone seems to assume Technological Man (known increasingly by the Social Security number he keeps) is capable of giving. This album finds the LRB a little more straight-ahead than in the past, with fewer fancy introductions and jazz chords; you can easily get the lyrics in one take and have enough time left over to let your mind get into mischief. And sometimes it's pretty, in a plastic sort of way, like those lamps with the glowing fibers. But it's cool, man, cool as a computer in the Klondike, this going through the right motions without going through the right emotions. **N.C.**

**MOON MARTIN: *Escape from Domination.*** Moon Martin (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *I've Got a Reason; She Made a Fool of You; Dreamer; Gun Shy; Hot House Baby; Bootleg Woman;* and four others. CAPITOL ST-11933 \$7.98, Ⓞ 8XT-11933 \$7.98, Ⓞ 4XT-11933 \$7.98.

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

I didn't like Moon Martin's first album, "Shots from a Cold Nightmare," and I don't like this one for the same reason: neither is really an "album" in the sense of being an artistic or performing whole meant to express a musical personality. Martin is a talented songwriter but hardly a singer, and the production on both his releases is so thin that they seem more like quick, cheap, rather sloppy "demos" for his songs—or perhaps the idea was to present him as a new "no-frills" cult figure. Whatever the plan, neither Martin nor his songs are shown to much advantage. **J.V.**

**RONNIE MILSAP: *Images.*** Ronnie Milsap (vocals, piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Nobody Likes Sad Songs; Keep the Night Away; I Really Don't Want to Know; Just Because It Feels So Good; Delta Queen;* and five others. RCA AHLI-3346 \$7.98, Ⓞ AHSI-3346 \$7.98, Ⓞ AHKI-3346 \$7.98.

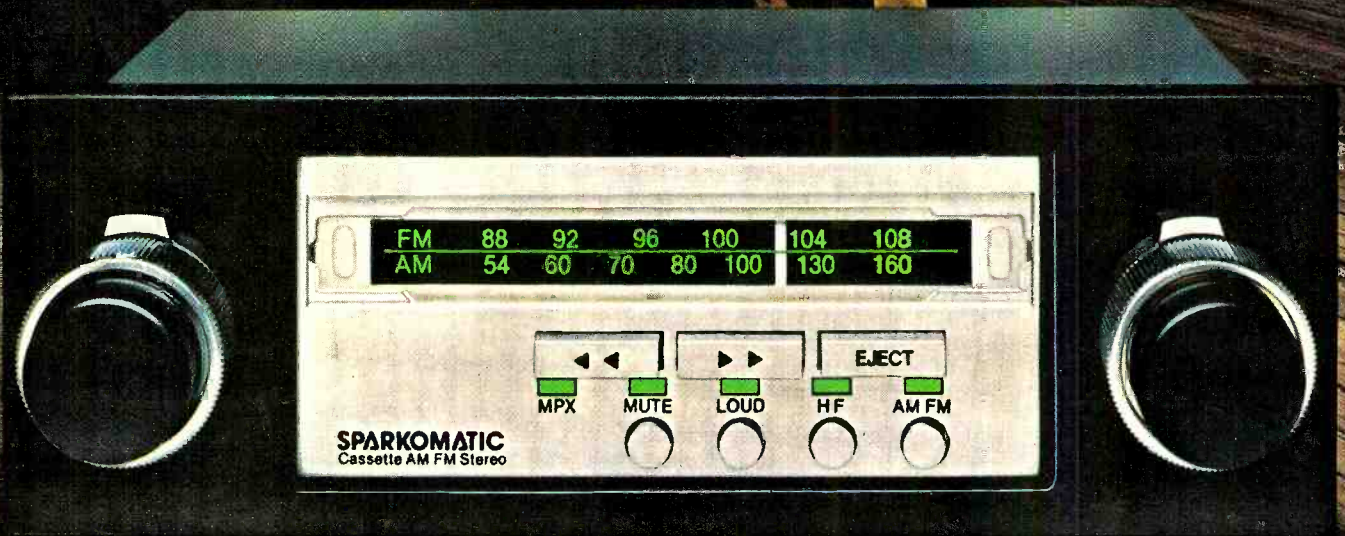
Performance: **Middle-age spread**  
 Recording: **Good**

I see by the album jacket that Ronnie Milsap has developed a bit of a paunch, which his music had started to do several albums ago and continues to show here. This one has a particularly square and conservative feel to it, being an old-time one-hit-and-filler type (*Sad Songs* being the hit) to start with and being awash in strings at every opportunity. Milsap's forte, let's face it, is sounding black in country music, but he keeps making these albums (especially this one) that try to sound like Charlie Pride, who really is black but has one of the whiter sounds in the game. Or maybe it's a country-Liberace figure Milsap is trying to cut. It's hard to say. Anyway, what he's really got—a certain kind of blue-eyed soul—doesn't go with this WASPish throw-away mentality about selecting and relating to songs. This time especially. "Images" hits what simply has to be the nadir in self-indulgent laziness. **N.C.**

**MARIA MULDAUR: *Open Your Eyes*** (see Best of the Month, page 78)

**RANDY NEWMAN: *Born Again*** (see Best of the Month, page 73)

(Continued on page 122)



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**T**HE label on the cover says, "Rock's First All-Digital Recording." But it is not an all-digital recording any more than Ry Cooder is simply or merely "rock." It just goes to show you, you can't pin a label on "Bop Till You Drop" (though I suppose you *could* call it a sly reference to Root Boy Slim's *Boogie Till You Puke*).

But no matter. It's a digitally mastered album, actually, and you can play it on your analog (as we say nowadays) turntable, but the sound of it is a revelation anyway, and Cooder, as usual, is something else. Being the first major pop figure to use this process is something of a responsibility, when you think about it—and I can't think of a more impeccable pop-music adventurer than Cooder. The album finds him nosing around in still more musical bags, giving top priority, as always, to getting the *feeling* right—and succeeding most of the time. The aura of authenticity continues to surround him.

The digital mastering process is said to transfer *no* generational noise through the dubbing and mixing activities, and what that means for this recording on my equipment is a noticeable improvement in stereo imaging, a somewhat more marked improvement in dynamic range, and a great improvement in the transparency of the sound—that is, you can crank it up so the bass is *loud* and you can still hear the words through it. It occurs to me that the sound is *better* than live, given the vicissitudes of PA systems and club interiors.

Cleanliness and nuance also happen to be among Cooder's trademarks. "Bop," like all his albums, is devoid of cheap licks and fancy runs, subordinating everything to the feel the song is trying to have. For years, Cooder has mined root musics, from the blues to Caribbean to Hawaiian, so that having a sheaf of his albums means having one of the more sensible and better-taught musicology courses available. "Bop Till You Drop," you might say, takes the mining operation indoors, for it seems to be a kind of *salon* root music—as, for instance, Mort Shuman's *Little Sister*.

In that one and in others you'll find a second-generation Latin backbeat working, as well as further manifestations of the hybrid process. A wink and a grin go implicitly with

much of it, and Cooder and bassist Tim Drummond broaden both the wink and the grin in their *Down in Hollywood*. Cooder's only bit of writing for "Bop." Cooder doesn't write much, but when he does his first aim, again, is to get the feeling right. In this case, it's a funky, blues-based hyperbole; he makes the big H seem as sleazy as Times Square in the little old lady from Dubuque's nightmare. But Cooder's feel for songs of this sort is perhaps not as sensitive as it is for songs like those on his earlier "Boomer's Story" album, for there is a sag in tunefulness on the second side. That may be because the early minutes of the album, in that glorious sound, have you guessing that the whole of it will do your laundry, shine your shoes, wash your car, and give you a massage. But it's only rock-and-roll . . . and about seventeen other things . . . with a cohesive, "albumy" feel and a consistent flavor.

That consistency shows up among the musicians too. David Lindley, Jackson Browne's sidekick, fits in as if he'd been playing with Cooder for years, and Drummond and Jim Keltner are similarly sympathetic. The backup singers (in too many albums they are among the "detail work" that is glossed over) are especially zingy, as are the solos Bobby King and Chaka Khan step out to take.

It is an album that shows Cooder's way of doing things as much as it is a collection of the kind of funky-to-cockeyed songs only he seems to uncover (though Doc Watson's doing roughly the same thing on plowed ground). And, for a bonus, Cooder's taste and subtlety are all the more impressive when you can hear them this clearly. The Eighties are looking up already.

—Noel Coppage

**RY COODER: *Bop Till You Drop*.** Ry Cooder (vocals, guitar, mandolin); Jim Keltner (drums); Tim Drummond (bass); David Lindley (guitar); other musicians. *Little Sister; Go Home Girl; The Very Thing That Makes You Rich; I Think It's Going to Work Out Fine; Down in Hollywood; Look at Granny Run Run; Trouble, You Can't Fool Me; Don't You Mess Up a Good Thing; I Can't Win.* WARNER BROS. BSK 3358 \$7.98, Ⓜ M8 3358 \$7.98, © M5 3358 \$7.98.

**ROBERT PALMER: *Secrets*.** Robert Palmer (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Bad Case of Loving You (Doctor, Doctor); Too Good to Be True; Can We Still Be Friends?; In Walks Love Again; Jealous; Remember to Remember;* and five others. ISLAND ILPS 9544 \$7.98, Ⓜ M8 9544 \$7.98, © M5 9544 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Good**

Rock is a simple form but not necessarily a banal one. Robert Palmer knows the difference. His no-nonsense approach is refreshing and pleasing as he cheerfully churns out straight-ahead rock-and-roll. His own material isn't bad at all, and he also essays *Bad Case of Loving You* (by Moon Martin, who's a good writer but a poor singer) and *Can We Still Be Friends* (by Todd Rundgren, who's also better at writing than at singing). "Secrets" isn't an album you'll play all the time, but you might find yourself listening to it on and off for the next few years because it's easy to take and because it's nice to hear a fellow who sounds happy in his work. J.V.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**THE RECORDS.** The Records (vocals and instrumentals); Ian Gibbons (keyboards). *All Messed Up and Ready to Go; Teenarama; Girls That Don't Exist; Starry Eyes; Up All Night; Affection Rejected;* and four others. VIRGIN VA 13130 \$7.98, Ⓜ TP 13130 \$7.98, © CS 13130 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good to brilliant**

Recording: **Fine**

Well, the main thing here is *Starry Eyes*, one of the most memorable singles of the Seventies, which you probably know from the radio unless you're living exclusively in Disco City. Entire careers have been built on songs nowhere near as good, but this one has everything—wry lyrics, gloriously nasal singing, enormous drive, and a guitar hook that brings the mid-Sixties sound and feel of the Byrds' classic work into the modern age. They don't come any better than this one.

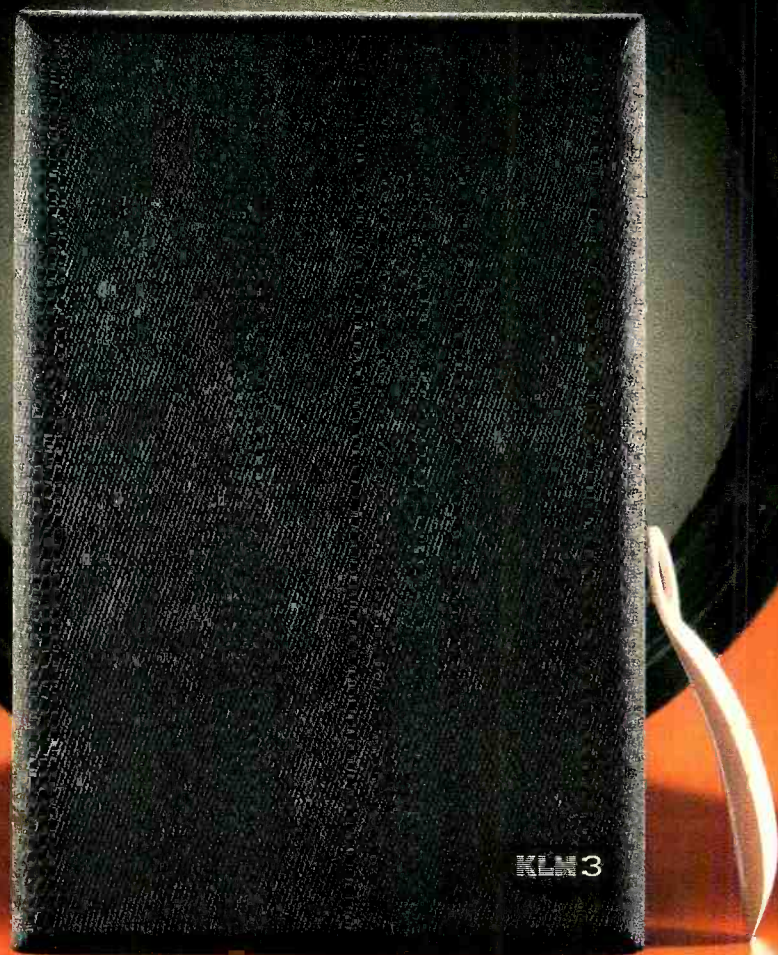
The rest of the album is a tad disappointing in comparison but enormously appealing nonetheless, real cruising-with-the-top-down stuff. What it demonstrates is that in a better world than this the Records would be the band John Lennon was working with, instead of raising cows or whatever the hell he's doing these days. Which is to say that they're an archetypal rock-and-roll band with one foot in pop, everything the Knack aspires to and doesn't quite pull off. They acknowledge their debt to the Sixties (a bonus EP included only with the initial pressing features a stunning version of the Kinks' obscure but lovely *See My Friends*), but they're not trapped by it. Their sound and sensibility have been equally informed by the New Wave ferment of the last few years, and on songs such as *All Messed Up and Ready to Go* and several others they manage handily to make the best of both worlds.

This is, in fact, a stunning debut and yet another convincing sign of rock-and-roll's return to the living. If you're still sitting around listening to scratchy copies of old albums from 1970, reminiscing about the good old days and bemoaning the dearth of "good" music, you could make a lot worse investments than "The Records." No self-respect-

(Continued on page 124)



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ing teenager of any age should be without it for a moment. S.S.

**REO SPEEDWAGON: *Nine Lives*.** REO Speedwagon (vocals and instrumentals). *Heavy on Your Love; Drop It; Easy Money; I Need You Tonight; Back on the Road Again;* and four others. EPIC FE 35988 \$8.98, © FEA 35988 \$8.98, © FET 35988 \$8.98.

Performance: **Affable**

Recording: **Good**

REO Speedwagon, which first established itself in the Midwest, plays mostly what we now call "power pop," a subgenre that by definition doesn't take itself too seriously. REO is no more serious but is more intense than, say, Cheap Trick; it sounds more wired-up than any of the others and more solid musically than most. Every now and then a Gary Richrath guitar solo will uncoil out of the muddiness and sear a little bit. Kevin Cronin's vocals are almost always intense (and don't range a lot emotionally) in this album, but the music still comes across as affable and unserious, full of tuneful moments if not engrossing whole tunes. On the whole, a fun record. N.C.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**LEON RUSSELL: *Life and Love*.** Leon Russell (vocals, keyboards, guitar); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *One More Love Song; You Girl; Struck by Lightning; Strange Love; On the First Day;* and four others. PARADISE PAK 3341 \$7.98, © M8 3341 \$7.98, © M5 3341 \$7.98.

Performance: **Surprise!**

Recording: **Very good**

After years—and years—of fooling around with superstar poses, third-rate songs (his own), and excessively mannered singing, all of which wasted the exciting promise he showed in the late Sixties, Leon Russell has at last made a good album. No, scratch that; he's made a *damned* good album.

The songs here aren't world beaters, but they are simple, direct, and catchy. Russell sings and plays like he means it, and the album is very difficult to remove from the turntable. It's the kind you let play through again because it's such uncomplicated fun. Among its delights are the "home cooking" sounds: blues syncopation, jazz bumps and glides, Latin touches, and a straight-ahead folk/country beat. This mixture has been the staple of Southern and Southwestern rockers since Buddy Holly; it is so accessible that it seems substantial even when the material is thin. Russell knows—or, more accurately, he has remembered—his home cooking, and he uses it splendidly here on *One More Love Song, Struck by Lightning, Strange Love, and Sweet Mystery*. "Life and Love" may not totally fulfill Leon Russell's promise, but, by golly, it sure gets it out of hock. J.V.

**DON SAMPSON: *Americansongs*.** Don Sampson (vocals, guitar); Frank Reckard (guitar); Jack Bone (bass); Elvin Myers (drums); other musicians. *Highway 66; King of the Strip; Workingman's Blues; I Like My Country Music (With Just a Little Shot of Rock and Roll); Coming Down Hard; Rolling Wheels; Love and a Sweet Song; Wild West Show;* and four others. REVOLVER R101 \$7.98 (from Revolver) (Continued on page 126)

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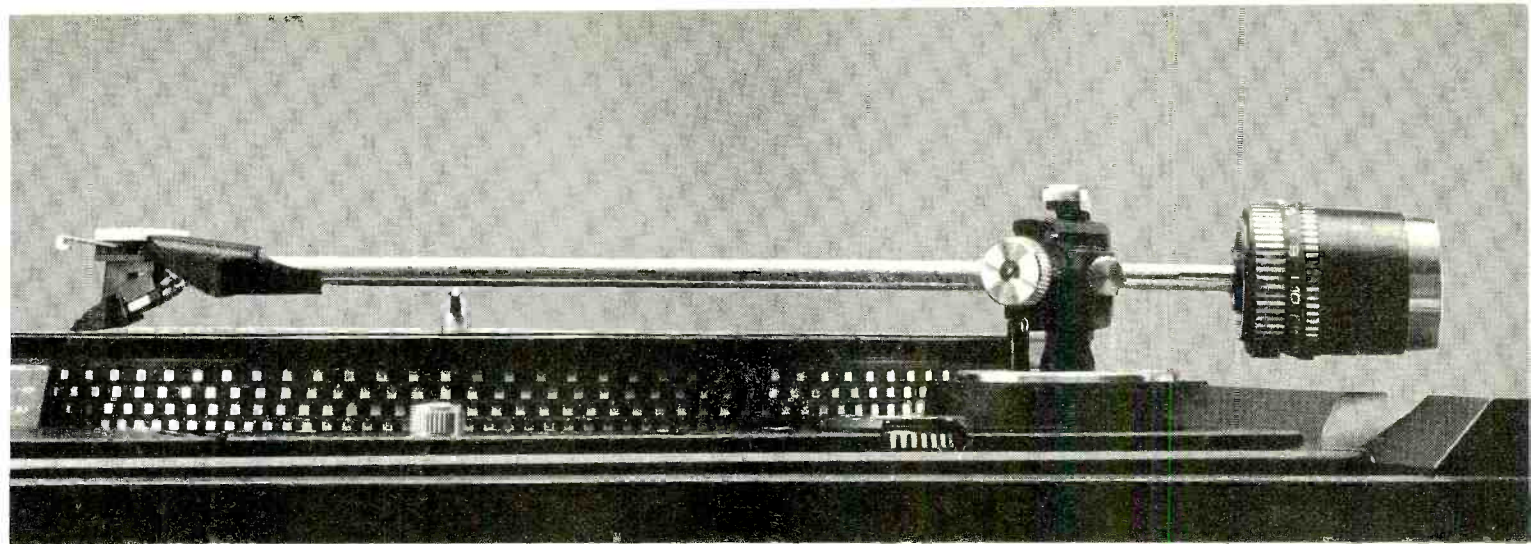
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Performance: **Near miss**  
Recording: **Exceptionally clean**

"How can we lose," asks Charlie Brown on the mound, his team trailing 14-0. "when we're so sincere?" Don Sampson is certainly sincere about being an observer of the American scene. He gives it a good shot here, getting off to a promising start with a song about what a disillusionment Route 66 is nowadays. But a Jim Croce he's not, a John Prine he's not—good lines and irresistible tunes always seem *about* to jump off the turntable at you, but they never quite make it. The thing seems to lack that last ounce of energy or sparkle or

something, like a case of too much hard work and not enough inspiration. But Sampson's heart is in the right place, his voice will be adequate when he learns irony a little better, he has the necessary native songwriting intelligence, and his band, though a bit ragged at times, attempts to play music rather than the canned riffs so fashionable nowadays. And we do need people like him to keep on trying.

N.C.

**THE EARL SCRUGGS REVUE: *Today and Forever.*** Earl Scruggs (banjo); Gary Scruggs (vocals); Randy Scruggs (guitar); Bob Moore (bass); Pig Robbins (piano); Billy Sanford (guitar); other musicians. *I Could Sure Use the Feeling; Blue Moon of Kentucky; Play Me*

*No Sad Songs; Give Me a Sign; Bye Bye Love;* and five others. COLUMBIA JC 36084 \$7.98, © JCA 36084 \$7.98, © JCT 36084 \$7.98.

Performance: **So-so**  
Recording: **Average**

The truth is, Earl Scruggs is not very imaginatively used—or does not very imaginatively use himself—in the Earl Scruggs Revue. Mostly he just plunks along in the background. The only thing slightly unusual about this program is the banjo in a rock song, or the country song transcribed to rock, as happens here (to nobody's benefit) to Bill Monroe's venerable *Blue Moon of Kentucky*. And you have the added distraction that the actual Earl Scruggs Revue gets rather lost in the crowd of studio musicians brought in by producer Larry Butler. The result is nothing very distinctive of any sort. Gary Scruggs' vocals are supposed to lace it together, I guess, but a whole album of Gary's vocals is a bit much. They're thin, if not whiny, and this particular assortment of forgettable songs and chestnuts has Gary aiming at an unusual number of elusive low notes. It all has the flavor of the Earl Scruggs Revue recorded live with a little studio slickness slathered over it, but live on a mediocre night and with the slickness slopped on like whitewash. If you listen superficially it isn't bad, but if you're sitting at home listening for something to really *happen* it's going to be a long night.

N.C.

**SMIFF 'N' THE TEARS: *Fickle Heart.*** Sniff 'n' the Tears (vocals and instrumentals). *Driver's Seat; New Lines on Love; Carve Your Name on My Door; This Side of the Blue Horizon; Looking for You;* and five others. ATLANTIC SD 19242 \$7.98, © TP 19242 \$7.98, © CS 19242 \$7.98.

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

Sniff 'n' the Tears is a young British group somewhere between Old Pop and New Wave, looking for some comfortable place between the glories of Sixties British pop and the nihilist debauch of the late Seventies. It may be corny to call such a search a youth identity crisis, but that's just what it is. The group has energy and ambition but no distinctive sound and direction as yet, although *Driver's Seat* has been all over the air waves. Maybe fate and luck will hurl them deeper into the commercial mainstream. At least it's heartening to know that a part of the younger generation is looking for a way to regenerate British rock.

J.V.

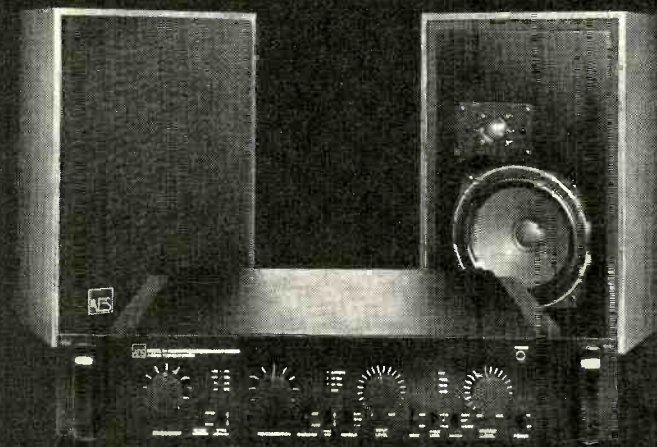
#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MAVIS STAPLES: *Oh What a Feeling.*** Mavis Staples (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Tonight I Feel Like Dancing; Let Love Come Between Us; Loving You; I Don't Want to Lose My Real Good Thing; I've Been to the Well Before; Oh What a Feeling;* and four others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3319 \$7.98, © M8 3319 \$7.98, © M5 3319 \$7.98.

Performance: **A delight**  
Recording: **Very good**

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(Continued on page 128)

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\* Quoted by permission, *Stereo Review*, April 1979, and *The Complete Buyer's Guide to Stereo/Hi-Fi Equipment*, November 1978.



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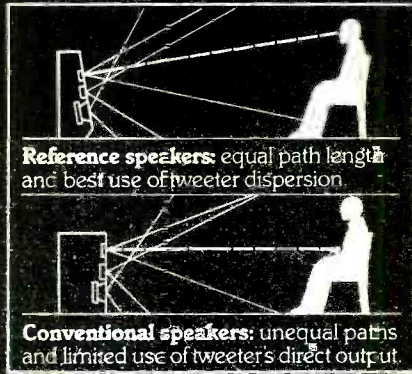
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tion has enabled her to retain credibility through her multiple transitions from gospel singer to Memphis folk-funkster to popular soul singer.

This album provides one of those rare occasions when she performs without the durable family group for which she serves as lead singer. Given the greater flexibility of a soloist, she ranges freely about the many corners of her personal style, transforming basically unremarkable material into satisfying little morsels. Most of the songs here fit comfortably into the r-&-b spectrum, with just a touch of the countryish folk flavor that is the Staples hallmark. Engaging traces of that old Mississippi-Memphis spirit shine through in her bluesy-gospelish treatment of *Loving*

*You, I've Been to the Well Before*, and *If I Can't Have You*. Yet Mavis is a bit more restrained here than usual, holding her preacher-like whoops and vocal swirls in check without sacrificing a sense of joy. The real surprise is the opener, a long disco track called *Tonight I Feel Like Dancing*. She pulls it off with robust flair, sailing along with the rhythm as though she were born to it. While the Staples as a group are among my all-time favorites, I do hope Mavis will seek further opportunities to record on her own. P.G.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**THIRD WORLD:** *The Story's Been Told*. Third World (vocals and instrumentals). *Talk*

*to Me; Irie Ites; Always Around; Tonight for Me; The Story's Been Told*; and two others. ISLAND ILPS 9569 \$7.98. © M8 9569 \$7.98. © M5 9569 \$7.98.

Performance: **Like an island breeze**  
Recording: **Good**

The Jamaican group Third World has managed to survive a declining American interest in reggae by presenting a refreshing kind of music that borrows as freely from popular North American sources as from the members' Caribbean roots. Lilted, understated island rhythms are mingled with the more explicit beats that are the mode of the day. Furthermore, Third World projects more vigor and excitement than most reggae groups by giving the percussionists room to cut loose with dazzling conga solos. These ingredients are blended smoothly with solid, well-harmonized group singing, and electronic instruments are occasionally employed to give the overall sound a modern texture. Notably, the group's songs are longer on melody than ideology, a plus on this side of the sea.

"The Story's Been Told" is a successful fusion of soul and reggae. The best thing here is the title track, but the entire album is consistently pleasing (though nothing in it is quite as memorable as *African Woman*, from Third World's last album, "Journey to Addis," Island ILPS 9554). P.G.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**GEORGE THOROGOOD AND THE DESTROYERS:** *Better than the Rest*. George Thorogood (vocals, guitar); Michael Levine (bass); Jeff Simon (drums). *In the Night Time; I'm Ready; Goodbye Baby; Howlin' for My Darling; My Weakness*; and five others. MCA MCA-3091 \$7.98. © MCAT-3091 \$7.98, © MCAC-3091 \$7.98.

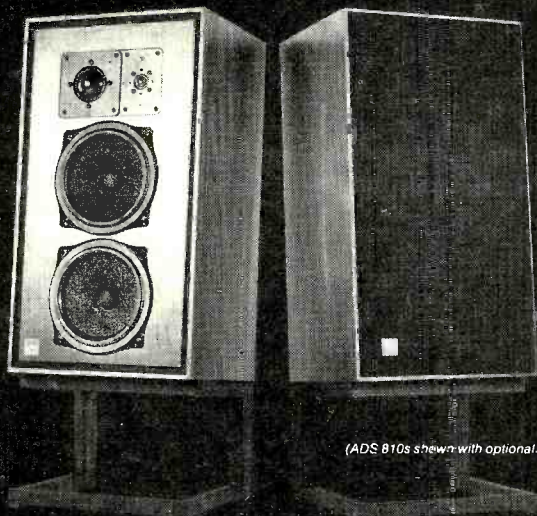
Performance: **Redefines brash**  
Recording: **Okay**

I'm a bit unclear as to where MCA got hold of these tapes, or under what circumstances Thorogood recorded them (in 1974, a sticker on the cover informs us), but from the sound I'd guess they were hurried demos made at a cheapie four-track studio; there are lots of sloppy endings, and on a purely technical level the stuff here has nowhere near the punch of Thorogood's recent, wonderful Rounder albums.

In a way, though, that only adds to the charm of the whole thing: it sounds so damned *authentic*. And I don't mean authentic in the Paul Butterfield/John Hammond Jr. sense, or that it in any way approaches the level of its great Chicago blues sources. Rather, it sounds eerily like all those poorly engineered amphetamine re-creations by the white, English, Sixties rock bands who had the same inspirations—like outtakes from the first Kinks album, say, or previously unknown tracks by Van Morrison's Them or the Pretty Things. Thorogood can't sing worth a lick, and he's also no better a guitar player than, oh, Rory Gallagher. But he doesn't care, and neither do I; he enjoys the hell out of what he does, and he's got more energy and enthusiasm than a dozen punk bands. And if you like your rock-and-roll served up hard, fast, and . . . well, cocky, then you should snag this one immediately. S.S.

(Continued on page 132)

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CIRCLE NO. 12 ON READER SERVICE CARD

**H**OAGY CARMICHAEL recently celebrated his eightieth birthday. It is a good reason to recall how many fine melodies he wrote, and it is a pleasure to find that most of them appear in their original recorded versions (electronically reprocessed for stereo) in the Carmichael entry in RCA's "Legendary Performer" series.

I recall watching Carmichael's show in the early days of live television. I watched not so much because I then understood or appreciated him as a musician but because he had been a friend of Bix Beiderbecke. Their meeting in the Twenties did not produce any collaborations, but they had the same interest in advanced harmonies, compositional structure, and musical adventure. Both of them sought to expand their music beyond the

*Washboard Blues* date (which, incidentally, was the first time Bix recorded with the Whiteman band) because he was interested in finding new talent. Another Whiteman discovery was vocalist Mildred Bailey, whose recording of Carmichael's *Rockin' Chair* was so successful that she became known as "Mildred Bailey, the *Rockin' Chair* lady." The original version is included here (but not, alas, the 1930 Victor recording with Carmichael doing some vaudeville vocals while Bix and Bubber Miley blaze away on cornets).

It would be pointless to compare Ethel Waters' version of *Georgia on My Mind* (1939) with Carmichael's own (1930), though both are included here. The song is practically immortal, and Waters performed it like the great artist she was. Carmichael, his nasal, Hoosier

performance seems to me overripe, but that was the style in 1940, and *Star Dust* can survive almost any interpretation. Oran "Hot Lips" Page was a yeoman trumpeter who never quite made it big; when he cut *Small Fry* in 1938 he was leading his own band, and he has fun with the tune. *I Get Along Without You Very Well* expresses sentiments that will be familiar to anyone who has ever lost—or found again—an old and true love. The 1958 version of *Lazy Bones* by Kay Starr has a growling trombone and an amplified semirock guitar that don't really go together. Billy Eckstine's vocal on the 1942 recording of *Skylark* is, like Sinatra's on *Star Dust*, a period piece in performance and arrangement, but it's important to listen past that—as well as past Johnny Mercer's overdone lyrics—to the lovely melody. Muggsy Spanier, the Chicago cornetist who at fourteen used to sneak into downtown clubs to hear King Oliver and Louis Armstrong, all his life believed in and practiced what he called "righteous jazz"—a small, slugging combo raising the skirts of a tune. His 1939 "Ragtime Band" sessions for RCA are rightly known as classics of the two-fisted, no-apologies Dixieland style. The selection here is *Riverboat Shuffle*. Carmichael wrote it as *Free Wheeling* for the Wolverines, who tore up the campuses of Indiana when Bix was the lead horn. Bix liked the tune but not the title; he renamed it *Riverboat Shuffle* and recorded it twice.

**H**OAGY CARMICHAEL surely deserves our unqualified admiration, not only for his achievements as a composer of popular songs but for the serious artistic intentions behind them: he wrote songs from the belly. He is probably the most *amiable* of American pop composers, and his music has a shy, disarming quality coupled with a bold impulse toward structural adventure. Though not as versatile as Irving Berlin, as cosmopolitan as Cole Porter, or as sentimental as Richard Rodgers and his collaborators, Carmichael never lost his ability to portray the innocence of the farm kid come to the big city, seeing how oddly city folks act—and yet not finding any basic difference between them and his own kind. He was an unabashed, unreconstructed romantic who had not only the need for love but the serene faith to give it as well. And for such faith his name and works will be well remembered. —Joel Vance



## Vintage Star Dust

Hoagy Carmichael as he appeared in *To Have and to Have Not* with Lauren Bacall

confines of the standard pop song, Bix in his playing and Hoagy in his writing.

The best recorded example of this kind of experimentation—this adventurousness—is Carmichael's 1933 piano solo in his most famous song, *Star Dust*, included in the RCA set. It is not a straightforward rendering of the melody; rather, it is a set of variations on the theme, with frequent references to jazz and specifically to the harmonies and rhythms of Bix's piano tone poem *In a Mist*. Also included is the *second*-best example, Carmichael's featured role in a showcase recording of *Washboard Blues* by the Paul Whiteman Orchestra in 1927. Bix and Bill Challis persuaded Whiteman to give Hoagy the date, and though it took four takes before Carmichael felt comfortable with the vocal of his own song (Bing Crosby was standing by in case things didn't work out), the recording is not only successful artistically but historically important. *Washboard Blues* appears to be a pop song typical of the time, a "novelty" item about the comic despair of a black character. There is nothing comic, however, in either Carmichael's intention or his delivery, and as a *composition* it is far from the standard verse-chorus-verse-bridge-chorus format, having distinct, related *movements* like a mini concerto. And Whiteman's twenty-eight-man orchestra was not only capable of providing a "concert" sound but was perfectly attuned to Carmichael's thought.

Whiteman was amenable to Carmichael's

voice quite aside, has persuasively dead-sure phrasing, but it is Bix's muted closing statement that makes the Carmichael version a treasure. This was Beiderbecke's last record date; he was sick, frightened, and despairing, less than a year from death, and for the first time in his career his playing revealed personal pain. His *Georgia* solo is beautiful, but it is a carol of defeat.

*Lazy River* is another indestructible Carmichael song, and his vocal perfectly fits the romantic whimsey of the lyrics. Tommy Dorsey, Eddie Lang, and Joe Venuti were along on this 1930 date, and Venuti's half-passionate, half-comical swoopings are a wonderful intrusion. Two dates from the year 1934, *Moon Country* and *Judy*, round out the Carmichael vocal performances. *Moon Country* is a fine melody, with the jazz feeling that Hoagy most often brought to his compositions, and the opening ensemble statement takes an unexpected melancholy turn. It is also one of the rare recordings on which Jimmy Dorsey plays trumpet (he and brother Tommy occasionally indulged themselves on the instrument), and while his lips weren't quite up to the different embouchure, this is probably the wildest Jimmy Dorsey you'll ever hear. *Judy* is a fine love song that might have become more popular if the heroine's name had been more exotic.

When Tommy Dorsey became famous as a bandleader, he cut *Star Dust* with young Frank Sinatra in a lush arrangement. The per-

**HOAGY CARMICHAEL—A Legendary Performer and Composer.** Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra with Frank Sinatra and the Pied Pipers: *Star Dust*. Ethel Waters with Eddie Mallory and His Orchestra: *Georgia on My Mind*. Hot Lips Page and His Orchestra: *Small Fry*. Earl Hines and His Orchestra with Billy Eckstine: *Skylark*. Helen Ward with Peanuts Hucko and His Orchestra: *I Get Along Without You Very Well*. Muggsy Spanier and His Ragtime Band: *Riverboat Shuffle*. Kay Starr: *Lazy Bones*. Mildred Bailey: *Rockin' Chair*. Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra with Hoagy Carmichael: *Washboard Blues*. Hoagy Carmichael and His Orchestra: *Georgia on My Mind*; *Lazy River*; *Moon Country*; *Judy*. Hoagy Carmichael (piano): *Star Dust*. RCA CPL1-3370(e) \$8.98. © CPS1-3370(e) \$8.98, © CPK1-3370(e) \$8.98.





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CIRCLE NO. 83 ON READER SERVICE CARD



**PETER TOSH: *Mystic Man*.** Peter Tosh (vocals, guitar, keyboards); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Mystic Man*; *Recruiting Soldiers*; *Can't You See: Jah Seh No*; *Fight On*; and four others. ROLLING STONES COC 39111 \$7.98. © TP 39111 \$7.98. © CS 39111 \$7.98.

Performance: **Mystic mess**

Recording: **Overcooked**

Peter Tosh, a reggae singer from Trenchtown, Jamaica, where his songs have sometimes been played and sometimes banned on local radio, here sings truculent ballads summoning his Rastafarian brothers—who worship the spirit of the late Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia as a god—to "free" Africa by 1983 and bring about an apocalyptic end to white oppression. Tosh, who has been singing since the age of three, recorded his furious songs in Jamaica with a band named Word, Sound and Power, and they were mixed in a New York City studio. The result is unfortunate. The basic five-man band has been augmented by sixteen supporting players and singers who create a great deal of racket in the course of which the reggae sound, with its strange mixture of Calypso, Latin rhythms, the blues, and a dash of rum-flavored rock, gets lost in almost total musical confusion. The bullying sound of Tosh's surly voice, with its curious religious overtones, is all that's left intact; it's intimidating but not very entertaining. P.K.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**NEIL YOUNG AND CRAZY HORSE: *Rust Never Sleeps*.** Neil Young (vocals, guitar); Crazy Horse (instrumentals). *My My, Hey Hey*; *Thrasher*; *Ride My Llama*; *Pocahontas*; *Powderfinger*; and four others. REPRISE HS 2295 \$8.95, ® R8 2295 \$8.95, © R5 2295 \$8.95.

Performance: **Gutsy**

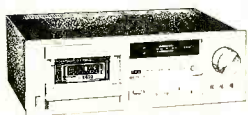
Recording: **Pretty good**

Some people think the hippie attitude lives as long as Neil Young survives, and here's some good news for them. Young divided this album into an acoustic side and an electric side—an arrangement that does not thrill me—and when the opener, *My My, Hey Hey*, gets a reprise at the end as *Hey Hey, My My*, the electrified sound is as distorted as he and Crazy Horse can make it, to go with the words "Rock and roll will never die." To tell the truth, much of the electric side is running on a lean mixture, let's say, musically. *Sedan Delivery*, written in 1977, is a throwback to the psychedelic mishmash song, and *Welfare Mothers* (which is a good idea) is just a chant, every other line being "Welfare mothers make better lovers." But the meat of the acoustic side (*Thrasher*, *Pocahontas*, and *Sail Away*) is so good—and such a unique, Neil Young kind of good—that it qualifies the whole thing as a job well done. *Pocahontas*, especially, is a high point; in addition to a funny twist of lyric involving Marlon Brando as the top certified Indian lover, it has a neat twist of chording at a key spot, for which they wisely brought in a twelve-string guitar. Except in *Thrasher*, Young's viewpoint is slightly detached from the action, just enough to make everything wryer than usual. A toast, then, to the King of the Hippies, realizing that with hippies you can't have everything. N.C.

(Continued on page 134)

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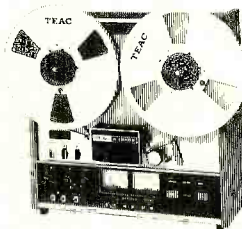
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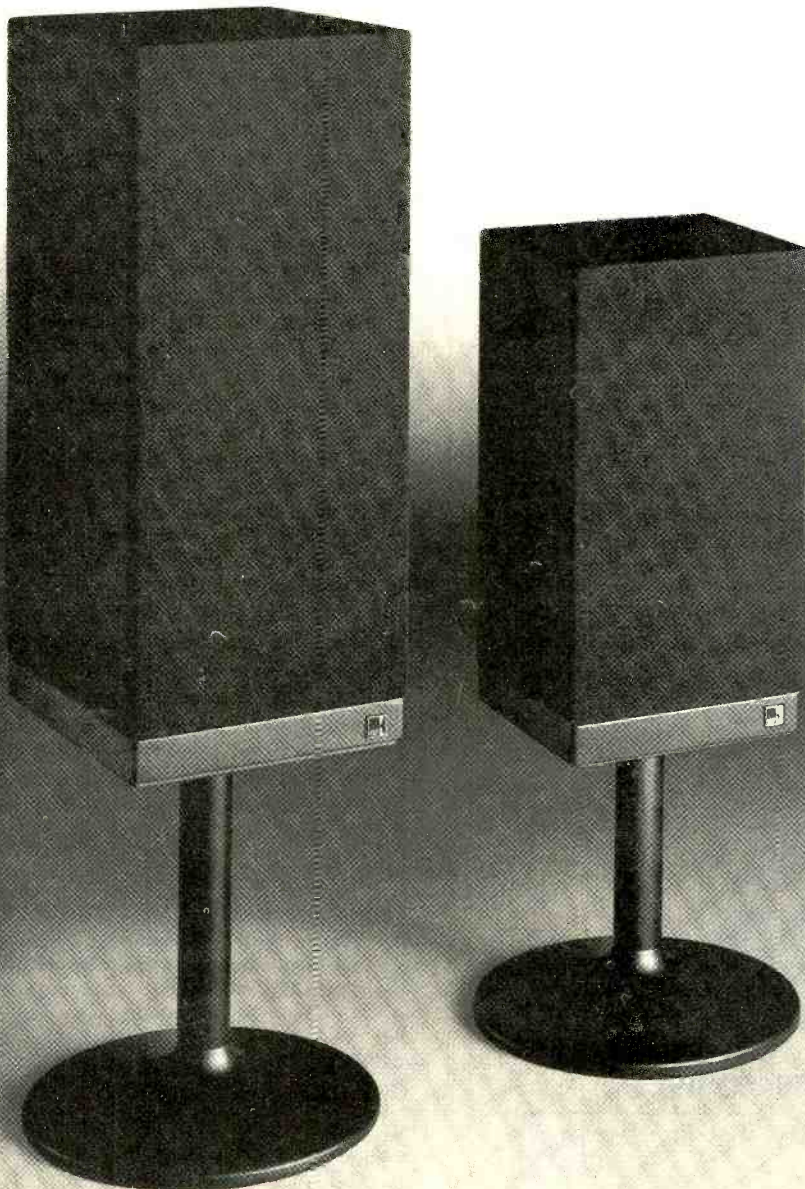
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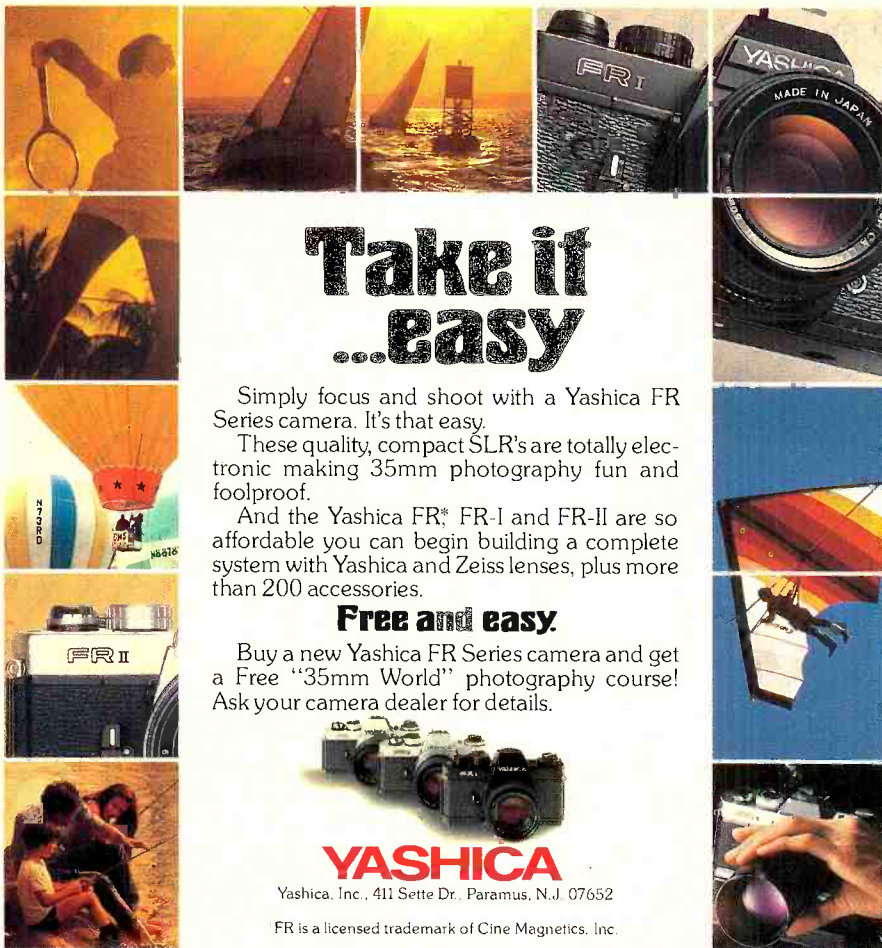
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## DISCO



### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**JAMES BROWN: *The Original Disco Man.*** James Brown (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *It's Too Funky In Here; Let the Boogie Do the Rest; Still;* and three others. POLYDOR PD-1-6212 \$7.98, Ⓢ 8T-1-6212 \$7.98, © CT-1-6212 \$7.98.

Performance: **Still Soul Brother No. 1**  
Recording: **Good**

If President Carter manages to hold to his decree that 78 degrees should be the official summer temperature for public places, James Brown's musical complaint that "It's too funky in here. . . . Gimme some air!" might become the rallying cry for the disco set. Certainly his new album isn't going to help cool things down any. This set would be well worth listening to if only for that most amusing opening number. Brown proves that he still has ample claim to his old title of "Soul Brother Number One" as he shouts and squeals his way through this high-energy stomper while a female group backs him up with bullet-like punctuations of "Funk-funk-ety-funk!" Unquestionably, this is one of the all-around best records Brown has cut in many moons. He has broken out of the rut of a few years back when it seemed he was always singing the same song under different titles. What he has done is to fuse blues with disco. In *Let the Boogie Do the Rest*, for example, he starts out in a traditional gut-bucket vein, with deliciously provocative statements from a "dirty" guitar, and switches tempo midway through to a disco pace without disrupting the musical flow. On other tracks, such as *Still*, he just leans back into a cool, strutting mood and lets his gritty voice work its old magic. Highly recommended. P.G.

**CANDIDO: *Dancin' and Prancin'.*** Candido (percussion); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Dancin' and Prancin'; Thousand Finger Man; Rock and Shuffle (Ah-Ha); Jingo.* SALSOL SA-8520 \$7.98, Ⓢ S8-8520 \$7.98, © SC-8520 \$7.98.

Performance: **Percussion virtuosity**  
Recording: **Fine**

There's no doubt from these four "arrangements" (you cannot really call the material on this LP "songs") that percussion is Candido's forte. Conga, bongo, tambourine, cabassa, clave, jawbone, tom-tom—you name it, he plays it. And as disco it comes out better than you might expect. For one thing, Candido is good. His "thousand fingers," as the title of one of these numbers puts it, play with all the skill of a true virtuoso, lending rich variety to the standard disco beat. (One quibble: why, oh why, add an *electronic* beat behind all this marvelous playing?) And he doesn't go it  
(Continued on page 136)

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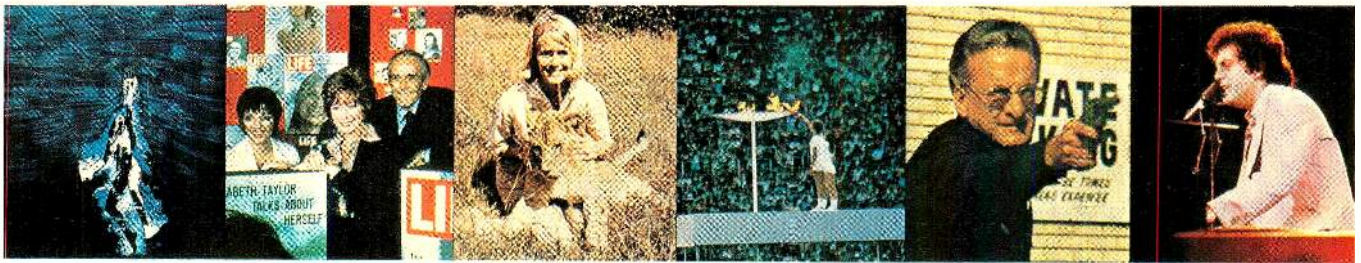


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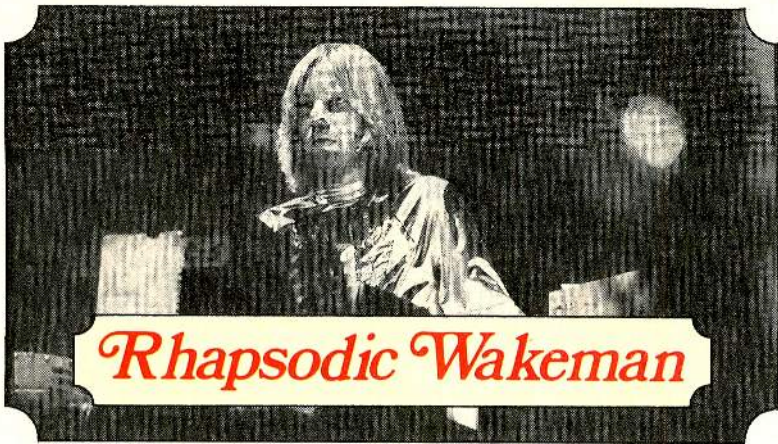
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## Rhapsodic Wakeman

A DISCO treatment of *Rhapsody in Blue*, a reggae interpretation of *Swan Lake* with a little Grieg thrown in, a Dixielandish couple of minutes called *Half Holiday*, and an all-keyboard track of traditional jazz are among the diversions to be encountered in Rick Wakeman's new two-disc A&M album "Rhapsodies." Wakeman, who brings humor and intelligence to his efforts (as well as a certain amount of what he admits is self-indulgence), did all the writing and/or arranging here, plays the keyboards imaginatively, and even sings on one track—*Pedra da Gavea*, a kind of sci-fi ballad about a place where "warships are fighting 'round me in the sky" intoned in the manner of a man with electronic vocal cords.

Wakeman and his quartet of versatile instrumentalists occasionally allow their ingenuity to obtrude too flashily, but their bold experiments in applying contemporary idioms to familiar material are more often ingratiating than they are irritating. Even their updating of Gershwin has a certain musical logic to it, while *Animal Showdown*—to the tune of *Yes, We Have No Bananas*—makes for a mirthful interlude, and *Wooly Willy Tango*

and the Albinized *Sea Horses* are engaging stunts.

Wakeman, a blond and bearded Englishman, made his reputation through an on/off relationship with the group Yes and his own theme albums with such gaudy titles as "Journey to the Centre of the Earth," "The Myths and Legends of King Arthur," and "No Earthly Connection." He lives in a farmhouse in Switzerland these days, and much of the work on "Rhapsodies" was done in Montreux. The clear, clean mountain air seems to have had a bracing effect on him. —Paul Kresh

**RICK WAKEMAN: *Rhapsodies*.** Rick Wakeman (vocal, keyboards); Bruce Lynch (bass, guitars); Frank Gibson (drums, percussion); Nico Ramsden (electric guitars); Tony Visconti (acoustic guitars). *Pedra da Gavea*; *Front Line*; *Bombay Duck*; *Animal Showdown*; *Big Ben*; *Rhapsody in Blue*; *Wooly Willy Tango*; *The Pulse*; *Swan Lager*; *March of the Gladiators*; *Flacons de Neige*; *The Flasher*; *The Palais*; *Stand-by*; *Sea Horses*; *Half Holiday*; *Summertime*. A&M SP 6501 two discs \$9.98, © 8T 6501 \$9.98, © CS 6501 \$9.98.

alone. Two of the four cuts have strong vocals backing up the instrumentals, and in the best passages the percussion is leavened with guitars, horns (often played solo), simulated strings, and acoustic piano. I am not an aficionado of percussion; I need the touch of melody that these back-ups bring to *Thousand Finger Man* and, especially, the album's best cut, *Rock and Shuffle (Ah-Ha)*. Still, this is a tour de force performance and a good warmup for a dance evening. E.B.

**CORY DAYE: *Cory and Me*** (see *Best of the Month*, page 74)

**JOEL DIAMOND EXPERIENCE.** Joel Diamond Experience (vocals and instrumentals). *Tall in the Saddle*; *Body Language*; and five others. CASABLANCA NBLP 7168 \$7.98, © NBL8 7168 \$7.98, © NBL5 7168 \$7.98.

Performance: **Better than the material**  
Recording: **Superb**

Something happens when white folks try to be funky. It often comes out collegiate-dirty.

Well, there's a strong element of *Animal House* sleaze about the Joel Diamond Experience: double entendres a fourteen-year-old would be certain to get, rockets zooming through "rock it" lyrics (cute), painfully juvenile smirks over references to s-e-x. Fortunately, there's also a lot of good music here. Rockets aside, *Just As Long As I'm Dancing (Rock-It Tonight)* works up a dynamite sweat. Whiplashes and hoofbeats aside, so does the hard-driving last section of *Tall in the Saddle*. In fact, at its best—as in *Finger Snaps*, with pulled-in, closely harmonized voices, and a bouncy swinger called *Heaven in the Afternoon*—the album is very good indeed. Ron Frangipane's arrangements are tricky, varied, and inventive. The engineering is as good as it gets these days, and the singing is terrific. (A maddeningly unidentified female vocalist does wonderful work in *Body Language*, pitting her strong, soul-based voice against a rock-bottom bass chorus.) As silly as the album sometimes gets, nothing in it is truly bad. Producer Diamond just needs a bit more discipline to create something memorable. E.B.

**HOT: *Strong Together*.** Hot (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Slippin' Up Slippin' Around*; *If You're a Friend*; *Take a Little Time Out*; *Gonna Get You into My Heart*; and seven others. BIG TREE BT 76016 \$7.98, © TP 76016 \$7.98, © CS 76016 \$7.98.

Performance: **Promising**  
Recording: **Fine**

There's so much that's good about this album that I wish someone would roll up his sleeves, get in there and remix a cut or two to double the present length, and give Hot a big, big disco hit. Three strong female voices sing eleven good songs with confidence and thorough professionalism; the arrangements are not straight disco but are certainly danceable, and the energy level is high.

True, the songs are mostly about love lost or love going: *I Don't Wanna Be Around When the Hurt Comes*, *Taking My Love for Granted* ("If it makes me feel sick inside, then I can do without"), that sort of thing. Even when it's done well, as in *One Man's Woman* ("I'm one man's woman, but another man's wife/One man's weakness, and another man's life"), I'm not sure these are the sentiments dancers want pulsing out at them from those floor-to-ceiling speakers. But several of the songs, most notably *Borrow Me* and *Gonna Get You into My Heart*, strongly suggest that disco stardom is within Hot's reach. Next time out, let's have fewer songs, each tailored for dancing, and see what happens. E.B.

**HOT CHOCOLATE: *Going Through the Motions*.** Hot Chocolate (vocals and instrumentals). *Going Through the Motions*; *I Just Love What You're Doing*; *Dreaming of You*; *Dance (Get Down to It)*; and three others. INFINITY INF 9010 \$7.98, © INFT 9010 \$7.98, © INFC 9010 \$7.98.

Performance: **Sound and fury**  
Recording: **Very good**

Beneath the clever recording devices and careful production techniques used for this record, there lies an enormous musical void. As much as anything I have heard lately, it shows how nothing can be passed off as something providing it's loud enough. As a rule, the songs employ only two chords, which are worked to death and given a few fancy synthesizer embellishments in the background, and the lyrics are at the same level of idiocy. I suppose that the emphasis on rhythm and repetition might have a certain hypnotic effect at three in the morning if you're stoned on something or other and surrounded by a gyrating crowd. Yet some critical intelligence must have been involved here in the title department. Both *Mindless Boogie* and *Going Through the Motions* are all too accurately descriptive of what Hot Chocolate does. P.G.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MACHINE.** Machine (vocals and instrumentals). *There but for the Grace of God Go I*; *You've Come a Long Way*; *Give It a Go*; *Get Your Body Ready*; and three others. RCA AFL1-3410 \$7.98, © AFS1-3410 \$7.98, © AFK1-3410 \$7.98.

Performance: **Uncommonly interesting**  
Recording: **Fine**

Machine specializes in the kind of slightly syncopated music—vaguely Forties, vaguely  
(Continued on page 138)

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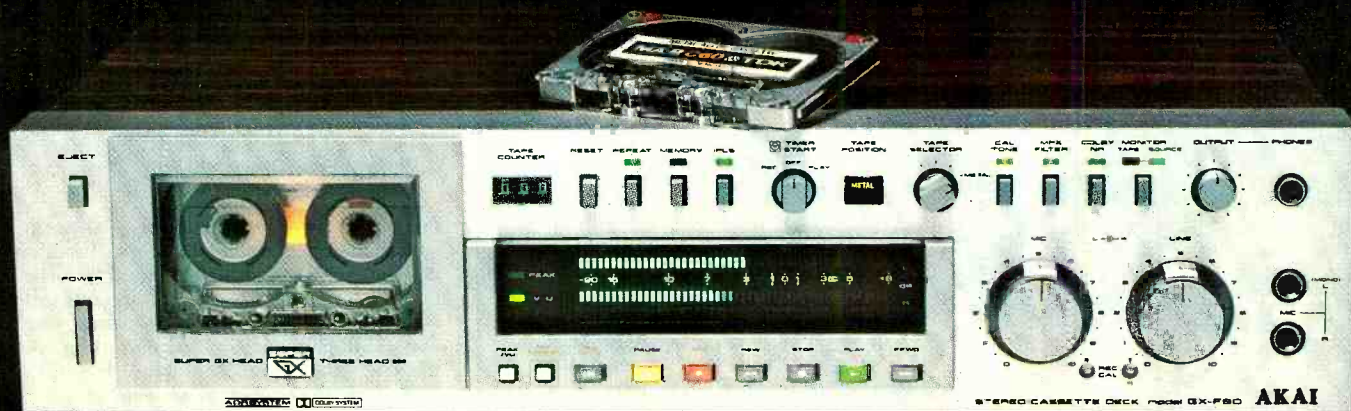
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jazz—that is purveyed by the Savannah Band. The resemblance is not surprising, since August Darnell, a prime mover in SB, produced this album. Machine ranges here from the charming calypso beat of *Give It a Go* (sweetly sung, as befits a song about love and peace and good will toward all, by soloist Jay Stovall) to the bluesy ballad *Mr. Destiny*. The new group isn't as adventurous as the Savannah Band, but there are complex rhythms that build hypnotically into good dance numbers. Though more patience is demanded than with most disco material, repeated hearings are musically rewarding.

Nevertheless, it's mainly for the disco hit *There but for the Grace of God Go I* that people will buy the album. This is a serious disco "message" song, the story of the wayward, overprotected daughter of Carlos and Carmen Vidal. That alone makes it uncommonly interesting (not that you'd ever hear the lyrics on the dance floor), and rhythmically, too, this is a stunner that works very well for dancing. Only *It's the Last Time Again* among the album's six other songs approaches the same level of pure danceability. But nothing Machine does is really dull. Keep an eye on this group. *E.B.*

**MECO: Moondancer.** Meco (vocals and instrumentals). *Moondancer; Love Me, Dracula; Spooky*; and three others. CASABLANCA NBLP 7155 \$7.98, © NBL8 7155 \$7.98, © NBL5 7155 \$7.98.

Performance: **Merely okay**  
Recording: **Very good**

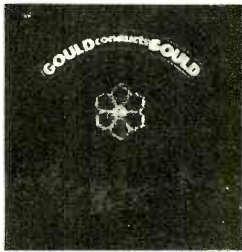
This album is full of good melodies, nice up-tempo beats, and top-drawer engineering. Yet nothing happens. The music simply doesn't command attention. The spirit is definitely high; *Grazing in the Grass* and *Living in the Night*, for example, are infectiously happy numbers. And Meco's Cantina Band provides thoroughly professional vocals. So what's missing? Energy, that's what. Meco's arrangements, which have in the past worked disco wonders on adaptations of widely varied material—from *Superman*, *Star Wars*, *The Wizard of Oz*—here rarely get beyond the workmanlike. Only one cut, *Devil Delight*, with its clipped strings and doubled percussion, catches fire. For the rest, it's fine for swaying to while you wash the dishes or get dressed to go out for some *real* dancing. *E.B.*

**TONY ORLANDO: I Got Rhythm.** Tony Orlando (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Sweets for My Sweet; Bent on Keeping You; I Remember Yesterday; They're Playing Our Song*; and three others. CASABLANCA NBLP 7153 \$7.98, © NBL8 7153 \$7.98, © NBL5 7153 \$7.98.

Performance: **One good cut**  
Recording: **Excellent**

For six of its seven bands Tony Orlando's new album is a fizzled firework. In disco-derived arrangements that couldn't be busier, the beat bumps along, the slick sounds grind on and on, and the famous Orlando voice, sassy and silly, goes on and on too. In *High Steppin'* he offers a disco dance lesson that might qualify the disc as an educational recording of some sort, with the right instruction booklet included, but as music that too fizzles. Then, just when you've given up, there comes that glorious, high-spirited hit *(Continued on page 140)*

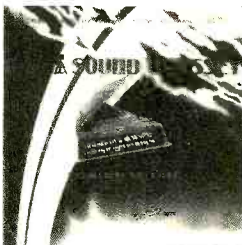




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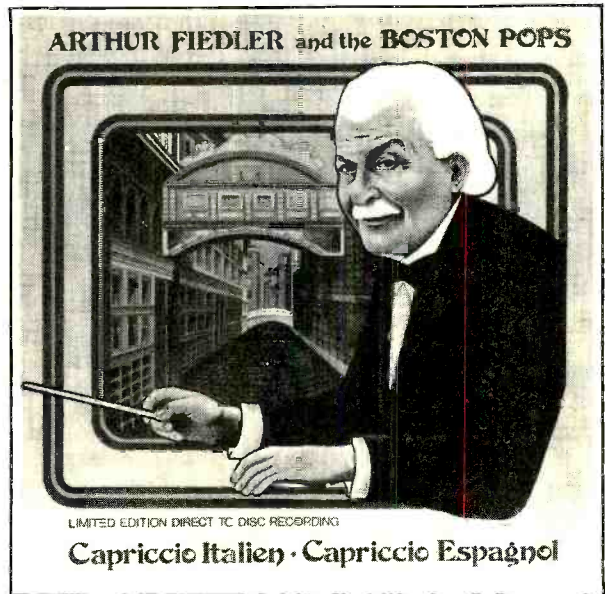
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with the goofy words, *They're Playing Our Song*, and at long last the album takes off. The performer's popular reputation is vindicated in the space of eight infectious minutes. The rest is glop. P.K.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**SAMANTHA SANG:** *From Dance to Love*. Samantha Sang (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *From Dance to Love; In the Midnight Hour; It's the Falling in Love; I Can Still Remember; Moments*; and four others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA965-H \$7.98, © EA965-H \$7.98, © CA965-H \$7.98.

Performance: **Solid**  
Recording: **Terrific**

This impressive vocal performance moves from excellent disco to powerful pop. Samantha Sang has the flexibility and control needed to ease her voice down into the fabric of the music and then soar over it, she has the voice needed to participate in the constantly shifting dynamics of such a splendid disco cut as *In The Midnight Hour*, and she has the pop sensibility to dig into the lyrics of Carole Bayer Sager's *It's the Falling in Love* and find gold.

All the cuts have big arrangements by Harold Wheeler. He doesn't aim to break new ground in them; instead, he uses familiar material, from gospel to honky-tonk piano to a pure Caribbean lilt (*Now*), with great skill, weaving it all into perfect backdrops for his singer. Whether the song struts or whispers or shouts, Samantha is right there, with just the right voice. *Take a Chance*, for example, has an intimate MOR delivery that opens up in a big way for a hand-clapping gospel revival. And there are moments in the dramatic little item called *Moments* when Sang sounds like Liza Minnelli crossed with Streisand, though she's a lot warmer and sexier than either. This is wonderful, sensitive, intelligent singing, and it makes for an important new record by a top new singer. E.B.

**MARLENA SHAW:** *Take a Bite*. Marlena Shaw (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Suite Seventeen; It Was a Very Good Year/I'm a Foster Child/Love Dancin'! Thank You/Touch Me in the Morning*; and four others. COLUMBIA JC 35632 \$7.98, © JCA 35632 \$7.98, © JCT 35632 \$7.98.

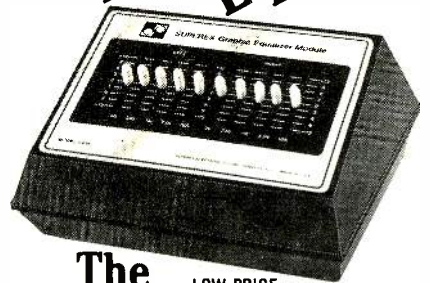
Performance: **132 thumps per minute**  
Recording: **Good**

Marlena Shaw worked briefly with Howard McGhee fifteen years ago, sang with Count Basie's band on and off for a couple of years ten years ago, and launched her recording career on the Chicago-based Cadet label in 1966, but she never really made it as a jazz singer. In 1972 Shaw joined the already de-jazzed Blue Note label and changed her course in the direction of wider appeal. I daresay more people know of Marlena Shaw now than would have if she had kept on her old course, but she is also paying the price by taking a back seat to thumping treadmill arrangements.

Her voice isn't bad, but she has yet to figure out what to do with it. She calls "Take a Bite," her third Columbia album, "just a musical feast." I prefer to call it just another disco album. Shaw now sings and raps like an exaggerated Harlem street dude; in her desperate attempt to be "real," she is reduced to

(Continued on page 143)

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performing parodies of the most distasteful kind. On side one—which is banded, but continuous—Shaw takes us through five songs to Harold Wheeler's formula arrangement, which I clocked at 7,920 tpm (thumps per hour). It's rather ordinary stuff from a lady capable of delivering more. Side two opens with more stereotyped "rap" but generally fares better. Still, the arrangements—this time by Bobby Bryant—sound store-bought, and Shaw is annoyingly mannered until she reaches the album's final track, *I'll Be Your Friend*, where she finally seems to throw pretension to the wind and sings to the simple accompaniment of a gospel-tinged piano and a tapping foot. Yet I had the uneasy feeling that even this throwaway number was contrived to show that Marlena Shaw can "get real." I wish she would. C.A.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**MICHAEL ZAGER BAND: *Life's a Party*.** Michael Zager Band (vocals and instrumentals). *Life's a Party*; *Love Love Love*; *On and On*; and four others. COLUMBIA 35771 \$7.98, © JCA 35771 \$7.98, © JCT 35771 \$7.98.

Performance: **Thoroughly joyful**  
Recording: **Good**

"Love, everyone, love; smile, everyone, smile/Dance, everyone, dance/'Cause life's a party everyone comes to." With Michael Zager's arrangements and production, the sentiment is easy to believe. This is an absolutely wonderful dance record—easy on the ears, relaxed enough to avoid frenzy, yet strong enough to be irresistible. No one could sit still through the opening few minutes of *You Don't Know a Good Thing*, and no one could dance through the synthesized bass chords that suddenly emerge in the middle of that song without smiling.

Michael Zager, arranger, is stronger than Michael Zager, composer. A certain lyric skill is evident in these songs—lines such as "We fell from heaven to be alone" lift *Still Not Over* well out of the ordinary—but too many of the melodies are dangerously alike. Still, there is such richness of music making in this album that I heartily recommend it. Best moments: a swirl of contrapuntal classicism in the strings during *Love Love Love*, followed by solo work on three differently pitched bells; the horn work that punctuates the end of *On and On*; the sweet, sweet violin that soars over *Using You*. Give this one a listen. E.B.

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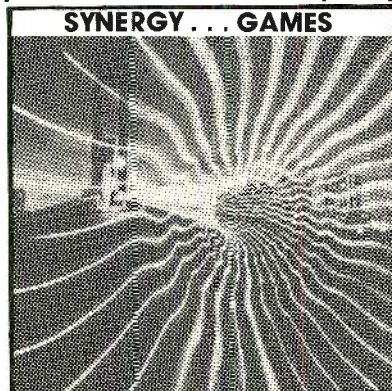
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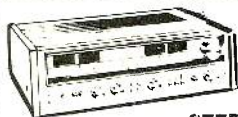
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# JAZZ



**NAT ADDERLEY: *A Little New York Midtown Music.*** Nat Adderley (cornet); Johnny Griffin (tenor saxophone); Victor Feldman (keyboards); Ron Carter (bass); Roy McCurdy (drums). *Yeehaw Junction*; *Sunshine Sammy*; *Come Rain or Come Shine*; *Whipitup*; and three others. GALAXY GXY-5120 \$7.98.

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

Nat Adderley's new album was recorded in Berkeley, California, in late 1978, but to the majority of those involved in this session it must have seemed like midtown Manhattan almost twenty years ago. That was when Riverside Records was a veritable jazz factory and producer Orrin Keepnews, the man responsible for this date, churned out records as if there would be no jazz tomorrow. Adderley was part of the Riverside stable; so were Johnny Griffin and Victor Feldman, and Roy McCurdy was around at that time too, record-

ing for Riverside with the Mangione Brothers (Gap and Chuck). If Ron Carter wasn't exactly a part of the Riverside crowd, his colleagues on this session must have brought back memories of the time he was a freshman bassist from Rochester, New York.

Yet this record is not intended as any kind of reunion or nostalgia session—at least there has been no attempt to point out past associations—and neither repertoire nor approach indicates that it is any more than a straightforward, inspired outing by a wisely assembled quintet. Not everything here reflects wisdom, however: Feldman's use of the electric piano is unfortunate; it dilutes the rich sound of the other instruments on two thirds of side one (*Fortune's Child* and *Sunshine Sammy*). The rest of the album is quite another matter, with Adderley and Griffin perpetuating a rapport they evidenced on the former's first Riverside album in 1958; the rhythm section works well together, steered, it seems, not by Feldman's piano, but by Carter's luxuriant bass. Though Adderley never got high scores for originality as a player, he imbues his style with his own ideas and good taste. Here he makes frequent and effective use of the mute, sounding good at all tempos employed, but shining with particular radiance on the slow, laid-back *Yeehaw Junction*. C.A.

**STANLEY CLARKE: *I Wanna Play for You.*** Stanley Clarke (vocals, bass, synthesizers); Stan Getz, Tom Scott (saxophones); Jeff Beck (guitar); Steve Gadd (drums); Airtio Moreira (percussion); George Duke (piano); Harvey Mason (drums); Dee Dee Bridgewater

(vocals); other musicians. *Rock 'n' Roll Jelly*; *All About*; *Jamaican Boy*; *Christopher Ivanhoe*; *My Greatest Hits*; *Strange Weather*; *I Wanna Play for You*; *Just a Feeling*; *The Streets of Philadelphia*; *Blues for Mingus*; and five others. NEMPEROR KZ2 35680 two discs \$11.98, © ZAX 35680 \$11.98, © ZTX 35680 \$11.98.

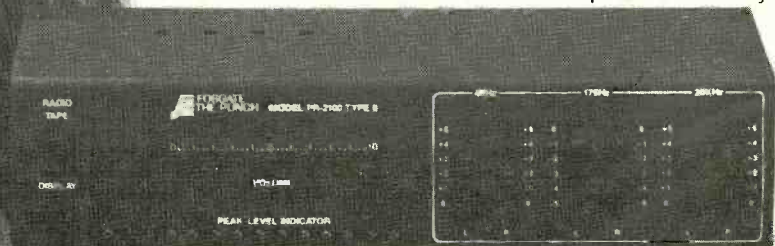
Performance: **Half and half**  
Recording: **Very good**

Half of this two-disc set is well worth hearing: the live sides on which bassist/vocalist Stanley Clarke and an array of stellar jazz chums play some very inviting "new fusion" music. But the other two sides are a mixed bag of disco, electronic vaudeville, and turkey-gobble jive. Apparently Clarke is in a hurry to show himself as all things to all people ("Hey, gang, it's Mr. Versatile!"), so instead of issuing the live and studio sessions as separate albums—which they should have been—he's come up with this wheat-and-chaff package that seems to be a formal application for stardom. Still, when Clarke is working and not play-acting he is quite a talent, and he's been around. A co-founder and co-captain (with Chick Corea) of Return to Forever, he also produced Roy Buchanan's "Loading Zone" album, which is by all odds Buchanan's best. If Clarke were less obviously anxious for stardom he might well be more certain of achieving it. That is the lesson of *Coriolanus*. J.V.

**CHICK COREA: *Delphi I.*** Chick Corea (piano). *Delphi I-VIII: Children's Song #20*; (Continued on page 146)

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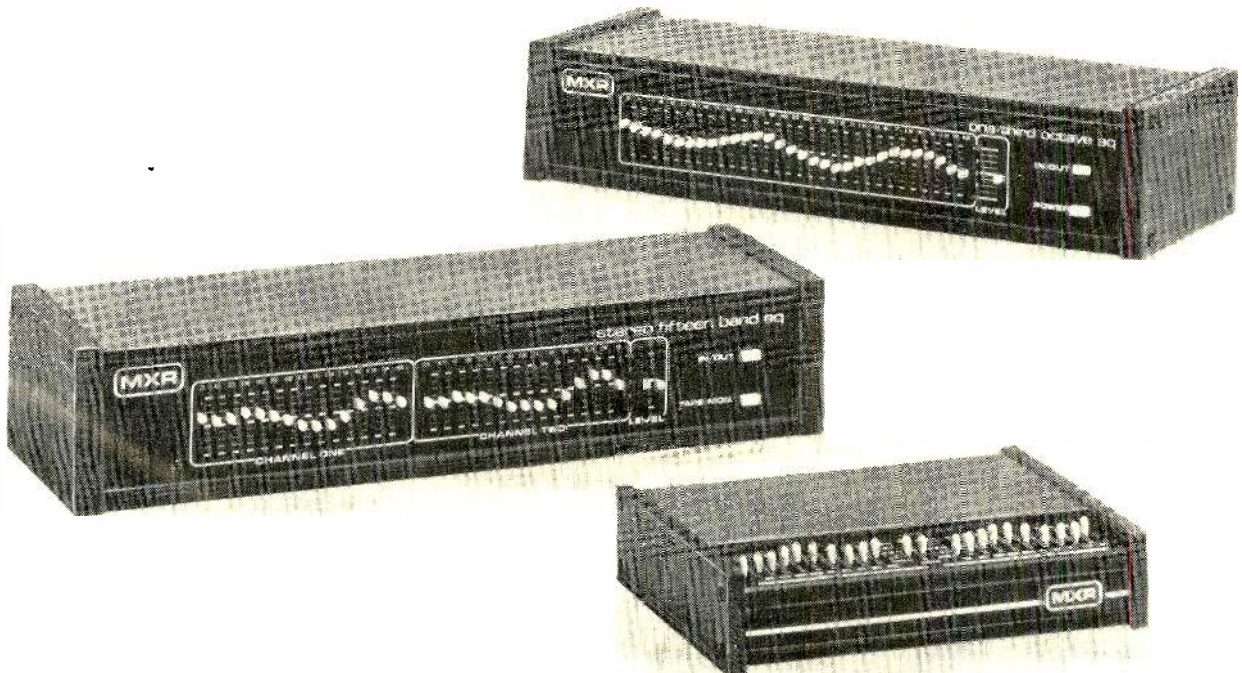
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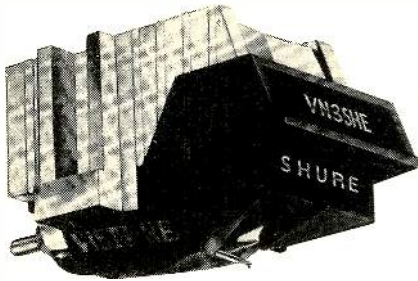
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*Stride Time I-VII*. POLYDOR PD-1-6208 \$7.98, © 8T-1-6208 \$7.98, © CT-1-6208 \$7.98.

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

Chick Corea is a gifted pianist with laudable technique, but he simply cannot make up his mind what style to use. One album will have him making his way through a sludge of pop-jazz "fusion" and on the next he'll be a lonely poet picking lint off his soul in twelve-tone scales. He keeps bouncing between the church and the whorehouse, never finding a just balance between the spiritual and the practical. This present item is a series of piano improvisations recorded at Delphi, a Scientology school in Oregon. There are moments, in the middle of all the flim-flam technique, when Corea starts to stay something genuine about himself or his talent—a passage, a phrase, even hitting a chord for the sake of hitting it right, for the sake of *passion* pure and sweet—but they are few and furtive. *Come on, man.* J. V.

**EDDIE "LOCKJAW" DAVIS:** *Sweet and Lovely.* Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis (tenor saxophone); Harry "Sweets" Edison (trumpet); Gerald Wiggins (piano); Major Holley (bass, vocals); Oliver Jackson (drums). *Jim Dawg; Meditation; Intermission Riff;* and three others. CLASSIC JAZZ CJ 116 \$7.98.

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

As Nat Hentoff points out in his notes to this album, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis was never a "startling innovator." In fact, I cannot link him to any innovation, startling or otherwise, but even in jazz true innovators are few and far between. And, though Davis has not brought anything "new" to jazz, he continues to fire a rich tradition without which there would be no new sparks from anyone. The same can be said of his fellow horn player in this quintet, trumpeter Harry "Sweets" Edison—who, like Davis, is a Count Basie alum— and the expertly swinging rhythm section headed by pianist Gerald Wiggins.

This is very straightforward stuff: the horns swing as swing horns should and the rhythm men make that just about mandatory; bassist Major Holley occasionally hums as he bows (*à la* Slam Stewart); and the set, recorded in France four years ago, is as smooth as vintage wine. "Sweet and Lovely" is not only an apt title for the album, it also describes the gentler side of Davis' playing. But, as he demonstrated so often when he co-led a quintet with saxophonist Johnny Griffin, there is also a stomping, robust side to Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, and that side, too, emerges on this timeless album. C.A.

**SONNY FORTUNE:** *With Sound Reason.* Sonny Fortune (alto flute, soprano and alto saxophones); Larry Willis (keyboards); other musicians. *Igobob's Shuffle; Georgiana; Loneliness Returns; Afortunado;* and three others. ATLANTIC SD 19239 \$7.98, © TP 19239 \$7.98, © CS 19239 \$7.98.

Performance: **Ho-hum**  
Recording: **Good**

Philadelphia-born saxophonist Sonny Fortune came to New York with a rhythm-and-blues background some twelve years ago, but he soon found himself in the best of jazz circles. His bosses during the early Seventies includ-

ed Elvin Jones, McCoy Tyner, Buddy Rich, and Miles Davis, and he has had a longer list of equally distinguished peripheral associates during the past ten years. Fortune—now forty—is a most capable saxophonist with a chameleon-like musical personality that I suspect is preventing his own style from emerging. He can play very moving music, such as Larry Willis' *Loneliness Returns*, then turn around and give us saxophone that is only one notch above Grover Washington Jr. Though he does take off on *Afortunado*, the final track here, "With Sound Reason" is mostly boring and uninspired. Accompanied by piano and rhythm only, Fortune trudges through material that often deserves better treatment than he gives it—this sounds like a low-budget Bob James session. Shining through, here and there, is the keyboard work of Larry Willis (who is responsible for five of the seven compositions). This very talented performer first came to my attention more than a decade ago, and it's high time for his creativity to be displayed in more stimulating company. C.A.

**JAN GARBAREK:** *Photo with Blue Sky, White Cloud, Wires, Windows and a Red Roof.* Jan Garbarek (soprano and tenor saxophones); John Taylor (piano); Bill Connors (electric and acoustic guitars); Eberhard Weber (bass); Jon Christensen (drums). *Blue Sky; The Picture; Red Roof;* and three others. ECM ECM-1-1135 \$8.98, © M8E-1135 \$8.98, © M5E-1135 \$8.98.

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

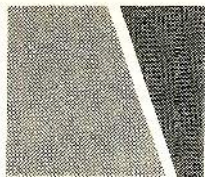
Norwegian saxophonist/composer Jan Garbarek is a key figure in the development of what has come to be known as "the ECM sound." His style still bears traces of a Coltrane influence, but it reflects more and more the stark, clear beauty of Garbarek's mountainous homeland and the almost painful frugality of rural Scandinavians. Garbarek's music never goes to one's toes; its studied incandescence will, at most, travel to and slightly animate a pair of shoulders, and when a small glow appears it hardly ever melts the ice surrounding it. I think it is a mistake to label the music of Garbarek—and, for that matter, that of the majority of ECM's artists—jazz. But I happen to like much of Garbarek's output, and this release, recorded last December, finds him leading an excellent quintet through a good forty-three minutes of music that feeds the intellect, though it would, in the long run, starve the soul. C.A.

**ERROLL GARNER:** *Dreamy.* Erroll Garner (piano); bass and drum accompaniment. *When You're Smiling; Anything Goes; Avalon; Passing Through; But Not for Me;* and four others. ENCORE © P14386 \$4.98.

Performance: **Unique**  
Recording: **Good mono**

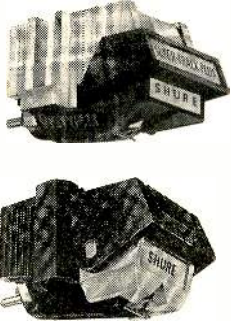

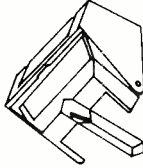
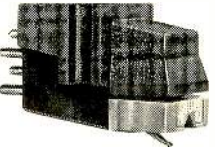
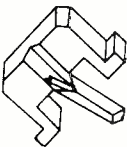
The late Erroll Garner was enjoying great popularity between 1952 and 1956, when these recordings were made, but he climbed even higher after that, reaching far beyond his jazz audiences with *Misty*, a tune recorded at the same 1956 session that yielded the title song of this reissue album. So wide was Garner's commercial appeal that many critics found it necessary to minimize their enthusiasm for his music; after all, they rationalized, only something that is less than art could

(Continued on page 148)



# fact: a Genuine Shure upgrade stylus is unquestionably the biggest bargain in hi-fi

We strongly urge you to check your stylus for wear at least once a year to protect your records and maintain the highest standards of listening pleasure. Regardless of when (or where) you purchased your Shure cartridge, there is a Genuine Shure replacement stylus available which will bring your cartridge right back to its original specifications. Even better, *you may actually be able to improve its performance significantly over the original with a Genuine Shure upgrade stylus...* at surprisingly low cost! For example:

IF YOU OWN:	UPGRADE WITH:	THIS IS THE RESULT:
 <p><b>V15 Type III SERIES</b></p> <p><b>M95 SERIES</b></p>	<p><b>VN35HE</b> Hyperelliptical stylus</p>  <p><b>N95HE*</b> Hyperelliptical stylus</p> 	<p>A dramatic reduction of harmonic and intermodulation distortion (formerly available only to owners of the incomparable V15 Type IV) is now possible with the V15 Type III and the M95 Series of cartridges simply by replacing the stylus. The Hyperelliptical stylus configuration contacts the record groove in a "footprint" that is longer and narrower than the popular Biradial tip design, making it pre-eminent for reproduction of the stereo-cut groove.</p>
 <p><b>M70 SERIES</b></p>	<p><b>N72EJ</b> Biradial (Elliptical) stylus</p>  <p><b>N72B</b> Spherical stylus</p>	<p>Improved trackability, especially at high frequencies, due to a new, redesigned low-mass N72 stylus assembly.</p>
<p><b>ANY M91, M92, M93</b></p>	<p><b>N91ED*</b> stylus</p>	<p>Much improved trackability due to the lower effective tip mass of the nude Biradial (Elliptical) stylus tip. Less tracing distortion compared with a Spherical stylus tip.</p>
<p><b>ANY M71, M73, M75</b></p>	<p><b>N75 TYPE 2*</b> Series styli</p>	<p>Improved trackability at higher frequencies due to a stylus assembly with a lower effective tip mass.</p>
<p><b>ANY M44 Series</b></p>	<p><b>N55E*</b> stylus</p>	<p>Lower tracking force with a Biradial (Elliptical) stylus, lower distortion, lower effective tip mass.</p>
<p><b>M3D, M7D</b></p>	<p><b>N21D*</b> stylus</p>	<p>Improved performance at lower tracking forces.</p>

\* Before purchasing any replacement stylus be certain your turntable is compatible with the tracking force of the stylus you select.

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possibly appeal to such a broad segment of the public. Granted, Garner's playing did at times become hampered by clichés and not every recording was a gem, but his batting average was impressively high. If some grew tired of his distinctive style, put the blame on an industry that saw gold in them that tinkles and gave us Garner until our ears went numb.

"Dreamy" is a good collection of Garner as he sounded when the masses discovered him. I still think he made some of his best recordings earlier, the ones he did with small bop groups including Charlie Parker in 1948, some four years after Danish jazz enthusiast Baron Timme Rosenkranz first committed his playing to records. This is not the cream of Garner's Columbia crop, but I can recommend it as a healthy addition to any collection, and at least one track, *Will You Still Be Mine?*, can be counted among the late pianist's finest trio efforts. C.A.

**THAD JONES/MEL LEWIS: *Thad Jones, Mel Lewis, and UMO*.** Thad Jones (cornet); Mel Lewis (drums); UMO/The New Music Orchestra. *Groove Merchant; Summary; Little Pixie; Tip-Toe*; and four others. RCA AFL1-3423 \$7.98, © AFS1-3423 \$7.98, © AFK1-3423 \$7.98.

Performance: **Finn-ished**  
Recording: **Good**

Thad Jones is a good arranger who can be excellent when the spirit moves him. That spirit obviously visited when he wrote some of the arrangements for this album, but getting this wet rag of an orchestra to render them in anything but a drowsy, faucet-dripping way seems to have been impossible. The orchestra in question is a Finnish group called UMO/The New Music Orchestra, which not only can't swing but also lacks life. Sure, they hit the right notes, but there is not a sign of en-

thusiasm or energy to be heard; it is all pathetic beyond belief. Jones and his partner Mel Lewis—whose presence is more in evidence on the back cover than on the album itself (perhaps presaging their recent split)—made this mistake in Helsinki, Finland, a couple of years ago. As so often happens with mistakes, it has come back to haunt them. At least I hope so; I mean, I hope they aren't pleased with this thing. C.A.

**CEDAR WALTON: *Eastern Rebellion*.** Cedar Walton (piano); George Coleman (tenor saxophone); Sam Jones (bass); Billy Higgins (drums). *Naima; Bolivia; Bittersweet*; and two others. TIMELESS MUSE TI 306 \$7.98.

Performance: **Excellent**  
Recording: **Quite good**

**CEDAR WALTON: *The Pentagon*.** Cedar Walton (piano); Clifford Jordan (tenor saxophone); Sam Jones (bass); Billy Higgins (drums); Ray Mantilla (congas). *Manteca; Darn That Dream; Una Mas; He Is a Hero*; and two others. INNER CITY IC 6009 \$7.98.

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

"Eastern Rebellion" takes its title from a name given the group by its leader, pianist Cedar Walton. The rebellion, according to the notes, is against "the more electric sounds of some of the fusion music...." This was a working quartet in December 1975, when the album was produced (by Walton himself) for Timeless Muse, a European label with a singularly appropriate name for the kind of music Walton and his colleagues make.

Tenor saxophonist George Coleman is a far better musician than his lack of renown would lead one to believe; a list of his past associates offers proof of his acceptance by other musicians. But try to find a George Coleman al-

bum—if there ever was such a thing, its existence has eluded me. When Coleman was a member of the Miles Davis Quintet in the early Sixties, he had yet to break out of the Coltrane mold (very few young tenor men escaped that mold in those days). He has long since taken his own path, however, and it should have led to center stage by now. Coleman and Walton make good musical partners, but Walton seems to relate more strongly to Clifford Jordan, Coleman's predecessor with the group. You will hear what I mean if you compare "Eastern Rebellion" with "The Pentagon," recorded five months later with Jordan back in the tenor seat.

I prefer the warmer sound of Coleman's horn, but there is much to be said for the Jordan/Walton coalescence, and "The Pentagon"—with conga drummer Ray Mantilla joining the quartet on three numbers—proceeds smoothly and on an even keel despite the tensions inherent in direct-to-disc recording (for the original issue on the Japanese East Wind label; the Inner City version was remastered using tape). Jordan's tone is hard, his approach direct, and his style bears strong traces of Lester Young, particularly on Young's *D. B. Blues*.

I cannot recommend one of these albums over the other, but you wouldn't go wrong with either one—or with both. C.A.

**JOE WILLIAMS: *Prez & Joe*.** Joe Williams (vocals); Dave Pell's Prez Conference (instrumentals). *Lady Be Good; Fooling Myself; Easy Living; If Dreams Come True; When You're Smiling*; and five others. GNP/CRESCENDO GNPS 2124 \$7.98.

Performance: **Caressing the past**  
Recording: **Good**

Singer Joe Williams and tenor saxophonist Lester Young ("Prez") both worked with Count Basie, though not at the same time, and that is, I suppose, one reason Dave Pell chose to feature Williams on his second album with Prez Conference, the half-sax, half-rhythm octet dedicated to multiplying by four the solos of Lester Young. "Prez & Joe" has less of a Supersax feeling than its predecessor ("Dave Pell's Prez Conference," GNP/Crescendo GNPS 2122), and that works in its favor; so do the well-chosen program of selections recorded by Young, mostly with Billie Holiday, and the fact that the session(s) caught Williams in good voice.

When the reeds take on a Young solo it is not always one transcribed from familiar recordings but often from lesser-known air checks, which makes it a bit more tolerable than, in essence, someone is tampering with Lester Young's music. And it is obviously done with a love of the original material; Bill Holman wrote the arrangements, leaving—as he did in the first album—room for some individual statements. The main statement, however, is that delivered by Joe Williams, and he is eloquent whether rendering lyrics or scatting.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the recording was made directly on two tracks to avoid remixing. Four paragraphs on the back cover are devoted to explaining the advantages of such regression (early stereo recordings were made this way), but these advantages somehow escaped my ears as I listened to the album. C.A.



Stanley Dance

**S**AXOPHONIST Budd Johnson, a member of Earl Hines' band in the Thirties, was reunited with "Fatha" for this 1974 date shortly after both had appeared at a French jazz festival. Wishing to avoid a traffic jam of laudatory adjectives, I will say that their teaming produces certifiable bliss. Johnson's tone, attack, and imagination are rich, supple, intimate, and convivial, while Hines is—well, he's Earl Hines, the greatest jazz pianist, in my opinion, of all time. Noble support is given by bassist James P. Leary, who sometimes plays in the "buzzing" style of Slam Stewart, and that terrific pro drummer Panama Francis. The six selections are of luxurious length—*Blues for Sale* and *The Dirty Old Men* run more than nine minutes each—so there's plenty of room for Hines and Johnson to stretch out. Any Hines recording is special, but this one comes close to being an Event.

—Joel Vance

**EARL HINES/BUDD JOHNSON: *Linger Awhile*.** Earl Hines (piano); Budd Johnson (tenor and soprano sax); James P. Leary (bass); Panama Francis (drums). *Blues for Sale; Gone with the Wind; If You Were Mine; Am I Wasting My Time; The Dirty Old Men; Linger Awhile*. CLASSIC JAZZ CJ 129 \$7.98.

## Earl Hines: the Greatest

(Continued on page 150)



# The car stereo buyer's guide to the Audiovox range\* of sound systems for 1980:



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and Quartz Clock



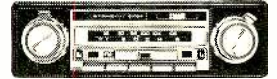
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Quartz Clock/Calendar



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radio. 4-Way balance



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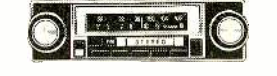
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Quartz Clock



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4-Way balance



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Stereo Cassette player with AM/  
FM/Stereo radio. "500" Nose-  
piece for Import Cars



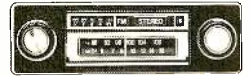
**Model ID-610**  
Stereo Cassette player with AM/  
FM/Stereo radio. Locking  
cassette controls



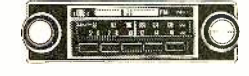
**Model C-977A**  
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AM/FM/Stereo radio. Special  
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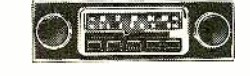
**Model ID-600C**  
Stereo Cassette with  
AM/FM/Stereo radio. Locking  
cassette Fast-Fwd. control



**Model ID-400C**  
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Nosepiece. Track lights



**Model ID-300B**  
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control. Slide-Bar band selector



**Model C-575C**  
Pushbutton Tuning AM/FM  
Stereo radio with "500" nose-  
piece designed for Import Cars



**Model ID-200B**  
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radio with Slide-Bar AM-FM  
Band selector. 4½" deep chassis



**Model C-506B**  
AM/FM Pushbutton Tuning  
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designed for Import Cars



**Model ID-100B**  
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with illuminated Slide-Rule dial.  
4½" deep chassis



**Model C-406**  
AM Pushbutton Tuning radio.  
Full-range tone control. "500"  
Nosepiece for Import Cars



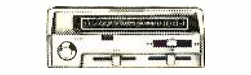
**Model UC-20**  
Underdash Stereo Cassette player  
with FM Stereo radio. F.Fwd/  
Rewind/Eject cassette control



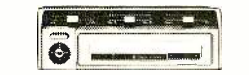
**Model UT-30**  
Underdash 8-Track Stereo Tape  
player with FM Stereo radio.  
Slide-Bar controls. Track lights



**Model C-981A**  
Auto-Reverse Stereo Cassette  
player with F.Fwd/Rewind/  
Eject. Underdash installation



**Model C-988**  
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player with Slide-Bar controls.  
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# FOLK



**THE KLEZMORIM:** *Streets of Gold.* The Klezmerim (vocals and instrumentals). *Di Zilberne Khasene; Papirosn; Medyatsiner Waltz; Mayn Rue Plats; A Glezle Vayn;* and eight others. ARHOOLIE 3011 \$7.98.

Performance: **The past recaptured**  
Recording: **Very good**

Last year the Klezmerim, a roving band of young California musicians who take their name from the wandering Jewish instrumentalists who once walked the highways of Europe, issued a record called "East Side Wedding" (Arhoolie 3006) that was hard to listen to without wanting to get right up and join the dance. Their new disc is just as infectious as the first. When one of their raucous marches, wedding waltzes, or Bessarabian gypsy melodies goes on a mite too long to hold your attention, there are the fascinating liner notes to divert you. This talented group of teenagers, who improvise their own arrangements right on the spot just as did the klezmerim of old, are skillfully reviving the musical heritage of turn-of-the-century immigrants who came here looking for streets paved with gold and generally found nothing half so rich as the music they brought with them.

P.K.

**PETE SEEGER:** *Circles and Seasons.* Pete Seeger (vocals, guitar, banjo, recorder); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Garbage; Sailing Down This Golden River; Mexican Blues; The Photographers; I'm Gonna Be an Engineer; Seneca Canoe Song;* and eight others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3329 \$7.98, M8 3329 \$7.98, M5 3329 \$7.98.

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

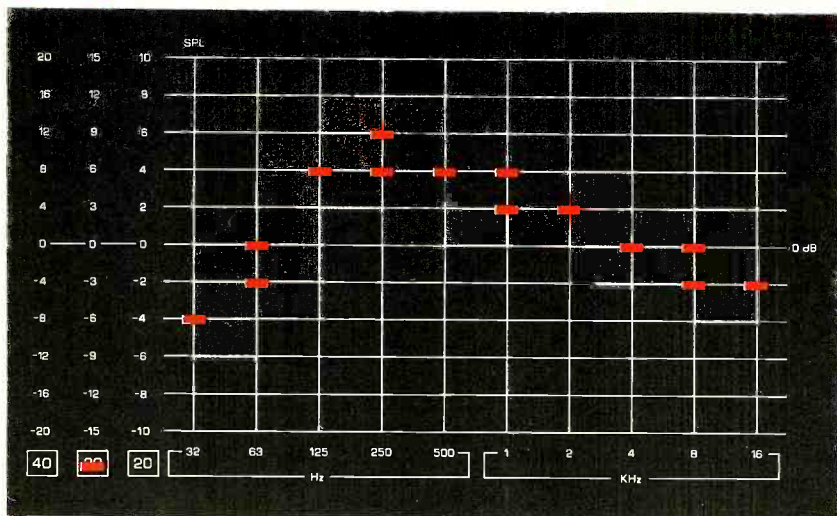
Pete Seeger, who left Harvard in 1938 to take that fateful trip across our country on which he met Huddy Ledbetter (better known as Leadbelly) and Woody Guthrie, thus forming the nucleus of the folk-music revival of the Forties, turns sixty this year. It's hard to believe. That agreeable baritone of his sounds as young as ever as he continues to compose and sing catchy ballads on such subjects as injustice, pollution, and prudery.

The opener is *Garbage*, a long ballad by Bill Steele that manages rhymed attacks not only on nuclear fallout, environmental pollution, and strip-mining but also on plastic Christmas trees, talking dolls, and Superman. The album also includes sweet songs about maple-sugar making, gardening, and sailing as well as a couple of purely instrumental interludes. And there are plugs for other Seeger albums and instructions for ordering one of his sister's discs from England. Pete Seeger may not entirely approve of the free-enterprise system, but he certainly knows how it works.

P.K.

(Continued on page 152)

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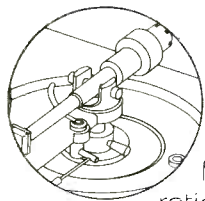
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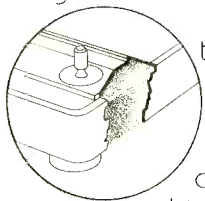
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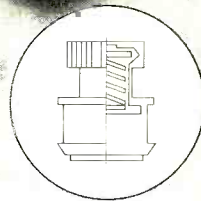


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4mm/sec., and the tempered spring anti-skate adjustment is infinitely variable to 3.5 grams. The pivot system uses stainless steel instrument bearings, which are hand-picked and perfectly matched to both the outer and inner races for virtually frictionless movement. All this makes it the best tonearm found on an integrated turntable.

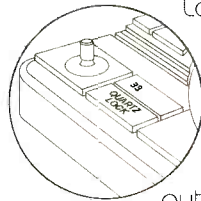


The base on the ADC 1700DD turntable is constructed of a highly dense structural foam which absorbs and neutralizes resonance and feedback. The speed selection control is an electronic microswitch which will respond to your lightest touch.



Supporting this resonance-cancelling base are energy absorbing, resonance-tuned rubber suspension feet. These suspension feet help to stabilize the base while controlling resonance.

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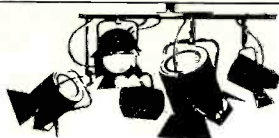
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## THEATER • FILMS

**AMERICATHON.** Original-soundtrack recording. The Beach Boys, Eddie Money, Elvis Costello, Nick Lowe, Tom Scott, Zane Buzby, Harvey Korman (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. LORIMAR JS 36174 \$7.98. © JSA 36174 \$7.98, © JST 36174 \$7.98.

Performance: **Variable**  
Recording: **Ditto**

The rundown on *Americathon* goes like this: The movie, which concerns a telethon to bail the U.S. of the 1990s out of a monumental fiscal crisis, is based on an idea by Phil Proctor and Peter Bergman of the Firesign Theater, and, like a lot of that duo's recent work, it exhausts its comic possibilities about halfway through. The performances are generally funny and the satire has a certain engaging tastelessness, but by and large it's not really trashy enough even to become a midnight-show cult item.

The soundtrack LP is equally a mixed

blessing. The Beach Boys' new *It's a Beautiful Day* is vastly superior to anything on their recent abortive comeback album, the kind of summery pop stuff they used to crank out with brilliant regularity (still, the single would seem a better buy); Nick Lowe's *Without Love* is charming, but it's available on his sublime "Labour of Lust"; and Elvis Costello's two contributions (one a hitherto-unavailable outtake from "This Year's Model" and the other an FM staple from the import version of same) are swell. The rest is completely dispensable. Save your lunch money. S.S.

**THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE (Richard Rodgers—Lorenz Hart).** John Adams, John Moore, Bob Monkhouse, Ronnie Corbett, Maggie Fitzgibbon, Sonny Farrar, others (vocals); chorus and orchestra. Robert Lowe cond. STET DS 15016 \$8.98.

**NO STRINGS (Richard Rodgers).** Art Lund, Beverly Todd, Hy Hazell, Ferdy Mayne, others (vocals); instrumental ensemble, Johnnie Spence cond. STET DS 15013 \$8.98.

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

Two sides of Richard Rodgers are up for inspection on new Stet releases of the London-cast recordings of *The Boys from Syracuse* and *No Strings*: the early melodist of romantic or brash and brilliant tunes to lyrics supplied by that wily wordmaster Lorenz Hart, and the Rodgers of later years, whose penchant for the soggy and the sentimental was encouraged by his long association with Oscar

Hammerstein II. *The Boys from Syracuse*, based on Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* with its mixed-identity plot about a pair of twin brothers separated in infancy, abounds in songs with a proved survival quotient. *No Strings*, Rodgers' thirty-eighth musical, for which he wrote the lyrics in 1961, has one enduring song, *The Sweetest Sounds*, and a dozen or so others that are finely crafted but easily forgotten. The sticky tale, about a Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist who falls in love with a black model in Paris, would probably have suited MGM better than the musical stage, but Rodgers considered the theme "adult" and the show did well enough. The instrumentation, certainly, is quite interesting; the composer decided to place the instruments (there are, literally, no strings) backstage and to bring various soloists on from time to time like characters in the show.

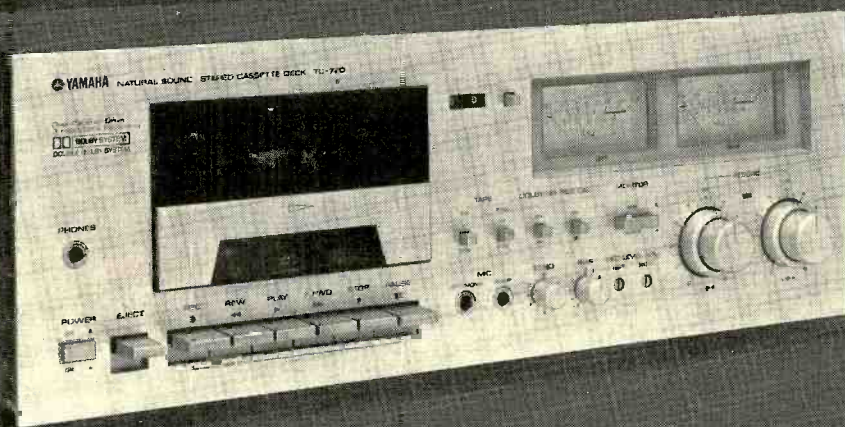
There is no recording available, more's the pity, of the original 1938 New York cast of *Boys*, which included Eddie Albert and Wynn Murray. There is a fine one, however, of the 1963 off-Broadway revival still available on Columbia Special Products (COS 2580), and if you have it, you won't be needing this London version. As for *No Strings*, it was written as a vehicle for Diahann Carroll, and the original-cast recording of the New York production stars that lady and Richard Kiley. It is, however, out of print at the moment, so if you'd like to hear *No Strings*, Stet's "original London-cast recording" is all there is. P.K.

**THE FANTASTICKS** (see *The Pop Beat*, page 54)

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\*Dolby is a trade mark of Dolby Laboratories.

## SPOKEN WORD



**WILL ROGERS: *All I Know Is Just What I Read in the Papers.*** Excerpts from original radio broadcasts. *Where the Blue of the Knight; Plans; Congress and Law; President's Day;* and three others. GOLDEN AGE ® GA 5034 \$4.98.

Performance: **Bottom of the barrel**  
Recording: **Just barely intelligible**

Sometimes a record can defeat its own purpose. Like the camera, the phonograph can tell its own kind of lie, catching the subject in a weak and unflattering moment, with a reverse alchemy turning the gold of nostalgic memories to dross. Everybody knows that Will Rogers—with his lasso, his chewing gum, and his wry, running commentary on the state of the union—was one of the most devastating comic observers of the passing scene that ever lived, but it would be hard to convince a skeptic with this record drawn from his radio broadcasts of the Thirties.

Rogers would be about a hundred years old

by now, yet many of his more caustic aphorisms seem as timely today as ever ("Do I ever read fiction? Sure, the newspapers."). But as he rambles on here, grumbling about income taxes, speculating ineptly on Aimee Semple McPherson's meeting with Ghandi in India, alternately lambasting and praising Franklin D. Roosevelt during his early days in the White House, chiding the members of Congress as "really children that's never grown up," he is frequently more tedious than titillating. The fellow who claimed he never met a man he didn't like himself becomes increasingly unlikable. Things brighten up when, at the end, he turns his withering attention to the all-too-vulnerable subject of Mother's Day, but most of these excerpts should have been left to our memories. P.K.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**ROBIN WILLIAMS: *Reality... What a Concept.*** Robin Williams (monologues); instrumental accompaniment. *Nicky Lenin; Pop Goes the Weasel; Kindergarten of the Stars; A Touch of Fairfax; Reverend Ernest Angry; Shakespeare (A Meltdown's Nightmare);* and five others. CASABLANCA NBLP 7162 \$7.98, ® NBL8 7162 \$7.98, © NBL5 7162 \$7.98.

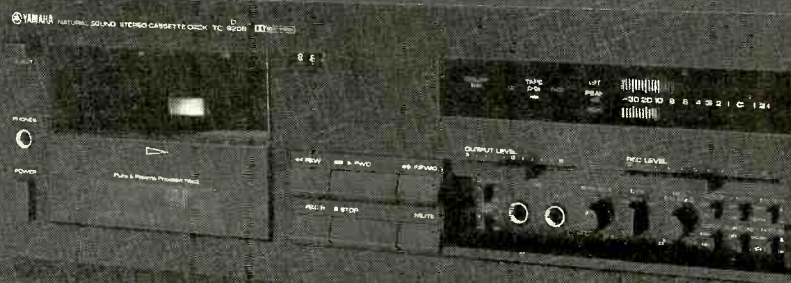
Performance: **Excellent**  
Recording: **Good**

Robin Williams, a brilliant young comedian with a furious imagination and a zany propulsion that is almost equally exhausting to him and his audience, is the star of *Mork and*

*Mindy*, a TV series that is a favorite not only with viewers but with actors, who delight in and appreciate his bold but fragile balancing of lunatic comedy and exquisite timing. Williams' first album almost does a disservice to him, because so much of it rests on the assumption that everyone who hears it will have seen *Mork and Mindy* or the other TV programs to which he refers in some of the routines. Not only that, but Williams is a very visual comic; there is loud and prolonged laughter at several points on the album when he is not saying anything but surely doing something, and not knowing what's going on makes you feel left out.

Williams is, among other things, a gifted mimic. If you have seen *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, a babysitter-type children's TV program, you will appreciate Williams' approximation of Mr. Rogers' condescending whine. And there's a hilarious rendition of William F. Buckley Jr.'s tense, urban drawl. By far the best routine—and totally aural—is *Come Inside My Mind*, in which a comedian reveals the civil war fought between his ego and his fears as he realizes he is bombing out in front of an audience. It comes complete with the comic's memory of himself as a frightened child looking for parental approval as he tries to convince his father he has talent, and it is at once the most giddy and the most uncomfortable portrayal of a comic ever presented—so accurate, so funny, and so cathartic that one fears for Williams' emotional safety even as one admires his heroic candor. I just hope he doesn't burn himself out—for our sake as much as his. J.V.

# the competition.



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IN less than five years we'll be at George Orwell's ominous, not-so-magic marker along the road to the twenty-first century. Things are running downhill fast, and whether or not he was right about anything else, it's beginning to look disconcertingly as if he was right about one thing: by 1984 we'll have become so thoroughly, self-consciously egalitarian that "class acts," in or out of show business (that includes politics, by the way), will be as arcane as, say, spats or double-damask dinner napkins.

Time was when you could point out undisputed excellence on all sides of the entertain-

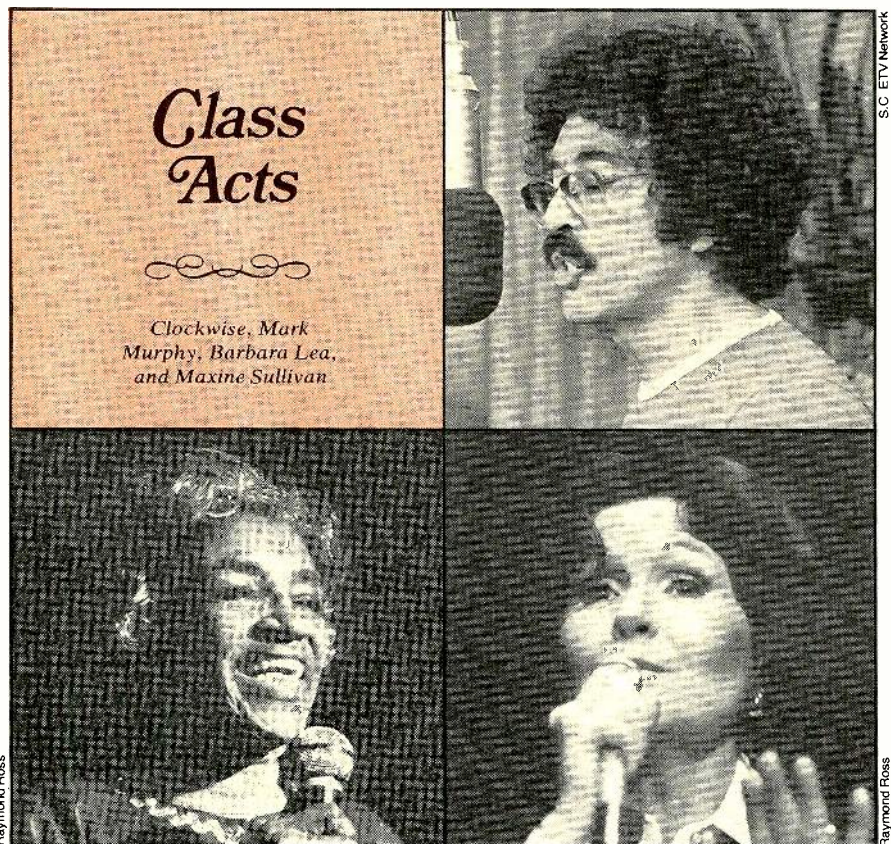
perform—like any of the three artists I am about to bring to your attention would not only require an interesting, *musical* voice to begin with, but also that its owner cared enough about expressing the emotional meaning of song lyrics to labor long and lovingly until that meaning came clear. All three of these singers love and delight in their craft. They love it immeasurably more than they do themselves or any dreamed-up Image of themselves. Listen to any band on any of these three albums, and you'll hear what pop singing really *can* be when stripped of gimmickry, faddishness, and narcissism.

favorite of mine in the version by Jeri Sothern. She chose to take it at a fast beguine tempo, and her performance of it, still redolent of Mysterious Glamour in my Fifties memory bank, was the siren song that lured youths from Morristown, New Jersey, inexorably toward the bright lights of show-biz (some day I'm gonna get you, Jeri Sothern!). Mark Murphy's choice is rather to riffle through it coolly, like Burt Reynolds through his address book, to produce a teasing invitation and a perfect new delight. As in his previous albums, Murphy uses his voice almost as a musical instrument in the best old-jazz style, yet along with it he maintains an almost uncanny ability to shed new and different light on lyric meanings.

**B**ARBARA LEA'S "Remembering Remembering Lee Wiley" at last finds this attractive, womanly singer in the kind of repertoire that fits her graceful and intelligent gifts. Lee Wiley was a famous singer of over a generation ago, but her recordings are still treasured by those lucky enough to own them. She and Libby Holman were probably the only two female singers who could really be said to have followed in the tradition established by the great Helen Morgan. Wiley, in particular, gave such depth and meaning to her performances that she easily transcended the label "torch singer." Someone once described her voice as sounding like "hot chocolate being poured." Unfortunately, her private life was as strenuous as Helen Morgan's and Judy Garland's *put together*, and she never reached the audiences her talent entitled her to.

Barbara Lea is a singer's singer and a long-time fan of Lee Wiley's performances. Her collection of Wiley songs is a very special tribute that comes off as superbly as it does only because of Lea's own delivery. She never mimics Wiley (although, as she herself admits, she does "perform in the manner of" in two Wiley classics, *Sugar* and *Down to Steamboat Tennessee*), but she intuitively catches the essence of the Wiley message. That message was dramatic, gut-sincere, and meltingly female. She has both the voice and the technique to fashion a creative memory of the woman she's honoring—and more than enough left over to let you know who Barbara Lea is too. She also does a remarkable job on what I think is the best track here, *Supper Time*. I've never identified this song as much with Lee Wiley as I have with Ethel Waters, for whom Irving Berlin wrote it. Waters' performance of it was as monumental as she was, but Lea's version of this simple, quietly horrifying tale of a black woman setting the supper table, out of habit, out of stubborn disbelief, for her man who has just been lynched stands very much on its own as a sharp, moving portrait of anyone, anywhere, vainly trying to hold back the awful impact of reality. In it Barbara Lea does double justice to the song and to her talent; the result is simply splendid.

**I**F someone were to ask me what repertoire would best suit Maxine Sullivan, I would probably say that almost anything from the *Hallelujah Chorus* to *I Shall Survive* would benefit from acquaintance with this glorious national resource. Now pushing seventy, this incredible singer sounds better today than she



ment business. Where have you gone, Joe Di-maggio? Where are you now, Cary Grant, Audrey Hepburn, Peggy Lee, Lena Horne, Julie Harris, Rex Harrison, George Shearing, and all the rest? Oh, they're all *there* all right, but the public appetite for them has noticeably cooled, and not simply because of their age (if that were the only reason, we would already have younger replacements for them coming up—*pace* Cheryl Ladd and Tony Orlando). It is probably because we, as an audience, don't really seem to want individual excellence and unique style any more. We want to "identify," not with symbols of what we possibly *could* be, but with avatars of our own let-it-all-hang-out amateurism. We want to turn the *whole world* into the Arthur Godfrey Show. I could—you could—fake a Travolta, for example, but never an Astaire. And to sing like any number of today's chart heavyweights would hardly tax the resources of a high-school sophomore. But to sing—that is, to

Mark Murphy, probably the least known of the three, has been blazing his own musical trail in a quiet way for several years now. He seems, finally, to be coming securely into his own, as Alec Wilder's liner notes testify: "I was ashamed of myself for not knowing about him sooner. . . . I honestly consider him one of the very few great singers I have ever heard." And Murphy is great indeed in a fine collection of songs by lyricist Dorothy Fields and composer Cy Coleman (it includes only one Fields/Coleman collaboration, *Seesaw*, from the Broadway musical of the same name).

The Coleman side has two gems: Murphy's work-over of *I'm Gonna Laugh You Right Out of My Life* and the nimbly sardonic *I Walk a Little Faster*. But the sun comes out and *stays out* on the Fields side with dapper, worldly readings of *Don't Blame Me*, *I'm in the Mood for Love*, and *A Fine Romance*. He also revives *Remind Me*, long a particular fa-

did in 1937 when she had her first pop hit with Claude Thornhill's arrangement of *Loch Lomond*. I say that not out of any halfhearted impulse to Give the Old Trouper a Great Big Hand, out of sentimental loyalty, or out of any old-wine-is-best snobbery. I say it because it's wonderfully, *provably* true. Listening to her cajole, tease, and bring to glittering life such things as *Miss Otis Regrets*, *Exactly Like You*, *You Were Meant for Me*, and even—so help me—*St. Louis Blues* is like reading ripe Colette: not a phrase is muffed, not an accent misplaced, not a moment wasted getting to the core of *what has to be said*. Sullivan's voice is still as light and carefree as it ever was, but her lyric readings now have all the sharp perception of a woman who's old enough to be willing to share some of the stories that lie behind the secret smiles of remembering. No Sun City regrets for Maxine. She's happy where she is, enjoys where she's been, and has a lot to tell you about how you're going to feel when, for instance, something like *That Old Feeling* overtakes you.

If you remember the days of the class act, you are probably already a fan of one or another of these three singers. If you aren't, I can't think of a better time or place to start getting in on the civilized action. Get up, go out, get these albums, and let them happen to you. You'll find that they don't push themselves on you aggressively; they just slide gracefully into your consciousness—and never leave. —Peter Reilly

**MARK MURPHY:** *Mark Murphy Sings Dorothy Fields and Cy Coleman*. Mark Murphy (vocals); Loonis McGlohon (piano); Terry Lassiter (bass); Jim Lackey (drums). *I Love My Wife; I'm Gonna Laugh You Right Out of My Life; When in Rome; On Second Thought; Seesaw; I Walk a Little Faster; That's My Style; Don't Blame Me; Remind Me; I'm in the Mood for Love; A Fine Romance; April Fooled Me; Alone Too Long; I'm Way Ahead*. AUDIOPHILE AP-132 \$7.98.

**BARBARA LEA:** *Remembering Remembering Lee Wiley*. Barbara Lea (vocals); Loonis McGlohon (piano); Mel Alexander, Terry Lassiter (bass); Tony Cooper (drums); Bob Mitchell (clarinet). *Down to Steamboat Tennessee; Someone to Watch Over Me; Sugar; A Ship Without a Sail; Let's Fall in Love; Fun to Be Fooled; Supper Time; Any Time, Any Day, Anywhere; Who Can I Turn To? I've Got the World on a String; Wherever There's Love; Fools Fall in Love; I've Got a Crush on You; Basin Street Blues*. AUDIOPHILE AP-125 \$7.98.

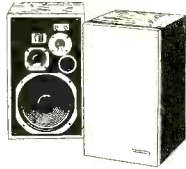
**MAXINE SULLIVAN:** *We Just Couldn't Say Goodbye*. Maxine Sullivan (vocals); Art Hodes (piano); Ernie Carson (cornet); Spencer Clark (baritone saxophone); Jack Howe (tenor saxophone); Johnny Haynes (bass); Tom Martin (drums). *We Just Couldn't Say Goodbye; Someday Sweetheart; Exactly Like You; That Old Feeling; Miss Otis Regrets; I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter; I Gotta Right to Sing the Blues; She's Funny That Way; St. Louis Blues; Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea; Legalize My Name; You Were Meant for Me*. AUDIOPHILE AP-128 \$7.98.

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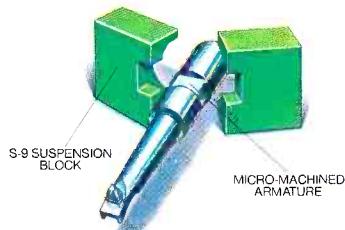
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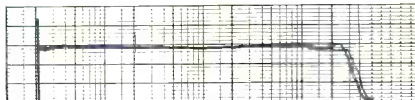
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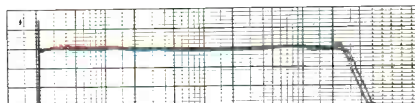


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