

THE FM SQUEEZE

DECEMBER 1979 • \$1.25

Stereo Review®

REBIRTH OF THE BLUES—or just an unusually eloquent last gasp?

RY COODER SAYS: Bad music will make you weak

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS: Audio Pro TA-150 AM/FM Stereo Receiver
Dual Model 506 Record Player and Ortofon ULM 55E Phono Cartridge • MXR Dynamic Expander
Electro-Voice Interface:C Series II Speaker System • Tandberg TD 20A Open-reel Tape Deck

XMAS WRAP-UP: Audio Accessories to Perk Up Your System



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 12



AND SO IS THE FIGHT ABOUT TUNERS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PIONEER

We bring it back alive.

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THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE CLASSES IS OVER.

For years people have clashed over which amplifiers are best. Class A or Class B.

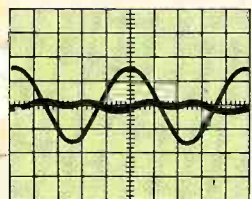
Expensive Non-switching Class A amplifiers are known to offer the lowest levels of distortion. At the same time, they also offer the highest operating temperatures.

And while Switching Class B amplifiers increase efficiency, they also increase distortion.

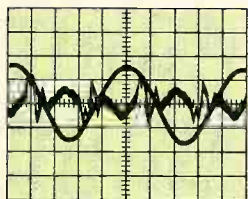
So if you're not paying through the nose for a heat-producing Class A amplifier, you'll be paying through the ear for a distortion-producing Class B.

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

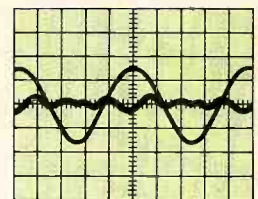
Pioneer's Non-switching SA 9800 offers the efficiency found in the finest Class B amplifiers. With a distortion level found in



CLASS A AMPLIFIER.
LEAST DISTORTION
BUT MOST HEAT.



CLASS B AMPLIFIER.
MOST DISTORTION
BUT LESS HEAT.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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We bring it back alive.

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CIRCLE NO. 70 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Empire's EDR.9

The Phono Cartridge Designed for Today's Audiophile Recordings



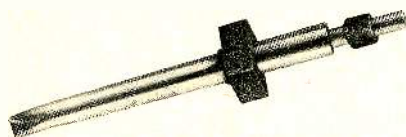
Direct-to-Disc and digital recording have added a fantastic new dimension to the listening experience. Greater dynamic range, detail, stereo imaging, lower distortion and increased signal-to-noise ratio are just a few of the phrases used to describe the advantages of these new technologies.

In order to capture all the benefits of these recordings, you should have a phono cartridge specifically designed to reproduce every bit of information with utmost precision and clarity and the least amount of record wear.

The Empire EDR.9 is that cartridge. Although just recently introduced, it is already being hailed as a breakthrough by audiophiles, not only in the U.S., but in such foreign markets as Japan, Germany, England, France, Switzerland and Sweden.

What makes the EDR.9 different?

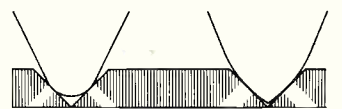
1. _____



Within the cantilever tube, we added a mechanical equalizer. It serves two purposes: (1) to cancel the natural resonance of the cantilever tube, and (2) to

improve the overall transient response of the cartridge. The end result is a stylus assembly that has a mechanically flat frequency response. The frequency response extends from the 20Hz to 35Hz with a deviation of no more than ± 1.75 dB. No other magnetic cartridge has that kind of performance. We call this stylus assembly an "Inertially Damped Tuned Stylus," the refinement of which took over 6 years.

2. _____



Contact area of ordinary Elliptical Diamond. Large contact area of LAC Diamond.

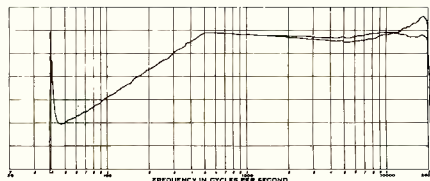
In order to reproduce a groove containing extreme high frequency musical overtones, the stylus tip must have small enough dimensions to fit within the high frequency portion of the groove. Yet, the smaller the stylus tip, the greater the pressure applied to the record surface and the more severe the record wear. In the EDR.9, we have responded to these conflicting requirements by developing a stylus that has the proper dimensions from side-to-side, a much

smaller dimension from front-to-back, and a very large, low pressure degree of contact between stylus and groove top-to-bottom. The net result of this large contact area, which engineers call a "footprint," is that the stylus of the EDR.9 can track musical signals to the limits of audibility and beyond, yet has the lowest record wear of any cartridge presently available. The stylus shape of the EDR.9 is called L.A.C. for "Large Area of Contact."

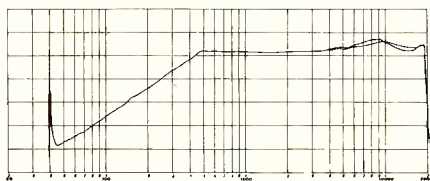
3. _____

Conventional cartridges exhibit radical changes in their frequency response when connected to different preamplifiers. This is because the load conditions—the amounts of capacitance and resistance provided by the preamp—vary tremendously from one preamp to another, and from turntable to turntable. Consequently, most phono cartridges, even expensive ones, have their frequency response determined essentially by chance, depending on the system they are connected to.

But the electrical elements of the EDR.9 have been designed to remain unaffected by any normal variations in load capacitance or resistance. Thus, the EDR.9 maintains its smooth frequency response and accurate transient reproduction ability in any music system, irrespective of loading conditions.



A conventional cartridge's frequency response changes when connected to different preamps.



EDR.9 is not affected by changes in loading conditions.

4. _____

Then, as a final test of performance, we listen to every EDR.9 to make certain it sounds as good as it tests. At \$200, the EDR.9 is expensive, but then again, so are your records.

For more detailed information and test reports, write to:

Empire Scientific Corp.
Garden City, NY 11530



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Stereo Review®

DECEMBER 1979 • VOLUME 43 • NUMBER 6

The Equipment

NEW PRODUCTS	
<i>Roundup of the latest audio equipment and accessories</i>	14
AUDIO QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	
<i>Tropicalizing Equipment, Damp Speakers, Dolby De-noiser</i>	LARRY KLEIN 24
AUDIO NEWS	
<i>The FM Squeeze</i>	PETER MITCHELL 30
TAPE TALK	
<i>Mixing Bias/Equalization, New "Metal" Machines, Dolby Confusion</i>	CRAIG STARK 37
TECHNICAL TALK	
<i>Measurements in the Twilight Zone</i>	JULIAN D. HIRSCH 39
EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS	
<i>Hirsch-Houck Laboratories test results on the Tandberg TD 20A open-reel tape deck, MXR dynamic expander, Electro-Voice Interface:C Series II speaker system, Dual 506 record player and Dual/Ortofon ULM 55E phono cartridge, and Audio Pro TA-150 AM/FM stereo receiver</i>	JULIAN D. HIRSCH 40
AUDIO ACCESSORIES	
<i>How to make Christmas merrier for your hi-fi system</i>	IVAN BERGER 75
RODRIGUES TAKES A LOOK AT STEREO CLINICS	80

The Music

A REBIRTH OF THE BLUES?	
<i>All that underground activity must mean something</i>	JOHN MORTHLAND 70
RY COODER	
<i>"Good music is what you like, bad music what someone else thinks is good"</i>	NOEL COPPAGE 82
BEST RECORDINGS OF THE MONTH	86
<i>Mozart: The Marriage of Figaro</i>	87
<i>"Christemas in Anglia"</i>	88
<i>Mozart: Violin Concertos Nos. 2 and 5</i>	88
<i>Gary Burton/Chick Corea: "Duet"</i>	91
<i>The Bread & Roses Festival</i>	91
<i>Humperdinck: Hansel and Gretel</i>	92
POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES	95
<i>Chuck Berry: "Rockit"</i>	96
<i>John Denver & the Muppets: "Together"</i>	100
<i>Aretha Franklin: "La Diva"</i>	105
<i>Van Morrison: "Into the Music"</i>	108
<i>Nancy Harrow: "Anything Goes"</i>	112
<i>Soundtrack: The Muppet Movie</i>	116
<i>Anne Murray: "I'll Always Love You"</i>	120
<i>Soundtrack: The Who's "Quadrophenia"</i>	126
<i>TV Score: "Pennies from Heaven"</i>	129
<i>Jazz Giant Bix Beiderbecke</i>	132
CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES	136
<i>Britten: A Ceremony of Carols</i>	137
<i>The Complete Berwald</i>	140
<i>A Welcome New Faust</i>	142
<i>Rossini: The Other Otello</i>	150
<i>Rossini/Respighi: La Boutique Fantasque</i>	153
<i>Unexpected Galway</i>	154

The Regulars

BULLETIN	WILLIAM LIVINGSTONE 5
SPEAKING OF MUSIC	WILLIAM ANDERSON 6
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	10
BOOKS FOR XMAS	LOUISE GOOCH BOUNDAS 13
GOING ON RECORD	JAMES GOODFRIEND 65
THE POP BEAT	PAULETTE WEISS 66
OPERA FILE	WILLIAM LIVINGSTONE 68
EDITORIAL INDEX FOR 1979	DAVID STEIN 157
SIMELS LIVE	STEVE SIMELS 162
ADVERTISERS' INDEX	162

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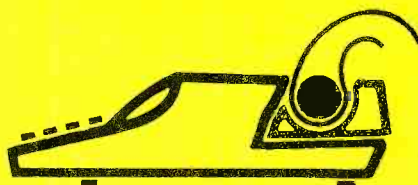
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CIRCLE NO. 20 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Stereo Review

BULLETIN

Edited by William Livingstone

● STANDARDS AND SPECIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN endorsed by twenty-two manufacturers of car-stereo equipment who account for 90 per cent of the industry's sales. The standards, which cover amplifiers, FM tuners, and tape systems, are similar to those of the Institute of High Fidelity. They establish methods of measurement and a format for stating specifications. Since car-stereo equipment does not fall under the Federal Trade Commission rule on power and distortion that applies to home entertainment equipment, this move on the part of the industry is voluntary. It follows a year's work by the Ad Hoc Committee of Car Stereo Manufacturers.

● LONDON RECORDS HAS INCREASED PRICES of discs and cassettes on the Telefunken Das Alte Werk, L'Oiseau Lyre, Headline, and Cima labels and in the music series on Argo to \$9.98 each, the same as for London's digital recordings. Prices for London FFRR, Telefunken Aspekte, Phase Four, the Treasury Series, and Argo spoken-word recordings are unchanged.

● THE SUIT AGAINST TOYOTA BY CASA (the Custom Automotive Sound Association) has been settled by Toyota's agreement that dealers can delete the standard radios in all models of the Celica and Corona Luxury Edition. CASA, which represents manufacturers, distributors, installers, repairers, and suppliers of custom sound equipment for cars, estimates that this victory opens about 400,000 more cars to custom installation. Agreements of this kind have already been made by CASA with General Motors and Chrysler, and a suit has been filed against Volkswagen alleging that the practice of making radios standard items in cars is anticompetitive.

● HOME VIDEOTAPING OF TV SHOWS IS LEGAL, according to Judge Warren J. Ferguson, who decided in favor of Sony in a suit brought by Universal City Studios Inc. and Walt Disney Productions. Universal and Disney claimed that Sony's sale of home videotape recorders led to theft of copyrighted movies and TV programs and could cause the production companies to lose millions of dollars in sales. Judge Ferguson ruled that noncommercial use of VTRs does not violate existing copyright laws and that manufacturers

may continue to market such units. An appeal is expected from Universal and Disney. Sony claims that Universal, a subsidiary of MCA, entered the suit because MCA plans to market a videodisc system.

● SENNHEISER'S INFRARED LISTENING SYSTEM transmits sound directly from the stage of a theater to lightweight earphones worn by members of the audience who are hard of hearing. Transmitting sound by invisible infrared light was introduced by Sennheiser in 1975. Audio signals from a theater's ordinary amplification console are processed by the system's infrared transmitter and broadcast to all parts of the house. The earphones receive the signal through "magic eye" silicone diodes. There are no wires to plug in, and no cable connections are needed at each seat. The system made its Broadway debut this season at the Lunt-Fontanne Theater in New York, where Sandy Duncan is currently starring in the musical Peter Pan.

● PROFESSIONAL ELVIS PRESLEY IMITATORS now exceed 20,000 men around the world, according to Jem Records. This is an increase of 5,000 per cent over 1975, and if the current growth rate continues, imitating the King of Rock-'n'-Roll will be the occupation of one out of eleven employable males by 1986. The album "Impersonators Convention" (Rhino RNEP 505) includes Elvis' greatest hits done by Yankel Prestein, Hound Dog Fujimoto, Gunga Maharesley, and Elvis von Borman.

● VIDEOTAPABLE MUSIC SHOWS ON TELEVISION this month include a Christmas special with John Denver and the Muppets on ABC December 5. (See review of their album "Christmas Together" elsewhere in this issue.) On PBS on that date, Exxon's Great Performances will present Bizet's Carmen taped live at the Vienna State Opera with Elena Obraztsova, Plácido Domingo, and Yuri Mazurok (conductor is Carlos Kleiber). On December 8, PBS salutes Louis Armstrong with "Satchmo," made up of live footage of Armstrong in action. Bruckner's Ninth Symphony will be played by the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Herbert von Karajan in the Great Performances series on December 26. Check local listings.

Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



BEL CANTO DEITIES

THE Grand Promenade in the State Theater at New York's Lincoln Center is at once the most impressive and the most inviting public space in the whole city, in part because of the presence there of two white-marble statues (by Elie Nadelman) that preside over their court with a majesty distant but in no way haughty. They have often seemed to me like a pair of auxiliary muses awaiting assignment, and so they must be, for on the evening of October 15 these stately goddesses apparently stepped down from their pedestals, crossed the plaza to Avery Fisher Hall, and presented a joint recital in the guises of soprano Dame Joan Sutherland and mezzo Marilyn Horne. It was an evening the capacity audience in the hall and the millions who watched the simultaneous Live from Lincoln Center TV broadcast will not soon forget.

One of the most prized albums in my vocal collection has long been the famous *bel canto*

recital by Sutherland and Horne (with tenor Richard Conrad) on London OSA 1257, so it was particularly gratifying to be able to hear them sing a similar program in person and even to be able to compare two of the selections with the earlier recorded versions—Horne's "Iris Hence Away" (from Handel's *Semele*) and the "Serbami ognor" duet (from Rossini's *Semiramide*). Both lived up to expectations, the Handel even exceeding them: it was taken, incredibly, at a tempo even faster than that of the recording—"a speedy flight" indeed.

These and other items on the program must have come as something of a surprise to TV viewers whose notions of opera are derived from later, less daunting works. All those intricate vocal *floriture* may at first sound a little off-putting, but they are completely accessible to modern understanding when done properly. We are all familiar with

such expressions as "trembling with rage" (or fear), "shaking with passion," and the like. It was the naïve notion of *bel canto* singers that such emotions could be communicated musically through a system of stylized vocal ornaments and figures—and they were right. Unfortunately, these athletic vocal demands were too enormous to be long sustained—particularly when the supply of leather-lunged castrati began to peter out—and the style disappeared from the opera houses. Only through the gifts of such startlingly talented singers as Sutherland and Horne can we even glimpse how it all must have sounded to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century audiences: absolutely astonishing.

I cannot easily remember another occasion when audience response was so enthusiastic, so frenzied—as if the Golden Age had just miraculously inserted itself into the present. That may be why I noticed something I had not really paid any attention to before: three of New York's newspaper critics were lined up on the aisle ahead of me—and all of them sat on their hands throughout the program. This little ritual of the fraternity is meant to signal (for those in the know) the pure, objective integrity of the unobserved observer, but I'm afraid what it actually looks like is disdainful ego (Here Sits a Big Critic) and rudeness. Surely all of us, critics included, owe an immediate feedback to performing artists to give them the energy they need to surpass themselves; we can always cavil, uncompromised, in print later (Horne was an amazingly consistent semi-microtone flat throughout Foster's *I Dream of Jeanie*).

The program was not recorded officially, but there is a "safe" copy that will doubtless see videodisc once the cutting edge of a checkbook severs the Gordian knot of contractual complications. And there are many videotaped copies out there already (a friend of mine flew in for the concert, but he set the timer on his TV in San Francisco so he'd have it all on tape when he got home). Ah, Brave New World!

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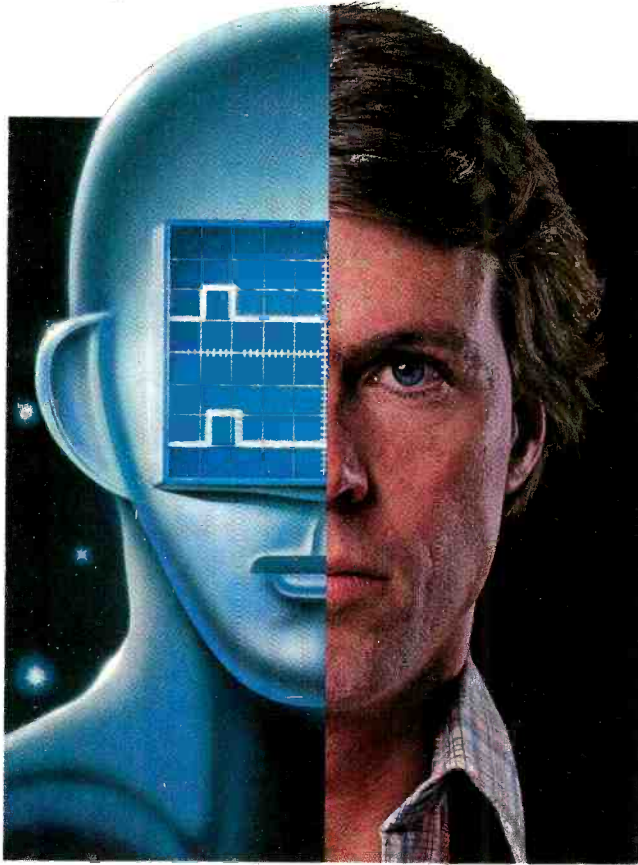
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PLUS SERIES™

When you're ready for something better.

SANYO

CIRCLE NO. 50 ON READER SERVICE CARD



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 outfitted 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.

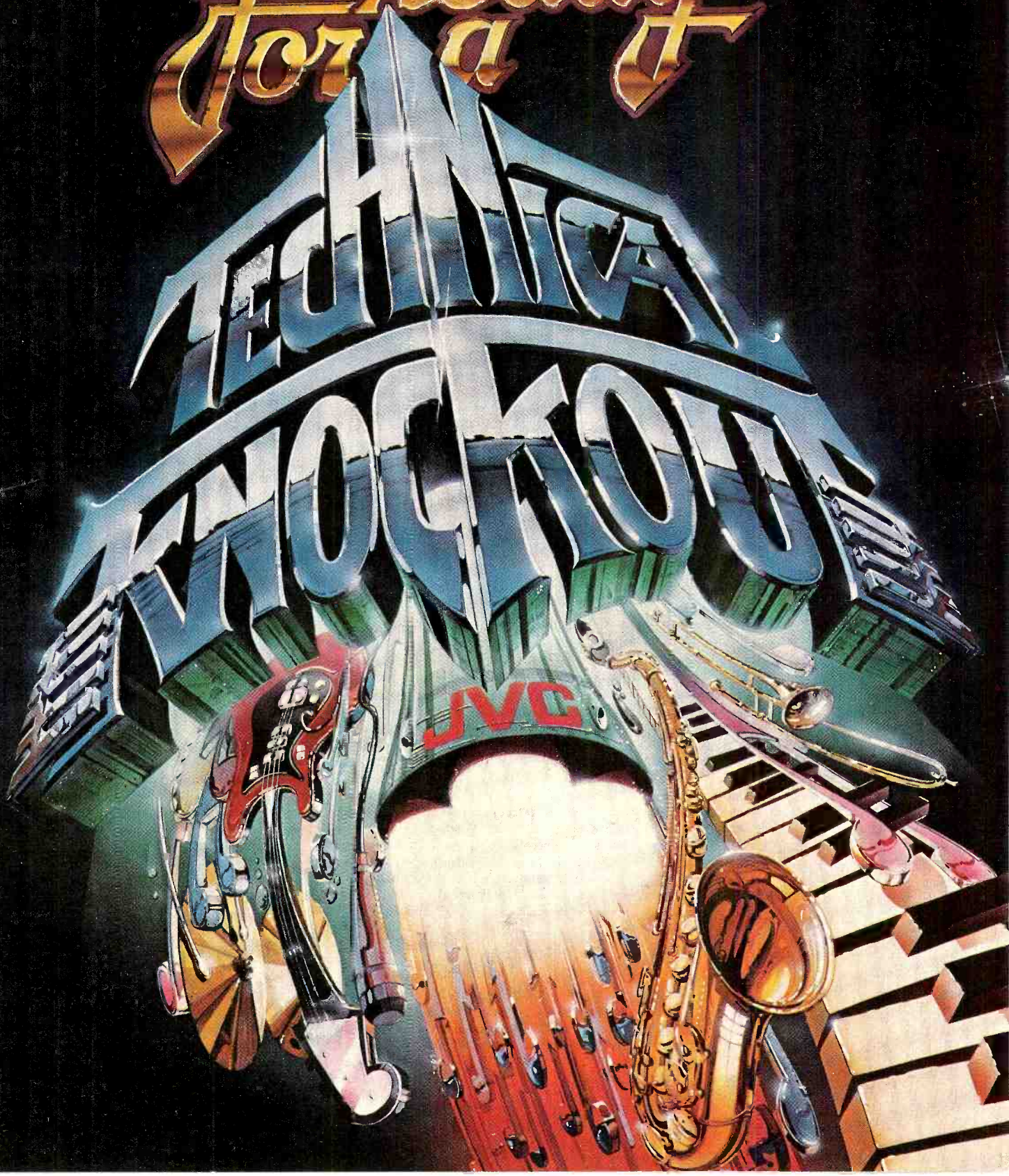


JVC
US JVC CORP.

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

Charles Mingus

● Chris Albertson's "Mingus Legacy" in the October issue was excellent. He treated the late Charles Mingus with the respect due an enormous, if erratic, talent who had some very human failings. Readers may be interested in one of my own memories of Mingus as I saw and heard him at the Five Spot Café in New York City almost fifteen years ago. One evening during a break Mingus stayed on the stand and amused himself by doodling on Jaki Byard's piano. He hypnotized the audience, and I recall that he tuned the piano slightly *with his fingers!* Later, in response to some prolonged heckling, he picked up a small hammer he had, raised it over his head, looked angry, and stomped directly toward the heckler. As he reached the now petrified heckler, he gave a short, nasty laugh and then stomped right past him and into the dressing room. Thank goodness!

K. A. BORISKIN
Framingham, Mass.

Pretentious Renaissance?

● Songs about love, sex, not having love, not having sex—is that all there is to popular music? No, but when someone tries something else, it's labeled "pretentious," as Paul Kresh dismissed the album "Azure d'Or" by the group Renaissance in his October review. I find Renaissance's music interesting because of its basis in classical compositions and the unique subject matter. True, the tunes aren't always original, but when was the last time Prokofiev or Rachmaninoff made the charts?

GREGG COCKROFT
Annapolis, Md.

Well, Prokofiev's Lieutenant Kijé Suite (DG 2530 967) has been on for about five months now....

Subwoofers

● Peter Mitchell was in error when he stated, in his otherwise excellent article on subwoofers (October), that a subwoofer can be properly balanced only by the use of fairly

sophisticated measuring equipment. John Marovskis of Janis Audio Associates has developed a novel method of tuning a subwoofer to the rest of a system by ear. All that is required is a tape player and a special tape, available from Janis for \$15, containing filtered pink-noise test tones. The test is simple to perform, unambiguous, repeatable, unaffected by room acoustics, and accurate to within 1 dB at the crossover frequency. I've used this test to balance my own Janis W-1 subwoofer and verified the results with sound-measuring equipment. It works, and it can be used with subwoofers made by other manufacturers as well. So, subwoofers *can* be balanced by ear if the right technique is used. But do *not* put on an organ record and tune for maximum wool!

CHARLES P. REPKA
Oakland, N.J.

Summer CES

● I'd like to call readers' attention to an incorrect entry in Ralph Hodges' report on new products at the 1979 Summer Consumer Electronics Show (October issue). Advent did *not* introduce a three-way speaker system at \$250, nor are there any plans to do so in the near future. (However, Mr. Hodges neglected to mention that we did introduce a new receiver, the Model 350—one of the few entries in this area by an American firm.) We're receiving four or five calls daily from interested customers and confused dealers concerning this "new product," and STEREO REVIEW's credibility is such that some are still skeptical even after our Customer Service people have explained and apologized for the confusion. The interest created by this short entry could be telling us something.

FRED PINKERTON
Advent Corporation
Cambridge, Mass.

● The \$210 T-05 cassette player introduced by B.I.C. at the Summer CES is for home use, not, as Ralph Hodges had it in his article on the show, for automobiles.

FRANK HOFFMANN
B.I.C./Advent
Westbury, N.Y.

Nana Mouskouri

● I'm furious! I bought the new Nana Mouskouri album, "Roses & Sunshine," on the basis of Peter Reilly's September review. After I got it home and played it, I got back in my car and, gas shortage or no, made the half-hour drive back to the record store to buy the three other Mouskouri albums they had in stock. The lady is a phenomenon!

The reason I'm mad is that STEREO REVIEW hasn't devoted a convincing full-page review to one of her records before. I could have been collecting her albums for the past ten years instead of having to start from scratch at this late date!

You can reingratiate yourselves with me by settling a longstanding dispute I've had with a friend over whether it was Marty Robbins or Guy Mitchell who had the circa-1959 hit *White Sport Coat*. We've exhausted the various trivia books and are reduced to sniping at each other's memories, characters, etc. Help!

PAUL ROSS
Riverside, Calif.

Popular Music Editor Paulette Weiss replies: Marty Robbins wrote and performed White Sport Coat, which was the country's No. 1 hit in 1957, not 1959. Years later its first line, "A white sport coat and a pink carnation," inspired the fond parody of Jimmy Buffett's album title "A White Sport Coat and a Pink Crustacean."

Statler Brothers

● One small correction for Noel Coppage's "Whatever Happened to Four-part Harmony?" in September: the group's lead vocalist is Don Reid (not Harold), and brother Harold (not Don) is the daddy who sings bass.

MICHAEL REDIFER
Greenville, Va.

Price Corrections

● The October "New Products" report on the VCX-600 cassette deck from Vector Research erroneously quoted a price of \$575, which applies rather to the VCX-500 deck. The suggested retail price of the VCX-600 is \$750.

BILL CAWLFIELD
Vector Research, Inc.
Chatsworth, Calif.

● The September "New Products" report on the KEF Model 101 minispeaker erroneously states that the speakers cost "\$250 per matched pair." In fact, the Model 101s are priced at \$250 *each*.

BRYAN STANTON
J. B. Stanton, Inc.
New York, N.Y.

Unidentified Audio Object

● The inadvertently unidentified hand-held instrument on our October 1979 cover is the \$750 Ivie Electronics Model 1E-10A spectrum analyzer; it is shown responding to the low-bass output of the subwoofer. For information on the Ivie line of test instruments, write to Bill Raventos, Ivie Electronics, 500 West 1200 South, Orem, Utah 84057.



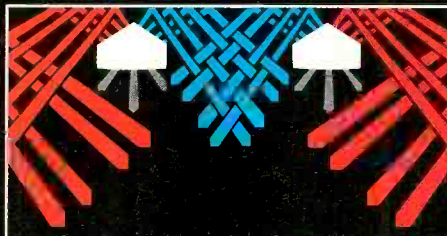
Introducing the Bose® Spatial Control™ Receiver

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

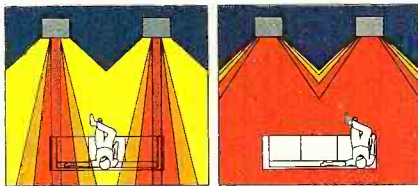
Covered by pending patent rights.
Cabinet is walnut veneer.

How Audio History is made.



Mantaray Horn

Has American ingenuity taken a back seat to cheaper foreign labor? Not at Altec Lansing, where we've been inventing and building high-quality speakers for well over 42 years. Like the Model 14. It's so unique, that before we could create it, we first had to invent a whole new family of components.



Conventional beaming narrows listening area. Mantaray expands listening sweet spot.

We began with a new type of horn. The Mantaray.TM* It's the first "constant directivity" horn ever created. Conventional horns, cones and domes (including so-called omnidirectional and reflective speakers) tend to "beam," that is, narrow their angle of sound radiation at higher frequencies. This effect causes the stereo image to lose strength off the center axis and to actually wander.

Mantaray, on the other hand, delivers a clearly-defined sound wedge that keeps its strength regardless of the music's changing frequencies.

You get the full spectrum of sound and the most solid three-dimensional stereo image you've ever heard. And since the sound doesn't diminish off center axis, the Model 14 enlarges your listening area, your "stereo sweet spot."

As an extra benefit, Mantaray's precise sound focusing means your music goes in your ears—not in your drapes, walls, and ceilings. Consequently, it's more likely than other speakers to sound the same in your home as it does in your dealer's showroom.



Power Control

Then to give you even higher highs, we developed the first radial phase plug, the Tangerine^{®**}

In contrast to conventional phase plugs with two equidistant circular slots that block some frequencies, the Tangerine's tapered slots permit a free flow of high frequencies to beyond 20 KHz.



Tangerine

Equally important to all this is our new Automatic Power Control System.

Unlike fuse-type devices or circuit breakers, the system keeps track of the power pumped into the speaker, lets you know with a blinking light when power exceeds safe limits, and then reduces overloads automatically, but without shutting the speaker off. It's quite a system.

In addition, the Model 14 offers you super-efficiency, highpower handling capacity and exceptional dynamic range, plus a new vented enclosure with a 12-inch bass driver for a tighter, crisper low end. So that's how audio history is made. And it's all yours at a price that means the best sound value available for your home today.

So the next time someone tries to tell you that American workmanship is taking a back seat, play your Altec Lansing speakers for them and prove how wrong they are.

For a free brochure and the name of your local dealer, write:

Altec Lansing International,
1515 South Manchester Avenue,
Anaheim, CA
92803.



The Choice of Professionals



* U.S. and foreign patents pending
**U.S. Patent No. 4050541

● *This Is Music*, by David Randolph. Cornerstone Library, New York (1979), 222 pages, \$3.95 (paper). A distinguished conductor and lecturer, Randolph is also a gifted teacher, and it is good to have his introduction to the appreciation of music back in print. It is not a history of music, but a discussion of its principal components—melody, harmony, rhythm, tone color, and form. Contending that you don't have to be able to read a single note to understand and enjoy music, the author demystifies music appreciation. Common sense and love of music pervade the book. An excellent first book for a beginner, it will also enhance the listening pleasure of more experienced music lovers. —W.L.

● *The Pursuit of Perfection, A Life of Maggie Teyte*, by Garry O'Connor. Atheneum, New York (1979), 327 pages, \$15.95. The art of the English soprano Maggie Teyte (1888-1976) is well documented on records, and in this excellent biography her grand-nephew documents her life as well as her career. Particularly renowned as an interpreter of French vocal music, she studied in France with Jean de Reszke and worked closely with the composers Reynaldo Hahn and Claude Debussy. The book is candid about her personal life (she had affairs with Georges Enesco and Sir Thomas Beecham), but not sensational. The appendices include brief articles by Teyte herself and a complete discography. This ranks among the best biographies of singers ever written. —W.L.

● *The Music Criticism of Hugo Wolf*, translated, edited, and annotated by Henry Pleasants. Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., New York (1979), 291 pages, \$24.50. Uninformed critics of critics tend, sooner or later, to fall back on the old saw "those who can, do; those who can't, criticize," unaware that some (though far from all) of the best musical criticism has been written by composers: Schumann, Debussy, Berlioz—and Hugo Wolf. English translations of the critical writings of the first three have long been available (though few have read them), but Hugo Wolf's brief career as a critic (a little over three years) has been accessible only to those equipped to deal with his difficult German. Those not so equipped may know only that Wolf was not a fan of Brahms (as Hanslick was not of Wagner) and so dismiss him. Henry Pleasants' translation should correct the record for Wolf as his earlier (1950) *Vienna's Golden Years of Music* did for Hanslick. The content is fascinating and instructive, and the style (close to a hundred years later) is startlingly contemporary. Wolf—the critic and the composer—clearly deserves more attention than he has been getting lately. —W.A.

● *American Musical Theatre, A Chronicle*, by Gerald Bordman. Oxford University Press, New York (1978), 749 pages, \$35. An incredibly comprehensive yet surprisingly

readable reference work. *Every* musical production on (and many off) Broadway from 1866 through 1978 is discussed, often in considerable detail, and a prologue covers even earlier works. The season-by-season chronicle is interspersed with short biographies of the principal creative figures, and the several indexes make it easy to locate anything of special interest. —D.S.

● *Fundamentals of Musical Acoustics*, by Arthur H. Benade. Oxford University Press, New York (1976), 596 pages, \$15.95. Recommended for music lovers and audiophiles who want to know more about the physics of musical sounds. Starting with basic sounds and principles, Benade takes the reader through what he calls "vibration recipes" to fascinating discussions of musical-instrument acoustics. All the instrument families are covered in detail, as is the ever-popular and controversial subject of room acoustics. The explanations and illustrations are entertaining and clear, and there is extensive bibliographical information for those who can't get enough of the subject. —D.R.

● *Benjamin Britten, Pictures from a Life*, compiled by Donald Mitchell. Scribner's, New York (1979), 440 illustrations, unpaginated, \$25. The late Lord Britten was said to be a bit camera shy, but few lives in music have been so lavishly documented graphically as his is here. The pictures include not only original photos but also facsimiles of paintings, drawings, posters, manuscript pages, correspondence, and program notes, and the subjects include, besides Britten, many other



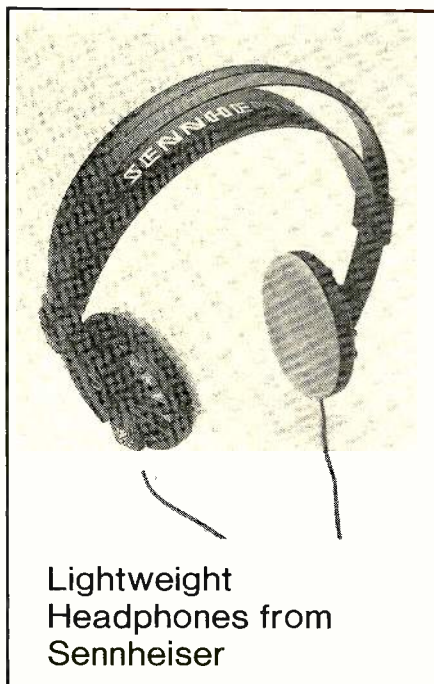
people important in his life and career, especially his close friend and colleague Sir Peter Pears. A feast. —D.S.

● *An Autobiography*, by James Galway. St. Martin's Press, New York (1979), 181 pages, \$8.95. One of the world's most elegantly polished flutists tells his own story in rough-hewn but generally charming prose. The homespun "philosophy" gets a bit thick—Galway has come to view his musical career virtually as a religious vocation—but the many stages of his journey from Belfast to Berlin and beyond are convincingly evoked, and the anecdotes about famous musicians he has known or worked with (especially "Herbie" von Karajan) are delightful. —D.S.

● *The Music Makers*, edited by Clive Ungler-Hamilton. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York (1979), 264 pages, 612 illustrations (including 221 in full color), \$35. This is the music coffee-table book par excellence. Not only is it a beautifully produced volume—Abrams is, after all, a publisher of *art* books—it is well written and informative, covering music from the troubadours to "The Electronic Revolution," composers and performers from Guido d'Arezzo (who flourished around the year 1000) to Paul McCartney's Wings. The book's organization may seem peculiar at first, for everything is chronological, but once you get used to using the index you will appreciate the advantages of being able to refer to subjects in the context of their times, to composers and performers in the context of their contemporaries. And the illustrations, many in full color, are magnificent. You just can't beat this for browsing. If you're lucky enough to get it, leave it on your coffee table for a few weeks at least. When you do get ready to put it away, it will fit conveniently on the shelf with your LPs—it is the same height and depth as an album jacket. Expensive, but worth it. —L.G.B.

● *To Be, or Not... to Bop—Memoirs*, by Dizzy Gillespie with Al Fraser. Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y. (1979), 552 pages, \$14.95. "Naturally, I know my own contribution to jazz. I know just what I created that someone else didn't, and what Monk did and what Charlie Parker did; what their contributions have been. I was just digging and I said, 'Now, let me see, what did I do that is going to be hard to get rid of?'" This book is "going to be hard to get rid of," for one thing. John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie is, of course, a great jazz (bebop) innovator, and anything he wrote would be of interest to jazz enthusiasts. But Gillespie and his collaborator Al Fraser have done a *lot* of digging for these memoirs, and the book turns out to be much more than the autobiography of the man with the extraordinary chops and the cocked horn. It is an intelligent, provocative, opinionated history of the music and the people, mainly black, who made it. *To Be, or Not... to Bop* has a remarkable vernacular flavor, and it is full of wonderful anecdotes. There is a twenty-page "Selected Discography" at the end, and that alone would make the book a must for the record collector. —L.G.B.

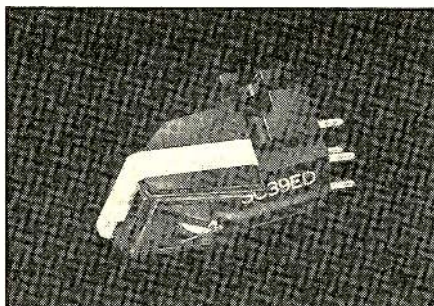
● *Celebration: The Metropolitan Opera*, by Francis Robinson. Doubleday, New York (1979), 304 pages, \$30. The author, an executive at the Met for more than thirty years, probably knows the background and workings of the company better than anyone else alive. Also an excellent raconteur, he enlivens this affectionate account of the Met's past and present with many anecdotes about those who have helped to make the company great. For an opera fan the four hundred well-chosen illustrations alone would make the book worth its price. —W.L.



**Lightweight
Headphones from
Sennheiser**

□ Excluding the cable, Sennheiser's new HD-420 headphones weigh only 4 ounces due to the use of samarium-cobalt magnets. Rated frequency response is 18 to 20,000 Hz, and output level is 94 dB with a 1-milliwatt input. Rated harmonic distortion is less than 1 per cent. Driver impedance is 600 ohms. An adjustable headband strap exerts about 3 newtons of force on the head. The headphones come with a 10-foot stranded-steel cable and a standard stereo phone plug. Price: \$84.80.

Circle 120 on reader service card



**Heavy-duty
Shure Cartridges for
Professional Use**

□ The three cartridges of the Shure SC39 series have characteristics tailored to heavy-duty professional applications. The SC39 cartridges are said to have high-fidelity performance along with providing resistance to stylus damage and record wear in demanding studio cueing operations. To protect against a sideways push or bending of the stylus, a lat-

eral-deflection protective assembly responds to side thrusts by withdrawing the entire stylus tip and shank into the stylus housing before it can bend. A locking guard protects the stylus tip against drops, bumps, and other mishandling. Special proprietary treatment of the stylus tip guards against build-up of record noise during repeated playings of low-quality 45-rpm discs or master lacquers.

The SC39EJ and SC39B units have a smooth frequency rolloff between 15,000 and 20,000 Hz, while the SC39ED is claimed to have a frequency response comparable to that of a top-quality consumer cartridge. The SC39ED requires a tracking force between 0.75 and 1.5 grams; the SC39EJ and SC39B need between 1.5 and 3 grams. The SC39ED and SC39EJ both have elliptical styli; the SC39B comes with a spherical stylus. Prices: SC39ED, \$100; SC39EJ, \$80; SC39B, \$60.

Circle 121 on reader service card



**Onkyo Direct-drive
Turntable Has
Carbon-fiber Arm**

□ Onkyo's CP-1030F fully automatic, single-play turntable has a straight, low-mass, statically balanced tone arm made of carbon fiber. The arm's detachable carbon-fiber head shell has an ADC-type connector and accepts any cartridge weighing from 5 to 8.5 grams. Antiskating adjustments and an oil-damped cueing control are also included.

The directly driven nonferrous platter weighs 3 pounds and has a weighted-rms wow-and-flutter specification of less than 0.03 per cent. The turntable motor is a brushless, coreless, and slotless d.c. unit controlled by a quartz crystal. A separate motor drives the automatic tone-arm functions. These functions include a repeat mode in which a record side is played again and again as long as desired. All automatic-control functions, in addition to the power, disc diameter, and speed switches, are accessible with the dust cover closed. The suspension is designed to eliminate the effects of acoustic feedback and external vibrations. Dimensions are 17 7/8 x 5 1/4 x 14 1/2 inches. Price: \$315.

Circle 122 on reader service card

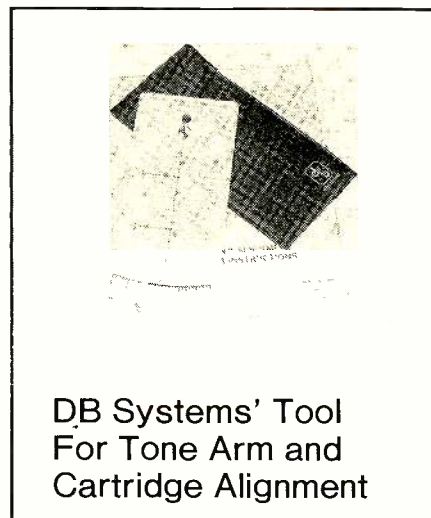


**SAE's Thin Pro
Power Amplifier**

□ The 1 3/4-inch-high, rack-mounting P50 power amplifier from SAE is meant for professional applications. It is rated at 70 watts per channel into 8 ohms or 110 watts into 4 ohms with no more than 0.05 per cent total harmonic distortion (THD) and 120 watts into 2 ohms with no more than 0.1 per cent THD. The amplifier employs heavy-duty output transistors and a cooling fan and can meet FTC test requirements into 2-ohm loads without thermal cycling.

The P50, as supplied from the factory, has a low-frequency response rolled off at 6 dB per octave starting at 20 Hz. By minor modifications, the user can extend the low-frequency response to 5 Hz as well as limit the ultrasonic frequency response to 25 kHz. Other features include d.c.-protection circuitry, overload indicators, and a third input jack that bridges the amplifier for 350-watt mono operation. Price: \$500.

Circle 123 on reader service card



**DB Systems' Tool
For Tone Arm and
Cartridge Alignment**

□ DB Systems' DBP-10 "Phono Alignment Protractor" is designed for measuring the lateral tracking error of a mounted phono cartridge and is said to be accurate to one quarter of a degree. The unit is intended for use with any tone-arm-and-cartridge combination and will enable the user to adjust his cartridge for optimal tracking to achieve minimal distortion. Made of heavy plastic, the DBP-10 comes with a carrying case. Price: \$19.95. For information, write DB Systems, P.O. Box 187, Jaffrey Center, N.H. 03454.

(Continued on page 16)

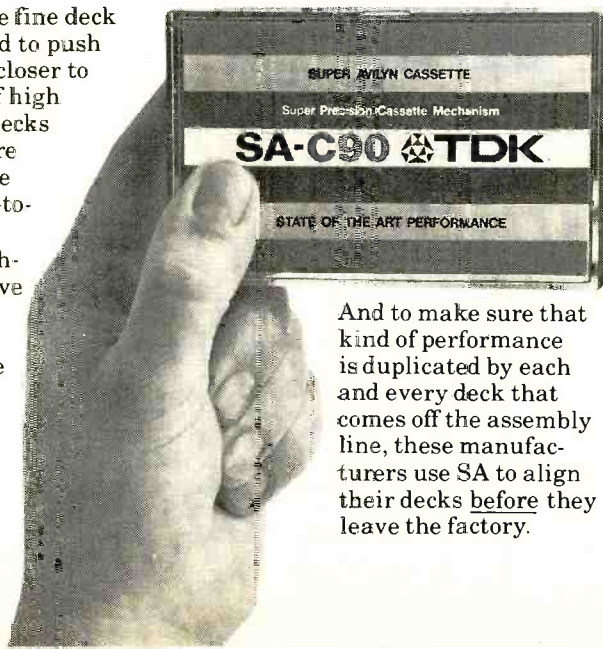
The standard bearers.



The high bias standard.

In the past few years, these fine deck manufacturers have helped to push the cassette medium ever closer to the ultimate boundaries of high fidelity. Today, their best decks can produce results that are virtually indistinguishable from those of the best reel-to-reel machines.

Through all of their technical breakthroughs, they've had one thing in common. They all use TDK SA as their reference tape for the high bias position. These manufacturers wanted a tape that could extract every last drop of performance from their decks and they chose SA.



And to make sure that kind of performance is duplicated by each and every deck that comes off the assembly line, these manufacturers use SA to align their decks before they leave the factory.

Which makes SA the logical choice for home use; the best way to be sure you get all the sound you've paid for.

But sound isn't the only reason SA is the high bias standard. Its super-precision mechanism is the most advanced and reliable TDK has ever made—and we've been backing our cassettes with a full lifetime warranty* longer than anyone else in hi fi—more than 10 years.

So if you would like to raise your own recording standards, simply switch to the tape that's become a recording legend—TDK SA. TDK Electronics Corp., Garden City, NY 11530.

TDK
The machine for your machine.

*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.

CIRCLE NO. 62 ON READER SERVICE CARD

FREE

details... A DIFFERENT KIND OF RECORD CLUB

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

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

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CIRCLE NO. 18 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories



Radio Shack's 1980 Catalog

Radio Shack's 176-page 1980 catalog describes products suitable for audiophiles, electronics hobbyists, and experimenters. Among the new products listed are an AM/FM stereo receiver with microprocessor controls and digital frequency readouts, an open-reel tape deck with full logic control, and a cordless extension telephone. The catalog is available from Radio Shack dealers.



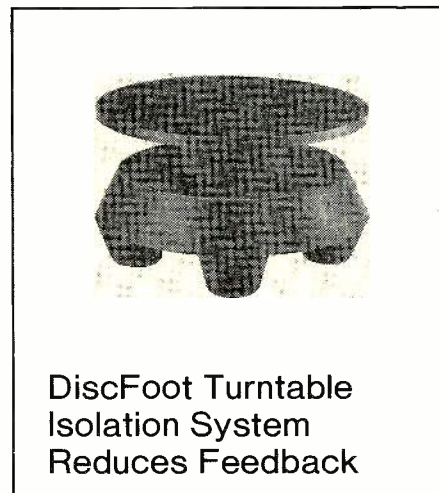
KEF's Kit Speaker Systems

KEF's Model 104aB and Cantata speakers are available in kit form with only the enclosure needing construction. The Model 104aB kit (shown) contains a baffle assembly on which are mounted a mid-frequency/bass driver and a tweeter. The acoustic bass radiator enhances the lower-bass response from an enclosure of modest size without a loss of efficiency. The baffle assembly has a lacquer

finish and is supplied already wired and tested. A detailed instruction leaflet describes how to construct the remainder of the enclosure. The finished Model 104aB has a nominal impedance of 8 ohms and a frequency response of 50 to 20,000 Hz ± 2 dB. The speaker has a minimum amplifier-power requirement of 15 watts and a maximum power rating of 100 watts. Dimensions are approximately 15 1/4 x 12 1/4 x 8 1/4 inches. The Model 104aB should be installed about 8 inches off the floor. Price: \$250.

The floor-standing Cantata system has three drive units preassembled on a baffle. Like the Model 104aB an 8-ohm system, the Cantata has a rated frequency response of 35 to 20,000 Hz ± 2 dB. The maximum power rating of this closed-box speaker is 150 watts. Dimensions are approximately 24 1/2 x 12 1/4 x 13 3/4 inches. Price: \$395. Both kits include speaker-protection fuses and driver-contour controls. For more information write to Intratec, P.O. Box 17414, Washington, D.C. 20041.

Circle 124 on reader service card



DiscFoot Turntable Isolation System Reduces Feedback

Discwasher's DiscFoot turntable-isolation system acts together with existing turntable feet to achieve optimal isolation from airborne acoustic feedback and surface-borne vibration. The system consists of four DiscFoot isolation feet together with furniture-protective sheets, platform caps, and foam damping pads to adapt DiscFoot units to certain turntables. The manufacturer states that the isolation feet of the DiscFoot system, which is said to operate differently from other isolation systems, are able to reduce turntable response to airborne signals between 30 and 200 Hz by as much as 25 dB. They can also provide a 20-dB isolation improvement over other systems for surface-borne vibrations in the 2- to 20-Hz band. Price: \$22.

Circle 125 on reader service card

(Continued on page 18)

YOUR TURNTABLE PROBABLY DESERVES BANG & OLUFSEN.

If you've spent a fair amount of time and money on your audio system, it's likely your turntable is ready for the new MMC 20CL cartridge. You do need a tonearm which can track successfully at one gram, one that has its own resonance well damped, and one which features minimal horizontal and vertical friction. Many of today's higher quality units meet these criteria; more likely than not so does the one you own.

THE MMC 20CL, A REFRESHING PERSPECTIVE IN CARTRIDGE DESIGN.

Critical acclaim has identified the MMC 20CL as an exceptional cartridge. It is. It will not only give you more music from your records, but will insure those records last significantly longer. However, it is not one of those 'astounding breakthroughs' that always seem to be hovering around cartridge design and its promotion. No, while the 20CL does incorporate new thinking, new materials, and new manufacturing methods, it should be reasonably viewed just as it is: simply one step closer to the theoretical ideal. When we introduced the first stereo cartridge to Europe over 20 years ago, we knew that someday we would have the 20CL. Our approach to cartridge engineering tells us that 20 years from now we will have something significantly better.

SINGLE CRYSTAL SAPPHIRE, BECAUSE THE CANTILEVER IS CRITICAL.

Unlike aluminum and beryllium, single crystal sapphire transfers the motion of the stylus tip without adding any measurable vibration, and hence distortion, of its own. The absence of this vibration and flexure in the cantilever means the undulations in the record groove are transferred exactly and generate an exceptionally accurate electrical signal. Music is no longer lost between the stylus tip and the armature. Your records open up and music unfolds with new clarity, definition, and spaciousness.

Give your turntable what it deserves. The MMC 20CL with our new universal connector can be mounted directly on most high quality tonearms.



REDUCING EFFECTIVE TIP MASS, BANG & OLUFSEN'S ENGINEERING TRADITION.

As early as 1958, our research demonstrated that effective tip mass (ETM) was the single most determining factor behind record wear and the loss of high frequency sound information. While some manufacturers are now beginning to realize the importance of this specification, only Bang & Olufsen can look back upon a continuous chain of improvements in this critical area. Today, the MMC 20CL with its Contact Line, nude diamond, ultra-rigid sapphire cantilever, and the patented Moving Micro Cross armature features an ETM value of only 0.3mg.

LOW INDUCTANCE, OUTPUT REMAINS CONSTANT REGARDLESS OF LOAD.

As you know, low inductance in a cartridge is related directly to the strength and constancy of the electrical signal fed to your preamplifier input. What you may not know is that the MMC 20CL has an inductance among the lowest of all high quality cartridges available today. This is due to a design which incorporates an exceptionally powerful permanent magnet and coil cores of very low permeability. This design results in very low cartridge induced noise. Subsequently you receive an excellent signal-to-noise ratio without being required to use auxiliary equipment.

INDIVIDUALLY CALIBRATED.

When you manufacture very high quality cartridges, each unit must be tested—not one out of two, or ten, or twenty, but each one. This is why when you purchase the MMC 20CL, you will receive the test results for your individual cartridge. These results include: output voltage, channel balance, channel separation, tracking ability, and a frequency response graph for each channel.

THIS TIME MAKE THE RIGHT CONNECTION

Bang & Olufsen

Interface:C

Series II It sounds like music.

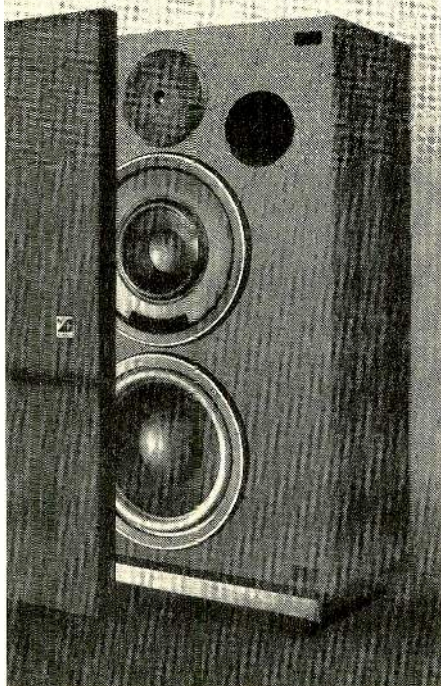
Interface:C Series II is the fulfillment of our six-year association with optimally vented speakers based on the theories of A.N. Thiele — speaker designs first introduced by Electro-Voice in 1973. The Interface:C offers you a unique combination of high efficiency and high power capacity — the only way to accurately reproduce the 120+ dB peak sound pressure levels found in some types of live music.

The SuperDome™ tweeter, an E-V exclusive, and the VMR™ vented midrange driver, the first to apply optimally vented design to mid frequencies, ensure your music is reproduced without the coloration normally found in other high-efficiency drivers. An honest 30 Hz low end totally eliminates the need for expensive subwoofer assemblies.

When you spend \$1,000 for a speaker system, get your money's worth. Audition the Interface:C Series II at your nearest Interface dealer. If you want a speaker that sounds like music, the Interface:C Series II is the one you'll buy.

Ev Electro-Voice®
a gulfair company

500 Cecil Street, Buchanan, Michigan 49107



New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories



Minispeaker Stands From Mesa

□ Mesa Electronics Sales' miniature-speaker stands come in what looks like an oversize film canister. When set up, they accommodate Mini-Mesa 30 loudspeaker systems as well as other miniature speakers with tapped mounting sockets. The stands are 6 inches high, and the tripod-type legs telescope into the canister stems for storage. To double the height, two stands can be screwed together. Price: \$24.95 per pair. For more information, write to Mesa Electronics Sales, Ltd., 2940 Malmo Drive, Arlington Heights, Ill. 60005.

Circle 126 on reader service card



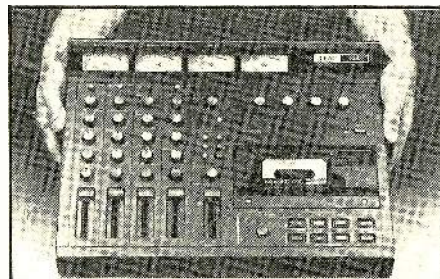
Superex Satellite/1 Add-on Tweeter

□ Intended to augment the high-frequency response of existing speaker systems, the Satellite/1 tweeter module is housed in a smoked Plexiglas enclosure in a truncated-pyramid shape said to minimize diffraction

effects. The 1-inch soft-dome diaphragms used by each of the two tweeters are treated to eliminate breakup as well as unwanted resonances.

The Satellite/1 requires no special power supply and is connected to the terminals of the main speakers. A built-in attenuator permits matching to the main-speaker efficiency. Frequency response of the unit is stated to be 4,000 to 20,000 Hz ± 2 dB, with a passive crossover providing rolloff below that range. Power-handling capacity is 100 watts rms; nominal impedance is 4 ohms, but the module may be used with 16-ohm systems. Maximum dimensions are 10¼ x 8½ x 6 inches; weight is 5 pounds. Price: \$89.95.

Circle 127 on reader service card



Teac's Portable Four-track Cassette Studio

□ Combining a four-in, two-out mixer with a multitrack cassette recorder, the Teac M-144 Portastudio weighs 20 pounds. The mixer has four unbalanced line or microphone inputs, four pan pots, individual bass and treble controls on each track, and switching for track-to-track copying and four-to-two-channel mixdowns. Other facilities include tape-cue monitoring, stereo-return inputs for hooking up external reverb units, and four VU meters. The mixer portion has a 68-dB signal-to-noise ratio and a frequency response of 20 to 20,000 Hz ± 1 dB.

The cassette section runs at 3¼ ips and contains Dolby circuitry for each channel. The unit can record four parallel tracks, two at a time. A pitch control varies the deck's speed by ± 15 per cent. Frequency response is 20 to 18,000 Hz (Dolby circuits on), and the signal-to-noise ratio is 63 dB (weighted, Dolby circuits on). Other features include a two-motor, solenoid-operated transport, punch-in recording, and a servo-controlled d.c. capstan motor. The Portastudio measures 18½ x 4¾ x 14¾ inches. Price: \$1,100.

Circle 128 on reader service card

(Continued on page 20)

Yamaha decks the competition.



TC-720. The 3-head deck for the creative recordingist.

If you like to get involved with your tape recording, this is the deck for you. The bias rotary control and built-in pink noise generator allow you to fine-adjust the deck's high frequency response to best suit the particular tape you are using. The REC LEVEL ADJ controls and REC CAL switch allow you to further adjust the recording sensitivity for proper Dolby[®] NR tracking, resulting in very high signal-to-noise ratio and exceptionally clean sound. The TC-720 also has a unique built-in "real time" echo facility. You can use this to add new dimensions of studio realism to tapes

recorded for playback in both your car and your home. All these front panel features (and more) are backed by reliable, advanced electronics. The Closed-Loop Dual Capstan Drive keeps the tape at an ideal tension for smooth head contact. An advanced Frequency Generator servomotor transports the tape at a constant, accurate speed with very high torque. High-performance, low-noise amplifying circuits are used for the mic and line inputs. All this superior performance is wrapped in a beautiful simulated ebony cabinet.

*Dolby is a trade mark of Dolby Laboratories.



TC-920B. Matching the industry's finest separates in appearance as well as performance.

For unparalleled performance, the TC-920B starts with the heads. Yamaha's unique Pure Plasma Process results in Sendust heads of unparalleled purity, resulting in high permeability of the core for better sensitivity and playback efficiency, excellent S/N ratio, and greatly reduced tape/head wear.

The 920B has a vast array of audiophile features. Like the unique FOCUS switch. In the "SOFT" position, you will attain a more relaxing, mellow quality to the overall listening effect. In the "SHARP" position, you get a more crisply punctuated high frequency sound quality. There's also a fine bias adjust control to match the deck's characteristics to those of the actual tape in use.

A switchable subsonic filter cuts out subsonic interference due to warped records, line hum, etc., and also safeguards your speakers during playback without altering

sound quality. The bar-graph peck level meters have a fast/slow switch to adjust the recovery time of the meters for maximum control over the material you are recording.

The 920B's sleek black cabinetry enhances the high-performance look of this studio quality deck. For maximum convenience an ingenious hinged panel conceals the less often used controls. Everything was done with striking esthetics and total performance in mind.

The TC-720 and the TC-920B will bring the competition to its knees, and will bring you to your feet, cheering. For the full story, visit your local Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer listed in the Yellow Pages. Or write us: Yamaha, Audio Division, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622.

From Yamaha, naturally.

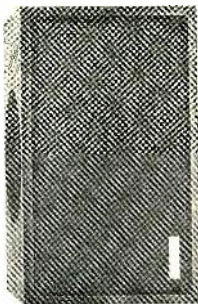
ALLISON™: leaders in acoustic research

CIRCLE NO. 3 ON READER SERVICE CARD

In 1954 Edgar Villichur, by means of his revolutionary acoustic suspension design, demonstrated the advantages of treating the woofer and its enclosure as a system rather than as separate components. Today, nearly all loudspeakers embody this concept. Roy Allison (a professional associate of Mr. Villichur for many years) has now extended the "system" one logical step further, to include the listening room itself. The result is

an improvement by one order of magnitude in the accuracy of the reproduced sound field.

Allison Acoustics manufactures six models of Room Matched loudspeaker systems priced from \$125 to \$441 each. Visit your Allison dealer or contact us directly for literature which includes complete specifications.

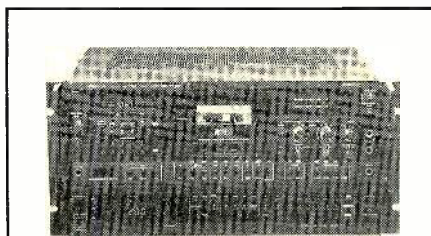


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price varies with shipping distance

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New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories



Optonica Deck Has Many Automatic and Timed Functions

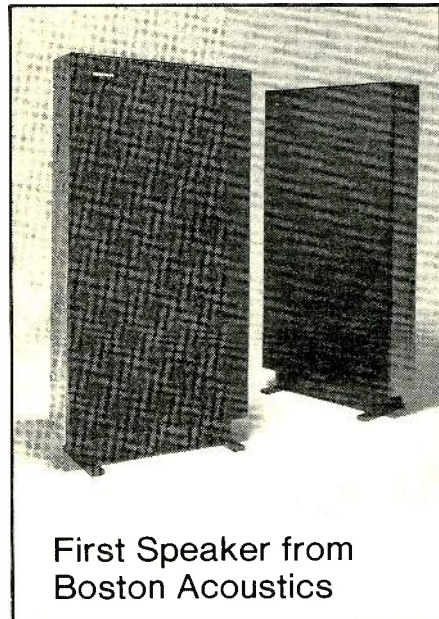
□ Optonica's RT-6905 consists of a cassette tape deck and a combination clock/timer/time-counter unit. An "Automatic Program Music Selector" permits the selection and programming of up to fifteen sections on one cassette for automatic playing in any order. With the auto-repeat control, a program can be repeated up to five times. The auto-repeat function can also memorize the positions of selections on the tape by either manual or automatic entry of the tape-counter numbers. An auto-cue button instructs the deck to find and cue a selection within a memorized program. A four-second blank segment can be inserted anywhere on a recording by an auto-space key to facilitate subsequent program location. And finally, the deck's "Automatic Program Search System" lets the unit skip ahead to the next selection or back to the beginning of the previous selection. All transport functions, including recording and the search system, can be controlled by the deck's infrared remote control.

The lower portion of the unit contains the timer section, which can execute forty-two start/stop programming instructions per week. The timer also controls two groups of a.c. outlets on the back panel. The timer section offers a 12/24-hour liquid-crystal display clock, an elapsed/remaining-time clock, an alarm, and battery-powered memory protection in case of power failure.

The RT-6905 transport employs a dual-capstan closed-loop drive system with a quartz-locked servo-capstan motor and a servomotor for reel driving. It has four heads, including a record/play Sendust-alloy head designed to eliminate bass-contour effects and a sensing head for the automatic functions. The front-panel sensitivity and bias controls accept normal, chromium-dioxide, ferrichrome, and pure-metal tapes. A fine-adjustment control automatically optimizes the bias currents and sensitivity for individual tapes. Additional features include record and playback Dolby circuits, a limiter switch, mic/line mixing, and an output-level control. With metal tape the stated frequency response is 20 to 22,000 Hz. Rated signal-to-noise ratio is 70 dB with the Dolby circuits on. Wow and flutter are rated at 0.038 per cent rms. Di-

mensions of the RT-6095 are 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and it weighs 34 pounds. Price: \$1,800.

Circle 129 on reader service card



First Speaker from Boston Acoustics

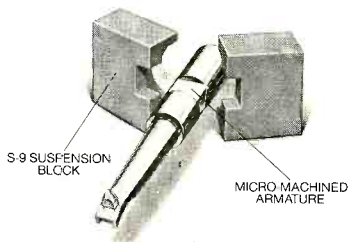
□ The Boston A-200 loudspeaker from Boston Acoustics is a three-way acoustic-suspension design incorporating a 1-inch dome tweeter with ferro-fluid damping, a 4-inch midrange driver, and a 10-inch woofer. Rated impedance of the system is 8 ohms (6 ohms minimum).

The Boston A-200's cabinet is designed to minimize frequency-response irregularities caused by room reflections. It measures 21 x 39 x 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches, dimensions that should reduce destructive room-interference effects in the mid- and upper-frequency ranges. The system is constructed so that in use the woofer is close to both a wall and the floor (the built-in stand provides a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch elevation); room-caused response dips therefore occur out of the woofer's operating range. The unit has a system resonance at 41 Hz with a -3-dB point of 36 Hz. With a 1-watt input, the speaker produces a 90-dB sound-pressure level measured at 1 meter. The minimum recommended amplifier power is 15 watts. Price: \$350. For more information, write to Boston Acoustics, 130 Condor Street, East Boston, Mass. 02128.

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.

You expect to be really impressed by a new cartridge. Otherwise you wouldn't even consider it. What you don't expect is to get the same impressive performance thousands of plays later. But consider this: after 1000 playing hours the new ADC Improved Series cartridges show no audible change in performance! Amazing? You're right. But what's even more



amazing is the new Omni-Pivot System™ that did it. It's a major advance in

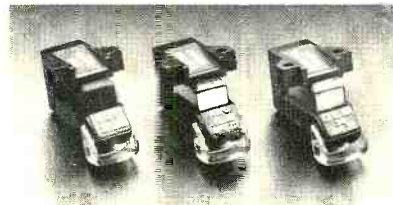
micro technology. There are no unpredictable armature governors, wires or adhesives. Instead each armature is micro-machined to perfectly lock into our exclusive new S-9 high definition suspension block. We think it's a real breakthrough. But you should be the judge.

Look at both the frequency response and stereo separation of a new ADC ZLM Improved cartridge. They're incredible. The new ADC ZLM accurately reproduces even the most complex musical passages with absolute neutrality.

Now compare the same cartridge after 1000 playing hours. See any difference? The ADC ZLM Improved cartridge shows less than a 1dB change in performance. That means you won't hear any difference.

Now the good news gets even better. The Omni-Pivot

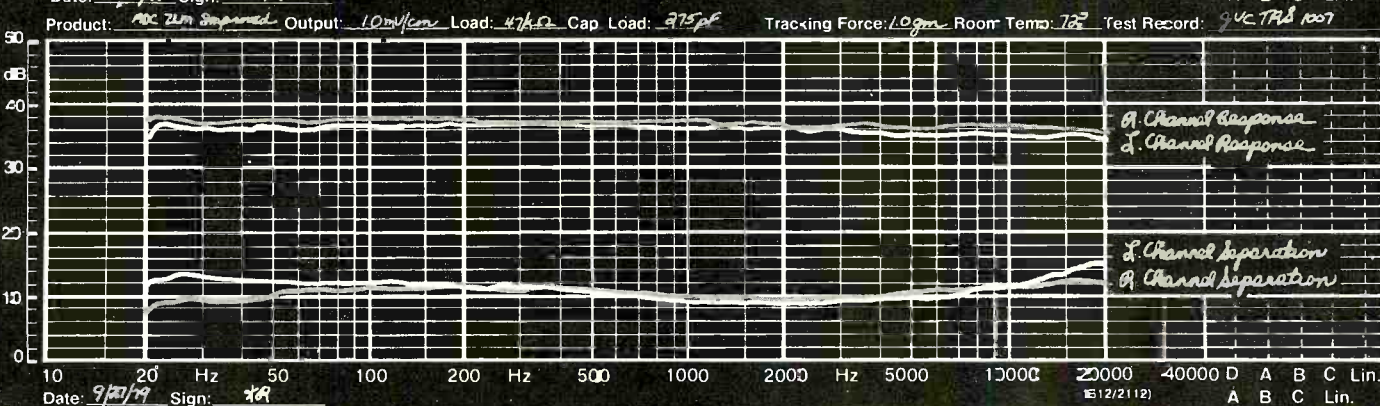
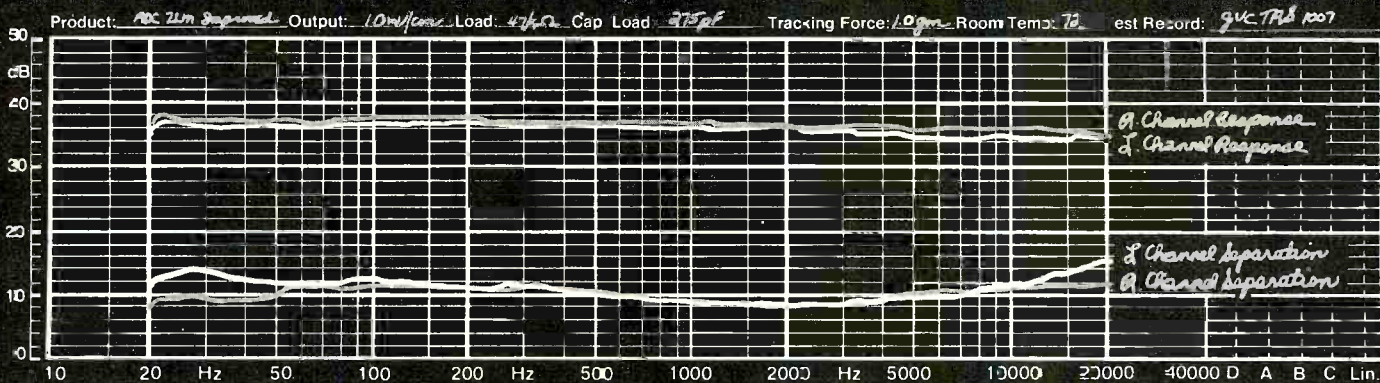
System™ comes in a wide range of new ADC Improved Series cartridges. The ZLM, XLM MKIII and MKII, and QLM-36 MKIII. All featuring new snap-down stylus protectors.



If you already own a fine ADC cartridge, the Omni-Pivot System™ is yours for just the price of a replacement stylus.

Listen to any new ADC Improved cartridge. After you've heard us, we'd like to hear from you. Write Audio Dynamics Corporation, Pickett District Rd., New Milford, Ct., 06776, or call our toll-free number (800) 243-9544.

BEFORE YOU BUY A NEW CARTRIDGE TAKE A LOOK AT A GOOD USED ONE.



A BSR COMPANY



**"THE
MISSING LINK
IN STEREO"**

"The Koss K/4DS Digital Delay System turns your room into a cabaret, theatre, auditorium or concert hall."

"From the beginning, Koss has been involved in creating unique listening environments to enhance the enjoyment of recorded music. With the invention of Koss stereophones, we created a uniquely private and singularly personal listening environment.

"Now, we are delighted to utilize our in-depth experience in acoustic and psycho-acoustic phenomena in the development of a home listening environment that is virtually a perfect replica of the actual environment in which the live performance took place. In other words, we've brought home not only the orchestra but your seat in the concert hall as well.

"Through the magic of the latest computer technology, Koss engineers have developed a 16,384 bit computer circuitry system that has been programmed to permanently store, in digital format, four ideal live performance rooms: a club, a theatre, a concert hall and an auditorium. Thus, with the K/4DS hooked into your system, all you have to do is simply turn the selector switch to the setting that corresponds to the most natural environment of your recorded material. The K/4DS will automatically delay the recorded material to conform with the optimized ideal room stored in the computer and play it back through a set of secondary or ambience speakers located at the sides of your listening room. Believe me, what you'll hear is the most life-like and realistic illusion of a live performance you've ever heard.

"To further match, as accurately as possible, the acoustics of a live situation, the K/4DS

features a special cross channel circuitry that delays and channels portions of the right audio signal to the left ambience speaker and vice versa. In addition, portions of the delayed signal are recirculated through the system again and again to simulate the actual decay rate that occurs during a live performance.

"Unlike most delay systems on the market, we've designed the Koss K/4DS with its own built-in amplifier. You need only add a pair of speakers that operate adequately up to 8,000 Hz to transform your current stereo system into an unbelievably exciting sound experience.

"For versatility, we've provided a speaker selector with three

settings: K/4DS 4th dimension sound, stereo only, and stereophones only. There's also an EQ switch to enhance the bass response of your ambience speakers and to roll-off the bass response below 50 Hz in order to eliminate possible distortion. And, of course, the K/4DS wouldn't be Koss without dual stereophone jacks, special built-in phone amps, and a 4th dimension to stereo comparator switch.

"Our new Koss K/4DS Digital Delay System has been carefully designed to offer the best possible in-home live sound experience at an affordable price. To achieve this goal, we've made the K/4DS an easy-to-operate, factory optimized digital delay system. You won't need to be an audio engineer to recreate at home the realism of the live performance.

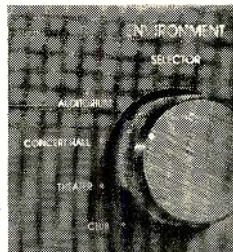
"I urge you to hear the Koss K/4DS Digital Delay System at any of these exclusive dealers. And to take advantage of our special \$20 introductory discount. Never since the introduction of stereo has a product so dramatically increased the listening enjoyment of recorded music. It's truly a remarkable achievement in sound reproduction and one I know you won't want to miss."

John C. Koss
KOSS CORPORATION



Suggested Retail \$500.

Write c/o Virginia Lamm, for more information about the Koss K/4DS Digital Delay System or about our world famous line of stereophones and loudspeakers.



Here's the ticket to a \$20 saving.
Available exclusively at these audio dealers.

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Take this ticket to your audio dealer for \$20 off the purchase price of a Koss K/4DS. This offer expires Jan. 31, 1980.

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CIRCLE NO. 33 ON READER SERVICE CARD

By Larry Klein



Technical Director Klein scheduling future equipment test reports. The gentleman peering over his shoulder is Claude Debussy.

Tropicalizing Equipment

Q. *I'm about to move to the tropics and I've been told that electronic equipment has to be specially treated to avoid fungus problems. How would you suggest I go about it?*

ARNOLD SILVER
Portsmouth, Me.

A. I'm indebted to reader Max Noll for the following suggestions based on three years of experience in Micronesia.

"Obviously, air conditioning is the best general solution to any tropics-related electronic problem. Not only does the gear run cooler (a problem in the tropics), but the lower humidity virtually eliminates the prime problem: corrosion. And it also slows down the growth of algae. If you can keep the relative humidity at 65 per cent or below, very few difficulties should be encountered.

"If air conditioning is not practicable, then more specialized protection is called for. The equipment should be disassembled to allow access to all circuit boards and controls, and the boards should be sprayed with two light coats of clear lacquer (preferably one with a fungicidal ingredient). Be sure to mask off controls, pulleys, dial cords, trim adjustments, and test points carefully. After the lacquer dries, remove the masking tape and apply liberal amounts of contact cleaner (the type that leaves a silicone residue) to all potentiometers and switches. Although this sounds like a complex job, a competent service technician should be able to perform the task in an hour or so. You may have to recalibrate or realign some critical circuits after the treatment.

"Power in some areas of the tropics is subject to varying frequency and voltages, so turntables and tape decks having synchronous motors driven directly from the power line should be avoided unless some method of regulating line frequency is provided. The servo-feedback type of motor or direct-drive machines should be okay.

"After a few days of high humidity you may notice that your speakers sound mellow. Some paper cones tend to hold moisture, and, while this in itself shouldn't damage the speaker, it might be advisable to fuse them with somewhat smaller fuses than you would normally use to prevent dangerous overdrive of the softened cone.

"As a final note, you should change all of your audio connecting cables to the gold-plated, corrosion-resistant type and clean all connections frequently with isopropyl alcohol—

including all contacts inside the phono-cartridge shell."

I can only add that it would also be a good idea to seek out a local electronic technician or TV repairman, people who have probably been dealing with such problems for years. They may have additional comments and recommendations for specific sprays, lotions, and other preventative poultices.

Damp Speakers

Q. *Do you know of any research on the effect of humidity on loudspeakers? I've noticed that on days of high humidity my speakers sound muddy, and on low-humidity days they sound crisp and clear. Is what I'm hearing a result of some humidity-dependent change in the cones of the speakers or what?*

ARTHUR G. NIEHAUS
Jersey City, N.J.

A. As is my custom when asked a technical question for which I have no ready answer, I turned to some friendly experts. Engineers from Acoustic Research, ADS, and Al-



lison Acoustics all agreed that—at least theoretically—moisture could have an effect on the sound quality of some loudspeakers because their diaphragms (cones) might absorb and release moisture as the ambient relative humidity changes. This could change the mass, breakup modes, or hardness of the cone, and all of these can affect the high frequencies. Specifically, humidity would affect

the upper end of the woofer response in a two-way system and the upper end of a mid-range's response in a three-way system. However, most loudspeaker cones are treated to resist moisture, and in any case, the effects are not likely to produce the gross response disturbances reported by Mr. Niehaus.

Two of my experts suggested that perhaps the temperature rise usually associated with high humidity might produce the perceived response change. Some cones manufactured with synthetic materials vary their properties with temperature, and the elastomeric materials used for stylus suspension in phono cartridges are notoriously temperature sensitive. So perhaps it's the heat, not the humidity...

I also checked one other possibility with my consultant on the human hearing mechanism. I asked whether the ear itself is responsive to changes in humidity. He replied that although the conductive properties of the air and possibly the absorptive properties of the room furnishings change with humidity, the human ear's performance does not. He stated that in none of the hundreds of studies of human hearing, which involved close control of all relevant variables, was ambient humidity specified as a factor. There's no question, my expert opined, that if humidity had a measurable effect on hearing, its level would be specified as part of the standard procedure. In addition, none of my consultants seem to think that the conductive/absorptive properties of the air itself (which does change with humidity) were responsible for my reader's perceived effect.

So where does that leave us? I'm not sure. It was suggested that a crisp bright day was psychologically more conducive to pleasant listening than a damp dreary day, but I'm inclined to think that explanation is, so to speak, all wet. And there's the matter of atmospheric pressure...

I would welcome some additional thoughts on the matter, but I'm issuing fair warning that letters containing comments about sand-filled baffles producing muddy sound when wet, or that our novice listener is wet behind the ears, will be automatically disregarded. Not that I want to water down any reader's contribution, or throw a wet blanket over the proceedings, but...

Dolby De-noiser

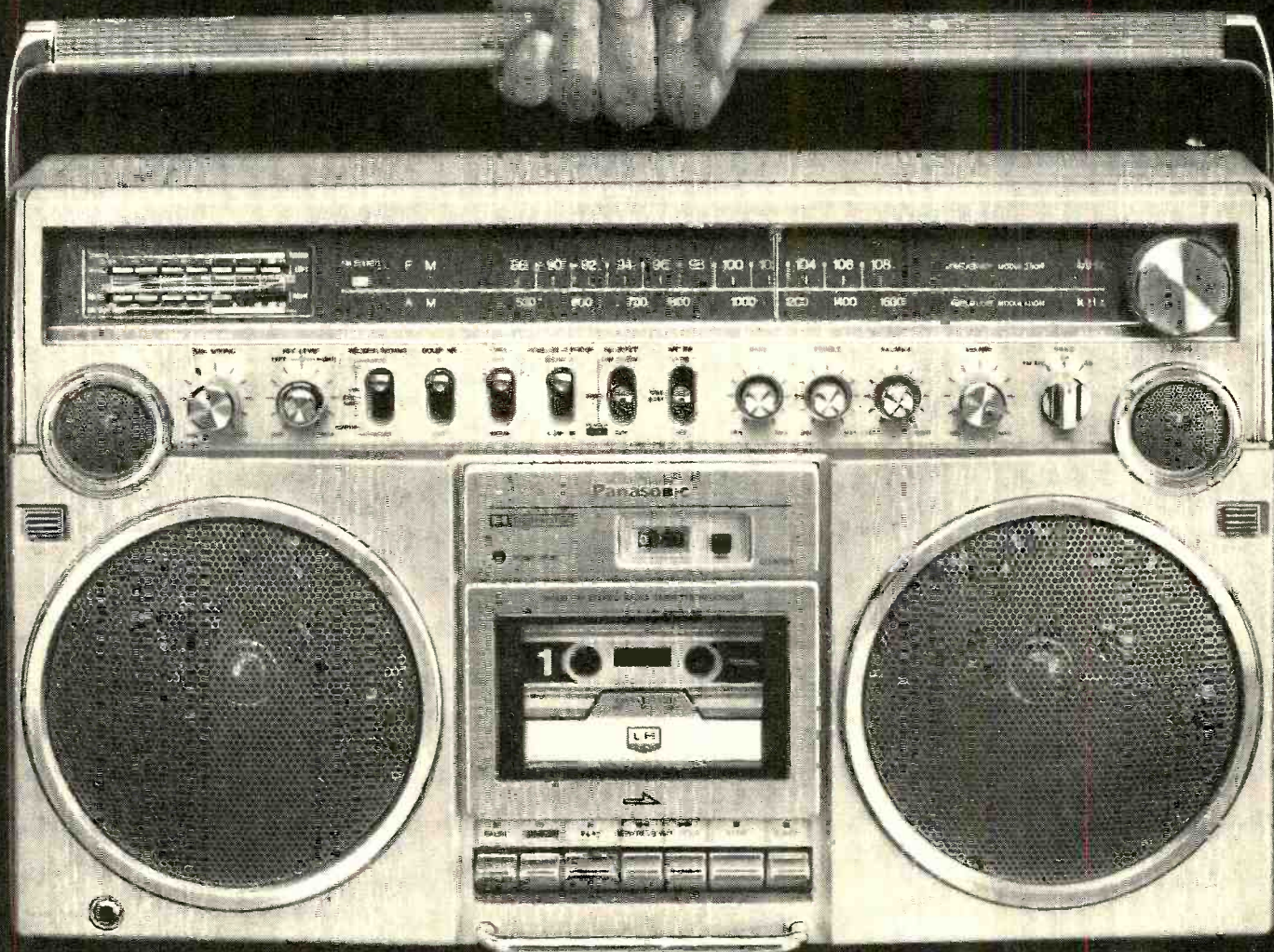
Q. *I have several old tapes that have been recorded from FM and records. Much of this music contains hiss and other strange noises. Would a Dolby unit installed in my stereo system (or a new deck with Dolby circuits built in) get rid of enough of this noise to make it worth the cost?*

GEORGE CULPEPPER
Pittsburgh, Pa.

A. Old-timers among my readers will forgive me if I give this perennial question another go 'round; I still get two or three letters a month asking it. No, Mr. C., the Dolby system can do nothing about noise that is *already* in the program material. The only thing Dr. Dolby has ever claimed his system can do is to cut back the noise added to the program material by the tape-recording process. The Dolby circuits cannot—repeat—cannot remove noise from program material if that noise was present in the signal *before* the tape was Dolby "encoded."

This Panasonic stereo has one component your component system doesn't have.

A handle.



AM/FM STEREO CASSETTE RECORDER

The best stereo sound used to come only from components. Until Panasonic put a handle on it. Now great sound carries everywhere with the Panasonic RX-5500 AM/FM stereo cassette recorder, a super portable that packs the features found in many component systems.

Like in-car-scale tuning that helps you pinpoint FM stations even on a crowded dial. For even more accuracy, there's a 14-stage LED tuning meter with separate right and left level channel indicators.

The 5500 also has component-like sophistication in the cassette section. Starting with the Dolby[®] Noise Reduction system. To a three-position tape selection that lets you handle the three most popular types of tape (CrO₂, FeCr and normal). There are two built-in, sensitive condenser microphones for great live recordings. And with mike-mixing you can record along with your radio favorites. While the digital tape counter, Cue and

Review and locking pause control add up to effortless recording and playback.

The 5E00's speakers are just as remarkable, with two powerful 6½" woofers and two 1¼" tweeters. And with separate controls for treble and bass, you can tailor the sound to your taste. There's even a variable sound monitor that lets you adjust the volume of the speakers without affecting your headphones. Or vice versa.

And all of this incredibly sophisticated sound travels just about anywhere because it operates on batteries (not included) and on any of the 4 international voltages. Even from your car with an optional adapter (RP-952).

The RX-5500. It's part of the line of Panasonic "Stereos with a Handle." Pick one up.

*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories.

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just slightly ahead of our time.

CIRCLE NO. 65 ON READER SERVICE CARD

TEAC TODAY.

You're looking at four new machines that have more in common with data recorders than audio recorders. Together they are called the X-Series. And they bring a totally new kind of technology to the open reel format.

Each X-Series transport is an instrumentation mechanism. For 15 years, this TEAC design has stood the grueling test of time in computer installations where dependability is worth millions.

The basic configuration is closed-loop dual capstan. It's extraordinarily quiet, stable and precise. Wow & flutter is very low. Speed accuracy very high.

Three DC motors drive the tape. They're used to keep changes in motor temperature to a minimum under different loads so constant torque is maintained.

Our Magnefloat flywheel assembly, a completely new concept, uses magnetics rather than mechanics to eliminate problem-causing

springs and pressure plates. Axial variations between the tape and capstans are prevented so proper tracking is assured. The result is highly accurate audio reproduction even after years of hard use.

The X-Series transport maintains ideal tape-to-head contact. Audible drop-outs, level and frequency losses are absolutely minimized. Frequency response is wide and flat. And signal articulation is unusually clear.

The brain behind the transport is our LSI control chip. It eliminates the need for mechanical relays so transport control is faster, more positive and reliable. The LSI also lets us provide full motion-sensing in the X-10 and X-10R.

Within the X-Series, machines have been specifically designed for bi-directional record and playback. Perfectly symmetrical head stacks (6 heads in all) assure top performance in

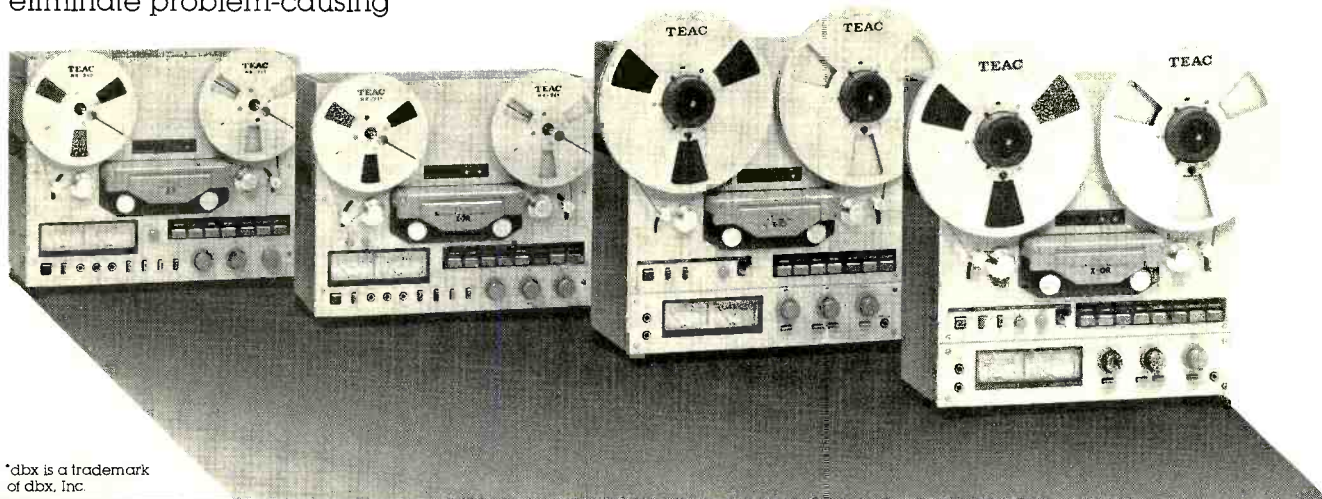
both directions. There's automatic reverse and repeat. And two-way cue monitoring.

New audio electronics accompany this new transport technology. Record and playback amplifiers are quieter and completely free of audible distortion. The sound is cleaner, more faithful to the source. The fidelity is unsurpassed.

An option previously available only on our professional recorders can now be added to any X-Series machine. Called dbx I,* this noise elimination system adds 30dB to the already high S/N and over 10dB of headroom to give you master-quality recordings.

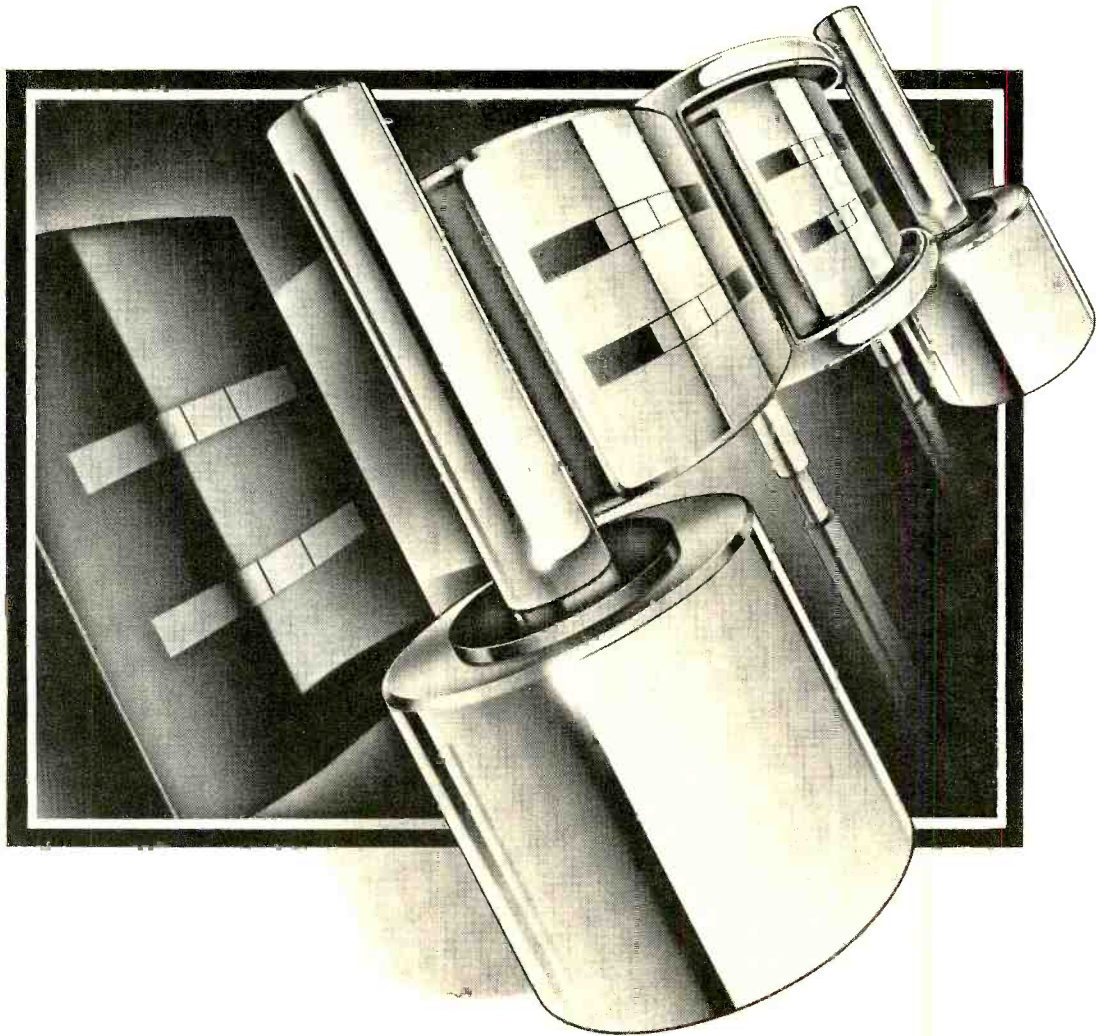
If your audio perception is critical, your listening standards high, audition an X-Series recorder. The performance is flawless. The sound peerless.

TEAC.



*dbx is a trademark of dbx, Inc.

THE X-SERIES.



CIRCLE NO. 63 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Sound has color. All kinds of wild and way-out and wonderful color.

That's why Sony is introducing audio tape with Full Color Sound.

To reproduce every shade, every tone, every tint of color that's in the sound itself.

Sony tape with Full Color Sound has such a full frequency spectrum it can actually record more sound than you can hear.

If your tape recordings don't sound the way this ad looks, switch to Sony audio tape. And be up to your ears in bright brilliant beautiful color.





***Sony Tape.
Full Color Sound.***

illinois audio



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- SONY STR-V4 RECEIVER
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WRITE US
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CIRCLE NO. 28 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Audio News Views and Comment

THE FM SQUEEZE

THERE is growing concern in audiophile circles about the potentially adverse effects of a recent proposal that the Federal Communications Commission reduce the minimum FM-channel separations from the present 200 kHz to 150 kHz or even 100 kHz. The possibility of such a change has become a matter for public discussion because the FCC has been asked to consider a number of proposals for increasing the number of available station allocations. The proposals are based on laudable and reasonable estimations of society's needs and goals. In practice, however, they could pose a dilemma: while benefitting a large number of the listening population, some changes would also work to the detriment of another large, overlapping segment of listeners.

The development of minority businesses in general, and minority ownership of broadcast facilities in particular, is regarded as an important goal by the Carter administration. Minorities comprise over 18 per cent of the U.S. population but own less than 1 per cent of the nation's 9,000 broadcast stations. Under the existing FCC station-allocation rules, there is little room for new stations. Of the few unallocated station assignments, most are for low-power stations in rural areas. On the other hand, except in the rural south, minority populations are concentrated in or near large cities. In the cities, the only way to get control of a radio station is to buy an existing facility. But few stations are for sale, and those only at high prices. An obvious solution to this dilemma is the creation of "air" space for new stations by changing the allocation rules.

In the case of AM, one proposal before the FCC is to reduce the station spacing from 10 to 9 kHz, as most of the rest of the world did in 1978. This change would not affect the prospects for—nor the desirability of—AM-stereo broadcasting which the FCC has been studying for the past three years.

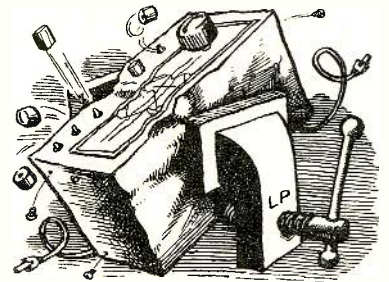
With FM, the FCC received a formal request for allocation-rule changes last spring from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), an office of the Department of Commerce. Technical support for the NTIA request has two aspects: the ability to calculate interstation interference and the improved performance of today's tuners.

WHEN the present station-allocation rules were established in 1963, a relatively simple set of formulas was used to guarantee minimal interference among stations on the same or adjacent frequencies. Since that time, complete topographic maps of the country in digital-computer format have become available, as have computer programs for predicting signal strengths as a function of local terrain and transmitter characteristics. Also since that time, FM-receiver performance has improved tremendously, especially in the area of interference rejection. So the NTIA has asked the FCC to take advantage of the state

of the art in computer and tuner design and to make three changes in the allocation rules:

- Authorize a greater variety of transmitter classes. In much of the nation, existing rules provide for Class C (high-power) stations and Class A (relatively low-power) stations but don't permit *medium*-power stations.
- Modify transmitter separation requirements in accordance with local terrain. Under the present system, in order to prevent interference, two Class C stations must be at least 180 miles apart if they are on the same frequency and 65 miles apart if they are separated by 0.4 MHz in frequency. Terrain variables could permit a relaxation of these rules.
- Permit the use of directional transmitter antennas to control signal coverage and potential interference between stations.

By instituting these changes, and by using computers to predict probable interference patterns, the NTIA claims that many new FM stations could be allocated within the existing FM band without degrading broadcast quality, precluding the introduction of quadrasonic FM, or causing serious interference problems. Asking the FCC to act upon these proposals "expeditiously," the NTIA also suggested that the FCC should "undertake a longer-range inquiry into several other techniques" for increasing the potential number of stations. These long-range proposals include: modification of the revised mileage-separation rules (relying on the excellent selectivity of modern tuners to resist the potential interference); further liberalization of the mileage-separation requirements in those areas where the populations served by a new station would substantially outnumber the population affected by the resulting adjacent-channel interference; and, finally, reduction of the spacing between FM channels from 200 kHz down to 150 or even 100 kHz. It's this last proposal that holds the most potential for damaging FM sound quality.



The Institute of High Fidelity, in an official letter of protest to the FCC, cited several objections to a reduction in FM-channel spacing. Their reservations are based on the possible deterioration of sound quality and on problems of receiving-equipment obsolescence and compatibility.

(Continued on page 32)



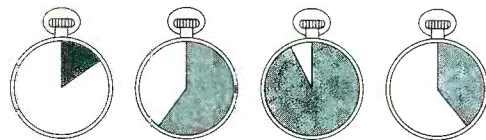
INDEPENDENT TEST REPORT: KENWOOD HAS BETTER TRANSIENT RESPONSE THAN PIONEER, TECHNICS OR YAMAHA.

Recently, we asked an independent testing laboratory to measure Kenwood's new Hi-Speed™ receiver against the competition. Each one "off the shelf" in unbroken factory cartons.

The results were impressive, if not surprising.

The Kenwood receiver outperformed comparable models of other brands in both rise time and slew rate, the same new specifications that are used to

RISE TIME (5 MICROSECOND CLOCK)



KENWOOD KR-7050 .85 μ S	PIONEER SX-980 3.0 μ S	TECHNICS SA-700 4.60 μ S	YAMAHA CR-1040 2.00 μ S
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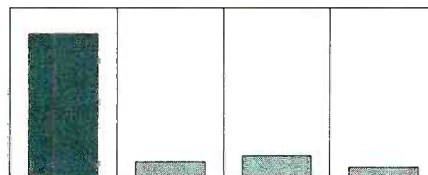
measure a receiver's ability to handle complex musical signals.

Of course, the Kenwood receiver had one unfair advantage: Kenwood's exclusive Hi-Speed circuitry. Hi-Speed allows an amplifier section to react faster to changes in music to minimize audible transient intermodulation distortion.

In the laboratory, this shows up as superb specs and an almost perfect square wave on an oscilloscope.

In your home, you'll hear superior clarity and definition with excellent imaging. For example, you'll be able to identify an individual singer in a vocal group.

SLEW RATE MEASUREMENT RESULTS



KENWOOD KR-7050 200 V/ μ S	PIONEER SX-980 20 V/ μ S	TECHNICS SA-700 29.4 V/ μ S	YAMAHA CR-1040 10.7 V/ μ S
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Your Kenwood dealer can show you the entire line of Hi-Speed receivers.

Because if you're going to buy a receiver, why not go with the best performer?

HI-SPEED™

Hear the future of high fidelity

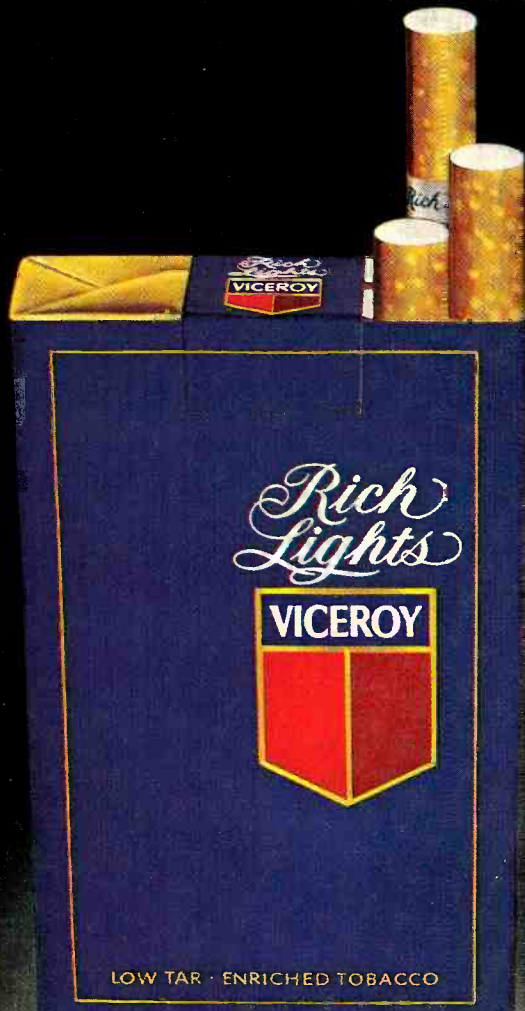
KENWOOD®

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. / Test data available upon request. Rise time and slew rate measured by slope at zero crossing method.

Rich Lights

from Viceroy



The rich low 'tar.'

Kings and 100's.

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

9 mg. "tar", 0.8 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

⊗ The selectivity characteristics of existing tuners are designed to cope with present channel spacings. With a more crowded FM dial, interference between adjacent stations would be a more common problem, particularly in urban and suburban areas.

⊗ Many of the most advanced FM tuners are designed with circuitry to tune only frequencies which are even multiples of 100 kHz. This is true not only of most digital frequency-synthesizing tuners but also of many tuners with quartz-locked automatic fine-tuning circuits. But with the proposed channel spacing of 150 kHz, stations could be located not only at frequencies like 90.9 and 91.3 (the present pattern) but also at 90.75 and 91.05 MHz—in the cracks between tuning increments. New tuners could easily be designed to fit the new channel spacing. In fact, the integrated circuits already exist for such tuners sold in Europe. If the proposals pass, however, many existing tuners would be at least partially obsolete.

⊗ In order to minimize adjacent-channel interference, transmitters and receivers would both have to be designed for reduced bandwidth. This would preclude adoption of discrete quadraphonic FM and might prevent the use of SCA subcarriers with stereo transmitters. (SCA transmissions ride "piggyback" on the normal FM signal and are used for commercial-free background music for business—restaurants, for example—and, in some areas, for "talking-book" services for the blind). Furthermore, and most important to high-fidelity enthusiasts, use of a narrower channel bandwidth causes increased distortion, increased noise in stereo reception, and reduced stereo separation. These effects are presently evident in test reports on tuners with selectable i.f. bandwidths. Although a reduction in the transmitted bandwidth would reduce the audible damage, such a procedure involves either a reduction in modulation level (with a consequent increase in noise) or a reduction in audio frequency-response range below the present 15 kHz.

BECAUSE the FCC's goals for FM broadcasting include providing for diverse programming and broadcasting services of local origin to as many communities as possible, it is likely that the FCC will eventually adopt one or more of the NTIA's recommendations. Since a reduction in FM channel spacing is clearly the alternative with the most adverse consequences, it is likely to be implemented only as a last resort—if the other proposals prove to be impracticable or do not sufficiently meet what is perceived to be the need for more FM stations.

It is the custom of the FCC to act slowly in making rule changes (stereo AM being one example) and to act very slowly when controversy is involved. At present, a fact-finding study has been commissioned to measure a representative sample of modern FM receivers and to determine the effects of reduced channel spacing on audio performance. Any decision to alter FM frequency allocations is likely to be at least five years away. The change would have to be preceded by a long period of studies and public hearings, and—in view of the opposition that would be generated—it might never happen at all. So if you are thinking about buying a digital or quartz-locked tuner, you needn't worry about its rapid obsolescence.

—Peter Mitchell

Inside, most speakers look pretty much the same. Drivers, baffle board and enclosure. Which is why some manufacturers make so much noise when they come up with anything new.

But in the midst of all the uproar, Kenwood's engineers have quietly developed five important design improvements you won't find anywhere else.

1. Separate front baffles. We mounted the mid and high frequency drivers on a separate baffle board. That keeps the woofer's vibrations from interfering with the mid and high frequencies. So you can get solid bass without losing any of the vocals.

2. Cross-over coil positioning. We found that two coils next to each other on a crossover network can cause signal leakage from the midrange to the woofer. By isolating

the coils away from each other, we eliminated cross-talk and muddy midrange.

3. Thermal/shock cone construction. We manufacture our own wood-pulp cones by applying our exclusive heat/shock treatment. This creates a cone that is more rigid than the usual pressed type for low distortion, yet light enough to deliver much better efficiency.

4. Midrange stabilizer. To get the nasal sound out of the midrange frequencies, where most of the music is, we introduced a center support system and a 3-point cone suspension. To you that means clear sound imaging and better transient response.

5. Power linearity. The frequency response of most speakers deteriorates at high power levels. By using a computer, we designed the LS-1200 to deliver the same linear

frequency response throughout its power handling range. From solo flute to full orchestra.

Listen to the LS-1200 at your Kenwood dealer and discover that, even at low listening levels, you get exceptional depth, clarity and fidelity. At high volume, it delivers the kind of tonal quality you normally expect from a live performance with a clean, punchy bass and clear, open highs.

That's one more reason the LS-1200 is simply too good to keep quiet.

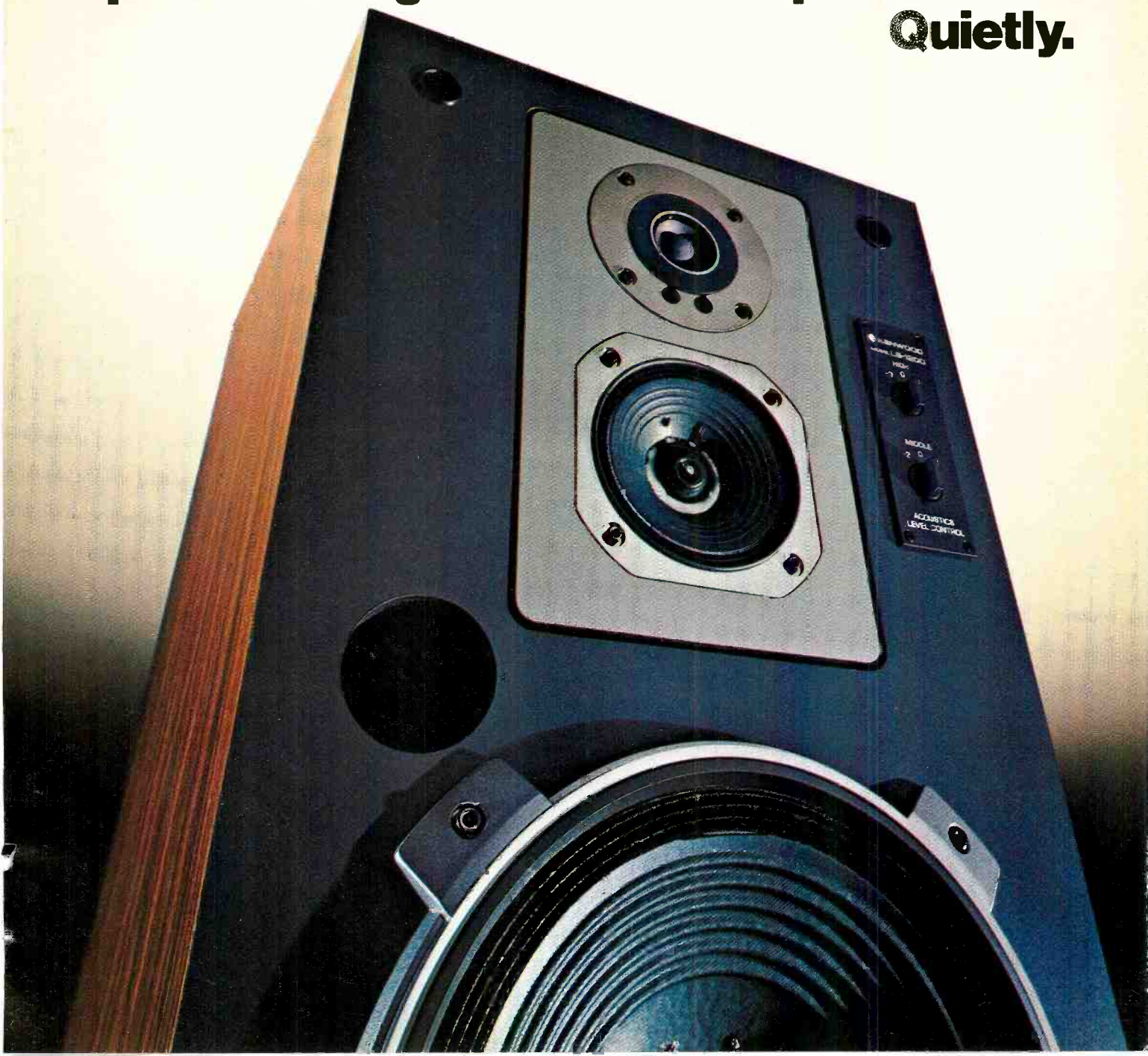
Your speaker's reputation should be as good as your receiver's.

 **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.

Speaker design takes five steps forward.

Quietly.

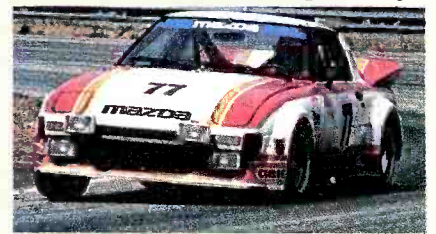


Just one look is all it takes to appreciate the exceptional value of the Mazda RX-7 versus Datsun 280ZX or Porsche 924.

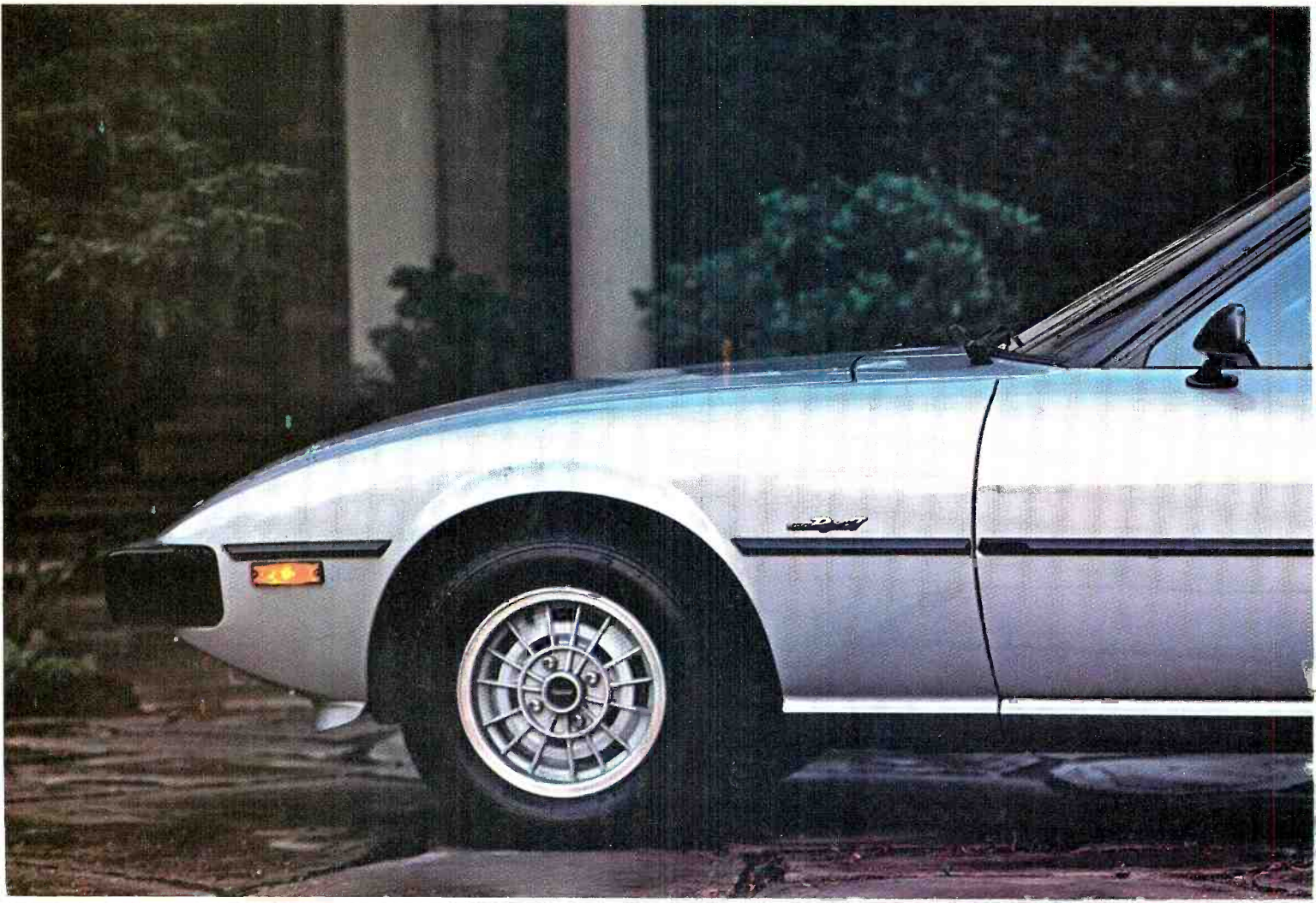
As remarkable as the Mazda RX-7 is on its own merits, it looks all the better when compared with the competition. Because the sleek, aerodynamic RX-7 is virtually everything you could want in a refined sports car—at an almost unbelievable price.

It can reach 0-50 in 6.3 seconds. Its inherently compact rotary engine is placed behind the front axle, for ideal weight distribution and superb handling.

In auto racing, a specially-



The 1980 Mazda RX-7 GS \$7995*



prepared RX-7 won its class at the Daytona 24-hour race. Another RX-7 set a world speed record at Bonneville.

17 EST. mpg **28** EST.** hwy mpg

The incredible smoothness of the rotary engine makes the RX-7 a quiet sports car. All this performance from a car that can attain excellent gas mileage on the open road.

But one of the most remarkable aspects of the front mid-engine RX-7 is that it offers infinitely more than performance. It also provides extraordinary comfort.

So if you know what you want in a sports car, and you don't want to pay a king's ransom to get it, take a look at the RX-7 GS or S Model.

The beautifully-styled, high-mileage, high-performance sports cars from Mazda.



You're also going to like the looks of RX-7 GS standard features.

- AM/FM stereo radio with power antenna
- Side-window demisters
- Cut-pile carpeting
- Tinted glass
- 5-speed
- Tachometer
- Styled steel wheels
- Steel-belted radial tires
- Front and rear stabilizer bars

- Ventilated front disc and finned rear drum brakes with power assist
- Electric remote hatch release
- 3-speed automatic transmission, air conditioning, aluminum wheels and sun roof available as options.

*Manufacturer's suggested retail price for GS Model shown. S Model \$7195. Slightly higher in California. Actual prices established by dealers. Taxes, license, freight, optional equipment and any other dealer charges are extra. (Wide alloy wheels shown \$275-\$295 extra.) All prices subject to change without notice.

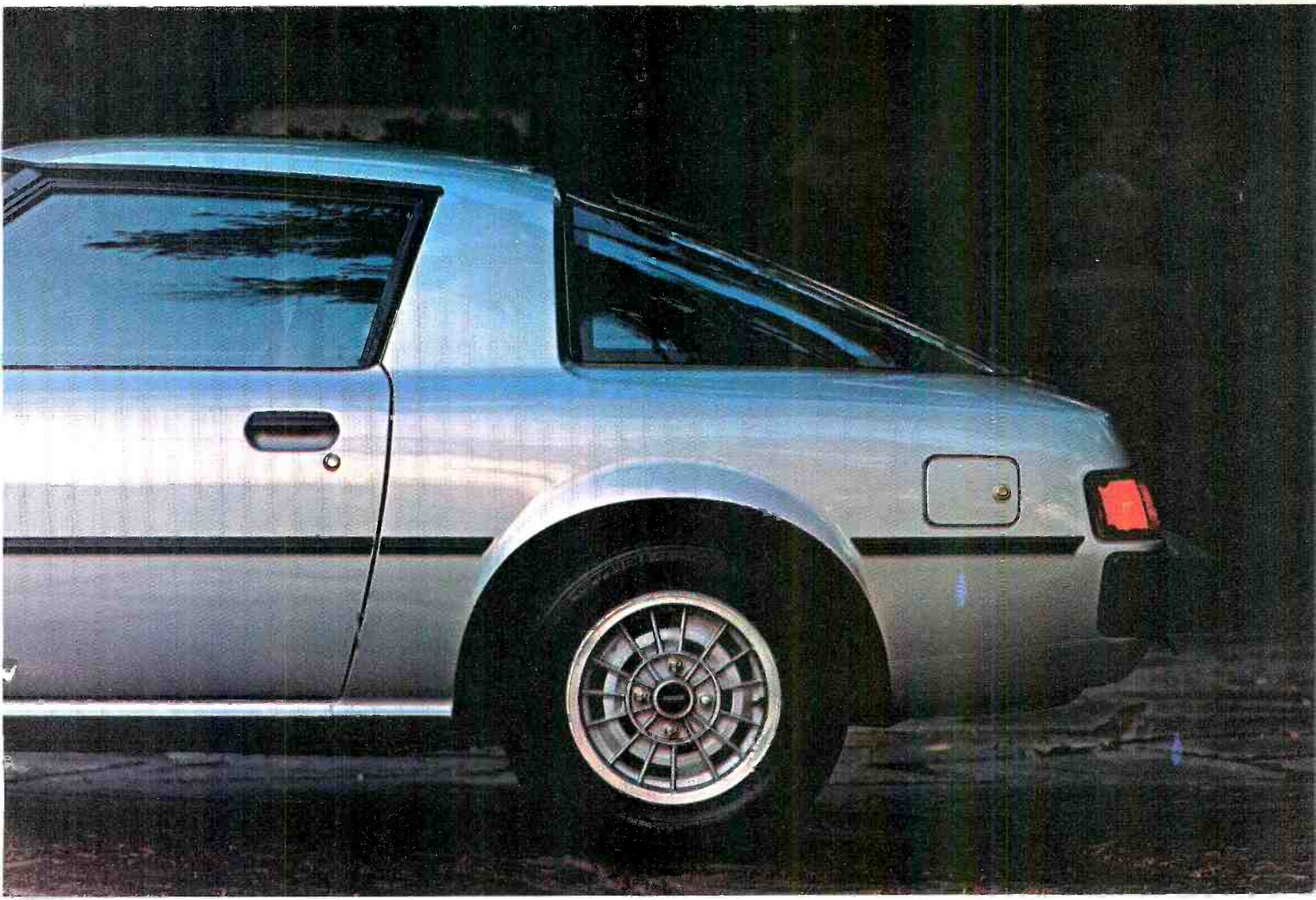
**EPA estimates for comparison purposes for GS Model with 5-spd. trans. The mileage you get may vary depending on how fast you drive, the weather, and trip length. The actual highway mileage will probably be less. California, 16 estimated mpg, 27 estimated highway mpg.

Mazda's rotary engine licensed by NSU-WANKEL.

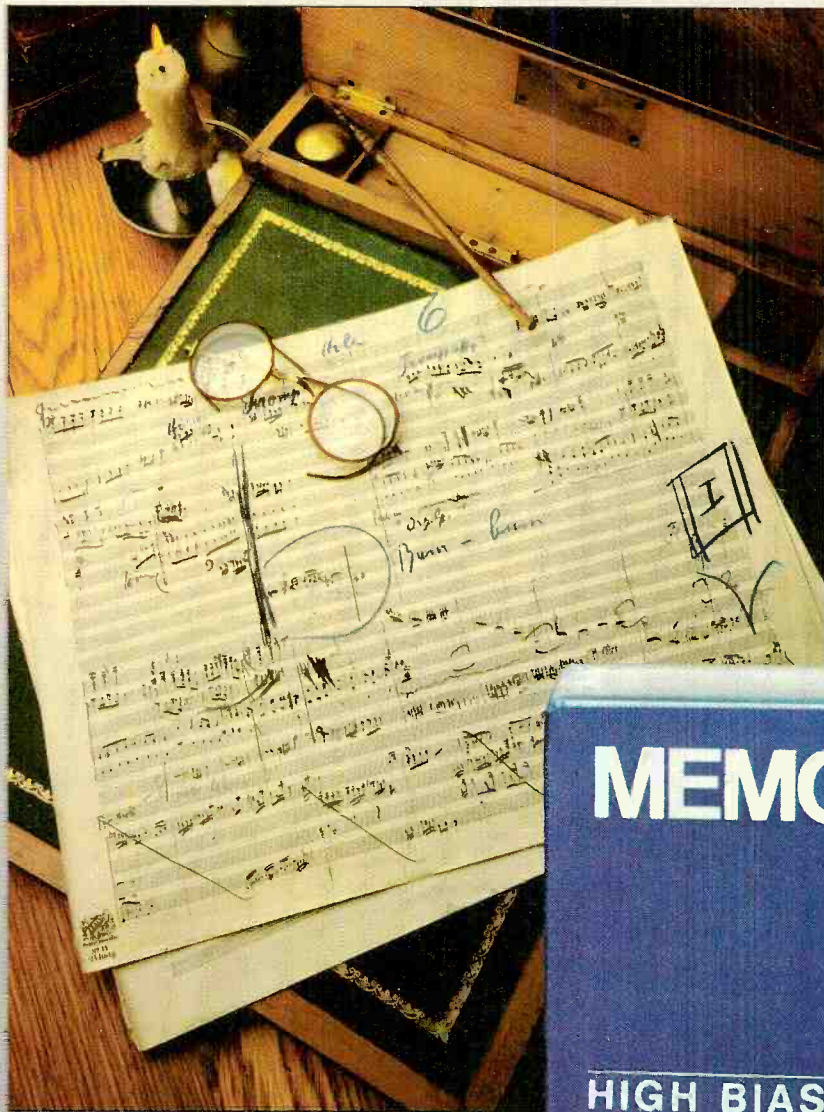
MAZDA

The more you look,
the more you like.

CIRCLE NO. 40 ON READER SERVICE CARD



WHICH HIGH BIAS TAPE WINS WITH MAHLER'S FOURTH SYMPHONY?



Original manuscript sketch for the first movement of Gustav Mahler's Fourth Symphony. Courtesy of The Newberry Library, Chicago.

Choose eight measures of Mahler's Fourth that are really rich in the high frequencies. The type of passage that high bias tapes are designed for.

Record it on your favorite high bias cassette, using the Chrome/CrO₂ setting. Then again on MEMOREX HIGH BIAS.

Now play back the tapes.

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

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

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

MEMOREX

Recording Tape and Accessories.
Is it live, or is it Memorex?

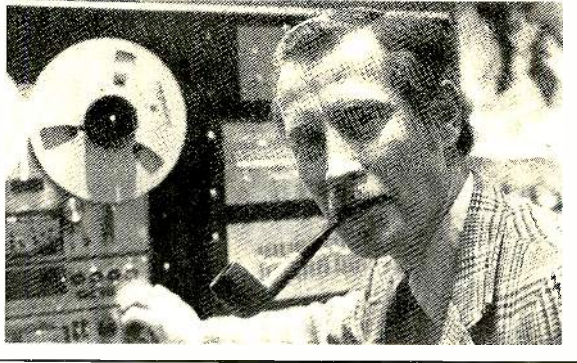


CIRCLE NO. 42 ON READER SERVICE CARD

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Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



Mixing Bias/Equalization

Q. *If I were to record a "high-bias, 70-microsecond" tape with its proper bias level but with 120-microsecond equalization, wouldn't I be able to increase the high-frequency headroom and frequency response of the tape at the cost of a 4- to 5-dB loss in signal-to-noise ratio?*

NEIL LAFFOON
Paragould, Ariz.

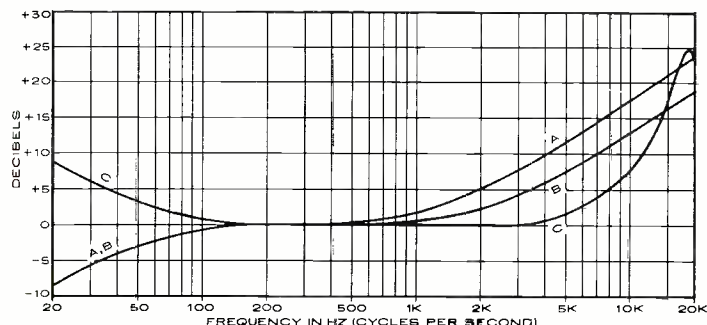
A. While there's a fairly common misunderstanding embodied in this question, it nonetheless homes in on an important point about equalization and signal-to-noise ratios. Let's clear up the misunderstanding first. The "70-microsecond" and "120-microsecond" descriptions of equalization do not apply to the *record* process at all. Rather, they are descriptions, in a kind of engineering shorthand, of two standardized *playback* equalization curves. In conjunction with the output from the playback head, these two standardized playback curves impose a frequency-response correction ("equalization") on *everything*—signals *and* noise—that comes off the tape. In the figure below, curve A shows the overall effective treble boost defined by the standard 120-microsecond ("ferric") playback equalization, and curve B does the same for a 70-microsecond ("CrO₂") equalization. Throughout most of the treble range, curve A is 4 to 5 dB higher than curve "B." Since both curves boost tape hiss as well as signal, if a tape can be recorded using only the 70-microsecond curve B in order to achieve flat frequency response, it will be that much quieter than a tape requiring curve A.

Now, however, consider curve C in the figure. This is not a standardized curve, but rather one typical of the *record* equalization that might be applied to either a 120- or a 70-microsecond tape, assuming that each tape was recorded with its proper bias. The bass boost shown simply complements the bass rolloff common to curves A and B and thus restores flat bass response. It is important to recognize, however, that the record treble boost shown in curve C must be applied to the audio signal *before* it hits the tape so that even with the additional effective playback treble boost shown in curves A or B the overall frequency response will be "flat." Curve C shows an enormous treble recording

pre-emphasis that must be added to the post-emphasis of the playback section in order to make up for the inherent high-frequency losses incurred at normal cassette speeds.

As reader Laffoon rightly surmises, it is curve C that drives cassette tapes into magnetic saturation at high frequencies. By using curve-A playback equalization on a tape designed for curve-B playback equalization, it would be possible to lower the amount of treble pre-emphasis shown in curve C. This would give 4 to 5 dB more high-frequency "headroom" at the cost of that much more tape hiss—assuming that you can get at the innards of your deck and modify curve C accordingly. It would not, however, necessarily yield a wider frequency response, for, as the illustration shows, the manufacturer has plainly given up all hope of extending frequency response beyond approximately 18,500 Hz because the pre-emphasis curve starts to roll off there.

Frankly, I'd be inclined to doubt that the trade-off between a little bit more headroom at the very highest frequencies and a lot more hiss throughout the more audible mid-high frequencies would be worth it. Time was when just that kind of tinkering around with established standards was part and parcel of being a genuine audiophile. But today it's become as obsolete and hopeless a task as trying to build your own loudspeakers from scratch in order to "improve" on the professionally designed products. On the other hand, if you look at the trade-offs involved in the current 15-inch-per-second playback curve, combined with the record pre-emphasis needed with modern open-reel tapes, it would seem that you could . . .



Curve A shows the standard playback equalization for ferric tape, curve B that for CrO₂ tape. Curve C shows a typical recording equalization.

New "Metal" Machines

Q. *Since erasure of metal tapes is what "pre-metal" cassette recorders cannot do, can you (1) record such tapes using the FeCr bias position and (2) erase the tape with a bulk eraser?*

R. D. KELLER
Sacramento, Calif.

A. Sorry, no go! In the first place, to record metal-alloy tape requires substantially more bias current (and a record head that will accept such current levels without saturating) than is produced in *any* bias position of "non-metal" decks. Second, I've tried several of the "bulk erasers" commonly used by audiophiles and have found that they don't have an adequate erasure capability for metal tapes. A professional bulk eraser designed for 1/2-inch (or wider) videotape would undoubtedly do the job, but just as a new generation of tape decks is necessary for metal tape, so is a new generation of audiophile bulk erasers. The one I'm using is a prototype model, from R. B. Annis Co., which draws 15 amperes at 230 volts!

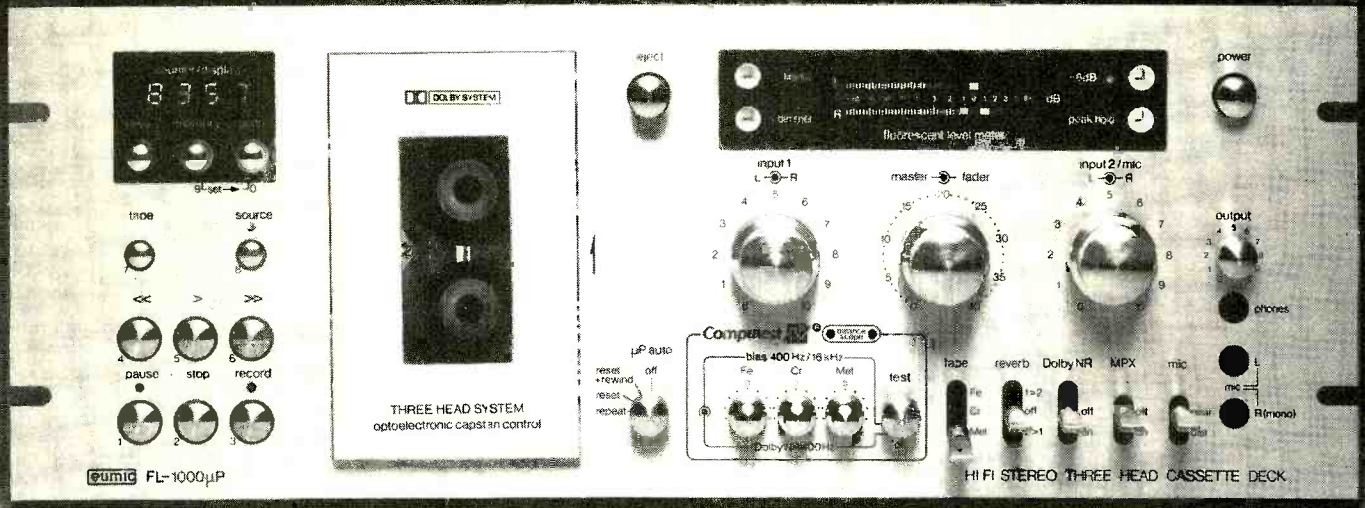
Dolby Confusion

Q. *Will playing back a Dolby-processed cassette without Dolby decoding (a) harm the tape or (b) damage the deck?*

SHAWN E. PORTER
Cato, N.Y.

A. Happily, the answer to both of your questions is a resounding "No." Of course, if you play a Dolby-encoded tape without the proper decoder you will not gain the advantage of the 8- to 10-dB noise reduction the system can provide, and you may find that the sound seems a little too bright. But you can usually "tone down" the treble sufficiently with the treble control on your receiver or amplifier to compensate for this brightness. On the other hand, most cassette decks today that do not have built-in Dolby decoders (most of those sold for automobile installation, for example), have rather poor high-frequency response to begin with. On such a cassette deck you may actually *prefer* listening to the Dolby-encoded signal without a proper decoder!

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!



Calling the FL-1000 a cassette deck is like calling a Ferrari transportation.

The owner of a Ferrari knows his car is much more than transportation. It'll get you there, but with a difference. A difference that comes from years of dedication to building precision machinery with an emphasis on performance and pleasure.

Similarly, anyone who uses the new Eumig FL-1000 immediately recognizes how much better it is—and how much more it does—than any other cassette deck. Much like the Ferrari, it is built for total satisfaction, to give top performance and instant response, where the competition just... works.

The FL-1000 has the most sophisticated microprocessor ever used in a cassette deck. It's so sophisticated, in fact, that it can be directly interconnected with most popular minicomputers through its standard IEEE buss for data storage and retrieval or automated music programming. The microprocessor provides logic-perfect tape transport supervision, plus automatic programmable stop and repeat. There's even an automatic searching mode to select any programmed point on the tape just by punching digits on the keyboard. The tape counter is purely electronic, with digital readouts, and the motor automatically slows when it approaches your selection and stops at the perfect point so you hear only what you programmed.

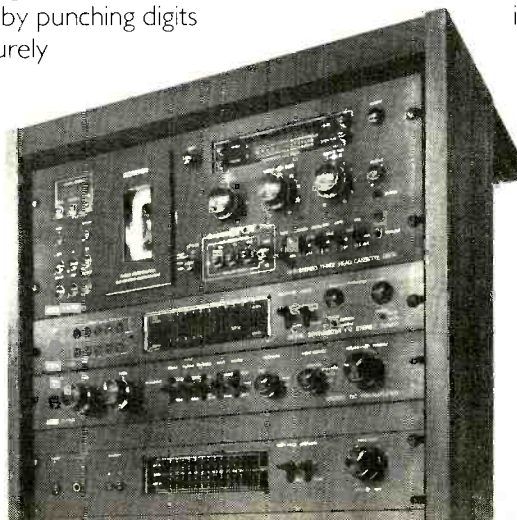
Our CompuTest automated test system and 400Hz and 14kHz test oscillators help you set optimum bias, equalization and Dolby™ levels for any tape, including the newest pure metal formulations. And our superb switchable limiter circuit—absolutely

undetectable in operation—assures distortion-free recordings with any tape or sound source.

Instead of clunking solenoids, the FL-1000 uses two electronically controlled motors for mechanical functions and to move the tape. The capstan motor incorporates Eumig's unique optoelectronic control. Instead of heavy flywheels and cumbersome belts, we use a low-mass disc with 2500 precisely photo-etched lines that are read by an optical sensor at the rate of 15,000 pulses per second. Speed correction is instantaneous, and wow and flutter are kept to an insignificant 0.035%.

Naturally the Eumig FL-1000 has three heads and double Dolby for true monitoring. And added flexibility is provided by two mixable stereo inputs with a cross fader, reverb without patch cords, fixed and variable outputs, fluorescent level meters with peak hold, and even a read-out that says "END" when the tape is finished.

If you want to understand and appreciate a fine car, a test drive is best. It's much the same with the FL-1000; so visit your Eumig dealer to audition the FL-1000 and the companion tuner, preamp and power amp. To set the right mood, make the trip in a Ferrari.



eumig®

Eumig (USA) Inc.,
Lake Success Business Park, 225 Community Drive,
Great Neck, New York 11020, (516) 466-6533

CIRCLE NO. 24 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



• Measurements in the Twilight Zone •

RECENTLY, while testing an FM tuner, I was reminded once again (as if I needed such reminding!) that the readings of any laboratory instrument must be taken with a grain of salt, so to speak. Such measurements must never be accepted as *absolutely* accurate, no matter how carefully made.

In the present case, several of the measured characteristics of the tuner differed markedly from those made on the same unit by its manufacturer. In particular, the stereo channel separation, given as better than 45 dB, measured only 30 to 35 dB. Although 30 dB or so is ample for excellent stereo, the discrepancy between my measurements and those of the manufacturer was disturbing.

One possible explanation could be an incorrect phasing of the 19-kHz pilot carrier in the test signal (an error of only 2 degrees would degrade the separation significantly). A check of the pilot-carrier phase in our signal generator showed it to be accurate.

The manufacturer then took the tuner back to his service laboratory and checked its separation with two other signal generators (both of the same type as ours, Sound Technology 1000A). Although there were the expected slight differences in separation measured with the two units, both gave readings close to 50 dB. Still, when the tuner came back to us, it could do no better than 35 dB.

At this point, the manufacturer's technician adjusted the tuner's internal separation control for best results with *our* signal generator. To no one's great surprise, the readings now matched those obtained with his own equipment. This left us as much in a quandary as before, since the manufacturer's test equipment is also carefully checked and maintained in proper condition. When the tuner is finally returned to him, it will be re-

checked with his equipment. If the separation is then only 35 dB, we will know that one of us does not have the correct pilot-carrier phase adjustment in his signal generator. If it is 50 dB, we will still have an unexplained mystery on our hands!

This sort of problem is not that uncommon, considering the "outer-limits" complexity of today's high-fidelity components and the instruments used to measure their performance. There are other apparent discrepancies that are not easily explained, some of them suggesting that our measurements are taking place in the "twilight zone" instead of here in the real world.

CONSIDER the case of phono-cartridge distortion. There are no standards for specifying or measuring cartridge distortion, and there are no universally accepted test records for that purpose. This does not deter many manufacturers from claiming impressively low distortion levels for their cartridges, usually with no explicit description of the test method or identification of the record used.

I therefore feel free to use any means at my disposal for measuring, or trying to measure, phono-cartridge distortion. There is little chance of correlating my findings with any manufacturer's ratings, so all I can do is obtain comparative data on the cartridges I test. Having done so for many years, I am beginning to believe that this is as fruitless an endeavor (as far as making precise correlations between the figures obtained and the quality heard is concerned) as measuring ultra-low levels of amplifier distortion.

A distortion measurement requires a signal source whose inherent distortion is a small fraction (no more than one-tenth to one-fifth) of the distortion expected from the equipment

under test. It matters not what distortion is claimed or expected from a phono cartridge, since there is no way of knowing what the distortion in the test record is. In fact (and unlike an electrical test signal), record distortion does not even *exist*, any more than the test signal itself exists, until the groove has been traced by a stylus and a cartridge output has been generated.

Consider the intermodulation-distortion measurements that I make on cartridges using signals of 400 and 4,000 Hz mixed in a 4:1 amplitude ratio and recorded at a number of different peak velocities. This is closely analogous to a conventional amplifier IM measurement and in fact is made with the same type of IM analyzer.

Anyone watching this measurement being made would (quite rightly) question the whole process. At the highest velocity levels, there may be actual mistracking, producing a clipped waveform not unlike that produced by an overdriven amplifier. In this case, there is no doubt that the distortion is large (20 to 30 per cent are typical readings) and that the cartridge's tracking ability has been exceeded.

At some lower velocity, the waveform usually *looks* perfectly good (IM distortion cannot be judged merely by viewing the waveform, as harmonic distortion of a sine-wave signal can). The IM analyzer, however, may read 6 to 10 per cent. Even worse, the meter pointer is swinging wildly under the influence of record warps and eccentricities that constantly vary the effective stylus tracking force and thus the distortion. The readings may be different from the left and right channels or when the two are paralleled (mono). Any one of these connections may give the lowest distortion reading—but not necessarily at all the test-signal levels on the record! (Overleaf)

Tested This Month

Tandberg TD 20A Open-reel Tape Deck • Audio-Pro TA-150 AM/FM Stereo Receiver
Dual Model 506 Record Player and Dual/Ortofon ULM 55E Phono Cartridge
Electro-Voice Interface:C Series II Speaker System • MXR Dynamic Expander

It is easy to understand why the results of this measurement are rarely publicized by cartridge manufacturers. There is, of course, an art to making the measurement, and it takes a considerable amount of arbitrary judgment, based on one's experience, to interpret it. (A similar situation exists with regard to flutter and rumble measurements on turntables, in which stationary meter pointers and unambiguous readings are almost unheard of.) I choose the cartridge-output connection that gives the lowest distortion reading on the highest-velocity test band that does not cause mistracking, and I maintain the same connection throughout the test. The tone-arm anti-skating is set for minimum distortion. The lowest reading of the swinging meter pointer is taken as the distortion in each case. If all of this looks like I am bending over backward to favor the cartridge, it is because I am.

Even so, the numbers obtained are horrifying to anyone used to the minuscule distortions generated by amplifiers and tuners. If the distortion gets down to about 2 per cent at the lowest velocities, the cartridge is doing a pretty good job. Readings as low as 1 per cent occur only rarely. It is not uncommon for the distortion level to remain at several per cent over most of the test record. The situation is very similar with tape recorders. (Did you ever wonder why no one talks about tape-recorder IM distortion measurements? If you tried to make one, you would understand!)

You might wonder why anyone even bothers with cartridge IM measurements. Partly because they are easy (they take a few minutes at most) and partly because we are intrigued by the apparent total lack of correla-

tion between the numbers we get and the quality (and price) of the cartridge. There must be some reasonable explanation of this situation, but so far it has eluded us. An inexpensive cartridge may have an IM reading of 1 to 2 per cent, whereas another costing several times as much may also have several times as much distortion. *To top it off, none of this has the slightest connection, so far as we can determine, with anything actually heard from any of these cartridges!*

The real problem is not so much the measurement of distortion as the correlation of the measurement with some audible effect. It is always possible to devise a test that will reveal differences between products that appear to be identical when tested by more conventional means. This, in my opinion, is the sort of "cart before the horse" approach that has resulted in the vigorous promotion of the various transient intermodulation distortion (TIM) and related types of measurements.

If some amplifiers really sounded inferior in ways not explainable by previously known tests, it certainly would make sense to determine the reasons for the difference, and find ways to measure it. Obviously, one must be able to measure performance in order to modify it intelligently. Without (I hope) stirring up the muddy TIM waters again, I cannot but wonder if the reverse was done here. The extensive analysis of TIM and its causes led to various methods of measurement, no one of which has any wide acceptance. Now, under the influence of the promotion of presumably TIM-free amplifiers coming from several manufacturers, we are expected to *hear* a wondrous improvement. And, human nature

being what it is, if someone expects to hear something, particularly after paying good money for it, it is likely that it will be heard.

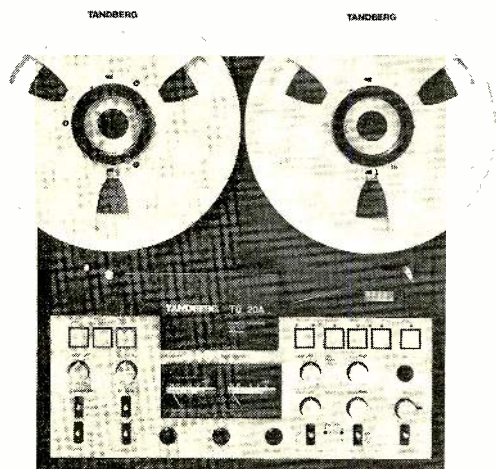
The most fascinating aspect of this whole business is that the recorded program material to which most of us listen is, for good technical reasons, quite incapable of causing TIM distortion in any reasonably well-designed amplifier. One has to design an inferior amplifier deliberately, and operate it under unreasonable conditions, or contrive a special input signal, in order to produce TIM.

I started out to describe some of the strange and mysterious things that one encounters in trying to measure the performance of audio components. At this point, I can see that to do justice to this subject would require a sizable book, and one probably of interest only to my fellow hi-fi test lab workers at that.

THE message to the reader, however, is simple: do not place your ultimate faith in the numerical ratings of a product—whether they are provided by a manufacturer or by an independent reviewer—particularly when those ratings describe phenomena taking place in a range that can be neither heard nor reliably measured. This "twilight zone" of audio performance, where anyone can hear anything at any time for unexplained reasons, is the natural habitat of purely subjective critics. Rational creatures enter such domains at their own risk. However, when the *measured* figures reflect technical performance that relates to qualities and quantities that the ear *can* hear, such measurements are useful as general guides to audible performance.

Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



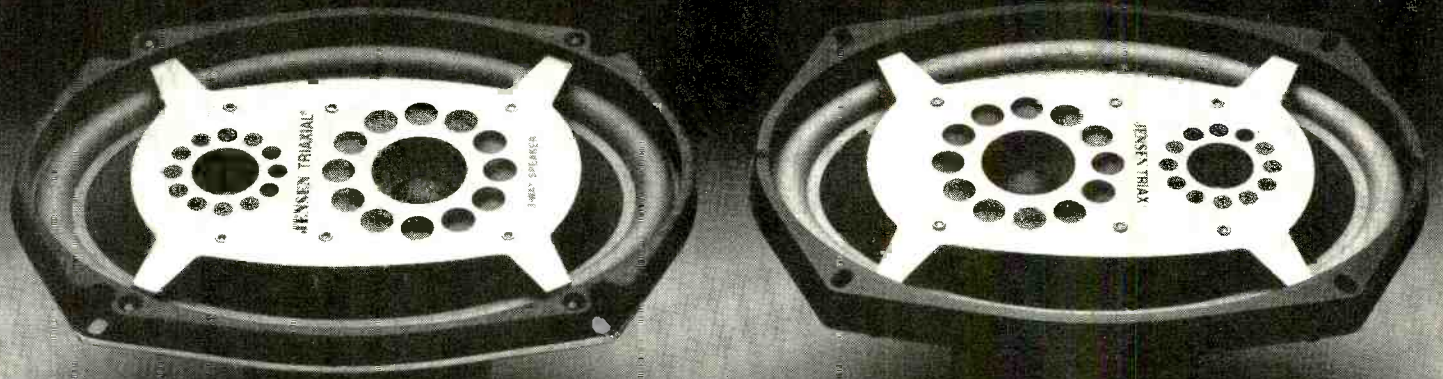
Tandberg TD 20A Open-reel Tape Deck

TANDBERG has been making high-quality open-reel recorders for more than a quarter of a century, and its latest model, the TD 20A, lives up to its distinguished heritage. Capable of handling reel sizes up to 10½ inches in diameter, it is available in either quarter- or half-track stereo formats and with either 15/7½-ips or 7½/3¾-ips speed options. The unit we tested had the quarter-track heads and 7½/3¾ speeds used by most home recordists.

A total of four motors is used in the TD 20A. Each of the two reel tables is directly connected to its own drive motor for fast winding and takeup torque, and an a.c. synchronous motor is belt-coupled to the capstan. The fourth motor replaces the customary solenoids in controlling the brake bands and the rubber pressure-roller mechanism. This produces very quiet, smooth operation, in contrast to the usual sharp "clack" of solenoids. The reel motors receive a short electrical impulse when the stop button is pressed after threading the tape, taking up any slack. Spring-loaded tension arms on each side of the head assembly are similarly used to

(Continued on page 42)

Same looks. More guts.



The speaker on the left is the best selling, most popular car stereo speaker ever. The Jensen Triaxial® 3-way speaker system.

The speaker on the right is the one that's replacing it. The new Jensen Series I Triax.® The one with even higher efficiency. More power. More guts.

Sure, they look alike. But the similarity ends there.

Higher power handling.

Believe it. The new 6" x 9" Series I Triax is rated at 50 watts continuous average power, compared to 30 watts for the old Triaxial. Which means it'll take more power—more heat—and more abuse from high power car stereo units, without sacrificing musical accuracy at the expense of high volume levels.

Why can it take more power? Because of its new, larger oven-cured one inch voice coil. It offers 66% greater power handling for superior durability. And because the special piezoelectric solid state tweeter is virtually indestructible, yet sensitive to every musical nuance.

The efficiency expert.

Like all of the new Jensen Series I speakers, the Triax is more efficient than ever, thanks to our special high compliance cones with Flexair® rim suspension, 4 Ohm impedance and new, more efficient motor structures. Which translates to very high efficiency that lets

More improvements.

The Series I Triax features an improved, 20-ounce ceramic magnet structure for deep, well-defined bass. Also a new, rugged gasket for a tight acoustic seal. Black zinc chromate plating insures corrosion resistance.

We also designed it to be easier to install than the old Triaxial with the stud-mounted grille.

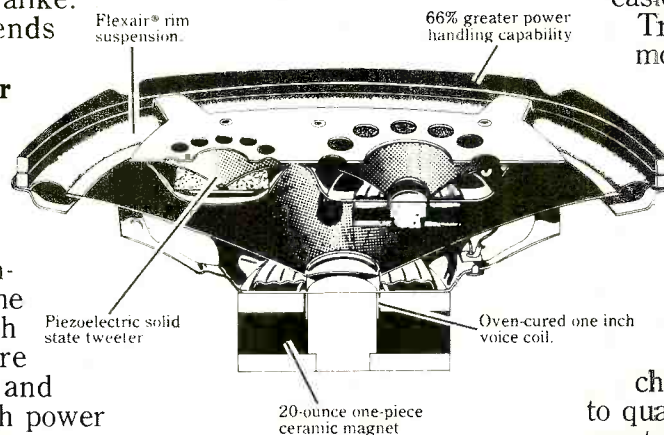
Some things don't change.

There are some things we just couldn't improve. Like the idea of an individual woofer, tweeter and midrange balanced for accurate sound reproduction.

We also haven't changed our commitment to quality. And to back it up, we steadfastly support our full line of Jensen Series I speakers with an excellent one year limited warranty.

"But they still look the same..."

You say you still can't see any difference between the old Triaxial on the left and the new Series I Triaxial on the right. Maybe not. But you sure will be able to hear the difference. And after all, that's the guts of the matter.



Jensen Series I speakers play louder with less power for smoother, distortion-free music in your car.

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The thrill of being there.

4136 N. United Parkway
Schiller Park, Illinois 60176

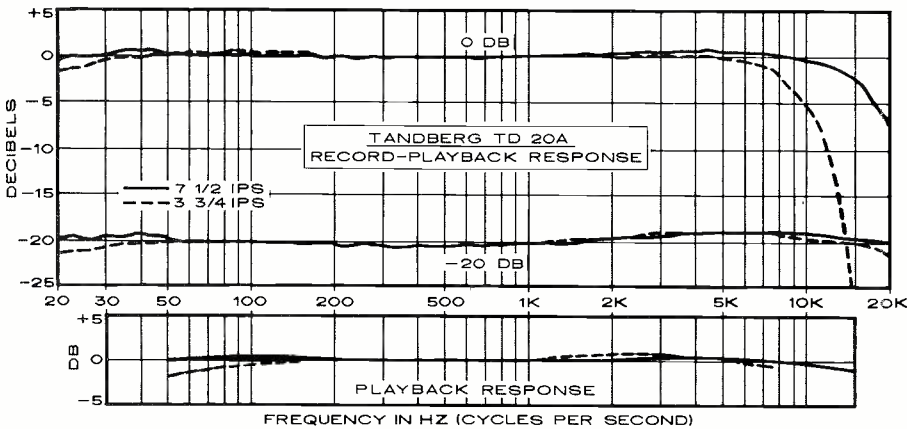
"Triaxial" and "Triax" are the registered trademarks identifying the patented 3-way speaker systems of Jensen Sound Laboratories. (U.S. Patent No. 4,122,315)

CIRCLE NO. 32 ON READER SERVICE CARD

smooth the tape flow during normal operation, and a small precision roller inside the head nest acts as a "scrape-flutter" filter.

The heads themselves are of Tandberg's own design and manufacture, and are of ferrite, giving them exceptional resistance to wear. The playback head is fitted with a spring-loaded shield that swings into place when the tape gate closes; it provides additional protection against hum, but it does make it difficult to mark the tape for editing purposes. Inside the head assembly is an optical sensor that stops the deck in the event of a tape break or runout. A conventional four-digit counter registers the revolutions of the takeup reel.

The lower section of the TD 20A contains the controls and meters. Three large pushbuttons turn the machine on and off, set the speed to high or low (there is no variable pitch control), and select the proper tensions



for either large (10½-inch) or small reel sizes. Below these are separate left- and right-channel playback-level controls whose settings affect not only the outputs and headphone volume, but also the indications of the meters when the deck is in its playback mode.

Beneath the playback-level controls are four lever switches. A three-position PLAYBACK MODE switch connects the left channel to both outputs, the right channel to both outputs, or, in its STEREO position, each channel to its appropriate output. The MONITOR switch permits direct comparison between the signal fed to the tape and a playback of the same signal a split-second later. A SEL. SYNC. switch permits a previous recording made on the left channel only to be synchronized with a new recording made on the right channel by temporarily converting the left-channel record head to a playback function. And an EDIT/CUE switch activates the playback amplifier when the deck is stopped or in a fast-winding mode to facilitate finding a precise spot on the tape. One note of caution is in order: when using the CUE function during high-speed winding, turn down the playback level to prevent tweeter damage.

On the right side of the electronic section are five large pushbuttons, each with its own LED indicator, for RECORD, REWIND, STOP, WIND, and PLAY. All of these operate through integrated-circuit logic control, so no sequence of commands can snarl or break the tape. If the STOP and WIND buttons are depressed and then released simultaneously, the deck enters a FREE mode (also signaled by a

LED indicator) in which the reel brakes are released, facilitating tape threading. If either or both of the two RECORD SELECTOR switches is shifted to ON, a STAND BY indicator is illuminated. In most tape decks, the record mode can be entered only by depressing the RECORD and PLAY buttons at the same time, but Tandberg has chosen to follow the professional practice of using record-selector switches in conjunction with a separate RECORD button. This allows the record mode to be entered directly while the tape is running, though for such "flying start" or "punch-in" applications it is also necessary to keep the PLAY button depressed.

Below these pushbuttons are four input-level controls plus a master input control. The INPUT 1 pair is dedicated to "line-level" sources (a preamplifier's tape-out jacks or another recorder, for examples), while the INPUT 2 pair can be used to mix in either micro-

phones, a second line-level component, or a "radio" output plugged into the European DIN-B socket on the rear panel. The master level control has an adjustable ring with a detent to allow return to a predetermined setting when fading in or fading out. A DIN-type jack for an accessory remote-control device and a microphone-sensitivity switch that inserts a 25-dB attenuator to prevent overload when using high-output microphones are also located on the right side of the front panel.

In the center section are jacks for headphones (nominal 8-ohm impedance, though we experienced no difficulty in using 600-ohm types) and a pair of microphone inputs that are rated to accept either balanced or unbalanced microphones of low to medium impedance (50 to 700 ohms). Above these jacks are the illuminated meters (indicating from -24 to +3 dB), which, in conformity with a long-standing Tandberg design philosophy, are not only peak reading (rather than VU) but are "equalized" as well. This means that during recording they register the effect of the necessary record high-frequency equalization, so they do not give the same reading for the same signal level at all frequencies. While this is an annoyance to a tester or equipment reviewer (record and playback levels cannot be made to agree on the meters, for example), it does assure the user that, no matter what the frequency content of the music, so long as the indicators do not exceed the 0-dB marking he will get a virtually undistorted recording.

The rear panel of the TD 20A contains the necessary input and output jacks, which are

inset into a cavity so that the deck can be operated in either a vertical or a horizontal position. The overall measurements of the TD 20A are 17¼ inches wide, 17¼ inches high, and 6 inches deep (not including the front-panel knobs); it weighs approximately 37½ pounds. Price: \$1,500.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Tandberg TD 20A comes factory-set for use with Maxell UD-XL tape (which we used for our measurements), though it has screwdriver-accessible bias-adjustment holes on the front panel that permit optimization for nearly any conceivable tape type—including open-reel metal tapes, should these ever become available.

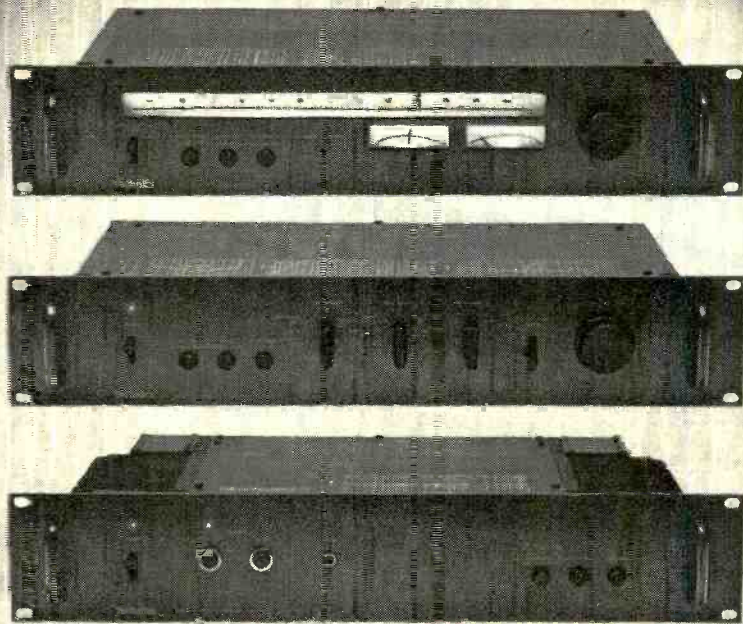
Playback equalization was checked using standard Ampex test tapes, which, within their frequency limits, showed near-perfect response as indicated in the graph. Overall frequency response, measured at the customary -20-dB level with the recommended Maxell UD-XL tape, was so flat at both 7½ and 3¾ ips that drawing the "curves" was essentially an exercise in futility. Response was not down by more than 3 dB at the low-frequency end until a frequency of 11 or 12 Hz was reached, and in the high-frequency region the -3-dB points extended to 21 kHz at 3¾ ips and to 33 kHz at the 7½-ips speed. At a 0-dB level the differences in high-frequency potential show up more clearly, yet even here the curves are perhaps slightly misleading: since the record-level meters are equalized, they deflected well off-scale at the higher frequencies when using the 3¾-ips speed, plainly warning the user to reduce the overall record level. Though making a straightforward frequency-response curve at this level overloaded the tape capacity, it did not overload the record amplifier, with its "Actilinear" circuit.

Because the TD 20A uses peak-reading rather than average-reading meters, it requires little or no headroom allowance to compensate for meter ballistics and unforeseen signal peaks. Distortion of a 1,000-Hz tone recorded at an indicated 0-dB level was less than 1 per cent at either speed, and the customary 3 per cent third-harmonic distortion level used for making signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) measurements was reached with an input level of +4 dB—1 dB above the meter scale. Unweighted S/N, referred to the output at this level, was 62 and 59.5 dB for the 7½- and 3¾-ips speeds, respectively. Applying the customary IEC A-weighting curve improved the figures to 69 and 66 dB. Wow and flutter was extremely low at 7½ ips, measuring between 0.015 and 0.018 per cent (wrms) and between 0.02 and 0.03 per cent on the stricter DIN-B peak-weighting standard. At 3¾ ips the figures increased to 0.055 and 0.1 per cent, respectively.

At the inputs, a signal level of 35 millivolts (mV) was required to produce a 0-dB indication when using the LINE 1 inputs, and the maximum output at this level was 1.2 volts. A signal level of 0.15 mV produced the same reading at the microphone input, and the overload point was reached at 24 mV. The 25-dB microphone attenuator raised these figures correspondingly. The fast-forward and rewind times for a 1,800-foot tape on a standard 7-inch reel were identical at 90 seconds.

● **Comment.** We would have preferred slightly larger meters and wish that when switch-
(Continued on page 44)

You're looking at three ways Technics pursues the one ideal. Waveform fidelity.



Waveform fidelity. It should be the objective of any professional component. Because perfect waveform fidelity would mean an output signal that's a mirror image of the input signal.

How do our engineers pursue this elusive goal? To begin with, they use two automatically switchable IF bands in the ST-9030 FM tuner. A narrow band for extra-sharp selectivity. And a wide band for extra-high S/N and extra-low distortion. But just as significant is a pilot-cancel circuit which Technics developed for high-frequency waveform fidelity. Even the basic tuning function in the ST-9030 is unique. Like an B-ganged tuning capacitor for outstanding reception.

The engineering in the SU-9070 DC preamp is similarly impressive. There's a moving coil preamp with -157 dBV noise voltage. A moving magnet preamp with an extremely high S/N of 100 dB (10 mV input). Direct-coupled circuitry to keep distortion at a minimum of 0.003% (rated THD). What's more, the SU-9070 has inputs for three tape decks.

Finally there's Technics SE-9060 amp. It's DC like our preamp. Has a frequency response of 0-100 kHz (+0, -1 dB). And a "strapped" circuit for more than

double the power in a multi-amp system. Compare specifications and prices. We think you'll agree. There's no comparison for these Technics components.

ST-9030. THD (stereo, 1 kHz): Wide—0.08%. Narrow—0.3%. S/N (mono): 80 dB. S/N (stereo): 73 dB. FREQUENCY RESPONSE: 20 Hz—18 kHz +0.1, -0.5 dB. SELECTIVITY: Narrow—90 dB. CAPTURE RATIO: Wide—0.8 dB. IF, IMAGE and SPURIOUS RESPONSE REJECTIONS (93 mHz): 135 dB. STEREO SEPARATION (1 kHz): Wide—50 dB.

SU-9070. PHONO MAX. INPUT VOLTAGE (1 kHz RMS): MM—380 mV. MC—9 mV. S/N MM—100 dB (10 mV input). MC—72 dB (60 μ V). FREQUENCY RESPONSE: Phono 20 Hz—20 kHz (RIAA \pm 0.2 dB).

SE-9060. POWER OUTPUT: 70 watts per channel (stereo), 180 watts (mono) min. RMS into 8 chms from 20 Hz to 20 kHz with no more than 0.02% total harmonic distortion. S/N: 120 dB.

Technics. A rare combination of audio technology. A rare standard of audio excellence.

Technics

Professional Series

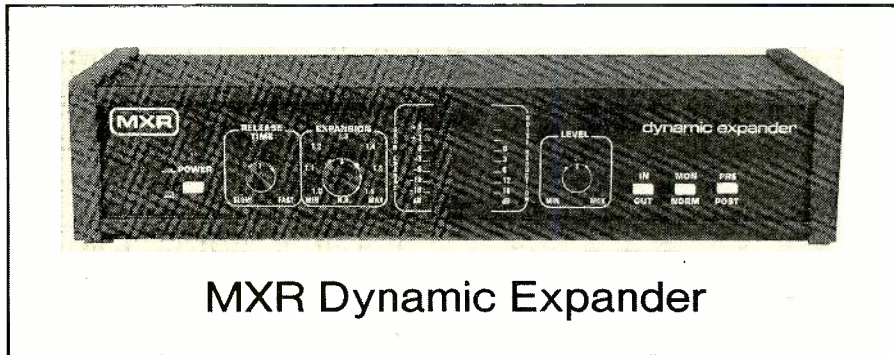
CIRCLE NO. 64 ON READER SERVICE CARD

ing from "source" to "tape" during the record process the meters were switched as well (the meters read playback levels only in the play mode). And we wish that there were space in the head nest for a second (half-track) playback head so that tapes recorded in either format could be played. But these are only minor cavils.

Listening tests using a wide variety of material confirmed the excellent measurements we obtained. Even making copies of master tapes of live musical performances produced no audible loss of frequency response and added only the slightest amount of hiss, which is inherent in any dubbing process. In the several months we have used the

TD 20A it has yet to snarl a tape, and it is so quiet in operation that we have several times inadvertently left it running without being aware of it. The Tandberg TD 20A is a superb audiophile deck, and, while not inexpensive, it is certainly well worth the price.

Circle 140 on reader service card



MXR Dynamic Expander

SINCE its inception, the MXR brand name has been associated with signal-processing devices of various kinds (mostly for the professional user). Their new dynamic expander, which complements the MXR graphic equalizers and other instruments, is a single-pass device meant to be inserted into the tape-recording/monitoring loop of an amplifier or receiver (or between the preamplifier and power-amplifier sections, although that is less desirable since the signal will be affected by tone and volume controls before being expanded). It expands the dynamic range of the program linearly and equally for all frequencies and levels, and it requires no critical gain adjustments.

To restore the tape-monitoring function of the component to which it is connected, the MXR dynamic expander has duplicate tape-input and -output jacks on its rear apron and a front-panel tape-monitor switch button. Another button makes it possible to expand the program *before* it is recorded (PRE) or to expand the playback from the recorder (POST). A third INPUT button bypasses the expander circuits. There is also a power push-button; if desired, the MXR unit can be plugged into a switched outlet of the amplifier or receiver and controlled by the main power switch.

The MXR dynamic expander is finished in flat black with clearly contrasting white panel markings and wood side panels. In addition to the previously mentioned pushbutton switches, it has three knob-operated controls. The RELEASE TIME knob controls the rate at which the expander gain returns to normal after expansion. It is adjustable over a range of approximately 50 to 500 milliseconds (corresponding to the FAST and SLOW panel markings). The attack time is fixed at about 5 milliseconds or less, depending somewhat on the program material. As a rule it is desirable to have the fastest possible expansion rate, but

not so fast as to follow a very-low-frequency waveform (which would cause distortion).

The EXPANSION control changes the slope of the OUTPUT/INPUT transfer characteristic continuously between the limits of 1.0 and 1.6. The former represents a non-expanded condition in which a 10-dB change in input level will result in a 10-dB change in output. The other extreme will give a 16-dB change in output for every 10 dB of change in input. In most cases, an intermediate setting will be found most satisfactory.

The LEVEL control is used to optimize the operation of the expander roughly with respect to the signal level. Though critical, it is useful for adjusting the relative amounts of upward-gain shift (expansion) and downward-gain shift (noise reduction) imparted by the unit to any given program.

In the center of the panel is a vertical array of red LEDs that monitor the expander operation. They show the instantaneous gain of the device, from +6 to -18 dB, in 3-dB steps over most of that range. When the 0-dB light is on, the expander gain is unity (no expansion or noise reduction). The LEVEL control is normally set so that the 0-dB light is on at average program levels. When the input level drops, the expander gain drops with it, reducing the background noise by a corresponding amount. A high-level passage will increase the expander gain to +3 or even +6 dB, with a corresponding boost of signal level over the unexpanded condition.

The operating instructions of the MXR dynamic expander explain clearly how to adjust the controls, which must be set by ear in accordance with the program and one's listening preference (in other words, there is no "correct" setting). Its own signal-handling ability (the maximum rated input and output are, respectively, 4 and 8 volts) is well in excess of the levels it will have to handle in any operating music system. The frequency re-

sponse is essentially flat over the audio range, and distortion is well below audibility (although the unit's distortion is a function of its instantaneous expansion as well as the signal-input level and frequency).

The input to the MXR dynamic expander, after buffering to isolate the expander circuits from the amplifier's tape-output circuits, is divided into separate signal and control paths. The control path contains a rectifier that produces a d.c. voltage proportional to the rms value of the complex program waveform (it is not clear in the literature from MXR whether this is a *true* rms detector or an average-responding detector). The control signal is derived from the sum of the two input channels and affects the signals in both channels equally to prevent lateral shifts of gain that would disturb the stereo-image position.

After passing through circuits that adjust the attack and release time constants, the control signal is compared with a reference voltage and the difference is used to control the gain of a voltage-controlled amplifier (VCA) through which the signal passes. The display on the front panel is also operated by the control signal. The MXR dynamic expander is 18 inches wide, 4 inches high, and 6¼ inches deep. It weighs approximately 6½ pounds. The suggested retail price is \$300.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Because of the MXR expander's dynamic nature, our laboratory measurements were naturally limited to its steady-state input/output transfer characteristic, distortion, and frequency response.

With the EXPANSION control set to 1.0 (no expander action) the frequency response of the MXR expander was flat across most of the audio band and was down only 0.3 dB at 20 Hz and 0.2 dB at 20,000 Hz. At full expansion (1.6), the response at the lowest frequencies dropped off to about -6 dB at 20 Hz, but from 100 to 20,000 Hz the total variation was about 1 dB.

The maximum input before waveform distortion occurred was 3.7 volts, and the maximum unclipped output was 9.3 volts. With a 1.0 expansion slope, the distortion at either 1,000 or 20,000 Hz was less than 0.01 per cent at a 0.3-volt output or less, increasing slowly to 0.014 per cent at 1 volt and 0.07 per cent at 3 volts. The 20-Hz distortion was higher (though still negligible), measuring 0.016 per cent at 0.1 volt, 0.06 per cent at 1 volt, and 0.22 per cent at 3 volts output.

At full expansion (1.6) the distortion at 1,000 Hz was no more than 0.025 per cent up to 0.3 volt and 0.089 per cent at 3 volts output. (Continued on page 46)

ONE-OF-A-KIND QUALITY CONTROL RAISES THE NIKKO NR-1219 ABOVE ORDINARY RECEIVERS

You compare specs and features of different brands before you buy a new receiver. But how about quality?

That's why you should know about Nikko's "200% Quality Control" program. It provides continuous custom inspection of each and every receiver before it leaves our production line. Then, just to make sure, we start all over again. Each unit is thoroughly rechecked before it's delivered to your Nikko dealer. That way you can be certain you're getting all of the outstanding performance and reliability that Nikko builds in.

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nology and advanced features. This superb DC amplified receiver delivers a hefty 100 watts per channel, minimum RMS at 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.03% total harmonic distortion. And because it's designed with a direct-coupled DC amplifier that uses no input or output capacitors—rotting comes between you and the music. You hear it all.

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The NR-1219 also features a 25-microsecond FM Dolby* de-emphasis switch, 20dB audio muting, and the insurance of an electronic protection circuit for speakers. It's the

finest receiver Nikko has ever produced.

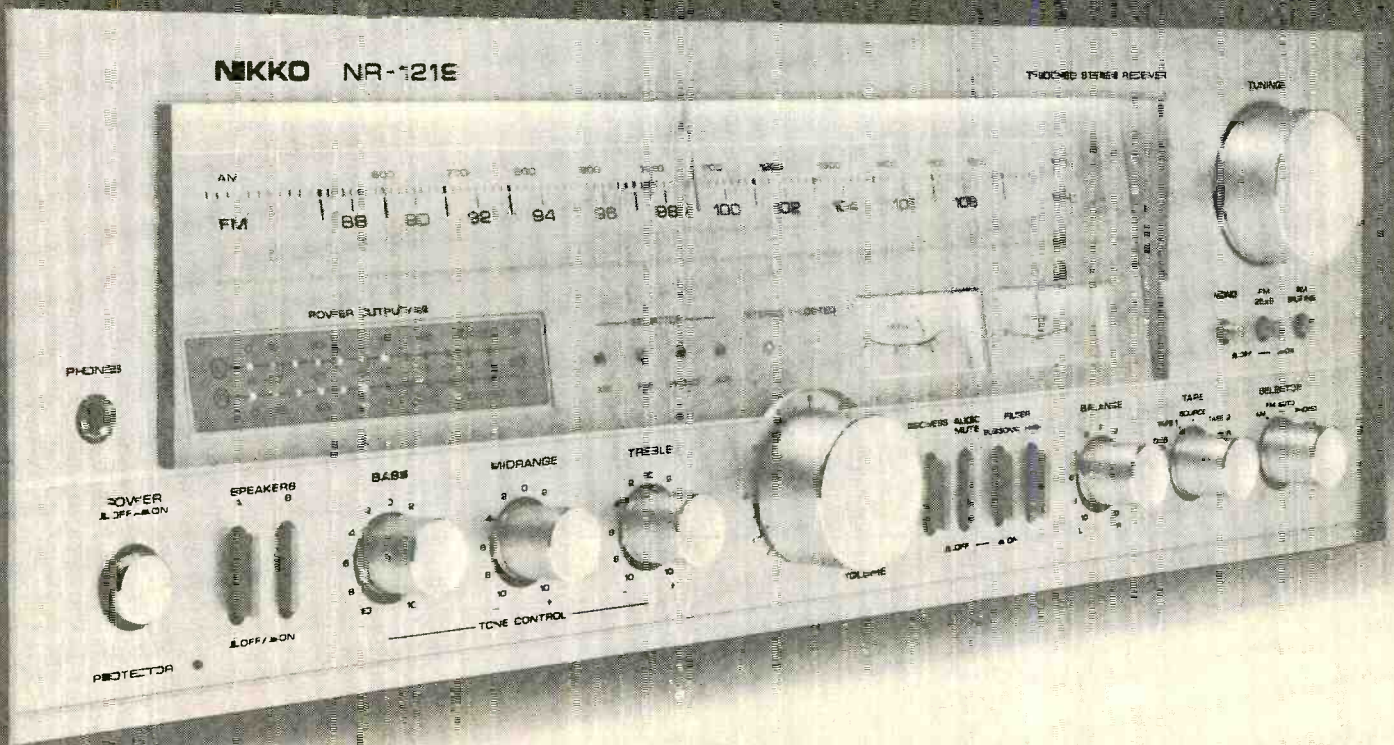
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put. The 20,000-Hz readings were about 0.02 per cent or less up to 1 volt and 0.13 per cent at 3 volts. At 20 Hz, the distortion was a constant 1.3 per cent from 0.3 to 3 volts.

The measured slopes of the expander characteristics were considerably less than the values shown by the panel markings. The 1.0 slope was correct, but the 1.3 setting produced a slope of about 1.25 dB down to -30 dB and only about 1.15 dB over a full input range of 60 dB (which resulted in an output change of about 68 dB instead of the expected 78 dB). With a "1.6" slope, the actual output/input ratio was about 1.5 near the upper end of the output range, but only 1.25 dB over the full 60-dB range. For these measurements, we set the "0 dB" level to give 3 volts output (at 1,000 Hz) and reduced the input in 10-dB steps over a 60-dB range.

● **Comment.** The audible performance of any dynamic signal processor cannot be judged from conventional measurements; therefore, our only purpose in making bench measurements on the MXR expander was to confirm its basic electrical performance and to detect any possible level or impedance incompatibility with other system components. There were none, and its electrical quality was obviously of a fully "hi-fi" caliber.

Anyone using a dynamic expander for the first time will inevitably use it to excess, if only to judge the limits of audible effects on

the program. MXR suggests doing just that with their dynamic expander, to exaggerate the degradation of program quality that can result from the injudicious application of this type of signal processor. Having done that, the user is advised to alter the control settings for the best compromise between sonic improvement and undesirable side effects.

Any signal processor must be used with discretion; if its action is obvious, then it is *ipso facto* excessive. In most cases, when we used an expansion slope of 1.3 or less, the action of the expander could not be detected (except by bypassing it, which can be a very convincing demonstration of its noise-reducing capabilities). Higher settings than 1.3 can too easily result in an audible surging of program level or background noise, and lower settings may not produce sufficient expansion.

In general, we found that the benefits of dynamic expansion lie more in the *downward* part of the expansion characteristic which reduces background noise during quiet passages (this is true of all of today's expanders, not merely the MXR unit). If the hiss in the incoming program is plainly audible without expansion, it will almost always be heard "swishing" up and down with program-level changes. A long release time is helpful in such a case. The quieter the incoming program, the more effective will be the overall expansion process. This comment applies equally to the several types of "single-ended"

noise-reducing devices available to the audiophile (dynamic filters, autocorrelators, and the like). None of them do very well with *really* noisy material, but their effectiveness increases dramatically as the quality of the program improves.

A highly compressed program (such as most pop or rock music) will not be expanded or otherwise improved with the expander, since it has no significant dynamic range to begin with. On the other hand, the sound of a fairly wide-range recording with low surface noise can often be improved from "good" to "spectacular." Between these limits, most programs will be improved to some extent by proper expansion. Although one would rarely wish to expand a program before taping it, this feature of the MXR expander can be useful when dubbing old discs having noisy surfaces and limited dynamics.

The question that can be answered only by the prospective purchaser of a dynamic expander such as the MXR is "Are the possible benefits worth the rather large investment?" Everyone will have to make his or her own decision on that matter. From our experience with the MXR dynamic expander, we can say that it does its job effectively, subject only to the limitations inherent in its product category and the ability of the user to adjust it properly to the program material.

Circle 141 on reader service card



Electro-Voice Interface:C Series II Speaker System

THE Electro-Voice Interface line of speaker systems, originally introduced in 1973, is now in its third generation. The current line includes seven systems, ranging from "book-

shelf" size to large, floor-standing units. One of the larger is the Interface:C, which is now in its "Series II" form. It is a floor-standing, three-way system based (like all the others)

on an "optimally vented" woofer built according to criteria established by researcher A. N. Thiele.

Thiele's analysis of vented speakers makes it possible to design a speaker system to satisfy a wide range of requirements in respect to low-frequency response, distortion, size, and efficiency. E-V's goal was to create a speaker considerably more efficient than acoustic-suspension types, yet with a low-distortion response extending smoothly to 30 Hz or below—and in an enclosure of reasonable size.

The specifications of the Interface:C Series II suggest that they have done their work well. It is not small, measuring 31½ inches high, 20 inches wide, and 12½ inches deep, but neither is it obtrusively large. The walnut-veneer cabinet is attractively faced with a brown cloth grille, and the system weight of 60 pounds is no more than that of some so-called "bookshelf" speakers we have seen.

The woofer, nominally 10 inches in diameter, is vented by a ducted port 4 inches in diameter. At 400 Hz there is a crossover to a novel E-V midrange driver design, the VMR II (VMR stands for "vented midrange"). This 6½-inch cone speaker uses the same massive (5 pounds, 12 ounces) magnet structure employed in the woofer. It is fully sealed around the back, with the enclosed volume filled with sound-absorbent material. The midrange driver is also vented through a slot on the front of the speaker housing. The VMR design enables the midrange driver to deliver a flat response, down to the 400-Hz

(Continued on page 48)

The Evolution of Excellence

In 1947, Pickering built the first magnetic cartridge and holds 13 U.S. and numerous foreign patents on cartridge design. In 1976, Pickering launched a new modern high fidelity era by introducing the first of a new generation of phono cartridges, the Pickering XSV/3000, acclaimed a top performer by critics and reviewers worldwide.

Now Pickering takes the Stereohedron® Series one step beyond excellence with the new XSV/4000. Technical advances in both design and construction have made this degree of perfect on possible.

A lightweight, high energy, samarium cobalt magnet and shaped-for-sound Stereohedron Stylus tip are major innovations that eclipse previous performance standards in four crucial areas. Improved tracking ability. Expanded frequency response range. Wider channel separation. And featherlight treatment of the record groove.

XSV/4000... the next generation of sound.

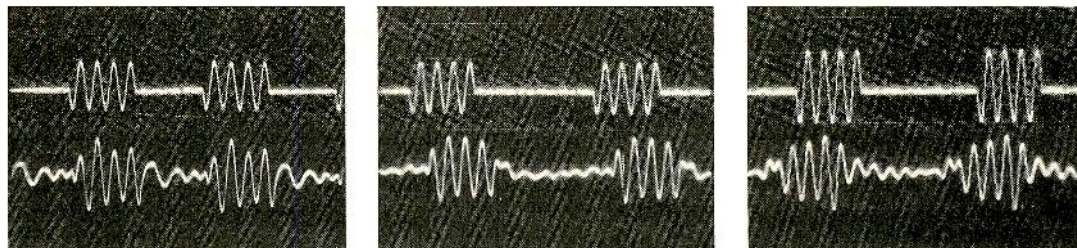
For further information write to: Pickering & Co. Inc., Sunnyside Blvd., Plainview, N.Y. 11803

 **PICKERING**

"for those who can hear the difference"



The generally good tone-burst response of the Interface:C Series II speaker is shown at (left to right) 100, 1,000, and 10,000 Hz. The input-signal traces are at the top in the oscilloscope photos.



crossover frequency, with low distortion, high power-handling ability, and an efficiency matching that of the woofer. Also, the small size of the midrange cone provides the necessary dispersion.

The second crossover, at 2,500 Hz, is to an E-V "Super Dome" tweeter. Basically a dome radiator, it is front-loaded by a plastic-foam acoustic lens that improves its dispersion at high frequencies. The voice coil has been designed to handle 25 watts continuously (about five times the power-handling ability of typical conventional tweeters), and its efficiency is also several times higher than that of ordinary dome tweeters.

Inherent in the Thiele-based design of the Interface:C Series II woofer is the use of an equalizer (as an alternative to using a very large enclosure) to flatten out and extend its low-bass response to 30 Hz. The equalizer, which can be connected either in the tape-monitoring path of an amplifier or between the preamplifier and the power amplifier, has unity gain and negligible noise and distortion. It boosts the response gradually below 200 Hz to a maximum of +6 dB at 35 Hz with a controlled rolloff below that frequency to eliminate infrasonic components that could cause noise or distortion. It also has two optional degrees of high-frequency rolloff in addition to a flat-response condition (in lieu of tweeter-level controls).

The equalizer is a small black box, 2 inches high, 8 inches wide, and 7 inches deep. It is self-powered, with a four-position switch controlling the power and the treble response (0, 3, and 6 dB of attenuation at 10,000 Hz). Another switch replaces the tape-monitoring functions when the equalizer is connected into the amplifier's tape-monitoring path.

The performance of the E-V Interface:C Series II is specified with unusual completeness. Its rated response is ± 2.5 dB from 30 to 18,000 Hz in an on-axis measurement taken at 1 meter (presumably anechoic), and it is recommended for use with amplifiers delivering from 2.8 to 350 watts per channel (which must surely include every amplifier ever sold for high-fidelity use in the home). A 1-watt input is rated to produce a sound-pressure level of 93 dB at 1 meter, and the maximum available long-term average level in a normal listening room is an ear-splitting 111 dB! The system impedance is nominally 6 ohms, with a 4-ohm minimum rating. The E-V Interface:C Series II is sold only in pairs, including the equalizer. The price of the complete system is \$995.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** All our measurements of the E-V Interface:C Series II were made through its equalizer. We also measured the frequency response of the

equalizer separately. As is our usual practice, the integrated speaker response in the reverberant field of the room was spliced to the close-miked woofer response to form a composite curve.

The response at middle and high frequencies was extraordinarily flat, varying only ± 1 dB from 550 to 10,000 Hz. The woofer response, not quite so flat, was nevertheless excellent and was maintained to the lowest audio frequencies. The combined response curve showed a variation of ± 2.5 dB from 30 to 17,000 Hz, an impressive result for a measurement made, for the most part, at a typical listening position in a normal room about 12 feet from the speakers.

The dispersion of the "Super Dome" tweeter and the VMR midrange driver was essentially perfect for normal stereo listening. By that we mean that the curves made at a single microphone position, on the axis of the left speaker and 30 degrees off the axis of the right speaker, were effectively identical over the entire range from a few hundred hertz to 20,000 Hz. This is what we expect to measure from good omnidirectional speakers; it is exceedingly rare in front-firing speakers.

The system impedance varied between 3 and 8 ohms over most of the audio range, with maximums of 10 ohms at 25 Hz and 16 ohms at 64 Hz. The 6-ohm nominal rating seems justified, although in our measurements the minimum impedance reached 3 ohms at 1,000 Hz and between 5,000 and 10,000 Hz. We would not suggest paralleling two Interface:C Series II systems on a single amplifier, although the E-V instruction manual implies that this is acceptable.

The high sensitivity of the E-V Interface:C Series II was confirmed by our measurement of a 94-dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter when we drove it with 2.83 volts of random noise in an octave centered at 1,000 Hz. Not only is this 8 to 10 dB more efficient than many acoustic-suspension systems, but it rivals the most efficient vented speakers we have tested in recent years and is combined with superior low-bass performance.

The low-frequency distortion was low, about 1 per cent down to 50 Hz at a 1-watt (2 volts) drive level and increasing to 7 per cent at 80 Hz. At a 10-watt level, the distortion was about 2 per cent down to 65 Hz, reaching 10 per cent at 35 Hz. Bearing in mind the rather high acoustic output that is produced by even a 1-watt input, this indicates a *very low* effective distortion level under any reasonable listening conditions. The tone-burst response, at several frequencies in the audio range, was good though not outstanding.

● **Comment.** At the time we were evaluating the E-V Interface:C Series II, we had on

hand several other speakers that might be considered as competitive in respect to size or cost. Not unreasonably, they were also competitive in listening quality, which made our task both easier and more difficult.

The problem is that when judging speakers selling for \$500 each or more, one expects—and usually receives—correspondingly good sound. Naturally, all speakers sound different to *some* degree, and that degree might be determined by the way they interface with the specific environment in which they are playing. How does one make a reasonably objective selection from among a group of speakers that are about equally pleasing—or accurate—but which have slightly different sonic qualities?

We can answer that question only in a rather oblique manner. In truth, over the years we have encountered a few systems selling for \$500 or more that really sounded very bad. Needless to say, those speakers did not receive reviews in these pages. Among the good ones, we have found that it is easy to become accustomed to the particular sound quality of any really fine speaker. The differences to be heard are analogous to the change in the sound of an orchestra when heard from different seats in a *good* hall.

In the case of the Interface:C Series II we could not pick out any particular instrument that it favored or discriminated against. It simply sounded as smooth and clean, as "good" in every respect, as we could wish from any speaker. It has a full measure of highs, middles, and lows, with no lack or emphasis in any part of the spectrum. We were never driven to switch it off in favor of some other speaker (this is perhaps the highest accolade I can bestow on any product).

The nearly ideal manner in which the Interface:C Series II "measured" no doubt influenced our feelings; we often face the problem of explaining or justifying a subjective preference that is not obviously correlated with measurements. Not so in this case: the Interface:C Series II measures about as close to ideal as can be expected under the test conditions we use, and it sounds every bit as good as its curves indicate. Also, the fact that these speakers do not require weight-lifting skills to unpack or move around may have contributed something to our positive reaction! E-V has clearly done so many things right and so few wrong (actually, we didn't find *any* "goofs" in this speaker, but we assume that no one—even E-V—is absolutely perfect) that we were just plain impressed with the final result.

Circle 142 on reader service card

(Continued on page 50)

In recent years over 500,000 music lovers chose a Realistic[®] receiver over Kenwood[®], Pioneer[®] and Technics[®] ...



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We make it easy for you. Radio Shack is a retailer as well as a manufacturer. When the store is also the factory, you're apt to get less fiction and more fact. Also, Radio Shack has more company-owned and operated service stations than anyone we know of in the audio business (54 to be specific).

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We have the edge on technology. Then there's this to consider: The same company that puts Realistic out front also builds and markets the world's most popular personal computer, the TRS-80[™]. It seems to us that a company smart enough to design

equipment as innovative and complex as a computer is a logical one to choose to build your stereo receiver!

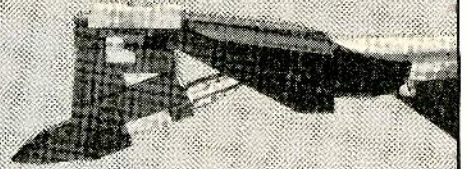
We're close to you. Need another good reason to buy Realistic? Let's take availability. Instead of tens or hundreds of places to find it, we offer over 7,300 — wherever you go in the USA or Canada — and a surprising number of overseas locations as well. Being more available doesn't necessarily make us more lovable. But it goes a long way towards assuring you of being able to get in touch with us when you need advice on adding a tape deck or replacing a lost instruction manual.

We've challenged the rest and won your trust. Incidentally, we're not picking on Kenwood, Pioneer and Technics. The same half-million-plus folks who chose Realistic also probably had a crack at buying Sansui, Marantz[®] and Fisher[®]. The important thing is ... they didn't!

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Dual 506 Record Player



and Dual/Ortofon ULM 55E Phono Cartridge

THE Dual 506 is a single-play record player whose only automatic feature is an end-of-play arm lift and motor shut-off (the arm remains in place and must be returned manually to its rest). The cast-aluminum platter is belt-driven at 33½ or 45 rpm, the speed being selected by a lever on the motorboard that shifts the belt to different drive-shaft diameters. A vernier speed-control knob, concentric with the speed selector, expands the drive shaft slightly to vary the speed ± 6 per cent at 33½ rpm. Stroboscope markings on the edge of the platter arc illuminated by a neon lamp.

The Dual 506 features a newly designed ULM (Ultra Low Mass) tone arm whose effective mass (less cartridge) is only about 5.5 grams (one-third to one-fourth the mass of most contemporary record-player tone arms). With its straight tubular construction and low-friction gimbal bearings, it bears a general resemblance to former Dual tone arms. With minor differences, principally in the counterweight, the new ULM tone-arm design is used on all current Dual record players.

The arm is balanced by a threaded counterweight, and tracking force is applied by a spiral spring acting around the vertical-pivot axis. A knob on the side of the pivot structure is calibrated from 0 to 3 grams (at 0.1-gram intervals from 0.2 to 1.5 grams and at 0.25-gram intervals from 1.5 to 3 grams). The antiskating dial has scales for conical and elliptical styli.

The turntable is started by moving the arm from its rest. At this point, the cueing lift is in the UP position, so that the arm can be moved over the desired part of the record by a light horizontal push. A flip of the cueing lever lowers the pickup to the record with a smoothly damped motion. If the arm is lifted manually and returned to its rest, it automatically moves the cueing lever to UP as it enters the rest, shutting the motor off at the same time. At the end of a record, the arm simply lifts and remains in place, but the motor shuts off.

Like all Dual record players, the 506's components are mounted on a single steel plate that is isolated from the wooden base on springs. The synchronous motor is further isolated from the motorboard by a compliant suspension. The clear plastic dust cover is

hinged to remain fully open, closed, or at intermediate angles.

The tone arm is the truly unique part of the Dual 506. Despite its apparent similarity to previous Dual arms, it is constructed of a smaller-diameter and lighter-weight tubing. Dual's familiar plastic cartridge mount has been eliminated in the interest of keeping arm mass to a minimum. More than that was required, however. Most cartridges weigh between 5 and 8 grams, and all of the weight effectively appears at the stylus location. One could not hope to achieve Dual's goal of an 8-gram *total* effective mass with a cartridge that weighed almost that much.

Dual therefore joined forces with Ortofon in adapting the Danish manufacturer's new LM cartridge design (used in their Concorde series) to Dual's needs. The 2.5-gram mass of the Dual ULM cartridge (including mounting bracket and hardware) makes it ideal for use in a ULM system. Although cartridge installation is slightly less convenient than in previous Dual players, it presents no real problem. The 506, like all the other current Dual models, is available with a factory-installed ULM cartridge, thus sparing the user one of the most onerous and critical chores in setting up a music system.

However, Dual has not ruled out the use of other cartridges in their record players. A mounting adapter and overhang adjustment jig are supplied with the 506, and the arm will balance cartridges weighing between 2 and 9 grams (with the aid of an additional counterweight section for the heavier types). The chief difference from the former mounting procedure is that the leads from the arm must be attached to the cartridge before it is actually mounted. The cartridge is held in place by a single screw.

The ULM cartridge comes in three models whose stylus characteristics complement the requirements of the associated record-player arm. In the case of the Dual 506, a ULM 55E is supplied. It is fitted with a 0.2 x 0.7-mil biradial (elliptical) stylus rated to track at 1.5 grams. The stylus is easily replaceable, sliding off the end of the cartridge when the finger lift is moved to the rear (as was done in former Dual arms to release the entire cartridge mount). To safeguard the stylus against theft (in stores or showrooms), a self-tapping screw can be installed in a second

hole in the arm-mounting plate. It prevents the stylus from being removed by locking the finger lift in place. The stylus assembly carries a hinged plastic guard. The Dual 506 (without cartridge) is \$189.95. With a factory-installed ULM 55E cartridge it is less than \$299.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Dual 506 tested for this report was supplied with the ULM 55E cartridge. As mounted, the tracking error was less than 0.33 degree per inch over the surface of a 12-inch record, and essentially zero at most points. When the arm had been balanced, the calibration of the tracking-force dial was exact (except for a barely measurable 0.05-gram error at 1 gram). We used the recommended 1.5-gram force during our tests.

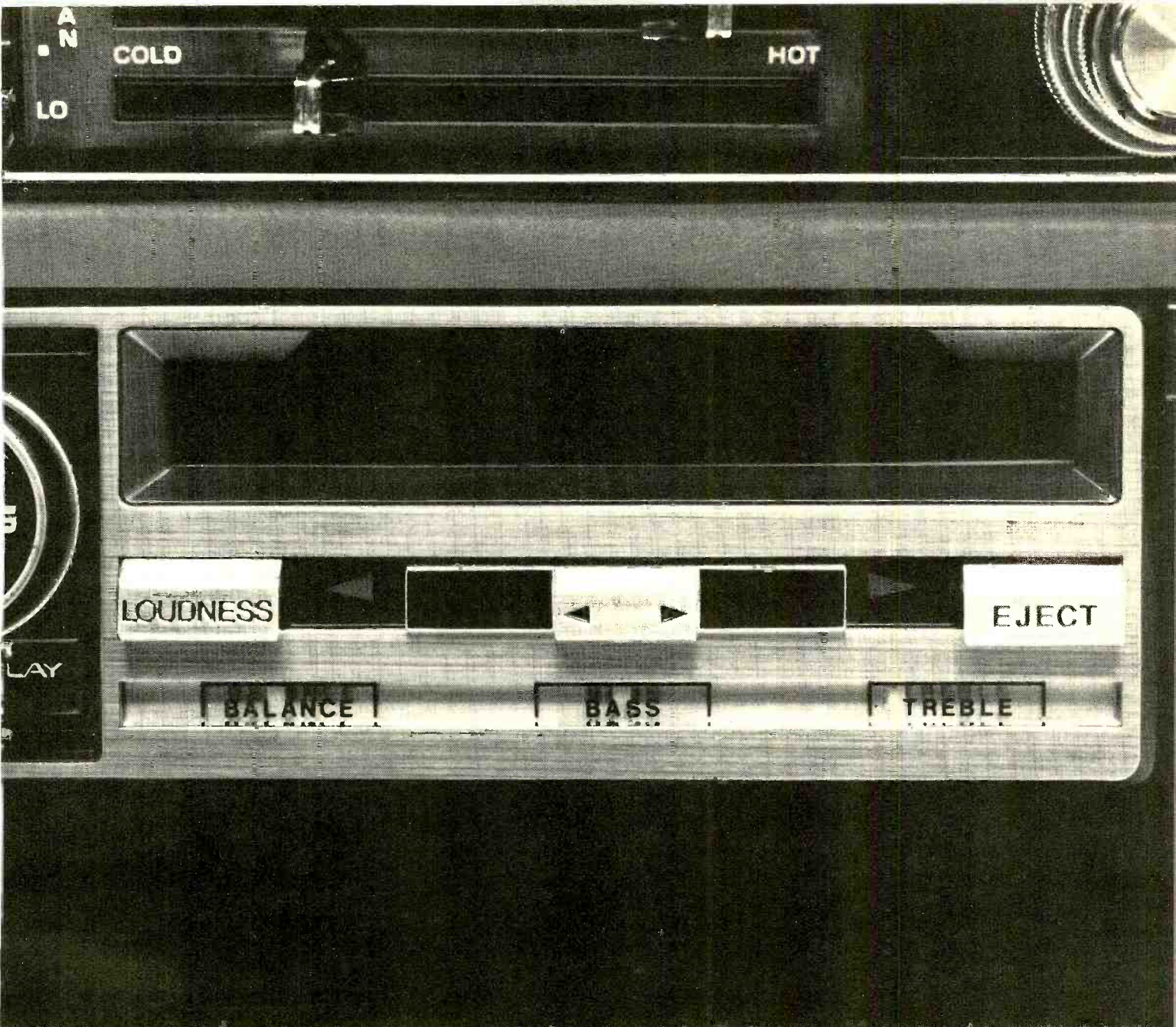
The total effective mass of the arm and cartridge was 7 grams (slightly less than the rated 8 grams, but well within the normal uncertainties of this type of measurement). The low-frequency resonance measured with a Denon 7001 test disc was at 14 to 15 Hz with an amplitude of about 5 dB. However, Dual's measurements with the German DIN 45543 test disc show a lateral resonance at 9.8 Hz and a vertical resonance at 11.5 Hz. The question of which figures are truly representative of the Dual 506's tone-arm/cartridge resonance is under investigation.

The antiskating calibration was nearly correct, although we found that setting it to 2 grams gave optimum compensation with a 1.5-gram tracking force. The cueing device followed Dual's tradition of being free of any lateral drift during arm descent. It was also exceptionally easy to use and had no tendency to jar or displace the tone arm.

The turntable itself ran smoothly and quietly. The vernier control had a range of ± 5.3 per cent at 33½ rpm and $\pm 3, -1.5$ per cent at 45 rpm. When the lower speed was set exactly, the 45-rpm speed was 0.5 per cent fast. Although it could easily be set to the correct value, an error of this magnitude can be ignored in most cases. The speed vernier knob had a distinctly "rubbery" feel, and considerable care was needed to set the speed exactly. The turntable speeds were not affected by line-voltage changes from 95 to 135 volts.

The unweighted rumble was -28 dB, im-

(Continued on page 54)



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Every type of Maxell tape is designed to give you the widest frequency response, the highest possible signal-to-noise ratio and virtually no distortion. All of

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CIRCLE NO. 38 ON READER SERVICE CARD

All nine new Dual turntables feature ULM... the Ultra Low Mass tonearm and cartridge system with 8 grams total effective mass.

All it takes to appreciate the significance of Dual's new Ultra Low Mass system is a clear understanding of what happens when the stylus tracks warped records.

As the record warp rises and falls, the stylus should be able to follow it with a minimum of resistance from the tonearm. Otherwise, tracking angle and tracking force will vary widely as the stylus digs in on the way up the warp and takes off on the way down.

The high inertia of a conventional tonearm and cartridge combination, with approximately 18 grams total effective mass, can cause tracking force to vary as much as 30 percent. And a warp as small as 1.5 mm (barely discernible) can generate harmonic distortion of 2.7 percent. That's audible.

The new Dual ULM tonearm and cartridge system has only 8 grams total effective mass. Tracking the same warped record under the same conditions, harmonic distortion is reduced to only 0.01 percent. That's 270 times less!

Not only is the overall sound audibly improved, but stylus and record life are significantly extended.

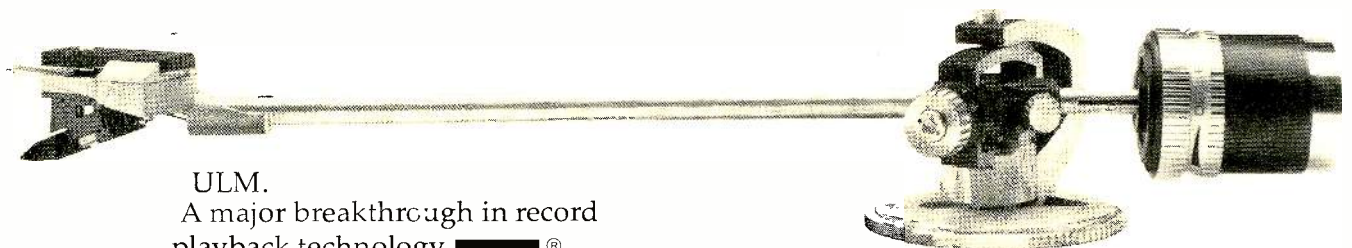
What has made the ULM system possible? First, Dual's straight-line tubular tonearm with its gyroscopic gimbal suspension and unique system for setting tracking force without increasing effective mass. This tonearm can now accept a cartridge weighing as little as 2 grams. Second, a new generation of cartridges that resulted from a collaboration between Dual and Ortofon. These ULM cartridges weigh only 2.5 grams, including mounting bracket and hardware.

Together, the new ULM tonearm and ULM cartridge form a perfectly matched system, with total effective mass less than half that of conventional tonearms and cartridges.

To experience the demonstrable advantages of ULM, bring a badly warped record to your Dual dealer. Listen to it when played with the ULM tonearm and cartridge system. You will hear the difference that ULM can make on all your records. Then you need only decide which of the nine new Dual turntables best meets your requirements for convenience and refinements.

Prices begin at less than \$180 for the multiple play model 1257. The top model, the automatic single-play 731Q with quartz PLL direct drive, is less than \$560. ULM cartridges are optional.

For the complete ULM story, please write to: United Audio,
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A major breakthrough in record
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proving to -56 dB with ARLL weighting. These figures are consistent with our past experience with moderate-price belt-driven turntables using synchronous line-powered motors (as opposed to electronically driven servo-controlled motors, either direct-drive or high-speed). Although the measured rumble was slightly higher than we have found on more elaborate or expensive turntables, it was quite negligible from a listening standpoint. The flutter was ± 0.13 per cent weighted peak (DIN) and 0.08 per cent wrms (JIS). Both the rumble and flutter-frequency spectra were mostly below 10 Hz.

ALTHOUGH the ULM 55E cartridge is not available separately, we measured its performance to assess its place among today's cartridges. Its output at 3.54 cm/sec was 4.9 millivolts, with channel levels balanced within 0.27 dB. The vertical stylus angle was 28 degrees. At its rated force, the cartridge easily tracked our high-velocity test records, including the 80-micrometer level of the German HiFi Institute record.

The high-frequency tracking distortion of the cartridge, playing the shaped tone bursts of the Shure TTR-103 record, was reasonably low, increasing from 0.85 to 1.65 per cent as the velocity went from 15 to 30 cm/sec. However, lower-frequency intermodulation-distortion measurements with the Shure TTR-102 test record produced some rather strange results which we cannot explain (this particular measurement is also one of the most difficult to correlate with any audible property of a cartridge). The ULM 55E did not mistrack significantly at the record's maximum level of 27 cm/sec, which is a severe test. On the other hand, its intermodulation distortion did not drop as much at lower velocities as we would normally expect, reading 4 per cent at 7 cm/sec. The important conclusion from this test, however, is that the ULM 55E can cope with the highest velocities likely to be found on commercial discs.

When we measured the frequency response of the ULM 55E, using a 47,000-ohm load and only the capacitance of the record-player's arm and signal cables, the output rose by about 5 dB at 20,000 Hz following a

long, smooth decline in output from 500 to about 10,000 Hz. Dual's recommended total of 400 picofarads resulted in a response flat within ± 1.5 dB from 40 to 20,000 Hz with the CBS STR100 test record. Slightly different results were obtained with the JVC TRS-1005 and B&K QR-2009 records, but we felt that the response with the STR100 was at least as valid as any of the others. The square-wave response with the CBS STR112 record was good, with a couple of cycles of moderate-level ringing at slightly over 20,000 Hz.

Channel-separation measurements are closely dependent on the relationship between the cartridge under test and the geometry of the cutter head used to produce the test disc. The JVC record provided slightly better separation figures than the others, averaging 25 dB through much of the audio range, while the CBS and B&K records showed separations of 17 to 20 dB. The exact numbers are not very important, since even 17 dB is adequate for a full stereo effect. What is noteworthy about the ULM 55E is the uniformity of its channel separation across the entire audio range. Even at 20,000 Hz, the separation is about 15 dB. Also, the crosstalk curves of the two channels are unusually symmetrical. We detected several small "glitches" in the crosstalk-response curves at 90, 160, and 400 Hz, apparently the result of resonances in the arm or cartridge structures. They did not appear in the direct-response curves, nor were they audible.

The isolation from external shock and vibration provided by the turntable base and mounting springs was about average for similar belt-driven turntables and not unlike that of Dual models we have tested in the past. The only significant transmission through the base was at 40 Hz.

● **Comment.** Dual has taken a rather bold step by incorporating a radically new integrated arm and cartridge in their entire product line, and, as we see it, they have come off very well in the process. We welcome the appearance of ultra-low-mass pickups in moderate-price record players.

What does the ULM arm and cartridge combination do for the user? Unlike most of the "improvements" touted in new products, the benefits here are neither subtle nor subject to much argument. The Dual pickup system tracked the most severely warped records in our collection, usually so well that we heard nothing wrong. Sometimes there was a trace of wow when the pickup climbed over a warp of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or more, but in the past such a record was destined for the discard pile.

The Dual 506 handles "normal" records with the greatest of ease. It has none of the quirks of automatic turntables (the arm will never go anywhere but where you place it, and there are no unexpected turn-offs or cycling operations). The fact that the cueing lift is "up" whenever the arm is on its rest means that the pickup can be moved across a disc by a simple lateral push without any concern about keeping the stylus safely above the record. Everything feels "just right," and the Dual cueing system (traditionally one of the best in the business) puts the stylus exactly into the groove below it instead of a little ahead (in our experience, a nondrifting cueing system is about as rare as an unwarp record). Finally, at the end of play, the "automation" is a bare functional minimum, lifting the arm and shutting off the motor. A slight push will then return the arm to its rest.

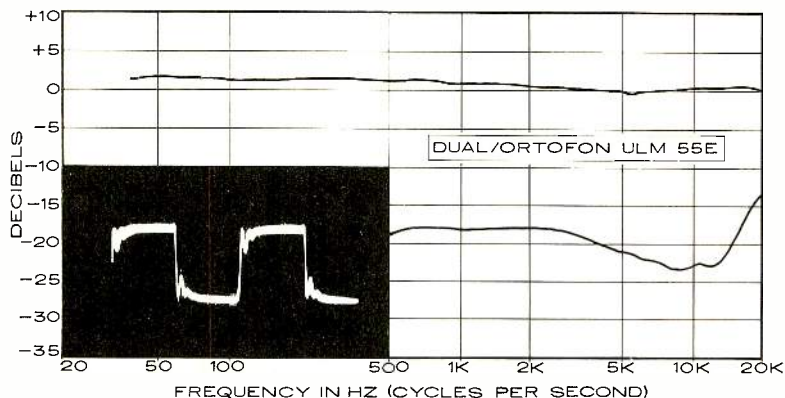
Dual's ULM system, in combination with a balanced arm that uses a spring to set its downward force, is remarkably insensitive to jarring. The entire record player can be shaken quite vigorously without dislodging the pickup from the groove. Since this will often cause wow due to the rocking of the motor on its mounts, we would not suggest operating the 506 in a moving vehicle, but it does demonstrate that the stability of its tone arm is well above average.

As for the sound of the Dual 506/ULM 55E, if you like a very flat, uncolored sound (as we do), it is hard to beat an Ortofon cartridge, and the combination is a most felicitous one at a really affordable price.

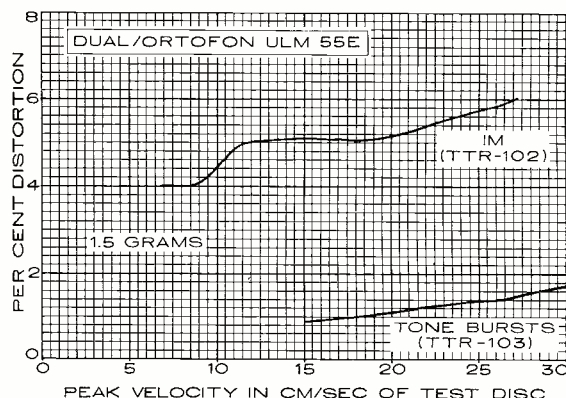
Circle 143 on reader service card

(Continued on page 58)

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



TTR-103 test records. These high velocities provide a severe test of a phono cartridge's performance. The intermodulation-distortion (IM) readings for any given cartridge can vary widely, depending on the particular IM test record used. The actual distortion figure measured is not as important as the maximum velocity the cartridge is able to track before a sudden and radical increase in distortion takes place. There are very few commercial phonograph discs that embody musical audio signals with average velocities much higher than about 15 cm/sec.



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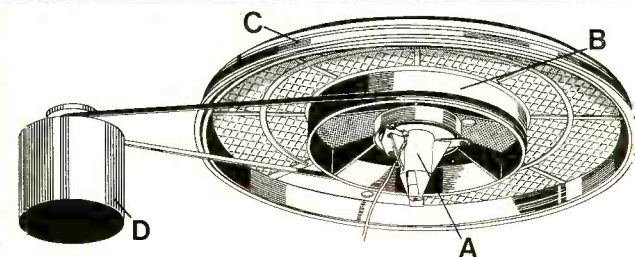
What's better than belt and direct drive? The best of both in one turntable. The specs of direct drive with the acoustic and mechanical isolation of a belt drive. Until now, unheard of. But now you can hear it all on Philips' exclusive, new Direct Control turntables.

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In all Philips Direct Control turntables a mini-computer at the driving disc constantly checks and re-checks the platter speed. Instantly correcting for any variations in line voltage, frequency, pressure on the platter, temperature – even belt slippage.

That's how all Philips Direct Control turntables keep the speed constant and accurate.



A 160 pole tachometer generator (A) at the driving disc (B) electronically monitors the platter's (C) rate of rotation. The tachometer's d.c. signal is continuously compared to a stable d.c. reference signal. Any variations (+ or -) and the tachometer (A) instantly accelerates or slows the separate d.c. motor (D). Direct Control actually puts the driving disc into the electronic feedback loop for excellent speed stability.

DIRECT CONTROL FREE-FLOATING SUBCHASSIS. Specially designed to give Philips Direct Control turntables superb acoustic and mechanical isolation. To cushion the platter, the tonearm – and protect your valuable records – from unexpected jolts, shocks and knocks. And to keep the rumble remarkably low.

DIRECT CONTROL = TOTAL TURN-TABLE DESIGN. But Philips doesn't stop there. For us Direct Control is more than an exclusive new drive and suspension system – it's a completely new concept in total turntable design. Direct Control is specially designed straight, low mass, tubular aluminum tonearms, with very low friction bearings. To track even your most warped records accurately.

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QUARTZ PLL

○ SPHERICAL
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ANTI-SKATING

ON

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QUARTZ

33.3

STYLUS FORCE

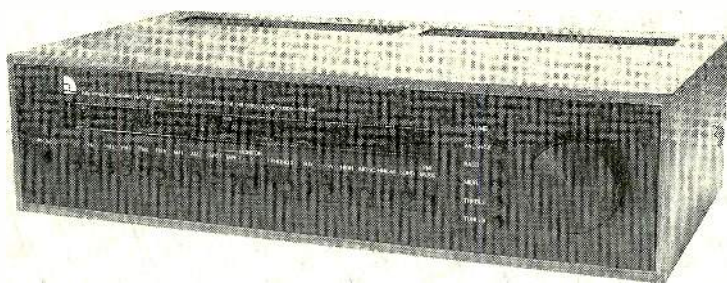
0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5 3

PITCH CONTROL

33 ON 45

STOP

START/RE



Audio Pro TA-150 AM/FM Stereo Receiver

THE Swedish-made Audio Pro TA-150 is a genuinely unique product: the first and so far only fully microprocessor-controlled AM/FM stereo receiver. Designed from the outset as a computer-age product, it has no conventional mechanically operated components. Every aspect of the receiver's operation is controlled by a National Semiconductor SC/MP microprocessor whose inputs are derived from pushbuttons and an optical-impulse generator controlled by the unit's *single* knob. That knob, 2½ inches in diameter, is one of the TA-150's most visible features. Next to it is a vertical row of six small pushbuttons marked VOLUME, BALANCE, BASS, MIDR, TREBLE, and TUNING. A red LED beside each button lights when it has been selected. Strange as it may seem, the single knob serves all these functions depending only on which button has been pressed!

At the right of a large "dial" window that occupies most of the upper part of the panel is a four-digit numerical readout. The 2½-inch-high red numbers can be read easily from across the room. When the receiver is OFF (or ON, with any non-tuner input) the digital display shows the time of day. When either FM or AM reception is selected, it shows the frequency to which the receiver is tuned. Two small red LEDs to the left of the received-frequency display serve as FM-tuning indicators, lighting equally when the receiver is correctly tuned. A green LED to their left is the stereo-FM indicator.

The left half of the dial area is occupied by a horizontal row of sixteen red LEDs that indicate the settings of the volume and tone-control circuits and of the balance control. A scale above the lights is calibrated from fully off to full volume (0 dB); the lights go on sequentially as the volume is increased, forming a line whose length is proportional to the receiver's internal volume setting (it has no relationship to the knob position). When a tone control or the balance control is being adjusted, a lower scale is used. Calibrated from 0 dB in the center to ±16 dB at the extremes, it shows the degree of boost or cut of each of the three tone-control functions (normally, two adjacent LEDs are lit simultaneously during display of tone or balance functions).

Below the dial, over its full width, is a row of twenty pushbuttons, each with its own LED, similar to those that select the knob functions. Five of them are for preset FM channels (marked FM1, FM2, etc.) and two

are for preset AM channels. Others select TAPE 1 or TAPE 2 sources, PHONO 1 or PHONO 2, or AUX. Normally, only PHONO 1 is functional. An optional plug-in module can be installed in the receiver to provide a second phono input (for either a moving-magnet or moving-coil cartridge). A MONITOR button selects the playback output of either tape deck independently of the regular program source. Other buttons control the LOW and HIGH filters, MONO mode, LINEAR (a tone-control bypass), LOUD(ness) compensation, and FM MUTE.

The Audio Pro TA-150 has no power switch as such. Pressing any of the input-selector buttons turns the receiver on (a separate button turns it off). When the receiver comes on, the function lights next to the knob come on sequentially and the scale lights in the "dial" show the settings of the BALANCE, BASS, MIDR(range), and TREBLE tone controls; the digital displays show the frequency to which the receiver is tuned if either AM or FM has been selected. After the initial scan, which takes a few seconds, the control returns to its VOLUME function, with the volume set at or near minimum to prevent blasting regardless of where it was set the last time the receiver was used. However, any other functions that have previously been set, such as FM MUTE, LOUD(ness), or one of the filters, as well as *all* the preset tuner frequencies, are "remembered" by the computer for at least a week, even if the receiver has been unplugged from a power source. To use any of the tone controls or the tuning function, it is necessary

only to touch the corresponding button and use the knob. A few seconds after the adjustment has been completed, the knob automatically reverts to its volume-control function.

The performance specifications of the Audio Pro TA-150 are generally good, and in some cases excellent. It is rated to deliver 70 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads (or 90 watts to 4 ohms) from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.1 per cent total harmonic distortion. Most of the FM-tuner ratings are closer to those of a good medium-price receiver than to a "super-receiver" in the price range of the TA-150. The real forte of this receiver is not its numerical specifications, but rather the remarkable marriage of computer and analog circuitry that it represents.

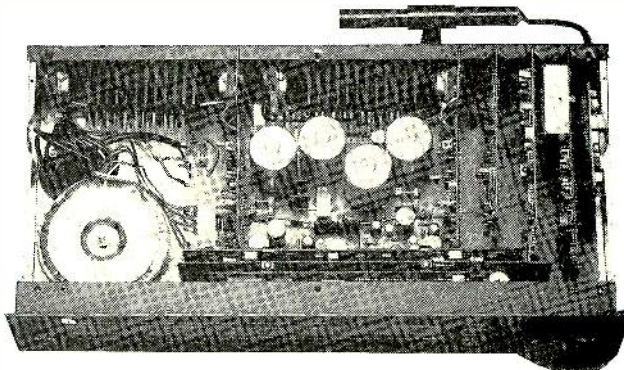
Despite its digital features, the basic circuits of the TA-150 are essentially analog in nature. Even the tuning is done by voltage-controlled oscillators rather than frequency synthesizers (which would have seemed to be a logical feature of an all-digitially controlled product). However, the designers of the TA-150, 3Dgruppen of Stockholm, Sweden, decided that the added expense of a digital synthesizer would not result in audible benefits to the user. Thus, the computer "remembers" the d.c. voltage (via an analog-to-digital converter) that is needed to tune the receiver to any selected frequency. When it is commanded to go to that frequency, it uses the voltage to tune the local oscillator.

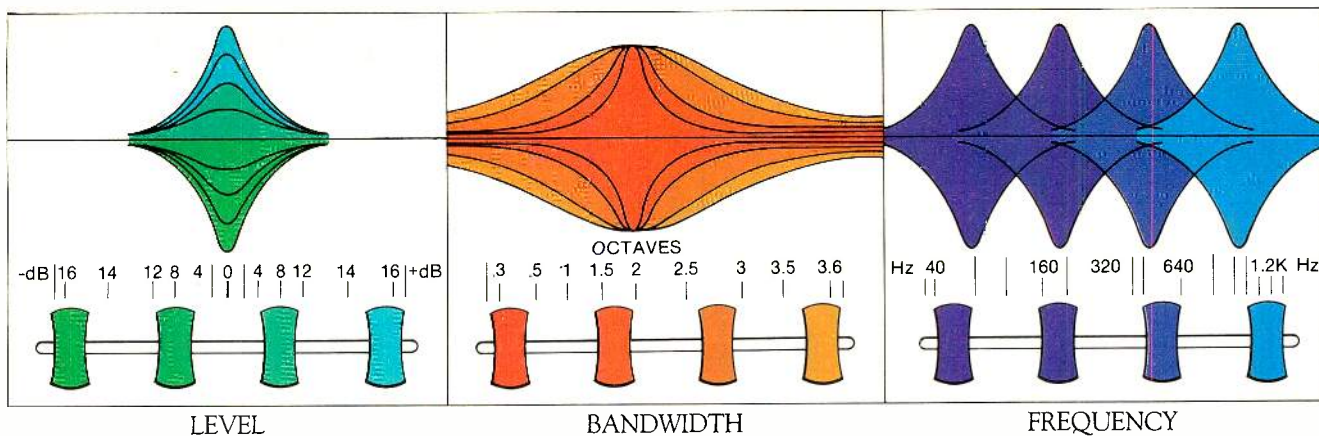
A powerful AFC system (which is disabled during the actual tuning process) comes on slowly a few seconds after a station has been acquired and locks the receiver precisely to the frequency of the received signal. The readout is from a frequency counter that measures the actual local-oscillator frequency and subtracts the 10.7-MHz intermediate frequency (455 kHz for AM) to show the frequency of the received signal.

The volume could have been controlled by means of a voltage-controlled amplifier rather than a mechanical potentiometer. However, it was decided that the distortion contributed by such a circuit was excessive, and 3Dgruppen decided to use a switched attenuator of fixed resistors and voltage-controlled solid-state switches. The attenuator varies the audio attenuation from 0 to 93.5 dB in 1.5-dB steps. The attenuator sections are distributed among the stages of the audio amplifier in such a way as to optimize its overload vs. noise characteristics.

A somewhat similar system is used for the
(Continued on page 60)

Most of the circuits of the Audio Pro TA-150 are mounted on vertical printed circuit boards plugged into a master board carrying the interconnections and power-supply circuitry.





With the *graphic equalizer*, you have a limited number of chances to correct an infinite number of potential problems in a recording or listening environment. You're dealing with fixed bandwidths and fixed frequencies. You can only increase or decrease the level. When boosting or cutting frequencies,

you have to settle for the nearest one or two octaves. It's a compromise. With the *parametric*, you're provided an infinite number of solutions. Bandwidth, frequency and level are each determined by you. Any musical problem can be isolated and corrected. And that's what all the excitement's about.

The graphic reason to buy our parametric.

At SAE, the battle has always been for complete musical control. Control that would allow you to correct for any inadequacy in any recording or listening environment.

Now the battle is over. You won.

SAE introduces the 180 Parametric Equalizer.

Actually, if you work for a recording studio, "introducing" would hardly be appropriate. You'd be working with parametrics already. Very simply, it's a matter of flexibility and precision. And very simply, with the SAE 180, the flexibility and precision of your sound control are absolutely limitless.

We should let the parametric speak for itself.

Problem: The lead singer is overpowered by the back-up group.

Solution: Set Level control to +10dB. Sweep Frequency control until the voice is brought

forward. Adjust Bandwidth control to encompass the full voice range. Tailor Level control to exact voice presence desired.

How much does a machine like this cost? How can I afford a component that can acoustically correct a system? How can I buy an electronic box that can fix a listening room and a recording at the same time?

The SAE 180 costs \$250.* That's how.

What we have is a small miracle that is also an attainable reality. Imagine: Complete, precise, musical control for the price of a common graphic.

Remember that word: Parametric. Remember that number: 180. And remember that name: SAE.

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I want control. Send information.

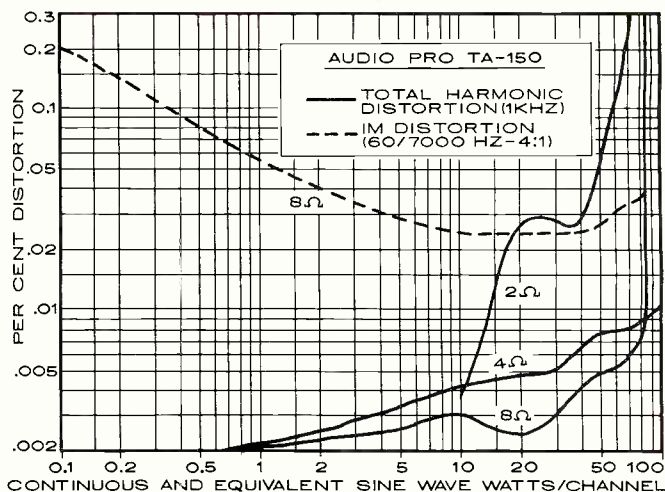
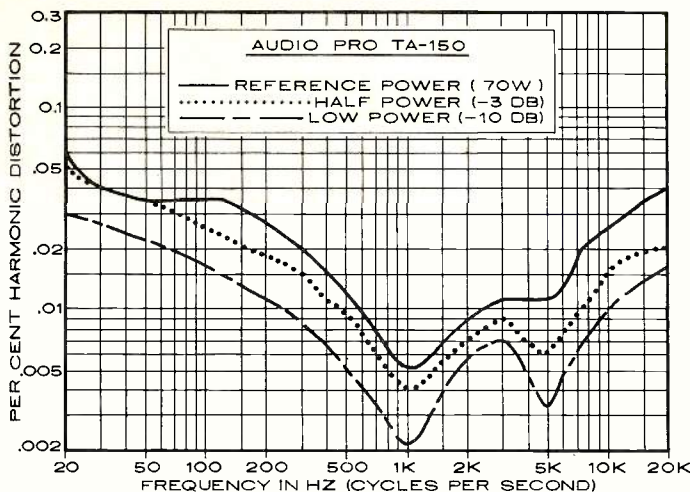
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tone controls, but with an interesting difference. The tone controls actually consist of high-pass, low-pass, and bandpass filters, each of them synthesized by a computer algorithm rather than being formed of physical components. As an indirect result, the receiver has an extraordinary tone-control range of up to ± 30 dB boost or cut.

The balance control does not even exist as a physical entity. Channel balance is varied by having the computer differentially shift the signal attenuators for the two channels. Similarly, the loudness control has no separate components; it merely instructs the computer how to set the filter responses to obtain the desired results.

There is obviously much more to this receiver than can even be touched upon in the

available space. One thing worth mentioning, however, is its mechanical construction. It is assembled on a number of individual printed circuit boards, or cards, which plug directly into a large "mother" board. Except for the power-line input, there is virtually no discrete wiring in the set, all interconnections being part of the printed wiring. The cards include the left- and right-channel power amplifiers (whose heat sinks screw to the case), the tape-input card, phono- and aux-input card, FM-tuner card, AM-tuner card, preamplifier card (including the volume and tone-control functions), microprocessor card, and the front card that carries all the pushbuttons and displays. Each card is separately tested and aligned and can be replaced in a moment without tools and with no need for any adjust-

ment or alignment of it or any other part of the receiver. All related input and output connectors are part of the cards themselves (accessible through holes on the rear of the cabinet where required), so that the entire performance of any module can be guaranteed when a new module is plugged into the receiver.

Finally, the single knob is quite unlike any ordinary control knob. For one thing, it does not *turn* anything! It is on a short shaft, with a large number of detents to give it a "feel" and sense of location as it is turned. On the back of the knob are 128 alternating light and dark segments illuminated by an infrared LED and scanned by two phototransistors in the receiver. When the knob is turned, the optical sensing system sends impulses to the computer that tell it how far the knob was turned and in which direction. Depending on the selected function, these impulses then direct the computer to take the necessary action (change frequency, volume, etc.).

The microprocessor continuously scans all the inputs and indicating devices, approximately 1,000 times per second, lighting the appropriate indicators each time and comparing the input signals to the previous ones to detect any change. When a button is pressed, the computer notes the fact but does not act on it immediately (since the impulse might be noise from a stray electrical transient). After two more checks, if the contact appears to be genuine, the computer switches to a sub-routine to execute the command. The assigned change is made, and the system returns to its scanning. Since the entire process takes only a small fraction of a second, it appears to the user to be instantaneous.

DIN sockets are used for the signal inputs, speaker outputs, and antenna connectors on the rear apron of the receiver. Adaptors are furnished to convert all of them to the phono connectors used in this country. In addition to the TAPE, PHONO, and AUX connectors, there is a PREAMP OUT/POWER AMP IN socket. Plugging a DIN plug into this disconnects the junction between the two sections of the amplifier. Pushbuttons on the rear of the receiver activate the two sets of speaker outputs. There are a hinged AM ferrite-rod antenna and a single switched a.c. outlet on the rear apron. The Audio Pro TA-150 is finished in black throughout, with white markings. It is 19½ inches wide, 10¼ inches deep, and 2½ inches high; it weighs 25 pounds. An optional

(Continued on page 62)



"All right, Smedley, this is Captain Mulholland. Throw out that videotape recorder and all those pirated-off-the-air videotapes!"

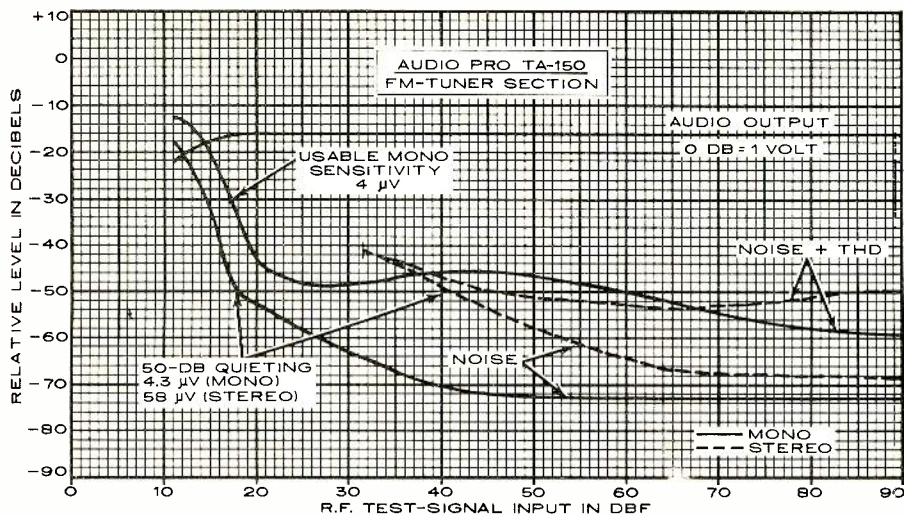
No compromise
Winston Lights didn't compromise
on great taste to get low tar.
Why should I?

Winston Lights taste good
like a light cigarette should.



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

13 mg. "tar", 0.9 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report MAY '78.



wooden cabinet is available. The same receiver, less power amplifiers, is available as the TPA-150 tuner/preamplifier. The suggested retail price of the Audio Pro TA-150 is \$1,135. The TPA-150 is \$995. The wood cabinets are \$40 to \$65, depending on the finish.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The one-hour preconditioning period, with the amplifiers delivering 23 watts to 8-ohm loads, left the top and back of the Audio Pro TA-150 very hot (too hot to touch for more than a second or two). However, even after the extensive testing that followed, there was no further heating or apparent degradation of any performance characteristic. In normal operation, the receiver became only moderately warm.

With both channels driving 8-ohm loads at 1,000 Hz, the clipping headroom was 0.72 dB (82.6 watts). With 4-ohm loads, the outputs clipped at 120 watts for a 1.25-dB clipping headroom rating. Into 2-ohm loads (for which the receiver is not rated) the outputs clipped at 94 watts. The dynamic headroom (clipping power during a 20-millisecond burst signal) was 1.77 dB (105 watts) with 8-ohm loads and a large 3 dB (180 watts) into 4 ohms.

The harmonic distortion at 1,000 Hz was barely detectable at most power levels, being under 0.003 per cent from 0.1 to 30 watts output, 0.005 per cent at the rated 70 watts, and 0.007 per cent at 82 watts, just before clipping occurred. Into 4-ohm loads, the distortion was only slightly higher, rising from less than 0.003 per cent in the under-1-watt range to 0.005 per cent at 30 watts and eventually to 0.013 per cent at 110 watts, just under the clipping point. Even 2-ohm loads did not severely affect the amplifier's distortion at normal listening levels. It measured 0.004 per cent at 10 watts, less than 0.03 per cent up to 40 watts, and 1 per cent at 90 watts. The 8-ohm intermodulation distortion (IM) was in the 0.02 to 0.03 per cent range at most power levels up to about 60 watts, and only 0.036 per cent at 80 watts. Across the audio-frequency range, the distortion at the rated 70-watt output dropped from about 0.05 per cent at 20 Hz to 0.005 per cent at 1,000 Hz and then rose to 0.04 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At reduced power levels the shape of the distortion curve was similar but the measured values were lower.

To drive the amplifier to a reference output of 1 watt, an AUX input of 21 millivolts (mV)

or a PHONO input of 0.28 mV was needed. The respective A-weighted signal-to-noise ratios were 73.5 and 71.5 dB, referred to 1 watt. The phono preamplifier overloaded at 175 mV at 1,000 Hz and at equivalent levels at 20 and 20,000 Hz. The RIAA phono equalization was accurate within +0, -1 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz referred to the 1,000-Hz level, and it was not affected detectably by the presence of phono-cartridge inductance at the input to the preamplifier. The phono input had a resistance of 50,000 ohms, shunted by 100 picofarads (there is space on the phono card to add capacitance if the cartridge requires a higher value). The amplifier slew factor was greater than our measurement limit of 25 (according to the manufacturer, the amplifier response extends to beyond 500 kHz, but it is rolled off ahead of the power amplifier to prevent interference from AM broadcasts and any chance of slew-related distortion).

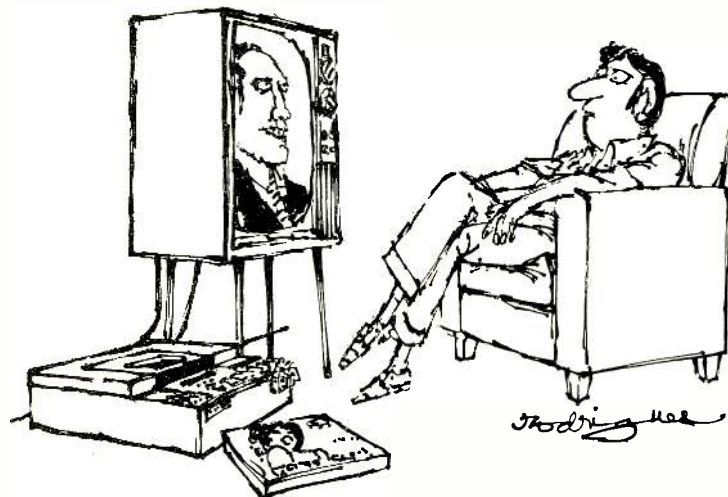
The tone controls had the specified characteristics, but the shape of their curves was unlike any we have seen in the past. Both the bass and treble control responses are hinged at 850 Hz, with shelved boost characteristics and a slight additional dip in the response at 80 and 10,000 Hz when full cut was used.

The midrange control affected a wide range of frequencies in boost but only a rather narrow band centered at 850 Hz in cut (this is to be expected from the basic design of the tone-control system and the response curves of the bass and treble sections).

The loudness contours boosted only the low frequencies, with the same shelved response we noted in the tone-control curves (since it uses the same filter algorithm). The boost was not apparent until the volume had been reduced about 30 dB from maximum. The low and high filters had gradual 6-dB-per-octave slopes, with -3-dB points at 40 and 8,000 Hz. The amplifier also has a fixed infrasonic filter operating below 14 Hz.

The FM tuner's usable sensitivity of 17 dBf (4 microvolts) was lower than we usually measure on medium- and high-price receivers, but quite adequate for most situations. The 50-dB quieting sensitivity was 17.8 dBf (4.3 μ V) in mono, with 1.8 per cent total harmonic distortion (THD), and the stereo sensitivity was 40.5 dBf (58 μ V) with 0.4 per cent THD. At a 65-dBf (1,000 μ V) input the distortion was 0.23 per cent in mono and 0.21 per cent in stereo, and the respective signal-to-noise measurements at that level were 73 and 67 dB. These measurements were made at the tape-recording outputs as usual, but we found that, as with some other European-made receivers, the output-signal voltage to a tape deck was much lower than we usually measure: about 140 mV (0.14 volt) from a 100 per cent modulated FM signal.

The FM frequency response showed some rolloff at the high frequencies, to almost -7 dB at 15,000 Hz. The channel separation was about 40 dB in the midrange, 32 dB at 30 Hz, and 15 dB at 15,000 Hz. The tuner's capture ratio was exceptionally good: 0.77 to 0.87 dB depending on the signal level. AM rejection was fair at about 50 dB and image rejection was an acceptable 61 dB. The tuner's selectivity was good: 80 dB for alternate-channel spacing and 6 dB on adjacent channels. The muting threshold was 17 to 20 dBf (4 to 5 μ V), with the muting and unmuting action taking place smoothly over that range of signal levels. The stereo switching threshold was 22 to 30 dBf (7 to 16 μ V). The level of the 19-kHz pilot carrier in the audio was -66 dB,



"Hello, there! We hope you're enjoying this spicy videotape movie, and we'll get back to it in a moment . . . but first, how's your real-life sex life? Have you ever considered an aphrodisiac? Well, through special arrangement with the makers of Mr. Satyr . . ."

and the tuner's hum was -67 dB. Our only measurement on the AM tuner was of its frequency response, which was considerably flatter than most we have seen, though not really much wider. The response was almost perfectly flat from 100 to 3,000 Hz and was down 6 dB at 22 and 4,500 Hz.

● **Comment.** The Audio Pro TA-150 is a curious combination of a rather ordinary tuner section, an extremely good audio section, and a most remarkable control system. One small flaw in its operation is in the AM tuning (and this is *very* minor for me, since I do not ordinarily listen to AM). The "stepped" knob action has the effect of tuning the AM section in small discrete increments, and it is usually not possible to set it exactly to the frequency of a desired station. It is frustrating to hear the obvious sound of a mistuned AM receiver—and then to move the knob one notch only to hear the tuner pass through the signal and come out the other side! The receiver should really have AFC for its AM tuner or else leave out the AM band entirely.

To us, the total worth of a product such as this is heavily influenced by its less tangible aspects (or at least its less *audible* ones). Apart from the undeniable novelty of the TA-150's computer control system, it has also done away with almost every part that might wear out or require service. By eliminating switches, potentiometers, tuning capacitors, dial cables, and virtually all the point-to-point wiring, it seems reasonable that the designers of the TA-150 have extended its potential trouble-free life by a significant amount.

Assuming that the TA-150 continues to work indefinitely (as well it may), does it still offer any advantages over a conventional receiver? I think so. Frankly, from what I had read of the single-knob control of this receiver, I had prejudged that feature as a "gimmick." I was very wrong. Within minutes after setting up the receiver, I found that using it was an almost automatic process. Unlike most similar components, there was no need to remember control locations or search among a large number of seemingly identical knobs for the specific control needed. Practically no familiarization time is necessary with the TA-150. There is only one control, and the indicator lights next to it leave no doubt as to what it is controlling. The overall "feel" of the receiver is outstanding. In our view, the Audio Pro TA-150 is the most successfully "human engineered" high-fidelity product we have ever seen, and we would be happy to see its design philosophy in other components.

Yes, it is expensive, and *no*, it really doesn't sound any better most of the time than some receivers selling for a fraction of its price. Still, it handles so perfectly and is so free of apparent flaws (with the minor exceptions noted) that I think I could be happier with it than with some comparably priced receiver with a couple of dozen knobs.

There are many other features of the TA-150 that are worth commenting on, but space does not permit any more. Summarizing, it is a superbly sophisticated product, a genuine computer-age receiver, and without a doubt the simplest to operate that we have yet seen. Its FM-tuner section is at least competent, and its audio performance is outstanding. All things considered, the price seems quite reasonable.

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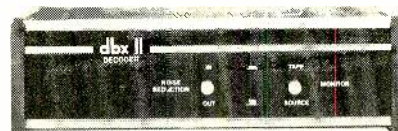
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CIRCLE NO. 10 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Going on Record

By James Goodfriend



TIME AND TEMPO

THERE is probably no subject better calculated to prove that music is more an art than a science than the matter of tempo. A recent letter to this magazine from Mr. Robert Collins offers an opportunity to expound upon this.

Mr. Collins, who is not a composer, feels that if he were he would certainly indicate, by means of metronome marks or some other generally comprehensible system, *precisely* the tempo at which he wanted his music to be played. He points out, quite logically, that if such a system had been followed in the past, we might all be spared the enormous variations in tempo from one performance of a piece to another and, furthermore, be spared the disheartening spectacle of critics bewailing tempos taken by performers as either too slow or too fast—and disagreeing among themselves into the bargain. His letter deals with basics, and though it is somewhat difficult to answer, it is important to try.

The very concept of a metronome, an instrument to measure tempo, goes back at least to Galileo, but the practical construction and commercial availability of such an instrument had to wait for Johann Maelzel, who patented one in 1816. Maelzel was a friend of Beethoven, and some of the earliest metronome markings occur in Beethoven scores. Of course this leaves the many hundreds of years of music that preceded 1816 metronome free, and the correct tempos have to be determined from pulse, from such inexact terms as *allegro*, *presto*, and *lento*, and from musical intuition and a sense of rightness. Quite frankly, though, it leaves Beethoven's music (and the music that came after him) in only a slightly less equivocal position, for musical tempo, while it can be set by a metronome, cannot be *controlled* by one. *Mechanical* regularity tends to be either hypnotic or soporific, and such states are usually not what is wanted in the performance of music meant to be listened to.

What Mr. Collins' beef brings us to, then, is *many* problems rather than one, all of them somewhat distinct from one another but all related in musicians' abhorrence of a specified, precisely regular beat. With "pre-metronome" music there will naturally be differences among performers about just what constitutes an "*andante*." But I must point

out that these differences of opinion are hardly ever mere whim. One performer *feels* the music at a tempo faster than another, and, more important, he can make it *work* at that tempo. It is eminently possible for two conductors to take the same tempo and, all other things being equal, for one performance to sound satisfying while the other seems too fast, too slow, or just somehow not right. Composers have a tendency to play their own music rather more quickly than other interpreters. The composer, according to theory at least, *knows* the tempo he wants. But there may be generations of listeners and performers who will openly protest that the music *sounds* better when played differently—that is, slower—than what the composer wants. This is one way performance traditions develop that seem to run counter to the score.

A second part of the problem lies in the fact that many pieces of music are written in sections with different tempos for each. The choice of tempo for the first movement of a symphony influences the choice of tempo for the second, and so on. So there is a problem of artistically balancing the parts of a composition through judicious contrasts of tempo. Different artists do it differently.

FINALLY, there is the matter of phrasing and rubato. Even at a set tempo, *all* quarter notes do not take the same temporal value—not when played by human beings, at any rate. And interpreters differ from one to another because they are different people. If we could find, for example, two recordings of a Strauss waltz, one led by Clemens Krauss, the other by George Szell, both at the identical metronome setting (and I don't say that we could), the stopwatch would reveal that the Krauss performance was still longer than the Szell. Why? Because Krauss believed in the Viennese tradition of *Lufpausen*, tiny expressive lengthenings of a beat, and Szell thought that such practices were pure *Schlamperei*. You may prefer which you will, but there is nothing in the score, not even a metronome mark, to prove that one is right and the other wrong. The most "correct" performance of any piece of music is the one that, within the restrictions of the score and what we know of the style, sounds best to us, and metronomes, if they disagree, can go hang. □

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




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CIRCLE NO. 53 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The Pop Beat

By Paulette Weiss



THE GREAT PRATFALL

HERE we are (already) at the end of the Seventies. Contemplating the next decade, keeping in mind the events of 1979, the future of pop music looks surprisingly bright. Although there was plenty of pop news that made headlines in 1979, one event shook the music business to its foundation. Those in the record industry half jokingly called it the Great Crash of '79. It wasn't a crash, actually. It was more like a well-choreographed pratfall, but its effects will probably be felt well into the Eighties.

Here's what happened. Fifteen years ago the Beatles and the other British groups that followed them gave a powerful stimulus to the American record industry, which immediately began to expand. Sales figures grew year after year. Recording stars crisscrossed the world on concert tours. By 1978 the music business had grown by 500 per cent and in that year it generated a staggering \$4.2 billion in sales in the U.S. alone.

The Recording Industry Association's gold record awards (for 500,000 unit sales) and platinum awards (for 1,000,000 sales) became more common as the music business grew bigger than all spectator sports combined. Recording became the glamour industry, surpassing even movie making. For successful recording stars there were limousines and private jets, mansions and parties—anything a fertile imagination could dream up and money could buy.

The industry firmly believed it was recession-proof. For fifteen years, despite fluctuations in the general economy, profits had increased every year. But the fiscal realities of 1979 brought an end to all that. Hard-core record buyers finally began diverting their cash to pay inflated prices for such basics as food and gasoline. Records became more expensive as a result of rising costs for everything from raw materials to studio time, and such labels as CBS instituted a list price of \$8.98 for star acts. With concert tickets averaging \$10 to \$15, attendance fell off, and the summer gas shortage made everything worse.

Not only had the market gone soft, but the industry had overextended itself. Expecting to surpass 1978's phenomenal profits, record companies pressed more discs than they could sell in 1979. Some labels overshipped solely to qualify for the RIAA platinum award, but

lax return policies permitted retailers to send back vast numbers of unsold discs.

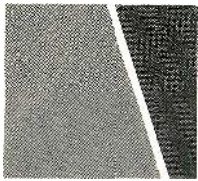
Major labels lost money footing the bills for unsuccessful concert tours—and some "successful" ones as well. Added to this was a considerable cash drain for such promotional items as T-shirts and press freebies (tickets and albums). Faced with declining sales, record companies panicked. More than six hundred employees within the industry were fired abruptly. Freebies were cut back, and many summer concert tours were canceled.

As fall approached and the gasoline shortage abated, industry sales figures showed an encouraging upswing. Early autumn releases by name acts such as Led Zeppelin sold well and quickly. Record-company executives breathed easier—and then took a long, hard look at their business. Judging from the steps they've taken toward economic stability, it looks as though the pop-music consumer may benefit from the Great Crash of '79.

FIRST, to stimulate sales, CBS, Phonogram/Mercury, Capitol, and MCA have all introduced budget lines with a \$5.98 list price. Second, many of those overstocked discs pressed for the boom that never came are being sold as cutouts, with some excellent records going for as little as \$1.50.

There will be two notable trends in recording pop acts. For one, emphasis will be placed on established superstars who can be expected to sell even at the \$8.98 list price. The other is that unknown acts of real musical quality, many with New Wave credentials, will get record-company support because they generally require less expensive promotion and have low overhead. For example, the Knack's surprisingly successful debut album cost Capitol only \$18,000 to produce instead of the \$100,000 once considered average.

Other policies to insure the health of the industry are going into effect. Record piracy is under continuing attack, and a tax on blank tape to discourage illegal copying is being considered. The RIAA has changed its certification requirements to eliminate overshipping, and labels are limiting the number of returns they will accept. Fortunately, the Great Pratfall was not fatal, and a chastened recording industry is up and proceeding—somewhat gingerly—into the Eighties. □



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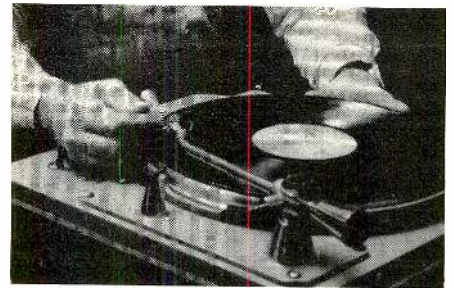


There is a new phono cartridge line that is the talk of the recording and broadcasting industries: the Shure SC39 Series. It is the first professionally optimized combination of true high fidelity performance, superb trackability, resistance to stylus damage under grueling conditions, and prolonged record life. These unique features make the SC39 ideal for high quality home applications as well.

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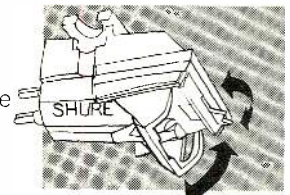
In addition, the SC39 offers a unique stylus tip *not available on any other cartridge*: the MASAR™ tip, designed for playing even delicate lacquer masters, without objectionable noise buildup or "cue-burn" damage. It even helps when playing discs with high surface noise, or 45 rpm records made from reprocessed, substandard vinyl or polystyrene.



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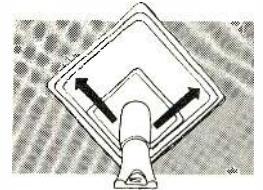


This cartridge also comes close to being "butterfinger-proof." Most stylus damage is caused either by dropping the cartridge or by pushing the stylus sideways against the edge of a record. To protect against this, the SC39 is equipped with two remarkable features. The first is the *Lever-Operated Stylus Guard*, which locks the stylus guard in safety position when not in use. With the flip of a thumb, the guard snaps up and the operating lever turns into a handy cueing aid.



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In addition, the *SIDE-GUARD Stylus Deflector* protects the stylus shank from damage by withdrawing it safely into the cartridge body in response to sideways impacts.

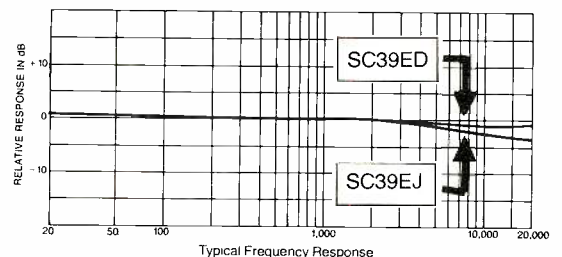


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The transparent sound of the SC39 Series is due to its optimized professional response which is virtually flat through the upper mid-range, with a smooth and gentle rolloff at the highest frequencies. It is especially pleasant when used with loudspeakers that tend to exaggerate the high frequencies.

There are three models in the SC39 Series: SC39ED—Biradial (Elliptical) stylus for ¾ to 1½ gram tracking; SC39EJ—Biradial (Elliptical) stylus for 1½ to 3 gram tracking; and SC39B—Spherical stylus for 1½ to 3 gram tracking



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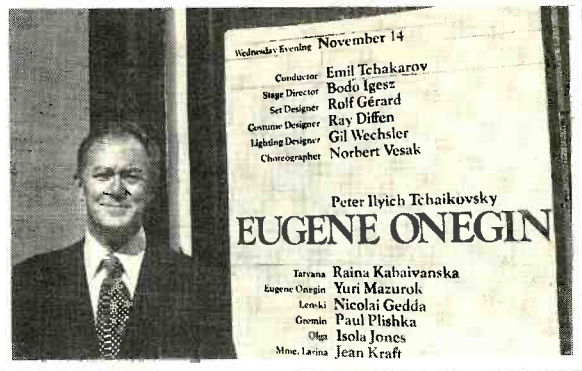
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The Opera File

By William
Livingstone



TEXACO PRESENTS

A COUPLE of seasons ago a listener to the Saturday afternoon broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera submitted the following question to the popular intermission feature, Texaco's Opera Quiz: "Which star has appeared on more of the Met broadcasts than any other?" One of the panelists guessed the answer, which was, of course, the Texaco star. On December 8, 1979, with the Met's performance of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, Texaco will begin its *fortieth* year of underwriting the broadcasts, the longest continuous sponsorship in the history of radio, and when the season ends on April 19, 1980, Texaco will have sponsored the broadcasts of eight hundred Met matinee performances.

In recent years other companies have provided grants for various cultural television programs on the Public Broadcasting Service, but Texaco pioneered this kind of corporate support of the arts when it began its association with the Met with the broadcast of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* on December 7, 1940. Under present government regulations, Texaco could take up to twenty minutes to advertise its products on a three- or four-hour broadcast. Instead, less than two minutes are used for sponsor identification, and the rest of the time between acts is given over to discussions that complement the music.

Like millions of other American opera fans, I came to love opera through these radio performances, and like many other critics, I feel indebted to Texaco because the broadcasts gave me my operatic education. I probably learned as much from the intermission features produced by Geraldine Souvaine as from exposure to the music. The first of these features is always a musical and dramatic analysis of the opera of the day by an expert musician, such as Boris Goldovsky, Robert Lawrence, or Alberta Masiello.

The broadcasts were carried by commercial networks until 1960, when Texaco engaged G. H. Johnston, Inc., a broadcast-packaging firm, to put together the Texaco-Metropolitan Opera Radio Network, a chain of about three hundred selected commercial and noncommercial stations. Perhaps because I grew up far from any important opera house, it gives me particular pleasure to know that this network makes twenty Metropolitan performances a year available free to 95 per

cent of the potential radio audience in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico.

The total effect of this long-term collaboration of art, business, and technology is impossible to calculate, but there are many obvious benefits. Because of the broadcasts, the Met, which has had no artistic interference from Texaco, does not merely serve a local audience, but has become a national institution. The record industry has benefited enormously because the broadcasts stimulate sales of recordings of whatever operas the Met performs on the air. Production and release of operatic recordings are often keyed to the Met's repertoire. For example, Angel released Beverly Sills' recording of Rossini's *The Siege of Corinth* when she made her debut at the Met in that opera, and London issued Joan Sutherland's recording of Massenet's *Esclarmonde* when she sang it at the Met.

THE greatest influence of the broadcasts has probably been the building of a large audience for live performances of opera across the country. Every opera administrator I've talked with outside New York has cited the Met broadcasts as the principal cause of the phenomenal growth of the regional opera movement. According to the best available statistics from the Central Opera Service at the Met, in the season of 1940-1941, when Texaco began its sponsorship, there were only 77 opera-producing organizations in the United States and 12 colleges with opera workshops. The most recent COS statistics show that in the 1978-1979 season there were 8,554 performances of 498 operas given by 966 organizations. Of these, 415 were college workshops.

Texaco now supplements the radio broadcasts by contributing funds for four telecasts in the Live from the Met series on PBS. What Texaco gets for its money is probably intangible "image" or "prestige." The intangible public benefits of forty years of broadcasts include the gradual democratization of opera. It's expensive, but the broadcasts have made it possible for anyone to enjoy the Queen of the Arts without living in a big city or having a lot of money. I like to think that one of the kids staying home on Saturday afternoons this winter listening to the Met will become my eventual successor in this job. □

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Is the late resurgence of interest
merely an unusually eloquent last gasp,
or are we indeed witnessing

A REBIRTH OF THE BLUES?

By John Morthland

By the mid Seventies, the Blues had been pronounced dead and buried, written off as the music of a time, a place, and a way of life alien to most contemporary Americans. But "the blues never die," as the peerless Chicago pianist Otis Spann reminded us in the Sixties, and the late Seventies have witnessed a surprising resurgence of interest, especially among white fans.

While it would be something of an overstatement to say that blues music is thriving today (the current activity may be more like an unusually eloquent last gasp), several blues veterans have renewed faltering careers, some lesser-known performers are attracting real attention for the first time in their lives, and there's even some young talent coming up. The number of white blues bands has also increased, even if most of them are not really known yet outside their home bases. Such bands reflect changing tastes at a grass-roots level, and should one or more of them land a contract with a major label and click with the public, we could see a repeat of the white blues movement of the Sixties.

The most *conspicuous* artifact of the New Blues so far is, unfortunately, the Blues Brothers' "Briefcase Full of Blues" (Atlantic 19217), which, through some strange alchemy, has turned the painfully amateurish singing and harp playing of *Saturday Night Live* mainstays John Belushi and Dan Ackroyd into a runaway platinum best-seller. That fluke aside, the current up-and-comer is George Thorogood, the Kid Flash of white blues guitar. He attacks his material with such innocence that it's hard not to like it even though he's simply recycling the previously tried and true. His albums "Move It On Over" (Rounder 3024) and "George Thorogood and the Destroyers" (Rounder 3013) have been

making the charts even though they're on an independent, poorly distributed label. Ranking below Thorogood and his group are any number of other white blues bands—such as the All-Stars (Charlottesville, Virginia), the Thunderbirds (Austin, Texas), and the Nighthawks (Washington, D. C.)—some of which have albums out on specialty labels that are even smaller than Rounder.

FOR those who prefer the real thing, Muddy Waters has released three solid albums on Blue Sky in the last two years ("Hard Again," PZ 34449; "I'm Ready," JZ 34928; and "Muddy Waters Live," JZ 35712). None is on a par with his epochal Fifties sides—that would be asking too much—but they do provide a fitting capstone to the career of this mighty bluesman and belong at the head of any list of contemporary-blues releases.

"Contemporary" here means electrified and with a back-up band. Originally, of course, the blues was the music of a solitary performer backed only by his own acoustic instrument, almost

always a guitar. It was a rural music, mostly confined to Mississippi Delta blacks, though there were also bluesmen working in other Southeastern states and in the Texas-Louisiana area. With a few exceptions, the blues followed a twelve-bar pattern with a simple 4/4 beat. The lyrics were almost always about women, whiskey, and rambling, and the same verses often wound up in several different songs. Singers moaned and cried their songs, creating a sound that was stark and foreboding, brimming over with raw emotion. Blues was—and is—a limited form technically; each individual performer has to develop the nuances that make his music uniquely his own.

The Thirties was the era of country blues, the music of fish fries and Saturday-night partying. Chicago was already a recording center by then, and by the late Thirties and early Forties a distinctive Chicago blues sound had evolved. This was aided by the massive migration of rural Southern blacks to the Northern cities, which peaked around the time of World War II.

Post-war blues was largely, though not entirely, Chicago blues. There were also a West Coast blues movement and an active scene in Memphis, but both went fairly slick fairly soon. Chicago blues stayed closest to the original Delta blues, but, even so, the noisy, congested Northern city presented a new way of life quite unlike that of the rural South, and the music changed as the lives did. Instruments were added: first the bass, then harp (harmonica), piano, drums, and, finally, horns. The blues went electric so that the musicians could make themselves heard over the crowd noise in the taverns where they played. The music became more rigid in form, because to work with a band a singer had to follow set patterns, and it became more aggressive in character.

(Continued on page 72)

BLUES SOURCES

If your local record store doesn't carry these small specialty labels, you might try writing to them directly at the following addresses:

- Alligator Records, P.O. Box 60234, Chicago, Ill. 60660
- Blind Pig Records, 208 South First Street, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48103
- Delmark Records, 4243 North Lincoln Avenue, Chicago, Ill. 60618
- Tomato Records, 611 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012
- Trix Records, Drawer AB, Rosendale, N.Y. 12472

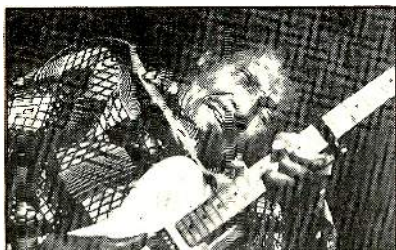


Bent Mackin - Alligator

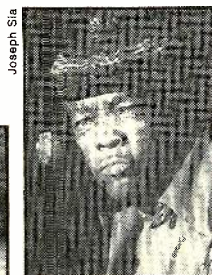
BLUES...



Clifton Chenier



Albert Collins



John Lee Hooker

Walter Horton



Albert King



Jimmy Johnson

But that raw Delta sound remained at its heart.

The blues kept its popularity with urban blacks through the Fifties and into the Sixties, but new generations were growing up for whom the Delta wasn't even a distant memory. City life was the only life they knew, and *their* music—soul music—was even more frenetic, more aggressive, more contemporary. The blues became increasingly unfashionable among blacks, an unwelcome reminder of the repressive conditions prevailing before the Civil Rights era.

The music got a second wind in the mid Sixties, but with a twist, when British bands (the Rolling Stones, the Animals, the Yardbirds) took this black American music and introduced it to white American kids. Before long there were hundreds of white blues bands on both sides of the Atlantic (most of them just plain embarrassing), and some young white musicians—John Hammond, for instance—took up blues in its traditional (not rock-adapted) form. Even more significant, for the first time ever the black masters of the blues were playing to mainly white audiences. However, for most white rock fans the Sixties blues revival was merely a fad, and as such it passed quickly.

The Living Chicago Blues series on the Alligator label (see below) makes a case for the blues as an ongoing tradition, at least in the Windy City. The bands there work some of the same clubs their illustrious predecessors did, and their music is still full of hard times—and still helps people to transcend those hard times. Little *has* changed in that respect, though it's hard to believe, as some enthusiasts contend, that the scene today is "as big as ever." That a scene exists at all—in Chicago and in certain pockets in the South and West—is enough. Today the blues is the music of small, independent labels; the leader, in both quantity and quality, is Alligator Records.

WHAT follows is a survey of contemporary black blues on the specialty labels. It ignores those artists (Waters, B. B. King, Bobby Bland) who still record for major labels, as well as reissues, imports, the white revivalists, and the deeply moving country blues of Johnny Shine and a couple of others (all categories in which there is current activity also). The list is not exhaustive but is more than just representative. It should go quite a long way toward helping you to discover—or rediscover—the magic of the blues; but from that point you really have to travel on your own.

● **CLIFTON CHENIER BAND: *Cajun Swamp Music Live***. TOMATO TOM2-7002 two discs. Clifton Chenier plays *zydeco*, the blues-based music of the black Cajuns living in the Louisiana bayou country. *Zydeco* isn't easy to describe, but Chenier and his rollicking band charge through waltzes and two-steps, white Cajun standards, popular country songs, and straight blues, with Chenier singing in both French and English. It's infectious stuff, meant primarily for all-night dancing and partying, and Chenier's accordion wails like nothing you've ever heard before. Chenier's growing old and can't work as hard as he used to, but on this album he sounds more energetic than he has for some time. The man should be considered a national treasure.

● **ALBERT COLLINS: *Ice Pickin'***. ALLIGATOR AL-4713. Finally, this kinetic Texas guitar whiz has an album fully representative of his talents. Collins churns out insistent solos that are usually built around a flurry of shrieking high notes set off by either a sudden outburst of low notes or a dramatic silence. He plays with a rhythmic thrust that gives the songs momentum, and his timing is impeccable. He calls what he does "the Cool Sound," which is as good a description as any. The six-piece back-up band is sympathetic, and the material displays the sly, mock-worldly sense of humor peculiar to the blues.

● **JOHN LEE HOOKER: *The Cream***. TOMATO TOM2-7009 two discs. Hooker is the great "primitive" of this bunch, the one whose Delta roots are most explicit. One of the most over-recorded of bluesmen, he is at his best working alone or with just a second guitar. Then he can let his instincts guide him—dropping a bar or two here, adding one there, declaiming lyrics that sound made up on the spot even when they aren't. The result is a sort of blues stream-of-consciousness that always keeps the listener on edge. On this recent live double album, Hooker's voice is dark and brooding, his guitar work terse and penetrating, but working with a band led him to iron out too much of the eccentric timing and phrasing that make his music unique. What we get is four sides of boogie—two too many.

● **WALTER HORTON: *Fine Cuts***. BLIND PIG BP006-78. As a blues harpist, Horton leans more toward the sweetness of Sonny Boy Williamson than the manic edge of Little Walter. He is more effective as a sideman than as a leader and often seems more concerned with showing off his technical range than with expressing real feelings. But his range *is* impressive, and not too many other bluesmen could get away with a set that puts *La Cucaracha* and Ellington's *Don't Get Around Much Anymore* alongside more traditional fare. Horton is erratic and the band here is a little stiff, but when everything jells it's clear he's as good as anyone blowing harp today.

● **ALBERT KING: *New Orleans Heat***. TOMATO TOM-7022. It must have seemed a good idea at the time to pair Albert King, an often self-indulgent guitarist who tends to milk a few tricks for more than they're

worth, with producer Allen Toussaint. Presumably it was hoped that Toussaint would impose some discipline on King (and give him some New Orleans second-line funk in the bargain), but the most one could say for their album is that it has some rhythmic diversity. Generally, though, Toussaint has framed King's listless singing and cliché guitar work with production formulas. Predictable horn arrangements and a grating, supershrill female chorus mar nearly every track, including the pointless remakes of such King standards as *Born Under a Bad Sign* and *The Very Thought of You*.

● **LIVING CHICAGO BLUES, VOL. 1: *The Jimmy Johnson Blues Band; Eddie Shaw and the Wolf Gang; Left-Hand Frank and His Blues Band.*** ALLIGATOR AL-7701. Jimmy Johnson's voice has the purity and urgency of a gospel singer (which he once was), his music deftly incorporates elements of soul (which he once played for a living), and his guitar style owes a lot to Otis Rush (who's a good man to emulate). Eddie Shaw plays a squawking sax, sings in a gravelly voice, and has a delightful penchant for raunchy lyrics. The Wolf Gang is Howlin' Wolf's old band, sounding a tad more sedate here than they ever did behind the master, though Hubert Sumlin's guitar is still one of the most bracing in all of contemporary music. Left-Hand Frank is a throwback to twenty-five years ago, with an approach that's noticeably closer to the Delta roots. He has an appropriately lazy voice, his solos cut right to the bone, and he sounds best on medium-tempo numbers. This is the best album in this series.

● **LIVING CHICAGO BLUES, VOL. 2: *Carey Bell's Blues Harp Band; Magic Slim and the Tear Drops; Johnny "Big Moose" Walker.*** ALLIGATOR AL-7702. Carey Bell is such a soft, sensitive singer that unless you specifically concentrate on his vocals you hear them almost subliminally. He's equally graceful as a harp player, and here he fronts a crack band (which includes his son Lurrie on guitar). These are the best recordings this Chicago journeyman has ever made, especially the slow numbers. Magic Slim, on the other hand, is an unoriginal singer and guitarist backed by an equally ordinary boogie band. Johnny Walker is a jaunty, upbeat pianist who also suffers here from working in pedestrian company. Aside from Carey Bell's soothing blues, there's not much of interest here.

● **LIVING CHICAGO BLUES, VOL. 3: *Lonnie Brooks Blues Band; Pinetop Perkins with Sammy Lawhorn; Sons of the Blues.*** ALLIGATOR AL-7703. Lonnie Brooks is a biting guitarist whose Texas and Louisiana roots shine through on everything he plays. His smoky vocals add to the mood, and his band knows how to hit a groove and hold it. Pinetop Perkins—who ordinarily plays in Muddy Waters' band—is a rather lightweight singer, and the only thing wrong with his piano work is that it doesn't really drive the band the way it should. Fortunately, the band can fend for itself, and *Blues After Hours* here shows just how seductive this music can be. The Sons of the Blues (also known as the S.O.B. Band),

whose members include Carey Bell's son Lurrie and Willie Dixon's son Freddie, exhibit more style than substance, making for a fairly humdrum set.

● **ROBERT "JUNIOR" LOCKWOOD: *Does 12.*** TRIX 3317. Lockwood, an old running buddy of the legendary Robert Johnson, is a real find. He plays twelve-string guitar on most of this album, which allows him to indulge his passion for a jazzier sound. Since his sax player, Maurice Reedus, is similarly inclined, Lockwood's blues are much more experimental, and more interesting harmonically, than most. Nevertheless, his earthy interpretations of three Johnson songs show just how true to his roots he remains. The band swings as effortlessly as it rocks, which gives the whole set the relaxed feel of a late-night blowing session.

● **OTIS RUSH: *So Many Roads.*** DEL-MARK DS-643. To understand why this relatively obscure Chicago guitarist has such a strong cult following, you have to hear his skitterish previous album, "Cold Day in Hell" (Delmark 638). This live set, which includes such Rush favorites as *I Can't Quit You* and the title song, simply doesn't do him justice. Not that it's *bad*: Rush plays fluent guitar, and though he does plenty of stretching out here, he seldom spreads himself too thin. But no real sparks fly either, and that's precisely what Rush at his best provides.

● **SON SEALS: *Live and Burning.*** ALLIGATOR AL-4712. Arkansas-born Son Seals makes Albert King, his main influence, seem positively arthritic in comparison; he is easily the most exciting of the younger Chicago bluesmen. Seals can weave subtle threads of soul and jazz (even disco) into his music and still have it come out sounding like nothin' but the blues. And though he can also play guitar as fast and flashy as the next showboater, he's usually disciplined enough to rein himself in before technique replaces emotion. What's most impressive about this set is the aggressive *presence* of Seals and his steamrolling band, which is the way a live album should be.

● **KOKO TAYLOR: *The Earthshaker.*** ALLIGATOR AL-4711. Are you ready for a female Howlin' Wolf? Koko Taylor's coarse, growling blues are probably about as close as we're ever going to get. One of the very few women ever to hold a place in the overwhelmingly male blues world, Taylor's basic approach is to step up to the mike and just cut loose. She sounds battered here, but still willing and able to go another round against whoever wants to mess with her (though she'd rather be out partying). The band, a cannily composed mix of youngsters and veterans, is solid, if unspectacular, on this set of mainstream Chicago blues. If you've wondered how *Hey, Bartender* (the John Belushi favorite) sounds in the hands of a pro, look no further. □

John Morthland, a free-lance writer, has contributed to Country Music, Cream, and Rolling Stone, among other publications.



Carey Bell



Johnny Walker



Robert Lockwood



Pinetop Perkins



Otis Rush



Son Seals



Koko Taylor

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AUDIO ACCESSORIES



Ivan Berger reconnoiters a crop of stocking stuffers that will make your system's Christmas a happy one

YOUR stereo system's been good to you all year; why not remember it at Christmas with a little accessory something? Audio salons are full of such little somethings for your system as well as those of your audiophile friends and neighbors. Those stores are full of *big* somethings that could be called accessories too: equalizers, analyzers, noise reducers, compactors, delay units, and the like. But each of those is (or has been—see box on page 78) worth an article by itself; what I'd like to examine now are those stocking-stuffers of various sizes that don't merit a full-dress treatment. There are so many of them available, in nearly every price range, to make a good system do its thing better, more conveniently, or with greater panache, that finding one to fit seasonal gift-giving needs or year-long listening ones is no problem at all.

Accessories are sometimes called for because you're making a significant change in your system—adding exten-

sion speakers, for example, in which case you may need an outboard speaker-selector switch if there isn't one already in your amplifier or receiver. Audiotex, Switchcraft, and others make them, and Russound even has models that let you adjust the levels of each set of speakers independently.

Similarly, if you keep extra cartridges on hand, for whatever reason, you'll need extra head shells or slides to hold them. If your turntable uses the four-pin, plug-in "universal" shell found on many tone arms, you can get extra-light versions from Audio-Technica, low-resonance carbon-fiber ones from Adcom, and four models in graduated weights (to help you adjust arm/cartridge resonance or to simplify rebalancing when you change cartridges) from Fidelity Research. If you need a place to hold the holders, Audio-Technica has a plastic case for three universal shells, with a separate, plastic mini-bell-jar cover for each. When you install a cartridge in its

shell and the shell on its arm, proper alignment will ensure the best possible sound from any cartridge—so Osawa and db Systems make protractors to help you make this alignment properly.

(Incidentally, space limitations prevent listing every brand of every item; in any event, not all are available everywhere. Inclusion does not constitute an endorsement—nor omission the reverse; most small accessories are helpful, and some are excellent.)

Turntable Gremlins

Since the phonograph is both the most popular and the most problem-ridden signal source, it gets the most attention from accessory manufacturers. Most of that attention is concentrated in two areas: the mechanical one of resonance, warps, and acoustic feedback, and the "housekeeping" one of record cleanliness. *(Overleaf)*

ACCESSORIES...

Common turntable problems can seem like poltergeists that playfully toss your tone arm from the record or like ghosts that haunt your system with strange thumps and rumbles. There are plenty of accessories designed to help exorcise these evil sonic spirits. Whether caused by acoustic feedback from speaker to turntable or infrasonic vibrations (rumble) in your turntable (or in the one used in cutting the master record), very-low-frequency noise can cause problems even when it is not audible. A high-level infrasonic signal can drive speakers into distortion, and even a low-level one can steal power from the amplifier. The simplest solution is to filter it out; if your amplifier lacks suitable infrasonic filters, you can get external ones from Ace Audio and Warp-Knot.

Acoustic feedback can cause noise, distortion, and tracking problems, and it usually occurs at audible frequencies, so you should do what you can to eliminate it too. Netronics and Cotter offer turntable-isolation platforms (Cotter's weighs 130 pounds!), while Audio-Technica, Discwasher, Enid, Iso-Base, Keith Monks, Realistic, and others make specially designed isolating devices to fit under your turntable and/or speaker.

But even if the record player is adequately insensitive to acoustic vibrations, records can still pick them up from the air. This is one reason for the profusion of hold-down weights for discs (they are also claimed to reduce warp effects) from Audio-Mate (Elpa), Audio-Technica, Bib, Metrosound, Keith Monks, and others. Anti-resonant turntable mats such as the Waterloo Platter Pad and Osawa DISK-SE22 are also aimed at disc vibrations, both transmitted and developed from disc/cartridge/arm resonances. Since the source of the prob-

lem may just possibly *not* be what you think it is, any of these expensive curative accessories should be bought with a money-back guarantee. Arm and cartridge resonances can also be attacked directly with the Discwasher Distraker and Adcom Discotrace. Both are arm-mounted, their motion-damped pads gliding along the record surface to minimize tone-arm misbehavior on warps.

Dirty Discs

Dust, and the static electricity that attracts it, are among the biggest problems in phonograph reproduction, and there are probably more accessories to counteract them than for all other hi-fi purposes combined.

Antistatic guns, with piezoelectric elements that fire neutralizing ion charges, are available from Discwasher, Bib, Metro Sound, Empire (Audio Groome), Audio-Mate, Radio Shack, and others. Audiotex and Le-Bo devices are brushes with neutralizing generators built into their handles. Nuclear Products' Staticmaster brush has a built-in strip of polonium, whose mild radioactivity also neutralizes static charges. Stanton's Permostat is an antistatic solution intended to give lasting static immunity; other antistatic sprays or liquids are available from Ampex, Audiotex, Bib, Fidelitone, GRT Design, Recoton, and Vac-O-Rec.

Conductive brushes, which can draw off record-static charges to a ground point, are widely available. Models from Decca, Goldring, Keith Monks, and others even track and destaticize the record during play. Lenco's new model mounts on (and descends with) the dust cover, contacting the disc itself with a radially tracking conductive brush, and the spindle with an additional grounding contact; a conductive platter mat comes with it. And if you want to see how effective your antistatic measures are, Bib and Sound Guard both offer simple static detectors.

Nonconductive brushes that track the disc during play are even more common than the conductive kind. In addition to the original Watts Dust Bug, there are now units available from Audiotex, Audio-Technica, Bib, Calibron, Canton, Fidelitone, Leda, Metrosound, Recoton, Robins, Sound Saver, and many others. Duotone has a device that looks like a tracking brush, the moderately expensive (\$89.95) Groovac, but it is actually the nozzle of a tiny vacuum cleaner; its power and dust-collector sections are in a small box styled like a hi-fi component—which, in a way, it is.

Manual brushes abound too—Discwasher's has one-way bristles that dig down into the groove when stroked one way but disgorge their captured dirt when stroked the other. Others are Transcriber's Classic 1 and the Watts Disc Preener, both with built-in humidifiers, the Memorex, the Groove Tube, and the venerable Watts manual Parastat. Then there are *powered* brush systems, ranging from the handheld, battery-powered Panasonic to the more elaborate groove-cleaning devices from Vac-O-Rec and the most expensive record-care accessory, the Keith Monks *machine* at \$695. To be on sale in 1980, it washes and vacuum-drys records in a continuous process.

Some cleaners lift disc dirt off by adhesion. Rollers with surfaces sticky to dirt but not to the record surface range from the Sonic Research Pixoff, with a replaceable tape surface, to permanent-surface rollers from Bib, Fidelitone, Metrosound, and Rotel. Empire's Audio Groome Discofilm is a coating applied to the disc; when dry, it is peeled off with the dirt in its grip.

If keeping a record clean lengthens its life, so can lubricating it. Sound Guard pioneered this approach with a non-gumming lubricant; Sound Saver and Recoton now offer other lubricants, while Audio-Technica's Life Saver and Audio Kare's Quietone combine lubrication with an antistatic agent.



A little dust accumulation on the stylus can do more sonic harm than the same amount spread over the record surface. So there are stylus cleaners too. Watts and Discwasher were among the first to make special stylus brushes, while Audio-Technica pioneered with special stylus-cleaning solutions. Now nearly every manufacturer of record-care accessories offers one or the other, and many offer stylus-balancing scales to check stylus force.

Disc Efficiency

You get the benefit when your records stay in better shape. But there are accessories which benefit you more directly. For example, if you've ever tried to cue up a band of a record when the turntable is resting on a dimly lit shelf, you'll appreciate a light that mounts in the dust cover and goes on when the lid is raised: Lenco, Goldring, Radio Shack, and Robins all make them. Discwasher has a small offset-mirror/flashlight combination to help you examine styli, check connections behind your set, and so on. And for those who don't have tone arms with automatic functions, Thorens, Audio-Technica, AudioSource, and Bib all have gadgets that will automatically raise a manual tone arm at the end of a record.

You *should* be putting your records away right after playing each one, but most people let them accumulate around the turntable and then refile them all at once. A number of new products deal with that problem: GRT's "London" and "New York" record housings hold small batches upright; the New York model can be stacked and interlocked to hold a full collection. Discwasher's DiscKeeper, of wood and metal, holds up to fifty albums upright and flat against the wall, yet lets you leaf through them at will. Metrosound's Mill record storage system is an all-aluminum, table-model rack that holds up to sixty records.

Tape Care

Now that the cassette deck is almost as standard in stereo systems as the turntable, accessories for tape care have become almost as common as those for record care. Tapes themselves need less care and cleaning than records, but tape *heads* need at least as much attention as phonograph styli. Heads need to be demagnetized and checked for wear. And though they require cleaning, they don't need to be cleaned with as delicate a touch as styli.

Head-cleaning kits such as Maxell's and TDK's have been with us for ages, as have long-nosed head demagnetizers. The latest wrinkle, though, is cleaners, demagnetizers, or combinations of the two built into cassette or eight-track cartridge shells. Head-cleaning cassettes are available from Ampex, EMI Audiocare (Empire), Fidelitone, Memorex, Nortronic, Recoton, and TDK. For demagnetizing cassettes, try Nortronic, Robins, and TDK; GRT has combination clean/demag models.

There are some interesting new touches in the long-nosed type of demagnetizer too. Calibron and Radio Shack, for example, have illuminated models to help you see what you're demagnetizing. TDK makes a battery-powered one that bends in the middle for easier access to cassette heads. And if you want to get *really* fancy about head care, R.B. Annis makes magnetometers that enable you to check how well your demagnetizer did its job.

Test tapes are probably easier to find today than test records are (STEREO REVIEW, though, still markets one of the latter—see accompanying box). Aspen, Audiotex, Fidelitone, Nortronic, and TDK offer these, with TDK having about the most extensive line of test cassettes.

Tapes, unlike records, can be edited—even, when necessary, spliced. Splicers come in two basic types: the clamp-and-hold type, such as the well-

known Robins "Gibson Girl," and the open splicing block, such as the original Editall. Those who splice only occasionally seem to prefer the former, those who edit professionally prefer the latter (once mastered, it is simpler and faster). An interesting hybrid is the Nagy splicer line, an open-block type incorporating a built-in cutter like the clamping type. Splicing blocks with side-by-side cassette (1/2-inch) and open-reel (1/4-inch) channels are made by Leda (in metal) and by Radio Shack (in plastic).

More and more recorders feature "timer standby" circuits that permit you to record a program off the air while you're away, or wake you up by playing your favorite tape. But the *timers* needed to use this facility have been hard to find until lately. Today, such timers are available from Sanyo, Onkyo, Pioneer, and Nakamichi, with another possibly coming soon from Marantz.

Tuner Aids

You almost certainly have an FM tuner, quite likely with an AM section too. But with TV sound improving, you might want to add a TV tuner (from Pioneer, Rhoades, Finco, and others), unless you're willing to wait a few years for the onset of stereo-sound TV. Whatever bands you're equipped for, you'll probably receive them better if you add a good antenna. Outdoor FM and TV antennas are available from many sources, while McKay Dymek offers good outdoor and indoor AM ones, and Sansui has an outdoor antenna for both AM and FM. For indoor use, B.I.C. has two models of low-gain but directional and somewhat tunable Beam Box antennas, while JFD has a nondirectional, signal-amplifying indoor/outdoor weatherproof unit. And Audio Marketing by Von has the Magnum FM Power Sleuth, a tunable FM antenna-signal amplifier.

(Continued overleaf)



Not all accessories, of course, are devoted to just one signal source, as those for phono, tape, and FM are; there is a whole world of ancillary equipment that works with your amplifiers and speakers and therefore affects *all* your listening.

Other Helpers

Actually, there aren't many kinds of amplifier accessories. Power meters and displays are the main ones, either for use with amplifiers that don't tell you how much power they're delivering, or for those whose meters are mounted out of sight. Heathkit, Crown, Radio Shack, Technics, and Draco are among those making add-on power meters, with Heath's kit doubling as a speaker switch and headphone-jack box. Crown's does all that and monitors a.c. line voltage and the power from a second amplifier as well. The Technics model has a 25-minute peak hold for such tasks as checking maximum level over an entire record side. Somewhat jazzier are the illuminated linear power displays from Audio Innovations, Audio Technology, Heathkit, Agian, Lux, and Uni-Sync. And if you want to know how much sound is resulting from all that power, Radio Shack and BSR offer inexpensive sound-level meters.

As your components grow in number, so the number of your amplifier's jacks seems to shrink into inadequacy. But no need to buy another amp; you can buy accessory boxes with extra switching and inputs for any need instead. The Audiotex Director, for example, adds two auxiliary inputs, two tape monitors with direct dubbing in either direction, plus a third loop for a signal processor or another tape deck. Russound has switchers for three or five tape decks or other sources, and Superex has a three-deck switcher. And Series 20 has a component-style switcher with four tape-monitor loops, a built-in dubbing bus, two auxiliary inputs, three phono inputs, and three power-amp outputs.

If you prefer the flexibility of professional-style patch bays and patch cables to the convenience of switchers, that's easily arranged too. Switchcraft makes rack-mounting patch bays for regular and "tiny" phone jacks, Teac has one for regular phono plugs, and Russound has one using miniature phone plugs. Russound also makes

both stereo and quadraphonic control centers that combine switching and patching features.

Leading into and out of the amplifier are cables, of course. Premium interconnection cables with non-corroding gold-plated plugs and contacts are widely available. So are premium speaker cables, said to provide low capacitance, more "skin effect," and more conductor area for lower resistance. Experts disagree as to whether such cables can audibly improve the sound, but there is no disagreement that some amplifiers react violently to the extra capacitance found in a few fancy speaker cables. If your amplifier's

maker gives you the go-ahead, however, and if you can hear a difference worth the extra cost, then you'll have plenty to choose from. Audio-source, Audiotex, db Systems, Discwasher, Fulton, Marcof, Megastrand, Mogami, Monster Cable, Polk, Recoton, Sansui, and many others make them. There's also a phono-impedance matching kit from db Systems to optimize phono-cartridge response.

If the speakers at the other end of your cable sound boomy, it may be because they're sitting on the floor—bookshelf speakers seem to spend less and less time on bookshelves lately. If this is your problem, consider raising your speakers on speaker stands such as those from Speaker Uppers. This is one accessory whose utility you can test before you spend a cent: set your speakers on some books or chairs and see if the bass sounds more realistic. If it does, speaker stands will help. They may also reduce the bass feed-through that annoys your downstairs neighbor, and the tilt-back of most stands may aim your tweeters in a more suitable direction. There might even be some reduction in acoustic feedback. There are housekeeping advantages, too: stands let you clean the floor beneath the speakers, and those on rollers make it easy to move them out of the way or into an acoustically better (if logistically inconvenient) location for critical listening or just into another room. And, by the way, when you're tinning the ends of your speaker wires, a portable, rechargeable soldering tool from Wahl might come in handy.

And for the rest . . .

There is no end to the accessories you can add to your system, of course. More of them have doubtless entered the market even as you read this, including some that don't fit into any neat category. Elpa's Audio Buff cleaner and polish for plastic dust covers is one example. Audio furniture is another: when you have a fully equipped system, you need somewhere to put it. Most of the major component makers now offer racks and cabinets, as do a growing number of cabinet specialists. Après Audio, Crown, Gusdorf, Intra, Mariani, O'Sullivan, and Sound Stack have some especially interesting designs along these lines, but there are many others. Sansui (they have a bolt-in rack themselves) also makes rack-mounting accessory *drawers*—an accessory for an accessory, so to speak, designed to hold other accessories. And that, I guess, is about as far as you can go in that line. □



● STEREO REVIEW's SRT 14A test record, an accessory in itself, is designed to assist in audio-system setup and maintenance, and it includes tests for evaluation of frequency response, stereo balance and spread, phasing, and record-player adjustments. It costs \$7.95 (plus sales tax where applicable) by mail from: TEST RECORD, P.O. Box 278, Pratt Station, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205.

● The following articles from previous issues of STEREO REVIEW relate to aspects of accessories not covered in this brief Christmas survey. The magazines may be available at your local library, or reprints can be ordered as indicated below.

40902 How to Select a Microphone (March 1975)

40909 Audio Equalizers (May 1976)

40926 All About Noise Reducers (October 1977)

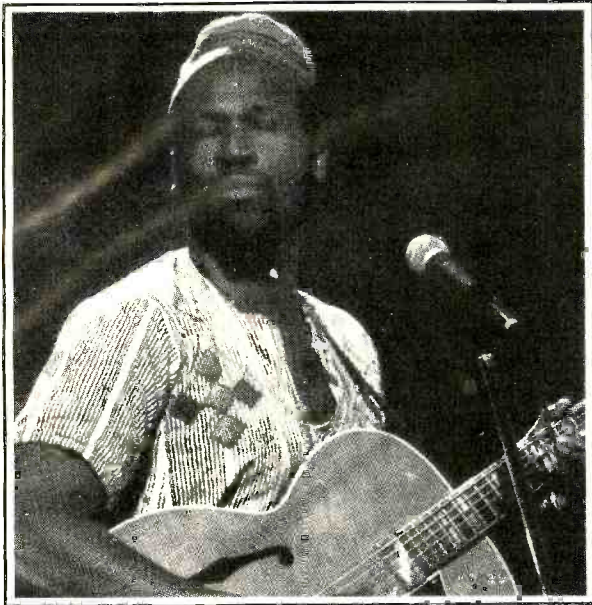
41365 FM Antennas (September 1978)

41366 Time-delay Systems (October 1978)

41367 Hi-fi Equipment Racks (December 1978)

Reprints are \$2 each (minimum order \$4). Please order by number from STEREO REVIEW REPRINTS, same address as above.

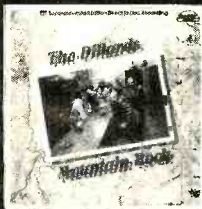
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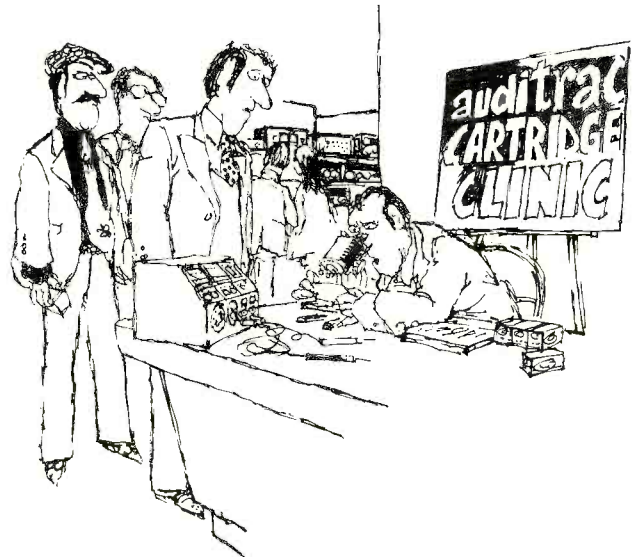
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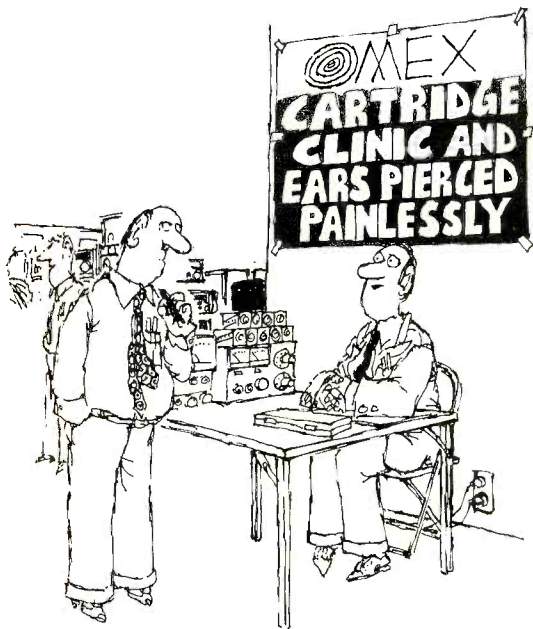
BY *Rodriguez*



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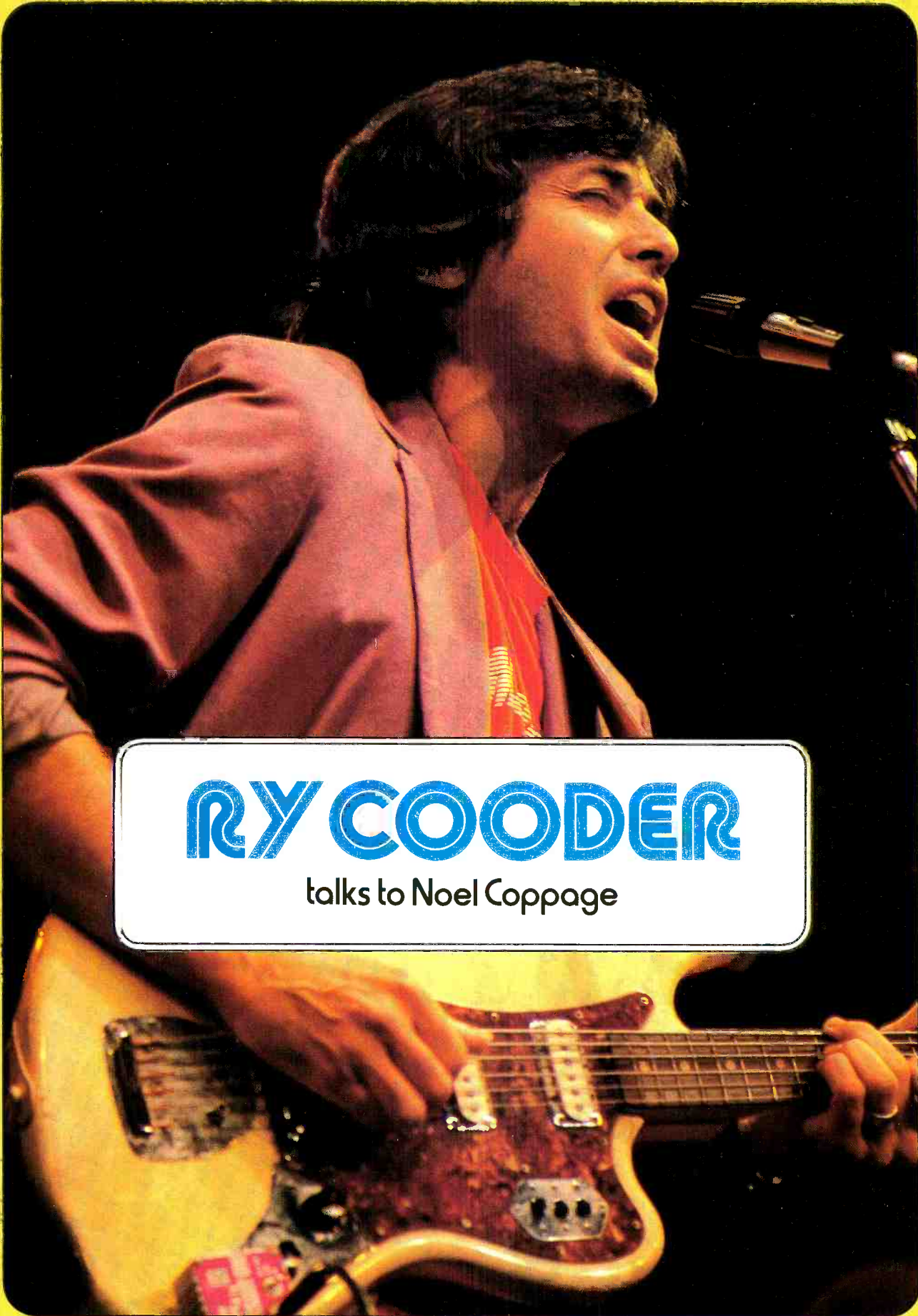


"... And you say all you did was plug it in?..."

"... Not only that, but he insists on being addressed as 'Doctor.'..."



"... Hey, you! I happen to sell a lot of those 'turkey' turntables you're referring to!..."



RY COODER

talks to Noel Coppage

PEOPLE seem to have accepted the idea that Ry Cooder is to pop music as *American Heritage* is to magazines, not only for style but content as well: he's classy, accurate, and sentenced to a small circulation. "Bop Till You Drop," his new rhythm-and-blues-based, digitally mastered album, is changing notions about the last part by getting airplay and a good sales jump during a record-industry slump. And in a face-to-face chat over breakfast, an unnatural meal for both of us, he told me he feels very cramped inside the label "archivist."

"It's just the sound on a record, is all we're talking about," he says. "Most musicians learn music from other musicians, but as a kid I wasn't around live music at all, just records. So my whole perception was geared to records, little short performances and finite things. I'd memorize all this structure: 'The guy did this and it went up and then he did that.'"

Similarly, people find a different strain of Americana in each of such albums as "Into the Purple Valley," "Boomer's Story," "Chicken Skin Music," and "Jazz," and so they ask him, as I did, which direction he may jump next.

"I'm not jumping. People ask me that, but it isn't a jump. It's just trying to find a good band sound, basically, a good format for *me*. It wasn't so much trying for a theme as it was trying to concoct a setting. The Tex-Mex thing was a good setting for what I do, but it was intractable, hard to work with for any length of time. This band [the one that played on "Bop"] is good, and I continue to go along looking for people to play with, because an important thing about records to me is to get the ensemble right. This one is the closest. I like who I have this time, and I'm going to use them again."

The general impression that Cooder came to record-making from a folk orientation *is* accurate, he says, but, again, records are to blame. His father played classical recordings all the time, and he was first caught by the melodies of Handel. But he was first *hooked* by exotic American sounds.

"I got hold of a Woody Guthrie record that struck me," he recalls, "because of the WPA pictures that were included in the booklet, the weird sound of his voice, the words—very exotic, different-sounding vocabulary—so you have a whole impression that's very strong. You get a picture of this guy, and the little photographs of those Okies, and you hear this nasal twang and strange-sounding guitar. . . . And I was interested in the blues, caught by the tonalities."

His father gave him a guitar when he was about ten. He always used open tunings—tuning all the strings to make a chord when struck unfretted—and by the time he was sixteen he was working, virtually alone in the middle Sixties, on the bottleneck slide technique he'd heard on Lightning Hopkins records and others. His almost unique ability to handle that, before the late-Sixties explosion in bottleneck players, helped him land a number of recording dates as a Los Angeles studio musician, a phase he liked—within limits.

"I can't say I was high on anybody's session-man versatility list," he says, although he was used by people as different as Gordon Lightfoot and the Rolling Stones—and mostly by quality musicians who could hear the economy and soul in his style, however diverse their sessions were. But it was not an environment in which he could pursue his own ideas. "I'd look at great musicians like James Burton and think, 'This is crazy, now, these guys don't make their own records.' Some of their best stuff didn't make *any* record—it would be rubbed off in the mix."

Meanwhile, Cooder had been educating himself not in the archives but at the turntable. A friend who was a record distributor would alert him to releases that might suit his growing folk interest, and there was a large record store in the Los Angeles area (where Cooder grew up and still lives)

"If people only know what they hear on the radio... how the hell can they know you've got a record out...?"

where he could go into a booth and listen to rare 78s. At one point during his teens, Cooder decided Sleepy John Estes was his favorite. By a happy coincidence, the Sixties interest in bringing back traditional musicians came into fashion at about the same time. Cooder was able to go to a local club and see Sleepy John in the flesh.

"The thing about seeing these people was I got to understand how different the real thing is from records," Cooder says. "The best part of it was the guys who didn't have a polished act. Some of these guys really were primitive art. Like Jesse Fuller and all his contraptions. Very rich, very colorful situation. Gary Davis, a tremendous figure, a wild man. He used to

want to drive cars all the time. One time some friend of mine left him in the parking lot of a store, went in to get some liquor, came out, and there was Davis, driving around backwards in the parking lot. A *blind* man!"

In the L.A. of his high-school years, Cooder remembers, music was no big deal—or even much of a *small* deal—until the Beatles. "Nobody I knew except two guys who were into jazz, who were weird, gave a shit about music. If they were aware of it at all, it was Beach Boys records at a party. Part of a certain ambiance. You put on a Beach Boys record and you did a little dance and then you had a Coke and this and that and the other thing. When the Beatles came along, all of a sudden they got interested in music—the Beatles, the Beatles, as if they'd never heard of the *idea* before."

COODER could see right there, presumably, that his interests weren't exactly mainstream. Since then he has never gone out of his way to make them so. His recordings, including the new one, sound as if they're oblivious to the market. When I ask him how he has done it, survived all these years, he says, "I don't know. Maybe I was lucky." But he *is* interested in selling enough records to keep surviving, and he is aware of how the business works. "If people only know what they hear on the radio and you don't get played on the radio, how the hell can they know you've got a record out or whether they like it? Public access is the key to the whole thing. It's not enough to say I know what I like and to hell with everybody else.

"I think the regional differences are dwindling," he says. "People are more like everybody else everywhere I go. But if you look at a tip sheet you can see that the middle of the country is basically into, oh, Bachman-Turner Overdrive, or make that Van Halen, and that moves a lot of your youth out there. If you take urban centers—say Detroit versus Dallas—if you make a broad sweep like that, I would be more popular in Dallas. It has something to do with environment and climate. Take a town like L.A., where everything is totally geared to trend and what's new, and the latest disco record is *the* thing, so that's what people are going to be struck by. Very momentary, very fleeting. There are twenty-six rock stations in L.A. Unbelievable. And the demographics are so tight you don't have much chance of getting on the air there—except on this punk station. There's a really neat punk station, plays anti-disco records. They play Devo and the Clash and all that

COODER...==

shit, and they play me once in a while."

Making records, he says, has become so electronic and technical that "it's become a producer's and engineer's trip." But, he says, "Things change fast. I had a feeling when Dire Straits was so successful. It occurred to me there may be a rekindled interest in small-band records that are not necessarily the reflection of a producer or an engineering situation. New Wave has that quality, and I kind of like that. It's simple.

"Not to say that disco stuff is complicated—it's moronic. It's overdressed nothing, hot air. The *dressing* is what's complicated. You have somebody get up and sing 'I like to make love/I like a slow dance,' and it's awful monotonous, horrible, crushing stupidity, but that doesn't mean it's simple. It just means it's dumb. Somebody said about my records that the 'production values' were bad: 'You're not participating in what has come to be accepted as good production,' in terms of colors, strings and horns, all that stuff. In other words, the L.A. sound, for instance. I try to adhere to what I like to hear on a record, regardless of the song, because songs to me are vehicles for arrangement ideas, basically, and for instrumental textures. That's what I'm interested in."

THE production is exceptionally clear in "Bop," but Cooder credits that largely to the digital process. The making of the album pushed musical values and not production values in this new "studio magic" sense. *Accurate* recording of sound is another matter. In fact, he says, the digital machine may have kept him from quitting—"strictly as an aesthetic gesture"—in protest over the opaque sound he had been getting from a conventional twenty-four-track analog recorder.

"Digital revived my interest," he says. "I was getting very depressed about the sound of records. With digital, it's all there, and you get a sense of accomplishment—you can hear each instrument so well, and the musicians love it. It makes the whole recording process seem a lot more spontaneous and direct. You don't feel your sound has been processed in all these wires and channels and filters and comes out squeezed and amorphous. Digital is ideal for modern recording. Fleetwood

Mac was trying to get it away from me the whole time. What will happen is people like Fleetwood Mac will use it, and that will lead the rest of the industry. The hardware leads the biggies, and the biggies lead the rest."

In addition to resisting the mainstream notion that production is the dog and music is the tail, Cooder also resists the temptation to show off on the guitar or mandolin (or the accordion, which, legend has it, he learned to play so he would have better rapport with Flaco Jimenez, when he was contemplating meeting and trying to hire that Tex-Mex stalwart for "Chicken Skin Music").

"Good musicians don't throw notes away," he says, as if resisting such temptation were easy. "That's a sign, to me, of too little awareness. Charlie Parker never played an extra note in his life. Taste is the whole thing. Everybody has his own opinion—good music is what you like, bad music is

"Speed guitar ... grabs people. That doesn't necessarily have anything to do with music or taste."

what someone else thinks is good—so you can't say there's good and bad. But there are things that make a difference. If one note is right, play that note.

"Technique is something people are aware of now and weren't before," he says. "Now, fast notes, a lot of notes, is something people can relate to. They can see and hear a guy who can play fast. They can perceive what looks like the theatrics of a lot of technique. Speed guitar has got to be the one hook that has lasted and paid off. It grabs people. That doesn't necessarily have anything to do with music or taste. It's an *idea*, a kind of show. Visual more than musical. So you have guys who formulate whole careers and styles based on speed. A lot of what you hear played today as electric lead guitar is nothing but speeded-up Chuck Berry.

"But having technique doesn't mean you can play something good. And these guys who are content to go diddley-diddley, and this horrible, screaming feedback so many people do—I don't know for whose benefit—is kind of an aggression thing, a pow-

er thing, some kind of mind warp. Certainly it's tiring, and it's bad for you. Bad music will make you weak. I can't be around that stuff too much. But then, to the kids who go to concerts and buy those records, I think it's like some kind of drug. Some kind of fix. Turn the stuff up real loud—earphones—it's like injecting yourself with some kind of adrenalin. A lot of those bands have hearing damage."

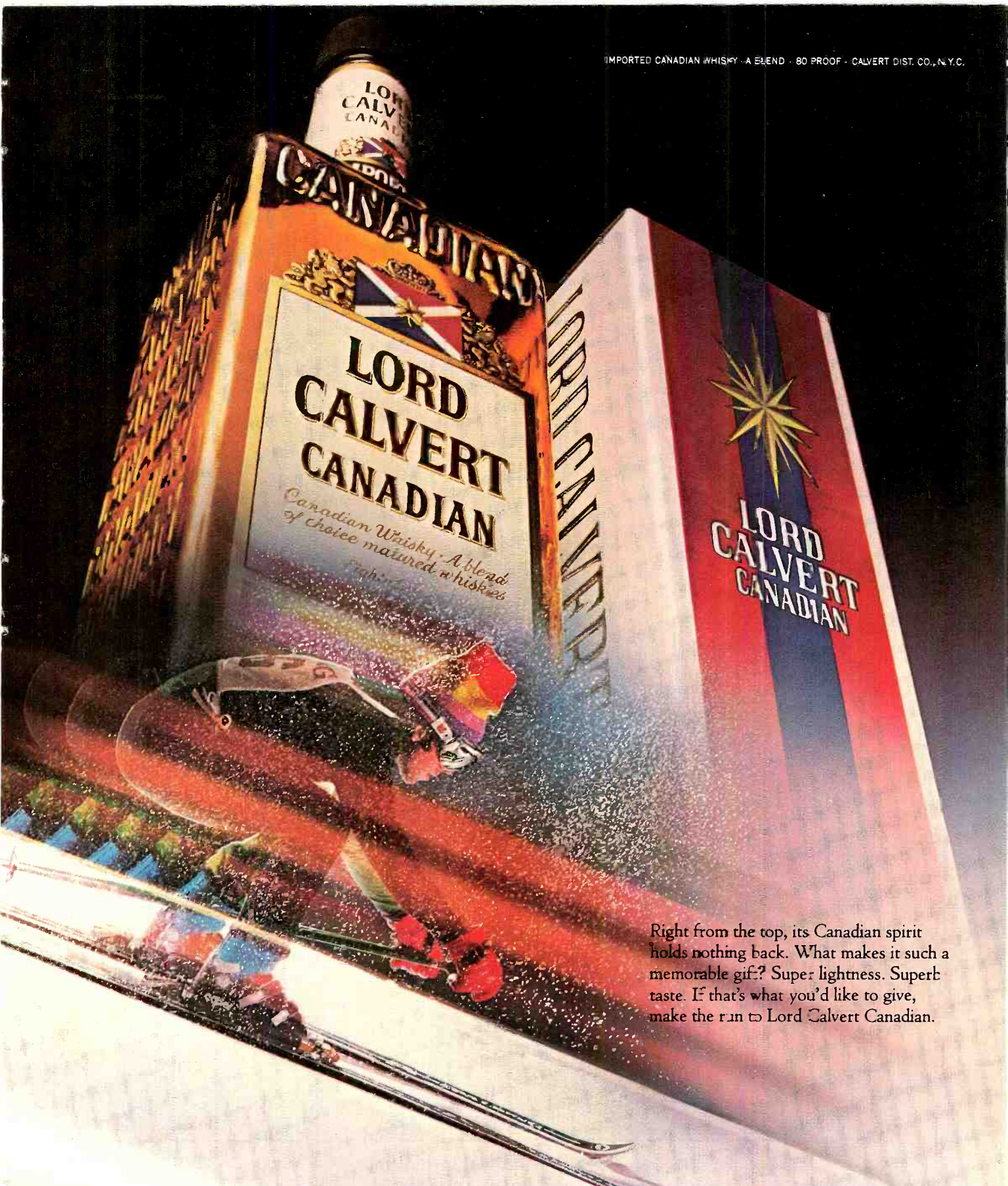
Cooder says he knew he wanted to make recordings the first time he heard one by Big Joe Williams, and he expects to keep wanting to make them for the same reasons: "Basically so I could hear certain things; I could do what he was doing and add certain things of my own."

It seems to me that he is taken for a folklorist, or archivist, because he keeps returning to such primary sources and performing so as to keep their spirit intact. One knows he must go to *some* length to find off-beat songs and musicians, but he's not a folklorist. He doesn't read music and he's not a scholar. He's a folk musician. His passion is not to show you something quaint he's dug up, but to build upon the thing, stretch it, turn it over, add his own ideas to it. He is an agent in what we sometimes call the folk process, which is dynamic and continuing.

He is also, like most such agents worth listening to, an entertainer. His goals aren't any fancier than his guitar style. Yet, even though he won't romanticize it, I think he senses the importance of having a tradition there to build upon, and I get the feeling, listening to him talk *and* play, that he taps sources and resources that will help him keep his world organic, that he would like music to be the communal thing it was not in the L.A. of his youth.

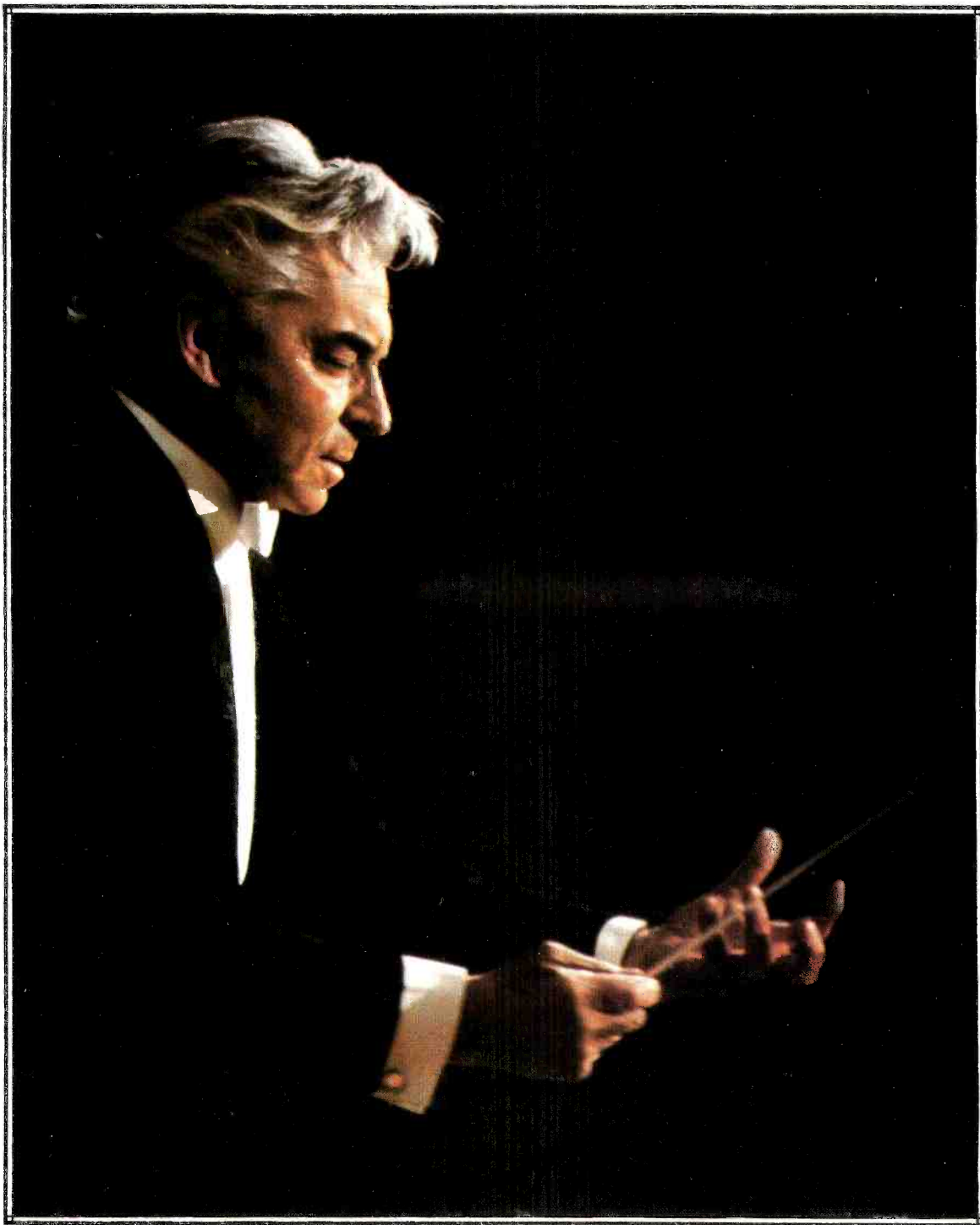
I THOUGHT a glimmer of this showed when we talked, at one point, about how some of the most interesting music was an off-center attempt to copy something else. "Even someone as isolated as Lonnie Johnson tried to copy real polished cats," he said, with obvious approval. "It seems to me that's one of the main reasons records got made, some guy trying to do what some other people had done. People think these guys were operating in a vacuum, but that's not true.

"At the same time, the music served the community. Country suppers, picnics, church socials. The musician wasn't a god then like he is now. He was just a guy. Instead of doing the barbecue, he played the music. Part of the community. That's a nice way to look at it." □



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Herbert von Karajan
(photo courtesy Deutsche Grammophon)

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



• London's Gloriously Stylish New *Marriage of Figaro* •

THERE are operas one listens to for the sake of a couple of great singers and some great music for them to sing, and never mind that the stuff that surrounds them is an insult to one's musical digestion. The Mozart operas, and particularly *Le Nozze di Figaro*, are not among these. For Mozart, what one wants is *style*, and it does my heart good to find that in London's just-released *Figaro* what one gets is style. It will take less than a minute of the overture to convince you that something pretty glorious is about to happen, and each succeeding moment will further enforce your conviction that you have bought the right recording.

The cast is, of course, international, but this is Viennese Mozart. The Vienna Philharmonic plays as though they really mean it, and when they do that (which they don't all the time), they are, for me, the world's greatest orchestra. Herbert von Karajan conducts like the Karajan of old. There is always *something* to admire in any Karajan recording, but many of his greatest achievements date from long before he attained the exalted position he now occupies. This recording *is* a great musical achievement, and the very consistency and elegance of its musical style tell us unmistakably that it is Karajan's achievement.

Of course, one needs fine singers in *Figaro*, but one or two of them will not do; they *all* have to be good, and here all of them are. I still have some magical past performances in my head (and many of the records from which they came on my shelves): Erich Kunz's *Figaro* and particularly an old 78 of "*Non più andrai*," a "*Voi che sapete*" that the young Irmgard Seefried seemed to sing in one effortless breath, Elisabeth Schumann's teasing "*Venite, inginocchiatevi*," the overture by Bruno Walter, plus complete performances

led by Erich Kleiber and, fascinatingly, Herbert von Karajan.

I don't want to say that the individual achievements in this set equal or surpass those old ones. I would not like to say that I like José van Dam *quite* as much as Kunz, Cotrubas as much as Seefried, Tomowa-Sintow as much as Schwarzkopf or Della Casa, and so on. But I certainly have no compunctions about mentioning them in the same breath. My, what elegant singing—and from so many different quarters!

"This recording is a great musical achievement, and the very consistency and elegance of its musical style tell us unmistakably that it is Karajan's achievement."

Karajan, I'm sure, had a great deal to do with that.

José van Dam is really a splendid *Figaro*, and Ileana Cotrubas' Susanna is certainly the best thing I've heard her

do on records. Frederica von Stade is already very nearly famous for her Cherubino; she not only has the voice for the part, and the musical intelligence, but the very character aligns perfectly with her temperament. She is infinitely more convincing here than in the Jennie Tourel repertoire. Similarly, Tom Krause's slight inherent musical stiffness *characterizes* the part of the Count here rather than detracting from it. This, of course, is one of the miracles of the opera itself: the music to be sung by each of the characters is no neutral *lingua franca* but, within the ample boundaries of the Classical style, expressive and representative of the personality of the character. No singer can truly portray every operatic personality that happens to lie within his or her vocal range, and the real basis for the success of this performance is the casting—which is brilliant. Only the Countess (for my taste) could be a bit more regal than Anna Tomowa-Sintow manages. Still, she is both musically lovely and believable. The lesser roles are handled to near perfection (what a handsome voice Heinz Zednik has for Don Basilio!), and certainly a nod is due Konrad Leitner for continuo work that seems much more inventive than usual.

No faults are to be found with the recording, although the *pressings* that I received leave a bit to be desired. A full libretto, is, of course, included with the set, with a brief but very interesting essay by Stanley Sadie and some notes on the rearrangement of the order of numbers in Act III (quite logical) that is followed in this recording. The Kleiber-led recording of *Figaro*, brilliant achievement that it is, is still in the catalog (London 1402). But on points, recording quality being one of them, I think this new set can be said to surpass it. —James Goodfriend

MOZART: *The Marriage of Figaro*. Ileana Cotrubas (soprano), Susanna; Anna Tomowa-Sintow (soprano), Contess Almaviva; Frederica von Stade (mezzo-soprano), Cherubino; Jane Berbié (mezzo-soprano), Marcellina; José van Dam (bass), Figaro; Tom Krause (baritone), Count Almaviva; Heinz Zednik (tenor), Don Basilio; Jules Bastin (bass), Dr. Bartolo; others. Vienna State Opera Chorus; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. LONDON OSA 1443 four discs \$35.92.

**The Christmas Album
For the Year 1979:
Nonesuch's Enchanting
"Christesmas in Anglia"**

SOMEONE at Nonesuch had the dandy idea to invite Frederick Renz and his Ensemble for Early Music, a group that traces its origins back to Noah Greenberg's much-esteemed New York Pro Musica, to the St. James Chapel in New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine to record a program of "Early English Music for Christmastide." The result is one of the best and most unusual Christmas records ever issued. Johana Arnold employs her light, clear, supple soprano and Daniel Collins his crystalline countertenor in a program of largely unfamiliar but totally captivating airs drawn from the Coventry mystery plays, from Scottish and Irish as well as English sources, the whole sung partly in old English, partly in Latin.

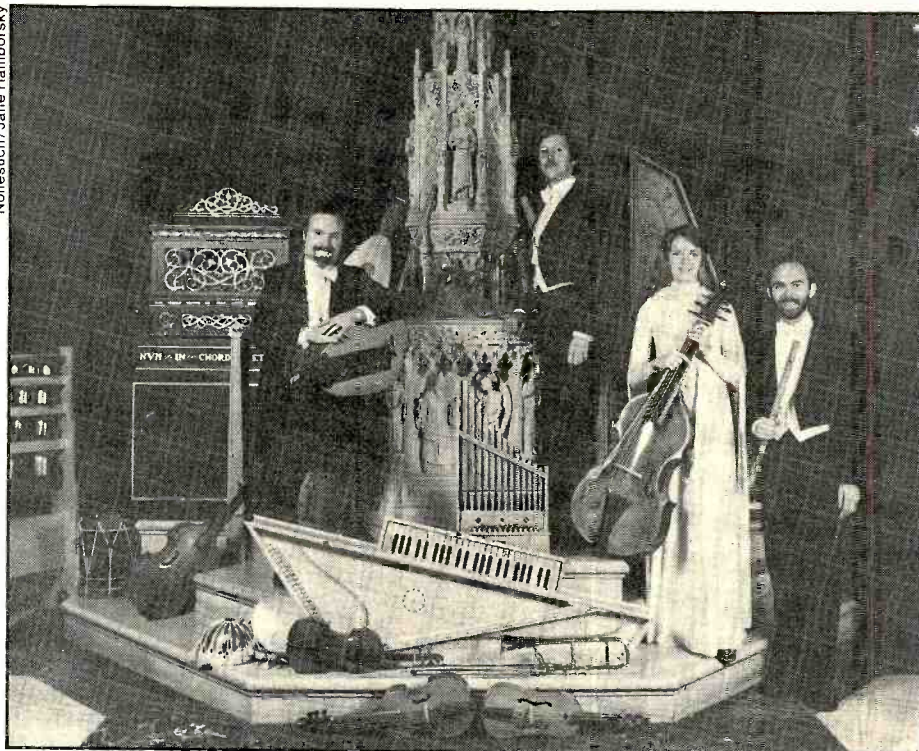
There's a New Year's text to the familiar tune of *Greensleeves* taken from the Pepusch arrangement for John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* of 1728, but most of the other melodies came to this listener as a complete—and enchanting—surprise: the lullaby *Qui Creavit Celum*, for example, traced to a Benedictine nunnery in Chester, where it was popular in the 1400's; a *Tander-nacken* attributed to Henry the Eighth himself; a monophonic carol from the late fifteenth century; carols about angels—and others that sound as though angels had written them. All of these are performed with clarity, delicacy, musicianship, and excellent diction.

Interspersed with the vocal portions are lovely instrumental miniatures, including a dance from fourteenth-century Britain and old Scottish airs for the violin. A complete text, including felicitous translations into modern English, is supplied. Simply wonderful.

—Paul Kresh

CHRISTESMAS IN ANGLIA: *Early English Music for Christmastide. Rex Virginum Amator; Edi Beo Thu; Alleluia Psallat; Angelus ad Virginem; Qui Creavit Celum; Estampie; Nowell, Nowell! This Is the Salutacion; Nowel, Owt of Your Slepe; Ther Is No Rose of Swych Vertu; Lully, Lulla, Thou Little Tiny Child; Tander-nacken; All Sons of Adam; Irish Air; Balulalow (I Come from Hevin); Sueit Smylling Katie Loves Me; Now Blessed Be Thou; Kathren Oggie; Come, My Children Dere; Green Grows the Rushes; Greensleeves (The Old Year Now Away Is Flede).* Ensemble for Early Music, Frederick Renz cond. NONESUCH H-71369 \$4.96.

Nonesuch/Jane Hamborsky



THE ENSEMBLE FOR EARLY MUSIC: left to right, conductor Frederick Renz, Daniel Collins, Wendy Gillespie, and David Hart

**Vladimir Spivakov:
Setting a Standard of
Exquisite Perfection
For the Violin**

ANGEL's album of Mozart concerto performances by the Soviet violinist Vladimir Spivakov sets some kind of standard for exquisite perfection. Every note, every phrase, is placed with such otherworldly musical precision that one can only listen in awe and wonder. True, if one pulls resolutely back from the hypnotic spell, one can see that there are some few levels of drama and passion in this music that Spivakov does not touch, but in the enchantment of these performances such considerations are irrelevant. By whatever means, Spivakov has also persuaded the English Chamber Orchestra to play at his exalted level and with his refined stylistic consciousness.

Curious. Just at the time when Western performance practice is veering away from the Awful, Grandly Noble Style of the earlier part of the century, the Russians, after generations of gypsy fiddling, have perfected a Neo-Noble style that is for the gods. This must certainly be the way they play in heaven to keep themselves fittingly amused. In fact, I think Spiv-

akov ought to play a wrong note or a rough tone just once in a while to escape incurring the jealous wrath of the gods. As it is, he's taking big chances.

—Eric Salzman

MOZART: *Violin Concertos No. 5, in A Major (K. 219, "Turkish"), and No. 2, in D Major (K. 211).* Vladimir Spivakov (violin); English Chamber Orchestra, Vladimir Spivakov cond. ANGEL SZ-37511 \$8.98.

SPIVAKOV: *refined Russian*



Reg Wilson/Angel/EMI

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Worth Waiting For: A New Duet Album From Gary Burton And Chick Corea

VIBRAPHONIST Gary Burton and pianist Chick Corea recorded their first set of duets in 1972. The album, "Crystal Silence" (ECM 1024, released in this country in 1974), received such impressive—and, I might add, highly deserved—critical acclaim that it seemed reasonable to expect an encore release within a year or so. Well, it took *seven* years, but the new "Duet" proves to be well worth the wait. Burton and Corea express themselves with stylistic individuality, but their musical languages are cognate, both having jazz roots. What they play here often falls outside the jazz category, but it never strays beyond the boundaries of musical excellence. What a contrast to the sounds of Corea's *Return to Forever!*

The compositions featured in "Duet" are mostly by Corea, but they include two—*Never* and *Radio*—by bassist Steve Swallow, who also contributed material to "Crystal Silence." Though the program includes four beautiful short pieces—Corea's *Children's Songs* Nos. 2, 5, 6, and 15 (ranging in length from fifty-five seconds to just over two minutes)—it is in the longer pieces that the two players get the opportunity to demonstrate a really wonderful compatibility, building up breathtaking patterns and in-

ECM Records

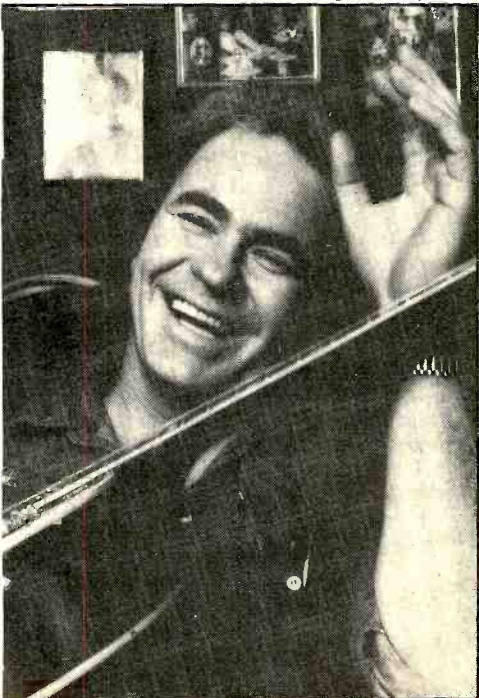


Vibraphonist Gary Burton, pianist Chick Corea

teracting in a way Corea and Herbie Hancock never could. My favorite right now is Corea's *La Fiesta*, but that might change the next time I play the record, for the walls of preference are mighty thin when an album is as uniformly exquisite as "Duet." Incidentally, I can still recommend "Crystal Silence," which remains in the catalog; being a product of ECM's former Polydor affiliation, it even lists for a dollar less. —Chris Albertson

GARY BURTON/CHICK COREA: Duet. Gary Burton (vibraphone); Chick Corea (acoustic piano). *Duet Suite; Song to Gayle; Never; La Fiesta; Radio; Children's Songs Nos. 2, 5, 6, and 15.* ECM EC-1-1140 \$8.98, © M5E M8E 1140 \$8.98, © 1140 \$8.98.

AXTON: unregenerate folkie



A&M Records

Bread and Roses: Old Folkies Never Die—They May Even Be Coming Back

"You old *folkniks*, you!" Joan Baez says to the audience at her sister Mimi Fariña's shindig, the Bread & Roses Festival of Acoustic Music, and indeed one can listen to the ensuing al-

bum, "Bread & Roses," and wonder if the folkie consciousness and its acoustic instruments aren't actually lurking around somewhere working up to a comeback. If you've been listening to New York gossip, you've already heard "folk movement" talk, most of it based upon the Big Apple's reaction to the Roches and Steve Forbert. The Bread & Roses Festival, a fund-raiser for Mimi's organization (it takes free live music into hospitals, nursing homes, and prisons), tends to look back, however, being a muster of some of the actual folkies of the early Sixties scene—and I can't help noticing that several of them are still my favorite people. Fantasy's live-album documentary will show you they can still cut it musically.

It's a bit dated, of course; it actually happened in October 1977, and Malvina Reynolds has since died. But it is still a whopper of a collection of the music and the musicians that helped shape many of our current pop attitudes. The musicians, all donating their time, seem to be enjoying themselves a lot more than in "normal" recording situations, and it is one of the best recordings of the subtleties of acoustic music in a festival setting you could hope to hear. There isn't really a single weak performance or any prima donna self-indulgence anywhere, although they *could* have cut out some of Hoyt Axton's drunker-than-thou monologue. His musical performance,

however, is one of the highlights. Two more are Richie Havens' *What You Gonna Do About Me?* and (especially) Jackson Browne's *For Everyman*.

Not much singing is heard from Mimi Fariña herself, and one does tend to wonder how it would be if a few other voices were here—the presence of Freebo, the bass man in the “house band,” for example, suggests the name Bonnie Raitt—but if you like acoustic music or if you're an old folk-nik, there's enough here to hold you half the night. It's pretty rich stuff; try not to OD.

—Noel Coppage

BREAD & ROSES. Jesse Colin Young, *Sugar Babe*; Dave Van Ronk, *Swinging on a Star*; Malvina Reynolds, *Little Boxes*; Pete Seeger, *Sailing Down My Golden River*; John Herald Band, *Ramblin' Jack Elliott*; Ramblin' Jack Elliott, *San Francisco Bay Blues*; Hoyt Axton, *Boney Fingers and Evangelina*; Arlo Guthrie, *Al the Goose*; Boys of the Lough, *General Guinness/Irish Reel*; Mickey Newbury, *Mabel Joy*; Dan Hicks, *I Got Mine*; the Persuasions, *Just Another Night with the Boys*; Richie Havens, *What You Gonna Do About Me?*; Buffy Sainte-Marie, *Universal Soldier*; Joe McDonald, *Save the Whales!*; Joan Baez, *There but for Fortune*; Toni Brown and Terry Garthwaite, *Beginning Tomorrow*; Maria Muldaur, *Walkin' One and Only*; Jackson Browne and David Lindley, *For Everyman*; Finale (all), *Just a Closer Walk with Thee*. FANTASY F-79009 two discs \$9.98.

Hansel and Gretel: A Triumph of Musical Craftsmanship, and Too Good for the Kids

THE musical public's consciousness about Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* has been raised almost solely through recordings. Most opera houses treat the work as family entertainment for Christmastime; they cast it in a utilitarian fashion and make of it a pleasant but decidedly unexciting pastime. But a series of recordings that capture its remarkable blend of innocence, magic, and sophistication in richly sparkling performances by first-class singers has proved that *Hansel and Gretel* is not only a triumph of musical craftsmanship, but an inspired operatic masterpiece as well. A long-deleted mono set under Karajan (Angel 3506) was the first jolt to our consciousness, RCA's marvelous 1975 re-

lease (ARL2-0637) was the second, and now Columbia has come up with another superb version.

I don't recall hearing such an ear-caressing concord of female voices in one opera since Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Rita Streich, and Irmgard Seefried cast their combined vocal spell

over Richard Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Angel 3532) more than twenty years ago. In an admirable blend of timbres, Frederica von Stade and Ileana Cotrubas are the Hansel and Gretel here, both youthful sounding, both lively, believable, and enchanting. The Sandman has only a brief moment, but Kiri Te Kanawa makes a ravishing experience out of it, and Ruth Welting treats us to another impressive display of the high-flying, ethereal “fairy music” that seems to be her specialty. Can you imagine such luxuriant casting ever being offered in a mere opera house?

But that's not all. That remarkable artist Elisabeth Söderström is the Witch, and she is simply... well, bewitching. With a calculated bit of nasality here, a sudden—but slight—nasality inflection there, she *sings* all the notes without any really grotesque distortion. All her effects are carefully measured and skillfully brought off, and she is obviously enjoying every minute of her virtuosic performance. Christa Ludwig, the superb Witch in the RCA set, sings the Mother here. It is not a grateful role, and even Miss Ludwig (not in her best voice on this occasion) can do no wonders with it. But Siegmund Nimsgern is a hearty, energetic Father, and his full, firm, and wide-ranging tones fill all needs completely.

Conductor John Pritchard supports the singers well and keeps good control—though he applies too *much* restraint in some big orchestral moments, and I cannot say that he brings out all the strands of Humperdinck's convoluted counterpoint in the overture with maximum transparency. The orchestra itself is good, if perhaps slightly below virtuoso caliber, and the same is true of the children's chorus. I find the miking somewhat distant for my taste, and balances are at times less than perfect (Söderström's delightful antics, for example, surely deserve more prominence). But these are minor reservations about a very satisfying whole. I am happy to note that the disc surfaces are excellent, perhaps some indication that Columbia is on the way to solving its problems in that area.

—George Jellinek

HUMPERDINCK: *Hansel and Gretel*.

Frederica von Stade (mezzo-soprano), Hansel; Ileana Cotrubas (soprano), Gretel; Siegmund Nimsgern (baritone), Father; Christa Ludwig (mezzo-soprano), Mother; Elisabeth Söderström (soprano), Witch; Kiri Te Kanawa (soprano), Sandman; Ruth Welting (soprano), Dew Fairy. Children's Chorus of the Cologne Opera; Gurzenich Orchestra, John Pritchard cond. COLUMBIA M2 35898 two discs \$17.98.



Hansel and Gretel principals: top to bottom, Frederica von Stade (Hansel), Ileana Cotrubas (Gretel), Siegmund Nimsgern (Father), and Elisabeth Söderström (Witch).

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"Stereo imaging was extremely stable and quite broad. With the speakers pulled out a few feet from the wall, the image depth was excellent.

"In our opinion, Infinity has done a terrific job on these speakers... considering its price, we'd call it a 'best buy'."

STEREO, Fall 1978. All Rights Reserved.

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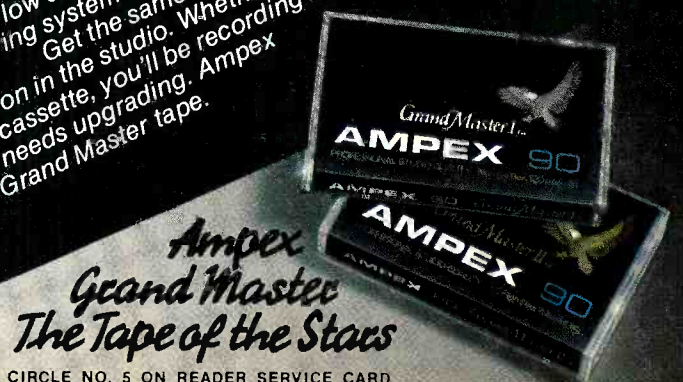
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POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

BLONDIE: *Eat to the Beat.* Blondie (vocals and instrumentals). *Dreaming; The Hardest Part; Union City Blue; Shayla; Die Young Stay Pretty; Atomic;* and six others. CHRYSALIS CHE-1225 \$7.98, © 8CH-1225 \$7.98, © CCH-1225 \$7.98.

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

Something of a tempest in a teapot has surrounded Blondie since the group enjoyed its first hit single with *Heart of Glass* last year. Some rock critics, the press in general, and possibly a lot of fans from Blondie's early days at the New York punk club CBGB claim that the group has sold out since breaking the disco *Glass*. And the band has reacted to its critics and to its success with incredible defensiveness. What the fans and critics don't seem to realize is that Blondie has *always* been much closer to the fashion/pop-art world than most other groups on the punk scene. What the group doesn't seem to understand is that the punk world is just like any other insular little clique in which everybody loves you only as long as you're their private fetish. From a group as breezy and fun as Blondie started out to be, all this defensive solemnity is intolerable. As far as I'm concerned, their first album is the best they've made yet, because it has a delightful, unself-conscious, comic-strip quality. Maybe they

were too innocent to take themselves very seriously back then, but that's where most of their best songs are.

Yet Debbie Harry is a better singer now, and she sometimes displays a passion that was almost entirely missing in the past. The band (and they *are* a band—five of the six share songwriting credits) is growing with her, though there's still nothing really outstanding about their playing, and the new songs are mostly pretty serious stuff. Maybe that's why I'm having trouble with "Eat to the Beat," not because there's anything wrong with the music—there are at least two beautiful songs here, *Dreaming* and *Shayla*—but because, for my taste, pop groups were never supposed to be this heavy and grim. Blondie doesn't sound much happier than they look in recent photographs, and I wonder how much more exciting they might be if they'd just lighten up a bit. As Mick Jagger once said, "You should relax in my impression."
—Lester Bangs

KARLABONOFF: *Restless Nights.* Karla Bonoff (vocals, guitar); Russ Kunkel (drums); Kenny Edwards (bass); Dan Dugmore, Waddy Wachtel (guitars); other musicians. *Trouble Again; Restless Nights; The Letter; Only a Fool; Baby Don't Go; Loving You;* and three others. COLUMBIA JC 35799 \$7.98, © JCA 35799 \$7.98, © JCT 35799 \$7.98.

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

A songwriter-singer has all the time in the world to write the songs for a first album and a lot less time to write those for a second album, and the difference usually shows. It does in this case; the songs in Karla Bonoff's second batch don't have the bite of those in the string recorded by Ronstadt nor the regal beatific beauty of *Home*, recorded by Raitt. These show craftsmanship and facility, and Bonoff's vocal style is further clarified, but mostly they seem trivial beside her best stuff. Producer (and Ronstadt bassman) Kenny Edwards did all *he* could; the thing abounds

with lovely sounds and taste. As albums go it's more than passable, but it isn't going to stand up, in the long run, as one of the best of Bonoff
N.C.

CARLENE CARTER: *Two Sides to Every Woman.* Carlene Carter (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Do It in a Heartbeat; Lies; Swap-Meat Rag; Gold-Hearted Lady; Two Sides to Every Woman; It's No Wonder;* and three others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3375 \$7.98, © M8 3375 \$7.98, © M5 3375 \$7.98.

Performance: **Something amiss**
Recording: **Good**

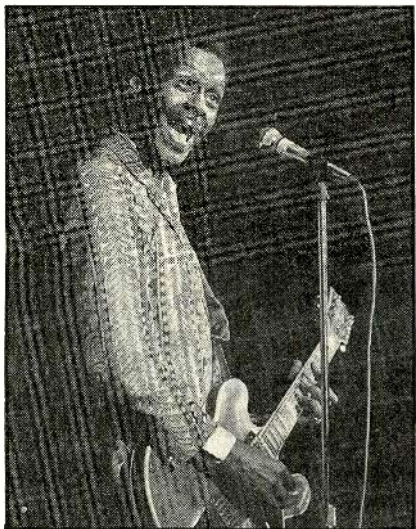
Carlene Carter, daughter of country singer Carl Smith and June Carter (now June Carter Cash) and granddaughter of the late Maybelle, is rather spectacular evidence that musical aptitude is inherited. She's a major talent. But . . . something I vaguely sensed about her first album bothers me about the second: There's something impersonal, cold-blooded, almost academic about it. This time it's clearer in the production, by Lance Quinn and Tony Bongiovi, in that the instrumentals seem detached and calculated, almost as if the players didn't know the songs all that well by ear. Carlene's vocal delivery is not cut of the same cloth, at least not usually, not when she's singing as opposed to acting. But that brings us to the songs, most of which she wrote, some of which I think call for her to act and others of which *could* be stumping the band, so to speak. It seems to me that she has been in a hurry to establish *rock* credentials, above all others, for herself, and this works fine to the degree that she has a natural feeling for the style. But she seems to force it beyond that. Including *Lies*, by Nick Gravenites and R. Troy, is an example of forcing it. The thing is as lifeless and pointless as it is tuneless; the only thing you can say for it is that it's hard-edged rock extreme enough to help shape an image. Then comes Carter's own poorly thought-out *Swap-Meat Rag*; it purports to be disdainful of spouse swapping, but in order for its line of disapproval to work it has to regard spouses as property to begin

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = open-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- ⓐ = stereo cassette
- Ⓚ = quadraphonic disc
- Ⓛ = digital-master recording
- Ⓣ = direct-to-disc recording

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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



Joseph Sta

Chuck Berry

LISTENING to "Rockit," Chuck Berry's masterly new Atco album, led me to replay "Golden Decade" and a few other collections of his hits and near hits, which began with *Maybellene* in 1955. An evening spent listening to Chuck Berry records, old or new, is an evening well spent, for he is a remarkable songwriter and performer.

Berry was the first literate lyricist in rock-and-roll, and, so far as I'm concerned, he's still the champ. His delighted exploitation of the possibilities of the English language and his sophisticated sense of humor are unsurpassed in the field. And his guitar style is as distinctive as his lyrics, so immediately recognizable and utterly personal that other musicians have given up even trying to imitate it. The secret of that style is a thrilling economy; Berry doesn't play a lot of notes and chords—because he doesn't *have* to. Knowing exactly what is needed and what will work, he plays just that, no more and no less.

Berry's career has been fairly frustrat-

ing—he's never had as great a popular success as he deserved—but he has survived, and his talent has survived as well. "Rockit" is precious not merely as a reminder of what he once was, but as evidence of how great he still is. Some of the songs here, such as *Oh What a Thrill*, are such pure, undiluted examples of Berry's late-Fifties style that they might have been written and recorded twenty years ago. Others are frankly updates: *Havana Moon*, one of Berry's B-sides from the Fifties, is re-created here without the West Indian accent he was then fond of using, and *I Need You Baby* is a rewrite of Elmore James' blues number *It Hurts Me Too*. (Berry has always been too proud to sing real blues himself and would often tinker with the lyrics to make them more cosmopolitan.)

But three cuts here show quite a "new" Chuck Berry, different from the "classic" rock artist we've taken for granted for so long. *I Never Thought* and *Wuden't Me* are bitter, dramatic statements about being black in white America, an issue Berry's work has always previously avoided (though the "pitch" on him has always been that "he could have been as big as Elvis if he'd been white"). And the final track, *Pass Away*, with unabashedly romantic lyrics that are impressively spoken, not sung, suggests that Berry's ultimate ambition is to be recognized as a poet—and, perhaps even more, as an actor.

"Rockit" epitomizes Chuck Berry's past glories, demonstrates the healthy current state of his talent, and points out his possible future direction. Clearly, he is at his best as a lyricist, but he is also a consummate guitar stylist and an ingratiating singer. All rock musicians today are in his debt, but that's not why you should buy "Rockit." Buy it because it's *good*.
—Joel Vance

CHUCK BERRY: *Rockit*. Chuck Berry (vocals, guitar); Jim Marsala, Bob Wray (bass); Kenneth Buttrey (drums); Johnny Johnson (piano). *Move It; Oh What a Thrill; I Need You Baby; If I Were; House Lights; I Never Thought; Havana Moon; Wuden't Me; California; Pass Away*. ATCO SD 38-118 \$7.98, © TP 38-118 \$7.98, © CS 38-118 \$7.98.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOHNNY CASH: *Silver*. Johnny Cash (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *The L&N Don't Stop Here Anymore; Lonesome to the Bone; Bull Rider; Ghost Riders in the Sky; Cocaine Blues*; and five others. COLUMBIA JC 36086 \$7.98, © JCA 36086 \$7.98, © JCT 36086 \$7.98.

Performance: **Classic Cash**
Recording: **Very good**

Given material semi-worthy of him, Johnny Cash can make almost anybody stop and listen, and in the last couple of years he has tightened his concentration on making albums. Even in that context, this one is special. "Silver" refers to his twenty-fifth anniversary in the biz, and it is worthy of the title—with the proviso that parts of it probably will turn gold. It comes off as an expression of

Johnny Cash as he is today, settled down, responsible, Christian, an American institution even—but it also reminds you of the old wildness. The old rockabilly energy and high style are still there, the old spartan upbringing and perpetual money worries are still there. The feeling of this weaves through the excellent selection of songs and is appropriately put in its place (t'other side of the jug) in the last cut, *I'm Gonna Sit on the Porch and Pick on My Old Guitar*, which in its quiet way finds the good in middle-age mellowness. Through it all, Cash never sang better in either the technical or expressive sense of the word. His is one of our American voices. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ROSANNE CASH: *Right or Wrong*. Rosanne Cash (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Right or Wrong; Take Me, Take Me; Man Smart, Woman Smarter; Couldn't Do Nothin' Right; Big River; Anybody's Darlin'*; and four others. COLUMBIA JC 36155 \$7.98, © JCA 36155 \$7.98, © JCT 36155 \$7.98.

Performance: **Hot 'n' juicy**
Recording: **Very good**

Bobby Bare, who sings a duet with her in *No Memories Hangin' 'Round*, says Rosanne Cash has "one of those wet voices." I'll accept that. She also has one of those potent ones, reminiscent of Ronstadt in the way it can ring through the instruments. But I'm not yet prepared to say that she's a great singer; what I'm prepared to say is that she and her husband, Rodney Crowell, who produced this and wrote most of it, sure know how to make albums. Her version of Karen Brooks' and Gary Nunn's *Couldn't Do Nothin' Right*, for example, doesn't match the Jerry Jeff Walker version, but it comes close enough. And it is done with style, one that combines, in this case, a Caribbean beat and country sensibilities. Rosanne is Johnny Cash's daughter, of course, and Crowell is one of the best of what he calls "second-generation country" songwriters. There are hints here that he's grinding them out to meet the demand sometimes nowadays, but his grinds are better than most country songwriters' creative furies. Consequently, the thing is strong-on material, well paced, vaguely country, and sort of L.A.-sounding. Shucks, just another good thing from the House of Cash. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MARSHALL CHAPMAN: *Marshall*. Marshall Chapman (vocals, guitar); Steve Schaffer (bass); Mike Dospapas (guitar); Jerry Kroon (drums); other musicians. *Rock and Roll Clothes; Home to the Road; Going to Hell and Get It Back; Two Fires; Rock and Roll Girl; Runnin' Out in the Night*; and four others. EPIC JE 36192 \$7.98, © JEA 36192 \$7.98, © JET 36192 \$7.98.

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

Well, Bette Midler fans, I finally found *my* type of high-class floozie—this knucklehead right here. "Marshall" seems pretty close to the kind of album Marshall Chapman has been trying to make; it is a hard rocker and at times it is hilarious and always it reflects an unsinkable spirit. Even if it does start (and
(Continued on page 98)

with. You will forgive me, I hope, if I cynically suggest that courting the New Wave was its real purpose . . . which ain't a *musical* purpose. Then there's the title tune, almost systematically depersonalized by the disco trappings built into it.

To be fair to Carlene the writer, though, the songs grow somewhat more personal and heartfelt on side two and the arrangements do not. The idea of presenting Carter as the latest thing in hard-edged modern may be coming from all around her and not from her. Ironically, her voice is full of warm tones; if the writing and production could simply follow the way she sings decent stuff, be it her own slightly romantic *Gold-Hearted Lady* or Elvis Costello's entirely different *Radio Sweetheart*, the album would seem more unified and, for me at least, more alive. "Two Sides" has its moments, but very few of those occur on one whole side of the album. N.C.

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intermittently continue) with the kind of thing that would be a lot better if we could also see it. The first piece, *Rock and Roll Clothes*, is a loopy-goopy spoof of Mick Jagger, internally about the joys of hiding behind unisex dress. Much of the rock-and-roll is about rock-and-roll, which usually doesn't work for other performers but does for Marshall, and some of it kids our attitudes about sex unmercifully. *Why Can't I Be Like Other Girls* is rerecorded here, presumably because it fits so well in such a program. The drawback is that much of it is caricature, and that seems truly minty fresh only the first time you encounter it. When it palls, however, you can listen for other things, especially the drive she has built into the beat and the post-lib presumptuousness (and good health) of her attitude. Let's hear it for tough women! N.C.

DESMOND CHILD AND ROUGE: *Runners in the Night*. Desmond Child and Rouge (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *The Truth Comes Out; My Heart's on Fire; The Night Was Not; Goodbye Baby; Runners in the Night; Rosa*; and four others. CAPITOL ST-11999 \$7.98, © 8XT-11999 \$7.98, © 4XT-11999 \$7.98.

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

This group's first album contained a couple of semi-electric cuts and a lot of lesser stuff. "Runners in the Night" is more even; it generally reassembles the ingredients of rock with authority. But it isn't as exciting as it figures to be. Some of the vocals are just delicious, echoing everything from basic doo-wop to Martha Reeves to not-so-early Springsteen to something more at home in the better parts of town. But I get the feeling production values were pushed a little too hard; there is a coolness in the instrumentals that doesn't quite serve the voices or the songs. I'll bet the same thing with a live mix would pass these days for a revelation. N.C.

RITA COOLIDGE: *Satisfied*. Rita Coolidge (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *One Fine Day; The Fool in Me; Sweet Emotion; Let's Go Dancin'; Pain of Love*; and four others. A & M SP-4781 \$7.98, © 8T-4781 \$7.98, © CS-4781 \$7.98.

Performance: **Brrrr!**
Recording: **Good**

When times got hard in the Thirties, the down-and-outers by and large opted for the kind of entertainment you'd normally associate with the rich—who, in any era, would rather stick with their Eddy or Peter Duchins and similar purveyors of surface gloss and not be reminded that there's another world out there. In hard times it seems the *inhabitants* of that world don't want to be reminded of it either, and if you want any more proof that these are hard times, take this new Rita Coolidge album. Please. Produced by David Anderle and Booker T. Jones (!), it would not cause your average rich twit a moment's discomfort. Some of the words do ostensibly deal with pain and joy and one or two other feelings, but the production is all surface. The words are treated the way words were in the Tin Pan Alley era, and, as they were then, they deserve to be—but (like then) they aren't treated that way for that reason. Rather, it's a stylization in which the objective seems

(Continued on page 100)

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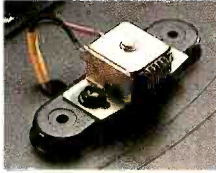
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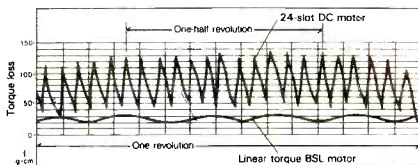
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SONY



John Denver with about two-thirds of the merry Muppets cast

Denver/Muppets/Xmas

JOHN DENVER got himself in Dutch with the Ecofreaks when he quite sensibly installed a ranch-size gas tank (or was it two?) at his Colorado layout this past summer. Who in his right mind—given the wherewithal—would have done otherwise? But if he lost a bit of his audience there, he stands to pick up another, rather heftier one with his Christmas album with the phenomenally successful Muppets.

Denver is not really the *star*, of course—*no one* can upstage the Muppets—but he is keeping the kind of classy company that cannot do a struggling young artist any harm. (Then again, maybe he blends in so well because he's a Muppet himself—just take a look at the record jacket and you'll see what I mean.) Nonetheless, I was impressed all over again, as I have been with every new Denver album, with the sheer *quality* of his vocal equipment; see if you don't agree, starting with the very first notes of *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. (The recorded sound, by the way, has a frosty-night clarity, and the stereo effects are marvelous.)

The *Peace Carol* (sung with Richard Hunt, as Scooter, and the rest of the cast) is for my taste the most winsomely "Christmassy" song here, but the others have winning ways as well. Overall, the touch is refreshingly light (Miss Piggy's Carmen Miranda reading of *Christmas Is Coming* would guarantee that all by itself, but *Little St. Nick*, by Dr. Teeth and the Electric Mayhem, further ensures that any long faces in the crowd get shorter fast). Somehow I don't miss the customary solemnity at all, and a young woman of my acquaintance tells me she plans to use the album as background music at her Christmas parties. If she is planning one for December 5, however, she won't need it: John Denver and the Muppets are offering substantially the same program on an ABC-TV special that night.

One thing I haven't quite figured out for myself yet, and that is the mysterious magnetism of the character of Miss Piggy: you'd like very much to give her a smart slap across the chops, yet you can't keep your eyes (or ears) off her. In *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, for example, she gets to sing (hell, she probably just *took* it) the delicious "five go-o-old rings" line, and she milks it for all it's worth at every repeat. But she isn't satisfied with that melodic spotlight, so toward the end of the catalog she develops a trick of following it with a rudely superfluous "pa-dum-pum" underline that is inspired by the purest stage-hogging, egomaniacal gall. It is probably something Miss P. thought of in the heat of the recording session, and they very sensibly decided to leave it in. If you find such small strokes of genius fascinating, then you'll know why the Muppets Show works.

—William Anderson

JOHN DENVER & THE MUPPETS: A Christmas Together. John Denver (himself), Frank Oz (Miss Piggy, Fozzie Bear, Animal), Jerry Nelson (Robin, Floyd, Lew Zealand), Richard Hunt (Scooter, Janice, Statler, Beaker), Dave Goelz (the Great Gonzo, Zoot, Beauregard, Dr. Bunsen Honeydew), and Jim Henson (Kermit the Frog, Rowlf, Waldorf, Dr. Teeth), vocals; instrumental accompaniment. *The Twelve Days of Christmas*; *Christmas Is Coming*; *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas*; *Peace Carol*; *A Baby Just Like You*; *Deck the Halls*; *When the River Meets the Sea*; *Little St. Nick*; *Noël—Christmas Eve, 1913*; *The Christmas Wish*; *Medley—Alfie, The Christmas Tree/Carol for a Christmas Tree/It's in Every One of Us*; *Silent Night*; *We Wish You a Merry Christmas*. RCA AFL1-3451 \$7.98, ©AFS1-3451 \$7.98, ©AFK1-3451 \$7.98.

to be to avoid making the listener feel anything. Coolidge, as always, has nice tones, and she doesn't sound like she necessarily *wants* to be this cold-blooded, but the setting keeps dragging her away from actually expressing anything. The instrumental backing is mechanical and academic, and she couldn't sink down an inch in any of the songs. My feeling about this kind of thing is that hard times may starve me, but I'm not going to let them bore me to death. N.C.

THE EAGLES: *The Long Run*. The Eagles (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *The Long Run*; *I Can't Tell You Why*; *In the City*; *The Disco Strangler*; *Heartache Tonight*; and five others. ASYLUM 5E-508 \$8.98, © ET8-508 \$8.98, © TC5-508 \$8.98.

Performance: **They gotta be kidding**
Recording: **Expensive**

I really don't believe this record. Yes, against all expectations (for this they labored *three years?*), here is still more monied *Angst*, lame social comment, and overproduction from the Eagles, who apparently believe that what the world needs now is a tuneless, turtle-tempo essay on the human condition as seen from the perspective of five very rich, very bored Angelinos.

Here, for example, is a potentially good idea for a song about a mass murderer at Studio 54 (*The Disco Strangler*) that makes the most obvious points imaginable about loneliness and alienation. Here's an unbearably smug attempted dissection of the casting-couch mentality (*King of Hollywood*) rendered in a manner so laid-back it approaches the catatonic. Here's a song about the good old days of hanging out at the Troubadour Bar (*Sad Café*) that is guaranteed to be of absolutely no interest to anyone outside the Eagles' immediate circle of friends. Here's a lame love song pasted together from snippets of old George Benson records (*I Can't Tell You Why*) and the most tired-sounding bit of blues-based rock (*Heartache Tonight*) they have yet essayed. Here's a vaguely funny evocation of mid-Sixties frat-house partying (*The Greeks Don't Want No Freaks*) that is supposed to be a throwaway yet ironically has more life than anything else in the package. Here are tedium, a total waste of the not inconsiderable talents of Joe Walsh, and the sound of a band with nothing to say saying it at incredible length (*King of Hollywood* runs more than six minutes).

In sum, the Eagles' "The Long Run" is the most pointless vinyl extrusion of 1979, with the possible exception of "The Georgie Jessel Disco Album," which I understand A&M is readying in the wake of their success with a similar venture by Ethel Merman. Like I said, I really don't believe this record. S.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ELLEN FOLEY: *Nightout*. Ellen Foley (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *We Belong to the Night*; *Thunder and Rain*; *Stupid Girl*; *Sad Song*; and five others. EPIC JE 36052 \$7.98, © JEA 36052 \$7.98, © JET 36052 \$7.98.

Performance: **All right!**
Recording: **Fits the mood**

Ellen Foley is a close musical associate of Meat Loaf, having appeared with him in concert. (Continued on page 105)

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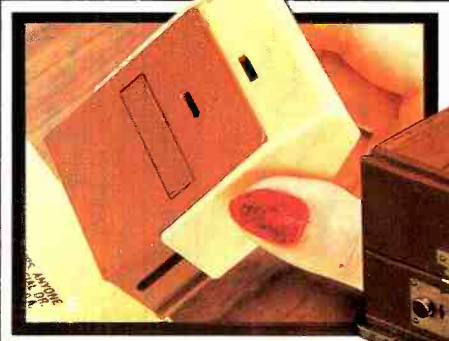
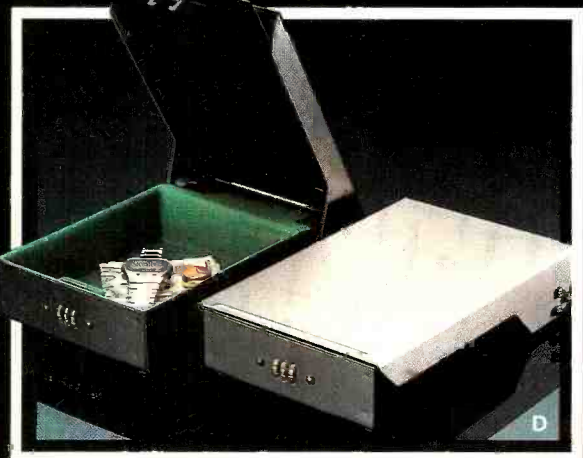
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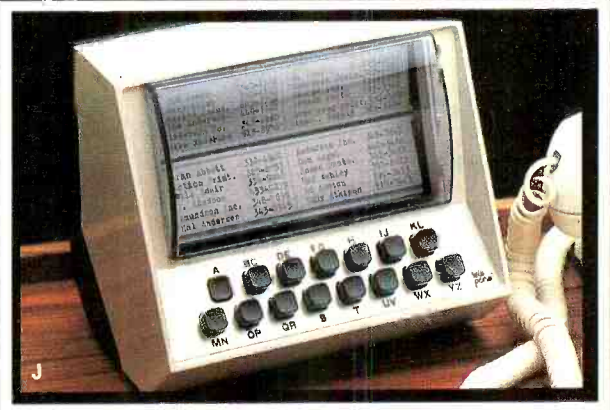
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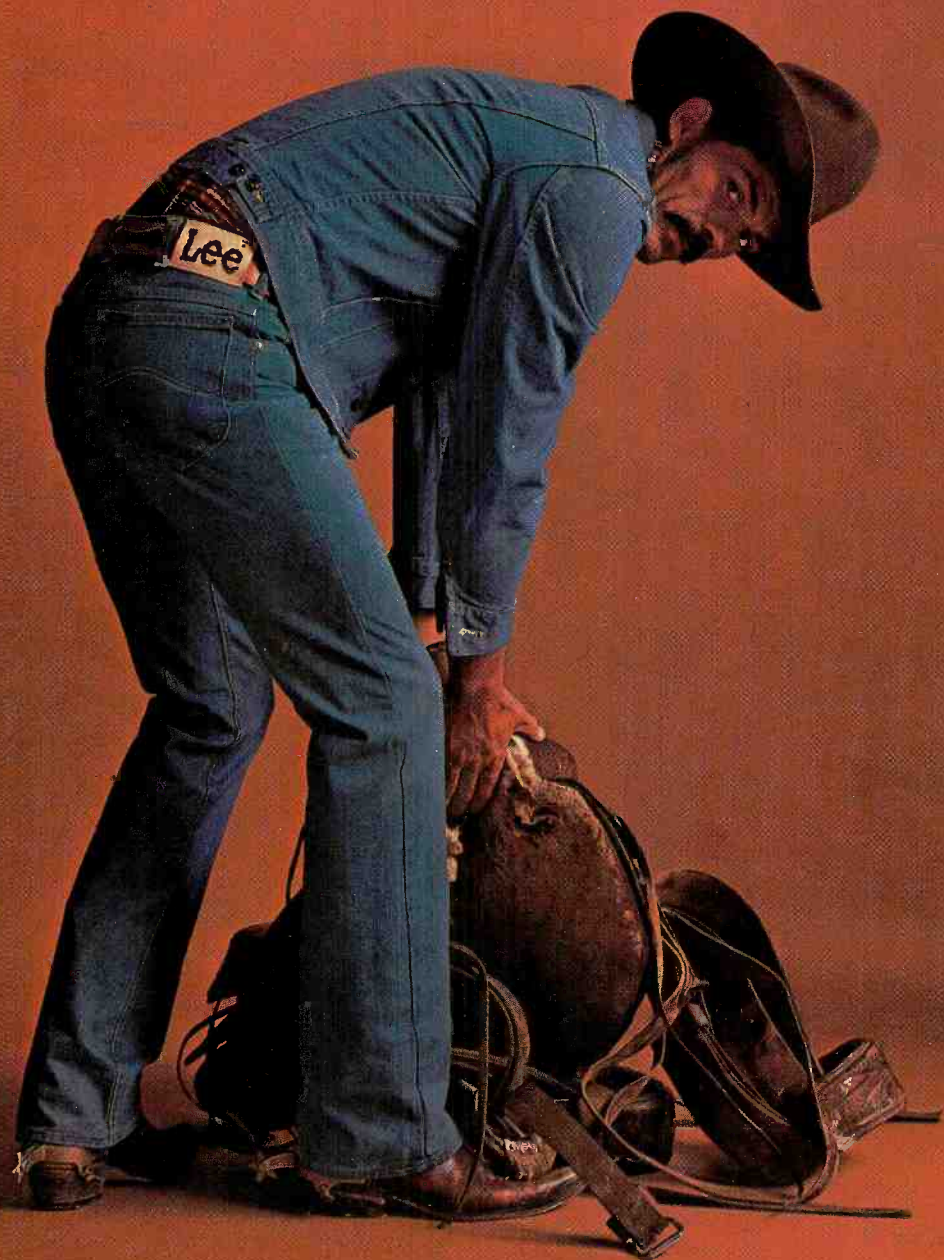
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cert and on recordings. It's a pleasure to report that her first solo album is a success—her singing, the songs, and the production (by Mick Ronson and Ian Hunter) are all fine rock-'n'-roll by any standard.

The standouts here are *We Belong to the Night* (co-written by Foley), a close parallel to Bruce Springsteen's *Born to Run*; *What's a Matter Baby*, a hit for Timi Yuro some years ago; Mick Jagger and Keith Richard's *Stupid Girl*; and *Sad Song*, which parallels *It's a Heartache*, the Bonnie Tyler hit (it's interesting to compare Foley's version with the recent one by nymphet Rachel Sweet). The production and performance represent a remarkable fusion of three decades of rock, from the Fifties through the Seventies. One often seems to be hearing—all at once—a Phil Spector "wall of sound" from the Fifties, some of the more charming studio gimcrackery of the Sixties, and the obsessively clinical engineering of the Seventies. Foley shines throughout, and I heartily recommend that you hear and cheer her.

J.V.

GARLAND JEFFREYS: *American Boy & Girl*. Garland Jeffreys (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Living for Me*; *Bad Dream*; *City Kids*; *American Boy & Girl*; *Mataador*; *Night of the Living Dead*; *Bring Back the Love*; and three others. A&M SP-4778 \$7.98, © 8T-4778 \$7.98, © CS-4778 \$7.98.

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

It is difficult for me to get a handle on Garland Jeffreys, though there are several things about him that I immediately appreciate. He is one of the very few people around these days who try to say something in their songs. This is commendable at a time when much of pop music is merely chewing gum for the ears, as Frank Lloyd Wright might have said. Jeffreys' lyrics indicate a high level of social concern and sensitivity toward the human condition. It can be jolting, as it is here on *City Kids*, a chilling comment on the almost casual destructiveness that has undermined contemporary urban life, particularly where the young are involved. Irony laces many of his songs, such as *If Mao Could See Me Now* and the title track, *American Boy & Girl*.

Jeffreys' style is definitely derived from rock, with rock's harsh, lean sound infusing both vocals and instrumentals. Sometimes he slips in some modified Caribbeanisms, and there are snatches of country-inspired guitar work, but the rawness of rock prevails. I do not like his music, and his singing style leaves me unmoved. But he's a talented lyricist, a brilliant urban troubadour, and I *do* like what he's saying.

P.G.

DAVID JOHANSEN: *In Style*. David Johansen (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Melody*; *She*; *Big City*; *She Knew She Was Falling in Love*; *Swaheto Woman*; and five others. BLUE SKY JZ 36082 \$7.98, © JZA 36082 \$7.98, © JZT 36082 \$7.98.

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

The last thing I expected from an ex-New York Doll was competence and the next to last was credibility, but David Johansen shows a measure of both here. In fact, if it were all as good as *Justine* and *Flamingo Road*, it would be a bang-up teenage album.



THOUGH the term "diva" is usually reserved for leading ladies of the opera, it is an apt borrowing for the title of the new album by Aretha Franklin. The First Lady of Soul has shown as much toughness and endured as long as any robust Wagnerian soprano or heroine of *bel canto*. As she is still relatively young, it may be difficult to believe that she has been a professional singer for *twenty-five years*. For the first six of those she sang gospel, a career she began at the age of twelve and more or less abandoned at eighteen to shift into popular music. (Before the move, some were calling her the most likely successor to the mantle of the late Mahalia Jackson.) But even more remarkable than Franklin's staying power is the generally high quality of her output. I can't recall a single record of hers without at least one outstanding track, and several are among the all-time classics of rhythm-and-blues.

Aretha Franklin is much more than simply one of the best pop singers ever. She is also a pianist and a composer, which enables her to shape both her own songs and those of others to fit a basic musical approach that strongly reflects gospel roots. She is a true original and still sounds like nobody else, though a whole school of contemporary pop singers has followed her lead.

Of course, any career has its high and low points, and in the last few years Franklin's albums have lacked much of the electricity and emotional depth of her earlier efforts. In fact, the last one that really excited me was "Let Me in Your Life" (Atlantic SD 7292), released back in 1974. But one mark of a true diva is the ability to bounce back from a slack period with a stunning performance that confirms her high status, and that's just what

Franklin has done with her new "La Diva."

By now the word on the streets is probably that Aretha's "gone disco," but that's not really what's happening here. Rather, she has cleverly meshed items in her old, familiar style with others showing the influence of current pop. Her own *Ladies Only*, the opener, starts out in an intimate, ear-caressing way, then segues into a sassy disco groove that seems to fit perfectly with what has preceded it. Two very different sounds are made compatible by the awesome force of Franklin's performance.

MOST of the other selections, including *Honey I Need Your Love* and *Only Star*, also Franklin compositions, are vintage soul music without a trace of disco. And the range of moods and settings is further extended, in a different direction, by Zulema Cusseaux's *Half a Love*, which sounds like some of the delicious slow-drag dance music of the Fifties and Sixties. If there is any overall disco flavor to "La Diva," it is probably traceable to the late hustle king, Van McCoy, who co-produced it with Charles Kipps. This was one of McCoy's last efforts, and I'm glad he had a chance to work with Aretha Franklin, an artist able to bring out the best in any material she touches.

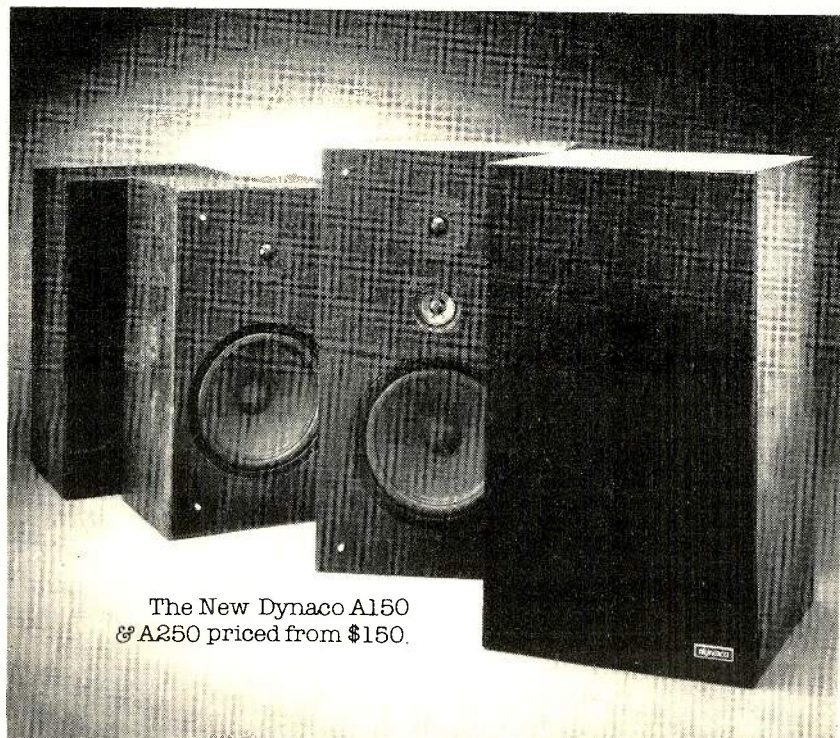
—Phyl Garland

ARETHA FRANKLIN: *La Diva*. Aretha Franklin (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Ladies Only*; *It's Gonna Get a Bit Better*; *What If I Should Ever Need You*; *Honey I Need Your Love*; *I Was Made for You*; *Only Star*; *Reasons Why*; *You Brought Me Back to Life*; *Half a Love*; *The Feeling*. ATLANTIC SD 19248 \$7.98, © TP 19248 \$7.98, © CS 19248 \$7.98.

It's pretty bang-up anyway, in the loud sense. The dynamic range seems compressed, as in a commercial, so that everything is just about as loud as it will go most of the time. That and the fondness for a certain tempo Johansen apparently has give it a monochromatic

quality, which is compounded by his tendency to shout the vocals. And, while the backing is generally pretty good and most of the songs are better than average, there are places where thin tunes and power-pop tricks run into the ground can make you want to leave

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the room. Just turning the thing off won't do it; the whole room vibrates for minutes afterwards, and so does your head. But it does rock your socks off some of the time, more of the time than most. *N.C.*

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON: *Shake Hands with the Devil*. Kris Kristofferson (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Shake Hands with the Devil*; *Prove It to You One More Time Again*; *Whiskey, Whiskey*; *Lucky in Love*; *Seadream*; and five others. COLUMBIA/MONUMENT JZ 36135 \$7.98, © JZA 36135 \$7.98, © JZT 36135 \$7.98.

Performance: **Largely off-key**
Recording: **Good**

Well, I can see how making movies would interfere with Kris Kristofferson's songwriting (four of the ones he wrote here are five to nine years old), but the immediate problem with this album is that he can't sing for beans. (Do I hear some smart-ass saying, "Fair enough, he can't act either"? I hope so.) Actually, the songs here, several of them, are pretty nice—not striking, the way Kristofferson's early songs were, but clearly the work of a pro—albeit, in some cases, a pro from back in 1970. But, Lord, those vocals. For some reason, Kris keeps making it even harder on himself by casting the song in a lower key than he needs to, and he hits low notes like I would hit Tom Seaver fast balls. Of course, he never was exactly steady as a vocalist, but he was both better technically and more appealing when he was trying to do it full-time. *N.C.*

IAN LLOYD: *Goose Bumps*. Ian Lloyd (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Love Stealer*; *Slip Away*; *First Heartbreak*; *Holiday*; *Goose Bumps*; and seven others. SCOTTI BROTHERS SB 7104 \$7.98, © TP 7104 \$7.98, © CS 7104 \$7.98.

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

Ian Lloyd is from Stories, the vaguely Beatles-sounding early Seventies group that had some nice tunes and dumb lyrics. Lloyd, who does simultaneously sound a little—but only a little—like both Lennon and McCartney, comes on here as a hard rocker if not a would-be power popper. The format suits him at least as well as Stories did, and, taken little bits at a time, the album has several potential singles. But taken as a whole, it sure is relentless. You'll want to give your ears a rest afterwards, but if it's rock with the old verve you crave, what's a little deafness? Lloyd doesn't try anything too fancy—the lyrics are generally a little less dumb than Stories'—he just lays back his ears and rocks. But there's a subtlety in getting that just right, and a lot of little things are done well here. *N.C.*

DAVID LOGGINS. David Loggins (vocals, guitar); Kenny Malone (drums); Steve Brantley (bass); Jon Goin (guitar); other musicians. *Faces in the Window*; *You Made Me Feel Love*; *If I Had My Wish Tonight*; *A Woman That You Can't Have*; *The Fool in Me*; and five others. EPIC JE 35972 \$7.98, © JEA 35972 \$7.98, © JET 35972 \$7.98.

Performance: **Spit-shined**
Recording: **Ditto**

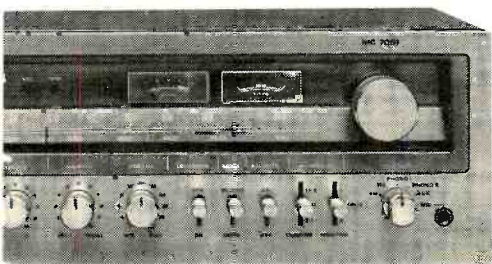
This is an abrupt turn for the Tennessee boy we used to know as *Dave* Loggins, and I'd call
(Continued on page 108)

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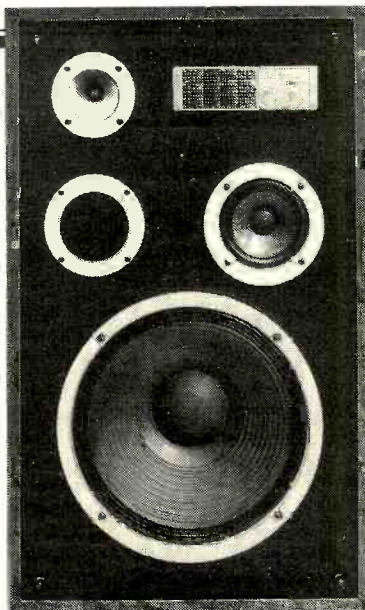


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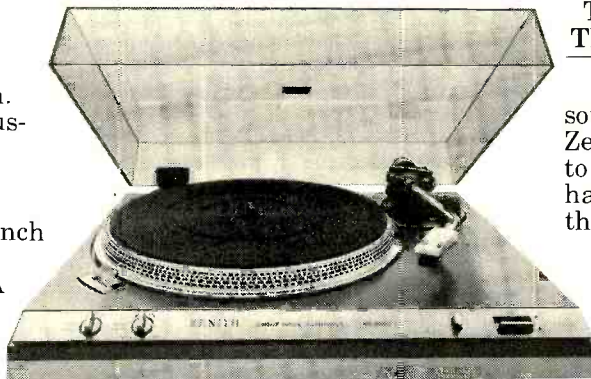
midrange with a 5-inch cone in its own subenclosure. And a brilliant 3½-inch horn tweeter.

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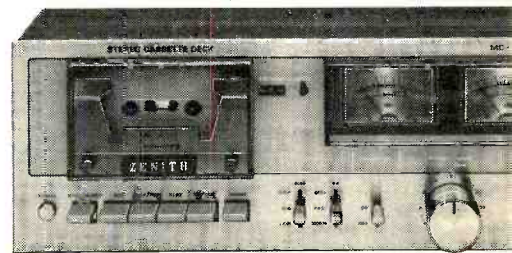


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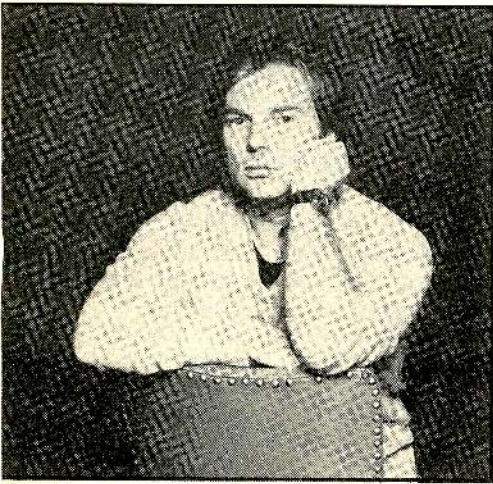
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Van Morrison

THERE is a persistent rumor about Van Morrison's struggles with stage fright. I don't know to what degree he still has it after all these years, but you can hear for yourself—and in Martin Scorsese's and the Band's movie *The Last Waltz* you can see it again and again—that he is one nervous and wired-up performer. This is most curious, so curious that it has upended my assumption that other people's stage fright feels more or less the same as *my* stage fright.

I've been on the other side of the microphone enough times to see how mine works, or to think I do, and what I find is that it erodes rapidly when I get up there and perform several nights in a row. At first it's fierce—the first two or three times I estimated I was intimidated into doing only about 45 per cent of what I could do at home alone (on the instrument, that is; I think it's a little easier for vocalists). And it comes back somewhat—but never as fierce as at first—if there's a layoff or a hiatus in my getting up there and doing it. But, Lord, after a little time on the road, it gets to be not all that novel. Indeed, the usual schedule will eventually make a performer wish he were *more* keyed-up, not less, when the time comes to get up there and do it.

That's the way I thought it must work for everyone, but apparently it does not work that way for Van Morrison. Here's his umpteenth album, "Into the Music," and its overriding characteristic is what a coiled spring Morrison is.

This leads me to suspect that his "stage fright" is something I can't know exactly. I'm just not tense enough (though Lord knows I try sometimes). It appears to be a standard part of his way of doing things, an essential part of his personality. In a way it may have been the biggest factor in keeping him in favor, to a reasonable degree, through the shaky Seventies. For, whatever else we may have said about him, no one could accuse him of failing to try to get into the music. He has never been one to pitch (as in toss off) a song out to the audience or control room; he has always opted to crawl inside the rascal and

ride it wherever it went. And he was not a passive rider, either.

Of course, usually it was a song he had written himself. The intensity Morrison the singer would later bring to it would never show in the bare lyrics (and still doesn't), but you could (and still can) hear it in the long, rubber-band melodic lines and in the beat. This new album, being more even and listenable than most, is a good example of how, ideally, songwriting and singing merge in Morrison's world. When he's successful, his lyrics—once he's sung them—convey, at most, that what he's trying to express is beyond words. Read them or hear almost anyone else sing them and they almost always seem trite and banal. Sometimes in the past they've seemed that way even when Morrison sang them; not even he could draw enough attention away from their prima-facie dumbness. But most of those in "Into the Music" are above the good-enough-to-be-sung threshold, and several times they suck you right into Morrison's world, where the strain on the word is more important than the word itself.

WITH all this straining and intensity, it should follow that Morrison would be limited in the emotional range he can convey. I'm not so sure he is. There's a limit to how happy he can *sound*, but somehow here, at the very start, he takes his agonized, squeezed, stretched, slobbered-over, basically sad inflections and still makes *Bright Side of the Road* an upbeat little experience. (Something similar happened, you'll recall, with *Tupelo Honey*.) Mood is a big thing with Morrison, and when he gets inside a song, he'll serve it, somehow, whether he's equipped to or not. In the new album, he makes it a little easier on himself by thinking up some fetching tunes—some of which, such as *Rolling Hills*, take unexpected directions and don't sound like the usual stylized, patented Van Morrison tunes—and by assembling a tasteful but rakish back-up group whose members play off each other as well as Morrison.

And for *Listen to the Lion*-type mood freaks, there is *And the Healing Has Begun*, which is a stereotypical Morrison experience of stereotypical Morrison length, but not bad for all that. The very end, grafting *You Know What They're Writing About* onto *It's All in the Game*, doesn't work too well, since Morrison's moody appendage is just too meandering, too sketchy, and yet too heavy-handed to be wistful, which was its only chance. But before that there's a lot of pretty solid album here, and it's a genuine encounter with one of the real stylists of our time. —Noel Coppage

VAN MORRISON: *Into the Music*. Van Morrison (vocals, guitar, harmonica); Toni Marcus (violin, viola, stromboli, mandolin); Mark Jordan (keyboards); Herbie Armstrong (guitar); David Hayes (bass); Peter Van Hooke (drums); other musicians. *Bright Side of the Road*; *Full Force Gale*; *Stepping Out Queen*; *Troubadours*; *Rolling Hills*; *You Make Me Feel So Free*; *Angeliou*; *And the Healing Has Begun*; *It's All in the Game/You Know What They're Writing About*. WARNER BROS. HS 3390 \$8.98, © W8 3390 \$8.98, © W5 3390 \$8.98.

it a turn to the right—which is to say, going with the flow. A bunch of damned silk-shirted songs is what it is. It would be a credit to Boz Scaggs. And there are smart-ass little turns of melody, to go with words ostensibly about human emotions, that every android out there is going to love. Guess you might say it is not my cup of tea; I'd rather have one of the other directions Loggins used to hint at taking, something a little more organic. Or a *lot* more. But it's well crafted, and Loggins is a good singer. Would that the times had swept him some other way. N.C.

CAROLYNE MAS. Carlyne Mas (vocals, guitar, piano); David Landau (guitar); John Siegler (bass); Andy Newmark (drums); other musicians. *Stillsane*; *Sadie Says*; *Snow*; *It's No Secret*; *Call Me*; *Baby Please*; and four others. MERCURY SRM-1-3783 \$7.98, © MC8-1-3783 \$7.98, © MCR4-1-3783 \$7.98.

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

In some ways this is a crackerjack of a bubblegum album, but it leaves you feeling Carlyne Mas has the intelligence—and knowing she has the voice—to aim higher. It is intelligently produced by Steve Burgh, given the material (by Mas), which repeatedly poses Mas as a not-so-innocent innocent (we know what *Snow* is really about, etc.) at large in the big, fat world. There is something precocious about the attitude of the thing, but Mas' voice is pliant and expressive and doesn't need this flirtation with girliness. The songs mostly perk along just fine on a bubblegum level but are almost all throw-aways. There's talent here, though. N.C.

THE ALAN PARSONS PROJECT: *Eve*. The Alan Parsons Project (instrumentals); vocal accompaniment. *Lucifer*; *I'd Rather Be a Man*; *Damned If I Do*; *Secret Garden*; *You Won't Be There*; and four others. ARISTA AL 9504 \$7.98, ©A8T 9504 \$7.98, © ACT 9504 \$7.98.

Performance: **Crisp**
Recording: **Super**

The three astonishingly beautiful women on this album's disturbing cover have faces that turn out, on closer inspection, to be horribly disfigured, and the album's "concept" is the two faces women show to men (or that men *think* women show to men). One face is caught in the callous images of the opener, *You Lie Down with Dogs* ("Not your only man, just another/I'm gonna take what I can like any other"). "Eve" then moves through a series of male confrontations with woman's mysteries to a kind of resolution in *If I Could Change Your Mind*, in which a female vocalist sings of "Windy shores on melancholy days/Drifting along with the tide/And the joys of simple things and ordinary ways."

It's not the most profound concept, the conflict of the animal urgings of sex and the human need for love, and it's not carried through and developed in a literary or operatic way, like *Evita* or *Tommy*. But it adds a nice dimension to the listening experience, the kind of lightly sketched theme that Alan Parsons fans look for in each of his remarkable mood albums. Musically, though, "Eve" is a disappointment coming from Parsons and Eric Woolfson, the creators of the classic

(Continued on page 110)

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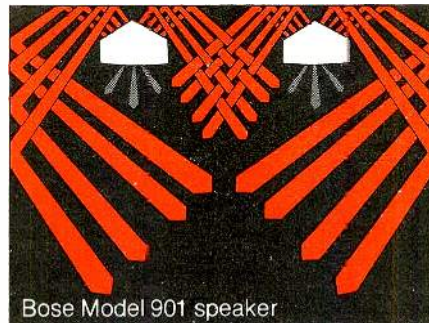
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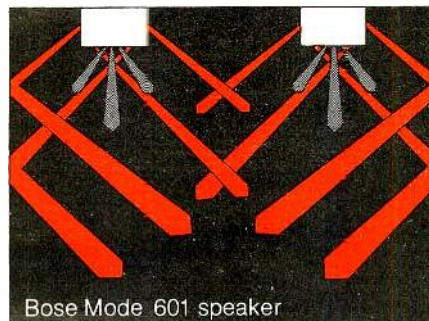
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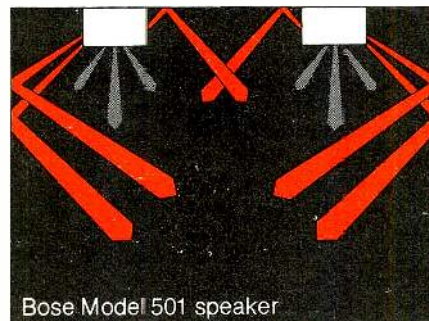
A live performance



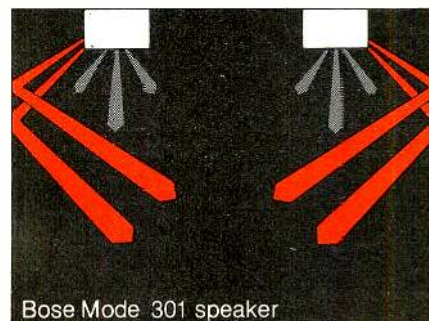
Bose Model 901 speaker



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Bose Model 501 speaker



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"Pyramid." The arrangements are not as fresh, and the sound, which seemed so new so recently, now seems repetitive. *You Lie Down with Dogs*, with a gritty vocal by Larry Zakatek, is as close to straight rock as anything Parsons has done. It's not the best song in "Eve," but it is the most interesting—because it's the only one free of the double-time intros, choral vocalise, and big, rhythmic electric-piano chords we've heard before in other Parsons albums. A much better song, the ballad *You Won't Be There*, gets a fine vocal performance too (from Dave Townsend), but it's hurt by a *Star Wars*-size finale more appropriate to the bigger subjects of "Pyramid." The two instrumental cuts, *Lucifer* and *Secret Garden*, sound like out-takes.

Of course, sounding like the Alan Parsons Project is not a bad thing for the Alan Parsons Project to do. And there are some wonderful things in "Eve." **E.B.**

ALAN PRICE: *Lucky Day*. Alan Price (vocals, piano, synthesizer); instrumental accompaniment. *Groovy Times; Baby of Mine; Those Tender Lips; Help from You; England My England*; and five others. JET JZ 35710 \$7.98, © JZA 35710 \$7.98, © JZT 35710 \$7.98.

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

Pop composer-performer Alan Price has been a solo artist since his departure from the Ani-

mals in 1965. He has a loyal band of supporters in his native England, and, from his work on the film *O Lucky Man*, a cult following here in the U.S. His specialty is the sharp, mordant lyric (generally a sociological comment) accompanied by a bouncing tune. The aspiration seems to be Brechtian, but the results more often resemble Gilbert and Sullivan. Price is an intelligent, suave performer, however, and there are a few sarcastic chuckles to be found in such things as *England My England*: "... his mum is a cleaner at the Co-op bakery/She saves all her wages for a Japanese TV/To please her old man who is struggling on the dole" Or there's *Pity the Poor Boy*: "I'm a dreamer, I'm a schemer/How can I win in this world and survive" Price's work is as English as gin and bitters but served, unfortunately, at that beverage's usual tepid temperature. **P.R.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GENYA RAVAN: *And I Mean It!* Genya Ravan (vocals, harmonica); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *I Won't Sleep on the Wet Spot No More; Junkman; Roto Root Her; I'm Wired, Wired, Wired; Love Isn't Love*; and five others. 20TH CENTURY-FOX T-595 \$7.98, © 8-595 \$7.98, © C-595 \$7.98.

Performance: **She means it**
Recording: **Good**

After a period spent producing other acts and reviewing her own singing career from a distance of time, Genya Ravan last year made her return as a performer with "Urban Desire" (20th Century-Fox T-562), an album that deserved a better reception than it got. Her new release, "And I Mean It!," is even better. In fact, it tops everything Genya Ravan has done previously, and that includes her work with Ten Wheel Drive, which originally established her on the American pop map.

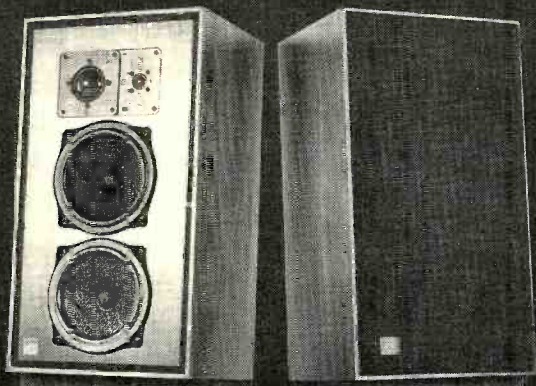
Ravan's vocal sound is a kind of hybrid that was developed in the Fifties by white singers trying to imitate black ones. Her style, however, is strictly her own, and, as in the previous album, she applies it here to material that reflects the Sixties without sounding anachronistic. Again, there is a nod to Motown—this time it is Marvin Gaye's 1962 song *Stubborn Kind of Fellow* (here changed to *Stubborn Kinda Girl*)—and a generous portion of tunes by Ravan herself. Though I went back several times to her own tune, *I'm Wired, Wired, Wired*, the most sparkling gem of this album is *Junkman*, written by Joe Droukas and exquisitely performed by Ravan and singer Ian Hunter. I love this album . . . and I mean it! **C.A.**

KENNY ROGERS: *Kenny*. Kenny Rogers (vocals); Pig Robbins (piano); Bob Moore (bass); Billy Sanford (guitar); other musicians. *You Turn the Light On; You Decorated My Life; She's a Mystery; Goodbye Marie; Tulsa Turnaround; Old Folks*; and five others. UNITED ARTISTS LWAK-979 \$8.98, © 8LN-979 \$8.98, © 4LN-979 \$8.98.

Performance: **The usual**
Recording: **Good**

Kenny Rogers' image is just about anywhere you'd care to look. His picture (a real photograph, not graffiti) has even made the New York subway system. On the tube—with
(Continued on page 112)

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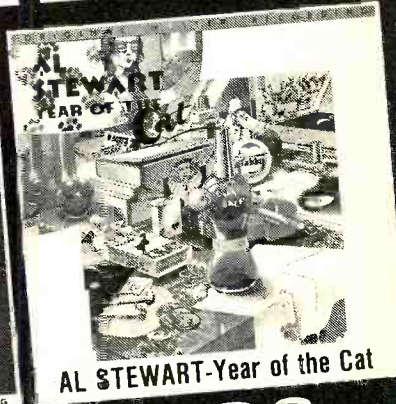
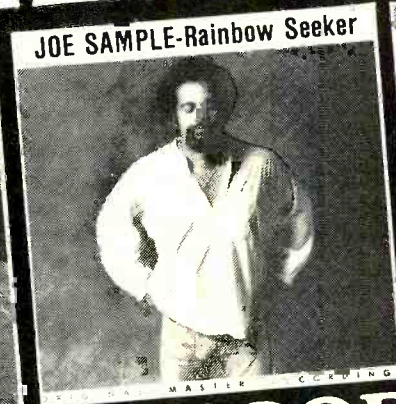
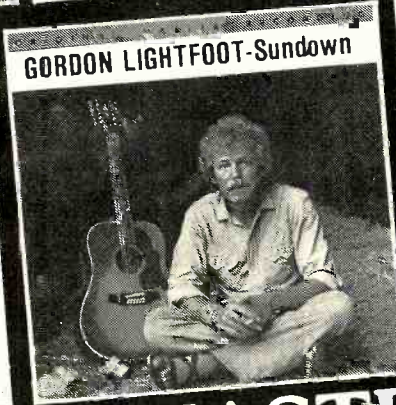
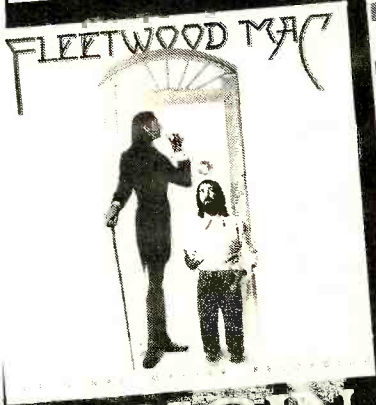
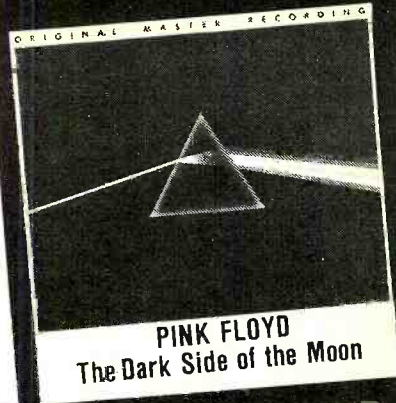
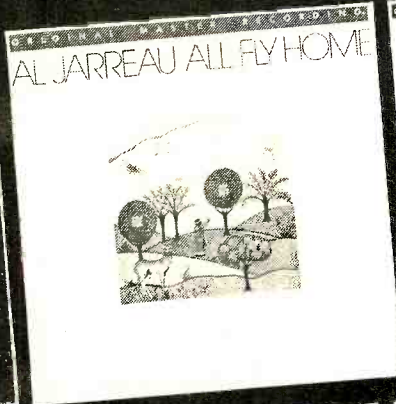
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CIRCLE NO. 46 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Al Greese

Nancy Harrow

WHEN I look at the record charts these days I often sigh and think, "Oh well, there just isn't that much real talent around. And besides, a cool, robot-like charm helps more in winning popularity contests." But then a beautiful, truly elegant album comes along—such as Nancy Harrow's "Anything Goes" on Audiophile—and I actually get angry when I think of all those people who *could* appreciate it but will never even get to see a copy in their local stores because the racks are too crowded with the latest instantly salable junk.

Well, if you don't see Nancy Harrow's new album where you buy records, ask for it; and if that doesn't work, write away for it. I can assure you that hearing it will improve your life immeasurably in a variety of ways. For starters, your intelligence will savor her serene, less-is-more approach to lyric reading, with just a slight ritard (such as in the middle of Cole Porter's *Anything Goes*) pointing up internal rhymes that probably never struck you before. Your body will probably learn a

great deal about the art of sensuous relaxation from Harrow's laid-back, slightly lascivious run-through of the old Ma Rainey song *See See Rider*, in which she demonstrates what pop/jazz singing can do when it's really good: namely, create a space and mood in which the listener becomes the protagonist.

Finally, your soul can't help but be refreshed and enriched as you hear Nancy Harrow glide and turn, soar and flutter through such gems as *I Wished on the Moon*, with its Dorothy Parker lyrics, or the stoically lovely Arlen/Mercer ballad *Come Rain or Come Shine*, or maybe the best damned performance ever of *He's Funny That Way*.

Harrow made two albums in the early Sixties that were exceptional enough to assure her being booked into the best clubs of the time. Unfortunately, they came at a time when the club scene was doing a fast fade for lack of patrons (the "revolution" and all that, don't you know), and she decided to slip out of the limelight for a while. Her second child was born in 1969, the year she became an editor at *American Journal*, a literary magazine. In the last few years she eased back into singing publicly, then decided to record this album. Praise be that she did.

FOR accompaniment, Harrow chose Jack Wilson on guitar, Billy Hart on drums, and the spectacular Rufus Reid on bass. Their playing creates the kind of warm, billowing musical cushion on which Harrow can float effortlessly through her repertoire. Her exceptional line and rhythm and pace mark her as a thoroughbred, and thoroughbreds have a way of standing out no matter where you put them—even in a barnyard full of tricky bionic charthorses. —Peter Reilly

NANCY HARROW: *Anything Goes*. Nancy Harrow (vocals); Jack Wilkins (guitar); Rufus Reid (bass); Billy Hart (drums). *Anything Goes; Prelude to a Kiss; See See Rider; A Woman's Intuition; I Wished on the Moon; Come Rain or Come Shine; He's Funny That Way; Them There Eyes; My Old Flame; A Fine Romance; Foolin' Myself; I've Got a Crush on You.* AUDIOPHILE OP-142 \$7.98 (from Audiophile Records, 3008 Wadsworth Mill Place, Atlanta, Ga. 30032).

Merv or Mike or one of those—he says these things usually last five or six years and then fade away, which is true. You remember John Denver. Anyway, Rogers keeps turning out product to capitalize on that notoriety while it lasts, and it is respectable product but basically safe and conservative.

At the very beginning of the First Edition, Rogers brought a certain flair and freshness to record making. You could even say he was one of the first to bring a country bearing back to post-rockabilly rock. But this album, like most of his recent ones, has a pedigreed, market-researched air about it and an amorphous non-style. That is, it's an old-time MOR pop album. That would be all right—because his voice is ubiquitous too, and always recognizable—except that the songs and instrumentation are so formula-struck. It's like Howard Johnson's commitment not to

surprise you. There's even a little piece of mint you can pick up after this anonymous feeding exercise: *Coward of the Country* (well, it's listed as "Country" on the jacket, although Kenny says "county" when he sings it) is a little acoustic-guitar-fed story song to be played on the country stations and to remind us all where Kenny's roots once were and maybe make us forget some of the bloated orchestration that went on before. Rogers still has musical talent, but he's too busy being a businessman, while this thing lasts, to use much of it. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STEVE ROSS. Steve Ross (vocals, piano). *I Want to Be Seen with You Tonight; Steppin' Out with My Baby; Sometime When You're Lonely; Tuscaloosa's Calling Me; Sweet and*

Low-Down; Two for the Road; 99 Miles from L.A.; Soon; and four others. STOLEN MOMENTS SM 1938 \$8.00. (Available by mail from Stolen Moments Records, 255 West 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10024 for \$9.50 postpaid.)

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

One of the principal reasons for the success of Ted Hook's Backstage, a theatrical restaurant on West 45th Street in Manhattan, is that Steve Ross has entertained at the piano bar there for the last three years. This album is an excellent example of the kind of work that keeps Ross' devoted following of theatergoers and performers coming back for more.

He has an enormous repertoire of American theater songs which he has chosen with taste and performs with skill, reinterpreting them in cabaret style. Among his greatest assets are his talent for arranging and his ability at the keyboard, and he has the diction and the sensitivity to lyrics that are required for success in cabaret. His voice may not be the world's greatest natural instrument, but he uses it to considerable expressive effect. It has a reedy sound, reminiscent of Fred Astaire and Noël Coward, that lends an appealing period quality to his interpretations of Irving Berlin's *Remember* and *How Deep Is the Ocean* here.

The album contains a nice mixture of standards and more contemporary songs such as *99 Miles from L.A.* by Albert Hammond and Hal David. My favorite is Harold Beebe and Bill Heyer's valentine to New York City, *Tuscaloosa's Calling Me (But I'm Not Going)*. For me it sums up what Ross is all about: New York night life and the glamour of the Broadway theater.

—William Livingstone

RACHEL SWEET: *Fool Around*. Rachel Sweet (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *B-A-B-Y; I Go to Pieces; Who Does Lisa Like?; Wildwood Saloon; Sad Song; Cuckoo Clock; and four others.* STIFF/COLUMBIA JC 36101 \$7.98, @ JCA 36101 \$7.98, © JCT 36101 \$7.98.

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

Rachel Sweet is a seventeen-year-old American singer who made it big in England and has now returned here. I wish her success. In musical and historical terms she can be compared with Brenda Lee and Leslie Gore, but with one important difference. The times have changed in such a way that singers of Ms. Sweet's tender age can take on subjects that weren't allowable for her predecessors. Today a rapid loss of innocence is assumed, and a teenager can handle material that is womanly rather than girlish. Instead of a child prodigy singing polite pop we have what I guess we will have to call nymphet-rock.

Sweet's voice is occasionally cloying, but she has a good sense of phrasing and a commendable bravura. The material is an interesting mixed bag. *B-A-B-Y*, a hit for Carla Thomas, and *I Go to Pieces*, a hit for Peter and Gordon before Peter Asher became Linda Ronstadt's producer and Gordon disappeared, are both given sturdy, professional treatments. There are also some odd items: *Cuckoo Clock* is about a demonic machine,

(Continued on page 114)

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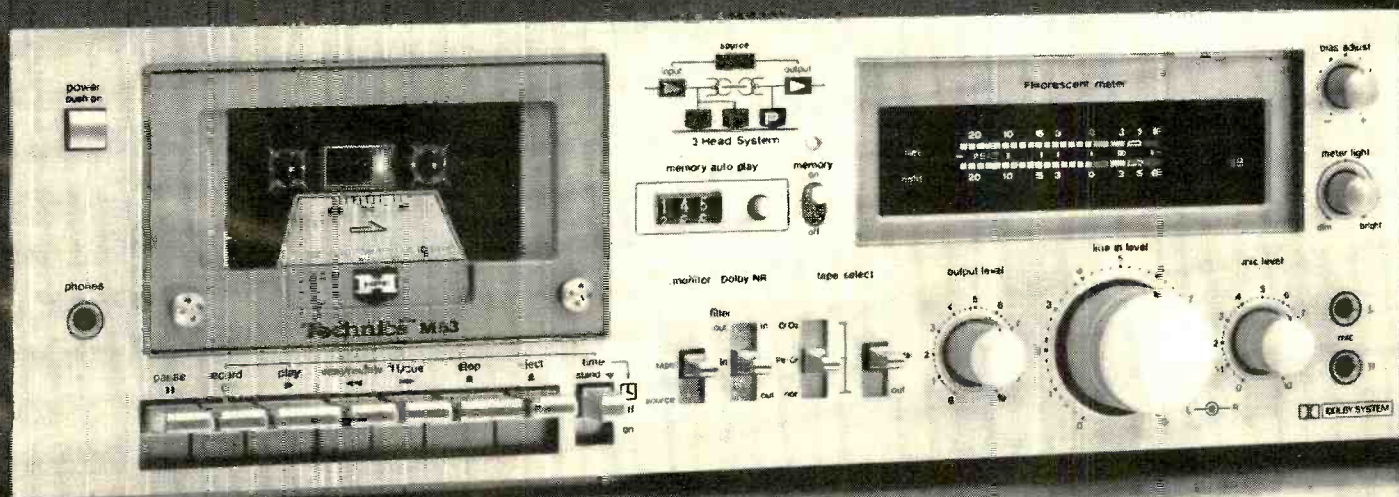
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CIRCLE NO. 43 ON READER SERVICE CARD

and Elvis Costello's *Stranger in the House* is a country-type tune in which Our Little Girl is cast as the wife of a fellow who can't get over another woman. The late Vladimir Nabokov, author of *Lolita*, would have had a field day with this album. For the rest of us, ... well, it's rock-and-roll, baby. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TALKING HEADS: *Fear of Music*. Talking Heads (vocals and instrumentals). *I Zimbra; Mind; Paper; Cities; Life During Wartime; Memories Can't Wait*; and five others. SIRE SRK 6076 \$7.98, © M&S 6076 \$7.98, © M&S 6076 \$7.98.

Performance: **Assured and dazzling**

Recording: **Terrific**

Funny how soon the avant-garde becomes mainstream these days. Case in point: Talking Heads. Two or three years ago they sounded kind of weird even to themselves, and now their music is reasonably accessible to almost everybody without their having compromised their integrity in the slightest. In part this is because a number of other bands (the Cars, for example) have adapted elements of the Heads' style for more conservative pop-oriented songs, but it's also because the Heads' own outlook has become increasingly focused and sophisticated, to the point where it's now quite obvious that Sixties funk of the Memphis variety, rather than SoHo minimalism, is the real root of what they're doing. Comparisons with Booker T. and the MG's have never been more to the point.

"Fear of Music" is primarily a sound album in the best sense, full of textural surprises, rhythmic quirks, and striking instrumental work, an eccentric, danceable, even subtly tuneful display coupled with some of the most cohesive ensemble playing in rock today. I couldn't care less that David Byrne's choked, paranoid singing might be considered a mannerism; it sounds utterly right in the context of what the band is doing. Overall, this is the most accomplished outing yet from what must be recognized as the world's most cerebral funk band. I think it's just bloody marvelous. S.S.

FRANK ZAPPA: *Joe's Garage, Act I*. Frank Zappa (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *The Central Scrutinizer; Catholic Girls; Crew Slut; Wet T-Shirt Nite; Toad-O-Line*; and four others. ZAPPA SRZ-1-1603 \$7.98, © ZT8-1-1603 \$7.98, © ZT4-1-1603 \$7.98.

Performance: **Prurient**

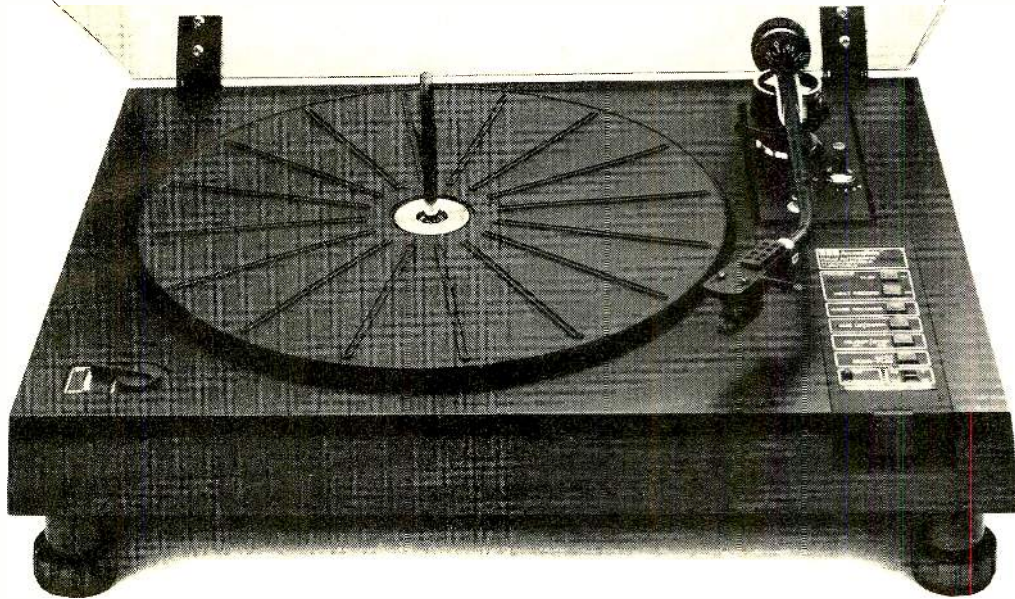
Recording: **The Zappa Sound**

I don't know if "Act II" of "Joe's Garage" is forthcoming, but I hope so. "Act I" sure does end incomprehensibly. As usual, Zappa milks his favorite obsessions: "Joe's Garage" is a slightly surrealistic sound drama about garage bands, groupie sex, and all-American sleaze. The story is told by the Central Scrutinizer, whose job is to enforce all the laws that haven't been passed yet—mainly the Abolition of Music, the very art whose temptations and evils are so well illustrated in this album. In the end, all that happens is that our hero joins the First Church of Appliantology—punishment enough, perhaps, but not exactly the horrible fate we had been led to ex-

(Continued on page 116)

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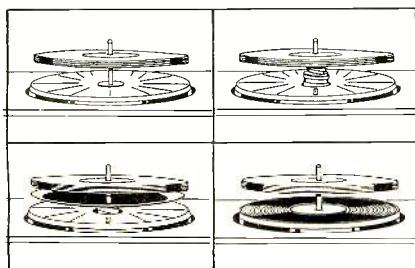
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CIRCLE NO. 12 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Kermit with Muppeteer Jim Henson

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The Muppet Movie

SHORTLY before the all-too-early ending of *The Muppet Movie*, Kermit the Frog looks out at the audience and comments, "That's what it's all about, folks. You have to keep on believing and you have to keep on pretending." That little bit of survivalist philosophy just may be what has caused me to see the film twice and listen to the original-soundtrack recording on Atlantic often enough that I can lip-synch most of the songs.

In their first appearance on the Big Screen, the Muppets provide the kind of entertainment we haven't seen the likes of since the days of the great silent-film comedians. It will have grade schoolers rolling on the floor with delight even as it foils grownups' determination to keep a straight face. Kermit and his scruffy menagerie have the magic grace of make-believe, expressing feelings that are supposedly reserved for human beings but that probably only hand puppets can safely display in real life.

The Academy Awards, that worn and dusty ritual of an industry grown tired, will soon be upon us again, and if *The Muppet Movie* isn't given a special award for restoring some of the golden glow that's been missing from movies since, well, the Thirties, then there's just no justice. (One has heard, of course, of the underground movement to launch a massive write-in campaign to name Miss Piggy as Best Actress, and I don't suppose I have to tell you whose fine, porcine hooflet is behind that!)

The plot of the movie is simplicity itself. A fast-talking Hollywood agent comes upon Kermit singing in the swamp and tells him that he ought to go to Hollywood so his songs could reach millions of people all over the world. The idea appeals to him, and he sets out for Tinseltown. Along the way he picks up a diverse crew of traveling companions: Fozzie Bear, the world's worst stand-up comic; Gonzo, the clumsiest bird ever to spread his wings; the inimitable Miss Piggy, a beauty-

contest winner and the flintiest-eyed pursuer of the Big Chance since Lorelei Lee; the devil-may-care Dr. Teeth and his Electric Mayhem band; and a host of other wonderful creatures that spring from the imagination of Jim Henson and are as warm, witty, and winsome as any of the creations of Lewis Carroll, A. A. Milne, or L. Frank Baum. No doubt about it, the Muppets already have the shimmery aura of classic characters about them in their film debut. There is also a subsidiary chase plot featuring a fast-food mogul (*frogs' legs!*) and his cohorts who complicate the gang's journey toward their American Dream. But that needn't trouble you for a moment, for none of those sleazy characters turn up on the recording. It's a glorious Muppets carnival all the way, with Frank Oz, Dave Goelz, and Henson providing most of the voices.

The score that Paul Williams and Kenny Ascher have devised has the same charmingly goofy inventiveness and sunny disposition as the Muppet odd squad itself. *Movin' Right Along*, for instance, is travelin' music for Fozzie and Kermit as they burn up the highway in Fozzie's uncle's vintage Studebaker, and it is as zappy as anything Crosby and Hope ever had to work with. Then there's Dr. Teeth and the Electric Mayhem's big, BIG production number, *Can You Picture That*, in which the estimable Dr. and his group go bananas as usual about very little, giving us, and having themselves, a wonderfully lunatic time. Plus the poignant charm of Gonzo singing his heart out and his few remaining feathers off in *I'm Going to Go Back There Someday*. And, finally, Miss Piggy's hymn to herself and her romantic destiny, *Never Before, Never Again*. Never mind that it's damned close to perfect as a piece of special material, that it is also quite a good love song, or that Frank Oz, as Miss Piggy, is able to bring to it a believability that makes you forget the arm (and possibly the heart) of steel that lies beneath the sentimentality, for you'll simply be laughing too hard to care. In this flight of pure comedic fancy, Miss Piggy makes her bid to become the Love Goddess of the Eighties. Go home, Bissett; get lost, Deneuve; try tap-dancing lessons, Antonelli—Miss Piggy has arrived!

BUT perhaps the finest achievement here, on all levels, is the Williams and Ascher song *The Rainbow Connection*. It starts out by asking *why* there are so many songs about rainbows, and then goes on to list the reasons: because they represent happiness, wishes and dreams, contentment and fulfillment, and—most of all—because they symbolize happy endings whatever the time, no matter how difficult that time may have been. That, to me, means hope, and hope can be, according to your point of view, either a blessing or a curse for mankind. I think you know where Kermit and I stand.

—Peter Reilly

THE MUPPET MOVIE (Paul Williams–Kenny Ascher). Original-soundtrack recording. Jim Henson, Frank Oz, Jerry Nelson, Richard Hunt, Dave Goelz, Steve Whitmire, and Kathryn Mullen (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. ATLANTIC SD 16001 \$7.98, © TP-16001 \$7.98, © CS-16001 \$7.98.

pect. Maybe there is more to come in Act II.

In between, there is some music: Zappa-esque instant classics like . . . well, you can read the list above. The title song, a retroactive garage-band national anthem, is Zappa's grungy answer to Disco, New Wave, and No Wave. *Joe's Garage* and an almost lyric *Lucille* (as close as Zappa ever gets to lyric) are the only songs on the album that aren't dirty. All the rest are leering, lascivious, lyrical-musical humor of the sort Zappa has been pushing for years. His zestful, zany, adolescent *Singspiel* and muddled madcap music may be amusing, but it hardly has the urgency his work used to have. Pop musicians with a lot of money and a lot of ego and a lot of talent can, like presidents and kings, get cut off from the rest of us. Frank needs to break out and move on.

—Eric Salzman



STEVE MARTIN: *Comedy Is Not Pretty*. Steve Martin (monologues, banjo). *Born to Be Wild; The All Being; McDonald's/Men's Underwear; Drop Thumb Medley; Googlephonics; Hostages; Cruel Shoes*; and five others. WARNER BROS./PALM TREE HS 3392 \$8.98, © W8 3392 \$8.98, © W5 3392 \$8.98.

Performance: **Hit and miss**
Recording: **Good**

The comic character Steve Martin has created is an urban clod who thinks he's sophisticated but keeps showing, through various gaffes, that he's not. Martin handles this schizophrenic role well, but its very nature makes the comedy of it hit and miss. On *Googlephonics* (a miss), for instance, he announces that he is going to perform a comic bit that will put him among the all-time greats. He then proceeds to tell a deliberately bungled story about stereo systems. The joke is supposed to be that the "great bit" isn't funny and that Martin can't even present it properly, but that's not very funny either.

Martin *can* be quite funny, though, in a haphazard way. He appears to be incapable of a sustained routine, but he has some lovely flashes—giddy plots with a series of punch lines that jab like a Golden Gloves boxing champ. The only completely satisfying routine on this album is the title story of his recent book, *Cruel Shoes*. It's berserkly beautiful, probably because Martin had time to think about it, write it down, and then figure out how to perform it. I was also impressed by *Drop Thumb Medley*, in which Martin shows himself to be a talented folk banjoist in the style of Pete Seeger, with a fine balance of percussion, attack, and attention to the melody. Steve Martin is a very interesting, if very uneven, fellow.

J.V.

(Continued on page 118)



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CIRCLE NO. 23 ON READER SERVICE CARD



PATTIE BROOKS: Party Girl. Pattie Brooks (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *My Heart Belongs to You; Workin' It Out; Got Tu Go Disco; Leap Tall Buildings;* and three others. CASABLANCA NBLP 7158 \$7.98, © NBL8 7158 \$7.98, © NBL5 7158 \$7.98.

Performance: **Solid group effort**
Recording: **Excellent**

Pattie Brooks is one of those singers intelligent enough to gather the best talent around her so as to maximize her assets and minimize her deficiencies. Her voice is limited. She can "soul" it, as she demonstrates in a totally hot number called *My Heart Belongs to You*, but her top notes are either thin or strained, depending on how hard she pushes, and her middle ones undistinguished.

But the music! "Party Girl" is full of good stuff, most of it written by members of the top disco group Instant Funk, who also provide back-up for our Ms. Brooks. It adds up

to a high-powered dance experience. *Cause I Love, Love, Love You* will probably knock you out, but you'll collapse happy. *Workin' It Out* (written by Marvin Hamlisch and Carole Bayer Sager) is a good contrast: a basic strut-your-stuff number that I pick to make the charts. There's yet another contrast in the juxtaposition of the freaky-funky *If You Are My Man* and the MOR appeal of the big, energetic title song from the recent Broadway fiasco *Got Tu Go Disco*.

Altogether, this is a nicely mixed selection of happy arrangements. Everything is done just right—no ground-breaking novelty but a secure grasp of disco style. "Professional" in the best sense of the word. **E.B.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CAMEO: Secret Omen. Cameo (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Energy; I Just Want to Be; Find My Way; New York;* and three others. CHOCOLATE CITY CCLP 2008 \$7.98, © 8-2008 \$7.98, © 5-2008 \$7.98.

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

I kept telling myself that I did *not* like this record. After all, it's just a whole lot of singing, stomping, and clapping going on to a disco cadence augmented by assorted Latin accents on percussion. Yet this insistent, weirdly captivating pulse managed to trigger an utterly uncontrolled response in some part of me that just wanted to leap and clap along with all this organized cacophony.

Once I decided to be completely honest

with myself, I realized what a wonderful record this is. Certainly, there is nothing convoluted or intellectual about it, but if the music makes you feel good, that can be enough. This group sounds like a bunch of people who got together, brought their instruments along, and just decided to have some fun. All I can say is that I'm glad they invited us to the party. **P.G.**

CHIC: Risqué. Chic (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Good Times; My Feet Keep Dancing; Can't Stand to Love You; My Forbidden Lover;* and three others. ATLANTIC SD 16003 \$8.98, © TP 16003 \$8.98, © CS 16003 \$8.98.

Performance: **Too chic**
Recording: **Lush**

This is my favorite Chic recording so far, but I still find their music less than easy to dance to. It's slow, first of all, and it tends to have unexpected rhythms that get in the way on the dance floor. Worse, the typical Chic song is weak on melody, putting romantically lush arrangements and hypnotic repetition where the *song* should be.

Good Times is the latest in the group's string of super hits, and it's the best thing Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards, who write and produce all of Chic's music, have done yet. As always, the tone is laid-back and elegant, but this time there's a touch of wit added to the cool, classy music. Lyrics such as "Don't be a drag, participate/Clams on the half shell and roller skates" are not to be

(Continued on page 120)



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CIRCLE NO. 1 ON READER SERVICE CARD



At a reception following her Carnegie Hall debut, Anne Murray receives the original art (by Jim Manos) for the June 1972 cover of STEREO REVIEW from Editor Anderson, Pop Editor Weiss, and Exec. Editor Livingstone.

Anne Murray

FIRST heard Anne Murray in the late summer of 1970 singing her "breakout" recording of *Snowbird*, noting in these pages at the time that "though there are many singers around who have made successful careers without them, really good voices are extremely rare, and Anne Murray has one—clear, clean, musical, beautifully focused, and unbelievably on pitch." She also had that singular advantage without which no singer can hope to move out of the crowd: a unique, immediately identifiable vocal signature.

Gratifyingly, none of that has changed. What has changed is pop music itself, which (disco aside) now seems to be ricocheting within a triangle bounded by folk, country, and rock. And who is the canny young woman occupying the catbird seat right in the middle of that triangle? Why, Anne Murray, that's who. I caught her long-overdue Carnegie Hall debut this past September 19 and was struck by the seamless, low-key professionalism of the whole program, which was, appropriately enough, a kind of review of her career from *Snowbird*, on through the "country" period, and to date. Included, of course, was Randy Goodrum's brilliant *You Needed Me*, which she described as her favorite song. On her new Capitol album "I'll Always Love You" she sings another Goodrum song, *Broken Hearted Me*, already released as a single.

sneezed at. My other favorite is *My Feet Keep Dancing*, yet another dreamy affair in the Chic mode, but brightened by an arrangement that builds almost subliminally until it takes on a dramatic edge I've never heard from them before. It's a welcome change for music that tends to be, well, too chic. E.B.

GIORGIO MORODER: *E = MC²*. Giorgio Moroder (instrumentals); vocal accompaniment. *Baby Blue/What a Night/If You*

Not bad, not bad, but I prefer John Stewart's *Daydream Believer* (those lovely low notes) or Jesse Winchester's *Wintery* [sic] *Feeling* (not wintry at all).

My most favorite Anne Murray, however, is the one who appeared in the 1971 duet album (Capitol SW 869) with Glen Campbell, their voices blending, as Noel Coppage put it, "like real butter and warm sorghum molasses." Highlight of that album for me was a one-on-one *quodlibet* of Jimmy Webb's *By the Time I Get to Phoenix* and Burt Bacharach's *I Say a Little Prayer for You*, a rare triumph of the pop-music art. Still hungry for more, I asked Miss Murray after the Carnegie concert if she wouldn't like to do another some time. "Yes," said she, "with Kenny Rogers." Your move, Rogers.

—William Anderson

ANNE MURRAY: *I'll Always Love You*. Anne Murray (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *You've Got Me to Hold On To; I'll Always Love You; Stranger at My Door; Good Old Song; Why Don't You Stick Around; Broken Hearted Me; Easy Love; Daydream Believer; Wintery Feeling; Lover's Knot*. CAPITOL SOO-12012 \$8.98, © 8XOO-12012 \$8.98, © 4XOO-1202 \$8.98.

Weren't Afraid; I Wanna Rock You; and two others. CASABLANCA ● NBLP 7169 \$7.98, © NBL8 7169 \$7.98, © NBL5 7169 \$7.98.

Performance: **Electronic upper**
Recording: **Digital disco**

Musically, this is no groundbreaker. Others have accomplished more—much more—with electronics than Giorgio Moroder has here. Kraftwerk has produced richer textures and

weightier music, the Munich Machine provided back-ups of surprising variety and inventiveness for their early disco albums, and Meco has played more involved electronic games with winning results. Nevertheless, "E = MC²" is a very happy new entry in the same category, and it has the added advantage of spectacular sound. The record is billed as "the first electronic live-to-digital album," and however peculiar that may sound as applied to the output from a whole warehouse full of electronic equipment ("25 computerized synthesizers, 4 computerized pianos, 3 micro-computers, drums and electronic percussion," plus vocals), the digital recording has captured an astonishing range of material with amazing fidelity.

If you like to dance, you'll get a lot of enjoyment out of this disc even if you never hear it on audio equipment that can do full justice to its sound. The unbroken medley on side one, for example, is a dancer's delight. Too few disco producers provide this kind of instant party, obvious though the idea seems. Yes, there is a sameness of tone and tempo in the three perky songs (at least until midway through *If You Weren't Afraid*), and yes, they don't hold up for mere listening; but they do build beautifully for dancing. The songs on side two are independent and, as songs, better. Both *I Wanna Rock You* and *In My Wildest Dreams* are substantial rock/disco/trippy production numbers. The whole album, in fact, is infused with a rare glee. Moroder and Co. clearly enjoyed putting it all together. Even the credits are fun: they're spoken in a computer voice on the last band, timed to an unbroken disco beat. E.B.

PINK LADY. Pink Lady (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Kiss in the Dark; Love Me Tonight; Dancing in the Halls of Love*; and seven others. ELEKTRA 6E-209 \$7.98, © ET8-209 \$7.98, © TC5-209 \$7.98.

Performance: **Routine**
Recording: **Very routine**

Just what you wanted for the holidays, I'm sure: Pink Lady—actually two gorgeous Japanese girls named Mie and Kei—in a disco album that sounds so much like every other disco album you've ever heard that you'll have to keep checking the label to be sure you haven't slipped some older record onto the turntable by mistake. The performer's nationality makes about as much difference here as a pair of eyeglasses on a radio announcer. Mie and Kei chant, hum, croon, squeal, and coo (apparently on direct cue from producer-engineer Michael Lloyd), and the headache that results from their efforts can't be distinguished in the least from any old Occidental headache you're likely to get any old day. Talk about second-generation rock! This is fifth- or sixth-generation disco. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MIGHTY POPE: *Sway*. Mighty Pope (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Sweet Blindness; Sway*; and three others. RFC/WARNER BROS. RFC 3310 \$7.98, © M8 3310 \$7.98, © M5 3310 \$7.98.

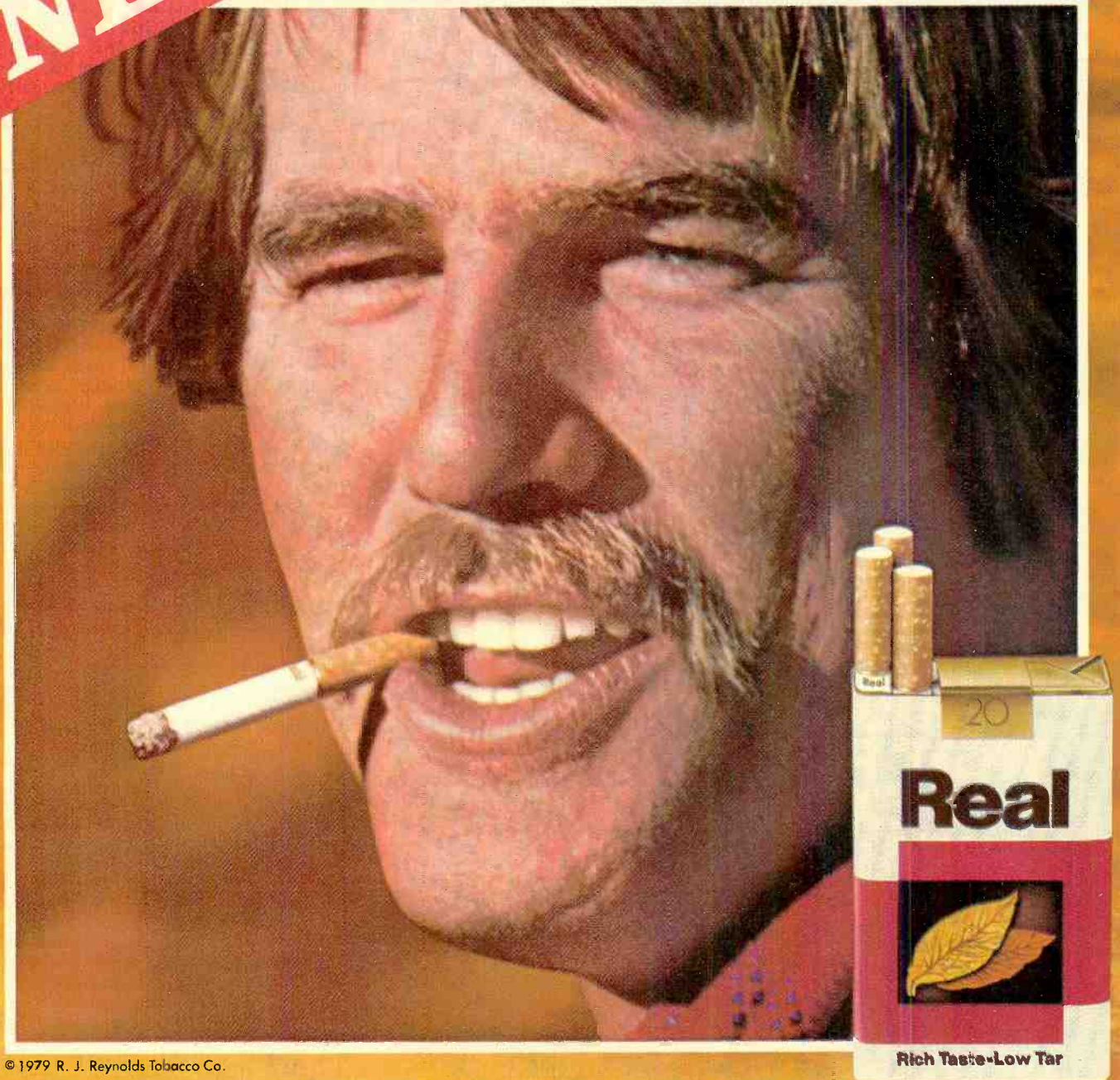
Performance: **A good new voice**
Recording: **Brilliant**

If you've been wondering what's happened to Gino Soccio since his successful "Outline" (Continued on page 122)

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CIRCLE NO. 73 ON READER SERVICE CARD

LP a few months back, wonder no more. He's been doing the arrangements for other artists' albums, including this one from Mighty Pope. The arrangements here share the elements that rocketed "Outline" to the top: an electronic disco sound, tight orchestrations that concentrate on the beat, trippy multiple tracks, and a sense of erotic urgency that makes you want to move. In fact, the album's opening cut, an update of Iron Butterfly's *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*, is cut from the same cloth as Soccio's own album. This is hypnotically trancy music that seems to *grow* rather than build. It's sexy and great for both heavy dancing and just listening.

What has been added to "Sway" that wasn't in "Outline" is a sense of delight in music making, and here the credit belongs to Mighty Pope himself. Electronics-flavored dance music rarely achieves the kind of joy that infuses the title song here. Mighty Pope's dark, husky voice handles *Sway* with a perfect blend of restraint and enthusiasm, making it the kind of song you dance to with a smile on your face. It's a wonderful disco number, fast and infectious. Pope's voice is heard to even better advantage in *New Orleans*, mostly because the engineering pushes it forward. After listening to this happy hand-clapper, there's no question that Pope has a mighty voice indeed, or that he can use it with tremendous musicality. Even the monotonous production on *Because the Night* (which is saved by some beautifully played and recorded percussion) can't obscure its quality. *E.B.*

TUXEDO JUNCTION: Take the "A" Train. Tuxedo Junction (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Toot Toot Tootsie Goodbye; That Old Black Magic; Take the "A" Train; You Gotta Be a Football Hero;* and three others. BUTTERFLY FLY-3105 \$7.98, © FLYT-3105 \$7.98, © FLYC-3105 \$7.98.

Performance: **Flip, fresh, and fun**
Recording: **Fine**

Cory Daye has shown us, in "Cory and Me" (see November's "Best of the Month"), that disco can utilize elements of old-time pop and jazz and still sound as up to date as the most elaborate electronic music. Now Tuxedo Junction shows us, with saucy good humor, that pop/jazz standards from as far back as the Twenties can sure as shootin' go disco and keep their timeless charm intact. "Take the 'A' Train" is a refreshing album, and the first three cuts, including the title track, are something more: they're fun and classy and good dance music all at once.

The album opens with a jitterdisco romp through *Toot Toot Tootsie Goodbye* and continues with a South Seas hustle through *That Old Black Magic*. But the high point is the group's version of Billy Strayhorn's classic *Take the "A" Train*. It's not simply a disco arrangement of this evergreen standard, but rather an uncanny translation of Forties big-band jazz into late-Seventies dance music. The arrangement incorporates the close harmony and massed brass of the original, but the tempo and phrasing are definitely geared to today's dancing.

Unfortunately, the rest of the album is much less successful. *You Gotta Be a Football Hero* succeeds only intermittently in being a convincing blend of the old and new styles, and Tuxedo Junction's *Begin the Be-*

(Continued on page 126)

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CIRCLE NO. 58 ON READER SERVICE CARD

STEREO REVIEW

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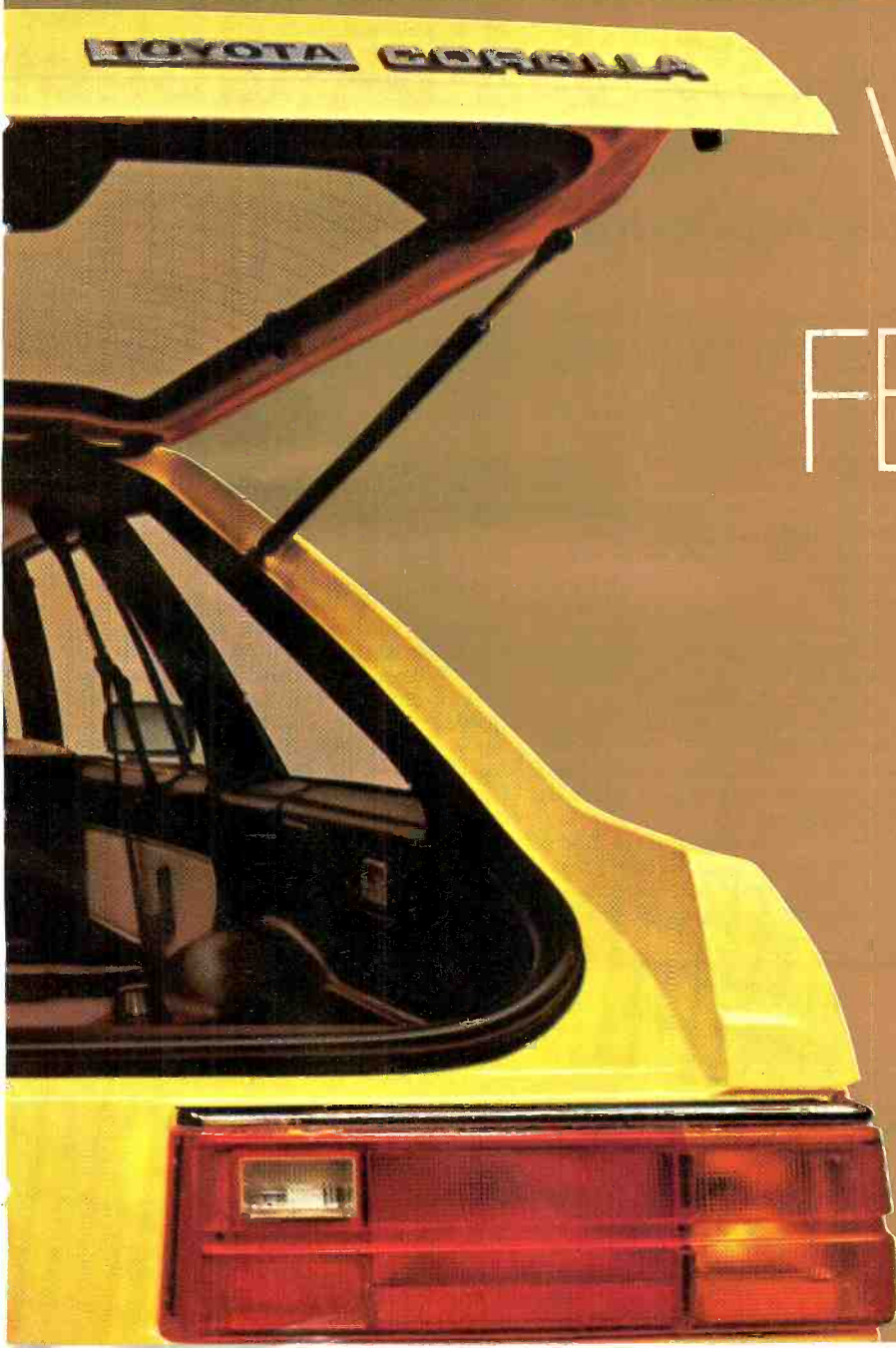
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Phil Daniels as Jimmy the Mod

Soundtrack: The Who's "Quadrophenia"

THE original version of "Quadrophenia" was, among other things, an attempt on Pete Townshend's part to rid the Who of the crippling stigma of forever being known as "the band that did 'Tommy,'" and in that it was only partly successful. Critics were, by and large, respectful, but the album sold only respectably for a Who product and audiences were slow to catch on—probably because the thing never worked, as "Tommy" did, as a stage piece. But time has seemingly caught up with its saga of alienated working-class kids, both on the visual level (post-punk fashion has turned out to be almost a carbon copy of the Mod look) and on the sociological one. We begin the Eighties in much the same muddle we began the Sixties (there's not much difference, after all, between "Ban the Bomb" and "No More Nukes"), and suddenly a meditation on an English youth cult that turned Rebellion Without a Cause into Style seems eerily contemporary.

The story, as some have pointed out, is superficially similar to *Saturday Night Fever* (aggression, music, dancing, escape), and certain critics (I have yet to see the film as of

this writing) have already suggested that it may have a similar cultural impact, a latter-day rocker's call to arms, as it were. It wouldn't surprise me: any kid who has stubbornly resisted peer pressure to turn himself into a Travolta clone might well find *Quadrophenia* something of a rallying cry, and musically, of course, there's no contest. In *Fever* the Bee Gees parlayed their pop sound on a seductive macho strut and won, but what the Who gives us here is that plus magnificent dynamics, sex, humor, and a real feeling of sympathy for the characters. This is rock-and-roll, after all, and the significant difference between rock and disco is that rock has heart *and doesn't lie*: Jimmy the Mod doesn't escape to Manhattan at the end of this one—rock knows that life's just not that simple. Travolta and his girl friend may have wound up in an idealized Disney fantasy land, but *Quadrophenia's* hero is left shattered and alone.

THE performances here have been remixed from the 1973 versions by John Entwistle. Mostly he's fiddled with equalizations on his bass tracks and pruned the formerly opulent arrangements for a somewhat sparser sound, presumably to add a little period flavor. Still, the differences are minimal and preference a matter of taste; both versions are splendid. There are three new songs, all very good (one of them, *Joker James*, if memory serves, has been in the can from some scrapped project since the Sixties—a testament to the consistency of Townshend's vision). I'd rate the original album, divorced from the film, as more impressive because it's more cohesive, but this soundtrack works as an album *and* as a vindication of Townshend's faith in the universality of his story and the music he concocted for it. If the film is anywhere near as good as the record suggests, *Quadrophenia* just may turn out to be the first great dramatic rock statement on celluloid. We wait and hope.

—Steve Simels

QUADROPHENIA (The Who). Original-soundtrack recording. The Who, the High Numbers, Cross Section, James Brown, the Kingsmen, Booker T. and the MG's, the Cascades, the Chiffons, the Ronettes, and the Crystals (vocals and instrumentals). *I Am the Sea; The Real Me; I'm One; 5:15; Love Reign o'er Me; Bell Boy; I've Had Enough; Helpless Dancer; Doctor Jimmy; Zoot Suit; Hi Heel Sneakers; Get Out and Stay Out; Four Faces; Joker James; The Punk and the Godfather; Night Train; Louie Louie; Green Onions; Rhythm of the Rain; He's So Fine; Be My Baby; Da Doo Ron Ron.* POLYDOR PD-2-6235 two discs \$13.98, © 8T-2-6235 \$13.98, © CT-2-6235 \$13.98.

guine fails utterly to bring anything fresh to the original. Finally, their overly straight reading of *Stardust* deteriorates into cloying sweetness. But they deserve a lot of credit for the stuff that does work. More! E.B.

ULLANDA: Love Zone. Ullanda McCullough (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Stars; Gotta Dance Now;*

Time for You and Me; and three others. OCEAN/ARIOLA OR 49900 \$7.98, © 8XW 49900 \$7.98, © 4XW 49900 \$7.98.

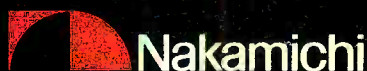
Performance: **Real dancin' stuff**
Recording: **Wonderful**

There is not one device in the more than ten minutes of *Stars*, the opener here, that you
(Continued on page 130)

For those who appreciate simple virtuosity

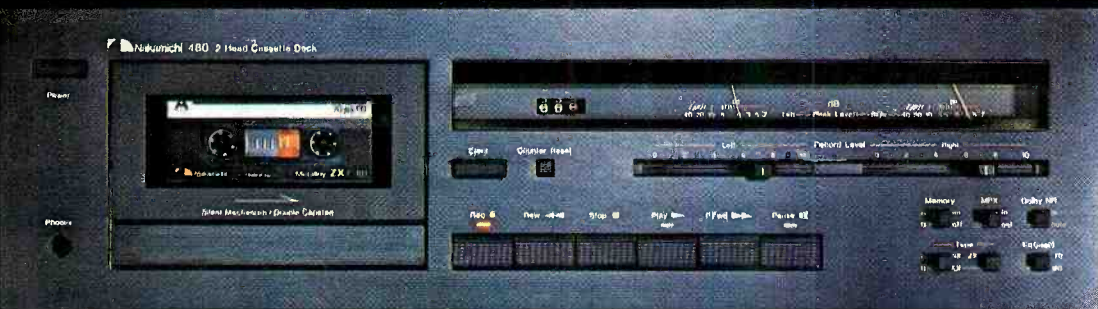
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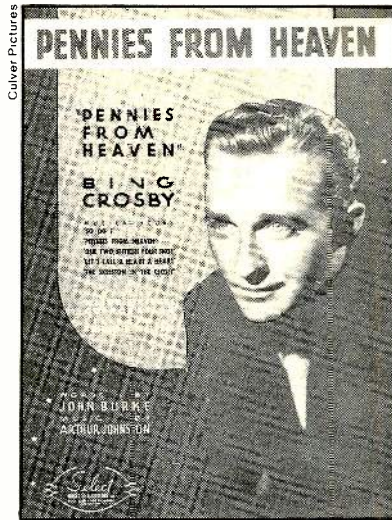


“... music for an endless art-deco tea dance . . .

SOME months back I managed to get myself hooked by a series on public television. It was called *Pennies from Heaven*, and when I tried to tell friends about it they wouldn't listen because they thought I was talking about the old Bing Crosby movie they had seen as children. But this *Pennies from Heaven*, a huge success in England on the BBC in the spring of 1978, is a six-part play by Dennis Potter set during the Great Depression and filled with authentic music of the period. The hero is a seedy-looking chap named Arthur who goes around England peddling song sheets. Arthur is a dreamer who just can't understand why reality is so much at variance with the lyrics of the songs he has so much trouble selling. He has a miserable marriage with a prudish wife, and when he falls in love with a rural schoolteacher he meets on his travels it ends up with her having to go to work as a whore in London.

The things that happen to Arthur, his frigid wife Joan, and his schoolteacher sweetheart grow increasingly dismal, but every so often the action stops in its tracks so the protagonists can launch into a song-and-dance routine mimed to one of more than sixty old dance-band tunes. Among those songs—some standards still popular today, others flipside flops I thought that I alone remembered—were many that I loved and bought records of in my own adolescence, and after the series ended I longed, as maybe you did too, to hear them again. That longing can now be fulfilled, for two British record companies have between them reissued just about every song played in the course of the six episodes of *Pennies from Heaven*.

A two-disc Decca set offers twenty-nine of the recordings used in the television series. Arthur Tracy (the “Street Singer” of my childhood radio memories) sings the title song; Greta Keller, one of the greatest of this century's cabaret singers, can bring tears to the driest eyes with *Blue Moon*; Al Bowly, a crooner who once threatened Bing Crosby's supremacy on the latter's own turf when he toured America with Ray Noble and His Orchestra, sings, among other things, that gloomiest of gloomy ballads, *Riptide*. Connie Boswell sighs *In the Middle of a Kiss*, and Phyllis Robbins murmurs *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes* just as she did when it was a new hit back in 1934. Ambrose and His Orchestra accompany several of the songs, and it's a group whose blandness makes Guy Lombardo's band sound like late Schoenberg. In those days, blandness—smoothness, the daydream of a Lotus Land with pink clouds and white violins—was the pop-music ideal, and British orchestras and singers were especially adept at making everything sound like the



The Other “Pennies from Heaven”

music for an endless art-deco tea dance aboard a luxury liner bound for nowhere.

If the Decca set is not enough to satiate your appetite for these musical finger sandwiches, two more albums of them are available on EMI's World Records label “Pennies from Heaven” and “More Pennies from Heaven.” These also offer recordings used in the BBC series; only four titles are the same as on the Decca set, and the thirty-four numbers are performed by Al Bowly, Ray Noble and His Orchestra, the BBC Dance Orchestra, Lew Stone and His Band, and all the rest in precisely the same style. Where else could one find *Pop! Goes Your Heart* or *Down Sunnyside Lane* these days—complete with descriptions of just what is happening in the TV play at the moment each song is played? Finally, for those who simply cannot get enough of this repertoire, there's a third World Records album, “Roll Along Prairie Moon,” with twenty more recordings from the same period not used in the TV series but utterly compatible with its spirit (there is considerable title duplication between this album and the Decca set, but the performances are different in personnel if not in style). The beautifully cleaned-up mono sound on all these discs makes the exercise in nostalgia they encourage all but painless.

—Paul Kresh

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN. Recordings used in the BBC television series. Various vocalists and orchestras. *Pennies from Heaven; Blue Moon; Smoke Gets in Your Eyes; You've Got Me Crying Again; Without That Certain Thing; Isn't It Heavenly; You Couldn't Be Cuter; That's a Plenty; Just Let Me Look at You; Love Is the Sweetest Thing;*

. . . aboard a luxury liner bound for nowhere.”

Garden of Weed; Roll Along Prairie Moon; I Love You Truly; Easy Come, Easy Go; So Do I; Riptide; Fancy Our Meeting; The Echo of a Song; Serenade in the Night; My Woman; On the Other Side of the Hill; Painting the Clouds with Sunshine; In the Middle of a Kiss (two versions); Pick Yourself Up; Says My Heart; In the Dark; The Glory of Love; Medley—Roll Along Prairie Moon/Pennies from Heaven. BRITISH DECCA Ⓜ DDV 5007/8 two discs \$14.96, © KDVC2 8106 \$14.96 (from DRG Records, Inc., 200 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019).

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN. Recordings used in the BBC television series. Various vocalists and orchestras. *Roll Along Prairie Moon; Seein' Is Believin'; Dreaming a Dream; You and the Night and the Music; Nasty Man; Radio Times; I Only Have Eyes for You; It's Got to Be Love; Painting the Clouds with Sunshine; I Found the Right Girl; Hands Across the Table; The Moon Got in My Eyes; March Winds and April Showers; Haunting Me; Roll Along Covered Wagon; Pennies from Heaven.* EMI WORLD RECORDS Ⓜ SH 266 \$7.98 (from DRG Records, Inc., 200 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019).

MORE PENNIES FROM HEAVEN. Recordings used in the BBC television series. Various vocalists and orchestras. *Down Sunnyside Lane; The Clouds Will Soon Roll By; Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart; You Rascal, You; Cheek to Cheek; Yes, Yes (My Baby Said 'Yes'); Love Is Good for Anything That Ails You; Life Begins at Oxford Circus; We'll Make Hay While the Sun Shines; Better Think Twice; Indian Love Call; Pop! Goes Your Heart; How's Chances; Okay, Toots; Anything Goes; Whistling in the Dark; I Like to Go Back in the Evening; Says My Heart.* EMI WORLD RECORDS Ⓜ SH 276 \$7.98 (from DRG Records, Inc., 200 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019).

ROLL ALONG PRAIRIE MOON. Various British dance bands and vocalists. *The Echo of a Song; Love Is the Sweetest Thing; You've Got Me Crying Again; Isn't It Heavenly?; Without That Certain Thing; Garden of Weed, Bit; I Love You Truly; Easy Come, Easy Go; Smoke Gets in Your Eyes; Blue Moon; On the Other Side of the Hill; Roll Along Prairie Moon; The Glory of Love; Serenade in the Night; Pick Yourself Up; So Do I; Pennies from Heaven; You Couldn't Be Cuter; Just Let Me Look at You.* EMI WORLD RECORDS Ⓜ SH 304 \$7.98 (from DRG Records, Inc., 200 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019).

haven't heard before. But if you're looking for a dance experience, it still works.

The whole album is like that—good dancin' stuff. *Gotta Dance Now* is disappointingly brief, but it's fast and wonderful. The strings alone in *Want Ads* will lift you right onto your feet. And *Time for You and Me* is catchy and contagiously happy. To top it all, Ullanda can sing. The title song is an Ashford and Simpson creation (not one of their best) that showcases her two-tiered voice: a strong chest voice that seamlessly *leaps* way, way up there into a totally controlled soprano register that carries right through even a heavy arrangement. Ullanda's is an electric voice, and "Love Zone" is a simply electrifying debut album.

E.B.

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- **DON ARMANDO'S SECOND AVE.** BAND: *Deputy of Love*. ARISTA ZEA-12-0003 disco disc \$3.98.
- **IAN DURY & THE BLOCKHEADS:** *Reasons to Be Cheerful, Pt. III*. STIFF/EPIC XSS 166692 disco disc \$3.98.
- **DONNA SUMMER/BARBRA STREISAND:** *No More Tears (Enough Is Enough)*. CASABLANCA NBD 20199 disco disc \$3.98.
- **SUGARHILL GANG:** *Rappers' Delight*. SUGARHILL/PLATINUM SH 542 disco disc \$3.98.

(List compiled by John Harrison.)

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FOLK



BREAD & ROSES (see Best of the Month, page 91)

POPE JOHN PAUL II: *Sings at the Festival of Sacrosong.* *Fanfare for the Pope; The Raftsmen; The Moment of the Entire Life; Oh, God, I Place My Trust in You; Queen, Black Madonna; Huzelen Song; Peter's Song; The Our Father;* and six others. Pope John Paul II with a student chorus and the Krakow Symphony Orchestra. INFINITY 9899 \$9.98, ©INFT-9899 \$10.98, ©INFC-9899 \$10.98. (Also available as "*Lieder des Papstes*" on Crystal 056 CRY 45 725 from the German News Co., Inc., 218 East 86th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028, for \$9.98 postpaid.)

Performance: **Documentary**

Recording: **Live, outside**

Poland's Sacrosong Festival (this year's was the eleventh) was founded by (then) Cardinal-Archbishop Wojtyla and dedicated to "the enrichment of Polish culture and confirmation of religious ideals": little wonder that it does not appear in the official government register of Polish cultural activities. Little wonder too that it coincided this year with Pope John Paul II's June visit to his homeland, or that some three million Poles gathered to see and hear the Pontiff participate in the festival program. This documentary record therefore has less significance as a musical event than as a religious—even political—one. And it serves also, of course, owing to the exquisite timing (let's hear it for the Pope's PR man) as a souvenir of the papal visit to the United States in October.

The program is made up of a mixture of folk and contemporary songs, all but a couple of them sacred. The Pope does a solo, naturally, on the Blessing following the Lord's Prayer, and he can be heard on many of the others, alternately up front and receding, singing in the firm, resonant (if slightly off-key) voice of a still-vigorous oldster. No fewer than six of the fourteen numbers are devoted to the cult of Mary, the real engine (politics and diplomacy quite aside) of the Polish church's successful resistance to the continuing threat of Communist repression. One of them is the Pope's own *The Moment of the Entire Life*, a reflection on the Immaculate Conception as a source of spiritual inspiration (Luke 1:30-33). It would perhaps have been wise to substitute some of this Marian inspiration for the reactionary "back to the habit" remarks addressed to female religious during the American tour.

Souvenir collectors should know that the Infinity issue (it includes English texts) is attractively packaged in a heavy paper stock embossed to look like the white silk moiré of the Pope's soutane (let's hear it for the art director).

—William Anderson

JAZZ



HAMIET BLUIETT: *S O S*. Hamiet Bluiett (baritone saxophone); Don Pullen (piano); Fred Hopkins (bass); Famoudou Don Moye (percussion). *Sobre Una Nube/Na Likolo/On a Cloud*. INDIA NAVIGATION IN 1039 \$8.98 (from India Navigation Company, 60 Hudson Street, New York, N.Y. 10013).

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

Never heard of Hamiet Bluiett? That's not surprising, for even with four or so albums under his belt this man with the strange-sounding name remains relatively unknown even in jazz circles. I know more about Bluiett's music than I do about the man himself, and I can't give you so much as a thumbnail biography, but I *can* recommend that you listen to his music if you like acoustical semi-avant-garde jazz with roots—a kind of lightly harnessed Art Ensemble of Chicago.

"S O S" offers one long composition by Bluiett recorded at a 1977 concert in lower Manhattan. The quartet is an excellent one, and each member is given his turn up front. Pianist Don Pullen (the best-known member of this group) and bassist Fred Hopkins are most effective, but it is a shame that the latter's solo occurs during the switch from side one to side two. Don Moye, an alumnus of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, falls nicely into place here, and leader Bluiett proves that he is a baritone saxophonist worthy of the instrument (even though he can make some very unmusical sounds with his mouthpiece).

The India Navigation Company is a small, dedicated jazz label that deserves our support for bringing us such music as Bluiett's. But selling this album is not going to be easy no matter how good the music is, and the dreadful cover is going to make it even harder. And while we're on the subject of repackaging, how about some informative notes? C.A.

GARY BURTON/CHICK COREA: *Duet* (see Best of the Month, page 91)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RICHIE COLE: *Keeper of the Flame*. Richie Cole (alto saxophone); Harold Mabern (piano); Vic Juris (guitar); Rick Laird (bass); Eddie Gladden (drums); Eddie Jefferson (vocals). *As Time Goes By; Strange Groove; New York Afternoon; I Can't Get Started*; and three others. MUSE MR 5192 \$6.98.

Performance: **Richly rewarding**
Recording: **Very good**

Richie Cole is one of the many fine jazz players who work steadily and create extraordinary music, yet somehow never seem to be singled out for recognition beyond the inner circles of jazz. Now thirty, Cole grew up in Trenton, New Jersey, staying up nights to lis-

ten to a Philadelphia jazz station (WHAT-FM, which, incidentally, featured one Chris Albertson as its morning DJ) and, beginning in 1958, working arduously to put into practice on an alto saxophone some of what he learned from listening. He was thirteen when he formed his first group, the Jazz Casuals, and fifteen when he began taking formal lessons from Phil Woods. Cole rounded out the Sixties as a member of the Buddy Rich Band, and as the Seventies went into the last lap he could be heard far and wide with singer Eddie Jefferson, a superb match of talents that is displayed on a couple of tracks in this album. The association was abruptly cut short six months after this session by the fatal shooting of Jefferson in Detroit. *Harold's*

House of Jazz, which opens side two of this set, is particularly interesting because Jefferson's verbal gymnastics cross over into the realm of the loft generation. His frequent appearances at New York loft sessions indicated that he had found a new audience, and his performance here shows that he had also found a new sound.

Cole's crisp, decisive alto strikes notes of particular beauty on *I Can't Get Started*, swings to kingdom come on *As Time Goes By*, and steps into the present with both feet on *Strange Groove*, which has an ending that would have pleased Jelly Roll Morton. The rest of the quintet performs admirably throughout, with pianist Harold Mabern—
(Continued on page 134)



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Bix Rhythm Jugglers recording at Gennett's Indiana studios in 1925: Don Murray, Howdy Quicksell, Tom Garland, Paul Mertz, Bix, and Tommy Dorsey.

Jazz Giant Bix Beiderbecke

LEON "BIX" BEIDERBECKE (1903-1931) was the greatest white jazz musician of the Twenties, one of the greatest of all jazz cornetists, a seminal figure in the development of jazz, and an honest-to-God legend, both in his own time and after it. Any survey of jazz would have to deal with Beiderbecke on about the level that any survey of classical music would have to deal with Schubert, and so to find a volume devoted to him in Time-Life's "Giants of Jazz" series is no surprise. But Bix has, within recent years, been the subject of considerable detailed study, and so the Time-Life album—which includes a fifty-two-page booklet of annotations by Curtis Prendergast (on the life) and Richard M. Sudhalter (on the music)—finds itself in the tricky position of talking both to experts and to neophytes, to amateur and professional scholars of jazz and to the people whose purchase of the set makes the whole operation commercially feasible—that is, those who are interested but know next to nothing about Beiderbecke. I find it both striking and remarkable that this production manages to do exactly that and do it exceedingly well.

The booklet is neatly written and up to the minute in its scholarship. It is authoritative enough in its details to satisfy those to whom this is a twice-told tale, but for those to whom the Twenties are as the fifteenth century the story is still clear and comprehensible.

The temptation of the expert, in selecting the recordings for a set like this, is to include all the rare and obscure items, the "historically important" sides, the recent discoveries, the alternative takes, and pass over, not perhaps the most outstanding records, but the high-grade, middle-ground material upon which the artist's reputation really rests.

That, I am happy to say, was not done here. There *are* rarities (sides by the Chicago Loopers and the Broadway Bellhops), but there are only two selections by the Wolverines (Bix's first orchestra and, on the recorded evidence, not a very good one) and two by the Jean Goldkette Orchestra, a sometime-swinging band that, with few exceptions, recorded nothing but sweet 'n' low. Those selections are exactly the right ones, though Bix, typically, gets little solo space.

Listeners coming to Beiderbecke's music for the first time should be aware that, in general, they will be listening for snatches and fragments. Frankly, none of the bands Bix played with were all that good; the records are classics because of him. Though Bix was famed for harmonic sophistication far in advance of his time and for a fecundity of inspired melodic improvisation altogether extraordinary for *any* time, it is his rhythmic feeling that first sets him off from his musical surroundings. Certainly, he is the *only* musician on these records who is consistently free of the incredibly dated-sounding expression of jazz rhythm common to most white musicians (and some black musicians) in the Twenties. Were it possible to lift Bix's playing from the matrix of the band sound and superimpose it upon jazz sounds of later days, there would be no conflict. Bix's rhythmic perception was of the timeless sort that employs an infinite number of degrees of syncopation rather than being limited by the small selections of them that ultimately become the clichés of the time.

It is also wise to remind oneself when hearing Bix that he is *improvising*, and that these records are, really, only a random

sampling of what he played and not at all a calculated "best of." He apparently never played anything the same way twice (and couldn't even when he was asked to do so), and so one infers the extent of his gift from the sample given rather than being able to pin it down purely on the basis of what one hears. Not all jazz musicians improvise, of course, and many who do only occasionally give us anything to remember. But almost every note that Bix so casually committed to records is somehow strangely memorable.

A part of the reason for this is a characteristic Beiderbecke shared with some other great jazzmen: the tendency to simplify rather than embroider. He seems to play so few notes, and yet he consistently convinces the listener that it was precisely the *right* number of notes, at the right pitches, and in the right rhythmic relationship for the occasion. In other words, he always seemed to play the *best* notes, and, since they were different every time, the inevitability that seemed inherent in them was a direct result of his having played them. "Lots of cats tried to play like Bix," Prendergast quotes Louis Armstrong as saying. "Ain't none of them play like him yet." You see why.

I would hope that anyone introducing himself to Bix's music through this album would begin his listening with something like *At the Jazz Band Ball* (side three, band five) or *Jazz Me Blues* (side three, band seven) rather than with the early, "historical" material. The second of those selections, particularly, with its utterly simple and totally arresting eight-note break in mid-chorus, is almost a guide as to what to listen for elsewhere: the *best* notes. A little later on, one

can appreciate the difference between Frankie Trumbauer's intelligent, musicianly, and even avant-garde sax solos on *I'm Comin' Virginia* and *Singin' the Blues* and the pure and timeless magic of Bix's solos that follow them. Then it may be time for listening through the ensembles for the directing force of the cornet, for exploring Bix as pianist and composer, and for grabbing the bits of genius that are scattered everywhere throughout these records.

I don't want to seem to be putting down the musical surroundings too strongly. Many good musicians played with Bix, and their contributions, though uneven, are real enough in places. But there is a difference between good musicians and great artists. We can hear that now.

SADLY, it seems that being a great artist is very hard on life. Some great, original talents can cope and live long and fruitful and possibly happy lives. Others find it necessary to sacrifice other people in order to flourish or even survive. And still others take it out on themselves. Beiderbecke burned himself out



Duncan P. Scheidt Collection

(with alcohol) at the age of twenty-eight. His recording career had lasted all of about six and a half years. How lucky for us that we can hear it here! —James Goodfriend

GIANTS OF JAZZ: Bix Beiderbecke. Bix Beiderbecke (cornet and piano) with the Wolverine Orchestra, Jean Goldkette and His Orchestra, Frankie Trumbauer and His Orchestra, Bix Beiderbecke and His Gang, Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra, and others. *Copenhagen; Big Boy; My Pretty Girl; Clementine; Clarinet Marmalade; Singin' the Blues; Riverboat Shuffle; I'm Comin' Virginia; For No Reason at All in C; Blue River; In a Mist; Royal Garden Blues; Jazz Me Blues; Sorry; Changes; Lonely Melody; From Monday On; Sugar; Tain't So, Honey, Tain't So; Louisiana; China Boy*; and nineteen others. TIME-LIFE STOL-4 three discs \$19.95, © STOL-4 \$21.95, © STOL-4 \$21.95 (plus \$1.25 shipping and handling charge from Time-Life Records, Time & Life Building, Chicago, Ill. 60611).



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another relatively unsung talent—a particular delight. More Cole, please. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HELEN HUMES: *Sneakin' Around*. Helen Humes (vocals); Gerard Badini (tenor saxophone); Gerald Wiggins (piano); Major Holley (bass); Ed Thigpen (drums). *St. Louis Blues; Sometimes I'm Happy; Tribute to Jimmy Rushing; Exactly Like You*; and four others. CLASSIC JAZZ 110 \$7.98.

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

Helen Humes had just reached her teens in 1927 when she made her recording debut on

the Okeh label in St. Louis. Seven months later, in New York, she brought her total of Okeh sides up to twelve, but only in the late Thirties did she begin to gain widespread recognition; that's when she joined the stomping, swinging, and fast-blossoming Count Basie Band. Ms. Humes made numerous recordings with Basie, proving not only that she could shout the blues with the best of them (Jimmy Rushing, to be specific) but also that her vocal talent was in no way limited to the blues. However, it was not until 1945—some four years after she had left Basie—that Helen Humes scored her first measurable hit with a novelty double-entendre bebop jump number called *Bebaba-Leba*; it was definitely a case of the

artist rising above her material, and rise she did to better bookings, accompanying musicians, and labels. But in 1967, when her mother died, she gave it all up, moved back home to Louisville, Kentucky, and took a job in a local munitions factory.

Helen Humes would probably still be making gunpowder if critic Stanley Dance had not persuaded her to take part in a Carnegie Hall Basie reunion concert which was a part of the 1973 Newport in New York Jazz Festival. Of course, the crowd cheered, the promoters purred, and the gunpowder business lost a worker. This album was recorded in Paris in March of the following year, and so far it is Ms. Humes' best recorded effort since her return; I rate it high above the Columbia set ("The Talk of the Town," PC 33488), which had good musicians—George Benson, Buddy Tate, etc.—sounding awkward, and it is silk to polyester compared with "The Incomparable Helen Humes" (Jazzology J-55), a dreadful amateur production on which the veteran vocalist battles a spirited but incompetent septet.

I am not saying that "Sneakin' Around" is a perfect album, but it is one of which Ms. Humes and any owner can be proud (the cover's disgusting, but you can just turn that toward the wall). Except for tenor saxophonist Gerard Badini, who is French, the accompanying group consists of an American rhythm section headed by pianist Gerald Wiggins; it is a perfect quartet for the clear-voiced, versatile singer whose highly personal style does not require instrumental frills. The album's highlight is a nine-minute *Tribute to Jimmy Rushing*, a Humes blues concoction in which she lovingly applies some favorite Rushing lines. I recommend this album to anyone who values the fine and possibly dying art of jazz singing. Helen Humes is often overlooked when Holiday, Vaughan, and Fitzgerald are the names being banded about, but she belongs in there. C.A.

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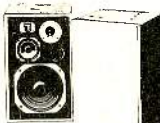
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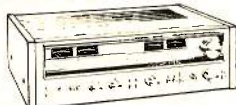
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RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ETTA JONES: *If You Could See Me Now*. Etta Jones (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *What a Little Moonlight Can Do; Ghost of a Chance; I Saw Stars; If You Could See Me Now*; and four others. MUSE MR 5175 \$6.98.

Performance: **Bluesy and basic**
Recording: **Very good**

Etta Jones has been a blues singer's blues singer ever since she came up from Aiken, South Carolina, to make her debut at the famous Apollo Theatre in Harlem back in 1945. She has worked with the greats of the jazz world through the years, from Hot Lips Page to Leonard Feather, Earl "Fatha" Hines, and J. C. Heard. Yet her name has never become a household word like that of Billie Holiday, who was her "greatest inspiration," or those of Ella Fitzgerald and Dinah Washington, with both of whom she has been compared. -

Etta Jones sings with a wholesome fervor that is quite contagious, unabashedly making the romantic most of such bluesy old commercial standards as *What a Little Moonlight Can Do, Ghost of a Chance, and I'm in the Mood for Love*. "I like wholesome, beautiful, romantic lyrics," she says, and this attitude comes through in her treatment of the words in a song, which are never just sounds



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to her. As for the music, she bends the notes to her will the way Billie did, and she's no respecter of tunes, taking them, leaving them alone, inventing her own variations on them as she sees fit. If Jones has any drawbacks at all, it is her tendency to drag things out at times and to let herself drown in a sea of slush rather than swim out of it (as in the sentimental, second-rate *The Way We Were*). She atones for this with her upbeat treatments of such numbers as *I Saw Stars* and *Ain't Misbehavin'*, though, and all in all deserves more fame than she has achieved. On this record, she gets marvelous assistance from tenor saxophonist Houston Person, who is nothing less than sensational as her chief accompanist (and producer), and from the other instrumentalists who help make the experience of hearing this persuasive woman a memorable one. *P.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SAM RIVERS: *Waves*. Sam Rivers (flute, soprano and tenor saxophones, piano); Joe Daley (baritone horn, tuba); Dave Holland (bass, cello); Thurman Baker (drums, percussion). *Shockwave; Torch; Pulse*; and two others. TOMATO TOM-8002 \$7.98.

Performance: **Grade A**
Recording: **Excellent**

"Waves" is a remarkable album by Sam Rivers, a player who has more creativity than many of his better-known colleagues and knows exactly what to do with it. What he does with it here is as stunning as it is multifaceted, the album being almost an extension of the two sets of duets with bassist Dave Holland that were recorded in 1976 and released on Paul Bley's Improvising Artists label ("Dave Holland/Sam Rivers," 37.38.43, and "Sam Rivers/Dave Holland Volume 2," 37.38.48). This time Rivers has assembled a quartet with Holland, horn player Joe Daley, and drummer Thurman Baker, River's most recent recruit, whose past affiliations include Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians. What I hear on "Waves" makes me hope that this quartet can survive as a unit for as long as Rivers wants it to and that more recordings are forthcoming. Here are surging, intricate statements, gut-grabbing beauty, and the kind of musical solidarity most leaders can only dream of. Rivers uses different strokes to paint each composition, but all are the strokes of a master. Which track I would pick as my favorite would depend entirely on my mood at the time of selection, for the album invokes many moods and is compatible with even more. I suggest you pick this Tomato. *C.A.*

SONNY ROLLINS: *Don't Ask*. Sonny Rollins (tenor saxophone, piano, lyricist); Larry Coryell (guitar); other musicians. *Harlem Boys; The File; Disco Monk; My Ideal*; and three others. MILESTONE M-9090 \$7.98.

Performance: **Don't ask**
Recording: **Good**

Don't ask why an artist of Sonny Rollins' stature and talent can't go into a studio and make a consistently good album. Don't ask why Sonny Rollins stooped to write and record such trite, boring fare as *Disco Monk*. Don't ask why anyone would veil Rollins' wonderful tenor tone with a reverb effect and rob it of any presence. Don't ask why anyone

should have to sit through substandard Rollins material to hear two acceptable duets between Rollins and Larry Coryell (on acoustic six- and twelve-string guitars). Don't ask why a pedestrian pianist by the name of Mark Soskin is even considered for a Rollins date. Don't ask for this album at any store under any circumstances. *C.A.*

BUDDY TATE/BOB WILBER: *Sherman Shuffle*. Buddy Tate (clarinet, tenor and baritone saxophones); Bob Wilber (clarinet, soprano and alto saxophones); Sam Jones (bass); Leroy Williams (drums). *Have You Met Miss Jones?; Medley—Lover Man/Body and Soul/Warm Valley; Potentate; Curtains of the Night; Back in Your Own Back Yard*;

and three others. SACKVILLE 3017 \$7.98 (from Coda Publications, Box 87, Station J, Toronto, Ontario M4J 4X8, Canada).

Performance: **Informal to a fault**
Recording: **Good**

Both Buddy Tate and Bob Wilber rank high on my list of favorite living reed players, but the muse had the day off when they got together for this session last January. I am not implying that this is a bad album, but considering the musicians involved—and that includes bassist Sam Jones and drummer Leroy Williams—"Sherman Shuffle" should have been hot enough to melt the very vinyl it's pressed on. Unfortunately, it is only lukewarm, and so are my feelings about it. *C.A.*

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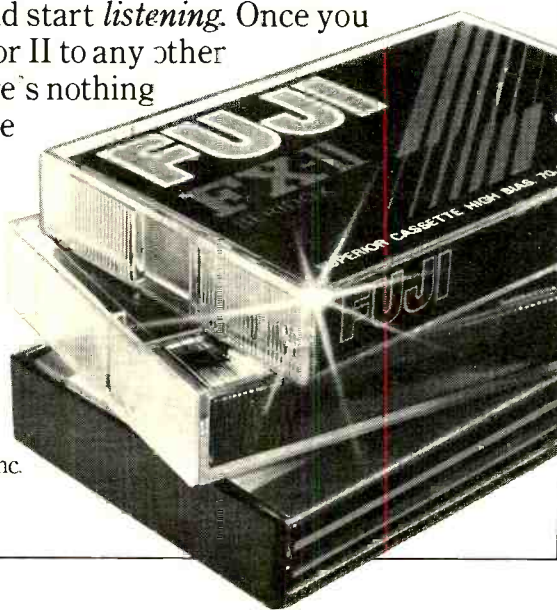
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CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • PAUL KRESH
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J. S. BACH: *Christmas Oratorio (BWV 248)*. Hubertus Baumann, Frank Sahesch-Pur (boy sopranos); Michael Hoffmann (boy alto); Heiner Hopfner (tenor); Nikolaus Hillebrand (bass); Regensburger Domspatzen; Collegium St. Emmeram, Hanns-Martin Schneidt cond. ARCHIV 2710 024 three discs \$29.94, ©2276 012 \$29.94.

Performance. **Spotty**
Recording **Excellent**

There are many good things about this performance as well as, alas, many bad things. The problems are apparent at the very beginning. The sound of the period instruments is thrilling as the kettle drums thud, the oboes squall, the recorders twitter, and the violins scurry like mad. Then the chorus barks its message of joy. The sound is there, the enthusiasm is there, but the effect is scruffy. And so it goes for the rest of the performance: wonderful sound and enthusiasm, technical blunders and stiff phrasing.

In an effort to keep the chorales moving, the tempos are often too fast and the phrases clipped. The recitatives lack rhythmic flexibility and, despite some fine nuances, are too measured. Ritards are banished, and many movements simply stop rather than coming to a cadence. All too often conductor Hanns-Martin Schneidt sets a rigid tempo that stifles a singer's vocal instincts. A case in point is the bass aria "*Grosse Herr und*

starker König." The vocal line is fierce with leaps and coloratura, but Nikolaus Hillebrand is never allowed to turn a phrase, prepare a leap, or linger on a high note. And despite this rigidity, the syncopations are flabby and ensemble problems abound. Hillebrand's voice is splendid, the trumpet hits all the notes, but nobody sounds happy.

Exceptions to this overall halfheartedness are the strong interpretations of tenor Heiner Hopfner. Although he is a bit rigid in the narrations, his aria singing is exquisite. In "*Frohe Hirten, eilet, ach eilet*," each phrase is beautifully molded and the ensemble of voice and flute is perfect; his final ritard and the takeover for the final ritornelle by the flute are masterly.

The most objectionable aspect of this album is the solo singing of the boy sopranos and alto. (Frankly, I don't care whether Bach actually used boys as soloists or not.) Their voices here are too weak, often wobbly, old-sounding (!), and out of tune. Nor are their musical instincts sufficiently mature to express Bach's profundity. Of the thirteen arias and ensemble numbers, eight involve boy soloists and are accordingly sabotaged. I find it ridiculous to have a bass croon his part of a duet at half voice in the hope that his boy partner can be heard. Why not use women singers and let us enjoy the music rather than make us suffer like this in the name of "authentic performance practice"? Basically, I find this release more frustrating than rewarding. S.L.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

J. S. BACH: *Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin (BWV 1001-1006)*. Oscar Shumsky (violin). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4032/3/4 three discs \$15.60 (plus \$1.25 for postage and handling from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

Performance **First-rate**
Recording **Very good**

The solo sonatas and partitas of Bach represent an arena where Oscar Shumsky—a high-

ly respected if lowly touted violinist—must not only take on the fierce musical challenge but also contend with competitive achievements of such gladiators as Heifetz, Milstein, Szeryng, Grumiaux, and Menuhin, who have preceded him. But he comes through most impressively.

Shumsky's playing is admirable in its tonal firmness and musical logic. He does not match the classic poise and silken elegance of Milstein or the Heifetz way of sailing through phenomenal difficulties as if they did not exist. This is not a seamless performance, but neither is it labored or heavy-handed. It is warm in tone, incisive, technically assured, and sensitive to dynamic shadings. The rhythm is steady but not inflexible, and the complexities of such fiendishly written sections as the adagio and *fuga* of the Sonata No. 3 are clearly defined. The celebrated *chaconne* in the D Minor Partita is also impressive in its clarity of structure.

There are some unconventional touches: Shumsky alters the prevailing dotted pattern in the fifth measure of the *allemande* in the Partita No. 1; he repeats the second section of the same movement (a procedure that, to my knowledge, is not generally followed), and he adds a few unwritten trills in the *grave* of the Sonata No. 2, in A Minor. Let us remember, however, that the number of differently annotated editions in this literature is, in Joseph Szigeti's phrase, "bewildering." The same word may be applied to the available recorded versions as well. And yet Shumsky's holds its own among them, and it has been cleanly and resonantly recorded. G.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BERLIOZ: *Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphale, Op. 15*. Musique des Gardiens de la Paix de Paris, Désiré Dondeyne cond. NONE-SUCH H-71368 \$4.96.

Performance **Poignant and powerful**
Recording **Excellent**

In France the year 1840 marked the tenth anniversary of the July Revolution that installed King Louis Philippe, and his govern-

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- Ⓜ = open-reel stereo tape
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The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

ment decided to transfer the remains of the 1830 combatants from the Colonnade du Louvre to the Place de la Bastille, where a commemorative column was to be dedicated. The Minister of the Interior invited Hector Berlioz to compose a work for the occasion, and the result was the *Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphale*, a noble and stirring piece of music conceived on the grand scale for which the composer was famous. The performance on the occasion suffered a number of mishaps, but later that year, when 450 performers, including a chorus the composer had added, offered the work at the Opéra, it was a huge success. Wagner thought it was the best thing Berlioz had ever written. This new Nonesuch release (it is *not* the old Erato recording), acquired from Calliope in France, sticks to the original scoring without chorus, but an overpoweringly persuasive offering it is, hypnotic in its effect as each of the movements builds majestically in great sweeps of sound, punctuated by exclamations from the drums and brasses in the opening movement and by arresting passages for clarinets and flutes in the final *Apothéose*.

As in any big Berlioz work, there are overblown, inflated, and static stretches, but by and large the score is an especially moving one. The performance by the Band of the Paris Municipal Guard under Désiré Dondeyne is stunning—absolutely hair-raising, in fact—and magnificently recorded. It lacks only the element of surprise and variety supplied by the chorus, which *is* included in the Philips album with the London Symphony under Colin Davis, a recording that in all other respects seems inordinately tame after hearing the one on Nonesuch. *P.K.*

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 9, in D Minor.* Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Kurt Masur cond. VANGUARD VSD-71245 \$7.98.

Performance: **Level-headed**
Recording: **Very spacious**

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 9, in D Minor.* Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Eugen Jochum cond. PRIVILEGE 2535 173 \$6.98, © 3335 173 \$6.98.

Performance: **Passionate**
Recording: **Good 1966 vintage**

Those searching for a recorded performance of Bruckner's Ninth that is less imposing and granitic in mien than those of Karajan or Haitink will find two contrasting alternatives here. Kurt Masur adopts the more classical approach and achieves unusually transparent textures in the first movement; the sound is very spacious with a somewhat distant microphone placement. Some of the impact of the gigantic climaxes is thereby dissipated, but, fortunately, the line and chord structure is not muddled. Masur and the production staff are most successful in the always affecting final adagio, which here emerges as a series of grandiose tonal vistas stretching into a seemingly infinite horizon.

As those familiar with the original Deutsche Grammophon issue of the Bruckner symphonies under Eugen Jochum well know, his way with the music is personal and romantic, with the kind of tempo modifications one would expect. In essence, Jochum judiciously compromises the structural element in order to bring into relief the passionately lyrical content. The result in this instance is movingly eloquent, particularly

the slow movement. The sonics are excellent, even by today's standards. *D.H.*

BYRD: *Lute Music* (see Collections—Paul O'Dette)

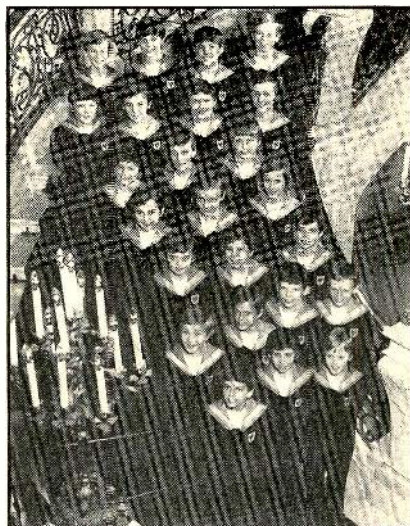
RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DEBUSSY: *Images (1894); Estampes; Images, Series I & II.* Paul Jacobs (piano). NONESUCH H-71365 \$4.96, © N5-1365 \$4.96.

Performance **Sensitive and exquisite**
Recording **Nice sound**

There is a group of pianists who came up in the 1950s and who were associated with new works and a supposedly intellectual approach to music. It's good to see that some of these people—Charles Rosen, Russell Sherman,

Paul Jacobs—long ignored by the musical establishment, are finally getting their due. Jacobs, who spent a great deal of time in France in his younger days (he was more or less the official pianist of the old avant-garde), has not surprisingly turned out to be an excellent Debussy pianist. Logically, for a pianist known for twentieth-century music, Jacobs has worked his way backward through the Debussy repertoire: from the late, more abstract *Études* to a two-volume set of the *Préludes* to the earlier and vivid *Estampes* and *Images*, Debussy's musical equivalents of sketches or prints. These include an early set dated 1894 (the same year as the *Afternoon of a Faun*) and apparently written for a young lady by the name of Yvonne Le Rolle. The manuscript somehow passed into the hands of Yvonne's piano teacher, Alfred Cortot, who put it in his library and did nothing



The Vienna Choir Boys

Britten's "Ceremony of Carols"

If you are a connoisseur of boys' choirs (there must be three or four of us anyway), you are aware that there are considerable national differences among them. English choirs tend to be very pure and a little hooty; French ones nasal, sometimes insecure in pitch, but still somehow lovely; Danish ones secure, musical, a little bland; Spanish, utterly striking, as if their throats were made of bronze. The Vienna Choir Boys also have a sound of their own, and it is perhaps the most simply beautiful of all.

Devotees of Christmas music (there are more of them) know that there are really comparatively few crossovers from country to country in Christmas repertoire. So it is rather unusual to find the late Benjamin

Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* performed here by the Viennese group, albeit with the assistance of one of the composer's close friends, the Welsh harpist Osian Ellis. Ellis has also arranged a group of English carols for the second side, and, make no mistake, these are no mere run-throughs with newly composed harp accompaniment, but inventive, in places rather Brittenish, elaborations of the traditional tunes, with such interesting small adjuncts as bells, whistles, and occasional rather threateningly modern sounds. Still, they are a joy and a definite asset to the record.

The Vienna Choir Boys' performance of the Britten is, as one might expect, a most beautiful one in terms of sheer sound, and Ellis' harp is given more prominence than usual—to the advantage, I think, of the work. The boys sing with excellent diction, mispronouncing only occasionally (and then rather charmingly); they swallow a syllable once in a while in the faster sections, but they are almost always right on pitch. There is really little one can find wrong in their musical idiom, but some of the subtleties of inflection to be found in English performances are not tried for here. The soloists strike me as both better and more secure than usual.

Britten's own recordings of *Ceremony* seem to be gone from the catalog, so if you need a performance of this striking work, the present one is well worth getting. Taking into account the Ellis arrangements on side two, I can't think of a more Christmassy-sounding record this year. Excellent recording (barring a few blasts from the pressing—presumably incurred in the cutting), but, unfortunately, highly incomplete texts for the Britten and none whatever for the Ellis. Not, in other words, the most intelligent production job. Christmas rush? —James Goodfriend

BRITTEN: *A Ceremony of Carols, Op. 28.* **TRAD. (arr. Ellis): *Seven English Christmas Carols.*** *Ding Dong! Merrily on High; Away in a Manger; We've Been Awhile A-Wandering; Coventry Carol; I Saw Three Ships; Once in Royal David's City; Deck the Hall.* Osian Ellis (harp); Vienna Choir Boys, Uwe Christian Harrer cond. RCA ARL1-3437 \$8.98, © ARK1-3437 \$8.98.

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with it. The collection later came to this country, and the set of three pieces was published only in 1978. Debussy had formed his personal style quite completely by 1894, and even the connections with later works (a revised version of the second movement appears in *Pour le Piano* and the third is based on a nursery rhyme used in one of the later *Images*) do not prevent us from regarding this as a major independent work and an important addition to the repertoire.

Jacobs plays this work and the others with great finesse. Small distinctions and great precision count for a lot. This is not a colorful or flashy Debussy—Jacobs would obviously prefer that the visual and literary imagery remain subordinate to the purely musical—but it is sensitive and exquisite. Nice sound from the Baldwin SD-10. E.S.

DONIZETTI: *Lucrezia Borgia*. Joan Sutherland (soprano), Lucrezia Borgia; Giacomo Aragall (tenor), Gennaro; Marilyn Horne (mezzo-soprano), Maffio Orsini; Ingvar Wixell (baritone), Don Alfonso; Graeme Ewer (tenor), Rustighello; Nicola Zaccaria (bass), Astolfo; Richard Van Allan (bass), Gubetta; Graham Clark (tenor), Liverotto; Lieuwe Visser (bass), Gazella; John Bröcheler (bass), Petrucci; Piero de Palma (tenor), Vitellozzo; others. London Opera Chorus; National Philharmonic Orchestra, Richard Bonyngé cond. LONDON OSA 13129 three discs \$26.94. © OSA 13129 \$26.94.

Performance: **Good to not so good**
Recording: **Very good**

Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* comes close to being a good opera. The prevailing dark coloration of its music captures the sombre, intrigue-laden atmosphere of Renaissance Italy the way Verdi's *Rigoletto* (another opera based on a Victor Hugo horror drama) was to do several years later. *Lucrezia* has several arias and ensembles of first-class inspiration and even orchestral writing of intermittent beauty. But against all this weighs a preposterous plot, characters torn by unconvincing contradictions, and music that tends to wind down after a promising first act, descending all too often to predictable formulas. About ten years ago, RCA released a quite distinguished version of the opera (LSC 6176, with Monserrat Caballé, Alfredo Kraus, and Ezio Flagello, Jonel Perlea conducting) which, one would have thought, should have satisfied the public need. Well, "one" was wrong, or at least Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngé feel that the time has come for *Lucrezia* to stir things up again.

Sutherland can no more make a credible or compelling character of Donizetti's *Lucrezia* than Caballé could. She is also hampered by the occasionally low tessitura, but her singing, in general, is secure and accomplished, and she can still rise to an impressive high E-flat. The Caballé of 1967 exhibited more tonal freshness than the Sutherland of 1977 (the year of this recording), but Sutherland can manage the embellishments more fluently. Both versions are fortunate in their interpreters of Gennaro: Giacomo Aragall offers the richer sound, Alfredo Kraus the more elegant style. Aragall has more to sing, however, because in London's version the role is enhanced by the two arias (one at the beginning of Act III, the other near the end, as death approaches) that Donizetti added to the score after the 1833 première.

Marilyn Horne's sound is unique and her artistry treasurable even when, as here, she is not in her best vocal form and even though she applies too much sound to the lightly drawn role of Orsini. Ingvar Wixell is suitably furious as Lucrezia's irate husband, but his tones are ill-focused and his style vigorously anti-*bel canto*. The veteran Piero de Palma emerges like an Italian oasis in the desert of unidiomatic-sounding *comprimari*. But even in *their* ranks Graeme Ewer calls attention to himself with his unique approach to the Italian language and a tone that recalls the late-period Alessio de Paolis. Cannot these overworked Englishmen be given a lengthy rest from Italian opera?

Although he augments the tenor part, Bonyngé omits Lucrezia's first-act cabaletta, "*Si voli il primo a cogliere*," added to the score for the Milan revival of 1840 (it is retained in the RCA version). Both versions offer Lucrezia's final *aria di bravura*, which Donizetti wrote with great reluctance to accommodate the original interpreter, the fading but still demanding Méric-Lalande. An effective vocal display, it is also a *coup de grace* for this dramatically incoherent opera.

Richard Bonyngé conducts with an obvious understanding and affection for this uneven score, and the orchestral playing is first-rate. Some of the ensembles could be cleaner and better clarified in terms of balances, but the recorded sound is impressively rich. The background essay by Jeremy Commons is unusually informative. G.J.

DOWLAND: *Lute Music* (see Collections—Paul O'Dette)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DUFAY: *Missa Ecce Ancilla Domini; Je Me Complain; Navré Je Suy; Anima Mea Liquefacta Est; Gloria Resurrexit Dominus; Ave Regina Celorum; Ecclesie Militantis*. Pomerium Musices, Alexander Blachly cond. NONE-SUCH H-71367 \$4.96.

Performance: **Beautiful**
Recording: **Fine**

Alexander Blachly and the Pomerium Musices have evolved a perfect sound and style for the delicately etched lines of Guillaume Dufay's music. The ten members of the chorus produce a clear, light sound and sing with a rhythmic vitality that brings life to each of the intricately wrought parts of the music. The *a cappella* performance of the *Missa Ecce Ancilla Domini* is a model of vocal chamber music in which the linear aspects of Dufay's art are beautifully displayed.

Joined by vielles, sackbuts, and a lute on side two, the group offers several motets and two secular works. Here again, rhythmic clarity and subtle articulation propel Dufay's mosaic-like structures. This record is impressive for both its content and its performance, and the recording is fine too. S.L.

GLAZUNOV: *The King of the Jews, Op. 95*. Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra, Siegfried Kohler cond. TURNABOUT □ QTV 34739 \$4.98.

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

In 1905, the year in which he turned forty, Glazunov became the director of the St. Pe-
(Continued on page 142)

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Franz Berwald: The Orchestral Works Complete on Seraphim

Conductor
Ulf Björlin



Angel/EMI

IN 1957 American Decca, with the release of Igor Markevitch's mono recording, with the Berlin Philharmonic, of two symphonies by Franz Berwald (1796-1868), introduced into the record market a composer until then unknown to most of us. Here was a fascinating discovery: a Swedish symphonist of real stature who was born a year before Schubert, died a year before Berlioz, and was productively influenced by the latter (and Mendelssohn) in developing a language and style utterly and uniquely his own.

Over the years there have been a few recordings of Berwald's other symphonies and much of his chamber music, but some of the best versions of the symphonies have followed Decca's old DL-9853 out of the catalog. Sixten Ehrling's splendid performances of the *Sinfonie Singulière* and the Symphony in E-flat (the same two Markevitch had done), recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra in observance of the centenary of the composer's death and available here all too briefly on London CS 6602, and Antal Dorati's Stockholm Philharmonic recording of the *Sinfonie Capricieuse*, formerly on Victrola VICS-1319, may still be available as Swedish Discofil imports, but the only Berwald symphonies listed in Schwann the last few years have been the *Singulière* and the *Sérieuse*, both performed by the Stockholm Philharmonic under Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt on Nonesuch H-71087.

Although Schwann formerly made reference to six Berwald symphonies, there are actually only four. The numerical confusion is clarified by Robert Layton, the author of the only English biography of the composer (London, 1959), in his comprehensive annotation for a new four-disc Seraphim set of all of Berwald's orchestral works performed by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under the young Swedish conductor Ulf Björlin. In his capacity as a record reviewer, Layton greeted these recordings when they were released in England two years ago as "a welcome and self-recommending issue." And so it is, if perhaps more for simply making all this music so conveniently and economically

available than for performances one might regard as consistently distinguished.

To suggest a lack of distinction is not to say that Björlin's performances are not pleasing. His handling of the *Sinfonie Sérieuse* in particular is extremely convincing, and, while the slow movements of the other symphonies are unfolded rather prosaically and there are moments of shaky ensemble in several of the works, the orchestral playing is for the most part up to the level one associates with the RPO. Björlin shows both a good understanding of the material and a competent, unself-conscious manner in presenting it.

Indeed, the two concertos do come off with a good deal of distinction, and they are both eminently attractive works, if less striking than the symphonies. The Violin Concerto, the slighter of the two, was composed in 1820 and is more or less in the style of Mendelssohn—who was then eleven years old. (As Layton remarks in his general comments on Berwald, "when one is reminded of other composers, one usually discovers that they are much later.") Both the Symphony in E-flat and the *Singulière* seem to "pre-echo" parts of Dvořák's Fourth and Fifth Symphonies.) The Piano Concerto, composed in 1855, is Schumannesque in its contours and general feeling; what is "different" about it is that the piano plays constantly, with the orchestra so much in an accompanying role that the score advises that the work may be performed *without* orchestra. (The Piano Concerto was not heard in any form until 1904; like the symphonies of Schubert, several of Berwald's works waited until long after the composer's death for their premières.) Soloists Arve Tellefsen and Marian Migdal show consummate skill and commitment in their respective assignments, and Björlin and the orchestra are at their best on these two sides. I have not heard Greta Erikson's recording of the Piano Concerto (Genesis GS-1011), but Migdal's playing makes me very eager to hear *him* again.

Berwald was, as we used to say, a man of many parts. In addition to composing and conducting, he founded an orthopedic insti-

tute in Berlin, managed a glass works in northern Sweden, and established a sawmill. His orchestral writing was concentrated in a short but remarkably productive period: all five of the tone poems were composed between December 1841 and August 1842, two of the symphonies in the latter year, and the other two in 1845. In his recording of two tone poems and two overtures (Nonesuch H-71218), Ehrling shows more subtlety, more skill in the shaping of some phrases, and more all-round refinement than Björlin does, but in these pieces Björlin's exuberance serves him well, and so does the superior sound of his newer recording. I would question only the juxtaposition of the *Festival of the Bayadères* and the *Queen of Golconda* Overture on side six, since both pieces make use of the same material.

CONSIDERING previously available records, some collectors might be grateful if Seraphim were to make the disc of the two concertos available on its own. But many Berwald enthusiasts, I suspect, will not mind duplicating some of the titles for the convenience and comprehensiveness of this economical, well-recorded, and well-documented set. Surely those coming to Berwald's music for the first time will find this a boxful of the most delightful discoveries, and in that light the importance of the shortcomings I have noted tends to diminish appreciably.

—Richard Freed

BERWALD: Symphony in C Major ("Singulière"); Symphony in G Minor ("Sérieuse"); Symphony in D Major ("Capricieuse"); Symphony in E-flat Major; Piano Concerto in D Major; Violin Concerto in C-sharp Minor, Op. 2; The Queen of Golconda, Overture; Estrella di Soria, Tragic Overture; Play of the Elves; Serious and Joyful Fancies; Festival of the Bayadères; Memories of the Norwegian Mountains; Racing. Marian Migdal (piano, in concerto); Arve Tellefsen (violin, in concerto); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Ulf Björlin cond. SERAPHIM SID-6113 four discs \$19.98.


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Méphistophélès (Ghiaurov) and Marguérite (Freni) at playback

A Welcome New "Faust"

IT is a safe premise that a performance of Gounod's *Faust*—a large-scale grand opera—needs the best possible singers for its success. This does not necessarily mean the singers *stylistically* best qualified to fill the roles. For example, a strong case could be made nowadays for casting Alain Vanzo, Ileana Cotrubas, and Roger Soyer as the principals. But would such a cast attract anywhere near as much interest on records as the formidable trio of Plácido Domingo, Mirella Freni, and Nicolai Ghiaurov? Of course not. So let us be realistic and accept the casting on the new Angel recording as eminently *logical*.

Actually, though not very French, this performance is very good, the best on records since Angel's last attempt about twenty years ago (S-3622). If the three stars are not shining examples of the great Gallic tradition, they serve Gounod's imperishable and accommodating music with distinction. Domingo sings the title role in his usual committed, passionate, yet tasteful fashion. Freni's tones may have lost some of their erstwhile freshness and gleaming purity, but hers remains a lovely voice, and she uses it with particular delicacy in the seldom-heard Spinning Wheel aria, "*Il ne revient pas*." Ghiaurov, too, is not as overwhelming as he was in his previous recording on London (OSA 1433) ten years ago, but he is still a commanding presence, and I doubt that there is anyone who can surpass his Méphistophélès.

The rest of the cast is uniformly excellent. The English baritone Thomas Allen commands the best diction among the non-French principals. His youthful, vibrant voice easily encompasses the role's high tessitura, though it is somewhat wanting in forward projection. Michèle Command is a gentle, velvety sounding Siebel, Marc Vento an uncommonly strong Wagner, Jocelyne Taillon an expert

Marthe. Georges Prêtre, an old hand with this score, at times holds the singers on too tight a rein (Valentin's Cavatina and the Serenade of Méphistophélès could stand more flexible shaping), but overall his work is brisk, sensible, and well organized. The chorus and orchestra are good, though the violin solo at the end of "*Salut, demeure*" is not perfect in intonation.

The new Angel version offers a great deal more of *Faust* than is usually heard in the theater (though not quite as much as the London set). In addition to the scene containing Marguérite's "*Il ne revient pas*," Siebel's second aria ("*Si le bonheur*") is retained. We are also treated to Faust's Drinking Song in place of the Walpurgis ballet (Act V), with the ballet given as a bonus on side eight. Technically, the recording makes surprisingly little of the stereo possibilities, but it is entirely satisfactory.

There are now four stereo *Fausts* in the catalog, but the RCA version is not really in the competition. London OSA 1433 offers completeness and Ghiaurov in superlative form (also Sutherland and Corelli, however miscast they are), and Angel S-3622 should be treasured for the unequalled Marguérite of Victoria de los Angeles. I welcome the new set for its balance and for its all-around high standards.

—George Jellinek

GOUNOD: *Faust*. Mirella Freni (soprano), Marguérite; Plácido Domingo (tenor), Faust; Nicolai Ghiaurov (bass), Méphistophélès; Thomas Allen (baritone), Valentin; Marc Vento (baritone), Wagner; Michèle Command (soprano), Siebel; Jocelyn Taillon (mezzo-soprano), Marthe. Paris Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Georges Prêtre cond. ANGEL SZDX-3868 four discs \$24.98, © 4Z4X-3868 \$24.98.

tersburg Conservatory. He had by then produced virtually all of his really important works—the three ballets, the two adorable *valse de concert*, the eight symphonies, five of the seven string quartets, and the violin concerto (whose opus number, 82, indicates how productive he had been). After 1905 he was more conspicuously active as pedagogue than as composer, and little of the music he wrote in his last thirty years has anything like the freshness or appeal of what he produced earlier. Here, for the first time on records, is a case in point, a marvelously orchestrated but substantially empty set of pieces composed in 1913 for a "mystery play" by the Grand Duke Konstantin Romanov. The play was produced in 1914, with choreography by Michel Fokine, the Grand Duke himself in the role of Joseph, and other roles taken by officers of the Ismailov regiment, who took up the Resurrection Chorus from the score as their own in the war that broke out in the summer of that year. The chorus is not included in the sequence recorded here, which is presumably what Glazounov himself used to conduct on his concert tours. Other listeners may find themselves responding more sympathetically than I have been able to do. The performance itself seems to be a good one (Siegfried Kohler has recorded some more interesting Russian music for Turnabout), and the sound is very good. R.F.

HAIIEFF: *Symphony No. 2*. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch cond. **Piano Concerto.** Leo Smit (piano); Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Walter Hendl cond. SERENUS SRS 12086 \$6.98.

Performance: **Splendid**
Recording: **Well-preserved**

Charles Munch's recording of Alexei Haieff's Second Symphony, one of the few he made of any American music, originally appeared about twenty years ago on RCA paired with Easley Blackwood's Symphony No. 1, but it did not stay in the active catalog very long. It was very much worth rescuing from the vaults, for it is a splendid performance of an intriguing and highly accessible work, and the early stereo sound, while in no way outstanding, carries its years well. The overside performance of Haieff's perhaps even more interesting piano concerto was recorded as part of the Ditson-funded American Recording Society project in the early Fifties, and for the last dozen years or more it has been available in artificial stereo on Desto DST-6420; it seems to be offered in undotored mono here, and the restoration is first-rate. There was a somewhat later recording of the concerto on MGM, but this performance, by the pianist for whom the work was written and one of the finest conductors this country has produced, is definitely the one to have. Altogether an attractive package. R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HAYDN: *Six Flute Quartets, Op. 5*. Jean-Pierre Rampal (flute); Trio à Cordes Français. SERAPHIM S-60327 \$4.98.

Performance: **Sparkling**
Recording: **Beautiful**

There is no genre, at least in my opinion, that so combines the qualities of wit and elegance as the late eighteenth-century *divertissement*.

(Continued on page 144)



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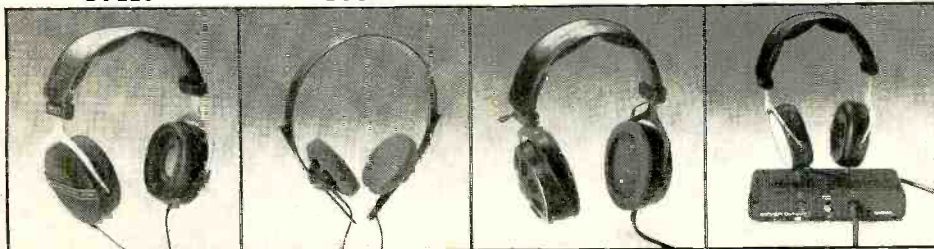
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CIRCLE NO. 26 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Whether they scored for strings, winds, chamber orchestra, or, as in this case, flute quartet, composers of the era sought a perfect balance to delight both the amateur and connoisseur of music. Haydn was a master of this art, and the Op. 5 flute quartets demonstrate how early in his career he could charm all the senses in beautifully balanced structures.

With the Trio à Cordes Français, Jean-Pierre Rampal is at his best. He is a brilliant soloist, and these pieces tend to feature the flute, but all the parts are played to perfection. This is chamber-music playing at its finest: the ensemble is excellent, and yet there is that interplay of sonority and phrasing that is the essence of this high art form. A delightful record. *S.L.*

HAYDN: Mass No. 1, in F Major (Missa Brevis); Salve Regina in E-flat Major; Mass No. 2, in E-flat Major ("Great Organ Mass"); Stabat Mater. Krisztina Laki (soprano); Julia Hamari, Hildegard Laurich (altos); Claes-Haaken Ahnsjö, Aldo Baldin (tenors); Richard Anlauf (bass); Stuttgart Chamber Choir; Christof Roos (organ); Württemberg Chamber Orchestra, Heilbronn, Frieder Bernius cond. Vox SVBX 5216 three discs \$11.95.

Performance: **Adequate to excellent**
Recording: **Adequate to good**

This first volume of a projected *complete* recording of Haydn's church music is somewhat uneven; fortunately, the most important item here, the *Stabat Mater*, is the one definite success. Other than a Dutch recording on Musical Heritage Society, this appears to be the only stereo version of the *Stabat Mater*. H. C. Robbins Landon dates the piece 1767 (not 1770-1771 as the album notes have it), and, like the C Major Mass (*Saint Cecilia*) written the previous year, it is very elaborate in layout and lasts over an hour in performance. Stylistically, the music seems both to look back to the late-Baroque Italian manner and to look forward to the "storm and stress" expressiveness of Haydn's 1771 symphonies. It is a fascinating and substantial work with a key place in Haydn's creative development. The performance here is good on the whole. The female soloists are heard to especially fine advantage. Bass Richard Anlauf also does very well with his two major arias, and tenor Claes-Haaken Ahnsjö not only displays topnotch musicianship but has a voice of singular sweetness and body. The entire standard of performance is audibly higher than in the three earlier works; conductor Frieder Bernius clearly had his heart in this task.

The *Missa Brevis* is the work of a seventeen-year-old just learning his craft. Its twelve and a half minutes shows a fresh, naïve charm, especially in the intertwined lines for alto and soprano (Krisztina Laki and Julia Hamari, respectively), who are in splendid form throughout. The orchestra sounds a bit tentative, the chorus spirited if not very clear in terms of diction. The three-minute *Salve Regina*, again a work of sweetness and naïveté, is performed somewhat better.

The E-flat Mass is more ambitious. The prominent episodes for organ obbligato and the treatment of the solo lines give something of a concerto grosso feel to the work, and the frequent fugal textures foreshadow the fugues in the soon-forthcoming Op. 20 string quartets. The "Great Organ Mass" is a vital work, if not as stylistically cohesive as Haydn's more mature essays in the genre.

This Vox Box contains the only currently available recordings of the first two Masses, and we should be grateful to Vox for giving us such music at such a modest price. Nonetheless, I have some gripes about the packaging as well as the uneven performance quality. No texts are supplied for the *Stabat Mater*, the *Salve Regina*, or the *Missa Brevis*, and the labels and annotation do not make it clear which soloists are participating in which work. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HOLST: The Planets, Op. 32. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti cond. LONDON CS 7110 \$8.98, © CS 5 7110 \$8.98.

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

Had Toscanini ever chosen to include Holst's *Planets* in his active repertoire, I imagine that his reading of it would have sounded very much like this remarkable one by Sir Georg Solti. In contrast to most other recorded performances of *The Planets*, Solti's is taut and volatile, and except for the mystical *Neptune* finale it is wholly convincing. *Mars* is relentless brutality incarnate. *Venus* is handled with a superbly sustained line and boasts exceptionally fine solo work from the London Philharmonic woodwinds. *Mercury* is super-mercurial here: the orchestral playing constitutes a virtuosic tour de force, with marvelous articulation of tricky rhythmic figurations and utter clarity of textural detail. In keeping with Solti's general interpretive approach, *Jupiter* is taut and festive—there's none of the beefiness that one sometimes encounters in this piece, especially with the entrance of the "big tune."

Saturn is for me the high point of *The Planets*, and so it seems to be for Solti also. He lavishes care on this music, bringing its sad procession to a mighty outcry and then making the most of the serene final pages. *Uranus*, a first cousin to Dukas' *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, provides a feast of magical high-jinks presented here with momentum and utter clarity of rhythmic articulation. Only in the otherworldly *Neptune* music does Solti's performance let down. It is all very nicely done, but there's little of the special nuance that Sir Adrian Boult in his top form has brought to these same pages.

If you want your *Planets* ultrabrilliant, Solti's is the one for you. Otherwise, of the more than a dozen alternative recordings, Boult on Angel and Haitink on Philips are my choices. London's recording for Solti, by the way, matches the performance point for point in clarity and power. *D.H.*

HUMPERDINCK: Hansel and Gretel (see Best of the Month, page 92)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JANÁČEK: String Quartet No. 1 ("Kreutzer Sonata"); String Quartet No. 2 ("Intimate Pages"). Gabrieli Quartet. LONDON STS 15432 \$4.98.

Performance: **Stunning**
Recording: **Superb**

It was not so long ago that virtually all Czech music was regarded as properly performable only by Czech musicians. While this notion *(Continued on page 147)*

has been largely corrected in the case of Dvořák and Smetana, it has held on more firmly in that of Leoš Janáček, perhaps with more justification since so much of Janáček's music is based on the speech patterns of his native Moravia. It is really only in the last few years that a few recordings have demonstrated conclusively that "you don't have to be Czech" (to paraphrase the Levy's Jewish Rye ads) to perform Janáček's music. The latest case in point is an absolutely stunning disc of the two string quartets played by the Gabrieli Quartet in London's Stereo Treasury Series.

There is a unique authority in the Janáček Quartet's old recording of these works (originally on Crossroads, now available on Supraphon SUAST-50556), and a more recent version by the Smetana Quartet (Denon OX-7066-ND, Supraphon 4 11 1995) is magnificently recorded and elegantly impassioned, though the refinement of the playing occasionally clashes with the earthiness of the material. The Gabrieli Quartet, it seems to me, plays with every bit as much refinement as the Smetana and an intensity almost equal to that of the Janáček, and they miss none of the musical points of the two works. Indeed, I don't think even the Janáček Quartet realized more fully or more poignantly the personal emotion the composer put into the final movement of *Intimate Pages*, a work produced in the last year of his life as a by no means "autumnal" love letter (the original subtitle, in fact, was *Love Letters*) to Kamilla Stoesslova, a woman half his age who had been his inspiration for a dozen years and his companion for several.

In Janáček's case, as in Vaughan Williams' or Nielsen's or Shostakovich's, it is perhaps the taking up of his music by performers other than his own compatriots that can most forcefully demonstrate that its intensity and appeal rest not solely on nationalism but at least as much on a personal style that makes national and language barriers meaningless. In any event, it would be hard to imagine more persuasive performances than these either in terms of personal drama or in the more pertinent context of exalted chamber music. London has provided superb sound, Hugh Ottaway's succinct notes tell us all we need to know about the music and its background, and the presentation of this disc on a budget label is a final benefaction that should leave hardly anyone who loves chamber music with a valid reason for not buying it. *R.F.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LISZT: Piano Sonata in B Minor; Au Bord d'une Source; Sonetto 104 del Petrarca; Transcendental Etude No. 10, in F Minor; Mephisto Waltz No. 1. Horacio Gutiérrez (piano). ANGEL SZ-37477 \$8.98.

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

Cuba-born Horacio Gutiérrez, who was a Tchaikovsky Competition silver medalist, here follows his two concerto albums for Angel with an impressive solo debut in a Liszt program. The B Minor Sonata has not lacked for superb recorded performances, and this one will not put out of court those by Horowitz, De Larrocha, or Fialkowska, to name just three of the half-dozen top ones. Still, Gutiérrez not only has *extraordinary* technical command of the music, he brings to it his own special brand of youthful flamboyance

and concept of Lisztian rhetoric without trading its substance. There is also a finely developed *lyrical* flair displayed throughout the sonata, with an impressive display of dynamic gradation and detail of voicing in the big fugal episode.

Gutiérrez's reading of *Au Bord d'une Source* struck me as of more than usual interest by virtue of its emphasis on the songlike melodic line. The feverishly passionate F Minor Etude is carried off in splendidly fiery fashion, and the restlessness of the Petrarch sonnet evocation (originally intended as a song) is convincingly conveyed. The familiar *Mephisto* Waltz gets a super-brilliant treatment. Angel's recording is unusually good throughout, though the pressing is somewhat noisy at times. *D.H.*

MOZART: The Marriage of Figaro (see Best of the Month, page 87)

MOZART: Violin Concertos Nos. 2 and 5 (see Best of the Month, page 88)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

OFFENBACH: Orpheus in the Underworld. Jane Rhodes (soprano), Public Opinion; Mady Mesplé (soprano), Eurydice; Michel Sénéchal (tenor), Orpheus; Charles Burles (tenor), Aristeus-Pluto; Michèle Command (soprano), Venus; Jane Berbié (mezzo-soprano), Cupid; Michel Trempont (baritone), Jupiter; Michèle Péna (soprano), Diana; André Mallabrera (tenor), Mercury; Bruce Brewer (tenor), John Styx; others, Chorus and Orchestra of the Capitole de Toulouse, Michel Plasson cond. ANGEL SZCX-3886 three discs \$27.98, © 4Z3X-3886 \$27.98.

Performance: **Most enjoyable**
Recording: **Excellent**

Orpheus in the Underworld, Offenbach's first full-length operetta, was a rousing success when it shattered the musical sensibilities of 1855. Both the book (by Crémieux and Halévy) and the music were daringly parodistic in intent and devilishly clever. Among the targets: Gluck's noble *Orphée et Eurydice*, the force of Public Opinion (which compels this Orpheus to reclaim the shrewish Eurydice even though he is happy to be rid of her), and the mythological deities. Even Verdi's *Il Trovatore* (which was contemporary then, since its Paris première was in late 1854) comes in for a bit of good-natured ribbing.

Angel's new set, the first "complete" recording of the operetta, reveals occasional weaknesses here and there, but the Concerto Duet in the first act is a brilliant invention, most of the second act—with its rebellious gods on Mount Olympus—is delicious, and, though invention sags momentarily in the third act, the familiar Cancan sweeps everything before it. There is an aura of total rightness about this performance, and Michel Plasson's spirited conducting and the zestful orchestral playing make it nearly irresistible. The singers are not only good, they seem to be enjoying themselves thoroughly. Michèle Command (Venus), Charles Burles (Pluto), and Michel Trempont (Jupiter) are the vocal standouts, and only the Diana is not quite up to her task. As Eurydice, Mady Mesplé can still fearlessly ascend into the vocal stratosphere, but the excessive vibrato she has acquired is heavy ballast, and her tone is not

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always pleasant. Neither is Jane Rhodes, another veteran, in her best voice, but she can still project a formidable Public Opinion. The violin solos are seductively played by Yan-Pascal Tortelier.

The recorded sound deserves special praise, for it is wonderfully rich, natural-sounding, and spaciouly deployed for stereo. The liner notes are interesting but fail to explain why we get a brief (though appropriately theatrical) curtain raiser instead of the familiar potpourri-type overture.

G.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PERLE: *Thirteen Dickinson Songs; Two Rilke Songs.* Bethany Beardslee (soprano); Morey Ritt, George Perle (piano). COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC. CRI SD 403 \$7.95.

Performance: **Beautiful**
Recording: **Close and effective**

George Perle is probably best known as the Alban Berg man. It was he who uncovered so much about the complete version of Berg's opera *Lulu* and campaigned tirelessly for its production. He is also the author of some very well-regarded material on twelve-tone music and for many years has been professor of music at Queens College in New York City. But it would be a mistake to think of him as primarily a theoretician, musicologist, or pedagogue. He is and always was basically a composer with a singular view: a tonal composer who uses the techniques of twelve-tone music.

Given the lyric/tonal bent of much of Perle's instrumental music, the art song

would seem to be a perfect outlet for him. Yet the Two Rilke Songs of 1941 and the Thirteen Dickinson Songs of 1977-1978 are, as he says, "my total output in the genre." As a matter of fact, these songs are not especially lyrical—at least in the conventional sense—but they are highly expressive. Perle is reticent about these matters, but the Dickinson cycle is devoted to the memory of his wife, the English artist Barbara Phillips, and the motifs of remembrance, autumn, and death are used as the organizing principle.

Not the least of the impact of this music stems from the performance by Bethany Beardslee, for whom the Dickinson cycle was written, and Morey Ritt, her accompanist in it. Ms. Beardslee is, of course, a pioneer of modern vocal music in this country, and she is a performer of great vocal beauty and depth. She is recorded here very close—and, remarkably, without any balance problems with the piano. Such a plain, merciless acoustic spotlight might have shown up another, weaker singer. With Ms. Beardslee the impact is tremendous. Best of all, her diction, the recording itself, and the setting make it possible for once to understand the English language in a few of its finest manifestations (texts are provided, but they are virtually unnecessary).

E.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

D. SCARLATTI: *Keyboard Sonatas in G Major (K. 146), F Minor (K. 204a), F Minor (K. 204b), F Minor (K. 205), C Major (K. 513), B Minor (K. 87), A Major (K. 322), A Major*

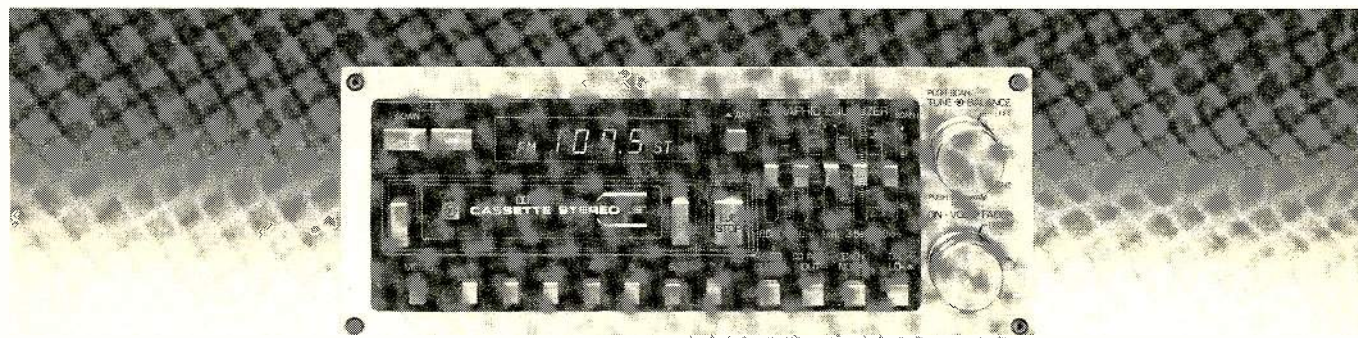
(K. 323), G Major (K. 337), G Major (K. 338), D Major (K. 443), and D Minor-Major (K. 444). Igor Kipnis (clavichord, harpsichord). ANGEL SZ-37310 \$8.98.

Performance: **Dazzling**
Recording: **First-rate**

In his vastly productive exploration of music for his instrument(s), Igor Kipnis has not, unless I'm mistaken, given us a recording devoted entirely to Domenico Scarlatti until now. The omission, if such there was, is grandly rectified with the appearance of what Angel must surely intend to be the first of many such discs. The program itself is a most imaginative one, built on some of the very meatiest, if not exclusively the most familiar, of Scarlatti's hundreds of sonatas. As may be inferred from the juxtapositions of Kirkpatrick numbers, there are three pairs of related sonatas and a stupendous triptych of animated works in F Minor, as well as three exceptionally intriguing independent sonatas. From dancelike glitter to ruminative expansiveness, the individual character of each of the dozen sonatas is realized in full. This is achieved in part by Kipnis' brilliant embellishments of repeats, in part by his alternating between two different harpsichords and a clavichord to suit the contrasting moods and textures of the respective works, but most of all through a dazzling combination of insight and dexterity that makes it all seem a tour de force on the composer's own part rather than a mere display of virtuosity.

R.F.

(Continued on page 152)



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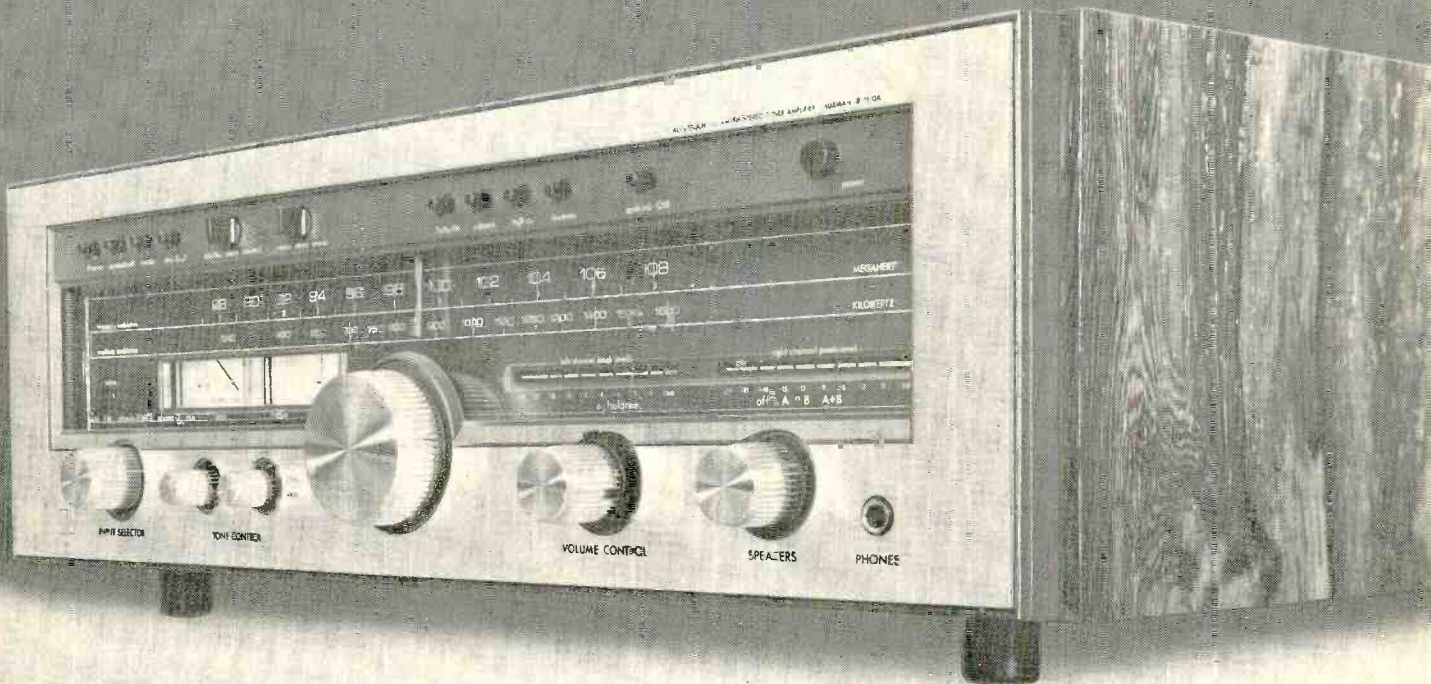
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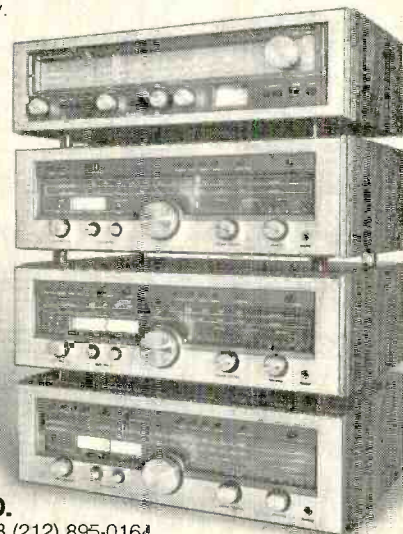
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CIRCLE NO. 36 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The Other "Otello"

Otello (José Carreras)
at the bedside of the sleeping
Desdemona (Frederica von Stade)



Mike Evans/Phonogram International

ALL too often when a company decides to record a seldom-performed opera, the result is disappointing. Either the recording reveals weaknesses in the work that make quite clear why it is not in the standard repertoire, or because of insufficient rehearsal the singers are capable of little more than a soulless run-through in the studio, turning pages as they sight-read from the score. This is absolutely not the case with Philips' splendid first recording of Rossini's *Otello*. The conducting by Jesús López Cobos is impressive, and the excellent group of singing actors headed by José Carreras (*Otello*) and Frederica von Stade (*Desdemona*) bring a great deal of involvement and conviction to the interpretation of their roles. What López Cobos elicits from the singers, chorus, and orchestra is something that has become rare in operatic recordings; a real *performance*.

Rossini's nineteenth opera, *Otello* was first staged in Naples in 1816, and it had considerable success during his lifetime. Since the premiere of Verdi's *Otello* in 1887, however, Rossini's has rarely been performed, and I have seen it on stage only once. *Desdemona's* Willow Song turns up occasionally on recital albums by *bel canto* specialists, but aside from that you will find the rest of the music unfamiliar.

Verdi's *Otello*, of course, is generally regarded as the greatest Italian tragic opera ever written, but there is no reason to let respect for that towering masterpiece keep you from enjoying the wealth of beautiful music that is so beautifully performed on this recording. The two *Otellos* are as different as Massenet's *Manon* and Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, and there is no need to choose between them.

A great deal happened to Italian opera in the more than seventy years that separate Rossini's *Otello* from Verdi's. Operatic structure evolved, and the methods composers used to express emotion changed. Also, late-nineteenth-century audiences would accept more passion and violence on stage than was permissible earlier. Rossini's *Otello* was daring in that it was one of the first nineteenth-century operas to end tragically. This was so

unusual that when *Otello* was produced in Rome after the Naples premiere, Rossini had to concoct a happy ending to substitute for the murder of *Desdemona*. For this recording López Cobos used Rossini's autograph score with the original ending.

Rossini's libretto is typical of the early-nineteenth-century *opera seria*, and it has very little to do with Shakespeare. *Desdemona* doesn't even have a handkerchief. The music of the first two acts is composed within the strict *opera seria* forms, but in Rossini's hands this style never becomes arid or tedious. In addition to the classic elegance of his vocal and orchestral writing there is always expressiveness and excitement, and the ensembles are particularly fine. I must confess, however, that it is occasionally startling to hear delightful, almost cheery, orchestral accompaniments to some rather tense scenes in the drama.

The wonderful third act, however, is composed in a different style that is more personal and "modern." In the essay included with the libretto, Rossini scholar Philip Gossett points out that the dividing line between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Italian opera is the third act of *Otello*.

ROSSINI composed this opera for the singers available to him in Naples, and consequently he made *three* of the principal characters tenors. Few modern tenors are comfortable with the amount of coloratura singing required in *bel canto* operas, but all three on this set manage surprisingly well, and their different vocal timbres suit the way Rossini characterized their roles in the music. José Carreras' voice has grown somewhat darker and heavier since he recorded Rossini's *La Pietra del Paragone* for Vanguard in 1972, but it has retained its sweetness and inherent beauty of tone. Salvatore Fisichella, an interesting new singer I had not heard before, has a lighter voice that is capable of handling the higher, more florid role of Rodrigo, and Gianfranco Pastine sounds suitably villainous as Jago. Variety is added by the sonorous bass of Samuel Ramey as Elmiro, *Desdemona's* father.

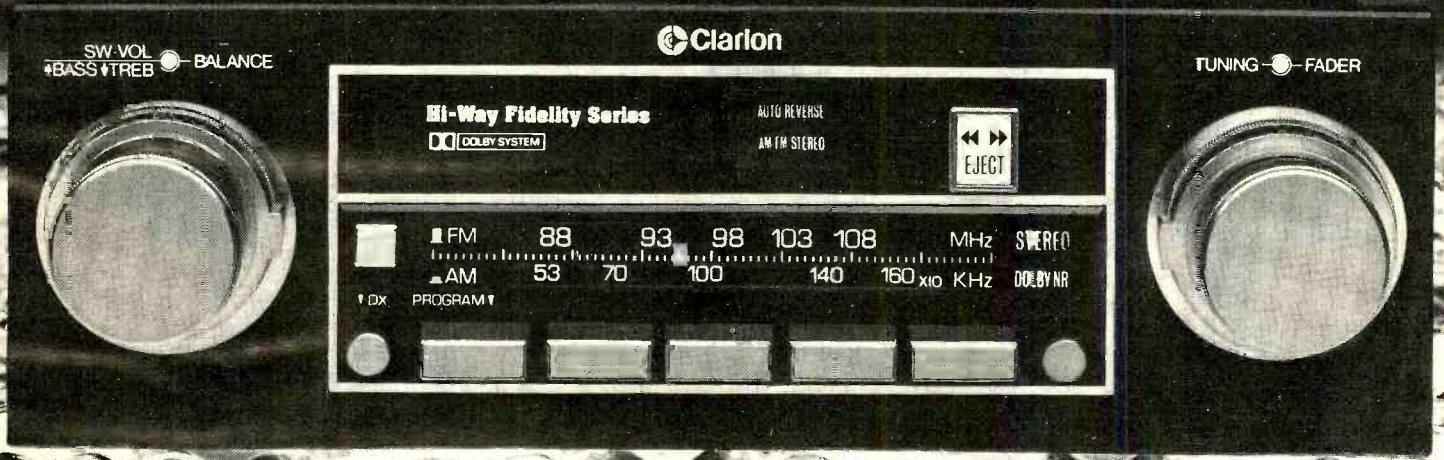
The versatile Frederica von Stade is so convincing as *Desdemona* that it is difficult to believe she has never performed this role on stage. It does not call for as much dazzling coloratura singing as her roles in Rossini's comic operas; instead, *Desdemona* has many long-lined plaintive melodies to sing. Miss von Stade spins them out beautifully, always with full attention to the meaning of the words and with excellent diction. If she tends to overshadow the men in the cast, it is because Rossini gave her so much gorgeous music to sing and she sings it so well.

A darker-voiced mezzo, Nucci Condó, is good as *Emilia*, and the smaller roles are performed more than adequately. The recording quality is excellent, with what I found an ideal balance between singers and orchestra. Stereo effects are used well to suggest some movement on stage, but not enough to be distracting.

It has always seemed to me that in the *bel canto* revival of the last thirty years, Rossini has gotten somewhat less attention than Donizetti and Bellini. I am pleased that such scholars as Professor Gossett are preparing accurate editions of all his work. Of his three dozen operas, the Schwann catalog now lists stereo recordings of only nine besides this one. The new *Otello* is a most welcome addition to the list. Philips also gave us an excellent *Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra* two years ago, and I hope they have more Rossini in store. I would like to hear, for example, what López Cobos and the singers of his choice could do with *La Donna del Lago*.
—William Livingstone

ROSSINI: *Otello*. José Carreras (tenor), *Otello*; Frederica von Stade (mezzo-soprano), *Desdemona*; Gianfranco Pastine (tenor), *Jago*; Salvatore Fisichella (tenor), *Rodrigo*; Nucci Condó (mezzo-soprano), *Emilia*; Samuel Ramey (bass), *Elmiro*; Keith Lewis (tenor), *Lucio*; Alfonso Leoz (tenor), *Doge, Gondoliere*. Ambrosian Opera Chorus; Philharmonia Orchestra, Jesús López Cobos cond. PHILIPS 6769 023 three discs \$29.94, ©7699 110 two cassettes \$19.96.

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CIRCLE NO. 27 ON READER SERVICE CARD

SCHUBERT: Songs. *Sei Mir Gegrusst; Dass Sie Hier Gewesen; Lachen und Weinen; Du Bist die Ruh; Greisengesang; Die Liebe Hat Gelogen; Du Liebst Mich Nicht; Der Zwerg; Lebensmut; Herbst; Auf dem Strom.* Peter Schreier (tenor); Walter Olbertz (piano); Peter Damm (horn). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3915 \$5.20 (plus \$1.25 for postage and handling from the Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

SCHUBERT: Songs. *Des Sängers Habe; Wehmut; Der Strom; Das Zugenglöcklein; Abendbilder; Auf der Donau; Der Schiffer; Totengräbers Heimweh; Am Fenster; Die Sterne; Liebeslauschen; Fischerweise; Der Wanderer; Auf der Bruck; Im Frühling; Aus Heliopolis II.* Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Sviatoslav Richter (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 988 \$9.98.

Performances: **Both good**
Recordings: **Both good**

There are eleven songs on Peter Schreier's program, sixteen on Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's, and not a single title is duplicated. Such a happy circumstance ought to please lieder fanciers, to whom I recommend both recitals, though not without reservations.

Schreier has chosen settings of four poets: Rückert, Rellstab, Platen, and Collin. The first two inspired some wonderful Schubert songs, including *Sei Mir Gegrusst, Lachen und Weinen*, and *Du Bist die Ruh*, which enhance the present recital. Other noteworthy choices here are *Der Zwerg*—a macabre story set to amazingly adventurous, not to say modern, music, and *Auf dem Strom*, with a horn obligato that makes it a forerunner of the superior and better-known *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*. All of these are well suited for Schreier's performing style, which is unflinchingly musical, unmannered, and sensitive without being particularly penetrating. His voice lacks sensuous warmth, but it copes with the musical needs expertly, and Walter Olbertz's accompaniments are first-rate.

Except for the applause at the end, one would never guess that the Fischer-Dieskau recital was taped at a concert in Touraine—the audience and the engineering are both entitled to our compliments. The poetic representation here is wider ranging and the material generally less well known. In fact, only two songs (*Im Frühling* and *Fischerweise*) have had regular currency on records. Both are irresistible, and I would apply the same description to the relatively unfamiliar *Zugenglöcklein* and *Die Sterne* as well. In general, this seems to be a sequence of songs of philosophical content, dealing in many instances with the transitoriness of life (*Auf der Donau, Wehmut, Totengräbers Heimweh, Abendbilder*). Many call for virtuosic pianism, which Sviatoslav Richter supplies without unduly calling attention to it. Fischer-Dieskau is in his characteristic autumnal form: exquisite at moderate volumes and in comfortable ranges, impressive in his control of dynamics and textural illumination, both compensating for certain interpretive mannerisms as well as a tendency to make passionate songs (*Auf der Bruck*, for one) nearly toneless in their expressive vehemence.

Both discs come with texts. The Deutsche Grammophon has no annotation, the MHS passable but atrociously edited notes. The DG sound has more presence. *G.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUBERT: Waltzes for Piano. Paolo Bordoni (piano). SERAPHIM SIC-6112 three discs \$14.94.

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

Waltzes, which were (and are) all the rage in Austria, flowed by the dozens from Schubert's pen in freshets of ravishing melody, and they are all here—in one of your more unusual integral recordings—in this three-record set from Seraphim. There's the popular second waltz from the "Thirty-six Original Dances" of Op. 9, the *Valses Nobles* and the *Valses Sentimentales* with their shifting rhythms and ingratiating melodies, and the "Gratz Waltzes" written during a two-week holiday the composer spent in southern Austria in 1827—the last holiday he would ever enjoy, for a year later he was dead, after a life that spanned scarcely more than thirty years. Here are cotillions, too, and the "Last Waltzes," published posthumously in 1828. You can make a melodic night of it if you want to hear them all at once at your own Schubertiad, or you can spread the pleasure out over as many sessions as you please. Pianist Paolo Bordoni is a young Italian who brings a sunny warmth to this splendid concert, making up in verve whatever he might lack in reserve, although he is capable of the subtlest shading when the music calls for it. A sustained delight. *P.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

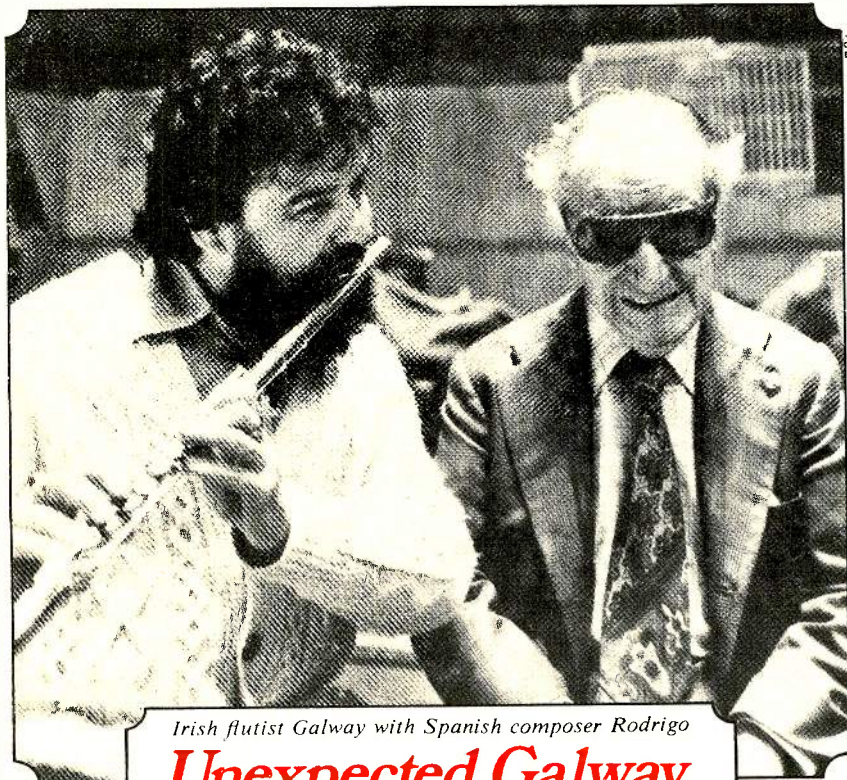
SHOSTAKOVICH: Violin Sonata, Op. 134. Gidon Kremer (violin); André Gavrilov (piano). **Viola Sonata, Op. 147.** Fedor Druzhinin (viola); Mikhail Muntyan (piano). COLUMBIA M 35109 \$8.98.

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

Shostakovich turned increasingly to chamber music in the latter part of his life, and these two sonatas are outstanding examples of his work in that genre. The Violin Sonata, written in 1969 for David Oistrakh and played here by one of Oistrakh's best pupils, is a work that radiates mystery. I am not talking about the circumstances of the composition of the work—about which I know little—but of its aura, at once appealing and elusive. Gidon Kremer's performance is superb and fully supported by André Gavrilov.

If the Violin Sonata is turned inward, the Viola Sonata, the composer's last work, is *painfully* introverted. Like the Violin Sonata, it has three movements, a fast one surrounded by two slow ones. Here, the final adagio, with its extraordinarily moving reference to the *Moonlight* Sonata, is the focus. It has been called the composer's farewell, and perhaps it is. But it is also, in its inwardness and calm, a kind of heroic rebellion and affirmation from a man who lived a tortured life as the musical hero of a society that constantly put him down and oppressed him. This is an impressive performance as well, but it is marred by the recording of the viola, which is set too far back and in an unpleasant boomy acoustic. Both works were recorded at low levels. *E.S.*

JOHANN STRAUSS II: Kaiser Walzer, Op. 437 (arr. Schoenberg); Rosen aus dem Süden, Op. 388 (arr. Schoenberg); Wein, Weib und



Irish flutist Galway with Spanish composer Rodrigo

Unexpected Galway

As one might infer from the listings below, James Galway's two new RCA recordings share something besides the presence of conductor Eduardo Mata and Ireland's flute-playing household word: each of them contains one legitimate flute piece together with a Galway-arranged flute version of a work originally written for something else. Apart from that, the records are different even in their conformity to expectations.

One would expect the Mozart Flute and Harp Concerto to come off well, and it unquestionably does. Galway, of course, unlike some other great flutists, is basically a *romantic* player, and so the listener must expect a certain expressive milking of the lines, particularly in the cadenzas, where conductor Mata cannot very well sit on his soloists' anachronistic urges. Robles may have romantic tendencies too, or she may simply be following Galway's lead, but she is, if you didn't know it, one superb harpist. Given the bias, the performance is really quite fine, and, though the recording irritatingly highlights the flute, it can be corrected by a small adjustment of the balance control to the right.

One might not expect too much from a flute transcription of the great Clarinet Concerto (Galway's is based on one by A. D. Müller published in 1801), and one doesn't get it. Galway tries, but the insinuating attack and expressive capabilities of a well-played clarinet are simply not available to him. The work is an object lesson in Mozart's sensitivity to instrumental idiom; it remains prime clarinet music.

The Rodrigo record reverses the situation. The Spanish composer's *Concierto Pastoral*,

written for Galway, bears all the marks of a potboiler: it is mechanical, melodically uninspired, derivative, sectionalized, and too virtuosic by half. Galway does everything with the flute but stand on it, but to no musically satisfying end. On the other hand, his transfiguration of Rodrigo's *Fantasia para un Gentilhombre* is pure serendipity. The *Fantasia*, in its original guitar and orchestra scoring, is a rather reticent work which, though it has a large share of memorable passages, seems too shy for its own good. Galway's rescoring (much more was done than simply adapting the guitar line for flute) brings the charm of the work to full flower, showing it off as everything that the flute concerto isn't, and may inadvertently garner for the piece a popularity of its own comparable to that of the famous *Concierto de Aranjuez*. The orchestra plays with idiomatic feeling, and the recording is not bad.

—James Goodfriend

JAMES GALWAY PLAYS MOZART. *Concerto in C Major for Flute and Harp (K. 299); Concerto in G Major for Flute and Orchestra (arr. Müller/Galway after the Clarinet Concerto in A Major, K. 622).* James Galway (flute); Marisa Robles (harp, in K. 299); London Symphony Orchestra, Eduardo Mata cond. RCA ARL1-3353 \$8.98.

JAMES GALWAY PLAYS RODRIGO. *Concierto Pastoral; Fantasia para un Gentilhombre (arr. Galway).* James Galway (flute); Philharmonia Orchestra, Eduardo Mata cond. RCA ARL1-3416 \$8.98, © ARK1-3416 \$8.98.

and elegant, but they seem to me incredibly strait-laced. Surely Schoenberg and company could not have expended twenty-five hours of rehearsal time to achieve *this* kind of result. A clue to the apparent mystery lies in the recently released 1932 recording of Webern conducting his own orchestration of Schubert dances (Webern: Complete Works, Vol. 1, Columbia M4 35193), for Webern's way with the music was filled with the most delicate rhythmic and dynamic inflections, precisely the sort of thing that would take hours of rehearsal to establish, and precisely the sort of thing that is absent on this record. The evidence may be circumstantial, but it, together with my ears, forces me to the conclusion that these otherwise very fine Boston performances are simply unidiomatic. But listen yourself; you might like them that way.

—James Goodfriend

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *Hugh the Drover.* Robert Tear (tenor), Hugh the Drover; Robert Lloyd (bass), the Constable; Sheila Armstrong (soprano), Mary; Helen Watts (contralto), Aunt Jane; Michael Rippon (bass), John the Butcher; Terence Sharpe (baritone), a Showman; John Fryatt (tenor), the Turnkey; others. Choristers of St. Paul's Cathedral Choir; Ambrosian Opera Chorus; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Charles Groves cond. ANGEL SZBX-3879 two discs \$18.96.

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Orchestra understated**

Hugh the Drover, composed between 1910 and 1914 but not staged until 1924, was the first of Ralph Vaughan Williams' five operas. It is, to quote the composer, "folk-song-y in character, with a certain amount of real ballad stuff thrown in." The story takes place in the English countryside during the Napoleonic War, and, though the libretto is not without some awkward turns and artificiality, the music is quite endearing in its natural "Englishness." It may not be an opera to cause much excitement, but it is tuneful, concisely written, and quite enjoyable.

There is nothing seriously amiss in this performance, but the prominence of voices over the orchestra and the generally low level of sound give me the impression that the music has not come to life with all the buoyancy and incisiveness implicit in the score. The singing is generally good, with particularly fine contributions from Sheila Armstrong and Helen Watts. There are no glaring weaknesses in the cast, but the overall effort would have benefited from a protagonist with a tone more ingratiating than Robert Tear's. G.J.

COLLECTIONS

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

AMERICAN CHORAL MUSIC OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. Carter: *Musicians Wrestle Everywhere. Ives: Psalms 24, 67, and 90. Druckman: Antiphonies. Copland: In the Beginning.* Beverly Morgan (mezzo-soprano, in Copland); Tanglewood Festival Chorus, John Oliver cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 912 \$9.98.

Performance: **Stunning**

Recording: **First-rate**

In programming, in execution, and in terms of recorded sound, this is a simply stunning album—by all odds the best of its kind since

the Gregg Smith Singers' 1965 Everest disc of William Schuman's *Carols of Death*. I have never heard the amazing Ives Psalms from the 1890s done more tellingly; Psalm 90, with organ and bells, is a masterpiece that makes an awesome dramatic impact. Elliott Carter's *Musicians Wrestle Everywhere* speaks movingly and delectably for itself in this performance, which has far more rhythmic vitality than the one by the Gregg Smith Singers on Vox. Jacob Druckman's *Antiphonies* are highly expressionistic a cappella settings of poems by Gerard Manley Hopkins that match the nervous energy and tension of the texts. Aaron Copland's *In the Beginning* is for me one of his less convincing works, yet it is understandably very popular and has fared well on discs in the past; mezzo Beverly Morgan and the Tanglewood choristers do splendidly with it here. I hope this release is only the first in an extended series from conductor John Oliver and his singers. *D.H.*

CHRISTEMAS IN ANGLIA: Early English Music for Christmastide (see Best of the Month, page 88)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PAUL O'DETTE: *The English Lute—Music by John Dowland and William Byrd.* Dowland: *The Most High and Mighty Christianus the Fourth, King of Denmark, His Galliard; Forlorn Hope Fancy; Sir Henry Guilforde, His Almaine; Mignarda; My Lady Hunsdons Puffe; Pavana; The Right Honourable Robert, Earl of Essex, His Galliard; A Fancy.* Byrd: *Will Yow Walk the Woods Soe Wyld; Pavana Bray; Galiarda; Lullaby; Wolseys Wilde; Pavane; My Lord Willoughbies Welcome Home.* Paul O'Dette (lute). NONESUCH H-71363 \$4.96, © N5-1363 \$4.96.

- Performance: **Skilled**
Recording: **Engaging**

Paul O'Dette, a classical guitar pupil of Christopher Parkening and Michael Lorimer, has turned his full attention to that most fascinating, glamorous, and elusive of instruments, the lute. Every age has its plucked-string favorite. In the Renaissance it was the lute, and nowhere was it more in favor and more inspirational than in England. Dowland, a lutenist himself, created a whole gorgeous repertoire for the instrument. Byrd was a keyboard player and composer of keyboard music par excellence, but much of his music lends itself very well to the lute—indeed, some of it was already being arranged for lute in his lifetime. O'Dette makes clear what the great historical reputation of the lute was all about. It was not an inferior sort of guitar but a distinctive instrument with a character all its own. In the hands of a composer like Dowland, its potential reaches a peak of musical fulfillment. O'Dette's playing is sensitive and moving. If you love the Renaissance, don't miss this record. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI: *Favorite Neapolitan Songs.* Di Capua: *O Sole Mio; Maria Mari.* Tosti: *A Vucchella; Marechiaro.* Cannio: *'O Surdato 'Nnammurato.* **Gambardella:** *'O Marenariello.* **De Curtis:** *Torna a Surriento; Tu, Ca Nun Chiagne!* **Pennino:** *Pecchè?* **D'Annibale:** *'O Paese d' 'o Sole.* **Tag-**

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liaferri: *Piscatore 'e Pusilleco*. **Denza:** *Funiculi Funicula*. **Anon.:** *Fenesta Vascia*. Luciano Pavarotti (tenor); Orchestra of the Teatro Comunale, Bologna, Anton Guadagno cond.; National Philharmonic Orchestra, Gian Carlo Chiaramello cond. LONDON OS 26560 \$8.98, © OS 5 26560 \$8.98.

Performance: **Prime Pavarotti**
Recording: **Very good**

The songs of Naples are among Italy's cultural treasures, and in perpetuating them on records Luciano Pavarotti continues in the path of his great tenor predecessors. Twelve of his choices are sure-fire old favorites; the one unfamiliar item, *Fenesta Vascia*, is a lovely example of the early (mid-nineteenth-century) Neapolitan song. An individual stylist, Pavarotti manages to impart to these songs his own brand of fervor and conviction. His tone is bright and generous, and the innate elegance of his singing successfully resists overstatement. In the second verses of *O Sole Mio* and a few others he scales his voice to a *pianissimo*, which is a nice touch, and the languorous approach he brings to *'A Vucchella* is quite effective.

There are a few instances where the overall rendition beomes too operatic, and *Marechiaro* sounds under-rehearsed. Gian Carlo Chiaramello's arrangements are modern, but not too intrusive, though he seems to be addicted to thunderous closing chords. But there's no question about it: everything here points to another Pavarotti best seller. *G.J.*

MAGGIE TEYTE: *Songs and Arias*. **Hahn:** *Si Mes Vers Avaient des Ailes*. **Fauré:** *En Sour-dine*. **Message:** *Monsieur Beaucaire: Philomel*. **Massenet:** *Manon: Adieu, notre petite table; Duet from Act I*. **Berlioz:** *Nuits d'Été: Absence*. **Duparc:** *L'Invitation au Voyage*. **Chausson:** *Les Temps des Lilas*. **Trad.:** *Greenleaves; Oft in the Stilly Night*. **Puccini:** *La Bohème: Mi Chiamano Mimi*. Maggie Teyte (soprano); Heddle Nash (tenor, in *Manon* duet); orchestra. GLENDALE (M) GL 8002 \$7.98 (from Glendale Records, P.O. Box 1941, Glendale, Calif. 91209).

Performance: **Appealing and individual**
Recording: **Fair to poor**

Maggie Teyte, a highly individual singer, had an endearing style that combined utter naturalness with a few lovable mannerisms. This recital, put together from radio air checks (mostly of *Bell Telephone Hour* performances during Teyte's 1948 American tour), shows her in a remarkably fresh vocal state for her age (sixty) and in full mastery of the French song. There was still an unaffected charm in her singing, and the vividness and mystery she imparts to *L'Invitation au Voyage* sets her rendition apart from any other. Her intonation, too, was remarkable, as in the difficult intervals in *Absence*; only a certain shortness of breath—artfully concealed most of the time—betrays her advanced age.

On the debit side I must cite the recorded sound, which is acceptable most of the time but quite dreadful in the *Manon* duet (from a 1938 BBC broadcast), unfortunately damaging an otherwise elegant performance. The two traditional British songs are beautifully sung, but "*Mi chiamano Mimi*" is too mannered and quite unidiomatic. Nevertheless, Teyte's studio recordings are not easy to come by, and her admirers will find much to treasure in this memento of her art. *G.J.*



STEREO REVIEW 1979 EDITORIAL INDEX

Prepared by David Stein



● AUDIO BASICS

The Wrong Tape (Hodges), Jan. 36
Working Out the Angles (Hodges), Feb. 42
Tape Bias: A Popular View (Hodges), Mar. 38
Signal Processing (Hodges), Apr. 40, May 40
From Infrasonic to Ultrasonic (Hodges), Jun. 32
Is There Hope for FM? (Hodges), Jul. 42
Judging Speaker Quality (Hodges), Aug. 28
The Dawn of Digital (Hodges), Sep. 34
A Decade in Audio (Hodges), Oct. 28
In the Beginning (Greene), Nov. 26

● AUDIO NEWS

The New Recording Technology (Stock), Feb. 30
A Videodisc Hits the Market (Stock), Mar. 30
Magnavision: How Well Does It Work? (Kois), Apr. 28
You, Me, and the FCC (Stock), May 30
A Digitally Encoded Audio Disc (Stock), Sep. 28
The FM Squeeze (Mitchell), Dec. 30

● EQUIPMENT REVIEWS

(Hirsch-Houck Laboratories)

Amplifiers and Preamplifiers

BGW Model 210 power amplifier, Jan. 44
Carver C-4000 sonic-holography/autocorrelator pre-amplifier, May 46
GAS Thalia II preamplifier, Nov. 44
Luxman Model L-11 integrated amplifier, Nov. 46
NAD Model 3020 integrated amplifier, Jul. 54
Onkyo A-7070 integrated amplifier, Aug. 50
Phase Linear Model 700 Series Two power amplifier, Apr. 62
Pioneer SA-7800 integrated amplifier, Oct. 51
Sansui AU-919 integrated amplifier, Mar. 56
Soundcraftsmen SP4002 preamplifier, Jun. 56
Threshold CAS 1 power amplifier, Feb. 62

Phono Cartridges

Audio-Technica AT25, Oct. 54
Bang & Olufsen MMC 20CL, Jun. 40
Dual/Ortofon ULM 55E, Dec. 50
Empire EDR.9, Sep. 56
Ortofon Concorde 30, Aug. 40
Signet TK7E, Feb. 56

Receivers

Audio Pro TA-150, Dec. 58
Harman Kardon hk670, Apr. 47
Kenwood KR-8050, Sep. 48
J. C. Penney Model 3275, Jan. 48
Sherwood S-7650, May 64
Yamaha CR-840, Jun. 48

Speaker Systems

AAL Micro 100, Aug. 61
Acoustique 3A Andante, Nov. 51
Acutex MTS 1, Aug. 61
ADS Model 300, Aug. 62
Akai SW-7, Aug. 62
Audioanalyst M2, Aug. 62
Avid Model 230, Feb. 54
B & W DM2/II, Aug. 38
Bang & Olufsen C-40, Aug. 63
Braun L-200, Aug. 63
Canton GLE 40, Aug. 63
Dahlquist ALS 3, Aug. 64
Design Acoustics D-12A, Mar. 52
Electro-Voice Interface-C Series II, Dec. 46
Gale GS401A, Apr. 58
Hitachi HS-1, Aug. 65
JVC s-M3, Aug. 65
KEF Model 105, Jun. 52
Koss CM/1020, Sep. 46
Lafayette Pip-Speak, Aug. 66
Micron Model 521, Aug. 66
Mordaunt-Short Festival Series 2, Oct. 44
Polk Mini-Monitor, Aug. 65
Realistic Minimus 7, Aug. 66
RTR PS/1: DAC/1, Jul. 52
Sansui J11, Aug. 67
Sony SS-5GX, Aug. 68
Ultralinear Model 228, Jan. 46; M16, Aug. 68
Visonik D-6000, Aug. 68

Tape Decks

Akai GX-635D open-reel, Nov. 36
Fisher CR-4025 cassette, May 54
Hitachi D-5500 cassette, Jul. 48
Nakamichi Model 582 cassette, Aug. 34
Realistic SCT-30 cassette, Jan. 54
Tandberg TD 20A open-reel, Dec. 40
Teac Model 124 "Syncaset," Sep. 60
Toshiba PC-5460 cassette, Feb. 51

Tuners

Kenwood KT-917, Mar. 43
Mitsubishi DA-F20, Aug. 46
Rotel RT-2100, Oct. 58

Turntables, Automatic and Manual

Dual Model 506, Dec. 50
Garrard DD132, Sep. 54
Philips AF 877, Mar. 48
Revox B790, Apr. 66
Thorens TD 115C, Jul. 60

Other Equipment

ADC Sound Shaper Two Mk 1 equalizer, Feb. 60
ADS Model 10 Acoustic Dimension Synthesizer, Apr. 50
Allison Electronic Subwoofer, Oct. 60
B.I.C. FM-8 Beam Box antenna, Mar. 46
dbx Model 1BX dynamic-range expander, Jul. 62;
Model 21 disc decoder, Nov. 40
Koss Pro/4 AAA headphones, Jan. 52
MXR dynamic expander, Dec. 44
Scott Model 830Z audio analyzer, Jun. 38
Shure/SME Series III tone arm, May 58
SAE Model 180 parametric equalizer, May 56

● TAPETALK (Stark)

Microphone Selection, Feb. 49, Apr. 43
Meters vs. Electronic Indicators, May 42
The Dolby HX System, Sep. 38
Improving Cassette Treble Response, Oct. 32
Reader Questions and Answers, Jan. 38, Jul. 38,
Aug. 30, Oct. 32, Nov. 28, Dec. 37

● TECHNICAL TALK (Hirsch)

Cartridge Measurements—Read with Care!, Jan. 42
Amplifier Dynamic Headroom, Feb. 50
Distortion—How Small Must It Be?, Mar. 42
Does "Reference" Mean Best?, Apr. 46
Audible Differences, May 45
Fuse Distortion?, Jun. 37
Computerized Cartridge Measurements, Jul. 47
Computerized Speaker Measurements, Aug. 33
Modified Amplifier Distortion Measurements, Sep. 45
Are Stereo Images Real?, Oct. 41
Test Samples: How Representative Are They?, Nov. 31
Measurements in the Twilight Zone, Dec. 39

● TECHNICAL FEATURES

Audio Accessories (Berger), Dec. 75
Autosound (Berger), Jul. 76
Cassette Recorders, Portable (Berger), Mar. 68
Digital Mastering (Repka), Jan. 62
FM Broadcast Quality (Orban), Nov. 60
Installation of the Month (Stock), Apr. 44, Aug. 74,
Oct. 36
Japan Audio Fair (Mitchell), Apr. 72
Minicomponents (Klein), Apr. 77
Minispeakers, Listening Tests (Stock), Aug. 58
National Public Radio Broadcasting via Satellite (Greene), Nov. 64
New Audio Products 1979 (Hodges): Winter CES,
May 79; Summer CES, Sep. 70, Oct. 77
Phono Cartridges (Curtiss), Feb. 72
Record Hygiene (Alexandrovich), Jun. 78
Record Quality Control ("Engineer X"), Jan. 72;
(Mendenhall), Jan. 76
Stereo Clinic (Rodrigues), Dec. 80
Subwoofers (Mitchell), Oct. 70
Tape. The Future of Magnetic (Stark, Imaoka),
Mar. 78
Tape Recording Primer (Greene), Mar. 75
Turntable Primer (Stock), Jun. 64

● BEST OF THE MONTH

Classical

Bach, J. S.: *St. Matthew Passion*, Jan. 92
Barrios: *Guitar Works*, Jun. 82
Beethoven: *Fidelio*, Feb. 99; *Piano Concerto No. 4*,
Apr. 92; *String Quartets Nos. 7-11*, Nov. 74
Brahms: *Songs*, Mar. 86
Britten: *Peter Grimes*, Aug. 76; *Spring Symphony*,
Sep. 88
Bruckner: *Symphony No. 5*, Jan. 93
Grainger: *Orchestral Pieces*, Jun. 84
Grieg: *Piano Concerto in A Minor*, Jun. 84; *Peer Gynt*, Aug. 79
Haydn: *Vocal Trios and Quartets*, Mar. 87
Humperdinck: *Hansel and Gretel*, Dec. 92
Machaut: *Secular Music and Poetry*, Jul. 73
Mahler: *Symphony No. 1*, Feb. 100
Massenet: *Cendrillon*, Sep. 89
Milhaud: *Protée; Suite Symphonique No. 2*, Jun. 85
Moussorgsky: *Pictures at an Exhibition; A Night on Bald Mountain*, Nov. 81
Mozart: *Violin Concertos Nos. 2 and 5*, Dec. 88; *The Marriage of Figaro*, Dec. 86
Schubert: *Impromptus*, Jul. 72
Schumann: *Kreisleriana; Two Novellen*, May 93
Shostakovich: *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, Oct. 93
Strauss, R.: *Ein Heldenleben*, Sep. 90; *Die Schweigsame Frau*, Nov. 77
Tchaikovsky: *The Seasons*, May 96
Telemann: *Music for Winds*, Feb. 103
Thomas: *Mignon*, Feb. 102
Verdi: *Battaglia di Legnano*, Apr. 91
Zelenka: *Orchestral Music*, Mar. 84

Christmas in Anglia, Dec. 88
Digital Showpieces (Morton Gould, Carlo Curley),
Oct. 90
Joselson, Tedd: *Prokofiev Piano Concerto No. 3* and
Ravel Piano Concerto in G Minor, Jan. 90
Moravec, Ivan: *Schumann Piano Concerto* and
Franck Symphonic Variations, Apr. 93
Scotto, Renata, and Plácido Domingo: *Romantic Opera Duets*, May 94

Popular

Austin, Patti: *Live at the Bottom Line*, Sep. 88
Bacharach, Burt: *Woman*, Sep. 86
Bromberg, David: *My Own House*, May 97
Bryson, Peabo: *Crosswinds*, Apr. 94
Burton, Gary, and Chick Corea: *Duet*, Dec. 91
Christy, June: *Impromptu*, May 95
The Clash, Oct. 92
Daye, Cory: *Cory and Me*, Nov. 74
Dire Straits, May 94
Flack, Roberta, Jan. 89
Flash and the Pan, Jul. 74
Freeman, Chico: *Kings of Mali*, Jan. 91
Garfunkel, Art: *Fate for Breakfast*, Jul. 70
Grateful Dead: *Shakedown Street*, Apr. 94
Griffin, Johnny: *Live in Tokyo*, Mar. 83
Harris, Emmylou: *Blue Kentucky Girl*, Sep. 89
Heath Brothers: *Passing Thru...*, Feb. 103
Jennings, Waylon: *I've Always Been Crazy*,
Feb. 104
Laws, Hubert: *Land of Passion*, Aug. 78
Mack, Jimmie: *On the Corner*, Jun. 85
Mann, Herbie: *Super Mann*, Jun. 86
Merrill, Helen: *Something Special*, Apr. 95
Milestone Jazzstars: *In Concert*, May 96
Morris, Joan, and William Bolcom: *Songs of Irving Berlin*, Jul. 73
Muldaur, Maria: *Open Your Eyes*, Nov. 78
Newman, Randy: *Born Again*, Nov. 72
Peter, Paul & Mary: *Reunion*, Jan. 90
Reese, Della: *One of a Kind*, Oct. 94
Riperton, Minnie: *Minnie*, Aug. 79
The Roches, Jul. 72
Sedaka, Neil: *All You Need Is the Music*, Mar. 85
Summer, Donna: *Live and More*, Feb. 101
Taste of Honey: *Another Taste*, Oct. 94
Thompson, Richard and Linda: *First Light*, Mar. 85
Warnes, Jennifer: *Shot Through the Heart*, Aug. 78

Bread & Roses, Dec. 91

(Overleaf)

● **GOING ON RECORD (Goodfriend)**

Great Music I Have Hated, Jan. 28
 Centen- and Other -aries, Feb. 70
 Vox Pop, Mar. 60
 History Is Bunk (Almost), Apr. 69
 A New "Aspekte," May 70
 Kremerspiegel, Jun. 60
 The Here and Now Scene, Jul. 68
 Fit for a King, Aug. 54
 Play It Again, Claude!, Sep. 66
 What's in a (Generic) Name?, Oct. 64
 Webern, Berg, and . . . , Nov. 56
 Time and Tempo, Dec. 65

● **THE OPERA FILE (Livingstone)**

Texaco Presents, Dec. 68

● **THE POP BEAT (Weiss)**

Two Ways to Stretch Your Ears, Jan. 61
 "Going Gold," Feb. 68
 The Lizard King Lives, Apr. 70
 Amateur Night, May 68
 Disco Goes Legit, Jun. 62
 Crime and Punishment, Jul. 66
 Jingles All the Way, Aug. 56
 Second-Generation Rock, Oct. 66
 Twenty Fantastick Years, Nov. 54
 The Great Pratfall, Dec. 66

● **SIMELS LIVE**

New in New York, Sep. 64
 Night of the Living Poodles, Dec. 162

● **SPEAKING OF MUSIC (Anderson)**

The Idea of Music, Jan. 8
 Support Your Local Civilization, Feb. 8
 Political Music/Musical Politics, Mar. 8
 Postponing Life, Apr. 8
 Aesthetological Unemployment, May 8
 The Critic's Duty, Jun. 8
 Monster Concert, Jul. 8
 Sweeney and the Zeitgeist, Aug. 7
 Advice to Young Composers, Sep. 6
 Not on the Disc, Oct. 6
 Ear Training, Nov. 6
 Bei Canto Deities, Dec. 6

● **MUSICAL FEATURES**

Adler, Kurt Herbert: Opera Overtures (Freed), Apr. 159
 Allen, Peter: *I Could Have Been a Sailor* (Reilly), Apr. 98
 Angel's 45-rpm Releases (Hall), Aug. 120
 Armstrong, Louis (Vance), May 142
 The Asbury Jukes—see Southside Johnny
 Ashford and Simpson (Allen), Aug. 70
 Astaire, Fred: *The Astaire Story* (Reilly), Mar. 120
 Avant-Garde, New Sounds from the (Salzman), Jan. 108
 Bach, J. C.: Symphonies, Op. 3 (Lincoln), Oct. 146
 Bach, J. S./Malloch: *The Art of Fuguing* (Hall), Feb. 134
 Baez, Joan: *Honest Lullaby* (Reilly), Oct. 114
 Bagley, Ben: *Make Mine Manhattan and Great Revisited* (Kresh), Aug. 94
 Barber, Samuel (Freed), May 115
 Bartók: *Concerto for Orchestra* (Hall), Nov. 86; also see Dorati
 Bee Gees (Coppage), Apr. 86; *Spirits Having Flown* (Simels, Coppage), Apr. 100
 Beethoven: *Archduke Trio* (Freed), Jan. 96; String Trios (Kolodin), Mar. 90; Symphonies 1-9 and Overtures (Martin), Aug. 110; also see Pollini
 Beiderbecke, Bix (Goodfriend), Dec. 132
 Benson, George: *Livin' Inside Your Love* (Garland), Jul. 116
 Berners: Songs and Piano Music (Reilly), Aug. 109
 Berry, Chuck: *Rockit* (Vance), Dec. 96
 Berwald: Complete Orchestral Works (Freed), Dec. 140
 The Blues Brothers: *Briefcase Full of Blues* (Simels), May 124
 Blues Revival (Morthland), Dec. 70
 Boskovsky, Willi: *New Year's in Vienna* (Freed), Jun. 146
 The Boomtown Rats: *A Tonic for the Troops* (Simels), May 121
 Bowie, David: *Stage* (Simels), Jan. 122
 Bream, Julian: *Villa-Lobos Etudes, Suite* (Freed), Mar. 98
 British Music (Jacobson), Sep. 108
 Cantelli, Guido: Franck Symphony in D Minor (Kresh), Apr. 133
 Carmichael, Hoagy (Vance), Nov. 130
 Catherine, Philip—see Coryell
 China: Bamboo Curtain Music (Goodfriend), Nov. 94
 Chopin: Piano Music (Salzman), May 100; (Hall), Jun. 140; also see Zimmerman
Clown Around (Thompson), Jan. 82
 Cooder, Ry (Coppage), Dec. 82; *Bop Till You Drop* (Coppage), Nov. 122

Cooper, Alice: *From the Inside* (Coppage), Apr. 106
 Copland and Ives (Hall), May 108
 Coryell, Larry, and Philip Catherine: *Splendid* (Albertson), Jan. 150
 Costello, Elvis: *Armed Forces* (Simels), Jun. 94
 Crawford, Randy: *Raw Silk* (Garland), Jul. 112
 Creme, Lol, and Kevin Godley: L, Feb. 110
 Dash, Sarah (Garland), Mar. 128
 De los Angeles, Victoria: *In Concert* (Livingstone), Nov. 90
 Denver, John, and the Muppets: *A Christmas Together* (Anderson), Dec. 100
 Disney: *The Magical World of* (Buxbaum), Jun. 112
 Dorati, Antal: Bartók Suite No. 1, *Two Pictures* (Freed), Sep. 96
 Dylan, Bob: *Slow Train Coming* (Coppage), Nov. 112
 Fiedler, Arthur: Tchaikovsky and Rimsky Capriccios (Freed), Oct. 131; Conducts Gershwin, Favorite Overtures, *Saturday Night Fiedler* (Freed), Nov. 106
 Flamin' Groovies: *Jumpin' in the Night* (Simels), Nov. 118
 Fox, Virgil: *The Fox Touch* (Hall), Nov. 98
 Franklin, Aretha: *La Diva* (Garland), Dec. 105
 Fricke, Janie (Coppage), Feb. 80
 Galway, James (Kozinn), Oct. 84; Plays Mozart and Rodrigo Concertos (Goodfriend), Dec. 154
 Gaye, Marvin: *Here, My Dear* (Garland), May 122
 Glass: *Einstein on the Beach* (Salzman), Sep. 100
 Godley, Kevin—see Creme, Lol
 Gold Records (Jurin), Jul. 90
 Goossens: *Divertissement*, Oboe Concerto, Songs, Chamber Works (Freed), Jan. 100
 Gordon, Robert: *Rock Billy Boogie* (Simels), May 138
 Gottschalk: *Night in the Tropics* (Chase), Apr. 134
 Gounod: *Faust* (Jellinek), Dec. 142
 Grammys, Simels Contemplates the, May 148
 Grappelli, Stéphane: *Uptown Dance* (Reilly), Jan. 142
 Hair and the Hippie Revival (Simels), Jun. 108
 Harrison, George (Simels), Apr. 114
 Harrow, Nancy: *Anything Goes* (Reilly), Dec. 112
 Haydn: *The Seasons* (Freed), Jun. 132; Chamber Music (Kipnis), Oct. 132
 Haymes, Dick: *As Time Goes By* (Reilly), May 134
 Heinrich: *The Ornithological Combat of Kings* (Chase), Apr. 134
 Hines, Earl, and Budd Johnson: *Linger Awhile* (Vance), Nov. 148
 Holloway, Loleatta: *Queen of the Night* (Garland), Jan. 138
 Hunter, Alberta: *The Thirties* (Pleasants), Jun. 90
 In Sync/Connoisseur Society Cassettes (Freed), Jul. 108
 Ives—see Copland
 Jarreau, Al: *All Fly Home* (Garland), Feb. 107
 Jazz Guitar Pioneers (Vance), Feb. 126
 Jazz Reissues (Albertson): Barnaby/Candid, Jan. 144; Pacific, Apr. 130; Bethlehem, Jun. 122
 Joel, Billy: *52nd Street* (Reilly), Jan. 131
 John, Elton: *A Single Man* (Reilly), Jan. 121
 Johnson, Budd—see Hines
 Kahn, Chaka (Garland), Mar. 128
 The Kinks: *Low Budget* (Coppage), Oct. 98
 Kiss: Solo Albums (Simels), Feb. 118
 Kitt, Eartha: *Eartha* (Hemming), Feb. 114
 Knight, Gladys (Garland), Mar. 128
 Lea, Barbara: *Remembering Remembering Lee Wiley* (Reilly), Nov. 154
 Lillie, Beatrice: *Queen Bee* (Reilly), Sep. 114
 Lord of the Rings (Kresh), Mar. 132
 Marriner, Neville: Bloch and Martin (Hall), Oct. 142
 McGarrigle, Kate and Anna: *Pronto Monto* (Reilly), Feb. 122
 McGuinn, Clark & Hillman (Simels), Apr. 114
 Milnes, Sherrill—see Sills
 Mingus, Charles (Albertson), Oct. 128
 Mitchell, Joni: *Mingus* (Coppage), Oct. 100
 Monteverdi: *Il Combattimento* and Other Secular Vocal Works (Lincoln), May 99
 Morrison, Van: *Into the Music* (Coppage), Dec. 108
 Mouskouri, Nana: *Roses & Sunshine* (Reilly), Sep. 124
 Moussorgsky—see Nesterenko
 Mozart: *Idomeneo* (Jellinek), Sep. 104; also see Galway, Mutter, Zimmerman
 The Muppets: *The Muppet Movie* (Reilly), Dec. 116; also see Denver
 Murphey, Michael: *Peaks, Valleys, Honky-tonks, and Alleys* (Coppage), Jul. 114
 Murphy, Mark: *Stolen Moments* (Reilly), Jun. 98; *Sings Dorothy Fields and Cy Coleman* (Reilly), Nov. 154
 Murray, Anne: *I'll Always Love You* (Anderson), Dec. 120
 Musical-Comedy Reissues (Kresh), Jul. 126
 Muti, Riccardo (Hemming), Mar. 64; First Philadelphia Orchestra Recordings (Goodfriend), Mar. 102

Mutter, Anne-Sophie: Mozart Violin Concertos (Freed), Jul. 95
 National Public Radio Programming (Salzman), Nov. 64
 Nesterenko, Yevgeny: Moussorgsky Songs (Salzman), Jun. 134
 Nelson, Willie (Nash), Nov. 68
 New Lost City Ramblers: *20 Years/Concert Performances* (Reilly), Aug. 96
 New World Quartet: *New World Composers from the Old World* (Jacobson), Apr. 146
 Oak Ridge Boys: *Have Arrived* (Coppage), Sep. 128
 O'Day, Anita: *The Big Band Sessions* (Reilly), Sep. 134
 Opera Glasses, Through the (Kilbourne), Jan. 105
 Parker, Graham, and the Rumour: *Squeezing Out Sparks* (Simels), Jun. 94
 Parton, Dolly (Coppage), Sep. 82; *Great Balls of Fire* (Coppage), Sep. 118
 Passionate Collector, The (Kresh), Jun. 72
 Pennies from Heaven (Kresh), Dec. 129
 Perlman, Itzhak: *Virtuoso Violinist* (Jellinek), Nov. 104
 Phantasmagoria Musica (Perry), Feb. 132, Mar. 92, Apr. 138, May 104, Jun. 128, Jul. 100, Sep. 98, Oct. 136
 Pointer, Bonnie (Garland), Mar. 128
 Pollini, Maurizio: Beethoven Piano Sonatas Nos. 28-32 (Freed), Feb. 131
 Pop Rotogravure (Simels), Mar. 110, May 118, Jul. 88, Sep. 110, Nov. 108
 Prague String Quartet: Borodin and Prokofiev Quartets (Freed), Mar. 89
 Ravel: *Chansons Madécasses*, Small Chamber Works (Freed), Jun. 150
 Record Collecting—see Passionate
 Record of the Year Awards, Feb. 85; Party, Apr. 84
 Rhythm-and-Blues, Basic Library of (Garland), May 72
 Rolls-Royce Audio Demo Tape (Reilly), Jul. 81
 Ross, Diana: *The Boss* (Reilly), Oct. 108
 Rossini/Respighi: *La Boutique Fantasque* (Kresh), Dec. 153
 Schubert: *Alfonso und Estrella* (Jellinek), Jul. 98; Symphonies and Overtures (Kolodin), Aug. 114
 Scott, Marilyn: *Dreams of Tomorrow* (Reilly), Jul. 111
 Seventies, Requiem for the (Coppage), Jul. 84
 Shaw, Robert: Stravinsky and Borodin (Freed), Feb. 136
 Shaw, Woody: *Woody III* (Albertson), Oct. 124
 Sills, Beverly (Livingstone), Feb. 88; and Sherrill Milnes, *Up in Central Park* (Anderson), Feb. 91
 Simon, Carly: *Spy* (Reilly), Oct. 120
 Smetana: *Má Vlast* (Martin), Nov. 100
 Patti Smith Group: *Wave* (Simels), Jul. 118
 Southside Johnny (Simels), Jan. 66; and the Asbury Jukes, *Hearts of Stone* (Simels), Jan. 70; *The Jukes* (Simels), Oct. 97
 Spivakov, Vladimir: Violin Recital (Jellinek), Nov. 104
 Statler Brothers: *The Originals* (Coppage), Sep. 128
 Steeleye Span: *Live at Last* (Coppage), Mar. 136
 Stern, Isaac (Salzman), Jul. 103
 Streisand, Barbra: *Greatest Hits, Volume II* (Reilly), Mar. 114
 Stuff: *Stuff It!* (Vance), Aug. 101
 Sullivan: *The Zoo; Cox and Box* (Kresh), Jul. 107
 Sullivan, Maxine: *We Just Couldn't Say Goodbye* (Reilly), Nov. 154
 Summer, Donna: *Bad Girls* (Buxbaum), Aug. 83
Superman—The Movie (Simels), Mar. 113
 Sweeney Todd (Kresh), Aug. 90
 Taylor, James: *Flag* (Coppage), Aug. 86
 Tee, Richard: *Strokin'* (Vance), Aug. 101
They're Playing Our Song (Reilly), Jun. 116
 Tin Huey: *Contents Dislodged During Shipping* (Simels), Jun. 89
 Tokyo Quartet (Kozinn), May 88
 Tonio K.: *Life in the Foodchain* (Simels), Apr. 97
 Tosh, Peter: *Bush Doctor* (Bangs), Apr. 122
 Venuti, Joe: *Violin Jazz* (Reilly), Jan. 142
 Verdi: *Otello* (Jellinek), Feb. 142
 Vienna Choir Boys: British Christmas Music (Goodfriend), Dec. 137
 Vivaldi: *Orlando Furioso* (Salzman), Jan. 104; Sacred Choral Music (Lincoln), Jan. 116; *Tito Manlio* (Salzman), Mar. 109
 Voyage: *Fly Away* (Buxbaum), May 126
 Wakeman, Rick: *Rhapsodies* (Kresh), Nov. 136
 Walcha, Helmut: *The Early German Organ School* (Lincoln), Jun. 125
 Webern: Complete Works (Salzman), Oct. 148
 The Who: *The Kids Are Alright* (Simels), Sep. 113; *Quadrophonia* (Simels), Dec. 126
 Wind Band Spectacular (Hall), Jan. 65
 Word of Mouth Chorus: *Rivers of Delight* (Salzman), Aug. 113
 Yiddish Folk Songs (Kresh), Apr. 127
 Zappa, Frank (Simels), Apr. 80
 Zimmerman, Krystian: Mozart Sonatas (Freed), Jan. 95; Chopin Piano Concerto No. 1 (Freed), Sep. 93

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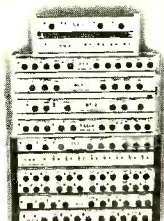
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STEREO REVIEW
ADVERTISERS' INDEX

READER SERVICE NO.	ADVERTISER	PAGE NUMBER
1	Acoustic Research	119
	ADS	110, 131
2	Aiwa	90
3	Allison Acoustics	20
4	Alltec Corp./Sound Products Division	12
5	Ampeg Corp.	94
6	Angel/EMI Records	138
7	Audio Dynamics-Cartridge	21
8	Audio Matic Electronics	98
9	Audio Supermart	147
	Audio-Technica U.S., Inc.	141
10	Bair Corporation	64
11	Bang & Olufsen of America	17
	Bose Corporation	11, 109, Cover 3
12	BSR (USA), Ltd.-Accuglide	115
13	BSR (USA), Ltd.-Equalizer	69
	Burns Audioelectronics, Inc.	143
14	Clarion Corporation	151
15	Consumers Company	144
16	Crystal Clear Records	79
17	dbx, Inc.	63
18	Discount Music Club	16
19	Discount Sound	134
20	Discwasher	4
	Dual	52, 53
21	Dynaco	106
22	Electro-Voice, Inc.	18
	Empire Scientific Corp.	2
23	Epicure Products, Inc.	117
24	Eumig (USA), Inc.	38
	Fuji Photo Film, USA	135
25	Fujitsu Ten	148
26	Harvey's Sound	144
27	Hi-Fi Buys	152
28	Illinois Audio	30
29	Infinity Systems, Inc.	93
30	International Hi-Fi Dist.	152
	Jack Daniel's	133
31	J & R Music World	65
32	Jensen Sound Laboratories	41
	Kenwood Electronics	31, 33
	Kool Cigarettes	101
33	Koss Corporation	22, 23
34	Koss Corporation	Cover 4
35	Lee	104
	Lord Calvert Canadian	85
36	Lux Audio of America, Ltd.	149
37	3M Company	155
38	Maxell Corp. of America	51
39	Maxell Corp. of America	130
40	Mazda	34, 35
42	Memorex Corp.	36
75	Micro-Acoustics Corp.	68
43	Mitsubishi Car Audio	114
44	Mobile Fidelity Sound Labs	111
	Nakamichi USA Corp.	127
	Nikko Electric Corp. of America	45
45	Ohm Acoustics Corp.	126
46	Onkyo	89
66	Panasonic	25
47	Phase Linear	118
52	Philips High Fidelity Laboratories	56, 57
41	Pickering & Company	47
	Radio Shack	49
	R. J. Reynolds/Real Cigarettes	121
	R. J. Reynolds/Winston	61, 128
	Ron Rico Rum	55
48	S.A.E.	59
49	Sansui Electronics Corp.	123
50	Sanyo	7
51	H. H. Scott, Inc.	74
53	Shure Brothers	66
54	Shure Brothers	67
55	Sony Corporation	97
56	Sony Corporation	99
57	Sony Corporation	28, 29
58	Sony Corporation	122
	Speakerlab	153
59	Stereo Corporation of America	147
	Stereo Discounters	156
60	Studer/Revox America	139
61	Superelex Electronics	153
62	TDK Electronics	15
	TDK Electronics	161
63	Teac Corporation	26, 27
64	Technics by Panasonic	113
65	Technics by Panasonic	43
67	Top Discount Audio	156
68	Toyota	124, 125
	United Audio	52, 53
69	U.S. JVC Corp.	8, 9
70	U.S. Pioneer	Cover 2, 1
	Viceroy	32
71	Wisconsin Discount Stereo	155
	Yamaha International Corp.	19
72	Yashica, Inc.	98
73	Yashica, Inc.	122
74	Zenith	107

DECEMBER 1979

Simels Live

By Steve Simels



NIGHT OF THE LIVING POODLES

ONE of the interesting things about pub crawling, especially in a major metropolitan area, is that sometimes you chance upon the birthing of a whole new sociological phenomenon. Usually, of course, you don't realize it until a few months, even years, later, after you've read about it in some trend-sensitive, circulation-under-forty-thousand tabloid, but that's the risk you take. For example, seasoned observer that I am, I had no idea, on a long-ago summer night in 1973 when I stumbled into a stygian Bowery dive and noticed the bass player of the band rending his T-shirt on the tiny stage between solos, that this was the soon-to-be-legendary Richard Hell in the process of inventing punk fashion. In the immortal words of the 2000 Year Old Man, *who knew?*

Be that as it may, I have noticed that an entire new subgenre of rock-and-roll—utterly without redeeming social value, shamelessly anachronistic, and bereft of any media attention whatsoever—has been festering of late, like some hideous herpes, right under our collective nose. Cognoscenti (there *are* a few of us) refer to it as Poodle Rock, though not because it has anything to do with the antics of the group affectionately known as the Fab Poos. Briefly stated, Poodle Rock is the music purveyed by any group of musicians sporting long shag haircuts, flashy eye make-up, platform shoes, and immense stacks of Marshall amplifiers. It is invariably loud and heavy on the macho posturing (even when performed by women), and it generally sounds like a variant of what Bad Company plays on an off night, although there are some exceptions.

Its antecedents are obvious: the 1969 Rolling Stones (many of these bands have all but memorized the dialogue in *Gimme Shelter*), the 1971 Rod Stewart and Faces, the snake-period Alice Cooper, and the latter-day Kiss (especially in New York, where Ace and Gene and the rest are viewed as local boys who made good). Among its distinguishing characteristics is that all the bands put ads in the *Village Voice* giving *height* requirements. It used to be called Glitter Rock, Heavy Metal, and Big Rock, and most critics have long since written it off as fatally passé and even irrelevant, which of course explains why so many groups, signed and unsigned, are attracting large crowds by playing it.

In New York City, Poodle Central is a place called the Great Gildersleeves, located on the Bowery just down the street from the shrine known as CBGB (and easily sighted because of the expensively garish neon sign out front). Gildersleeves started out as a sort of less-uptight alternative to CB's; they booked blues bands, mainstream rockers, and three-chord weirdos without a thought about what was hip and what wasn't. Unfortunately, the major labels began using it as a showcase room for aging heavy-metal veterans, attendance picked up, and the owners realized they had a potentially good thing going. The result? An endless succession of the most boring, obnoxious (and proud of it) bands in Christendom, complete with tired old theatrics (smoke bombs in *this* day and age?), vacuous groupies, and an audience dressed exactly like the performers.

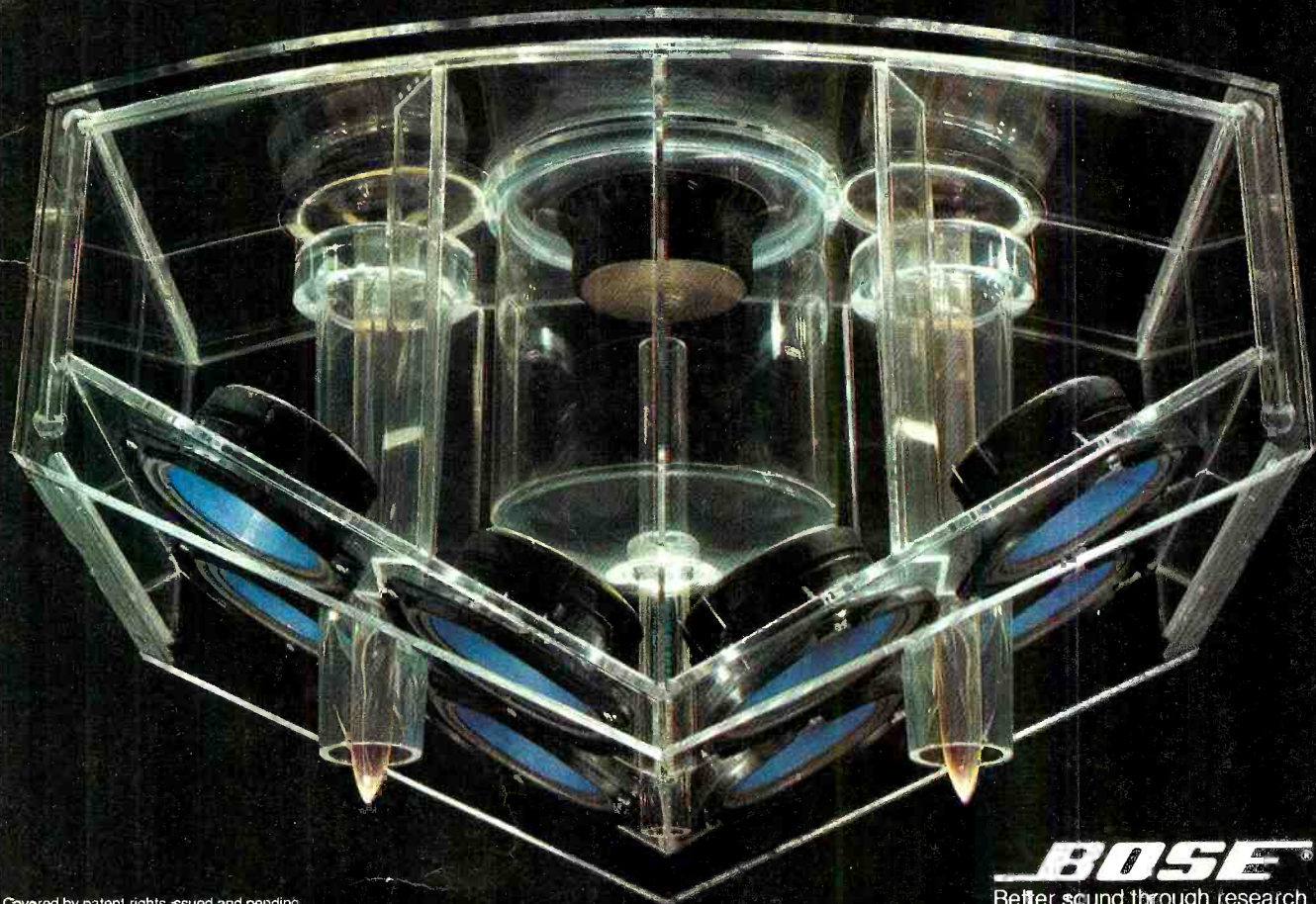
ON an average night at Gildersleeves you might see... the **Richie Scarlett Band**. Scarlett is a guy capitalizing on a physical resemblance to Keith Richards in such an obsessive manner that it verges on the pathological. He gets this year's "Jeff Beck Erect Left Nipple" award for performing in a leather jacket without a shirt. His music sounds like what a Sherman tank looks like, and it has been known to reduce more than one listener to whimpering "I'll talk, I'll talk..." Then there are the **Brats**, who've been playing drivel in white-satin gangster outfits since the days of the Mercer Arts Center, apparently without wising up. At a recent performance they attracted nonmusical media attention when one of their flash pots exploded prematurely, sending several patrons to the hospital. Any press is good press... Or you might take the **Bonnie Parker Band**—please! Ms. Parker is a bass-playing young woman with a voice like Gabby Hayes and a stage demeanor that suggests Rod Stewart on angel dust and testosterone. And there's **Falcon Eddy**, a power trio with a lead singer *really bugged* that he's not as good looking as Roger Daltrey... **Moonbeam**, with a lead guitarist who will answer much in heaven to Jimi Hendrix... and **Face Dancer**, of whom I will say nothing except that their name is not the worst thing about them. There're more, but I'm, uh, pooched out. □

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