

JULY 1980 • \$1.25

Stereo Review

COMPARATIVE LISTENING TESTS: How far can they be trusted?

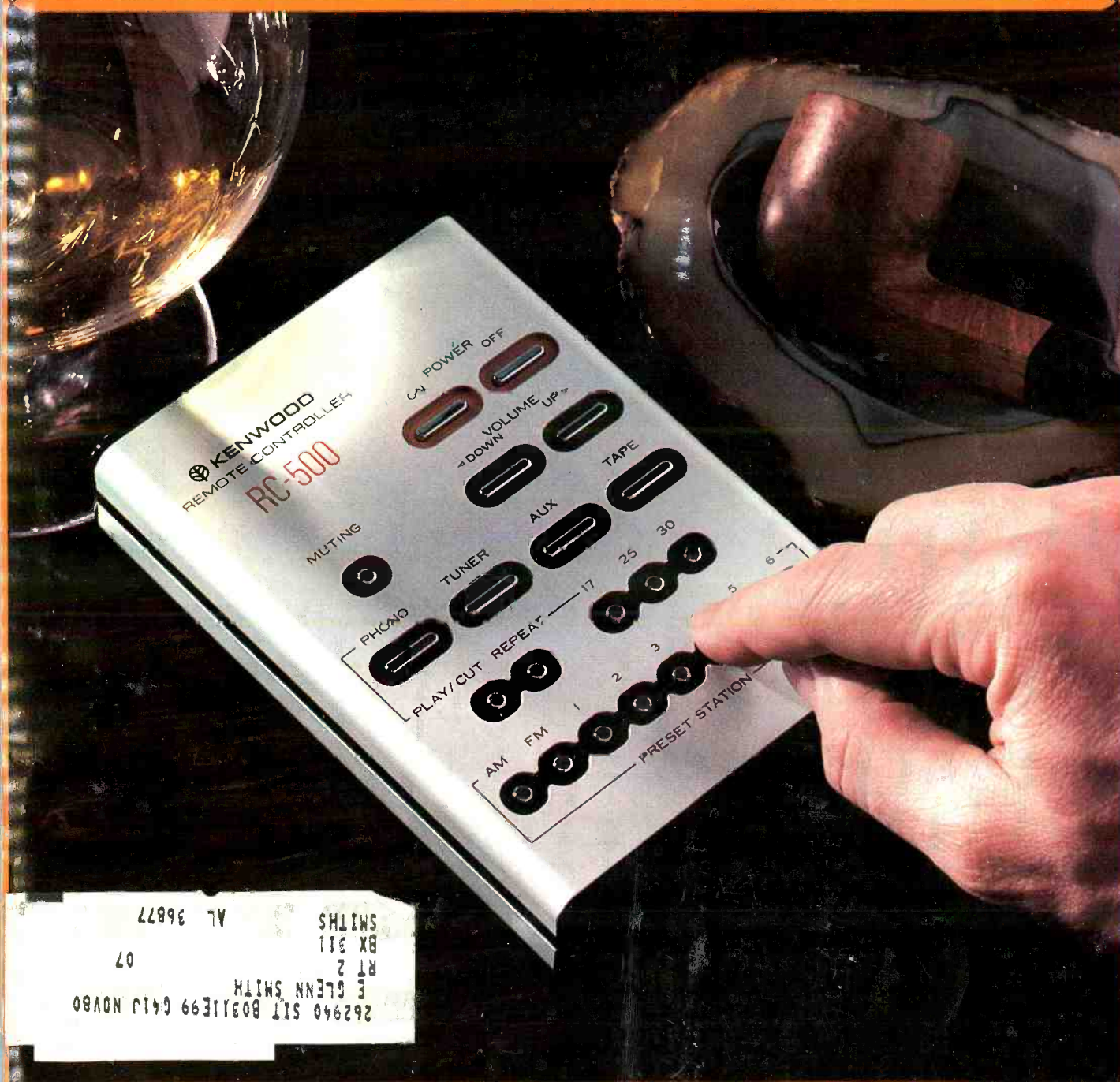
SINGER CORY DAYE: undaunted • HARPIST MARISA ROBLES: indefatigable

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS: Adcom GFA-1 Power Amplifier

Dynaco A-150 Speaker System • Garrard GT350ap Record Player

Koss HV/X and HV/XLC Stereo Headphones • Sansui G-7700 AM/FM Stereo Receiver

New developments in **REMOTE CONTROL** for your stereo system



WITH ONLY ONE EXCEPTION, THIS IS THE MOST REMARKABLE TAPE DECK IN THE WORLD.



But without exception it's the most remarkable cassette deck.

Today, a thousand dollars or more is standard fare for a professional quality cassette deck. But when Pioneer designed the new CT-F1250, they not only raised the performance standards of high quality decks, they also lowered the standard price.

Metal tape capability is something most new high quality cassette decks have in common. But while many of them have just been modified for this advancement, the Pioneer CT-F1250 has been specially designed for it.

Instead of the two heads found in most metal capable tape decks, the CT-F1250 has three. And it's these three heads that keep us way ahead of the competition.

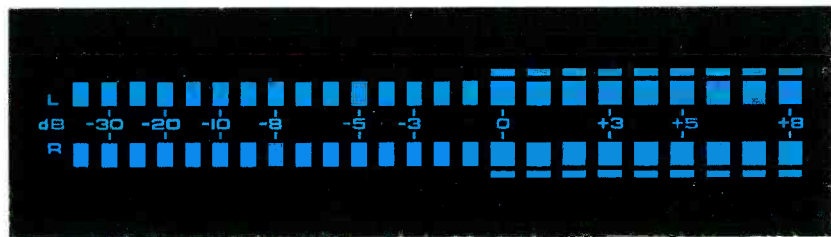
Our new "small window" erase head makes a big difference in making sure all metal tapes are wiped completely clean. And our Uni-Crystal Ferrite recording and playback heads give you greater frequency response and better wear-resistance than the ordinary ferrite and Sendust alloy heads you'll find on most other tape decks.

But you don't get distortion-free recordings just by using your heads.

Instead of the single capstan tape transport system you'll find on some tape decks that are nearly twice the price, the CT-F1250 has a closed-loop dual capstan system, similar to that found in our remarkable RT-909 open-reel deck. This system

keeps the tape in perfect contact with the heads at all times. So you are assured of getting everything that's on

Pioneer's 24-Segment Fluorescan Meter gives you an instantaneous picture of what you're listening to.



the tape. Nothing more; nothing less. What's more, the CT-F1250 has a Quartz-Locked Direct Drive capstan motor that senses the slightest deviation in speed and automatically corrects it to keep wow and flutter down to an unbelievable 0.03%.

It's engineering innovations like these that make the CT-F1250 so remarkable. But equally remarkable are the features that make the CT-F1250 so easy to operate.

Like our specially engineered Tape Calibration System that lets you quickly set bias level, Dolby adjustment, and record equalization for the best possible signal-to-noise ratio, the lowest distortion, and the best high frequency response.

And our 24 segment Fluorescan meter that works on Pioneer's own microprocessor to give you a more accurate reading of what you're listening to. It even has Peak, Peak Hold, and Average Buttons that let you record without fear of overload.

In addition Pioneer's CT-F1250 has a digital brain with a memory that controls four different memory functions. Plus pitch control. Mic/line mixing. Independent left/right input/output controls. And more.

By now, it must be obvious that the CT-F1250 was designed to push up the limits of cassette deck performance. But only Pioneer would do it, without pushing up cassette deck prices.



Metal tape capability for far greater dynamic range and far less distortion.

WITH ONLY ONE EXCEPTION, THIS IS THE MOST REMARKABLE TAPE DECK IN THE WORLD.



PIONEER®
We bring it back alive.

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Pioneer's easy-to-use Tape Calibration System guarantees optimum performance from every tape.

But without exception it's the most remarkable reel-to-reel.

Today, many audio manufacturers are putting a lot less into their tape decks and charging a lot more for them. But when Pioneer designed their new RT-909 open-reel tape deck they made certain it had every conceivable feature an audiophile could expect.

And one feature that was totally unexpected. A reasonable price.

Even if you pay \$1500 or more for a so called "professional" quality tape deck, you'll probably still be getting a

conventional single capstan tape transport system that is prone to wow and flutter.

Pioneer's RT-909 has a specially designed closed-loop dual capstan system that isolates the tape at the heads from any external interference. So you get constant tape-to-head contact. And constant, clear, accurate sound.

And while many of the expensive new tape decks have old fashioned drive systems that drive up heat and distortion, the RT-909 doesn't. Instead, it has a far more accurate DC motor that generates its own frequency to correct any variations in tape speed. And keeps wow and flutter down to an unheard of 0.04% at 7½ ips.

What's more, the drive system of the RT-909 is unaffected by fluctuations in voltage. So a drop in voltage doesn't mean a drop in performance. The RT-909 also has a logic system that ensures smooth, accurate speed change.

Most professional quality tape decks are designed for use outside the home. So the convenience features

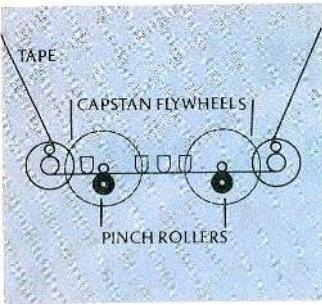
most audiophiles enjoy are nowhere to be found. The RT-909, on the other hand, offers automatic reverse, automatic repeat, and a timer controllable mechanism that lets you record a midnight concert even if you can't stay awake for it.

Examine our heads and you'll see Pioneer engineers at their very best. Our playback heads, for example, have a new "contourless" design that makes them more sensitive. They increase frequency response upwards to 28,000 hertz, and extend it all the way down to 20 hertz. So you not only get greater range than any other tape deck, but also any other musical instrument.

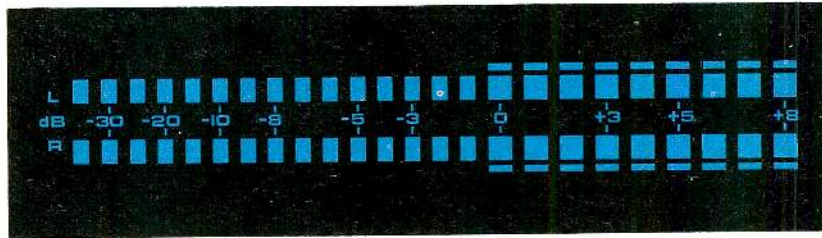
Of course, these features alone would make Pioneer's RT-909 quite a remarkable tape deck.

But the RT-909 also has a Fluroscan metering system that gives you an instantaneous picture of what you're listening to. A pitch control that lets you listen to music in perfect pitch even if it was far from perfectly recorded. Four different bias/equalization selections so you can use many tapes and get maximum performance from them all.

Obviously these advancements are very impressive. But there's still one thing even more remarkable than the technology we feature. It's the price we feature.



Pioneer's Closed-Loop Dual Capstan Tape Transport System ensures constant tape to head contact.

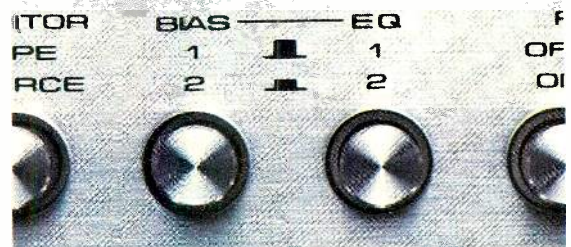


Pioneer's 24-Segment Fluroscan Meter gives you an instantaneous picture of what you're listening to.

PIONEER®

We bring it back alive.

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CIRCLE NO. 63 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Independent bias and equalization for maximum performance from any tape.

Five Important Reasons Why You Should Own This New 10-Band Equalizer.

1. Matches your system to any room.

Some rooms are acoustically "dead" due to thick carpeting and tons of overstuffed furniture. Some are acoustically "live" because of tile floors and hardwood paneling. Either environment will murder your music by altering the sound you hear by 6 decibels or more. Ordinary **broad-band** bass and treble controls can't compensate for these imbalances because they alter far too much of the audio spectrum. But the Realistic wide-range equalizer, with 10 **narrow bands** and 10 controls for each channel, gives you total command from 31 to 16,000 Hz. You can add to or subtract from the music by up to 12 dB for a complete, creative control range of 24 dB.

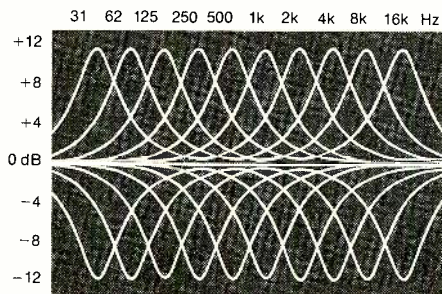
2. Improves records, tapes, FM.

Remove annoying record scratches from old LPs and 78s without remov-

ing the music. Just reduce the audio level at 8 and 16 kHz. Rumble is eliminated with the 31 and 62 Hz controls but the bass remains intact. Substandard audio from careless radio stations can be cleaned up by a little re-equalization on your part.

3. Improves your speakers.

Moving a speaker just 6" out from a wall can degrade bass response by 8 to 10 dB. But sometimes you have to. This equalizer restores the lost performance. And you can enhance the sound of the best speakers even



Graphic display of maximum boost and cut action

when they're perfectly placed. Electronic equalization is the only way you can extend the response of a speaker.

4. Makes you a recording pro.

Now you can record professional-sounding tapes without professionally priced equipment. Using a 3-head deck, you can monitor off the tape and adjust the equalizer for the results you want.

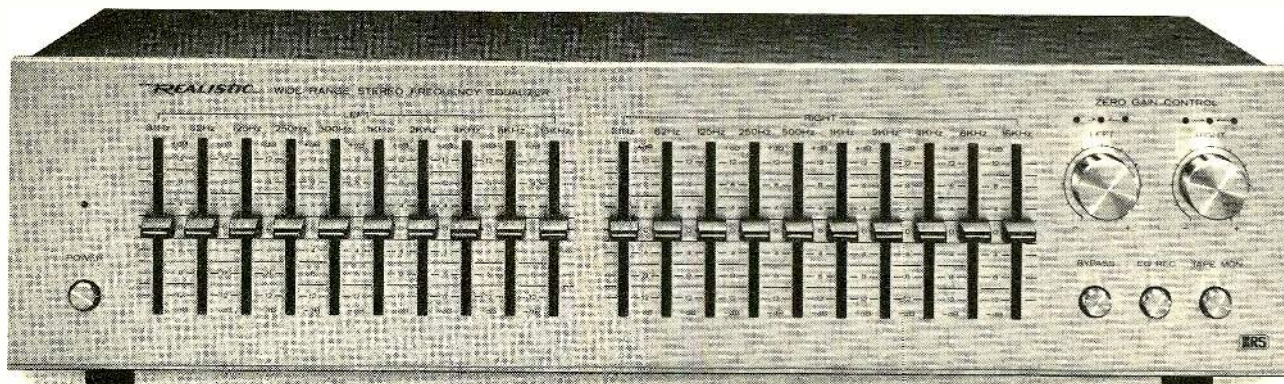
5. Low priced.

Lower than any 10-band design of comparable features and quality that we know of. Yet it adds value, versatility and enjoyment to your stereo system, no matter what you paid for it! Can you afford **not** to own it? Come in and let us demonstrate a little "audio magic".

Bands: 31, 62, 125, 250, 500, 1000, 2000, 4000, 8000 and 16,000 Hz. Frequency Response: 5 to 50,000 Hz. Tone Control Range: ± 12 dB. THD: .02%, 20-20,000 Hz.

Dynamic Range: Up to 10 volts RMS, flat setting. Total Gain: 0 dB, flat setting. Electrical: 120VAC, 15 watts, U.L. listed. Size: 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x16 $\frac{3}{4}$ "x10 $\frac{1}{4}$ ".

The Realistic® \$179.95* Audio Upgrader Does It All!



Radio Shack®

THE NATIONWIDE SUPERMARKET OF SOUND®

*Retail price may vary at individual stores and dealers

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

Stereo Review[®]

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COVER: Design by Borys Patchowsky; photo by Bruce Pendleton. For more on the future of remote-control audio see page 60.

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DISCWASHER D4 SYSTEM



A NEW STANDARD OF RECORD CARE

NEW D4 FLUID

Inherently more active against record contamination. Inherently safe for record vinyl. Preferentially absorptive formula carries all contamination off the record.

NEW D4 FABRIC

Unique directional fibers preferentially remove fluid and contamination. D4 fabric results in clearly better cleaning, better drying and ultimately residue-free surfaces.

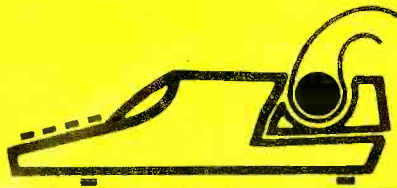
UNMATCHED VALUE

The Discwasher D4 System is enhanced by the durability and aesthetics of the hand-finished walnut handle. Included in the D4 System are the DC-1 Pad Cleaner and new instructions.

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PRODUCTS TO CARE FOR YOUR MUSIC

Discwasher, Inc., 1407 N. Providence Rd., Columbia, MO 65201

CIRCLE NO. 15 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Edited by William Livingstone

• SYNTHESIZED STEREO SOUND FOR WGN-TV has been developed by United Video, the company that carries programming from the Chicago station to cable TV systems throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and Alaska. Subscribers with FM hookups can watch WGN on TV and through an FM receiver tune in the audio portion of the program with an electronically synthesized stereo effect.

• CROSSOVERS: Linda Ronstadt makes her acting debut as Mabel in Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta The Pirates of Penzance in New York this summer. The show, produced by the Public Theater, will run in Central Park from July 15 to August 24....Grand Ole Opry star Loretta Lynn and opera star Luciano Pavarotti have taped a segment of the TV show Omnibus to air this summer. The coal-miner's daughter and the baker's son discuss their small-town origins. He sings Women Are Fickle. She sings I'm Pregnant Again. No necessary lyrical connection.

• FESTA!, A GUIDE TO PERFORMING ARTS in the United States, lists more than two thousand events, including arts festivals, symphony concerts, chamber music, historic pageants, jazz, opera, country music, summer stock, dance, and other kinds of entertainment. The book gives addresses, phones, ticket prices, driving time from nearest city, availability of parking, and so forth. Price: \$5.95 plus \$1.25 for postage and handling. Write FESTA!, Box 1266 (r), Edison, N.J. 08817.

• TWO NEW VOCAL SHOWS BEGIN IN JULY on National Public Radio. Soprano Phyllis Curtin is commentator on "The Art of Song," a series of recitals by such artists as Martti Talvela and Frederica von Stade. "NPR World of Opera" will present thirteen of the most highly acclaimed U.S. productions of the last two years recorded live in performance. In addition to six U.S. premières, the series will include the world premières of Robert Ward's Claudia Legare and Stephen Paulus' The Village Singer. Check local National Public Radio stations for exact times.

• FIRST-PRIZE WINNERS IN THE KEYBOARD talent search conducted by the Baldwin Piano and Organ Co. and the Liberace Foundation of Las Vegas are: organist Robert B. Speaker, nineteen, and pianist Janet M. Carr, twenty-six. Both winners are from St. Petersburg, Florida, better known heretofore as a geriatric center than as a hotbed of undiscovered young talent. You figure it out.

• PRICEY NEW EQUIPMENT includes a home terminal, Starscan, that will receive over twenty channels of TV programming from satellites now in orbit above the earth. Price: \$10,000. For nearest dealer, write to Starscan, Gardiner Communications, 1980 South Post Oak, Suite 2040, Houston, Texas 77056. For audiophiles more interested in the past, Art Shifrin has developed and is marketing an electronic phonograph for playing antique cylinder recordings. The unit has a modified Rabco SL8-E arm and a Stanton 310B preamp and 500 series cartridge. Price: \$5,000. Write Art Shifrin, Box 128, Little Neck, N.Y. 11363.

• A 50-INCH (DIAGONAL) COLOR TV SET is in the early development stages at RCA. Similar in size to projection-TV screens, the display panel will be only 4 inches thick and can be mounted on a wall like a picture. The display consists of forty modules, each 1 inch wide and 30 inches high, fastened side by side to form a single screen. RCA engineers estimate that it will be close to 1990 before such a system can be manufactured at a price the home consumer will be willing to pay.

• CLASSICAL AWARDS: To mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne, New York City's highest cultural award, the Handel Medallion; to conductor Antal Dorati, a gold disc from British Decca honoring sales of two million records worldwide; to soprano Victoria de los Angeles, an award from EMI for "outstanding sales of Puccini's La Bohème"; to pianist Rudolf Serkin, an honorary doctorate from Columbia University; and to soprano Beverly Sills, the U.S. Medal of Freedom.

Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



GOOD NEWS TONIGHT?

JUDGING by the unusual number of journalists who turned out for a CBS Records press conference in mid May, the world is hungry for anything that looks like good news from the record industry. What CBS had to tell us is that it has decided to embrace the "new technology" in recording by introducing its Mastersound series of three kinds of "audiophile" records and tapes: digitally recorded (but still, of course, analog mastered) discs, half-speed-mastered reissue discs of recent pop successes, and chromium-dioxide "extended-range" cassettes. The discs will be pressed on a special proprietary vinyl, given 100 per cent visual inspection *plus* computer-monitored playback, and packaged in a static-reducing inner sleeve and a heavy-gauge plastic outer envelope (*not* shrink

wrap) to sell at \$14.98 (!) suggested list.

Columbia is only the latest of the world's major record producers to hop aboard the digital bandwagon. London has already had success with last year's releases of the digitally recorded "New Year's in Vienna!" (two discs for \$19.96) and the Mahler Fourth (Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic, \$9.98), RCA rather less with its Ormandy/Philadelphia Bartók Concerto for Orchestra (\$9.98)—but it is about to bring out the first domestic digital sampler anyway (Schumann's First Symphony, Mendelssohn's *Hebrides*, Emanuel Ax in a slice of Mozart concerto), \$7.98 for early birds, \$9.98 later. Angel has just introduced the first albums in its new digital series (\$10.98), and if the Previn Debussy is any measure (reviewer James Goodfriend last month

called it "unquestionably a landmark in the history of recorded music"), success is assured. Vox is about to embark on a digital recording program (the discs to be pressed, for quality reasons, at CBS Canada), and Deutsche Grammophon seems disposed to wait until it can enter the lists in full panoply: Herbert von Karajan conducting *Parsifal* in what is reputed to be the most costly recording project ever undertaken (London's *Fidelio*, however, to be reviewed next month, will have the honor of being the first digital opera).

Does this mean that the record industry has finally taken years of consumer complaints about quality seriously? No. Recording quality is directly related to record prices, and as long as they stayed low, quality suffered. The quality complaints came mostly from the classical side, the money from the popular side; as long as popular sales held up, there was no incentive to do anything about quality. With the continuing radical decline in pop sales, however, the majors developed a keen interest in the tidy profits being racked up by the "audiophile" labels with their technology-based "super-sound"—direct-to-disc, half-speed mastering, 45-rpm, and digital. Digital turns out to be the most attractive format for many reasons, not the least being the fact that it alone is a bridge to the (so far) pirate-proof technology of the videodisc.

There is, in short, at long last, some promising ferment in the innovation-shy record industry, an opportunity (and perhaps the money) to make some substantive changes in the way it operates. It should, at the very least, be possible to free the creative end of the business from constraints placed on it by the sales department. It is now demonstrated fiscal folly to try to feed a record market composed of hundreds of minority tastes as if it had but one appetite, and that satisfiable in 10,000-unit bites. □

Stereo Review

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MEMOREX HIGH BIAS TEST NO. 5.

WHICH HIGH BIAS TAPE STANDS UP TO A GENRAD REAL-TIME ANALYZER?



The GenRad 1995 Real-Time Analyzer is among today's state-of-the-art devices for accurately measuring and displaying audio signals. That's why we used it to show that MEMOREX HIGH BIAS is today's state-of-the-art high bias cassette tape.

When tested at standard recording levels against other high bias tapes, none had a flatter frequency response than MEMOREX HIGH BIAS.

And, the signal/noise ratio of MEMOREX HIGH BIAS proved to be unsurpassed at the critical high end.

Proof you can't buy a high bias cassette that gives you truer reproduction. And isn't that what you buy a high bias tape for?

Is it live, or is it
MEMOREX



CIRCLE NO. 35 ON READER SERVICE CARD



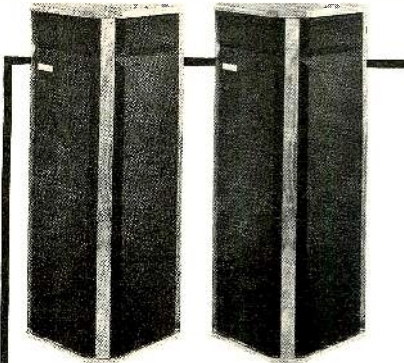
The GenRad 1995 Integrating Real-Time Analyzer measured signals from a Nakamichi 582 cassette deck. Input signal source was "pink noise" at 0dB (200 nanowebers—standard record level). If you'd like a copy of the test results, please send a self-addressed, stamped business-size envelope to the address below. Ask for the GenRad Test.



For unbeatable performance in a normal bias tape, look for Memorex with MRX₁ Oxide, in the black package.

Original.

original *n*: that from which a copy, reproduction or translation is made. (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary)



The ALLISON: ONE® Room Matched® loudspeaker system was introduced in 1974. It was the first direct-radiator system ever designed to use room-boundary reflections constructively, so that flat acoustic power could be radiated into a listening room throughout the full frequency range.

Now, more than five years after, we are pleased to see systems based on this concept being marketed by AR, Design Acoustics, and Snell (if we've omitted anyone, our apologies). To all such we say, "Welcome aboard." The more of us there are, the better.

But imitation does not mean replication. Only Allison® loudspeaker systems are manufactured under U.S. Patent No. 3,983,333, which teaches the most effective and least costly ways to make Room Matched loudspeakers. Only Allison systems have convex-diaphragm tweeters and mid-range drivers, which combine high output capability and unmatched dispersion. And only Allison systems are available in models designed for use with one, two, or three intersecting room boundaries.

Information on the complete line, including specifications, a list of authorized dealers, and details of our Full Warranty for Five Years, is available on request.

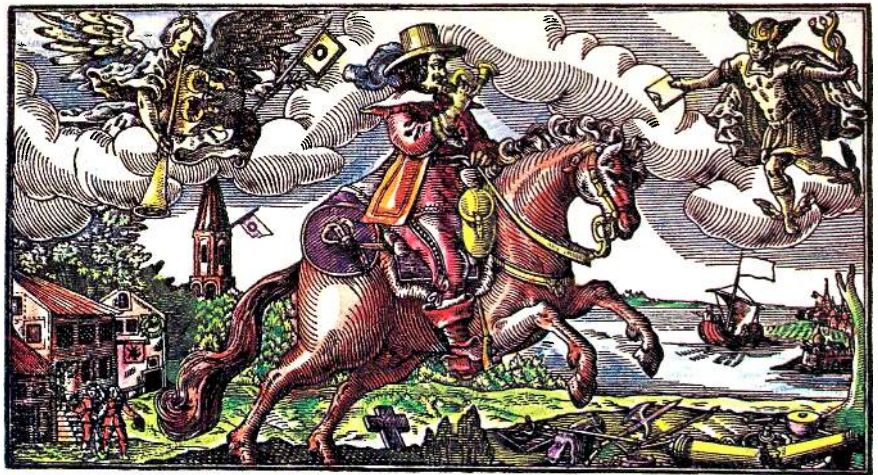
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CIRCLE NO. 2 ON READER SERVICE CARD



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mireille Mathieu

● I just had to write and say how much I enjoyed Peter Reilly's May review of the new Mireille Mathieu album. Like him, I've been enjoying her recordings for ten years or more, even though I don't know French at all. It's good to have an English-language album by her to add to my collection. I remember hearing her *La Dernière Valse* in a record store for the first time. The shop owner put the record on the player, I put on the headphones, and I said "yes" even before she had begun to sing; the piano opening alone sold me! Please keep on promoting her!

SUSAN CLARK SIEFFERMAN
Decatur, Ill.

● Critics who spend most of their time rationalizing lousy records by washed-up Sixties heroes such as Country Joe McDonald and Jefferson Starship shouldn't try to sort out the New Wave/punk tangle. These aren't separate entities; rather, punk is (actually was) just a part of the New Wave. And no matter how you look at it, both sprang up in reaction against people like Linda Ronstadt. The Sex Pistols didn't start playing in the hope of being accepted or recognized by Ronstadt—or Noel Coppage. They wanted to—and *did*—make her absolutely irrelevant. She can cover *Anarchy in the U.K.* if she wants to; she's still a relic.

DAVE ALEXANDER
Flint, Mich.

Linda Ronstadt

● I've got to give Noel Coppage a hand for his May review of Linda Ronstadt's "Mad Love" album. He's right: Linda is an institution. When will the Top-40 stations wake up and quit treating her music the way they do a Bee Gees single? Linda Ronstadt has made the New Wave sound a more respectable, convincing force in a field where the artists have left most listeners in a state of utter confusion. Listening to the hodgepodge of new sounds and styles, I often wonder what rock is coming to. "Mad Love" is a pleasant change of pace, as well as being a milestone in Ronstadt's career.

RANDALL G. RAMPY
Warrenton, Va.

● My congratulations to Noel Coppage for the way he handled Linda Ronstadt's change of direction in his May review of "Mad Love." Female artists seem to be particularly vulnerable to audience dissatisfaction when they try something new. Carly Simon does a little too much "attitude dancing" herself, and I will never forget the funny feeling I got when I first heard Streisand sing disco. Mr. Coppage was direct and to the point, his words evoking a spirit of truth I had thought was all but dead in this media-herded world.

AL TAYLOR JR.
Circleville, Ohio

Audio Courses

● Robert Greene's May "Audio Basics" column on audio education should be of considerable assistance to those interested in such training, but there was one significant omission. Synergetic Audio Concepts offers three-day seminars in sound engineering and acoustics that are surprisingly detailed for the time they take. Their address is P.O. Box 1115, San Juan Capistrano, Calif. 92693.

BOB NORMAN
New York, N.Y.

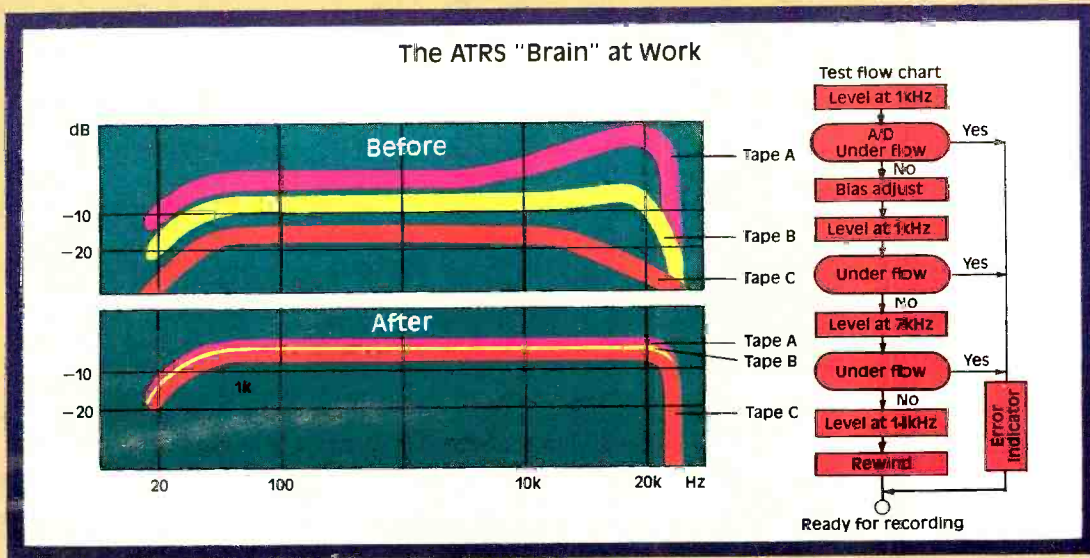
Synergetic Audio Concepts was included by implication, since they are listed (though at an older address) in the Audio Engineering Society Directory of Courses referred to in the column. Space did not (does not) permit our naming every worthy organization or institution individually.

Service Questions

● Regarding the item "Questions Question" in April's "Audio Q. and A.": the reason so many component owners write to STEREO REVIEW first when they have trouble is that letters to manufacturers are usually either completely ignored or else answered by a "nothing letter" saying only "Thank you for your interest. Send your (Continued on page 10)

The brain.

Hitachi puts it in charge of sensitivity, bias and EQ.



ATRS (Automatic Tape Response System)

The ATRS brain is a sophisticated microcomputer that's built into the Hitachi D-5500M Cassette Deck. Because there are hundreds of different tapes on the market, ATRS was designed to match bias and EQ settings to the precise characteristics of each one you use.

Press the test button while in record and in 20 seconds ATRS carries out six calibration functions. It also has three individual memories for the test results of the three tapes you use most frequently.

The D-5500M adds to that little miracle of technology a few more Hitachi firsts. Like full IC logic detachable control block that doubles as a wireless infrared remote unit. A direct-drive Unitorque™ motor (0.028% WRMS wow and flutter). And a close-gap R&P three-head system.

The Hitachi D-5500M Cassette Deck with ATRS. It never stops thinking about your music.



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CIRCLE NO. 21 ON READER SERVICE CARD

unit to the nearest friendly service station. Have a nice day." Even the reader service cards in the magazine are a joke; last September I requested information on some twenty items and only received it on five.

JOSEPH LOUX
Hightstown, N.J.

The Editor replies: I can't account for their ignoring your letters, but with the best will in the world there are some problems manufacturers can do nothing about through the mails; that's why they set up warranty stations. Long-distance diagnosis is a chancy thing at best (as our "Audio Q. and A." column often demonstrates), and there is really nothing to equal "hands-on."

Also keep in mind that it usually helps to maintain one's civility when approaching someone else for help. It is exasperating to have a component blow up or break down, and the squeaky wheel does (sometimes) get the grease, but I've seen (copies of) letters to manufacturers that accuse them of everything from the loss of Eden to fomenting World War III, hardly the way to gain someone's sympathetic attention. As for the reader service cards, yes, some manufacturers are lax in responding to these—you'd think they'd be eager to get their hands on a live one!—probably because the unexpected volume of card response catches them off guard. (STEREO REVIEW, by the way, does not mail out manufactur-

ers' information; we merely forward names and addresses on the cards to the manufacturers concerned.)

Danny Stiles, Danny Stiles

Chris Albertson has made the common mistake of assuming that there is only one Danny Stiles in the music field. Well, there are two. One is the trumpet player whose new album Mr. Albertson reviewed in the March issue; the other is the WEVD disc jockey. I've been listening to the latter's program off and on for the past five years, however, and the closest thing I've heard to a "vintage jazz recording" was Mr. Cohen sung by Sophie Tucker.

CHARLES TUBICK
Norwalk, Conn.

Wonder "Plants"

After reading Zita Allen's review in February of Stevie Wonder's "Journey Through the Secret Life of Plants," I bought the album at the earliest opportunity. To say I was not disappointed is an understatement! It is incredibly beautiful, and Ms. Allen's ironic remark that it has "intensely visual" cuts hits the nail directly on the head. I'll be sure to see the movie when it comes out; if it equals the soundtrack it will certainly be a success. If not, well, at least I'll hear Wonder's music again. The man is indeed a genius.

JOHN D. TIDBALL
Pirmasens, West Germany

City Boy

I was quite disappointed with Joel Vance's review of City Boy's album "The Day the Earth Caught Fire" in the January issue. He calls them a "new British group," but this is their fifth album, so they are hardly new to rock. And in my opinion each of their albums is exceptional. City Boy is a very tight and talented band, and they seem to enjoy what they do.

DENNIS L. KARCHNER
Clearfield, Pa.

Joel Vance replies: Although "The Day the Earth Caught Fire" is indeed City Boy's fifth album, it is their first on Atlantic Records. This secondary "debut" led to my confusion. I apologize for the error, but I hold firm in my opinion of their talent.

Disposable Music

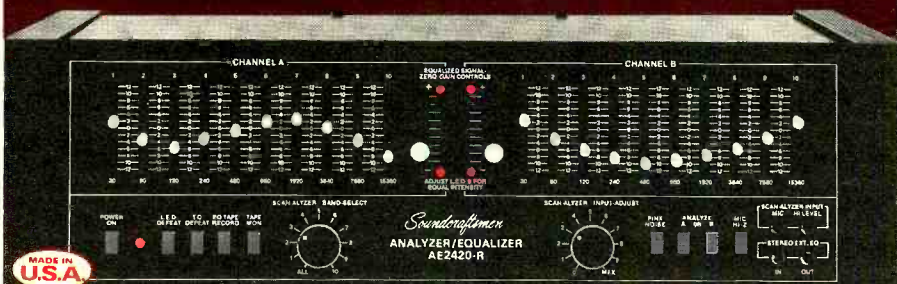
What's going on? Has everyone forgotten that pop music, especially rock, is disposable? Most people are taking it so seriously that they can't enjoy it! Instead of laughing at the antics of Kiss, Johnny Rotten, Iggy Pop, and sometimes Joe Jackson (when his sound system goes on the blink), people spend all their energy attacking them. What do these folks do for a good time—go home and get heavily depressed listening to music? I agree with Mr. Jagger: "You should relax, is my impression!"

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(Complete Equalizer AND complete 0.1dB accurate Real Time Analyzer)



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combination of equalizer and analyzer creates a functional component that should be an integral part of every high quality home stereo system. The "SCAN-ALYZER" EQUALIZER with its accompanying COMPUTONE CHARTS, can be used in a home stereo system for so many important functions we can't begin to list them here. DATA: SIN 100 dB THD < .01%, FREQ. RESP. ± .04 dB 5 Hz-100 KHz. SIZE: 5 1/4" x 19" x 11"

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CIRCLE NO. 49 ON READER SERVICE CARD



MODEL R-3045

LUX DELIVERS TUNER/AMPS WITH A NEW TWIST.

Duo- β and intelligent tuning.

If you think you need separate components for true audio performance you just don't know Lux. Individually or combined, Lux systems perform at the peak of technological achievement.

As of now, all Lux amplifiers, separate or not, feature duo-Beta circuitry. Exclusively Lux's, duo-Beta provides two negative feedback loops to specific circuit paths. Each path gets just the right amount of feedback for its function. The result is harmonic distortion you can't hear ... intermodulation distortion you can hardly measure.

Lux provides two types of intelligent tuning. The "Flash" system, used in the R-3030 and R-3045, and Closed Locked Loop Acculock, used in the R-3055. Flash tuning searches for the desired frequency, points the direction in which to tune and becomes a signal strength indicator when the frequency is reached ... all using an array of LEDs.



MODEL R-3030

CLL Acculock, on the other hand, incorporates feedback circuitry which follows the crystal-controlled transmission frequency of the station wanted. The tuning circuit is synchronized at a point which the system detects the exact

center frequency and a control voltage physically locks the tuning knob at the tune-in point. The lock is released on demand. Both systems provide pinpoint accuracy, freedom from drift and station stability.



MODEL R-3055

The R-3030 is a 30 watt per channel system; R-3045 delivers 45 watts per channel; R-3055 is a 55 watt per channel system. Power output is minimum RMS per channel, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20-20,000 Hz with no more than 0.05% THD.

All units feature direct coupled DC amplification and realtime peak power indication through a 5-point peak indicator for each channel. A host of additional features provide utmost quality, convenience and versatility.

Lux's concept of audiophile needs gives you a choice of the system that suits you best in terms of power. But all are Lux quality with exquisite reproduction, low noise and almost no distortion.

All that's left now is your moment of truth ... the Lux listening test. See Lux ... hear Lux ... use Lux. You'll never want anything else.

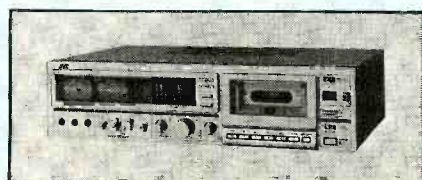


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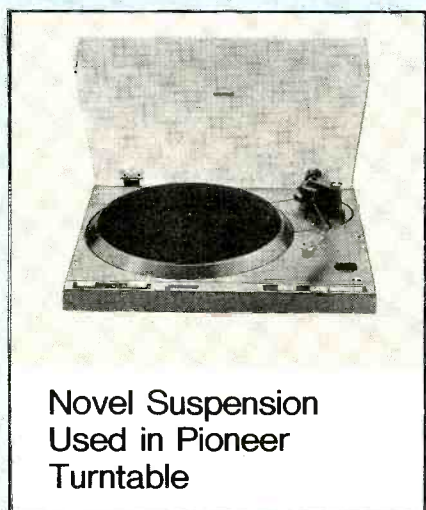
160 Dupont Street, Plainview, NY 11803 / (516) 349-7070 • West Coast Office: 11200 Chandler Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91603 / (213) 985-4500 • Canada: Lux Audio of Canada, Ontario M1S 3R3



Spectro Analyzer in JVC Cassette Deck

□ The Spectro Peak Indicator in JVC's KD-A7 cassette deck displays the levels of seven frequency bands on a series of twelve-segment bar-graph displays. The two-motor transport has full logic control and a d.c.-servo capstan motor. The record/playback head in the KD-A7 is made of a Sendust material claimed to be harder than ferrites and to have the necessary magnetic properties for optimum results with metal tape. Other features include a Super ANRS noise-reduction system, two tape-selector switches, a timer-standby mechanism, a headphone output, and an optional remote control. Frequency response at -20 VU with metal tape is given as 25 to 17,000 Hz ± 3 dB. Signal-to-noise ratio with metal tape is 60 dB. Wow and flutter is 0.004 per cent, and total harmonic distortion at 0 VU and 1 kHz is 1 per cent with metal tape. Fast-forward/rewind time is 85 seconds. Dimensions are 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Price: \$450.

Circle 120 on reader service card



Novel Suspension Used in Pioneer Turntable

□ In the suspension system of Pioneer's PL-600 turntable, the platter, motor, and tone arm are mounted on a single bottom plate which is suspended from the cabinet via springs attached to the cabinet's feedback-isolation feet. The tone arm in this fully automatic turntable has an effective length of 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches and a "decoupled" counterweight. The arm mounting can also

be raised or lowered by 3 millimeters to accommodate the alignment needs of different phono cartridges. The arm movement during automatic functions is powered by a separate d.c. motor. The direct-current, direct-drive motor in the PL-600 is controlled by a quartz-PLL servo. Wow and flutter is rated at 0.025 per cent weighted rms, and the unit's signal-to-noise ratio is given as 78 dB (DIN B). Dimensions are 18 x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 15 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches and weight is 24 $\frac{1}{4}$ pounds. Price: \$399.

Circle 121 on reader service card



New Three-way Floor-standing AR Loudspeakers

□ The AR93 (left) is a three-way, floor-standing system with four drivers (two 8-inch woofers are mounted on either side of the cabinet near the floor). The AR94 (right), also a three-way system, has two different 8-inch low-range drivers that act as a pair of woofers below 350 Hz. The upper-bass driver of the AR94 also handles the midrange. Mid- and high-frequency drivers in both speakers are vertically aligned to sharpen stereo imaging. Acoustical absorbing material is fitted around the speakers' tweeters to smooth high-end response. The 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch cone tweeters are cooled by magnetic fluid.

Most specifications apply to both models. System efficiency is 87-dB sound-pressure level with a 1-watt input at a 1-meter distance. The low-frequency response is -3 dB at 44 Hz; system Q is 0.9 at resonance. System impedance is nominally 6 ohms (4.5 ohms minimum). The crossover frequencies are 350 and 2,000 Hz. Cabinet finish is non-removable black acoustically transparent cloth over high-density particle board. Speaker tops and bases are molded black plastic. Connections to the units are made from the bottom. Dimensions are 30 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 14 x 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Weight is 50 pounds for the AR93, 43 pounds for the AR94. Prices: AR93, \$249; AR94, \$199.

Circle 122 on reader service card



Ace Audio's Hum Eliminator

□ The Model 3900 Ground Eliminator from Ace Audio Co. is designed to break ground-loop faults in connecting cables that can cause audible hum levels in a stereo system. While hum in a stereo system can come from faults in individual components, it often arises from ground-loop errors in the connecting cables and from improper connections. The Model 3900 contains completely passive circuitry and it is claimed that it cannot introduce distortion of any kind. Prices: kit, \$14.25; wired, \$16. Ace Audio Co., Dept. SR, 532 5th Street, East Northport, N.Y. 11731.

Circle 123 on reader service card



Record Cleaner for Audio- and Videodiscs

□ The Model 1100 Vac-O-Rec dry electrostatic record-cleaning system, distributed by Robins Industries, removes micro-dust and lint from phonograph records. Removed debris is retained by a vacuum system so that none of the particles is expelled into the air. The machine can also be used

(Continued on page 14)

The continuing story of TDK sound achievement.

Part One.



Music has gone through many transitions. Its rhythms, tones and forms have changed dramatically. As have the means of reproducing it. From the first wax cylinder to today's music machine: the TDK cassette.

TDK pioneering in ferrite technology began over forty years ago. This led TDK engineers to develop microscopic particles which, through their long shape and uniform size, could translate magnetic energy into flawless sound. By 1968 TDK had created TDK SD. The world's first high fidelity cassette. In 1975, TDK created a revolution. Super Avilyn. Ultra-refined gamma-ferric oxide particles were bombarded with cobalt in a proprietary ion-adsorption process. The resulting TDK SA cassette had higher signal to noise. Higher coercivity. Low noise. A maximum output level superior to anything heard before. Overnight, TDK SA became the high bias reference.

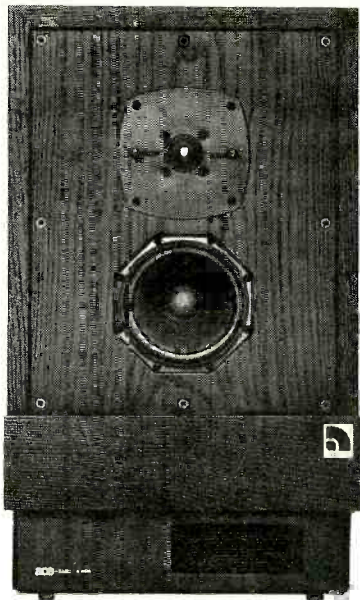
TDK has a philosophy of sound. A belief that total performance is the outcome of a perfect interplay between the parts. It all begins with *Part One*, the TDK tape. Magnetic powder is first converted into TDK magnetic material in the form of a coating paint or binder. On a giant rotary press and in a dust-free atmosphere, jumbo rolls of tensilized polyester are coated evenly with TDK binder. The tape rolls are edited and leader is inserted at precise intervals. Surgically sharp knives then cut the tape into predetermined widths. The edges perfectly straight. All along the way, TDK tape undergoes thousands of checks. It's polished to micron smoothness to give better head contact, increase sensitivity and maintain stable output. TDK binder, recently improved, packs more particles on the tape surface. And the whole process is done automatically. Controlled by a central computer brain. From

the very first, TDK tape runs true. And so does the sound.

The TDK story will unfold in future chapters. You'll learn about other key parts and their sound synergy in a TDK cassette. And you'll draw only one conclusion. Music is the sum of its parts.



 **TDK**
The machine for your machine



THE AUDIO PRO A4-14
BIAMPLIFIED LOUDSPEAKER

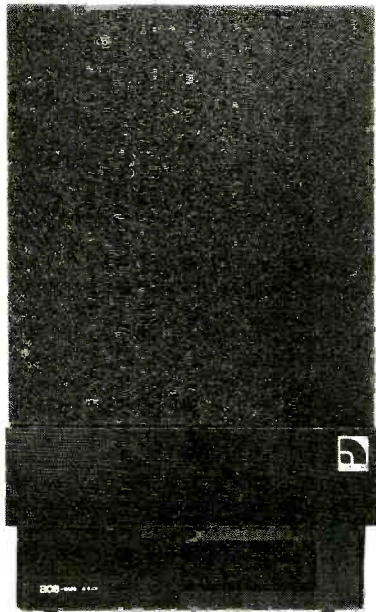
The only bookshelf-size* speaker with a built-in subwoofer.

Audiophiles tell us the ultimate speaker system uses bi-amplification and subwoofers. The bi-amplified A4-14's, with their built-in "ACE BASS" subwoofers are an entire audiophile system in bookshelf-size enclosures.

Acoustical engineers tell us that the ideal loudspeaker would be a single radiating point. Because of its built-in subwoofer, the Audio Pro A4-14 comes closer to this ideal than any other full range loudspeaker—without sacrificing bass.

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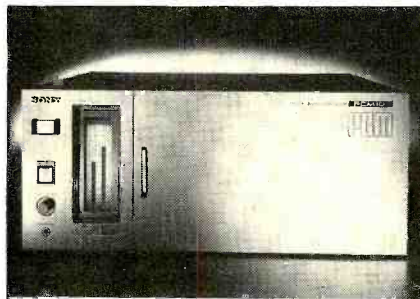
latest audio equipment and accessories

to clean the surfaces of most videodiscs. To use the Model 1100, a disc is inserted into the unit's slot. A motor slowly rotates the disc past a metalized Mylar brush which discharges static electricity, thus loosening dust. A separate mohair brush removes the dust, aided by the vacuum system. Both sides are cleaned at the same time; the operation takes about 30 seconds to complete. Price: \$49.95.

Circle 124 on reader service card

Pamphlet Explains New Dolby HX

□ A four-page illustrated pamphlet explains the theory and operation of Dolby Headroom Extension (Dolby HX). The new circuit technique is said to achieve a dynamic-range increase on the order of 10 dB at high frequencies through signal-controlled variation of a cassette deck's recording bias and equalization. The brochure discusses Dolby HX in the context of the several different tape parameters it affects and includes a series of questions and answers dealing with tape types, compatibility, and the use of Dolby HX. The publication is available free upon request from Dolby Laboratories, Dept. SR, 731 Sansome Street, San Francisco, Calif. 94111.

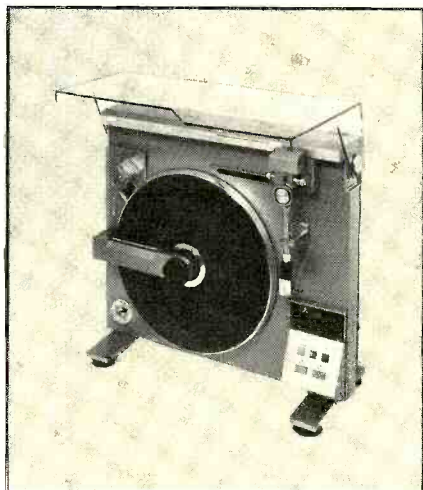


Sony Digital-audio Adaptor for VCRs

□ The Sony PCM-10 digital-audio processor is designed to comply with the Electronic Industry Association of Japan's fourteen-bit standard format and can be used with any home VCR for recording and playback of two channels of digital audio. The unit converts two audio channels to and from video-format digital-audio signals. The adaptor has liquid-crystal peak-program meters with a temporary-peak-hold feature. Extra audio outputs make possible recording analog audio signals on the audio tracks

of a videocassette. Sampling frequency is 44.056 kHz; encoding is through a twelve-bit floating-point analog-to-digital converter with fourteen-bit dynamic range; decoding is through a fourteen-bit linear digital-to-analog converter. Dynamic range is greater than 85 dB, harmonic distortion is less than 0.03 per cent, and frequency response is from 0 Hz (d.c.) to 20,000 Hz \pm 1 dB or less. Dimensions are 18 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; weight is 46 $\frac{1}{4}$ pounds. Price: \$5,500.

Circle 125 on reader service card



Mitsubishi's Vertical Turntable

□ Mitsubishi's LT-5V is a vertical, linear-tracking, fully automatic turntable with logic control and belt drive. The two-speed unit has a PLL-controlled d.c. servo motor and a wow-and-flutter specification of 0.045 per cent (weighted rms). Signal-to-noise ratio is given as 76 dB (DIN-B). The LT-5V's die-cast aluminum platter is 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter and weighs 2.9 pounds. The tone arm has a universal head-shell mount, an effective length of 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches, and a tracking error of \pm 0.1 degree. The turntable's speed can be varied \pm 3 per cent with the aid of a stroboscopic speed indicator. Automatic functions include speed and disc-size selection, cueing, and arm movement to left or right. The record clamp that holds the disc on the turntable also acts as a disc stabilizer to reduce record-borne vibrations. The 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ -pound unit sits on acoustic-insulator feet and has a detachable dust cover that fits over the top third of the turntable. Dimensions are 18 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 17 x 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Price: \$450.

Circle 126 on reader service card

(Continued on page 17)

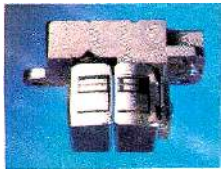
Sony overcomes the gap in three-head technology.

Introducing the TC-K81 discrete three-head tape cassette deck.

The superiority of three-head cassette tape decks is well known. With three heads you can achieve the individual optimum head gaps for record and playback. Without compromising the head gaps as in conventional two headed systems. You get a wider frequency range and a higher frequency response.

The real advance in three-head technology is Sony's TC-K81 discrete three-head cassette tape deck.

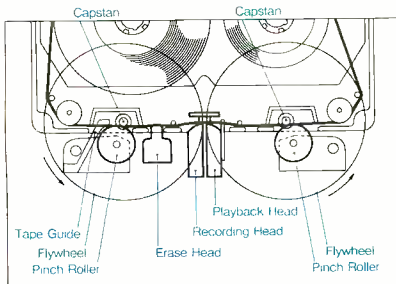
Each head has its own individual casing and suspension systems. With Sony's three individual heads you get precise azimuth alignment* and equal record and playback head to tape pressure. Features that combination or other discrete three-head systems can't offer. And you don't have to worry about unwanted magnetic leakage flux, as in combination three-head systems,



when you are monitoring the actual recorded signal. In short, three heads have never been better.

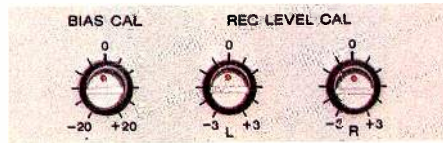
We also used Sendust and Ferrite for the heads in the TC-K81 to increase linearity and frequency response. S&F heads are ideal to get the most out of metal tapes. As well as Regular, Chrome and FeCr.

Sony's closed loop dual capstan drive system, unlike other dual capstan drives, assures equal torque distribution to both take-up and supply reels.



Closed-Loop Dual-Capstan System

And our new cassette deck really shows its stuff in Bias Calibration and Record Level Calibration



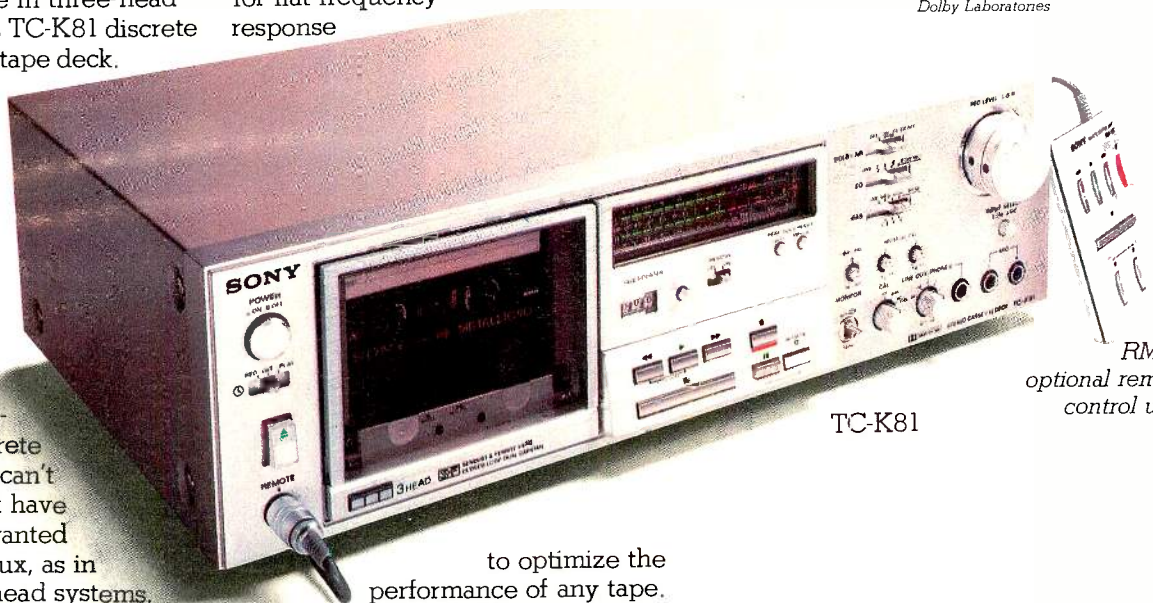
Systems. Two built-in oscillators and Multi-function LED Peak Meters let you adjust Bias and Record Level for flat frequency response

sound reproduction. And the TC-K81 has Dolby** IC, Headphone/Lineout attenuator and all the other sound quality standards to improve musical performance. You can pop, rock and bop. Or enjoy the airiest of arias with profound fidelity and Sony quality.

The TC-K81. See it. Hear it. And you'll say, yes.

*Factory aligned

**Dolby is a registered trademark of Dolby Laboratories



TC-K81

RM-50 optional remote control unit.

to optimize the performance of any tape. Sony's quality shows on the inside with linear BSL (Brushless & Slotless) motors and a damped flywheel to eliminate resonance. Metallized film resistors and Polypropylene capacitors promise clear

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Infinity makes the ultimate statement in speaker technology.

The Infinity Reference Standard.

The IRS: Seven feet six inches tall. Servo'd woofers driven by one kilowatt per side. 16 Hz to 40 kHz \pm 2 dB.

About \$20,000.

 **Infinity**

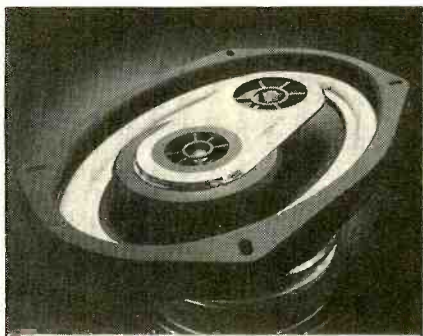
We get you back to what it's all about. Music.

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latest audio equipment and accessories



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Three-way Speaker
From AFS Kriket**

□ Adding to their line of car speakers, AFS Kriket has introduced the Domaxial III, a three-way system built onto a single frame. Instead of a bracket to hold the two smaller drivers, the Domaxial III uses a single rigid center support, an arrangement said to improve performance of all three elements. With crossover frequencies at 4,000 and 7,000 Hz, the assembly is made up of a 6 x 9-inch low-frequency driver, a 1-inch phenolic-dome tweeter, and a 2-inch direct-radiator supertweeter. Sensitivity is 104 dB sound-pressure level for 4 watts input at 1 meter, and maximum power-handling capacity is 90 watts. Frequency response is 35 to 40,000 Hz with the driver mounted properly, and nominal impedance is 4 ohms. Price: \$159.95 per pair.

Circle 127 on reader service card



**Cassette-player
Receiver Has
Standby Feature**

□ The KRC-711 is Kenwood's most expensive AM/FM car-cassette unit. In addition to its own amplifiers, which provide a power output of 5 watts per channel for the front speakers and 20 watts for the rear speakers, the KRC-711 in-dash unit incorporates Kenwood's "Cassette Standby" that permits a cassette to be cued up on the machine indefinitely and activated auto-

matically when radio reception falls below acceptable limits. Also included are ten channel presets (five each for AM and FM) and bass, treble, balance, and fader controls. The volume control and cassette well are illuminated, and provision is made for automatic cassette ejection when the ignition is switched off. The KRC-711 tuner has a signal-to-noise ratio of 65 dB, selectivity is 65 dB, and stereo-FM separation is 40 dB. The cassette-section wow-and-flutter figure is 0.12 per cent (wrms), signal-to-noise ratio is 52 dB, and frequency response is 30 to 16,000 Hz. Price: \$449.

Circle 128 on reader service card



**Jensen's Two
Under-dash
Graphic Equalizers**

□ The Models EQ-400 and EQA-3000 are both under-dash-mounting graphic equalizers, the latter unit having its own 12-watt-per-channel stereo amplifier built in. The EQ-400 has five bands with operating centers switchable up or down by approximately half an octave; the EQA-3000 is a five-band equalizer/amplifier with five dual-channel slide controls. Both units have front-to-rear fader controls with center detent, and their slide controls are illuminated. Both also provide up to 12 dB of boost or attenuation at the selected frequencies and have equalization-defeat buttons for comparison purposes. Total harmonic distortion for each unit is 0.3 per cent, input impedance is 47 ohms, and channel separation is 65 dB at 1,000 Hz. The equalizers may be mounted on the floorboard hump as well as under the dash, and they take their signal from the speaker terminals of an existing amplifier, thereby necessitating a second power amplifier (with the EQ-400 this has to be purchased separately). Prices: EQ-400, \$129.95; EQA-3000 (with built-in amplifier), \$179.95.

Circle 129 on reader service card

(Continued overleaf)

FREE

details... **A DIFFERENT KIND OF RECORD CLUB**

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

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

Look at these benefits:

TREMENDOUS SAVINGS

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

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

ALL LABELS AVAILABLE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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CIRCLE NO. 13 ON READER SERVICE CARD

A NEW PREAMP FROM BOB CARVER



SONIC HOLOGRAPHY®

Audition a departure from conventional stereo. Introducing the Carver C-4000 SONIC HOLOGRAPHY™ — AUTO CORRELATION Preamplifier: the most complete sound control center in audio history. The C-4000 is a superb preamplifier combining a time delay system for concert hall ambiance, the Autocorrelator noise reduction system that works on any source material, a Peak Unlimiter to restore dynamic range, and SONIC HOLOGRAPHY™ — a new concept in audio realism.

Here is what the experts said about the Carver C-4000.

"...the result was positively breathtaking! When the lights were turned out we could almost have sworn that we were in the presence of a real live orchestra." *Hal Rodgers, Senior Editor — Popular Electronics, May 1979.*

"Plain old stereo will never be the same." *Arthur Salsberg, Editorial Director — Popular Electronics, May 1979.*

"Instruments and performers are located where they belong, whether to the front of, between, beside, or behind the speakers — in short, anywhere in a 180-degree arc facing the listener." *Omni Magazine, March 1980.*

"The effect strains credibility — had I not experienced it I probably would not believe it myself." *Julian Hirsch, Hirsch-Houck Laboratories, Popular Electronics, May 1979.*

"Bob Ajaye...after two days of critical listening called the Carver invention 'a giant leap forward for hi-fi.' I agree." *Larry Klein, Technical Director — Stereo Review, May, 1979.*

Whether you're searching for a new preamp, or just want to be stunned, we suggest that you critically audition a properly set up C-4000. Sonic Holography delivers the depth and breath of the concert stage. The only sound experience that out-performs Sonic Holography is the performance itself.

CARVER

CORPORATION

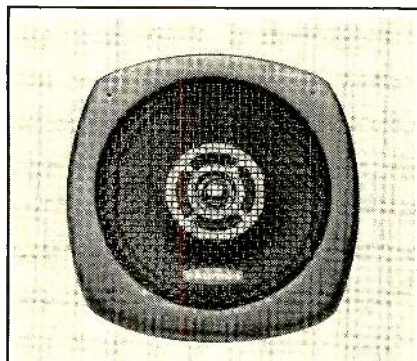
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Woodinville, Washington 98072

CIRCLE NO. 8 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Car Stereo Products

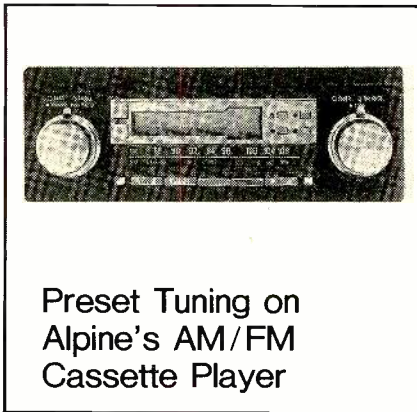
latest audio equipment and accessories



New Grundig Shallow-profile Loudspeaker Line

□ Grundig Autosound has introduced a line of three loudspeakers. Lowest priced of these is the GLA 1230, a 4 3/4-inch round speaker that requires only 1 1/8 inches of installation depth. Nominal impedance is 4 ohms, and it can handle up to 30 watts of power. Next is the GLA 1640, a 5 1/4-inch round unit requiring 1 3/4 inches of installation depth. Also 4 ohms, it comes with a padded grille and can accept up to 40 watts of power. At the top of the line is the GLA 1845 (shown), similar to the GLA 1640 except that it has a coaxially mounted tweeter and can accept up to 45 watts of power. Prices: GLA 1230, \$39.90; GLA 1640, \$49.90; GLA 1845, \$64.90.

Circle 130 on reader service card

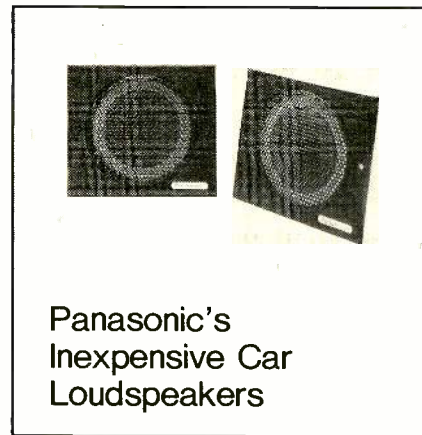


Preset Tuning on Alpine's AM/FM Cassette Player

□ Alpine's Model 7206 is an in-dash AM/FM cassette player featuring a five-station-preset pushbutton tuning system, Dolby circuits, fader and balance controls, and a CrO₂/FeCr tape-selector switch. Cassettes are automatically ejected when the ignition is turned off or at the end of play or fast forward; the deck can also be set to replay

automatically at the end of rewind. The "Music Sensor" feature will pick out the next taped selection or repeat the previous one. Also included are controls for muting, bass and treble tone, loudness contour, and automatic local/distance switching. Distortion at 10 watts output is 0.8 per cent. The FM usable sensitivity is 1.4 microvolts and signal-to-noise ratio (with Dolby) 72 dB. Tape signal-to-noise ratio is 65 dB (with Dolby), frequency range is 40 to 12,000 Hz, and wow and flutter is 0.09 per cent. Price: \$409.95.

Circle 131 on reader service card



Panasonic's Inexpensive Car Loudspeakers

□ Among Panasonic's speakers for the car are four inexpensive models. The EAB-050 is a 5-inch-round, 1-inch-deep model having a frequency range of 50 to 16,000 Hz and a power-handling capability of 10 watts with 20 watts on peaks. The EAB-914 (shown) and the EAB-915 are 4-inch, flush-mounting speakers. The former will accept 5 watts and has a frequency range of 65 to 14,000 Hz; the latter can accept 10 watts with a frequency range of 50 to 15,000 Hz. The EAB-030 is a 3 1/2-inch round unit capable of handling 10 watts continuous and 20 watts on peaks. It features a sub-cone (whizzer) and high-compliance construction; frequency range is 100 to 20,000 Hz. It comes with adaptor plates for use in GM and Ford cars. All of these speakers are sold in pairs. Prices per pair: EAB-050, \$44.95; EAB-914, \$24.95; EAB-915, \$29.95; EAB-030, \$19.95.

Circle 132 on reader service card

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

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



Bob Carver dancing in his laboratory.

BOB CARVER'S GOT IT!

What weighs nine pounds, delivers 400 watts,* and costs less than \$350?

Give up? Then we'll tell you. It's the Carver M-400, the world's first and only Magnetic Field Power Amplifier. And, with its price, power and performance, the M-400 is guaranteed to change the way you think about power amplifiers.

In case you haven't noticed, most high power amplifiers weigh about as much as a St. Bernard and can cost as much as a used Volkswagon.

The Carver M-400 is designed to use only the power it needs at a given moment, and that's efficient!



Plus, high power means high fidelity. The M-400 delivers the power, voltage, and current reserves you need to avoid clipping, overload, and distortion. You get the full impact of the music.

Nine pounds? Four hundred watts? Superb performance? Less than \$350? You bet!

So, if you're searching for a new power amplifier, or if you just don't believe us, visit your nearest Carver dealer and ask to hear the small, light cube with the awesome power. Then enjoy your new Carver M-400.

*401 watts RMS minimum, one channel driven into 8 ohms from 20Hz-20kHz at no more than 0.05% THD. 201 watts RMS minimum per channel into 8 ohms from 20Hz-20kHz at no more than 0.05% THD.

CARVER

C O R P O R A T I O N

PO Box 664 Woodinville, Washington 98072

CIRCLE NO. 7 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.

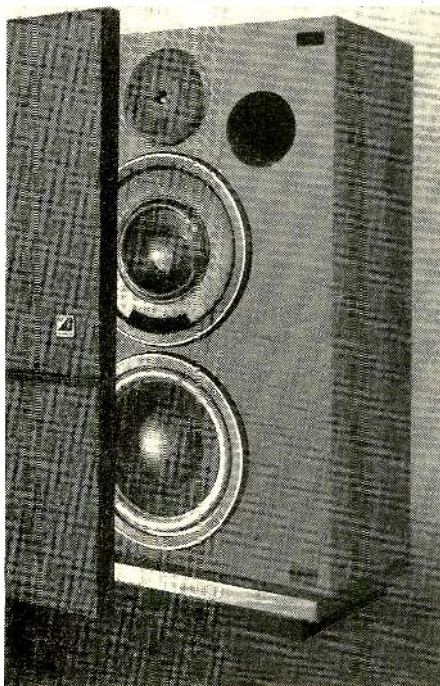
The SuperDome™ tweeter, an E-V exclusive, and the VMR™ vented midrange driver, the first to apply optimally vented design to mid frequencies, ensure your music is reproduced without the coloration normally found in other high-efficiency drivers. An honest 30 Hz low end totally eliminates the need for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



Electro-Voice®
a gulton company

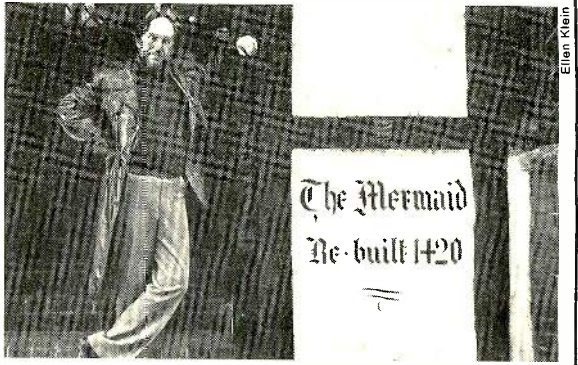
600 Cecil Street, Buchanan, Michigan 49107



Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein

Technical Director Klein, in England on business, helps prop up one of the Old Country's more recently restored hotels.



Stereo AM . . .

Q. I just heard that the FCC has approved a stereo system for AM radio. What do you think it will mean for the future of broadcast hi-fi?

FRANK MARKS
Boston, Mass.

A. My immediate reaction to the news was a thoughtful and considered "So what?" I foresee this scenario: (1) most of next year's car-stereo equipment will have stereo AM, (2) component manufacturers will be driven nuts trying to figure out what products they should install it in—and will probably decide that stereo AM is appropriate only to low-cost tuners and receivers, (3) the semiconductor manufacturers will shortly market a new IC "chip" incorporating the AM decoding circuit, and (4) some thought will be given to developing AM-band noise-reduction circuits and extending the bandwidth of AM reception in receivers beyond today's usual 60 to 3,000 Hz.

Keep in mind that the major reason for stereo AM at this time is to enable the AM stations to compete more effectively against the FM broadcasters for the advertiser's dollar. The goal is an improved balance sheet, *not* higher fidelity.

In respect to the technical questions, the FCC reports that the Magnavox system they chose as the standard (by a four-to-two vote of the commissioners) was one of five under consideration and that their choice was made on the basis of its having marginally better technical performance than the other proposed systems.

If any readers are upset over the fact that the FCC moved so rapidly on the low-fi stereo-AM question rather than the longer-pending hi-fi quad-FM question, I can only refer them once again to Klein's Law, which states: "If you are puzzled over why something is being done that doesn't seem to be required, or why something is not being done that apparently should be, an investigation into who is or is not making a buck on the situation will usually provide the answer." In brief, the FM broadcasters see no potential for improved profits in quadrasonic FM, but the AM broadcasters have high hopes for same from stereo AM. Only if AM stations now start to cut

into the revenues of FM broadcasters will we see a renewed interest in quad FM.

. . . and Digital FM?

Q. I'm intrigued by your magazine's constant coverage of the upcoming "digital decade." Has anyone considered digital FM transmission?

BRANDON CROUCH
Los Angeles, Calif.

A. I'm sure that it's been considered—and immediately rejected for the following reason: the present maximum permitted audio range of the FM signal is 30 to 15,000 Hz, and in order to transmit that audio range digitally the transmission bandwidth would have to be approximately that of a color TV signal—something like twenty-five times (!) wider than the present FM-bandwidth requirements.

In the light of today's proposals for narrowing both the AM and FM transmission bandwidths to provide more room for additional stations, it is not likely that such a plan would receive even a microsecond's consideration by the FCC.

Lumped Wow /Flutter?

Q. Why are wow and flutter lumped together as one specification? Wow is the slow speed variation around 10 Hz or so, while flutter components are up around a few thousand hertz. Since the ear is more sensitive to flutter than to wow, combining these measurements could result in the turntable with the better specs being the one that actually sounds worse, right?

STEVEN GUTTENBERG
Brooklyn, N.Y.

A. Although wow and flutter are caused by the same mechanism (short-term speed variations) and can be considered frequency modulations of the audio signal occurring at different rates, their audible effects are quite different. Psychoacoustic studies have shown that the human ear is most sensitive to flutter at rates of about 4 Hz and that higher-frequency flutter is
(Continued on page 22)



INCREDIBLE CASSETTE OFFER!



Blank Cassettes Meet original Rock & Roll

Now in Stereo

Now in Stereo

Try 10 DAK blank high energy 90 minute cassettes risk free for only \$2.19 each and get 20 Stereo Hits Re-Sung Live by the original artists on two prerecorded cassettes for only \$2!

RE-RECORDED LIVE IN FULL STEREO. RE-SUNG BY THE ORIGINAL ARTISTS.

The songs are incredible...But first let us tell you about the 10 great blank cassettes. You don't want to think about cassettes jamming, loss of high frequency response or tape hiss.

DAK manufactures a cassette that you can really forget about. Great sound, and no problems. And, for only \$2 we hope you think a lot about your 2 Rock & Roll cassettes.

YOUR TIME IS PRECIOUS

Imagine yourself just finishing recording the second side of a 90 minute cassette and horrors, the cassette jams. The tape is lost and your recorder may be damaged. Enter DAK.

MOLYSULFIDE

DAK developed polyester slip sheets, inside the cassette, with raised spring loaded ridges to guide each layer of tape as it winds. We coat them with a unique formulation of graphite and a chemical, Molysulfide.

Molysulfide reduces friction several times better than graphite and allows the tape to move freely within the cassette. **Hi frequency protection!** Friction within the cassette causes the build up of static electricity, which can erase high frequencies. Molysulfide reduces friction, which is a very important consideration for often played tapes.

MAXELL IS BETTER

Yes, honestly, if you own a \$1000 cassette deck like a Nakamichi, the frequency responses of Maxell UDXL or TDK SA are superior and you just might be able to hear the difference.

DAK ML has a frequency response that is flat from 40hz to 14,500hz ±3db

Virtually all cassette decks priced under \$600 are flat ±3db from 40hz to about 12,500hz, so we have over 2000hz to spare, and you'll probably never hear the difference.

No apology. We feel that we have equaled or exceeded the mechanical reliability of virtually all cassettes and offer one of the best frequency responses in the industry. Maxell UDXL is truly the Rolls Royce of the industry,

and DAK is comparable to the 100% US made Cadillac or Corvette!

Price. DAK manufactures the tape we sell. You avoid paying the wholesaler and retailer profits. While Maxell UDXL 90s may sell for \$3.50 to \$4.50 each at retail, DAK ML90s sell factory direct to you for only \$2.19 complete with deluxe boxes and index insert cards, and backed by a full one year guarantee.

the original artist in a modern recording studio to produce these two stereo cassettes, and they're both yours for \$2.

DAK TAKES A RISK

Obviously giving away superb stereo Rock & Roll cassettes is not going to make DAK rich. We are betting that you will buy our blank cassettes again, and we are putting our money where our mouth is.

Customers like you are very valuable in the form of future business.. We anticipate receiving over 3000 orders and 2000 repeat customers from this advertisement to add to our list of over 72,000 actives.

TRY DAK ML 90 CASSETTES RISK FREE

Try these high energy cassettes on your own recorder without obligation for 30 days. If you aren't 100% satisfied for any reason, simply return the ML90 cassettes and the two volumes of Stereo Rock & Roll for a full refund.

To order your 10 DAK ML, 90 minute high energy cassettes, at only \$2.19 each and get the two stereo Rock & Roll cassettes with your credit card, simply call the toll free number below, or send your check for **only \$21.90 plus \$2** for the two stereo Rock & Roll cassettes, and **\$3** for postage and handling for each group of 10 tapes

and two Rock & Roll cassettes to DAK. (CA res. add 6% sales tax).

DAK unconditionally guarantees all DAK blank cassettes for one year against any defects in material or workmanship.

Why not order an extra group of 10 DAK ML90 cassettes for yourself or a friend? We will add one free ML90 cassette to each additional 10 you buy and of course you can buy the two stereo Rock & Roll tapes for only \$2 with each group you buy.



CASSETTE VOL. 1

- TEEN ANGEL**
Mark Dinning-No.1 in 1959
- SAVE THE LAST DANCE FOR ME**
The Drifters-No.1 in 1960
- CHAPEL OF LOVE**
Dixie Cups-No. 1 in 1964
- RUNAWAY**
Del Shannon-No. 1 in 1961
- SURF CITY**
Jan & Dean-No.1 in 1963
- THE TWIST**
Chubby Checker-No. 1 in 1960
- MY BOYFRIENDS BACK**
Angels-No.1 in 1963
- BLUE MOON**
Marcells- No. 1 in 1961
- SOLDIER BOY**
The Shirelles-No. 1 in 1962
- MY GUY**
Mary Wells-No. 1 in 1964



CASSETTE VOL. 2

- HONEY COMB**
Jimmie Rodgers-No. 1 in 1957
- YAKETY YAK**
Coasters-No.1 in 1958
- HE'S A REBEL**
Crystals-No. 1 in 1962
- HE'S SO FINE**
Chiffons-No. 1 in 1963
- THIS DIAMOND RING**
Gary Lewis & the P.B.-1 in 1965
- CHERISH**
The Association-No.1 in 1966
- IT'S MY PARTY**
Lesslie Gore-No. 1 in 1963
- COME SOFTLY TO ME**
Fleetwoods-No. 1 in 1959
- WILL YOU LOVE ME TOMORROW**
Shirelles-No.1 in 1960
- MR. BLUE**
Fleetwoods-No. 1 in 1959

STEREO ROCK & ROLL FOR \$2?

It had to happen. Rock & Roll from the 50's and 60's is just about the most popular music around. But...most of it was recorded before stereo, so it doesn't have really great sound.

Think of it. People like The Coasters, The Drifters, Jimmie Rogers, and The Shirelles, all brought back into the recording studio to recreate their greatest number 1 hits, now re-sung in full stereo on two individual cassettes.

NOT ELECTRONIC STEREO

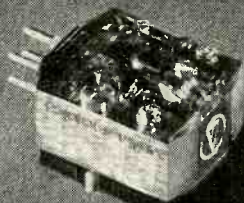
In the past, record companies have tried to recreate stereo electronically. These number 1 hits are the real thing, re-sung live by the original artist.

These special collector's cassettes are being offered on a limited basis. You cannot buy them in stores, or on TV. Remember, each of these treasured number 1 hit songs, has been re-sung by



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CIRCLE NO. 12 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Tracks digital cannons,
synthesizers, big bass drums
and hot piccolos
with perfect aplomb.



New AT32 Dual Moving MicroCoil™ Stereo Cartridge

Moving coil cartridges have been known for phenomenal transient response for years. Now there's a moving coil cartridge which combines this acoustic transparency with equally sophisticated tracking ability at as little as one gram. The new AT32 from Audio-Technica.

Inside the jewel-like case of the AT32 is a most sophisticated moving assembly. Effective moving mass is extremely low to permit high compliance without unwanted resonances. And every AT32 moving system is individually hand-tuned to insure optimum tracking at all frequencies, while eliminating unit-to-unit variations.

The nude-mounted, square-shank miniature elliptical diamond in its beryllium cantilever is exactly aligned to the groove for lowest distortion. And the tiny moving

coils are mounted in an inverted "V" which precisely aligns each coil with the groove face it senses.

The care in design, construction, and testing lavished on each AT32 is clearly evident in its superb reproduction of even the most-difficult-to-track selections. Indeed, adding an AT32 to your system eliminates one more barrier between you and your music. Audition the AT32 at your nearby Audio-Technica showroom today. AUDIO-TECHNICA U.S., Inc., 1221 Commerce Drive, Dept. 70F, Stow, Ohio 44224.

audio-technica®



Model AT32
Stereo Phono
Cartridge with
Dual Moving
MicroCoils™
\$300

AUDIO-TECHNICA PROFESSIONAL AND HOME PRODUCTS FOR BETTER SOUND



rarely audible as such. Although it is true that at one time rates below about 10 Hz were arbitrarily classified as "wow" and higher frequencies as "flutter," current measurement standards—and measuring instruments—use a single weighting filter and lump the resulting wow-and-flutter measurement into a single numerical spec.

The U.S. (IEEE), Japanese (JIS), and European (DIN) weighting curves are identical, although each standard has its own requirements for meter indication (rms or peak) and test frequency (either 3,000 or 3,150 Hz). The weighting curve maximizes the response at 4 Hz and is down 4 dB at 1 Hz and 6 dB at 20 Hz, with faster cutoffs beyond those frequencies. In effect, the weighting with frequency is intended to produce *measured* values that reflect *audible annoyance* value.

Amplifier Wear

Q. *I bought a new receiver about a year ago and I'm very pleased with it. However, I'm worried that I may be wearing it out prematurely. I play it about 4 hours a day and at moderate listening levels most of the time (0.1 to 5 watts on its power meters). About 75 per cent of my listening is to records or tapes. Since I won't be able to purchase a new system for at least six years I want to make this one last as long as possible even if I have to cut back on its use. Do you have any advice for me?*

RICHARD D. CARDE
Carbone, Maine

A. The component in your system *least* likely to wear out through use or aging is your receiver (followed closely by your speakers). And, in any case, the *conditions* of use of electronic equipment are of much more significance than the *time* in use. The greatest enemy of longevity is internally generated heat, which afflicts receivers, integrated amplifiers, and power amplifiers, but generally not preamps or tuners. If, in home use, solid-state (meaning "transistor") equipment is running too hot to hold your hand on comfortably, then it is either being overdriven (or driven *very* hard), has inadequate ventilation, has its bias circuits misadjusted, or is operating in the straight class-A mode. (If you have any question whether your amplifier has class-A output stages, it probably doesn't.) So, Mr. Carde, it's not likely that you are causing "premature" wear of your electronic components by the conditions of use.

Mechanical components, however, do wear out. Phono-stylus assemblies, record-player mechanisms, tape heads, and transport mechanisms will all "go bad" through normal use. The only advice I have to offer is to check your owner's manuals for recommended regular maintenance procedures. If any procedures *are* recommended, follow them religiously.

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

NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT THE COMPONENTS YOU WANT... GET THE ONE YOU NEED.

A SCOTCH® CASSETTE IS THE ONE COMPONENT THAT LETS YOU GET IT ALL OUT OF YOUR SYSTEM.

There isn't another cassette made that can give you better sound than Scotch. Rich, true, pure sound. The best your stereo can deliver.

Take Scotch Master® Series for example. Three premium cassettes with three different oxide formulations designed to bring out the best in the type of music you record.

If you record music at high sound levels, like rock, choose Master I® for normal bias. It gives you the volume level you want without the distortion some low noise tapes can induce.

Master II® for chrome bias is ideal for classical or mood music. Sensitive and quiet, it can record the softest passages without interfering tape hiss.

Master III® (FeCr) will give you outstanding clarity for any recording, plus a high-end brilliance that delivers truly remarkable sound on your car stereo.

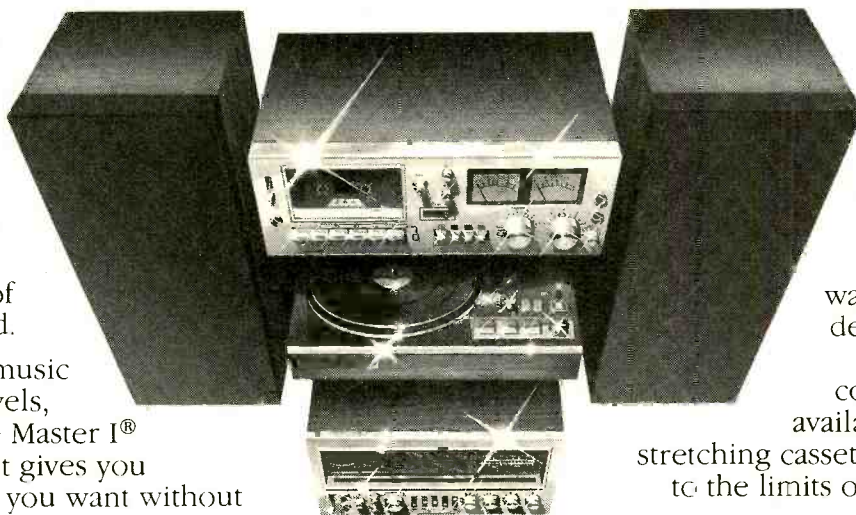
Every tape in the Scotch line is made with the same kind of care and precision that went into your other components, to give you all the performance your system can deliver.

SCOTCH METAFINE® THE ULTIMATE COMPONENT.

When Metafine metal particle tape was introduced, it was so advanced most decks couldn't record on it. Now, metal-compatible decks are available and Metafine is stretching cassette recording almost to the limits of the audible range.

NO TAPE COMES CLOSER TO THE TRUTH THAN SCOTCH®.

More than 30 years of research, technology and innovation go into each of our cassettes. What comes out is the truth. No more. No less.



SCOTCH® RECORDING TAPE. THE TRUTH COMES OUT.

3M

CIRCLE NO. 32 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Audio Basics

By Robert Greene



TONE-CONTROL COURAGE

MANY otherwise reasonable audiophiles exhibit a strange (and completely groundless) fear of turning their tone-control knobs away from the dead-center "flat" position. Such reluctance would appear to spring from the assumption that everything in the audio world is perfect; needless to say, it isn't. Hi-fi equipment designers know this, and that's why they provide tone controls: to allow some means of correcting the inevitable imperfections.

Quite a few playback situations call for the use of tone controls. For example, speaker designers have no way of knowing exactly how their products will sound in *your* listening room. Room resonances in the bass or lower midrange or high-frequency absorption by room furnishings can greatly alter sonic balances, and you are completely justified in correcting them with tone controls. And even in the unlikely event of your having an acoustically perfect listening environment, you certainly had no control over the acoustics where your recordings were *made* or over the frequency balance the recording engineer put on your tapes or discs. No problem: if you don't like what you hear, use the tone controls to make the sound "right" in *your* room with *your* speakers.

Tone controls commonly appear as a pair of knobs (or sliders) that boost or cut bass and treble relative to the frequencies they leave unaffected. Such controls used to have a "hinged" response characteristic: they increased or reduced the output above and below a fixed point (the hinge), usually around 800 to 1,000 Hz. More recently, however, most tone controls use feedback circuits that leave a wide portion of the middle frequency range largely untouched. (Such feedback controls are often referred to as "Baxandall" types after their designer.) Changing the control setting also moves the point (or *turnover frequency*) at which the control action begins, so that correction can be made at the frequency extremes rather than in the midrange.

Even with feedback-type controls, however, the action is generally not abrupt enough at the desired point, and other frequencies are therefore affected. One solution to this is to place the turnover frequen-

cies near the upper and lower limits of the audible range. Because there may well be times when the more conventional kind of tone-control action is desired, a number of amplifiers and receivers now provide a choice of two (usually) switch-selected turnover frequencies for each tone control.

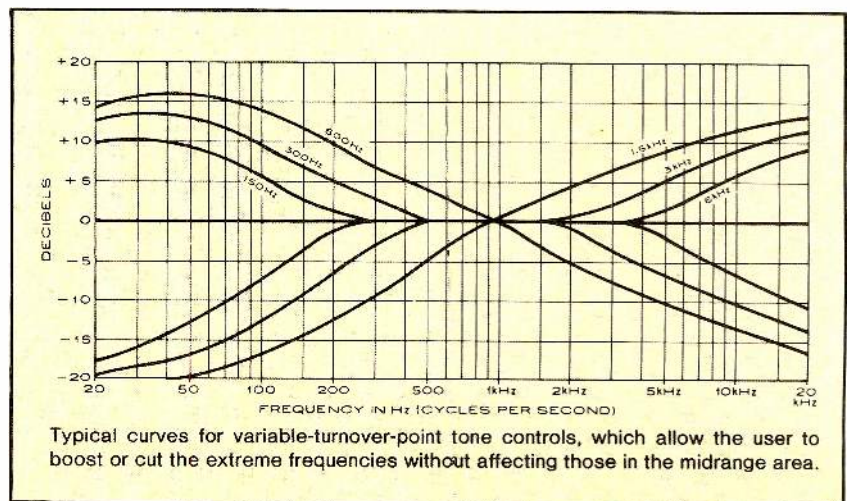
In some equipment you will even find a *third* tone control for the midrange. Its action is usually centered somewhere between about 500 and 1,500 Hz, and it is most useful for changing overall tonal balance (its action is too broad to compensate for finicky room acoustics). Since increasing the midrange level seems to move the sound toward the listener (and vice versa), these are sometimes called "presence" controls.

Many frequency-response problems are simply too complex to be solved with two or three ordinary tone controls, however. An example might be a peak (or a dip) within the normal response limits of the system arising from a speaker characteristic or possibly a room resonance. Such irregularities can span as much as an octave or two anywhere in the audio range, and none of the tone-control systems mentioned so far are able to correct them without undue effect on adjacent frequency areas. An equalizer can provide the solution here. Briefly (see the April 1980 issue for details), an equalizer can be thought of as a multi-band tone control with separate adjustments in from

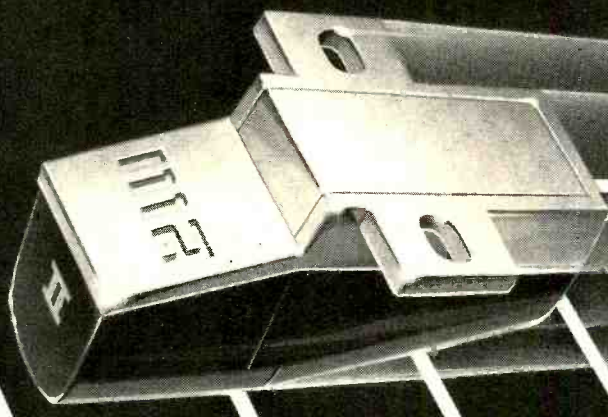
five to fifteen frequency bands. This makes it possible to "fine tune" a system to a room, as well as to subtly alter the sound of a recording.

Finally, there's the "loudness" control; it generally does not allow for much adjustment on the part of the user, being designed to correct for a specific, relatively predictable situation. It seems that the ear loses sensitivity to extremely high and extremely low frequencies as the sound intensity (volume) diminishes. This was established some years ago by two acousticians who documented the phenomenon; the result of their work—the Fletcher-Munson curves—therefore bears their names. These curves, and data gathered by others who later reworked the experiments with even greater precision, are used as the basis for designing a loudness-compensation function into volume controls. The intention is to permit listening at low volume levels while retaining a subjectively correct balance of bass and treble. Since the hearing-sensitivity loss at the low end is considerably greater than at the high end, the compensating bass boost is appropriately larger. Unfortunately, it is sometimes misused to produce additional bass boost by those whose speakers are inadequate, those who like a "mellow" sound, or those who wish to duplicate the sound of a disco at home. This last is usually abuse rather than correction, for the equipment used in discos is made especially for the purpose; attempting to duplicate its performance with a home system can lead to equipment damage (to say nothing of impaired relations with your neighbors).

THE question of just how much is *enough* is of course central to the whole idea of tone controls. Typically, they are designed to increase or decrease response by 10 to 15 dB at about 50 and 10,000 Hz, and that is *more* than adequate for most purposes. A few controls can even boost the extremes by as much as 25 dB or more, and these should be used *very* cautiously. Keep in mind that even a 10-dB boost demands a *tenfold* increase in your amplifier's power output. It's very easy to drive a moderate-power amplifier into overload clipping with overuse of tone controls; it is, in fact, the main cause of midrange/tweeter burnout. Used judiciously, tone controls can help fit equipment to a room or a recording to your taste. And, as with all good things that require the exercise of judgment, they should be used with moderation. □



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Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



Contributing Editor Stark contemplates an over-size model of JVC's X-cut cassette-deck head.

Open-reel Bias/EQ

Q. I have a rather expensive open-reel recorder that provides several switchable settings for record bias and equalization to compensate for differences between tapes. How can I tell which tapes use which switch settings?

RICK PALA
 Avenel, N.J.

A. Frankly, I'm more than a bit disappointed with those manufacturers who produce either open-reel or cassette decks whose "professional" features (adjustable bias/equalization) are not supported by a listing of tapes and their recommended settings or some practical means of deriving the settings (such as built-in test oscillators). If you already own such a machine, I should think that the manufacturer owes you a reply to a civil letter in which you state, "I am interested in using tapes A, B, C, D, and E and I wish to know your machine's recommended settings for them." While professionals may be presumed to have the test equipment necessary to make the best use of variable bias and equalization controls, this should not be demanded of the ordinary consumer.

SAE, Garrard, and Burwen Labs (now a division of KLH) manufacture devices that will remove the sharp "ticks" and "pops" endemic to old records. For continuous "surface" noise, a dynamic noise filter, such as the Phase Linear "Autocorrelator" or units from Burwen or Heath, will help. (Dolby- and dbx-type units do not help reduce already existing noise, being intended to keep more noise from being added by the taping process.) You may also want to acquire an octave-band equalizer so as to approximate more closely the non-standard equalizations on old records.

More on MPX Filters

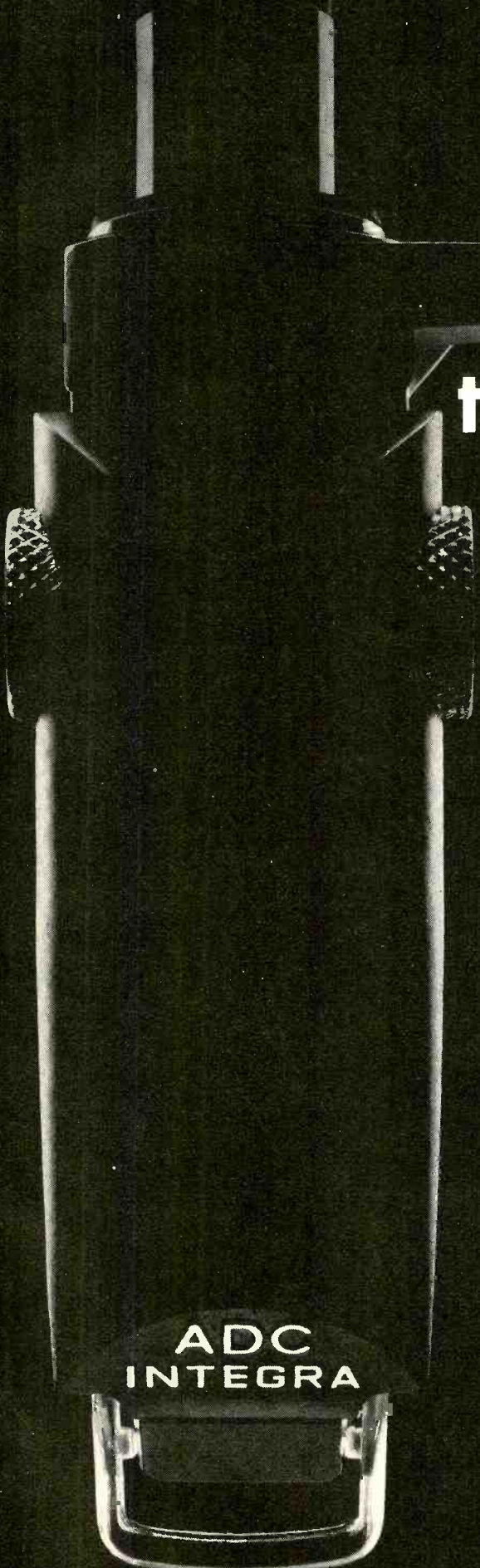
● Kenneth Gundry, senior engineer at Dolby Laboratories, Inc. and developer of the Dolby HX headroom-extension system, has a different viewpoint from my own about the importance of the 19-kHz FM multiplex filters included in most of today's cassette recorders, and it is only fair to give him an opportunity to reply to my discussion of the matter in my February column. He writes:

In answering a question concerning "MPX filters" in cassette recorders, Dr. Stark gives one of the reasons for fitting such a filter, but he does not discuss what is perhaps a more important function.

On cassette tape it is not possible to record as much energy at high frequencies as it is at lower frequencies. If you try to record very high levels at high frequencies, the high frequencies will not be reproduced (the phenomenon known as tape saturation), but there will instead be large amounts of intermodulation distortion. This is why cassette recordings of loud rhythm sections or of muted trumpets frequently sound dull and muddy; the dullness results from the loss of high frequencies and the muddiness from the IM distortion. . . .

The problem of high-frequency saturation gets worse rapidly as the frequency response is extended upward. Other things being equal, the problem is much worse at, say, 18 kHz than at 15 kHz. Therefore, if your recorder is capable of recording at all up to 18 or 20 kHz, you may be in trouble when you try to record music containing more than minute amounts of energy up in that area of the spectrum, particularly if

(Continued on page 28)



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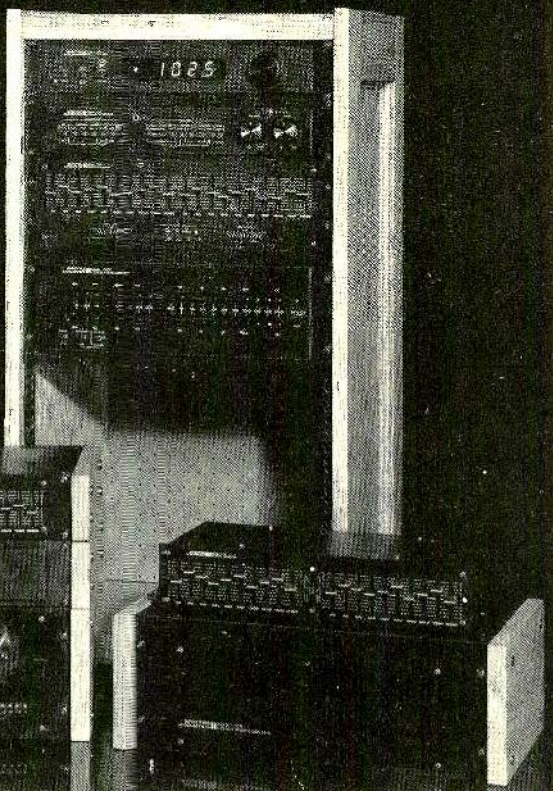
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you make live recordings. You probably won't actually hear the loss at 18 or 20 kHz (unless you are very young), but you probably *will* hear the intermodulation distortion resulting from saturating the tape at these very high frequencies. Therefore, a cleaner, more accurate recording is frequently obtained by filtering out energy above the normal limit of human hearing (around 16 kHz) so as to reduce or eliminate the saturation and resulting intermodulation distortion.

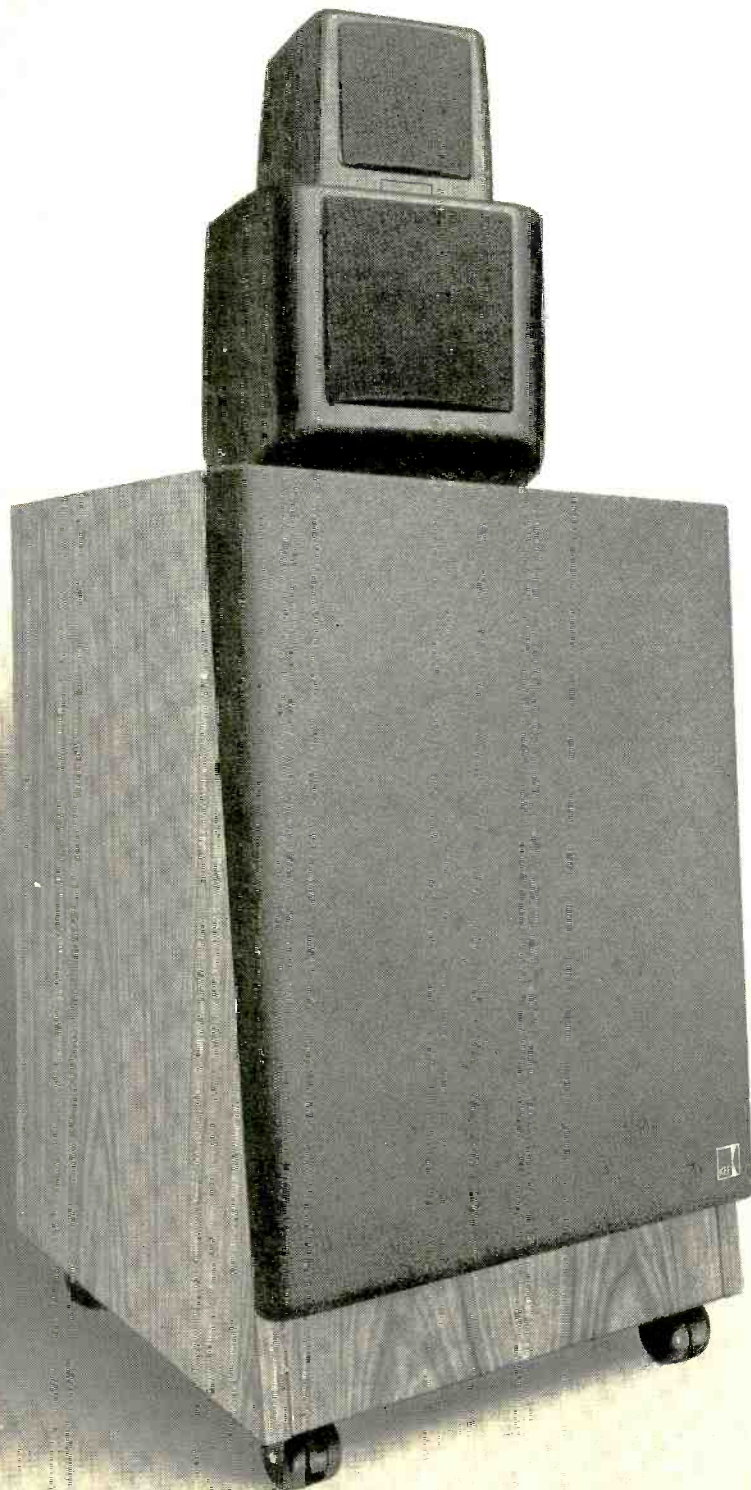
A noise-reduction system makes the use of a filter even more necessary. Proper decoding of complementary systems (such as ANRS, dbx, and the Dolby system depends on the signal's having the same relative level and frequency content before and after taping. If it doesn't—because of tape saturation—the noise-reduction circuitry can be upset.

A filter is important whenever the input signal might contain high-frequency components at a level sufficiently high to cause saturation. The safe rule is: if in doubt, switch the filter on, especially on live recordings (despite what the instruction book of your recorder may say); it is unlikely to do any audible harm and often will do audible good.

Mr. Gundry's letter raises some very important points. When a cassette tape is pushed to saturation (or beyond) by high-level high frequencies, the recorded output of the tape actually *declines* as the input level *increases*! Moreover, intermodulation-distortion products (audible as "muddying") increase noticeably. The Dolby HX system, the Tandberg DynEq system, and the Akai ADR system are all attempts to minimize (in their different ways) the problems that arise from treble saturation of cassette tapes. However, I doubt that any one of them would claim to have *solved* the problems that would arise from, say, using a cassette deck, with wide-range microphones, for live recording of muted trumpets (or other sources of high-level high frequencies).

But the logic of Mr. Gundry's argument would seem to imply that it is a mistake on the part of cassette-deck manufacturers to try to extend the frequency response of their units (measured at a low -20-dB level) beyond approximately 16 kHz. When they do, he seems to be saying, we should employ filters (the FM multiplex—MPX—filter being handy for the purpose) on the chance that some of the high-frequency material might come through at a level high enough to cause treble saturation and its attendant evils. Here I must disagree, for while my hearing is no doubt less acute than it was twenty years ago, in dubbing wide-range musical material I do seem to detect a difference between decks that cut off at approximately 16 kHz and those that go all the way to 20 kHz. The proper place for an MPX filter, I maintain, is in the FM tuner or receiver, and it *ought* to be of sufficiently good design to eliminate the 19-kHz pilot tone at its source, thus eliminating encoding/decoding errors when using a noise-reduction system. An additional MPX filter in the cassette recorder itself should be "back-up insurance" against the possibility of there being an inadequate filter in the receiver or tuner. But to saddle all cassette recording with the bandwidth limitations of stereo FM would be an unwise step backward, in my view.

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Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch

*Contributing Editor Hirsch
in his never-ending search for
the fount of audio wisdom*



• Double Blind Equipment Comparisons •

MOST subjective judgments of audio-component quality are made by means of a side-by-side (A/B) listening comparison between two products. It is now well recognized that A/B listening comparisons must be conducted with extreme care if the results are to be meaningful. If one knows which of two components is being heard at any given time, it is almost impossible to eliminate one's personal bias from the judgment. [Additional pitfalls in the comparative-listening process are discussed in Lynn Claudy's article elsewhere in this issue.]

Even a "blind" test, in which the listener does not know the identity of the component being heard (or even which two are being compared) is subject to human error. Subtle hints, often unintentional, given by the person conducting the test may provide the listener with a clue to the identities of components that ought to be known only as "A" and "B," thus introducing a bias, conscious or unconscious, into the judgment process.

The only rigorously correct way to conduct an A/B comparison is by means of a "double blind" test, in which neither the person administering the test nor those participating in it can know which component is being heard at any time. Ideally, the listener should not even be aware of the identities of the products being compared, although that is not always possible.

A number of audiophile groups have attempted to conduct double blind tests for their own edification. Anyone who has been involved in such an activity knows that an enormous investment in time and procedures is needed to produce valid results. A

number of conditions must be met if the result is not to be slanted in favor of one or the other component. Probably the most critical requirement is that the levels heard from the two units must be matched very closely, preferably within 0.1 dB. This also implies that the frequency response of the two products must be closely matched as well, although this is not always possible (especially since the differences one is listening for may be inherently related to frequency-response differences).

AND there are many pitfalls to be avoided. For example, if power amplifiers are being compared, there must usually be some external means of matching their gains. Great care must be taken to avoid introducing any noise or distortion in the level-adjusting circuits. In comparing phono cartridges, turntables, and tone arms, a complete duplication of the record-playing setup is required, including two samples of any record being played. And, since no two records are likely to be absolutely identical, nor different samples of a cartridge exactly alike, it is desirable to repeat the tests not only with the records interchanged, but with the cartridges interchanged between the tone arms as well.

Speaker comparisons are complicated by the fact that two speakers cannot occupy the same space at the same time, yet the sound of any speaker may be profoundly affected by even a small change in its position relative to the listener (or vice versa). Probably the best way to compare two speakers is in mono, first with the two placed as closely as possible, and then repeating the

comparison with the speaker positions interchanged. Unfortunately, this method does not permit evaluating stereo imaging and spatial characteristics, which may be more important than the acoustic-response properties. It is also important that the speakers not be visible during the test (and also, from my own experience, that one have no idea which models are being compared).

If all this sounds like a lot of work, I can assure you that it is, but it can probably be justified if a sufficient number of individuals take part in the tests and their listening judgments are logged and analyzed by statistical methods. This is certainly an ideal method of determining how many of the supposed sonic differences between components are real and how many of them are imaginary.

ALL I have said about blind and double blind tests presupposes that a number of people are participating, at least to the extent that the person doing the switching is not the same one doing the judging, and preferably that the one taking the test cannot know which components are being compared. As a lone listener a good part of the time, I am in a difficult position, for there is no way for me *not* to know which components are wired into my comparator system or which speakers are facing me at the other end of the room. In any case, I am rarely concerned with minute or elusive differences in sound quality that might appeal to me and not to someone else (or vice versa) and that would very likely be different in any other listening environment. My chief interest is in identifying *obvious* sound

Tested This Month

Adcom GFA-1 Power Amplifier • Dynaco A-150 Speaker System
Garrard GT350ap Record Player • Koss HV/X and HV/XLC Stereo Headphones
Sansui G-7700 AM/FM Stereo Receiver

characteristics that can be described in more or less unambiguous terms. (Incidentally, when I have made completely "non-blind" A/B comparisons, I have rarely heard any distinct differences in sound that could not be ascribed to measured frequency-response or noise-level differences.)

Recently I had the opportunity to use a unique device, an ABX Comparator, which was developed by members of a Detroit-area audio-construction club, the Southeastern Michigan Woofer and Tweeter Marching Society. It is designed to perform double blind listening comparisons, between almost any two components, in such a way that no one can know which is "A" and which is "B" until after a test sequence has been completed.

The ABX Comparator consists of a small control box with six pushbuttons and a two-digit LED numerical readout, a box of similar size for switching low-level components, a high-level switching box for speakers and power amplifiers, and a remote indicator box whose LEDs match those on the control box and can be seen at a considerable distance. The system is powered by two small remote power supplies (to operate the rather involved digital logic circuits and the reed relays that do the switching).

The two components being compared, designated A and B, are connected to the switching boxes in accordance with the test to be conducted. After the comparator is powered and prepared for use, the digits 01 appear in its display window. When either the A or B button is pressed, the corresponding LED on the control box (and the remote display) lights and the selected component is connected to the system. Thus, one can always listen to A or B as often as one desires.

After levels and other relevant qualities have been matched as closely as possible, the person taking the test can alternate between them as long as he deems necessary to hear any presumed sonic differences. Every time a button is pushed, the sound is muted for about 50 milliseconds, making the transition between A and B smooth and noise-free.

The comparison can then be made between X and either A or B. The comparator randomly assigns either A or B to the X button, so the person taking the test must rely on his hearing judgment to decide whether X is *really* A or B. (One can easily get trapped into judging a speaker superior to itself!) After a number of listening and switching trials, during which a record is kept of one's choices, the **NXT** button on the control box is pressed. This reassigns the X button, again randomly, to either A or B, and changes the number in the readout window to 02. The test is continued, perhaps with a different participant, and the X assignment can be changed to provide up to 99 random settings for X.

AFTER the test has been concluded, the **ANS** button is pressed, and the **RST** button used to reset the display to 01. This silences all the signal sources, and the LEDs on the control box and remote display come on to show whether X was really A or B during test 01. Each time the **NXT** button is pressed, the display advances one digit, and the lights show what the X assignment was for that particular test sequence. The memory of the X assignments is retained while power is applied to the comparator system (in fact, it can be erased only by switching off the power for a few seconds).

It is obvious that this can be a powerful

tool for making double blind tests with no possibility of listener bias. I set up the ABX system and made two limited sets of comparisons to verify its operation and to satisfy my own curiosity. First, I connected a high-quality preamplifier to a 200-watt-per-channel amplifier, a pair of good speakers, and a top-quality phono system. A second preamplifier, of good quality but far less expensive than the first, was connected into the signal path from the first preamp so that it could be compared to a piece of wire.

When I played a pink-noise test record, I found to my surprise that I could distinguish between A and X (preamplifier No. 2 and a piece of wire) on four out of five tries. The difference was subtle, and I am sure could probably be explained by minute level differences or frequency-response differences (I had set the levels by ear instead of using instruments as recommended for this procedure).

When I repeated the test with high-quality music recordings (direct-to-disc or from digital masters), I was able on my first attempt to make a correct choice only one out of three tries. With one record, I was right four out of four times. Neither test, of course, was statistically significant (at least fifteen to twenty tries would have been needed for that).

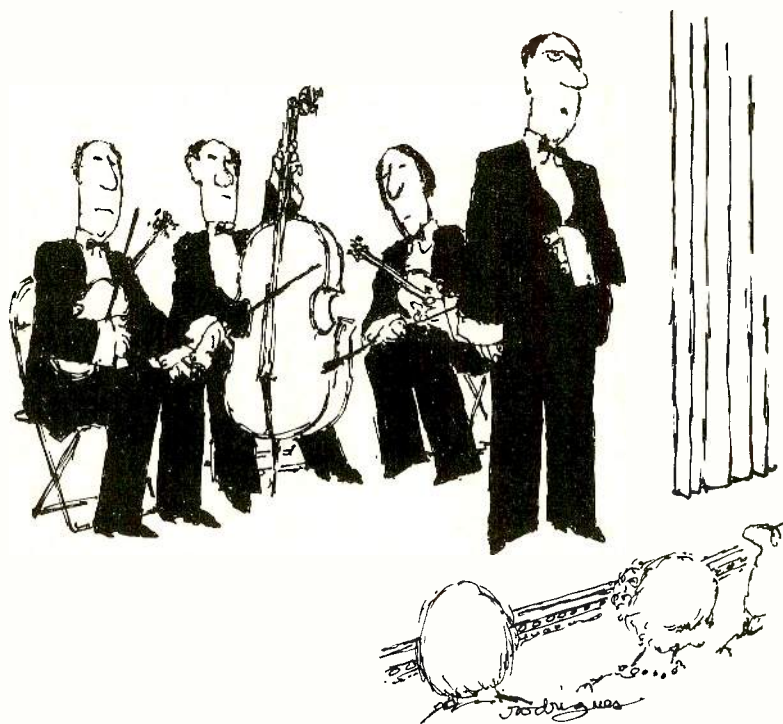
In the second test, I compared the original basic-amplifier setup with a small 20-watt integrated amplifier of recognized quality. The phono-preamplifier input of the first amplifier was driven from the cartridge, and its tape-recording outputs supplied the signals to the **AUX** inputs of the second amplifier.

In this case, I was right 50 per cent of the time—in other words, I heard no significant difference between the two amplifiers (the power output was kept within the ratings of the less powerful amplifier, of course).

I WISH I had the time to use the ABX comparator more extensively, but this type of testing belongs in the province of a group of dedicated audiophiles who are willing and able to invest the many hours that are required to do a meaningful job of comparison. From my brief experience with it, I was most impressed with the ABX Comparator and the care that obviously went into its design. It seems to me that such a device should be able to settle most of the arguments regarding the supposed sounds of amplifiers and other components (although die-hards do seem inclined to deny the validity of *any* evidence that clashes with their preconceptions). It should be noted also that tests run with the ABX system over a three-year period by the Southeast Michigan Woofer and Tweeter Marching Society were concerned simply with establishing whether *differences* could be heard, no attempt being made to establish any preferences between the components that were being compared.

The SMWTMS will provide schematics and parts lists for those who wish to build their own ABX Comparator; they also expect to manufacture limited quantities of these systems. For further information, contact them at 10155 Lincoln Avenue, Huntington Woods, Michigan 48070. □

Test Reports start on page 34



"... Ladies and gentlemen: Mr. Emanuel Roitman of the Prima Quartet is indisposed with the flu. At the conclusion of this evening's program, please present your ticket stub at the box office for a refund of 25¢ on the dollar."

The 1980 Mazda RX-7 GS

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

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

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

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

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

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

But the front mid-engine RX-7 offers infinitely more than performance. It also provides extraordinary comfort.



So if you know what you want in a sports car, and you don't want to pay a king's ransom to get it, take a look at the RX-7 GS or S Model. The beautifully-styled, high-mileage, high-performance sports cars from Mazda.

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

- AM/FM stereo radio with power antenna
- Side-window demisters
- Cut-pile carpeting
- Tinted glass
- 5-speed
- Tachometer

- Styled steel wheels
- Steel-belted radial tires
- Front and rear stabilizer bars
- Ventilated front disc and finned rear drum brakes with power assist
- Electric remote hatch release
- 3-speed automatic transmission, air conditioning, aluminum wheels and sun roof available as options.

\$8395*

*Manufacturer's suggested retail price for GS Model shown. S Model \$7645. Slightly higher in California. Actual prices established by dealers. Taxes, license, freight, optional equipment and any other dealer charges are extra. (Wide alloy wheels shown \$275-\$295.) All prices subject to change without notice.

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

Mazda's rotary engine licensed by NSU-WANKEL.

Mazda

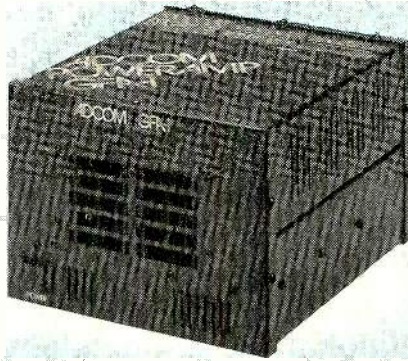
The more you look,
the more you like.



Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

Adcom GFA-1 Power Amplifier



THE Adcom GFA-1 is an exceptionally compact, moderate-price, high-power amplifier rated to deliver 200 watts per channel and advertised as costing a dollar per watt. The GFA-1 is a simple rectangular box, finished in black. It measures 8¾ inches wide, 6½ inches high, and 10½ inches deep. Its 22½-pound weight is relatively light for an amplifier of its rating, but because of its compact size it feels surprisingly heavy. The front panel contains a large air-exhaust opening, a small red LED pilot light, and a pushbutton power switch. The rear of the amplifier has an opening of similar size for air intake, spring-loaded connectors for the speaker outputs, and the phono-jack signal inputs. The amplifier has a heavy-duty, two-wire a.c. line cord (it consumes 800 watts at full output).

Both the packaging and circuit design of the Adcom GFA-1 were meant to create an economical and compact amplifier of the highest quality. Each channel actually consists of two amplifiers, one carrying the positive portion of the signal waveform, the other the negative portion. The outputs are "bridged" so that the speaker is driven from the two "hot" outputs, and neither side of the output circuit can be grounded. Adcom points out that this completely symmetrical circuit, in which each half of the amplifier has its own negative-feedback network, handles both signal polarities identically (which is not always the case in conventional amplifiers).

The four amplifiers—positive and negative for each channel—are powered by two separate power supplies (for positive and negative sides). These voltages are developed by separate bridge rectifiers and filter systems operating from a single power transformer. In great measure, the compactness of the GFA-1 can be credited to this transformer, a toroidally wound "pancake" about 7 inches in diameter and only 1¾ inches thick, which fills most of the bottom of the amplifier case.

It is still necessary to dissipate a considerable amount of heat from the output transistors of the GFA-1. This has been done, within the compact dimensions of the GFA-1, by arranging the output transistors in a single row across the top, from front to rear, with a large number of rod-like radiators extending from their mounting plate into the duct that passes through the amplifier from front to rear. A small fan draws in air in the rear and expels it at the front after it has passed over the cooling "fins."

The Adcom GFA-1 has several protective systems, including relays that disconnect the outputs if any significant d.c. component appears there (such as might occur from an FM-tuner muting-circuit "thump" or from flicking a phono stylus). The relays also provide a turn-on delay of several seconds to prevent starting transients from reaching the speakers. An electronic current-limiting circuit prevents excessive currents from passing through the loads if their impedance is 2 ohms or less, but it does not affect loads with impedance of 4 ohms or higher, nor reactive loads such as electrostatic speakers. A thermal cutout on the power-transistor mounting plate shuts off power to the amplifier if the temperature approaches an unsafe value. There is also an a.c.-line fuse. Price: \$400.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Continuous operation at one-third rated power, required as part of the FTC-mandated preconditioning procedure, caused the thermal cutout to shut down the amplifier after a few minutes, and thereafter it operated on a cycle of about 2 minutes "on" and 4 minutes "off." As a result, some three hours of operation was needed to accumulate the specified 1 hour of actual "on" time.

When we drove 8-ohm loads at 1,000 Hz, the waveform clipped at 290 watts per channel for an IHF clipping-headroom rating of 1.6 dB. The amplifier does not have power ratings for lower load impedances,

but we measured the clipping output as 340 watts per channel into 4 ohms and 200 watts into 2 ohms. With the tone-burst signal used for the IHF dynamic-headroom measurement, we obtained an output of 365 watts into 8 ohms (dynamic headroom = 2.6 dB), 430 watts into 4 ohms, and 265 watts into 2 ohms.

At 1,000 Hz, harmonic distortion with both channels driving 8-ohm loads rose smoothly and continuously from the lowest power levels to the highest (unlike with most amplifiers, in which distortion rises at very low power outputs). The distortion, masked by noise at 0.1 watt, was a barely measurable 0.0017 per cent at 1 watt and rose smoothly to 0.015 per cent at 100 watts and 0.032 per cent at the rated 200 watts. Intermodulation distortion could not be measured (since the IM analyzer grounds one side of the circuit to which it is connected), but we had no reason to believe it was out of line with the HD measurements.

With 4-ohm loads, the distortion increased from 0.002 per cent at 1 watt to 0.011 per cent at 100 watts and 0.18 per cent at 200 watts. Driving 2 ohms, the distortion went from 0.0032 per cent at 1 watt to 0.16 per cent at 100 watts and 0.32 per cent at 150 watts. The distortion could not be measured at higher power outputs with 4-ohm and 2-ohm loads because the amplifier overheated and shut off before a reading could be made.

At the rated 200-watt output into 8-ohm loads, the distortion was between 0.03 and 0.04 per cent from 20 to 9,000 Hz, rising to 0.09 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At lower power levels the distortion characteristic was much the same, with lower readings at most frequencies but rising to between 0.05 and 0.07 per cent at 20,000 Hz.

The frequency response of the GFA-1 was flat from d.c. to 10,000 Hz, down 0.3 dB at 20,000 Hz, and down 3 dB at 140,000 Hz. The instruction booklet does not specifically state that the amplifier is direct-coupled from input to output (in fact, it gives no specifications whatever), but its perfect amplification of a 5-Hz square wave left no doubt that it is a true d.c. amplifier. The amplifier's rise time was approximately 3 microseconds, and its slew rate was about 33 volts per microsecond. The IHF slew factor was 5, and a reference output of 1 watt was obtained with an input of 73 millivolts. The hum and noise (A-weighted) was a very low -83 dB referred to 1 watt.

● **Comment.** The Adcom GFA-1 was one of the quietest fan-cooled amplifiers we have used, for it could be heard only within a distance of a foot or two in a quiet room. In any normal installation it should be completely inaudible. Adcom indicates that the GFA-1 is suitable for disco service, needing only a simple rewiring of the fan connec-

(Continued on page 36)

JBL's new L112. Lower, higher, faster, flatter.



Listen to years of research at the leading edge of transducer engineering.

Lasers, holography, computers and the human ear interfacing toward one end: a new state-of-the-art in bookshelf loudspeakers... JBL's new L112.

Lower. The L112's Symmetrical Field Geometry 12" woofer, with its larger 3" voice coil and specially-coated cone, delivers the low notes of music with extremely low distortion. Lower than any other bookshelf speaker we've ever tested. You'll hear crisp, clean, powerful bass all the way down to the

lowest notes.

Higher. A new vapor aluminum-coated lightweight phenolic Dome Radiator was developed through the use of laser holography. This laser research helps our engineers examine tweeter cone movement like an X-ray allows physicians to examine the human body. Diaphragm excursions have been refined for exceptionally smooth response, maximum stereo imaging and high-power handling. You'll hear harmonics you've never heard before.

Faster. JBL's new High Resolution Dividing Network enables

the L112 to deliver transients with startling immediacy. It controls each of the L112's drivers throughout their full operating range. You'll hear sound so coherent, it will seem that only one extremely wide-range transducer is responsible—not three!

Flatter. The flat frequency response measurements of the L112 qualify this speaker as the most accurate bookshelf performer we've tested in JBL history.

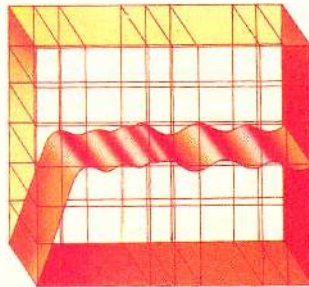
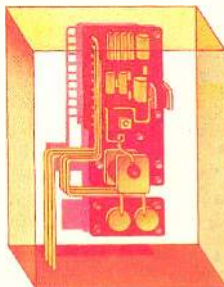
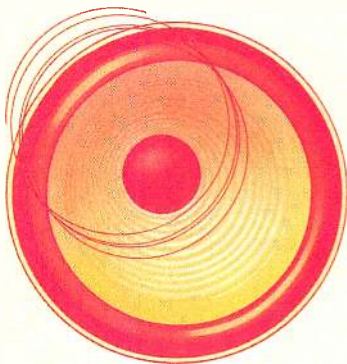
The L112 represents more than engineering excellence. It's also excellence in quality assurance and manufacturing. In JBL's ma-

chine shop, we hold tolerances on the L112 components such as pole pieces to 2/10,000ths of an inch! These are tolerances normally found only in aerospace technology.

Each speaker is crafted in the USA at our Northridge, California facility, inspected and tested at over 50 test stations and beautifully hand-finished with oiled and rubbed American walnut veneer.

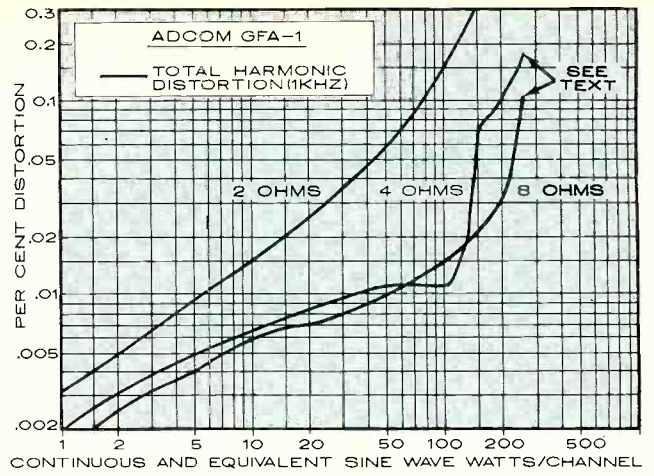
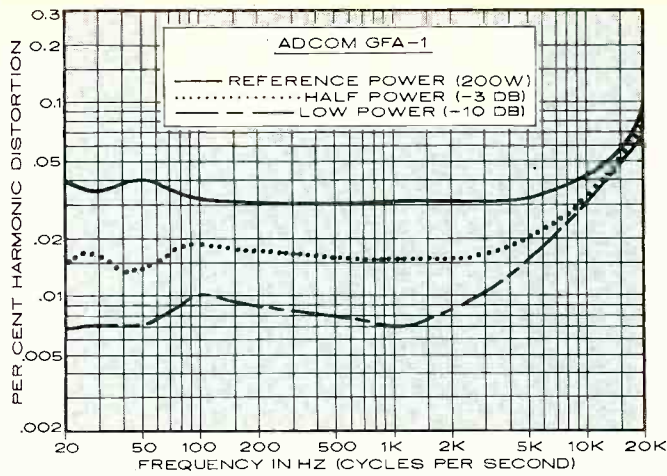
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tions (to increase its speed), which can be done by the factory, the dealer, or a knowledgeable consumer.

Although the thermal-protection system made our testing a lengthy and sometimes exasperating procedure, it is undeniably effective. The cooling ("off") time would have been greatly reduced if the cutout had merely shut off the amplifier but left the fan running instead of turning off everything, but this is of no significance in normal operation of the amplifier. After hours of playing music (rather than test tones) at fairly high levels, the exterior of the amplifier was completely cool to the touch. In sine-wave testing, the "singing" of the power transformer could be heard clearly at a considerable distance (across the room, in fact), but the Adcom manual indicates that

this is normal. With loudspeakers connected, the acoustic noise from the amplifier was completely masked.

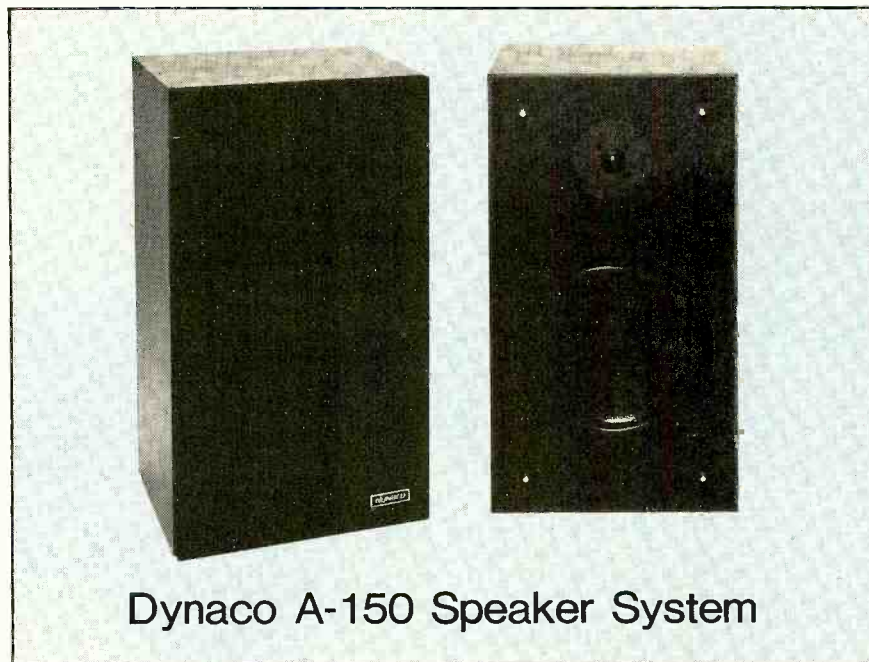
Because of its bridged outputs, we could not connect the GFA-1 to our switching comparator system (which has a common ground for both channels). We therefore set up the amplifier with a high-quality preamplifier, record player, and speakers and listened to it without attempting to make direct A/B comparisons.

Listening left no doubt that this is a top-quality amplifier (and our measurements make it highly unlikely that it is anything less than that). We were more concerned with the possible presence of anomalies such as turn-on thumps, audible noise from the fan or transformer, and the possible temperature rise in normal service with pro-

gram material rather than test tones. None of these effects materialized.

The overall performance and features of the Adcom GFA-1 would be a credit to any high-power amplifier regardless of size and price. The size of the GFA-1 makes it possible to install it almost anywhere with only slight concern about ventilation, and its price makes it one of the top values in today's market. One could pay two or three times as much and get no better audible performance. The absence of gimmicks and the presence of innovative electrical and mechanical design together make the Adcom GFA-1 a top contender in the heavy-weight amplifier class (despite its much less than heavy weight!).

Circle 140 on reader service card



FOLLOWING its acquisition by ESS, Dynaco has announced a new line of speaker systems in keeping with the long-standing Dynaco tradition of optimum performance at moderate cost. The smallest of the three initial models, the A-150, is a bookshelf-size, two-way acoustic-suspension speaker system designed to have higher than average efficiency.

The 10-inch-diameter woofer of the A-150 has a rubber-edge surround and is driven by a 1½-inch-diameter, four-layer voice coil operating in an 8,500-gauss field from a 4-pound magnet assembly. At 2,000 Hz there is a crossover to a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter. A knob in the rear of the enclosure, next to the insulated spring connectors, varies the tweeter level from its nominally flat position to suit individual circumstances. It can be increased by up to 2 dB or effectively cut off.

The Dynaco A-150 is housed in a walnut-grain, vinyl-veneer box 22 inches high, 12¼ inches wide, and 12¾ inches deep; it weighs about 30 pounds. Its brown cloth grille is retained by metal pegs. The A-150 is nominally an 8-ohm system with a rated fre-

(Continued on page 38)



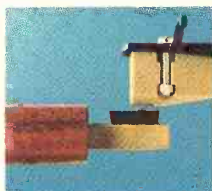
Give your cartridge more than The Finger!

Give it Stylus Care With the new Discwasher SC-2 System.

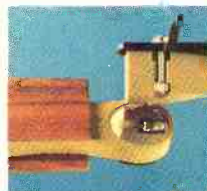
The famous SC-1 stylus brush (standard of the record and hifi industries) now has a synergistic fluid called SC-2.



New Fluid



Nylon Brush



Inspection Mirror

SC-2 Fluid enhances and speeds cleaning and yet protects diamond adhesives, cartridge mounting polymers and fine-metal cantilevers against the corrosive effects of many other "cleaners".

The Discwasher SC-2 System. Stylus care you can finger as clearly superior.



SC-2 Stylus Care System



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quency response of 50 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB. It is recommended for use with amplifiers delivering from 15 to 65 watts per channel. Suggested retail price of the Dynaco A-150 is \$150.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The mid- and high-frequency response, measured in the reverberant field of our test room, rose smoothly and continuously from 600 to 7,000 Hz and was almost flat from 7,000 to 20,000 Hz at a level some 5 dB higher than the average midrange output. The high-frequency dispersion was excellent up to 9,000 Hz, and at higher frequencies we observed the moderate directivity typical of 1-inch dome tweeters.

The woofer output, in a close-miked measurement, was at its maximum between 70 and 80 Hz. It fell off at 12 dB per octave below 60 Hz and at about 3 dB per octave above 80 Hz. A slight jog in the response curve at 500 to 600 Hz appeared in both the close-miked and the far-field measurements and seemed to be a characteristic of the woofer. When spliced, the two curves showed an overall composite frequency response within ± 2.5 dB from 49 to 2,500 Hz with a 5-dB rise at 7,000 Hz and higher. This measurement was made with the tweeter level set to 0, the nominally flat position. The level control was able to increase the output by about 2 dB above 1,000 Hz, and when it cut off the tweeter entirely output dropped steeply above that frequency.

The bass distortion at 1 watt input was between 1 and 2 per cent from 100 Hz down to 50 Hz, and it rose steeply below that frequency to 7.5 per cent at 40 Hz and 22 per cent at 30 Hz. When we drove the speaker

with 10 watts, the distortion was considerably higher, between 3.5 and 5.5 per cent from 100 to 50 Hz and 14 per cent at 40 Hz.

The impedance of the A-150 system was 8 ohms at 20 Hz; it rose to a peak of 30 ohms at 55 Hz and fell to about 6 ohms between 100 and 500 Hz. There was a broad rise to about 15 ohms in the 1,000- to 2,000-Hz range, and the impedance remained at about 8 ohms above 5,000 Hz. The speaker delivered a sound-pressure output of 87 dB measured at a distance of 1 meter with an input of 2.83 volts of noise in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz. This sensitivity is high for an acoustic-suspension system and is actually higher than we have measured on a number of vented speaker systems. Toneburst response was good at all frequencies.

● **Comment.** Removing the grille of the Dynaco A-150 reveals a front that looks much like any of dozens—or hundreds—of small two-way speaker systems on the market. To the casual viewer, it would appear to be "just another small-box speaker." To our ears it was much more than that. The smoothness of its sound belied its unexceptional driver array (unexceptional only to the eye, since Dynaco designers had certain definite goals in mind when they created the A-150, and its sound is testimony to their success).

The balance among bass, midrange, and treble frequencies was as good as we have ever heard. It had the unified quality that tells an experienced listener that there are no serious peaks or holes in the power-response curve of the speaker, and this was confirmed by our measurements. The high

end is strong, although in our rather absorbent room it sounded just right. In a bright or hard room one might wish to reduce it somewhat, and the level control in the rear of the speaker should be able to do this easily.

The sound of the low bass was much cleaner and stronger than we would have expected from our measurements. However, one cannot expect miracles from a speaker any more than from any other mechanical device. The Dynaco A-150 does manage to sound better than one would expect, given its rather basic driver configuration, but the sharp increase in bass distortion when the speaker is driven hard is a limitation. Still, since one would not think of using a pair of these speakers to fill an auditorium—or even in a very large home living room—with sound, this is really not much of a drawback.

In the A-150, Dynaco has created a compact bookshelf speaker with above-average efficiency and very smooth frequency (power) response capable of delivering genuine high-fidelity sound quality if not driven too hard. Since its high efficiency makes it unlikely (and unnecessary) that the A-150 will be exposed to very high power inputs, we see it as a well conceived and executed design, larger and wider in range than "mini-speakers" costing almost as much, yet compatible with equally modestly priced amplifiers and receivers. We are happy to see that under its new management Dynaco's former quality standards and basic philosophy are being carried forward into the fourth decade of this pioneering hi-fi company.

Circle 141 on reader service card



Garrard GT350ap Record Player

THE Garrard GT-350ap is a two-speed manual or automatic single-play turntable whose 3-pound (including the rubber mat) cast aluminum-alloy platter is belt-driven by a servo-controlled d.c. motor. The playing speed (either 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ or 45 rpm) can

be electronically varied over a nominal ± 3 per cent range by a small knob next to the platter, and it can be monitored by the stroboscope marks cast into the platter edge and illuminated by a LED.

The tone arm, a slightly S-shaped alumi-

num tube finished, like most of the record player, in black, is fitted with a low-mass carbon-fiber head shell of the standard four-pin plug-in type. The cartridge-mounting screws pass through the finger lift, which slides into a groove on the top of the shell. This not only simplifies the stylus-overhang adjustment but keeps the cartridge parallel to the head-shell axis at all times. Parallel lines on the underside of the rubber mat can be used to verify the tangency of the head shell to the record grooves.

The black-finished counterweight is threaded onto the end of the tone arm and has a tracking-force scale calibrated from 0 to 3 grams at 0.25-gram intervals. The skating-compensation dial is located next to the base of the arm, where it can be adjusted while a record is being played. The arm rest, which is an extension of the arm base, is fitted with a retaining lock.

All the operating controls of the GT350ap are on the front of its base, where they are fully usable with the smoky-plastic cover lowered. Except for one pushbutton, they are all horizontally moving levers. The SPEED/SIZE lever sets both the turntable speed and the arm-indexing diameter (12

(Continued on page 41)

AKAI INTRODUCES THE NEW WAVE.

A brand new generation of integrated amplifiers and tuners filled with some of AKAI's brightest, most sophisticated wizardry ever.

Take the AM-U06, our top amp. With a hefty 68 watts per channel minimum RMS at 8 ohms from 20-20,000 Hz. And unbelievably, with no more than 0.008% THD. That's right, 0.008%.

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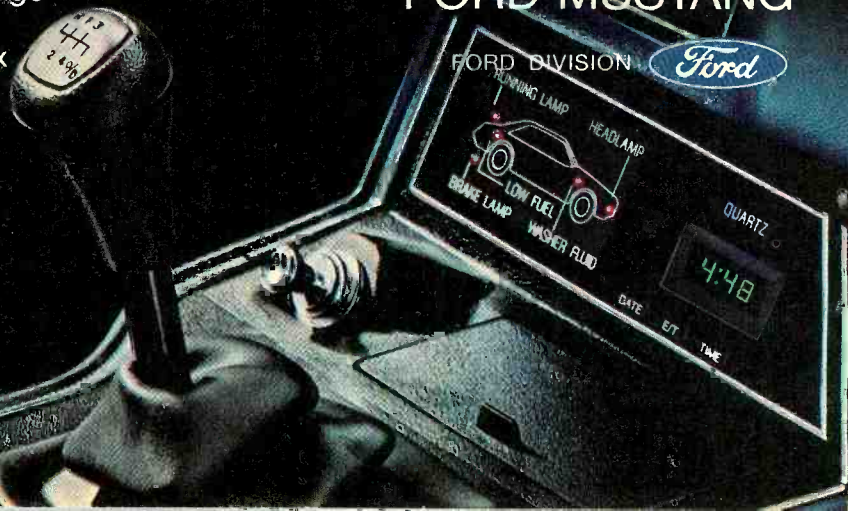
CIRCLE NO. 19 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New 5-speed overdrive.

Get all the excitement of an optional 5-speed overdrive, plus a world of other options—turbo, V-8, Michelin TRX radial tires, forged aluminum wheels... even a flip-up open air roof.

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FORD MUSTANG



inches for 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm records, 7 inches for 45-rpm records; other combinations of speed and size can be played manually). Next to it is a small AUTO RETURN pushbutton that can stop play at any time and return the arm to its rest.

The basic operation of the record player is controlled by a three-position AUTO START lever. Moving it from OFF to MAN turns on the turntable, leaving the arm to be positioned manually. A further movement, past MAN to AUTO, starts the motor and initiates the automatic operating cycle. The mechanism of the GT350ap is made of Delrin plastic for quiet and reliable operation, and it is driven from the main motor by a polyester belt. The arm indexes to the selected diameter and lowers gently to the record. At the end of play, in either the AUTO or MAN mode, the arm lifts and returns to its rest, shutting off the motor. The remaining control is CUE, which raises and lowers the tone arm in proportion to its movement to the right or left.

The black base of the Garrard GT350ap is molded of glass-filled polyester to match the overall appearance of the unit, which is finished in black with accents of aluminum (at the arm pivots, speed vernier and antiskating knobs, and the front control panel). The entire record player is supported on four softly sprung rubber feet. With the cover lowered, the GT350ap is 17 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches wide, 15 inches deep, and 6 inches high. It weighs approximately 13 pounds. Price: \$209.95 (also available as the GT350ap/S, mounted with a Shure M95ED cartridge, for \$287.45).

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The test sample of the Garrard GT350ap was supplied to us with a Shure V15 Type III cartridge installed, and it was tested with that cartridge. The tracking-force calibration was very accurate, reading within 0.05

gram of the actual force at all settings. The tracking error of the tone arm was typically less than 0.5 degree per inch. (We noted that the cartridge-aligning "protractor" lines under the turntable mat were at a radius of 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. They would be more helpful if located at a smaller radius, such as 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 inches.) The capacitance of the tone-arm and signal-cable wiring was 108 picofarads (pF) to ground on one channel and 126 pF on the other. The difference between the two channels, though unusual, should have no practical effect on the performance of any cartridge used in this arm. The interchannel capacitance was 5.5 pF.

The net effective mass of the tone arm was 11 grams, making it one of the lighter integrated record-player tone arms presently on the market. The highly compliant V15 Type III cartridge resonated at 8.5 Hz, with an output rise of 5.5 dB at resonance. The skating compensation was adjusted properly (equal distortion on both channels) when its dial was set 1 gram higher than the tracking force. The arm-cueing device raised and lowered the pickup smoothly, although the lift had to be done slowly to avoid bouncing the arm, and the pickup height could be set anywhere from barely touching the record to its maximum. The outward arm drift during descent was negligible even from its maximum height without antiskating, but there was an appreciable lateral shift when optimum antiskating was applied. This was easily avoided by lifting the arm only enough to clear the record, in which case there was no detectable lateral tone-arm drift.

The turntable speed could be varied ± 4.2 per cent at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm and from +7.6 to -3.9 per cent at 45 rpm. Line-voltage changes from 95 to 135 volts caused a negligible transient speed shift of about 0.2 per cent, and the speed returned to its previous value in a couple of seconds. The un-

weighted rumble was -30 dB, improving to -59 dB with ARLL weighting. The flutter was 0.08 per cent wrms (JIS weighting) and ± 0.15 per cent weighted peak (DIN). The operation of the automatic arm-cycling mechanism required 13.5 seconds to begin playing a record (after the control level was moved to AUTO), and after the return was initiated it took 9.5 seconds for the motor to shut off.


● **Comment.** The soft mounting feet of the Garrard GT350ap give it a rather "bouncy" feel, especially when the controls are operated rapidly or when the cover is raised or lowered. If a record is being played at such a time, there is an audible "wow," apparently caused by the motor's rocking on its mounts. On the other hand, once one learns to move the controls smoothly, and in particular to raise the tone arm only partially with the CUE lever, the GT350ap is as smooth and "bug free" as one would wish.

Despite the GT350ap's soft mounting, its isolation from base-conducted vibration was no better than the average direct-drive turntable, with numerous transmission responses between 20 and 100 Hz, plus one at 230 Hz that appeared to be a dust-cover resonance. This is not to say that it was unusually sensitive to feedback-inducing vibration, but rather that (unlike many other belt-drive units) it was not particularly insensitive to it.

The moderate-price Garrard GT350ap is an attractive, functional, and basically well-designed record player. Judging from our experience with it, it has a rugged and essentially foolproof mechanism. And once one has become accustomed to a record player with *all* its controls on the front panel, it is hard to go back to the "old-fashioned" variety!

Circle 142 on reader service card

Koss HV/X
and HV/XLC
Stereo
Headphones



THE Koss HV/X is a "high-velocity" stereo headphone designed to give wider and smoother frequency response than previous lightweight, acoustically transparent phones. The newly designed circumaural foam-plastic ear cushions are contoured to fit around the ear. The depth of the cushion increases with the distance from the center, and when the phones are worn the outer portion of the cushion is compressed to a greater extent than the innermost portions. This variable-density feature is part of the basic acoustic design of the phones.

The diaphragm within each earpiece is vented to the rear through an acoustic resistance and eventually to the outside through a number of narrow slits in the back of the enclosing shell. The plastic cushions can easily be removed for cleaning with mild soap and lukewarm water. The spring-metal headband is adjustable for a comfortable fit, and the soft vinyl band that actually contacts the head and supports the headset is exceptionally comfortable. The

(Continued overleaf)

Koss HV/X is fitted with a 10-foot coiled cord and a standard phone plug. The same headphone is also available as the Model HV/XLC, which has an individual slide-type level control in each earpiece for volume and balance adjustment.

The manufacturer's specifications for the HV/X include a frequency response of 15 to 35,000 Hz (as is usual with headphone ratings, no decibel tolerance is given). The nominal impedance is 85 ohms at 1,000 Hz, and the phones are suitable for use with amplifier outputs rated from 3.2 to 600 ohms. The sensitivity for a 100-dB sound-pressure level (SPL) is 1 volt rms at 1,000 Hz or 0.7 volt rms of pink noise, and the total harmonic distortion at 100 dB SPL (1,000 Hz) is less than 0.5 per cent. The rated SPL for 1 per cent distortion at 1,000 Hz is 120 dB! The weight of the Koss HV/X (less cord) is 8.5 ounces. Price: Koss HV/X, \$69.95; HV/XLC, \$79.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Koss HV/X and HV/XLC were both measured on an acoustic test coupler (similar to an ANSI standard headphone coupler). The measured performance of the two phones was so nearly alike that we are presenting data only for the HV/X; differences between them probably were no greater than would result from normal production and measurement tolerances.

With 1 volt of signal applied, the mid-range SPL output was 98 dB. The output

rose below 500 Hz to 105 dB at 100 Hz, falling off to 96 dB at 20 Hz. Above 1,500 Hz the response became irregular, as is usual in coupler measurements. However, except for one narrow dip, the output remained above the midrange level all the way up to our 15,000-Hz upper measurement limit.

To attain the rated 120-dB SPL at 1,000 Hz, it was necessary to drive the phones with 16.8 volts (equivalent to an amplifier output of 35 watts into 8 ohms). Our measured total harmonic distortion of 1.6 per cent was almost evenly divided between second- and third-harmonic components. Since a listening level of 120 dB would be uncomfortably loud (and perhaps dangerous) for anyone with normal hearing, this rating merely indicates that the HV/X phones can play loud enough for *anyone* without significant distortion. The phones could not be driven to the 120-dB level at 100 Hz without excessive diaphragm excursion and severe distortion.

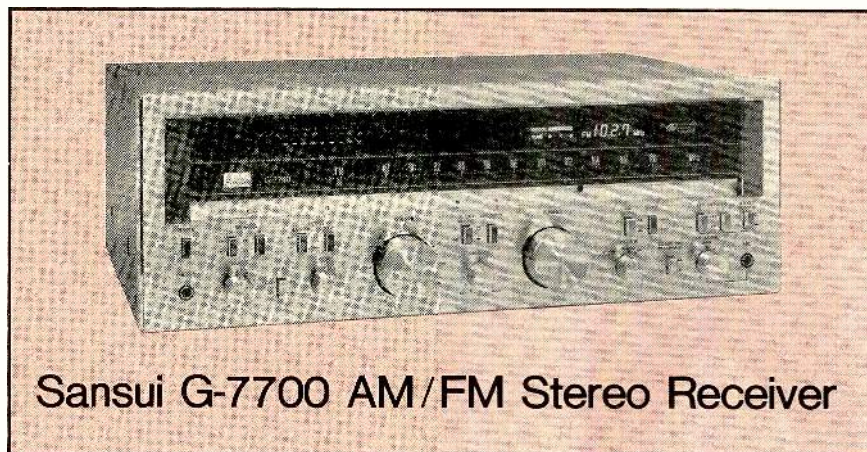
At a more reasonable listening level of 100 dB (which is still *loud*), the total harmonic distortion of the HV/X phones was exactly the rated 0.5 per cent, almost all second-harmonic. The impedance of each earpiece was an almost constant 100 ohms from 20 to about 6,000 Hz, increasing to about 160 ohms at 20,000 Hz.

● **Comment.** Listening tests confirmed the essential identity of the Koss HV/X and

HV/XLC phones when the volume controls of the latter were set to maximum. For a solo listener there would be little reason to choose the HV/XLC, but its volume controls could be very convenient when more than one pair of phones is to be driven simultaneously from a single amplifier. As Koss claims, the HV/X phones were very comfortable to wear. As a matter of fact, it was easy to forget that they were being worn, which certainly cannot be said of most phones.

The sound quality of the phones was about as smooth and uncolored as we have ever heard from a dynamic headphone. There was no obvious emphasis of any part of the frequency range, and the overall sonic balance was excellent. Of course, it is difficult to compare headphone sound quality, either with another phone or with a speaker, because of the unavoidable time lapse when switching phones and the totally different psychoacoustic experience when one hears sound from a pair of speakers. Such comparisons as we could make did not reveal any weaknesses in the HV/X, although a pair of fully electrostatic (and much more expensive) phones had an obviously smoother overall frequency response. However, unlike the heavier, tightly sealing electrostatic units, the fine-sounding HV/X phones could be worn for several hours without discomfort.

Circle 143 on reader service card



THE Sansui G-7700 stereo receiver features a digitally operated quartz-locked tuning system and a direct-coupled power-amplifier section. Its FTC power rating of 120 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.02 per cent total harmonic distortion places it next to the top of Sansui's new receiver line, and its performance and features are certainly commensurate with that position.

The G-7700 is an imposing receiver, with a satin-silver front panel and a handsome wood cabinet finished in rosewood veneer.

The large tuning-dial cutout across the top of the panel is devoted only partially to the AM and FM dial scales (the latter having linear frequency spacing). Above the right portion of the dial scale is a blue fluorescent display group covering the basic parameters of frequency, signal strength, and center-channel FM-tuning indication. At the upper left of the dial area is an amplifier-power readout consisting of two groups of red LEDs that expand to the left and right to show the instantaneous power output of each channel. They are calibrated at intervals of approximately 3 dB to correspond to

power outputs of 0.01 to 120 watts into 8-ohm loads.

Two large knobs on the front panel below the dial area are for volume and tuning (the former being lightly detented at many closely spaced positions). Between them are a smaller center-detented balance knob and two pushbuttons that operate the audio-muting (a 20-dB volume reduction) and the loudness-compensation circuits. Smaller knobs to the left of the volume knob are the bass and treble tone controls, each having eleven detented positions including a center "flat" setting. Between them is a TONE pushbutton that bypasses all tone-control circuits when in its out position. Two similar buttons above the tone controls individually connect the outputs for two sets of speakers, and two more buttons switch the infrasonic and high-cut filters. At the lower left of the panel are the POWER button and a headphone jack.

To the right of the tuning knob is a smaller SOURCE selector knob with positions for TAPE/AUX, two identical PHONO inputs, FM AUTO and AM. Another button changes the FM de-emphasis time constant from the normal 75 microseconds to the Dolby FM de-emphasis of 25 microseconds for use with an external Dolby-decoding adaptor. Above these controls are two buttons for FM MULTING and stereo/mono MODE. Three buttons to their right control the tape-monitor functions, providing playback from either of

(Continued on page 44)

Technics

Performance and reliability. That's why 73 of the top 100 radio stations that use turntables use Technics direct drive turntables. In fact, of those stations surveyed by Opinion Research Corporation, Technics was chosen 6 to 1 over the nearest competitor.

Why did station engineers choose Technics direct drive: "Latest state of the art." "Reliability and past experience." "Low rumble, fast start." "Wow and flutter, direct drive and constant speed." To quote just a few. And you'll choose Technics for the same reasons.

The D-Series. Three turntables that start at \$125. Each with 0.03% wow and flutter and -75 dB rumble. That's unsurpassed performance for the price.

The Q-Series. Two turntables with speed accuracy of 99.998%, wow and flutter of 0.025% and -78 dB rumble. No wonder so many radio stations choose Technics quartz-locked turntables.

The MK2 Series. Three turntables with a startup time of 0.7 seconds, or 1/2 of a revolution. And the accuracy of Technics quartz-locked pitch control. That's performance good enough for the most demanding professional.

Then there's the SL-10 (\$600). The turntable of the 80's. Not much bigger than a record jacket, it has a quartz-locked direct-drive motor and a servo-controlled linear tracking arm. But what really makes it unique is what it can do: Play with all the accuracy Technics is so famous for, even on its side or ups de cown.

Technics direct drive. The turntables that top radio stations use. * Technics recommended prices, but actual price will be set by dealers.

CIRCLE NO. 56 ON READER SERVICE CARD

You should buy a Technics direct drive turntable for the same reasons 73 of the top 100 radio stations did.



two tape decks with provision for dubbing from deck 1 to deck 2 (but not in the reverse direction) while listening to the playback from either deck or to the selected program source. At the lower right of the panel is a MIC jack and a MIC MIXING LEVEL knob that injects the output of a single microphone equally into both speaker outputs independent of the setting of the main volume control (the microphone signal does not appear at the tape-recording outputs).

Between the control knobs and buttons and the dial area are three LED indicators. The green SAFELY OPERATE light comes on a few seconds after turn-on, when the internal delay circuit activates the relay that connects the amplifier outputs to the speakers. If the protective system is actuated for any reason (such as excessive output current or a severe input overload), the SAFELY OPERATE light goes out and the receiver is silenced. It is necessary to turn it off for a few seconds and then reapply power to restore operation. There is also a red FM STEREO light and a green QUARTZ LOCKED light.

Sansui's digital quartz-locked tuning system is one of the G-7700's unique features. Despite its nomenclature, the receiver is tuned in a conventional analog fashion. The "quartz lock" is an aid to accurate tuning, similar in its effect (though not in the details of its operation) to the "quartz-lock" tuning systems employed in some other receivers and tuners. It acts as a very powerful automatic-frequency-control (AFC) system controlling the FM local oscillator frequency so that the receiver is accurately tuned to a multiple of 100 kHz when a signal stronger than a certain threshold level is received and the quartz-lock light is on.

According to information in a Sansui brochure, the frequency of the local oscillator is compared with a reference frequency derived from the same crystal oscillator which generates the time base for the frequency counter that reads out the frequency to which the receiver is tuned. Without further explanation, it is implied that the phase difference between the oscillator and the reference signal is measured digitally and then converted to an analog voltage that controls the oscillator frequency through a varactor diode. The circuits are evidently quite complex, but most of them are built into one large-scale integrated circuit.

On the fluorescent display, the tuned frequency (for either AM or FM bands) ap-

pears as a four-digit readout with large, clearly visible numerals flanked by the identifiers AM or FM and kHz or MHz. To the left of the numbers a horizontal, eight-segment bar indicator lights up in proportion to received signal level and serves as a signal "meter." Below it is an FM-tuning display consisting of two arrows pointing toward each other. One of the arrows glows to show which way the knob and dial pointer should be moved to correct the tuning error. When the set is tuned correctly, the arrows are extinguished and a dot midway between them comes on. A moment later the green quartz-lock light comes on and the receiver is tuned and locked to the exact indicated frequency. The tuning lock is disabled as soon as the tuning knob is moved even the smallest amount (it senses the knob motion or rate of change of frequency rather than the touch of the hand on the knob sensed by some tuning systems). When the receiver is turned off and later turned on again, it comes on locked to the previously set frequency.

The tuner section of the Sansui G-7700 makes extensive use of integrated circuits. In the FM section, a MOSFET r.f. amplifier is followed by an IC that combines the functions of local oscillator and mixer. The converted i.f. signal passes through a ceramic filter to an IC amplifier, followed by two more filter sections and another IC that provides limiting, muting, and quadrature detection functions. The detected signal is demodulated by a stereo-multiplex IC. The entire AM tuner section is a single IC. Thus, five integrated circuits plus several discrete transistors form the entire active circuitry of the G-7700's AM/FM-stereo tuner section.

Much of the rear apron of the G-7700 is occupied by the large power-amplifier heat-sink fins. To one side of them are the various signal inputs and outputs and the antenna terminals, plus a hinged and pivoted AM ferrite-rod antenna. On the other side are insulated spring-loaded connectors for the two sets of speaker outputs and two a.c. outlets, one of them switched. The Sansui G-7700 is a rather large receiver, measuring 20 inches wide, 16 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches deep, and 7 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches high. It weighs 40 pounds. The suggested retail price is \$800.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The heat-sink fins and the top of the cabinet above the output transistors became quite hot dur-

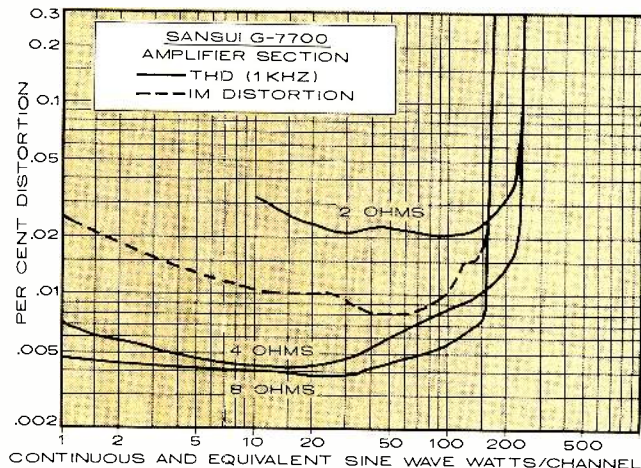
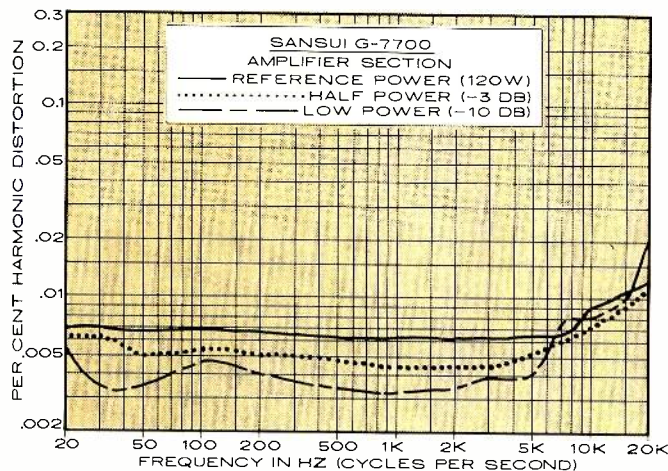
ing the 1-hour preconditioning period, but no part of the receiver that is normally contacted by the user was uncomfortable to the touch. The G-7700's conservative power ratings were demonstrated by its power output at clipping (8 ohms, 1,000 Hz) of 171 watts per channel, with both channels operating, for an IHF clipping-headroom rating of 1.54 dB. The receiver is not rated for load impedances other than 8 ohms, but into 4- and 2-ohm loads it clipped at 240 and 250 watts per channel, respectively (the maximum output into 2 ohms was determined by the protective relay, which cut off the outputs before waveform clipping appeared).

These measurements suggest that the G-7700 is a "powerhouse" receiver with plenty of reserve potential. This conclusion was reinforced by dynamic-power-output measurements using the tone-burst signal specified in the current IHF amplifier-test standard. Driving loads of 8, 4, and 2 ohms, the respective maximum short-term power outputs were 260, 433, and 277 watts per channel (the latter again being limited by the operation of the protective circuits, which operated so fast that they guarded the amplifier against damage from the 20-millisecond bursts we used). The 8-ohm IHF dynamic-headroom rating of 3.35 dB is the highest we have yet measured on an amplifier.

The amplifier's 0.02 per cent distortion rating was also very conservative. The total harmonic distortion (THD) at 1,000 Hz was about 0.004 per cent for all power outputs from 1 to 50 watts, 0.0063 per cent at the rated 120 watts, and 0.02 per cent at 160 watts. As expected, the distortion was slightly higher with lower load impedances. Driving 4-ohm loads, it was 0.014 per cent at 1 watt, decreased to 0.0042 per cent at 10 watts, and increased to 0.014 per cent again at 200 watts output. Even when driving 2-ohm loads, a condition for which the receiver was never designed (but which it might experience, especially when driving two pairs of speakers), the distortion was between 0.02 and 0.03 per cent from a few watts to 200 watts output.

With 8-ohm loads, the intermodulation distortion was about 0.01 per cent from a few watts to 140 watts output. The harmonic distortion across the audio-frequency range was between 0.003 and 0.007 per cent from 20 to 7,000 Hz at power outputs from

(Continued on page 46)



Music sculptor.



Meet the music sculptor. The new EQ400 car stereo graphic equalizer. Sensitive. Perceptive. And remarkably precise. Simply connect it between your stereo source and power amplifier.

Then reshape the response of your music to your own taste. Enhanced mid-bass... a little more sheen to the strings... a bit more bite on the brass. Contour, mold, enhance the music until it's just right for your ears.

15 bands: total control.

That's right. A full *fifteen* bands are at your command with this graphic equalizer. To shape your music like no other car equalizer can.

Looking at the EQ400 you'll see five sliding controls with a ± 12 dB range. Look closer, and for each control lever there's a selector for three different bands. Fifteen in all.

Center frequencies controlled are:

| | | |
|---------|-----------|-----------|
| 60 Hz | 80 Hz | 125 Hz |
| 160 Hz | 250 Hz | 400 Hz |
| 630 Hz | 1000 Hz | 1600 Hz |
| 2400 Hz | 3500 Hz | 5000 Hz |
| 7000 Hz | 10,000 Hz | 14,000 Hz |

Even more precision.

Our desire for precision doesn't stop with the fifteen bands.

The EQ400 offers you more precise tuning *within* each band as well.

The top-mounted sliding scales on the EQ400 are physically almost twice as long as the short, front-mounted controls on most other equalizers. Which means far better resolution. For much more precise adjustments... and much more precise sound.

You can instantly compare any boost or attenuation you

the dash equalizer.

The EQ400 rests unassumingly under the dashboard. That is, until you're ready to use it.

Then... a slight pull slides it out to reveal a full, top-mounted illuminated control panel.

The top-mounted controls are easier to see, easier to reach and easier to use.

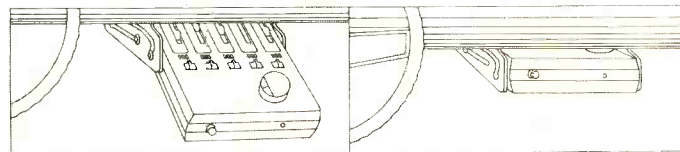
When you're finished adjusting, just slide the unit back under the dash. That way the controls aren't exposed where they can be accidentally bumped out of position. And meanwhile, an LED on the front glows to indicate the unit is on.

The same bracket can also be used to mount the equalizer right at your fingertips, between the bucket seats of smaller cars and vans.

Your own kind of sound.

No longer do you have to settle for someone else's interpretation of your music.

Because now you can shape it and enhance it with music sculptor. The Jensen EQ400 graphic equalizer. Or the EQA3000 5-Band Graphic Equalizer with built-in dual 12-watt power amplifiers. Hear what they can do... soon.



The EQ400 has a special under dash mounting. This enables you to slide it out for easy adjustment. When you're finished, slide it back. The controls then can't be accidentally knocked out of adjustment.

make with the equalization defeat switch. A front-to-rear fader control offers additional flexibility. And with its switchable 10/47 ohm input impedance, the EQ400 can be connected to any low impedance stereo source.

Slide out, tune in.

This is no ordinary under

JENSEN
SOUND LABORATORIES
AN ESMARK COMPANY

CIRCLE NO. 25 ON READER SERVICE CARD

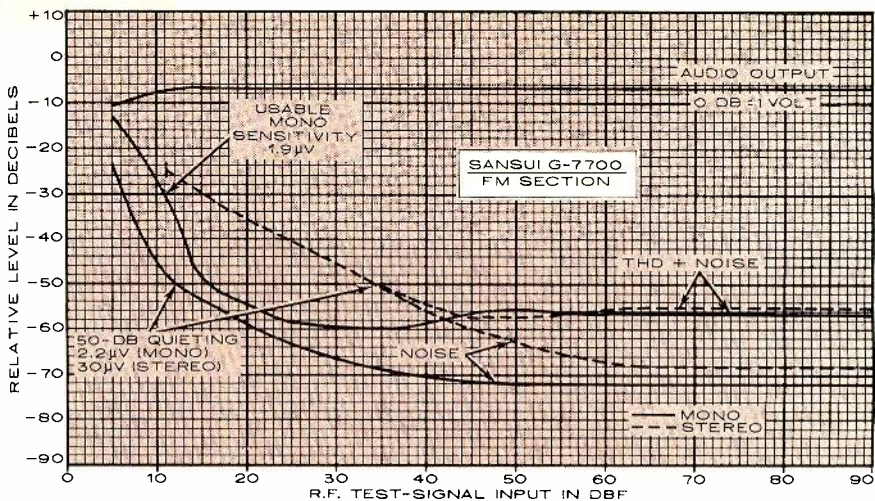
12 to 120 watts. It increased to between 0.01 and 0.02 per cent at 20,000 Hz.

The amplifier sensitivity for a reference output of 1 watt was 32 millivolts (mV) through the high-level AUX input and 0.56 mV through the phono or microphone inputs. The A-weighted signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) was between 72 and 73 dB for all inputs, referred to 1 watt output. The phono preamplifier overloaded at 310 mV at 1,000 Hz and at the equivalent of 332 mV at 20 Hz. However, at 20,000 Hz the overload margin was much less, being the equivalent of 94 mV at 1,000 Hz (still a perfectly adequate figure). The phono-input impedance was 50,000 ohms in parallel with 150 picofarads. The MIC input overloaded at 440 mV, a level not likely to be approached by most microphones one might use.

The tone controls had conventional characteristics, with a variable low-frequency turnover and a high-frequency response hinged at about 2,000 Hz. The loudness compensation boosted both the low and the high frequencies (the latter only slightly). The infrasonic filter reduced the response at 20 Hz by about 2 dB, and we did not measure the response below that frequency. The high filter had a 6-dB-per-octave slope and reduced the response by 3 dB at 3,000 Hz. (It did little that could not have been done with the tone control.) The RIAA phono equalization was accurate within 0.7 dB overall from 20 to 20,000 Hz and was unaffected by the inductance of most magnetic cartridges. Using a high-inductance cartridge, we detected a negligible reduction in response above 10,000 Hz, amounting to about -1 dB at 20,000 Hz.

The amplifier rise time was 4 microseconds and the slew rate was 33 volts per microsecond, both measured through the AUX input. These figures represent good performance, although they cannot be compared to the figures of 1.4 microseconds and 60 volts per microsecond that Sansui gives for the power-amplifier section alone (there is no access to the power-amplifier inputs and thus no means of verifying these ratings). The IHF slew factor exceeded our measurement limit of 25. The power-indicator lights were rather optimistically calibrated, reading from 20 to several hundred per cent higher than the actual power delivered to 8-ohm loads.

The FM tuner had an IHF usable sensitivity of 10.8 dBf (1.9 microvolts or μV) in



mono and 15 dBf (3 μV) in stereo. The steep limiting curve resulted in a 50-dB quieting sensitivity of 12 dBf (2.2 μV) in mono and 35 dBf (30 μV) in stereo. The distortion, measured at 65 dBf (1,000 μV) input, was 0.15 per cent in mono and 0.18 per cent in stereo, and the respective S/N readings were 72 and 68 dB. The muting and quartz-lock thresholds were nearly identical at 19 to 20 dBf (5 to 5.5 μV). There was no distinct stereo switching threshold, but the stereo light flickered at inputs less than 11.5 dBf (2 μV). The noise in stereo was excessive at that level, so that the effect had no practical significance.

The capture ratio was 1.45 dB at 65 dBf and slightly better at 45 dBf (100 μV). The AM rejection at those input levels was (respectively) a very good 72 dB and a still good 59 dB. The image rejection was good at 86 dB, as was the alternate-channel selectivity of about 78 dB. The adjacent-channel selectivity was just under 10 dB. The tuner hum level was -61 dB.

The stereo performance of the tuner section was very good, with a frequency response down 1.5 dB at 30 and 15,000 Hz and very uniform crosstalk characteristics that yielded channel-separation measurements in the 36- to 37-dB range at mid frequencies, falling to 30 dB at 30 Hz and 25 dB at 15,000 Hz. The 19-kHz pilot carrier was suppressed to -67 dB. The signal-

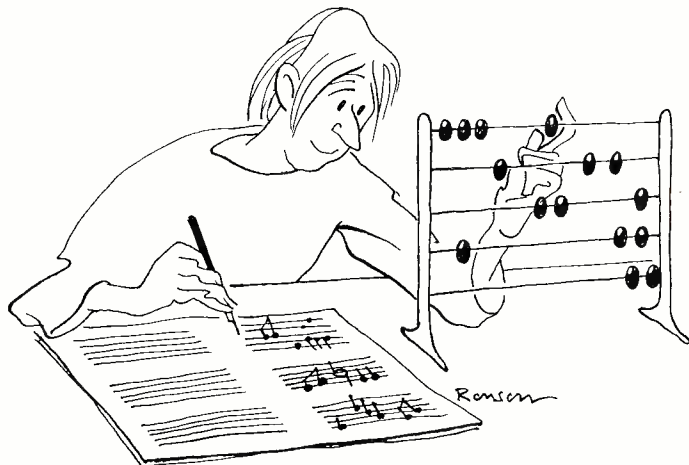
strength lights came on at inputs from 20 to 40 dBf. In effect, this means that one can expect to obtain reasonably quiet stereo reception only when all the lights are lit. The AM-tuner section had a very restricted frequency response, down 6 dB at 200 and 3,500 Hz.

● **Comment.** The basic performance of the Sansui G-7700 is just what one should expect from a rather expensive, de luxe stereo receiver. Few amplifiers, either in receivers or as separates, can match the combination of high power and low distortion across the audible spectrum offered in the G-7700.

The high current-delivering ability of the G-7700 amplifier sets it apart from many other receivers, which are not known for their ability to drive very low load impedances without unpleasant side effects. Like most others, the Sansui G-7700 is rated only for driving 8-ohm loads, but unlike them it can deliver a huge power output to 4-ohm and even 2-ohm loads without distortion or internal damage. Also, the dynamic headroom of the G-7700 is exceptional, making it for most practical purposes the audible equivalent of a much more powerful receiver (although it is unlikely that most people will ever feel the need of more power than the 120 watts for which the receiver is rated).

The FM-tuner section is in no sense a "super tuner," but one could hardly ask for better sound from an FM tuner (nor would one be likely to obtain it, given the sound quality of most FM broadcasting). The quartz-lock system works well, making incorrect tuning a virtual impossibility, and the fluorescent tuning display is exceptionally easy to read.

Our only criticism of the design of the G-7700 relates to its lack of features such as switchable tone-control turnover frequencies, a midrange tone control, effective filters, and separate preamp outputs and power-amp inputs, among others. Still, everything on the Sansui G-7700 works smoothly and essentially as claimed, as one would expect of a de luxe product. It is a fine receiver, and anyone who does not feel the need of a feature that it may lack can hardly do better in respect to overall performance.



Circle 144 on reader service card

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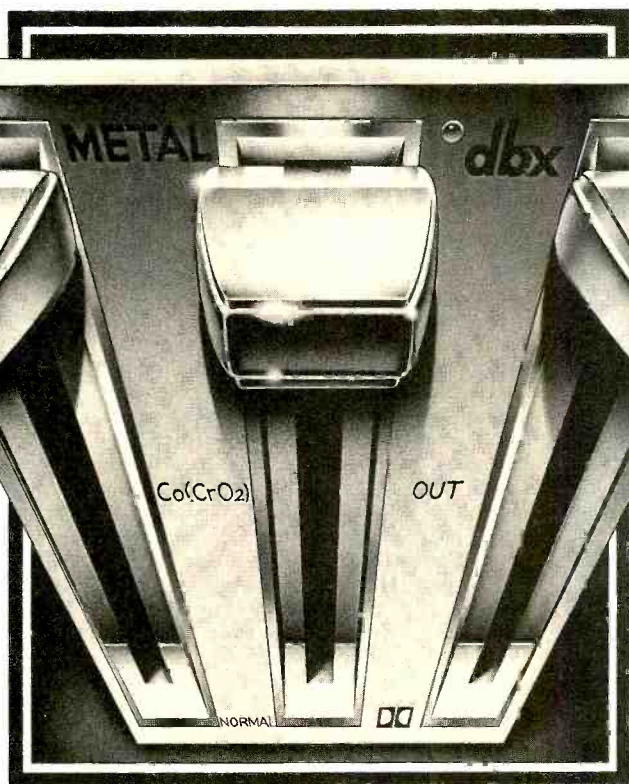
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The amazing A-550RX. You'll hear completely noise-free cassette recordings with the broadest dynamic range available.



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CIRCLE NO. 55 ON READER SERVICE CARD

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CIRCLE NO. 34 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The Pop Beat

By Eric
Salzman



Is his Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair art?

USELESS "ART"

Is pop music art? The question is probably of little concern to most of the millions who buy records or listen to radio stations of one flavor or another. Listening is simply part of the fabric of their daily lives—part of doing homework, making dinner, making love, trying to fall asleep, dancing, or merely daydreaming.

But there are people who listen to this music for its own sake, not just as an accompaniment to some other activity. Major publications (including this one) now take jazz and pop as seriously and with as long a face as any music. Pop critics swarm; in fact, they now outnumber what used to be known as the "long-hairs" and are even (sometimes) more serious. And, more and more, pop musicians consider themselves artists. Jazz musicians teach in universities and conservatories, serve on National Endowment panels, and live on (or in the hope of living on) foundation grants. Stephen Foster and Scott Joplin can be found on "classical" labels, and Richard Rodgers departed this life with as much serious attention as did Igor Stravinsky. If there are Bebop Professors, there will shortly be Rock-and-Roll Professors as well; culture has been creeping up on rock for some time now and some of the younger New Wavers (many of them refugees from art school) consider themselves Art Rockers. Art Disco, anyone?

In the good old days there was Art Music and Folk Music. Period. Though Art Music soon began to subdivide into Light and Serious, anything that welled up from below, from the unwashed and the uneducated, was still Folk. *Popular*: "of the people." *Musica popolare*: "folk music."

Well, popular music has folk roots and classical influences, but it is distinct from both. It is really the music of the great middle class, of industrial society and the mass media, drawing technique from above and nourishment from below and making entertainment into an art. Most of the creativity came originally from black, rural, and working-class people, but, in the great American tradition, it has been upwardly mobile. Ragtime and blues started out in the streets, bars, and bordellos, but W. C. Handy and James Reese Europe published

their sheet music and recordings and played society dances. Joplin wrote an opera and Europe formed a jazz symphony years before George Gershwin and Paul Whiteman each accomplished similar things. Jazz/pop went quickly around the country and the world through records and radio.

The North (and South) American vernacular became (it still is) the liveliest living musical tradition in the world. It is a singing and playing (and dancing) music rather than a formal, scored-out composer's music. But performance-practice music based on a strong rhythm/bass is hardly new or even restricted to popular music. Baroque music also uses a rhythm section (continuo), standard vocal forms, shorthand chord charts, variation and ornamentation, and flexibility over a steady beat. There are folk roots in the various dances that made their way from downtown to uptown and hybrid vigor in the mixture of influences from the people, the church, and various national styles.

There is, in short, nothing inherent in the origins, make-up, form, or expression that keeps any of this music from being "art." The few distinctions we make about use, distribution, class, and media are *social* categories: if ragtime stops emanating from bordellos and starts coming out of player pianos and phonographs, then it is respectable middle-class entertainment; if it appears on Nonesuch Records or at Carnegie Hall, it is art.

THERE seems to be a good deal of acceptance for the modern notion that if something is utterly useless it must be art. Music to dance to or make love to, music for the theater or film or instruction, for dinner or entertainment—none of these can be art until they lose their functions and can be enshrined in a museum, concert hall, record archive, or doctoral dissertation. This is of course absurd, deadening, and unproductive; it goes against the role of art in virtually every other culture in history. The problem of popular music as art is therefore not with the music but with our view of art. Personally, I rather like what a Balinese sage told John Cage: "Art? We have no word for art. We just do the best we can." □

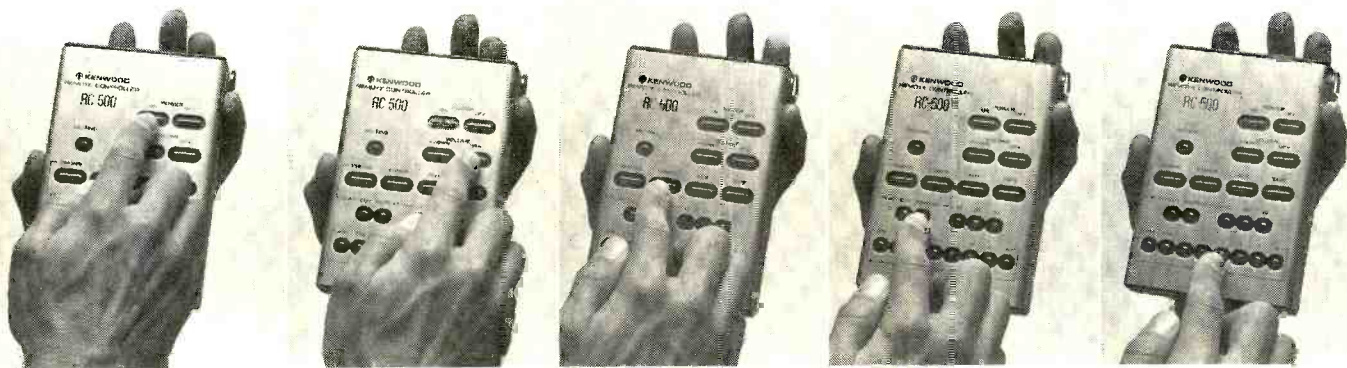
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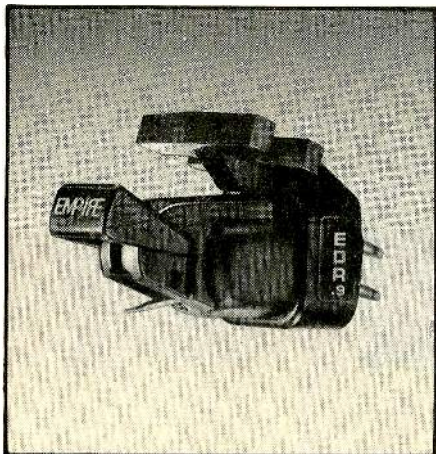


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EMPIRE



CIRCLE NO. 17 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Going on Record

By James
Goodfriend



THE CLASSICAL MARKET (AGAIN)

AFTER years of working in and around the record industry, I have become convinced that the basic flaw in the whole setup is the tying of the classical business to the popular business. The marriage, which must have seemed so logical when first entered into (and for years afterward), has not been a happy one for some time now. Even the notion that mass popular sales could support an expanded "prestige" classical line—true for a time—has now crumbled to dust. Record-company executives, rather than being *more* conversant with classical music and its market than their predecessors were, are now even less aware of it. Popular sales go down, so classical budgets are cut. Illogical as that may seem when stated quite so baldly, it was inescapable, built into the system from the beginning.

On superficial examination, classical and popular records *seem* to have a great deal in common. Actually, they have almost nothing intrinsically in common beyond appearance and the physical fact that they are manufactured on the same presses, played on the same turntables.

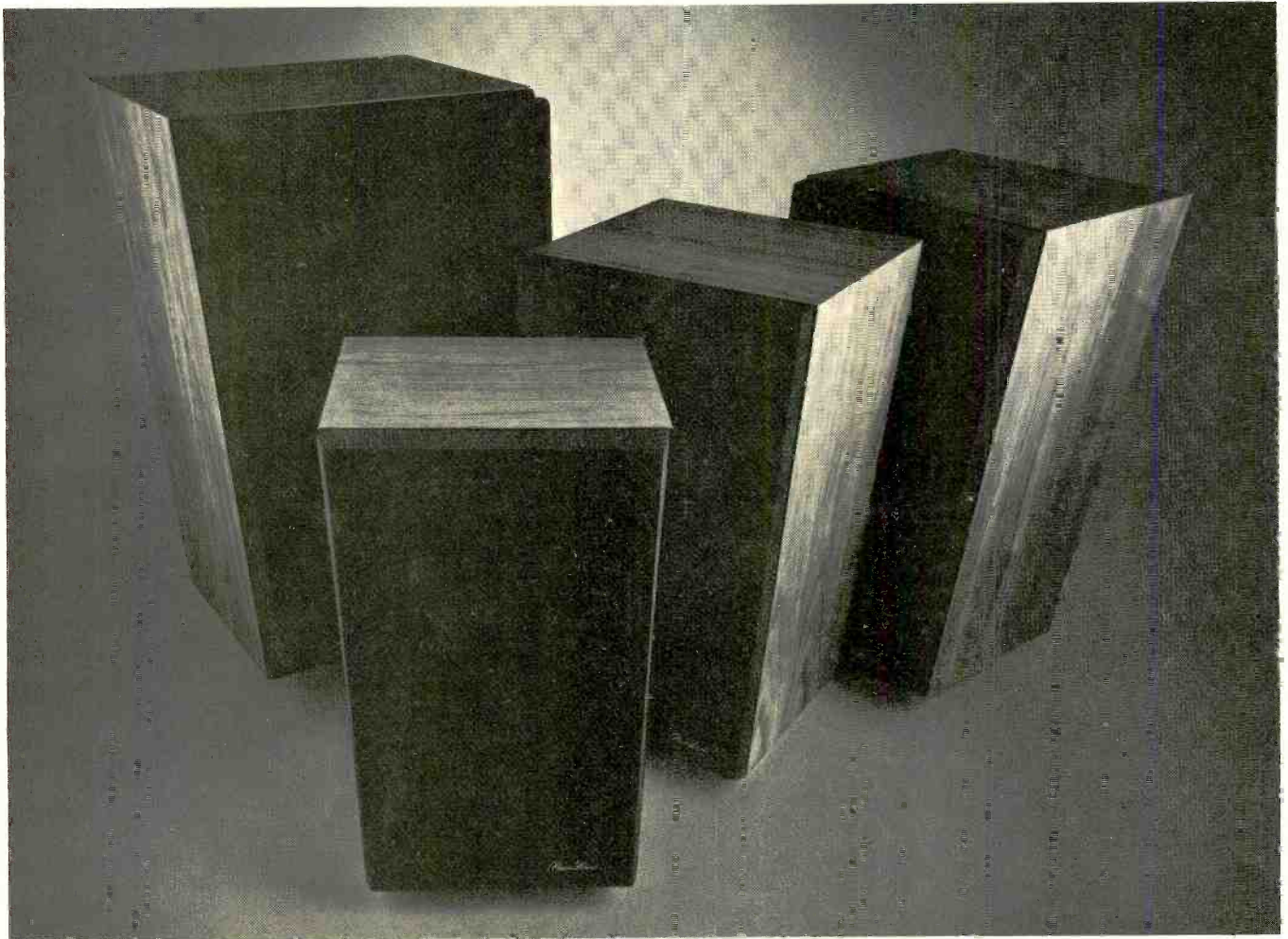
Even the *people* who make classical records are different—not just in person, but in kind—from the people who make popular records. Their purposes are different. Moreover, the people who buy classical records are generally not the ones who buy popular records, and both their reasons for buying and their methods of buying are different. The classical record is a product designed for "the happy few," a group distinguished far less by education, income level, social class, or intelligence than by accidents of inheritance and environment that happen to produce a taste, a *love*, for music. However you might want to describe the popular product or its audience, it will not read *that* way. The problem is that classical records, whose manufacture and marketing should logically be totally different from those of popular records, are made subject to the manufacture and marketing conditions that prevail for that totally different product.

We are all painfully aware, for example, of the problems of the pressing itself, the physical imperfections that are so secondary a matter (to quantity and speed of distribution) in pop sales but so deadly a flaw

in classical ones. We have all also (especially recently) become aware of the pop merchandiser's impatience with the *slowness* of sales of classical records. What is perhaps less obvious is the terrible influence the pop business has had on the classical always to emphasize the new, to dismiss last year's records as ancient history. This is perfectly understandable in a business that is totally based on trend, fashion, and fad, but what has it led to in the classics? Forty Beethoven Fiftths and ten new ones every year; the endless repetition of repertoire, nowadays repeated—and re-repeated—even by the same artists; the constant deletion, followed by rerelease, of older records merely to call attention once again to their very existence; the placing of faith in new technological developments (real as they may be) to initiate all by themselves a whole new sweep of buying and thus save the industry. Ultimately it is a situation of a business competing ridiculously with itself on every level, in every area, at every price. The choice given to the potential buyer is so great as to make decision impossibly difficult; so great as to make fulfillment of his wishes unlikely at all but the largest, best-stocked retailers; so great as to bankrupt the industry in a futile effort to keep *everything* available.

ONLY recently has there been a reaction to all this. Distributors and retailers have finally balked at accepting new product (any but the most obvious big sellers, that is) in favor of restocking records they have sold successfully before. This is unprecedented in the classical record business. At the same time, it is fascinating to observe that those companies that have sold a *lot* of classical records—Book-of-the-Month Club, Time-Life Records—have rarely fought the Battle of the Moment. They choose what to them seems the best, the tried and true, and lean on it hard, collecting critical opinion to support their sales pitch, promoting and advertising heavily what it is they are selling. They sell something they believe in, they know what business they are in—and it is *not* that of the latest pop hit. Will record companies ever discover that they are in that business too? □

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LISTENING TESTS

How far should we trust the unaided ear
in the evaluation of audio equipment?

By Lynn Claudy

How valid are subjective listening evaluations? This question has become perhaps the most controversial and difficult to resolve in all of audio. Bitter words have been exchanged, ethics impugned, and friendships strained over the matter of whether it is possible to hear differences between two particular pieces of hi-fi equipment. Those who do not perceive the differences heard by some others are told that their test conditions aren't right, that their associated equipment is so insensitive (or so bad) that it masks the subtleties involved, that the switching devices they use in making comparisons have technical flaws, or that they are themselves deaf, stubborn, under the influence of advertising pressures, or worse.

To be perfectly candid, those of us who don't acknowledge that differences are always there to be heard—or who insist that they are frequently trivial when they are—suspect that many “golden-eared” audiophiles find it necessary to hear differences in order to validate their roles as audio critics. Improper comparison techniques are standard with most of these listening prodigies because they are based on an inadequate knowledge of acoustics, psychoacoustics, electronics, and particularly the very complicated business of experimental methodology. Faulty procedures either produce artificial differences or else allow room for fevered imaginations to generate them afterward.

The technical staff of *STEREO REVIEW* are not among those who automatically find profoundly significant audible differences between all the various makes and models of equipment that comes their way. Loudspeakers, more than other components, tend to have their own individual sound characteristics. Yet I have on occasion heard pairs of systems in my listening room that sounded absolutely identical on some musical material but subtly different on other programs. (Some of the music contained frequencies in ranges where the speakers performed differently and some of it didn't.) Was I able to judge one set of speakers “better” than the other? No, because (1) the sound was not unnatural in either case; (2) the audible difference between them was less than might occur in different seats in the same good concert hall; (3) I had no way of knowing whether one set of speakers provided a better match to the specific way the recording was made, to the specific acoustics of my listening room, or to the output characteristics of the amplifier;

and (4) even if I had preferred the sound of one system over the other, it is not unlikely that my opinion would have changed if I had repositioned the speakers.

I'm sure that if I thought about it a bit, I could come up with still more reasons why a magazine such as *STEREO REVIEW* cannot responsibly make monthly pronouncements about the ultimate “best” of anything. Certainly we do not hesitate to state whether we find a particular component we have tested to be excellent, good, or simply okay. But we do not make distinctions any finer than these because (1) conventional listening tests do not have the necessary reliability built in, and (2) conventional test measurements do not necessarily encompass everything that contributes to each person's listening experience.

Listening-test controversies provide material for endless discussions among audiophiles and audio editors, and on those levels they are certainly no more harmful than any other kind of in-group theorizing. But for equipment manufacturers the results of listening tests by audio critics are not to be taken lightly. One man's printed subjective opinions can be another man's objective loss of sales.

FOR the past several years, Shure Bros. has been engaged in a massive program both to evaluate and to enhance the reliability of listening-test procedures. The products used for the tests were, naturally enough, phono cartridges, many of them hand built with the special characteristics required by the test procedures. The tests themselves were as rigorous and as scientifically controlled as the Shure engineering staff and a battery of consultants knew how to make them. A description of the test procedures and the test results (dozens of critical listeners and perhaps thousands of hours of work were involved) were presented in a paper delivered before the Audio Engineering Society's 64th Convention. [Preprints of the AES paper are available free of charge (while supplies last) from Shure Bros., Dept. 52, 222 Hartrey Avenue, Evanston, Illinois 60204.]

Shure engineer Lynn D. Claudy subsequently converted his technical paper into an article for *STEREO REVIEW* because we believe that his approach and the findings that resulted from the tests themselves have implications and applicability for components other than phono cartridges as well. —Larry Klein

LISTENING TESTS and their results have always formed an important part of audio-component evaluation. Often, however, the tests are run in a casual, loosely organized fashion without regard to controlling those variables that could mask, distort, or otherwise misrepresent the true qualities of the components being evaluated. Strong opinions may consequently be formed for or against a given component *based on factors other than its inherent qualities*. Examination of what these factors might be, along with their relative importance and how they apply to the subjective testing of phonograph cartridges, should prove useful to the equipment buyer, for the listening-test methodology detailed below can generally be applied to most audio-component testing.

First, it can be said that, in general, more discriminating judgments can be made *if the listeners are concerned only with hearing whether or not audible differences actually exist between the components under examination*. Judging absolute quality without the benefit of some reliable standard reference is a much more difficult task. Second, establishing the *existence* of audible differences, if any, should be given first priority, for individual *preferences* will vary from listener to listener and even from source to source. Remember that the "sound" of a recording is determined by the microphone techniques used, by studio (or hall) acoustics, electronics and tape characteristics, equalization, compression, limiting, control-room loudspeakers and acoustics, the personal preferences of artists, producers, and engineers—and more besides. Different recordings will therefore embody different ideas of "correct" sound reproduction. To emphasize, then: since the particular qualities of the components being tested may complement or distort the sound of any given recording, more useful information can be gained from a listening test if emphasis is placed on differences rather than preferences.

A listening-evaluation test should answer the following three questions (in order of relative importance):

1. Were differences heard?
2. If they were, what were their natures and magnitudes?
3. Are there any preferences associated with the differences?

Even given the clarity of these objectives and the absolute integrity of the listening panel, an experiment that is not properly set up in all its particulars can invalidate its own results. For example, listening-test results in audio are always, at least in part, a function of the acoustical characteristics of the

listening room. A test was made that illustrates this very well: two highly regarded phonograph cartridges were compared for listener preference, the test being repeated in two listening rooms that differed in size, reverberation time, etc. *All* other aspects of the



COMPARATIVE LISTENING: TEN COMMANDMENTS

THESE factors must be taken into account in order to make reliable, repeatable subjective listening tests:

1. Tests should be run in a "blind" fashion, with interactions between listeners kept to a minimum.
2. The same listening room should be used consistently, and its acoustical properties must be known.
3. The choice of loudspeakers and associated equipment that may play a part in influencing test results should be standardized.
4. Listening levels should be matched and standardized.
5. Tracking force, antiskating, head-shell leveling, electrical loading, and tone-arm-resonance characteristics should all be set optimally for each cartridge.
6. Comparisons should be presented closely together in time so as to maximize contrast and to accommodate short auditory memories.
7. Acoustic feedback should be avoided by isolating the cartridge from the sound field.
8. Listener variables should be considered (experience in critical listening, amount of listening fatigue, etc.).
9. Selection of program material should be based on (a) compatibility with the test, (b) the listening panel's personal tastes, and (c) familiarity with the music.
10. All discs should be in good condition and scrupulously cleaned.

test were kept the same. The listening panel as a whole was divided as to which cartridge they preferred whatever the room used for the test. Individually, however, all the members of the panel *reversed* their preferences in the two rooms: if a panel member liked cartridge A better than cartridge B in the first room, he liked B better than A in the second room.

The choice of the test loudspeakers introduces another important variable. A given loudspeaker's frequency response, directivity pattern, room placement (distance from walls, for example), and angular orientation relative to the listeners can profoundly affect the outcome of a phono-cartridge comparison. Not only that, but data from otherwise identical tests run with different loudspeakers show that *preferential* results are strongly dependent on which loudspeaker is used. However, room acoustics and loudspeaker choice and placement are *not* significant when the audible differences are *large*, such as those produced by severe mistracking distortion or frequency-response peaks. The subtle factors introduced by room acoustics and speaker placement become important only when the differences themselves are subtle.

Frequency response has been found empirically to be one of the most important factors in the determination of overall sound quality. A discrepancy as small as 0.5 dB over a significant part of the frequency range can be easily discerned, and some reports indicate that the threshold of differential audibility is even lower. If testing must be done with different loudspeakers or in different rooms, equalization can be used to compensate for the inevitable frequency-response differences, though some audiophiles would probably refrain from using either equalizers or tone controls as additional variables in a test program.

The selection of preamplifiers and power amplifiers for phono-cartridge testing also involves some special precautions. These include having accurate RIAA playback equalization for the cartridges under test, sufficient dynamic range, and distortion, hum, and noise levels low enough that they do not mask subtle effects in the cartridges. These requirements are not very hard to meet with contemporary preamplifiers and power amplifiers, and they can, in any case, be easily verified. In using these components, however, it is important that the *volume level* be kept the same for the cartridges being compared. Again, as little as 0.5 dB of level difference can contribute to misleading results. The overall listening level for the test series as a whole should also be

LISTENING TESTS...

"...group pressure causes individuals to shift their judgments toward the majority view to avoid appearing either 'wrong' or non-conforming."

standardized, for the ability of the ear to discriminate between small sonic differences changes as the listening level changes. And, too, such psychological factors as mood and degree of concentration may cause identical musical signals to have quite different subjective impressions when played at different levels. For example, material that is perceived to yield crisp, clean detail at one loudness level may be judged strident, irritating, or harsh at a higher level. Psychological factors can also change a listener's perception even when the signals and levels are exactly the same in successive tests.

Every phono cartridge under evaluation in a comparative test requires individual optimization of several user adjustments. The tracking force specified by the manufacturer must be applied, as well as the proper skating-force compensation. Also, the geometrical relationships between the cartridge, tone arm, and disc must be correctly set for each cartridge tested. Improper head-shell leveling or overhang adjustment will cause harmonic, intermodulation, and FM distortion products, while lateral rotation of the cartridge/head-shell unit will degrade crosstalk performance and spatial imaging. Other external factors such as tone-arm resonances and acoustic feedback may evidence themselves in differing degrees and ways with different cartridges. Proper cartridge load resistance and capacitance must be provided too.

Just as the test procedures and the test equipment itself must be very carefully supervised, so must all the variables relating to listener judgments and the physical and psychological effects that determine them. First, it should be noted that a listener's auditory memory is quite short. Comparing the sonic qualities of each component by memory becomes increasingly difficult as the period between hearing each unit lengthens, especially when the differences between components are very small. For this reason, listening comparisons yield the most information when presented closely together in

time, when the details of the sonic images are still fresh.

In addition, listeners may very well have quite different ideas about how the "ideal" hi-fi system *should* sound. These ideas may be the result, at least in part, of learned preferences. It has been found that repeated exposure to a given hi-fi system can contribute to a listener's preference for the sound qualities of that system even at a much later time. In fact, it has been suggested that repeated exposure to a given stimulus may cause a preference for that stimulus *even when the subject isn't aware of having been exposed to it*. It is even possible to develop a preference for sound qualities that are generally thought to be *undesirable*, such as for a system having limited bandwidth.

The psychological effects of group pressure in a hi-fi listening-test situation can also have great influence on the individual participants, especially when the tests involve very subtle differences. In general, group pressure causes individuals to shift their judgments toward the majority view to avoid appearing either "wrong" or non-conforming. Thus, a listener who is undecided as to whether an audible difference even exists may shift his position in the direction of consensus when others are openly enthusiastic (or uncomplimentary) about a particular component. Conversely, responses are likely to become more individual if a listener is unaware of the opinions of other panel members and is not allowed to interact with them during the test.

Test Methodology

The approach used in our cartridge-listening program was developed with a set of prior guidelines in mind (see box on the previous page). The equipment we needed had to be custom built and would therefore not be particularly practical for the home enthusiast to reproduce, but it is illustrative of an attempt to deal with the problems of subjective comparison in a straightforward way. The test methodology used is not,

needless to say, either foolproof or all-inclusive, but as an evolving *technique* it can be adapted for use in other test programs.

Because rather fine sonic distinctions between cartridges had to be established, it was decided that no more than two cartridges would be compared in any single test to avoid running into the natural limitations of human judgment. Also, comparisons between two cartridges had to take place closely in time in order to maximize the contrast between them, for, as noted above, sonic images fade quickly from the auditory memory.

Because of the lengthy setup procedures and the adjustments necessary for cartridge comparisons, quick evaluations can be achieved by using two tone arms and preamps. Doing otherwise would produce unacceptable delays between playing each cartridge. The equipment used to make this "A/B" comparison used two tone arms offset from each other and mounted on one turntable (see Figure 1). It would have been possible to mount the tone arms on two turntables and play identical discs, but different copies of the same disc are almost never "identical," each having slightly different blemishes, vinyl formulations, accidental scratches, dirt and dust-particle distribution, static charges, warps, etc. These deficiencies would contribute even more variables to a test already filled with them—and ones not controllable by the tester at that.

Several factors regarding two-tone-arm record playing are worth mentioning. First, it has been hypothesized that vinyl discs require a minimum "relaxation time" after each playing before another playing should be attempted. According to the theory, when a stylus traces a groove modulation, the groove is slightly deformed and the vinyl requires a little time to "flow" back into its original shape. Supposedly, if this relaxation time (variously reported as being anywhere from ten minutes to sixteen hours) is ignored, repeated playing will hasten disc wear and create



audible sound degradation. However, carefully controlled listening tests aimed specifically at investigating possible differences between the sound of leading (first) and lagging (second) *high-quality* cartridges playing the same groove have *not* shown this effect to be consistently audible, nor has it been unambiguously proved that increased record wear results. But since there is a remote possibility that an audible difference between a leading and a lagging cartridge *might* exist, their signals should be secretly and randomly alternated between successive records in a given test so that if there *is* any such difference it will not affect the overall results.

Another factor in two-tone-arm playback, one that *does* seem to be audible, involves discs with dirt and other particles on the surface. As low-level groove-wall modulations pass the stylus, dirt particles tend to collect at the diamond tip and are carried along in the groove. When the tip, now laden with particles, encounters a region of *high-level* modulation, the collected debris is shaken off the stylus and deposited in the groove. The result is that the formerly random arrangement of particles now appears in clumps in the groove at the onset of high-level signals. The photomicrograph of Figure 2 illustrates the results from just *one* playing of a generally dirty record. Note the absence of particles in the silent grooves (top and bottom) and the high density of debris at the transient portion of the tone-burst-signal modulations (center). If a second stylus were now to play this signal, it would trace a path somewhat different from that of the first stylus, ploughing up some particles and gliding over others, and the resulting distortion of transient signals could be audibly distressing. To avoid this problem in testing, all records used must be cleaned carefully with a good-quality record cleaner prior to *each* playing.

Studies of auditory memory indicate that the delay time between the two cartridges' outputs should be as short as possible. On the other hand, the delay

should be *long enough* that a musical phrase of meaningful length can be repeated for comparison by the lagging cartridge. A delay of 5 to 7 seconds (three or four record grooves) has been found to be reasonable.

To avoid erroneous responses resulting from unconscious personal bias, a listening test is best handled as a series of double blind comparisons. That is, *neither* the listeners nor the person operating the A/B switch should know which cartridges are being evaluated. This goal can be achieved by keeping the turntable assembly out of the listening room and so furnishing no visual clues whatsoever to the listeners. (As an additional benefit, this arrangement also eliminates any possible audible effects from acoustic feedback.)

The two tone arms should be connected to two separate preamplifiers. These preamps should be matched for important primary performance characteristics (such as RIAA-equalization accuracy, distortion, and noise). And the preamps' volume levels must be adjustable so that their outputs can be exactly matched for cartridges with different sensitivities. Also, facilities should be available to make it possible to attach the optimum load to each cartridge being tested.

Cartridges should be identified merely as A and B, but listeners should not be told which is which. A listener switching between cartridges selects cartridge A or B by means of a hand-held wireless remote-control unit whose signal goes to the control electronics and selects the appropriate cartridge. The leading and lagging cartridges can be randomly switched between records in a given test, and it is also possible to switch the identities of the cartridges so that the cartridge identified as "A" on one record may actually be "B" on the next. In this way each record played constitutes an independent blind test; judgments made on a given record will not be based on differences heard on a previous record (the listeners should be told that the cartridge identities may be switched at any point.)

This double blind A/B test method represents only one of several testing philosophies currently being employed in subjective evaluations of audio equipment. Some researchers feel, for example, that certain very subtle differences will become most apparent only through long-term, individual component testing. They find that the nuances of a component evidence themselves gradually, over an extended period of listening. While this type of testing has its merits, the validity of the results is questionable since practical considerations make it extremely difficult to control the test variables to the degree possible with A/B testing. Differences heard in long-term tests, which are usually ascribed to the components being evaluated, may in fact be partially or even totally due to other uncontrolled (and uncontrollable) factors.

The principal advantage of the technique presented here is that variables not under investigation (but which might affect the test results) can be controlled, their contributions to audible differences being all but eliminated. The equipment required is highly specialized and not commercially available, but the foregoing description of its nature and employment will perhaps give the reader some clues to just how difficult it is to conduct subjective tests unclouded by the immediately invalidating presence of invisible (inaudible) flaws in the test method. No evaluation that depends on ears alone is worth anything if such flaws are present.

AFTER all this you may be curious to know whether or not such a carefully constructed scheme of subjective listening evaluations can be effective in differentiating between two phono cartridges. This one was, and listening tests therefore continue to be a valuable information resource in the cartridge-design process. □

Lynn Claudy, a development engineer with Shure Brothers, is mainly involved in the areas of phono cartridges and test records.

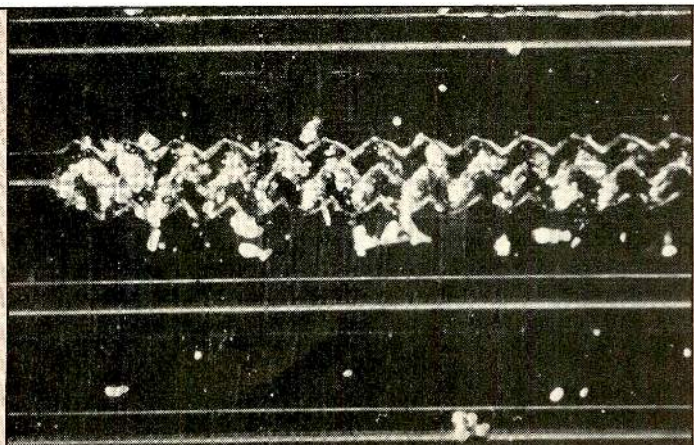


Figure 1 (facing page). A dual tone-arm system permits both of the cartridges under test to play the same signal.

Figure 2 (left). Dust and debris collected by the stylus in silent grooves (top and bottom) are shaken off at the onset of a high-level signal (center).

As we enter the Eighties, some of us are gripped by a need for change, a compulsion to alter in some measure the pattern of our lives. We don't make specific resolutions, as we have been programmed to do each ordinary New Year, but history tells us that the birth of a new decade traditionally sets societal attitudes and behavior on a new course, and few of us want to be left behind.

Ever since the phonograph and electronic media made the music industry's direction a factor, however slight, in the determination of how we live, the sounds of the times have become a decade's most enduring distinguishing mark. Would the Twenties really have roared if the flappers hadn't had the Charleston to animate them? Can we imagine the Forties without big-band swing, the Fifties without the simple message and the hard drive of rock-'n'-roll, the Sixties without protest songs and the calculated earthiness of "folk" singers from the Bronx and other urban boondocks? And how will we remember the Seventies if not by the steady thump of disco?

Many people think that disco's days would have been numbered under any circumstances, though the looming new decade surely inflicted the initial wound. But disco is not dying the natural, gradual death that may have been in its cards. Rather, it is being forcefully strangled by the painted punksters of something we are told is "New Wave" but that seems to have a decidedly old wrinkle—a disdain for quality and a passion for mediocrity.

The acceptance of mediocrity is not a sign of spreading deafness (though over-amplification has undoubtedly taken its toll in recent years); it is part of our conditioning. This is a new decade, so we must have *new* music, even if we have to force it into existence. If you thought disco fostered questionable talent—and it did—you ain't, as Al Jolson once said, heard nothin' yet! And so, as many a disco diva wipes the glitter off her bewildered face and brushes her clothes free of the dust thrown up by the chauffeured limousine that's rapidly disappearing out of her life, as she discovers that her framed hit record was just fool's gold, a fickle industry opens another door and yells "Next!"

One undaunted soul left on the curb is Cory Daye, the lively vamp of Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band, who branched out on her own last year with "Cory and Me" on the RCA-distributed New York International label. Though a disco sound dominates that album, Miss Daye has never considered herself a "disco singer," and so she feels that her step into the shadows is only

temporary. "I was always against disco," she says, "but they made me do it. They said, 'Cory, put out a solo album, just do some disco, you'll make it, you'll go platinum.' Then—when was it, six months later?—the word was out: disco's dead, Casablanca's folding. I mean, give me a break!"

Cory Daye's first break was purely a matter of happenstance. She grew up in the same Bronx neighborhood as Stony Browder Jr., August Darnell, Mickey Sevilla, and Andy Hernandez, the cocky kids who became the Savannah Band. She reminisced over a Bloody Mary at One Fifth Avenue, a New

A talk with
CORY
DAYE
 By Chris Albertson

York hangout for late-Seventies disco/rock stars: "Stony used to tinkle on the piano while I sang," she recalls, her eyes getting misty. "We were just high-school kids doing whatever gigs we could find, and Stony's father carted us around. We used to call him 'the Doctor,' and we were like the elixir of life, so he became 'Dr. Buzzard,' which was a name for the medicine men who went around in the South with little bottles and said 'Here, drink this, it heals all wounds.'"

It was while attending James Monroe High School that the five youngsters formed a band and began working locally under such names as the In-Laws and the Strangers. Their first professional break came in 1975, when they had started calling themselves Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band, and producer Tommy Mottola heard their unusual blend of Copacabana echoes and current sounds, a busy mixture containing dashes of Glenn Miller and Xavier Cugat swirling around in a mad tempest of coconut rhythms and hustle thumps. Where did it all come from? "From the *Million Dollar Movie*," says Cory Daye. "Growing up in the Bronx where money was tight, you

watched television, and I always leaned toward the musicals. I loved the pretty ladies, the Andrews Sisters, Abbott and Costello—I loved *all* of that. They say children soak it all in; it's true. So it was easy for me to pick up on what Stony wanted when I was chosen to sing the leads."

Cory's chance to be heard up front came when the band made its first album. She had previously been kept in the background because "Stony wanted a crooner, someone to be the next Frank Sinatra. But the male singers couldn't cook, so I stepped in. I knew all that old Hollywood stuff, but I also liked modern music, r-&-b, and I loved James Brown—all that rhythm. I love rhythms because I don't have a wide range. My voice is really very limited—I think maybe I could stretch to two octaves on a good day—so I have to rely on the rhythm to keep things going musically."

When it comes to keeping things going in person, Miss Daye takes advantage of her penchant for the campier side of Hollywood and becomes an unlikely cross between Bette Midler and a Pointer sister. Wrapped in a Salvation Army print dress, her lips painted the color of a ripe tomato, a large flower in her Maria Montez hair, she stomps her feet in Joan Crawford pumps and delivers the lyrics with a Carmen Miranda rapidity. Range or no range, audiences love it. Why, then, after three albums with the Savannah Band and one of her own, is Cory Daye out in the cold? That is a question to which she is still seeking a plausible answer. She has been told that RCA dropped her because one of the company's high-ranking executives "didn't understand" her solo album, but she finds that hardly a logical explanation.

Relations with RCA were actually somewhat awkward from the very beginning. The Savannah Band, an undisciplined, unproved group of cocky kids brought to the company by an independent contract producer, spent a full six months in the House of Music studio (a converted New Jersey basement) making an album that few people at the label thought would have any chance in the market. "The people at RCA heard the album and thought it was something from the deep blue. It was something they couldn't fathom, so they didn't do any promotion on it. It was all word of mouth."

The first real sign of appreciation came when the New York gay community—specifically, the summer crowd on that thin strip of sand known as Fire Island—embraced the album's *Cherchez la Femme*. "When Fire Island closed that fall," says Miss Daye, "they



CORY DAYE...

"... you do have to wonder why they sign you up and record you if they aren't going to give you the push you need."

brought the word back to the island of Manhattan. It was the Bicentennial year, and we were an American group with a new sound. It was great, everyone was gung-ho, and RCA finally decided to put us on Amtrak for a trial promotion in Washington, D.C. The whole band went, and we sold fifteen thousand units in one week. So then RCA said, 'Hmmm, it shows promise,' and they sent us on to a few other major cities—before dropping all promotion again. We thought they were just as mad as hatters." Miss Daye concedes that neither RCA nor Mottola exactly had a group of angels on their hands: "We were brats, we were bad, and our way of showing unhappiness with the RCA people was to do things like shooting jelly beans into the lobby of the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Atlanta. We went nuts with squirt guns and that sort of thing—a little immature, maybe, but very effective."

Despite such antics, and even though the success of the first album was mainly in the New York area, RCA went ahead with a follow-up. After all, those seemingly hopeless recordings from the New Jersey basement had not only registered healthy sales but also garnered a Grammy nomination (the award went to the Starland Vocal Band, another RCA group). As so often happens in the music business, the second album, "Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band Meets King Penett," released in 1978, did not live up to the expectations generated by the first.

Unpleasant memories are attached to that album. Its release coincided with the breakup of Miss Daye and Stony Browder, whose relationship dated back even before the time when she was a "respectable, no-nonsense waitress" at Hungry Hilda's, an Eighth Avenue topless establishment. "I left, but a good part of me will always remain with the Savannah Band. At that time it was just more than I could take, and the only person I could turn to was Tommy Mottola. He took me in, made a solo deal for me with RCA, and everything was hunky-dory."

The result of that deal was "Cory

and Me," a lonely experience for Miss Daye. The only familiar face in the studio was that of the Savannah Band's mascot, her cocker spaniel Mr. Lime-light. "I opened my eyes and Stony was not there, Darnell was not there, and Andy was not on the floor kicking his heels up in the air. It was very strange not having them around. I felt very insecure."

Despite these insecurities and some reservations regarding the direction of her first solo venture, Cory Daye is not ready to dismiss it: "I did it, and I'm always very happy with my babies. You might have ten children, some ugly, some pretty, but you still love them all the same, and that's how I feel about my albums." RCA launched "Cory and Me" with a boat party that reputedly cost \$50,000.

"While we were making the album," she says, "the people at RCA told me, 'Cory, you have to clean up your act, you have to get the word out that you are not a brat any more.' So I became an angel, a saint; I was really good, paid the RCA brass compliments—the whole bit. Then they threw that boat party for me, and the president of the company said, 'Cory, look at all this,' as he pointed around at the people dancing and the big neon sign with my signature. 'Do you think you deserve it?'" Diplomacy not being one of her virtues, Cory Daye replied, "You're damn right, and more." But there was no more. "I'm sure it wasn't his fault," she says, referring to the label's subsequent cut in the promotion budget for her album, "but you do have to wonder why they sign you up and record you if they aren't going to give you the push you need."

CORY DAYE is, of course, the victim of a system rather than any individual or company, and if there are any hard feelings on the part of RCA, the current staff is not showing them. "Cory was not as difficult to work with as she herself would lead you to believe," says one executive, "but this is a business, and when a product does not register satisfactory sales, you either look to improve it or you replace it." And so, when the promotional materials dwindle down to a Xeroxed few, when the phone calls from the office stop and nobody from the record-company team shows up at an artist's performance, the writing on the wall might as well be flashing neon. It is a humiliating ordeal that more and more artists are experiencing as pop music once again seeks out a new direction.

"The worst part of being on the ladder of success," says Cory Daye, "is when you have made it to about the

third rung from the top and you can see just what it's like to be successful. You can look down and say 'Unh, unh.' Then you look up—you're so close you can smell it—and someone up there is saying 'Unh, unh' to you."

What would Cory Daye do if all of her career decisions were hers alone to make and money were no problem? "I'd pull Stony back into the studio and try to beat some sense into his head," she says, smiling as she relishes the thought. "I'd try to make not only a fusion of sounds and eras, but a fusion of sounds for ears, for people. They're the ones buying the records, so let's take them into consideration. I don't think I've done enough ballads, for example. I haven't done enough things that people can relate to. I would do an album totally related to human beings, to what we all experience, believe, and see."

Would it be another echo of *Million Dollar Movie*?

"Yes—if you mean Cecil B. De Mille! I don't want to be just a recording artist, I want to be an *entertainer*. People love to be entertained—if you go to a party and there's no life in the crowd, you walk out. 'Cory and Me' was what I had to do at that time. I realized I had to prove something, not to the public, but to myself. I had to prove that I am my own person."

SHE has also realized that it is hard, if not impossible, for her to sever the connection with the old gang completely. Though she was contracted independently, she is now back with the Savannah Band on an Elektra album ("Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band Goes to Washington," 6E-218) that captures the flavor of the celebrated first album and even improves on it, though it may well be too sophisticated to catch on commercially. Recently the Bronx Bombshell has also been heard with August Darnell's Kid Creole and the Coconuts (the Savannah Band minus Browder), a group Darnell uses to back up his stable of acts. It is an odd mélange of talents, but the overall effect is just far enough out for Cory Daye to fit in, and the rebellious atmosphere created by Darnell's music and antics suits to a tee a woman who has been known to register in one of New York's finer hotels under the name Polly Esther. And, though the New Wave may have swept her temporarily out of the limelight at home, Cory Daye still has a place stage center abroad. She has twice been summoned for appearances in Holland, and at this writing she was planning a South American tour. It looks to me as if we still have the dawn of a new Daye to look forward to. □



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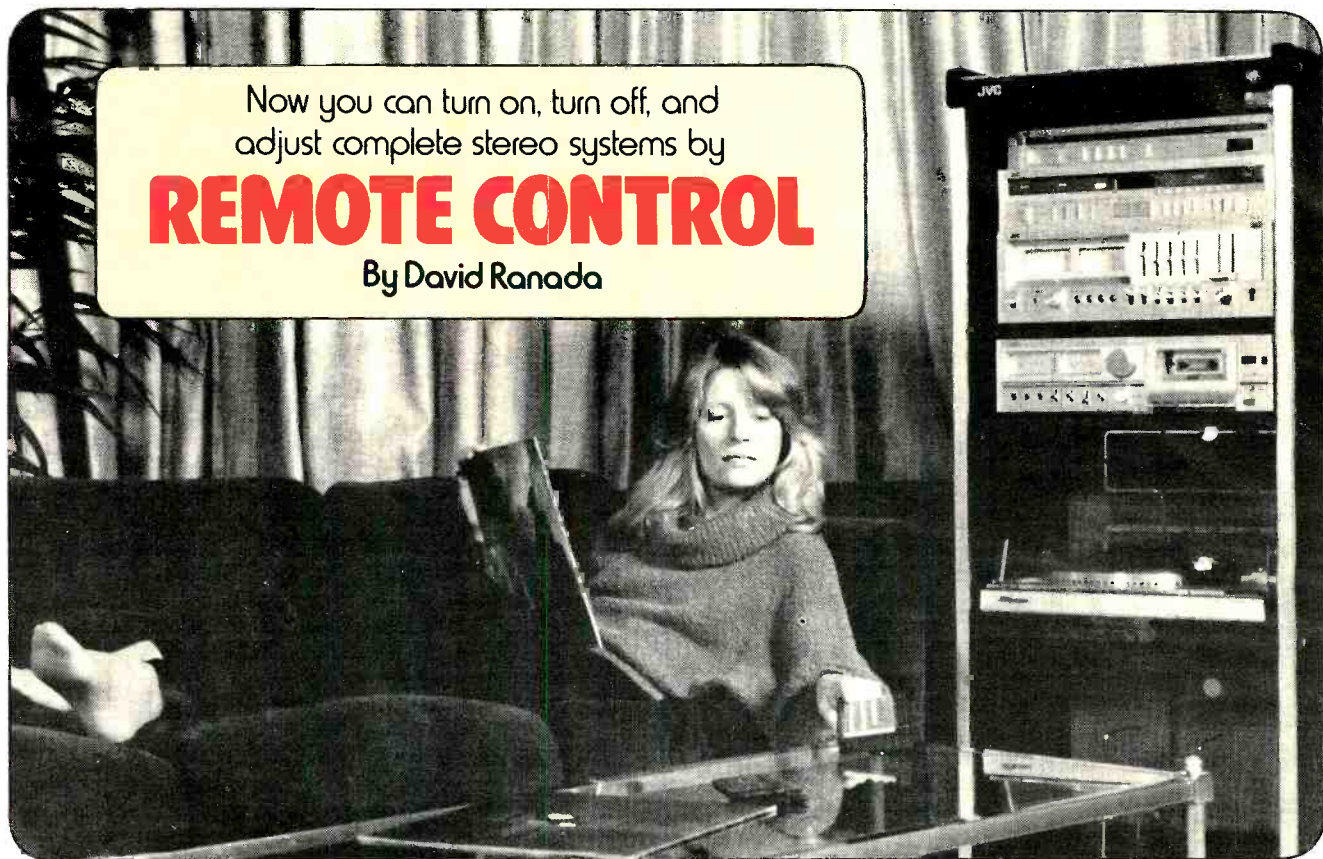
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Now you can turn on, turn off, and
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REMOTE CONTROL

By David Ranada



CONVENIENCE has never been a prime attribute of component stereo systems, at least as compared to such user-optimized home products as remote-controlled TVs, programmable microwave ovens, and multi-cycle washing machines. Now all that has changed. Developments in semiconductor technology over the last few years have made remote-control circuitry simple and inexpensive—so much so that there are now complete, high-quality stereo systems (turntable, tape deck, tuner, and amplifier) that can be switched, adjusted, and tuned from a distance. Remote-control *techniques* have changed too, from the effective but crude motor-driven TV-channel-changing units using electronic umbilical cords, ultrasound, or radio, to the infrared remote-control systems of today and the voice-activated systems of tomorrow.

Why remote control? Aside from its obvious advantages to the handicapped, the ability to control a system without moving from the listening position has its audiophilic benefits as well. Remote control of such system adjustments as volume and input selection allow A/B comparisons to be made. Other capabilities, such as controlling turntables, tape decks, and station selection in tuners, are simply more convenient with a remote-control unit (keep in mind that

remote-controlled stereo systems vary in their controllable features). And, until listening rooms themselves are perfected, it is still necessary to adjust certain parameters for listener location, and it makes sense to do such adjusting *from* that location.

Remote-control units with varying capabilities are available with systems from Akai, Aiwa, Bang & Olufsen, Dual, SAE, Sony, Technics, Kenwood, Fisher, JVC, and others. Still more manufacturers have one or two units that can be controlled remotely, usually a turntable or a tape deck. Most use infrared light to activate the remote-control system, usually via an accessory remote-control-receiver box that connects to the controlled components. The box receives the infrared pulses sent from across the room by the hand-held transmitter, decodes them, and activates the appropriate system functions. All this is done using (primarily) digital circuitry. In fact, remote control and time delay are so far the only areas in consumer audio in which digital processes play a primary role.

Basically, an infrared remote-control system works by transmitting information about which button has been pressed on the remote-control unit. Each button is assigned a particular sequence of infrared-light flashes. The flashes are generated by infrared

LEDs which transmit their output across the room. The use of infrared techniques avoids some of the problems that arise with other types of remote-control media. Ultrasonic types, for example, are susceptible to Doppler frequency-shift effects if the transmitter is being moved rapidly while transmitting. Doppler effects are not significant with infrared until the receiver or transmitter is moving near the speed of light—hardly a common household occurrence! Infrared controls are also immune to most interference effects commonly found in homes (how many things in *your* house emit sequences of infrared flashes?).

The receiving unit contains infrared-sensitive detectors that convert the infrared light received into electrical pulses. These are decoded by suitable digital circuitry, and the end result is usually the activation of a switch or the turning of a motor. All these operations have nothing to do with the *audio* quality of the controlled component, of course, only with its ease of operation.

THAT ease of operation has been further increased recently by the introduction of the first of what might become a long line of *remote-control systems that respond to the human voice*. Toshiba's voice-responding component system is called the Acoustic Remote

Controlled System (ARCS), and it memorizes, recognizes, and responds to commands *only as spoken by its programmer's voice*. Now, this is not done by the use of integrated circuits capable of following a conversation, although such developments probably lie in the not too distant future. What Toshiba has constructed, however, is a simple electronic model of the way the human ear interprets sounds.

CIRCUITS in the ARCS take the signal entering from the unit's microphone and feed it through a bank of bandpass filters. The outputs from the filters are turned into a series of varying d.c. voltages proportional to the level of the signal passing through each filter. These two steps mimic the actions of hearing, but the ones that follow are considerably less anthropomorphic. The series of d.c. voltages representing the filter outputs is digitized by an analog-to-digital converter and stored in the system's digital memory in the "slot" reserved for the word spoken. (Any spoken word can be programmed into the slots reserved for "fast-forward," "volume-up," etc. during programming. The comedic possibilities of entering non-hi-fi words as system commands are endless, but you had better be able to remember what they are!)

In the remote-control mode, the same process is repeated, but instead of entering the digitized filter outputs into the vocabulary memory, the controlling microprocessor compares the word spoken to all the words contained in the memory. When a close match is found, the ARCS performs the action required by the located word's memory slot.

A total of fifteen words can be programmed into the ARCS to voice-activate the companion Toshiba stereo components to perform nineteen operations. With the ARCS microprocessor performing thousands of operations a second, reaction to the spoken command is very fast: it takes 0.6 second to enter a command, 0.5 second to recognize and respond to it—less time than it might take most people!

Even though it is only in the advanced-prototype stage of development, ARCS' debut at a New York City press conference was quite impressive if for no other reason than that it indicated one future direction of remote-control technology: toward a greater simplicity of control techniques. What, indeed, could be simpler than *talking* to your stereo system?

Another direction is indicated by BSR's X-10 remote-control system for a.c.-powered devices: more widespread applicability. The X-10 encodes its but-

ton pushes *as signals fed into a house's electrical wiring system*. Receiver boxes, into which the controlled devices are plugged, patiently monitor the house current until their individual actuating codes come through. They then turn the attached light or appliance on or off, as desired. You can even remote-control the remote control by using an accessory ultrasonic control for the system's central transmitting unit. The importance of this system lies in its ability to control many widely spaced devices, though so far only with on/off and light-dimming functions. The future will probably bring a whole series of devices with all their functions remotely controllable from a central panel.

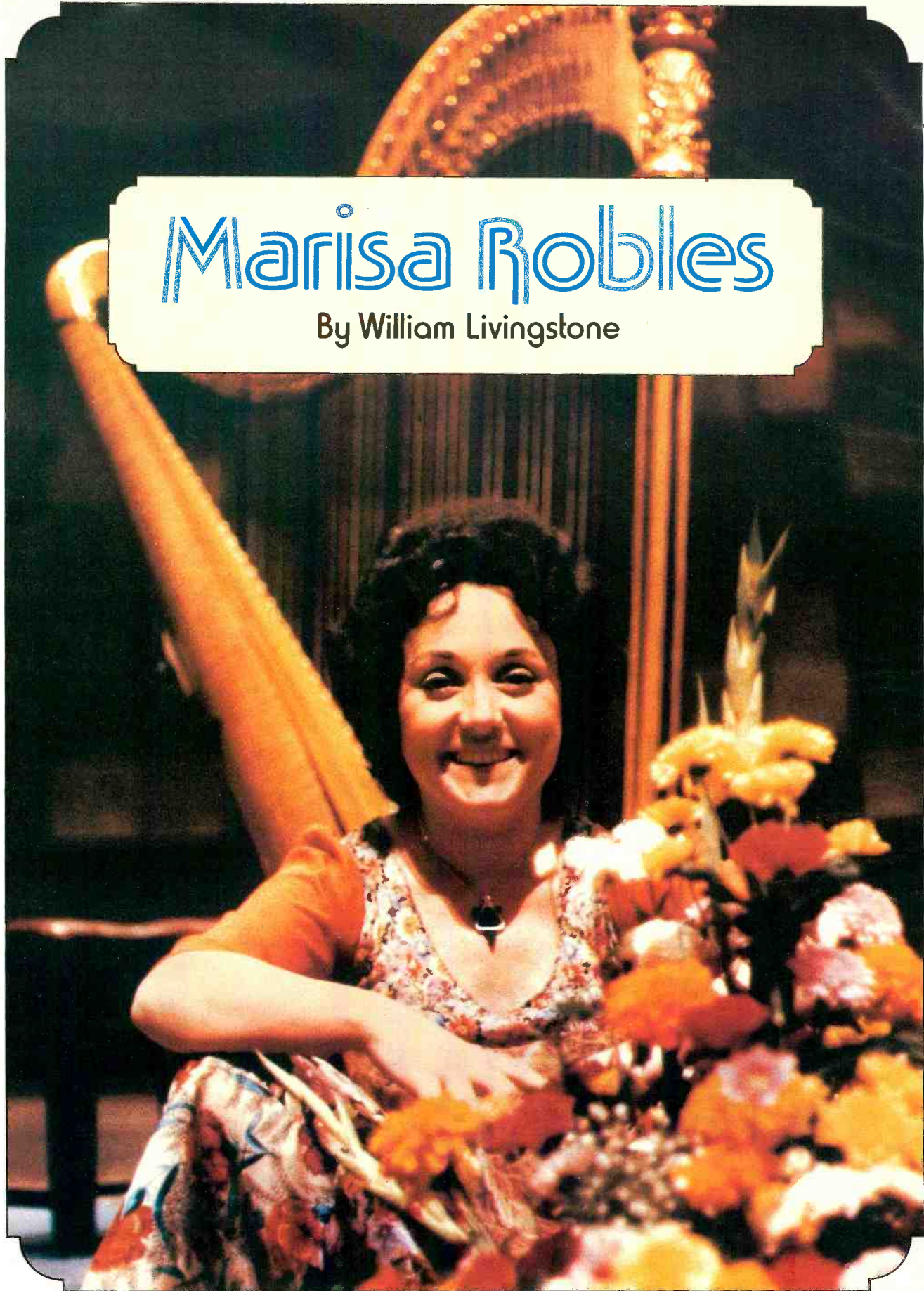
ATHIRD possibility for remote control's future is already in use in language translators and teaching aids: talking circuitry. Integrated circuits are available which can be programmed to "speak" using pre-programmed vocabularies. These chips haven't yet been used in hi-fi equipment, but their eventual application seems inevitable. One hopes that they won't be used *everywhere*, however. The last thing I want in the middle of a critical live recording session is for my tape recorder to start commenting on the performance. □



Technics' remote-control center (above) and Fisher's remote-controlled system (below) both use infrared techniques. Toshiba's ARCS (right) is controlled by user-programmable voice commands. BSR's X-10 system (left) operates lights and appliances that are plugged into a house's electrical system.

Marisa Robles

By William Livingstone



THE Mostly Mozart Festival, which takes place every summer at Lincoln Center in New York, is an international affair. In addition to many American artists, the musicians closely associated with the Festival include such Europeans as the pianist Alicia de Larrocha from Spain and the flutist-conductor Jean-Pierre Rampal from France.

Mostly Mozart has also been a New York launching pad for many important performers. The Dutch soprano Elly Ameling, the Irish flutist James Galway, and the conductors Peter Maag from Switzerland, Charles Mackerras from England, and Edo de Waart from Holland all made their New York debuts at the Festival. The name of the Spanish harpist Marisa Robles will be added to this impressive list of musicians when the Festival begins this summer on July 14. At the opening concert Miss Robles will join Galway as a soloist in Mozart's Concerto for Flute and Harp (K. 299).

Other American cities became acquainted with Miss Robles a few months ago when she toured in this country with Galway and the violist Milton Thomas. Toward the end of the tour I met Miss Robles for tea at the Mayflower Hotel in New York, and she spoke enthusiastically about her first American performances. "It has been incredible," she said. "I've known Jimmy Galway for sixteen or seventeen years, and he gave me a great opportunity by inviting me to play here where he is already so famous.

"We have played sixteen concerts with the violist Milton Thomas—a great musician from Los Angeles—and we've had a marvelous partnership, the three of us. All our concerts were sold out, and the audiences were very enthusiastic. There wasn't *one* where we didn't have a standing ovation at the end. It has been a *tremendous* welcome for me!

"Our programs here have been different from the typical classical way of making music. We didn't take the direct, very serious approach to the audience—you play, you say nothing, you go. No! We like to treat the audience as friends, and we *talk* to them. This draws them into the program, and they get to know the artists not only as musicians, but also as people. On this tour Jimmy did most of the talking because he presented the program, but I talked about my own solos and about the composers, and I told everybody that I was playing in this country for the first time and how interesting it was for me. We wanted to *entertain* the audience—with dignity and with musicianship to be sure—but in addition to giving them a

musical evening, we tried to give them a good time."

Miss Robles is a pretty, vivacious brunette of forty. Radiating high spirits and self-confidence, she speaks English with great fluency and speed, trilling every "r." According to the reviews for her first American tour, she was an equal partner to Galway on stage in terms of charm and personality as well as musicianship.

"I'm used to that fantastic personality of Jimmy's," she said, "because I've known him so long and because we've done a lot of work together in Europe. He's special. He can be serious when he has to be, and he worries when that's necessary, but mostly he enjoys his life. He takes it as a great big joke really. He's not going to kill himself because his profession is so important. He strolls out on stage with the flute on his shoulder because the flute is a very natural thing for him. It's much the same for me, except that I can't carry my harp on my shoulder."

I commented that it seemed odd that so many women have gravitated to the harp, an instrument that is so difficult to transport. Miss Robles smiled with mock coquettishness and said, "Difficult to transport? Not really. It weighs only about forty kilos. I can't do it by myself, of course, but I've never had any trouble finding a couple of nice men to *help* me carry it."

BORN in Madrid, Marisa Robles belongs to a large musical family, in which she represents the third generation of harpists. She began studying the instrument at the age of seven. "It was in the family, and I was surrounded by harps all the time. My mother was a harpist until her late twenties, when she married my father. She eventually had six children, and that's a big career, especially in Spain at that time."

"If you want to examine the position of a career woman and mother, the great example is me. I am two persons in one all the time."

Miss Robles' only teacher was her great aunt Luisa Menarguez, whom she describes as a contemporary of the famous French harpists Carlos Salzedo (1885-1961) and Marcel Grandjany

(1891-1975), both of whom immigrated to America. "I think my aunt, who died only three years ago, was the best harp teacher of her time in Europe. She belonged to an aristocratic family in Spain and was the first woman in the family to have anything to do with a profession. The year she completed her studies at the Paris Conservatory, she received the first prize for harp, and Grandjany was number two. Nobody in the family, however, understood that she was a *great* harpist, and she was expected to stay at home and be a society lady. But she became a marvelous teacher and passed her knowledge on to younger generations. Nicanor Zabaleta [Spain's most famous harpist] was one of her pupils, and so today because of my aunt there is Zabaleta, there is me, and there are many other Spanish harpists who are very good."

Miss Robles made her official debut in Madrid when she was sixteen, performing as a soloist with Jean-Pierre Rampal and the National Orchestra of Spain in the Mozart Concerto for Flute and Harp. At the age of twenty-one she succeeded her aunt as professor of harp at the Conservatory of Music in Madrid. Two years later she married an Englishman and left Spain to start a new career in England.

In the middle Sixties she made half a dozen recordings for Argo Records which won her a following among harp aficionados around the world. At present the only one of these available in the United States is Argo ZRG 574, which contains Ravel's *Introduction and Allegro* and trios for harp, flute, and viola by Debussy and Arnold Bax. Others are rumored to be scheduled for reissue. Because of the recent acquisition of British Decca labels by PolyGram, Miss Robles said, "At the moment I don't know whether I belong to Argo, London Records, or Philips, but the Mozart concerto I recorded with Galway is out here on RCA." Reviewing that album (RCA ARL1-3353) in this magazine, James Goodfriend said of Miss Robles that "she is, if you didn't know it, one superb harpist."

UNLIKE her mother and her aunt, Marisa Robles has managed to combine a performing career with raising a family, and she and her husband have three children. When they were very small, she limited her tours and declined invitations to perform in such faraway places as the United States. She still avoids engagements around Christmas so that she can spend the holidays with her family, and she reserves a month in the summer to take her children to Spain for a vacation. For the rest of the year she is a very

busy performer, averaging three concerts a week.

"If you want to examine the position of a career woman and mother," she says, "the great example of it is me. I am two persons in one all the time. I don't mean that I am schizophrenic, but I constantly have to readjust from one to the other. I do a lot—really a lot—of work in Europe. I don't want to sound arrogant, but to be truthful I must say that I am the most popular harp soloist of my generation in Europe today. But I have to switch all that off whenever I go back home. Then I think, 'Tomorrow I must organize the food for next week.'

"A man doesn't have to change patterns so much. His career is the most important thing in his life most of the time. When he comes home, he says hello to the children, if he's got any. His wife has been there taking care of them, and everything is waiting for him.

"My two roles in life, however, are entirely different. Even though I have a nanny to help me, I think the amount of energy I have to spend in being good at both my roles is much more than is ever required of a man. Women have only recently had a chance to prove that on many occasions they can do as well in their professions as men. We are only starting to catch up, and it's very difficult and very tiring. I think women who have big careers are admirable people. They are very strong characters."

MISS ROBLES thinks it a mistake to consider the harp a "feminine" instrument or one especially suited to women. She says that it was excessively romanticized in the nineteenth century because women look very pretty playing the harp. When she challenged me to name a woman harpist of the stature of Salzedo, Grandjany, and Zabaleta, I suggested Lily Laskine. "Definitely, Lily Laskine is a great harpist," she said, "but to speak of Zabaleta and the harp is like speaking of Segovia and the guitar or Rampal and the flute.

"Masculinity and femininity are very difficult to define, certainly in music. I think of instruments as the means of expressing the personality of a performer, who is the medium between the creator and the listener. To the extent that an instrument can have gender, I suppose it takes on the sex of the person who is playing it.

"One might argue that the harp is a *masculine* instrument because it is so

hard to play it well," she continued. "Some people are self-taught and can pluck a few chords, just as anyone can play the guitar a bit, but it is very difficult to be an artist on the guitar, and so it is with the harp. We have forty-seven strings on the harp and seven pedals. All the semi-tones—the black notes on the piano—are played with the feet on the harp."

ACCORDING to Miss Robles, the availability of good modern harps from many countries is contributing to the increased popularity of the instrument. Her favorite among her own harps is one made in Chicago by Lyon & Healy. "The harp is becoming very popular. People love it, and I think it's going to be very much an instrument of the future."

She contributes to this interest in the harp not just by performing on the instrument. Since moving to England she

"... women who have big careers are admirable people. They are very strong characters."

has continued to teach, and she is now professor of harp at the Royal College of Music in London. "Teaching is one of the most important things in my life. No matter how busy I am, I feel a responsibility to pass on whatever I have been able to learn to benefit someone else. My teacher still lives in what she was able to give to me, and I see my pupils as another continuation."

Miss Robles is impressed with the number and quality of American students of her instrument. "Last September I represented Great Britain on the jury of the Seventh International Harp Contest in Israel. Americans accounted for easily 50 to 60 per cent of the players there, and four of the six prize winners were Americans, including Mary Emily Mitchell, who won first prize."

What will all these young harpists play? Is there much of a repertoire for the harp? "Absolutely! There is enough to keep you going for many years. We don't have the literature that exists for the piano or violin, but the harp repertoire is comparable to that of the flute, I suppose. Galway has to play a great many transcriptions of such things as Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. It's great mu-

sic, he likes playing it, and I'm sure Vivaldi would be *delighted* to hear it.

"We can make very good transcriptions for the harp of works written for the harpsichord by such composers as Rameau and Couperin. In original music, besides the Mozart concerto we have one by Handel. Ravel and Debussy have written very well for the harp, both solo pieces and chamber works. And in the contemporary repertoire for harp you find such important names as Hindemith, Ginastera, Rodrigo, Villa-Lobos, Benjamin Britten, and many British composers of the highest caliber. There is certainly more repertoire than I will ever be able to play. Really! I don't want to practice *that* much."

Having finished tea, we left the hotel to walk over to Lincoln Center so that Miss Robles could have a look at the Juilliard School and at Avery Fisher Hall, where the Mostly Mozart Festival is held, and we continued to talk about music. Like most musicians, she says that she likes to make records but rarely listens to her own. "I prefer the direct contact with the audience. If I'm not playing, I go to as many concerts as I can. I like to hear great music performed by great orchestras and great singers."

She admits that most of the music she and Galway play whenever they are booked together is not very substantial. "But then we're not looking for very serious pieces that you have to sit down and meditate with. Most of our repertoire for flute and harp consists of delightful compositions that have entertained several generations already and will entertain a few more. The sonata by the French composer Jean-Michel Damase is important music, and our major piece is the Mozart concerto."

BY now we were standing in front of Avery Fisher Hall where she and Galway will play the concerto, and I wished her success in her debut. She smiled confidently and said, "It should go well. Audiences usually love that concerto, and they generally bring us back for two or three encores." She studied the façades of the buildings on the plaza and commented, "Fisher Hall is impressive, but it looks a bit *plain* compared with the one next to it. Is that the Metropolitan Opera? I think I'll ask the management of the Festival to move my concert there. It's quite grand." Although Miss Robles can be very persuasive, the opening concert of the Mostly Mozart Festival is still scheduled for Avery Fisher Hall. But I'm planning to go early that night just in case there is a change of venue and she needs someone to help carry her harp. □

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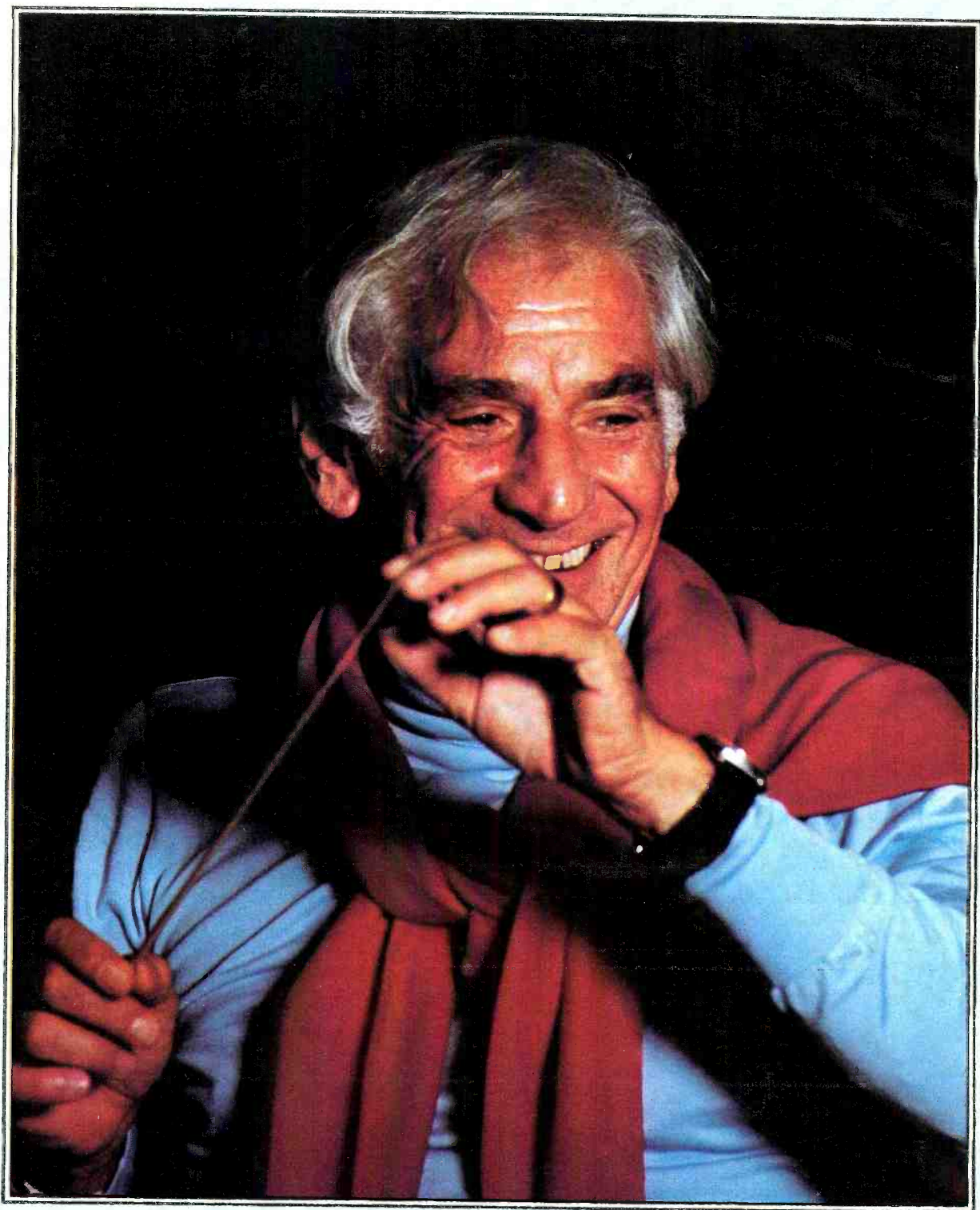


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Leonard Bernstein

(Photo Susesch Bayat, Berlin; courtesy Deutsche Grammophon)

STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEST OF THE MONTH



• Bernstein's *Fancy Free*: Witty and Perfectly Made •

CONDUCTOR/COMPOSER Leonard Bernstein, a Jerome Robbins ballet, Russian violinist Gidon Kremer, and the Israel Philharmonic all on a Deutsche Grammophon record? It's an unlikely—but very impressive—combination, and it works.

As everybody must know by now, there are two Leonard Bernsteins: the “serious” composer of *The Age of Anxiety*, the *Jeremiah* and *Kaddish* Symphonies, and the Serenade for Violin, Strings, Harp, and Percussion, and the “show” composer of *West Side Story* and *Fancy Free*. As Deutsche Grammophon continues to run through the Bernstein *oeuvre*, they must inevitably move toward the theater works, and they are at least halfway there with the latest release in what begins to appear to be a comprehensive series. It contains both the Serenade, a big, ambitious, *very* serious concerted work close to the European tradition, and the music for *Fancy Free*, brash, brassy, bluesy, non-serious Bernstein-on-Broadway. The Serenade, not a well-known work, deserves reviving, especially in such an exceptional performance as this one, but *Fancy Free*, just as brilliantly performed, is a revelation.

The Serenade first: it was commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation and premiered in 1954 by Isaac Stern and (somewhat surprisingly) this very orchestra under the composer's direction. Now, a quarter-century later, we have another fiddler (of a similar heritage) and the same collaborators in a superb live performance. What an artist Kremer is! This is what used to be called “long-hair” music—long-haired and (except for the colorful finale)

rather long-faced—but it is anything but that in the performance. It is said to be “after Plato's *Symposium*,” and the movements are titled (I kid you not) “Phaedrus-Pausania,” “Aristophanes,” “Erixymachus,” “Agathon,” and “Socrates-Alcibiades.” Let us pass in silence over these programmatic Greeks, who are in this case no help to the understanding whatever. But not to worry; the music has charms enough of its own without the need for any classical pony. This is warm, romantic, unjustly neglected music that is bound to find some new life in concert halls through this recording.

Fancy Free is the suite drawn from the original ballet—which later turned into *On the Town*. It (the ballet) was created by Robbins in 1944 for Ballet Theater—not yet “real” Broadway, but evocative of it. These symphonic Broad-

BERNSTEIN: *Serenade for Violin, Strings, Harp, and Percussion*; *Fancy Free*. Gidon Kremer (violin, in the Serenade); Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 196 \$9.98.

way blues are prefaced and afterworded by Bernstein himself playing and singing something called *Big Stuff Blues* as if he were in the back room of some slightly seedy piano bar.

The roots of the music are complex: jazz and blues, yes, but also Stravinsky, Shostakovich, Copland, and Gershwin.

For all that, the style is pure Bernstein: lean, a little mean, inflected, tightly organized, held (laid?) back, and full of tension. In its economy and its repetitive patterns it even has elements in common with the minimalist tendency in contemporary art—except that there is always either an implicit or an explicit excitement about it. Every note, every rhythm and phrase extension, every orchestral color, is placed within a dynamic/formal framework that both contains and conveys this tremendous energy. What is surprising is not merely how witty this music is, but how perfectly it is made—a masterpiece of its kind.

This is also a remarkable live performance by the Israel Philharmonic. There was a time when music like this could hardly even be attempted by non-American orchestras without ludicrous, unidiomatic results. Obviously this is no longer the case. Either the conductor was able to persuade this orchestra to sound ultra-American, or the idiom is now truly international. Whichever the case, the performance is absolutely first-rate—the excitement is palpable, the playing full of life. The recorded sound is also exceptional. This is one of those cases where an extraordinary live performance beats any less-spontaneous studio run-through all hollow.

I should add that the record sleeve promises program notes in an enclosed leaflet. I was rather looking forward to discovering what a German critic would have to say about this music and its composer, but there was nothing in the jacket but an advertising throwaway—and, of course, a very, very good record. —Eric Salzman

“... the style is pure Bernstein: lean, a little mean . . . and full of tension. . . .”



Mike Evans/Phonogram International

Looking over the score:
left to right, Edith
Mathis, Raymond Leppard,
and Dame Janet Baker

Ariodante: The Finest Recording of a Handel Opera Yet

HANDEL'S *Ariodante* is not only one of his masterpieces but one of his most accessible operas as well. The plot is derived from a section of Ariosto's ever-popular *Orlando Furioso*. Free of the period's conventional magic and disguises and unencumbered by a confusing subplot, it traces the love story of Ariodante and Ginevra, a Scottish princess. The lecherous Polinesso, who wants Ginevra for himself, falsely convinces Ariodante that Ginevra is having an affair with him. This, of course, leads to a predictable series of dramatic events, including an attempted suicide, a mad scene, a tournament, and a final denouement in which the lovers are united.

The score is a particularly rich one, and the tremendous variety of emotions that Handel takes his characters through permits them to step forward as passionately real human beings. Janet Baker, as the hero Ariodante, plays a joyful lover whose tenderness is transformed to vengeful hate when he hears of Ginevra's alleged infidelity. The ferocity of his passion is heard in the menacing "*Scherzi infida*," with its eerie accompaniment of bassoon obbligato, muted upper strings, and pizzicato basses, and the rapture of Ginevra's

final vindication is communicated in the fiercely difficult syncopations and coloratura of "*Doppo notte*."

Dame Janet, as well as offering her usual impeccable technique and musicianship, imbues her arias with overpowering drama; she has never sung Handel better. The part of Ginevra, sung by Edith Mathis, is equally fully explored. Miss Mathis is at her best in the moments of high drama, such as her mad scene ("*Il mio crudel martoto*"), and her heart-rending resignation to fate ("*Io ti bacio*") is one of the high points of the opera. Norma Burrowes' portrayal of the innocent Dalinda is a delight. Her voice is fresh and the suppleness of her coloratura is simply dazzling. Her first love is charmingly portrayed in "*Il primo ardor*," and her emergence as a mature woman who has suffered the very cruelest quirks of fate is expressed in her "*Neghittosi, or voi che fate*." In many respects, Miss Burrowes' performance is consistently the finest of the entire cast, and that is saying a lot.

Lurcanio, Ariodante's devoted brother and the eventual winner of Dalinda's love, is superbly sung by David Rendall, one of the finest exponents of Handel singing around today; the voice is strong, heroic, and agile. Samuel Ramey as the King of Scotland maintains a proper dignity, but it does not interfere with his expressing deep anguish over the decisions he must make. Although James Bowman is effective as the evil Polinesso, I find a countertenor out of place in this stellar, operatically oriented cast. Every time he enters, we

are suddenly wrenched into the world of Old Music Making and the drama grinds to a halt. The notion of using a countertenor is understandable, but few, if any, of these vocal specialists have the seasoned opera singer's sense of drama and projection, and that is what Handel and this performance are all about.

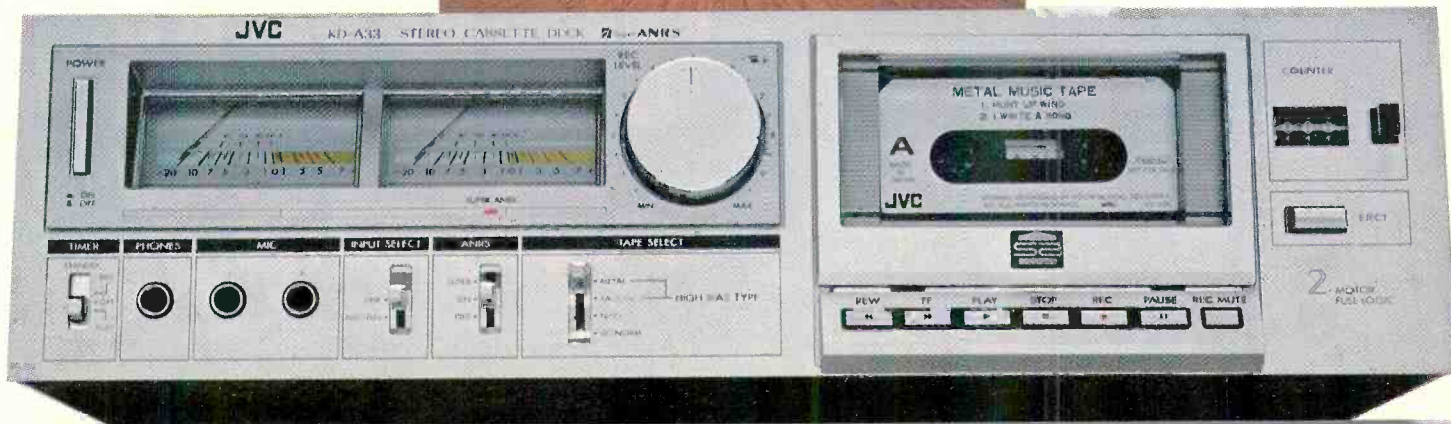
However beautiful the singing may be in this performance, it would not be possible for it to make its effects without the assistance of Raymond Leppard and the English Chamber Orchestra. Leppard's refusal to cut the score vindicates Handel's sense of dramatic proportion. The recitative, while fairly strict, is delivered with a compelling urgency. Even the playing of the final cadences simultaneously with the last vocal note, a dubious practice stylistically, works here. The da capos are tastefully decorated, and there are added cadenzas—which, however, are not permitted to interfere with Handel's rhythmic flow. The orchestral playing is precise and clean and the ensemble excellent. This is particularly telling in the many arias in which the violins double the vocal line (a real problem in Baroque opera), and of course *Ariodante*, with its overtures, sinfonias, and three ballet sequences, has more than its share of orchestral music.

If I seem to be belaboring this subject somewhat, it is because I find this by far the finest recording of a Handel opera that has yet appeared. The libretto is dramatically believable, Handel is at his best, the performance quality is first-rate, and the performance style is

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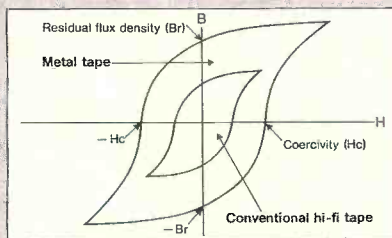
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—Stoddard Lincoln

HANDEL: Ariodante. Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano), Ariodante; Edith Mathis (soprano), Ginevra; Norma Burrowes (soprano), Dalinda; James Bowman (countertenor), Polinesso; David Rendall (tenor), Lurcanio; Samuel Ramey (bass), King of Scotland; Alexander Oliver (tenor), Odoardo. London Voices; English Chamber Orchestra, Raymond Leppard cond. PHILIPS 6769 025 four discs \$39.92, ©7699 112 \$39.92.

Jerry Lee Lewis: Doing All He Can To Become a Legend In His Own Time

A COLOSSAL ego has hilariously animated the performances of Jerry Lee Lewis ever since the day he cut *Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On* in the Fifties, and it has continued to power his desultory assaults on cheering audiences since. Though there was a temporary change-over to country-ballad singing in the mid-Sixties, Lewis returned as always to his first love, rock, when that frustrated old ambition to be a Big Star began to stir in his innards.

Lewis has long worked assiduously at creating his own legend, referring to himself in spoken asides on his recordings as "the Killer" and running vocally barefoot through a trademark repertoire of extramusical whoops, gurgles, and assorted mutterings. Now, in his middle years, he seems to have arrived at the realization that, although he may never be a star of quite the magnitude he aspired to, there is one more option to exercise: he can be an eccentric. And you know something? It works!

His new "When Worlds Collide" for Elektra opens with the Killer's own *Rockin' Jerry Lee*, written to remind us of his considerable collection of credentials. Much of the rest is made up of standard, sturdy country ballads that he handles very well. But there are unexpected dizzy departures. *Alabama Jamboree* turns surprisingly into a Dixieland jazz parade—trumpet, clarinet, guitar, and piano taking their solos in turn—with Lewis shouting encouragement and advice to the musicians. *Toot, Toot, Tootsie Goodbye* and *I Only Want a Buddy Not a Sweetheart* are vaudeville tunes straight from the Tin Pan Alley archives. You might think they should have stayed there, but you would be wrong: I predict that you will love every note of the way Lewis makes them work all over again.

Over the years Jerry Lee's athletic piano antics have evolved from ham-handed backwoods boogie/gospel to the point where they now display nothing less than occasional bursts of technical competence and even some good ideas—sudden, rather heartening leaps from, shall we say, third-rate to second-rate. But he plays best in a jam session, and piano is only *one* of the things he does anyway; as an all-round entertain-

er he is *first-rate*. The performing persona he has grown into—an odd mixture of Falstaff and Huckleberry Finn—is delightfully cuckoo and utterly winning. Jerry Lee Lewis has at last succeeded in proving what he always knew and wanted everyone to recognize: that there is really no one else like him. —Joel Vance

JERRY LEE LEWIS: When Two Worlds Collide. Jerry Lee Lewis (piano, vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Rockin' Jerry Lee; Who Will Buy the Wine; Alabama Jamboree; Good Time Charlie's Got the Blues; Love Game; When Two Worlds Collide; Good News Travels Fast; I Only Want a Buddy Not a Sweetheart; Honky Tonk Stuff; Toot, Toot, Tootsie Goodbye.* ELEKTRA 6E-254 \$7.98, © ET8-254 \$7.98, © TC5-254 \$7.98.

"New York, New York": A Nifty Jazz Outing Disguised as a Tribute To the Big Apple

IF the public-relations people charged with persuading you to visit New York City have been doing their jobs right in recent years, you should have forgotten by now that the old term "concrete jungle" has anything to do with that pleasanter-sounding nickname "Big Apple." Credit where credit is due, however: clever as Madison Avenue hucksters can get when it comes to inventing catchy phrases, they didn't



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invent this one. Like so much of today's ubiquitous slang, New York City's currently most popular nickname originated with black Americans, jazz musicians and vaudeville performers who were calling it that even before the halcyon days of Mayor Jimmy Walker. Folk etymology has it that it was a show-business dictum: if you wanted to make it to center stage, the first thing you did was point your toes toward the *core* of such activity, the *apple*—and not just *any* apple, but the *BIG* apple.

Not surprisingly, New York has over the years inspired enough tunes (including *The Big Apple*, a 1937 Swing Era dance favorite) to fill several albums, and a number of these have now been gathered together for a lovingly executed tribute titled "New York, New York: Sounds of the Apple." The program is well chosen (though *Chinatown, My Chinatown* does not, as far as I know, relate specifically to Manhattan's). But what gives this collection its charm is the warmth and spirit that prevail among the eight performers. I point this out because the great volume of repetitive recording activity in New York has often been known to induce an oh-no-not-that-again lethargy in studio musicians, and even the best of them have been heard to shortchange the mikes on musical substance. Not so in this case. If the performers we hear on these nine selections are not genuinely enjoying themselves and caring very much about the end results, they certainly have *me* fooled.

Rife with articulate instrumental performances, this set also boasts five vocals rendered by Dardanelle, Grady Tate, Slam Stewart, and trumpeter Marky Markowitz. All perform with

the skill one might expect of full-time professional singers, although only Dardanelle is considered primarily a vocalist. She can hold her own very nicely on piano and vibes as well, however. She plays the former here on *Manhattan* and *Sidewalks of New York*, but the dominant keyboard role on the album is played by the impeccable, non-singing John Bunch.

The familiar coupling of bass and voice that first made Slam Stewart's presence so strikingly apparent a few eras ago continues to sound fresh, but here he unveils yet another side of his talent; ballad singing. Though his range is not impressive, I'll take his tasty, expertly mixed *Manhattan* over many a version I've tried in the past.

Also highly palatable is Marky Markowitz's Armstrong-inspired, tongue-in-cheek scatting on *Theme from "New York, New York."* Markowitz sings only that one song, but he also plays some fine *non-Armstrong-inspired* trumpet on this Apple tribute. Tenor saxophonist Phil Bodner (you may have seen his name on albums by just about anybody from Wes Montgomery, Milt Jackson, and Maynard Ferguson to Janis Ian and Martin Mull) proves here that he should be asked to step front and center more often.

If Markowitz and Bodner have been kept out of your range of hearing by tin-eared producers, drummer Grady Tate has at least gotten some exposure—though not as a drummer—with his late-Sixties vocal hit *The Windmills of Your Mind*. Here, with *Autumn in New York*, Tate proves once again that he is a fine ballad singer as well as a topnotch drummer. Add to all this a smooth, well-oiled rhythm section cush-

ioned by Bucky Pizzarelli's bouncy guitar and a fine technical recording job by Les Paul Jr. (son of the well-known guitarist), and you have an accessible, thoroughly enjoyable salute to New York City, a set as simple and delicious as a street-corner pretzel, as exhilarating as a Coney Island roller-coaster ride.

—Chris Albertson

NEW YORK, NEW YORK: SOUNDS OF THE APPLE. Marky Markowitz (trumpet and vocals); Phil Bodner (tenor saxophone); Dardanelle (piano and vocals); John Bunch (piano); Bucky Pizzarelli (guitar); George Duvivier (bass); Slam Stewart (bass and vocals); Grady Tate (drums and vocals). *Manhattan; Sidewalks of New York; Take the "A" Train; New York State of Mind; Broadway; On Broadway; Chinatown, My Chinatown; Theme from "New York, New York."* STASH ST 204 \$7.98 (from Stash Records, Inc., P.O. Box 390, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11215).

Smokey Robinson's "Warm Thoughts": Unflagging Enthusiasm, Understated Brilliance

THOUGH he has been one of the anchor-men of vocal soul music for over twenty years, William "Smokey" Robinson manages to sing with the warmth, sincerity, and emotional involvement of a very young man still anticipating life's greater and yet-un-

DARDANELLE



SLAM STEWART



tasted pleasures. There is no hint of flagging enthusiasm, no sign that he has lost any of his customary purity of sound or style. Many musical modes have come and gone in the two decades he has been before the public, but he continues to rely on the same effective cool-sweet approach, the essence of "laid back" long before that term came into popular over-use.

His new Tamla album, "Warm Thoughts," contains eight selections that bear all the familiar characteristics of vintage Smokey even though they are brand new. This appealing blend of the old and the new is, in fact, probably the key to his remarkably evergreen popularity. There is a distinct echo of the early Sixties, for example, in the way he manages to suggest sensuality without flaunting it in the more modern style, and both melodies and lyrics flow over the mind with a delectable suggestion of the *déjà vu*. There are whole stretches of this new music so cleverly tuneful that it seems immediately familiar and hummable, lyrics that capture our attention at once with clever new twists on old clichés—such as the song *Into Each Rain Some Life Must Fall*.

Critical attention will probably focus on *Melody Man*, the most imaginative and rousing track here (Robinson wrote it with Stevie Wonder), but I am more drawn to the understated brilliance of Smokey's own *Let Me Be the Clock* and *I Want to Be Your Love*. And there is also a nice little surprise in the closing number, *Travelin' Through*, written by Rose Ella Jones, whose work is new to me. There must be many songwriters falling over each other to get Smokey to sing what they have to offer, for he has

the gift of making the most personal of these musical dreams spring miraculously to life—warm thoughts indeed.

—Phyl Garland

SMOKEY ROBINSON: *Warm Thoughts*. Smokey Robinson (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Let Me Be the Clock; Heavy on Pride (Light on Love); Into Each Rain Some Life Must Fall; Wine, Women and Song; Melody Man; What's in Your Life for Me?; I Want to Be Your Love; Travelin' Through.* TAMLA T8-367M1 \$8.98, © 8-367KT \$8.98, © 8-367KC \$8.98.

Tenor Peter Schreier: Gratifying Sensitivity in Robert Schumann's Eichendorff *Liederkreis*

THE songs in Robert Schumann's Op. 39 *Liederkreis* do not add up to a true cycle as they do in his *Dichterliebe*—that is to say, they do not follow a story-like continuity. But the two collections do resemble each other in one important detail: both are based on, and therefore artistically unified by, the work of a single poet—Joseph von Eichendorff for *Liederkreis*, Heinrich Heine for *Dichterliebe* (Heine was also, of course, author of the poems for the earlier Op. 24 *Liederkreis*).

Musical Heritage Society's newly released album containing the Eichen-

dorff *Liederkreis* is the only available version recorded by a tenor, an engaging alternative to Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's earlier (and also outstanding) recording on Angel S-36266, and superior to the three versions by female interpreters in the current catalog. Tenor Peter Schreier, who can be off-putting when he is grappling with uncongenial Italian texts, communicates these lines of German poetry with a most gratifying sensitivity. His singing admits no intrusive mannerisms; it is accurate, clearly enunciated, and admirably musical.

The generous program presented here includes eleven songs based on the works of other poets, Heine among them. There are some gems included, but also a few that are rather weak. Schreier's singing, however, is praiseworthy throughout, and Norman Shetler's accompaniments neatly complement the tenor's musicianly and not overly sentimental approach. In certain songs—*Frühlingsnacht* and *Der Nussbaum*, for example—one could wish for a more rapturous delivery, but that does not lessen my appreciation of what they communicate so beautifully here.

—George Jellinek

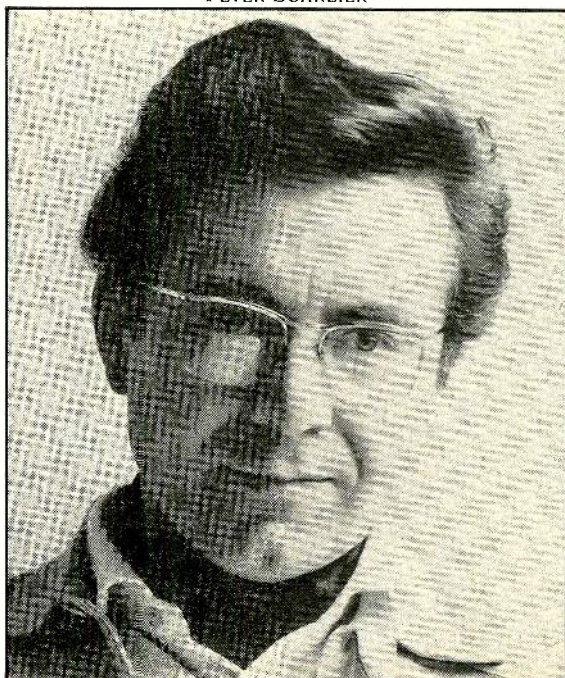
SCHUMANN: *Liederkreis*, Op. 39. *Die Lotosblume; Was Will die Einsame Träne; Du Bist Wie eine Blume; Dein Angesicht; Lehn' Deine Wang' an Meine Wang; Mein Wagne Rollet Langsam; An den Sonnenschein; Ich Wand're Nicht; Der Frohe Wandersmann; Der Einsiedler; Der Nussbaum.* Peter Schreier (tenor); Norman Shetler (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4062 \$5.95 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling from Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

SMOKEY ROBINSON



Tamla Records

PETER SCHREIER



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[**Stravinsky: Petrouchka (NY Philharmonic/Mehta); Shostakovich: Symphony No. 5 (NY Philharmonic/Bernstein); R. Strauss: Till Eulenspiegel, Don Juan, Death and Transfiguration (Cleveland Orchestra/Maazel); "M'Boom" (Max Roach)**]

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Classical Discs and Tapes



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

BARTÓK: *Violin Concerto No. 2, in B Minor*. Pinchas Zukerman (violin); Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta cond. COLUMBIA M 35156 \$8.98, © MT 35156 \$8.98.

Performance: **Fluently lyrical**
Recording: **Spacious**

As an amalgam of transcendent virtuosity and solid musical substance, Béla Bartók's Second Violin Concerto is, for me, pre-eminent among twentieth-century examples of the genre. Like his Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta from the same period, it reconciles the Magyar national idiom with the major Classical tradition as represented by the violin concertos of Beethoven and Brahms. It takes a formidable soloist-conductor-orchestra collaboration to do the score full justice.

Whereas all four recorded performances by Yehudi Menuhin (made in the Forties, Fifties, and Sixties) communicate enormous conviction and emotional intensity, the execution seems labored in spots compared with that of the younger generation of virtuosos who have taken up the work. Certainly this new recording by Zukerman and Mehta makes light of the music's technical hazards; both soloist and conductor take all steps to bring out the concerto's lyrical aspects as well as its kaleidoscopic array of orchestral and violinistic coloration.

This music seemed formidable under Menuhin's fingers and with Dorati's craggy orchestral backing, but here one becomes so entranced with tonal beauty and long lyrical lines that the Beethovenian architectural solidity of the piece seems almost to evaporate. That effect is, indeed, enhanced by a very spacious acoustic ambience surrounding the orchestra, with the soloist more in the spotlight, though not obtrusively so. The fine details of Bartók's scoring are marvelously captured, but more orchestral presence might have given the performance a more substantial, structural feel. *D.H.*

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Sonata No. 21, in C Major, Op. 53 ("Waldstein"); Piano Sonata No. 31, in A-flat Major, Op. 110.* Harris Goldsmith (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4005 \$5.95 (plus \$1.25 shipping and handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

Performance: **Bracing**
Recording: **Realistic**

In his annotation for this record, Harris Goldsmith sets out some of the problems and choices confronting pianists who perform these sonatas. The *Waldstein*, he notes, has one of those Beethoven first movements "especially vulnerable to variations of pacing: play any of these works a little fast and they respond with terse, stinging impetus; play them a little slow and immediately an aura of stately grandeur is established." His own inclination is not toward stately grandeur; he takes the piece at quite a clip, never allowing it, however, to become hectic or at all untidy. The effect is bracing, and so is that of the straightforward unfolding of the final movement, its washes of color being especially effective at Goldsmith's sensible tempo. The Op. 110 sonata, a particularly suitable disc-mate for Op. 53 because of both the similarities and the nature of the contrasts between the two sonatas, is given a crisp, well-proportioned reading in which its peculiar drama seems self-generating. Less convincing perform-

ances than these, if offered on a premium-price label by the latest "discovery" from Eastern Europe, would set off paroxysms of enthusiasm. Goldsmith is provocative in his way, he has a point of view in both works, and this record is a good candidate for listening in alternation with some of the established preferred versions of the respective works. The sound is quite good. *R.F.*

BELLINI: *Norma*. Renata Scotto (soprano), Norma; Tatiana Troyanos (mezzo-soprano), Adalgisa; Giuseppe Giacomini (tenor), Pollione; Paul Plishka (bass), Oroveso; Ann Murray (mezzo-soprano), Clotilde; Paul Crook (tenor), Flavio. Ambrosian Opera Chorus; National Philharmonic Orchestra, James Levine cond. COLUMBIA M3X 35902 three discs \$15.98.

Performance: **Very good, but . . .**
Recording: **Very good, but . . .**

If the role of Norma is perceived as mainly a *bel canto* vehicle to exhibit a lovely tone and a faultless vocal technique (a perception with which I am not disposed to quarrel), then Renata Scotto's portrayal here is open to considerable criticism. She cannot comfortably encompass the music, and when her tone is brought under pressure for volume, intonation and technique are both compromised. On the other hand, her compelling characterization is comparable to Maria Callas' mind-opening achievement. Like Callas, Scotto fills Norma's recitatives with fire and eloquence, while in *arioso* passages she makes her voice triumph over its natural limitations. Her top range is far more secure than Callas' was in her recorded *Normas*, and she has mastered the art of floating high pianissimos (written or otherwise) with cannily expressive results. In all, her performance has its share of technical flaws, but it is put together with meticulous care and rings with dramatic truth.

I dwell at such length on Miss Scotto's contribution because it is, without a doubt, the new set's greatest asset. Tatiana Troyanos is a worthy partner, though, as Adal-

Explanation of symbols:

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

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

gisa. She shapes the music lovingly and impresses us with her command of its vocal range and technical requirements. But, alongside Scotto's illuminating way with the text, I find Troyanos' pronunciation too casual, a stream of lovely sound virtually unbroken by consonants. As Pollione, Giuseppe Giacomini offers a sturdy tone without much variety, tentative solutions in florid passages, and some insecurities of intonation, while Paul Plishka is a sonorous but at times unfocused Oroveso (these two roles are best served by Plácido Domingo and Ruggero Raimondi on RCA LSC-6202).

The familiar strengths of James Levine's Verdi readings—vigorous propulsion, sustained singing lines, and sharply defined rhythms—are in evidence here, but they do not serve Bellini as well as Verdi. I happen to be partial to Tullio Serafin's classic poise and serenity in this music; by that standard I find some of Levine's allegros rushed and his tempo transitions too abrupt, with excessive jauntiness in such *marcato* passages as "*Dell' aura tua profetica*" and "*Norma viene*" in the first act. The recorded sound is very good, but my discs were afflicted with pre-echo.

Summing it all up, I find this to be, in its own style, a recommendable recorded performance. You will accept or reject it depending upon your view of that style and of Renata Scotto's part in it. G.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BENATZKY/STOLZ: *White Horse Inn*. Anneliese Rothenberger (soprano), Josepha Vogelhuber; Peter Minich (tenor), Leopold; Grit van Jüten (soprano), Otilie; Norbert Orth (tenor), Dr. Siedler; Elke Schary (soprano), Klärchen; Hans Putz (speaker), Emperor; others. Bavarian Radio Chorus; Munich Radio Orchestra, Willy Mattes cond. ANGEL SZBX-3897 two discs \$17.96.

Performance: **Captivating**
Recording: **Excellent**

Two musical plays—poles apart—were introduced in Germany in 1930. One might assume that of the two Brecht and Weill's *Mahagonny* was the true mirror of the musical theater at the dawn of that fateful decade. But the traditional Viennese operetta was not yet ready to give up the ghost: *White Horse Inn*, which opened in Berlin on November 8, 1930, was instantaneously successful, so successful that it was carried to other European cultural centers and eventually to Broadway as well.

Whatever the reasons for Berlin's being its first home, *White Horse Inn* is a typical Viennese product. The story is set in the picturesque lake and mountain region near Salzburg, and the principal characters—a vivacious lady innkeeper and her amorous headwaiter—carry on in an unmistakably Viennese manner. Above all, the music is Viennese; most of it was written by Ralph Benatzky, though two of the score's best numbers came from the sure hand of Robert Stolz. By 1930, of course, the jazzy currents from across the Atlantic had made their inroads into Continental operetta, and they are present here too. Fortunately, the new orchestrations for this recording (by conductor Willy Mattes) manage to enliven the dance numbers without making them

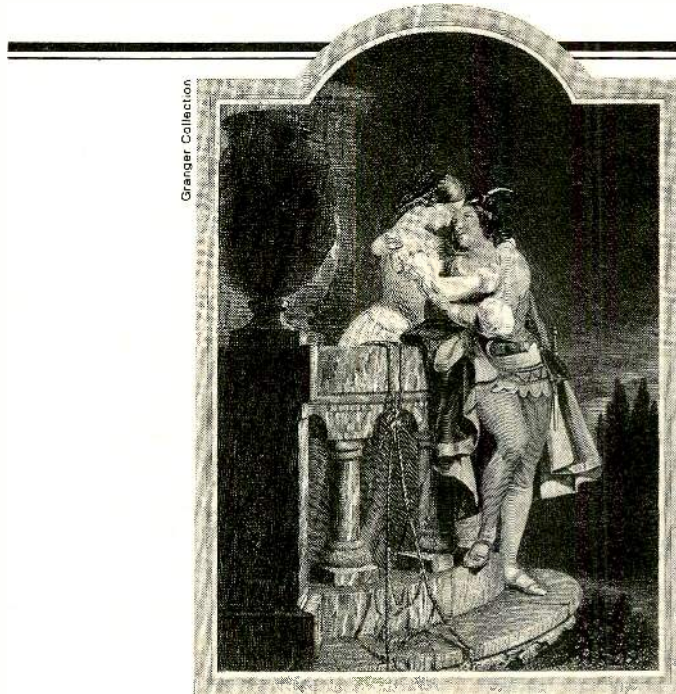
sound anachronistic. There is, of course, a certain inescapably dated innocence about the book (which accommodates a charming episode involving the old Emperor Franz Josef), but there is nothing dated about this production, which moves along smartly with lively recorded sound and imaginative use of stereo imaging. It helps if you understand German, because the book is not without humor, but the spoken dialogue is reduced to a minimum and the music is irresistible. The singing is not likely to make aficionados forget Tauber, Gedda, and Schwarzkopf (or the Rothenberger of a few

years ago), but it is idiomatic and full of charm.

Viennese operetta—not the Americanized variety, but the genuine article—is perhaps not for every taste. But if you are one of its partisans, this is a set for you. G.J.

BERNSTEIN: *Serenade for Violin, Strings, Harp, and Percussion; Fancy Free* (see Best of the Month, page 66)

BOCCHERINI: *String Quintets: F Major, Op. 13, No. 3; D Major, Op. 40, No. 2;* (Continued on page 80)



Stunning Tchaikovsky

THE record sleeve of Leonard Bernstein's new recording of Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Francesca da Rimini* with the Israel Philharmonic states that it was made at a live performance. If so, the music-loving citizenry of Israel must be remarkably free of respiratory ailments and exceedingly disciplined as well. For my part, I agree with Bernstein and others who feel that the most meaningful documentation of their work comes from the capture of a public performance rather than one subject to the often inhibiting constraints of studio recording.

This release certainly makes a good case for that view, since these recorded performances of Tchaikovsky's finest Shakespearean music and his powerful, if somewhat repetitious, Dantean evocation are simply stunning. Bernstein's way with *Romeo and Juliet* is marked by rhythmic tautness and high drama in the episodes of conflict and tragedy, and by all the passion (without its becoming overwrought) one could wish for in the love music. The Inferno music in *Francesca* is truly terrifying here, and through his handling of articulation in the

early chromatic episodes, Bernstein very powerfully conveys the wailing of Dante's damned souls in the Tartarean whirlwind. The celebrated lyrical middle section, in which Tchaikovsky initially sets forth the sad tale of Francesca and her lover, is played here with great poignancy. Indeed, throughout both of these performances I was struck by the hair-trigger response of the orchestra's players to every fluctuation of the music, to its ebb, flow, and upsurges of dramatic energy.

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON's recording job is first-rate—a bit close in perspective, but that is probably necessary under live-performance conditions. The stereo imaging, overall frequency range, and dynamics are all most effective. Altogether an outstanding disc. —David Hall

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy-Overture After Shakespeare; Francesca da Rimini, Op. 32.* Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 211 \$9.98, © 3301 211 \$9.98.

Keyboard Bach: Three Schools

ROSALYN TURECK: *poise
and introspection*



NO other body of music has undergone such radical changes in performance practice over the years as the keyboard music of J. S. Bach. Shortly after the Second World War, Rosalyn Tureck began her long study of Bach's works and came up with a crisp, clean style that returned the music to its eighteenth-century concept and left an impact on future generations of pianists. A few years before that Wanda Landowska had taken up residence in this country and presented the works of the master on the harpsichord, the instrument for which they were written. Though her own harpsichord, a magnificent sort of stringed organ, had little to do with the instruments Bach had available, and though her interpretations were dominated by her own powerful and vivid imagination, she inspired a school of harpsichord playing and building that completely transformed our understanding of Bach's keyboard works.

Landowska was unique, and, as her example gradually faded, the diligence of historians gave rise to a completely different type of instrument and a style of playing that, through the work of Gustav Leonhardt and his followers, has now become the "in" way of approaching Bach. A fascinating group of four recent releases presents keyboard works of Bach played by four excellent representatives of these three "schools."

The Tureck school of playing Bach on the piano could be represented by nobody better than Tureck herself. Her performances on the piano have ripened over the years, and there is a poise and introspective quality about them that set them apart from others. On her latest CBS disc the reading of the Italian Concerto sparkles. The slow movement is particularly beautiful because she can mold the sinuous melodic line like a violinist. An added enhancement is her ornamentation of left-hand passages—a bold stroke, but one that works.

Tureck's linear playing of the Four Duets is as clear and articulated as anyone could wish; her subtle shading of the undulating scales and the feminine endings of the E Minor Duet is especially beautiful. Perhaps

her most contemplative playing is in the Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue. On the harpsichord, the fugue is a work of unmitigated brilliance. Tureck's translation of it to the piano, however, brings out its pathos—which, incidentally, is exactly what happens when one plays the work on the clavichord, as Bach most certainly did. Tureck proves without a doubt that the piano is a valid and effective medium for Bach's keyboard music, and her example should encourage more pianists to go back to Bach and to stop being intimidated by the presence of the harpsichord and all those harpsichordists.

The Landowska school is strongly represented on a new Towerhill disc by Robert Edward Smith, who plays a magnificent harpsichord by Eric Hertz replete with buffs, English lutes, and a booming sixteen-foot stop. Smith uses these assets to the hilt with dramatic and striking results. The fantasy part of the Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue smolders with shattering juxtapositions of rage and tenderness. The pedal points of the fugue drop like distant bombs menacing the buoyant counterpoint dancing in the same landscape. The fiercely difficult G Major Partita is introduced by a boisterous prelude, and each dance movement has its own individual affect peculiar to Bach rather than to the prescription of the dance form he is using. Although the sixteen-foot stop muddies the A Minor Duet and the final gigue of the partita, Smith's registration is imaginative and effective as well as structurally sound. This is playing in the grand manner that defends and vindicates the Landowska school.

THE "historical" school of Leonhardt, which strives to recapture Bach's own performance practice, is represented on discs by Blandine Verlet and Trevor Pinnock (from Philips and Archiv, respectively). Austerity is the word here; relentlessly pursued tempos, procrustean rhythmic alterations, and severity of registration are the outward hallmarks of the style. Only the finest musician can play this way and still make music.

Indestructible as Bach is, however, he does not easily succumb to this style; there is too much detail written in. Verlet, an arch-exponent of the style, gives in to Bach. Despite her lack of registration changes and use of eight-foot stops only, the opening of the B Minor Overture is played with such style that it is very effective. The *passepied* movement is delicious, and the subtle handling of the rhythms of the sarabande demonstrate that historically inspired techniques can result in a remarkable tenderness. The outer movements of the Italian Concerto are nicely propelled, but the clipped and rather too fast tempos in its slow movement and in the E Minor Duet suggest that Verlet is happier with crisp allegros than with lyrical pieces. Indeed, this is true of most adherents of this style.

That Trevor Pinnock's performance is a disappointment is a bit of a mystery. In his past recordings he has usually exhibited a perfect combination of historical accuracy and superb musicianship. In this particular album his playing is neat but dull. The notion of coupling Bach's transcription of a Vivaldi concerto with his own Italian Concerto is a good one, and Landowska certainly proved that the Vivaldi could sparkle even if she (like Bach) felt the necessity of "adjusting" a few passages. Pinnock plays it straight—no rolled chords, no rhetoric (a necessity in Vivaldi performance), and no rubato—and only proves that Bach's transcription was for study purposes, not performance. Somehow the Italian Concerto sounds very much the same; the music is all there, but nothing happens.

THERE is really no choice to be made among Tureck's, Smith's, and Verlet's albums. Listening to them together is a revelation, and what a happy coincidence that they cover basically the same repertoire. Above all, they prove once again that Bach is indestructible, his music valid for everything from kazoo to full orchestra. He belongs to us all. —Stoddard Lincoln

J. S. BACH: *Italian Concerto in F Major (BWV 971); Four Duets (BWV 802-805); Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D Minor (BWV 903)*. Rosalyn Tureck (piano). CBS M 35822 \$8.98.

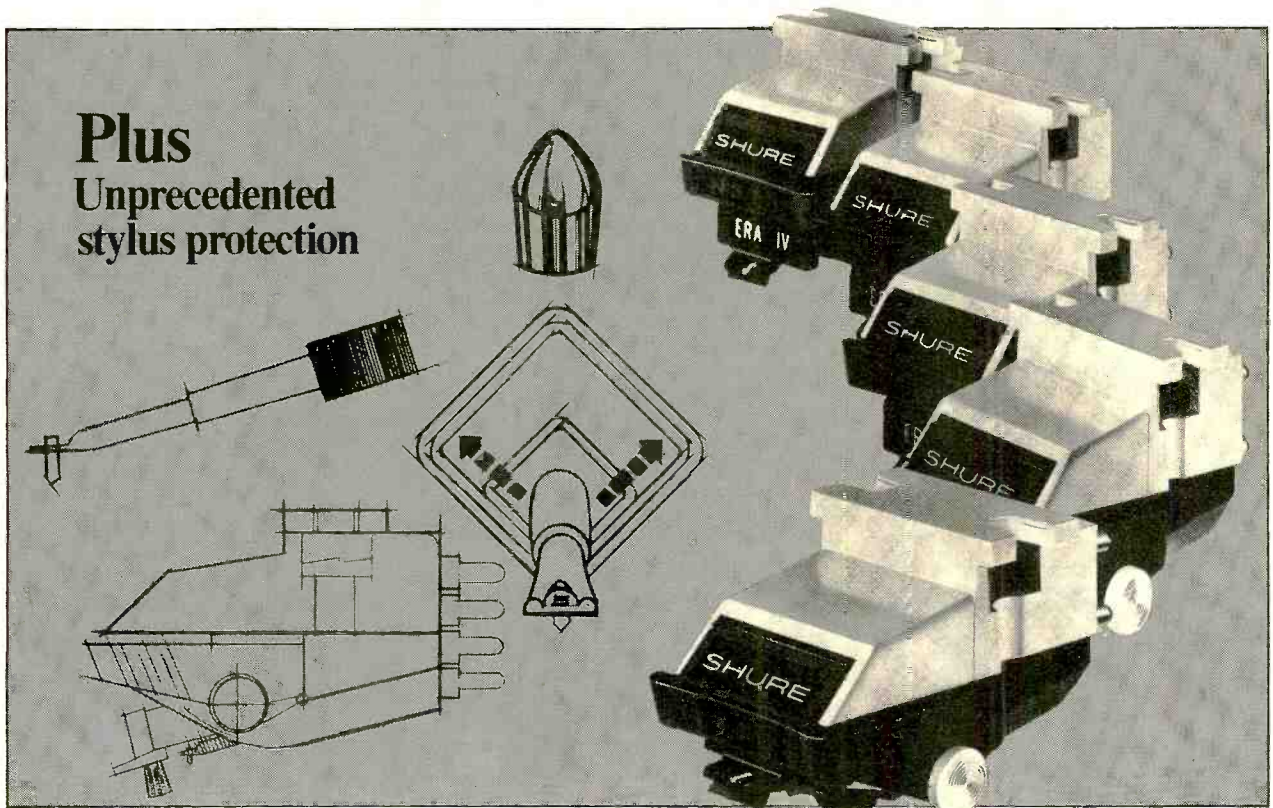
J. S. BACH: *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D Minor (BWV 903); Four Duets (BWV 802-805); Partita No. 5, in G Major (BWV 829)*. Robert Edward Smith (harpsichord). TOWERHILL T-1005 \$7.98 (plus \$1.50 postage and handling from Towerhill Records, 6000 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, Calif. 90028).

J. S. BACH: *Concerto After Vivaldi in D Major (BWV 972); Italian Concerto in F Major (BWV 971); French Overture in B Minor (BWV 831)*. Trevor Pinnock (harpsichord). ARCHIV 2533 424 \$9.98.

J. S. BACH: *Italian Concerto in F Major (BWV 971); French Overture in B Minor (BWV 831); Four Duets (BWV 802-805)*. Blandine Verlet (harpsichord). PHILIPS 9500 588 \$9.98.

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C Major, Op. 30, No. 6 ("La Musica Notturna delle Strade di Madrid"). Quintetto Boccherini. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4131 \$5.95 (plus \$1.25 shipping and handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

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

BOCCHERINI: String Quintets: D Major, Op. 40, No. 2; G Minor, Op. 42, No. 4; C Minor, Op. 31, No. 4. Richte van der Meer (cello); Quartetto Esterházy. TELEFUNKEN 6.42353 AW \$9.98, © 4.42353 CX \$9.98.

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

The one work that appears to be common to both these releases turns out to be not quite the same piece after all. What is in both cases identified as Op. 40, No. 2 (G. 341) is actually a bit more than that on the MHS disc, where the work's two movements are reversed, the famous fandango coming last, and are preceded by a *Pastorale* from an earlier quintet (G. 270). Regrettably, there is no mention of this on the label or in the annotation, although it was all set out clearly enough on HNH 4048 when the same program (from *Ensayo de Barcelona*) was issued by that label two years ago. The music and the infectious performances are, of course, as outstandingly attractive on MHS as on HNH; the mastering was done in the same house (Masterdisk) for both compa-

nies, but the sound has a somewhat more "open" character on HNH. There is little in this, though; the one significant reason for preferring that version over the new MHS one is HNH's more accurate identification of the material, not only in the labeling but also in Peter Eliot Stone's annotation.

The Quartetto Esterházy gave us an agreeable recording of the six quartets of Boccherini's Op. 32 two or three years ago (Telefunken 6.35337 EK), and now, augmented by cellist Richte van der Meer, the Dutch-based group offers similarly agreeable performances of three quintets. In addition to the original—or authentic—version of Op. 40, No. 2, there are two works in minor keys that are less immediately ingratiating but show a somewhat more profound aspect of this extremely likable and prolific composer's art. The sound of the seventeenth-century instruments, with their gut strings, relatively straighter necks, and less arched bridges, is itself appealing, and it is richly captured in the warm and well-balanced recording. Still, I prefer the zestful style of the Quintetto Boccherini in its "augmented" version of the D Major Quintet, and I would have to be a good deal more enchanted than I am by the Dutch group to put up with Telefunken's gratuitous "sandwich" layout. Here the four-movement Op. 42, No. 4 (G. 351), probably the most intriguing of the three works in this package, is interrupted for turnover.

R.F.

COLERIDGE-TAYLOR: Hiawatha's Wedding Feast. Richard Lewis (tenor); Royal

Choral Society; Philharmonia Orchestra, Sir Malcolm Sargent cond. ARABESQUE © 8005 \$6.98.

Performance: **Jolly**
Recording: **1962 mono**

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born in 1772 and died in 1834. He was an English poet. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, on the other hand, was born in London in 1875 and died in 1912 at the age of thirty-seven. The son of a doctor from Sierra Leone and an Englishwoman, he was a prolific composer of choral music. His works were well loved and very much in demand in England at the turn of the century. Improbably enough, his big number was a trilogy of oratorios based on Longfellow's *Hiawatha*; apparently these works were even performed with costumes and sets, arousing an enthusiasm almost incomprehensible to us today.

Hiawatha's Wedding Feast was the first of the three and the best known, and though it is hardly performed any more, it has never quite disappeared from the English choral consciousness. So it is perhaps not altogether surprising to find that it was recorded by Sir Malcolm Sargent a few years before his death—a quite attractive recording now released here on Arabesque.

The music is sweet, flowing, elegant, smooth as silk, with just a touch of the exotic. Coleridge-Taylor had a really exceptional gift for creating long, continuous movement in an easygoing Romantic style—without ever forsaking Mendelssohn for Wagner. This is continuous melody

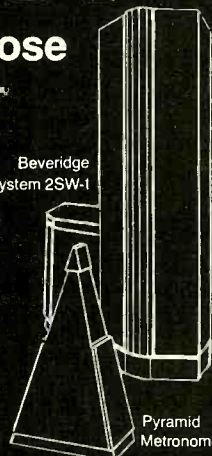
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RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHOPIN: Piano Sonata No. 3, in B Minor, Op. 58; Polonaises: No. 3, in A Major, Op. 40, No. 1 ("Militaire"); No. 4, in C Minor, Op. 40, No. 2; No. 6, in A-flat Major, Op. 53 ("Heroique"). Emil Gilels (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 099 \$9.98.

Performance: **Elegant**
Recording: **Excellent**

In the last decade or so Emil Gilels has made relatively few recordings, most of them for Deutsche Grammophon and all apparently representing his own choices of the music that means most to him. While his fine performance of Chopin's E Minor Concerto with Eugene Ormandy continues to be available (Odyssey Y 32369), I think we've had no solo Chopin works from him since the retirement of his mono recordings of the Second Sonata, so this new collection is especially inviting. He takes a highly individualized approach to the B Minor Sonata, being extremely unhurried in both the first and third movements and playing throughout with a great deal of inwardness and care for detail—as well as great beauty of tone. In the three polonaises, set forth with both solidity and sensitivity, one is

aware of Gilels' aristocratic sense of structure, clean articulation, steady rhythms, and, at the same time, warm feeling for the essence of these pieces. The insight, vitality (a quality, as Irving Kolodin pointed out long ago, not to be confused with mere energy), and technical assurance brought to bear here add up to music making on an exalted level—"poetic" if you like, but rare enough by any designation. And the piano sound is superbly realistic. *R.F.*

HANDEL: Ariodante (see *Best of the Month*, page 68)

HANDEL: Concerti Grossi, Op. 3 (complete). Northern Sinfonia, George Malcolm cond. NONESUCH H-71376 \$6.98.

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

It will be a surprise to many just how quickly Nonesuch, after the firing of director Tracey Sterne and the canceling of scheduled recording sessions, has been able to lease material from a European source and get it on the market. It is also something of a surprise how quickly the post-Sterne label has changed its appearance. Gone are the elegant and readable typefaces, replaced by a humdrum sans-serif, too small and surrounded by too much wasted white space; gone are the timings (they are on the record label only); gone are the listings of performing soloists and the recording dates and locations; and gone are the beautiful and often highly pertinent paintings and drawings

reproduced on the covers, replaced, in this instance, by an ugly, meretricious, and certainly anachronistic "portrait" of Handel, uncredited as to creator, superimposed on a slap-dash background. Nonesuch was always, after its initial releases, a cheap label that didn't look cheap.

The present recordings were made by the English company Enigma in 1978. The performances are generally excellent, with fine work by the anonymous soloists, and they are certainly comparable to those by Leppard (Philips) and Marriner (Argo) still in the catalog. There are a few points with which one might quibble—trills occasionally leaning on the wrong note, a tempo or two—but the whole is very fine, with sufficient perkiness to allow one to listen to all six concertos in a row, something of which Handel probably never dreamed. The recording too is quite acceptable, the pressing slightly ticky but not at all bad.

—James Goodfriend

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MENDELSSOHN: String Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20; String Quintet No. 2, in B-flat Major, Op. 87. Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Ensemble. PHILIPS 9500 616 \$9.98.

Performance: **One of the best**
Recording: **Sumptuous**

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Soloist Itzhak Perlman, conductor Seiji Ozawa

Indispensable Berg

JUST about every recording of the Berg and Stravinsky violin concertos has been genuinely distinguished. There haven't been so many, after all, and the works' champions have been the likes of Isaac Stern, Arthur Grumiaux, and Josef Suk. But the new coupling of these two concertos, played by Itzhak Perlman—in his debut on the Deutsche Grammophon label, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Seiji Ozawa—is the sort of record one has to have because it is so spectacularly beautiful, regardless of comparisons, duplications, or whatever. And it also, I think, has the most extraordinary realization of the Berg I've ever heard, on records or otherwise. Both the intensity and the beauty of tone Perlman produces here have to be heard to be believed, and Ozawa's conducting of this work may be the most eloquent performance he has yet committed to records: every line is clarified, every inner detail is brought out as seldom before, and yet it never gives the impression of one of those "X-ray" affairs in which emotion is abjured and momentum frozen. Never has this music, which Berg undertook as a requiem for young Manon Gropius and which became his own as well, seemed quite so affecting, its peculiar luminosity quite so aglow. How truly exalted, and at the same time how simply and directly touching, is the treatment of the Bach chorale theme in the concluding adagio! All this is enhanced no little by the orchestra's superb playing and by DG's magnificently rich and detailed recorded sound, but it is the two principals who most cover themselves, and Berg, with glory.

The Stravinsky is no less beautifully played, though some listeners might find it

a mite undervalued. Compare the opening section of this version and that of Kyung-wha Chung's with André Previn (London CS 6819), and the difference is apparent at once. It is not that Perlman and Ozawa lack vigor (they take three of the concerto's four movements, in fact, a shade more briskly than Chung and Previn), but three factors combine to suggest perhaps more of a difference in this respect than actually exists.

FIRST, while DG's beautifully warm and well-balanced sound serves the Berg concerto ideally, London's brighter focus is more suited to the Stravinsky; second, Previn shows a more enlivening response to the brilliant, sometimes spiky Stravinskian neo-Classicism in his molding of phrases and springing of rhythms; and, finally, the remarkable effortlessness of Perlman's playing tends to reduce the excitement level a mite, while Chung—whether by choice or necessity—allows us just enough awareness of the work's challenges to make us sit up a little more attentively as each is successfully met. Still, in pointing out these contrasts in the two performances, I don't wish to exaggerate them. The Perlman/Ozawa Stravinsky is splendid by any standards, and for those who are unwilling to duplicate this title the DG recording is the one to buy, simply because the incomparable performance of the Berg makes it indispensable.

—Richard Freed

BERG: Violin Concerto. STRAVINSKY: Violin Concerto. Itzhak Perlman (violin); Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 110 \$9.98, © 3301 110 \$9.98.

back to 1966 but still sounds as bright as most of today's recordings. It has a clarity at the low end, in fact, that is not matched by the otherwise more sumptuous sonics of this new version. The Academy ensemble, however, gives a performance every bit as fetching as that of the Italians, and apparently they see the work similarly in nearly every detail. The English players take the famous scherzo at a more exciting pace (not as reckless, though, as that of the Cleveland and Tokyo Quartets on RCA ARL1-2532); I Musici, somewhat more relaxed, brings out a bit more of the music's charm. Both performances fit snugly on a single side, even with the first-movement repeat taken. My personal preference is for I Musici, but by a very narrow margin, and the question of couplings might reasonably be the deciding factor. The Academy offers an excellent account of the 1845 quintet, I Musici the Tenth and Twelfth of Mendelssohn's early string symphonies. *R.F.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: Clarinet Concerto in A Major (K. 622); Bassoon Concerto in B-flat Major (K. 191). Harold Wright (clarinet); Sherman Walt (bassoon); Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 254 \$9.98, © 3301 254 \$9.98.

Performance: **Outstanding**

Recording: **Outstanding**

Here's an early Mozart wind concerto and a late one, both solo parts beautifully played by Boston Symphony first-desk men, neatly accompanied and neatly recorded. The outstanding thing about both of the solo performances is how artistic they are: beautiful tone, gorgeous phrasing, big dynamic range, superb articulation. The modern American wind style, here represented to perfection, goes well with Mozart, and it's nice to have that recognized by a prestigious German record company!

Someone should tell Deutsche Grammophon, though, that the English word for cadenza is cadenza and not cadence (which means something different). Otherwise, I have no complaints about this release and lots of compliments for it. *E.S.*

OFFENBACH (arr. Rosenthal): Gaité Parisienne. J. STRAUSS II (arr. Dorati): Graduation Ball. Philharmonia Orchestra, Sir Charles Mackerras cond. ARABESQUE 8020 \$6.98, © 8020 \$6.98.

Performance: **Buoyant**

Recording: **Splendid**

Back in 1938 the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo dazzled audiences in its own city with a work choreographed by Leonide Massine, who had already delighted Europe with his Rossini ballet *La Boutique Fantasque*. Massine himself played the role of a bug-eyed Peruvian tourist looking for adventure at the Moulin Rouge in Paris, and the score was based on the music of Jacques Offenbach. So irresistible was Manual Rosenthal's sumptuous arrangement of the Offenbach tunes for *La Gaité Parisienne* that the music by itself has had a healthy life, especially on records. It is frequently coupled with the music from *Graduation Ball*, an-

(Continued on page 84)

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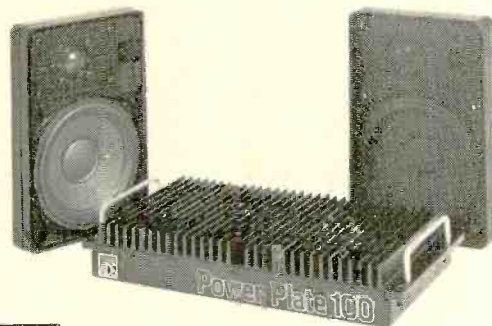
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other effervescent ballet, which was set to a score arranged by choreographer David La-chine and conductor Antal Dorati, mostly from unpublished music by Johann Strauss, Jr., discovered in the Vienna State Opera Library. Suites from both ballets have been stunningly recorded by Dorati and by numerous other conductors, but this brilliant 1964 interpretation under Charles Mackerras, propulsive and colorful, deserved to be restored to the catalog. The recording has been remastered, and the surfaces on the disc are free of annoying flaws. The cassette version, though awkwardly packaged, is nearly a match for the disc and comes complete with Audrey Williamson's interesting notes.

P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUBERT: *String Quartet No. 15, in G Major, Op. 161 (D. 887)*. Juilliard Quartet. CBS M 35827 \$8.98, © MT 35827 \$8.98.

Performance: **First-rate**

Recording: **Excellent**

What a great quartet this is! I mean the piece, but also the performing ensemble. The Juilliard Quartet has changed a lot

over the years—only first violinist Robert Mann now remains from the original group—but it is sounding as strong as ever. The Schubert Quartet No. 15 has not changed, of course, except that one does not often hear it with just the right blend of poised, Classical balance, dynamic excitement, and an intimate, lyric, personal style that is very close to the expressive heart of this matter. This is Schubert at his most original, a work that combines the expressive and the epic, and this is a recording that is its match.

E.S.

SCHUMANN: *Liederkreis, Op. 39; Eleven Lieder* (see Best of the Month, page 74)

J. STRAUSS II (arr. Dorati): *Graduation Ball* (see OFFENBACH)

STRAVINSKY: *Symphony in Three Movements; The Firebird, Suite (1919)*. Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Eduardo Mata cond. RCA ◉ ARC1-3459 \$11.98.

Performance: **Good to excellent**

Recording: **Mostly very good**

Stravinsky's *Symphony in Three Movements*, composed during World War II, is

possibly the most powerful of his scores after the *Symphony of Psalms*. Yet it has received relatively little attention on records, and before this disc by Eduardo Mata the only conductor of a generation younger than Stravinsky's to have recorded the score was Colin Davis—in 1965. Unfortunately, neither Mata nor Davis comes within miles of matching the rhythmic tautness and cutting edge that Stravinsky brought to his own recorded performances in 1947 and 1962. Mata is heard to best advantage in the slow movement, where RCA's digital master tape lays bare a wealth of textural detail and where the Dallas first-chair woodwinds bring forth some first-class playing. In the *Firebird* music, the *Khovorod* of the Princesses and the *Berceuse* fare best because of minimal background tape noise and, again, excellent solo wind playing. As a whole, though, the reading is relatively undistinguished.

The recording as such is pleasing, though the pressing is not blessed with surfaces as quiet as on the best digital records that have come my way. The sound is clean and full-bodied, with good room ambiance, and it is free of the overmiked feeling that marred RCA's digital recording of Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*. One curious thing about the *Firebird* recording is the presence of a persistent, faintly audible offstage metallic noise, as though someone were pushing a cleaning cart in some corridor adjacent to the Mountain View College auditorium where the sessions took place. The digital recording technique is *merciless!* D.H.

WEBER: *Abu Hassan*. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano), Fatima; Erich Witte (tenor), Abu Hassan; Michael Bohnen (bass), Omar. Berlin Radio Symphony Chorus and Orchestra, Leopold Ludwig cond. VARÈSE SARABANDE © VC 81093 \$8.98.

Performance: **Very good**

Recording: **Quite dated**

Available in the early LP days on Urania 7029, this is a 1941 German radio performance of Weber's charming one-acter, minus the spoken dialogue. The casting is of very special interest, for it includes the young Elisabeth Schwarzkopf at the dawn of her career and the veteran Michael Bohnen (1887-1965) at the twilight of his. Both are quite marvelous, upsetting the balance somewhat since Erich Witte's interpretation of the title role is only routine.

I recommend the disc mainly as a historical item, a rare souvenir of two great vocalists, but its dated sound prevents me from extending a broader recommendation. A modern and more complete recording of *Abu Hassan* is available on a Eurodisc import with superior sound—but with no singers comparable to Schwarzkopf and Bohnen.

G.J.

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(Continued on page 86)

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Performance: **Brilliant**

Recording: **Super!**

EMPIRE BRASS QUINTET: Renaissance Brass. Guami: Canzon No. 19. Holborne: The Honie-Suckle; The Image of Melancholy; Wanton; The Widows Myte; The Fairie-Round. Ghiselin: La Alfonsina. A. Gabrieli: Ricercar del Duodecimo Tuono. Adson: Three Courtly Masquing Ayres. G. Gabrieli: Canzona No. 3. Anon.: Two Fanfares for Two Trumpets. Isaac: Der Welte Fundt; Instrumental Piece Without Title; Maudit Soyt. Locke: Musick for His Majestie's Cornetts and Sackbuts. Scheidt: Canzona on a French Theme. Pezel: Hora Decima: Sonata No. 22. Brade: Two Festive Dances. Daniel Katzen (French horn); Thomas Gauger (percussion); Empire Brass Quintet. DIGITECH/SINE QUA NON ◉ DIGI 102 \$11.98.

Performance: **First-rate**

Recording: **Very good**

Between them these two discs present a remarkably wide panorama of repertoire (both original and transcribed) for brass instruments, ranging from the late fifteenth century (Heinrich Isaac) to the mid eighteenth (J. S. Bach). The American Brass Quintet offers the somewhat narrower selection, but it is brilliantly played and superlatively recorded. You can't get a truer or more coruscating brass sound on records than this.

The Empire Brass Quintet, with two guests, not only supplies delectable percussion touches (tabor, tambourine, antique cymbals) in the first three of the Anthony Holborne pieces and in those by William Brade but also gives us two out-of-the-way works of unusual interest, the three-voice *La Alfonsina* by Netherlander Johannes Ghiselin, which makes effective use of the *Spagna* melody, and the brilliant Samuel Scheidt *Canzona on a French Theme (Canzon Super Carminum Gallicam)*, as stimulating a folk-tune workout as I've heard in many a day and a real challenge to the virtuosity of the players. Both the American and Empire quintets are tops in their field, and if the latter presents the more stimulating program, the former has a slight edge in the sound department, especially with regard to pinpoint localization of individual instruments and telling antiphonal effects. There is quite a price difference, though.

D.H.

TAMÁS HACKI: Füttykonzert (Whistle Concert). Monti: Csárdás. Grieg: Peer Gynt (excerpts). Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2. Verdi: Aida: Triumphal March. Tchaikovsky: Swan Lake (excerpts). Boccherini: Menuett. Saint-Saëns: Samson and Delila (excerpt). Milchberg/Robles/Simon: El Condor Pasa. Trad.: Shepherd's Dance; Ex A; Volga Song; Greensleeves. Tamás Hacki (whistle); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. PEPITA SLPX 17576 \$8.98 (from

Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Unique**

Recording: **Good enough**

Yes, I know that records are too expensive nowadays to be indulged in lightly, and you ought to spend your money for masterpieces or at least the latest wrinkle, neither of which this disc is. What we have here, from one of the Eastern suburbs of the musical world, is certainly no more than fun, at times perhaps as low as kitsch, but odd, charming, and maybe even lovable. If you can afford to throw away money on such superficial pleasures (instead of something else to demonstrate your woofers) or if you have a couple of young children running through your house, lend an ear.

Tamás Hacki (to Westernize the order of his Hungarian name) is an expert, nay, a virtuoso whistler, a species that seems to have all but died out in this country. He has a straight, clear tone, not overlaid with vibrato, and all the tricks, including fabulous breath control, the ability to produce mordants, trills, and assorted other ornaments, and a most individual and effective rising glissando—all evoked with no more apparatus than what God gave him (Tomita, *ecce homo!*). He also has musicianship and a sense of humor.

He expends his abilities here on a variety of repertoire ranging from the folk to the operatic, but—and this is the nice touch—nothing is done straight. A little rock, a little jazz, a little East European dance rhythm, a little *Three Penny Opera* weave their way in and out of the arrangements (most of them by Péter Wolf). Guitars (acoustic and electric), harp (?), and wordless voices offer countermelodies and rhythmic punctuation, and it all swings. It is done with charm and humor, and Hacki plays straight man or fun man with equal agility.

After hearing, unannounced, about three measures of this disc, my six-year-old daughter tore out of the room and came back banging a tambourine. She danced through both sides of the record while playing, in succession, every toy instrument she could lay her hands on, and then asked to hear it over again. Got some bored children on your hands? Do you ever wonder what else you can get them to listen to besides kiddie records? A word to the wise.

—James Goodfriend

SIEGFRIED JERUSALEM: Great Operatic Arias. Wagner: Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg: Prize Song. Lohengrin: In fernem Land; Mein lieber Schwan. Tchaikovsky: Eugene Onegin: Lenski's Aria. Mozart: Die Zauberflöte: Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön. Weber: Oberon: Hüon's Recitative and Aria (Act I); Hüon's Prayer (Act II). Smetana: The Bartered Bride: Hans' Aria (Act II). Flotow: Alessandro Stradella: Jungfrau Maria. Meyerbeer: L'Africaine: Land so wunderbar. Siegfried Jerusalem (tenor); Munich Radio Orchestra, Gabriel Chmura cond. CBS M 35830 \$8.98, © MT 35830 \$8.98.

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Good**

This is an auspicious solo recording debut for a handsome German tenor who has come a long way in a few years. (He may

also be heard as the tenor lead in London's recording of Paër's *Leonora*, reviewed here last January). A wide range of repertoire seems to be in his reach, not surprising for one whose name embraces the Old Testament as well as the Nibelung Saga. He counts the *Götterdämmerung* Siegfried among his roles, according to the liner, but his recent appearances at the Metropolitan Opera mark Jerusalem as a lyric tenor, and the present recital confirms this.

There is smooth and tasteful Mozart among Jerusalem's offerings here, and all three Wagner arias are delivered with an agreeable tone and compelling lyricism. His Lenski (in German) is also distinguished by a nice lyric flow, and in declamatory passages (*Oberon*) he eschews the martial style some German tenors find unavoidable. But there are disappointments too, such as the uncomfortable opening phrases of the *Stradella* aria and a hurried and inelegant "*Land so wunderbar*." In general, Jerusalem's musicality and versatility mark him as a worthy successor to Nicolai Gedda—unless he prefers a shorter, more heroic career via *Götterdämmerung*. G.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

NEW YORK CONSORT OF VIOLS: The Sweet Power of Musicke. Deering: Pavan. Lupo: Fantasia. Tomkins: Barafostus Dreame; Alman. Holborne: Coranto, Heigh Ho Holiday; Pavana Ploravit. Hume: Touch Me Lightly; Death; Life. Ravenscroft: Fantasia No. 4. Gibbons: The Queenes Command. Johnson: Where the Bee Sucks. Simpson: Bonny Sweet Robin. Anon.: Greensleeves; Fortune My Foe; When Daphne from Fair Phoebus Did Fly; O Death, Rock Me Asleep; Ophelia's Songs; Robin Is to the Greene Wood Gone; Whoope, Do Me No Harm. Sheila Schonbrun (soprano); Edward Smith (harpsichord); New York Consort of Viols. **Shakespeare: Selections from the Sonnets and Plays.** Tom Klunis (actor). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4123 \$5.95 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling from the Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

Performance: **Wonderful**
Recording: **Perfect**

Those who enjoyed Music for a While's delightful album "*La Fontaine Amoureuse*," which so effectively combined the music and poetry of Guillaume de Machaut, will revel in "*The Sweet Power of Musicke*," which intersperses recitations from Shakespeare with appropriate music of his time. The world of early-music making is a closely knit one; the membership of Music for a While overlaps with that of the New York Consort of Viols, and actor Tom Klunis gives them something more in common with his fine readings.

"*The Sweet Power of Musicke*" is divided into four sections: In Praise of Music, Love, Death, and Life. Each includes readings from Shakespeare, songs, and instrumental music, all carefully selected and ordered in highly dramatic sequences. Especially moving is side two with its stark contrast of life and death. The juxtaposition of poetry and music is extremely effective, frequently bringing a new meaning to tunes one is more apt to know in instrumental set-

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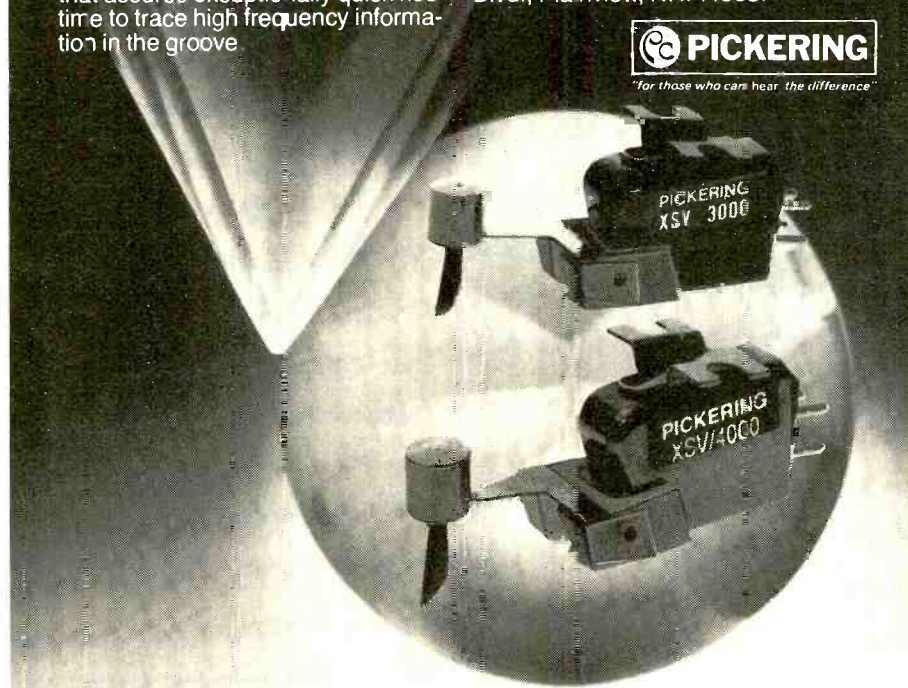
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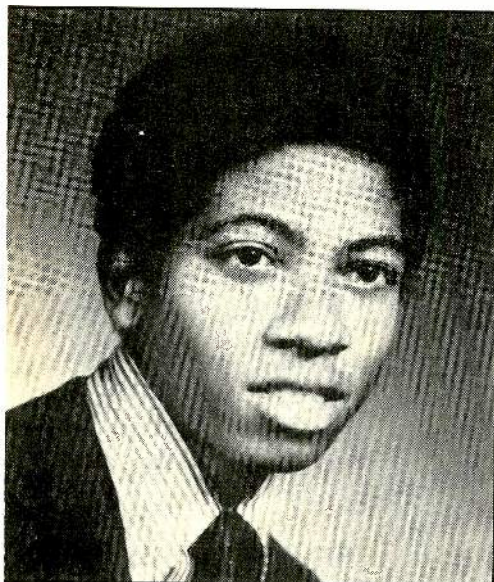
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ANTONY ROLLÉ

A Medtner Revival?

NIKOLAI MEDTNER, who was born in Russia in 1880, was a pianist and a composer for the piano. He was an arch-traditionalist, the enemy not only of modernism but even of the nationalistic trends in turn-of-the-century Russia. The Revolution and collapse of the old order drove him to Germany and France, where he found virtually no support or audience. In 1935 he moved to England, a country whose conservatism in musical and other matters was as agreeable to Medtner as his music was to the English. The ending of his story is nothing less than (to use a title attached to some of his works) a Fairy Tale: His Highness the Maharajah of Mysore became Medtner's patron, founding a society for the propagation of his music and initiating a project for the composer to record all of his works. A few of these records were completed before Medtner's death in 1951. I can remember seeing and, I suppose, hearing some of them and wondering what it was all about.

Could we be due for a Medtner revival? Emil Gilels played the *Sonata Reminiscenza* as far back as 1969, and when his "Live at Carnegie Hall" recording was first released in 1970 a lot of people thought the Medtner was its high point. Now that disc has been rereleased on Quintessence, and there's also a new *all-Medtner* disc from Finnadar, a label previously known for its radical musical point of view, with performances by Antony Rollé, a very talented young black pianist from Brooklyn who was barely past his twentieth birthday when he recorded it.

The *Sonata Reminiscenza* comes from a volume entitled *Forgotten Melodies*; the

irony is not entirely unintentional, for Medtner was constantly trying to recall (in both senses) a Golden Age that existed more in his imagination than in reality. The *Fairy Tales*, which take up half of the Finnadar disc (the title really should be translated as *Legends* or *Ballades*), and even the late, tragic *Sonata Minacciosa* (on side two; the mistranslation as *Stormy Sonata* is the composer's own) are part of the vision of a man who lived out of his time. These works are not as literally neo-Romantic as you might imagine, being nonetheless clearly colored by the time of composition. Nostalgia for the dead past is certainly part of the modern sensibility, and it has never been more evident than today, so a small Medtner revival is a real possibility. *All* of that music that lies in the wash between the dry land of tradition and the open sea of modernism is interesting to us today.

But placing Medtner in the grand scheme of things is not easy. I might like his music more if I didn't know Rachmaninoff, who mostly did it better. I found the *Fairy Tales* disappointing; I expected something more picturesque, or at least seductive. I suspect that Antony Rollé feels the same way about them, for I did not find his performances of these shorter pieces as inspired as that of the *Stormy Sonata*, an intensely personal and dramatic piece of real character and individuality.

THE *Sonata Reminiscenza*, although not as powerful as its successor, is also a work of considerable individuality; Medtner's approach to the sonata form was far from conventional, and his handling of a largish onemovement structure is exceptional. Gilels' performance of the piece is exemplary and may indeed be the high point of his concert recording. I didn't care for his Bach/Busoni or the last two movements of the *Moonlight Sonata* (the second movement is vastly misconstrued), but his playing of the hackneyed first movement of that work is truly affecting. So, somewhat surprisingly, are his Ravel performances. Gilels is at his best as an introverted lyricist—not a writer of lyrics but a considerable and moving tone poet. His affinity for Nicolai Medtner's Slavic, lyric cry for a world that never was is therefore great.

—Eric Salzman

MEDTNER: *Fairy Tales, Opp. 20 and 26; Stormy Sonata in F Minor, Op. 53, No. 2.* Antony Rollé (piano). FINNADAR SR 9026 \$7.98.

EMIL GILELS: *Live at Carnegie Hall. Medtner: Sonata Reminiscenza in A Minor, Op. 38. Beethoven: Piano Sonata No. 14, in C-sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight"); Thirty-two Variations in C Minor (G. 191). Prokofiev: The Love for Three Oranges, Op. 33: Scherzo and March. J. S. Bach/Busoni: Prelude and Fugue in D Major. J. S. Bach/Siloti: Chorale Prelude in D Minor. Ravel: Jeux d'Eau; Pavane pour une Infante Défunte. Chopin: Etude No. 26, in A-flat Major, Op. Posth.; Etude No. 14, in F Minor, Op. 25, No. 2.* Emil Gilels (piano). QUINTESSENCE 2PMC-2708 two discs \$11.96.

tings. The tune *Walsingham*, for example, is primarily known in its virginal settings by John Bull and William Byrd; to hear it sung with Ophelia's words is a revelation.

The performances are topnotch. The New York Consort of Viols produces a ravishing sound and plays to perfection. One understands why when one hears three of the members separately playing some of the amazing solo literature for the viol. Judith Davidoff must be singled out for her striking performances of Tobias Hume's *Life and Death*. Her technique is virtuosic and her interpretations dramatic. Sheila Schonbrun sings simply and brings poignance to Ophelia's unaccompanied songs. Edward Smith plays with ease, choosing not to bring out the showiness of Elizabethan virginal writing. The whole is bound together by Tom Klunis' subtly modulated Shakespeare readings, which are taken from *Henry VIII, Pericles, Richard II, Hamlet*, the sonnets, and other sources.

S.L.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CAROL ROSENBERGER: *Water Music of the Impressionists. Liszt: Les Jeux d'Eaux à la Villa d'Este. Griffes: The Fountain of the Acqua Paola. Ravel: Jeux d'Eau; Ondine. Debussy: La Cathédrale Engloutie; Jardins sous la Pluie; Reflets dans l'Eau; Poissons d'Or; Ondine.* Carol Rosenberger (piano). DELOS ◉ D/DMS 3006 \$17.98.

Performance: **Good to superb**

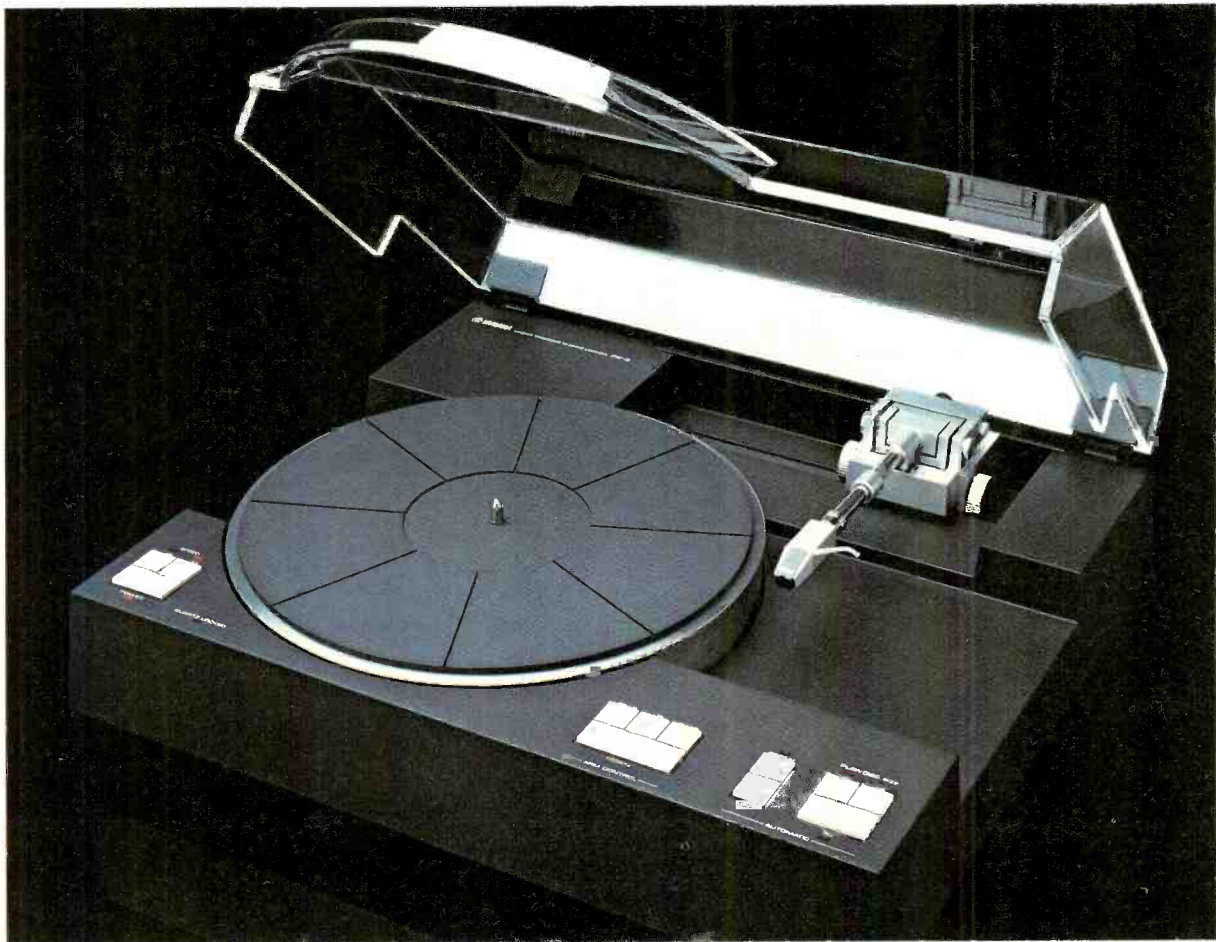
Recording: **Absolutely stunning**

Though the reading is a bit static for my taste, readers who own state-of-the-art playback equipment owe it to themselves to hear Debussy's *La Cathédrale Engloutie* on side two of this disc. For super-fi reproduction of piano sound—in this case a Bösendorfer Imperial concert grand in perfect condition and in ideal acoustic surroundings—I have never heard anything to match it. As if the sonic richness and huge volume at the climax of the modal chorale were not enough, the audible overtones shimmering over the deep-bass fundamentals throughout the later pages of the music are simply hair-curling. This is one of those discs I wish could be played with a laser beam, for I'm scared to death that with each stylus playing I'm wiping out a few more of those precious upper partials!

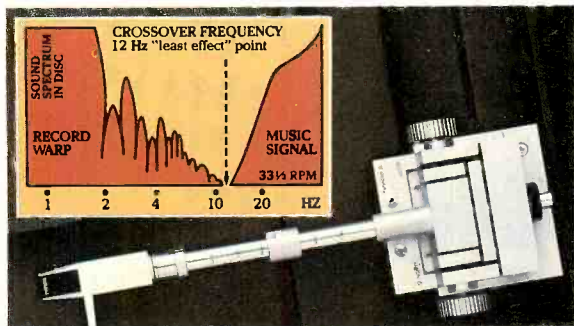
So much for sound; in that respect this Delos release is mind-boggling. Musically, the program presents a fascinating mix, beginning with Liszt's proto-impressionist masterpiece, then a brief poetic piece by American composer Charles Tomlinson Griffes, then a plunge into Maurice Ravel's glittering post-Lisztian evocations. The entire second side is given to Debussy, and, except for the rather immobile treatment of the *Cathédrale*, the interpretations are most successful. Carol Rosenberger's fingerwork is surpassingly brilliant in the Ravel *Jeux d'Eau* and in Debussy's *Jardin sous la Pluie*, the latter being, as a combination of music and sonics, my favorite single track. The performances of the two *Ondine* pieces are fascinating too, as much as anything else for the light thus shed on the sharply contrasting creative personalities of Ravel and Debussy. This disc is worth every penny of its cost if you have playback equipment to do it justice.

D.H.

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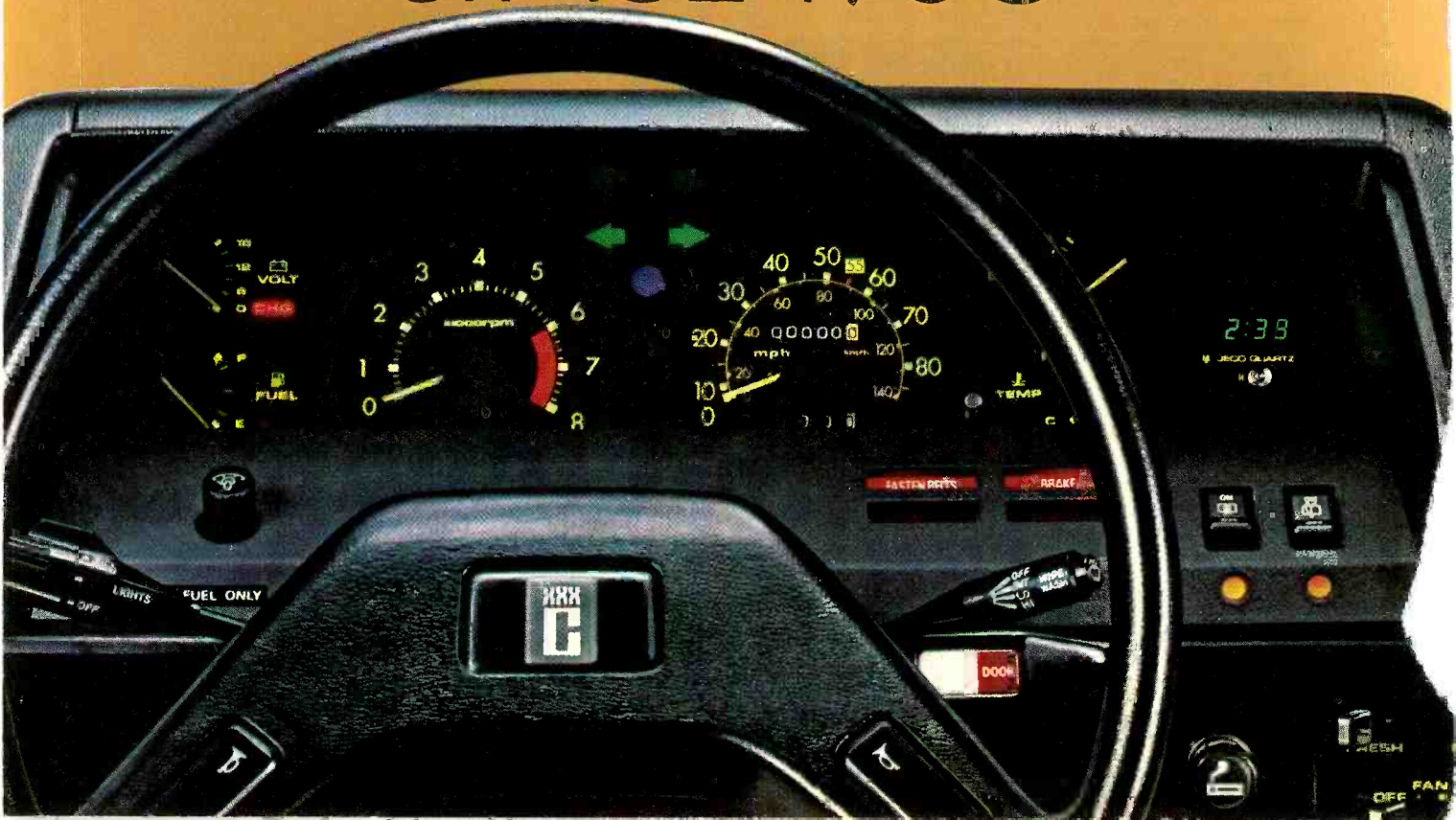
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Popular Discs and Tapes



Reviewed by CHRIS ALBERTSON • EDWARD BUXBAUM • NOEL COPPAGE • PHYL GARLAND
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BELLAMY BROTHERS: *You Can Get Crazy*. David and Howard Bellamy (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Dancin' Cowboys; Sugar Daddy; Foolin' Around; Comin' Back for More; Dead Aim*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3408 \$7.98, Ⓜ M8 3408 \$7.98, Ⓞ M5 3408 \$7.98.

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

The Bellamy Brothers are like the loud-mouth kid in the eighth grade who thought any remark with sexual implications was sure to bring down the house. Here's another album whose main identifying mark is a pitch to the crowd of people who learned about sex from *Hustler*. Country music, of course, just naturally takes to bedroom talk, but its sexuality is usually of the soap-opera sort (*Margie's at the Lincoln Park Inn*, etc.); the Bellamys go Conway Twitty one step further in loosening attitudes and blurring the question of whether Luv has to be involved. Not all the time—just in the cuts likely to get radio play, including, on this album, *Sugar Daddy*. It would be okay, brave even, to make loosening country music's attitude about sex your goal, but making it your gimmick is something else again. The songs that use it here are leering and exploitative. Musically, the Bellamys are not particularly interesting, but they are

thoroughly competent. The backing in this one is tighter, more organic, and less throw-away than you'd expect, considering the songs, for what that's worth. It has some tuneful moments and a nice run or two, but where sexual attitudes are concerned it's part of the problem. N.C.

DEBBY BOONE: *Love Has No Reason*. Debby Boone (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *If It's So Easy; Take It Like a Woman; Free to Be Lonely Again; Love Put a Song in My Heart; I'd Even Let You Go*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3419 \$7.98, Ⓜ M8 3419 \$7.98, Ⓞ M5 3419 \$7.98.

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

Debby Boone's newest album proves that she can be a perfectly competent country singer. Just *why* she's been asked to be one is the big mystery. Her producer, Larry Butler, has selected material that sounds as if it came out of the bottom of a Nashville drawer and provided arrangements that droop around Boone like an unwatered fern, apparently on the conviction that what the world has been waiting for is a cut-rate Crystal Gayle. Hardly. What the world is waiting for, or at least what I am waiting for, is the return of the original Debby Boone whose sensational debut a few years ago lit up my hopes that pop music had found its own equivalent to Meryl Streep. Unfortunately, since that time Debby has been sent off on several tangents, each new one further away from the core of her talent than the last. This latest excursion into pop-country is the silliest and most wasteful yet. I have a feeling that it's time Debby Boone took her career more firmly into her own hands and aligned it with her own instincts. A few more albums like this one and she'll be back touring state fairs with Pop, Mom, and the rest of the family. P.R.

accompaniment. *Stomp!; Light Up the Night; Treasure; This Had to Be*; and five others. A&M SP-3716 \$8.98, Ⓞ 8T-3716 \$8.98, Ⓞ CS-3716 \$8.98.

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

I am increasingly impressed by the enormous amounts of energy and technology invested in the production of music that is really quite ordinary. On the albums by Quincy Jones' protégés the Brothers Johnson, the list of production credits gets longer and longer while the artistic quality diminishes proportionately. The credits for this new one include thirteen additional instrumentalists and synthesizer arrangements by Quincy Jones, Rod Temperton, and—of all people—Johnny Mandel. It's hard to believe this is the same Johnny Mandel whose superb jazz-infused film scores for *I Want to Live* and *The Sandpiper* are now collector's items, but, alas, it is. The roster of background singers includes, among others less luminous, Michael Jackson, Merry Clayton, Scherrie Payne, and Susaye Greene-Brown. Yet the overall effect is of energized clutter, with all these guest artists borrowed from a half-dozen recording firms serving primarily to get in each other's way, their efforts blurring into an enormous sonic smudge. "Light Up the Night" is not a really *bad* album—all this expensive energy can be rather rousing, as on the dance track *Stomp!*—but why should so much be given by so many for so little? P.G.

BRUCE COCKBURN: *Dancing in the Dragon's Jaws*. Bruce Cockburn (vocals, guitar, synthesizer, dulcimer); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Creation Dream; Hills of Morning; Badlands Flashback; Northern Lights; After the Rain*; and three others. MILLENNIUM BXL1-7747 \$7.98, Ⓞ BXS1-7747 \$7.98, Ⓞ BXX1-7747 \$7.98.

Performance: **Academic**
Recording: **Excellent**

At home, Bruce Cockburn is one of the most popular of Canadian artists, and he's

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

THE BROTHERS JOHNSON: *Light Up the Night*. The Brothers Johnson (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental

won all sorts of national awards. The U.S. release of this album is another attempt to propel him over the border and into the hearts, minds, and pocketbooks of American consumers.

Cockburn credits Charles Williams, the British religious poet and fantasist, as the inspiration for his songs, but it is more evident how much he has in common with other Canadian singer/songwriters who have become known in the U.S. (Gordon Lightfoot, Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Anne Murray). Like theirs, Cockburn's lyrics and music display a highly romantic, tenaciously naïve, and rather malleable attitude. Despite Canadians' professions of intent to create a national musical identity, the U.S. still provides the basic formal models, whether in pop, country, or rock. So, like most of his predecessors, Cockburn reverts to Canadian folk music for the content he pours into these forms.

Much of the instrumentation here is acoustic, and the arrangements are like quasi-concertos with a suggestion here and there of a jazz tonality. While the sound is crisp and ingratiating, it ends up having too many air pockets. Cockburn's vocals are so subordinated to the moods of his lyrics that his singing seems almost dispensable. And, though these lyrics are studiously literate and strive to be poetic, I suspect that comparable sentiments and word plays could be found in the writing of any fairly well-educated graduate student in the humanities. I don't mean by any of this to disparage all Canadian artists, nor do I frown on poets. In fact, I much prefer Cockburn's sincere, if unexciting, attempts to balance the sensual with the spiritual to the poetic posturing of, say, Harry Chapin or Neil Diamond. Keep trying, Bruce; maybe someday you'll teach us Yankees a lesson. J.V.

THE CRETONES: *Thin Red Line*. The Cretones (vocals and instrumentals). *Real*

Love; Everybody's Mad at Katherine; Justine; Mad Love; and six others. PLANET P-5 \$7.98, © PT-5 \$7.98, © PC-5 \$7.98.

Performance: **Transparently phony**
Recording: **Excellent**

The Cretones are another of Richard Perry's "New Wave" (ha ha!) discoveries, and they run strictly to type: skinny ties, session-player competence, and a paucity of ideas. They're harmless, mostly, but because they're such a blatant commercial cash-in, with so much money behind them, one does begin to wonder if they're going to make it harder for a new band with a radical notion (like having something to say) to get a fair hearing. Mark Goldenberg, the head honcho, previously contributed two of these songs to Linda Ronstadt's new album, and when she sang them the nicest thing you could say was that they were genre pieces. Here, in their composer's unremarkable stylings, they're *lousy* genre pieces. The album's lowest point, though, comes in an ode to Diana Rigg as she was on the old *Avengers* TV show, and it would give me much joy if the lady in question gave this punk a swift kick in the chops.

Slicker than the Knack and more grown-up, the Cretones manage to be equally calculated and offensive. If there's any justice in this world, they'll be toiling at a car wash in the corner of Pico and Alvarada before December. S.S.

THE CURE: *Boys Don't Cry*. The Cure (vocals and instrumentals). *Jumping Someone Else's Train; Boys Don't Cry; Plastic Passion; 10:15 Saturday Night; Accuracy; Object; Subway Song; and six others.* PVC 7916 \$7.98.

Performance: **Okay**
Recording: **Okay**

The Cure is a middling punk band whose main stock in trade seems to be a certain

rueful melancholia. This is most noticeably evident on the album's title song, an ironic little plaint that will probably wind up on a Sire Records punk retrospective around 1992. If you think this sounds like I'm suggesting that at best the Cure will be remembered as a minor footnote to pop history, you've got it. Questions of genre aside, this is ordinary stuff. S.S.

DANNY DAVIS AND WILLIE NELSON WITH THE NASHVILLE BRASS. Willie Nelson (vocals); Danny Davis and the Nashville Brass (instrumentals). *Night Life; December Day; Rainy Day Blues; Hello Walls; The Local Memory; and five others.* RCA AHL1-3549 \$7.98, © AHS1-3549 \$7.98, © AHK1-3549 \$7.98.

Performance: **Unnecessary**
Recording: **Good grafting job**

Well, this isn't quite as dumb as I expected, but it's dumb enough. Danny Davis took some previously released Willie Nelson vocal tracks and superimposed the Nashville Brass, which is sort of early Herb Alpert further simplified. It was something to do, I suppose. Unfortunately, the main thing it accomplishes is to burnish the "Peripatetic Willie" image—Nelson's been flitting from one project to another for a long time now, apparently unable to write any more, and this time he didn't even have to lift a finger. And, yes, horns on *Good Hearted Woman* sound just as silly as you always thought they would. On a few cuts, notably *Night Life*, they would fit if they were a little less schmaltzy. Anyway, instrumental accompaniment has not been Willie Nelson's problem for years; he has one of the best back-up bands in the business. His problem is that too much of his material has been recycled too many times in too many guises. This album is just the latest example of the problem. N.C.

ROBERTA FLACK FEATURING DONNY HATHAWAY. Roberta Flack (vocals, keyboards); Donny Hathaway (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Only Heaven Can Wait (For Love); God Don't Like Ugly; You Are My Heaven; Disguises; and three others.* ATLANTIC SD 16013 \$8.98, © TP 16013 \$8.98, © CS 16013 \$8.98.

Performance: **So-so**
Recording: **Okay**

Roberta Flack and the late Donny Hathaway made only one complete album together (Atlantic SD 7216); that memorable collaboration was one of the top-selling records of 1972, and it is still available. Its best tracks, such as *Where Is the Love, You've Got a Friend*, and *Come Ye Disconsolate*, are as much of a joy to listen to today as when they were first issued. Flack's and Hathaway's voices were so perfectly matched they might have been molded to each other: the sweetly flowing, honeyed texture was the same, their registers were compatible, and stylistically they shared a firm gospel tradition.

All the more pity, then, that since Hathaway's death last year (he fell, or jumped, from a hotel window on Central Park South in New York City) no further collaborations by this pair will be possible. The pres-

(Continued on page 99)



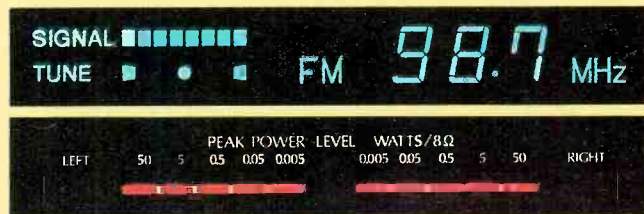
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LET'S talk about rock-and-roll heroes. Still have any? I didn't think so. No wonder, really, when you consider what buffoons, by and large, our Sixties heroes have managed to become. Critic Simon Frith has observed that the reason English punks hate hippies so is that they are secretly afraid they'll turn out the same. They probably will, and though it does conjure up *some* interesting prospects, it's going to be pretty grim if our Sixties heroes are any example.

Consider, say, Grace Slick, now doing the talk-show circuit as a reformed alcoholic and carrying on like a Young Republican version of Lillian Roth. Or, better still, consider Bob Dylan, who appeared on the most recent Grammy Awards (after being introduced by Kenny Rogers as "the voice of a generation," which immediately moved those at my house to apply for membership in some *other* generation) wearing a tux and looking like a rather more jowly Richard Nixon. He proceeded to sing a Sunday school ditty that would not have been out of place at a Billy Graham crusade and finished by thanking the Lord and his producer (in that order). Now I ask you: in 1967, as you sat long into the night listening to "Blonde on Blonde," could you have imagined, even in your wildest hemp-induced reveries, a de-greening of *that* magnitude?

The punks actually seem to have found ways of accelerating this depressing recidivism. By the time you read this, Debbie Harry of Blondie will be all over the tube hawking jeans bearing the name of Gloria Vanderbilt, which would have been unthinkable as recently as three years ago. And there will certainly be others in her wake: if Slick and Dylan can make shambles of our dreams, then I would counsel young idealists not to count too heavily on Bruce Springsteen or the Clash's remaining long unsullied either.

The point is that hero worship is just as dangerous in rock-and-roll as it is in any other area of life, politics included. Be-

cause, finally, *all* your heroes have feet of clay; every one of them will let you down if you give them the chance.

Which leads us to the Beatles and their "new" album. The Beatles were the biggest heroes rock-and-roll ever produced, and if "Rarities" is nothing else it is an artifact that takes their continuing hero status as a given. I don't think that's terribly healthy, though I will concede it may be justifiable. Though their individual stocks have dropped considerably in the years since the break-up (with rare exceptions: a few of Paul's singles, most of "Band on the Run," and John's brilliant, angry first solo album), they have had the wit or integrity to resist being reformed. And that is why they still qualify as heroes.

But, no matter how you try to rationalize it, the Beatles-as-Heroes line is counterproductive, even though there are hordes of people out there who would like nothing better than for the Mop Tops to shake their aging booties on stage one more time. To tell the truth, I might have enjoyed the spectacle once myself. No more, and what finally wised me up were a couple of unpleasant realizations. *One*: it dawned on me that everything I detest on the radio today can be traced back to the Fab Four, from Barry Manilow all the way to Foreigner. (I'm sure that when the Beatles were writing *Yesterday* or *Penny Lane* it was not their *intention* to provide inspiration for those who in better times would have been writing jingles for chewing gum, but the mush-rock sound that defines our era *is* basically a bastardization of once-exciting Beatles innovations.) *Two*: I realized that I simply don't listen to them any more. That might be chalked up simply to overexposure (hell, if I had heard the B Minor Mass as many times as I've heard "Sgt. Pepper" I'd probably never listen to *it* again either), but I think it goes deeper. While I still believe that their talent and vision were the most all-encompassing of any rock band past or

present, *they no longer speak to me*, and there are lots of people around who do.

It is not a question of their music's having dated; most of it hasn't and probably won't. The point is that *life goes on*, but the Beatles-worshipping mass audience seems not to care, preferring instead to crawl back into the womb of nostalgia. If you don't believe me, then please explain why nothing on AM radio these days, with the exception of the occasional disco record, would have sounded at all out of place back when the Beatles were at their peak? I'm *not* suggesting that everybody go out and buy the new Public Image album; Johnny Rotten hasn't a fraction of John Lennon's genius. But if people won't even take the time to listen to what he (or any one of his contemporaries) has to say, preferring instead to dream of some vanished Golden Age that never existed anyway, then we are all of us—hippies and punks alike—in serious trouble.

What disturbs me about "Rarities" is that it seems aimed directly at people who still buy the Beatles myth whole, those who think of the group as a permanent standard against which the rest of rock-and-roll (and maybe everything else) must be judged forever. But even at a discount price, it's such a *slight* package that had a similar reconstruction job been undertaken for a lesser group, Ralph Nader would be bringing class-action suits for consumer fraud. These aren't "rarities"; they're *footnotes*, and from the lunatic fringe of Beatlemania at that. What you get are occasional lengthened intros (*I Am the Walrus*) and endings (*And I Love Her*), "B" sides you already own, and bad mono mixes of a lot of ephemera. Who, other than the kind of people who can't throw out back issues of *National Geographic*, even *cares* any more?

YES. I'm being unfair. It is sort of nice, finally, to have the un-Spectored version of *Across the Universe*, one of Lennon's loveliest studio essays. And there's nothing intrinsically evil about an album for collectors; if this had been released in, say, 1970 it would have been an appropriately thoughtful coda to a distinguished career. And yes, the Beatles *were* great; there's evidence of that all over this record. But this is 1980, dammit, and we live in a world where things change. "Rarities," it seems to me, attempts to deny that, and ostrichism is the very last thing we need right now. I can find only one redeeming feature in all this: in an age when rock stars fall all over themselves to hustle for establishment status symbols, it is a consolation to know that the Beatles themselves had absolutely nothing to do with the decision to market this dispiriting package.

—Steve Simels

THE BEATLES: Rarities. The Beatles (vocals and instrumentals). *Love Me Do; Misyery; There's a Place; Sie Liebt Dich; And I Love Her; Help; I'm Only Sleeping; I Am the Walrus; Penny Lane; Helter Skelter; Don't Pass Me By; The Inner Light; Across the Universe; You Know My Name (Look Up My Number); Sgt. Pepper Inner Groove.* CAPITOL SHAL-12060 \$5.98, © 8XA-12060 \$5.98, © 4XA-12060 \$5.98.



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ent release represents only a partial collaboration, for Hathaway sings on only two songs, *You Are My Heaven* and *Back Together Again*. Worse, neither of these, nor any of the other tracks on the album, begins to approach the level of quality of that wonderful 1972 set. The earlier album is full of excellent songs drawn from diverse musical camps and reflecting an assortment of moods, but this new one has only mediocre songs with appropriately trite arrangements. The horn and guitar licks are identical with those heard on dozens of other pop/soul records these days. Even the two Steve Wonder compositions, *You Are My Heaven* and *Don't Make Me Wait Too Long*, are undistinguished, representing an ill-judged attempt to go disco. Roberta Flack will have other chances to do better, but it's sad that Donny Hathaway's swan song could not have been sweeter. P.G.

GENTLE GIANT: *Civilian*. Gentle Giant (vocals and instrumentals). *Convenience; All Through the Night; Shadows on the Street; Number One*; and four others. COLUMBIA JC 36341 \$7.98, © JCA 36341 \$7.98, © JCT 36341 \$7.98.

Performance: **Well intended**
Recording: **Mostly good**

Gentle Giant's civilian is the same put-upon, exploited, bored-to-neurosis wretch you've previously heard described by Pink Floyd, the Kinks, and Jethro Tull—the ordinary person made faceless and dehumanized by technological progress. In this case, there isn't even any relief in the *Underground*, which Derek and Ray Shulman and their cohorts are referring to literally: the grubby subway, where the wheels simply make more noise. Our antihero realizes he's about lost his grip in the next-to-last piece, *Inside Out*, which is followed by a sort of musing epilogue that asks, mainly, "What do we see, the product or the message?" Good question, and the little cycle of songs hammers at a theme that we need to keep hammering at with 1984 approaching (David Eisenhower will be old enough to run for Prez then, by the way). Unfortunately, Gentle Giant's way of doing it makes for rather mundane rock. They don't have Pink Floyd's way of making sound seem important or Ray Davies' way of arranging simple language so that it really gets to you. Their vocals have taken on a strained Yes quality, and the instrumentals, while tight and competent, are about as imaginative as the civilian in question after he's watched too many *Laverne and Shirley* reruns. Watch out; listening to too many rock clichés could do the same thing to you. N.C.

GODLEY AND CREME: *Freeze Frame*. Kevin Godley (vocals, guitar, keyboards, percussion); Lol Creme (vocals, drums, percussion); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *An Englishman in New York; Random Brainwave; I Pity Inanimate Objects; Freeze Frame; Get Well Soon*; and three others. POLYDOR PD-1-6257 \$7.98, © 8T-1-6257 \$7.98, © CT-1-6257 \$7.98.

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

Kevin Godley and Lol Creme, former members of the delightful 10cc, are witty and

quixotic composer/performers. Though one is never quite sure exactly what windmills they are tilting at, they charge them with commendable zeal. Their sound, which uses studio effects to the maximum (warps, echoes, filters, sudden high-decibel bursts), is meant to keep the listener off balance without totally disorienting him. The sound complements the lyrics; the instrumental tracks set the jokes, and the lyrics deliver them. For example, *An Englishman in New York* is a cynical, brilliant, and hilarious dissection of the city's foibles; *Mugshots* is a tale of petty crime and British judicial bureaucracy; *Get Well Soon* is another Godley/Creme lunge at commercial pop music and expedient rock (Paul McCartney is on this track as a back-up singer, but his voice is as indistinguishable as on his own recent material). Sometimes the jokes go on too long, but Godley and Creme do have their moments. J.V.

DANNY KORTCHMAR: *Innuendo*. Danny Kortchmar (vocals, guitar); Jim Keltner (drums); Kenny Edwards (bass); other musicians. *You and What Army; Killer's Kiss; The Ghost of Errol Flynn; Endless Sleep; Ego Tripper*; and five others. ASYLUM 6E-250 \$7.98, © ET8-250 \$7.98, © TC5-250 \$7.98.

Performance: **Tough-guy crap**
Recording: **Good**

You never know what sidemen are thinking—but you can still count on them to make lousy solo albums. Danny Kortchmar, for years the sidekick of the sensitive and sensible James Taylor, takes his "own" direction here, trying to pass himself off as a secondhand, over-age punk. Listen to this and you'll get what *Esquire* meant recently about America going from the soft line to the hard line. It's just as unattractive on Danny Kootch as it is on Jimmy Peanut. All the vocals are heavily mannered to simulate strutting, and most of the songs are constructed to sound tough and mean and little else. If it were convincing, it would bring me down; as it is, however, I merely find it ludicrous. N.C.

JERRY LEE LEWIS: *When Two Worlds Collide* (see *Best of the Month*, page 71)

LITTLE RIVER BAND: *Backstage Pass*. Little River Band (vocals and instrumentals); Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. *It's a Long Way There; So Many Paths; Statue of Liberty; Hard Life; Light of Day; The Rumor; Too Lonely Too Long; Red Shoes; Reminiscing; Let's Dance*; and eight others. CAPITOL SWBK-12061 two discs \$13.98, © 8XWB-12061 \$13.98, © 4XNB-12061 \$13.98.

Performance: **Greatest zits**
Recording: **Mostly good remote**

Into the beginning record buyer's vocabulary has crept this phrase, the first part pronounced as if it's one word: "Toto'n'Foreigner'n'Styx—and the Little River Band." It is noteworthy that the Little River Band gets a pause before its part in this construction. Like Toto'n'Foreigner'n'Styx, the Little River Band is an all-synthetic outfit, a rock band based upon other rock bands, but it does seem interested in, and capable of, coping a wider, more disparate assortment



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Loretta as herself

The Two Loretta Lynns

THE better the copy, the more you appreciate the original, so if you've seen *Coal Miner's Daughter* you should be fairly salivating for the latest thing from the real Loretta Lynn. The movie is a good copy—even though the guy playing Moonie is too normal looking—basically because Sissy Spacek is such a good actress. She carries the soundtrack album, singing eight of its songs, and the way she handles the singing part of this tough role is the actress' way—she plays Loretta Lynn doing that, too. That is, she imitates her, and pretty well, on such obvious things as Loretta's almost unique (even for a Kentuckian) pronunciation ("walkun after midnat," "lookun ut country," etc.) and on the subtleties of phrasing also. Beverly D'Angelo, however, doesn't take nearly as literal an approach to playing Patsy Cline singing. Instead she goes after, and does manage to suggest, Cline's well-known ease with a song. And former Band member Levon Helm, who plays Loretta's dried-up little Paw, gets to sing one song with the advantage of not having to "play" anyone we've heard on records

before—but then old Levon always did sound authentically old-time backwoods anyway.

Yet, as much as one admires Spacek's performance, there's a great difference—in what? resonance?—between the copy and the original. Loretta is in great voice in her new album "Loretta," which is a little more sophisticated overall than we expect of her albums, but she shows basic horse sense in starting off with a crackerjack juke-box tune, *I've Got a Picture of Us on My Mind*: Loretta on the box in a truck stop on an interstate is one of those quintessential American things. And there are some unexpected twists here: *Sweet, Sweet Daddy* has an odd little tag line at the end of the verse, *You're a Cross I Can't Bear* seems to resolve the chorus and then has one more line, and *The Fool Wouldn't Listen* is a structurally involved pop-type tune. It's mostly typical, straight-ahead Loretta Lynn music, though—all of it listenable, not all of it memorable. But that voice! The movie soundtrack album really sets you up to appreciate that.

—Noel Coppage

COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER. Original-soundtrack recording. Sissy Spacek, Beverly D'Angelo, Levon Helm (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *The Great Titanic*; *Blue Moon of Kentucky*; *There He Goes*; *I'm a Honky Tonk Girl*; *Amazing Grace*; *Walking After Midnight*; *Crazy*; *I Fall to Pieces*; *Sweet Dreams*; *Back in Baby's Arms*; *One's on the Way*; *You Ain't Woman Enough to Take My Man*; *You're Looking at Country*; *Coal Miner's Daughter*. MCA MCA-5107 \$8.98, © MCAT-5107 \$8.98, © MCAC-5107 \$8.98.

LORETTA LYNN: Loretta. Loretta Lynn (vocals); Pig Robbins (piano); Jerry Carrigan (drums); Reggie Young (guitar); Mike Leech (bass); other musicians. *I've Got a Picture of Us on My Mind*; *Naked in the Rain*; *Sweet, Sweet Daddy*; *It's Too Late to Love Me Now*; *You're a Cross I Can't Bear*; *I've Been Lonely So Long*; *It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels*; *I Should Be Over You By Now*; *The Fool Wouldn't Listen*; *Pregnant Again*. MCA MCA-3217 \$7.98, © MCAT-3217 \$7.98, © MCAC-3217 \$7.98.

of musical feels. You might say, listening to how much lead vocalist Glenn Shorrock allows himself to sound like Joe Cocker, that all these groups are impersonating rock bands for a living, but the LRB is impersonating a more complicated one than the others are. I mean, *Reminiscing*, for instance, is a tricky little number. The Little River Band consistently gets all the parts right, which must mean that if they're not innovative musicians, they are at least very good administrators.

This double-disc live album seems to bear that out, doing the smart thing of giving us some new stuff even as it basically gives us stuff that's not only old but predigested. The first disc, recorded in the Little River Band's native Australia, is gussied up here and there with bursts from the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. Well, it didn't figure to hurt, and it doesn't. The second disc, recorded during LRB's 1979 North American tour, gives us five never-before-recorded songs. So we get the greatest hits in not-exact duplicates of their first appearances (although the band, for its part, seems to try to repeat those performances note for note) and a couple of new tunes that are sure to get on the radio. The LRB does have a knack for turning up catchy tunes, and I suppose they're not all that much more synthetic than the Eagles were—one more notch, approximately. In fact, a Little River single usually improves the sound of radio, the state of programming being what it is these days. Just a reminder then, kids, that somewhere there's an original version of everything you'll hear on LRB's "Backstage Pass." N.C.

THE MARSHALL TUCKER BAND: Tenth. The Marshall Tucker Band (vocals and instrumentals). *It Takes Time*; *See You One More Time*; *Disillusion*; *Cattle Drive*; *Gospel Singin' Man*; *Save My Soul*; *Sing My Blues*; and three others. WARNER BROS. HS 3410 \$8.98, © W8 3410 \$8.98, © W5 3410 \$8.98.

Performance: **Soft at the center**
Recording: **Very good**

This band can play, but the more I hear the less I think it can write. When you wrap your ears around a song and squeeze, you need to feel some resistance eventually; this stuff seems capable of yielding infinitely. The first side tries to stay vaguely soft-jazz-oriented, as if to capitalize on Jerry Eubanks' reed playing, but never actually works out the reeds all that much. The main thing about it is that—except for the drive of *See You One More Time*, which is about the fourth time the late Toy Caldwell wrote that same song (the fifth comes on side two in *Save My Soul*)—it sounds contrived and tuneless. Side two is a bit more guitar- and rock-based, but the songs have the same lifeless, recycled quality. The Marshall Tucker Band was never famous for depth of lyrics, of course, but some of these skating exercises don't even bother to touch base with reality. *Sing My Blues*, for example, starts off, "I'm so tired of people telling me/That I can't wear long hair." Where have these boys been since 1969? The other songs offer about the same dearth of insight, but in different styles. On the other hand, the playing—the playing together, the relating of instruments and sounds to

one another—is first-rate. Caldwell had the touch to make the electric guitar at once lyrical and raunchy. What I wish is that this band would take time out from trying to write and do something basic, such as a blues album—not one about hair length but about real stuff. *N.C.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GRAHAM NASH: *Earth & Sky*. Graham Nash (vocals, guitar, harmonica); Joe Walsh (guitar); Tim Drummond (bass); Russell Kunkel (drums); other musicians. *Earth & Sky; Love Has Come; Out on the Island; Skychild; Helicopter Song; Barrel of Pain; It's All Right; Magical Child*; and two others. CAPITOL SWAK-12014 \$8.98, © 8XN-12014 \$8.98, © 4XN-12014 \$8.98.

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

I guess it's unfair to review a man's moustache, but really, since Graham Nash's conservative brush turned grey he looks like one of those quintessential British majors who tell boring stories about India on into the night. But then this sets up an interesting contrast to his childlike singing voice, which here, in his first album for Capitol, sounds as pure and unspoiled and attractively naive as it did on the first Hollies record. And he's still doing his thing, good ol' soft rock, seemingly oblivious to fashions and fads. It's good to lay hands on a new album nowadays that is *musical*.

On the sleeve, Nash gives thanks to forty-six people and two companies, which doesn't seem to bode well for spontaneity. He apparently used all the available L.A. studio aces plus Joe Walsh of the Eagles, and it is quite a studio-ish album, but relaxed and natural-sounding for all that. Nash's new songs probably account for this: they don't attempt to be earth-shakers, but each one tries to give you some actual tune and they're all, like Nash, eminently civilized. Even the paranoia in *Barrel of Pain*, about nuclear power plants (Nash is a member of Musicians United for Safe Energy), and in *TV Guide*, about Them looking through your telly at You, à la Orwell's 1984, is a stylized, Crosby, Stills & Nash kind of paranoia; all it does is give you a yen to listen again to *Wooden Ships*. Such cuts as *Out on the Island* and *It's All Right* may reassure you that there's room in the Eighties for pretty music nicely played, which can give one a good feeling. I guess there's something to be said for a man who won't use Grecian Formula that close to his mouth. *N.C.*

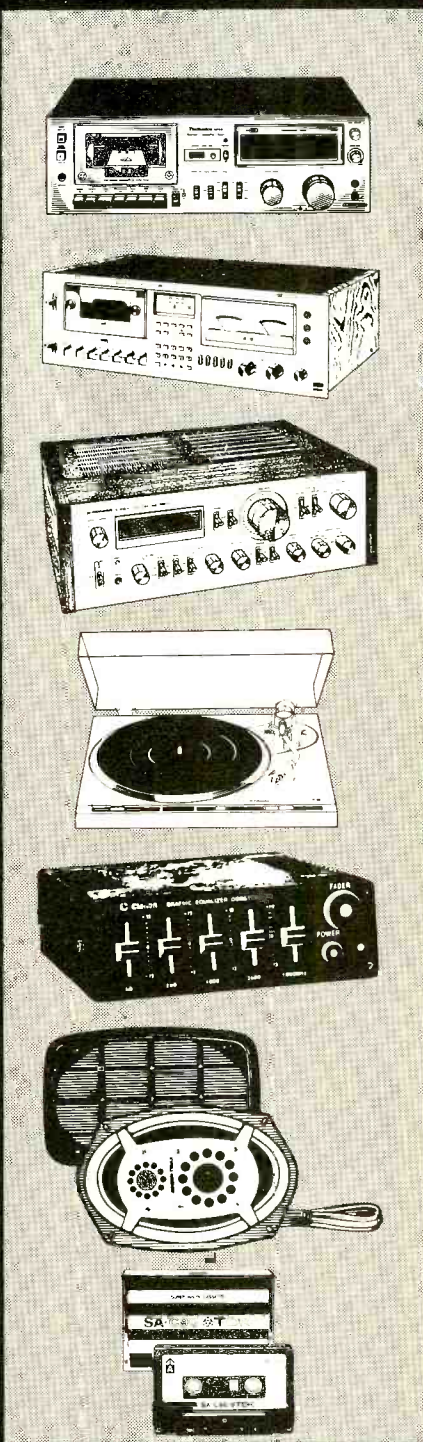
SMOKEY ROBINSON: *Warm Thoughts* (see Best of the Month, page 73)

MIKE RUTHERFORD: *Smallcreep's Day*. Mike Rutherford (guitars, bass); Noel McCalla (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Smallcreep's Day (Suite); Moonshine; Time and Time Again; Romani*; and two others. PASSPORT PB 9843 \$7.98, © PB8 9843 \$7.98, © PBC 9843 \$7.98.

Performance: **Overblown**
Recording: **Heavy**

Oh, dear—another one of those albums: organs and synthesizers galore, high-pitched,

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Tommy James Returns

THE title single from Tommy James' entertaining new Millenium album, "Three Times in Love," was an unexpected hit last Christmas, signaling the thirty-two-year-old singer's comeback from almost seven years of obscurity. James started in the music business at twelve as lead singer with a Michigan band called the Shondells, and he moved to New York at the age of eighteen on the strength of a fluke hit for a four-year-old single he had cut with them, *Hanky Panky*. From then until 1973, when his label stopped making new records and he declined offers to tour as part of an "oldies" act, Tommy James was big stuff; an estimated thirty million copies of his singles and nine million of his albums were sold worldwide.

James credits his latest comeback, like his recovery from a bad period in the late Sixties, to the support of his wife, Lynda, and to "a lot of talks with the man upstairs." He says he's not a "born-again" Christian but an "always-was" one, and his passionately innocent singing style and firm faith in romance seem to reflect this. *Three Times in Love* is itself a veritable carol of faith, and even when his songs deal with failed relationships (*Everything I Am*, *It's All Right for Now*) the lyrics seem to leave open the possibility of a happy ending. Critics have generally disliked James' work—many, in fact, have been openly hostile—and dismissed his sincerity as either blandly uninteresting or commercially calculated. In order to do that, however, they have to ignore his impressive combination of talent and professionalism in the varied roles of writer, singer, guitarist, and producer—plus his obviously unabashed delight in making music. Tommy James' songs are as simple, direct, and likable as Buddy Holly's were, and there's no more reason to scorn those qualities today than there was then.

Most of the songs on "Three Times in Love" are traditional in construction—characters are introduced; a problem is stated, then all is resolved with a strong hook in the chorus—and only around four minutes long. The arrangements are similarly economical, with the back-up adding color to James' lead but never getting so complicated or self-indulgent as to distract our attention from the story being told. The album is carefully programmed, with a seemingly organic progression from the opener (*You Got Me*) to the close (*It's All Right for Now*), the arrangements becoming thicker and, although the basis throughout is acoustic, an electric sound becoming increasingly predominant.

BOTH the songs and the overall sound are tied to James' voice and the way he uses it. Basically, it's a mellow tenor that can become husky or liquid as the occasion demands. He seldom lets go completely, evidently preferring to retain emotional control for the sake of the total performance, but he comes close to doing so on *I Just Wanna Play the Music*, starting out with a breathy intimacy and then roughing it up on the chorus. The emotion is unquestionably genuine in this highly autobiographical song; making music is all Tommy James has ever wanted to do. And, as I've often said before, it's always good to hear a fellow who's happy in his work. —Joel Vance

TOMMY JAMES: *Three Times in Love*. Tommy James (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *You Got Me*; *Long Way Down*; *Three Times in Love*; *Lady in White*; *Everything I Am*; *It's Magic*; *I Just Wanna Play the Music*; *Let It Slide*; *It's All Right for Now*. MILLENIUM BXL1-7748 \$7.98, © BXS1-7748 \$7.98, © BXX1-7748 \$7.98.

overladen vocals, and lyrics that plead the case of an ego tormented by the world and lesser mortals. That's side one. Side two is an interpretation of *Smallcreep's Day*, a book by Peter Curell Brown. Smallcreep is a factory worker who, after forty years of doing the same thing on the assembly line, decides one day to find out what the end result of his labor is. He wanders the labyrinths of the large factory until he spies the final product, described as "an immense machine." Curiosity satisfied, he goes home and prepares to spend another forty years drilling widgets in the prescribed manner. Mike Rutherford, on a solo outing from Genesis, wrote the lyrics and music, and Noel McCalla emotes his way through the vocals. Smallcreep should sue them. J.V.

DOUG SAHM: *Hell of a Spell*. Doug Sahn (vocals, guitar); John Reed (guitar); John Oxendine (drums); Jack Barber (bass); other musicians. *Tunnel Vision*; *Ain't into Lettin' You Go*; *All the Way to Nothing*; *I'll Take Care of You*; *I Don't Mind at All*; *Hell of a Spell*; and five others. TAKOMA TAK 7075 \$7.98.

Performance: **Lost in conventions**
Recording: **Good**

Nowadays a respected member of the Austin crowd, Doug Sahn a decade ago passed for a rock star as leader of the reasonably popular Sir Douglas Quintet. The coolness of Texas hillbilly jazz has always been an influence on him, which may help explain this in-between, neither-fish-nor-fowl waste of his sure-handed and soulful vocals. The idea, according to the tiniest of liner notes, was to make a Doug Sahn blues record, but the result, a mishmash of mundane melodies and blah lyrics (mostly written by Sahn) and just about every "blues horn" cliché in the book, sounds more like a supper-club record. In most cuts there's hardly a suggestion of actual blues feeling; what there is sounds like a Las Vegas (or network television) interpretation of *rhythm-and-blues*, with horns and saxes arranged to the point of lifelessness. More than anything else, it reminds me of one of Geoff Muldaur's lesser efforts. Too bad, as Sahn is a natural singer. A Doug Sahn blues album *would* be a good idea. N.C.

RAY STEVENS: *Shriner's Convention*. Ray Stevens (vocals, piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Shriner's Convention*; *The Last Laugh*; *Rita's Letter*; *The Watch Song*; *The Dooright Family*; and four others. RCA AHL1-3574 \$7.98, © AHS1-3574 \$7.98, © AHK1-3574 \$7.98.

Performance: **Laff-a-minute**
Recording: **Good**

This album is just about entirely taken up with zainness, which is Ray Stevens' strong suit—his other suit being preachiness—but a lot of it is more nearly silly than funny. Stevens wrote only two pieces, the title "tune," which is mostly given over to one end of a phone conversation with a particularly irresponsible member of the lodge, and *The Dooright Family*, a much more deft send-up of one of those gospel-music family broadcasts. But he attempts to harpoon everything else, whether it was written to be harpooned or not. For example, *Hey There*, the old *Pajama Game* warhorse, is done

straight except that all the sibilants are unmercifully flubbed, and *Put It in Your Ear* is sung straight but there are goofy ad-libs in a German accent between the verses. All the other songs are novelty numbers you can grow overly familiar with rather quickly. Stevens, who has a good voice by the way, likes to milk a situation until it degenerates into chaos, but only in *Doorright*—in which the gospel bass singer explodes trying to hit one of those low notes—is it really funny this time. There is something funny about Shriners on a spree. Maybe that's the trouble: the phenomenon itself is funnier than anything one can say about it. N.C.

ROBIN TROWER: *Victims of the Fury.* Robin Trower (guitar); James Dewar (vocals, bass); Bill Lordan (drums). *Jack and Jill; The Ring; Victims of the Fury; Roads to Freedom; Into the Flame*; and five others. CHRYSALIS CHR 1215 \$7.98, © 8CH 1215 \$7.98, © CCH 1215 \$7.98.

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

Robin Trower's trio attempts not only to recreate the sound of the long-disbanded Cream but also, in their lyrics, to evoke the times and milieu in which Cream thrived. The cloning of Cream at this late date is distinctly retrograde, and the results should be of interest only to nostalgists. Bassist/vocalist James Dewar assumes the role of Cream's Jack Bruce even to the point of imitating the pitch of his voice (a despairing low tenor) as he rolls out orotund phrases and British art-school lyrics about "perceived dread." Drummer Bill Lordan clinically applies the crash-boom in the proper places; he is relatively discreet compared with his model, Ginger Baker, but almost any drummer with a bit of common sense would be. (Baker once admitted, on film, to an interviewer who asked how he played the drums, "Er, uh, well—you know, I, uh, just, uh, bash about.") Trower's own approximation of late-Sixties Eric Clapton is only half successful. In those days Clapton alternated between thick chords and muscular solo lines; Trower's imitation is confined to fat chords and overloaded solo lines. If Cream is what you want, go back to the originals and pass this one by. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TOMMY TUTONE. Tommy Heath, Jim Keller (guitar, vocals); Terry Nails (bass, vocals); Micky Shine (drums, vocals). *Angel Say No; Cheap Date; Girl in the Back Seat; The Blame; Fat Chance; Rachel; Dancing Girl*; and four others. COLUMBIA NJC 36372 \$7.98, © NCT 36372 \$7.98.

Performance: **Swell**
Recording: **Terrific**

Tommy Tutone is one of those power-pop groups that have become such a glut on the market these days. Surprisingly, though, this one's very good, a real breath of fresh air; even though the group's from L.A., it has a lot of what we used to call New York street soul. The reference points here are not English, as with most of the would-be power poppers, but American, and mostly black American: the album abounds with sly musical and lyrical quotations from old Impressions and Mickey and Sylvia rec-

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ords, and the cool-guy posturing for once seems utterly unforced. The overall effect, in fact, is something like Bruce Springsteen without the melodrama, and I find it absolutely delightful. Add to that an appropriately understated production job (live-sounding, but better) and you've got the perfect album for your next rock-and-roll dance party. S.S.

URBAN VERBS. Urban Verbs (vocals and instrumentals). *Subways; The Angry Young Men; Next Question; Frenzy; Ring-Ring (My Telephone's Talking)*; and four others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3418 \$7.98, © M8 3418 \$7.98, © M5 3418 \$7.98.

Performance: **All right**
Recording: **Very good**

Noel Coppage has observed that the fundamental metaphor for life in these United States is high school, which is true, of course, except in certain metropolitan areas where that would have to be amended to *art* school. Don't believe me? Then consider Urban Verbs, a group of well-mannered young adults headed by the brother of Chris Frantz, the drummer of Talking Heads (the quintessential art-school band), and featuring essentially the same line-up as Talking Heads, even down to a female bass player. You can tell these folks are artists: they have snapshots inside Baggies on the front cover and wavy lines superimposed on their back-cover photos. And their lead singer does a superb imitation of Heads honcho David Byrne's mannered, paranoid vocals.

Unfortunately, art-school drop-outs or no, the Verbs lack the Heads' seductive funk underpinnings and deal mostly in a post-post-acid psychedelia that strikes my ears as unutterably tortured. Worse, their lyrics, when they're not fashionably deadpan/oblique, tend toward unbecomingly snotty social satire; *The Good Life*, for example, is so smug in its contempt for the middle class that even Haight Ashbury hippies in 1967 would have cringed at it. Hell, I don't want to live in L.A. either, but I don't claim I'm a better person because of it.

Don't buy this record. In fact, organize a boycott of the group. The resultant suffering might just be good for their souls—soul being a quality, I should add, that is now almost completely lacking in their music. S.S.

MARTI WEBB; Tell Me on a Sunday. Marti Webb (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Take That Look off Your Face; Let Me Finish; Letter Home to England; Sheldon Bloom; Capped Teeth and Caesar Salad; Tell Me on a Sunday; Let's Talk About You*; and eight others. POLYDOR PD-1-6260 \$8.98, © 8T-1-6260 \$8.98, © CT-1-6260 \$8.98.

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

Andrew Lloyd Webber, who wrote the music for *Evita*, joined forces with Don Black to create this series of related songs about a young English girl living, and trying to love, in contemporary Manhattan. It is a partly

impressive one-woman show spotlighting Marti Webb, who played the title role in the London production of *Evita*. The part that's impressive is Webb's singing, which is often elegant and distinctive and subtle—adjectives I'd never use to describe Webber's patchouli-drenched music and Black's turgid lyrics. Webb struggles valiantly, even when she's inundated by the London Philharmonic (conducted by Harry Rabinowitz) on two of the ripest tracks, *It's Not the End of the World (If He's Married)* and the title song, but even at her best she can't raise the enterprise much above its essentially maudlin sentimentality. Compared with "Tell Me on a Sunday," that old piece of puff-pastry called "Manhattan Tower" seems positively dietetic. P.R.

FRANK WEBER. Frank Weber (vocals, keyboards); instrumental accompaniment. *Take It to the Limit; The Old Man; Reflections of Myself; Between N.Y. and L.A.*; and four others. RCA AFL1-3547 \$7.98, © AFS1-3547 \$7.98, © AFK1-3547 \$7.98.

Performance: **Derivative**
Recording: **Fair**

Are you ready for a cross between Barry Manilow and Billy Joel in mostly old-time "swing"-sounding arrangements? You may be, but I became convinced that I'm not after hearing Frank Weber plod through such dreary songs as *The Old Man* ("I used to visit the old man when I felt a particular way . . .") and *Reflections of Myself* ("I saw reflections of myself in the light of your

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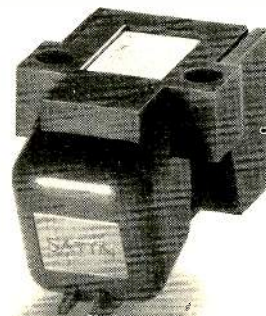
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cigarette . . ."). *Between N.Y. and L.A.* is the biggie here. It's sung once and then reprised as an instrumental on the last track. Its flavor can probably be conveyed by this excerpt: "Tell me 'bout Manet and Mat-tisse/I shall play Ravel and Satie . . ." Yes, yes, officer. I'll go quietly. P.R.

ROGER WHITTAKER: *Voyager*. Roger Whittaker (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *I Was Born; Paper Bird; I See You in the Sunrise; Here I Am; Lighthouse; Sail Away;* and six others. RCA AFL1-3518 \$7.98, © AFS1-3518 \$7.98, © AFK1-3518 \$7.98.

Performance: **Sweet and soothing**
Recording: **Very good**

In his fifth album for RCA, Roger Whittaker is back again singing the kind of sunny ballads that have made him popular since he gave up folk singing. There's *Paper Bird* ("I'm flying high, way up in the sky . . .") and *I See You in the Sunrise* and others with lines like "Something tells me that you're more than just a friend." These soggy sentiments are delivered in the cool style that has endeared Whittaker to his admirers, for whom his quiet, cozy music apparently serves as relief from the harder stuff that continues to dominate the market. The arrangements are all rich, creamy, and homogenized. Even a song from Africa, *Yebe*, is made to suggest a placid continent replete with well-ordered English gardens. One of the songs here is called *Sail Away*. It isn't the one by Noël Coward, nor the one by Randy Newman, but a leaky little item that promises to float us off to "where the flying fishes play"—and it's hardly a craft, one suspects, quite equal to such an ambitious journey. P.K.

JOHNNY WINTER: *Raisin' Cain*. Johnny Winter (guitar, vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *The Crawl; Sittin' in the Jailhouse; Like a Rolling Stone; New York, New York; Bon Ton Roulet;* and six others. BLUE SKY JZ 36343 \$7.98, © JZA 36343 \$7.98, © JZT 36343 \$7.98.

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

Johnny Winter's albums are predictable; they always contain energetic, good-time renditions of urban blues with a few rockers added. While Winter is not an authoritative singer or guitarist, he is convincing because he makes the most of his limitations; he knows his own space and happily confines himself to it. He has a thin voice and can't be a shouter in the classic mold, so his solution is to growl with momentum. There are passages in his guitar solos that work because he makes the right choices of which blues and rock licks to include, and he knows when and how long to apply them in a given song.

The best cuts here are *Talk Is Cheap*, a comedy blues, Muddy Waters' *Rollin' and Tumblin'*, and—speaking of making the most of limitations—Dylan's turgid and cryptographic *Like a Rolling Stone* from his messiah-as-misogynist period. Winter somehow makes even this one move—a really heroic achievement. J.V.

MAC WISEMAN: *Songs That Made the Jukebox Play*. Mac Wiseman (vocals, gui-

tar); Jim Belkins (fiddle); Will Briggs Jr. (saxophone); Dick Gimble (bass); Johnny Gimble (fiddle, mandolin); Bill Mounce (drums); Eldon Shamblin (guitar); other musicians. *Bubbles in My Beer; Slippin' Around; Home in San Antonio; My Mary; No Letter Today; I Love You Because; Born to Lose;* and fifteen others. CMH CMH-9021 two discs \$11.98, © CMH8-2-9021 \$11.98, © CMHC-2-9021 \$11.98.

Performance: **Surrounded by genre**
Recording: **Spacious**

There is a connection between bluegrass interests and country-swing interests. I first noticed it when I was about five, when my father, a bluegrass musician, would go about the house humming just about every song listed above. Then there was Merle Travis, who wrote the liner notes for this album; Travis and Bill Monroe came from adjacent counties in Kentucky, but Travis was always more at home in the spacious music of the Southwest and eventually made his physical home in Oklahoma. So it's not an unnatural act for Mac Wiseman, the best bluegrass singer, to make a country-swing album. Only it sounds better in theory than in fact. One could hardly improve on the vocals here, yet there is very little excitement about the music and the overriding question is: So what? Country-swing lyrics are even less important and more banal than bluegrass lyrics, and the country-swing singer is even more subordinated to the instruments.

What you need for country swing is not a stylish singer like Wiseman but a technical-ly competent and impersonal "band singer." In a sense, you need something similar for bluegrass, but Wiseman has managed to become a blessed exception there. Here, he's surrounded by too much space and too much stylized arrangement to exert much of an emotional tug on the listener. One listens to country swing to hear the band, preferably while dancing, so the emphasis of this one makes it not just an exercise but a hybrid, by nature a little skizzy. N.C.

GHEORGHE ZAMFIR: *The Lonely Shepherd*. Gheorghe Zamfir (pan flute); orchestra. *Ête d'Amour; She; Laryssa; Elsha; Run to Me; Black Rose;* and six others. MERCURY SRM-1-3817 \$7.98, © MCR8-1-3817 \$7.98, © MCR4-1-3817 \$7.98.

Performance: **Tender and tranquil**
Recording: **Very good**

This program of soft, soothing, tranquil music featuring the mellow sound of Gheorghe Zamfir's sweetly tootled pan flute (made of pipes that sound when blown across the upper ends, the kind Pan is usually depicted as carrying) could be sure-fire therapy for a tension headache or simply enjoyed subliminally with the sound turned down as background music for a quiet read or reverie. The sweetness is discreetly enough stirred in, though once, and only once—in the *Floral Dance* by Katie Moss—there is a sudden stirring up of the rhythms that breaks the quiet mood. Particularly lovely is *The Lonely Shepherd*, a piece just made to order for Zamfir's instrument. It's already made the charts as a hit single—and no wonder. P.K.

(Continued overleaf)

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Longhair's Farewell

THE sad news is that Roy "Professor Longhair" Byrd has made his last recording. He died of a heart attack early this year in his home town, New Orleans. The good news is that his ultimate album, "Crawfish Fiesta," is an endearing and lively legacy of a captivating talent.

Byrd was a singer, songwriter, and pianist whose keyboard style ruled New Orleans from the late Forties; among his disciples were Fats Domino, Allen Toussaint, Huey Smith, and Mac "Dr. John" Rebennack. Byrd owed part of his style to Jimmy Yancey, a Chicago boogie pianist whose 1939 recordings revealed a remarkable delicacy in that otherwise loud and monotonous form. Yancey's trademark in his usually restrained, almost shy playing was a sudden arpeggio imitating military bugle calls. Byrd appropriated that feature, but he was generally much more flamboyant than Yancey and always sounded as if he were having a better time. Byrd's writing was full of humor, and his singing—punctuated by sudden yodels—perfectly conveyed the point of his songs, which, true to New Orleans tradition, were usually about making love and having a party. *Bald Head*, included here, was first cut in 1949 about the same time Fats Domino's première single, *The Fat Man*, was issued. Unlike Domino, Byrd never could maintain—or couldn't be bothered to maintain—a recording career, preferring to stay in New Orleans and earn a living as a card player when musical work fell off. In 1972 Atlantic reissued some sides Byrd had recorded in the mid Fifties, and he recorded sporadically thereafter, but it was not until the late Seventies that he

emerged again as a full-time musician.

This album was recorded in 1979, and it is by all odds Byrd's best. The musicians behind him (including Rebennack on guitar) are topnotch. The sound is clean and well balanced, and the good times really roll. *Big Chief* is practically an anthem of the Mardi Gras, *Red Beans* is a variation on Muddy Waters' *Got My Mojo Working*, and *Whole Lotta Loving* is a virtual rewrite of Domino's song that far surpasses the weak original. *It's My Fault, Darling* contains a fine Byrd solo (as well as some excellent guitar work by Rebennack) and some hilarious "Longhair" lyrics: "If I'd knowed you had company, baby/I would have waited for my lunch/Oh, the man was twice my size/And I do believe he was packin' a Joe Louis punch." *Willie Fugal's Blues* and *Crawfish Fiesta* are piano solos with conga backing; the latter is especially charming and could serve as a "hail and farewell" for Byrd, who no doubt is having a grand party 'way up in the sky. —Joel Vance

PROFESSOR LONGHAIR: *Crawfish Fiesta*. Roy "Professor Longhair" Byrd (piano, vocals); Mac "Dr. John" Rebennack (guitar); Andy Kaslow, Tony Dagradi (tenor saxophone); Jim Moore (baritone saxophone); Alfred "Uganda" Roberts (congas); David Lee Watson (bass); John Vidacovich (drums). *Big Chief; Her Mind Is Gone; Something on Your Mind; You're Driving Me Crazy; Red Beans; Willie Fugal's Blues; It's My Fault, Darling; In the Wee Wee Hours; Cry to Me; Bald Head; Whole Lotta Loving; Crawfish Fiesta*. AL-LIGATOR AL 4718 \$7.98.

DISCO



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

AMERICAN GYPSY: *I'm OK, You're OK*. American Gypsy (vocals and instrumentals). *I'm OK, You're OK*. IMPORTE/12 MP-305 disco disc \$3.99.

Performance: **Hot disco returns**

Recording: **Eurodisco standard**

Remember Eurodisco? This disco disc (the company calls it a "Maxi-33") is a throwback using every electronic trick known to man or robot: dead ambiance alternating with resonating echoes, *Star Wars* flashes of sound, thumps and bleeps of every description. Happily, it uses these effects to achieve a dynamite result. Furthermore, the recording is extraordinarily clean, clear, and bright—real disco sound at home.

The tempo is, of course, fast—even furious. Interest is created by three totally different sounds that alternate with each other during the song's 10 minutes and 49 seconds. The hot "I'm OK, you're OK, we're OK" section is pounded out by a male chorus; a catchy soprano vocal follows, and there's a percussive instrumental hook with a big string section that echoes the vocal. The finale, when all three parts come together, is very exciting—precisely the high-energy experience that made disco big in the first place. And you know what? When it's done as well as it is here, the effect is still terrific. E.B.

ANN-MARGARET. Ann-Margaret (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Midnight Message; What I Do to Men; For You*; and two others. MCA MCA-3226 \$7.98, © MCA-3226 \$7.98, © MCAC-3226 \$7.98.

Performance: **Calling Dr. Caligari . . .**

Recording: **Emulsified disco**

Now that her looks are beginning to set, Ann-Margaret's "glamour" is becoming vaguely spooky, like a pop-gorgeous Conrad Veidt in his role as Cesare, the somnambulist, in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. The voice, as heard here in her first album in several years, is as incredible as ever. Which is to say that it is still a whispery extension of Ann-Margaret's screen personality. She sulks, pouts, oozes, and occasionally grunts (in *Midnight Message*) through this disco album like an amorous platypus in search of a center-fold photographer. She doesn't really sing any of the Paul Sabu songs here (true, even Donna Summer couldn't do much with such gaspers as *What I Do to Men* or *Love Rush*). Instead, she breathes in varying keys. Her ideas about lyric interpretation would fill perhaps half a page in a very small book. Yet, thanks to the kind of promotion generally

reserved for credentialed superstars, Ann-Margaret's managers have been able to convince a good part of the public that she's the hottest thing since green jalapeño sauce. You figure it. *P.R.*

JAMES BROWN: *People*. James Brown (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Regrets; Don't Stop the Funk; That's Sweet Music; Stone Cold Drag;* and three others. POLYDOR PD-1-6258 \$7.98, © 8T-1-6258 \$7.98, © CT-1-6258 \$7.98.

Performance: **Not among his best**
Recording: **Satisfactory**

Despite the limitations of his style, James Brown can usually be counted on to dish up a healthy portion of good-time, down-home, sweat-making music. But the Godfather of Soul gets off to a terrible start here with a lost-love song called *Regrets*, in which he's in such awful voice that his romantic entreaties resemble the bellows of a bull moose caught in a steel trap. *His* main regret about "People" should be in having led off with this song. There are more moments of rough going before the vocal rustiness subsides, but by the second side Brown is letting the funk flow with professional ease. Though this album is a considerable comedown from his fine previous set, "It's Too Funky In Here," it should pacify the ranks of James Brown fans until he comes up with something better. *P.G.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CISSY HOUSTON: *Step Aside for a Lady*. Cissy Houston (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Break It to Me Gently; You're the Fire; It Doesn't Only Happen at Night; Just One Man;* and three others. COLUMBIA JC 36193 \$7.98, © JCA 36193 \$7.98, © JCT 36193 \$7.98.

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

On *Break It to Me Gently*, the splendid opening selection on her new album, Cissy Houston readily demonstrates why some consider her one of the most versatile and durable popular singers at any level of the business. Avoiding ostentatious display, she concentrates on projecting the meaning of the lyrics with a mellowed restraint that comes with maturity. Her interpretations, both subtle and intense, are built on her long experience in leading struggling gospel ensembles and singing in endless back-up groups. She paid enough dues to last for several lifetimes before emerging as a disco favorite. It's too bad that most of her recent recordings have restricted her to a disco groove, for while she brings admirable vigor and vocal power to this type of music, its nature is far too limited for her talent.

Fortunately, "Step Aside for a Lady" is a happy compromise: half the numbers are tasteful disco of the sort we have come to associate with her, and the others, such as *Just One Man* and *What I Miss*, are ballads more appropriate to her interpretive abilities. This represents a certain amount of progress on the part of producer Michael Zager, who has too often treated this silk purse of a singer as though she were a sow's ear. Perhaps, on her next outing, the real Cissy Houston will be permitted not only to stand up, but also to really sing. *P.G.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

KLEEER: *Winners*. Kleeer (vocals and instrumentals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Winners; I Still Love You; Your Way; Hunger for Your Love;* and four others. ATLANTIC SD 19262 \$7.98, © TP 19262 \$7.98, © CS 19262 \$7.98.

Performance: **Pow-pow-powerful**
Recording: **Superb**

Side two of this album is practically ripped open by a number called *Rollin' On* that so magnificently joins disco, rock, gospel, and jazz that it practically defines just where dance music is in mid-1980. It is a hair-raisingly intense performance. The chorus

ends with a variant on "yeah, yeah, yeah" that lifts you right out of your seat, the lead vocal is gospel strong, the arrangement is laced with rock guitars improvising riffs with more than a trace of heavy metal, and driving straight through it all is That Beat.

Rollin' On also epitomizes the sound of this album. That Beat characterizes every cut, making it a very danceable album indeed. But the beat is not all the four talented guys who make up Kleeer are after. They are skilled musicians who write and arrange their own songs, and they have come up with a varied and exciting album. The title song, for example, is backed with female voices that emphasize the sway be-



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George Shearing

B RITISH-BORN jazz pianist George Shearing's first recordings, a handful of 1942 British Decca sides, were remarkably unimpressive boogie-oriented solos that gave little or no evidence of the talent he would evince by the end of that decade. In 1949, having moved to the United States, Shearing formed a quintet (with vibist Marjorie Hyams, guitarist Chuck Wayne, bassist John Levy, and drummer Denzil Best) with which he developed the unique sound that swept him to stardom and played an important role in the popularization of jazz during the Fifties. "It's interesting that jazz critics loved our music until it caught on," Shearing told me in a 1958 interview. "We were playing the same thing, but that didn't matter. I'll never understand it, but commercial success is dreaded by jazz writers, who seem to stop listening to anything as soon as a larger segment of the public begins to show its appreciation." Twenty-two years later, that attitude toward accessible music still exists to some extent.

Throughout the Fifties and Sixties, the George Shearing Quintet recorded profusely, first for MGM, then for Capitol, but the Seventies saw only sporadic releases on the German MPS label and Shearing's own Sheba Records. I have not heard his other MPS albums, but if "The Reunion," now released in the U.S. by Pausa, is any indication of their caliber, don't bother looking for them. "The Reunion" is not a bad album, it is merely dull, and it misrepresents Shearing's talent as much as those early British Decca sides did. The reunion in question is between Shearing and French violinist Stéphane Grappelli. They worked together in the early Forties, but the music they produced for this 1976 album fails to justify their being brought together again. "The Reunion" is mostly Grappelli's; Shearing serves in a supporting role, and neither player shows enthusiasm for the project.

Quite a different matter is "Blues Alley Jazz," a Concord Jazz release recorded live last October at a well-known Washington,

D.C., club. Working only with bassist Brian Torff—with whom he is eminently in rapport—Shearing here gives us a healthy taste of the kind of creativity and musicianship that helped put him on top three decades ago. The album is a delightful joyride from the opener, Billy Taylor's *One for the Woofers*, to the closing whimsical rendition of Hoagy Carmichael's *Up a Lazy River*, with plenty of wonderful stops—mostly in familiar territory—in between. One of those stops, *This Couldn't Be the Real Thing*, features a vocal by Shearing, whose feeling for the lyrics makes up for his vocal shortcomings. It reminds me of a vocal performance he treated me to privately in the late Fifties, a memorable rendering of *Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most* with modified lyrics that would be less startling in today's more permissive atmosphere than they were back then.

I HOPE we will be hearing more Shearing as the Eighties progress—and that he will stay away from such limiting, counterproductive projects as "The Reunion."

—Chris Albertson

GEORGE SHEARING AND STÉPHANE GRAPPELLI: *The Reunion*. George Shearing (piano); Stéphane Grappelli (violin); Andrew Simpkins (bass); Rusty Jones (drums). *I'm Coming Virginia*; *Time After Time*; *La Chanson de Rue*; *Too Marvelous for Words*; *It Don't Mean a Thing*; *Makin' Whoopee*; *After You've Gone*; *Flamingo*; *Star Eyes*; *The Folks Who Live on the Hill*. PAUSA 7049 \$7.98.

GEORGE SHEARING: *Blues Alley Jazz*. George Shearing (piano); Brian Torff (bass). *One for the Woofers*; *Autumn in New York*; *The Masquerade Is Over*; *That's What She Says*; *Soon It's Gonna Rain*; *High and Inside*; *For Every Man There's a Woman*; *This Couldn't Be the Real Thing*; *Up a Lazy River*. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-110 \$7.98.

hind the propulsive tempo. Their cool harmony beautifully counterpoints the funky, quirky beat. Romantic strings, in an utterly simple arrangement, soften the heavily accented beat of the wonderful ballad *I Still Love You*, sung by guest artist Isabelle Coles, and *Close to You* is top-drawer disco, almost furiously fast, that spotlights the beat. But even there the instrumental hook is inventively enriched by a series of bass-drum blasts that are fired off one at a time and allowed to hang inside the beat for a dramatic moment. Sometimes Kleecer goes overboard. *Hunger for Your Love*, for instance, is a sweet-enough ballad that doesn't need the syrupy vocal back-up they give it. But overall the group sings well, their songs have a good melodic sense, and they make exciting music. *E.B.*

SISTER SLEDGE: *Love Somebody Today*. Sister Sledge (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Got to Love Somebody*; *You Fooled Around*; *Pretty Baby*; *How to Love*; and four others. COTILLION SD 16012 \$7.98, © TP 16012 \$7.98, © CS 16012 \$7.98.

Performance: **Subdued but classy**
Recording: **Fine**

Credit composer/arrangers Bernard Edwards and Nile Rodgers with at least one thing: they have guided two black groups—Chic and Sister Sledge—through similarly successful careers that have crossed from disco to soul to mainstream pop while creating music for each group that is distinctly individual but with a common elegance. Unfortunately, all that output is beginning to drain its creators. This album has a fairly uninspired batch of new songs, though there is a felicitous turn of phrase now and then.

I do like the lyrics to *I'm a Good Girl* and its truncated, catchy beat. There's a pleasant variation on the "easy street" cliché in the song called, appropriately, *Easy Street*. Generally, the arrangements seem clearly calculated to broaden Sister Sledge's appeal. A year ago no dance record would have included sax solos like those here in *Got to Love Somebody* and *Reach Your Peak*. The latter, by the way, was absolutely the right choice for release as a single. It's a bit more subdued than Sister Sledge's earlier hit, *We Are Family*, but it dances well, it's a better song, and it stands a good chance of making it too. *E.B.*

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(List compiled by John Harrison)

JAZZ



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ERNESTINE ANDERSON: *Sunshine*. Ernestine Anderson (vocals); Monty Alexander (piano); Ray Brown (bass); Jeff Hamilton (drums). *Summertime; You Are My Sunshine; Time After Time; God Bless the Child; I'm Walkin'*; and five others. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-109 \$7.98.

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

As I mentioned in my review of her first Concord album ("Hello Like Before," CJ-34), Ernestine Anderson is a far better singer now than she was in the mid Fifties when she appeared on the American scene by way of some Swedish recordings. On this album she is backed by the same Ray Brown trio that accompanied her at last year's Concord Jazz Festival. Five selections documenting that encounter make up one side of a recent Concord release by the trio (CJ-102), which I recommend as heartily as I do this endearing exercise in vocal poise. The repertoire on "Sunshine" is comfortable and familiar, offering just enough variety of tempo and mood to demonstrate Ernestine Anderson's flexibility. She breezes through such numbers as *Love* (on which her scatting is strongly reminiscent of the obviously imitable Anita O'Day style), struts appropriately through Fats Domino's hit *I'm Walkin'*, and caresses with obvious fondness such slow items as *Time After Time* and *I Want a Little Boy*. On Billie Holiday's *God Bless the Child* only Monty Alexander is heard with Anderson, and the two do full justice to a song Diana Ross never seemed fully to understand.

Ernestine Anderson is not as individualistic as Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, or the sadly neglected Carmen McRae, but she can hold her own very well in that company. And she can deliver performances as pleasing as the scent of roses and as habit-forming as potato chips. I recommend this one. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LOUIE BELLSON: *Dynamite!* Louie Bellson Big Band. *Explosion; Deliverance; Cinderella's Waltz*; and three others. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-105 \$7.98.

Performance: **Dynamite indeed**
Recording: **Very good remote**

Chances are you won't recognize most of the names in Louie Bellson's band, but don't let that deter you from lending your ears to this set recorded live during last year's Concord Summer Jazz Festival. Bobby Shew, Don Menza, Dick Spencer, and John Chiodini are some of the unfamiliar

soloists whose exemplary work helps make "Dynamite!" such an aptly named album. The audience obviously loved the band's performance, and I am happy to report that this is not a case of "you had to be there"—the feast has been well preserved. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE HEATH BROTHERS: *Live at the Public Theater*. Jimmy Heath (soprano and tenor saxophones); Percy Heath (bass); Stanley Cowell (keyboards, kalimba); other musicians. *Cloak and Dagger; Warm Valley; Watergate Blues; A Sassy Samba*; and four others. COLUMBIA FC 36374 \$8.98, © FCT 36374 \$8.98.

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

"Live at the Public Theater" is the third Columbia album by the Heath Brothers, Jimmy and Percy, who thus continue to contribute uncompromising, quality-controlled jazz to the catalog. Except for one selection done over later in the studio because Jimmy was dissatisfied with the live performance, this is, as the title implies, a set captured live at New York's Public Theater. The event—a most happy one for lovers of fine, cooking jazz—probably took place last year, but neither the album's nominal producer, chart-minded George Butler, nor annotator Gary Giddins gives us a clue to the exact date. I mention this only because record collectors often care about such details, and this is an album many collectors will want to acquire.

Apropos details, the aforementioned exception is *For the Public*, a Jimmy Heath tune dedicated to this fine little theater. The studio version we hear—with dubbed-in audience response—was produced by the composer's son, Mtume, whose own recordings decidedly pander to the record industry's notion of popular taste. *For the Public* isn't exactly for the birds, but it is several steps down from the rest of the album.

Both Heath Brothers give much of themselves throughout, and, as on their previous albums, pianist Stanley Cowell shines brilliantly. No need to go into more detail here, for all the live tracks are crammed with vital statements and exemplary ensemble work. I should, however, make special mention of guitarist Tony Purrome, whose dexterity and creativity become more impressive with each Heath Brothers release. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CLIFFORD JORDAN: *The Adventurer*. Clifford Jordan (flute, alto and tenor saxophones); Tommy Flanagan (piano); Bill Lee (bass); Grady Tate (drums). *Here's a Hero; Quasimodo; I'll Be Around*; and three others. MUSE MR 5163 \$6.98.

Performance: **Roll, Jordan, roll**
Recording: **Good**

There is nothing very adventurous about "The Adventurer," saxophonist Clifford Jordan's new Muse release. But there is much to be said for tradition, and Jordan says it here in a most articulate and prepossessing way. Backed by a first-rate rhythm section headed by the very supportive Tommy Flanagan, Jordan—a former associate

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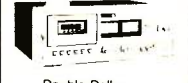
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of Kenny Dorham, Charles Mingus, and Max Roach—moves with the greatest of ease through a good program of Bird, ballads, and blues. He has always shown an affinity for the last, and one of his most interesting albums is the 1965 "These Are My Roots" (Atlantic 1444), which, with one exception, consisted of tunes by Leadbelly. Jordan's *Blues for Muse* (he calls it *Blues for . . .* and fills in whatever name happens to be suitable at the time of performance) features his flute and alto and provides one of the highlights of "The Adventurer." Clifford Jordan does indeed know where his roots lie, and he is not afraid to bare them. *C.A.*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK: SOUNDS OF THE APPLE (see Best of the Month, page 71)

SPYRO GYRA: *Catching the Sun*. Spyro Gyra (vocals and instrumentals). *Catching the Sun; Cockatoo; Autumn of Our Love; Laser Material; Percolator*; and four others. MCA MCA-5108 \$7.98, © MCAT-5108 \$7.98, © MCAC-5108 \$7.98.

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

Spyro Gyra plays "pop jazz"; they combine some leftover tonal ideas (Juilliard School circa 1966) with current synthesizer tomfoolery—the kind of "adventure" music you hear on soundtracks of cops-and-robbers TV series. Occasionally a solo by guest trumpeter Randy Brecker leaps out with real jazz clarity, humor, and common sense in the midst of the silliness, much as a Bix Beiderbecke solo does on a 1920s Paul Whiteman recording. But if you approach Spyro Gyra's music as light entertainment instead of jazz, you may enjoy it. *J.V.*

CAL TJADER: *La Onda Va Bien*. Cal Tjader (vibraphone); Mark Levine (piano, Fender Rhodes); Roger Glenn (flute, percussion); Vince Lateano (drums, percussion); Rob Fisher (bass); Poncho Sanchez (congas, percussion). *Speak Low; Star Eyes; Mambo Mindoro; I Remember You; Linda Chicana*; and three others. CONCORD JAZZ PICANTE CJP-113 \$7.98.

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

Cal Tjader's career began in the Bay Area of California during the Fifties, when the vibraphone and his combination of Latin rhythms with jazz improvisation were considered exciting novelties. "Latin jazz" is now accepted—although only lately—as a hybrid art form, and this has as much to do with changing social attitudes as it does with the music. Like many good musicians, Tjader has had to wait for trends to catch up with him.

Tjader's playing is as delicate but as strong as a bird's wing. The imagination is still there, backed by more than thirty years' experience. It should be emphasized, however, that the Latin component in Tjader's West Coast sound is South American and Mexican, in contrast to the Eastern (New York) Latin sound based on Cuban rhythms and a primarily Puerto Rican culture. Nonetheless, within this context, Tjader's music is thoroughly cosmopolitan and integrated, the work of a master. *J.V.*

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JULY 1980

Simels Live

By Steve Simels



L'il Queenie and the Percolators

Jan Cadoret

TREND BUCKING

BEING musically fashionable is a funny business. Right now, for instance, although conventional wisdom has it that as a result of the New Wave virtually *anything* goes, certain styles are far more fashionable than others, especially with the critics. Conventional wisdom is, in fact, accurate only up to a point. Yes, the club scene both here and in the U.K. is bustling and incredibly open; yes, a new band can get away with playing just about whatever it wants—which is why we have all these Sixties-influenced pop outfits around (the Jags, the Sorrows) and another Blues revival to deal with (the Fabulous Thunderbirds, the Nighthawks). Still, most of the younger critics have had their sensibilities shaped by the visionary artists; they're Futurists who have taken Bob Dylan to heart (he who is not busy being born is busy dying, etc.). The result is that the bands getting the biggest hypes these days are the overtly experimental ones.

I have mixed feelings about this. On the one hand, I don't want to be anti-progress, but on the other I'm not entirely sanguine that rock-and-roll as a form is broad enough to support well-meant attempts to make it something other than what it is. I think a good case can be made for the contention that innovation for its own sake is mere busy work, rhetoric (some of it very impressive) without genuine content. If you listen to most of the records made by the consciously avant-garde bands of the Sixties (Clear Light, anyone?) you'll find that they've dated fatally in ways that the ones by groups with organic connections to the rock mainstream haven't.

Writers who have a vested interest in all this are currently lined up behind three major trends. The first is the punk/free-jazz fusion Lester Bangs predicted in these pages last year. The second is a kind of minimalist heavy metal with reggae underpinnings, typified (at its avant-garde extreme) by the Gang of Four and (more commercially) by the Police. And the third is the ska revival, which is still mostly an English phenomenon.

Of course, there's a good deal of Big Apple provincialism in all this. Rock writers have a tendency to forget that there's a

whole world out there that doesn't read the *Village Voice* and even (bite your tongue!) pretty much ignores *them*. Take—case in point—New Orleans. I'm sure there's New Wave music being made there, but it's a place so steeped in its own rich, old musical traditions that, like Nashville, Memphis, or Detroit, it's never going to be a place where they worry about the Future too much.

And *that's* why I went to see L'il Queenie and the Percolators (one of that city's hotter local attractions) at Kenny's Castaways recently with a vague feeling of dread: I suspected they were sitting ducks for the critics. Friends of mine from Louisiana had raved about their brand of Southern r-&b with jazz and disco overtones seasoned by the inimitable regional gumbo of, say, Allen Toussaint. I know that lots of real people like that sort of thing, but I was worried about how the local press would take it.

I needn't have worried. Not only did the band go down a storm with the aforementioned real people, but evidently the entire New York music-business and critical establishments turned out to cheer. One big critical gun, John Rockwell of the *New York Times* (a man not given to prognostication or hyperbole), even devoted one of his weekly columns to predicting overnight stardom for them. Sometimes, it seems, it pays to be defiantly unfashionable.

IT also pays to be genuinely talented, which this band most certainly is. The Percolators have a wonderfully relaxed, funky groove to wallow in; they don't play swamp music *à la* John Fogerty, but they *do* sound like the bayou. And L'il Queenie herself (Leigh Harris in real life) is something of a marvel: a virtuoso jazz singer with rock-and-roll in her veins and the pipes and phrasing of a great gospel belter. She's already being compared to Janis Joplin—which she rightfully deplores: her range is infinitely wider and she's a far better, more disciplined singer technically. But it does testify to the remarkably emotive quality of her work; even her scat singing has soul. In sum, this is pretty wonderful stuff. I can't predict when the band will come to your town, but I suggest you check them out when they do. □

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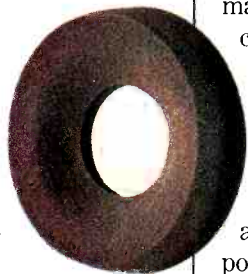
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