

APRIL 1981 • \$1.25

# Stereo Review®

## VIDEO GOES AUDIO

**STEREO TV IN JAPAN:** A preview of the hardware

**STEREO TV IN THE U.S.:** How soon will it be here?

Julian Hirsch discusses  
**AMPLIFIER OUTPUT-CURRENT RATINGS**

## EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS:

- Kenwood KA-1000 Integrated Amplifier
- Realistic STA-2250 Stereo Receiver
- SAE 2401 Power Amplifier
- Soundcraftsmen AE2420-R "Scan-Alyzer"
- 3D Acoustics Three-piece Speaker System

## DISC SPECIALS:

Don McLean: "Chain Lightning"  
Warren Zevon: "Stand in the Fire"  
Blondie: "Autoamerican"  
The new "42nd Street"  
and ... Todd Rundgren,  
Peter Allen

MONTEVERDI: *Return of Ulysses*  
ROSSINI: *William Tell*  
and ... Gidon Kremer,  
Helnz Holliger



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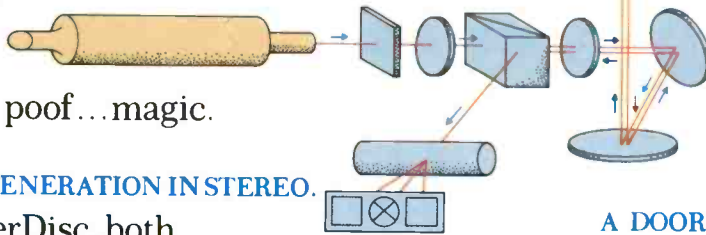
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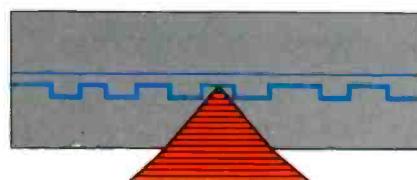
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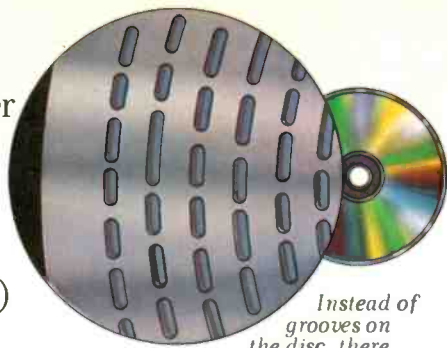


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*Simulated TV picture from The Blues Brothers.*



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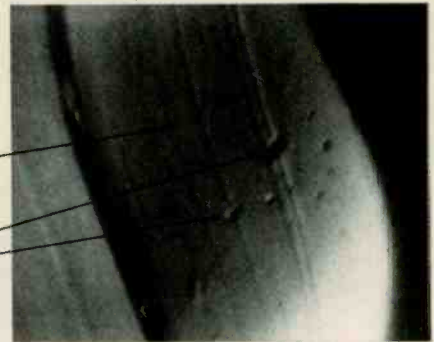
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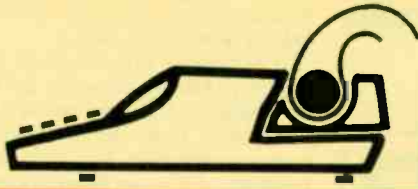


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Stereo Review

# BULLETIN

Edited by William Livingstone

● **DIGITAL FLASH:** Matsushita Electric of Japan (parent company of Technics and JVC) has announced that it will manufacture playback equipment for the laser-read Sony/Philips Compact Disc (CD) digital audio system. Matsushita also plans to produce equipment for the AHD digital audio disc system developed by JVC. The AHD system is compatible with the VHD videodisc system, a stylus-read grooveless disc not yet marketed in this country. Since Matsushita's announcement means that three major manufacturers will be producing equipment for the CD system, this gives CD the lead in the effort to establish world-wide standards for home digital audio.

● **THE METROPOLITAN OPERA** has released the eighth in its series of Historic Broadcast Recordings, Verdi's Un Ballo in Maschera from the Texaco-sponsored broadcast performance of December 14, 1940. Heading the cast are Zinka Milanov and Jussi Bjoerling, both long associated with the Met. Alexander Sved, Bruna Castagna, and Stella Andrevia are among the other singers. Ettore Panizza conducts. Boxed in a felt slipcase, the three-disc set will be sent to all contributors of \$125 or more to the Metropolitan Opera Fund, Box 930, New York, N.Y. 10023.

● **ON NPR THIS MONTH** the St. Louis Symphony begins a series of twenty-six live-on-tape concerts under music director Leonard Slatkin. Included are world-première performances of such works as David Del Tredici's 1980 Pulitzer-Prize-winning In Memory of a Summer Day and John Williams' violin concerto. The American Music Festival series, nine Sunday concerts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, begins April 5. It will include the world première of a flute concerto by John La Montaine. Also bowing in April are Wind Works, a series of concerts by wind ensembles with commentary by Frederick Fennell, and St. Paul Sunday Morning, concerts and conversation by members of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Check local National Public Radio stations.

● **THE ASSOCIATION OF RECORDED SOUND** Collections will meet this year in Chapel Hill, N. C., under the auspices of the University of North Carolina's Department of Music and WUNC-FM, the local public radio station. ARSC is a nonprofit organization of private collectors, institutions, and librarians interested in all aspects of recorded sound. Speakers at this year's convention include Bob Pinson of the Country Music Foundation, Dan Morgenstern of the Institute of Jazz Studies, and Martin Williams of the Smithsonian. Attendance is open to nonmembers as well as members of ASMC. Write Kathryn Logan, Music Library, 106 Hill Hall, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C. 27514, or call (919) 966-1113.

● **A \$4,000 SCHOLARSHIP** to study music at the undergraduate level is offered to qualified men by Saint Vincent College. Write Joseph Bronder, Music Department, Saint Vincent College, Latrobe, Pa. 15650.

● **MUSIC MAKES STRANGE BEDFELLOWS.** Nicky "Topper" Headon, drummer for the Clash, has just played his strangest gig ever: as percussionist with the New Philharmonia Orchestra (at Albert Hall in London) in a performance of Tchaikovsky's proto-punk classic, the 1812 Overture. The Philharmonia's kettle drums, which had been stolen, were offered for sale to Headon. He suspected foul play, made inquiries, and reunited orchestra and hardware. The New Philharmonia invited him to perform with them as a thank-you.

● **GROWTH OF THE HOME VIDEO INDUSTRY** continues to be strong according to 1980 U. S. sales figures released by the Electronic Industries Association. TV receiver sales of 16,447,792 were the highest since 1972, and the sales of 804,663 home videotape recorders were 69.3 per cent above the number of units sold in 1979. Akira Harada, a spokesman for Matsushita, estimates that world-wide VCR sales will exceed six million units in 1981, of which 27 per cent will be sold in the U. S.

# Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



## THE EISENHOWER WALTZES

**A**MONG music's greatest charms is the power it has over memory, a mere snatch of melody being sufficient to winkle an isolated incident out of the penetralium of the past for instant replay on the video monitor of the mind. Brahms' *Liebesslieder* Waltzes (Opp. 52 and 65) do that for me every time I hear them, and a newly released performance by the Los Angeles Vocal Arts Ensemble (Nonesuch D-79008) has reminded me once again of School Days, specifically a spring night in the late Forties when the men of the Columbia College Glee Club, together with the ladies of the Barnard College ditto across the street, presented the Op. 52 Waltzes in concert.

Columbia's president at the time was Dwight David Eisenhower, fresh from his European crusade and placed on "hold"

while strategists in smoke-filled rooms planned his coming bid for the White House. Campaign tactics were to have Ike maintain a high profile, meaning that he spent a lot of time off-campus addressing "alumni groups" on subjects having little discoverable bearing on the state of the football team (Columbia did dump Navy somewhere along in there nonetheless). As luck would have it, he was in residence the night of the Glee Club concert, and we sent him a special invitation. He didn't show. Which is why, after the concert, we choristers tramped determinedly across campus to Morningside Drive, deployed ourselves in the street before the President's House, and fired off a set of *Liebesslieder* Waltzes, from the top, *a cappella*, all over again. Ike descended in robe and slippers to thank us

from the stoop, shooing us off to bed while Mamie waved from above.

It is unlikely that President Eisenhower was ever again awakened by the *Liebesslieder* Waltzes, or that he would have recognized them if he were. For thirty years, however, they have been sufficiently in the forefront of my own musical consciousness that I am always surprised to find knowledgeable music listeners who have not yet discovered them. For all too many concertgoers, Johannes Brahms is four symphonies and a Requiem, a simplicism that leaves the greater part of his musical output unexplored. After all, he began his years in Vienna as conductor of the Wiener Singakademie, and a case might be made that, as a composer, he is almost as important to German song as Franz Schubert. I cannot think of a better place to start proving it than with these delightful waltzes. The new Nonesuch release is particularly welcome since I find it superior in both sonic quality (it's digital) and in performance sweep to any other version currently in the catalog. The voices of the Los Angeles Ensemble seem to me just right for the music: there is enough vocal weight to give it the free rhythmic *Schwung* it needs, but not too much to interfere with the equally necessary harmonic transparency.

There are thirty-three of these waltzes, and familiarity has taught me to love them all indiscriminately. Pressed, I would recommend *Ein Kleiner, Hübscher Vogel* and *Es Bebet das Gesträuche* from Op. 52, *Nein, Geliebter, Setze Dich* and especially *Zum Schluss (At the End)* from Op. 65. The last is the only song with a lyric by Goethe (the others are by a minor poet, Georg Friedrich Daumer) and not, strictly speaking, a waltz. In other words, the dance is over, and we have Brahms' own little *An die Musik*: "Muses... You alone give us solace/And soothe all torment." Just so. □

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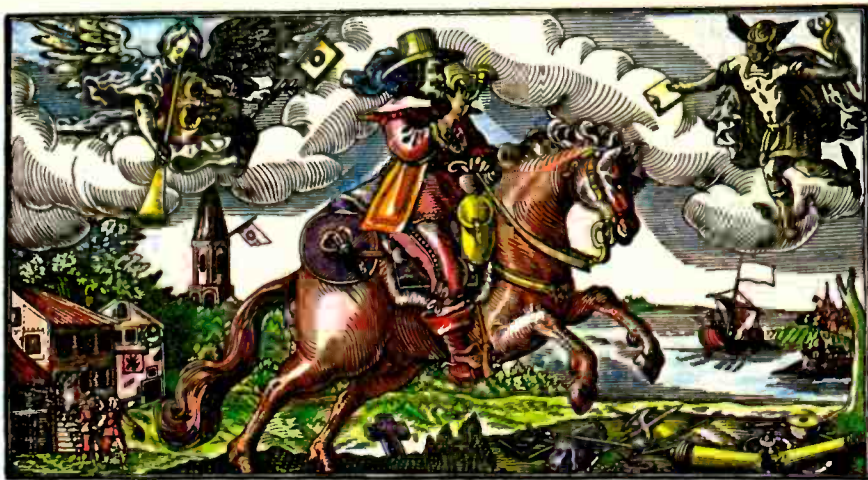
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Digital Audio

● Hooray for the Sony/Philips partnership and their digital-audio Compact Disc player ("Audio/Video News," February). But why do we have to wait until late 1982 for it? I'd buy a digital player made for PolyGram software today. After twenty-five years as an audiophile, I'm fed up with noisy surfaces, inner-groove distortion, styli, arms, rumble, flutter, wow, record care, brushes, lotions, noise-removal devices, expanders, dyna-warp, etc. *ad nauseam!* Let's go, Sony/Philips; the market for the digital audio disc is here!

WILLIAM R. GARTON II  
Fairport, N.Y.

### Aaron Copland

● In the February issue I particularly enjoyed Eric Salzman's article on the composer Aaron Copland, who won STEREO REVIEW's Certificate of Merit for outstanding contributions to the quality of American musical life, but the article does not say anything about how Mr. Copland was chosen for the award. Who made the choice? Looking at the photographs of him, I can imagine seeing his craggy face on a musical Mt. Rushmore. Who have been the other winners of this award whose faces might also appear along with Mr. Copland's on such a monument?

JOHN BAKER  
Chapel Hill, N.C.

*Members of the magazine's editorial staff meet every year to choose the recipient of the Certificate of Merit. It was first awarded in 1975 to the cabaret singer Mabel Mercer. The editors' subsequent choices have been violinist Jascha Heifetz (1976), conductor Arthur Fiedler (1977), composer Richard Rodgers (1978), opera singer Beverly Sills (1979), and jazz pianist Earl "Fatha" Hines (1980).*

### Forgotten Weill

● In his February review of the new recording of Kurt Weill's *Silverlake*, Peter

Reilly asks, "Anybody else remember *Firebrand of Florence*?" I don't, but in *Little Me* Patrick Dennis writes: "Although World War II had brought its share of illness, death, unhappiness and inconvenience, it proved a tremendous 'shot in the arm for the living theatre.' Were it not for the very existence of total war would such exquisite musical attractions as *Rosalinda*, *Up in Central Park*, *Follow the Girls*, *Song of Norway*, *Laughing Room Only*, *Firebrand of Florence*, and *Hats Off to Ice* have been produced at all?" (page 213). This was, of course, meant facetiously. *Firebrand* is not in august company here!

How did the reviewers treat *Firebrand of Florence* at the time? How long was its run? Is it worthy of revival on Broadway? Is it likely ever to be recorded? Has it had any productions of late? Finally, what the hell is a firebrand?

DONALD E. CLARK  
Mountain View, Calif.

*Peter Reilly replies: The Firebrand of Florence opened, and closed, in 1945. It was an expensive failure despite Weill's music, lyrics by Ira Gershwin, and a book by Edwin Justin Mayer. All that remains of it is Lotte Lenya's recording of Sing Me Not a Ballad on an old Columbia album, "September Song" (KL 5229). A "firebrand" is someone who stirs up trouble or incites revolt, and the musical was based on the life of Benvenuto Cellini, the Renaissance sculptor, goldsmith, author, and notorious rake.*

### Video for Audiophiles

● "Outstanding!" is the best description for Peter Mitchell's article "Video for Audiophiles" in January STEREO REVIEW. I've been an electronics technician in the U.S. Navy for six years now and recently got involved in video as a hobby. I've read countless books and manuals on video-equipment theory, but Mr. Mitchell explained it so well that a novice as well as a technician can comprehend it with little effort. Keep up the good work, Pete!

DENNIS M. COURTNEY  
U.S.N., Iceland

● Ellen Milhan Klein's otherwise excellent discussion of videocassette recorders in January gave surprisingly little attention to their audio performance. Given typical VCR tape speeds and audio track widths, it is amazing that one can get usable audio from them. In fact, with most TV-set speakers, one cannot hear the deterioration in frequency response and signal-to-noise ratio, with the unfortunate exception of the effects of the hyperactive, non-defeatable automatic gain control (AGC) circuits included in many VCRs, which cause obnoxious background-noise "pumping."

When one feeds VCR audio into a high-quality sound system, the results can be fairly good at higher tape speeds, assuming that AGC has not wreaked havoc. My Zenith Beta machine has reasonable AGC, low flutter, and surprisingly good frequency response at the B-II speed, though it sounds somewhat hissy. At the slower B-III speed, the frequency response deteriorates noticeably, but it is still equal to that of 16-mm-film optical soundtracks; my scratch filter eliminates the hiss without loss of highs.

As Ms. Klein notes, Japanese consumers have many VCR models with stereo audio and noise reduction available because of the many Japanese telecasts with multiplexed stereo or bilingual audio. Until U.S. broadcasters and manufacturers pressure the FCC for domestic approval of this superb system, we stand little chance of seeing more VCRs with stereo audio here.

GARRY MARGOLIS  
Los Angeles, Calif.

See page 52 for more on stereo TV in the U.S.

### Renaissance Boys Again

● Thank you, William Anderson, for "Renaissance Boys" in January! It is time that someone spoke up against the utter asininity of what passes for popular music today. There was a time, in the days of the big bands, when popular music was not only entertainment but also, as it were, food for thought. Not any more! Noise and a stress on sexuality seem to be the gist today. I am glad that I also like classical music and have a wealth of 78s of the big bands.

J. A. MALSI  
Chadron, Neb.

● Far be it from me to talk Editor William Anderson out of having a little fun with his January editorial. Believe me, all the people I talk to these days are out looking for some signs of the Rebirth of the Great American Musical. Where do these groundswell movements get started? Who's behind them all? The Great Satan? Geez, don't ask me. Why, I can't even pronounce "Elvis Era" without having to go look up what it all means in some back issue of *Rolling Stone*. How dumb can you get, right? Oh, by the way, could you explain exactly how the Japanese are going to shrink a whole audience down to family size? What else haven't you been telling us about the new laser-read videodiscs?

RICH LEE  
St. Petersburg, Fla.

(Continued on page 10)



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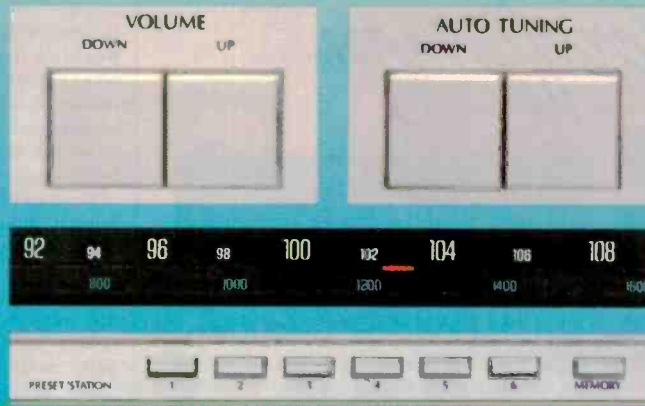
### DC-SERVO AMP FOR DEPENDABLE POWER

The leader in DC technology, Sansui uses a servo-controlled amplifier circuit in all "Z" receivers to eliminate unwanted ultra-low frequencies — like record warps — while maintaining the advantages of direct-coupled circuitry in their amplifier sections. The 5900Z delivers 75 watts/channel, min., RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20-20,000Hz, with no more than 0.03% THD.

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CIRCLE NO. 35 ON READER SERVICE CARD

## Pro Simels

● Let me join the crowd of letter-writing Steve Simels fans. When I receive my copy of *STEREO REVIEW*, I look first for Simels. ELIOT LEVIN  
Miami, Fla.

contained in this section. I look forward to its continuing and possibly being expanded in future issues. I would rather read this than so many record reviews (I trust that pop-music fans will feel the same about "Popular Music Briefs"). My congratulations on an excellent change.

VERN F. NEWBOLD  
Salt Lake City, Utah

## Format Change

● After reading the January issue I must write and tell you how pleased I was with one change in the editorial format of *STEREO REVIEW*, namely, the new "Classical Music Briefs" section. As a classical-music enthusiast, I was delighted to read the news

## Dubbing Ethics

● James Goodfriend makes a valid point in his December "Going on Record" about the connection between home taping of records and the subsequent downfall of some record

companies. Taping as such is both illegal and unethical, but maybe the record companies inadvertently share the blame for its results. Consider that an album costs anywhere from \$5 to more than \$13. Because of this, the taper resorts to enhancing his/her record collection, however small or large, with an assortment of tapes as well. Why not? One has virtually limitless resources at one's disposal via friends and neighbors who own records. It obviously eliminates the need to buy an album if the taper has access to it otherwise. Why not borrow a record for free from a friend and tape it instead of shelling out five or ten bucks for a new LP? The record companies might just think about that the next time they slap a \$10 price tag on an album.

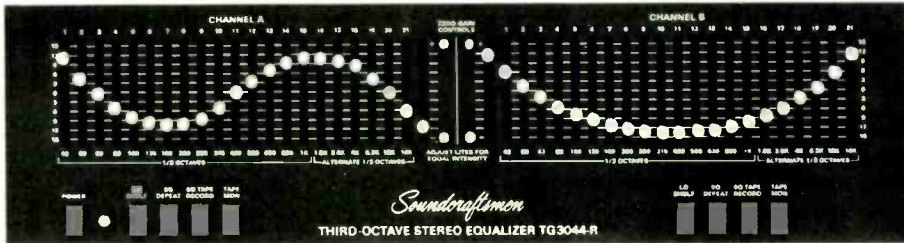
RUSS MATTHEWS  
Soper, Calif.

● As strong an argument as James Goodfriend makes against home piracy (December "Going on Record"), I'm afraid that his plea will not be heeded by most people. It's a matter of economics, and to most Americans this is more important than artistic survival. Typically, two \$6 records can easily fit on a single high-quality \$3 cassette, making it about four times more costly to buy records than blank tapes. The loss in sound quality in the transfer is diminishing thanks to technological improvements. It's also getting easier nowadays for people to record just about anything they want; usually a friend or the local library will have the desired record, or it will be played on a "New Releases" radio program. People will often tape something they wouldn't normally buy since they can always record over it later. It's risky to buy a record of music you've never heard before, no matter what the critics say; it may be \$6 down the drain, whereas \$3 spent on a good blank cassette is always a safe investment.

I am only nineteen and a classical-music fanatic. The prospect Mr. Goodfriend presents dismays me, but look at the facts. A study by the Roper Organization found that 69 per cent of blank tape is bought for copying music; CBS Records says that the U.S. record industry loses between \$700 and \$800 million in annual sales because of home taping. Between 1973 and 1979 blank-tape sales in America more than doubled, whereas record sales actually declined a bit! In spite of the efforts of Mr. Goodfriend and others, I am not optimistic about any changes in this trend.

MICHAEL J. WRUBLE  
St. Louis, Mo.

*Music Editor James Goodfriend replies: Why not tape it indeed? That is precisely the point. It is easy to be honest when a policeman is around, more difficult for some people when one is not. There is literally no chance for a taper to be caught and punished for his act. Therefore, appeals to ethics and honesty can have only a limited effect. So I appeal also to the taper's long-term self-interest in that the more he tapes now the less there will be to buy or tape in the future. The record's price tag has no bearing on the matter; only the price of blank tape does. Mr. Wruble's letter offers the statistics of what is happening. I will continue to argue against it, but I am not optimistic about the matter either.* □

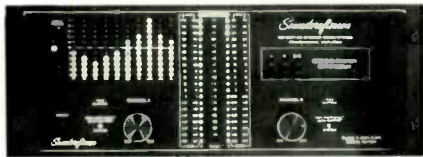


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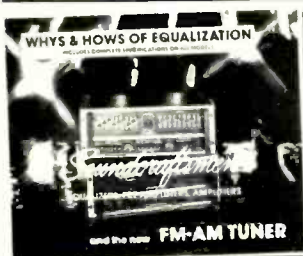
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# The continuing story of TDK sound achievement.

## Part Ten.



Inside the die-cast aluminum cassette housing, TDK brings together the full force of its revolutionary tape technology. *Part Ten* contains the ultimate mechanical perfection of the Reference Standard Mechanism. Around its precision seamless rollers and past its dual spring pressure pad flows TDK's unique metal-alloy tape. It's composed of ultra-fine metal particles called FINAVINX, whose recording capacity is four times as great as TDK's Super Avilyn. A special polymer coating makes this metal virtually impervious to oxidation.

To sharply define the difference between this cassette and any other, TDK encased it within two clear sheets of plastic. These sheets are thirty percent harder than the plastic used in ordinary cassettes. Die-cut, transparent liner sheets maintain a physical clarity that's matched by the crystal clarity of

sound. Six precision screws seal the shells and resist vibration. This state-of-the-art cassette is called MA-R. The effect is futuristic. But TDK does nothing merely for effect.

For example, *Part Ten* has the structural strength to withstand warpage, temperature, and humidity changes. In situations where stability and stress are critical factors, as in portables or car stereos, a bump in the road can throw a curve in the music. MA-R is warranted to perform uninterruptedly.

Because TDK has an unwavering commitment to music. It is the driving force behind every technological breakthrough. *Part Ten* plays as important a role in the MA-R's performance as its

unique metal tape. The added stability of structure and mechanism allows a more precise reproduction of music. TDK firmly believes a small cassette is governed by the same laws as a large orchestra. Music is the sum of its parts.



Assembled TDK MA-R cassette.



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The Amazing Music Machine.

CIRCLE NO. 42 ON READER SERVICE CARD



# New Products latest audio equipment and accessories



**Dual Turntable Has Double Suspension, 78-rpm Speed**

□ The Dual 608 semi-automatic, single-play, direct-drive turntable has an ultra-low-mass (ULM) tone arm, two suspension-isolation systems, and a tunable tone-arm anti-resonance filter. The "Hydrodynamic" suspension system floats the motor, platter, and tone arm on four fluid-filled shock absorbers, and four additional acoustic isolators are tunable to attenuate acoustic feedback or the effects of external shock. The anti-resonance filter can match the tone arm to any cartridge for minimum low-frequency resonance. An internal frequency generator precisely regulates the high-torque d.c.-servo direct-drive platter motor. The turntable will operate at 78, 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ , and 45 rpm. All controls (speed, pitch adjustment, and tone-arm lift) are located on the front panel. The dust-cover hinge is designed to allow the turntable to be placed close to a wall. The unit is available with an Ortofon ULM cartridge factory-installed. Price: \$329.95; with ULM cartridge, \$439.95.

*Circle 120 on reader service card*



**Akai Cassette Deck With Microcomputer**

□ Akai's GX-F95 has a built-in microcomputer that can automatically determine bias, equalization, and tape sensitivity for any cassette-tape formulation. Source/tape monitoring is provided by the Twin-Field Super GX Combo head. Other features of

the deck include illuminated full-logic solenoid touch controls, two twenty-four-segment, two-color fluorescent displays with peak or VU characteristics, memory rewind with automatic replay, two electronically controlled d.c. motors, and an electronic tape/time counter. Record muting, multiplex filters, and Dolby-B noise reduction are switchable. The hinged cover conceals most function controls. The built-in timer functions in both record and play modes, and there is an optional remote-control unit. Stated frequency response is 25 to 21,000 Hz; signal-to-noise ratio is greater than 62 dB (weighted, without Dolby-B, with metal tape). Wow-and-flutter is less than 0.025 per cent (weighted rms) and distortion less than 0.6 per cent (metal tape, 1,000 Hz, 0-VU recording level). Price: \$1,195.

*Circle 121 on reader service card*



**Three-way, Four-driver Jensen System**

□ The Jensen System 500 is an acoustic-suspension speaker system with a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter working in conjunction with a 2-inch rear-firing driver designed to reflect high-frequency sound energy off a back wall to supplement the dispersion of the front-firing driver. Both the high-frequency drivers and the 5-inch molded-cone midrange are acoustically isolated from the 12-inch woofer, which has a variable-density cone and a high-power, epoxy-core voice-coil assembly. Crossover frequencies are 760 and 4,200 Hz. Vertical driver alignment helps eliminate cancellation effects in the horizontal plane due to interference between adjacent drivers at the crossovers.

Treble and midrange controls with 10-dB ranges are provided. Usable frequency response is specified as 25 to 25,000 Hz. System impedance is nominally 8 ohms (5 ohms minimum). The system will produce a 90-dB sound-pressure level, measured at 1 meter, with a 1-watt input. Minimum rec-

ommended amplifier power is 10 watts. Dimensions are 29 x 15 x 11 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches. Weight is 45 pounds. Price: \$290.

*Circle 122 on reader service card*



**Lightweight Phones From Pickering**

□ Pickering's OA-4 Featherfone has a stated frequency response of 10 to 20,000 Hz and distortion of less than 0.5 per cent with a 100-dB sound-pressure level (SPL) at 1,000 Hz. Headphone sensitivity is 105 dB SPL with a 0.25-volt input at 1,000 Hz. The maximum permissible power input is 50 milliwatts; input impedance is 40 ohms. The transducers are  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch dynamic, high-velocity elements with synthetic film diaphragms and samarium-cobalt magnets. The ear cushions are of multidensity polyurethane foam. The headphones come with a 7-foot straight cord and weigh 2 ounces (not including cord). The OA-4's plug is a standard three-conductor,  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch phone plug, but models are also available with a separate mono (OA-4m) or stereo (OA-4s) mini-phone-plug adaptor for use with stereo portables. Price: \$49.95.

*Circle 123 on reader service card*



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and sound-level meter and supplied measurement microphone. To equalize a system, the user need only place the microphone in the listener position and sweep through the warble-tone generator's frequency bands while adjusting the appropriate slider. Center frequencies are 31.5, 63, 125, 250, 500, 1,000, 4,000, 8,000, and 16,000 Hz; adjustment range is  $\pm 12$  dB. The unit also includes a switchable 18-dB-per-octave infrasonic filter with a  $-3$ -dB point at 20 Hz. Total harmonic distortion is given as 0.04 per cent, signal-to-noise ratio as 90 dB. The unit has oak side panels and an ebony-colored front panel (a rack-mounting front panel is available). Price: \$229.

Circle 124 on reader service card



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Stereo Enhancer and  
Quad Synthesizer

□ Electro-Harmonix's Ambitron employs matrixing techniques, filtering, and analog delay to re-create the acoustic spaciousness of a concert hall. Claimed benefits include compensation for the short reverberation times of the home listening environment and of program material, improved stereo separation, and synthesis of a realistic stereo effect from mono signals. The device generates rear-channel reverberation signals with a high proportion of out-of-phase information to duplicate natural echo and acoustic cancellations. Controls include adjustments for input and output level, reverberation, ambiance, and delay. Price: \$349.95. Electro-Harmonix, 27 West 23rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10010.

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□ The JBL L150A speaker is said to incorporate advances in high-frequency-driver and crossover technology. The 1-inch high-frequency dome radiator, formed of lightweight phenolic material coated with aluminum, is claimed to have greater power-handling capacity, and the high-resolution dividing network provides the system with improved transient response. A 5-inch mid-range driver handles frequencies between 1,100 and 3,700 Hz. The 12-inch low-frequency driver in combination with a passive radiator handles frequencies below 1,100 Hz. Nominal system impedance is 8 ohms. System sensitivity is 89-dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter with a 1-watt input. Dimensions are 41½ x 17 x 13 inches; weight is 80 pounds. The enclosure's finish is American black walnut and the grille is available in brown, rust, or tan. Price: \$695.

Circle 125 on reader service card



Low-price  
Cassette Deck  
From Radio Shack

□ The Realistic SCT-24 stereo cassette deck has two tape-selector switches that provide correct bias and equalization for optimum results with ferric, chrome, or metal tapes. The deck has switchable Dolby-B circuitry and switchable multiplex filters. Five-step peak-reading LED meters show input levels from  $-13$  to  $+3$  VU. An automatic end-of-tape stop mechanism protects the motor, drive components, and tape from damage. A level adjustment matches the deck's output to any system. A headphone jack and two microphone inputs are included. Price: \$149.95.

Circle 127 on reader service card

(Continued on page 16)



# Free details on a different kind of record club

offering... BACH, BEETHOVEN, BRAHMS, FLEETWOOD MAC, LINDA RONSTADT, CHICAGO, KANSAS BARRY MANILOW, BOSTON, ELTON JOHN, JAMES TAYLOR, JEAN-LUC PONTY, CROSBY, STILLS & NASH, STEVE MILLER BAND, PETER FRAMPTON, BARBRA STREISAND, EAGLES, CHUCK MANGIONE and every other composer and artist in print.

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# New Car Stereo Products

## latest automotive audio equipment and accessories



**Under-dash  
Tape-Player/Equalizer  
From Alpine**

□ The under-dash Model 5400 from Alpine Electronics of America is a combined power amp and auto-reverse cassette player with Dolby noise reduction and five-band graphic equalizer. Features include detented volume and balance controls, fast-forward and rewind, a loudness switch, and tape-direction and power-level indicators. The range of the equalizer is  $\pm 12$  dB at center frequencies of 60, 250, 1,000, 3,500, and 10,000 Hz. Tape wow-and-flutter is rated at 0.1 per cent wrms, signal-to-noise ratio (with Dolby) is 65 dB, and frequency response (with metal tape) is 40 to 16,000 Hz.

The rated power output at 4 ohms, both channels driven, is 16 watts per channel with 8 per cent total harmonic distortion or 8 watts per channel with 0.08 per cent THD from 40 to 20,000 Hz. Use of the built-in DIN jack with other DIN-equipped units will automatically adjust output to the proper level. The Model 5400 also automatically disengages the cassette from its playing position when the car's ignition is switched off. Weighing about 3 pounds, the 5400 measures  $6\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{8} \times 2$  inches. Price: \$299.95.

**Circle 128 on reader service card**

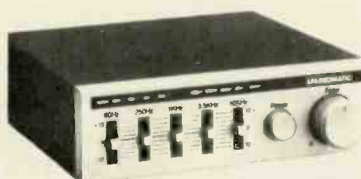


**Car Woofer  
From Craig**

□ As part of its extensive new line of autosound loudspeakers, the Craig Corporation has introduced the R840 woofer. A 6 x 9-inch 6-ohm unit, the speaker has a 30-mm-diameter voice coil for higher power-handling capacity, a cloth surround, and a

precision-ground molded 20-ounce ferrite magnet. With a frequency range of 30 to 6,000 Hz, each unit has a peak power-handling capacity of 100 watts. "Quick-Connect" terminals and color-coded leads facilitate installation. Grille covers are supplied. Price: \$79.95 per pair.

**Circle 129 on reader service card**



**Sparkomatic's Compact  
Equalizer/Booster**

□ Sparkomatic's GE 50 five-band graphic equalizer incorporates a booster to increase the power of radios and tape players. The center-detented slide controls operate at 60, 250, 1,000, 3,500, and 10,000 Hz with a range of  $\pm 12$  dB. The GE 50 features LED power-level indicators and a fader control for front-to-rear speaker balance. Power output is 20 watts rms per channel from 20 to 20,000 Hz with 1 per cent total harmonic distortion. Input impedance is 52 ohms (for connection to speaker outputs) and rated output load is 4 to 8 ohms. When the GE 50's switch is in the off position, it is completely bypassed and the speakers are fed directly from the main source. Small enough to fit subcompact cars, the GE 50 measures only  $4\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$  inches. Price: \$69.95.

**Circle 130 on reader service card**

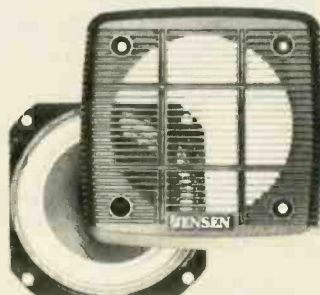


**Four Amplifiers in  
Fujitsu Ten's  
AM/FM/Cassette Unit**

□ Designed for in-dash installation in most small foreign and domestic cars, the CR-1130 receiver/cassette player from Fujitsu Ten has an AM/FM stereo tuner with five

station presets, three for FM and two for AM. The FM usable sensitivity is 20 dBf, with 50-dB-quieting sensitivity at 24 dBf and alternate-channel selectivity of 60 dB. The cassette section has a stated frequency response of 40 to 14,000 Hz  $\pm 3$  dB and wow-and-flutter of 0.12 per cent wrms. There is an auto-reverse function, and both chrome and metal-tape cassettes can be played. Also included are Dolby noise reduction, separate bass and treble controls, and a four-way fader control. The amplifier section includes four separate amplifiers and a conversion adaptor, and it has a rated output of 16 watts per channel into 4 ohms from 30 to 20,000 Hz with 10 per cent total harmonic distortion. The CR-1130's dimensions are  $7 \times 1\frac{1}{16} \times 5\frac{1}{16}$  inches. Price: \$299.95.

**Circle 131 on reader service card**



**Jensen's Shallow  
Full-range Speaker  
For Small Cars**

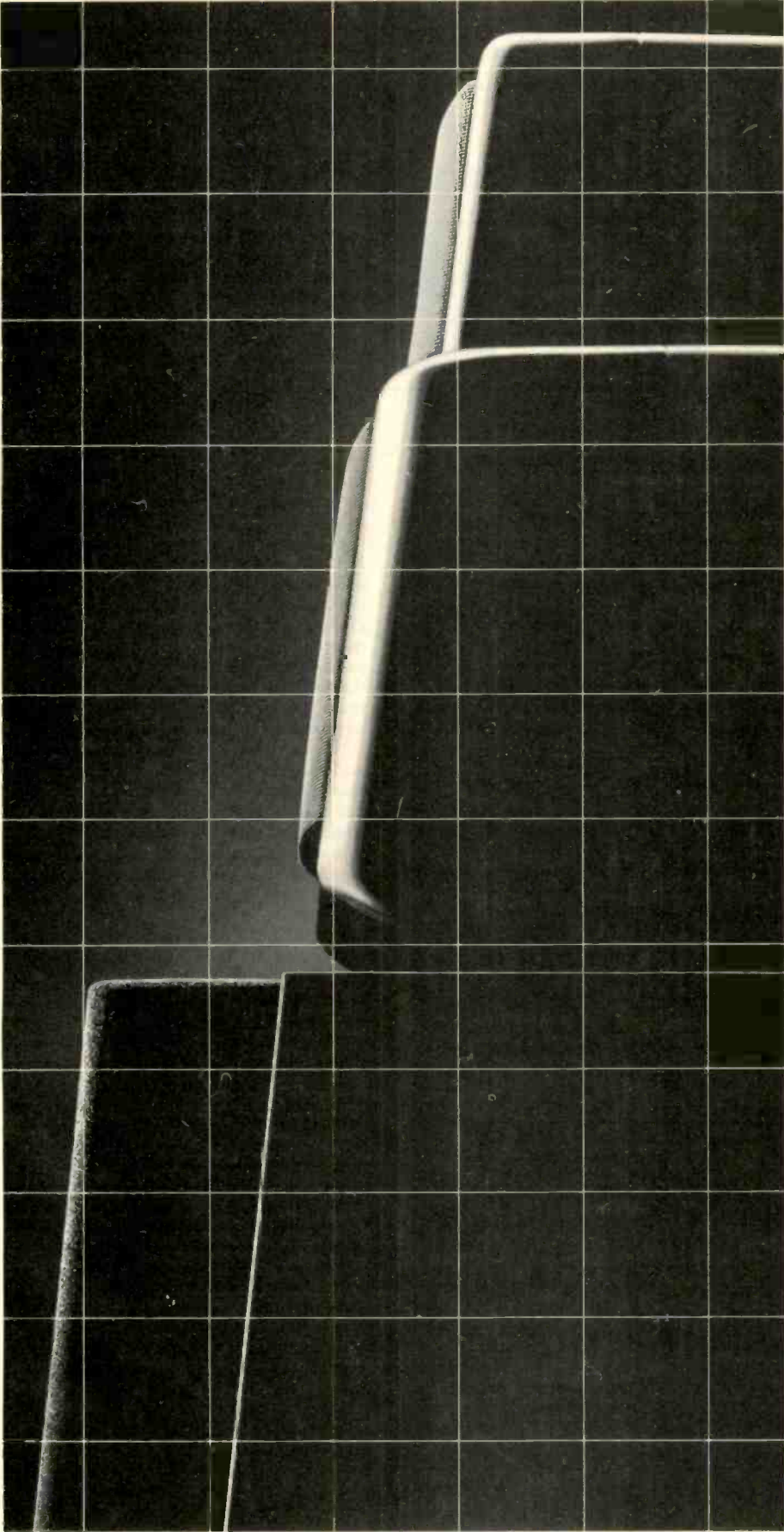
□ As part of its comprehensive new line of autosound equipment, Jensen Sound Laboratories has introduced a small, full-range speaker, the 4" ThinMount, designed for use in the limited mounting space available in X-body and compact imported cars. The very shallow speaker will fit in the dashboard, doors, or rear compartments of such cars. Price: \$44.95.

**Circle 132 on reader service card**

NOTE: All product descriptions and specifications quoted in these columns are based on materials supplied by the manufacturers, who will respond directly to reader requests for further information.

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





# Designed for Accuracy

The unique design of the head assembly for the Reference Series Model 105.2 and Model 105.4 is just one example of KEF's world-renowned research and engineering excellence.

Each unit is housed in its own enclosure of selected dimensions to support optimum radiation over the operating frequency range, and is scientifically shaped to avoid unwanted secondary wave formation.

The outstanding acclaim for the Model 105.2 created a demand for a system of similar performance and accuracy from a smaller enclosure, and at a more affordable price. Hence the Model 105.4

Like all Reference Series Speaker Systems, the Model 105.4 is a product of KEF's "Total System" design approach, where the drive units, filter network and enclosure are developed together to achieve a targeted response.

And like all Reference Series products, it also features the unique S-STOP, a self-powered circuit designed by KEF for total protection against accidental overload and fault conditions.

Of course, the ultimate criteria is in listening. Visit your KEF dealer and listen to the new Reference Series Model 105.4. For his name, write:

KEF Electronics, Ltd.  
% Intratec, P.O. Box 17414  
Dulles International Airport  
Washington, D.C. 20041



The Speaker Engineers

CIRCLE NO. 24 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# 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.

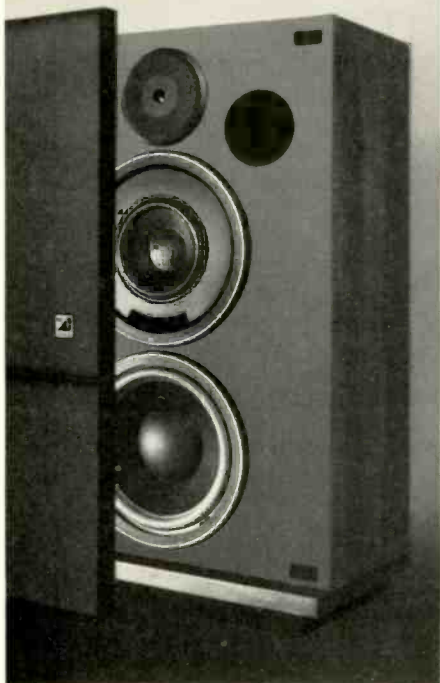
The SuperDome™ tweeter, an E-V exclusive, and the VMR™ vented midrange driver, the first to apply optimally vented design to mid frequencies, ensure your music is reproduced without the coloration normally found in other high-efficiency drivers. An honest 30 Hz low end totally eliminates the need for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



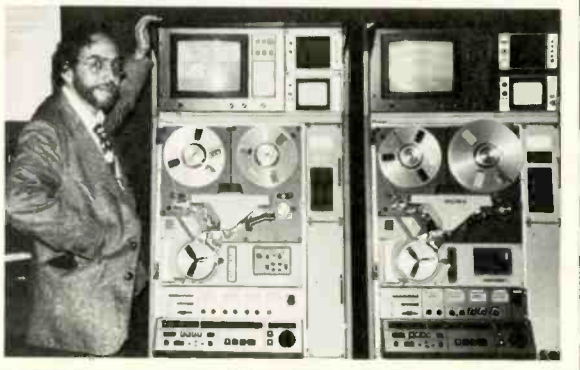
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a gulton company

600 Cecil Street, Buchanan, Michigan 49107



## Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein



*Technical Director Klein is impressed by a pair of Sony broadcast-quality videotape recorders.*

### Why Stylus Cleaning?

**Q.** *If I keep my records in top condition, why is it necessary to use a stylus cleaner?*

BARBARA PEDERSEN  
Lake Worth, Fla.

**A.** If you never play them, it's not. However, a rotating turntable platter often sets up convection currents in the surrounding air. This deposits on the record surface a certain amount of airborne debris that subsequently gets transferred to the stylus. Any one of several groove-tracking Dust Bug-type cleaners will help minimize that problem.

If the conditions under which your older records are stored and played are such that the Dust Bug never accumulates any dirt on its pad or brush, then I suspect there is little reason to use a stylus cleaner. New records, however, may have some fine debris in the grooves left over from the manufacturing process, and this may accumulate on the stylus during the first playings.

### One-brand Systems

**Q.** *Lately there seems to be a profusion of one-brand audio systems on the market, usually housed in vertical rack-like cabinets with record players on top. Where did all these systems suddenly come from and are they worthwhile or merely attractively packaged lo-fi components?*

ARNOLD PACKER  
Boston, Mass.

**A.** An appreciation of the socio-economics of the international hi-fi marketplace is necessary to understand what's going on. First of all, 65 per cent (!) of the households in Japan own hi-fi systems worth \$500 or more, but only about 12 per cent of U.S. homes are similarly equipped. Why haven't more Americans jumped on the hi-fi bandwagon? The answer, of course, hinges both on the availability of discretionary dollars and our cultural patterns. Component hi-fi is a well integrated part of Japanese life; it's advertised on national television and billboards, and department stores devote entire floors to

component displays and sales. Also, the Japanese biannual bonus system is well suited to large discretionary purchases such as hi-fi.

On the other hand, most U.S. consumers continue to regard hi-fi equipment as somewhat mysterious and esoteric. They see it as difficult to hook up and use, and, most of all, intimidating to buy—or at least so say the pundits attempting to explain the comparative lack of sales in the U.S. Add to that the fact that most of us get our cash in small continuous dollops rather than in large biannual bonanzas.

Now let's consider these socio-economic realities from the standpoint of the Japanese, whose giant audio-equipment factories must continue to produce (and sell) in large quantities to stay solvent. First, the Japanese quite naturally continue to court the already committed audiophile with new, better, more feature-packed and attractively designed hardware. (Unlike "planned obsolescence" in the generally accepted meaning of the term, the new products do *not* make the old models obsolete; they are aimed at the avid audiophile who is dedicated to owning the very latest audio technology, features, and appearance—plus perhaps marginally improved sound.) Second, there are other Japanese products and marketing efforts aimed at that frustrating virgin market, the 88 per cent of U.S. homes without any hi-fi equipment. This year's marketing strategy involves, as reader Packer has noticed, all-in-one, pseudo-rack systems. These have several apparent virtues: (1) they can be sold in department stores rather than audio or specialty shops, (2) they are all one brand, and (3) they are pre-matched and assembled. Thus the neophyte customer is relieved of (1) dealing with a potentially off-putting "audiophile" salesperson, (2) choosing from hundreds of components on the basis of little-understood factors, and (3) putting together an electronic jigsaw puzzle.

This sales strategy makes sense for a manufacturer provided there is a large enough group of consumers who are *not* willing to study their buying options but who *are* ready to spend \$1,000 or more for a system setup. To be sure, the choices available in this "whole system" form won't

*(Continued on page 20)*



# How to get 50% more sound without turning up the volume.

There's a whole range of sound in a live performance that you never hear from your stereo system. And it's not a question of turning up the volume.

The problem is in the records you play.

When recording engineers master a record, they electronically eliminate up to half the music. They literally compress the sound to make it "fit" on the vinyl record.

Fortunately, there's one solution to the problem: dbx Dynamic Range Expanders.

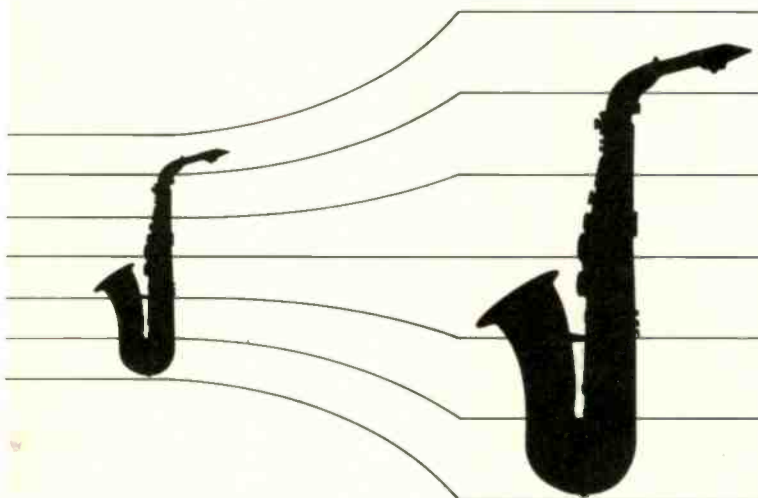
A dbx Dynamic Range Expander in your system restores most of the lost music. And it reduces annoying record surface noise by as much as 20 dB. So instead of a compressed 50 or 60 dB of dynamic range, you get a full 75 to 90 dB. The loud passages begin to thunder. The softs are truly subtle. All your music comes to life.

And you can use a dbx Dynamic Range Expander not only with your records, but also with tapes and FM broadcasts.

Visit your authorized dbx retailer for a demonstration of the 1BX, 2BX and 3BX Dynamic Range Expanders. Then select the model that's best for your system.

Because there's a lot more to music than has been reaching your ears.

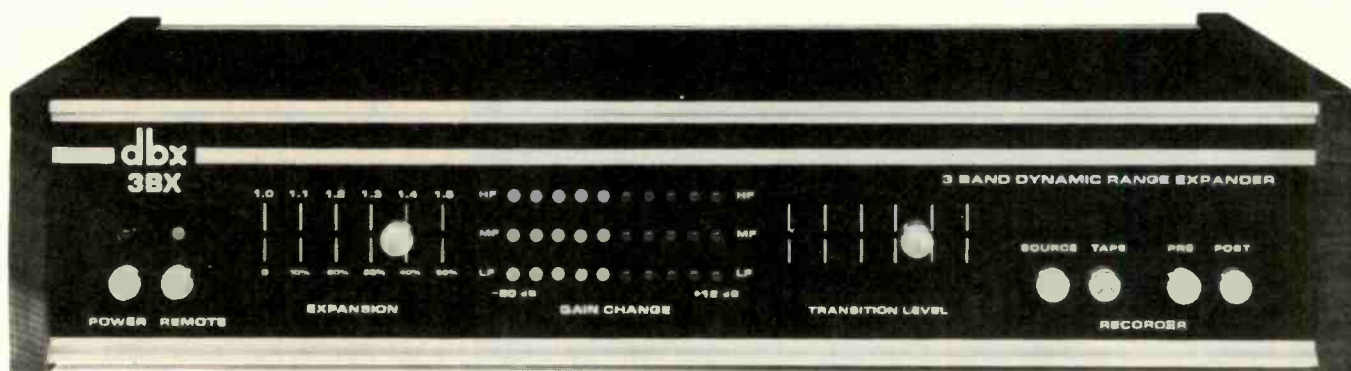
dbx, Inc., 71 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02195 U.S.A. Tel. (617) 964-3210. Telex 92-2522. Distributed throughout Canada by BSR (CANADA) Ltd., Rexdale, Ontario.



A dbx Dynamic Range Expander restores the music dynamics that were lost in the recording process - giving you up to 50% more sound. The technology is based on a technique originally developed by dbx for professional recording studios.

## dbx

Making good sound better



CIRCLE NO. 8 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# Our ADC Integra phono-cartridge's tracking angle adjustment

# VS their no adjustment at all.

If you're looking for conventional sound, take a look at our competitors. You'll find exactly what you want. But if you're looking for something more, take a look at the revolutionary ADC Integra. It's the first carbon fibre integrated headshell/cartridge with vertical tracking angle adjustment. It's simple . . . great ideas usually are. All you do is make one easy set-up adjustment. Once it's made, you're guaranteed of an optimum match for the vertical tracking angle record companies use to cut their masters. There are no compromises, no matter what turntable you use. Integra's vertical tracking angle adjustment is calibrated in degree increments from  $-8^{\circ}$  to  $+8^{\circ}$ . Enough to compensate for all tonearm heights. That kind of tracking angle accuracy is a big advantage. But the biggest advantage of all has to be the fact that it's available in three ADC Integra models. One for every kind of budget. All for one kind of sound. . . devastating. If you'd like to hear more call Audio Dynamics Corp. toll-free (800) 243-9544 or your

ADC dealer.



appeal to those who take pleasure in the shopping process, who enjoy owning esoteric equipment, who plan to add on and upgrade continuously, or whose listening situations or locations require special capabilities. But preassembled rack systems should appeal to those who want to own hi-fi equipment simply as a means to an end—music listening—rather than (to whatever degree) as an end in itself, and who also want the look and feel of quality (and the systems *are* at least good).

However, there are some potential pitfalls for the system buyer to be aware of. Although there are not likely to be significant audible differences among the different brands of electronic components, the speakers that come with the systems are going to make large differences, for better or worse, in the ultimate sound quality delivered. No matter how good the electronic elements in the system, the buyer has to make sure that the speakers that come with it are capable of revealing its virtues. Unfortunately, I can't provide any quick advice as to how to do that. Making sure that the speakers are of the same brand as the rest of the system is *no* guarantee of sonic quality, nor is the substitution of other speakers of different known or unknown brands. All that I can offer is the speaker-buying advice that has been appearing for years in our August issue. Our most recent condensed words of wisdom on the subject can be yours for a stamped, self-addressed envelope *plus* 30¢ in stamps or coins sent to Stereo Review, Dept. SA, One Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.

## Pop Goes the . . .

**Q.** *I recently played a prerecorded cassette (which had an incredible amount of bass) on a very good deck matched with a 100-watt receiver and speakers rated at 125 watts. The receiver's bass and treble controls were set at +3. On bass peaks I heard very loud "pops," which disappeared when I lowered the bass control. What caused this and is it likely that anything was damaged?*

THOMAS GALLAGHER  
Buffalo, N.Y.

**A.** The probable cause of the popping sound was overload in either the receiver's amplifier or (most probably) the speaker(s). If the receiver was the source, you probably heard the protective circuits acting up in protest against some peculiar characteristic of your bass-boosted speaker that was reflected back to the amplifier's output stage.

If you had described your problem as "snapping" rather than "popping," I would have suggested that what you were hearing was the rear of the speaker's voice coil hitting the back plate of its magnet assembly as a result of excessive low-bass excursion. You can tell the difference between the two sounds because the pop is an *electrically* generated sound, while the snap is a purely mechanical one with a crisper high end and superior transient response. In either case, if the system sounds okay, nothing was damaged, but I would avoid a repeat performance—even as a test to see if you can distinguish a pop from a snap. □



# The Polks "At their price, they are simply a steal!"

Audiogram



## **Incredible Sound/Affordable Price "Our advice is not to buy speakers until you've heard the Polks."** Musician Magazine

### **Polk Tri-Laminate Polymer Driver For Life-Like Clarity and Detail**



**Reviewers and Critics Agree** Polk speakers will give you the highest sound quality and the most listening pleasure for your money. They will deliver amazingly life-like, boxless, three dimensional sound with breathtaking clarity and detail in your listening room from your hifi system.

**"Polk speakers (are) so vastly superior to the competition...** a remarkably well integrated and coherent

sound that adapts itself ideally to all kinds of music...the kind of open, uncolored, perfectly imaged sound we thought began at twice the price...**Sound quite magnificent** with a good mid-powered popular brand receiver...They make the popular speakers in their price range seem dim, colored, boxy and just plain insufficient." Musician Magazine

**"Exceptionally pleasing sonic balance...** Polk's key design goals have definitely been realized...transient response is absolutely first rate...hemispherical dispersion is superb...**Open, boxless, three dimensional quality...** frequency response covers the entire audible range with commendable flatness...sensitivity is adequate for use with a 10 watt amplifier, yet it could absorb the full output of a 200 watt amplifier without damage...certainly a very fine speaker." Stereo Review

**Better sound in your home** Polk Audio loudspeakers will give you more listening pleasure and greater long term satisfaction from your music, your records and your hifi system. They offer the best sound for the money available on the market and are affordably priced from less than \$125 each to less than \$400 each.

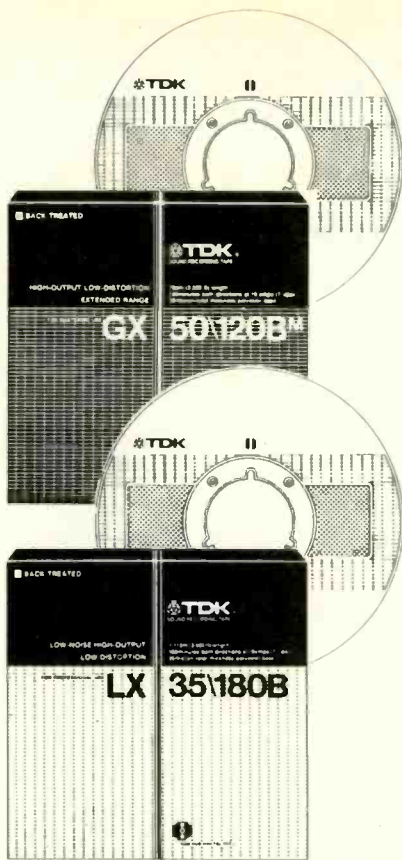
**Simply use the free reader service card** to receive detailed information, copies of the expert's rave reviews and the location nearest you for auditioning the incredible, affordable Polks. Polk Audio, Inc. 1205 S. Carey St., Balto., Md. 21230

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**Incredible Sound / Affordable Price**

# Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



## TDK brings two new standards to open reel.

TDK now announces two breakthroughs in open reel. TDK GX Studio Mastering tape: an ultra refined particle lets it handle the critical demands of live music mastering. And TDK LX Professional Studio tape, with a super refined particle that gives it a performance ideal for professional and audiophile use.

A unique polishing and binding process makes dropouts practically a thing of the past. A special graphite and carbon backcoating on all GX and some LX reduces friction for smooth winding while preventing static and diminishing wow and flutter. At last your music is heard the way you intended to hear it.

Listen to TDK GX and LX. They could open up a whole new standard of recording excellence.



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CIRCLE NO. 43 ON READER SERVICE CARD

### Overload from Warps

**Q.** *When I tape some of my records on a top-quality cassette deck, the copies contain a "wavering" or "warbling" quality that is not heard when playing the disc itself. The problem seems to occur only when recording at high (0 to +3 dB) peak levels, and the wavering seems to correspond to the rise and fall of the tone arm and cartridge as they track warps in the record. Can you explain what's happening and what I can do about it?*

RANBY HATCHER  
Eucess, Tex.

**A.** What is happening is that the record warps are interpreted by your phono cartridge as a high-level infrasonic signal. When such a signal is passed on to your recorder, it overloads the tape, creating intermodulation products (which you hear as the "wavering") with the regular program content. Sometimes recorders respond to warp signals by cutting off or by severe distortion. A deck that "rolled off" the low frequencies very sharply (as many less expensive recorders do) would not have this problem. Your only current recourse are to (1) record the warped discs at a slightly lower record-level setting, (2) use a preamp whose tape outputs have passed through a high-pass filter, or (3) use a damped tone arm and/or cartridge.

### Wow / Flutter Audibility

**Q.** *I'm considering buying a cassette deck that has a wow/flutter spec of 0.06 per cent "WRMS" or weighted rms (0.17 per cent DIN peak-weighted), while some other decks list figures of 0.03 per cent (weighted rms). All other specs being equal, would there be an audible difference between such decks? Also, what is the difference between weighted rms and DIN peak-weighted?*

LEN ROSS  
Los Angeles, Calif.

**A.** Let me start my answer with a perhaps impolitic remark: in my personal and professional opinion, so-called "weighted rms" or "WRMS" ("weighted root-mean-

square") wow/flutter figures are nearly meaningless when applied to cassette (or open-reel) decks. However, there are severe practical problems in making the much more meaningful DIN (Deutsche Industrie Normen, or German industrial standard) peak-weighted measurements—problems currently being assessed by the Electronic Industries Association's Tape Recorder Standards Committee on which I serve.

Just what is "wow and flutter"? In an ideal recorder the tape would flow past the record and playback heads absolutely smoothly, at a constant rate, and in such a case there would be no wow/flutter to consider. In an actual machine, however, the capstan and the pinch-roller are never absolutely round, and the bearings within which they rotate have a certain amount of play in them; the take-up tension and the holdback tension are not perfectly constant; the layer-to-layer adhesion in the tape varies somewhat, and if the tape pack isn't perfectly flat, additional variations may be induced when the tape "ticks" against a reel flange. The net result is that tape speed across the head varies from instant to instant. If a steady 3,000-Hz tone varies, in practice, between 3,003 and 2,997, the *percentage* of wow/flutter is 0.1. The *rate* at which these variations recur may be slow ("wow") or relatively rapid ("flutter"); the degree to which they are audibly objectionable depends upon the *combination* of percentage and rate plus—still another factor!—the sensitivity of the individual's ear (some people can tolerate more wow/flutter than others). Still further, some kinds of music—solo piano and flute, for example—show up wow/flutter more than others.

With all of these factors to consider, how do you "objectively" measure wow/flutter in a tape machine? Extensive psychoacoustic tests on human subjects have established a *weighting curve* that applies to the repetition *rate* of the frequency variations, and this curve is applied to both weighted-rms and DIN peak-weighted measurements. Where the two standards differ, however, is in how the meters used register the *percentage* of the pitch variations. The DIN measurement tries to follow the instantaneous ("peak") variations at their maximum points; the weighted-rms procedure tries to

(Continued on page 24)



# NEW HEAVYWEIGHT TECHNOLOGY IN LIGHTWEIGHT HEADPHONES. BY BEYER.

Imagine headphones so light you hardly know they're there. Imagine these same headphones with a frequency range so wide you never miss a note. And imagine what it took to create such headphones -



Heavyweight technology that distinguishes Beyer from the rest.

The DT 880 coil is made of copper that is .9 millimeter thick and 1/3 the weight of those found in conventional headphones. The polycarbonate plastic diaphragm, is so light, rigid and rare that it is found only in the best mics made in the world. It is viscous damped like the finest loudspeaker cones and statistically embossed so that its surface will be absolutely perfect for transmitting sound. Imagine using rare earth samarium cobalt magnets, the strongest magnet material known to man. And imagine headphones that will simply overwhelm you with bass response and a transparency of sound unheard of except in the finest, most expensive electrostatic transducers.

But you don't have to imagine. Just visit your Beyer dealer and see and hear our new heavyweight line of lightweight headphones. Try them on. We guarantee that you've never worn more comfortable headphones regardless of size! They feel great. They sound great. They look great. And they are priced just right. Come see for yourself. There is something better from Beyer.

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There are 300 voices  
in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.  
This tiny diamond tipped sapphire  
enables you to hear every one.



Shown actual size.

It's the diamond stylus/sapphire crystal cantilever of the Bang & Olufsen MMC 20 CL phono cartridge, the cartridge with no audible tip resonance. And no distortion of the music.

Your cartridge has an overwhelming influence on the reproduction quality you achieve. Which is why we go to great lengths to achieve perfection where it counts in all four of our cartridge models. Hear them for yourself at your local Bang & Olufsen dealer. Or write to us for reprints of what reviewers the world over have been reporting. Which is that Bang & Olufsen stereo phono cartridges are great places for your music to begin.

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515 Busse Road  
Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007

CIRCLE NO. 48 ON READER SERVICE CARD

## It whistles while it works

Listen to the Robins WhistleStop electronic head demagnetizer whistle as it eliminates performance-robbing residual magnetic build up from your tape head. Hear the difference in sound quality and reduced distortion. Simply insert like any cassette. Complete with batteries. At your hi-fi dealer.



ROBINS INDUSTRIES CORP.  
COMMACK, NEW YORK 11725

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find an average variation (the square root of the sum of each variation squared). Just as there is a difference between the peak power an amplifier may have to deliver in a given instant and the average power it turns out over a period of time, so there is a difference between peak wow/flutter and average ("rms") wow/flutter, even when the repetition rate ("weighted") is the same.

A weighted-rms flutter specification gives the best-looking (lowest) number on a spec sheet, which is why it is favored for advertising purposes. It is also the easiest to read on a meter because the meter has been intentionally "damped" to give a very steady reading that automatically eliminates occasional widely varying swings of the pointer. The ear, however, tends to respond to the "peak" values—those very wide-swinging variations an "averaging" meter ignores ("averages out"). A "pure" DIN peak-weighted measurement, on the other hand, might give an extremely unflattering numerical measurement for an outstanding tape deck based on a single wide swing of the meter needle that occurred only once in 30 minutes of music—and perhaps it was a fault in the tape rather than in the deck. This is why nearly everyone involved in testing recorders professionally "fudges" the absolute DIN peak-weighted measurements slightly, even though we tend to distrust profoundly the automatic "fudging" involved in weighted-rms flutter readings.

In answer to your first question, however, if there's a difference of more than 2:1 between a weighted-rms and a DIN peak-weighted wow/flutter spec, I'd be very wary about buying the deck in question. Given honest and experienced testers, the DIN specification is more likely to be meaningful, and, speaking for myself, I find a DIN spec much over 0.1 per cent wow/flutter likely to be audibly objectionable.

## Hot Heads

**Q** I clean and demagnetize the heads on my open-reel deck meticulously, but I've noticed that in less than 200 hours of actual use the face of the erase head has changed from a shiny silver to a dull bronze color. The deck seems to work all right, but is this something I should be concerned about?

ROBERT L. DOERR  
Dayton, Ohio

**A** The only time this ever happened to me it was owing to excessive current running through the erase head and overheating it. This can lead to head burnout or—in my case—to a tape's actually being melted when stopped in the record mode but physically up against the head.

The test I would propose is rather simple. Put the machine into "record" with no tape in it (a bit of masking tape will hold back the automatic shutoff arm to "fool" the deck) and leave it on for 10 to 15 minutes. Then touch the erase head (at first, gingerly!) with your finger. If you get burned, you have the problem I experienced and should see a serviceman. If the head face is only moderately warm, don't worry about the color change. □

STEREO REVIEW





# ONE SYSTEM STANDS ABOVE THE REST. VERTICALLY. SIMPLY. MITSUBISHI.

This is the system destined to turn the audio world on its ear. If you find that hard to believe, take another look. What you see is the InterPlay X-10™. The world's first *vertical format* complete audio system. No trick photography here. The way you see it is the way you play it. Vertically.

Play a record. Play a cassette. Play the tuner. Any way you play it, it's Mitsubishi.

The vertical *linear-track* turntable allows the X-10 to sit on a small bookshelf. It needs only 10" of shelf depth.

And we've integrated an AM/FM stereo tuner and cassette deck. Hook up the speakers, plug it in, and turn it on. The InterPlay X-10 is stereo at its upright best.

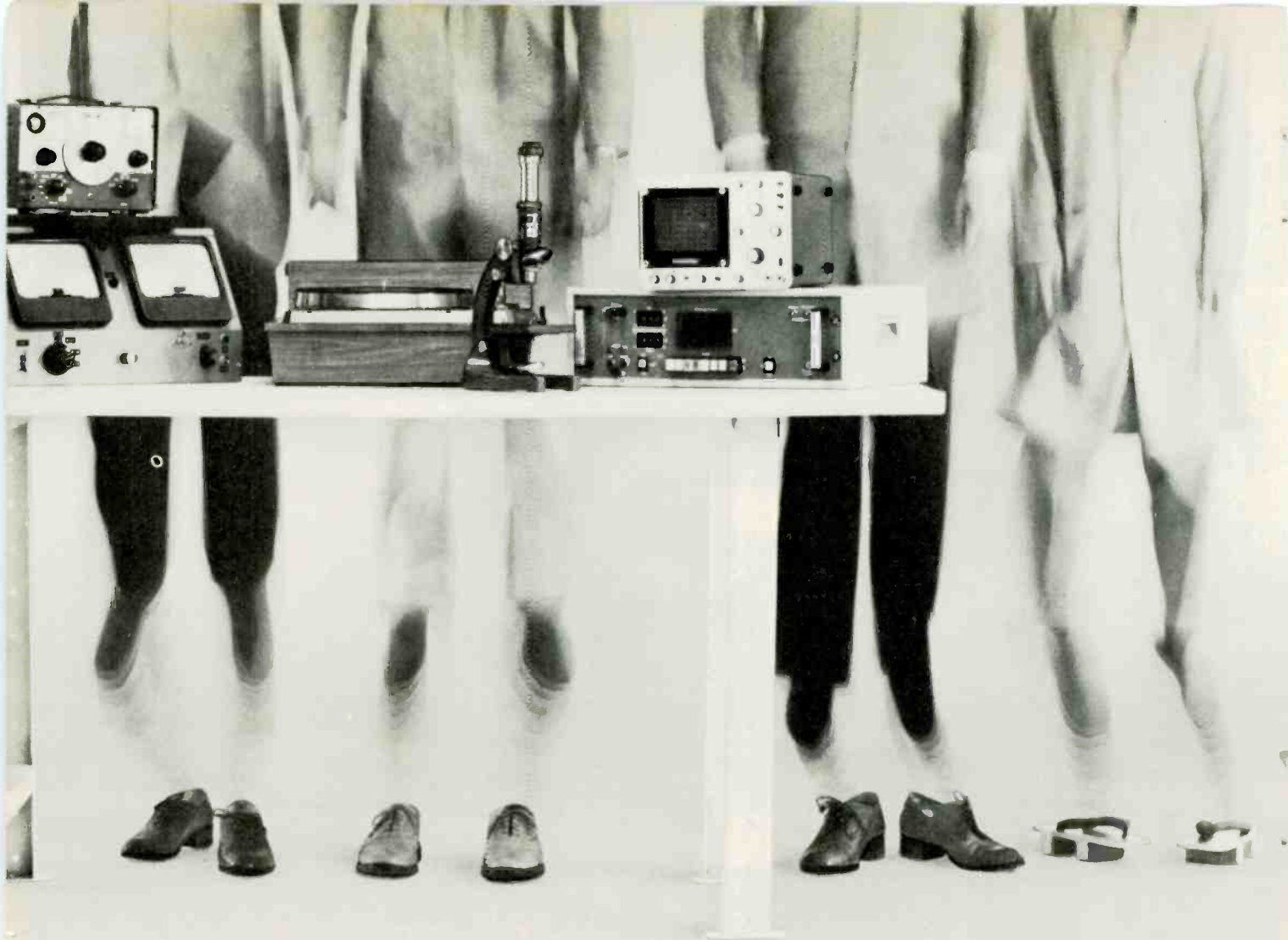
For your nearest dealer, call toll-free (800) 447-2882 or in Illinois, (800) 322-4400 and ask for operator X-10.



Shown here with optional CX-10 Cabinet and SX-10 Loudspeakers

**MGA/MITSUBISHI**

MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC SALES AMERICA, INC. 3010 E. Victoria St., Compton, Ca. 90221  
CIRCLE NO. 29 ON READER SERVICE CARD



#### HIGH FIDELITY

"... Empire says that it (600LAC) will operate into a wide range of preamp loads without audible ill effects. Our experience in the listening room confirms this..."\*

#### HI-FI STEREO BUYERS' GUIDE

"The sound quality is outstanding... Separation was beyond [better than] the 32 + dB limits of our test equipment..."\*

#### STEREO REVIEW

"The Empire 600LAC sounds as smooth as its response curve looks..."\*

#### FM WEEKLY (JAPAN)

"The sound is very beautiful at high frequencies. This is the tradition of Empire... It is remarkable that there is so little distortion in the reproduction of sound..."\*

## THE CRITICS RESPOND TO THE EMPIRE 600LAC CARTRIDGE

There's a new sound waiting in your stereo system. And you'll hear it as soon as you attach a new Empire cartridge to your tonearm.

Highs and lows your speakers have never played before.

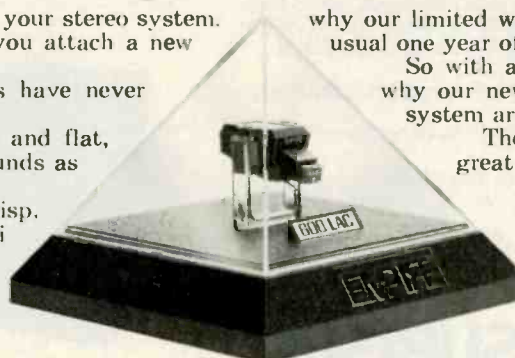
A frequency range that's wide and flat, and as Stereo Review put it, "... Sounds as smooth as its response curve looks."

And the separation is clean, crisp, and "... beyond the limits" of Hi Fi Buyers Guide's test equipment.

The 600LAC goes a bit beyond in quality too. Which is

why our limited warranty is two years instead of the usual one year offered by most other manufacturers. So with all that, it's easy to see (and hear) why our new cartridge will improve most any system around.

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CIRCLE NO. 14 ON READER SERVICE CARD



# Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



## • Amplifier Output-current Ratings •

**G**IVEN the sophistication of today's test equipment, it is not too difficult to find "new" methods of measurement and new things to measure. However, it is not so easy to find tests that correlate totally with the "sound" of an amplifier.

The problem is that amplifiers tend to sound pretty much alike if they are operated within their ratings and have identical frequency-response characteristics into the speaker load. I am ignoring the real or imagined subtle differences that are the favorite debating points of hard-core audiophiles, since not only are they sometimes unmeasurable, but they are not necessarily audible except to those who find them important. It is my view (and I am certainly not alone in holding it) that a power amplifier whose rated output has less than 0.5 percent harmonic distortion consisting largely of low-order (second and third) harmonics, whose noise and hum are less than about -65 dB relative to 1 watt, which has enough power for a comfortable listening level with about 10 dB in reserve so that it never clips, and, further, which has a frequency response flat within about  $\pm 1$  dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz should sound pretty much like any other power amplifier meeting (or exceeding) the same criteria.

Obviously what I am describing is far below the performance level of many, if not most, of today's amplifiers. It is also true that an amplifier apparently meeting all of the listed minimum criteria can, under some conditions, sound downright bad, and that a similarly rated amplifier can, under the very same conditions, be perfectly satis-

factory. The reason, of course, is that the bad-sounding amplifier is not really meeting the stated criteria, though it may seem to be.

There is a major fallacy in the assumption that an amplifier can deliver enough power to its speakers simply because it can deliver the power to 8-ohm resistive test-bench loads. Unfortunately, speakers are not resistors, for a speaker "looks" to an amplifier like a combination of resistance, inductance, and capacitance. Furthermore, the total impedance (the combined effect of those three elements) varies widely with frequency and may under some conditions be much less than the speaker's rated impedance (it can be higher too, but that usually causes no problems).

Let us, for the moment, ignore the reactive (inductive or capacitive) nature of the speaker impedance and consider only its resistive impedance. The typical amplifier behaves much like a constant-voltage source whose output is affected only slightly by the output load impedance. Thus, a load will draw current from the amplifier, in accordance with Ohm's Law, inversely proportional to its impedance.

This operation can be compared with the usual a.c. power-distribution system in the home, where the constant-voltage source (nominally 120 volts) is made available throughout the house. The current drawn from the line depends on the loads that are plugged into it. A single 100-watt light bulb draws less than 1 ampere, but a 1,500-watt radiant heater draws about 12 amperes from the line. This is somewhat analogous

to an amplifier driving either an 8-ohm speaker or a pair of speakers whose paralleled impedance may drop to 2 or 3 ohms at some frequency.

Both the audio and the home power-distribution systems are designed to handle loads of varying impedance. What happens if one turns on a toaster plugged into the same circuit already powering an electric heater? Since most home circuits are fused for 15 amperes, the result is a blown fuse or a tripped circuit breaker, either of which will prevent excessive current from passing through the house wiring (which would be a fire hazard). If this happens, the fuse or breaker is replaced or reset and no harm is done.

**I**n the parallel situation with an audio system, the amplifier also has a finite current-delivering capability, a function of its design and power rating. Attempting to draw too much current will drop the output-signal voltage and (more important) cause severe distortion. In most real amplifiers, of course, protective safeguards will be triggered before such problems occur.

The simplest and most common safety precaution is to place fuses in the d.c. power-supply outputs within the amplifier to limit the current that can be drawn from the power supply by the output stage (and ultimately delivered to the load). Fuses are often placed in the speaker-output circuits as well, and this is equivalent to a fuse within an appliance or at the wall socket in the home. Such a fuse will interrupt the excessive load current directly—before, one

## Tested This Month

3D Acoustics Three-piece Speaker System • Kenwood KA-1000 Integrated Amplifier  
SAE 2401 Power Amplifier • Soundcraftsmen AE2420-R "Scan-Alyzer"  
Realistic STA-2250 Stereo Receiver

hopes, the other protective systems have had a chance to act.

It is unwise to carry this analogy too far, since protection against excessive load currents (which usually means too small a load impedance) in amplifiers is not exclusively a safety precaution as it is in power wiring. The most obvious result of trying to pull too much current from an amplifier's output stage is distortion. However, in real-life (rather than test-bench) circumstances, by virtue of the transient and dynamic nature of music, the overcurrent condition is usually present for only a small fraction of the time. It is therefore likely to be audibly disturbing long before the amplifier overheats. Some types of music (mostly rock) with limited dynamic range will at times produce exceptions to this rule.

Most amplifiers have special circuits that are fast enough to sense a transient overload and protect the output devices from damage. Although they differ in detail, most function by monitoring the output current, preventing it from reaching excessive values by limiting the drive signal fed to the output stage. Some protective systems use relays to disconnect the speakers or to shut off the amplifier. The essential feature of all the systems is the rapid prevention of any further increase in the output current delivered to the load.

**U**NFORTUNATELY, some protective systems have unpleasant side effects. When the current through an inductive load is suddenly interrupted, a very large voltage "spike" can appear across the speaker terminals. Even if this does not damage the output transistors, it can be heard as a pop, a click, or some other disturbing sound.

Some recent amplifier designs (such as those by Axi, Hafler, NAD, and Threshold, among others) have avoided this problem by omitting the usual protection circuits entirely. If simple output-fuse protection is used, the worst that can happen from a

large overload is a blown fuse. Fuse protection is most successful in an amplifier with a rather high *current* capacity (not necessarily a high *power* capacity, which would require a large power supply and heat sinks). On the assumption that excessive load currents will be drawn for only short intervals, it is merely necessary that the output transistors be able to deliver that current safely for the required time (and preferably without severe distortion) and that the power supply be able to provide that "burst" of current without too much drop in supply voltage.

I am experimenting with a special simulated speaker load in testing amplifiers, although one is already defined in the current IHF amplifier standard. The IHF load calls for unreasonably high values of inductance and capacitance, and it is rather impractical for testing any but low-power amplifiers. Normally, I measure amplifiers with resistive loads of 2, 4, and 8 ohms, plotting for each one the maximum output at the clipping point as well as the distortion over a range of power outputs. Many amplifiers (almost all of them, in fact) are not meant to drive a 2-ohm load, and their fuses will blow out (or their protective relays will operate) before the clipping point is reached. To get around this problem, I also measure the dynamic-clipping power into each load impedance. The 20-millisecond tone burst (repeated twice per second) will not blow fuses or overheat anything, allowing the maximum undistorted current capability of the amplifier to be measured into almost any load impedance.

The same signal is used for the overload-recovery test, which (one would think) should reveal any "nastiness" occurring during or immediately following a severe overload of the amplifier. We have been surprised, therefore, to find that *no* amplifier we have tested in this manner, even into 2-ohm loads, has exhibited any untoward behavior after being overdriven 10 dB by

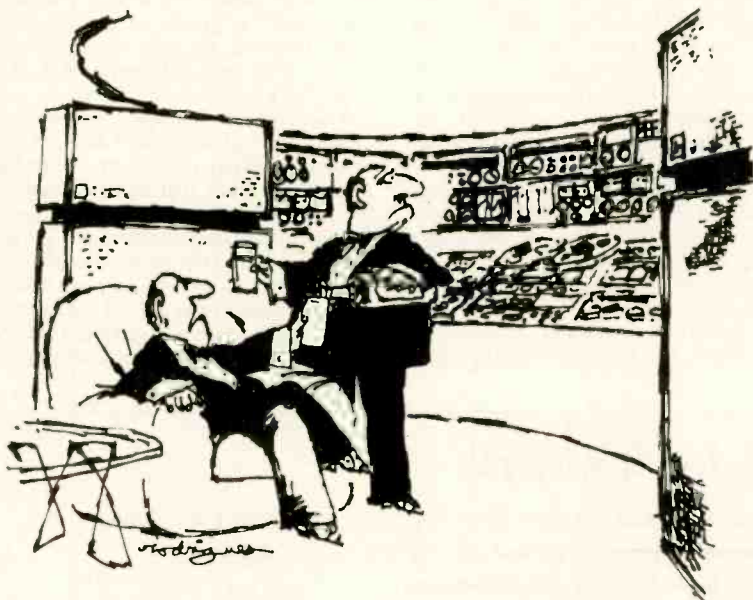
this signal. In most cases, full normal operation is restored in 2 to 10 microseconds after the cessation of the overload.

Dynamic-power output tests into low load impedances show the amplifier's actual current-delivering capabilities (independent of its power-supply and fusing constraints), and from these one can infer what its power limits are likely to be with unusually low load impedances (excluding possible interactions with highly reactive loads). For example, a 100-watt amplifier should be able to deliver 28.3 volts to an 8-ohm load, which will draw about 3.5 amperes from the amplifier. If the load is reduced to 4 ohms, a theoretically perfect constant-voltage source will still develop its 28.3-volt output, but the current will double to 7 amperes and the power output will be 200 watts.

Most amplifiers do not behave in exactly that manner because they are not true constant-voltage sources, due to limitations in their output transistors, a protective system, or the inability of the power supply to deliver the higher current. The dynamic test eliminates the power-supply regulation as a factor (since in most cases the filter capacitors have stored enough charge to supply the output current for the duration of the 20-millisecond burst). If that test shows less than twice as much power output into 4 ohms as into 8 ohms, the limitation is in the output stage or its protective system. Most amplifiers can deliver about 50 percent more short-term power into 4 ohms than into 8 ohms.

**I**f the differences between amplifiers are not always clear-cut when driving normal load impedances, they certainly become apparent when we apply the severe test of driving 2-ohm loads. This is not entirely unrealistic, since I have measured a number of nominally 8-ohm speakers whose impedance drops as low as 3 ohms at some frequency, and attempting to drive such speakers in parallel with any other speaker could easily load the amplifier with 2 ohms or less. Our hypothetical amplifier, in the unlikely event that it could sustain a 28.3-volt output across 2 ohms, would be delivering more than 14 amperes to the load, or 400 watts.

Almost no amplifier can maintain a reasonably constant-output voltage when the load impedance is reduced from 8 to 2 ohms. Nevertheless, some amplifiers can deliver much more short-term current (and therefore power) to low-impedance loads than others having equal capabilities into 8 ohms. Even if it cannot be proved (by these tests) that they are audibly superior to amplifiers with less current capacity, I think it reasonable to expect that a high-current amplifier should be able to drive unusually low load impedances with less likelihood of distortion or other unpleasantness than would be the case with an amplifier having more of a tendency to current limiting. This quality does not have anything to do with price or even with power rating, being solely an expression of the designer's philosophy—a philosophy that I happen to share. □



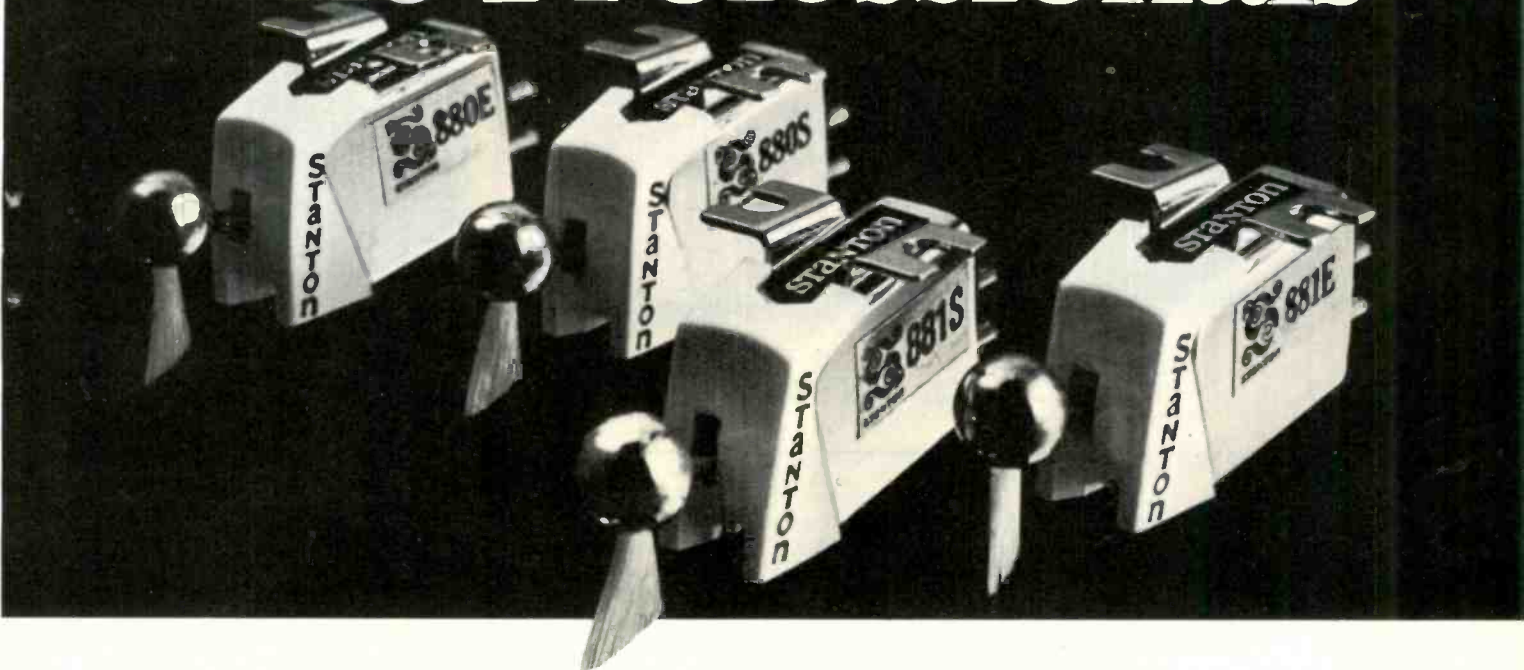
"Gee, Barney, that is tough luck. Fifty-five thousand bucks for a stereo system and all you get is CB and 60-cycle hum . . ."

Test Reports begin on page 30





# The Professionals



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CIRCLE NO. 44 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



3D Acoustics Three-piece Speaker System

**A**LTHOUGH three-piece speaker systems (a bass module and two small satellites) are as old as stereo itself, they seem to be enjoying renewed popularity these days. Usually they take the form of a pair of conventional speakers, either bookshelf or compact floor-standing units, to which the user has added an accessory "subwoofer" to extend the bass response. However, a number of such systems are now being offered by several manufacturers.

The advantage of this configuration is obvious: the smaller speakers can fit into the room decor more easily, yet the effective bass response of the system can match or surpass that of a pair of large speakers. Sometimes the bass module has separate sections for the two channels, and sometimes the left and right channels are mixed and heard through a single bass speaker. The effect in either case is much the same, since the combined bass is usually limited to frequencies below about 100 Hz, where there is little or no stereo information. For the same reason, the bass module can be located almost anywhere in the room, regardless of the placement of the satellites.

The Three Piece Loudspeaker System from 3D Acoustics (5 Sunrise Plaza, Valley Stream, N.Y. 11581) is a moderate-price system consisting of a pair of very compact

two-way speakers (the 3D6) and a common-bass speaker (10B). For convenience, we will refer to the complete system as the 3D6/10B. Each 3D6 satellite is in an oiled-walnut-veneer wooden cabinet measuring 14 inches high, 8½ inches wide, and 7¼ inches deep and weighing 13½ pounds. Each sealed enclosure contains a 5-inch cone speaker crossing over at 2,000 Hz to a 1-inch dome tweeter. The spring-loaded input terminals are recessed into the rear of the cabinet.

The 10B bass module is a floor-standing unit whose finish matches that of the satellites. It is 24 inches high, 16 inches wide, and 12 inches deep; it weighs 37 pounds. The bass unit is supported about 2 inches from the floor at its corners, and its single downward-facing driver radiates into the room through the four "slots" between the floor and the base of the cabinet. The bass driver is a nominal 10 inches in diameter and handles the mixed bass from both channels. Its enclosure is vented through a 2¼-inch-diameter port located behind a narrow black grille on a sloping panel across the upper front of the cabinet. The outputs of the two amplifier channels are connected to spring-loaded input terminals (8 ohms nominal) on the back of the 10B. Next to them are output terminals to which are connected

the left and right 3D6 satellites. The 100-Hz crossover network between the woofer and the other speakers is located in the 10B, and the system has no level or balance adjustments. Its power rating is 30 watts minimum, 150 watts maximum, per channel.

Although the installation instructions suggest placing the satellites against a wall, 3D Acoustics also manufactures accessory metal stands for the system; these support the 3D6 speakers 27 inches from the floor and allow them to be located some distance from the wall. The bass unit should be located against a wall for best response. The price of the complete 3D6/10B system is \$400 on the East Coast, \$450 in the West. A pair of SS-1 stands is \$65.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The 3D6 speakers were placed on their stands about 2 feet from the wall and 8 feet apart. Their response in the reverberant field of the room was averaged and smoothed over the measurement range of 100 to 20,000 Hz. Frequency response of the bass unit was measured by laying the 10B on its side and placing the microphone close to the woofer cone. A second curve was plotted on the same chart with the microphone placed at the opening of the port.

(Continued on page 32)



# IF YOU'RE NOT USING THE SCOTCH<sup>®</sup> RECORD CARE SYSTEM, YOU'RE USING THE SECOND BEST.

**THE SCOTCH<sup>®</sup> RECORD CARE SYSTEM. IT CLEANS,  
ANTI-STATS AND REDUCES FRICTION—ALL IN ONE STEP.**

Finally there's a way to give your records the kind of care and protection that hasn't been possible until now... a way to insure a long life of true sound.

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The Scotch Record Care System combines Sound Life<sup>™</sup> record care fluid with a unique dispensing applicator. To use, simply depress the supply container and Sound Life fluid is fed automatically to the pad. That's all there is to it. It's quick, easy and simple. No guesswork about how much fluid you need or how to apply it correctly. Just place the applicator on your turntable spindle, revolve it and the record is cleaned.

#### Super-wetting action deep-cleans grooves.



*Artist's representation.  
Water-based record-cleaning solutions bead up on the grooves (left). Sound Life with super-wetting action deep-cleans grooves (right).*

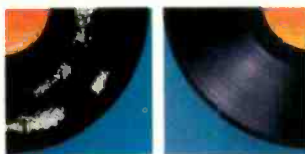
If your present cleaning solution beads up on the record surface, it may not be getting the job done.

Scotch Sound Life spreads onto the disc surface evenly—safely penetrating grooves to remove micro-dust and fingerprints. Sound Life leaves the record with a brilliant look, as brilliant as the sound is clean and true.

#### As it cleans, it wipes out static.

Even though your record surface is clean, it's generally the electrostatic charge that gets it dirty again. An anti-static gun is just a temporary treatment.

One application of Sound Life reduces the residual charge to near zero. And it prevents static from returning no matter how often the record is played.



*(Left) Foam beads are attracted to static charge left on record after cleaning with a leading record cleaner. Same record (right) after one treatment with Sound Life fluid with anti-static action.*

#### Friction reduction's a plus.

The same application of Sound Life that super-cleans and removes static can reduce stylus drag up to 15%.

And with your sensitive stylus that can mean less wear and improved record life.

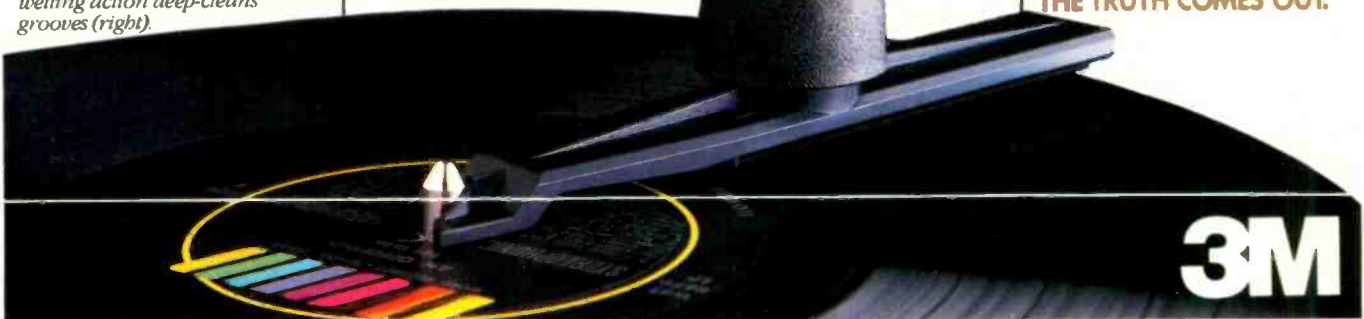
#### Better stereo performance.

To get all the true, pure sound you expect from your stereo, you need records that are truly clean, and protected from static and friction. Only the Scotch Record Care System gives you all three in one application. Ask to see a demonstration at your record or stereo store right now.

All of the tech data we've used to back up these statements is available free. Write to Home Entertainment Products Department, 3M Company, 3M Center, St. Paul, MN 55144. Ask for report C-242.



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RECORD CARE SYSTEM.  
THE TRUTH COMES OUT.**



The acoustic contribution of the port was so much smaller than that of the cone that it could be ignored in determining the total bass response. The woofer output reached its maximum at 70 Hz and fell off at lower and higher frequencies (the high-frequency rolloff was due to the internal crossover network). The smoothed middle- and high-frequency curve, corrected for the known room response, was spliced to the bass curve to form an overall composite response curve. It was very smooth, with a broadly depressed midrange output between 400 and 1,500 Hz. The extreme-high-frequency output was remarkably uniform, varying only  $\pm 0.5$  dB from 7,000 to 20,000 Hz. The dispersion of the dome tweeters was good, with diverging response curves from the left and right speakers appearing only above 7,000 Hz (one of them was measured on its axis and the other about 30 degrees off axis). The overall frequency-response curve of the system was within  $\pm 3.5$  dB from 40 to 20,000 Hz, representing excellent performance for any speaker system measured in a "live" room.

The woofer distortion at a nominal 1-watt (2.83-volt) input was very low (less than 0.5 per cent) down to 60 Hz, rising to 2.8 per cent at 35 Hz and 6.3 per cent at 30 Hz. A 10-dB power increase resulted in distortion readings under 1 per cent down to 70 Hz; they increased to 3.2 per cent at 40 Hz and were still only 6.3 per cent at 30 Hz. The system impedance averaged about 4 ohms from 20 to 100 Hz, rose to a maximum of about 60 ohms at 1,250 Hz, and fell to an average of 6 to 7 ohms between 4,000 and 20,000 Hz. This is a relatively insensitive speaker system, since an input of 2.83 volts of pink noise in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz produced a sound-pressure level of only 83.5 dB when measured at a 1-meter distance.

● **Comment.** Our measurements of the 3D 3D6/10B combination suggest that it is a rather good system in respect to frequency response, smoothness, and distortion. However, our listening tests revealed that the measurements do not adequately describe its remarkable performance.

We use the term "remarkable" advisedly, especially in view of the modest price of the system. The sound was immediately heard to be open and sweet, with no strain or spatial discontinuity between the satellites and the bass speaker. When we compared this system with a pair of very fine speakers located next to the satellites (which were on their stands), we found to our amazement that the two were frequently indistinguishable in an A-B comparison, except for occasional spatial differences that were of no consequence (since there was no way to determine which, if either, was more "natural"). This was difficult to accept, since the comparison speakers cost almost *ten times* as much as the 3D system, so we listened over a period of weeks using both disc and FM sources—and still had to conclude that the two sounded so much alike that we usually had to look at the switches on the comparator panel to determine which was playing!

The smooth, extended high-end response of the 3D6 left nothing to be desired (each of the satellites has foam-plastic damping sheets on three sides of the tweeter, presumably to smooth its polar response, but this was the only external sign of special construction techniques). The midrange dip, incidentally, was never audible as such. This may have been due in part to the acoustics of our listening room, since the comparison speakers exhibited a similar, but much smaller, dip when measured under identical conditions.

The only consistent sonic difference we

heard between the speakers was a feeling of added warmth in the sound from the 3D system, probably due to its slightly emphasized output in the 60- to 150-Hz range. It was not at all objectionable and would not have been noticeable except in comparison with the other speakers, which were very flat through that range.

Another genuine difference between the two systems was in their ability to handle very high amplifier-power levels. When we drove them with peak amplifier outputs of 200 watts or more, the sound of the 3D was slightly less "open" and we could sense the onset of compression in the program peaks (the sound did not get "mushy" or otherwise distorted, however). The comparison speakers, on the other hand, were totally unstrained at any power level we used.

We do not wish to imply that the three-piece 3D system is in all instances necessarily better than (or even as good as) some other speakers costing many times its price. In our room it definitely *was* (with the exceptions noted), but no doubt things would be different in a totally different environment. We can say, however, that in our listening room we have never heard a speaker (played at reasonable levels) that sounded significantly better than this one, aside from the questions of their ability to play louder or to produce another octave of clean bass. In our comparisons we used other systems selling at prices from double to ten times that of the 3D; they were all very fine-sounding speakers, and the 3D was just as fine. The 3D three-piece system is a real "sleeper," the sort of discovery that adds spice to a reviewer's life and prevents him from becoming jaded under constant exposure to look-alike and sound-alike components at ever-increasing prices. This is really something unusual. Hear it if you possibly can!



Kenwood KA-1000 Integrated Amplifier

**T**HE top-of-the-line integrated amplifier in the new Kenwood "Purist" Series is the KA-1000, rated at 100 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.005 per cent total har-

monic distortion. The most unusual feature of the KA-1000 (and of the two less expensive amplifiers in the Purist Series) is Sigma Drive, an auxiliary negative-feedback arrangement that includes the speaker ca-

bles within the loop. The result, as Kenwood puts it, is to "effectively place the amplifier across the speaker terminals." Special 13-foot speaker cables are supplied with the

(Continued on page 34)

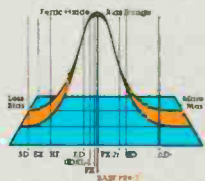
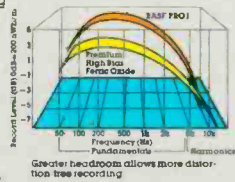


# The Tape Guide

**Professional-I.**  
The one tape that stands up when you crank it up.



Premium ferric oxide tapes have more headroom which allows higher maximum recording levels (MRL). Among all premium ferric oxides PRO I has the best MRL for loud recordings. Uniform maghemite particles provide increased headroom for very accurate and loud recordings with virtually no distortion. In the fundamental music range (20Hz-5kHz) PRO I can be recorded louder and driven harder than even high bias tapes. PRO I is the internationally accepted reference tape, whose bias point is specifically matched to the Type I/normal/ferric position on today's high quality cassette decks.



PRO I is designed to be compatible with the normal bias setting of many cassette decks than any other ferric tape.

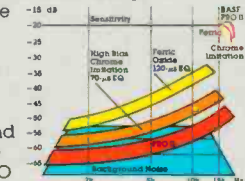
**Professional-II.**  
The world's quietest tape puts nothing between you and your music.



High bias tapes consistently provide wider frequency response and less tape noise (hiss or background noise) than any other tape type. Among premium high bias tapes PRO II is in a class by itself. It is the second generation chromium dioxide tape with superb frequency response and outstanding sensitivity in the critical (10kHz-20kHz) high frequency range. It also has the lowest background noise of any other competitive tape available today. PRO II will capture the many subtle harmonics of the most demanding recordings and play them back with the reality and presence of a live performance. PRO II is the tape for the Type II/chrome/high bias position that comes closest to Metal tape performance for half the price.



The pure chromium dioxide particles in the PRO II, unlike ferric oxide particles, are homogeneously shaped and uniformly sized to give the tape superior performance.

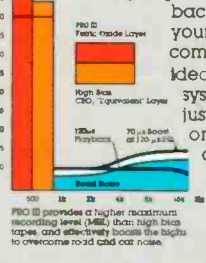
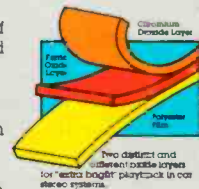


PRO II has the best high frequency sensitivity and the lowest background noise of any high bias tape.

**Professional-III.**  
The only car tape that eliminates the car.



Ferrichrome tapes combine the benefits of chromium dioxide and ferric oxide tapes for superior performance in car stereos. The top layer is pure chromium dioxide for unsurpassed highs and low background noise. The bottom layer is ferric oxide for superior lows and great middle frequencies. And it also gives you higher recording levels, so you get clearer, louder playback without cranking up your volume control to compensate. PRO III is the ideal tape for car stereo systems and performs just as well in the home on the Type III/ferrichrome position.



PRO III provides a higher maximum recording level (MRL) than high bias tapes, and effectively boosts the highs to overcome road and car noise.

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"The guarantee of a lifetime."  
All BASF tape cassettes come with a lifetime guarantee. Should any BASF cassette ever fail — except for abuse or mishandling — simply return it to BASF for a free replacement.



**Patented "Jam-Proof" Security Mechanism (SM):**  
All BASF tape cassettes come with our exclusive SM — Security Mechanism. Two precision arms actually "guide" the tape in a smooth, exact and consistent track, so that winding is always even, no matter how often the cassette is played. SM puts an end to tape jamming.



Crosby Drive, Bedford, Massachusetts 01730  
CIRCLE NO. 3 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Now with the new BASF cassette shell.  
Greater precision for greater performance.

## test reports

amplifier. In addition to two heavy conductors for the speaker drive, these cables include a pair of lighter-gauge wires to carry the feedback signals from the speaker terminals to special Sigma Drive binding posts in the rear of the amplifier.

Among the benefits claimed for Sigma Drive are a very large increase in effective damping factor (rated at a minimum of 600 at the speaker end of the cable), compared with any conventional output system, and a considerable reduction in the distortion of the electrical signal supplied to the speaker. Kenwood states that an amplifier—even one as advanced as the KA-1000—produces far more distortion at the speaker than is measured directly at the amplifier output because of the impedance of the connecting

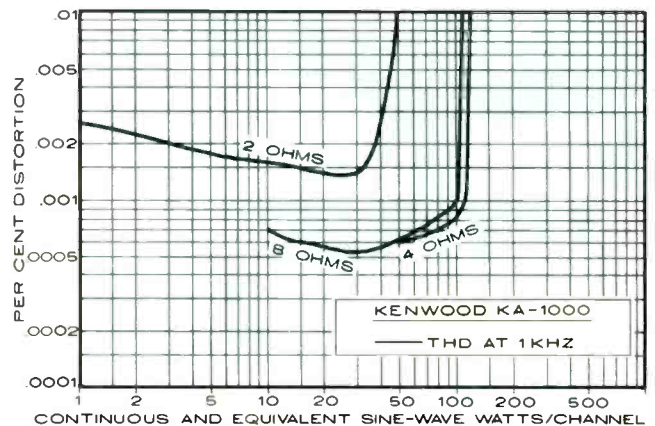
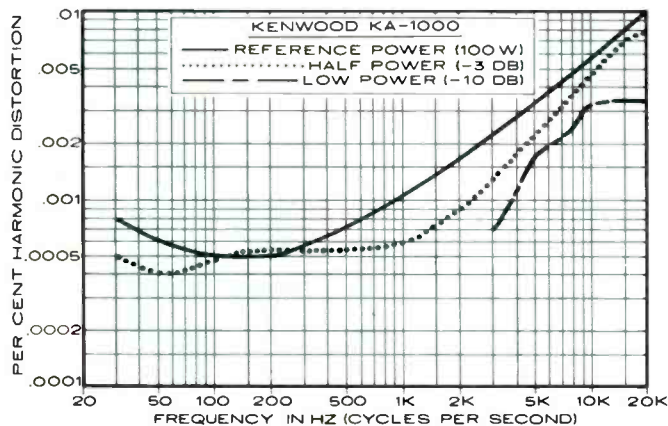
seen a number of bar-knob and pushbutton controls. The glass panel hinges down for access to these controls, most of which are used infrequently. The upper part of the panel, which is silver grey like the rest of the amplifier, contains a flat rectangular power switch at the left and a large rectangular transparent plate (FADER) at the right. To the left of the fader plate is a horizontal-slider volume control, below which are five input-selector pushbuttons.

The volume slider sets the listening level when the fader plate is illuminated from the rear by a pale blue light. Touching the plate lightly causes the volume to fade smoothly down to zero over a period of a second or two, and another touch returns it to the preset value over the same time period. This

or 400 Hz for the bass and 3 or 6 kHz for the treble control.

The balance control is center-detented and, like the tone controls, can be completely bypassed by a button that removes the balance control from the amplifier circuit. Other pushbuttons activate the loudness compensation, select either DC COUPLED or SUBSONIC FILTER operation, and choose stereo or mono mode.

The KA-1000 has two phono inputs, selectable from the front panel by a pushbutton. In the rear of the amplifier is a slide switch that provides phono-input terminating resistances of 33, 47, or 100 kilohms. Another front-panel switch converts the phono preamplifier from a moving-magnet (MM) cartridge input to a high-gain, 100-



cable and the nonlinear impedance of the speaker. Sigma Drive makes the extremely low distortion of the amplifier more readily available to the speaker.

Kenwood engineers also believe that the presence of magnetic materials in the immediate vicinity of signal circuits can introduce measurably significant amounts of distortion. To eliminate such effects, they have made the KA-1000 entirely of nonmagnetic materials—aluminum top cover and front panel, molded plastic sides and trim. The power supply is a separate unit, connected to the amplifier through a 3-foot cable. Separate power transformers are used for the left and right channels, and, according to Kenwood, there are actually five separate power supplies in the KA-1000.

In addition to Sigma Drive, the Kenwood KA-1000 has wide-band circuitry with full d.c. coupling from the preamplifier's high-level inputs to the speaker outputs (a low-frequency filter can be switched in to provide d.c. isolation as well as some attenuation of turntable rumble). The output stages use a "zero-switching" bias system to minimize crossover distortion. The heat from the plastic-cased output transistors is conducted to a refrigerant which circulates in a closed system to heat-radiating fins. The entire cooling system is contained within the amplifier cabinet.

From the front, the Kenwood KA-1000 presents a distinctive appearance, with the lower portion of its panel covered by a smoked-glass panel behind which can be

feature, which replaces the "audio muting" feature of many amplifiers, accomplishes much the same result, but Kenwood's system drops the volume to zero instead of making the usual 20-dB reduction, and it changes with a smooth fading action that encourages its use. As the signal fades, the blue light behind the touch plate fades with it, so the status of the system can be seen at a glance. In addition, the position of the volume slider gives an indication of how loud the sound can be expected to be when the signal is fully restored.

The program-selector buttons offer a choice of TAPE A, TAPE B, AUX, TUNER, and PHONO inputs. Their identifying markings are below their buttons on the hinged glass panel. Red lights next to smaller markings on the metal panel behind the door also show the program selection. Behind the hinged panel is a REC OUT knob switch that selects the recording-output program independently of the program being played. It duplicates the PHONO, AUX, and TUNER sources, plus two DUBBING positions for transferring programs from one tape deck to another. In its off setting, the tape outputs are completely isolated from the signal path.

The bass and treble tone controls can be bypassed by a pushbutton that completely removes all active tone-control circuits from the signal path (this also permits a d.c. response through the entire amplifier). In addition, there are turnover-frequency buttons for the tone controls, giving a choice of 200

ohm moving-coil (MC) cartridge input.

The remaining front-panel control is a knob-operated speaker switch controlling two pairs of speaker outputs. Only the SPEAKER A outputs include the Sigma Drive terminals, and a red light above the speaker switch indicates when it is in use. There is an A + B position that drives both sets of speakers simultaneously, but it does not use the Sigma Drive. If only the SPEAKER A terminals are used, it is easy to check the audible effects of Sigma Drive by switching to A + B, which disables that circuit. A headphone jack is located next to the speaker switch.

The Kenwood KA-1000 amplifier is about 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches wide, 14<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches deep, and 4<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches high. Because its power supply is separate, the amplifier unit weighs only about 13<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> pounds. The power-supply unit, which matches the amplifier in appearance, is 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches wide, 14<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches deep, and 4<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches high, and it weighs about 18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> pounds. On its rear panel are three switched a.c. outlets and one unswitched outlet. The two units can be placed side by side or the power supply can be located anywhere within its cable length of the amplifier (it has no controls). The suggested retail price of the Kenwood KA-1000 is \$795.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The 1-hour preconditioning period at one-third rated power made the top of the KA-1000 uncom-

(Continued on page 36)



# WHY SPEND \$200 MORE ON A BETTER TAPE DECK WHEN ALL YOU NEED IS \$2 MORE FOR A BETTER TAPE.



No matter how much you spend on a tape deck, the sound that comes out of it can only be as good as the tape you put in it. So before you invest a few hundred dollars upgrading your tape deck, invest a few extra dollars in a new Maxell XLI-S or XLII-S cassette.

They're the newest and most advanced generation of oxide formulation tapes. By engineering smaller and more uniformly shaped oxide particles, we were able to pack more of these particles onto a given area of tape.

Now this might not sound exactly earth-shattering, but it can help your tape deck live up to its specifications by improving output, signal-to-noise ratio and frequency response.

Our new XLI-S cassettes also have an improved binder system, which helps keep the oxide particles exactly where they're supposed to be. On the tape's surface, not on your recording heads. As a result, you'll hear a lot more music and a lot less distortion.

There's more to our XLI-S tape than just great tape. We've also redesigned our cassette shells. Our new Quin-Lok™ Clamp/Hub Assembly holds the leader firmly in place and eliminates tape deformation. Which means you'll not only hear great music, but you'll also be able to enjoy it a lot longer.

So if you'd like to get better sound out of your tape system, you don't have to put more money into it. Just put in our new tape.

**maxell**  
**IT'S WORTH IT.**

Maxell Corporation of America, 60 Clifford Drive, Mahanac, NJ 07074  
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fortably hot over the heat sinks, but elsewhere it was quite cool. Even in normal operation the top of the amplifier becomes rather warm, and proper ventilation is important. With both channels driving 8-ohm loads at 1,000 Hz, the waveform clipped at 114 watts per channel for an IHF clipping-headroom rating of 0.57 dB. The amplifier is not rated for loads other than 8 ohms, but its measured output at clipping into 4- and 2-ohm loads was 118 and 56 watts per channel, respectively. Dynamic-power measurements into these load impedances yielded clipping outputs of 128, 114, and 63 watts, giving the amplifier an 8-ohm IHF dynamic-headroom rating of 1.07 dB. The overload recovery time, when overdriven 10 dB with the pulsed test signal, was a good 10 microseconds.

Distortion measurements demonstrated the extraordinary linearity of the Kenwood circuits through most of the audio range. The distortion at 1,000 Hz was undetectable below 10 watts output into 8 ohms, being below the noise level and our measurement limit of 0.0003 per cent! It measured between 0.0005 and 0.001 per cent from 10 to 100 watts output. With 4-ohm loads the results were generally similar: levels of 0.0005 to 0.0007 per cent were measured in the 10- to 50-watt range and 0.008 per cent at 100 watts. Even when we drove 2-ohm loads (for which the amplifier is specifically not rated, being recommended for use only with speakers rated at 4 ohms or higher) the distortion was typically between 0.0015 and 0.002 per cent up to 40 watts, reaching 0.01 per cent at 50 watts.

At the rated 100-watts output, the distortion was under 0.001 per cent from 20 to 1,000 Hz, and it rose linearly at higher frequencies to the rated 0.005 per cent at 8,000 Hz and 0.01 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At lower power outputs the distortion was still lower. These measurements were made with the amplifier gain set to 20 dB below maximum, in accordance with IHF measurement standards. When the distortion is measured at maximum gain setting, the amplifier meets the published rating of 0.005 per cent at 20,000 Hz.

Our measurements were made through

the complete amplifier (AUX input to output loads) with the tone controls and balance control bypassed. The sensitivity at maximum gain for a reference output of 1 watt was 16 millivolts (mV): through the MM phono input it was 0.23 mV. No measurements were made using the MC input. Under reference-gain conditions (0.5 volt into AUX or 5 mV into PHONO producing a 1-watt output) the A-weighted signal-to-noise-ratio (S/N) readings were -80 and -78 dB for AUX and PHONO, respectively, referred to 1 watt. Relative to the amplifier's rated power, the S/N readings were -100 and -98 dB.

The phono input overloaded at 270 to 290 millivolts depending on frequency (referred to equivalent 1,000-Hz values). The phono-input impedances measured 110, 50, and 34 kilohms for the positions marked 100, 47, and 33 kilohms. The phono-input capacitance was 150 picofarads. The MC input resistance was 130 ohms.

The amplifier was stable with capacitive loads as great as 3 microfarads across the resistive loads. We measured its IHF intermodulation distortion using equal-amplitude signals, at 19,000 and 20,000 Hz, whose combined peak value was equivalent to that of a sine-wave signal at 100 watts output. The third-order IM distortion at 18,000 Hz was -83 dB and the second-order distortion at 1,000 Hz was -84 dB, both referred to 100 watts output. The amplifier rise time was 6 microseconds at the IHF standard-gain setting but improved to 1 microsecond (approximately as rated) with maximum gain. The slew rate was about 100 volts per microsecond, quite close to the rated 120 volts per microsecond, and the IHF slew factor exceeded our measurement limit of 25.

With the 400-Hz and 3-kHz turnover settings, the tone controls caused considerable change of overall gain; halfway settings of the controls produced a gain change of 2 to 3 dB, with little alteration of frequency response. With the other crossover settings (200 Hz and 6 kHz) the gain was fairly constant and there was a good control effect at the frequency extremes (although the treble control had negligible effect in

the first half of its rotation from center). The controls are not detented, but the bypass switch makes it easy to return to a flat-response condition whenever one desires.

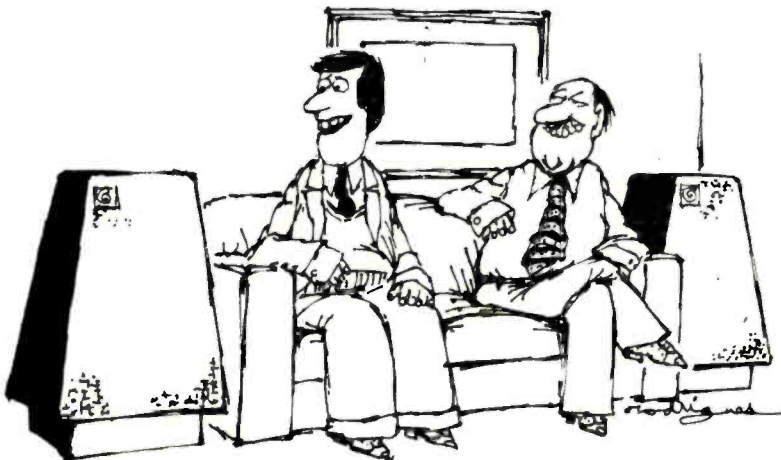
The loudness compensation boosted only the lower frequencies, below about 1,000 Hz, as the volume was lowered. The "subsonic filter," which has a gradual 6-dB-per-octave slope below its rated cutoff frequency of 18 Hz, reduced the response by 2.5 dB at 20 Hz with very slight gain reduction as high as 100 Hz. The RIAA phono equalization was extremely accurate, deviating only  $\pm 0.5$  dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz, which is within our normal measurement-error range. There was a slight interaction between cartridge inductance and phono response at frequencies above 7,000 Hz, depending on the specific cartridge used. In one case, the output rose to +1.2 dB at 15,000 Hz and +2.5 dB at 20,000 Hz, while with another cartridge the total change was +1, -0.5 dB up to 20,000 Hz.

All the preceding measurements were made using the Sigma Drive circuit and with the test loads connected to the amplifier via its special four-wire cables. To evaluate the action of the Sigma Drive, it was necessary to simulate a speaker load (the feature has virtually no effect with purely resistive loads). The best simulation is a real speaker, so we connected the amplifier to a high-quality three-way system (the KEF 105.2) and measured the response and distortion at the speaker terminals. To exaggerate the effect of long connecting cables, we also made measurements with an extra impedance in series with the speaker line at the amplifier where it would allow the Sigma Drive to operate with full effectiveness. For some measurements we used a 4-ohm resistor, and for others we used a large series inductor measuring 0.7 ohm and 2.5 millihenries.

First, we measured the distortion at the speaker through the KA-1000 cables using a 10-watt drive level at 40 Hz. The only measurable distortions were a 0.013 per cent second harmonic and several higher-order harmonics at about 0.006 per cent. The distortion was the same with or without the Sigma Drive in operation.

Since the amplifier has less than 0.0005 per cent distortion under the same conditions when driving an 8-ohm resistor load, it appears that the complex nature of a speaker load can increase the distortion by about thirty times, although in our view it is still completely negligible. When we inserted the 4-ohm resistance in the speaker line (with Sigma Drive off) the second-harmonic distortion rose to -47 dB (0.45 per cent). Though hardly likely to be audible under any conditions, this distortion level can no longer be summarily dismissed since it is not far below the levels attained by some good speaker systems at the frequency and power levels we used. There was also a third harmonic, at 120 Hz, at a -60 dB (0.1 per cent) level. Switching in the Sigma Drive reduced these distortion levels by 12 to 15 dB, certainly a very substantial improvement. The 80- and 120-Hz components were now, respectively, -63 and -72 dB (0.07 and 0.025 per cent), which

(Continued on page 38)



"From zero to 20,000-cycle response—say, those are good speakers, Floyd!"



## Two Paths to the Pinnacle

In a tradition  
of beauty & performance



### Nakamichi 700ZXL Computing Cassette Deck

And the 700ZXL with supersonic encoding, 15-program RAMM, and A.B.L.E. processor to achieve a remarkable 18 to 24,000 Hz response  $\pm 3$  dB.

Both have internal Double Dolby-B noise reduction and are compatible with more advanced external systems such as High-Com II and the NR-100 Dolby-C processor... and each has a full remote-control option.

700ZXE or 700ZXL...two paths to the pinnacle of perfection.

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\*High-Com® is the trademark of AEG-Telefunken.

### Nakamichi 700ZXE Auto Tuning Cassette Deck

An entirely new design...but one true to the Nakamichi 70C tradition. A unique blend of beauty and technology as ravishing to the eye as to the ear. And now...a choice of 700ZX cassette recorders. The 700ZXE with 50-dB peak-responding electronic metering, 9-program interstice-searching RAMM, and automatic calibration of azimuth, bias, and level attains a response from 18 to 23,000 Hz  $\pm 3$  dB...



For more information, write to Nakamichi U.S.A. Corp., 1101 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

are truly negligible compared to any speaker distortions.

One would also expect Sigma Drive to correct for any frequency-response changes caused by the impedance of the speaker cables. With a purely resistive impedance, these effects would merely follow the impedance characteristic of the speaker; with series inductance they would also show up as a loss of high-frequency output. This was tested by using our spectrum analyzer as a frequency-response plotter, with the same series impedances used for the distortion tests. With the 4-ohm series resistance and Sigma Drive off, the voltage at the speaker terminals varied about 2 dB over the range of frequencies up to 2,000 Hz. Turning on the Sigma Drive reduced the total variation to about 0.5 dB.

The series inductance had a more pronounced effect, reducing the speaker-drive voltage rapidly above 1,000 Hz as well as introducing several smaller irregularities at lower frequencies. The Sigma Drive eliminated the high-frequency roll off, actually converting it to a slight increase in output. Finally, an overall sweep from 0 to 20,000 Hz without Sigma Drive showed a drop in voltage of about 9 dB in the upper part of that range, caused by the impedance of the series inductor. The Sigma Drive converted this to a nearly flat response, varying only  $\pm 2$  dB over the full range.

● **Comment.** In the KA-1000, Kenwood engineers concentrated on improving certain specific areas of performance according to their perception of the importance of

those characteristics. Our measurements show that they have succeeded quite well in attaining their goals. However, we wish that the KA-1000's controls had been more versatile and effective and the control labeling more visible.

On the plus side of the ledger, the separate recording-output selector is a welcome feature, as is the smooth action of the fader, which mutes and restores the program so smoothly and unobtrusively that one is hardly aware of the action. The amplifier is dead quiet and, needless to say, utterly clean sounding.

Which brings us to Sigma Drive, the KA-1000's most unusual feature. Our measurements confirm that it does just what is claimed for it, effectively compensating for the presence of the speaker cables. Despite Kenwood's claim that it makes a "striking" difference in the sound, however, we never found more than the most subtle smoothing and "warming" of the frequency balance when it was switched in, and then only with certain program material. Its effect would also be quite dependent on the particular speakers used. The action of this circuit can be measured more easily than heard, which is an interesting inversion of the all-too-common case of subjective qualities that cannot be explained by any conventional measurements.

The longer the speaker leads, and the smaller their gauge, the more advantage will be realized from Sigma Drive. Thus, the special four-wire cables supplied with the amplifier are the *least* likely to disclose its merits. If they are not used and longer

speaker leads are needed, it will be necessary to run a second pair of leads back from each speaker to the Sigma Drive feedback terminals on the amplifier, but they carry almost no current and can therefore be of very small gauge. Judging by the effectiveness with which the Sigma Drive compensated for a 4-ohm connecting resistance (corresponding to hundreds of feet of speaker wire) there should be little need for any user of the KA-1000 to invest in any of the special "low-loss" cables on the market.

The KA-1000 will not be at its best with very-low-impedance speaker loads, and if your speaker drops much below 4 ohms we would not recommend its use (nor would Kenwood). On the other hand, we cannot imagine a cleaner-sounding amplifier, nor one which can come closer to equaling its test-bench performance when driving real loudspeaker systems.

Whatever the reasons, this was an amplifier we especially enjoyed using and listening to. On a subliminal level, which may be one of the best ways to judge a very highly refined amplifier or other component, we found the KA-1000 to be one of the best-sounding amplifiers available. Even if the full benefits of Sigma Drive probably can be realized only under rather special conditions, and even though it produced no spectacular results in our installation, we consider it to be a genuine step in the right direction and, unlike some other circuit developments of recent years, not at all in the "gimmick" category.

Circle 140 on reader service card



## SAE 2401 Power Amplifier

**T**HE SAE "01" Series "Dual High Resolution" power amplifiers have been designed, according to their manufacturer, specifically to drive real loudspeaker loads rather than being optimized for laboratory bench measurements using resistive loads.

The three models that presently make up the series have identical electrical characteristics except for their power ratings. The most powerful, the 2401, was tested for this report.

The rationale for the design of the "01"

Series amplifiers is the acknowledged fact that loudspeakers are not only reactive loads (exhibiting the properties of capacitors or inductors at different frequencies in addition to their resistive components) but

(Continued on page 40)



"I gave my kid brother  
my turntable.  
I gave him my tuner.  
I gave him my tape deck.  
But I kept my AR's."



Most good speakers sound fine when they're new.

But what about next year?

And the year after?

Will they start to sound tired and send you looking for something better?

Not if they're AR's.

We build accurate speakers.

Because no matter what kind of music you like, accuracy is the standard.

It's the way a speaker *should* sound.

So we build AR's to stay accurate.

It's nothing for us to hear from owners who've had theirs for 10 or 15 years. They've upgraded the rest of their system, but they still can't find an excuse to replace their AR's.

The reason AR's sound so good for so long is basic.

We build nothing but speakers. We design all the components that go into them and build them in our own plant. All our effort goes into making the perfect speaker. For example, every AR, yours included, has passed more than 70 quality control tests before it's shipped.

That's why AR can cover you with a full (not limited) 5-year warranty.

It covers parts. It covers labor. And it also promises that your AR's will perform to within 1 dB of design specs (as per AR warranty statement).

Isn't that the kind of quality assurance you want with your new speakers?



"Truth in Listening"



TELEDYNE ACOUSTIC RESEARCH

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are also nonlinear. Since a dynamic speaker acts as a motor, its voice-coil motion generates a "back emf" that tries to drive currents in the reverse direction through the amplifier's output terminals. For the amplifier to be insensitive to this reverse-signal component, it must have a high damping factor (low internal impedance) over the entire audio-frequency range.

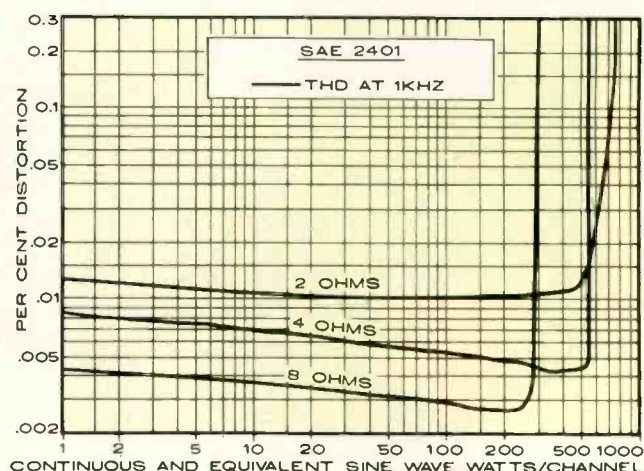
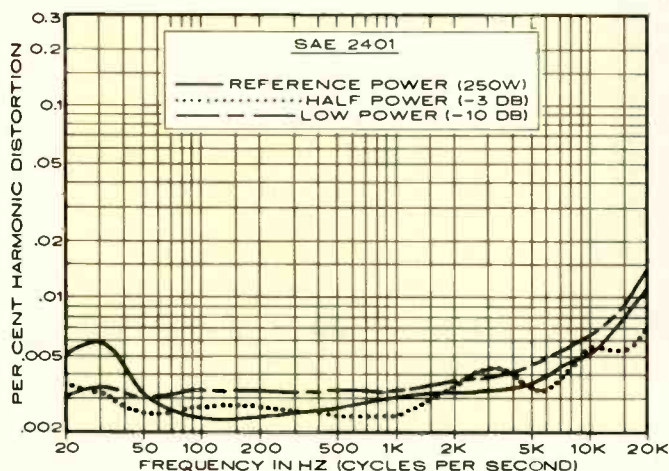
Most amplifiers have a high damping factor at low frequencies because of the considerable negative feedback employed in their circuits. At higher frequencies the damping factor decreases toward what SAE calls the "natural" damping factor, which is determined by (among other things) the number of output devices used, the power-supply capability and its regulation, and

statically and dynamically, with either symmetric or asymmetric signals. They have a very-high-speed current-delivering and -absorbing ability to deal with the dual problems of driving a speaker load and absorbing the return signals from its voice coils without distortion.

The SAE 2401 is rated to deliver 250 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.025 per cent total harmonic distortion. The 4-ohm rating over the same frequency range and with the same distortion limits is 375 watts per channel. The rated damping factor, referred to 8 ohms, is 65 at 100 Hz and 60 from 20 to 20,000 Hz. The rated input sensitivity is 0.14 volt for a 1-watt output or 2.24 volts for rated output, and the output noise (A-

large power transformer and the filter capacitors. The SAE 2401 is 19 inches wide, 12½ inches deep, and 7 inches high. It weighs 57 pounds. Price: \$950.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Although the top of the SAE 2401 became quite hot at times during our tests (and its thermal cutoff shut down the amplifier a few times during our tests with 2-ohm loads), it never reached uncomfortable or dangerous temperatures. The output waveform clipped at 325 and 576 watts per channel into 8- and 4-ohm loads, respectively, at 1,000 Hz. When we measured the clipping power into 2 ohms, we were able to drive only one channel at a time. The amplifier itself was not the limiting factor; our test-bench 15-



even the gauge of the connecting wire within the amplifier. According to SAE, the complex nature of a loudspeaker load makes the "natural damping factor" of the amplifier a more important consideration than its feedback-determined low-frequency damping factor.

The same factors that give an amplifier a high degree of natural damping also allow it to deliver high currents to the speaker loads. A loudspeaker generates an acoustic output proportional to the current passing through its voice coil, and this current does not have a simple relationship to the applied voltage as is the case for a linear load resistor. It is the contention of SAE that a slew rate expressed in volts-per-microsecond is not necessarily related to the ability of an amplifier to drive a loudspeaker with a current of rapidly changing level. They prefer to use "current slew rate," expressed in amperes per microsecond, as the criterion for an amplifier's high-frequency-power capability.

Finally, an amplifier must be able to handle asymmetric waveforms accurately. Unlike test tones, music waveforms are generally *not* symmetrical about the zero-voltage axis. Since the impedance of a loudspeaker may appear to be different for the positive and negative portions of the signal waveform, the amplifier must be completely symmetrical in its response to an external load. Essentially, the SAE "01" Series amplifiers have been designed to meet these requirements. They have low distortion, both

weighted) is 90 dB below 1 watt. The current slew-rate specification is 20 amperes per microsecond. The amplifier is protected against improper load or drive conditions by a combination of a relay, thermal cutoff, and a low-impedance load-sensing circuit.

The SAE 2401 is finished in black and has heavy-duty handles on its front panel, which is slotted for rack mounting. On the front panel are two parallel rows of red LEDs that show the instantaneous power output of the amplifier in 3-dB steps from rated output to -36 dB, plus a pair of LEDs that light to show that the amplifier is turned on (there are square pushbuttons on the panel to turn it on and off). Two sets of five-way binding posts on the rear apron of the amplifier supply the speaker outputs, and near each edge of the rear apron are two phono-jack inputs. For each channel there is a "normal" input whose frequency response is essentially flat down to 1 Hz and a "hi-pass" input whose response falls at 6 dB per octave below 20 Hz. The heavy-duty power cord has a three-pin grounding plug.

The power transistors are mounted along the left and right sides of the amplifier, and their heat-radiating "fins" resemble a cluster of rods extending horizontally from the transistors. Cooling air passes over them by convection, entering at the bottom and exiting from the top of the amplifier without the assistance of a cooling fan. Most of the center of the amplifier is occupied by a

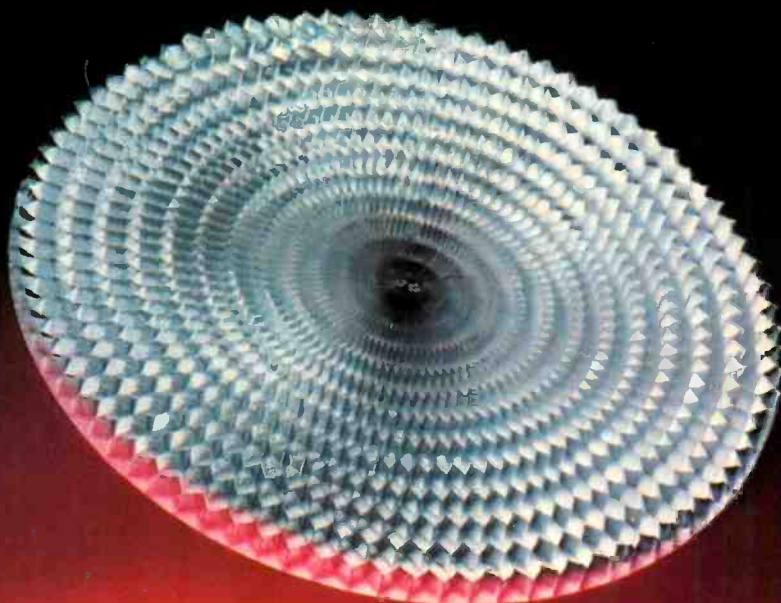
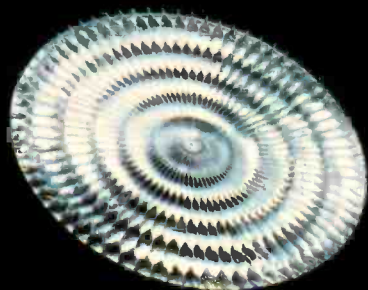
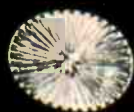
ampere line fuse blew before we reached clipping when we tried to drive both channels. This can be explained by the enormous sine-wave clipping power we measured into a 2-ohm load—925 watts per channel! Obviously, attempting to drive both channels to that power output at the same time would overtax the current rating of any home electrical wiring (15 to 20 amperes).

The IHF clipping-headroom rating of the SAE 2401 into 8 and 4 ohms was 1.14 and 1.86 dB. We also measured the dynamic-output power with the tone-burst signal specified in the IHF amplifier test standard. Into loads of 8, 4, and 2 ohms, respectively, the maximum nonclipped short-term power output was 370, 670, and 950 watts per channel. Thus, the IHF dynamic headroom rating for 8 and 4 ohms was 1.7 and 2.5 dB.

At 1,000 Hz, the distortion with 8-ohm loads was less than 0.004 per cent up to more than 270 watts output, reaching 0.165 per cent at 300 watts. The distortion was slightly higher when driving 4 ohms, measuring between 0.0045 and 0.0085 per cent for power outputs between 1 and 500 watts per channel. Even 2-ohm loads did not result in objectionable distortion; it was about 0.01 per cent up to 500 watts and reached 0.09 per cent at 700 watts (this was with only one channel driven, for the reasons stated earlier).

Across the full audio-frequency range the  
*(Continued on page 42)*





## The anatomy of a breakthrough in sound reproduction. Technics Honeycomb Disc speaker system.

You're looking at the heart of a revolutionary new speaker system—the flat honeycomb drivers of Technics new Honeycomb Disc speakers. A new shape that takes sound beyond the range of traditional cone-shaped speakers to capture the full energy and dynamic range of today's new recording technologies. It's the essence of a true sonic breakthrough.

All conventional cone-shaped drivers have inherent distortion problems due to uneven sound dispersion in the cone cavity. But Technics new axially symmetric Honeycomb drivers are flat. So "cavity effect" is automatically eliminated. And just as important, phase linearity occurs naturally in Honeycomb Disc speakers because the acoustic centers are

now perfectly aligned across the flat driver surfaces.

Technics also added a unique nodal drive system designed to vibrate the speakers in more accurate piston-like motion to reduce distortion even further. The result is an incredibly wide, flat frequency response, broad dynamic range, and amazingly low distortion.

To complete the system, Technics Honeycomb Disc tweeter with special front-mounted acoustic equalizer extends frequency response to a remarkable 35 kHz.

Technics offers a complete new line of Honeycomb Disc speakers, all enclosed in a rich rosewood-grain cabinet.

Now that you've seen what a sonic breakthrough looks like, listen to Technics—and hear what one sounds like.

**Technics**  
The science of sound

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distortion varied only slightly with power and hardly more with frequency. Typically, it was about 0.003 per cent from 20 to 2,000 Hz and rose smoothly to about 0.01 per cent at 20,000 Hz at power outputs from one-tenth-rated to full-rated power into 8 ohms. The sensitivity of the amplifier was exactly as rated, with a 0.14-volt input driving it to 1-watt output, and the output noise level (A-weighted) was better than our -90-dB measurement limit.

The power-output LEDs responded fairly well to peak levels, although their response time seemed to be closer to that of a standard VU meter than to genuine peak-responding indicators. With 300-millisecond tone bursts (the standard test for VU-meter ballistic response) the LEDs read 3 dB low, and with 20-millisecond bursts they read 12 dB low. On continuous signals, their calibration was approximately correct. The amplifier's frequency response was flat from 5 to 20,000 Hz, down 1 dB at 60 kHz, and down 3 dB at 125 kHz. Its IHF slew factor was 3, and the IHF overload recovery time was less than our 2-microsecond resolution.

SAE suggests certain measurements and tests to show the superiority of their amplifier over others when driving real speaker loads. These involve the use of asymmetrical pulse signals, which we did not have available. However, we were able to infer some of the special qualities of the amplifier from a standard IHF two-tone IM measurement, using equal-amplitude input signals at 19,000 and 20,000 Hz. When their combined peak-output amplitude was equivalent to that of a 250-watt sine-wave signal,

the third-order IM product at 18,000 Hz was 89 dB below 250 watts, which is very close to the residual distortion of our spectrum analyzer. Even more impressive and revealing was the total absence of a second-order (difference frequency) component at 1,000 Hz. That distortion component would show the degree of asymmetry in the amplifier (whose circuits are said to be completely symmetrical throughout). This was the first amplifier we have tested which did not produce any detectable second-order distortion in this test (down to our measurement "floor" of less than -100 dB). These tests would seem to confirm SAE's claims for high linearity and symmetry of the amplifier's response to both positive- and negative-going signals.

● **Comment.** Like most manufacturers of high-performance amplifiers, SAE urges that their products be judged by listening. As we have said on many occasions, the audible distinctions between power amplifiers tend to be so subtle and (to us, at least) so insignificant that we cannot use this as a basis for judging amplifier quality. We did make A-B comparisons against another amplifier of roughly similar ratings (which was not at all comparable to the SAE 2401 in its current-output capability) using good speakers that could absorb the full output of either amplifier. We did not hear any differences at all between the two amplifiers (nor did we expect to—which may account in part for why we did not, but that is another story!).

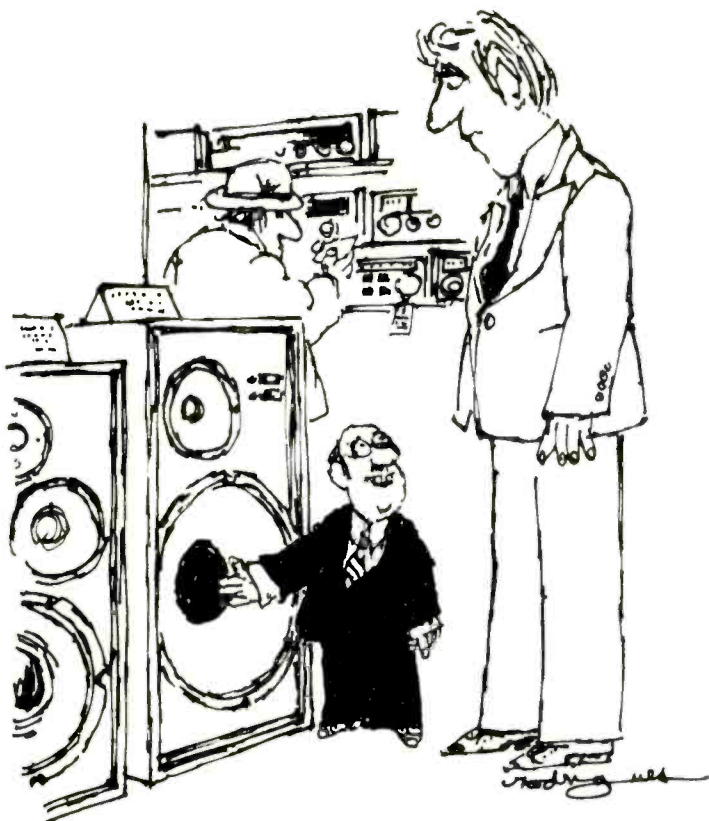
Disregarding sound quality for the mo-

ment, it was much easier to appreciate the advantages of the SAE 2401 from our experience in testing and using it as a part of a music system. Part of this appreciation concerns what it does *not* do. It has absolutely no vices or quirks that we could find. There is no fan to degrade ambient noise level; it runs completely (and literally) cool in normal operation, yet is not fazed in the least by treatment brutal enough to make its top cover quite hot. It makes no sounds, either electronic or acoustic, transient or otherwise, to mar the simple act of turning it on or off (there is a few seconds' delay on turn-on before the internal relay connects the speaker outputs). Its colorful LED power readout actually gives a useful indication of the amplifier's power output rather than merely serving a cosmetic function, as is so often the case.

The SAE 2401 is an extremely powerful amplifier in terms of what it can actually deliver to real speaker loads. Lacking a schematic diagram, we do not know whether it has any of the usual current-limiting circuits to protect its output transistors, but its behavior does not show any sign of such circuits. The fact that SAE says it will deliver a 20-ampere-per-microsecond current slew rate into a 1-ohm load suggests to us that only the output transistors and the power supply limit the current it can deliver to its loads. When we test amplifiers as powerful as this one, we tend to operate them cautiously, having had too many of them self-destruct or at least burn out inaccessible fuses when pushed to their limits or beyond. We were impressed by the fact that the SAE 2401 never winced or faltered even when pouring almost a kilowatt of clean power from one channel into a 2-ohm load, and by the fact that the only failure during our tests was of the 15-ampere line fuse in our test-bench wiring.

Naturally, we would not attempt to judge the validity of SAE's claims solely on the basis of limited listening with only a couple of types of speakers. That is one of the problems with subjective evaluation of any audio component—somewhere there may be a unique combination of program material, loudspeakers, amplifier characteristics, and/or room acoustics that will reveal some special merit (or fault), but it is not practical to have on hand, or to search out and set up, such special conditions from among the near infinity of possible acoustic circumstances and component combinations.

Still, our experience with the SAE 2401 indicates that it is as near to being an unbreakable amplifier as we have seen, capable of clean power outputs beyond any reasonable listening requirements (and probably beyond the ability of most speakers to absorb, so caution is advised). In spite of this, it can be picked up by one man (though not *too* casually), does not require a special power line unless you plan to drive both channels to full power into loads of 2 ohms or less, and is completely silent in operation. All things considered, even the 2401's moderately high price does not seem at all unreasonable for what it delivers. It is clear that the SAE 2401 is a most impressive amplifier by any criteria.



"For the money that is one helluva massive woofer, sir!"

Circle 141 on reader service card





## Soundcraftsmen AE2420-R "Scan-Alyzer"

**S**OUND CRAFTSMEN'S AE2420-R "Scan-Alyzer" combines a ten-octave graphic equalizer and a pink-noise generator whose output can be limited to the specific frequency ranges covered by the equalizer's individual filters. The unit can be used for equalizing or measuring the frequency response of an amplifier, a three-head tape deck, or, with a calibrated microphone (not furnished), an entire listening room, including the speakers.

The unique feature of the AE2420-R is a "differential-comparator" circuit that removes most of the usual sources of error from the measurement process. The internal pink-noise signal (which contains equal energy in each octave of frequency) not only drives the external device being tested, but is internally rectified, and the resulting d.c. signal is connected to one input of a highly sensitive voltage-comparator circuit. The output signal returning from the device under test (or the microphone, in the case of acoustic measurements) is also rectified and drives the other input of the comparator.

The comparator output is displayed by two red LEDs on the front panel. One lights when the outgoing signal level exceeds the returning signal level, the other when the returning signal exceeds the outgoing signal. When the two signals are exactly equal (within 0.1 dB) the two lights are of equal brightness or flicker on and off alternately for equal time periods. Since the AE2420-R always compares its own output to the return signal, errors in the level or spectral composition of the pink noise do not affect the equalization accuracy.

The equalizer portion of the AE2420-R is similar to that used in other Soundcraftsmen equalizers, with each channel having ten sliders to control the gain in octave bands, which have center frequencies from 30 to 15,360 Hz, over a nominal  $\pm 12$ -dB range. The inductive elements of the equalizer's bandpass filters are synthesized by active circuits (called gyrators). The individual band-level sliders have very light center detents, as does the master level control for each channel. In the center of the panel, between the two master level controls (which are used to compensate for whatever

gain shift results from the equalization process), are the four LEDs that show the outputs of the left- and right-channel differential comparators.

The lower portion of the front panel contains pushbutton switches for power and several equalizer functions, plus a number of controls and jacks used with the Scan-Alyzer portion of the unit. The equalizer controls include an EQ DEFEAT (bypass) button, EQ TAPE RECORD (which connects the equalizer into the signal path going to the tape recorder instead of in the playback line), TAPE MON (replacing the tape-monitoring function of the associated amplifier when the AE2420-R is connected into one of its tape loops), and LED DEFEAT, which extinguishes the LEDs in the event that their flashing proves distracting.

At the right of the panel are Scan-Alyzer buttons that turn on the pink-noise source, connect the instrument to analyze either the A or B channel (left or right), and change the test microphone's input-circuit impedance. To their right are standard 1/4-inch jacks for the MIC and HI LEVEL inputs and another pair, marked STEREO IN and EXT EQ OUT, that bypass the internal equalizer of the AE2420-R so that the Scan-Alyzer can be used with an external equalizer.

A knob marked SCAN-ALYZER BAND SELECT controls the noise bandwidth delivered to the external device through the line or tape outputs in the rear of the unit. Its ALL setting supplies a full audio-band signal. The others, numbered from 1 to 10, correspond to the numbers on the equalizer's channel controls. Each of them passes the pink noise through a bandpass filter whose frequency and shape correspond to those of the similarly numbered equalizer filter. The SCAN-ALYZER INPUT ADJUST knob is a level control for the differential comparator circuit; this is set for equal brightness of the two LEDs before beginning the equalization process.

In the rear of the AE2420-R are LINE IN and LINE OUT, TAPE IN and TAPE OUT jacks, plus a single unswitched a.c. outlet. The Soundcraftsmen AE2420-R, which can be rack-mounted, is finished in black with white panel markings and walnut wood side

plates. It is 19 inches wide, 11 1/4 inches deep, and 5 1/4 inches high; it weighs 20 pounds. Price: \$499.


● **Laboratory Measurements.** The average output level of the full-spectrum pink noise was 260 millivolts. Its spectrum closely matched that of another laboratory pink-noise generator when both were displayed on our spectrum-analyzer screen. The gain of the AE2420-R was 1.1 with all controls centered, and its A-weighted noise level was below our 100-microvolt-minimum measurement capability.

The line output clipped at 9 volts, and its distortion was very low at any level below clipping. It measured between 0.001 and 0.003 per cent up to 3 volts and only 0.05 per cent at 5 volts. The square-wave response, with all controls centered, was free of ringing or other aberrations and had a rise time of 2 microseconds.

The bandpass shapes of the various equalizer filters were virtually identical, indicative of equal effective "Q" values, and they had typical maximum control ranges of +14 to -13 dB. The ability of the AE2420-R to equalize a non-flat frequency response was demonstrated by passing its noise-output signals through a network which produced a response that rose more than 20 dB below 100 and above 7,000 Hz, peaking at 35 and 19,000 Hz. The controls of the Scan-Alyzer were operated according to instructions, enabling us to complete the equalization in less than a minute. The resulting overall response, plotted on the same chart as the external-device response, showed that its variation had been reduced from +22, -0 dB between 20 and 20,000 Hz to only  $\pm 2$  dB between 30 and 16,000 Hz. Although it might have been possible to improve slightly on our equalization accuracy by further adjustment of the controls, we feel that Soundcraftsmen's claims for speedy and accurate equalization were amply confirmed by our experience.

● **Comment.** The principal application of the Soundcraftsmen AE2420-R will probably be for room and speaker equalization.

(Continued on page 46)



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Although it certainly could be used for equalizing a tape recorder, as suggested by the manufacturer, the present state of tape-recorder performance hardly warrants its use for that purpose. As the manufacturer points out, the overall accuracy of the room equalization is limited by the microphone response and its calibration.

The equalization process is very simple and rapid. After the AE2420-R is connected to the system according to instructions and the microphone is located at the point in the room for which the system is to be equalized, the pink-noise signal is supplied to one stereo channel (selected by the front-panel buttons). With a sound level high enough to override any room noise and the Scan-Alyzer BAND SELECT set to ALL with all other controls centered, the Scan-Alyzer INPUT ADJUST is set for equal brightness of the indicator LEDs.

The BAND SELECT switch is then set successively to each of the octave bands and the corresponding equalizer slider is moved until the two lights show equal signal levels.

Since adjacent sliders will interact to some degree, it is necessary to repeat the adjustments in reverse sequence (from 10 down to 1) and then to repeat the entire process once or twice. Since only a second or two is required for each adjustment, the complete equalization process takes only a couple of minutes. A similar procedure is then followed for the other stereo channel.

We used our calibrated Bruel & Kjaer microphone for room equalization and had no difficulty finding the settings for our room and speakers. However, it is our experience that precisely equalizing a home listening room (as opposed to a large hall or a public-address installation) rarely improves the sound quality, and in this case a "flat" response measured near our listening position gave a listening quality far inferior to the unequalized sound. In any case, such equalization is effective only at the microphone position, and a move of a few inches can change the situation radically. This, of course, is a problem not unique to the Scan-Alyzer but rather a difficulty encountered

with any home room-equalization device.

Although the differential comparator has a resolution of 0.1 dB, the randomly varying pink-noise waveform almost never allows both lights to glow with equal brightness. Instead, they flicker on and off alternately, and they appear to be on for equal amounts of time as one watches them. We were rather surprised to find that the repeatability of the equalizer settings (and thus their probable accuracy) was nevertheless a small fraction of a decibel, considerably more accurate than any of the more usual equalization indicators such as real-time spectrum analyzers (which rarely have a level resolution better than 1 or 2 dB).

To summarize, the AE2420-R is a very good octave-band equalizer (and test instrument) whose effectiveness is greatly enhanced by the rapidity with which it can be adjusted with its built-in pink-noise generator and switchable filters.

Circle 142 on reader service card



Realistic STA-2250 Stereo Receiver

**A**LITTLE over a year ago, Radio Shack was one of the first hi-fi manufacturers to introduce a full-featured, digitally synthesizing AM/FM stereo receiver. The Realistic STA-2200 boasted an exceptional array of performance and convenience features as well as a relatively high selling price.

Although the STA-2200 is still in the Realistic line, the new Model STA-2250 brings its essential qualities, plus a few improvements, down to a much lower price range. The STA-2250 is rated to deliver 50 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.02 per cent total harmonic distortion (compared to 60 watts at the same distortion level for the STA-2200). The unit's tuned-in frequency is shown on a large blue-green four-digit fluorescent display in the upper center of the front panel. It is flanked by a five-segment green LED signal-strength indicator and a green STEREO light. When the tun-

ing section is not in use, these displays are blanked. To their right are eight small round buttons for the programmable station memories, plus a MEMORY SET button and light. To store the frequency of a station in the memory, the MEMORY SET button is pressed (lighting the indicator next to it), and pressing any of the station memory buttons assigns that frequency to its memory. Each button can be used for an FM and an AM station, for a total of sixteen stored frequencies. The programming will not be lost during brief power interruptions (up to an hour), but a longer period with the receiver unplugged will erase the programmed station memories, which will then have to be reprogrammed.

Five rectangular pushbuttons to the left of the display panel control the filters (MPX, LOW, and HIGH), mono mode selection, and the loudness compensation. The other controls form a row across the bottom of the panel. For the most part, they are conven-

tional knobs and switches. A rotary control selects the input source (AM, FM, FM with MUTING, PHONO, and AUX) and there are separate tone-control knobs for the bass, midrange, and treble ranges. Each has eleven detented settings, with the center being a fully "off" flat-response condition. Below the frequency readout are two large concentric knobs for volume and balance (the latter with a center detent). Other controls include pushbuttons for individual speaker selection of two sets of outputs and the power switch with an adjacent red pilot light. There is a headphone jack on the panel. Next to the input selector are two three-position lever switches for the tape-dubbing and monitor functions with two tape decks (it is possible to dub from either deck to the other without interrupting one's listening to a regular program source).

The tuning controls of the STA-2250 are two large rectangular buttons, marked DOWN and UP, mounted at a slight upward



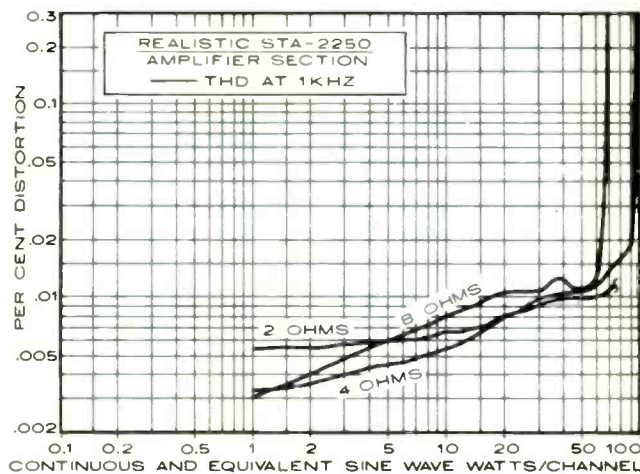
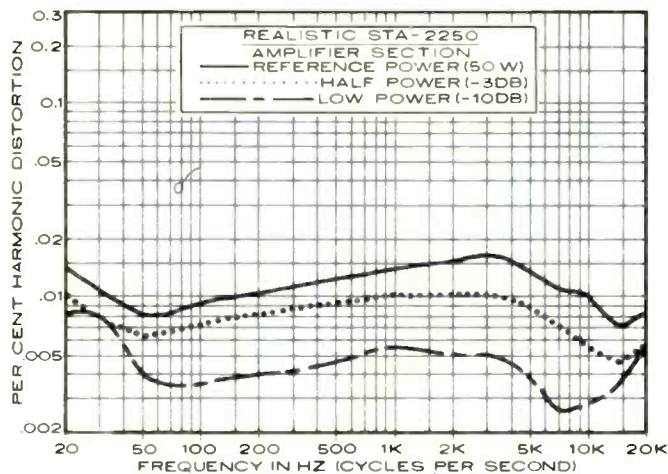
angle on the panel. Touching either one moves the frequency in the indicated direction. The normal tuning increments are 0.1 MHz for FM and 10 kHz for AM. The tuner frequency shifts by one increment each time the button is touched, and holding it down causes rapid frequency scanning until it is released. When the frequency reaches either end of its range, the tuner immediately goes to the other extreme and continues scanning. Above the tuning buttons is a small pushbutton marked SEARCH. When it is engaged, each touch of one of the tuning buttons causes the tuner to scan rapidly in that direction until a signal is encountered which is strong enough to unmute the receiver, and the scan halts at that point. This saves time when tuning across the band,

cy end of the range, but the distortion plot for the STA-2250 did not show such a trend. At lower power outputs the characteristic was similar, except that the distortion readings were even lower (at 5 watts, for example, the distortion was typically between 0.003 and 0.005 per cent).

At 1,000 Hz, the distortion into 8-ohm loads rose smoothly from less than 0.003 per cent at 1 watt to about 0.01 per cent between 20 and 60 watts before clipping at 68.5 watts. The 4-ohm performance of the amplifier was quite similar except for slightly lower distortion readings at most power levels and a power output at clipping of 93 watts per channel. Despite the warnings about not using loads of less than 4 ohms, we measured the amplifier's

The amplifier sensitivity for a 1-watt reference output was 22.5 millivolts (mV) through the AUX input and 0.29 mV through the PHONO input. The respective A-weighted noise levels were -81 and -79 dB, referred to 1 watt. The phono preamplifier overloaded with a 180-mV 1,000-Hz input. Equivalent overload inputs at 20 and 20,000 Hz were 240 and 115 mV. The phono-input impedance was 47,000 ohms in parallel with 270 picofarads. This capacitance is slightly high, although most modern record players will add only about 100 picofarads to it, placing the total capacitance within the usable range for most good cartridges.

We also measured the amplifier's intermodulation distortion with two equal-



since the receiver will stop only when a receivable signal is intercepted.

The rear apron of the STA-2250 contains phono jacks for the inputs and outputs, with DIN sockets paralleling the functions of each set of tape-recording jacks. Simple screw terminals are used for speaker outputs and antenna connections, and the terminals for speaker A are paralleled with phono jacks for simplified connection to speakers fitted with that type of connector and supplied with suitable connector cables (such as some Realistic models). There is a hinged ferrite-rod AM antenna and a single unswitched a.c. outlet. The front panel and controls of the Realistic STA-2250 are finished in pale gold satin aluminum, and it has a black metal top and rear. The wooden side plates are walnut veneered. The receiver is 19<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches wide, 13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches deep, and 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches high; it weighs 30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> pounds. It is available only through Radio Shack stores. The price is \$429.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Realistic STA-2250 is rated for use only with load impedances of 4 ohms or greater, and its internal protective circuits are designed to shut it off if one attempts to drive a lower load impedance. Into 8-ohm loads, the measured total harmonic distortion in the output was between 0.008 and 0.016 per cent from 20 to 20,000 Hz at 50 watts per channel output. Most amplifiers' distortion rises at either the low- or the high-fre-

quency end of the range, but the distortion plot for the STA-2250 did not show such a trend. At lower power outputs the characteristic was similar, except that the distortion readings were even lower (at 5 watts, for example, the distortion was typically between 0.003 and 0.005 per cent). At 1,000 Hz, the distortion into 8-ohm loads rose smoothly from less than 0.003 per cent at 1 watt to about 0.01 per cent between 20 and 60 watts before clipping at 68.5 watts. The 4-ohm performance of the amplifier was quite similar except for slightly lower distortion readings at most power levels and a power output at clipping of 93 watts per channel. Despite the warnings about not using loads of less than 4 ohms, we measured the amplifier's

performance into 2 ohms, since some speakers rated at 4 ohms impedance may dip to close to 2 ohms at certain frequencies. We were never able to reach the clipping level, since the protection system shut off the receiver at about 76 watts, well before clipping occurred. The first time this happened, we were at a loss as to how to get the amplifier working again. The instructions do not explicitly state that the power must be turned off for a while and reapplied to turn the receiver on after the protection has tripped, although this is implicit in the manufacturer's suggested trouble-shooting procedure. The IHF clipping headroom was 1.37 dB, based on the STA-2250's 8-ohm ratings. Since it is not rated for the other impedances, we can only note the maximum power outputs we measured at the clipping points. With the tone-burst test signals of the IHF dynamic-power test, we measured maximum unclipped outputs of 81 watts, 128 watts, and 156 watts per channel into 8-, 4-, and 2-ohm loads, respectively. The maximum 2-ohm power, even with the 20-millisecond tone burst of this test, was limited by the tripping of the protection circuit. The 8-ohm dynamic-headroom rating of the amplifier was 2.1 dB. The overload-recovery time was less than 5 microseconds, a totally negligible figure, and complex loads had no effect on the amplifier's waveform or its stability. The IHF slew factor was greater than our measurement limit of 25.

amplitude input signals, at 19,000 and 20,000 Hz, whose combined peak value was equivalent to that of a sine-wave signal of 50 watts output. The third-order distortion at 18,000 Hz was -67 dB and the 1,000-Hz second-order product was -84 dB, both referred to a 50-watt output.

The amplifier tone controls had conventional characteristics. We noted that the midrange control affected frequencies from 300 to 4,000 Hz, although it had relatively little effect near those extremes. With the knobs at their center positions, the frequency response was perfectly flat, obviating the need for a tone-control bypass switch. The loudness contours were well chosen, affecting only the lowest frequencies (under 200 Hz) and to a slight extent the frequencies above 7,000 Hz when the volume setting was reduced. The cutoff slope of the low-frequency filter appeared to be approaching 12 dB per octave below the audio range, but the high filter had a gradual 6-dB-per-octave slope. Their respective -3-dB response frequencies were 40 and 6,000 Hz. The RIAA phono equalization was accurate within 1 dB overall from 35 to 20,000 Hz. There was a slight change in the high-frequency phono response when it was measured through the inductance of a typical magnetic phono cartridge (about a ± 1-dB variation).

The FM tuner section had an IHF usable sensitivity of 11.8 dBf (2.1 microvolts, or μV) in mono. The stereo sensitivity was set

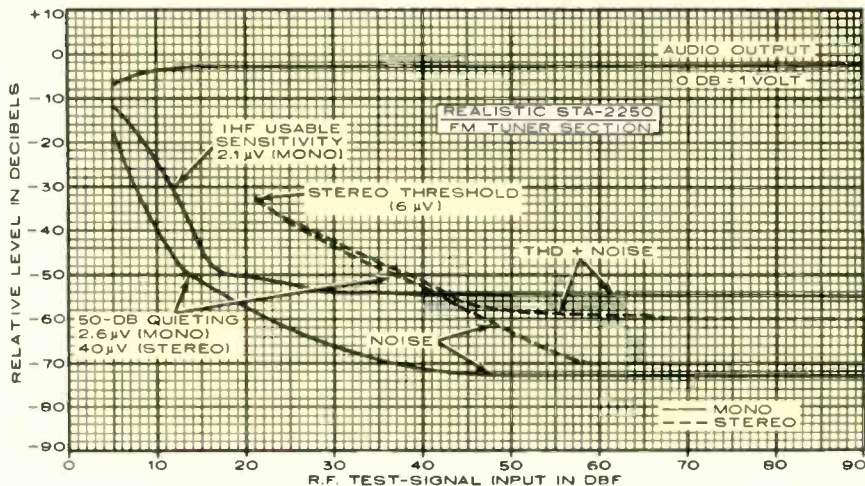


by the switching threshold of 21 dBf (6  $\mu$ V). The 50-dB-quieting sensitivity was 13.8 dBf (2.6  $\mu$ V) in mono and 37.8 dBf (40  $\mu$ V) in stereo. At a 65-dBf (1,000- $\mu$ V) input the distortion was 0.19 per cent in mono and 0.11 per cent in stereo. The respective noise levels were -72.5 and -68 dB. A two-tone intermodulation-distortion measurement was made with the signal generator modulated 100 per cent by equal-amplitude signals at 14,000 and 15,000 Hz. Spectrum analysis showed third-order distortion components at 13,000 and 16,000 Hz at a -45-dB level relative to the primary modulating tones, and a second-order component at 1,000 Hz at -50 dB relative to 100 per cent modulation at that frequency.

The stereo frequency response was flat within  $\pm 0.7$  dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. It was at its maximum at the high-frequency end of that range, but the suppression of the 19-kHz pilot carrier to a low -70-dB level in the audio outputs suggests the use of either very effective filters or a pilot-canceling circuit in the tuner section. The tuner's stereo crosstalk was low and very uniform, changing from about -42 dB at 30 Hz to -37 dB over most of the audio range and dropping to -32 dB at 15,000 Hz.

The FM-tuner capture ratio was 1.5 dB at 45 dBf (100  $\mu$ V) input, and the AM rejection was 62 dB at that level (both figures were slightly better at 65 dBf). The image rejection was an excellent 90 dB. Alternate-channel selectivity was also excellent at 81 dB, and the adjacent-channel selectivity was 4.4 dB. The muting and stereo thresholds were identical at 21 dBf (6  $\mu$ V). The tuner hum level was -68 dB. The AM-tuner frequency response was down 6 dB at 30 and 3,100 Hz.

● **Comment.** When we tested the Realistic STA-2200 receiver we were highly impressed with its absolute performance and



with the value it represented at its \$600 price. The new STA-2250 made an even greater impression on us, since it is in many ways improved over the STA-2200 and certainly shows no signs of any performance sacrifice. The principal omissions in the new model, compared with the older one, are the deletion of the Dolby FM decoder and the clock, plus a few control simplifications such as removing the power indicators, selectable tone-control turnover frequencies and bypass switch, and automatic scanning of the programmed channels. The only significant omissions in the STA-2250, in our opinion, are the separate preamplifier outputs/main-amplifier inputs found on the STA-2200.

To counter these deletions, the lower-price (by \$170) STA-2250 has more memories (eight compared to six), a midrange tone control, audio filters, and what we consider to be an improved front-panel layout.

Also, in the FM tuner we found image-rejection and selectivity characteristics, among other things, that were outstanding for a receiver in this price range.

Despite the manufacturer's repeated warnings about not using the STA-2250 with load impedances of less than 4 ohms, it seems better able to cope with such operation than most receivers we have tested. The protection circuit is highly effective (it gave the impression of being infallible, but that is always a risky inference), and we doubt that anything could be damaged if one were to use the receiver with a low-impedance loudspeaker load. Even though the output shut off at some 158 watts into 2 ohms with a 20-millisecond signal repeated twice per second, the waveform distortion was negligible up to that point, and we doubt that most very brief program peaks would trip the protection system.

Although we do not allow the AM performance of a receiver to affect our overall appraisal of its merit, it is worth mentioning that the STA-2250, whose AM frequency response is no better than that of similar receivers, *sounds* very much better than most of them. This is because it has a high effective sensitivity and does not seem to be susceptible to the buzzing interference that usually makes AM reception a practical impossibility at our location. By assigning the AM and FM outlets of a well-known good-music station to the same programmed button, we could make A-B comparisons between them; the STA-2250 acquitted itself very creditably, the major difference being the expected loss of high-frequency response in AM reception. From the standpoints of noise and distortion there was remarkably little difference.

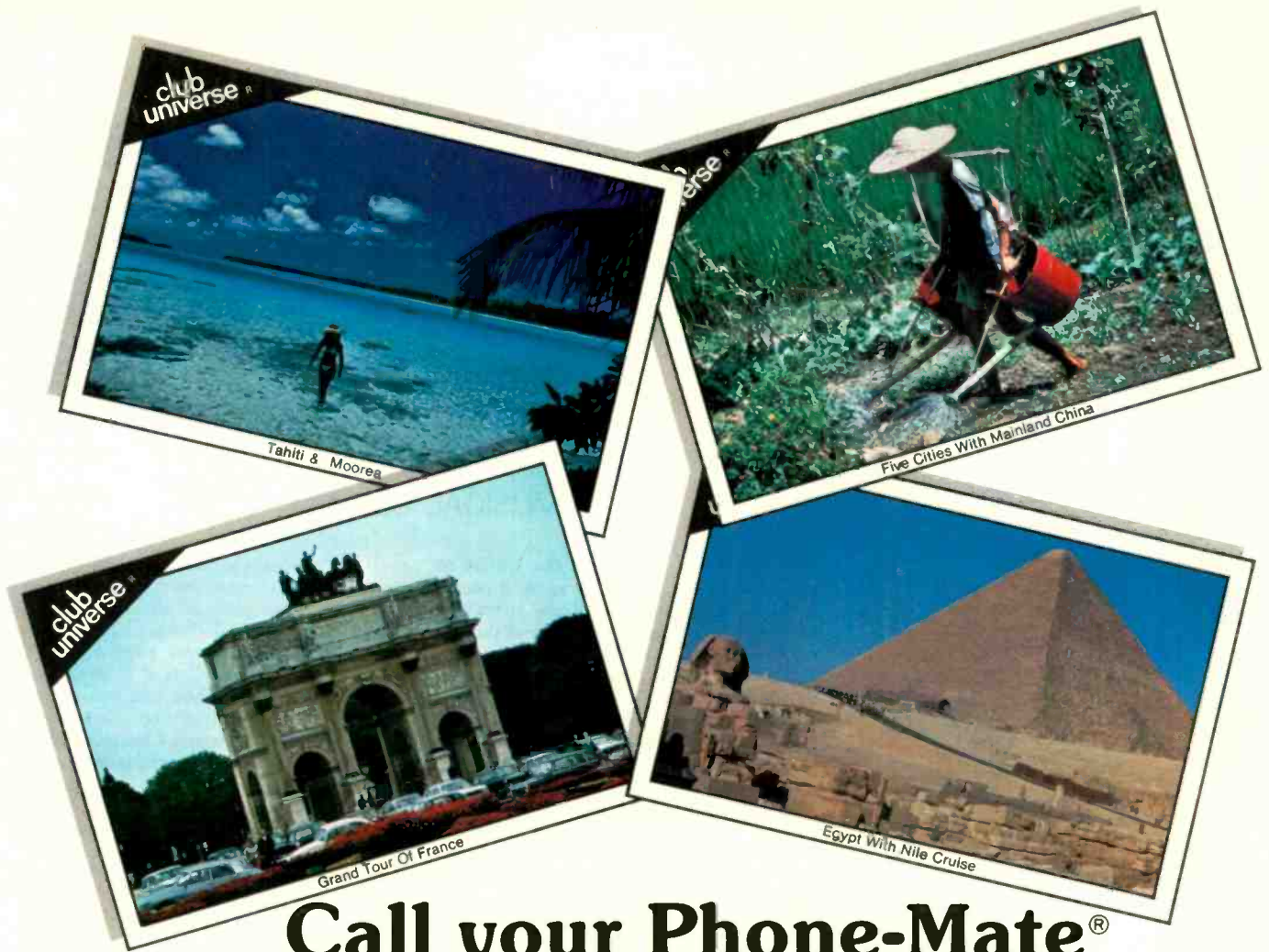
When the STA-2200 first appeared, fully digital receivers were far from common. Today, most manufacturers include at least one such product in their line, so the STA-2250 is not unique even in its price range. Nevertheless, it impresses us as being at least as good a buy as its predecessor, and it comfortably met or surpassed all of the performance ratings for which we could test. We found it a thoroughly fine receiver at a very reasonable price.



"What happened, Julius? You used to have such a nice stereo system. . . ."

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## Going on Record

By James  
Goodfriend



### MUSICAL CLARITY

**T**o the truly uninitiated, the clarity of musical sound as it comes off a record is completely a function of the latest and best in reproducing equipment and the latest and best in recording techniques. But, with all due respect to digital recording and \$2,500 amplifiers, these technological contributions are only the tip of the iceberg. Musical clarity, the quality that allows us to hear the details in a musical performance, rests on a whole lot of other things.

Yes, recording and reproducing equipment are important. You aren't going to hear low organ pedal tones if your speakers don't go below 80 Hertz, and if the recording came off a Pentron tape deck operating at 3¾ ips, a great deal of the original sound will simply not be there. But *who* does the recording as well as *what* is also critical. There have been bad digital and bad direct-to-disc recordings (and many bad quadraphonic ones), and producer Robert von Bahr, for example, who owns and operates Bis Records in Sweden, does *not* employ digital techniques or direct-to-disc or even use Dolby noise reduction—and yet he produces records of superb musical clarity.

Going back a step further, clarity also depends on the performing musicians and what instruments they play. Some instruments are easier to record than others and some *instrumentalists* may be easier to record than others. But forget about recording and consider the comparative transparency of instruments in performance. Schubert's *Trout* Quintet, for example, is scored for piano, violin, viola, cello, and bass. In most performances you will simply not hear the bass at any time the left hand of the pianist is playing; the opacity of tone of the lower register of the modern piano simply covers it. But there was a recording once (BASF KHB 20314, with Jörg Demus and members of the Collegium Aureum—alas, no longer in the catalog) in which pianist Demus performed on a Conrad Graf piano of the early nineteenth century whose tonal transparency allowed the bass and cello to come *through* it and give us the *Trout* as Schubert meant it to be heard. There is no miracle of modern recording technique that could have accomplished the same thing.

Similar things can happen in orchestral

music. For some years now the preferred orchestral sound of many conductors has been a smooth, homogeneous blend, a sort of overall organ-like sound that changed subtly as instruments (stops) were added or subtracted. As effective as it might be in certain music, that sound was inimical to clarity—for example, of the wind-band/strings opposition in much Classical music. Other conductors have sought such clarity, but with modern instruments and a modern, vibrato-laden way of playing them it was only partially achieved. The new series on L'Oiseau-Lyre of the symphonies of Mozart (Volume 4 is reviewed in this issue) by the Academy of Ancient Music under Christopher Hogwood and Jaap Schröder shows the difference. Using authentic instruments (old instruments or reproductions thereof), the ensemble makes audible virtually every internal detail of the music. Again, no recording technique, no reproducing equipment could have accomplished a similar feat starting from the base of a standard orchestra.

**B**UT the final determinant of musical clarity lies not with equipment, techniques, performers, or instruments, but with the listener. An individual's physical range of hearing is a factor, of course, but what I am really referring to is the psychological matter of familiarity with the music. There is perhaps nothing that will make a clarinet or bassoon obbligato in an orchestral work quite so audible as the knowledge that it is supposed to be there. One may note how decisively or how subtly it is there, but one always hears it, unless it is *not* there at all, in which case one most dramatically hears its absence. Such an absence, I might add, is something you can hear no other way. The next best thing to knowing the music is being able to follow the printed score. The very appearance on the page of a line for viola will make that viola more audible to you than anything a player or engineer can do short of completely distorting the music. Do you *really* want to hear what's going on in music? A record chosen on a *musical* basis and a few dollars invested in a score may let you hear more than a \$20 "audiophile" disc and \$20,000 worth of equipment. □



# Dolby® C-type Noise Reduction

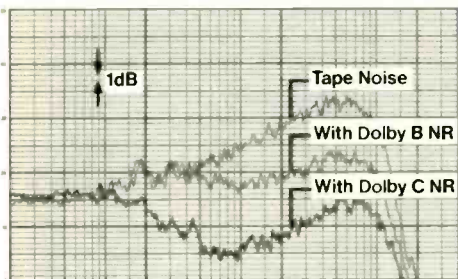
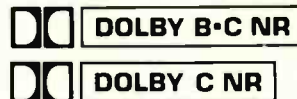


Figure 1: Noise from biased cassette tape (70  $\mu$ s equalization), measured with a constant-bandwidth wave analyzer, and weighted (CCIR/ARM) to reflect the ear's sensitivity to noise and to noise reduction effects.

## What Dolby C-type NR is

Dolby C is a new noise reduction system developed by Dolby Laboratories for consumer tape recording. It provides 20 dB of noise reduction above about 1 kHz, compared to the standard Dolby B-type system's 10 dB of noise reduction above about 4 kHz. Like the original system, the new Dolby C-type system operates without side effects on virtually all kinds of program material. It does not replace the standard Dolby B system, but will supplement it in a number of new high-performance cassette decks appearing in 1981.

## How Dolby C works: dual-level processing

In some respects, Dolby C-type noise reduction operates like Dolby B. When a recording is made, the middle and higher frequencies of low-level signals are selectively boosted, while loud signals are essentially untouched. On playback, the previously-boosted signals are attenuated

to where they were in the original program material, thus restoring proper musical balance while simultaneously effecting noise reduction. With Dolby C, signals are boosted and attenuated more than with Dolby B. In addition, Dolby C operates down to a lower frequency to maintain subjectively uniform noise reduction across the audible range.

Dolby C-type noise reduction is based upon a new and unique dual-level processing scheme. Two sliding-band processors operate in tandem at different levels to solve the problem of achieving 20 dB of compression and expansion without introducing undesirable side effects. Dolby C also incorporates several other new developments which reduce the effects of high-frequency tape saturation and minimize encode-decode errors, so that the new system puts no special demands on the user and requires no special recorder adjustments.

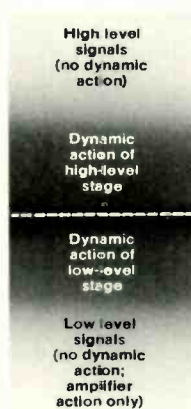


Figure 2: Dolby C-type noise reduction features dual-level processing, whereby two sliding-band processors operate in tandem at different levels. Like Dolby B, companding action is restricted to part of the dynamic range, above which there is essentially no action, and below which the system acts as a fixed-gain amplifier. Minimizing the system's dynamic action minimizes the possibility of side-effects on the signal being recorded.

Dolby C-type noise reduction has been designed so that recorders incorporating it can also provide the Dolby B characteristic at the push of a switch. This means that existing cassette recordings encoded with Dolby B-type noise reduction will be properly reproduced on the new models featuring Dolby C. In addition, most listeners are likely to find that Dolby C recordings are enjoyable on machines equipped only with Dolby B, or on portable and automobile players without any noise reduction circuitry.

## Availability

The following manufacturers have announced plans to develop products incorporating Dolby C-type noise reduction:

Advent	Nakamichi
Aiwa	NNEC
Akai	Olympus
Alpine Electronics	Pioneer
BASF	Sanyo
Chunilsa	H. H. Scott
Crown (Japan)	Shinwa
Denon (Nippon Columbia)	Silver (Shin-Shirasuna)
Dual	Sony
Hitachi	TEAC
JVC (Victor)	Vector Research
Lux	Yamaha (Nippon Gakki)
Marantz	
Mitsubishi	

## What Dolby C means to cassette recording

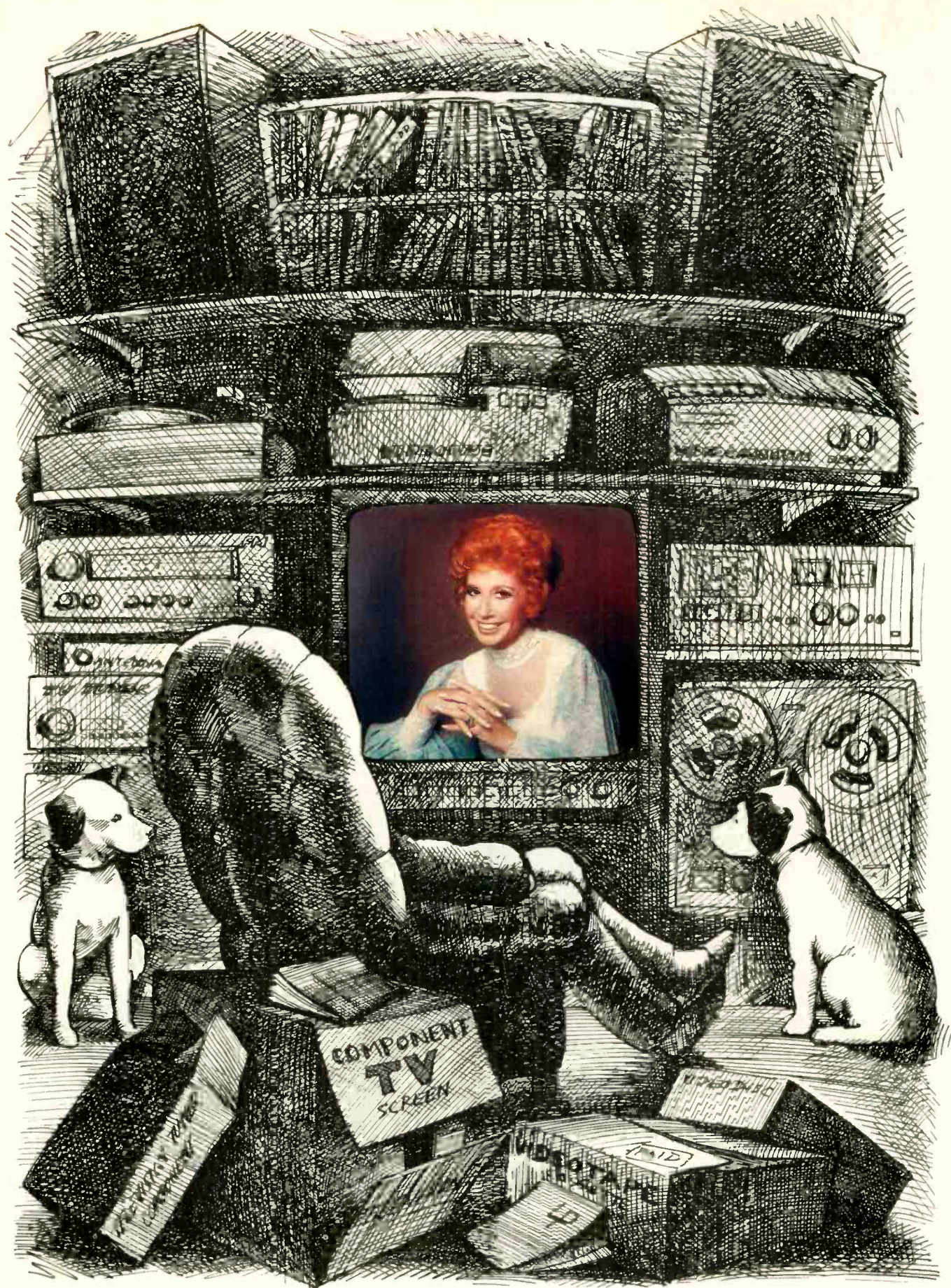
Combined with good tape formulations and a well-engineered cassette deck, Dolby C reduces tape noise to a level below the noise of virtually any program source available now or likely to be available in the foreseeable future. In fact, even at high listening levels, tape noise is lower than the ambient noise in many listening rooms. Thus for all intents and purposes, with Dolby C-type noise reduction, tape noise in cassette recording will no longer be of any practical consequence.



Dolby Laboratories Licensing Corp.,  
731 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94111,  
Telephone (415) 392-0300. Telex 34409.

"Dolby" and the double-D symbol are the registered trademarks of Dolby Laboratories for its A-type, B-type, and C-type noise reduction systems. 581/3122/3136







# STEREO TV IN THE U.S.

Your audio system will soon have  
a whole new program source to play with

By Ivan Berger

**T**HE sound quality of commercial television will probably never be an audiophile's dream, but it is becoming less of a nightmare every day. Today's TV sound is better than ever; tomorrow's will not only be still cleaner but will be in stereo as well—and with noise reduction to boot. Japan has stereo television already, which is one reason why Japanese sets with speakers on each side of the screen have been coming over here lately. The sets that reach the U.S. market aren't true stereo models yet, though a few are set up to provide pseudo-stereo effects. Sony, for instance, has a side-to-side *delay* network on its consoles and, among the domestic makers, J. C. Penney and RCA use *phase-shifting* networks. (The delay approach sounds more like true stereo—or less *unlike* it, depending on your point of view.) Some U.S.-made sets with two speakers flanking the screen but without pseudo-stereo have also appeared, apparently more in an effort to improve the sound (and/or sales) than to yield any stereo effect.

But stereo TV has for some time been a hit in Japan. Within less than a year after a late-1978 introduction, about 10 per cent of all TV sets sold in Japan had built-in multiplex decoders, while virtually all other new models had output jacks for external multiplex-decoder accessories (some were available even before stereo broadcasting began). The Japanese system is currently undergoing trials here, along with two other, U.S.-developed systems from Zenith and Telesonics. (A fourth system, by Quasar, has been withdrawn from competition.) The systems are undergoing lab tests by the Multi-Channel TV Sound Subcommittee of the Electronic Industries Association, and broadcast tests over Chicago station WTTW (they have already tested the Telesonics system) will probably be finished by the time you read this.

"Provided there are no problems," says subcommittee chairman Tom Keller, "we should report our findings

to the FCC in late spring or early summer. How fast the FCC responds depends on how clean the proposal is; if we go in with a proposal that everyone agrees to, I think it will go through the commission very fast; NTSC (the U.S. color system) went through fairly fast. [On the other hand, the stereo-FM decision dragged on through five years of FCC hearings, and the commission spurned an early-Sixties proposal for stereo TV on the grounds that a wide sound spread with a tiny picture made no sense. Listeners to today's stereo simulcasts know better. —*I.B.*] But if there is a lot of controversy, or if anyone files against, as happened with AM stereo, I think we've got a problem. Anyone can talk to the commission—we're not the only one. We're just trying to streamline things for the FCC."

---

**"At the absolute earliest, we might have stereo TV sound by mid-1982. I'd be very pleased if it happened that fast," says EIA subcommittee chairman Keller.**

---

Stereo won't be all we will get. Following the Japanese pattern, we'll probably have bilingual-sound capability too, despite the fearsome technical demands this imposes for very low cross-talk between channels. (In the Japanese system, there is automatic switching of the TV receiver to either the bilingual or stereo mode by means of a pilot tone broadcast by the station. In the bilingual mode, channel separation is enhanced at the expense of fidelity. For stereo, fidelity is preserved, and at least 30 dB of separation is maintained. With a bilingual broadcast, a manual switch enables the listener to choose the language channel desired.) We'll have noise reduction as well—and we'll need it: stereo broadcasts on TV's FM sound channels will be inherently noisier than mono ones, just as they are on the FM broadcast band. And since TV's soundtrack is less strongly modulated (it cov-

ers a range of  $\pm 25$  kHz, as opposed to FM's  $\pm 75$ ), it has a smaller signal-to-noise ratio to start with. Some sort of noise reduction is therefore a must.

## Noise Reduction

So far, three companding (compression/expansion) noise-reduction systems have been submitted for test—one each from Dolby, dbx, and CBS Technology.

- The Dolby system is essentially today's Dolby B, as used on virtually every audio cassette deck (and on a few videocassette ones). It reduces high-frequency noise by almost 10 dB.

- The dbx system is, according to the company, "a very different kind of animal" from the familiar dbx tape- and record-noise reducers. That's because its compression and expansion ratio is much milder than the 2:1 ratio dbx users are familiar with. Otherwise, though, both dbx systems are similar, with linear compression and expansion over the entire frequency band.

- The CBS system is the same one they've developed for disc decoding and encoding. Unlike dbx's disc system, this one is claimed to be compatible—that is, a decoder isn't necessary to hear the encoded disc well reproduced, though it is needed to realize the noise reduction. Nonetheless, CBS Technology claims 20 dB of wide-band noise reduction from it. Signals 40 dB or more below the average level are companded 2:1, while those above that —40-dB level are untouched. "The effect," says CBS Technology, "is not heard on most pop music—no great mystery, as pop is usually highly compressed to begin with. On classical music, a panel of five hundred experienced classical-record listeners did not perceive any alteration in dynamic range when listening to the CBS system *without decoders*. Again, that's not a great surprise: our compres-

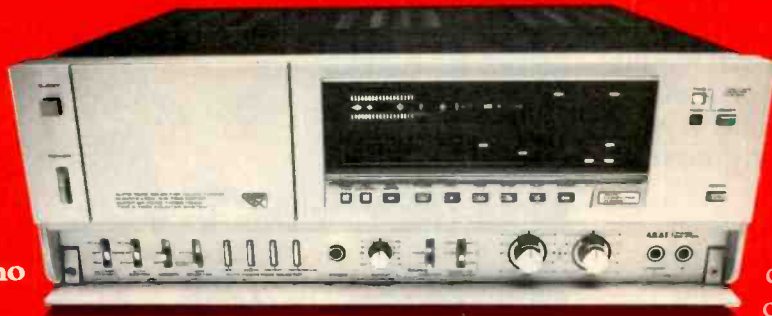






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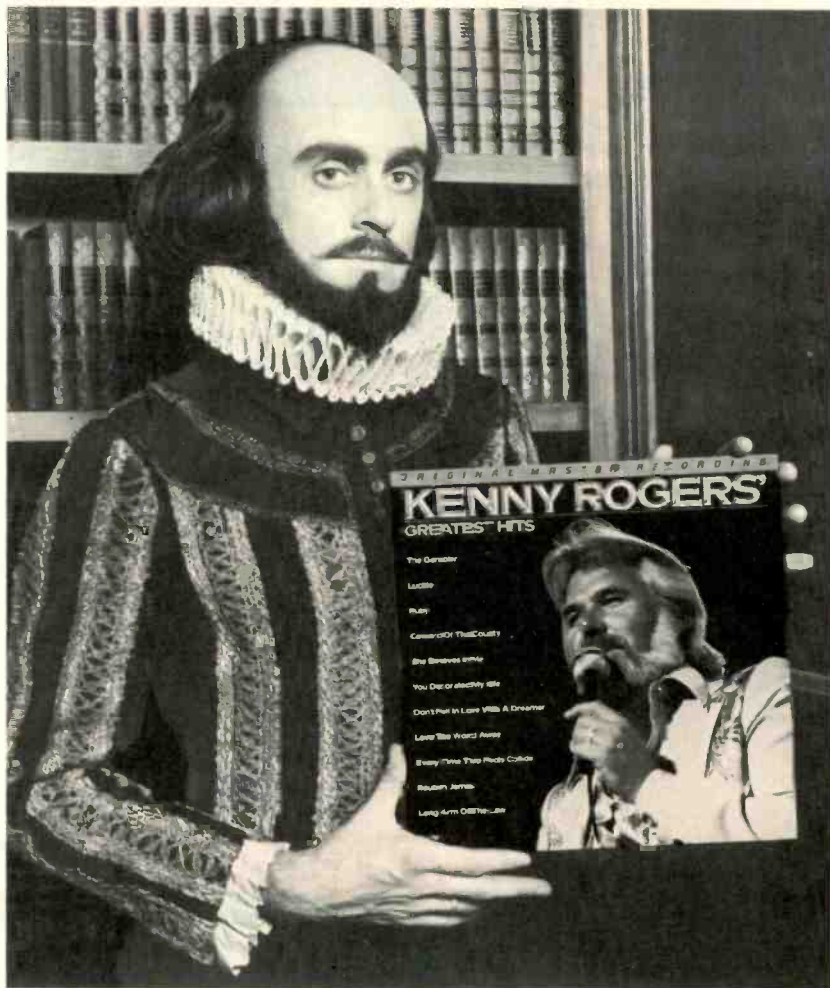
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electronics have become cleaner too. Some of the new 1-inch videotape recorders (with, incidentally, stereo capability) have far better sound than the old 2-inch decks. And movie soundtracks, which provide much of the sound heard on TV, have been improving over the past few years too.

## Improved Home Sound

The impact of all this new broadcast technology is already being felt in the home: TV sets with audio-output jacks to feed external hi-fi systems, sets whose built-in audio systems are capable of a reasonable degree of fidelity. There's no question that these sets owe their existence to such broadcast advances. Back in the early Seventies, companies like GTE Sylvania were quoted as saying they'd pay attention to their sets' sound when—and only when—better sound was broadcast to justify it. What seemed a cop-out at the time is proving to be prophecy, with the manufacturers apparently intending to be as good as their word.

Audio-output jacks have always been with us: Clairtone and Fleetwood were advertising component-TV chassis with such jacks (and optional sound systems) back in the Fifties. Many an amplifier or preamp of the period even featured an input labeled "TV"—though either lack of demand or poor-quality signals to feed through such inputs led to their being relabeled with a noncommittal "Aux." Heathkit has had audio-output jacks on its TV receivers since it began making them. Zenith, Tatung, RCA, Quasar, JVC, Hitachi, Magnavox, GE, and others have them too. And as an indication of things to come, some new audio products at the Winter CES (see next month's issue for a full report) sported selector-switch positions that were labeled "TV" or "Video."

Sound improvements within the set generally consist of more powerful amplifiers (up to 12 watts or so), more and bigger speakers, and decent baffling to coax maximum bass from those speakers. Quasar, Magnavox, RCA, GE, and Zenith have taken this route too—at least in their more expensive consoles. In its "Super Sound" series GTE Sylvania has probably taken this approach further than anyone else, at least for the time being, with two-way bass-reflex speaker systems, separate bass and treble controls that boost as well as cut, a high filter, and an amplifier delivering 8 watts rms from 40 to 15,000 Hz at less than 0.5 per cent distortion.

Today's top-of-the-line TV sets definitely sound better than the best ones of yesteryear. But this could—and

should—be only the beginning. As the trade magazine *Broadcast Management/Engineering* put it recently:

A changeover to a new (stereo) audio system brings a probably never-to-be-repeated chance to upgrade audio performance in general, both at the transmitter and at the receiver. If this opportunity is compromised, receiver design, in particular, may be irretrievably frozen at a lower level than the best... the receiver has inherent faults, particularly in control of noise, that demand a substantial redesign to get us to really top-grade TV sound.

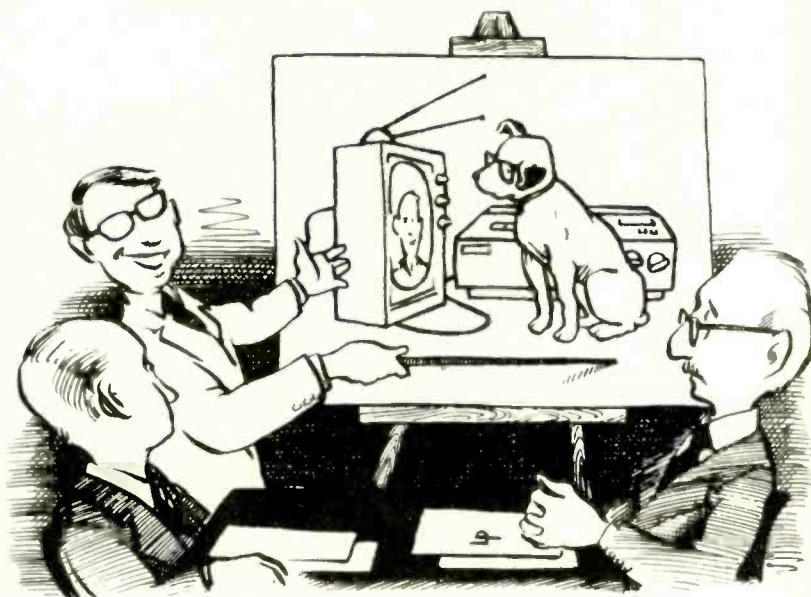
Approaches to this redesign have been announced not only in Japan but in Europe. Grundig and Siemens, for example, have developed a new "Quasi-Parallel" TV-receiver sound system that not only has the advantages of today's "intercarrier" sound system (which does not greatly distort or lose sound if the tuner's local oscillator frequency drifts slightly) but of yesterday's "split-sound" systems (which did not produce the annoying "intercarrier buzz" of today's intercarrier system). Performance is claimed to include a 50-dB signal-to-noise ratio.

The Japanese approach, recently shown in Japan by Sony, is to build a home TV system, like today's hi-fi sound systems, from individual components: display monitors, tuners, and audio output systems. The system is already used in the design of broadcast video equipment. With TV components, you could choose exactly the screen size, tuner sensitivity, and sound quality desired. You could run separate screens from the same tuner (a small one for personal viewing and a big one

for watching spectacular action films, for instance), then disconnect one from the system to use it as a monitor for your video tape or disc machine. With the TV picture tube's horizontal oscillator in a separate video-monitor component, its 15,750-Hz output is less likely to leak into the audio section where it might cause tweeter damage. It also becomes far easier to provide audio output flat to 15,000 Hz without having to contend with an unwanted 15,750-Hz noise signal.

Still another familiar advantage of the component approach is that it will let the individual video buyer spend his money where it will do him the most good. The fringe-area listener, for example, will be able to spend more for a super-sensitive tuner, while the cable viewer who needs less sensitivity might prefer to spend his money on a bigger screen. Some options, such as high-quality sound systems, are already available, of course: they are called hi-fi components.

**A** FEW other video components are already available here in the U.S., videocassette and -disc machines being the most obvious examples. But TV-sound tuners are components too. Pioneer's TVX-9500, which has been dropped from its line, was the best known of these. But there are others still available: Finco's T-82 Teletuner (\$189.95); Radio Shack's new Realistic TV-20 (\$79.95); and several TV-sound components from Rhoades (P.O. Box 1052, Dept SR, Columbia, Tenn. 38401). No reason why you can't get a little jump on the future right now. □



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# Stereo Review Throws a Party...

...to celebrate its Record of the Year Awards for the 1980 publishing year at New York's St. Regis Hotel on January 13. Twelve awards and twenty-four honorable mentions (see February 1981 issue) were toasted, with a special salute to guest of honor Aaron Copland, recipient of this year's Certificate of Merit (for outstanding contributions to the quality of American musical life). He is shown above (1) accepting the original of the Al Hirschfeld drawing that appeared on February's cover from young American conductor Michael Tilson Thomas, also an award winner for his CBS album "The Complete Music of Carl Ruggles." A clutch of younger composers gathers (2) to tender congratulations: John Corigliano, 1980 Pulitzer Prize winner David Del Tredici, Morton Gould—Copland and Thomas—and Lee Hoiby. Copland displays his Certificate of Merit while chatting with Thomas (3) and accepts the felicitations of (4) singing actor Lee Roy Reams (of the cast of the Broadway hit *42nd Street*), (5) harpsichordist Igor Kipnis, and (6) lyricists Adolph Green and Betty Comden. In a party mood are (7) publicist (and STEREO REVIEWER) Joel Vance, reviewer Paul Kresh, and CBS Records publicists Jane Berg and Hope Antman. (8) Ubiquitous J. Vance again with Jack Romann, Baldwin Piano's artists' representative, and pianist Ruth Laredo.

(9) Carly Simon was an award winner too (for her "Come Upstairs" album), and sister Lucy helps her cope with two glasses and one squirming daughter. (10) Singer Margaret Whiting was on

hand, comparing notes with cabaret artist Ronny Whyte. (11) STEREO REVIEW's pop-music arbiters Paulette Weiss and Steve SImels pose with jazz violinist LeRoy Jenkins, (12) Editor William Anderson welcomes actress Beatrice Straight (currently appearing in the movie thriller *The Formula*), and (13) Music Editor James Goodfriend and wife Carol get a smile out of Czech pianist Ivan Moravec. (14) Pop-music Editor Weiss again, with publicist David I. Salidor and Adrianna Kaegi, lead singer with the pop group Coconuts. (15) Focus Records' Mort Fega closes in on singers Barbara Lea and Bobbi Rogers while (16) composer Charles Strouse (*Bye, Bye Birdie, Annie*) talks shop with Betty Comden and (17) actor Jack Weston (soon to appear in Woody Allen's new play, *The Floating Lightbulb*) finds it hard to credit the point that STEREO REVIEW Managing Editor Louise Boudcas is making. (18) Beth Wernick and Dennis Fine, both of Arista's publicity department, chaperone Paulette Weiss and Gregory ("Scream'n") Fleeman, head honcho of G. F. and the Fleewomen, but busy Paulette is on her own with (19) Willie Nile (his latest is "Golden Down") and Polydor Records' Ken Reynolds. (20) Mark Johnson (of the Alligators) and Willie Nile toss off a bumper to the future of rock-and-roll, and (21) STEREO REVIEW Publisher Sidney Holtz, opera fan, gets to deliver a personal message to Met heroine Licia Albanese. (Credits: 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19—Ebet Roberts; 3, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 21—David Gould; 20—Richard E. Aaron.)

—Ed.









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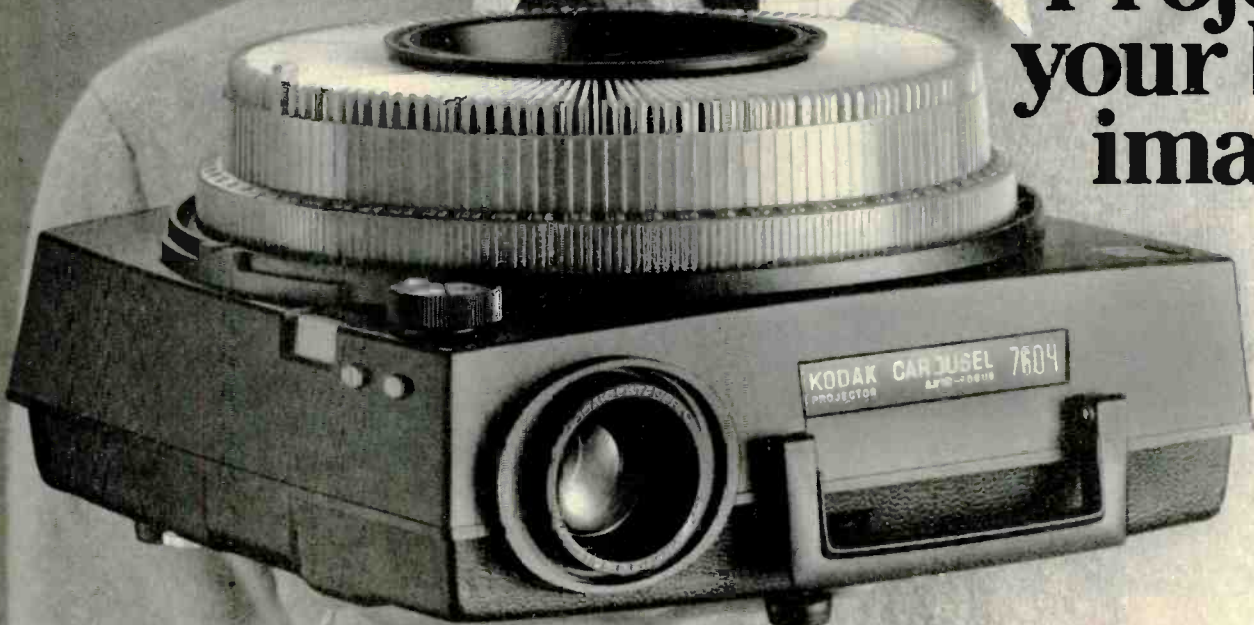
And a dark shutter latch on every model that automatically keeps the screen dark when no slide is being shown. And that's just the beginning. Accessories can make your Kodak Carousel projector so advanced that all that's left to do is sit back and enjoy the show.

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# STEREO TV IN JAPAN

A preview of the kind of "modular" components that are being readied for the American market

By Richard E. Varner and Aske Dam

**F**OR the American audio and video enthusiast, stereo-sound TV is an as yet unrealized technology, but multiplex stereo and bilingual TV audio have been a reality in Japan since October 1978. Tokyo's audiences were the first to get the new TV broadcasts with upgraded sound, and by the end of 1980 fully 70 per cent of the island country was receiving some type of stereophonic TV programming.

Color-TV ownership in Japan already approaches 100 per cent, and stereo sound is but another aspect of the TV medium that the country's avid TV viewers have greeted enthusiastically. According to a spokesman from the Electronic Industries Association of Japan (EIAJ), 2.5 million stereo-TV sets or adaptors have been sold since 1978, and stereo TVs accounted for about 20 per cent of domestic TV shipments during 1980 alone.

However, just as in the early years of color broadcasting, the diffusion of

stereo-sound hardware is running far ahead of the programming being produced to take advantage of it. For example, NTV, a Tokyo-based commercial broadcasting company with sixty affiliates nationwide, is one of the leaders in providing stereophonic and bilingual programs, but their total weekly two-channel transmissions amounts to only twenty hours, a mere 16 per cent of NTV's total on-the-air time. The Japanese Public Broadcasting Organization, NHK, produces a little more than four hours a week of two-channel programs for their Tokyo audience, just under 4 per cent of NHK's total broadcasting time.

Still, some kind of stereo broadcast from one of seven broadcasting stations is available in Tokyo every day of the week. Prime-time TV in Japan is referred to as the "golden hours," and on a typical evening the golden hours might feature a half-hour stereo show called "Music Fair" with several top

popular singers. There might also be a quiz program featuring a group of Japanese stars, the quiz master's voice coming over the left channel and the guests' over the right. A very worthwhile NHK documentary film about the fabled Chinese "Silk Road" has been broadcast with stereo background music, sound recorded on location being transmitted via the right channel and narration via the left.

Sporting events such as Japanese baseball have been very popular in stereo, and stereophonic sound does enhance the immediacy, the feeling of being right there in the crowd when "Mr. O," the local home-run king, smacks another long one to left field: ziiiiiiiiiaaaang . . . whizzes the baseball from right speaker to left. During the day there are seven bilingual news broadcasts, and at the push of a button the viewer can choose to listen in English or in Japanese. The late-afternoon viewing audience can tune in to Ameri-

## STEREO TV, JAPAN

"Stereo-sound TV seems to be the forerunner of a whole range of new components for audio/visual systems."

can films broadcast bilingually, and later in the evening *Starsky and Hutch* will be seen battling U.S. crime on the Japanese airwaves—in a choice of English or Japanese. A really eager viewer might even be up at 6:00 a.m. for a stereo version of the *Morning Show*.

### Equipment Categories

In the huge Akihabara electronics shopping area in Tokyo, store shelves are stocked with about five different categories of stereophonic TV equipment. The first, and unquestionably the most popular, is the stereo TV set. To give an idea of the magnitude of the selection, there are eleven different manufacturers producing approximately ninety different models of stereo TV! A stereo TV set is much like a conventional set except that it has stereo amplifiers and speakers. Matsushita's Model TH20-B15 stereo TV console is typical. It costs 218,000 yen (at 200 yen to the dollar that's \$1,090) and its built-in stereo amp, rated at 10 watts per channel, feeds a pair of two-way speaker systems built into the TV cabinet. Sharp's 20-inch CT-2083 has 5.5 watts per channel and sells for 179,000 yen (\$895). Over two million stereo TV sets have been sold in Japan so far at prices ranging from \$500 to \$3,500.

The second category includes more or less standard TV sets that are specially equipped with output jacks to which a stereo-TV adaptor can be connected. One such is JVC's 26-inch C-2669 (\$1,140) to be used with the CS-15 "Multi Sound TV Adaptor" (\$150). The adaptors come with built-in low-power amplifiers meant to be connected to external speakers and/or with line-output jacks for connection to a hi-fi component system. About 71,000 such adaptors have been sold to date.

The third category of stereo TV equipment is intended for use with conventional TV sets that don't have multiplex output jacks. Typical of this category is Hitachi's FTM-4500 "TV Stereo Dual Sound Tuner" (\$260). It features a built-in "soft touch" electronic tuner that enables both audio and video to be selected simultaneously. Line-output terminals make it possible to con-

nect the FTM-4500 directly to a hi-fi system. This tuner also features a built-in r.f. converter that functions like the one in a VCR—meaning that TV signals from the FTM-4500 can be fed directly to the antenna terminals of a conventional TV set and received via Channels 1 or 2, one or the other of which is usually unused in Japan. This enables the viewer to tune both the stereo audio and video portions of a program from the adaptor. This category of stereo TV equipment also includes units with built-in amplifiers that can drive speaker systems.

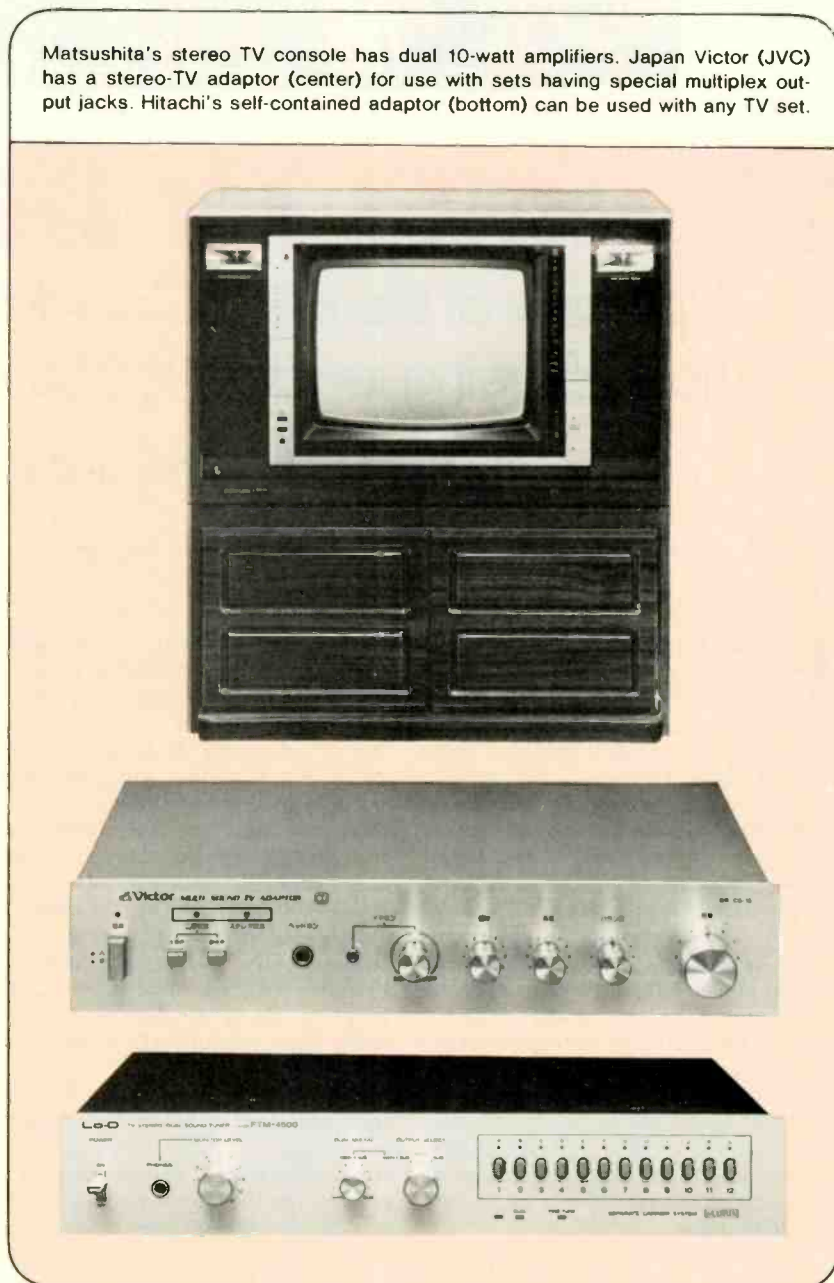
The fourth category of stereophonic TV equipment consists of VCRs capable of receiving, recording, and reproducing stereophonic sound. Typical of

these is JVC's HR-3750, a VHS model selling for \$1,340. This is a top-of-the-line model featuring audio-noise-reduction circuitry, LED audio-level display, and both automatic and manual control of the audio recording level.

Winding up the five different types of stereophonic TV equipment are the small (some not so small) portable radio/cassette players with built-in stereo TV tuners; some of these even have built-in TV picture tubes—for example, Hitachi's K-62MX (\$479). While the program is being viewed on the black-and-white picture tube, the audio portion can be recorded in stereo on the audio cassette recorder.

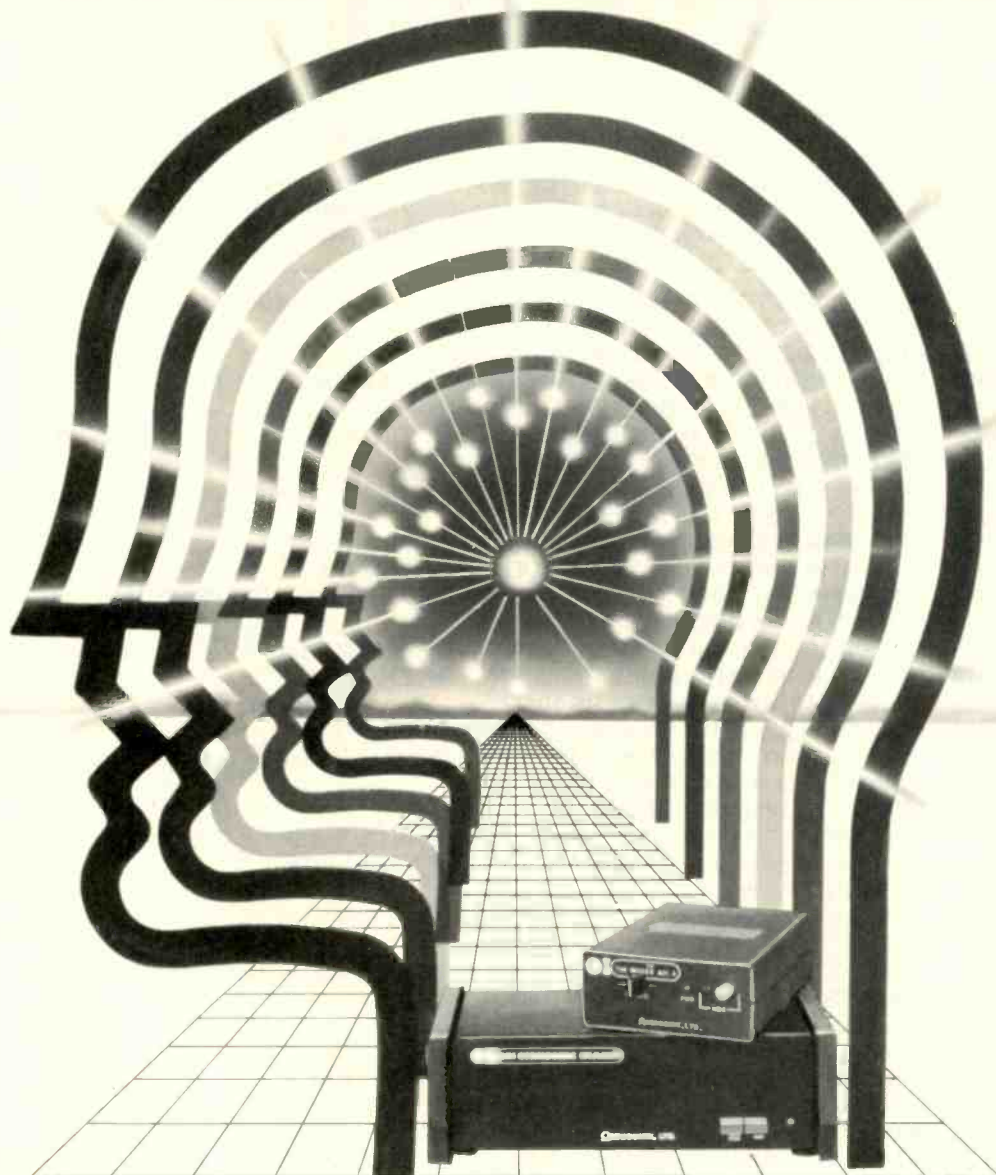
One trend in Japanese stereo TV is toward "personalized" viewing and lis-

Matsushita's stereo TV console has dual 10-watt amplifiers. Japan Victor (JVC) has a stereo-TV adaptor (center) for use with sets having special multiplex output jacks. Hitachi's self-contained adaptor (bottom) can be used with any TV set.





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tening. In one of JVC's 14-inch stereo TV sets, for example, stereo listening can be done only with headphones. In December 1980, Sony further advanced the technology of such headphone listening by introducing the H-AIR headphones with built-in remote-control TV tuner and power switch. Together with the 10-inch KV-10P2 TV set, they make up the new P-AIR-10, selling for \$499. Sony also has the smallest stereo-sound TV adaptor on the market, the MLV-50 (\$64); it too is designed for use with headphones.

The top-end VCR models equipped with stereo-sound capability include Hitachi's Mastacs and Sony's J-9. Matsushita's MacLord VCR requires an additional TV-sound multiplex adaptor. All three of these VCRs sell for just under \$1,500.

### Modular TV

Without a doubt, the most exciting aspect of the entire Japanese stereophonic-television scene is the concept of an "expanded component system" and what many are already calling "modular TV." Several diverse fields seem to be converging. The TV set is no longer regarded as a stand-alone device but rather as a "video monitor" designed to deliver visual information within an expanded component system. Unlike a TV set, a video monitor is equipped with input terminals to receive signals from other video-output components in the system.

An early indication of the emergence of a video monitor for consumers was Hitachi's October 1979 announcement of a "color monitor" which had neither TV tuner nor speakers. The 26-inch unit (\$1,000) had two video-input terminals and was intended for use with a separate receiver designed to provide both video and stereo-audio tuning.

Then, in February 1980, Sony introduced its own super-high-quality Trinitron color monitor "Profeel" (Professional Feeling). Profeel color monitors already account for 15 per cent of Sony's domestic color-TV shipments. The Profeel line includes a series of color monitors ranging from a 27-inch to a 5-inch unit, all with the same simple, basic design.

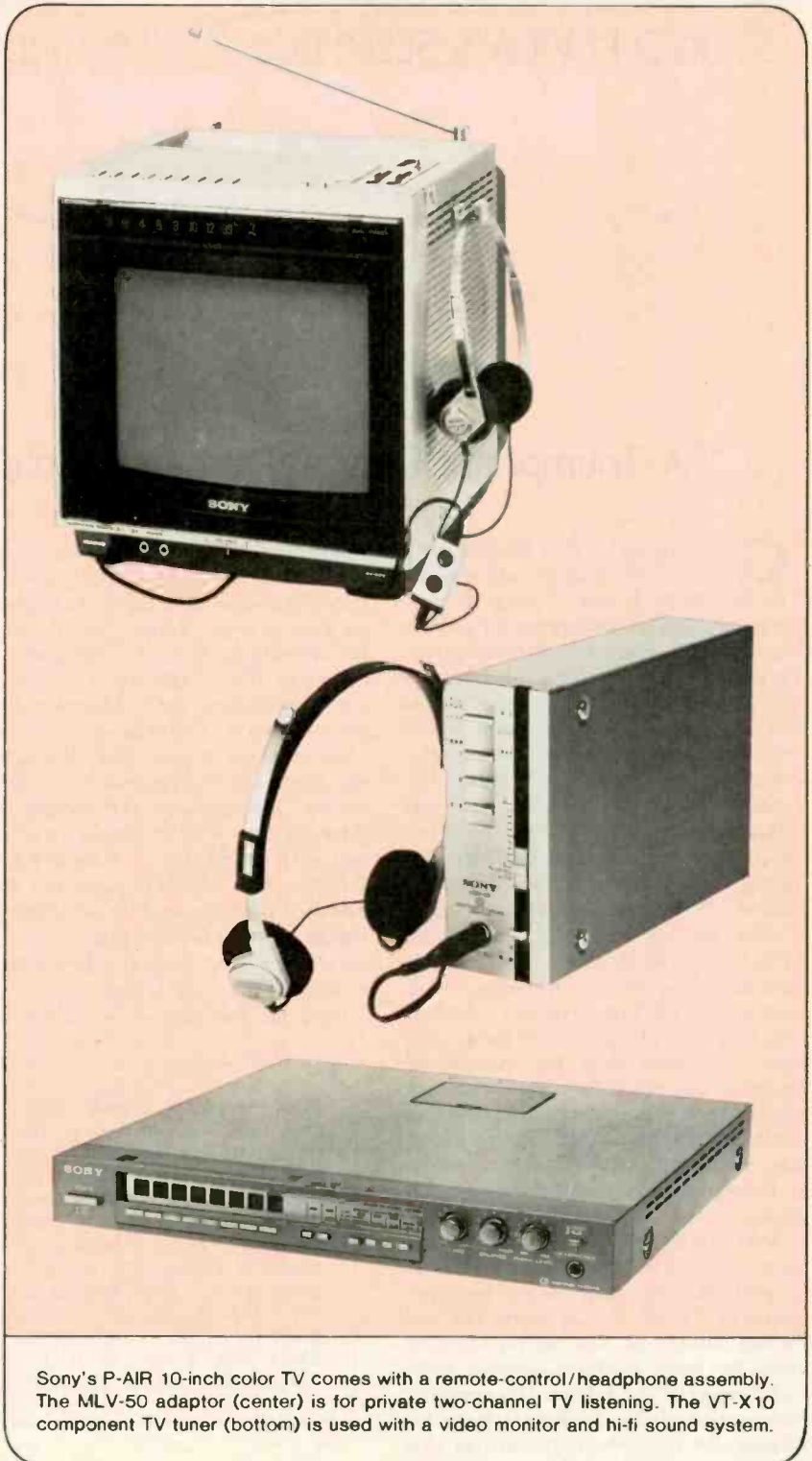
Expanded component systems of the future may be used with several other up-and-coming audio/visual technologies as well. One showroom in Tokyo's Ginza is exhibiting a color monitor that uses the Japanese Videotex system called CAPTAIN (Character And Pattern Telephone Access Information Network). The system requires an additional component, the Videotex Adaptor, which will make it possible to

call up 100,000 pages of printed and graphic information for display on the color monitor. Going one step further, in November 1980 Hitachi exhibited a system that will add sound to the silent Videotex images.

Already opening up several new dimensions to TV viewing and listening in Japan, stereo-sound TV equipment seems to be the forerunner of a whole

range of new components for audio/visual systems. It is only a matter of time—a short time—before they start reaching the American market. □

*Richard E. Varner and Aske Dam are freelance correspondents residing in Japan who work as a technical team reporting on home and commercial electronic products.*



Sony's P-AIR 10-inch color TV comes with a remote-control/headphone assembly. The MLV-50 adaptor (center) is for private two-channel TV listening. The VT-X10 component TV tuner (bottom) is used with a video monitor and hi-fi sound system.

# STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

## BEST OF THE MONTH



### • A Triumphant Return: Don McLean's "Chain Lightning" •

"ONLY connect," said English novelist E. M. Forster when asked *The Secret of It All*. "Hang in, just hang in," replied octogenarian actress Ruth Gordon when similarly cornered. Forster, who lived into his nineties, was talking about the collision of cultures and, on a more immediate level, about realistic expectations in human relationships. Ms. Gordon, still before the cameras in her eighty-fifth year, was talking about the ups and downs of her theatrical career. Interesting, then, that young Don McLean's new Millenium release "Chain Lightning" so aptly mirrors the life wisdom of both Cambridge don and Broadway actress. Interesting, but hardly surprising. After all, they are all three artists of considerable accomplishment who know that they can speak only for themselves, that they can teach only from their own experiences, that the very uniqueness of their talent excuses them from striking any momentarily fashionable attitudes or posing as spokesmen for their several generations.

Don McLean "connects" in many ways in his new album—most effectively, perhaps, when he gives you his experience of the way he has heard, the way he has thought of, and the way he now feels he must perform several well-loved songs of the Fifties. His stunning new version of the old Roy Orbison hit *Crying*, for example, is performed in a kind of pop *bel canto* unlike anything you've heard before or are likely to hear soon again (it's still Orbison's song, but it is now also McLean's). He does a dramatic and deeply moving performance of Paul Anka's *It Doesn't Matter*

*Anymore* that is even better than Linda Ronstadt's temporarily definitive version of a season or so back. He also adds an aura of high, desperate romance to the old Hank Williams weeper *Your Cheating Heart*, and his *nouvelle cuisine* approach to that rock-and-roll ragout known as *Lotta Lovin'* brings out each mystical musical ingredient with an up-to-the-minute, almost digital clarity. But perhaps the biggest surprise for fans will be his runaway success with the Skyliners' standard *Since I Don't Have You*. He takes the vocal line up, up, and away into an uncharted region between falsetto and some as yet uninvented new musical instrument. It is simply the most joyous bit of pop singing he has ever done, filled with

**DON McLEAN: *Chain Lightning*.** Don McLean (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Words and Music: Crying: It's Just the Sun; Lotta Lovin'; Chain Lightning; Your Cheating Heart; Wonderful Night; It Doesn't Matter Anymore; Since I Don't Have You; Genesis (In the Beginning); It's a Beautiful Life.* MILLENIUM BXL1-7756 \$7.98, © BXX1-7756 \$7.98, © BXS1-7756 \$7.98.

spontaneity and an almost palpable sense of wondering delight in musical discovery.

However fine his performances of genre material—and I would rank them as virtuoso level—Don McLean is

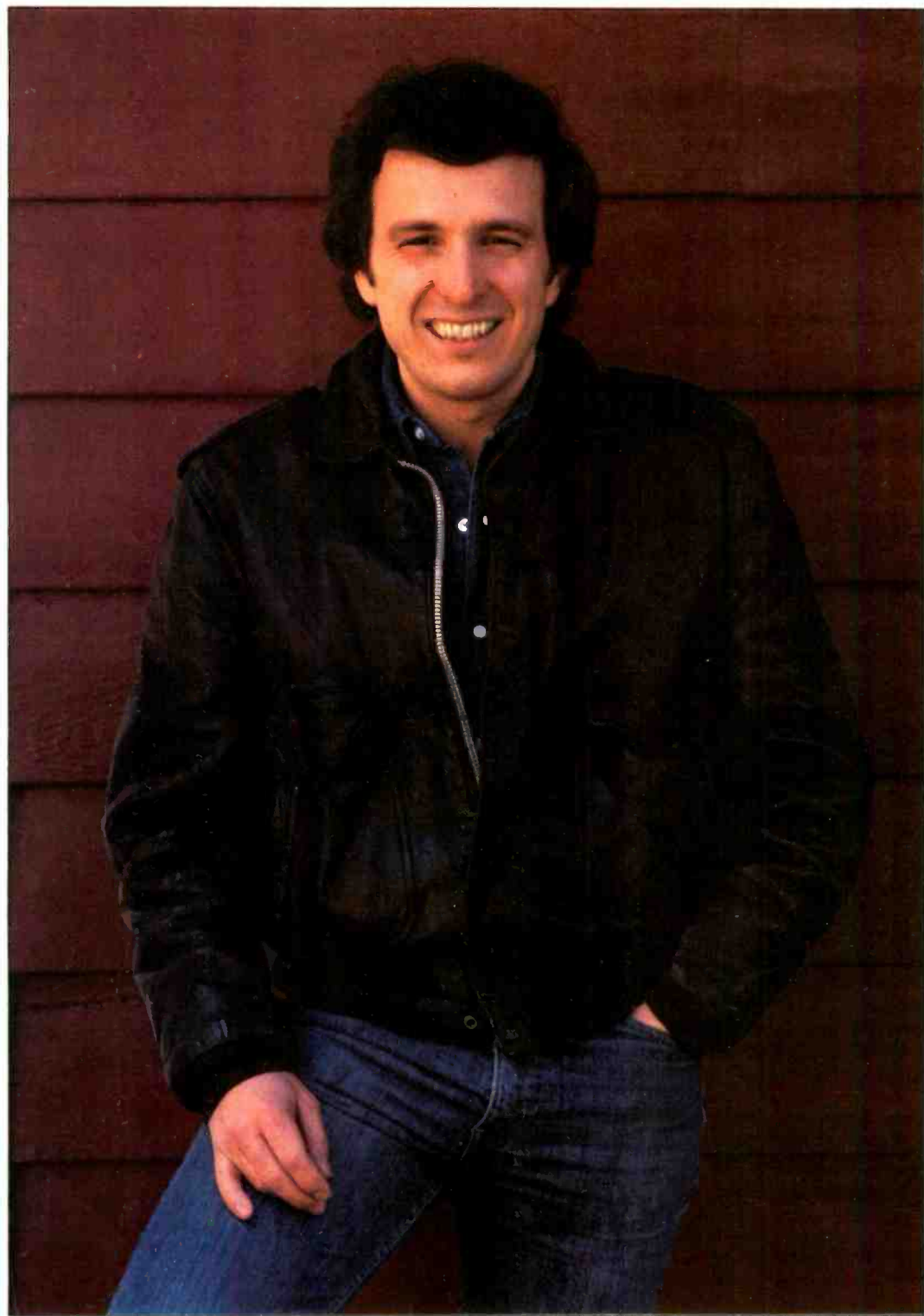
also one of our finest popular composers. Over the past ten years such albums as "Tapestry," "American Pie," and "Vincent" have proved that he is not only one of the few original melodic talents currently at work in American popular music, but that he has the ability to connect his melodies to lyrics that are genuinely meaningful. *Genesis (In the Beginning)*, with a lyric surprisingly drawn from the Good Book, not the rock group, is a magical ballad sung with the cool, controlled passion that has always been McLean's trademark. The title song, *Chain Lightning*, is a moody, folk-style piece delivered with just a touch of pale spookiness. *It's Just the Sun* is a pure, calypso-accented delight, and *Words and Music* an infectiously vigorous foot stomper.

If "Chain Lightning" fulfills, in every artistic sense, Forster's injunction to "connect," its release is also a happy affirmation of Ruth Gordon's wry philosophy of "hanging in." The album was recorded in 1978, but it failed to touch the delicately tuned musical sensibilities of the geniuses at—believe it or not—the several major labels that had it serially under option (it even got itself listed in Schwann on the Casablanca label, but there was no release). What these self-appointed arbiters of musical taste wanted from McLean was a safe-and-sure rip-off of his own work—an "American Pie à la Mode" or a "Son of Vincent" would have been right up the old commercial alley.

So, McLean picked himself and his tapes up and took a three-year walk. That's a long gamble in any popular artist's career, but it has paid off hand-

"filled with . . . an almost palpable sense of wondering delight in musical discovery."





Don McLean  
(Photo by David Gahr)

somely. First released in England on EMI, "Chain Lightning" has gone gold in Europe and *Crying* has already had a six-week ride at the top of the English charts. At the time of writing, the album has been out only a week in the U.S.: *Crying* is on the charts and that distant roar you hear is the fast-mounting air play. Don McLean doesn't have to prove anything to his fans, of course, but how sweet it must be to demonstrate, yet once again, that pop-music success comes not because of but despite the sage timidity of the Guardians of the Bottom Line. —Peter Reilly

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## Warren Zevon's "Stand in the Fire": First Great Live Album of the Eighties

**C**RITICS (myself included) pretty much exhausted their superlatives on Warren Zevon's first three Asylum albums, and with justice. It was obvious that Zevon was the most interesting American singer/songwriter of the late Seventies, and certainly the only one who could legitimately be called a rocker. The combination of his remarkably intelligent music (pomp-rock fans should check out his Copland-meets-Eno orchestration at the end of 1975's *Desperadoes Under the Eaves*), his abilities as a bandleader, his pop sensibility (the whole of the "Excitable Boy" album can be viewed as the bastard child of Leiber and Stoller's work with the Coasters), and his witty, one-of-a-kind lyrical perspective (something between John Lennon and Raymond Chandler) was particularly potent. And he actually had hit records, which meant that real people liked him as much as the critics.

But his live shows were another matter. He's terrific, was the consensus, but isn't it a shame the manic intensity of his songs doesn't have an analog in his performing style? Why couldn't he *loosen up*, become a bit more of the showman? Last year's tour in support of "Bad Luck Streak in Dancing School" put an end to that, however. Zevon danced around like a buffoon, stripped shirtless in a manner suggesting that he is an avatar of Mark Farner of Grand Funk Railroad, and generally carried on like a hyperactive teenager perfecting his arena-rock moves in

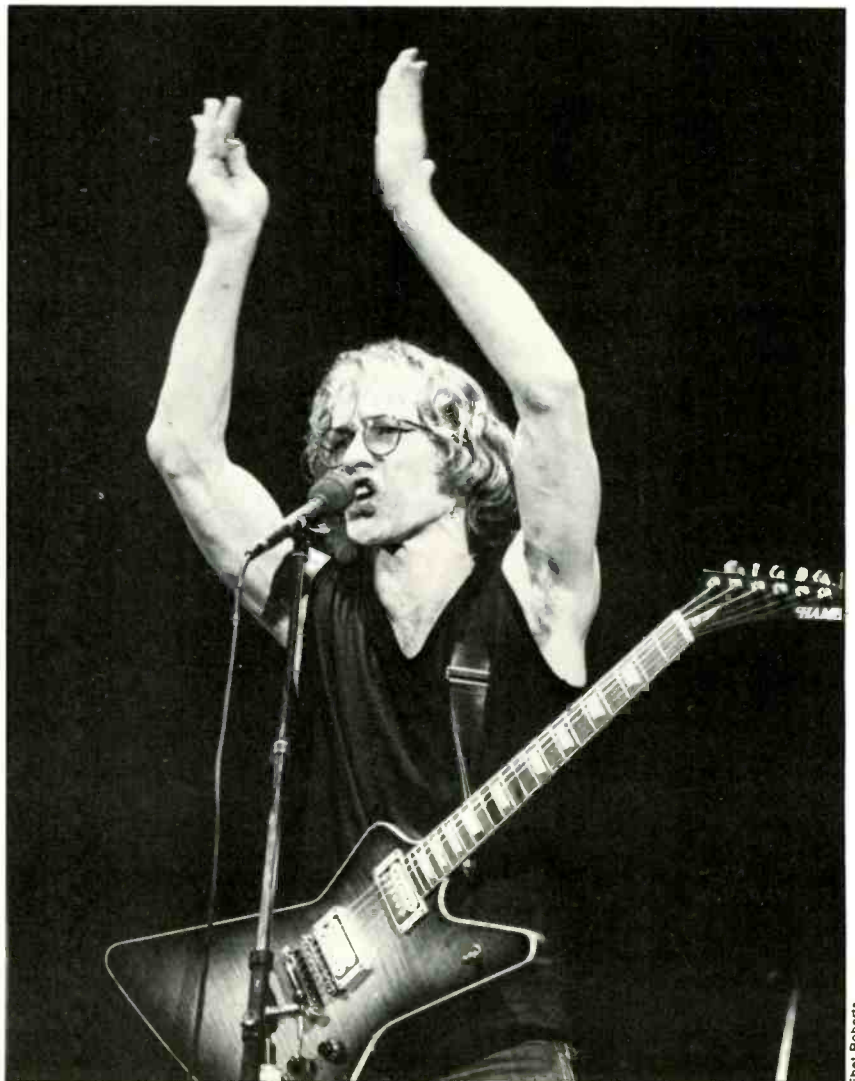
front of a bedroom mirror. It was well intentioned, but it was also, to say the least, embarrassing, and a lot of Zevon loyalists began to wonder if he was as good as they'd cracked him up to be.

Well, now comes "Stand in the Fire," a live document of that very tour, and it proves that, without the topless visuals, Zevon is even better than we suspected. In fact, he's made the first great live album of the Eighties; in its combination of brilliantly mad material and raunched-out guitar attack, it's worthy of comparison to the Stones' heretofore incomparable "Get Your Ya-Yas Out."

Some of the fun is purely technical. Unlike most recent live records from major artists, "Stand in the Fire" was recorded in a small club, and the result is a remarkable immediacy. You not only feel you're there, you feel almost as if you're breathing down Zevon's neck. There's none of the cavernous unreality of say, the current Eagles or Fleetwood Mac sets. Instead, there's the glorious sensation of having a raucous rock-and-roll band jamming for the sheer hell of it in your basement.

And what a band! Zevon apparently found the little-known musicians who back him here performing covers of his tunes at some dive of a bar, and while they are the least photogenic ensemble in recent memory (no teen idols here!) they nonetheless respond to the big-league challenge with everything they've got: it's a joy to hear them shred the parts originally played by the Asylum fat cats who normally back Jackson Browne and Linda Ronstadt. Perhaps not since Dylan and the Band has there been such a felicitous match of solo artist and back-up; in fact, with only one or two exceptions, the performances here make the original versions sound positively effete. *Excitable Boy*, for example, has not a hint of the Fifties revivalism inherent in the studio take; there is instead a coiled-spring intensity and a truly classic rave-up. Likewise the ever-popular *Werewolves of London* (complete with some hysterical lyrical changes courtesy of the composer). As done here, it has an over-the-edge *élan* that suggests a rock equivalent of such trash-film classics as *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*.

WARREN ZEVEON: he could annihilate your house plants







KERSTIN ÅBERG: special circuitry attuned to Franck

The rest of the record? Well, the new songs are wonderful. The title tune is one of the best on-with-the-show openers anyone has ever penned, and *The Sin*, a lyrically explicit punk pastiche about cruelty and guilt, simply wipes the floor with most of what Elvis Costello has written on those subjects. Either one could be a hit single as is, and if there's any justice one of them will be (think of the radio segue out of the latest limp Barbara Streisand kitsch!). Best of all, the pacing is merely brilliant: to paraphrase Sam Goldwyn, the album begins with a hurricane and then builds to a climax.

In short, this is the L.A. rock album for people who've always hated L.A. rock, a genre classic, and an exhilarating document of one of the great warped sensibilities of our time. If this man had a slightly better voice he'd be thoroughly dangerous; as it is, he's made a record that could annihilate your house plants. —Steve Simels

**WARREN ZEVON:** *Stand in the Fire*. Warren Zevon (vocals, guitar, piano); David Landau (guitar); Zeke Zirnigiel (guitar); Bob Harris (keyboards); Roberto Pinon (bass); Marty Stinger (drums). *Stand in the Fire; Jeannie Needs a Shooter; Excitable Boy; Mohammed's Radio; Werewolves of London; Lawyers, Guns and Money; The Sin; Poor, Poor Pitiful Me; I'll Sleep When I'm Dead; Bo Diddley's a Gunslinger/Bo Diddley*. ASYLUM SE-519 \$8.98, ©5C5-519 \$8.98, ©5T8-519 \$8.98.

## Infectious Spontaneity, Superb Sound for Fascinating Franck Piano/Orchestra Works

How does Robert von Bahr find all those splendid performers he has introduced on his Bis label? Are they really that special, or is it an illusion enhanced by the crisply realistic sound this independent Swedish producer achieves with his relatively unelaborate means? Kerstin Åberg, I'm convinced, is not only really that good, but must have been born with some special circuitry attuned to the music of César Franck, whose two concerted works—*Les Djinns* and the *Symphonic Variations* (both with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra under Okko Kamu)—and big solo piece, the *Prelude, Chorale, and Fugue*, she plays on a new Bis release.

A line on the album jacket lists the numbers, but not the titles, of a few earlier recordings Åberg made for this label; whatever they may be, I'm sorry I missed them, but I'm very glad I did not miss this one, for I've never heard any of these works more persuasively set forth. *Les Djinns*, in particular, is revelatory. This tone poem for piano and orchestra after Victor Hugo is not a

very familiar work; we encounter it only on records, and no prior recording of it, not even Richter's (which I admit to recalling only dimly now, and which was certainly recorded dimly), made it nearly so attractive. The pacing is broad, the momentum superb, the atmosphere enchanting, the pianism itself marvelous.

The same level of performance is evident in the much better-known *Variations*, and in both the orchestral contribution under Kamu is not only first-rate in its own right but exceptionally well integrated with Åberg every delightful step of the way. There is no let-down in the *Prelude, Chorale, and Fugue*, either. Åberg takes a rather deliberate view of the long middle section, but again, as in *Les Djinns*, her expansiveness is effectively balanced by an unflinching sense of momentum that evokes a most enlivening feeling of spontaneity. How infectious her exceptional response to these works becomes! What fascinating pieces they are, after all! This is a stunning release in every respect. —Richard Freed

**FRANCK:** *Les Djinns; Symphonic Variations*. Kerstin Åberg (piano); Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, Okko Kamu cond. *Prelude, Chorale, and Fugue*. Kerstin Åberg (piano). Bis LP-137 \$10.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

## Blondie's "Autoamerican": An Album of Good Tunes, Stylish Lyrics, and Impressive Performances

My friends look at me as if I've finally gone over the edge, but I say unto you as I do unto them: check out the new Blondie album "Autoamerican." The people who make up Blondie may not have a "Sgt. Pepper" in them, but this is their "Tusk" at very least.

It starts with a grandiose and well done instrumental written by Chris Stein, letting you know right off that this is a project with some ambition behind it, and then it goes on to deal with a variety of music evoking the past, present, and future with some startling vocal and instrumental textures and colors. It's the most pleasant surprise I've experienced since the first time I managed to pick *Wildwood Flower* (Continued on page 74)

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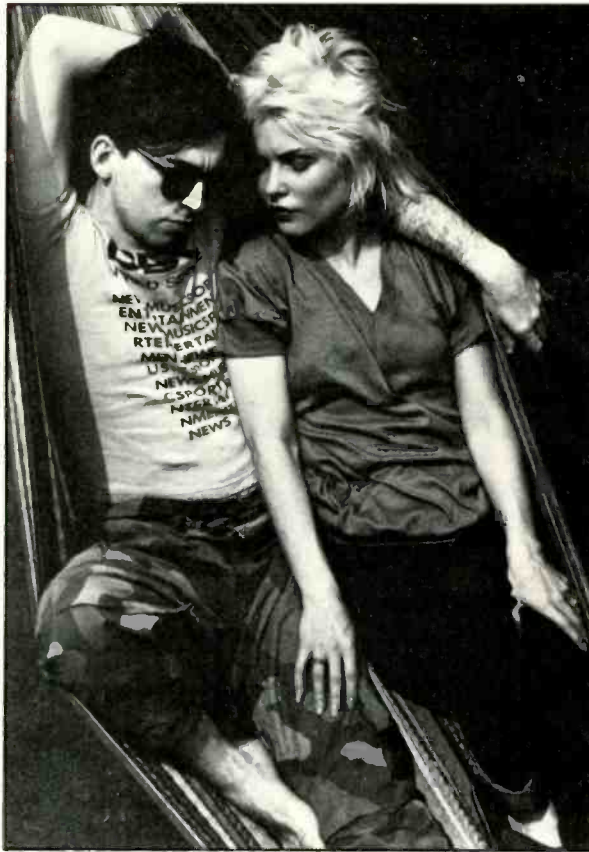
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ambitious project

to be completed by other hands from a sketch of twenty-eight complete measures and only the English horn part for the rest. It is a tribute to modern musical scholarship that such restorations can be effected, as here, with not a seam showing. The quartet by Johann Christian Bach, once thought to be by Joseph Haydn, is a rich and appealing work that deserves the splendid performance it gets. The two Michael Haydn pieces are much slighter, but they are not without their subtler charms. Holliger is a simply wonderful oboist—and English hornist as well—and the string players are excellent partners. The PCM/digital recording is superb, with a tight, clean sound that is nevertheless not lacking in the proper spaciousness. —Eric Salzman

**HEINZ HOLLIGER:** *Chamber Music for Oboe and Strings*. **Mozart:** *Adagio in C Major for English Horn, Violin, Viola, and Cello (K. 580a)*. **M. Haydn:** *Divertimento for Oboe, Viola, and Bass (P. 99); Quartet in C Major for English Horn, Violin, Cello, and Bass (P. 115)*. **J. C. Bach:** *Quartet in B-flat Major for Oboe, Violin, Viola, and Cello*. Heinz Holliger (oboe and English horn); Antonio Salvatore (violin); Massimo Paris (viola); Vito Paternoster (cello); Lucio Buccarella (bass). DENON ● OX 7185 ND \$15.

## London's New *William Tell*: An Operatic Masterpiece Gets the All-star Cast It Deserves

**T**HE nineteenth-century English critic Francis Toye was at least partly right when he observed that *Guillaume Tell* is "a splendid monument to Rossini's musicianship, but it is not Rossini himself, as the lighter operas are, because . . . Rossini had nothing of the heroic in his nature, and a subject like William Tell, to come wholly alive, demands such a quality." And yet, though he failed to break away from his *buffo* style and to find a musical expression worthy of lofty sentiments and grand aspirations in his earlier *Semiramide* and *Otello*, Rossini did succeed in doing so with *William Tell*; it is unquestionably a masterpiece. Bellini, Meyerbeer, Berlioz, and Verdi hailed it as such, and their view has not been challenged by posterity despite recurrent (and justifiable) reservations about the opera's stageworthiness. Owing to its

(I'm acoustic) without messing it up.

Deborah Harry doesn't dominate this album the way she has the others, nor does the hit-and-filler policy obtain. I had always thought there was something striking and necessary about both the sound and look of Harry and that the rest of the band was just competent back-up for her. Not so in this case. And, too, most of Blondie's hits had struck me as clever melodic thievery, pastiches of bits of other songs (and, indeed, *Here's Looking at You*, a period piece by Harry and Stein, sounds far too much like *Give Me the Simple Life*), but this album is full of good and not-too-derivative tunes. The lyrics don't compare to Pink Floyd's or Ian Anderson's big-project lyrics, having no big thematic ideas behind them, but they pass the time with style and an attractive, off-beat humor.

It's the performances that are most impressive. The instruments are lively and quick, often surprisingly appropriate, and they complement Harry's salty vocals beautifully. The band is definitely more versatile—and seemingly more committed—than I've given it credit for being in the past. I'll happily amend that assessment and vow to cut down on the snide remarks (there's still Heart to pick on) as soon as I can stop dancing around the room here.

—Noel Coppage

**BLONDIE:** *Autoamerican*. Deborah Harry (vocals); Clem Burke (drums); Jim Destri (keyboards); Nigel Harrison (bass); Frank Infante, Chris Stein (guitars). *Europa; Live It Up; Here's Looking at You; The Tide Is High; Angels on the Balcony; Go Through It; Do the Dark; Rapture; Faces; T-Birds; Walk Like Me; Follow Me*. CHRYSALIS CHE 1290 \$7.98, © CCH 1290 \$7.98, © 8CH 1290 \$7.98.

## Heinz Holliger and Friends: Splendid Performances of Works For Oboe and Strings

**S**WISS oboist Heinz Holliger and four Italian members of I Musici got together in Japan to make a superb digital recording of German eighteenth-century music, and it is now available in these United States on the Denon label as an import. That's the (geographical) way it goes nowadays in the classical-music business.

The Mozart adagio on the recording is an oddity: late and unfinished, it had



length and the awkwardness of its construction, *Tell* has suffered neglect as well as insensitive mutilations in the past, but now its musical riches are ours to enjoy either in the original French, as issued by Angel several years ago (S-3793), or in London's newly released Italian version.

The Angel set, which I reviewed here in December 1973, is a first-class effort, but the new recording is even better; all the London principals, for example, are stronger than their Angel counterparts. One of this opera's intrinsic problems is an episodic construction that causes the audience to lose sight of the hero for long stretches of time. But Sherrill Milnes, in outstanding voice throughout in the title role, makes so commanding an impression that his heroic presence seems to animate every scene, even those in which he does not appear.

Luciano Pavarotti sings the role of Arnold, a character whose romantic involvement initially weakens his patriotic resolve; he also leaves the stage on occasion, but his returns—a brilliant show-stopper of an aria ("*O mio asil*") and several ensembles in which he plays a crucial part—never fail to be musically rousing. Pavarotti rises to the vocal challenges unstintingly, pouring out effortless high Cs and displaying, in one passage at least ("*Cari, onesti e dolci accenti*," Act II), the honeyed tones and phrasing of his early years. Mirella Freni (Matilde) sings the haunting "*Selva opaca*" with sensitive lyricism, but she is equally convincing in her scene with Ferruccio Mazzoli (Gessler), where angry passions are called for.

Except for the tonally undernourished tenor who sings the role of the Fisherman (his, unfortunately, is the first voice we hear), the minor roles are also in good hands. Nicolai Ghiaurov is

a substantial Gualtiero (Walter), John Tomlinson brings a rich tone to the music of the ill-fated Melchthal, Mazzoli is an appropriately menacing Gessler, and Piero de Palma, that king of the *comprimari*, can still make a substantial contribution after some thirty years of service. The rest are competent or better.

Leaving the conductor for last seems a bit unfair, because Riccardo Chailly directs the opera with great vitality and conviction, sustaining a dramatically effective momentum throughout. The credit is largely his that in the beautiful but at times repetitious ensembles (such as the trio for Matilde, Edwige, and Jemmy in Act IV) beauty reigns while possibly tedious length is barely noticed. The familiar overture, too, gets a model rendition, with special praise due the cello principal.

Unlike the first *Guglielmo Tell* (Cetra 1952, later Everest), this edition is, to the best of my knowledge, complete. The familiar dance sequence, *Passo a sei*, is given not in context but as an appendix. One can understand the reason for this, but nothing is said about it in the notes. The album production is not quite on the level maintained by London's sister companies Deutsche Grammophon and Philips, but the performance is tops. —George Jellinek

**ROSSINI: *William Tell*.** Sherrill Milnes (baritone), William Tell; Elizabeth Connell (mezzo-soprano), Edwige; Della Jones (soprano), Jemmy; Luciano Pavarotti (tenor), Arnold; John Tomlinson (bass), Melchthal; Ferruccio Mazzoli (bass), Gessler; Mirella Freni (soprano), Matilde; Piero de Palma (tenor), Rodolfo; Nicolai Ghiaurov (bass), Gualtiero; Richard van Allan (bass), Leutoldo; Cesar Antonio Suarez (tenor), Fisherman; John Nobel (baritone), a Hunter. Ambrosian Opera Chorus; National Philharmonic Orchestra, Riccardo Chailly cond. LONDON OSA 1446 four discs \$39.94, © OSA 1446 \$39.94.

MIRELLA FRENI: sensitive lyricism



Peg Wilson / Angel/EMI

SHERRILL MILNES: heroic presence



## BEST OF THE MONTH: RECENT SELECTIONS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

### CLASSICAL

- Beethoven: *Piano Concerto No. 1, in C Major, Op. 15*. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 302. "The work has not been better served in its many recordings." (January)
- Handel: *Messiah*. L'OISEAU-LYRE D189K33. "The most absorbing and moving performance . . . ever." (March)
- Luciano Pavarotti: *Verismo Arias*. LONDON LDR 10020. "Every selection represents rich-toned, committed, exceptional vocalism." (March)
- Rachmaninoff: *Piano Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2; Polka on a Theme by V. R.* CBS M 35881. "A triumphant final volume in Ruth Laredo's survey." (January)
- Ravel: *Boléro; Rapsodie Espagnole; Alborada del Gracioso*. RCA ARC1-3686. "Razor-sharp performances, a blockbuster digital recording." (February)
- Schubert: *Winterreise*. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 118. "The one to have." (February)
- Shostakovich: *Symphony No. 13, Op. 113 ("Babi Yar")*. ANGEL SZ-37661. "Perhaps André Previn's finest recording to date." (March)
- Verdi: *Rigoletto*. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2740 225. "Giulini's somberly lyrical view . . . places this new set above all others." (January)

### POPULAR

- Roy Acuff: *Sings Hank Williams (For the First Time)*. ELEKTRA 6E-287. "One master pays tribute to another. . . should become a collector's item." (March)
- The Amazing Rhythm Aces: *How the Hell Do You Spell Rythum?* WARNER BROS. BSK 3467. "A record that really works." (January)
- Bobby Bare: *Drunk and Crazy*. COLUMBIA JC 36785. "Seriocomic country rock . . . basically anti-hypocrisy in a good-old-boy mode." (February)
- Ron Carter: *New York Slick*. MILESTONE M-9096. "For those who know real jazz from polyester." (January)
- Aretha Franklin: *Aretha*. ARISTA AL 9538. "The Queen of Soul back in peak form." (February)
- Donny Hathaway: *In Performance*. ATLANTIC SD 19278. "A posthumous addition to a treasureable legacy." (January)
- Michael Wycoff: *Come to My World*. RCA AFL1-3823. "A polished debut album by a promising young multi-talent." (March)
- Neil Young: *Hawks & Doves*. REPRISE HS 2297. "Back to basics with one of the originals." (March)



# Popular Music Briefs



Stephen Morley/Raina

**J**ohn Lennon's final live performances, with **Elton John** at Madison Square Garden in 1975, are finally being released, as a single, by DJM Records. Lennon dueted with Elton on the Beatles' *I Saw Her Standing There* (which John introduced as having been sung originally by "an old estranged fiancé called Paul") and *Lucy in*

*the Sky with Diamonds*, plus his own *Whatever Gets You Through the Night*. (*I Saw Her...* was available previously as the B-side of Elton's *Philadelphia Freedom*.) EMI owns the album rights to the entire concert, excerpts from which have appeared on Elton's "Here and There" LP; they may yet issue the whole thing. □

**T**HE **Grateful Dead** concert reported on in the January issue has gotten the band in a bit of legal hot water. New York's Radio City Music Hall, where the concert was staged, is suing the Dead to the merry tune of \$1,250,000 to prevent the release of a live album, a videodisc, and a poster the group planned to document the event. The Hall was not amused by "references to illegal drugs and sex acts during the performances" or by the poster, allegedly showing "two macabre skeletons" leaning on the Music Hall's exterior, which the Dead wanted to use as the cover of its Arista album. The concert was also witnessed by some twenty thousand ma-

cabre Dead Heads in Long Island's Nassau Coliseum via closed-circuit TV. □

**F**ANTASY RECORDS has lately made a most embarrassing discovery: its current hit "Creedence Clearwater Revival: The Royal Albert Hall Concert" was *not* recorded at the historic London pleasure palace but rather somewhere in... *Oakland*. The error, blamed on "inadequate master-tape labeling" (should we inaugurate an Understatement of the Year contest?), is being corrected by a shamefaced Fantasy. Future pressings will be labeled "Creedence Clearwater Revival: The Concert." □

**A**BBA, the Swedish hitmakers whose music earnings now exceed \$100 million worldwide, will soon be selling public stock in a new subsidiary, a real-estate firm they acquired six months ago. Further, according to artistic business manager Stig Anderson, the group, already Sweden's most profitable business organization, plans to list their Polar Group of companies on the New York and London stock exchanges in two years. All this enables the band to stay at home and off welfare in Sweden: without such diversification, the group would have to deal with that country's 85 per cent tax bite. Talk about national treasures. □



Pacific Arts Corp.

**M**ike Nesmith has seen the future, and it is video. The former Monkee has announced that his Pacific Arts label will stop manufacturing phonograph records and henceforth become a video label (cassettes and discs, all formats) called Pacific Arts Video Records. "We are not leaving the music industry," he said, "but only the analog phonograph record industry, which in my belief is already obsolete." Nesmith's new enterprise has al-

ready been responsible, via its in-house production facilities, for video projects by Poco and Kim Carnes, as well as providing segments for the Warner-Amex cable system and, more recently, *Saturday Night Live*. Given the surprise resurgence of Monkees Mania in Japan (see "Briefs," March 1981), one has to wonder whether Pacific Arts owns the video rights to Nesmith's old TV show. □

**A**dam and the Ants, whose "Kings of the Wild Frontier" album for Epic had the honor of displacing John Lennon and Yoko Ono's "Double Fantasy" from the number-one spot on the British charts, may be on their way to becoming the first big cult band of the Eighties in Los Angeles (where else?), for example, there is already an antsy copy band, called Mad Society, whose members dress up in Ants-like Indian garb and whose lead singer is a mere twelve years old! One might conclude that some pretty fast PR footsie has been choreographed for the group, whose records (only just released in this country) sound like warmed-over Gary Glitter but whose costumes owe something to the Village People. Is *nothing* new? □

**G**RACENOTES **Lou Reed**, who got out of his contract with RCA Records by forcing them to release "Metal Machine Music," a not exactly prize-winning two-record set consisting entirely of electronic feedback, has nonetheless re-signed with RCA after five years with Arista. No word on whether "M.M.M." □



will be reissued, but a new studio album will be forthcoming this year. . . . WEA (England) has released **John Lennon's** *Woman* single in cassette form, an experimental packaging move that several American labels are watching with interest. The next WEA cassette will be new **Pretenders** material. . . .

**Queen's** *Another One Bites the Dust*, which has sold three and a half million copies to date, has been declared the biggest-selling single of 1980 by *Variety*. The disco-flavored tune has been adopted as the theme song of the Detroit Lions football team. . . . Though Robert Stigwood's **Times Square**, the film that was supposed to do for New Wave rock what *Saturday Night Fever* did for disco, died the death in the U.S., it has just opened in England, where it may face a similar fate. Said the *Melody Maker*



Prodigal's return: RCA pres Robert Summer welcomes Lou Reed

critic: "It deserves a place in the next edition of *The Fifty Worst Movies of All Time*, perhaps eclipsing even *Santa Claus Meets the Martians*." . . . Jazz great **Sonny Rollins** will be the surprising featured soloist on at least one cut of the

new **Rolling Stones** album, still scheduled for early summer release. . . . Former Sex Pistol **Johnny Rotten** is talking of abandoning his singing career (currently with Public Image Ltd.) for the small screen. The *enfant terrible* of punk rock is a

fan of the long-running English TV soap *Crossroads* and covets the role of the black-sheep son on the show. Rotten has confessed to having "started liaisons [sic] with certain members of the cast about getting a job." . . . **Sting**, bass player of the Police, turned down (smart fellow) the role of the punk rocker in Neil Diamond's ill-received remake of *The Jazz Singer*. . . . New York area cult favorites **Shrapnel** recently made a cameo appearance (as themselves) in Marvel Comics' *The Amazing Spiderman* (does that count as a gig?). . . . And former *Playboy* Playmate and inconstant girl friend **Bebe Buell** (ex of Todd Rundgren and Elvis Costello, among others) debuted her new band, the B-Sides, as the opening act for Rick Derringer in New York recently. She shouldn't give up her day job. —S.S.

## Disc and Tape Reviews

By CHRIS ALBERTSON • IRV COHN • NOEL COPPAGE • PHYL GARLAND  
PAUL KRESH • PETER REILLY • STEVE SIMELS • JOEL VANCE

Ⓢ = stereo cassette

Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge

Ⓢ = digital-master recording

Ⓢ = direct-to-disc

Ⓢ = quadraphonic disc

Ⓢ = monophonic recording

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

**ABBA: Super Trouper.** ABBA (vocals and instrumentals). *Super Trouper; On and On and On; Our Last Summer; The Piper; The Way Old Friends Do*; and five others. ATLANTIC SD 16023 \$8.98, Ⓢ CS 16023 \$8.98, Ⓢ TP 16023 \$8.98.

Performance: **Ambitious**

Recording: **Very good**

It would appear that Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus—writers, arrangers, producers and the middle 50 per cent of ABBA—are reaching for higher things than pop/rock. Having assimilated all the characteristics of American and British songwriting and production, they now seem to be aiming for what Americans would understand as Broadway-musical potential—and they might just make target.

"Super Trouper" contains some of the usual ABBA staples—formula ballads like *The Winner Takes It All* and calculated hit-single items like the title tune. But there is something different and more ambitious about *Happy New Year*, a look back at the 1970s as a decade when, unlike the 1960s, nothing stirred people to embrace a cause with passion. Several other selections also break ABBA's commercial pop-hit pattern. *The Piper*, for instance, is a highly orchestrated but unabashed neo-folk song, and *The Way Old Friends Do* is extremely sentimental. ABBA has always been polished, but I welcome their new substance. J.V.

**JON ANDERSON: Song of Seven.** Jon Anderson (vocals, keyboards); instrumental accompaniment. *For You for Me; Some Are Born; Don't Forget (Nostalgia); Heart of the Matter; Hear It*; and four others. ATLANTIC SD 16021 \$8.98, Ⓢ CS 16021 \$8.98, Ⓢ TP 16021 \$8.98.

Performance: **Alry**

Recording: **Good**

Jon Anderson doesn't seem quite as annoying here as he did when he perpetrated similar stuff for Yes. There are subtle improvements in his writing, although he still comes on now and then like a witch doctor from outer space. As singers go he's almost all stylist, but his piping, reedy voice is one of those you recognize instantly. *Days*, uncharacteristically filled with concrete imagery, is sophomoric in concept (a snippet of "lyric poetry" that is all lush, romantic description), but it is craftily rendered and it has a nice tune. *Don't Forget (Nostalgia)* is quite a skillful evocation of the feel of Fifties rock-and-roll, and *Take Your Time* is decent and surprisingly down to earth. The rest is spotty. The title song, running over eleven minutes, doesn't sound too bad (many of these arrangements are reminiscent of Yes' but simpler and usually more sensible), but the lyrics are like the Anderson of old—would-be mystical but without reference points that might suggest Anderson knows what the hell he's talking about;

in a word, vague. Some of the album, though, could go with some of your moods. N.C.

**THE BLACKBYRDS: Better Days.** The Blackbyrds (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Dancin', Dancin'; Better Days; Do It Girl; Love Don't Strike Twice; What We Have Is Right*; and five others. FANTASY F-9602 \$7.98.

Performance: **So-so**

Recording: **Fine**

The now Byrd-less Blackbyrds are still creating dance-tempo r-&-b/pop hybrids, but whether these new days, without the group's founder and original producer Donald Byrd, are truly better days is open to doubt. The ten songs in this new album are sung in the group's familiar strong, tightly harmonized style. But song after song is punched out with a percussive monotony that wears thin very quickly.

It's a shame, because the aggressive production drowns some subtle, jazz-oriented musicianship. The title song, especially, has interesting, jagged solo instrumentals going on that I wished I could hear better. The ballad *Do It Girl* has enormous potential, but it too is pounded out of shape. Only when the rhythm section contributes to a song's intent, instead of laying effects on

(Continued on page 79)



Under a tin roof in a hurricane: miking 42nd Street's tap-happy choristers

## Nostalgia Pays Off: the New "42nd Street"

**H**EARING "42nd Street," that ultimate example of the movie musical, coming out of our loudspeakers in a new RCA recording is just about as unlikely an event as seeing the long-gone French liner *Normandie* slipping once again into its West Side Manhattan berth. One would have thought that this celluloid relic was permanently locked in the amber of the Thirties, to be taken out and admired occasionally only by film cultists, but producer David Merrick had the bright idea of remounting it on Broadway (where it always really belonged) as a stage musical. Under the brilliant direction of Gower Champion (who, sad to say, died the day of the New York premiere), "42nd Street" promptly emerged as perhaps the superhit of the Eighties.

The new "42nd Street," thank goodness, isn't all *that* new, at least from what I hear in the original-cast recording. It still has the same delightfully lame-brained script, now rewritten by Michael Stewart. For those of you without total recall, it is the oft-told tale of the Chorus Girl (Wanda Richert) who, under the driving guidance of the megalomaniacal Director (Jerry Orbach) trying for a comeback, is able, on short notice, to take over for the incapacitated Star (Tammy Grimes) and become a Brilliant Success. And it still has, praise be, the wonderful songs of Harry Warren and Al Dubin, including such fixtures of hit parades past as *Young and Healthy*, *Shadow Waltz*, *You're Getting to Be a Habit with Me*, *Lullaby of Broadway*, *Shuffle Off to Buffalo*, *We're in the Money*, *Dames*, and *42nd Street*. All are nearly a half-century old,

and believe me when I tell you that your ears will find them fresher than mint after twenty years of rock, punk, and new-wave noise.

The performances are merely marvelous. Tammy Grimes, whose voice has deepened and darkened over the years so that it now sounds like musk on the rocks, sings such things as *The Shadow Waltz* and (particularly) *You're Getting to Be a Habit* with a kind of spaced-out ritard in her phrasing and a theatrical grandeur in her diction that make her sound like some glorious hybrid of Tallulah and Sophie Tucker. She isn't camping; she's doing something far more difficult and daring. She's re-creating, for contemporary ears, the sound of what legit singing stars of the past sounded like, contributing in the process that extra note of personal flamboyance without which no one ever got to be a star in the old days.

Jerry Orbach sings only one number, but it is the immortal *Lullaby of Broadway*. He not only brings to it all of his savvy as one of Broadway's best leading men, but is also able to suggest—vocally—the aviator-goggles-and-white-silk-scarf grandiloquence of Julian March, the character he plays. This number alone, with its massed choral effects, its thunderous tap routines (haven't you too always found something oddly ominous in those Busby Berkeley production numbers?), and its wonderful use of stereo is worth the price of the album. The production, by Thomas Z. Shepard, has the style and dash few recorded musicals deserve these days—and even fewer get.

Wanda Richert is just fine as ingenue

Peggy Sawyer. She fails to duplicate the ripe Noo Yawk idiom Ruby Keeler lavished on the part in the movie, but she does have enough stamina and know-how to keep up with Ms. Grimes in their duet *About a Quarter to Nine* and more than enough high spirits for the huge *42nd Street*. Carole Cook is something of a discovery. She has two numbers in which she absolutely shines, the raucous and very funny *Getting Out of Town* and the lilting *Go Into Your Dance*. Whenever I heard her on the album, even only as part of a production number, my ears perked up. There's something very "right," in the sense of Broadway theater singing, in everything she does, a commanding ease and naturalness.

**T**HE rest of the cast sound as well-rehearsed, as part-perfect, and as demonically tap-happy as they would if the "real" Julian March had been directing them. The sonics are superb, particularly in the tap-dancing numbers, which make you feel as if you're trapped under a tin roof in a hurricane. The whole album has the speed and snap that always characterized the work of director Gower Champion. It is therefore a fitting memorial—but of the celebratory kind.

—Peter Reilly

**42ND STREET (Harry Warren-Al Dubin).** Original-Broadway-cast recording. Tammy Grimes, Jerry Orbach, Lee Roy Reams, Joseph Bova, Carole Cook, Wanda Richert; others (vocals); orchestra, John Lesko cond. RCA CBL1-3891 \$9.98, © CBK1-3891 \$9.98.



top, does the album come together in truly satisfying music. It happens in the Latinized *Without Your Love* and the genuinely exciting disco-ized *Do You Want to Dance*, but it doesn't happen often enough. *I.C.*

**BLONDIE:** *Autoamerican* (see Best of the Month, page 71)

**ROY BUCHANAN:** *My Babe*. Roy Buchanan (guitar); Paul Jacobs (vocals, keyboards); Gordon Johnson (bass); Ron Foster, Dan Brubeck, Richard Crooks (drums). *My Sonata; Blues for Gary; Dizzy Miss Lizzie; My Babe; Dr. Rock and Roll*; and four others. WATERHOUSE 12 \$7.98.

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

Roy Buchanan is such a dominant personality and stylist on the guitar that he's heard to his best advantage in the company of his peers, who keep him on an even keel because they can (or almost can) keep up with him. Unfortunately, when he's backed by a functional but undistinguished group, as he is here, he swamps everybody else and might as well be giving a solo recital.

Buchanan is a great talent—impulsive, emotional, even manic, and best not left entirely in charge of himself or his recording dates. He produced this session and has given the vocal work to Paul Jacobs, who provides yeoman service but nothing beyond that. Nor is the band more than proficient: that good old rocker *Dizzy Miss Lizzie* doesn't have the easy glide it should have, though everyone hammers away at it most industriously. Buchanan's essay of *Secret Love* is a mistake; despite his sentimental nature, he finds it hard to be gentle and throttles the tune instead of caressing it. *My Sonata*, which he wrote, is more successful. He is, of course, unique in his long blues pieces, and *Blues for Gary* is a violently exciting *tour de coeur*. Let's hope that next time he finds a band that can support his unquestionable gifts. *J.V.*

**GEORGE BURNS:** *In Nashville*. George Burns (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Just Send Me One; Inflation Dream; Ain't Misbehavin'; Jody and the Kid*; and six others. MERCURY SRM-1-6001 \$7.98, © MCR4-1-6001 \$7.98, © MC8-1-6001 \$7.98.

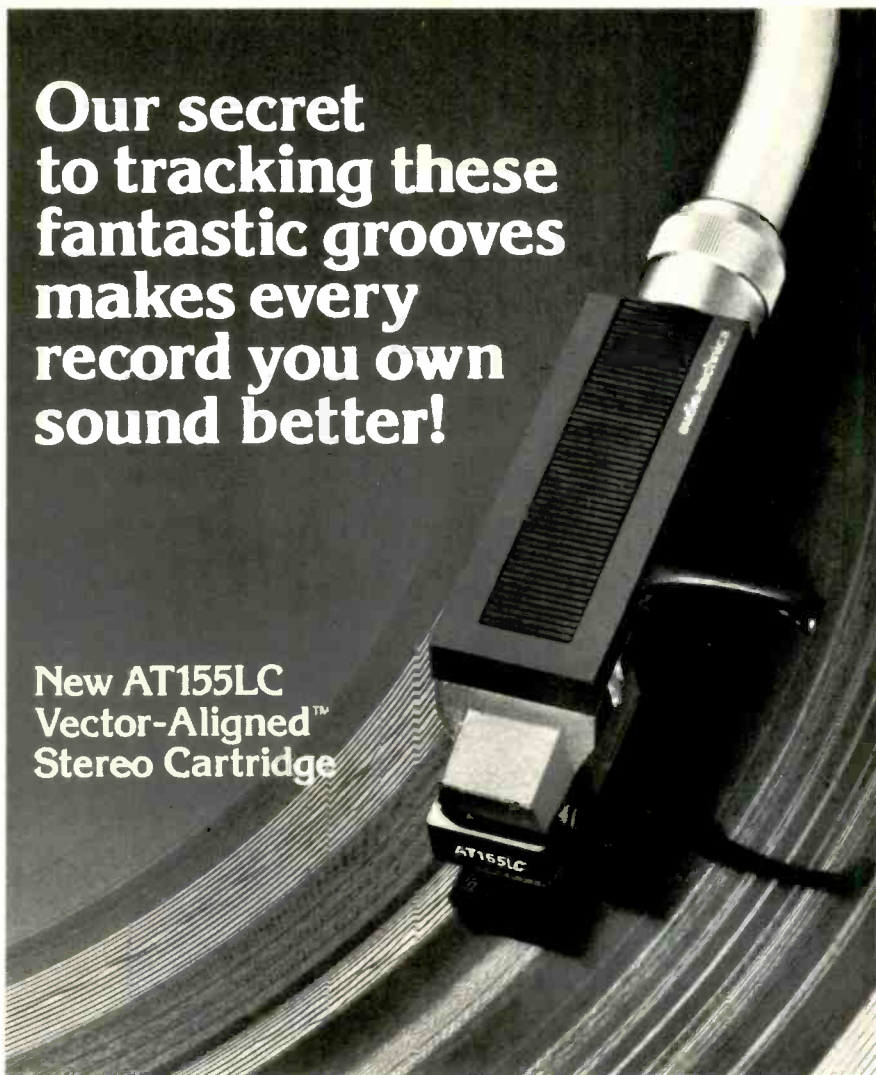
Performance: **Still behavin'**  
Recording: **Good**

It seems (and it's probably true) that I've been hearing George Burns sing *Ain't Misbehavin'* all of my life. He sings it yet again here, and this rendition is as much fun as all the others. This time out he's been fitted with a "Nashville sound," which is to say that there are several guitars strumming along in the background as well as a saccharine chorus that tracks his every vocal move. No matter. Burns ambles his way through such hogwash as *Inflation Dream* (about high prices) and the syrupy *It's Good to See You Smiling Again* with all his familiar, old-time, vaudevillean charm. Johnson he's not. Chevalier he's not. Burns, thank God, he is. *P.R.*

**THE CHI-LITES:** *Heavenly Body*. Gene Record and the Chi-Lites (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Heavenly Body*;

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*Strung Out; Love Shock; and five others.* 20TH CENTURY-FOX T-619 \$7.98, © C-619 \$7.98, © 8-619 \$7.98.

Performance: **Smooth**

Recording: **Good**

While "Heavenly Body" is hardly remarkable, it is smoothly executed and spirited enough to stimulate at least a few ripples of interest. For the most part, the first side is pretty standard stuff, typical of male soul quartets who lean toward light dance music. Things pick up on the flip side with the evergreen *Have You Seen Her*, followed by two sentimental goodies, *All I Wanna Do Is Make Love to You* and *Give Me a Dream*. The album would make good background

music for parties, but I don't think it's strong enough to *listen* to much. P.G.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**CON FUNK SHUN: Touch.** Con Funk Shun (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Too Tight; Lady's Wild; Pride and Glory; Welcome Back to Love; Play Widit;* and four others. MERCURY SRM-1-4002 \$7.98, © MCR4-1-4002, © MC8-1-4002 \$7.98.

Performance: **Pop Funk Fun**

Recording: **Okay**

These boys have the touch, all right. They've obviously heard the new smooth

black sound washing over the land, and they have adapted its strings and sweet harmonies to their own busy, funky rhythms. The result—especially in up-tempo songs such as *Too Tight* and in the ballad *Give Your Love to Me*, with its powerful vocal—is spontaneous-sounding and very likable. Furthermore, the arrangements throughout "Touch" give free rein to Con Funk Shun's instrumental talents. Not one song is allowed to stagnate; each repeat is actually a variation of either the rhythm or the melody, incorporating lots of imaginative musicianship. Two examples: the excellent trumpet and guitar breaks in *Kidnapped!* and the dramatic workout the strings get in *Welcome Back to Love*. I.C.

**NEIL DIAMOND: The Jazz Singer.** Neil Diamond (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Love on the Rocks; Hello Again; America; Songs of Life; Summerlove; You Baby;* and eight others. CAPITOL SWAV-12120 \$9.98, © 4XV-12120 \$9.98, © 8XV-12120 \$9.98.

Performance: **Lugubrious**

Recording: **Good**

I have the feeling that the days of *The Jazz Singer* as a star-making vehicle, as it was for George Jessel on the stage and for Al Jolson at the birth of the talkies, are over. And then some. Gene Shalit, commenting on Neil Diamond's performance in the new movie version of it, said, "Neil Diamond can act the way a lox can sing." I wish there were something that punchy I could say about this new album, which contains twelve of Diamond's original songs (and two adaptations, *Kol Nidre* and *Adon Olom*) from this new motion picture. Lacking the punch, I'll feint: always a turgid talent, Neil Diamond reaches a state of lugubriousness here that would make a group of hired professional mourners sound like the Supremes. P.R.

**DR. HOOK: Rising.** Dr. Hook (vocals and instrumentals). *Girls Can Get It; Body Talkin'; That Didn't Hurt Too Bad; Blown Away; S. O. S. for Love; Doin' It;* and four others. CASABLANCA NBLP 7251 \$7.98, © NBL5 7251 \$7.98, © NBL8 7251 \$7.98.

Performance: **Up and down**

Recording: **Good**

John Hartford once wrote a song about his poor old prurient interest, and that's largely what the title here refers to, but without Hartford's sense of humor, an ingredient Dr. Hook once held dear. A lot of the songs are about, you know, doing it, and I hope doing it is not as mundane for you as several of these songs are for me. A couple of them, however, are interesting treatments of a related subject, leave-taking: *Blown Away*, written by Sam Weedman, and *Before the Tears*, by Even Stevens and Paul Overstreet. Both also profit from some good, intense vocal harmonies. And there is a strange, narrative thing by Ray Sawyer, *99 and Me*, but what it mainly does is wear out its welcome. The overall quality is about as varied as the program. I don't mind Dr. Hook changing and trying new things, and some of the changes do look like growth; I just don't see why their old sense of humor had to be left behind. It could have done wonders for some of these tunes. N.C.

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**THE EAGLES: *Eagles Live*.** The Eagles (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Hotel California; Heartache Tonight; I Can't Tell You Why; The Long Run; New Kid in Town; Life's Been Good; Take It to the Limit; Desperado;* and seven others. ASYLUM BB-705 two discs \$12.98, © BC-705 \$12.98, © BT8-705 \$12.98.

Performance: **Good**  
Recording: **Mostly very good**

Jumping on the Eagles is quite fashionable these days. Although this album is just more of the Eagles' greatest hits with a little crowd noise, as an introduction to the group it's not bad at all. I say, if our children are going to learn the L.A. sound anyway, and they are, better they should learn it from the Eagles. They aren't innovators, but they do what they do with some style and taste, and they are of some use socially. *Hotel California* gave every kid in Middle America a better idea of what the Golden State feels like, *Life in the Fast Lane* was a title whose time had come, and so forth. Of course, if you have a big Eagles collection there's not much new here, and the boys seem always to try to sound live exactly like they sounded in the studio. On the other hand, that tendency enhances this release's value as a sampler. N.C.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**ROBERTA FLACK AND PEABO BRYSON: *Live & More*.** Roberta Flack and Peabo Bryson (vocals); vocal and instru-

mental accompaniment. *Only Heaven Can Wait (for Love); You Are My Heaven; Make the World Stand Still; Feel the Fire; God Don't Like Ugly; If Only for One Night; Love Is a Waiting Game; Reachin' for the Sky;* and seven others. ATLANTIC SD 2-7004-B two discs \$13.98, © CS 2-7004-B \$13.98, © TP 2-7004-B \$13.98.

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

Roberta Flack and Peabo Bryson can generate some of the sweetest sounds this side of the Sixties. Both are blessed with voices characterized by a rich tonal quality, sure pitch, and velvety texture regardless of volume. Their forte is the ability to convey a sense of intimacy; they sing to you, not at you, and they do so quite wonderfully.

It seems natural to draw comparisons between this set and the successful joint efforts of Ms. Flack and the late Donny Hathaway. "Love & More" stands up well and fuels anticipation for future collaborations by this pair. The main weakness in this enjoyable album is that the two do not actually sing together as frequently as they might; in fact, the bulk of this material has appeared on previous sets by one or the other. After the opener, *Only Heaven Can Wait (for Love)*, in which Peabo provides only an incidental accompaniment, they mostly sing solos with their own bands and back-up groups. Both perform with the high professionalism we have come to expect of them, although Peabo nearly steals the show with a searing rendition of his own

*Feel the Fire*. They do sing together on three compositions they co-composed, of which *More Than Everything* is the most appealing. Unfortunately, all three are dwarfed in stature and quality by the Flack oldies *Feel Like Makin' Love* and *Killing Me Softly with His Song*, both in slightly altered but attractive arrangements.

Some of the shortcomings of this album are common to live rehashes of old hits. While it does not represent the very best that might have come from the meshing of these two exceptional talents, it does provide more than an hour of delight. P.G.

**CARRIE LUCAS: *Portrait of Carrie*.** Carrie Lucas (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Lovin' Is on My Mind; Career Girl; Fashion; Keep Smilin';* and three others. SOLAR BXL1-3579 \$7.98, © BXX1-3579 \$7.98, © BXS1-3579 \$7.98.

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

Carrie Lucas is not the most distinguished singer around. She does a competent job here of keeping the mood light and the spirit up, but the album is helped more by a series of intelligent dance and light soul productions that lift it above the norm. The ace is *Keep Smilin'*, a major dance-single success that holds up extremely well for listening. *It's Not What You Got (It's How You Use It)* is another good dance song, and *Use It or Lose It* is a terrific one. The latter is about two notches funkier than the generally elegant tone of the rest of the album, but Lu-

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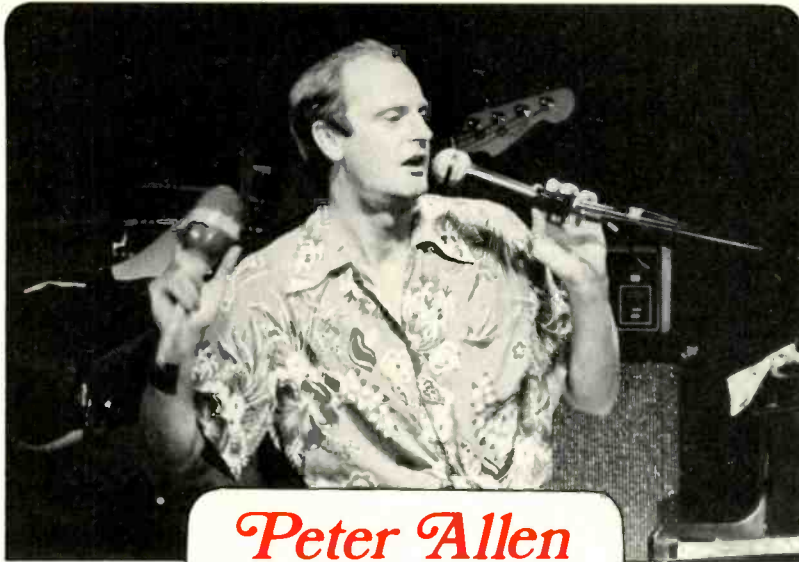
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*Peter Allen*

**H**ERE we are in the first flush of the Square Revolution of the Eighties, and supposedly everyone is gazing dreamily back at the Fifties as if that decade had been a social Nirvana and a cultural Eldorado. So how come Peter Allen, hip, slick, sophisticated, and liberated, whose new album, "Bi-Coastal," is out on A&M, is such a hit? Does his huge audience really know what he's been talking about, how antithetical his view of life is to our current wallow in retro morality? It's hard to believe that they've all been missing the point. At any rate, after this new album there can be no doubt at all as to what he means. The only question is whether a mass audience will knowingly accept it.

Of course, Allen's is hardly the first case of a marked sexual ambivalence stated in the work of a popular songwriter or performer. Many rock groups have touched on it, composer-performers of both sexes have coyly dropped hints, and the songs of the very great Cole Porter are rife with the broadest double-entendres and the sassiest insinuations. In Porter's day probably only the international set, theater people, and those "nice young men who sell antiques" caught his true drift and exchanged knowing smirks. Allen's audiences are sophisticated in a different way. If they are willing to accept his flaunting, it's unlikely to be because they are all tuned into what he's tuned into. Rather, it's because nothing much really surprises or shocks them—the Eighties are the Eighties, after all, however retro the prevailing mood—and because they are moved by his honesty, amused by his wit, and enormously entertained by his vitality and talent.

**F**OR instance, *Simon* is moving rather than shocking or offensive, a song about a long-ago relationship that the narrator thinks of as always remaining fixed—until he learns that his old lover is marrying a woman. The melodramatic *Hit in the Heart* ("Even when we're making love/My hands are always tied/'Cause by now we've reached the

point/Where cruelty becomes an art...") can be viewed as just an update of Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*. And these days the lyrics of the title song, *Bi-Coastal*—"From the towers of Manhattan, to the hills of Beverly/All those girls in TV movies, all those boys on Broadway/When you can't make up your mind, you know you'd go either way"—surely won't raise many eyebrows even in Dubuque.

There is one track here, however, that surprises me, coming as it does from an artist of Allen's caliber and character. *I Could Really Show You Around* has a kind of sinister sleaze. It's the first Dirty Old Man song, straightforwardly performed, that I've ever come across: "I can tell you're big-city bound/By the way you came off the Greyhound... /I could dress you up and then we could live it down/You could be surrounded by luxury... /All you have to do is let me take you home..." I don't really know which part of Allen's audience this is meant to entertain, inform, or amuse, but one thing is sure: Manhattan's notorious Port Authority Bus Terminal has found its anthem.

**A**LLEN'S usual fine songwriting form is more evident on several other selections, including the delightful *Pass This Time*, the galvanic *Fly Away* (released as a single with *Simon*), and the poignant *When This Love Affair Is Over*. In performance his usual dash and spirit are evident throughout the album. Peter Allen may be getting perilously close to insisting that he is one of the only true Free Spirits left, but he is still a very gifted entertainer. —Peter Reilly

**PETER ALLEN:** *Bi-Coastal*. Peter Allen (vocals, keyboards); instrumental accompaniment. *Fly Away*; *One Step over the Borderline*; *Bi-Coastal*; *I Don't Go Shopping*; *Hit in the Heart*; *I Could Really Show You Around*; *Somebody's Angel*; *Simon*; *Pass This Time*; *When This Love Affair Is Over*. A&M SP-4825 \$7.98, © CS-4825 \$7.98, © 8T-4825 \$7.98.

cas sings it very effectively against the beat with winning charm. A nice record. J.C.

**DON McLEAN:** *Chain Lightning* (see Best of the Month, page 68)

**MARIA MULDAUR:** *Gospel Nights*. Maria Muldaur, the Chambers Brothers, the Burns Sisters (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Brothers and Sisters*; *My Jesus Is All*; *Bright Morning Star*; *Daniel Prayed*; *Just Like an Eagle*; and seven others. TAKOMA TAK 7084 \$7.98.

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

Maria Muldaur's roots may be in old records rather than in field hollers, mountain picking, or honky-tonk whining, but, as Ry Cooder has argued convincingly in these pages, that's legitimate for musicians of a certain age. Here she has a secular gospel album with some of the backing by a bar band—but even so, it's not as secular as Willie Nelson's "The Troublemaker." Some of the backing also has that country-gospel restraint, and some is by the Chambers Brothers. Some of it is black gospel and some white, if you care to make such distinctions; Maria sounds sincere and authentic enough in any case—so sincere and authentic that this release may not be very commercial. Recorded live at McCabe's Guitar Shop in Santa Monica, it did manage to rock the crowd there a few times. Muldaur sings with less ornamentation than usual but with a lot of verve and energy. I won't play this every day, but I'm glad I've got it. N.C.

**THE OUTLAWS:** *Ghost Riders*. The Outlaws (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Sunshine*; *Angels Hide*; *White Horses*; *Devil's Road*; and four others. ARISTA AL 9542 \$8.98, © ACT 9542 \$8.98, © A8T 9542 \$8.98.

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

The Outlaws strike me as primarily a guitar band, and if you believe that that is *the* instrument in rock, this album is a good place to do some exploring. Hughie Thomasson and Billy Jones trade leads back and forth and come up with a wide variety of effects and textures. Some of the songs aren't bad either; I don't think their version of the classic *Ghost Riders in the Sky* will challenge Vaughan Monroe or Johnny Cash, but the guitars in the introduction are quite impressive. The best of the rest is *Angels Hide*, written by Thomasson. Some of it, of course, is mere heavy-metal thunder, but the good parts are a substantial improvement over the Outlaws' last outing. N.C.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**DOLLY PARTON:** *9 to 5 and Odd Jobs*. Dolly Parton (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *9 to 5*; *Hush-a-bye Hard Times*; *House of the Rising Sun*; *Deportee*; and six others. RCA AHL1-3852 \$7.98, © AHK1-3852 \$7.98, © AHS1-3852 \$7.98.

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

The stuff that made Dolly special is back. She has taken her *9 to 5*, which she wrote



for the movie of the same name, as a sort of overture and added an excellent selection of other songs old and new, her own and other peoples', and the result is a fine theme album on the subject of having to work for a living. It is a theme that involves Dolly emotionally, and that makes an important difference—to me, anyway—between this and her last few pop albums. In addition to being all surface, most of Dolly's recent hits have been trivialized by cute or smart-ass arrangements. This one is a bit overproduced in spots, and I think that Dolly (trying too hard?) oversings a couple of numbers, but the caring is there, and it gives purpose to the lovely, lilting tones she makes. Her reading of Woody Guthrie's *Deportee* is near-revisionist and very moving. And I was gratified to find Mike Settle's *But You Know I Love You* among the songs. Kenny Rogers and the First Edition recorded it about ten years ago, and it's been in my head ever since. Almost every song here is exemplary, and the album should appeal to workers on both sides of the collar-color barrier. It even appeals to people like me who *play* for a living. *N.C.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**LOU RAWLS:** *Shades of Blue*. Lou Rawls (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Cottage for Sale; Did You Ever Love a Woman; Be Anything (But Be Mine); You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'*; and four others. PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL JZ 36774 \$7.98, © JZT 36774 \$7.98, © JZA 36774 \$7.98.

Performance: **Oozing blue stuff**

Recording: **Very good**

Although it was almost twenty years ago, I still recall the first time I heard a Capitol album entitled "Stormy Monday" and how impressed I was with this new singer, Lou Rawls, and the way he delivered some familiar blues material associated with Bessie Smith, Big Bill Broonzy, and Leroy Carr. Before coming up front on that release with the Les McCann Trio, Rawls had spent time with the Pilgrim Travelers, a gospel group that also included Sam Cooke, laying a solid foundation for a career that is now documented by nearly fifty albums.

I mention all this because the tone of Rawls' new album, "Shades of Blue," reminds me of "Stormy Monday." The voice has matured, of course, and the style has crystallized, but the soul and regard for tradition are intact. This is reflected not only in the music, but also in the photos that adorn the album sleeve: Rawls photographed by and with James Van Der Zee, a legendary black photographer. Then too, the album is produced by Joel Dorn, a man well versed in the rich history of black music. But before you begin to think that this is some sort of documentary, let me assure you that it is simply a well-thought-out, expertly performed trek through music by Jimmy Reed, Phil Spector, Willie Dixon, and others whose sounds Rawls has absorbed over the years. There is also a rap of the kind Rawls pioneered and perfected long before Isaac Hayes dipped his vocal chords in the same honey jar. Do I love this album? You bet. *C.A.*

(Continued overleaf)

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Olympic Records

JUST when I was feeling completely fed up with cockles and mussels, convinced that another collection of "favorite Irish tunes" was the last thing I needed, along came the Guinness Choir on a beguiling Olympic release and I began to pine for Dublin, a city I have never visited. Probably nobody in all of Ireland can brew up a program of that country's music better than the members of this choir, which was founded in 1951 at, of all places, the Guinness Brewery. They are a remarkably well-drilled group, which perhaps comes from their having started out by giving performances of Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas; it must surely have helped develop the crisp precision that is their hallmark. Something else they have going for them is the skill of Arthur Wilkinson, who arranges all their material enchantingly and conducts the eighteen songs on this program with great flair. Whether it's *The Derry Air* as a quietly hummed interlude, the fleet-footed sprightliness of *Leprechaun*, the dreamy treatment of the ever-endearing *I Know Where I'm Going*, or the rousing one, at the end, of the apparently

imperishable *Lilliburlero*, nothing this outfit performs can possibly be confused with the blathery banalities that presume to pass for music in less inspired assemblages of similar material. The choir is said to excel also in music of Bach, Haydn, Rossini, Balfe, and Britten. How about a return engagement featuring some classics?

—Paul Kresh

**THE GUINNESS CHOIR:** *In Dublin's Fair City*. The Guinness Choir (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Cockles and Mussels/Father O'Flynn; I Know Where I'm Going; The Star of the County Down/Trottin' to the Fair/Bonnie Wee Mare; Believe Me if All Those Endearing Young Charms; The Real Old Mountain Dew; I Have a Bonnet Trimmed with Blue; The Girl I Left Behind Me; The Irish Washerwoman; The Derry Air; The Flight of the Earls; The Last Rose of Summer; Leprechaun; Down by the Sally Gardens/She Moved Through the Fair; Lilliburlero*. OLYMPIC 6169 \$5.98.

**REO SPEEDWAGON:** *Hi Infidelity*. REO Speedwagon (vocals and instrumentals). *Don't Let Him Go; Tough Guys; Shakin' It Loose; Keep On Loving You; Take It on the Run*; and five others. EPIC FE 36844 \$8.98, © FET 36844 \$8.98, © FEA 36844 \$8.98.

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

REO Speedwagon is the kind of standard touring band that can fill a hall in Moline, Illinois, on Saturday night and thrill the teenage citizenry. They've been at it for quite some time, and, though they're often a bit sleazy and infantile, they still know how to let loose with no-nonsense rock-and-roll. Oddly enough, the lyrics are better than

you'd expect from a band of this type. *I Wish You Were There* and *Out of Season* are applaudable attempts to rise above the average. *Tough Guys* is a teenybopper teaser in which the band really blasts out; it's a healthy reminder that the basic function of rock is to excite. I only wish they'd found a melody to match the lyrics on *Keep On Loving You*: "You should have known by the tone of my voice/But you didn't listen/You played dead but you never bled/Instead you laid still in the grass/All coiled up and hissin'." Not bad, huh? J.V.

**RHYZE:** *Just How Sweet Is Your Love*. Rhyze (vocals and instrumentals); vocal accompaniment. *Free; Home; I Found Love in You; Singing and Dancing*; and three oth-



ers. SAM LP 703 \$7.98, © 703-C \$7.98, © 703-8 \$7.98.

Performance: **Too sweet**  
Recording: **Okay**

Two cuts here show that one of disco's more successful engineers, Jim Burgess, is still alive and well. The seven singing instrumentalists called Rhyze put forth a mellow sound with the safe, close harmonies you expect of pop these days. Their orchestrations are decidedly retro: lots of big-band horns and more than a touch of swing. But on *Free* and *Do Your Dance* mixer Burgess effectively surrounds their sound with tasteful beat-focused productions. The beat also wins out over the strings on the album's best song, the joy-filled *Relax and Enjoy*. But be warned: there's barely a glimmer of surprise in this overly sweet album. *J.C.*

**JOHNNY RIVERS: Borrowed Time.** Johnny Rivers (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *China; Borrowed Time; Dreamer; Living Alone; Give It Up for Love*; and five others. RSO RS-1-3082 \$7.98, © CT-1-3082 \$7.98.

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

Johnny Rivers has sailed blithely on for fifteen years without changing much, though he does pull a surprise now and then (I fondly remember his update of *Rockin' Pneumonia and the Boogie Woogie Flu* in 1972). A sturdy vocalist with a rather limited range, Rivers still has a distinctive New Orleans accent he's never entirely lost. What keeps him in business is his choice of material; from *Memphis* in 1965 to *Slow Dancin'* in 1979, he's always shown a great deal of common sense about what songs to sing. There have been times, though, when the sailing was a little too blithe, and this is one of them. The material is adequate, but nothing grabs you. *Dreamer* by Moon Martin and *Living Alone* by Phil Everly are the two best songs and performances, but both are minor items that can neither carry nor validate the album. Rivers seems to be waiting for something to happen. Let's hope something will next time. *J.V.*

**THE ROMANTICS: National Breakout.** The Romantics (vocals and instrumentals). *Tomboy; Poor Little Rich Girl; Stone Pony; National Breakout; A Night Like This*; and six others. NEMPEROR JZ 36881 \$7.98. © JZT 36881 \$7.98.

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

What happens when a cliché meets a bro-mide? Or, to put it another way, what happens when a combo from Detroit takes its inspiration from the 1960s British Invasion? Usually you get a third-generation heavy-metal band trying to sound British, but in the case of the Romantics what you get is—dare I say it?—youthful vigor and charm. There's absolutely nothing original about the Romantics, but they are a convincing, lean, and muscular dance band, second-rate in musical conception but first-rate in execution. They don't have any ideas but they do have the chops, and their album is therefore a lot of fun. *J.V.*

(Continued on page 87)

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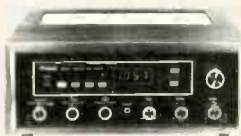
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Lynn Goldsmith

## Rundgren Faces the Beatles

**A**LTHOUGH Todd Rundgren's focus is partly on video these days, he is still active as a musician. "Deface the Music," Rundgren's latest album as generalissimo of Utopia, is a highly controversial tribute to the Beatles. That it was released shortly before the death of John Lennon is a sadly ironic coincidence.

The album is an audacious and affectionate memorial that pays due homage to the Fab Four but is not so sentimental as to ignore their occasional musical slips and personal foibles. Moreover, it manages to focus Rundgren's own usually scattered talents as writer, performer, and producer into a coherent, laser-bright display. Only a musician of Rundgren's caliber could have created an album so generous, accurate, and conclusive in its re-evaluation of the Beatles' career—or would have had the right to try.

Of course there are several satiric digs at the group on the album, but even a loyal fan would have to admit that there were times

when Paul sang slightly flat, that George's guitar leads tended to be cautious and parochial, that John's alternating moods of fear and hostility eventually degenerated into virtual paranoia, or that Ringo's playing had a pretty limited range, for all its undoubted effectiveness.

But the main kick of the album is the wonderful way that Rundgren has captured the sound and spirit of the Beatles from 1963 to 1967. His songs are not simple, one-to-one parodies of specific Beatles songs, like those by Neil Innes on the satire album "The Rutles." Rundgren himself explains that he and the group intended "to be funny but it didn't turn out that way. Curious, but not funny. We didn't listen to old Beatles records; we avoided them. It's just a bit of melancholy. The songs were easy to write. It's all subconscious, ingrained in your mind."

Wordsworth said that poetry "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity." Rundgren's recollections begin with *I*

*Just Want to Touch You*, a combination of *From Me to You* and *I Want to Hold Your Hand* from around 1963. The next cut, *Crystal Ball*, mixes *Can't Buy Me Love* with *I'll Cry Instead*. The third, *Where Does the World Go to Hide*, is a real gem because it so beautifully recalls the period in 1964-1965 when Lennon and McCartney were farming material out to other artists: Rundgren here re-creates the Peter and Gordon sound of *World Without Love*.

As the album progresses, it traces the development of both the Beatles' sophisticated technique and their emotional defenses against a fame they couldn't foresee and were unprepared to handle. *Hoi Poloi* (sic), based on *Penny Lane* structurally, mocks the British establishment's swooning acceptance of the Beatles. *Feel Too Good* (a blend of *Fixing a Hole* and *Getting Better*) and *Always Late* (a ragout of *When I'm 64* and *Ob-la-di, Ob-la-da*) are two songs about jerks. It's worth noting that Rundgren's lyrics give them a decidedly American context. In the Beatles songs the fool is rather endearing (the British love eccentrics), but in American terms a loser is just a loser.

*All Smiles* is a pastiche of several Beatles-period McCartney ballads, and it deftly parodies Paul's reedy, plaintive attempts to convince listeners that he has written something substantial when he really hasn't. Besides an extended coda recalling *Michelle*, which is famous because of its melody although the lyrics are pap, there are references to *Here, There and Everywhere*, a little-remembered tune of exquisite craft both melodically and lyrically, and the typically inconsequential *And I Love Her*.

Rundgren's survey sensibly cuts off around 1967, when the Beatles had yielded up "Sgt. Pepper" and begun their decline with the soundtrack of *Magical Mystery Tour*. They had run out of new things to say and were repeating themselves, a point driven home by Rundgren's finale, *Everybody Else Is Wrong*, which juxtaposes the too similar *A Day in the Life* and *I Am the Walrus*.

**T**HE critical and popular brouhaha over Rundgren's irreverence demonstrates anew that, even after all these years, we still expect too much from the Beatles. We didn't believe John when he said, "The dream is over"; for some of us it never died, and only John's death truly convinced us the group would never reform. But the Beatles' human limitations and failings cannot invalidate their musical legacy. Todd Rundgren and Utopia have fondly but clear-sightedly reminded us of that legacy, and "Deface the Music" leaves the Beatles still lovable, warts and all. —Joel Vance

**UTOPIA: Deface the Music.** Utopia (vocals and instrumentals). *I Just Want to Touch You; Where Does the World Go to Hide; Silly Boy; Alone; That's Not Right; Take It Home; Hoi Poloi; Life Goes On; Feel Too Good; Always Late; All Smiles; Everybody Else Is Wrong.* BEARSVILLE BRK 3487 \$7.98. © M5 3487 \$7.98, © M8 3487 \$7.98.



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**DEE DEE SHARP:** *Dee Dee*. Dee Dee Sharp (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Breaking and Entering*; *Let's Get This Party Started*; *I Love You Anyway*; *Easy Money*; and four others. PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL JZ 36370 \$7.98, © JCT 36370 \$7.98, © JZA 36370 \$7.98.

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

The cover of this album is amusingly deceptive, for there sits Dee Dee Sharp, looking sedate in a blouse and tweedy jacket of the sort that might fit well into a business office. No frills for her, no flash. But beware—there's a hint of fire in her eyes. And then there's that voice blasting out on the opening track, *Breaking and Entering*. She gets down, shouts out, sings up a storm in the best funky manner. Dee Dee Sharp possesses some pretty stunning vocal equipment. What's more, she's one of the most underrated soul singers around, capable of moving from the gutsy, almost caterwauling cadences of *Let's Get This Party Started* to the pensive balladry of *Invitation*—not the standard of that name but an intensely sensuous exploration of flirtation. And if my ears do not deceive me, that's Jerry Butler joining her for a rousing rendition of *Everyday Affair*, though this is not clearly indicated in the credits. Many of these songs lack staying power, but Dee Dee works them for all they're worth, infusing them with real excitement. This record certainly ought to get her some of the recognition she deserves. *P.G.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**ROD STEWART:** *Foolish Behaviour*. Rod Stewart (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Better Off Dead*; *Foolish Behaviour*; *My Girl*; *Passion*; *Somebody Special*; and five others. WARNER BROS. 11S 3485 \$8.98, © WS 3485 \$8.98, © W8 3485 \$8.98.

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

Rowdy Rod's got a good one here. It has recurrently interesting lyrics, engaging tunes, and some sidemen who put on a clinic in playing rock with imagination and zest. Stewart has become the kind of craftsman who makes radio bearable. He and some of his backers wrote the songs, several of which are quite graceful hard rockers. The second side doesn't have quite as much zing as the first—which ends with my favorite, *Oh God, I Wish I Was Home Tonight*—but then few things have lately. *N.C.*





RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**TAVARES:** *Love Uprising*. Tavares (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Only One I Need for Love*; *Hot Love*; *Do You Believe in Love*; *She Can Wait Forever*; *In This Lovely World*; *Life Time of Love*; and five others. CAPITOL ST-12117 \$7.98, © 4XT-12117 \$7.98, © 8XT-12117 \$7.98.

Performance: **Totally likable**  
Recording: **Fine**

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of smooth, cool, tightly harmonized vocals and catchy funk-inspired rhythms, and they haven't changed that combination in their newest album (their tenth). But "Love Uprising" is also filled with easy-listening charm and enriched by Benjamin Wright Jr.'s productions. The orchestral settings here are bigger, more ambitious, and more interesting than those of Tavares' other recent albums.

There is one song here—a soul ballad called *Loneliness*—that ranks with the best stuff the group has ever recorded. The beautiful melody and truly fresh, staggered vocal back-ups are irresistible. *Knock the Wall Down*, complete with a big horn section and a tripping, happy beat, and a "praise the Lord, clap your hands" delight called *Do You Believe in Love* are two more of my favorites. But the whole album is a pleasure to listen to, one of the most enjoyable I've heard lately. *J.C.*

**RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**GEORGE THOROGOOD AND THE DESTROYERS:** *More*. George Thorogood (guitar, vocals); the Destroyers (instrumentals). *I'm Wanted; Kids from Philly; One Way Ticket; Bottom of the Sea; Night Time*; and five others. **ROUNDER 3045 \$7.98.**

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

For white kids, there are really only two ways to approach the blues. The first is the

Eric Clapton/Paul Butterfield purist route, which entails practicing fifteen hours a day, developing a drug habit, and convincing yourself that you are really a seventy-five-year-old black sharecropper from Mississippi. This is an honorable tradition, and some very fine music has come from it, but it probably isn't much fun as a life style. The second approach is to just get out there and bash, and authentically be damned, which is what George Thorogood does. His singing is as white as Moby Dick, there are innumerable guitarists who can cut him technically, and "existentially" he's about as "inside" the blues as Al Martino. But he's terrific fun, so who cares?

Thorogood's new album is, of course, a delight. It contains no surprises, no innovations, and should not be taken seriously on any level. Particularly noteworthy: the old Strangeloves' hit *Night Time*, which makes the punk connection particularly explicit, and Slim Harpo's sublime *Tip On In* (better known as *Scratch My Back* played sideways). Thorogood will probably be making music like this until he's too old to hold his guitar, and I say more power to him. *S.S.*

**WARREN ZEVON:** *Stand in the Fire* (see **Best of the Month**, page 70)

**COLLECTION**

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**BLUES DELUXE.** Muddy Waters: *Clouds in My Heart*. Koko Taylor: *Hey Bartender*.

Willie Dixon: *Wang Dang Doodle*. Lonnie Brooks: *Sweet Home Chicago*. Son Seals: *Don't Throw Your Love on Me So Strong*. Mighty Joe Young: *Need a Friend*. **XRT 9301 \$5.98** (from Alligator Records, P.O. Box 60234, Chicago, Ill. 60660).

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

These are live recordings from a Chicago summer festival featuring some of the city's most notable blues people—and one titan—in whom the town takes an understandable pride. Muddy Waters, one of the few remaining exponents of the Delta-area Southern tradition of blues singing from the 1920s, is beyond comparison. He is sensual, commonsensical, and regal. Waters' home base since the 1940s has been Chicago; he absorbed from and contributed much to the South Side blues style which the other five performers represent so well.

Mighty Joe Young's *Need a Friend* ("Talk about the blues, I got 'em/Nothin' in my pockets but the bottom") is delightful. Koko Taylor has a fine time—and sees that everyone else does too—with *Hey Bartender*, and Son Seals gives a fine reading to Albert King's *Don't Throw Your Love on Me So Strong*. Willie Dixon, better known as a songwriter for many of the Chicago blues greats of the 1950s and 1960s, performs his own *Wang Dang Doodle*, originally cut by Howlin' Wolf. Lonnie Brooks offers a proud and muscular version of *Sweet Home Chicago*. This is a most enjoyable collection. *J.V.*

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# JAZZ



**HENRY "RED" ALLEN & COLEMAN HAWKINS—1933.** Henry "Red" Allen (trumpet); Coleman Hawkins (tenor saxophone); Dicky Wells, J. C. Higginbotham (trombone); Russell Procope, Benny Carter, Chu Berry, Hilton Jefferson (reeds); Wayman Carver (flute); Lawrence Lucie, Bernard Addison (guitar); John Kirby (bass); Big Sid Catlett (drums); other musicians. *Someday, Sweetheart; How Come You Do Me Like You Do?; Heartbreak Blues; Jamaica Shout; Hush My Mouth (If I Ain't Goin' South); Dark Clouds; My Galveston Gal; Ain'tcha Got Music?;* and seven others. SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION © R022 \$8.98 (plus \$1.89 handling charge from Smithsonian Customer Service, P.O. Box 10230, Des Moines, Iowa 50336).

Performance: **Classic jazz**  
Recording: **Fine mono transfers**

Trumpeter Henry Allen and tenor saxophonist Coleman Hawkins were never partners as such, but they did work together on a number of occasions, and, because they were both on the same wavelength and both extraordinarily musical, those occasions tended to yield some memorable moments. Fifteen of their recordings together have now been gathered by the Smithsonian Institution into an album that no true lover of the jazz tradition should be without.

All the recordings are from 1933, and the combined personnel list reads like a *Who's Who* of swing's earliest days, when jazz men followed Pied Piper Louis Armstrong into phase two. Like Armstrong, Henry "Red" Allen was from New Orleans, but he had his own distinct style of playing (though his singing was strictly from the Armstrong mold). It is hard to argue with those who contend that, but for Armstrong, Allen would have been the trumpet king; lacking his esteemed colleague's flair for showmanship, however, Allen would never have become the international pop star Armstrong was. In any case, Allen's clear, crisp tone, biting attack, and melodic inventions here are of the highest quality.

Hawkins, in contrast, often reached far beyond the borders of jazz. His historic recording of *Body and Soul*, made in 1939, won him a great new following as well as renewed respect from the jazz community, and his rhapsodic recordings with strings were popular FM fare in the Fifties and Sixties. I find it hard to pick favorites in this set, but I have always particularly enjoyed flutist Wayman Carver's work on a series of sides produced for British Decca by band-leader/bassist Spike Hughes (the notes erroneously attribute production to John Hammond), and two of these, *Sweet Sue, Just You* and *How Come You Do Me Like You Do?*, had both Allen and Hawkins in

the band, so those tracks have been included here.

My only complaint about this album is that the discographical information is incomplete and poorly laid out, but what a treat the music is for the ears! *C.A.*

**RUBY BRAFF: With the Ed Bickert Trio.** Ruby Braff (cornet); Ed Bickert (guitar); Don Thompson (bass); Terry Clarke (drums). *True Love; After Awhile; My Funny Valentine; This Year's Kisses; The Song Is Ended/When I Fall in Love;* and four others. SACKVILLE 3022 \$8.98 (from Coda Publications, Dept. B, Box 87, Station J, Toronto, Ontario M4J 4X8, Canada).

Performance: **Subtle, serene swing**  
Recording: **Very good**

If you find solace in the mellifluous horn of Ruby Braff and like gentle jazz with light swing and a lot of pretty embroidery, then this is the perfect album for you. I am not familiar with guitarist Ed Bickert and the two men who complete his trio, but I assume they are Canadians, and while what they have to say is as familiar as the repertoire of ballads through which they here express themselves, their statements are as suitable as back-up for Braff as they are eloquent. *C.A.*

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**CHICK COREA/GARY BURTON: In Concert, Zürich, October 28, 1979.** Chick Corea (piano); Gary Burton (vibraphone). *Señor Mouse; Bud Powell; Crystal Silence; Tweak; Mirror, Mirror; Love Castle;* and four others. ECM ECM-2-1182 (two discs) \$13.98, © 2E5-1182 \$14.98.

Performance: **Delicious duets**  
Recording: **Fine remote**

Pianist Chick Corea and vibraphonist Gary Burton have enjoyed long and successful recording careers, but they have rarely achieved as individuals the heights to which they soar as a team. Their previous duet albums, "Crystal Silence" (ECM-1-1024) and "Duet" (ECM-1-1140), are hard discs to follow, but this new release of concert performances is on the same level. It captures splendidly the lyrical interplay that made the earlier albums so outstanding (it also duplicates five titles, but the interpretations are fresh). If you have not heard Corea and Burton together before, you owe it to yourself to hear this album. If you have heard them, you need no advice from me. This music is boppish, bouncy, beautiful, at times even a bit Balinese—all qualities that earn it my resounding *Bravo!* *C.A.*

**ART FARMER: The Art Farmer Quintet at Boomers.** Art Farmer (flugelhorn); Clifford Jordan (tenor saxophone); Cedar Walton (piano); Sam Jones (bass); Billy Higgins (drums). *Barbados; 'Round About Midnight; I Remember Clifford; Will You Still Be Mine?* INNER CITY IC 6024 \$7.98.

Performance: **Informal but informative**  
Recording: **Okay, considering**

Boomer's no longer exists, but when this Art Farmer release was recorded there in spring 1976 by the Japanese East Wind crew, it was a hot little Greenwich Village club that braved the disco storm and pre-

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## Legend of Jesse James

Not to be Faulknerian about it, but my grandfather's uncle, I believe it was, had a narrow escape from Jesse James and a dozen or so of Quantrill's Raiders one time in western Kentucky. He had been bad-mouthing them and they'd heard about it, and when he met the horsemen on the road they recognized him though he didn't recognize them. They asked him to ride along—to show them, they said, where a third party lived. After a few miles, they met a friend of his (my grandfather's uncle's, that is) who managed, by hand signals, to tell him to get the hell out of there, and at the next opportunity he spurred his horse off into the woods.

A lot of families in the West and Midwest probably have similar stories. Although my own personal favorite outlaw was Sam Bass (because he was literary; he used to write funny letters to the editors of Texas papers, taunting the law for not

catching him), Jesse James is clearly the people's choice among your legendary bad men. Now A&M has chosen to tell his story again, in song, for its first "country" album. It isn't *really* a country album, despite the presence of Johnny Cash, Emmylou Harris, and Charlie Daniels and despite Levon Helm's Southern accent. It is a rock album designed to appeal to urban cowboys, most of whom would, as Larry L. King has said, die of exposure if they were outdoors longer than two hours.

Still, it isn't *too* bad. Oh, the story may be a bit familiar, coming this soon after *The Long Riders*. And it has that western-movie habit of hiring a great cast to make up for a mediocre script. Harris, the outstanding voice here, plays the cousin Jesse married, and she has a couple of decent songs to sing. Daniels is impressive as Cole Younger because he has such a flair for narrative, and Helm (Jesse) and Cash (brother Frank) manage to elevate the mundane stuff they have to sing, which serves the story line more than it serves music.

The album needs one really good piece of music to tie it together, or maybe a recurring instrumental theme like *Pictures at an Exhibition* (they should have asked John Williams to write one). As it is, you have to want the story (or be content with the stars) more than you want real songs. Then again, it wouldn't go too badly in an urban cowboy's apartment, the sound bouncing now off a Bloomingdale's Stetson, now off a Cuisinart.

—Noel Coppage

**THE LEGEND OF JESSE JAMES.** Levon Helm, Johnny Cash, Charlie Daniels, Emmylou Harris, Albert Lee (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Quantrill's Guerillas; Northfield—the Plan; High Walls; One More Snot; Six Gun Shooting; Help Him, Jesus; Riding with Jesse James; Northfield—the Disaster; Heaven Ain't Ready for You Yet; Wish We Were Back in Missouri; Have You Heard the News?; Hunt Them Down; Ride of the Redlegs; The Old Clay County; The Death of Me.* A&M SP-3718 \$8.98, © CS-3718 \$8.98, ® 8T-3718 \$8.98.

presented the music of men who had been popular with youthful audiences some fifteen to twenty years earlier. That is not to say that the music of this group did not still fire the imagination of young listeners in the mid-Seventies, only that the winds of popularity had largely shifted away from jazz at the time; now, fortunately, jazz seems once again to have caught the interest of a receptive younger generation.

At Boomer's, what is here labeled the Art Farmer Quintet was billed as Boomer's All Stars, which is an accurate name, for each of the players is indeed a star. As Clifford Jordan told annotator Andrew Sussman, this was an impromptu session where even the program was chosen on the spot. That could have been calamitous with less-experienced players, but these men knew what they were doing, and you owe it to yourself to hear these forty-one minutes that must

have sent tingles of joy through the Boomer's crowd that night almost five years ago.

C.A.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**RICKY FORD: *Flying Colors*.** Ricky Ford (tenor saxophone); John Hicks (piano); Walter Booker (bass); Jimmy Cobb (drums). *Jordanian Walk; Take the Coltrane; Olympic Glaze; Chelsea Bridge;* and three others. MUSE MR 5227 \$6.98.

Performance: **Flying Ford**  
Recording: **Very good**

"Flying Colors" is precisely what Ricky Ford's tightly knit quartet comes through with here. Although this is essentially what musicians refer to as a "blowing date"—a straightforward, loosely arranged tenor/rhythm session—the rapport between Ford

and his men is sufficiently strong to mask any casualness. Ford has yet to develop the strong character of the more outstanding individuals of jazz, but I have no doubt that he will. In the meantime, we can enjoy the true jazz spirit and melodic invention with which he feeds his surging horn, the sensitivity with which he approaches such gentle material as Billy Strayhorn's *Chelsea Bridge*, and the originality that shines through his compositions.

C.A.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**CHICO FREEMAN: *Peaceful Heart, Gentle Spirit*.** Chico Freeman (flutes, clarinets, soprano and tenor saxophone); James Newton (flute); Jay Hoggard (vibraphone); Kenny Kirkland (piano); John Koening (cello); Buster Williams (bass); Billy Hart (drums); Paulinho da Costa, Efrain Toro (percussion). *Freedom Swing Song; Morning Prayer; Look Up;* and two others. CONTEMPORARY 14005 \$7.98.

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

In my past praise of Chico Freeman, I don't believe I have left a single superlative unused, and I hate to have to repeat myself, so let me just say that his new Contemporary release is exquisite. If that does not suffice for you, perhaps I should add that "Peaceful Heart, Gentle Spirit" embodies all that is vital to the making of jazz. This is music of substance, an eclectic blend of the very finest ingredients that ought to satisfy a wide range of tastes. Rhythmic excitement, melodic beauty, stunningly shaded orchestral colorations, whimsy, and deep emotion are just some of the experiences awaiting you in the work of Chico Freeman, clearly my choice as the most valuable player of 1981.

C.A.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**HELEN HUMES.** Helen Humes (vocals); Connie Berry (piano); Charlie Howard (guitar); Al Autry (bass). *Summertime; More Than You Know; Come Rain or Come Shine; Ain't Misbehavin'; Embraceable You;* and five others. AUDIOPHILE AP 107 \$7.98.

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

Helen Humes is one of the great, triumphant survivors in the world of jazz/r-&-b singers. She's been around for more than forty years but sounds as startlingly good today as she did in 1938 when she was sharing the vocals with Jimmy Rushing in the old Count Basie Band. This release features her in such lovelies as *Embraceable You*, the wonderful old Harold Arlen *Come Rain or Come Shine*, and a vigorous *Honeysuckle Rose*. Almost any night of the week you can flip on the tube and hear young and not-so-young singers (Aretha Franklin and Della Reese among them) who have been influenced by Helen Humes' style. Here's your chance to hear the real thing. Don't miss it.

P.R.

**THE NUMA BAND.** Russ Iverson (trumpet, flugelhorn); Jack Baron (soprano and tenor saxophone, flute); Bob Sutter (keyboards); Ernie Denov (guitar); Dave Lang



(drums); Mitch Hennes (bass); Geraldo De Olivera (percussion). *J.T.'s Hiccups; Doots' New Toots; El Presidente #2; Doin' It Again and Again*; and three others. OVA-TION ● OV 1760 \$7.98.

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

The Numa Band is an energetic jazz septet with plenty of enthusiasm. Doubtless you can hear their type of music anywhere in the country, even in the suburbs, but they go at it with unusual heartiness. The writing and arrangements are rather pedestrian—at times they sound almost like the Average White Band playing *Pick Up the Pieces*—but each soloist leaps into his spot with glee. The best track is a blues ballad, *Doin' It Again and Again*, with some fluent guitar by Ernie Denov and effectively moody organ chords by Bob Sutter.

Now for the sound, since the liner notes make such a point of it: the session was live, with no overdubbing, and the engineers used a stereo digital recorder for the tape, which was transferred directly to disc with no editing. The sound is excellent, but the present fascination—especially of small labels—with recording techniques reminds me of the early days of "hi-fi" when labels great and small eagerly rushed out any product to demonstrate their prowess in the studio. Super sound means nothing if what is recorded is ordinary. *J.V.*

**BUCKY AND JOHN JR. PIZZARELLI:** 2 X 7 = *Pizzarelli*. Bucky Pizzarelli, John Pizzarelli Jr. (guitars). *Love for Sale; Pretty Women; Nuages; Sutton Mutton; Undecided; This Nearly Was Mine*; and six others. STASH ST 207 \$7.98.

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

Bucky Pizzarelli and his son John combine forces here for a series of duets on seven-string guitars. Technically it's just fine; Bucky is a superb player and John is obviously headed for the big time. Musically, in the matter of arrangements and attack, the album turns out to be something of a bore. Porter's *Love for Sale* barely survives a shower of pyrotechnics, and Rodgers and Hammerstein's *This Nearly Was Mine* nearly isn't in its rapid runthrough. Where it all does work beautifully, however, is in Django Reinhardt's *Nuages*, a really lovely piece written with true jazz spirit and feeling—and performed that way. Look, I know that good jazz artists cannot be expected to provide literal renderings of any score, but the Pizzarellis' performance of *All Through the Night* only gets up to about 10 p.m. C'mon, fellas, give us squares a break.

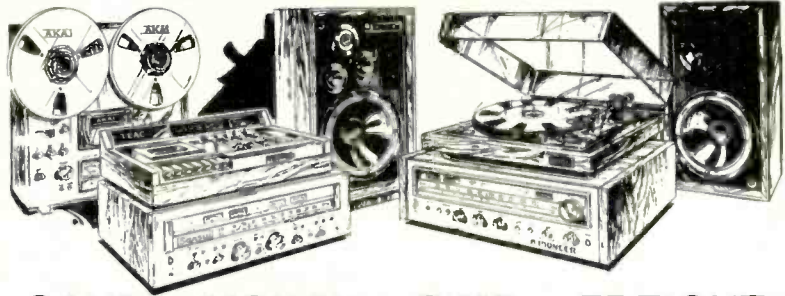
*P.R.*

**PREVIN: A Different Kind of Blues.** André Previn (piano); Itzhak Perlman (violin); Shelly Manne (drums); Red Mitchell (bass); Jim Hall (guitar). *Look at Him Go; Little Face; Who Reads Reviews; Night Thoughts; Chocolate Apricot*; and three others. ANGEL ● DS-37780 \$10.98.

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

André Previn is one of the most versatile musicians on the current scene, and Itzhak Perlman is a justly celebrated violinist and

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Casablanca

Post-disco: D.C. LaRue

THE new, post-disco style of D. C. LaRue on "Star, Baby," his latest Casablanca album, sounds a lot like that of Mick Jagger, of all people. This is not such a giant step musically for the man who wrote *On Your Knees* for Grace Jones, but it is light years removed from the disco milieu that originally nurtured him. LaRue's aggressive, theatrical, talk-a-song delivery in *Meter Men*, *Boys Can't Fake It*, and most of the other tracks here is as arrogant as it

would be coming from Jagger or any of his New Wave imitators. The rhythmically attractive settings, however, harken back to the pure, mindless fun of disco. It's a remarkable sort of fusion to attempt, and when it works the results are stunning.

It certainly works in the title song, for instance, where LaRue gives an ironic twist to the cliché of the lonely star. He seems to be saying that stardom is the best cure for a broken heart, not its cause, though the lyrics are ambiguous enough to make other interpretations possible. The lyrics of *So Much for L.A.* also show LaRue's serious side: "I've been to parties at Chasin's/You know, I find it a drag/And if you go dancing at Studio One/They all think you're a fag... /So much for L.A." Lines like that don't come along every day.

FOR all their thoughtfulness, *Star, Baby* and *So Much for L.A.* are fun songs, the latter especially being a happy, dance-energized production. *Juke Box* is even dancier, with a beautifully developed disco arrangement underpinning its strong, personal observations of dance-hall Romeos and girls with hennaed hair and fishnet stockings.

Vocal resemblance aside, "Star, Baby" is the work of a thoroughly individual performer. I don't know where D. C. LaRue's sudden surge of conviction came from, but I think we may have another major talent in our midst. —Irv Cohn

D. C. LARUE: *Star, Baby*. D. C. LaRue (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Boys Can't Fake It*; *Meter Men*; *She's About a Mover*; *Star, Baby*; *Reactor #2*; *So Much for L.A.*; *Juke Box*; *Into the Ozone*. CASABLANCA NBLP 7247 \$7.98, © NBL5 7247 \$7.98, © NBL8 7247 \$7.98.

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a delightful personality. Just for insurance on this venture, they have with them three of the most expert jazz players in the world. Yet Previn's fully composed jazz pieces (written at Perlman's behest), while extremely agreeable at inspired moments, are on the whole fairly synthetic. Perlman's big moment occurs in *Little Face*; it's a little face smeared with syrup, to which the violinist adds a dollop of *Schlag!* Then there's *Chocolate Apricot* and *A Different Kind of Blues*, the sort of pieces that Previn might have concocted, when he was a Hollywood composer in another life, for the story of a boy who gives up the fiddle for the fight ring. And so it goes: a little boogie here, a little blues there, a little night music, a little movie music, a lot of fun—or so the notes claim—for the five participants, but not a single moment that goes to the guts the way real blues or even real Gershwin does. Gorgeous playing all the way through—pleasant but forgettable. P.K.

(violin); other musicians. *I'se a Muggin'*; *I Can't Give You Anything but Love*; *After You've Gone*; *Limehouse Blues*; *Nagasaki*; *Georgia on My Mind*; *Shine*; *In the Still of the Night*; *Exactly Like You*; *Charleston*; *You're Driving Me Crazy*; *Solitude*; *Hot Lips*; *Ain't Misbehavin'*; and thirteen others. INNER CITY 1104 two discs \$11.98.

Performance: **Great**  
 Recording: **Fine mono restoration**

If you haven't heard Django Reinhardt yet, prepare yourself for a revelatory experience in jazz guitar. No one before or since (he died in 1953) combined his sound, ideas, and energy. Succeeding generations of musicians and listeners have been enthralled by this French-speaking Belgian gypsy who permanently injured two fingers on his left hand in a 1928 fire and developed a special playing technique to compensate.

Django's most fertile recording period was in the late 1930s when, with violinist Stéphane Grappelli, he fronted the Quintet of the Hot Club of France. This package on Inner City includes many selections not previously available in the United States, and they are wowsers. Among the new items are *I'se a Muggin'*, a reefer song by violinist Stuff Smith; it's sung here by Freddie Tay-

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT  
 DJANGO REINHARDT, STÉPHANE GRAPPELLI: *Django: The Quintet of the Hot Club of France (1936-1937)*. Django Reinhardt (guitar); Stéphane Grappelli



lor, who also glides through *I Can't Give You Anything but Love*. Duke Ellington's *In a Sentimental Mood* is gorgeous. James P. Johnson's *Charleston* is taken for a rousing ride, and *The Sheik of Araby* is taken to the cleaners. And so on.

There isn't any adequate way to describe the effect of Django's playing (to me it always suggested diamonds thrown into a sunbeam), but I assure you it is stupendous. There are two more volumes in the Inner City series, one of Django's compositions and the other of his solo, duet, and trio dates. I heartily recommend you latch on to all three. The man was a genius. J.V.

**SONNY ROLLINS: *Love at First Sight*.** Sonny Rollins (tenor saxophone); George Duke (keyboards); Stanley Clarke (electric bass); Al Foster (drums); Bill Summers (percussion). *Little Lu; The Very Thought of You; Caress*; and three others. MILESTONE M-9098 \$7.98.

Performance: **Fine Rollins, but . . .**

Recording: **Odd balance**

I don't know how he does it, but Sonny Rollins (still one of the greatest tenor saxophonists around, quite possibly *the* greatest) has managed to overcome the relative mediocrity of his accompaniment and give some stunning performances on this, his latest album. Pianist George Duke and bassist Stanley Clarke, men of great jazz potential who were bitten by the chart bug before they could show us more than the tip of their talent, here prove that they have spent too much time in fusionland, and drummer Al Foster sounds uninspired. Rollins deserves meritorious mention for rising above his surroundings, but those responsible for the recorded sound deserve several demerits for the awkward balance. C.A.

**CYBILL SHEPHERD: *Mad About the Boy*.** Cybill Shepherd (vocals); Stan Getz (tenor saxophone); instrumental accompaniment. *Triste; Speak Low; Do It Again; This Masquerade; I'm Old Fashioned*; and five others. INNER CITY IC 1097 \$7.98.

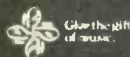
Performance: **No**

Recording: **Good**

Cybill Shepherd's film career is in the doldrums and her progress as a pop singer hasn't exactly been meteoric. This album, recorded in 1976 and only now released, may help explain why. The only excuse for its release would have to be Stan Getz's fine and stylish work on tenor saxophone. Shepherd's attempts to elucidate the complexities of lyrics by Noël Coward (*Mad About the Boy*) or Lorenz Hart (*It Never Entered My Mind*) left me as bewildered as I would be if a waiter in a Chinese restaurant suddenly burst into a medley of Ethel Merman's greatest hits. P.R.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**SMITHSONIAN JAZZ REPERTORY ENSEMBLE: *Music of Fats Waller and James P. Johnson*.** Bob Wilber (clarinet, soprano saxophone); Dick Hyman (piano, organ); Dick Wellstood (piano); Jimmy Maxwell (trumpet); Jack Gale (trombone); Major Holley (string bass); Panama Francis (drums). *Caprice Rag; Old Fashioned* (Continued on page 95)



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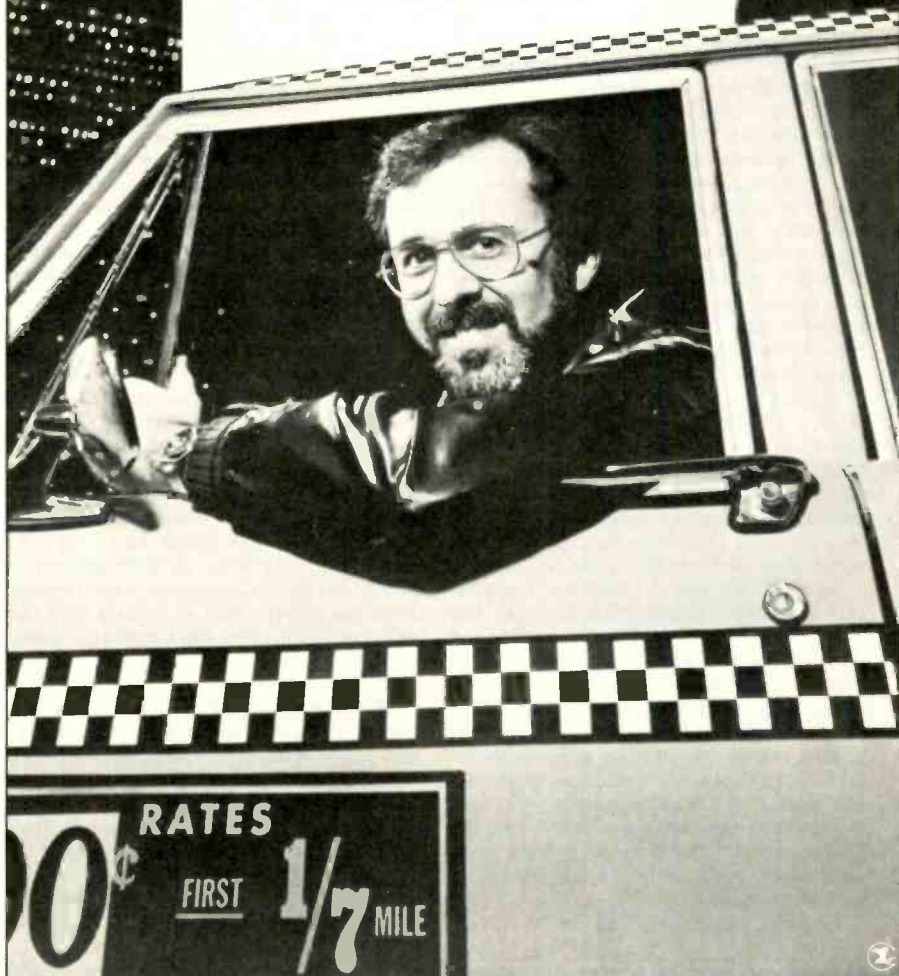
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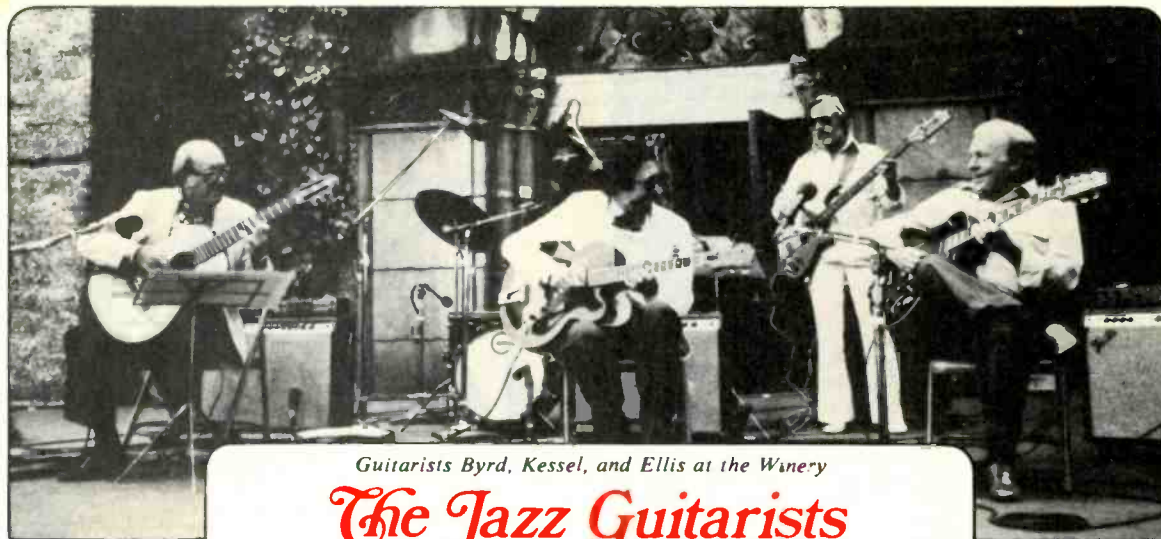
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Concord Jazz

Guitarists Byrd, Kessel, and Ellis at the Winery

## The Jazz Guitarists

**T**HE guitar boom that started with the folk-music fad in the late Fifties and rode the rock wave through the Sixties to the Seventies has given us a handful of players who are making their mark in jazz as we go into the Eighties. As the younger guitarists—men such as Larry Coryell, Steve Kahn, and Ralph Towner—explore new paths, they are ever mindful of those trod by such esteemed predecessors as Lonnie Johnson, Django Reinhardt, and Charlie Christian. Having won the ears of rock and fusion fans, the recent crop of jazz-oriented guitarists is in a good position to open the minds of new generations of listeners to the musical riches of the past half-dozen decades.

Four splendid new jazz-guitar albums offer tangible evidence of the instrument's ability to survive even the most severe pollution of the jazz waters. Larry Coryell and Steve Kahn have both crossed over into fusion and rock with great success, but neither has turned his back on jazz; when they toured together in the mid-Seventies, they played the compositions of some of their jazz colleagues with gentle, sensitive, acoustic sounds when a juiced-up, plugged-in approach would surely have won them a wider audience. Since then, both have delivered excellent albums on a variety of labels, and their latest individual sets, on Arista/Novus, are stunning examples of the depth of their listening experience and the heights to which they have brought their art.

Kahn's "Evidence" features compositions by Wayne Shorter, Joe Zawinul, Lee Morgan, and Horace Silver on one side and an 18½-minute medley of Thelonious Monk tunes on the other. The material is all interesting in itself, but Kahn's handling of it (assisted by guitarist David Russell Young) is what makes this album a remarkable asset to a jazz library. I would have preferred less reverb on Kahn's guitar, for even though the empty-ballroom sound does not obscure the creativity here, greater presence would have made this an even more palatable offering.

Coryell's acoustic sound on "Standing

Ovation" does have presence, and the album—dedicated to the memory of pianist Bill Evans—is generally more pleasing to the ear than Kahn's. That is not to say that I find it musically superior; it is rather like considering two fine pieces of prose and favoring one over the other because it is set in a more pleasant typeface. Coryell's album features mostly his own compositions, but there is also a *Spiritual Dance* by the Indian musician Dr. L. Subramaniam, who plays violin and tambura in a hot evocation of Oriental traditions. For about two minutes here, Coryell switches to piano, but that is not where he is at his best. Listen to him draw from the blues tradition on *Sweet Shuffle*, combine it with Spanish traditions on *Moon*, and flip the pages of guitar history in the course of *Ravel* and *Wonderful Wolfgang*. Standing ovation? Yes; in this case it is definitely called for.

A more introspective approach to the guitar is found on Ralph Towner's new ECM release, "Solo Concert." Towner has recorded prolifically in various contexts but perhaps most notably as a member of Oregon, the chamber group that grew out of the Paul Winter Consort ten years ago and, as far as I know, continues to thrive. Classically trained, Towner plays with tremendous facility and an engaging sense of dynamics. There is less of a pure jazz feeling in his work than in that of Coryell or Kahn, and Towner's direction seems to come more from South America than the American South; but when the creative impulse comes from the player's soul, it matters only that he is communicating and not what language he does it in.

**G**UITARS of a different generation are heard on another live album, "Great Guitars at the Winery," a Concord Jazz release featuring Charlie Byrd, Barney Kessel, and Herb Ellis, who as a group go, appropriately enough, under the name Great Guitars. This, their fourth album, was recorded last summer at the annual "Vintage Sounds" concert held in the Paul Masson Mountain Winery in Saratoga, California. You know

Masson—he's the guy who will let nothing be sold before its time (whatever that means), so it is fitting that this album's program is dominated by tunes that are as tasty today as when people first tapped their feet and swayed their bodies to them decades ago. Messrs. Byrd, Kessel, and Ellis uncork each tune with tender care and let it bubble delicately into the air; if the bubbles occasionally send a quiver through your body, you can be sure that it is by design. Nothing flat about this album.

—Chris Albertson

**STEVE KAHN: Evidence.** Steve Kahn (guitars, percussion); David Russell Young (guitars). *Infant Eyes; In a Silent Way; Melancholee; Threesome; Peace. Thelonious Monk Medley; Think of One; Monk's Mood; Little Rootie Tootie; Monk's Dream; Pannonica; Bye-Bye; Ruby, My Dear; Friday the Thirteenth.* ARISTA/NOVUS AN 3023 \$7.98.

**LARRY CORYELL: Standing Ovation.** Larry Coryell (guitars, piano); Dr. L. Subramaniam (violin, tambura on *Spiritual Dance*). *Discotexas; Excerpt from "A Lark Descending" [sic] by Vaughan Williams; Ravel; Wonderful Wolfgang; Piano Improvisation; Sweet Shuffle; Moon; Park It Where You Want It; Spiritual Dance.* ARISTA/NOVUS AN 3024 \$7.98.

**RALPH TOWNER: Solo Concert.** Ralph Towner (guitars). *Spirit Lake; Ralph's Piano Waltz; Train of Thought; Zoetrope; Nardis; Chelsea Courtyard; Timeless.* ECM ECM-1-1173 \$8.98, © M5E-1173 \$8.98.

**CHARLIE BYRD/BARNEY KESSEL/HERB ELLIS: Great Guitars at the Winery.** Charlie Byrd, Barney Kessel, Herb Ellis (guitars); Joe Byrd (bass); Jimmie Smith (drums). *Broadway; Air Mail Special; Body and Soul; You Took Advantage of Me; So Danco Samba; Sheik of Araby; Straighten Up and Fly Right; Just in Time; The Talk of the Town.* CONCORD JAZZ CJ-131 \$7.98.



Love; Carolina Shout/Snowy Morning Blues; Willow Tree; and six others. SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION N 021 \$8.98 (plus \$1.89 handling charge from Smithsonian Customer Service, P.O. Box 10230, Des Moines, Iowa 50336).

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

Dick Hyman and Dick Wellstood are eminently qualified to represent the music of James P. Johnson and Fats Waller. Only two pianists besides Johnson ever did justice to the romantic poignancy of his *Snowy Morning Blues*: one is Hyman and the other the as yet unrecorded Mike Lipskin. Wellstood's jubilant rendering of Waller's *A Handful of Keys* and emotional paraphrase of his *Minor Drag* solo are certificates of good taste. The pleasure is doubled when Wellstood and Hyman double up. Hyman plays a discreet and delicate organ counterpart to Wellstood's piano on Waller's *Jitterbug Waltz*, and they have a splendid carefree time playing three-handed piano on Johnson's *If I Could Be with You One Hour Tonight*. Further delights are provided by the supporting combo, in which Bob Wilber and Panama Francis are standouts.

Now to quibble. I would have preferred an equal number of Johnson and Waller compositions (it's six to four in favor of Johnson), and I think a more careful selection could have been made from the Waller catalog. But this Smithsonian album is thoroughly annotated and well recorded—a handsome package for eye and ear. *J.V.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**WEATHER REPORT: *Night Passage*.** Weather Report (instrumentals). *Night Passage*; *Dream Clock*; *Port of Entry*; *Rockin' in Rhythm*; and four others. ARC/COLUMBIA JC 36793 \$7.98, © JCT 36793 \$7.98, © JCA 36793 \$7.98.

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

If we must have space-age jazz, Weather Report seems to be about the best group we've got to get it off the ground. Perhaps that is because the prime movers of this ensemble, keyboardist Joe Zawinul and saxophonist Wayne Shorter, are no overnight fusion wonders. As veteran jazz performers, they use modern circuitry to enhance their basic jazz concepts. At times this combination of tradition and experimentation produces dazzling effects, as when Shorter's saxophone combines with Zawinul's synthesizer in a modernistic rendition of Duke Ellington's *Rockin' in Rhythm*. It may sound like an extraterrestrial reed section composed of little green swingers, but it works.

Weather Report's approach is almost surrealistic; they begin with recognizable structures, then bend and reshape them into dream-like configurations. The resultant sound images range from the frenetic visions of *Fast City* to the ethereal shadings of *Dream Clock* and the drifting, time-warp effects of *Forlorn*. By building on the solid ground of older forms, Weather Report makes space-age music, eerie electronic sounds and all, that is intelligible, even enjoyable. This is one "Night Passage" I can recommend. *P.G.*



#### THEATER • FILMS

**ANY WHICH WAY YOU CAN.** Original-soundtrack recording. Ray Charles and Clint Eastwood: *Beers to You*. Glen Campbell: *Any Which Way You Can*. David Frizzell and Shelly West: *You're the Reason God Made Oklahoma*. Fats Domino: *Whiskey Heaven*. Texas Opera Company: *Cotton-Eyed Clint*. And seven others. WARNER BROS. HS 3499 \$8.98, © W5 3499 \$8.98, © W8 3499 \$8.98.

Performance: **Wildly variable**  
Recording: **Good**

Country-flavored music apparently plays a big part in Clint Eastwood's sequel to *Any Which Way But Loose*, although, of course, it may not be as vital as the role of Clint's sidekick, the orangutan. Seven of the twelve cuts here are worth a listen, with Ray Charles, Glen Campbell, Fats Domino (sounding great, as always, but on a mediocre tune), Gene Watson, and Johnny Duncan doing their things plus a fine duet by newcomers David Frizzell and Shelly West plus the best stint of all, a hilarious bit of Old West lore made up, sung, and picked by Jim Stafford. His heroine is named Cow Patti, and she tracks down the killer who shot her Paw. "Forty shots rang out," Stafford sings. "Forty people fell/Patti and the killer missed each other/But they shot that town to hell." The other five tracks, however, involve lackluster performing or lackluster writing or both.

Eastwood is, like Burt Reynolds, emerging as a sort of benefactor of country or country-rock music just as the soundtrack album has taken on muscle in the marketplace. This one won't hurt anybody's reputation, but it shows that there's just so much a soundtrack can do and still function as a soundtrack—otherwise the weak spots could (and probably would) be replaced by Stafford and more of his nutty songs. As it is, it is not quite half bad. *N.C.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BEN BAGLEY'S HAROLD ARLEN AND VERNON DUKE REVISITED, VOL. II.** Blossom Dearie, Sandy Duncan, Helen Gallagher, Dolores Gray, Tammy Grimes, Arthur Siegel, Albert Evans (vocals); Glen Kelly (piano); orchestra, Dennis Deal cond. **Harold Arlen:** *Life Begins at 8:40*; *C'Est la Vie*; *Will You Love Me Monday Morning?*; *Such Unusual Weather*; *When the Wind Blows South*; *Things*; *Sweet Wind Blowin' My Way*; *Poor as a Churchmouse*; *Promise Not to Love Me*; *The Elks and the Masons*. **Vernon Duke:** *I'll Take the City*; *Let Him Not Be Beautiful*; *Off Again, On Again*; *This Is Where I Came In*; *I'd Like to Talk About the Weather*; *You Took Me by Surprise*; *Sailing at Midnight*; *That's Life*; *So*

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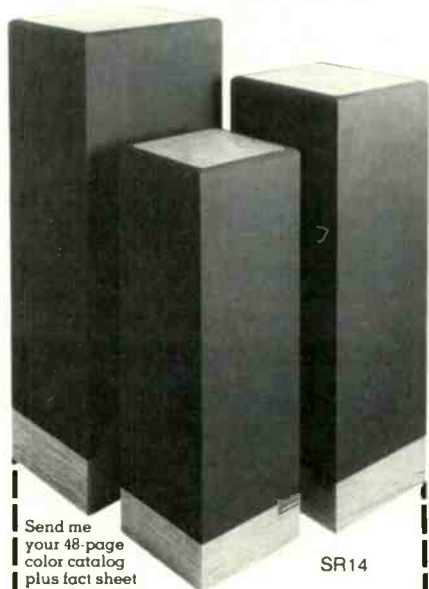
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*Nonchalant; A Penny for Your Thoughts.*  
PAINTED SMILES PS 1373 \$8.98.

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

Here's yet another package of vintage nostalgia from the label with the smiling pink lips. This time producer Ben Bagley has put together a perfectly lovely group of lesser-known songs from the pen of the prolific Harold Arlen and balanced them with some suave and subtle stuff by Vernon Duke. From Arlen's *Life Begins at 8:40*, a Broadway revue that harks all the way back to 1934, there's a medley of winners originally sung by Bert Lahr, Luella Gear, and Ray Bolger, lovingly reconstructed here by Sandy Duncan, Helen Gallagher, Jamie Rocco, and Arthur Siegel. Mr. Siegel and the quiet-voiced Blossom Dearie are especially endearing in *Such Unusual Weather* from a 1951 MGM musical that never got made. Several breezy numbers that should not have been cut out of *Jamaica* get glowing treatments from Dolores Gray and Tammy Grimes, and touching indeed is Miss Dearie's way with *Promise Not to Love Me*, which Arlen wrote in memory of his late wife Anya.

Vernon Duke, born Vladimir Dukelsky, is represented by relatively forgotten items from such shows as *Banjo Eyes*, *Walk a Little Faster* (words by E.Y. Harburg), *The Lady Comes Across*, and *Sadie Thompson* (words by Howard Dietz). Among them is a Big Apple tribute of 1941 with witty lyrics by John Latouche; *That's Life* ("Just when you're getting ahead/Bingo! You're dead"), appropriately entrusted to Mr. Siegel; and *So Nonchalant*, brought off as coolly as you please by Miss Duncan. Nothing as memorable as *April in Paris* or *Sophisticated Lady* in the lot, but all of it smooth and most of it very amusing. P.K.

**FLASH GORDON** (Queen). Original-soundtrack recording. Queen (vocals and instrumentals). ELEKTRA 5E-518 \$8.98, © 5C5-518 \$8.98, © 5T8-518 \$8.98.

Performance: **Star dreck**  
Recording: **Good**

Well, Dino DiLaurentiis, the King of the Clinkers (as the *New York Times* called him) has done it again. His remake of the charming old Buster Crabbe *Flash Gordon* serials is a witless, shoddily made, incoherent piece of camp inanity without a single redeeming virtue beyond an amusingly hammy performance from Max Von Sydow. Its special effects are bargain basement, Lorenzo Semple's script makes his old *Batman* TV series look like *Crime and Punishment*, and the film fails on almost every possible level: as pastiche, as tribute, as adventure. Somewhere Alex Raymond, the pulp genius who created and illustrated the brilliant newspaper comic strip that begat this latest adaptation, must be turning in his grave.

Queen's music for all this is brilliant in a perverse way—every bit as disjointed, insipid, and inappropriate as the work of everybody else connected with the project. Somewhere Franz Liszt, whose music was profitably looted for the Buster Crabbe version, must be turning in his grave. S.S.

(Continued on page 99)

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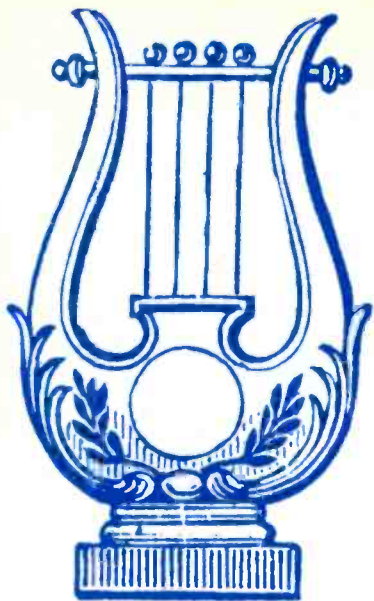
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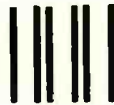


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**FOLK**



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**HUXTABLE, CHRISTENSEN & HOOD: Wallflowers.** Teresina Huxtable, Carol Christensen, Liz Hood (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Banks of the Sweet Primrose; The Truth from Above; Lake George 1922; Sheepcreek and Black Dog; The Week Before Easter; I'll Weave My Love a Garland; Oldest of Friends;* and six others. PHIL0 PH 1053 \$7.98.

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

There are pleasures galore in this generous program made up mostly of traditional ballads from such far-flung parts of the world as Herefordshire in England, the Bahama Islands, and Lake George in the Adirondacks. A lot of the material is unfamiliar, which makes it even more interesting. Teresina Huxtable, Carol Christensen, and Liz Hood are three intrepid young women who have collected these songs and, with the help of some skilled instrumentalists, harmonize on them to a fare-thee-well. One, *The Flying Cloud*, is fodder for the scenario of a full-length adventure movie: its hero, shipped to the "burning shores of Africa" as crew member on a slave ship, becomes a pirate and undergoes absolutely hair-raising ordeals at sea. Other ballads deal with tamer matters, such as the dangers of "courtin' too slow" and a 1715 alliance that didn't last between France and Scotland. There's even a tango "in the style of a Spanish fandango" written by Teresina Huxtable herself to conclude with a flourish a varied and distinguished compilation. **P.K.**

**DAVE VAN RONK: Somebody Else, Not Me.** Dave Van Ronk (vocals, guitar). *Michigan Water; Somebody Else, Not Me; Old Hannah; Old Blue; Casey Jones;* and five others. PHIL0 PH 1065 \$7.98.

Performance: **The hard stuff**  
Recording: **Very good**

Dave Van Ronk goes back to the heady early days of Eric Andersen, Tom Rush, Joan Baez, and Bob Dylan. His name is not obscure, having cropped up in countless books and articles about that era and about Dylan, but a lot of people who know about him have never heard his music, with one possible exception: his version of *Cocaine* is an underground classic with the earmarks of immortality. This new album is no-compromise folk-blues, with Van Ronk's growly voice slurring songs by the old heroes—and about the old heroes—the way they were meant to be slurred. Strong stuff. I guess, for someone weaned on the Little River Band, but quite a nice time machine for unreconstructed folkies. **N.C.**

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# Classical Music Briefs



Stanislaw Chmielewski

**Krzysztof Penderecki** was in the United States in January for the U.S. premiere of his *Te Deum* by Mstislav Rostropovich and the National Symphony in both Washington, D.C., and New York. The Polish composer is a relaxed and confident man in his mid-forties who speaks English fluently and with hardly an accent, more a citizen of the world than a Polish national, though he continues, by choice, to reside in Poland.

Penderecki has clear-cut views on music today and the place of his own music. "I am a professional composer," he said. "I can write any sort of music and I think I understand music. If I hear a piece that I cannot understand, I think that there must be something wrong. I hear much music today from which I cannot glean any personality. If I can't recognize who composed something, what good is it? It's just so much empty sound."

"I have always been particularly interested in strings and voices. In my early pieces I explored writing for strings to an extent that I could not take any

further. With the *St. Luke Passion* I began to find new things in music. There is some of my older style of writing in it, but I also rediscovered for myself the counterpoint of the late sixteenth century. In my recent music what I have attempted to do is to pick up the mainstream of music that was cut off earlier in this century, say around 1910." When asked about the unusual (for this century) prevalence of religious themes in his work, the composer replied simply, "I was born in Eastern Poland, near the Russian border. I grew up going to church every day. Religion was part of my childhood background."

Penderecki has been enormously impressed by performances in this country ("The brass players are spectacular and the large choruses are the best in the world—such enthusiasm!") and has virtually come under the spell of Rostropovich as a conductor. The great cellist, no matter what he plays or conducts, is a full-blooded romanticist, but, as Penderecki says, "Of course, my *music* is very romantic." It is also much appreciated. The *Te Deum* found receptive audiences and rave reviews in both cities. Recording plans are now being discussed. —J.G.

**E**XCLUSIVE contracts with classical artists belong to the record industry's past—with a few exceptions such as Leontyne Price and Van Cliburn on RCA Red Seal and Luciano Pavarotti and Alicia de Larrocha on London. CBS Masterworks has just made another exception by signing a new long-term contract with the

young American conductor **Michael Tilson Thomas**.

Thomas is exceptional in other ways. At a time when career prospects for American conductors are generally considered to be grim, he is a welcome guest conductor with the finest orchestras in Europe and, perhaps more surprisingly, in the United States. In a two-month European tour last fall he conducted the Berlin Philharmonic, the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, the Opera Orchestra of Marseilles, the Maggio Musicale Orchestra in Florence, the orchestra of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, and the Philharmonia Orchestra in London.

This season in the United States he is conducting the American Symphony Orchestra of Carnegie Hall, the Baltimore Symphony, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony, and the Detroit Symphony. Having conducted the American premiere of the three-act version of Berg's *Lulu* in Santa Fe in 1979, he intends to move more in the direction of opera and will make his New York City Opera debut on April 9 conducting Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

Thomas won a 1980 STEREO REVIEW Record of the Year Award for his CBS recording of all the music of Carl Ruggles. Awaiting release on CBS are his recordings of two more Beethoven symphonies in his series with the English Chamber Orchestra, Stravinsky's *Petroushka*, Prokofiev's *Lt. Kijé*, and a half-speed-mastered version of his best-selling recording of Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Cleveland Orchestra.

Asked to comment on the

plight of the American conductor today, Thomas said: "The day of the American composer has come. The day of the American conductor will also come. I am not at all worried about it." —W.L.

**T**HE Leventritt Foundation, which furthers the careers of young musicians, has just bestowed a Gold Medal Award (its highest honor) for the first time in ten years. The recipient is the nineteen-year-old Philippine pianist **Cecile Licad**.

From 1940 to 1976 the Leventritt Foundation selected young artists through international competitions. Musicians who won the Gold Medal Award during those years include the pianists Eugene Istomin, Alexis Weissenberg, Joseph Kalichstein, Gary Graffman, and Van Cliburn and the violinists Itzhak Perlman, Kyung Wha Chung, and Pinchas Zukerman. In 1977 the Foundation's directors rejected competitions and now make their selections after observing talented musicians over a prolonged period.





Miss Licad began her musical studies in the Philippines and continued them at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, where she studied for five years with Rudolf Serkin, Seymour Lipkin, and Mieczyslaw Horszowski. In addition to a \$10,000 prize, the Leventritt award includes appearances with the world's foremost orchestras over a three-year period, beginning in September 1981 with the New York Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta. Miss Licad is about to sign a recording contract with CBS Masterworks, so we should all be able to hear her soon. □

**R**ECORD pirates are not the only ones who make live recordings of concerts by international opera stars. CBS Masterworks is scheduled to record two song recitals by the young American diva **Frederica von Stade** at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center in New York on April 5 and 8. Pianist Martin Katz will accompany her. CBS will record the recitals digitally, a technological feat that is, for the present at least, still beyond the pirates. □

For an account of Miss Von Stade's latest operatic recording, see the review of Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* on the next page. Her recent CBS album of French songs with the Boston Symphony under Seiji Ozawa will be reviewed here next month. □

**T**HE Moss Music Group has signed a licensing agreement with the Soviet Melodiya label which will give MMG first-refusal rights in the United States and Canada on all Melodiya products. In past years Melodiya recordings have appeared here on the Angel and CBS labels, as well as, occasionally, on Westminster Monitor, and Ultraphone. New Melodiya recordings, some of them digital, will appear on MMG's new full-price label as well as on their mid-price lines (Turnabout, Candide, Vox). The first release is scheduled for June 1981 and will feature recordings by Emil Gilels, Sviatoslav Richter, Lazar Berman, Eugene Svetlanov, Vladimir Spivakov, Viktor Tretyakov, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, and the Bolshoi Opera. □



**"I** SUPPOSE that one of my problems is that I don't look like a pianist," says pianist **Robert Silverman**. "When I'm introduced to people they don't immediately envisage me seated at the keyboard whirling my way through Beethoven's *Hammerklavier*. Nobody knows I can play until I play." In this, Silverman joins a sizable group of eminent keyboard artists who don't look the part, some of whom—Solomon, for example—just happen to be among his favorites. "My other problem," says Silverman, "is being Canadian." □

With the retirement of Glenn Gould from the concert stage, Silverman is probably Canada's pre-eminent "live" pianist. He plays regularly with the major Canadian orchestras, he teaches at the University of Vancouver, he broadcasts for the CBC. "Being Canadian is not just a physical thing," he says, "but a state of mind. All my records are on American labels because there really is no Canadian classical company. That's a tangible thing. But there is also this attitude that if it's Canadian it can't be much good, and most Canadians seem to share that. It's a kind of diffidence—people in the States had to tell me how good I was before I believed it." □

Silverman has a string of top-flight records in the catalog (on Orion) and has just recorded (digitally) the Rachmaninoff Second Sonata for another label. He also has a collection of reviews of his concerts from both Canadian and American critics (including New York and Chicago) of the sort that should draw managers and booking agents like flies. He doesn't have a U.S. manager. Is it because he's Canadian? —J.G.

## Disc and Tape Reviews

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

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BOËLDEIU:** *Harp Concerto in C Major*.  
**DITTERSDORF:** *Harp Concerto in A Major*.  
**HANDEL:** *Harp Concerto in B-flat Major, Op. 4, No. 6*. Marisa Robles (harp); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Iona Brown cond. ARGO ZRG 930 \$9.98.

Performance: **Joyously involved**

Recording: **Rich and well balanced**

Marisa Robles plays with such vitality, such joyous involvement, and such gorgeous tone that all one can do with this record is enjoy it heartily. There are other recordings of all three works, perhaps equally fine in the case of the Boëldieu and Handel, but none has quite the same degree of charm or is recorded nearly so handsomely. The Dittersdorf, actually a transcription from one of his keyboard concertos by Karl Hermann Pilley, has been recorded on both the harpsichord and the piano as well as several times on the harp; to my ear there has been no performance, using any of the three in-

struments, nearly as delightful as this new one. My only complaint here concerns the layout: the record breaks for turnover between the first and second movements of the Dittersdorf concerto. Of course that does make it possible to include the Handel, and it is quite a substantial bonus. The accompaniment under Iona Brown is a good deal more than adequate, and the sound is especially rich and well balanced. R.F.

**BORODIN:** *String Quartet No. 2, in D Major*. **DVOŘÁK:** *String Quartet No. 12, in F Major, Op. 96 ("American")*. Concord String Quartet. TURNABOUT TVC 37009 \$4.98, Ⓢ CT 7009 \$4.98.

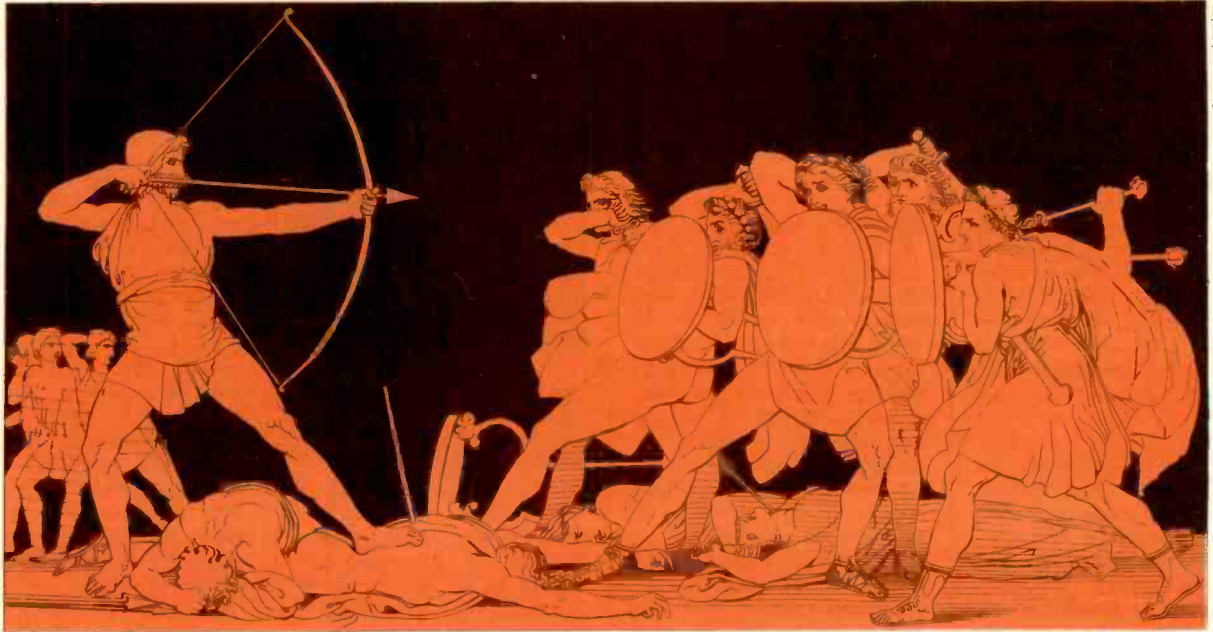
Performance: **Eloquent Borodin**

Recording: **Good**

My exposure to the Concord Quartet has been limited to its recordings of contemporary music. But ever since first hearing these players in the Rochberg Third Quartet (Nonesuch H-71283), I've been curious about how they might sound in Beethoven,

Schubert, and just such works as they perform on this Turnabout release. It is an eminently enjoyable record, and on the Borodin side a bit more than that: frequently aglow with the kind of inspired eloquence that reflects the deepest understanding and enthusiasm. The Dvořák performance is a little less fetching; although it has an engaging vigor and straightforwardness, it is rather unobtrusive and the finale tends to be a little headlong. Nonetheless, the group's playing throughout both works is always handsome, always extremely musical, always well balanced. Overall, I think this package is highly competitive with the Quartetto Italiano's similar coupling on Philips (802 814) at twice the Turnabout price. Though there are desirable versions of the Dvořák, there is no superior one at present of the Borodin (I wish Seraphim, or perhaps Odyssey, would reissue the incomparable mono recording by the Komitas Quartet formerly on Angel 35239). Nice, warm sound. R.F.

(Continued on page 103)



Granger Collection/Engraving by Jae Neegle after John Flaxman drawing

*Ulysses dispatching Penelope's suitors*

## Monteverdi's "Return of Ulysses"

**T**HE score of Claudio Monteverdi's opera *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, like that of his *Incoronazione di Poppea*, has survived in skeletal form: we have the vocal lines accompanied by figured bass and a few ambiguous rubrics indicating instrumental usage. Conductor Raymond Leppard, whose reconstructions of other Monteverdi and Cavalli operas have been successfully mounted in European and American houses, subjected *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* to a particularly lush re-creation for the 1979 Glyndebourne Festival production, and the result was recorded and has now been released on CBS.

Leppard's version is so lush, in fact, that it should, in all fairness, be billed as a work by Monteverdi/Leppard. Taking his cue from the rich battery of instruments that Monteverdi himself listed in the preface to *L'Orfeo*, Leppard has the continuo realized by harp, lutes, guitar, harpsichords, and organ—underlined, what is more, by cellos and double-basses! To all this he has added the sonorities of modern strings, woodwinds, and brass. The overall sound is extremely effective. It should be pointed out nevertheless that the number and variety of instruments available to Monteverdi at Mantua for the premiere of *L'Orfeo* far surpassed the comparatively meager forces he had at the public opera house in Venice where *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* was first given. Probably a simpler orchestration using strings and harpsichord would be closer to the original.

Leppard's addition of *sinfonias* where the action calls for them is certainly justified historically, but his use of the instruments involved seems influenced more by nineteenth- than by seventeenth-century operatic practice. Where Monteverdi would have

used simple chords to accompany the dramatic monody, Leppard provides a complex instrumental accompaniment which, while reflecting the emotion, tends to straitjacket the singer's declamation. Some of the orchestral effects and tone painting verge on overkill. The harmonic language and rhythms here may be Monteverdian, but the sonorities are Straussian.

**F**OR all that, Leppard is a superb musician who understands drama. His version of *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* may not be historically faithful, but it is stunning—no mere skeleton, but an effective opera full of drama and lyricism. One should also give full credit to the original composer, however, for the work has withstood the ravages of time and remained effective in its modern dress because of Monteverdi's genius at setting words. The libretto is full of subtle characterizations, tense drama, and striking contrasts, and Monteverdi catches every verbal nuance in so powerful a way that in the end it is his creation rather than any aspect of the reconstruction that makes the deepest impression.

The recorded performance is superb. The complex character of Penelope, Ulysses' wife, is beautifully set forth by Frederica von Stade. Her yearning for Ulysses' return as the opera opens seems heartfelt, and her coquettish response to the three malevolent suitors is full of sinister charm. The highlight of her interpretation is the aria "*Vogliam il ciel che mia vita*," which is infused with a warm glow of unquenchable hope. Even her expressions of doubt about Ulysses' identity near the end ring true. Richard Stillwell's portrayal of Ulysses presents him as steadfast and uncompromising. He moves with singleness of pur-

pose toward the exquisite final love duet with Penelope.

The three suitors are wonderfully characterized, each a distinct individual even though their purposes are the same. It is a joy also to hear Richard Lewis as the faithful old shepherd; his sense of style is perfect for Monteverdi's vocal writing. Alexander Oliver is effective too as Iro, with an extremely moving mixture of the comic and the tragic in his final monologue. And so on for the rest of the long list of characters. Each singer remains true to his own character while contributing to the overall splendor of the timeless drama.

**I**N many respects the finest of Monteverdi's stage works, *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* is a powerful opera. *L'Orfeo*, though charming, reveals one character only; *Incoronazione di Poppea*, though also powerful, is in the end morally disturbing. *Il Ritorno*, however, presents a variety of fully developed characters who triumph over evil. A universal theme is expressed in an excellent libretto and projected in powerful music. We are fortunate to have such a superb performance of it committed to records.

—Stoddard Lincoln

**MONTEVERDI: *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*.** Frederica van Stade (soprano), Penelope; Richard Stillwell (baritone), Ulisse; Patrick Power (tenor), Telemaco; Nucci Condo (soprano), Ericlea; Richard Lewis (tenor), Eumete; Patricia Parker (soprano), Melanto; Max-Rene Cosotti (tenor), Eurimaco; Ann Murray (soprano), Minerva; Roger Bryson (bass), Nettuno; others. Glyndebourne Chorus; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Raymond Leppard cond. CBS M3 35910 three discs \$26.94.



**BRAHMS:** *Liebeslieder Waltzes, Opp. 52 and 65* (see Speaking of Music, page 6)

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**CARTER:** *Symphony of Three Orchestras*. New York Philharmonic, Pierre Boulez cond. *A Mirror on Which to Dwell*. Susan Davenny Wyner (soprano); Speculum Musicae, Richard Fitz cond. CBS M 35171 \$8.98, © MT 35171 \$8.98.

Performance: **Impressive**  
Recording: **Ditto**

Except for the celebrity of its author, these pieces seem to me to have a lot going against them. This is difficult modern music of the kind that is now distinctly out of fashion. The three orchestras play three separate—separate but equal—four-movement pieces, each with its characteristic themes, harmonies, colors, and rhythms. Carter uses the term “symphony” in its original meaning of “sounding together”: the three orchestras and their independent musics literally fit together in a giant musical jigsaw puzzle. The work is four years old now, Boulez is gone from the New York Philharmonic, minimalism is the dominant force in new music, and even non-minimalists (such as this writer) tend to incorporate tonal elements into their music and to avoid intellectual puzzles and complexities—something critics and audiences in this country never liked very much anyway.

Actually, reputation is quite misleading. The *Symphony of Three Orchestras* is one of the best new orchestral works produced anywhere in quite a while, and it is a simply and eminently listenable piece of music—that is, a work of invention, fantasy, profile, and individuality. In my view, it takes a certain kind of *oversophistication* (admittedly encouraged by Carter and his reputation) to listen complexly when the real appeal and value of the music lie in qualities of directness and immediacy!

The cycle *A Mirror on Which to Dwell*, a setting of six wonderful Elizabeth Bishop poems, was written for the excellent Speculum Musicae ensemble as part of the Bicentennial festivities (just as the symphony was written for the New York Philharmonic on a similar commission). I like *A Mirror* less well than the symphony only in its treatment of the voice, which is less imaginative, less individual than the instrumental writing—not that the part isn't beautifully sung by Susan Davenny Wyner. Speculum Musicae is one of the finest new-music ensembles anywhere, and, if the same cannot be said of the New York Philharmonic, the performance and recording of both works here are still pretty impressive. *E.S.*

**DEBUSSY:** *Préludes, Books I and II*. Ernest Ulmer (piano). PROTONE PR 151/152 two discs \$15.96.

Performance: **Evocative**  
Recording: **Lacks focus**

It would appear that more pianists have been willing to take on recording all thirty-two Beethoven sonatas than to tackle Debussy's twenty-four *Préludes*, but virtually all of the relatively few integral recordings of the *Préludes* in the last several years have been of more than passing interest, the most striking surely being Paul Jacobs' re-

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Straub/Archiv

RACHEL YAKAR: aristocratic vocalism

## Clérambault: Two French Cantatas

**I**NSPIRED, but certainly not enslaved, by the Italian cantata, the French cantata emerged in its full glory in the music of

cent Nonesuch set (HB-73031). Ernest Ulmer, too, clearly seems to be "inside" this music. His approach is neither as big and bold as Claudio Arrau's in his realization of Book I (Philips 9500 676) nor as sharply etched as Jacobs', but it is beautifully evocative in a more understated, half-lit manner that seems to underscore the impressionistic character of the music. Although so much is admirable, even stimulating, on these four sides, I found myself put off a bit by the lack of contrast between the respective pieces, and the sound is less clearly focused than it might be, particularly in the opening of side one, where there seems to be a waver. The Jacobs set, which is well documented as well as economical, remains the one to have. *R.F.*

**DITTERSDORF:** *Harp Concerto in A Major* (see BOËLDEIEU)

### RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

**DVORÁK:** *Violin Concerto in A Minor, Op. 53; Romance in F Minor, Op. 11.* Josef Suk (violin); Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Václav Neumann cond. SUPRAPHON □ 1410 2423 \$9.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Still the champ**  
Recording: **Very good**

**DVORÁK:** *Violin Concerto in A Minor, Op. 53; Romance in F Minor, Op. 11.* Salvatore

Louis Nicolas Clérambault. Addressing himself to the high-flown passions of Orpheus and Medea, Clérambault etched their grief, joy, and hope in a telling and subtle musical language that only a Frenchman could have created. The fragile vocal lines are exquisitely detailed in their declamation and ornamentation, and there is plenty of passion beneath the polished Gallic veneer.

**A**CCOMPANIED on an Archiv recording by early instruments, soprano Rachel Yakar displays an aristocratic vocalism rarely encountered today. Trills and appoggiaturas come naturally to her, and the ornamentation never seems excessive. Her French diction is excellent, her word coloration effective. Where Clérambault's music allows the passion to rise to the surface in the form of Italianate coloratura, Yakar never loses her French sound or breaks the line of the music for the sake of mere brilliance. The instrumentalists offer firm support in their intricate obbligatos. The balance and ensemble here are so fine that one is conscious only of the high quality of the music; the authentic performance practice seems unaffected and appropriate. This is vocal chamber music at its best. —*Stoddard Lincoln*

**CLÉRAMBAULT:** *Orphée; Médée.* Rachel Yakar (soprano); Reinhard Goebel (violin); Wilbert Hazelzet (flute); Charles Medlam (viola da gamba); Alan Curtis (harp/chord). ARCHIV 2533 442 \$9.98.

Accardo (violin); Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, Sir Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 9500 406 \$9.98, © 7300 614 \$9.98.

Performance: **Too good to ignore**  
Recording: **Lifelike**

Josef Suk demonstrated his proprietary eloquence in these two works by his great-grandfather on an earlier recording with the same orchestra under the late Karel Ančerl; it has been available here on Crossroads, Vanguard, and now Quintessence (7112). His remake with Václav Neumann is no less ardent and possibly even more beautifully played, and of course it benefits from a more up-to-date (1978) recording, which makes every facet of the gorgeous orchestral contribution deliciously clear. No one who has Suk's earlier recording need be unhappy with it, but this new one is a clear winner among all current versions of the concerto. Even so, the new Philips release is no mere also-ran but very distinguished in its own right. As one might expect from their previous recordings, Salvatore Accardo and Colin Davis also have the measure of this music, and they function superbly together. I do not think it is merely a psychological reaction, however, to feel that the Czech musicians, the orchestra in particular, sound at least marginally more idiomatic in the concerto, especially in the opening of the work, the horn passage near the end of the slow movement, and the solo passage with drums early in the finale. In the *Ro-*

*mance*, Accardo is a little more expansive and perhaps also a little more evocative than Suk, but both performances are fastidious and expressive. *R.F.*

**DVORÁK:** *String Quartet No. 12, in F Major, Op. 96* (see BORODIN)

**FAURÉ:** *Pelléas et Mélisande.* **SCHOENBERG:** *Pelleas und Melisande, Op. 5.* **SIBELIUS:** *Pelléas et Mélisande.* Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, David Zinman cond. PHILIPS 6769 045 two discs \$19.96.

Performance: **Very good**  
Recording: **Excellent, clear sound**

Debussy's opera now so completely represents Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* to us that it is hard to imagine it in any other form. But it was, of course, originally a play, and a number of other distinguished composers wrote music for it over the years, mostly incidental music for theater performances. Sibelius wrote his attractive—but very Nordic and not very symbolist—*Pelléas* score for a Swedish translation of the play produced in 1905. Fauré, closer emotionally and artistically to the spirit of the original, wrote incidental music for a London production of 1898. This was boiled down considerably to a suite of six numbers including one song (curiously enough, the song did not, for various reasons, end up in the Debussy opera); it is here sung—very beautifully but utterly incomprehensibly (no text provided either)—in what is described as the original English translation.

The Schoenberg is quite a different sort of work. Apparently without knowing that Debussy was working on an opera based on the play, the Viennese composer conceived a similar plan; eventually the project was turned into a giant symphonic poem à la Richard Strauss—one of the last gasps of Romanticism stretched to its limits. Schoenberg's *Pelleas*, which appeared in the first few years of this century, is already a way station to atonal expressionism. It seems strange that Schoenberg would have even attempted to interpret a work that is the antithesis of the Wagnerian tradition out of which he came, for *Pelléas* is Maeterlinck's and Debussy's answer to *Tristan*. How ironic that Schoenberg uses it as a springboard to out-Tristan *Tristan!*

If Schoenberg stretches the nineteenth century to its limits, he also stretches the capabilities of the orchestra. My first thought was that the Rotterdam Philharmonic, even under as talented a leader as David Zinman, would not be able to do the score justice. I was wrong. The Schoenberg is actually the major success of this set: the reading is both clear (it can be a mess) and powerful. The Sibelius and Fauré scores are interesting to hear, but a little slow-and-refined goes a long way, and the playing is not quite elegant enough for the music. *E.S.*

**FRANCK:** *Les Djinns; Symphonic Variations; Prelude, Chorale, and Fugue* (see Best of the Month, page 71)

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**GOUNOD:** *Mireille.* Mirella Freni (soprano), Mireille; Alain Vanzo (tenor), Vincent; Jane Rhodes (mezzo-soprano), Taven; José Van Dam (baritone), Ourrias; Gabriel



Bacquier (bass-baritone), Ramon; Michèle Command (soprano), Clémence, Voice from Heaven; Christine Barbaux (soprano), Vincenette; Marc Vento (bass), Ambroise; Orchestra and Chorus of the Capitole de Toulouse. Michel Plasson cond. ANGEL SZCX-3905 three discs \$27.94.

Performance: **Good to very good**  
Recording: **Excellent**

On the surface, the story of Gounod's *Mireille* is conventional operatic material: a thwarted romance of two lovers torn apart by squabbling families, malice, and prejudice. A surprisingly successful combination of realistic and mythical elements lifts the libretto above routine, but what gives *Mireille* a truly distinctive character is its glorification of Provençal customs and folk traditions (inherent in the Frederic Mistral poem *Mirèio*, on which Michel Carré's libretto was based and to which Gounod responded with unbounded enthusiasm). Naturally, an opera so dependent upon local color is not likely to achieve international popularity, but in France *Mireille* has always been well received. An important revival at the 1954 Aix-en-Provence Festival even produced a fine complete recording with Janette Vivalda and Nicolai Gedda in the lead roles and André Cluytens conducting. That version (Angel 3533) disappeared many years ago, but its most welcome successor is likely to make many new friends for this worthy and beautiful opera.

Although the prevailing mood is lyrical and idyllic—and it is in such passages where Gounod's music is most persuasive—*Mireille* is not without passion, even violence. Most of the latter is linked with the character of the bull-tamer Ourrias, a rival of Mireille's lover Vincent. Ourrias wounds Vincent, almost killing him, and is punished for his sins in the haunted *Val d'Enfer* (Valley of Hell). The role is compellingly interpreted by José Van Dam, an always vital singing actor. As the star-crossed lovers, Mirella Freni (baptismally predestined for the part) and Alain Vanzo bring commendable artistry to music that at times severely strains their vocal resources. Miss Freni, in particular, has been heard in steadier voice on past occasions, but in their duets and other lyrical portions both artists do some distinguished singing.

Neither the opera's charm nor its passion is slighted by Michel Plasson's sympathetic leadership, and there are a number of valuable contributions from the supporting singers. Christine Barbaux is a thoroughly charming Vincenette, and, faded voice notwithstanding, Jane Rhodes is strong and characterful as the gypsy Taven. Gabriel Bacquier displays his customary dramatic authority in the role of Mireille's father.

In its original form (1864), *Mireille* was deemed much too severe for the Opéra Comique's audiences. Gounod was prevailed upon to make substantial changes, not the least of which was to alter Mireille's music to fit the vocal limitations and virtuosic inclinations of Marie Miolan-Carvalho, the role's creator (and the theater director's wife). This recording, however, is based on a 1939 edition close to Gounod's original. Accordingly, it does not include the fairly familiar vocal *Valse* that the composer halfheartedly inserted, to great public acclaim, for the heroine. G.J.

HANDEL: *Harp Concerto in B-flat Major, Op. 4, No. 6* (see BOÏELDIEU)

HARRISON: *Koncerto por la Violono kun Perkuta Orkestra*. LINN: *Concertino for Violin and Wind Octet*. Eudice Shapiro (violin); Los Angeles Percussion Orchestra; Winds of the Crystal Chamber Orchestra, William Kraft cond. CRYSTAL S-853 \$7.98.

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

Lou Harrison's Concerto for Violin and Percussion—the original title, given above, is in Esperanto—was written in 1959 from sketches made in 1940. It consists of a sin-

gle, twenty-minute melodic line for the soloist accompanied by a percussion "orchestra" that includes brake drums, coffee cans, flower pots, and a double bass played with beaters. The use of Esperanto is no mere affectation; Harrison conceives of his music as part of the world tradition rather than merely the Western one. In fact, without any obvious exoticism at all, he achieves a rather remarkable and unselfconscious blend of Eastern and Western musical ideas. Although the concerto was written for Anahid Ajemian, it has long been associated with Eudice Shapiro. She plays it beautifully here with excellent assistance from William Kraft's percussion group.

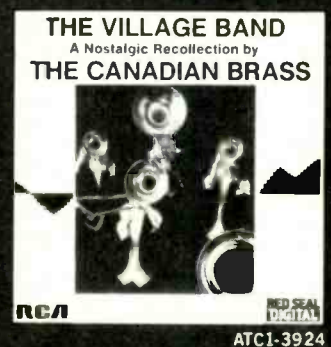
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side of the disc is a rather staid bit of well-done (in any sense) neo-Classicism. The recording is on the dry side; for whatever it's worth, the disc itself is a beautiful translucent blue. *E.S.*

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**HOLST: *The Planets, Op. 32.*** Scottish National Orchestra and Women's Chorus, Sir Alexander Gibson cond. CHANDOS ◉ ABRD 1010 \$15.98 (from Brilly Imports, 155 North San Vicente, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211).

Performance: **Virile**  
Recording: **Very fine**

Interpretively, this first digitally mastered *Planets* does not reach the peaks achieved by Sir Adrian Boult and Bernard Haitink in

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**MENDELSSOHN: *Symphony No. 4, in A Major, Op. 90 ("Italian").*** **SCHUMANN: *Symphony No. 4, in D Minor, Op. 120.*** Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Klaus Tennstedt cond. ANGEI ◉ DS-37760 \$10.98.

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

In the outer movements of the *Italian* Symphony, Klaus Tennstedt stresses the music's sinewy and athletic aspects; like Christoph von Dohnányi on his recent Angel disc of the work, Tennstedt omits the first-movement repeat, thereby depriving us of the lovely transitional episode. However, the pilgrims' procession in the second movement is solid without being stolid, and the intermezzo-like third movement is marked

(K. 200); No. 29, in A Major (K. 201); No. 30, in D Major (K. 202); *Symphony in D Major* (K. 203); *Symphony in D Major* (K. 204); *Symphony in D Major* ("La Finta Giardiniera," K. 196/121). Academy of Ancient Music, Jaap Schröder (concertmaster) and Christopher Hogwood (harpischord continuo), co-conductors. L'OISEAUX-LYRE D170D3 three discs \$29.94, ◉ K170K33 \$29.94.

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

This is Volume 4 of a projected seven-volume set of the complete Mozart symphonies (sixty-four, numbered and unnumbered) and the second volume of the set to be released in the U.S. (Volume 3 was ecstatically reviewed here by Igor Kipnis last May.) It has the same virtues as its predecessor: correct editions, an orchestra of authentic instruments led by both the concertmaster and the harpsichordist, spirited playing, excellent recording, and almost unbelievable transparency of orchestral sound. Actually, the balance seems even a little bit better in this volume than before. Naturally, not everything is *ne plus ultra*. Symphonies 25 and 29, for example, have been recorded in the past by some very eminent conductors and fine orchestras, and the caressing warmth brought to them by such as Bruno Walter and Colin Davis is not to be found here; in fact, in this set those two symphonies seem brilliant and hard-driven, though clear as crystal. But when things go right here (as they most often do) they really go right. The *Prestissimo* finale of K. 203 must be heard to be believed. Such verve! Such dynamics! Such articulation! Such clarity! It is a whole new experience in listening. And the symphony built on the overture to *La Finta Giardiniera* too. What wonderful charm and high spirits!

But points of interpretation aside, the value of this series is that it allows us to hear Mozart's symphonies as we have never heard them before. The early works in the volumes thus far are surely fascinating enough, but what we are really waiting for is the opportunity to hear this kind of transparent performance style applied to the complexities of some of the later, greater works. We'll just have to wait for Volumes 5 (*Haffner*) and 6 (*Paris, Linz, Prague, Jupiter, and Great G Minor*) for that.

An informative booklet comes with each volume, but the concordance to the Mozart symphonies included in it has some confusing points and some errors. K. 102 is listed as being in this volume, but seems to have changed its mind somewhere along the line. —James Goodfriend

**MUSSORGSKY/RAVEL: *Pictures at an Exhibition.*** **RAVEL: *Le Tombeau de Couperin.*** Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Sir Georg Solti cond. LONDON ◉ LDR 10040 \$10.98.

Performance: **Sinewy**  
Recording: **Sharply etched**

Admittedly, the price differential between the first digitally mastered *Pictures*—\$17.98 for Lorin Maazel and the Cleveland Orchestra on Telarc—and this new one with Sir Georg Solti and the Chicago Symphony is not to be dismissed lightly. The sonics of the two discs differ considerably,



Lauterwasser/Angel/EMI

**KLAUS TENNSTEDT: excellent Mendelssohn and Schumann**

their analog recordings, but Sir Alexander Gibson and his Scots players and singers do come through with a reading of solid distinction that is superbly recorded despite the somewhat tight sound of Henry Wood Hall in Glasgow. *Mars* is really menacing here, *Venus* emerges with unusual tonal purity thanks to the digital technology, and the evanescent textures of *Mercury* have never been heard to better advantage. *Jupiter* sounds delightfully lively and unpompous, and Gibson's broad pacing of *Saturn* lends to its slow, sad procession and the subsequent great outcry in the brass an aura of deep poignancy. *Uranus*, with its timpani *ostinati* and complex, rapid-fire woodwind textures, is a real triumph; for once the timpani in the middle section are heard in their distinct pitch progression rather than as an amorphous sonic blob. The glassy tonal fabric of *Neptune* achieves a truly chilly *frisson*, but the wordless off-stage chorus lacks the ultimate otherworldliness it has in the Boult recording—a matter, I suspect, as much of room acoustics as performance. Taken all in all, this is a very enjoyable *Planets*, worth keeping alongside Boult's and Haitink's and especially great for sound buffs. *D.H.*

**LINN: *Concertino for Violin and Wind Octet*** (see HARRISON)

by expertly done nuances in the bucolic trio section with its gentle horn fanfares. In the final *Saltarello* Tennstedt sets a sizzling pace, and the Berlin players stay with him all the way.

The Schumann D Minor Symphony gets its first digital treatment here, and musically it is a most satisfying experience. The ruggedness that characterizes the opening movement is tempered by a subtle relaxation in lyrical passages. The slow movement is tender without ever becoming merely sentimental, and the scherzo has a nice contrast between the driving pulse of the outer sections and the sweetly lyrical middle episode with its prominent solo violin. The crescendo leading to the finale is really spectacular, almost Brucknerian in its expansion both of dynamics and sonority.

All told, this is an excellent record. The digital mastering has done justice to the full tonal spectrum, whether in the inner detail of the Mendelssohn or in the clarifying of instrumental textures in the Schumann, but the greater part of the credit belongs to Tennstedt himself and the magnificent orchestra he is leading. *D.H.*

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**MOZART: *The Symphonies, Volume 4. No. 25, in G Minor (K. 183); No. 28, in C Major***



but this is as much a consequence of interpretive differences as of such factors as hall acoustics and microphone placement. In sum, Solti's reading can be described as muscular, thrusting, Toscaninian, whereas Maazel's more freely poetic way with the music is akin to that of Serge Koussevitzky, who commissioned the Ravel orchestration, and Rafael Kubelik, whose 1952 Chicago recording was an interpretive/sonic landmark in its day.

I frankly prefer the Maazel disc for both interpretation and sound; Cleveland's Masonic Auditorium seems to have more of the right kind of "give" than Chicago's Medinah Temple. But it is also clear that London opted for more close-up microphoning, and there are some very impressive passages. The handling of the "Ballet of Unhatched Chicks" seems to give each of the little beasties its own personality, and the "Hut on Fowl's Legs" bursts forth from the speakers with unparalleled ferocity. Like Maazel, Solti takes a very solemn view of the "Great Gate of Kiev" finale, endowing it with an almost Brucknerian aura. Rather less understandable is the pause at the end of the "Market Place at Limoges" when the music should plunge straight into the gloomy, brassy grandeur of "Catacombs."

The somewhat dry, precise character of Solti's music making lends itself remarkably well, I feel, to the Ravelian dry point of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*. Here the Chicagoans are in absolutely top form (none of the shuffling feet and such that give a somewhat restive atmosphere to *Pictures*). Solti does marvel with the dissonant aspects of the "Forlane" movement, and the final "Rigaudon" is distinguished by absolutely razor-sharp orchestral execution. D.H.

**RAVEL: *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (see MUSSORGSKY/RAVEL)**

**ROSSINI: *William Tell* (see Best of the Month, page 74)**

**SCHOENBERG: *Chamber Symphony No. 1, Op. 9; Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 16.* Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz cond. NONESUCH ● D-79001 \$11.98.**

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

The Five Pieces for Orchestra are among the most dramatic and highly evocative of Schoenberg's works, and when well played in the original full-orchestra version they can hardly fail to make a powerful impact. It was because Schoenberg's Society for Private Performances, organized in Vienna in 1918, could not afford the services of a large orchestra that the composer and his son-in-law/pupil Felix Greissle worked out a chamber-orchestra score for a dozen players: string quintet with double-bass, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, celeste, and harmonium. As played here by Gerard Schwarz's virtuoso group, the chamber version seems wholly ingenious, fascinating, and revelatory. The recording is especially revelatory in its clarification of musical texture, especially ingenious in its wonderfully effective use of the harmonium both as "orchestral pedal" and in places as a color resource. Although the catastrophic climax of the fourth piece, *Peripetia*, can hardly be

conveyed by a chamber group, the skeletal version of the concluding *Obligatory Recitative* seems to me a good way to get at the heart of the full orchestral score.

The 1906 Chamber Symphony for Fifteen Players finds the composer halfway between Richard Strauss and the "other planets" explored in later creations, free of a tonal base and dense in texture and event. The density of the later pages of Op. 9 presents problems in realization, as much because of acoustical considerations as in terms of execution and balance. I have a special fondness for the old Pierre Boulez/Domane Musicale recording, which was done in a bright acoustic and in a performance that conveyed superbly the nervous excitement of the piece (it was available for a time on Everest 3192). If this digitally mastered recording of the Chamber Symphony runs a little behind Boulez's, it is not the fault of the execution, which is masterly, but because the recording locale lacks enough brightness to give sparkle to the sound and to relieve the opaqueness of the denser portions of the score. Even digital technology and the most skilled microphone placement can do little to overcome acoustic deficiencies; indeed, they tend to emphasize them. D.H.

**SCHOENBERG: *Pelleas und Melisande* (see FAURÉ)**

**SCHUMANN: *Symphony No. 4, in D Minor, Op. 120* (see MENDELSSOHN)**

**SIBELIUS: *Pelléas et Mélisande* (see FAURÉ)**

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**R. STRAUSS: *Also Sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30.* Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. ANGEL ● DS-37744 \$10.98, © 4ZS-37744 \$8.98.**

**R. STRAUSS: *Also Sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30.* New York Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta cond. CBS ● 1M 35888 \$14.98, © HMT 35888 \$14.98.**

Performances: **Ormandy clear winner**  
Recordings: **Philadelphians have edge**

Here we have a digital double-header for Eugene Ormandy's third recording of *Zarathustra* and Zubin Mehta's second. When Mehta recorded the score for the first time, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1969, he came through with one of the most convincing performances by then committed to discs. The story this time around is quickly told. Whereas the earlier Ormandy recordings tended toward high gloss without much intensity, this one finds the veteran maestro and his orchestra tearing into the score in a manner worthy of the legendary Koussevitzky/Boston Symphony tour de force of the middle 1930s. His reading is extroverted, in contrast to the equally intense but more solemn one by Karajan on Deutsche Grammophon, and he treats the music almost as a kind of concerto for orchestra. The tempos are very steady, irresistibly propulsive, and Ormandy's command of the structure and texture of the music is absolute. Thanks to magnificent orchestral execution and the clarity of detail provided by digital mastering, one is more than usually

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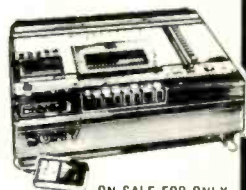
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aware of Strauss' subtle virtuosity in thematic transformation.

Mehta's way with the music is also on the extrovert side, but with a somewhat more rhapsodic touch in the pages that follow the thunderous climax of the "Science Fugue." This approach seems to underline the liabilities of the score's one major weak episode, the "Dance Song" with its prominent solo violin; by maintaining the basic pulse Ormandy manages to gloss over things here very neatly. For sound buffs, the most exciting section is the "Convalescent" episode with its sweeping orchestral gestures, octave trumpet fanfares, and dense, coruscating high percussion and woodwind parts. Both of the new recordings come through here with flying colors.

Episode for episode, the Ormandy reading is much the more exciting and convincing, and it also has a decided sonic edge. The room ambiance has just the right degree of brightness and reverberation to make the most of Strauss' scoring, and the Angel recording crew did a wonderful job with the stereo imaging in terms of panorama and detailed localization. The New York Philharmonic disc sounds more neutral and less bright in character and some-

how fails to project the inherent dynamism of the music. Both recordings have moments of nearly overbalanced sonorities: the horns with Mehta, the organ with Ormandy in the pages leading into the "Joys and Passions" episode. In both the dynamic range far surpasses that of the analog discs I had on hand; Angel's is the more impressive thanks to the more helpful room acoustic.

If you already own the analog recording by Mehta or Karajan, or the later Reiner/Chicago Symphony one, it is worth hanging onto. But the new Ormandy reading belongs in this elite company, and the recording job is definitely in the blockbuster class. *D.H.*

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**RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**VIVALDI: *Il Cimento dell'Armonia e dell'Invenzione, Op. 8: Concertos Nos. 5-10*** (RV 253, 180, 242, 332, 236, 362). Simon Standage (Baroque violin); Trevor Pinnock (harpsichord); the English Concert, Trevor Pinnock cond. VANGUARD VSD-71273 \$7.98.

**VIVALDI: *Il Cimento dell'Armonia e dell'Invenzione, Op. 8: Concertos Nos. 11***

**and 12** (RV 210, 178). *Flute Concerto in D Major, Op. 44, No. 7* (RV 429); *Cello Concerto in B Minor, Op. 16, No. 10* (RV 424). Simon Standage (Baroque violin); Stephen Preston (Baroque flute); Anthony Pleeth (Baroque cello); Trevor Pinnock (harpsichord); the English Concert, Trevor Pinnock cond. VANGUARD VSD-71274 \$7.98.

Performances: **Elegant**  
Recordings: **Excellent**

*The Four Seasons*, the first four concertos of Vivaldi's *Il Cimento*, are so universally celebrated that one tends to forget that there are eight other excellent concertos where they came from. Although they lack the programmatic interest of *The Seasons* (except for No. 5, *La Tempesta di Mare*), they are strong works that show Vivaldi in a particularly virile and imaginative frame of mind. If you have the first volume of the English Concert's *Il Cimento* (imported CRD 1025), you will want these to finish the set, and if you do not have any of them, you owe it to yourself to rush out and get these because of the fine music and performances. There is even the bonus of a concerto each for flute and cello.

The English Concert is certainly the most satisfying chamber orchestra today among those that employ original instruments and observe authentic performance practice (as it is understood now). Under the direction of Trevor Pinnock, the musicians play old instruments for musical purposes rather than as historic demonstrations. The ensemble's sound is pure and transparent, everything seems natural rather than studied, and the careful articulation and precise ensemble shed new light on Vivaldi's concertos. The music's rhythmic vitality, which is frequently treated as animalistic gruffness by performers of modern instruments, takes on an unexpected elegance, and charm softens the rough edges.

The soloists are all tops, and never does one feel that they are attempting to overcome the limitations of an earlier technology. They are virtuosos and express themselves fully. Only in the area of ornamentation is there a lack of freedom and imagination. The few ornaments here are far too chaste, and I wished that the musicians would simply let loose. But what they do offer is of such high quality that this is a minor complaint. *S.L.*

**COLLECTIONS**

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**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**JAMES GALWAY: *French Flute Concertos*. Ibert: *Concerto for Flute and Orchestra*. Chaminade: *Concertino, Op. 107*. Poulenc (orch. Berkeley): *Flute Sonata*. Fauré (orch. Galway): *Fantaisie, Op. 79*. James Galway (flute); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Dutoit cond. RCA ARL1-3777 \$8.98, © ARK1-3777 \$8.98.**

Performance: **Irresistible**  
Recording: **Transparent**

Cécile Chaminade, once known only by her *Scarf Dance* for piano, is at last beginning to build up a discography, which now includes two recordings each of her *Concertstück* for piano and orchestra and the concertino on this new disc. The concertino, a one-movement piece running exactly seven

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and a half minutes here, is quite a charmer and is most seductively played. The only real *concerto* on this record is the one by Ibert, and it is also the most familiar of the four works. The Poulenc entry is actually his similarly familiar sonata, performed here in the entirely idiomatic and marvelously effective orchestration of Sir Lennox Berkeley. Fauré himself (or his amanuensis, Koechlin) orchestrated a small section of his brief *Fantaisie*, originally for flute and piano, for use in his incidental music for *Pelléas et Mélisande*. James Galway's scoring of that section is more like the *Sicilienne* in *Pelléas* or Debussy's treatment of the Satie *Gymnopédies*, and his setting of the remainder is appropriately light and delicate, with nothing to distract from the eloquence of the solo line and more than a few imaginative little touches for the horns or lower strings. All the performances show the incredible Irishman at the top of his form, with first-rate partnership from Charles Dutoit and transparent sound. A must for flute fanciers and well-nigh irresistible, I think, to anyone with ears. R.F.

**GREATEST HITS OF 1790.** Beethoven: *The Ruins of Athens: Turkish March. Minuet in G. Für Elise.* Mozart: *Piano Concerto No. 21 (K 467): Andante. Piano Sonata No. 11: Turkish March.* Haydn: *String Quartet in F Major, Op. 3, No. 5: Andante Cantabile ("Serenade"). Trumpet Concerto in E-flat Major: Finale.* Gossec: *Gavotte.* Boccherini: *String Quintet in A Major: Minuet.* Gluck: *Orfeo: Dance of the Blessed Spirits.* Chick Corea (piano, in Mozart concerto); Edward Carroll (trumpet, in Haydn concerto); Hubert Laws (flute, in Gossec and Gluck); Philharmonia Virtuosi of New York, Richard Kapp cond. CBS 1M 35858 \$14.98, © HMT 35858 \$14.98.

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

Having raked in the shekels for their "Greatest Hits of 1720" and its sequel, "Greatest Hits of 1721," Richard Kapp and his Philharmonia Virtuosi skip to the last decade of the same century to provide a program that amounts to a compendium of musical clichés of the period. It should make a mint. The pieces are intriguingly dressed for the occasion—Mr. Kapp's settings of *Für Elise* (as a kind of tiny concerto for piano and orchestra), the *Turkish March* from *The Ruins of Athens*, and the *Minuet in G* prove that those hardy survivors can wear just about anything and still be attractive—but is Chick Corea really the ideal pianist for the *Andante* from Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 21* ("Elvira Madigan")? No matter; at least he plays all the notes, and who knows what love of the classics might be instilled through repeated hearings of these miniature masterpieces! Besides, if Mr. Corea seems a little out of his depth in Mozart, flutist Herbert Laws and trumpeter Edward Carroll acquit themselves superbly in their assignments, and the Philharmonia Virtuosi, thanks in part to the digital recording process, have never sounded more virtuosic. P.K.

**HEINZ HOLLIGER: Chamber Music for Oboe and Strings** (see *Best of the Month*, page 74)



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## Four New InSync Cassettes

CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY temporarily ceased producing discs some two years ago and has concentrated instead on building up a high-quality cassette line, which now includes more than fifty releases. This "Laboratory Series" of cassettes, produced in collaboration with InSync Laboratories, offers not only some of the best of Connoisseur Society's previous recordings but newly made ones as well, all on Dolby-processed, chromium-dioxide tape and duplicated in real time, not by a high-speed process. The label's disc recordings of piano performances by Ivan Moravec, Ruth Laredo, and Antonio Barbosa were among the finest sonic achievements prior to the advent of digitally mastered and direct-cut "super-discs," and the new cassette line represents the state of the art in that format too.

The latest Connoisseur Society/InSync cassettes duplicate some of the repertoire, but not the performances, of earlier releases, and comparisons are instructive. Antonio Barbosa shows far greater stylistic control in his new recording of a number of Liszt's transcriptions of Schubert songs than Oxana Yablonskaya did on her earlier one, and he also has the benefit of better-defined sonics. As for the music itself, at his

best Liszt was able to transform the songs into miniature tone poems (for instance, *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, *Wohin?*, *Auf dem Wasser zu Singen*, and *Horch, Horch die Lerche*). If his version of *Die Forelle* seems rather over-elaborate, he made of *Der Erlkönig* a celebrated virtuoso vehicle (Josef Hofmann made a remarkable recording of it in the early years of this century).

Comparison of Ruth Laredo's new recording of Scriabin's Sonata No. 9 with her 1970 one on C-4017 reveals a greater freedom of phrasing and richness of coloration in the remake. Her treatments of several Debussy pieces and of the youthful Prokofiev Sonata No. 3 on the same new cassette are similarly less "uptight" than previously, and her reading of the (in)famous Rachmaninoff C-sharp Minor Prelude is a sonic tour de force.

ON his new cassette, David Bar-Illan gives a super-virile treatment to the end movements of Schubert's *Wanderer* Fantasy, which suits the work well when it is done as tastefully as it is here. It is really a first-rate performance all around. His performance of the Mendelssohn Rondo Capriccioso is luxurious in the introductory an-

dante, perhaps a bit hectic in the virtuosic main part. Impetuosity dominates Bar-Illan's reading of the Schumann G Minor Sonata too, but this work can also take such an approach easily.

Wanda Wilkomirska, that formidable queen of violinists from Poland, completes her survey of Karol Szymanowski's music for violin and piano (the Op. 30 *Mythes* are on InSync C 4010). One hears the *Notturmo e Tarantella* relatively frequently as a virtuoso encore, but the other pieces on this cassette are virtually unknown. Best among them are the excerpts from the great *Harnasie* ballet score (the Postlude and the Highlanders' Dance, grouped here under a single title) and the exquisite *Berceuse* from the same last period of the composer's creative life. The Op. 23 Romance strikes me as lengthy relative to its musical substance, as does the early D Minor Sonata, for all its violinistic know-how (it seems to be a rather Franckian essay but without the terseness of that composer's masterly Sonata in A Major).

THERE is little left to be desired in these cassettes in terms of frequency range and balance, both musically and sonically. My only sonic criticism is that the level may be a bit too high, and there is a slight but audible pre-echo in almost all the new releases—perhaps a characteristic of chromium-dioxide tapes. For the price of \$14.98 apiece, however, cassette buyers deserve nothing but the best. —David Hall

**MENDELSSOHN: Rondo Capriccioso in E Major, Op. 14. SCHUMANN: Piano Sonata No. 2, in G Minor, Op. 22. SCHUBERT: Fantasy in C Major (D. 760, "Wanderer").** David Bar-Illan (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY/INSYNC © C 4061 \$14.98.

**RACHMANINOFF: Prelude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 3, No. 2. DEBUSSY: Préludes: Feux d'Artifice; Bruyères; La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin. Images: Reflets dans l'Eau. S Scriabin: Etude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 2, No. 1; Poem in F-sharp Minor, Op. 32, No. 1; Piano Sonata No. 9, in F Minor, Op. 68 ("Black Mass"). PROKOFIEV: Piano Sonata No. 3, in A Minor, Op. 38.** Ruth Laredo (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY/INSYNC © C 4060 \$14.98.

**SCHUBERT/LISZT: Die Forelle; Der Erlkönig; Auf dem Wasser zu Singen; Du Bist die Ruh; Horch, Horch die Lerche; Wohin?; Frühlingsglaube; Gretchen am Spinnrade; Ave Maria.** Antonio Barbosa (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY/INSYNC © C 4058 \$14.98.

**SZYMANOWSKI: Notturmo e Tarantella, Op. 28; Dance from "Harnasie," Op. 51; Romance, Op. 23; Berceuse, Op. 52; Violin Sonata in D Minor, Op. 9.** Wanda Wilkomirska (violin); Tadeusz Chmielewski (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY/INSYNC © C 4059 \$14.98.

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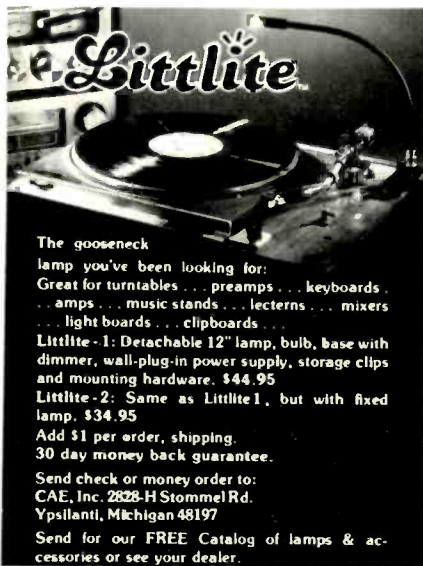
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*Kremer's Tchaikovsky*

**S**TILL in his thirties, and still not everywhere recognized, Gidon Kremer has already become one of the handful of great interpretive musicians of our time. Performing ability he has in abundance, but it becomes more and more evident that his real importance lies in his rethinking of the violin repertoire both as a whole and in its previously most standardized parts. Certainly he has rethought the Tchaikovsky concerto. There are almost limitless fine recordings of this attractive warhorse, but I have never heard another like Kremer's, just released on Deutsche Grammophon.

It seems to me that Kremer has turned his back on the whole Leopold Auer tradition of performing the work and given us an interpretation that differs not so much in tempo and dynamics as in the excision of what is frequently called schmaltz. The big throb is not there, the glossiness has been sanded away, a little grit has been thrown into the smoothness of execution. What we get is a rendition that is highly expressive in a new way, that is virtually casual where it is usually grand, dramatic where it is often routine, and where the violin as protagonist in the drama has become humanly vulnerable instead of mindlessly heroic. There are little scrapes and stutters and tones that are not so beautiful as they are expressive, passages of technical wizardry that do *not* call attention to themselves, and it all seems to come together as an *interpretation* rather than a performance.

Kremer plays the first movement as I imagine someone like Szigeti might have done if he had played the concerto (I do not know for sure, but I strongly doubt he ever did). The second movement is no rich,

throbbing canzonetta, but the re-creation of a sad village tune played by a sad village fiddler. The orchestral interjection that begins the finale thus finds us unprepared and hits like a cannon shell, the finale itself goes like the north wind when it goes and like a respite from a storm when it doesn't. Truly, there is more of the kind of "Russianness" I associate with Mussorgsky in this concerto than I would have believed possible.

Somehow conductor Lorin Maazel and the Berlin Philharmonic seem to have gotten inside this highly personal and original interpretation, and they do their part (which is far more than mere accompaniment) brilliantly and affectingly. The triumph at the close seems more than earned by all. To the filler on the disc, the *Sérénade Mélancolique*, both soloist and orchestra lend a measure of dignity the work does not always enjoy. Kremer's playing is smoother here, for the work is far more fragile than the concerto and dramatically there is far less at stake.

Overall, the digital recording seems excellent without calling attention to itself save at those moments when the dynamic range gratefully exceeds what one expects. A startling disc, and certainly a rendition of the concerto to balance off against your old Oistrakh or Heifetz (or Milstein, Chung, Friedman, Stern, Perlman, etc.) recording.

—James Goodfriend

**TCHAIKOVSKY: Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35; Sérénade Mélancolique, Op. 26.** Gidon Kremer (violin); Berlin Philharmonic, Lorin Maazel cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ● 2532 001 \$10.98, © 3302 001 \$10.98.



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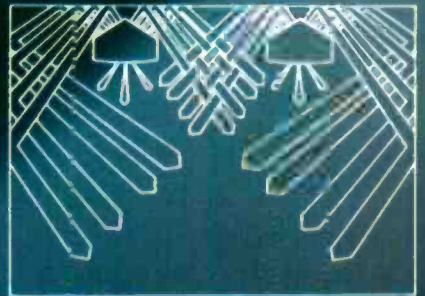
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