

HIGH FIDELITY

MARCH 1975 \$1.00
08398

Ravel's Music on Records

LAB TEST REPORTS
 Marantz Model 1070 amplifier
 Sony TAE-8450 preamp
 Yamaha CT-7000 tuner
 Sherwood S-7310 receiver
 Koss Phase/2 headphones

How to Understand Amplifier Ads

Today's Jargon Explained

HF LTH3G4424C009 OCT 76 1 03
 MR C LATHAN
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Receivers the world

Pioneer believes that any objective comparison of quality/performance/price between our new SX-1010, SX-939 and SX-838 AM-FM stereo receivers and any other fine receivers will overwhelmingly indicate Pioneer's outstanding superiority and value.

Our most powerful ever.

Pioneer uses the most conservative power rating standard: minimum continuous power output per channel into 8 ohm loads, across the full audio spectrum from 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz.

Despite this conservatism, the SX-1010 far surpasses any unit that has come before it with an unprecedented 100 watts of power per channel, minimum RMS, at no more than 0.1% total harmonic distortion. Closely following are the SX-939 (70 watts RMS per channel, minimum) and the SX-838 (50 watts RMS per channel, minimum), both with no more than 0.3% total harmonic distortion. Dual power supplies driving direct-coupled circuitry maintain consistent high power output with positive stability. A fail-

safe circuit protects speakers and circuitry against damage from overloading.

Outstanding specifications for flawless reception

FM reception poses no challenge to the exceptionally advanced circuitry of these fine instruments. Their FM tuner sections are designed with MOS FETs, ceramic filters and phase lock loop circuitry. The result is remarkable sensitivity selectivity and capture ratio that brings in stations effortlessly, clearly and with maximum channel separation.

	SX-1010	SX-939	SX-838
FM Sensitivity (IHF) (the lower the better)	1.7uV	1.8uV	1.8uV
Selectivity (the higher the better)	90dB	80dB	30dB
Capture Ratio (the lower the better)	1dB	1dB	1dB
Signal/Noise Ratio (the higher the better)	72dB	70dB	70dB

Total versatility plus innovations

Only your listening interests limit the capabilities of these extraordinary receivers. They have terminals for every conceivable accommodation: records, tape, microphones, headsets — plus Dolby and 4-channel multiplex connectors. Completely unique on the SX-1010 and SX-939 is tape-to-tape duplication while listening simultaneously to another program source. The SX-338 innovates with its Recording



The finest stereo receiver has ever known.



There can be only one best.





3,025 possible tonal compensations with unique twin stepped tone controls (SX-1010, SX-939)

Maximum input/output capability (SX-1010 shown)

Selector that permits FM recording while listening to records and vice versa. Up to three pairs of speakers may be connected to each model.

ultra wide tuning dial, FM and audio muting, loudness contour, hi/low filters, dual tuning meters and a dial dimmer.

SX-1010 — \$699.95; SX-939 — \$599.95, SX-838 — \$499.95. Prices include walnut cabinets.

INPUTS	SX-1010	SX-939	SX-838
Tape monitor/4-ch. adaptor	3	2	2
Phono	2	2	2
Microphone	2	2	1
Auxiliary	1	1	1
Noise reduction	1	1	1
OUTPUTS			
Speakers	3	3	3
Tape Rec./4-ch. adaptor	3	2	2
Headsets	2	2	1
Noise reduction	1	1	1
4-channel MPX	1	1	1

Never before used on a receiver are the twin stepped bass and treble tone controls found on the SX-1010 and SX-939. They offer over 3,000 tonal variations. A tone defeat switch provides flat response instantly throughout the audio spectrum. The SX-838 features switched turnover bass and treble controls for more precise tonal compensation for room acoustics and other program source characteristics.

In addition to these new units, Pioneer offers three equally outstanding receiver values at more modest prices. SX-626 (\$339.95), SX-525 (\$259.95) and SX-424 (\$199.95), with walnut cabinets.

U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 75 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, New Jersey 07074.

West: 13300 S. Estrella, Los Angeles 90248 / Midwest: 1500 Greenleaf, Elk Grove Village, Ill. 60007 / Canada: S. H. Parker Co.

Master control system capability

Pioneer's engineers have surpassed themselves with a combination of control features never before found in a single receiver. All three units include: pushbutton function selection with illuminated readouts on the

In their respective price ranges, these are unquestionably the finest values in stereo receivers the world has ever known. Audition their uniqueness at your Pioneer dealer.

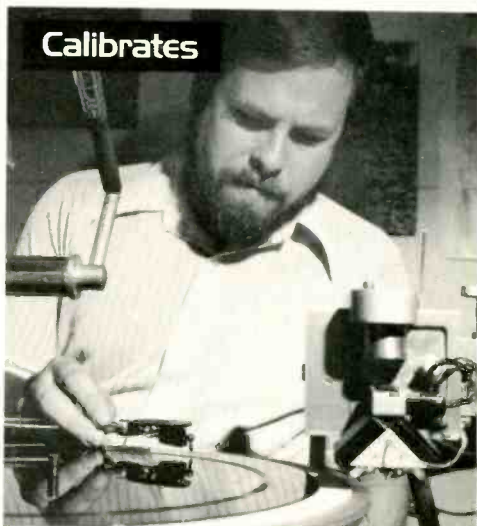


PIONEER

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CIRCLE 31 ON READER-SERVICE CARD





Capitol Records Calibrates · Evaluates · Approves · Tests · Repairs · Quality Controls · and Reviews with the Stanton 681 Cartridge Series

The physical process of making phonograph records is not for amateurs. It is a job for craftsmen of the highest order, craftsmen who know exactly what they are doing. Naturally, they need the precisely right tools to do the job.

In the case of Capitol Records, the highest quality tools are employed throughout the process. That is why Stanton 681 Calibration Standard Series Cartridges are used, with various styli that are designed specifically for each critical measuring and listening job.

It has proven to be a great advantage to Capitol Records to standardize their entire operation with the 681 Series and three basic styli:

The D6807A — for cutting system check-outs.

The D6800EEE (our famous Triple-E) — for the most critical listening.

The D6872AMC — for tough nickel-plated "mothers".

The Stanton 681 Calibration Standard Series enjoys almost universal acceptance throughout the Recording

Industry. After all, it was created in order to satisfy the need for a cartridge of sufficient sophistication to be used as a primary Calibration Standard in system check-outs for linearity and equalization. Stanton Magnetics met this need by producing an "absolute" cartridge standard . . . stereo cartridges of such linearity and overall quality as to gain immediate acceptance within the Recording and Broadcasting Industries.

The fact that Capitol has selected the Stanton 681 Calibration Standard Series for use throughout its operation is a testament to its quality.

All Stanton Calibration Standard Cartridges are guaranteed to meet specifications within exacting limits. Their warranty comes packed with each unit . . . the calibration test results for that individual cartridge.

Whether your usage involves Recording, Broadcasting or Home Entertainment, you can enjoy professional audio quality with Stanton Products.



Write today for further information to Stanton Magnetics, Inc., Terminal Drive, Plainview, N. Y. 11803.

CIRCLE 30 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

March 1975
VOL. 25 NO. 3

HIGH FIDELITY

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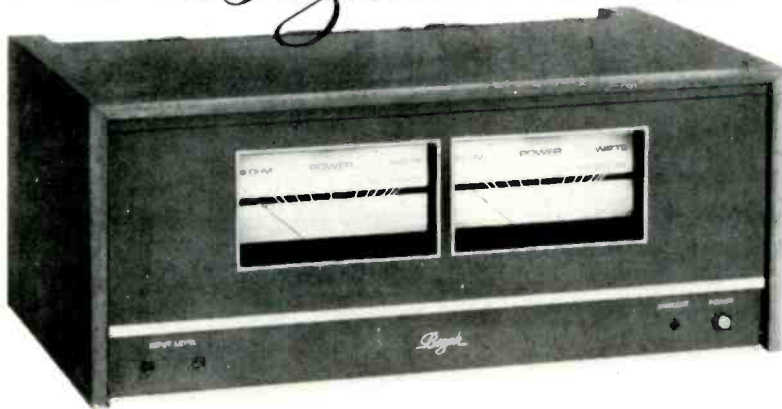


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At last! An amplifier fine enough to wear the *Bozak*[®] name



For years Bozak has been designing and building audio amplifiers with the uncompromising performance, power and reliability required for sound reinforcement systems used by major symphonies across the country, from the New York Philharmonic to the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra.

Now Bozak introduces the Model 929, based on experience gained in building fine commercial amplifiers but designed specifically for use in the home music systems of those whose goal is perfection in sound.

The Model 929 Amplifier features:

- ▣ Continuous minimum sine wave power: 150 watts per channel into 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000 hertz at less than 0.2% total harmonic distortion.
- ▣ Instant, noiseless on/off.
- ▣ Direct-coupled output to eliminate transformer distortion.
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- ▣ Overheat protection.
- ▣ Electronic circuit protection—no fuses in the output circuitry.
- ▣ Individual input adjustments for each channel.
- ▣ Ready for "bi-amp" operation.
- ▣ The Bozak nameplate.

Designed and manufactured in Bozak's own plant, Model 929 has to be heard to be believed—particularly in conjunction with the new Bozak Monitor-C speaker system. You can do so at selected Bozak dealers. We'll gladly send you their names.



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The ultimate others only approach.

An exceptional turntable requires the match of precision, refined strength and sensitivity. The Thorens TD-125 AB Mark II electronic transcription turntable has achieved the ultimate in this delicate balance.

At its heart is the most precise electronic control circuitry known to man. The solid state 2-phase Wien Bridge oscillator is impervious to variations in the frequency or amplitude of line current in your home. Even in today's uncertain energy environment, constant and precise platter rotation are ensured. And typical of Thorens' attention to detail, speed selection is accomplished with a gold plated switch.

We've harnessed the strength of Thorens' unique 16-pole synchronous motor by reducing the motor speed from

450 rpm to an exceedingly low 210 rpm. This reduces rumble to inaudibility.

The dynamically balanced 7.1 lbs. turntable platter vastly diminishes the wow and flutter caused by any momentary variations in pitch.

But strength must be tempered with sensitivity. To minimize acoustic feedback caused by vibration, a highly refined split-level suspension system isolates the tonearm and platter from a chassis housing the drive system.

All of this attention to detail is further evidenced in the TD-125 AB Mark II's ultimate tonearm. Unlike many high quality tonearms which employ springs or counterweights for anti-skating compensation, the Thorens TP-16 gimbal suspension tonearm utilizes a frictionless, magnetic system to

guarantee precise stylus contact in the absolute center of the record groove at all times.

This then, is the unique combination of excellence that defines perfection in turntable design and performance. And the reason Stereo Review said, "... This beautiful instrument provides a mark for others to aim at."

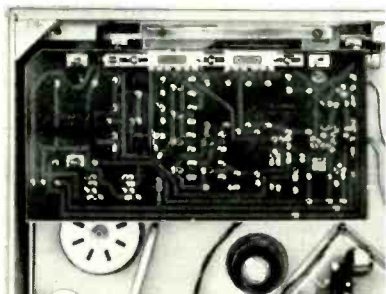
If owning the ultimate in sound equipment is important to you, owning the Thorens TD-125 AB Mark II is inevitable. Why not now?

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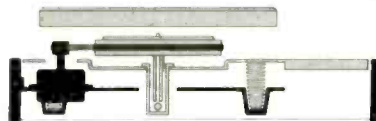
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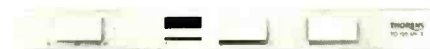
Wien Bridge oscillator assures precise speed control. Incorporates highly reliable, micro-miniaturized IC chips.



The TP-16 aerospace tonearm combines the gimbal suspension system with frictionless, magnetic anti-skating control.



Split-level suspension system isolates the tonearm and platter from the drive system for shock-free operation.



Simplified operation with all controls conveniently accessible on the front panel. Features sliding lever cueing control.



The belt-driven 16-pole synchronous motor provides almost instant start-up. Precise speed in 1.5 seconds!

The Nakamichi Revolution.



The Cornerstone.

The Nakamichi 1000 Tri-Tracer Cassette System, an achievement of such significance that it created a virtual revolution in cassette recording.

The first cassette deck to employ a true three head configuration—separate erase, record and playback heads—the Nakamichi 1000 attains a level of performance that rivals that of professional reel-to-reel recorders.

In every important respect, extended frequency response, wow and flutter, speed stability, distortion and signal-to-noise ratio, the Nakamichi 1000 sets new performance standards.

In fact, the performance capabilities of the 1000 are so awesome that High Fidelity (August 1973) characterized them as, "... well beyond the capability range of cassette decks as we've come to know them and into a range that makes possible professional applications that would be virtually unthinkable otherwise."

Get in the forefront of the revolution now.

For complete information and the name of your nearest dealer write: Nakamichi Research (U.S.A.) Inc., 220 Westbury Avenue, Carle Place, N.Y. 11514. In California: 1101 Colorado Avenue, Santa Monica 90404.

PERFECTION THROUGH PRECISION.



NAKAMICHI

letters

Black Ball

Gene Lees, in a parenthetic remark in his December column, mentions that he does not know how Bola Sete got his nickname. In the liner notes to "Bola Sete at the Monterey Jazz Festival" (Verve V6 8689) Herb Wong noted that the seven ball is "the single black ball in the game of billiards as played in Brazil."

Wong further wrote that Bola Sete (whose real name is Djalma de Andrade) got the nickname when he was "... the only Negro member of a small jazz group in South America." Anyone who has ever seen Bola Sete in concert can understand why the name stuck.

Stephen N. Gross
Hackensack, N.J.

For the Record

Like all record companies, Nonesuch noted with pleasure the fitting tribute to William Schwann in the October 1974 issue of HIGH FIDELITY. Our pleasure was considerably diminished, however, by a statement of Mr. Schwann's charging us with imprecise labeling. To a company long reputed for getting facts straight and communicating them accurately and clearly, this is no small accusation.

As it happens, the imprecision is Mr. Schwann's, not Nonesuch's. According to his statement, Nonesuch released a disc "purporting to be the Mozart Symphony in G. But there are numerous Mozart symphonies in G, so which one was it? ... It turned out to be not a symphony at all, but movements 3, 5, and 7 of one of the serenades." Nonesuch has never issued such a record. We assume that Mr. Schwann was referring to Nonesuch H 71047, which contains Mozart's Symphony in G minor, K. 550 (correctly designated as such), and a work titled "Symphony in D, after the Posthorn Serenade, K. 320." Edward Tattall Canby's liner notes set forth the relevant facts behind this second (admittedly odd) title; briefly put, the story is as follows:

Mozart turned a handful of his larger serenades into symphonies, usually by no more complicated a process than dropping the dance-derived and concertante movements from the original works. The symphony recorded in the above album by the Gürzenich Symphony Orchestra of Cologne conducted by Günter Wand is one instance of this, consisting as it does of movements 1, 5, and 7 (not 3, 5, and 7) of the *Posthorn Serenade*. The authenticity of the music in this form was accepted by the *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*; indeed, in the interim since the Nonesuch record was originally released, further proof of authenticity has appeared with the discovery of a set of parts prepared under the composer's supervision.

The Schwann catalogue's listing of this recording as "excerpts" (under Mozart: Serenade No. 9 in D, K. 320, "Posthorn Serenade") is in fact erroneous. In keeping with the pursuit of scrupulous accuracy shared by Mr. Schwann, the editors and readers of HIGH FIDELITY, and ourselves—among others—we feel this to be a useful occasion to set the subject straight.

Teresa Sterne
Director, Nonesuch Records
New York, N.Y.

Mr. Schwann replies: The Schwann catalogue has, for over twenty-five years, catalogued over 10,000 records each year (not 1,000 as erroneously stated in HIGH FIDELITY's article about us) from over 800 record and 270 tape labels. Occasionally new-release information sent to us is incomplete, obscure, inaccurate, or puzzling and leaves much for which we must put together the available pieces. It is impossible for us to write constantly to hundreds of record companies to check small details in advance release information they send us.

It is unfortunate that the only example of problems that arise (and not the best one either) which was reported in the HIGH FIDELITY article concerned one of Nonesuch's releases, *Movements 1, 5, and 7 of Mozart's Posthorn Serenade* may well have been performed as a "Symphony in D." However, the music still is movements 1, 5, and 7 of the *Posthorn Serenade*. We so listed it first in our May 1965 catalogue, with no comments from Nonesuch until now.

Similarly, when Telefunken issued *Missa 1733 by Bach* on its number 9581, we listed it under *Bach's Mass in B minor*, as the *Kyrie and Gloria*, which it is and which is the way most people would know it. Otherwise an unsuspecting customer who already had the *B minor Mass* might feel annoyed at the record company and the Schwann catalogue for causing him to buy a record that he already had in a more complete version. The same applies to Nonesuch's *Symphony in D*.

Record manufacturers do not pay us for the listings and nationwide publicity they receive in our monthly publications, listings that repeat month after month at our expense as long as the record is available. We appreciate the cooperation of the many hundreds of record manufacturers—including Nonesuch, to whom we send good wishes on its tenth anniversary.

In "Schwann at 25" [October], you quote Mr. Schwann as saying: "We think things should be listed that are currently available to record shops, so we exclude all the Musical Heritage Society records available only by mail order. ... This is ironic, because it is the small labels that I would most like to help."

The omission of MHS recordings (and I am sure similar, smaller labels) is the only feature of Schwann that has bothered me over the years. Mr. Schwann says they are not available in record shops. I could send him a page-length list of shops, large and small, that carry at least some MHS discs.

MHS makes available hundreds of good and great European recordings that would be forever "lost" to the American audience otherwise. In championing the "obscure" recording, MHS has helped encourage some major commercial labels to undertake similar fare. I would love to make all those who are uninformed aware of such fine alternatives to major-label recordings as MHS' recording of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, a superlative Franck symphony under Jean Martinon, and so much more. But Mr. Schwann could do the job so much more easily—all he has to do is list their 2,000-odd recordings. Would it be all that difficult? Come on, Mr. Schwann, this time you have made a serious omission.

Tom Veilleux
Brookfield, Conn.

This is what makes the Sansui 771 so great: Specs. Features. Looks. And Price.

Sansui, already famous for quality and value has again outdone itself with the 771 receiver. Look at the specs: 35 watts per channel, min. RMS both channels driven into 8 Ohms, 20 Hz to 20 kHz, at below 0.5% Total Harmonic Distortion — more than enough to power two pair of speaker systems. FM sensitivity of $2.0\mu\text{V}$ (IHF).

Look at the features: two tape monitors, two auxiliary inputs, three pairs of speaker selectors, two filters (hi & lo) and more — even a microphone circuit. Visit your nearest Sansui franchised dealer and listen to the tremendous Sansui 771. Then listen to the price.



Sansui

SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.

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SANSUI ELECTRIC CO., LTD., Tokyo, Japan • SANSUI AUDIO EUROPE S.A., Antwerp, Belgium
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Our new series is so advanced, we expect our first customers to be Audio Research & Crown.

They'll haul it back to their labs. And play it. And play with it. And in general, examine it to pieces to find out How We Did It.

Sony's Vertical Field Effect Transistors: What our competitors are eating their hearts out about.

It's a shame the term "state of the art" has been worn ragged in dozens of "This is It, this is finally and really It" stereo ads. Because anyone in the business will tell you that V-FET's are the biggest thing since the invention of the vacuum tube. V-FET's combine all of the advantages of both triode vacuum tubes and conventional transistors. With none of their disadvantages.

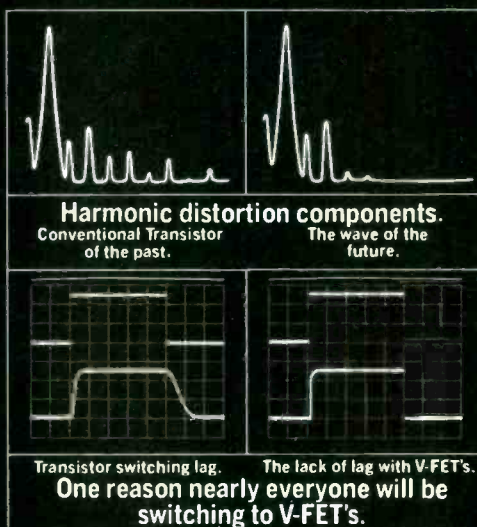
But nobody else can take advantage of these advantages yet. Ask anybody else how their V-FET's are coming. The responses will range from a forthright and candid "we're working on it," to an equally forthright and candid "buzz off." Sony is the first company in the world making commercially available equipment with V-FET's. A power-amp and integrated amp.

Herewith a partial and oversimplified explanation of just what in the world we're talking about.

Triode vacuum tubes: Pros and cons.

To belabor the obvious for a moment, in amplifiers, the name of the game is distortion. And until now triode vacuum tubes have yielded the lowest levels around. That's because of their non-saturating voltage versus current characteristics. Also, they do not suffer from carrier storage effect (which is standard equipment with regular transistors, and causes notch distortion and deterioration in transient response).

So much for the good points of tubes. They also tend to be inefficient, begin to deteriorate as soon as you use them, and wear out. Their high impedance characteristics generally require an output transformer to drive the speakers. And there's no way you can set up a true complementary circuit with vacuum tubes, so there's no way you can get true wave form symmetry.



Conventional Bi-polar transistors: Pros and cons.

The advantages of bi-polar transistors can be dealt with in a sentence. They're very reliable, very efficient and last almost forever. But there are a number of bugs in the ointment.

Bi-polar transistors can become saturated with current. And they all cause switching lag distortion. To obtain acceptably low levels of distortion, plus wide frequency response, you need to pump in a lot of negative feedback. Which can make the amp unstable.

Plus (at no extra charge), as they heat up, bi-polar transistors have a

marked tendency toward thermal runaway (which is a fancy way of saying they try to self-destruct).

V-FET's: All pros. And that's no con.

First off, V-FET's are very reliable, very efficient and last almost forever. They also match the highly defined tonal quality previously provided only by vacuum tubes. V-FET's don't become saturated with current. But at the same time, they protect themselves as temperatures build up. So there's no possibility of thermal runaway. Their low impedance characteristics mean no output transformer (the less gizmos in the circuit, the better the sound). The use of V-FET's allows for better control of negative feedback, making the amp more stable. V-FET's don't have carrier storage effect to cause switching lag. And you can use V-FET's to build a true complementary circuit, thus obtaining true wave form symmetry. And isn't that what it's really all about?

One more thing. We'd be less than forthright and candid if we didn't admit that our new amplifiers are a bit pricey. As much as \$1300 a piece.

At Sony, we've always maintained that, in the end, the best way to buy equipment is to hear it for yourself. So we're making what's probably the best offer you've ever heard. Have your dealer hook up our new V-FET equipment against *anything* made by *anybody*. If we sound sure of ourselves, we are.

And we're sure your own ears will tell you we've got the best sound you've ever heard.

SONY®

CIRCLE 35 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Discwasher is the only superior record cleaner.

Total protection
for the price of
three records.

Available at finer
audio dealers
nationwide
for \$15.00



discwasher inc., 909 University, Columbia, Missouri

Garrard's Nonchangers

Even a (relative) kid like me can remember the old, reliable Garrard TMK II manual player of the '50s and the briefly popular (and more sophisticated) 4HF of a decade or so ago. (I still have one of them, in fact.)

Yet, in a photo caption on page 63 of your October issue, you say: "Garrard Zero 100SB is one of two auto single-play units, the first nonchangers ever offered here by the British company, though it has made manuals for years." What happened to my trusted friend, HF?

William C. Parker
Prospect, N.Y.

The audio-video editor replies: By George, you've right. Our memory of these now-historic models was obscured by the striking facts of the more recent past, during which Garrard's European prestige was based largely or solely on one or two excellent manual turntables that were sold without arm, while during the same period all Garrards here were changers.

Second Time Around

I was surprised that the October review of the Vivaldi concertos for two orchestras on Telefunken SAWT 9600 did not mention that apparently the same performances may be found on Seraphim S 60118. Doesn't your "reissue" classification apply to this case? Surely since the Seraphim disc is about half the price of the Telefunken you owe this information to your readers.

J. Lewis
Edmonton, Alta.

They do indeed appear to be the same performances, in which case the "reissue" designation does apply.

Clifford F. Gilmore, usually the best-informed of reviewers, fails to note [November] that the new Telefunken recording of Fux's *Concentus musico instrumentalis* has been available for some years in the same firm's boxed set titled "Musik am habsburgischen Kaiserhof" (SAWT 9563/4).

Like many lovers of old music, I normally buy all the new Telefunken releases as soon as they appear. But Telefunken has the habit of slipping old recordings into new wrappings; buyers are well advised to check the production date on the lower-right corner of the back of the sleeve. If the date is a few years old and the disc is not one issued by license from another company, watch out—you may have the record already in another guise. In fact you may have it already, even if it is a licensed recording from another European label.

Edward Mendelson
New Haven, Conn.

Ahead of Their Time

We were interested in your report, "Advent's Cassette 'Records'" ["News and Views," October], regarding Advent's new chromium dioxide recorded cassettes.

We have been duplicating on chromium dioxide tape, with Dolby-B processing (and at 4:1 speed), for over two and a half years. It seemed the obvious thing to do at the time. We hope that it won't take another two and a half

years for the rest of the industry to see the light.

Raymond Creely
High Fidelity Recording, Inc.
Wichita, Kans.

Stokowski's Brandenburg No. 5

In "The Hyphenated Stokowski" [November] R. D. Darrell states, "[Stokowski] was also rumored to have recorded around this time [1960] the Bach *Brandenburg No. 5* and a batch of Bach transcriptions ... none of which, as far as I know, ever actually appeared."

The *Brandenburg No. 5* (along with three chorale-prelude transcriptions) surfaced on Columbia MS 6313, with Fernando Valenti,

Anshel Brusilow, and the incomparable William Kincaid contributing to what must be the slowest-ever recorded reading of this masterpiece. Columbia lists a timing of 25:48; it sounds like an eternity.

William H. Eisenberger
Kirkwood, Mo.

Truth in Labeling

As a loyal and long-time subscriber to HF/MA, I look forward to its monthly appearance in my mailbox. The record reviews have been most helpful in assembling an extensive and, I think, fine collection. And I should have waited for your review of the record I now complain about before buying it.

I am a devoted fan of mezzo Janet Baker (wish you'd do a feature on this superb artist).



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Therefore any disc I come across bearing the Baker name is quickly snapped up. Imagine my delight last week when I spied an album with a lovely picture of my heroine and the title "The Artistry of Janet Baker." It is an Everest release with compositions by Gustav Holst and Gerald Finzi—in "quad" sound, too, said the liner.

I regret to say that Ms. Baker's audible contribution consists of a few solo bars at the beginning and end of the Holst *Choral Fantasia*. Probably she sings in the chorus, but the recording (which sounds like a rechanneling) hides that. Tenor Wilfred Brown solos through practically all of Side 2 in the Finzi—pleasant music it is and sung well enough. But it isn't my Janet!

Everest has a decent record, and one that should interest Holst fans and those who wish to sample the work of the English composer Finzi. But to call it "The Artistry of Janet Baker" is a clear deception and completely misleading. Please, Everest, let's have some "truth in labeling."

Jack Burke
Chicago, Ill.

Bartók's Recordings

A correction to Robert P. Morgan's October review of the Turnabout disc of Bartók playing his own piano works: Inasmuch as Bartók died in 1945, these recordings could scarcely have been made in the "late '40s" as the listing says. They were in fact cut around 1941 and issued originally on a 78-rpm set, Continental 102.

For those interested in Bartók the performer, Schwann continues to list three discs as currently available: *Odyssey 32 16 0220* (nineteen *Mikrokosmos* excerpts, *Contrasts* with Szigeti and Benny Goodman), *Turnabout TV 4159* (Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion, excerpts from *Ten Easy Pieces* and *For Children*), and a piano miscellany on Bartók Records 903, an intriguing collection including early performances of Scarlatti and Liszt.

Bartók was a superb pianist; he finished second only to Wilhelm Backhaus in the Rubinstein Piano Competition of 1905.

Gary E. Hammond
Hacienda Heights, Calif.

And don't forget the 1940 Library of Congress recital with Joseph Szigeti, on *Vanguard Everyman SRV 304/5*.

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CIRCLE 44 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Colorado Jazz Party

THE TREES ON that leafy Denver street were taking on the yellow fringe of autumn, though the sunlight pouring into it was still warm. It was a weird scene: Heaped on the lawn and sidewalk and up the steps onto the porch of what can best be described as a modest mansion were innumerable suitcases and, more to the point, instrument cases of telltale shape—approximations in black of saxophones, trombones, basses, and (good heavens!) a tuba. Wandering back and forth or sitting on the steps, giving each other vast and heartfelt greetings, were some of the giants of American music: Clark Terry, Herb Ellis, Carl Fontana, Sarah Vaughan, Panama Francis, and, among others, Red Callender, proprietor of the tuba.

One wondered what some of the earlier visitors to this house would have thought of all these musicians and the music that was already pouring from the place, built by the colorful Harry Tammen of *Denver Post* fame. William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt, both friends of Tammen's, used to practice speeches from the landing on the stairs (which ever since has been known as the Presidents' Pulpit), aiming them, presumably, at friends and family down in the inlaid living room—it was no doubt a salon in those days. Now the place was awash with jazz.

How did jazz invade the Tammen house? Well, the house is now owned by an Alabama-born investment banker named Richard Gibson, who, in some circles at least, is more legendary than Harry Tammen ever was.

The legend goes something like this: There's this rich nut in Denver who helped to start the Water Pik, and he throws this three-day-long party for jazz musicians in Colorado, and all your expenses are paid, and you can even bring your wife, and you're treated like royalty.

The reality, as usual, is richer and more interesting than legend. Gibson is a white-haired, heavyset, pink-skinned man of fifty with eyes that combine a shrewd appraising calm with muted sadness. He is gifted with a luxuriant eloquence that he uses casually, almost

thoughtlessly. One is unsurprised to learn that he once taught creative writing at the University of Alabama, although finance is his thing. It is quite true that he set up the corporation that first manufactured the Water Pik and was later sold for \$23 million.

When some years ago Gibson settled in Denver after living in New York City, he found that the two things he missed were the ocean and jazz. "Gibson decided," said his fortyish and pretty wife, Maddie, who has the odd habit of calling him by his surname, "that he couldn't do anything about the ocean but that he could do something about the jazz. He could bring *that* to Colorado."

As it happens, he was also fed up with the way jazz was being treated by the media, for which he harbors a steady and reasoned hostility. So, first of all, he founded the World's Greatest Jazz Band, utilizing some of the major talents in traditional jazz, financing it, recording it, and sending it on its way. He also started his jazz party, at first in Aspen twelve years ago, later in Vail, and finally in Colorado Springs. Aspen and Vail were abandoned because they are hours by road from Denver and—since the Gibsons are as generous with libation as they are with admiration—many

of the musicians were basket cases by the time they got there. "We had to shovel them off the bus," Maddie said laughing.

The listening guests at the party, held as a rule on Labor Day weekend, *must* be invited, and they must be able to afford the very stiff tab. Gibson wants no more than about five hundred people in the audience, and with forty-five musicians at this last party, most of them accompanied by their wives, their hotel bill alone ran to \$12,000. Gibson figures out what the party costs and divides it among the listeners, half of whom are from Colorado and the rest from as far off as Australia. He has no interest in making a profit, only in covering his costs.

"One of the requisites for being invited," Maddie said, "is that you be able to handle your liquor. Anyone who gets out of line is never invited again."

"The party is really for the musicians," Gibson said, "and they know it. The others are allowed to listen."

The result is one of the finest, one of the most comfortable, one of the most exciting, the happiest, and certainly the most unusual musical events it has ever been my privilege to attend—as far from the overblown exploitive jazz festival, at



The 1974 Colorado jazz party was preceded by this informal session in the Gibsons' living room, where family members and guests gathered to hear, from left, trombonists Al Grey, Bill Watrous, Carl Fontana, and Frank Rosolino, pianist Roger Kellaway, bassist Larry Ridley, and drummer Alan Dawson. At top right are hosts Richard Gibson and wife Maddie.

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WHEN LISTENING BECOMES AN ART
CIRCLE 10 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

which the musicians arrive wearily, play briefly, and leave town as quickly as possible, as one could imagine. They attend Gibson's party for their own pleasure, and they stay all weekend. And you do *not* hear what you hear at most jazz festivals—this group or that doing what it usually does or playing what its recordings have made obligatory. At Gibson's event, you hear some of the great artists in American music doing what they *don't* normally do. They love it, and so does the audience, which listens in breathless silence and then explodes into applause and whistling and standing ovations.

Gibson himself—who has more perception of and insight into American jazz than any layman I have ever met—plans the programs, putting together the various impromptu bands. "It's a complex process," he said. "You have to imagine the music in your head. How will this musician interact with that? Would Carl Fontana or Frank Rosolino be better in this group? And, although it may not be immediately apparent, the entire program is integral: What happens Friday is pertinent to what happens Sunday afternoon. I'm not always right, but I think I hit about 80%." He hits probably more than that, and since there are twenty-six hours of music this is a remarkable feat of aesthetic imagination. Not surprisingly, it takes Gibson about a month.

Among the things you wouldn't hear at other musical events were the duets of this past party: alto saxophonists Benny Carter and Phil Woods; Red Callender and Major Holley setting aside their basses to play a pair of tubas; and piano duets by Dick Hyman and Roger Kellaway that proved so exciting that Gibson sent out for remote recording equipment, set aside a morning for a replay, and got enough material on tape for two superb albums.

About the only thing to be said against Gibson's party is that it is exhausting. It begins at his house Thursday afternoon when the musicians, some of whom have been coming back for years, arrive. They are dispersed and quartered at the homes of Gibson's friends on that block. The stately homes are so filled with fold-out beds and cots that they resemble exceptionally luxurious dormitories.

The music begins about as soon as the musicians can unpack their horns. They play till they're tired, and then they sleep. Next day they bus it to Colorado Springs and the Broadmoor Hotel, in the afternoon shadow of the Rockies. The music is presented in a chandeliered and gold-draped ballroom, behind which there is a large room set up as a tavern for the musicians, who spend more time socializing there than they do playing. Laughter echoes constantly in that room.

The formal party ends Sunday at 7 p.m., after which the musicians go back to Gibson's in Denver and start playing again. There I heard three of the greatest trombonists on this planet playing together and enjoying each other's work: Carl Fontana, Bill Watrous, and Frank Rosolino.

By then we were all running down. I sat with Gibson in his den upstairs as he remembered how he used to slip away to what in those days was called a "colored" neighborhood in Mobile, because his best friend's father was head of the Colored Firemen's Band. "It swung," Gibson said. "I didn't even know the word then, but it did, and I was enthralled by it." There he met Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter, Edmond Hall, and Oscar "Papa" Celestin. "I loved that music, and I have never stopped loving it."

When he grew a little older his mother told him he must give up playing with colored children. "I had never heard the word bigotry," he said. "But that's what it was. My mother said that when I was older I would understand. I wanted her to explain it to me now, for I was genuinely baffled, but she only smiled. It was a rather complacent smile, which makes her sound worse than she was. Most Northerners think of that kind of bigotry as a lot of people sitting around being vicious, but it's not. It's a great blank blandness. Color has never meant anything to me. I know many black people who are absolute bums. But I know more white people who are bums, because I know more white people. But I still remember that moment, and my bafflement."

I was watching Gibson's face carefully. There was a tear below the corner of his right eye. Perhaps he was only tired. But I did not misread his expression and his tone of voice: They were tinged with the decency and eternal sorrow that sleep in the American South and that perhaps are the reasons it is the cradle of great American art, from Faulkner to Flip Philips, from Tennessee Williams to Panama Francis.

We started down the stairs. Below us, Zoot Sims was playing with Rosolino and Watrous; Major Holley was playing bass. Dottie Dodgion was playing drums. The other musicians were consuming fried chicken and coffee and Coors. "Such wonderful, vital people," Gibson said, looking down from that landing where great men had tested their eloquence. The party was just about over.

But only for the nonce. Gibson has booked the Broadmoor every Labor Day weekend until 1980, and it seems likely that this joyous homage to American music will continue for some years to come.

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behind the scenes



Boulez, Schoenberg —and a Womble?



Pierre Boulez rehearses with the BBC Symphony and various choruses (above) for the recording of the Schoenberg *Gurre-Lieder* at West Ham Central Mission in London. One of the Wombles of Wimbledon Common (left) joins the conductor during a break.

LONDON

"Listen, a *Wienerwalzer*!" With a smile Pierre Boulez cocked one ear toward the row of four loudspeakers, much as a naturalist would listen for the chiffchaff, and the wonderful thing is that we had to agree. The music being played back was the opening of Scene 2 of Schoenberg's great opera *Moses und Aron*, here being recorded by Columbia Records with Boulez conducting BBC forces. [The first stereo *Moses*, the Philips set conducted by Michael Gielen, was reviewed in February.]

Boulez' magnetism persuaded not only us in the control room, but the whole array of musicians, who even before the official recording sessions had been subjected to an intensive series of rehearsals for a live broadcast from the Royal Festival Hall. Walking round the corridors of the West Ham Central Mission—the latest building in London to be cast in the role of recording hall—I even heard a musician or two humming Schoenberg "tunes"; after several takes I started humming bits myself.

Both with *Moses und Aron* and with *Gurre-Lieder*, which Boulez recorded in the same hall three weeks earlier with appropriately vast forces, the advantages of linking recording sessions to live performances were enormous. Tackling two such difficult scores in tightly scheduled sessions would otherwise have been virtually impossible, at least to the standards of precision that Boulez demands.

As it was, after only half an hour the first *Moses* take was underway—an extended passage covering the whole of the first scene, the scene of the burning bush, which presented producer Paul Myers and engineer Bob Auger with formidable balance problems. As Myers said, in the opera house there are no special problems in having a choir of thirty singers sing the voice from the bush, but in the studio it is more difficult to relate that to the full ensemble.

In that first scene, with its large-scale forces, Boulez made three complete takes before the tea break (obligatory on a Saturday afternoon); after playing back the last one during the interval, he decided that only ten bars would need retaking—a measure of his thoroughness before, between, and during each take, which made possible even in such tricky music the long takes necessary for preserving forward momentum.

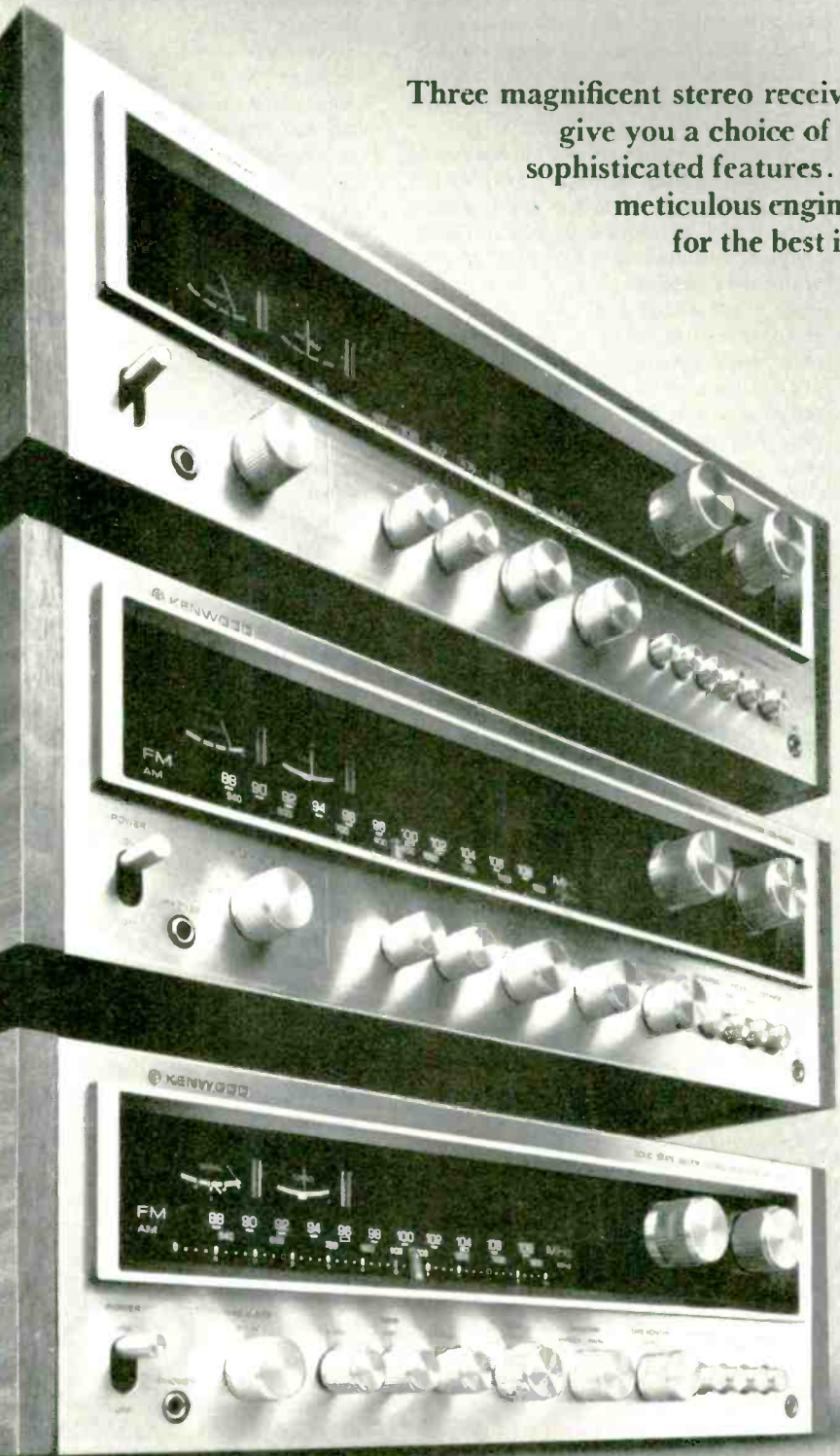
For the second scene (with the *Wienerwalzer*), the dialogue between Moses (Günter Reich, also Philips' Moses) and Aron (Richard Cassilly), the big battalions were allowed to leave. Myers was confident that the seven-minute scene could be completed in the session's remaining forty minutes; he proved right. With pauses for playback and for microphone shifting, Boulez went through the scene three times complete and left it at that.

Most relieved at the scene's completion in so short a time was tenor Cassilly, who displayed a fantastic ability to produce exactly what he was asked for with

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CIRCLE 1 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

minimal fuss. But after the second take, when plainly even Cassilly's ability to fling out one top B flat after another was being strained, he did ask gently but ominously in the control room how many times he was likely to have to repeat it all. "I could sing it all day," he explained, "if it was an octave lower." But Schoenberg places his top notes with fearsome lack of consideration in a passage that is straining the singer already. "You have a marvelous B flat climax, and you think you can go home. But you can't!"

Cassilly, a giant of a man, confessed that he still prefers singing Wagner (he was the Siegmund in Covent Garden's new *Walküre* production), but he plainly enjoyed the challenge. Like Boulez, he is extremely precise. "Can I have a little more time at bar 312?" he asked in the second session, when he had to clear a brief passage from Act II out of the way. "The second A flat is entirely different in color, and I need a moment to change." Boulez understood at once, and the necessary expansion was meticulously introduced.

Before that second session, Boulez had given the two harpists new sets of parts. "You see I have rearranged the harp parts. They were impossible," he explained. It was his only reference to the difficulty of Schoenberg's score. In fact he specifically suggested that *Moses* is an easier score to perform than *Erwartung* or even Berg's *Wozzeck*. Moses, he noted, has far more sustained sequences in a particular tempo or a particular measure. In any event, he had the BBC Symphony and the BBC Singers performing as though it was easy. The soloists were just as confident—a formidable team with the smaller parts taken by such recording-studio stalwarts as Helen Watts, Felicity Palmer, Jane Manning, John Winfield, John Noble, Philip Langridge, and Michael Rippon.

Gurre-Lieder and the Womble. Many of the same singers had taken part three weeks earlier in the first studio recording of *Gurre-Lieder*, a completely different kind of work that presented quite different problems.

The forces for this ultra-Romantic cantata were enormously greater, with not only the BBC Symphony Orchestra and BBC Chorus, but the BBC Choral Society, the Goldsmith's Choral Union, and the "gentlemen of the London Philharmonic Choir." Jess Thomas was the Waldemar, Marita Napier (Sieglinde in the Covent Garden *Walküre*) the Tove, Yvonne Minton the Wood Dove, and Kenneth Bowen the Klaus-Narr. Günter Reich warmed up for Moses as the *Gurre-Lieder* Speaker.

With some 150 in the orchestra and 200 in the chorus, in a previously untried hall, the balancing problems were so for-

midable that at the first session one scheduled passage had to be omitted. Producer Myers later took advantage of that need to bring the chorus back: He redid the final chorus, which on reflection he felt could be done better. Other last-minute session shuffling resulted from the illness of Napier, but the work was almost completely put together in only six sessions.

As light relief, at one session Bob Walker, head of marketing for CBS Records in Britain, brought along a figure best known to British children, one of the Wombles in their Disneyesque costumes are an enormous success on television with children of all ages, and their signature tune was an enormous pop hit for CBS. Needless to say, Boulez had never heard of the Wombles, but with a patience rarely given to such formidably intense artists he joined in the joke.

The experiment of using the West Ham Central Mission, eight to ten miles out of the center of London, was on the whole an enormous success. It was a client of engineer Auger who, as a trustee of the mission, suggested the hall. It proves to be rather similar in general layout to Kingsway Hall, most consistently successful of the London recording halls. Like Kingsway it is square with a big gallery, but it is larger by half. The imitation Byzantine architecture, with domes and arches and a cupola in the roof, suggests inspiration from much farther east than West Ham. The main snags are not really acoustic. Being a church, it has to be rearranged back to normal for Sunday (which meant a lot of work for Auger), and quite apart from the distance from central London, about the same as that of Walthamstow and Wembley, it was on this occasion very chilly. After players started wringing their hands, a few tactful words had to be spoken to the caretaker to stoke the boilers.

Miscellany. Other current CBS projects include an operatic recital by Renata Scottò and the complete lute music of Bach by John Williams.

For RCA, Stokowski and the LSO have recorded a selection of orchestral highlights including his own transcription of Brunnhilde's Immolation. RCA also recorded the Dvořák cello concerto (again at the EMI studio in St. John's Wood), with the LSO now conducted by James Levine and with Lynn Harrell as soloist, reproducing the performance they had just given together at the Royal Festival Hall.

That technique of taking a live performance straight to the studio was used yet again when Decca/London recorded the Bartók Second Concerto with Pascal Rogé and the LSO conducted by Walter Weller. EDWARD GREENFIELD

What Makes the New Heathkit Valu-Systems Different from Other Low Cost Music Systems? Performance.

There are plenty of "gutless wonder" compacts — knobs, buttons and flashing lights, but no performance. In fact, most compact manufacturers recently stopped publishing specifications. And for good reason — they probably have nothing to brag about since the FTC started enforcing its power standards.

Heathkit Valu-Systems are a totally different breed. We publish complete specs because they prove we do more than talk about good sound. The three compact receivers have some of the same features as our more expensive components — AM and FM ceramic filters, an integrated circuit in the FM IF and a phase-lock loop in the multiplex demodulator. The amplifiers are direct-coupled for optimum low-frequency response and have hum and noise — 60 dB down. The two 4-channel systems have built-in SQ† decoders and 8-track tape players with automatic stereo/quadrasonic switching. And the optional three-speed record changer is full sized.

The matching speaker systems combine high-efficiency with excellent sound-quality. Their useful response extends from 70-16,000 Hz and is within ±5 dB from 100-10,000 Hz. Those honest numbers may not impress you, but the clean, open sound will.

All four Valu-System control centers and speaker systems are

easy to build — even if you've never built a kit before. And the reliable tape players come factory-assembled and aligned, as does the changer which includes a base, dustcover and diamond stylus ceramic cartridge.

We think these Valu-Systems are the best-sounding compacts for the money. Of course, you've heard other manufacturers say the same thing or even claim that their compacts are "professional" or "component-quality." Talk's fine, but you'll probably never see their specifications. Now take a look at ours:

POWER OUTPUT: 4.5 WATTS RMS PER CHANNEL INTO 8 OHMS AT NO MORE THAN 1.0% TOTAL HARMONIC DISTORTION FROM 50-15,000 HZ

OTHER SPECIFICATIONS — AMPLIFIER — Frequency Response (1 watt): 30-15,000 Hz, ±3 dB. **FM — (Monophonic) —** Sensitivity: 5 μV*. **Selectivity:** 60 dB*. **Harmonic Distortion:** 1%*. **Hum & Noise:** —55 dB. **(Stereophonic) —** Channel Separation: 35 dB. **AM —** Sensitivity: 300 μV/m for 20 dB S+N/N. **Alternate Channel Selectivity:** 40 dB. **Hum & Noise:** —35 dB. **TAPE PLAYER —** Motor: Synchronous. **Frequency Response:** 50-10,000 Hz, +3, —5 dB. **Hum & Noise:** —40 dB. **Wow & Flutter:** less than 0.3%. **GENERAL —** Controls: bass, treble, sliding volume for each channel, speakers on/off, headphone jack. **Power Requirement:** 120/240 VAC, 60/50 Hz.

*RATED IHP (INSTITUTE OF HIGH FIDELITY) STANDARDS
†SQ IS A TRADEMARK OF CBS, INC.

Complete System 208⁸⁶*



AM/FM Stereo System

Everything you need for a fine stereo system. The AC-1118 compact receiver kit, \$139.95*; AS-1140 speaker kits, \$34.95* per pair and our \$44.95* ACP-1138 changer complete with ceramic cartridge, base and dustcover. When you buy the entire system, the price is just \$208.86 — you save 5% over the separate items price!

Complete System 270⁵⁶*



4-Channel Starter System

Everything you need to enjoy matrixed 4-channel records and discrete tapes — you can even add a tuner later! Our low system price is just \$270.56*, but you can buy the parts separately. The AT-1124 compact 4-channel amplifier with tape player, \$169.95*; 4 AS-1140 speakers, just \$34.95* per pair and ACP-1138 ceramic changer with base and dustcover, \$44.95*.

Complete System 246⁸⁶*



Stereo System with AM, FM & Tape

A lot of versatility for the money. Start with the AC-1120 compact receiver kit. For just \$179.95*, it plays AM, FM and 8-track tapes. Add the AS-1140 speaker kits (just \$34.95* per pair) and our \$44.95* ACP-1138 ceramic changer with base and dustcover. With our system discount, it's just \$246.86, that's a bargain.

Complete System 337⁰⁶*



4-Channel System with AM, FM & Tape

The top of our Valu-System line! \$239.95* buys a compact 4-channel AM-FM receiver kit with a discrete 8-track player and an SQ† decoder. Four AS-1140 speaker kits (just \$34.95* per pair) surround you with sound. Our \$44.95* ACP-1138 changer comes complete with ceramic cartridge, base and dustcover. The 5% system discount makes the price even more attractive — just \$337.06*.

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HF-293



too hot to handle

I'd like your personal opinion of Yamaha products. To the layman they seem expensive and out of touch. Are they?—Nelson B. Daniels, Des Moines, Iowa.

In a sense they are. They're expensive in the sense that the Yamaha component line has no budget models and contains some units that are very deluxe indeed. They're out of touch in the sense that, from styling through circuitry, many units accomplish standard objectives in nonstandard ways or accomplish objectives that other manufacturers don't even address themselves to. And in some areas (notably quad) Yamaha has done nothing at all so far. But though your first encounter with a Yamaha faceplate may give you a "what's going on here?" feeling, we'd prefer to call the approach fresh, rather than out of touch. That is, the individuality of design often pays material benefits for the user. (See our report on the CT-7000 tuner in this issue.) The high average price is matched by minimum performance standards that are at least as high. If you want, you might call this approach elitist; but the more we study individual Yamaha components, the more impressed we become by the creative engineering and physical design that went into them.

I have been considering purchase of the Teac 450 cassette deck, but with the introduction of the new ferrichrome cassettes will the 450 bias and equalize this tape correctly? Advertisements for Scotch Classic ferrichrome say the Teac's "high" position is okay, but articles say it isn't.—Timothy G. Cotner, APO, San Francisco, Calif.

Our experience with this combination indicates that the high bias position produces satisfactory tapes for general use, though all tests seem to suggest that it could produce even better results with a bias setting somewhere between the high and chrome switch positions on the 450. Sony and Merit both specifically recommend the special ferrichrome position on some equipment for optimum performance with their ferrichrome tapes. Since ferrichrome costs even more than some chromium dioxide tapes, we'd suggest that if you buy the 450 you use it either with ferric tapes (Maxell UD in the high position and LN in the normal position, for example) or, where you want best possible quality, a good brand of chrome. In our opinion, ferrichrome will justify its high cost only with optimum biasing (and then only with good signal quality, of course).

In your August 1974 test on the Bozak 401 the falloff in the high end of the response curve would not seem to be up to the standard of a good speaker. How can you describe 401s as "superior reproducers," "wide range," and suitable for use "as a

professional monitor"?—Phillip Dondo, Jamaica, N.Y.

Our enthusiasm was based on listening tests, more than lab data. But if you compare the top end of the Bozak curve with those for many fine speakers we have measured in the past, you'll find that a rolloff of this sort is not uncommon. The tendency to design for literally flat response through the top octave (10 to 20 kHz) is a relatively recent one. The 401 does not seem to be such a speaker; nor, on the basis of listening tests, does it seem to have as much rolloff in the listening room as the anechoic-chamber tests would suggest.

I have owned (chronologically) a P-E 2040 turntable with a Pickering XV-15/400E cartridge, a Lenco L-78 with a Stanton 600E, a Technics SL-1100 with a Shure V-15 Type III, an AR XA/Universal with a Stanton 600E, a Dual 1229 with a Shure M-91ED, and a Pioneer PL-15D with an ADC XLM. All have given me the same trouble: acoustic feedback. I now plan on buying a Thorens TD-125 Mk. II with a Rabco tone arm. What quality cartridge would you judge least susceptible to acoustic feedback? Please don't give me any advice on placement of the turntable, amp, or speakers, because they are set as far apart as possible.—Kenneth E. Pope, APO, New York, N.Y.

The needle jumps out of the groove when I walk across the room, though I've set it (with the Shure gauge) to the maximum recommended by ADC.—John F. Morris, White Plains, N.Y.

I like the Empire cartridge very much, but the sound becomes distorted when I turn the volume high enough, whether the music itself is loud or relatively soft.—R.R. Ames, Orlando, Fla.

Most reader problems of this type relate to mechanical resonances of one sort or another, and many will be solved by experimenting with the mountings and furniture, rather than with the stereo system itself. Remember that the arm/cartridge combination, the turntable mounting, the furniture on which or in which it sits, and the room itself all have resonant properties; and they may reinforce each other. For example a turntable assembly with a "soft" spring mounting might resonate severely at about 2 Hz. The floor of an older frame building might too. Put that turntable on a table in that room and any footfall will pop the stylus out of the groove.

One answer might be wall mounting. Another might be damping (say, wadded foam) in the springs on the turntable mount. But in one way or another you must determine experimentally which factors are influencing each other and by what path, and then provide the necessary isolation. Often a felt or foam pad under the

turntable is a big help. Occasionally a mismatch between tone arm and cartridge will be at least a contributory factor. But as Mr. Pope should have realized by now, you could go on replacing equipment indefinitely without getting to the root of the problem.

I have your reports on the Sony TC-152SD and the Tandberg TCD-310, but I can't determine from them which has better performance. I will be using the deck to record organ music. What do you suggest?—A. Lippes, Riverdale, N.Y.

Considering that the Sony is a battery portable and the Tandberg is an AC deck of unusual sophistication, the choice is surprisingly hard on the basis of performance measurements alone. The Tandberg's greater speed stability, slightly greater dynamic range (even without allowing for the Tandberg's metering, which further extends the dynamic range), and fine microphone-preamp section are in its favor for your purposes; the exceptionally low harmonic distortion of the Sony are in its favor. But this ignores several important points discussed in the texts of the two reports: the Tandberg's metering itself (which can be a big plus in getting levels that make maximum use of the tape's capabilities—particularly important in live recording) and the Sony's portability and automatic level control (an important plus if you're not experienced at interpreting meter readings and are willing to give up a little, in terms of sound quality, as a preventive to losing a lot through poor choice of levels). If you have access to AC when you're recording, we'd recommend the Tandberg; if not, there's no question that of these two the Sony is the only choice. A third choice, which should be available by the time you read this, might be the Nakamichi 550, which—on the basis of advance information—seems to combine many of the better features of the other two.

Three friends and myself have a chronic problem with Ampex Series 1100 tape decks. Their drive belts lose elasticity and become gummy and stretch within three months of installation. Our local Ampex dealer and the manufacturer have been most gracious about replacing the belts, but the new belts are no better than the old ones. My movie projector, slide projectors, turntables, and other makes of recorders with drive belts do not suffer from similar problems. Do you know where you can get drive belts for the Ampexes that will resist temperatures in the high 80s and humidity extremes without stretching and softening? We'd hate to dump these otherwise very satisfactory machines.—Roberto H. Lopez Busquets, Coamo, Puerto Rico.

No, we don't; but perhaps some reader does.

Your report [December 1974] on the B&O MMC-6000 pickup mentions that it comes with an individually made response graph. So did my Audio-Technica AT-15S, though your report in the same issue made no mention of the fact. Did I get something extra?—Lester E. Lisle, New Brunswick, N.J.

No; individual response readouts are packed with both models as well as with the Audio-Technica AT-20SL (the handpicked version of the AT-15S) and some others.

Our specs improve your hearing.

No one who holds a deep and enduring interest in hi-fidelity would deny the value of equipment specifications.

Least of all a manufacturer.

Yet, unlike many of our Comrades-in-RMS, Sherwood believes that the numbers should explain why a receiver sounds good. Rather than try to convince you that it does.

As a result, the performance figures we post for our products are based on the most stringent laboratory tests. There is no coloring of the facts. And no misleading claims.

If anything, we tend to understate.

Should this seem naive in the bravado of today's commercial jungle, we need only offer in its defense one other factor:

The number of 'Best Buy' ratings traditionally awarded our products by independent consumer testing services.

That's significant testimony to the merits of striving always to offer the highest performance-per-dollar ratio in the industry. And it proves something else.

Ears are not the only instrument needed to produce the finest audio equipment.

It also takes vision.

Model S7110. Specifications:

Minimum RMS power output at 0.9% Total Harmonic Distortion, both channels driven: 17 watts per channel @ 8 ohms, 40-20,000 Hz.

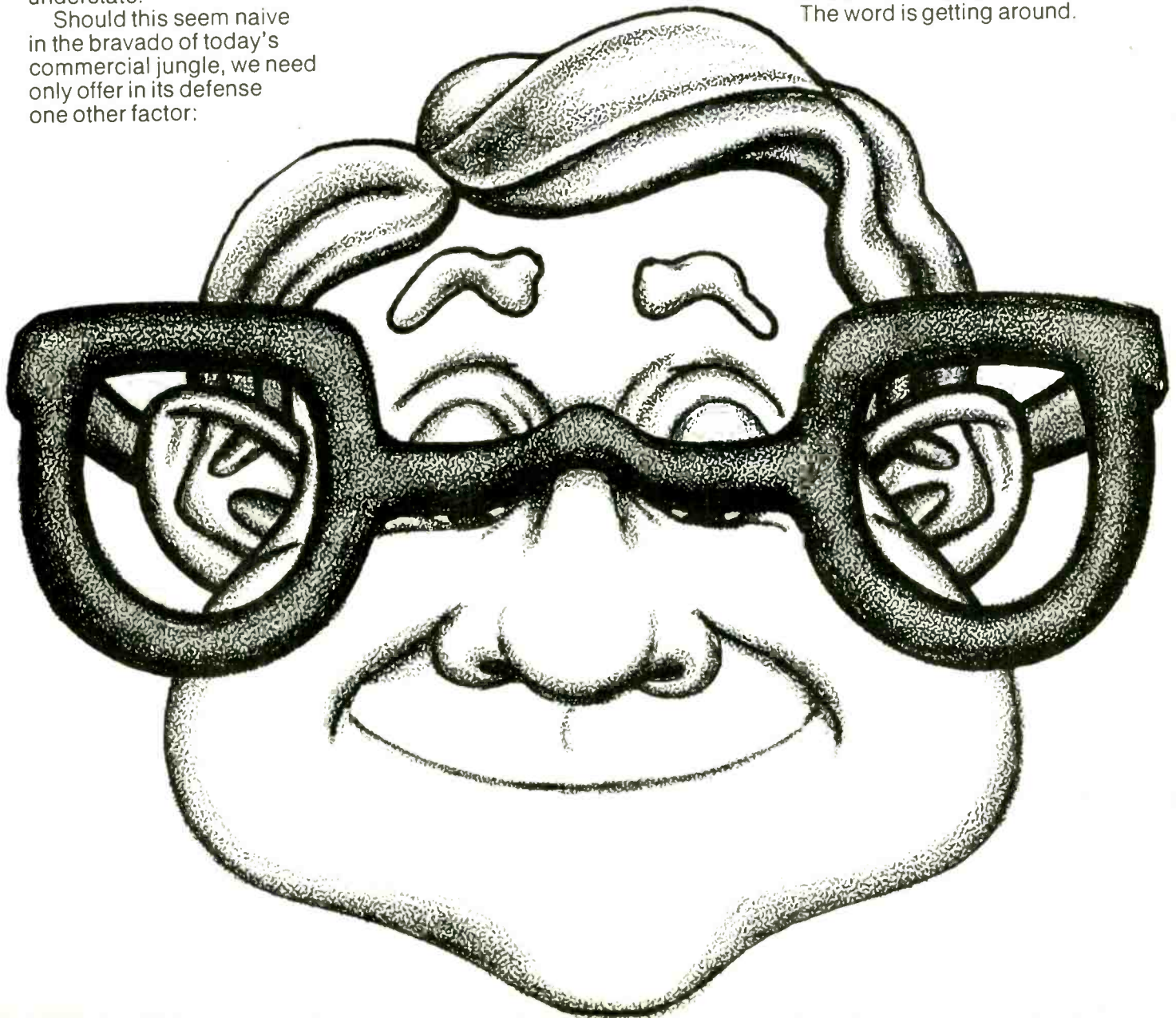
Direct-coupled amplifier yields power bandwidth of 9-50 KHz. Integrated circuitry, FET circuitry. 2.0 uV FM Sensitivity. Solid-state Ceramic FM IF filters. Walnut-grain case included. Price: \$239.95



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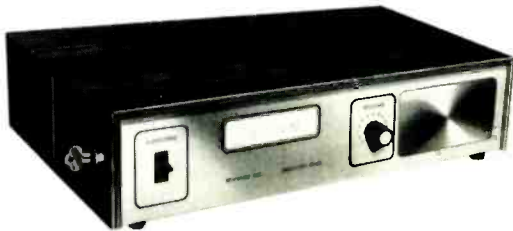
The word is getting around.



High Fidelity TV: Another Step

A UHF pay-TV system with some interesting wrinkles—particularly for the audiophile—has been announced by Blonder-Tongue, a manufacturer of industrial TV equipment, among other things. The key to the system is picture-scrambling at the transmitter with a decoder to unscramble the picture in the subscriber's home. The unscrambler keeps a record of viewing time consumed and the shows' rates. Each month the card on which these are recorded is removed and used to prepare the subscriber's bill. The transmission into the home is just like that of any UHF station; a nonsubscriber can pick up the broadcasts but not unscramble the picture.

More important to high fidelity is the sound system, which offers special potential. The decoder unit has a small built-in speaker and audio output connections. The subscriber can turn on the built-in speaker at any time, even if he has the unscrambler itself switched off



"Barker" speaker, at right on front panel, has its own level control and is independent of unscrambler switch at left.

and therefore is paying nothing for what he's hearing. In fact anyone can tune in to this audio channel, called the "barker" by Blonder-Tongue because it can be used to promote forthcoming shows. But a pay-TV service may choose to use this channel for stereo programming—along with a second audio channel that is multiplexed onto the station's signal (so that it can be received only via the scrambler). With regular mono audio, the multiplexed audio channel would carry the program sound and be reproduced via the TV-receiver's speaker, while the barker channel (which the viewer can turn off at will) continued to carry its regular content. When the program has stereo sound the viewer can use the barker speaker in the unscrambler plus the speaker in his TV set as his stereo pair. Or some programs could offer language options—say, an English soundtrack on the multiplexed channel and a Spanish one of the barker channel.

The audio outputs on the unscrambler allow the subscriber to feed either or both channels to a separate stereo system. Thus he can hear the sound (be it mono or stereo) reproduced via high-quality components—and, according to Blonder-Tongue, without the AGC buzz that is so difficult to control in feeding components from a sound takeoff on a regular TV receiver.

This telecasting system is the first we know of to be offered commercially in this country with built-in potential for true high fidelity stereo sound. WBTB-TV in Newark, New Jersey, has put it in use for the New York area.

They Said It Couldn't Be Done

The hi-fi gossips have been buzzing that automatic record changing and direct-drive turntable motors could not be on speaking terms—that jealousy prevented either from giving up spindle space to the other. (See "Should You Buy a Manual or an Automatic Turntable?", HF, May 1974.) Since a direct-drive motor must be attached to the spindle, they said, and since the spindle also must house the record-dropping mechanical linkages, the base of the spindle would not be used for both purposes in a single turntable design. Hence we could expect no wedding (or even liaison) between changers and direct drive.

Then the BIC changer line reintroduced the pusher platform—once the standard changer mechanism but gradually replaced by the "umbrella" spindle as the active element in releasing the record during the change cycle. (One reason, perhaps, is that when you replace the umbrella spindle with the stub for manual play the turntable looks more like a manual-only model: more professional, don't y'know?) With a pusher platform to ease the record past a supporting notch on the spindle, the spindle itself need have no moving parts and no complex and often delicate mechanical linkage at its base. Perhaps, we thought, BIC may go the next step

and give the gossips the lie by introducing a direct-drive changer.

The little old matchmaker, as it turns out, is not BIC, but Technics—and without using the pusher platform. Technics has taken its already highly automated SL-1300 direct-drive single-play turntable (see "Equipment in the News," HF, February 1975) and added an umbrella-type changer spindle. Just how the spindle's moving parts are kept out of the way of the drive system we're not sure, but we've seen the unit and been told that it should be available at about the same time as this issue. For \$349.95 (\$50 more than the SL-1300), the SL-1350 offers the features of the single-play model (brushless DC motor, an automatic-repeat option that allows you to dial the number of repeats you want, leads designed for CD-4 use, and so on) plus changer operation with up to six discs.

CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

New Name in Blank Tape

Nakamichi, a company known for tape decks rather than tape, now is marketing blank cassettes in both C-60 and C-90 lengths and in both "pure ferrocystal" and chromium dioxide. The ferric formulation is an extra-high-energy type without cobalt doping or other "impur-

The Speaker.

Rather than starting with an existing speaker, Yamaha began with a speaker idea.

A speaker system with the lowest distortion and coloration, and the best possible transient response.

Instead of merely modifying one, Yamaha has re-invented it. And in doing so, has improved every aspect of speaker design.

We call it the NS-1000 M Monitor.

Transparency and The Dome.

Existing technology has largely solved a major problem of speaker design through the use of the acoustic suspension driver: extended frequency response.

Today, what's missing from most sound in most people's living rooms is something a touch more subtle. It's called *transparency*.

The hemispheric dome tweeter allows a wider dispersion of high frequencies.

But the dome's own material weight causes it to lag behind the input signal. It simply doesn't respond fast enough, creating an opaque, masked sound that lacks fine detail and definition.

The ideal dome material for midrange and high frequency drivers would be extremely rigid and, most importantly, virtually weightless.

Introducing the Beryllium Dome. Why did it take so long?

After all, beryllium is the lightest, and most rigid metal known, and has a sound propagation velocity twice that of commonly used aluminum.

Beryllium is lighter and stronger and propagates sound better than other metals.

	ATOMIC WEIGHT	RIGIDITY (ELASTIC MODULUS) kg/mm ²	SOUND PROPAGATION velocity m/sec
BERYLLIUM (Be)	9.013	28000	12600
MAGNESIUM (Mg)	24.32	4500	5770
ALUMINIUM (Al)	26.98	7400	6420
TITANIUM (Ti)	47.90	11000	5990
IRON (Fe)	55.85	19700	5950

But because of beryllium's inherent characteristics, it resisted attempts by any manufacturer to form it into a diaphragm, let alone a dome.

Until now.

The New Yamaha Beryllium Dome, formed by Yamaha's unique vacuum deposition process, is lighter than any other speaker diaphragm found today. So it's more responsive

to direction changes in amplitude and frequency of the input signal.

Dome Tweeter Comparison			
	SIZE OF DOME	THICKNESS	WEIGHT
YAMAHA NS-1000 M (BERYLLIUM DOME)	3 cm	0.03 mm	0.03 g
TYPICAL SOFT DOME	3 cm	0.3 mm	0.1 g
CONVENTIONAL DRIVER	2.5 cm	0.45 mm	1.03 g

This is called transparency. It can be noticed best in complex musical passages and can be best described

possible for a midrange driver. It extends the linear portion of its response curve.

The midrange driver's frequency response is so wide that we can select only the choice flat section of its frequency response, thereby eliminating the peaks and valleys most competitors are forced to use.

The Beryllium Dome creates simply the flattest response; least colored, most natural sounding midrange of any speaker around.

Carefully designed acoustic equalizers flatten the frequency

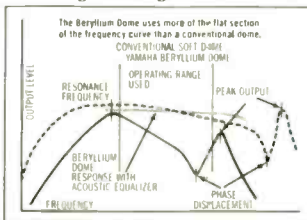


as highly defined and finely detailed. Only Yamaha has it.

Midrange: The Voice of Your Speaker. It's no secret that between 500 Hz and 6 KHz is where most audible differences in speakers occur.

It's where we hear the human voice, and it is the hardest part of the frequency spectrum to reproduce accurately.

Once again, beryllium solves the problem of uneven response. Since it's so lightweight, the dome can be made larger and lighter than before



response curve even further.

The NS-1000 M Monitor is so accurate that you may even hear enhanced detail in a recording you once thought already perfect.

Re-thinking the Woofer.

Some respected speaker manufacturers buy their low frequency drivers wholesale.

Yamaha doesn't buy them. We make them.

Even the very cone material itself was researched and developed and manufactured specially by Yamaha. (It's made much more dense than most cones. That means a tighter, cleaner sound.) And the frame is cast in our own foundry so we can control quality.

A plucked string of a bass sounds like a plucked string bass note.

Instead of a dull thud.

The Tangential Edge and Other Extras. Yamaha designed a special suspension

system that holds the beryllium dome to the speaker frame with less contact allowing it to move more freely. It's called the Tangential Edge. (You may not hear the difference at first, but you will.)

The crossover system was specially designed to have a very low DC resistance, increasing the system efficiency.

Most highly accurate systems need a large amp to drive them properly. The NS-1000 M Monitor requires only 15 watts RMS to fill an average room with loud music, yet can handle RMS power outputs exceeding 100 watts.

By Our Own Skilled

Hands. Yamaha's philosophy is one of self-reliance.

That's why, for example, we build the critical speaker components (like cone materials and speaker baskets) rather than purchase them.

That includes the speaker enclosure made from material designed for anti-resonance characteristics. (Our piano making experience was essential here.)

There are enough speaker system modifications and copies around, already.

This is something original.

Proudly Presenting the NS-1000 M. It's not

inexpensive or easy to find. The NS-1000 M is sold as right and left-hand units, and by the pair only.

They cost \$960.00 the pair, when you can get them.

Yamaha is making them as fast as we can, but you may have to wait a short while until your Yamaha Audio Dealer has a pair for you to audition. (He also features Yamaha speakers based on the same technology and quality at less money.)

Patience, please.

Part of the Yamaha

System. The NS-1000 M Monitor is the ultimate air suspension speaker system.

That is a strong claim to make.

In the future, Yamaha will present the ultimate power amplifier, tuner, preamplifier, and turntable.

Actually advancing the state-of-the-art of the major components of a music reproduction system.

In short, the ultimate system.

We're convinced that no matter what you think is the best today, we'll make you dissatisfied with it.

Don't say we didn't warn you.



YAMAHA

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CIRCLE 42 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

ity" and, according to Nakamichi, is interchangeable with Maxell UD—the recommended ferric for Nakamichi's decks. Existence of the Nakamichi brand does not mean that a change is being made in the tapes for which its decks are optimized, only that there is an alternate source of supply for appropriate tapes.

The housings were chosen for their precision. Imprecise molding and assembly can increase tape skewing, for example, to the point that it compromises performance, particularly in decks with separate recording and playback heads like Nakamichi's 700 and 1000.

Owners of other deck brands recommending Maxell UD and high-quality chromium dioxide blanks presumably will profit from the alternate supply source as well. List prices run from \$3.69 for the ferric C-60 to \$5.99 for the chrome C-90.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

I See in the Paper . . .

It's no news when a manufacturer issues a "booklet designed to explain this often misunderstood aspect of modern sound reproduction to the layman"—whatever the aspect may be. We all know what to expect: a rehash of the same old truisms, prepared perhaps with a certain amount of objectivity but liberally sprinkled with references to the manufacturer's products and ignoring or deprecating all design approaches but its own.

That's why we yawned when we picked up a copy of a new booklet entitled *The Teac White Paper on Tape Technology*. We didn't yawn long. This booklet is prob-

ably the best of its type that ever has come our way. It does *mention* Teac, but not with the usual smug air of flag-waving. And it does make a case for design points that Teac thinks are important, but not without giving reasonable credit to "the other side."

The subject matter is just what the title implies: a discussion of the technical factors that influence tape-recorder performance, use, design, and measurement. It is neither a primer for the totally uninformed nor an abstruse engineering-journal discourse. Copies are available (free, at present—which makes the *White Paper* even nicer) by mail from Teac Corporation, 7733 Telegraph Road, Montebello, California 90640.

For Design-It-Yourselfers

By odd coincidence one illustration (of frequency spectra for common musical instruments) used in the *Teac White Paper* described above also appears in another interesting booklet: *Loudspeaker Enclosures, Their Design and Use* from Altec. It is (like the *White Paper*) attractively—even lavishly—produced in 8½-by-11 format and contains lots of technical information.

It is by no means a book of plans from which any duffer can build a speaker system; rather, it is a text on the considerations that a knowledgeable constructor should work from in building enclosures (preferably for Altec speakers, of course). Interested readers can obtain a copy for \$2.00 by writing to Altec Corporation, 1212 South Manchester Avenue, Anaheim, California 92803.

equipment in the news

Marantz names a successor to the 10B tuner

In announcing the Model 150 AM/FM tuner, Marantz says it is "designed to redefine the state of the art in tuner development beyond that achieved by the legendary Marantz Model 10B," which first introduced the Model 150's oscilloscope tuning feature. Among the updated attractions are, of course, Dolby FM reception and phase-locked loop demodulator circuitry. Phase linearity is said to have been improved and distortion reduced throughout the listening range. The Model 150 is priced at \$599.95 (a bargain, we might add, on today's supertuner market).

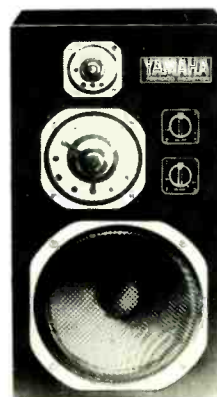
CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

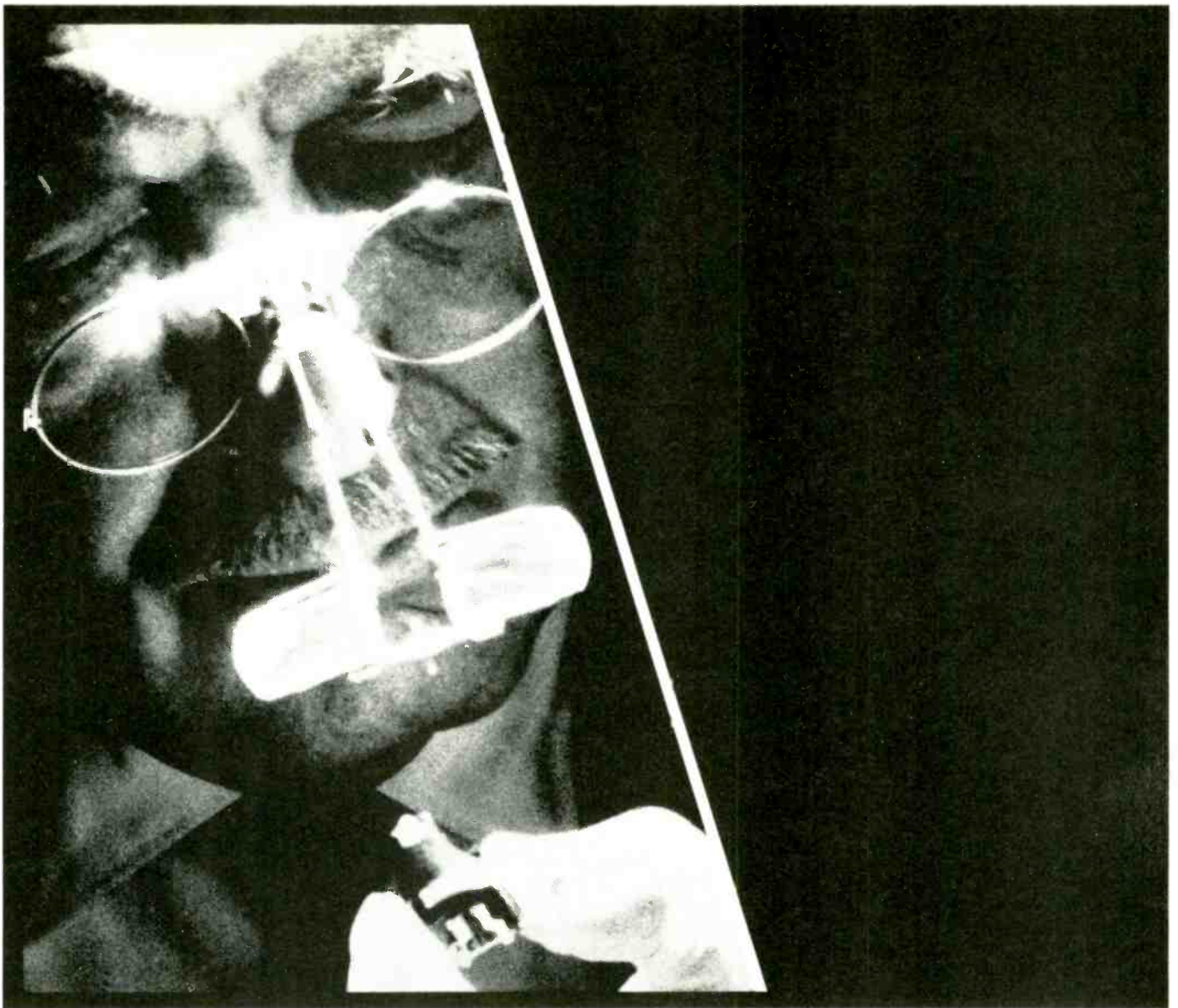


Beryllium-cone tweeter in Yamaha speaker

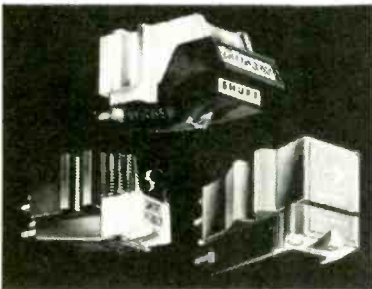
The NS-1000M, the new top model in Yamaha's line of speaker systems, is a radical departure, principally because it uses vapor-deposited beryllium to form the domed diaphragms of its midrange driver and tweeter. Beryllium—a uniquely hard, light, stiff metal—plus the extremely thin cross section permitted by vapor deposition are credited with achieving response and distortion properties unavailable with any other cone material. The resulting three-way system is somewhat larger than "bookshelf" size, comes in symmetrically matched pairs, handles up to 100 watts per channel, and has midrange and treble controls. The selling price is \$960 a pair.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD





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CIRCLE 37 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

A "clean look" tuner from Sansui

The Model TU-5500 AM/FM tuner, one of a new series from Sansui, is designed for uncluttered appearance as well as for performance, the company says. Lever switches are provided for AC power, FM muting, stereo noise cancellation, and input attenuation (to prevent front-end overload on strong local stations). In addition to mode-selector and tuning knobs, there is one to adjust output to match levels in the rest of the stereo system. A second back-panel output has fixed output level. The TU-5500 sells for \$279.95.

CIRCLE 151 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



A trapezoidal tower from Design Acoustics

The newest speaker system from Design Acoustics, the company that began with a strikingly styled polyhedral "omnidirectional" system, is just over 3 feet tall and has a 10-inch woofer mounted in the back of the sealed enclosure. Each of the three "front" surfaces carries a 2½-inch cone tweeter; a 5-inch midrange driver is mounted in the front surface and is loaded by a 2-inch aperture. Output of woofer and tweeters can be reduced by 3 dB, according to the company, with provided controls. Through a combination of direct propagation and controlled coupling to room boundaries, the system is intended to provide wide-range and wide-dispersion sound. It costs \$199.

CIRCLE 153 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Precision metal reel from 3M

A new accessory to the Scotch tape line is a 7-inch aluminum-flange reel. The hub portion is as thick as that of regular plastic reels, offering interchangeability in terms of reel height and hold-down hardware, but the precision of the metal flanges makes for superior tape winding and therefore tape protection. Three threading slots (often omitted from current plastic reels) are included. To our knowledge, this is the first precision reel to be distributed for home use by a national tape brand. The price is \$9.35.

CIRCLE 150 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Kenwood's budget-separates pair

Matching AM/FM tuners (Model KT-1300G) and integrated amplifiers (KA-1400G) have been introduced by Kenwood for the cost-conscious with a taste for attractive specs. Among the features that seem to belie the price category are phase-locked loop in the FM decoder, dual phono inputs, low noise (65 dB) phono-preamp circuitry, and dual tape monitoring, according to Kenwood. The tuner costs \$139.95; the amp, \$159.95.

CIRCLE 152 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Headphone control from Audiotex

In its stereo headphone control box, catalogue no. 30-5250, Audiotex offers individual slider level controls for the two channels and a mono/stereo switch as well as a five-foot extension to your headset's interconnect cord. Connections use the two-hot-plus-common-ground (tip-ring-sleeve) American standard headphone-jack system. The unit sells for \$8.64.

CIRCLE 154 ON READER-SERVICE CARD





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1. The design, development, and technology behind the BOSE Direct/Reflecting® speakers is presented by Dr. Bose in the article, "Sound Recording and Reproduction," published in TECHNOLOGY REVIEW (MIT), Vol. 75, No. 7, June '73. Reprints are available from BOSE for fifty cents.

2. For copies of the reviews, write BOSE Rm.H

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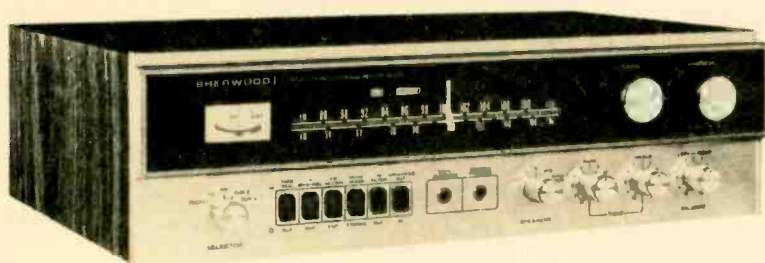
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CIRCLE 7 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



A "Solid, Sane" Stereo Receiver from Sherwood

The Equipment: Sherwood S-7310, a stereo FM/AM receiver (with Dynaquad four-channel simulation), in wood case. Dimensions: 17¼ by 5½ inches (case); 12¾ inches deep plus allowance for controls and connections. Price: \$369.95. Warranty: three years parts, one year labor, shipping not included. Manufacturer: Sherwood Electronic Laboratories, Inc., 4300 N. California Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60618.

Comment: If the S-7310 seems to resemble past receivers from Sherwood, let us reassure you immediately that the resemblance is more than front-panel deep. This is, as we have said of previous models, a solid design that dispenses with dramatic frills for the sake of honest quality. It is excellently thought-out in terms of both utility and performance within its price bracket—which today we would call the medium or even low-to-medium range in true high fidelity receivers.

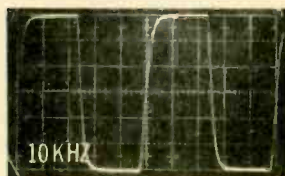
The upper portion of the dial is devoted to tuning (with a single meter displaying signal strength for AM, channel centering for FM), a series of lighting function indicators (built into the tuning dial), and the loudness/volume control (marked "loudness" since Sherwood has traditionally considered this the "standard" operation mode). The on/off switch is built into the volume knob. Below it are the remaining controls, neatly arranged in a single row. The speaker-selector knob has positions for off, the A speaker pair only, the B pair, both pairs, and Dynaquad—which converts the B output for speakers at the back of the room in simulating quad. The other knobs are for input selection, bass, treble, and balance. There are stereo phone jacks for headphone listening and for tape dubbing. And six pushbutton switches control tape monitor, four-channel, FM

muting, stereo/mono mode, high filter, and loudness defeat (so that the loudness knob becomes a regular volume control).

The four-channel button is wired just like a tape-monitor switch, "interrupting" the output circuit to insert whatever is connected to its input and output jack pairs at the back. The jacks can be used for a matrix-quad decoder (with a second stereo amp), a second tape deck, a Dolby-decode unit (for receiving Dolby FM broadcasts, for example), a speaker equalizer, or any similar add-on unit. The front-panel tape jack is wired in such a way that, when either the tape-monitor or the four-channel button is depressed, the signals from these inputs will be fed to the front-panel jack for recording, but, when neither button is depressed, the front-panel jack becomes an input feeding the deck(s) connected on the back panel. The jack therefore can be used for dubbing in either direction. Very clever.

The back panel also has pin jacks for phono and two aux inputs, plus one for four-channel FM reception (using some sort of adapter, should a discrete-quad broadcast system be adopted). The ground connection for the phono input doubles as that for 75-ohm FM antennas and is on a screw-terminal strip that also includes connections for 300-ohm FM and long-wire AM antennas. Knurled nuts with screwdriver slots are used on the speaker-output binding posts, which accept spade lugs or bared wires. The back panel also has a convenience AC connection, controlled by the S-7310's loudness-knob power switch.

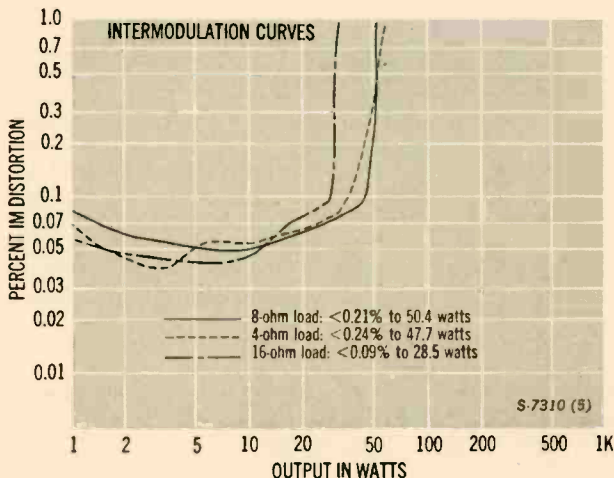
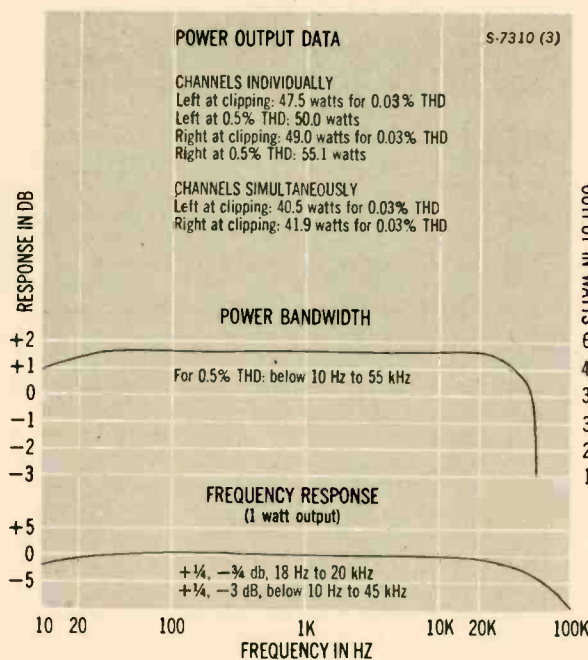
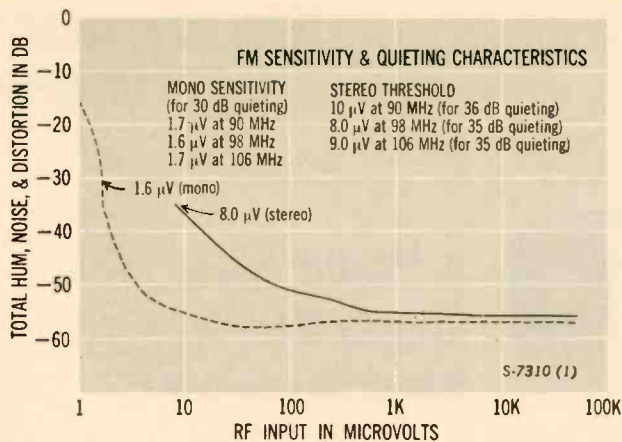
CBS Labs' measurements, like the receiver's cosmetics, proclaim this to be a unit that does its job well, without flourishes and without corner-cutting. Sherwood has consistently done this, while some of its competitors (as our test reports document) achieve more spectacular performance or features in one area only to embody a questionable design decision elsewhere. For example, Sherwood rates the tuner section's mono sensitivity at 1.8 microvolts. The lab data show that our sample measured 1.6 microvolts, and some units today are rated at even lower figures. But some of those that achieve more impressive numbers—perhaps higher price as well as better mono sensitivity—prove inca-



Square-wave response

REPORT POLICY

Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by CBS Laboratories, Stamford, Connecticut, a division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., one of the nation's leading research organizations. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. Manufacturers are not permitted to read reports in advance of publication, and no report, or portion thereof, may be reproduced for any purpose or in any form without written permission of the publisher. All reports should be construed as applying to the specific samples tested; neither HIGH FIDELITY nor CBS Laboratories assumes responsibility for product performance or quality.



Sherwood S-7310 Additional Data

Tuner Section			
Capture ratio	1.5 dB		
Alternate-channel selectivity	72 dB		
S/N ratio	74 dB		
THD	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.23%	0.27%	0.29%
1 kHz	0.15%	0.24%	0.21%
10 kHz	0.17%	3.2%	3.2%
IM distortion	0.17%		
19-kHz pilot	-66 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-67½ dB		
Frequency response			
mono	± 1½ dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
L ch	+ 1¼, -1 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
R ch	+ 1¼, -2½ dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
Channel separation	> 45 dB, 90 Hz to 2.3 kHz > 35 dB, 20 Hz to 8.5 kHz		
Amplifier Section			
Damping factor	45		
Input characteristics (for 38 watts output)			
phono	Sensitivity	S/N ratio	
aux 1 & 2	2.0 mV	65 dB	
tape monitor	152 mV	86 dB	
	152 mV	70 dB	
RIAA equalization accuracy	± ¼ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz		
Total harmonic distortion			
at 38 watts	L ch:	<0.19%, 40 Hz to 20 kHz	
	R ch:	<0.26%, 40 Hz to 20 kHz	
at 19 watts	L ch:	<0.12%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz	
	R ch:	<0.11%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz	
at 0.38 watts	L ch:	<0.16%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz	
	R ch:	<0.11%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz	

pable of stereo quieting beyond the 50-dB mark that (roughly) separates good from so-so. This receiver's mono quieting is beyond this mark for all inputs above about 3.5 microvolts; its stereo quieting is better than 50 dB from about 70 microvolts up and very nearly as good as the mono quieting for inputs from about 500 microvolts up, the range in which a good antenna system will pick up reasonably strong stations. So the actual overall FM listening quality of the S-7310 is better than that of many units that might, at first glance, appear to be better.

And the measurements show the receiver to be better, over-all, than its published specifications (which, be it noted, were prepared before the present FTC power-rating rules went into effect)—sometimes by considerable margins. There are a few, however, that don't quite meet the specs. While we don't consider any of them significant, we'll point them out for the record. Stereo threshold is spec'd at 5 microvolts but measures 8 microvolts in the test sample. Capture ratio at 1.5 dB, is a hair shy of the 1.2-dB spec. Harmonic distortion in the amp is rated at 0.5% down to 40 Hz at 40 watts per chan-

nel or down to 20 Hz at 38 watts; our sample still couldn't quite make the bottom frequency at 38 watts without exceeding the distortion rating. This last is of course totally undetectable and unimportant in reproducing music.

We have no hesitation in describing the S-7310 as a solid value and an utterly sane design. It is, in fact, the sort of unit on which Sherwood's reputation has been built.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Koss Phase/2: An "Activist's" Headphone



The Equipment: Koss Phase/2, a dynamic stereo headphone with "ambience expander" options; with 3-foot coiled cord extending to approximately 10 feet. Price: \$75. Warranty: one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Koss Corporation, 4129 N. Port Washington Ave., Milwaukee, Wis. 53213.

Comment: If you like to feel that you are the master of the sounds you hear, the Koss Phase/2 may be for you. It has built-in circuitry that, via a total of four controls, offers a unique range of possibilities—both for overcoming inherent peculiarities of stereo headphone perspective and for providing the illusion of placing yourself where you want to be with respect to the aural image.

On the right earpiece is a two-position "expander" switch marked N (for normal) and E (for expanded). On the left earpiece is a similar "comparator" switch marked +1 and +2 that is spring loaded so that it automatically reverts to +2 when released, providing momentary comparison between the Phase/2's sound and the conventional headset effect. At the bottom of each earpiece is a dial wheel (like the level controls on some Koss models) calibrated from 0 to 10 and independently variable for each channel. At the 0 positions the internal phasing (expander) circuitry is inactive and switching the comparator to +1 does not alter the sound. Turn the earpiece controls toward the 10 position, and the difference becomes progressively more dramatic.

The actual sonic effect of the controls depends on the nature of the stereo signal they're "processing." In this respect the expander action can be compared to quad simulation from stereo program material via a speaker matrix circuit—to which, in fact, the expander circuitry seems similar in that it makes use of phase relationships inherent in the original material to suggest spatial relationships that were not specifically intended in the original sound.

Generally speaking, increasing the settings of the dial wheels makes the music seem more immediate and the stereo perspective more "continuous"—that is, the sounds may seem better related to each other, with less

of the isolation between sound sources that can sound unnatural in headphone (though not speaker) listening. At the same time the imaging of centered soloists often seems to move them out in front of the listener, as opposed to the top-of-the-head sensation that some headphone listeners dislike. If you choose dissimilar settings of the two rotary controls, you can "focus" on the sounds emanating from one side or the other. Switching from N to E on the enhancer introduces more sense of space and seems to surround you with music somewhat more. It also may make sonic placements a little less specific (that is, a little more vague) than the N position, though again the degree of change varies with the program material.

Aside from this spatial juggling, what about the fidelity? We judged the sound from the Phase/2 to be excellent, very much in the tradition of the Koss PRO-4AA, which it resembles in styling as well. Most of the parts—headband, ear seal, and so on—are identical, giving the Phase/2 the same tight seal and good comfort despite its relative bulkiness at a hair over 1½ pounds (less cord). If you want the aural response of the PRO-4AAs, you can simply turn the earpiece controls to 0.

The prime interest here, however, is in the spatial presentation. For the "activist" listener who wants maximum control over aural perspective, this model is unique; for the listener who dislikes headphone listening because he prefers the sense of space and the room-integrated sound of loudspeakers, it may prove a revelation; for the dyed-in-the-earcup headphone listener who accepts (if not demands) "headphone sound," the special features may, particularly at first, seem something of a gimmick and not worth the extra cost. We find that on much stereo material the perspective is more convincing—and perhaps easier to listen to long term—with the special circuitry in operation. Because the achieved effect varies with the program material, we'd urge readers not to make judgments about the properties of the Phase/2 on the basis of only limited listening. And actually the exploration of the expander's potential is half the fun.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

The two specified impedances represent those used (respectively) with regular stereo cartridges and "CD-4" models; the "head amp" position is used for direct connection to tape playback heads, of course. The mike/aux selector has one position for microphone and one each for the three aux inputs. The mike inputs are phone jacks just below the subselector; if you use only one mike and want the mono signal in both output channels, plug it into the left-channel jack, which feeds both channels unless there's a plug in the right-channel jack. (This wiring has been used by Sony before, but it still strikes us as ingenious.) Next to the jacks is a mike-level control. When its knob is pushed in, mike levels will be fed to the meters (assuming their switch is in the mike position) but not to the output connections. When the knob is pulled out with the mike/aux subselector in the mike position, the control simply adjusts the output of the mike-preamp circuit; if the subselector is at one of the aux positions, the control will reduce the level of the aux signal while raising that from the mike—making it a cross-fader, in effect, and allowing aux/mike mixing. The aux-3 input, incidentally, is a stereo phone jack next to those for the mikes. (A mating cable with pin connectors at the opposite end is supplied.)

Other features of the front panel are a balance control (with visible marking and a detent at the normal position), a mode switch, and lever switches for "tape copy" (1-to-2/source/2-to-1) and "external adapter." In addition to stereo, reverse stereo, and all three of the normal mono modes, the mode switch has positions for checking individual channels (by killing output to the unselected channel). The external-adapter switch is wired like an extra tape monitor and is intended as a selector for quad decoders, outboard equalizers, or the like. Since it is ahead of the tone controls and filters, it cannot be used (as similar switching on some units can) for taping through these controls.

The back panel has pin-jack pairs for all the inputs and outputs already mentioned. In addition there are two pairs for the main output; one is live all the time, the other is cut off automatically when a plug is inserted into the headphone jack, killing the power amp and speakers for headphone listening. One of these outputs may be used to feed the power amp while the other delivers the filtered and/or equalized signal to a tape deck. Input level controls are provided for tuner, aux 1, aux 2, tape 1, and tape 2—all the back-panel inputs, that is, except those for the external adapter and phono. Both phono inputs have two-position (marked 1.5 and 4.5 mV) sensitivity switches. Phono 2 also has a four-position impedance matching switch for its head-amp mode. There is a spring-loaded grounding post nearby that is designed for bared leads but will accept some of the smaller spade lugs. Three convenience outlets, two of them switched, complete the back-panel features.

Most of the lab data confirm the technical excellence that the front panel suggests. They also confirm Sony's own specs, though rating methods are not as well established in some particulars as they are for, say, power amps. In particular, the noise measurements for the low-level inputs (phono, tape head, mike) appear poorer than spec, though Sony uses audibility weighting (which CBS Labs does not) and the published specs list no reference level. CBS Labs' S/N figures therefore cannot be compared with the published specs; when they are compared to the lab's measurements of other fine preamps, they don't represent the same order of excellence as the remaining data in this report. But we were unable to fault the unit in terms of audible noise when playing records with either phono position.

The total utility of the TAE-8450—particularly when judged against its very high price—is difficult to assess. A number of its features (the head amp, for example) are rare or unique among today's preamps; some users will greet them with an "at last!", others with a "so what?". On these questions each reader must ultimately determine his own answer, of course. We can only give our impressions.

The mike input wiring and mixing control we judge to be ingenious and welcome if you only occasionally need the feature but no substitute for a good (if simple) mixer. The headphone level control is extremely useful. The head amp is a feature that we would guess few of our readers will need; what with the common use of Dolby (either outboard or built into the recorder) and the high-quality amps in today's decks, we prefer using our decks' own electronics. The calibrated level control proves useful in many projects (though not, perhaps, for regular listening). We like the input level controls. The tone controls certainly are unusually flexible, though for efficient use they require some getting used to. And we appreciate the range of settings on the mode control.

The overriding interest, however, is in the metering—partly because it is unique so far. Its three modes will permit signal analysis available from no other home metering system we know of. It can be set so that it will give warning of transient peaks beyond the clipping point of the amp that the TAE-8450 is driving, but it is of particular interest to the recordist. In copying tapes or discs, the peak-hold mode will allow him to scan program material in advance looking for the trouble spots—and to do so without keeping his eye glued to the meter for a complete run-through. A comparison of peak and VU readings will tell him how much limiting the signals he is recording already have been subjected to and, therefore, how much headroom he need allow for transients. And so on. The meters are, in short, a fascinating tool for better understanding and reproduction of sound.

Our one complaint in this respect is the want of a me-

Sony TAE-8450 Preamp Additional Data

Output at clipping, channels individually		
L ch	15.0 V for 0.046% THD	
R ch	15.0 V for 0.022% THD	
Output at clipping, channels simultaneously		
L ch	15.0 V for 0.046% THD	
R ch	15.0 V for 0.022% THD	
Input characteristics (for 1 volt output)		
	Sensitivity	S/N ratio
phono 1	1.0, 3.3 mV*	59, 55 dB*
phono 2	1.0, 3.3 mV*	62, 55 dB*
head amp	0.10 mV	46 dB
mike	0.17 mV	45½ dB
tuner	0.11 to 1.4 V*	83 dB
aux 1, 2	0.11 to 1.2 V*	83 dB
aux 3	0.11 V	83 dB
tape 1, 2	0.11 to 1.2 V*	83 dB
IM distortion (1 V output)		0.007%
Frequency response		
±0 dB, below 10 Hz to 20 kHz		
+0, -1 dB, below 10 Hz to 100 kHz		

*First figure measured with input-level control at maximum, second with control at minimum

ter-level adjustment. With typical inputs (and even with the input level controls at maximum) and measuring the tape-recorder output (which is unaffected by the listening levels set at the TAE-8450's level control), the meters generally read below the 100% modulation mark even on the loudest passages (and even in the peak mode), so mental arithmetic is required to translate meter readings into equivalent readings at the recorder. You can adjust the 0-dB point with respect to an external reference (like the deck's meters) by using the main level control and metering the output, but then you lose control over listening levels unless monitoring is by headphone only—and this is how we ended up using the preamp for recording. But while we found the extra in-

formation provided by the preamp's meters useful, we're sure some readers will prefer speaker monitoring.

All told, then, this is a fascinating and utterly individual unit. It also is a fine one, but because of its maverick design and high price we expect it will precipitate sharp differences of opinion about the utility of its features and the degree to which they justify so sizable an investment. There's one thing we hope won't happen, however: an abandonment of this sort of creative and ground-breaking design if the public reception for this particular preamp is cool. The design is complex and, frankly, a little kinky; but it contains much that is original and valuable—and worthy of further exploration.

CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



A Winning Amplifier from Marantz

The Equipment: Marantz Model 1070, an integrated stereo amplifier in wood-grained metal case. Dimensions: 14 1/4 by 4 3/4 inches (front panel); 11 inches deep plus allowance for controls and connections. Price: \$269.95. Warranty: three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Marantz Co., Inc., P.O. Box 99, Sun Valley, Calif. 91352.

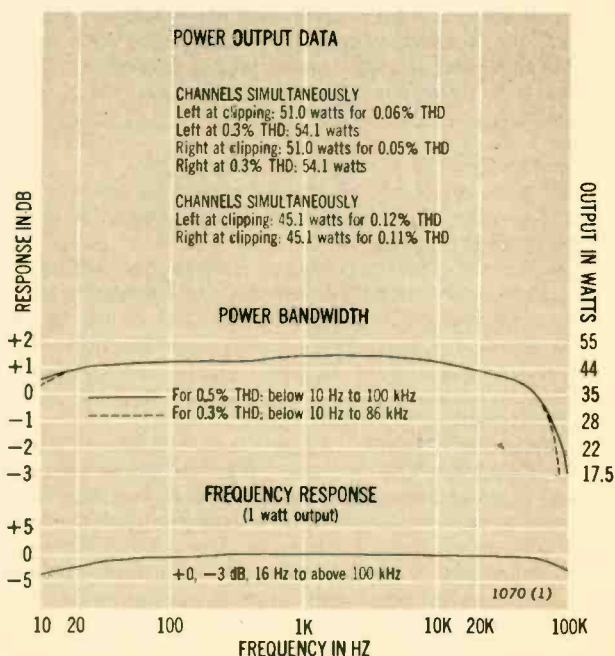
Comment: A real winner, this one. The Model 1070 offers features not often found in popularly priced amplifiers (such as a rear-speakers ambient enhancement option, midrange control in addition to treble and bass, circuit-interrupt connections), and it also offers clean, responsive performance in the medium power range. It is, for all this, quite compact. And at its price, on today's market, it shapes up as a genuine bargain. This amplifier is the kind of reliable audio beast to use as the control and power center of a very good stereo system, as an additional power amplifier or extra preamp (or both) to augment an existing system, or simply as a dependable standby unit to keep things going when your \$3,000 deluxe Cosmic system starts to sputter.

The control panel of the 1070 is a model of symmetry. The large knob at the left is the signal selector. To its right is a tape monitor switch with two monitor positions (it is possible, with this amplifier, to keep two tape recorders fully interconnected and to monitor each in turn at the flick of this switch). The center of the panel contains three slider controls, for bass, midrange, and treble. To their right is mode switch with positions for left channel, right channel, stereo, reverse stereo, and mono. To its right is the volume control.

Along the contrasting-color bottom section of the front you'll find a microphone input (phone jack), low filter and high filter switches, stereo headphone output jack, channel-balance slider with a center detent position, loudness contour switch, main and remote/ambience speaker switches, and power off/on switch. The headphone jack is live at all times, regardless of the settings of the speaker switches. The "main" speaker switch controls the normal (front) stereo pair of speakers; the "remote/ambience" switch controls an additional pair. When another switch at the rear of the amplifier is in "remote" position, the second pair of speakers

will duplicate whatever the main speakers are handling; with the back-panel switch in the "ambience" position, a built-in matrix circuit (similar, we'd judge, to the Dynquad circuit) delivers an "ambient enhancement" signal to the second speaker pair, used at the back of the main listening room to heighten the sonic splendor of ordinary two-channel stereo recordings.

At the rear are press-to-connect terminals for the main and remote stereo speaker systems. There also are two stereo pairs for the circuit-interrupt feature, which (with the supplied jumper cables removed) will allow insertion of a speaker equalizer or similar outboard unit between the control-preamp and power amp sections of the 1070. DIN connectors, as well as the standard pin jacks, are provided for both sets of tape inputs and outputs. Additional inputs at the rear handle magnetic phono pickups, tuner, and auxiliary sources. Two



Marantz Model 1070 Additional Data

Damping factor	66	
Input characteristics (for 35 watts output)		
	Sensitivity	S/N ratio
phono	1.7 mV	70 dB
mike	1.7 mV	67 dB
tuner	150 mV	92 dB
aux	150 mV	92 dB
tape 1 & 2	150 mV	92 dB
Total harmonic distortion		
at 35 watts	L ch: <0.034%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz	
	R ch: <0.040%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz	
at 17.5 watts	L ch: <0.029%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz	
	R ch: <0.045%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz	
at 0.35 watts	L ch: <0.049%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz	
	R ch: <0.061%, 20 Hz to 20 kHz	

AC outlets are provided, one being switched by the amplifier's own power off/on control. A chassis grounding terminal, power-line fuse, and AC power cord complete the picture here.

In tests at CBS Labs, the Model 1070 met or exceeded by very healthy margins its published specifications. At the 35-watt output level, and indeed at all levels tested, distortion remains well below rated values across the audio band. The data suggest, in fact, that the test sample conceivably could have been rated at 45 watts per channel without exceeding the distortion rating. Frequency response is within the 2-dB variation specified across the band from 20 Hz to 20 kHz; phono (RIAA) equalization is very flat; square-wave response looks very good for this class of equipment; input sensitivities and signal-to-noise characteristics are better than one might expect.

Installing the Marantz 1070 is no great chore, and using it is a delight. It drives a pair of low-efficiency speakers to more than room-filling (and clean) volume, and its controls all work smoothly and responsibly. You can't help liking this amplifier, especially at that price.

CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

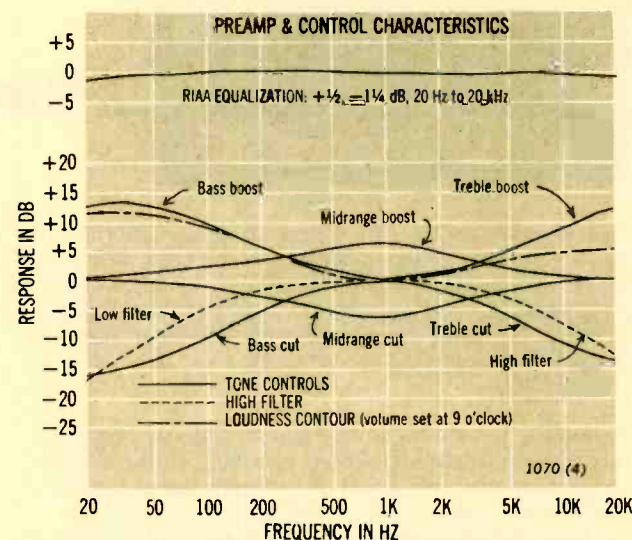
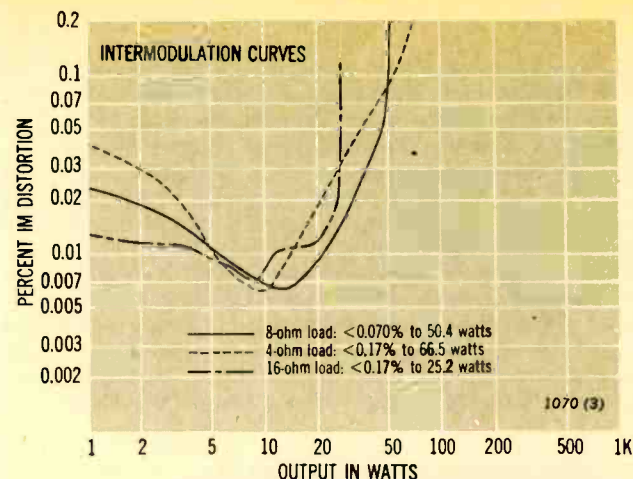
Yamaha CT-7000 *Continued from page 38*

tical and horizontal) for special testing via an external oscilloscope. There's also an IF output jack for additional special applications.

Either 300-ohm (twinlead) or 75-ohm (coaxial) cable may be connected to the antenna terminals at the rear. If the latter is used, it may be connected directly or via the ring-connector common to coaxial cable; either way no balun transformer is required. The rear also contains a system grounding terminal, an unswitched AC outlet, a fuse, and the set's power cord.

CBS Labs ran most of its tests on the tuner with the IF mode switch set to "normal" position. Some specific tests were also made at "wide" position. The latter was found to reduce sensitivity by a very small amount, selectivity by an appreciable amount, and distortion by a small amount. In general, then, the results confirm the instructions furnished with the set to use the "wide" position only under the best reception conditions.

Sensitivity measurements show excellent quieting ac-



Square-wave response

tion with normal signal strength levels, such as 60 dB of quieting for 50 microvolts of input signal and 61 dB for 50,000 microvolts. Ultimate S/N ratio is 73 dB. Stereo sensitivity tests show 50 1/2 dB of quieting for 50 microvolts of input and 58 dB of quieting for 50,000 microvolts—again, exceptionally good performance. Other measured characteristics are all consistently excellent, including the very low distortion measured in both mono and stereo operation. Audio response is virtually a ruler-flat line across the band; channel separation on stereo exceeds the nominal 30-dB mark right up to FM's 15,000-Hz limit.

Plainly, here is a basic tuner that offers performance and features not likely to be found in the tuner portion of most (any?) receivers. Whether this makes FM programs sound better, or whether it is worth \$1,200, is something we cannot say. Certainly, the all-out perfectionist with means owes it to himself to consider and audition this interesting unit.

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



No more cheap seats!

It's a real pain in the ears getting stuck in a bum seat in a concert hall. It's even worse in your own living room.

The fact is that most home music systems really don't allow you to sit where you want and hear all of the music. With conventional loudspeakers, even good conventional loudspeakers, unless you're sitting on axis (right in front of the speakers), you miss a considerable amount of high frequency sound. Why? Because high frequencies have rifle-like directionality. If you're sitting off-target, the full impact of the sound simply misses you. Of course you hear something. But is it a flute? A piccolo? Or a clarinet? If you're not right on axis, it's often hard to tell. It's true that there are some so-called "omni-directional" loudspeakers. Principally they use an "aim and scatter" technique — i.e. bouncing and scattering the sound

off the walls of the listening room. But something is lost in all that bouncing around. You get a lot of sound everywhere. Unfortunately it's not the kind of accurate sound you want.

The KLH Research X Classic Four — Ultra-wide dispersion with extraordinary accuracy.

The Classic Four incorporates a high frequency dispersion concept that not only gives music a new dimension but also gives you greater freedom as a listener.

What we've done is build two tweeters into the Classic Four in a mathematically calculated and meticulously tested configuration. The angle of the tweeters creates incredibly wide dispersion so that you hear perfect high frequency sound *no matter where you sit in the listening room*. This amazingly accurate means of sound dispersion also allows

you greater flexibility in the placement of the speakers. But most important, it brings new life and airiness to your recorded music. Each instrument is perfectly defined and recognizable — regardless if you're sitting on axis or not.

In addition the Classic Four has a typical KLH mid-range — ultra smooth and silky. And, of course, KLH has always had a reputation for getting an inordinate amount of bottom out of modest sized loudspeakers. But the Classic Four has bass response that is clearly a step beyond anything you'd ever expect from a bookshelf type speaker.

The Classic Four is at selected KLH dealers now. It comes with a removable grille cover in a choice of two decorator colors. It costs \$170. Not very much when you consider it makes every seat in your listening room front-row-center.

The Classic Four. Another innovative product from KLH Research X — a new era in audio.

For more information, write to KLH Research & Development Corp., 30 Cross St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139.



KLH Research X Division
KLH Research & Development Corp.
30 Cross St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139

CIRCLE 25 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

How to Translate Amplifier Jargon

An examination of some basic operating principles explains what the ads are trying to say

by Edward J. Foster

EVEN TO THOSE of you who considered yourselves reasonably well versed in the audio jargon of, say, five years ago, the amplifier descriptions you are faced with today in ads and articles, at high fidelity stores or shows, can easily seem bewildering. Be of good cheer. Computer-generated though some of the current terms may sound, they're not all that abstruse. As we review the basics of transistor amplifier operation, you will see how today's terminology fits into the scheme of things.

What Is a Power Amp Anyway?

Engineers look at the power amplifier in one of two ways. Some think of it as a "gain block" wherein the audio signal is further strengthened or enlarged. Others visualize the power amplifier as a sort of valve that controls the flow of energy from the power supply to the loudspeaker in accordance with the instantaneous value of the audio signal. I prefer the latter concept, because it emphasizes the fact that the source of all output power is indeed the unit's power supply—an amplifier cannot deliver more power than its own supply is designed for.

There is seldom an output transformer in a transistor power amp, so the maximum voltage that can be supplied to the loudspeaker is the voltage of the power supply. Actually, you can't supply quite all of that voltage since some will be lost across the "valve," even when it is wide open. It makes no difference what the *gain* of the amplifier is; you cannot deliver more output voltage than the supply voltage offers.

Before discussing the means that engineers have adopted for improving their amplifier designs, let's consider one of the improvements they're trying to achieve: reduced distortion. In solid-state ampli-

fiers there are two specific types of distortion that are particularly troublesome, and we will have occasion to refer to both repeatedly.

Power and Distortion

First, there is distortion caused by **clipping**, as you demand more power than the system is capable of. Clipping causes very loud musical passages to sound "shattery" or otherwise indistinct. It is visible on an oscilloscope as a flattening of the peaks and valleys in the wave form—literally the clipping-off of their extreme portions. There is not much you can do about it except get a more powerful rig or lower the output level.

Crossover distortion is most bothersome at the opposite end of the dynamic range—at low listening levels. It can be seen on an oscilloscope display as a little notch in the wave form at the point where signal polarity goes from minus to plus or vice versa and derives from the fact that the transistor is very nonlinear at these low current values. Crossover distortion generates harmonics that are nearly constant in level, and therefore, as the output power decreases, they account for a higher *percentage* of the total. These are "high order" harmonics and are very annoying. They lend a harsh or raspy quality to the reproduced sound.

In general, the newer **complementary symmetry** output stages exhibit less crossover distortion than do **quasi-complementary** designs. These terms refer to the way in which the transistors handle positive and negative swings of the wave form.

In between the crossover region and clipping, the residual distortion is caused by plain nonlinearities in the circuit. **Feedback** is a standard circuit device for self-correction of any nonlinearity occurring be-

tween the point to which the feedback signal is fed and that from which it is derived. The amplifier "compares" this signal with that at the "upstream" end of the feedback loop; where it finds a difference (representing distortion of one form or another), it uses the difference voltage to correct for the nonlinearity. With heavy feedback in the amplifier, the distortion will be extremely low in the region between crossover distortion and clipping.

Two Output-Stage Designs

Returning to our metaphor of the amplifier as a valve for the electrical energy available in the power supply, you must understand that this action actually takes place at the output stage of the amplifier. The earlier stages, in effect, simply build up the input voltages until they are strong enough to "work" this valve. And it is at the valve that clipping normally occurs.

Audio signals are AC. That is, the voltage alternates or changes in polarity (positive to negative and back) as well as in strength (amplitude). But the power supply delivers a steady DC, a fixed voltage (or pair of voltages) whose value and polarity are determined by the power-supply design. One way of making the conversion from DC power supply voltage to AC audio is to use *two* supplies, one positive in polarity and the other negative. Then, if we hook up *two* valves—one between the positive supply and the load and the other between the negative and the load—we can turn each on alternately, and to the appropriate level, to develop the audio signal across the load. This is the so-called **direct-coupled** output stage.

Note that it requires two power supplies of equal voltage but opposite polarity to maintain zero net DC across the load. Usually the output circuit is DC-coupled, and a lot of feedback is used to hold the output's "center" point at zero volts (DC) even when the transistors and other parts age. Should the output point drift from zero volts, a steady (DC) current would flow through the speaker systems' woofers, increasing loudspeaker distortion (because it provides a steady "push," forcing the loudspeaker cone away from its normal front-to-back centering).

The alternate approach to output-stage design, known as **capacitor coupling**, uses a single power supply at twice the voltage (for the equivalent output power). Two valves are used in series, and DC feedback establishes the voltage midpoint between the two at half the power-supply voltage. The loudspeaker is coupled to the midpoint through a large capacitor that blocks the DC voltage but passes the *audio variations* (that is, the AC component in the fluctuating DC voltage) through to the speaker.

Again the two valves are operated alternately in accordance with the audio, instantaneously raising

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the midpoint voltage closer to the power-supply level or dropping it closer to ground (0 VDC). On the other side of the capacitor—the speaker side—the average DC level is zero, and the audio signal alternates around “ground,” driving the speaker cone in and out. With such a capacitor-coupled output stage, there will be no net DC through the speaker even if the midpoint voltage drifts from its intended value.

If that voltage does drift, though, there will be some reduction in maximum output power since the amplifier will clip asymmetrically. If the midpoint voltage drifts up closer to the supply, the amplifier will clip on the positive peaks before it does on the negative; with a midpoint closer to ground, the negative will clip first.

The Matter of Protection

Some amplifier ads put a great deal of emphasis on **protective circuitry**. Does this mean that competing products are unprotected? Not at all. It simply means that there are several different conditions that must be protected against and different ways of protecting against them, and some are better than others. To understand why, it is necessary to understand in more detail how current flows through the amplifier's valve. So, back to the basics.

The output power delivered by an amplifier into a resistive load is given by the formula: Power in watts equals the square of the voltage divided by the resistance in ohms ($P = E^2/R$). This tells us that the average sine-wave power delivered by the amplifier is proportional to the square of the rms signal voltage. Thus, if the output voltage is raised from one volt to two volts, the output power is not doubled, but quadrupled. Let's put some numbers into the formula and see what happens.

For the moment, we'll assume perfect valves (transistors)—with no voltage loss through them—and an 8-ohm load. With two power-supplies, one delivering +25 volts, the other -25 volts, the *peak-to-peak* AC signal that could be developed is 50 volts. Assuming a sine-wave signal, this works out to 17.68 volts rms. Squaring this figure and dividing by 8 ohms (using the formula) gives us a maximum possible output power of 39 watts. If we were to raise the supply voltage of each power supply from 25 volts to 30 volts for a total of 60 volts, we could get 56.25 watts under the same conditions. Thirty-five volts per supply, or a total of 70 volts, would give us a 76.5-watt capability. Thus, increasing the supply voltage and keeping the load constant increases the power delivered to that load.

Now let's see what happens if we keep the supply voltage constant and change the load. We said the two 25-volt supplies gave us the capability of 17.68 volts rms into the load. While this corresponds to 39

watts into an 8-ohm load, it is only half that—or 19.5 watts—into a 16-ohm load. On the other hand, it is doubled to 78 watts if the load drops to 4 ohms. It doubles again to 156 watts for a 2-ohm load.

Do these numbers lie? Can we actually get 156 watts out of a 39-watt amp? Yes, if—and that's a big if—the amplifier output stage and its power supply have been designed to drive a 2-ohm load. Up to this point, we've made the tacit assumption that the power supply could deliver unlimited current without changing its voltage. We also assumed ideal valves that could handle these currents without loss. Neither assumption holds true in practice.

Which brings us to another formula to calculate power, this time using the current rather than the voltage: Power in watts equals resistance in ohms multiplied by the square of the current in amperes ($P = I^2 R$). Working backward, with 39 watts into an 8-ohm load, we find that the current flow is 2.21 amperes rms. With 19.5 watts into 16 ohms, current flow is 1.10 ampere rms—obviously no strain on an amplifier that can deliver 2.21 amperes. At 78 watts and 4 ohms, current flow is 4.42 amperes rms. The supply and/or the output stage may not be able to deliver this level of current, and so we may not be able to deliver the full 78 watts into a 4-ohm load. When we get to 2 ohms and 156 watts, we're dealing with 8.83 amperes rms; and, almost certainly, a system designed for 39 watts and 8 ohms (2.21 amperes) will not be capable of pumping out 8.83 amperes. The point is that the amplifier can be *either* voltage-limited *or* current-limited. At higher than nominal (8-ohm) load impedance, power is limited by power-supply voltages; at lower than nominal, it is limited by current.

This latter limitation applies not only to the power supply, but, more important, to the output transistors themselves. The heat generated in any circuit component is proportional to the current through it. Voltage is one of the factors that determines how much current will flow, but voltage itself produces no heat. And obviously it is heat that will “burn up” the output transistors if they are over-driven.

It also is the heat generated by current flow that blows fuses, and fuses are one of the means available to protect the amplifier against overload. They frequently are used in the power-supply circuits to protect against internal shorts or other outright faults. They also can be used in the output circuits, where they sometimes are called speaker fusing, but they have two disadvantages when used this way: By adding resistance they reduce the amplifier's damping factor (a measure of internal resistance within the amp itself); and, depending on the type of signal and the amplifier's design, they don't necessarily have the same type of sensitivity to current overload as the amplifier does—meaning that the fuses may either blow before the amp is in dan-

Electronic protection circuitry

■ Plug-in circuit board

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ger (a nuisance) or after the amp already has gone (a catastrophe).

Most manufacturers therefore use some form of protective circuitry, usually of the current-limiting type. This is why the maximum power output at low load impedances generally is not as great, with respect to rated maximum power at 8 ohms, as our formula would seem to predict. Maximum output at 4 ohms sometimes is *less* than at 8 ohms, in fact; often it is severely limited at 2 ohms because of the current required to achieve appreciable power.

In addition to simply imposing a ceiling to am-

perage values through the protective circuitry itself, some protective devices in effect alter the circuit operation elsewhere to prevent damage. Some designs use relays or other mechanisms that reduce power-supply voltage until the overload is corrected. And instead of being sensitive to current flow (or to current flow alone) they may be designed specifically as **thermal protection** devices—that is, as thermostats that will respond to overheating itself.

Overheating is important not only because it is what destroys output transistors, but because it is the major contributor to aging of solder joints, capacitors, and other circuit components. For this reason efficient heat dissipation is vital both to short-term and to long-term amplifier protection. This is why you will see references to massive heat sinking (or similar phrases) in many amplifier ads.

A **heat sink** is a heat conductive assembly on which the output transistors are mounted. Its function is very much like that of an automobile radiator. The greater the surface area of the heat sink exposed to the air around it (and the better the ventilation of that area), the more readily heat can be conducted away from the output transistors. This is particularly important, of course, in high-powered amplifiers; and some manufacturers install (or recommend that the user install) fans to further increase the rate of heat dissipation.

The Amplifier Class System

Some of what we have been discussing so far assumes the most common type of transistor amplifier circuit, known as Class B. The class designation does not mean that the amp is a second-rate design; it refers to circuit type categories by which engineers specify the time during which each of the output transistors will conduct current.

In a **Class A** output stage, both transistors conduct current all the time. Each of them is normally biased with DC from the power supply to conduct a current equal to the *peak* AC current that would flow into the load under maximum signal conditions. With no input signal, this steady DC current flows equally in both transistors and there is no *unbalanced* current or voltage at the midpoint—the output. Thus no current flows into the speaker. As the signal goes positive, the “upper” transistor (in terms of carrying the higher DC voltage) turns on more, allowing more current to flow, and the “lower” one turns off by a corresponding amount, reducing its current flow. The unbalance in currents must flow through the speaker, generating sound.

This type of operation is very linear, even without feedback, and so the distortion is low. In particular, crossover distortion is essentially absent.

(This is why Class A operation sometimes is considered ideal among transistor designs.) On the negative side of the ledger is very poor efficiency. Since current flows even with no signal output, power is continually consumed and dissipated as heat in the amplifier. As a matter of fact, the worst-case power dissipation occurs with *no* signal, since under these conditions *all* the power is dissipated as heat in the output stage and none goes to the load. With increasing signal levels some of the power goes out to the load and less is turned into heat.

A characteristic of Class A operation is that the *total* power consumed is constant—independent of the signal level—and equal to twice the total maximum output power even under ideal conditions. Assuming the 25-volt supplies and 8-ohm load of the earlier example, the output transistors would have to dissipate twice 39 watts, or 78 watts, under no-signal conditions. With full signal output, the amplifier would produce 39 watts of output plus 39 watts of heat, for an efficiency of 50% when the signal is a sine wave. If we planned to use the Class A amplifier with a 4-ohm load, it would have to handle 156 watts of heat, and that's a lot! This means *really* massive heat sinks, a very large power transformer (because of the low efficiency), and excellent ventilation. You can see why Class A operation, even with its low inherent distortion, seldom is used on even medium-powered amplifiers.

In the true **Class B** operation and with no input signal, neither output transistor conducts and no power is dissipated in the amplifier. As soon as there is signal, the transistors conduct on alternate halves of the signal wave form. Now there is power output and also power dissipated in the amplifier. With our 25-volt supplies and an 8-ohm load, operated Class B at an instant when there is a +8-volt signal output, the lower transistor is still off but the upper one is on and conducting 1 ampere to develop 8 volts across 8 ohms. There are 17 volts (25 – 8) across the conducting transistor, and at that instant it must dissipate 17 volts times 1 ampere, or 17 watts of power.

In an ideal Class B amplifier, operated with a sine-wave signal, it turns out that most power is dissipated in the amplifier when it is delivering 40.5% of its maximum output power. At this point it will be dissipating the same amount of power as it is delivering—that is, it will be 50% efficient. Thus, in our hypothetical 39-watt amplifier, the most heat is generated when it is delivering 15.8 electrical watts plus 15.8 watts of heat. Obviously this is much easier to dissipate than the 78 watts of Class A operation. Of course worst-case operation is far more likely in the Class A amplifier (whenever it is idling) than in the Class B design (only instantaneously during loud passages). And finally, a smaller power supply is possible because the efficiency at full output of Class B operation is higher—78.5% as opposed to 50% for Class A.

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There always seems to be a catch somewhere, and there is one in Class B operation: Transistors turn on in a very nonlinear way. As a matter of fact, common silicon transistors will not conduct at all until the signal reaches about 0.6 volts. In pure Class B operation then, the distortion is extremely high at low signal levels, since the output voltages will not “track” input voltages because of crossover distortion, which occurs as the signal crosses over from one transistor, or one polarity, to the other.

In practice, pure Class B is not used. Rather, both transistors are biased so that they are conducting *slightly* even with no input signal. For very small signals the amplifier operates in Class A, automatically switching to Class B for large signals. This mode is properly called **Class AB**. The efficiency is slightly lower than Class B (that is, the heat dissipated is slightly greater), but the reduced crossover distortion is worth it.

The newest type of amplifier is Class D. But what happened to Class C? In Class A, the output transistors conduct 100% of the time; in Class B they

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conduct 50% of the time; in Class AB they conduct more than 50% of the time to reduce crossover distortion. In Class C they conduct less than 50% of the time, and the distortion is horrendous! Class C is very efficient but is used mainly in transmitters and is unsuitable for audio.

Class D is an extremely efficient mode that now is finding its way into some sophisticated high-powered amplifiers. The output transistors are used as switches: They are valves that are either open or closed—never part-way open as they are in the other operation classes. For that reason they are comparable to the circuitry in digital computers, and this sort of design may be called a **digital amplifier**. And because of the switching action, the design often is called a **switching amplifier**.

When the Class D output transistors are on, they ideally connect the load directly to the power supply. Current flows, but there is no voltage across the transistor because it is effectively a short. Thus no power is dissipated. When the output transistor is off, the full power-supply voltage appears across

the transistor, but no current flows, since the transistor is open. Hence, again, no power is dissipated. Theoretically the efficiency is 100%!

How does one make a switch into an amplifier? By using a circuit called a pulse-width or pulse-duration modulator. With this circuit, the output signal is compared with the input many times a second and a pulse is generated whose width or duration is proportional to the "error" between the output and the input. If the output should be higher, the pulse gets wider, narrower if it should be lower. A low-pass filter at the output of the amplifier averages these pulses into a replica of the input signal. This may sound strange to you, but it can be shown mathematically that, as long as you sample and correct the signal at a rate more than twice the highest audio frequency involved, it theoretically is possible to reproduce the input signal exactly at the output of the filter.

What does Class D give you? Extremely high efficiency, which means a smaller power supply and drastically reduced heat sinking in high-powered amplifiers. Further, since the output stage is not amplifying, but switching, there is no distortion caused by nonlinearities in the transistors. The main cause of distortion—or what distortion remains—is the limited accuracy with which the modulator can generate the proper pulse width. On the negative side are the more complex circuitry, the possibly more limited frequency response, and the probably more expensive transistors.

Two Plus Two Equals Five

With this background, we can now look at four-channel amplifiers operated in the **strapped** or two-channel mode. There actually is more than one way of achieving this objective, just as there are many terms for it (**bridging**, **BTL**, and so on). If you look at the specs for various quad receivers and amps, you will find that some deliver less total power for two-channel operation than for four, others approximate the same total power either way, and still others deliver more power in the two-channel strapped mode. How come? The answer lies in how the strapping is achieved.

When you switch some quadriphonic amplifiers from four channels to two, you disconnect the rear amplifiers and increase the power-supply voltage on the front amplifiers by switching taps on the power transformer. If our hypothetical amplifier were a four-channel rig, its 39-watt capability would be 4 times 39, or 156 watts, for all four channels together. If we now switch to two channels and increase the supply voltage from 25 to 35 volts, the power capability per channel would rise to 76.5 watts. The total power capability could be 153 watts, or just about the same as in the quadriphonic mode. Had the power supply voltage gone to only

ACES FET POWER AMPLIFIER DIGIOUS CAPABILITIES

30 volts, we would get 56.25 watts per channel, or 112.5 watts total. Obviously any power level is available if the design in the front channels makes allowances for it and for the voltages it requires. This approach has the advantage that the speakers need not be disconnected when going into the alternate mode.

In this approach, strapping is really a misnomer since only one pair of amplifiers is used in stereo. There is another approach that uses all four amplifiers, strapping them in two bridge arrangements. If the loudspeaker is connected between two outputs (rather than between one output and ground) and the inputs to the pair of amplifiers so used are driven by equal but oppositely phased signals, they can develop twice the voltage across the speaker that either could alone. That's because, as one output goes positive by one volt, the other goes negative by a volt (they're out of phase), putting 2 volts across the speaker. Now remember that doubling the voltage across the speaker *quadruples* the power. So our 39 watt-per-channel quadriphonic amp (156 watts total) could be a 156 watt-per-channel stereo amp (312 watts total) in the strapped mode!

It *could*, if the power supply will permit it. But in order to deliver 312 watts in stereo, the power supply must be designed to deliver *twice* the current in stereo that it normally delivers in quad, and at the same voltage. It's unlikely that such a large margin would be built into the amp. The output stages, too, would have to be designed to handle the extra current. Thus, while it is possible to get more total power in strapped stereo than in quad by using a bridge hookup, it is unlikely that you will achieve the doubling that is theoretically available.

The Last Word?

Among the most recent entries into the high fidelity lexicon is the term **FET amplifier**. Field effect transistors themselves are not new, of course. The basic FET principle was in fact invented (by Oskar Heil) long before there was a solid-state technology in which it could be used. But when conventional (bipolar) transistors finally did come into common use they were found to have some limitations, par-

ticularly in dynamic range. For that reason designers continued to use tubes in some circuits of otherwise transistorized designs, particularly at the front ends of FM tuners and in microphone preamps where extreme dynamic ranges can be expected.

The commercial availability of FETs changed that. In some key respects they behave much more like tubes than like bipolar transistors, and the phrase "FET front end" has long been a feature of FM tuner and receiver advertising. Their low noise and low distortion has recommended FETs for applications in phono and mike preamp stages as well. But until very recently no available FETs have been able to handle appreciable quantities of power.

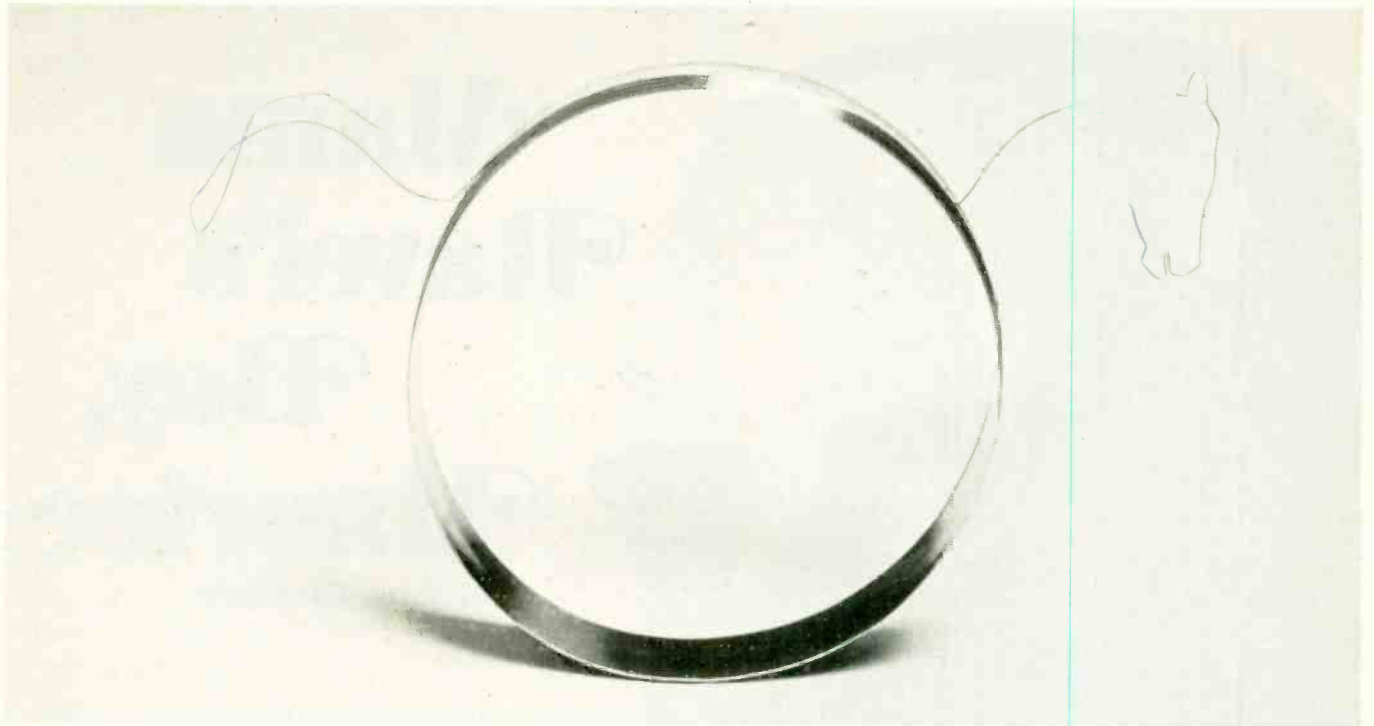
The first prototypes of FET power amplifiers appeared only last year, and by the beginning of this year several companies had announced plans to offer production models. This, therefore, is a brand-new development, and one whose significance in terms of available equipment cannot yet be assessed. Like the "all-triode" amplifiers of the tube days, the FET amplifier specifies the type of component used rather than, necessarily, how it is used. The inherent properties of both triodes and FETs are theoretically superior to those of their more commonly encountered counterparts, and it will be interesting to see just what performance levels can be achieved with the new power FETs.

The Purpose of It All

All of the circuit ideas discussed in this article are aimed at one basic objective: the development of reliable sources of electrical power appropriate for driving loudspeakers and having minimum distortion within the output-capability and cost limits set for them. Thus all the terms and concepts relate in one way or another to the quality of sound you can expect to hear in the end product.

Obviously, no one phrase or idea pre-empts the others. That is, a Class A amplifier is not necessarily more desirable than a conventional (Class B) unit, for example, despite its inherent advantages. The importance of each design depends on the quality level you wish to achieve and on the power levels at which you must achieve it. ●

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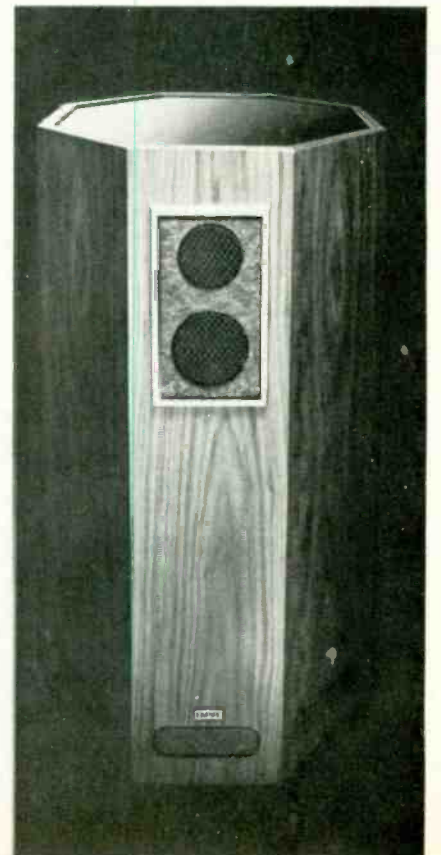
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A noted Ravel scholar draws a portrait of the composer after ten years of interviews with those who knew him.



Mama Ravel's Boy, Maurice.

by Arbie Orenstein

IN THE COURSE of Maurice Ravel's lifetime, his music was performed throughout Europe, North America, and South America, and from North Africa to the Orient. His career intersected with those of many outstanding personalities—Ansermet, Bartók, Casals, Chaliapin, Debussy, Gershwin, Heifetz, Horowitz, Matisse, Monteux, Nijinsky, Picasso, Prokofiev, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Villa-Lobos. Granted honorary awards and citations by universities, ministers, and kings, Ravel had a life marked by brilliant and rich achievement. Behind it all lay the essential simplicity yet subtle complexity of the man.

Although Paris was his artistic hub, he frequently left the bustling capital to return to his tranquil birthplace in the Basque territory. Located at the southwestern corner of France, the tiny village of Ciboure is just across the bay from St. Jean-de-Luz, a short distance from the Spanish border. Here the quintessential French composer, who would one day epitomize Parisian sophistication

Mr. Orenstein is an assistant professor of music at Queens College. He recently completed work on a book, Ravel: Man and Musician, which is scheduled for publication in September by the Columbia University Press.

and elegance, was born to a Swiss father and Basque mother one hundred years ago—March 7, 1875.

The origins of the Ravel family have been traced to Collonges-sous-Salève, a village in France's Haute-Savoie. During the latter part of the eighteenth century there lived in this town one François Ravex or Ravet; the name somehow evolved into Ravel. Pierre Joseph Ravel, the father of the composer, was born in Versoix, Switzerland, in 1832, one of five children. Although Pierre was keenly interested in music and studied the trumpet as a young man, he became an engineer and was a pioneer in the developing automobile industry. He frequently took his children to visit factories of all sorts. Maurice appears to have inherited his father's fascination with mechanical objects; this aspect of his musical personality later was revealed in the remarkable prelude of *L'Heure espagnole*, with its automatons and precision engineering.

The relatively late parenthood of thirty-five-year-old Marie Delouart, with her warm Spanish upbringing (she was raised in Madrid), and forty-three-year-old Pierre Ravel may well have had something to do with the great affection they lavished on their firstborn son. Their second son, Edouard, took after his father, but Maurice, his mother's favorite, was influenced more strongly by her. While Edouard had boyish haircuts, Maurice would be coiffed in girlish-length hair. While Edouard eventually married, there never even was an important woman in Maurice's life, except for his mother. And while Edouard followed in his father's footsteps as an engineer, Maurice dedicated himself to art.

Ravel's attachment to his mother was undoubtedly the deepest emotional tie of his life, and her death in 1917 caused virtual hiatus in her forty-two-year-old son's creative activity for three years. Among his earliest memories were the Spanish folk melodies she sang to him, and through her he developed a love of the Basque country, its people, and its folklore, as well as a deep sympathy for the music of Spain. Manuel de Falla observed that "Ravel's Spain was a Spain ideally presented by his mother, whose refined conversation [was] always in excellent Spanish." From the *Habanera* of 1895 through the *Rapsodie espagnole*, *L'Heure espagnole*, *Bolero*, and *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée* of 1932, the meridional warmth of Spain plays an important role in Ravel's *oeuvre*.

When it became clear that the elder child would pursue a career in music, he was given unqualified parental encouragement and support. There was no Berliozian crisis over his choice: It was music from the very beginning, and the only question was whether he would be a concert pianist or a composer. His distaste for practicing helped solve that problem.

In addition to his Basque-Swiss heritage, Ravel's personality was strongly influenced by his colleagues and professors at the Paris Conservatoire. An extraordinary journal written by his closest friend, the Spanish pianist Ricardo Viñes, offers a wealth of fresh insight. The boys had met in 1888, and Ricardo was at first struck by his friend's shoulder-length hair. Both youngsters were blessed with an insatiable curiosity, and while their mothers conversed in Spanish they played an imposing variety of music at the keyboard, ranging from Mozart and Mendelssohn through Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin to Chabrier and Satie.

After classes at the Conservatoire, the boys would take long walks, play games of all sorts, copy out poetry, make drawings, attend concerts, or visit art galleries. They were especially drawn to the music of Wagner and the Russian school and to the writings of Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Poe, and Verlaine. In particular, Ravel was fascinated by the fresh spontaneity of the Russians, with their exotic modality and brilliant orchestral color, and it is clear that Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* and *Capriccio espagnol* were the key influences on Ravel's *Shéhérazade* (both the overture and the song cycle) and the *Rapsodie espagnole*.

It is notable that the teenage Ravel already had a sophisticated appreciation of the most subtle French literature and was attracted to the complex symbolism of Mallarmé—an especially striking circumstance since the composer had no formal education other than his music lessons. He regretted this academic deficiency and in later life he answered a mother who had asked his advice on musical instruction for her son by warning her: "Above all, have him continue his academic studies. Today, more than ever, a musician should not be only a musician."

During the summer of 1892, Maurice and Ricardo spent virtually an entire day "experimenting with new chords" at the keyboard. The results of these and other discoveries were revealed soon after in the *Habanera* for two pianos, in which Ravel boldly affirmed his predilection for subtle and sophisticated harmonies. Another classmate, the pianist Alfred Cortot, who characterized Ravel as a "slightly bantering, intellectual, and somewhat distant young man," remembered that between classes the students used to play each other's music. If they came across "a few measures of highly audacious music . . . we always agreed on one point at least—they must have been taken from one of Ravel's latest compositions." And Gabriel Fauré, Ravel's professor of composition, wrote of his twenty-five-year-old student: "Very good student, hard-working and punctual. Musical nature very taken with innovation, with a disarming sincerity!"

Ravel generally maintained an air of cool detachment and hardly ever was able to express per-

sonal affection except to those in his own family, cats, and children. His bantering humor and a deliberate attempt at mystification helped him to keep others at a distance, and this facet of his personality appears to indicate the influence of Erik Satie, whom he used to visit. However, the young composer was drawn not to Satie's Bohemianism, but to Baudelaire's description of the dandy, who was supposed to exhibit simplicity and elegance in grooming and to carry out a dignified quest for beauty. Ravel devoted much of his extramusical passion to collecting bric-a-brac and fussing about his wardrobe. He chose a vest or a tie as carefully as he chose a chord. Behind this mask of trivia, he did in fact carry out a "dignified quest for beauty" and was oriented toward all that was "poetry, fantasy, precious and rare, paradoxical and refined." This description, by Viñes, offers an important clue to the elegance, refinement, and preciousness underlying many of Ravel's works, from the early *Pavane pour une infante défunte* (1899) to *Ronsard à son âme* of 1924.

Above all, the composer was sensitive, indeed hypersensitive, to artistic beauty. By his early twenties, Ravel's personality was rather firmly set in its own contradictory way. Apparently remote and uninvolved, he actually was a fun-loving man. An example of his ironic, cool humor is found in an unpublished letter to the Parisian hostess Madame René de Saint-Marceaux, written during the summer of 1898:

Madame.

The little symbolist, very happy that you deign to occupy yourself a bit with his music, deeply regrets to have perpetrated no new vocal work in recent days. Some may believe that remorse overwhelms him. Not he, unfortunately, for he is incorrigible and quite ready to do nothing about it. While waiting, he is doing a bit of fugue and a lot of bicycling. . . .

Pardon him, Madame, and kindly accept his most respectful homage.

The element of reticence is an important key to Ravel's personality both as an individual and as a musician. In fact, while he was both astute and lavish in his criticism of others' music, the emotional vulnerability necessary to give a face-to-face compliment was apparently beyond him. He could tell a young composer "Your ballet is very bad," but singer Marcelle Gerar told me that when she auditioned for him he received her properly though coolly and made no comment about her voice or interpretation. Only later, through a mutual colleague, did she learn that Ravel had been impressed with her ability, and soon after she was asked to concertize with the composer.

The French musicologist Alexis Roland-Manuel, who was Ravel's closest associate for some twenty-five years, recalled for me the composer's unique



The picture of late-nineteenth-century respectability, Mme. Marie Ravel sat for a portrait with her sons (the becurled Maurice is at left) in 1888. The piano class of Charles de Bériot (seated at the left of the piano, facing page) at the Paris Conservatoire in 1895 included Ravel (extreme left) and his friend Ricardo Viñes (standing fourth from right).

method of instruction: "I was introduced to Ravel in 1911 by Erik Satie. At the time, he was living with his mother and brother at 4 Avenue Carnot, just a few steps from the Arc de Triomphe. For my first lesson, I composed a minuet based upon the letters of his name. He examined it carefully, pointing out many errors and weaknesses. Nothing got by his demanding eye. 'If you thought you would revolutionize music with this work,' he observed, 'you didn't. If, on the other hand, you wished to write a traditional work, then it is clear that you have a great deal to learn.' I was totally discouraged. A few weeks later I saw a mutual friend, who said Ravel had spoken to him about me very highly. 'The minuet,' Ravel observed, 'although containing many imperfections, shows considerable talent.'"

"This," Roland-Manuel continued, "was perhaps the essence of Ravel's personality. One had the feeling that the full expression of his emotions was reserved exclusively for his music."

On another occasion, an orchestration assignment was brought, and it received strong criticism. "Why did you have the strings accompanying the woodwinds in this passage?" Ravel asked. "It would be much better the other way around." The fresh assignment was carried out with alacrity and submitted at the next lesson. He studied it and then observed, "You know, I think it was better the first way!"

Ravel's particular humor generally found expression in his proclivity for doing the unexpected, and this tendency may also be observed in his treat-



ment of the orchestra. In the *Bolero*, for instance, all the instrumental families eventually are given what is essentially the drum part to play. In the Daybreak scene of *Daphnis et Chloë*, the woodwinds perform extended harplike passages. In the "Laideronette" episode of *Ma Mère l'Oye* the melody is deliberately given to the weak and generally avoided bass register of the celesta. Robert Casadesus told me about a rehearsal in which he performed this celesta part. At this passage, Ravel stopped the orchestra, visibly upset. "I cannot hear the celesta," he commented. Had the composer miscalculated the orchestral balance? What to do? Casadesus came up with a novel suggestion. "Instead of striking the keys with my finger, why don't I make a fist and strike them with the side of my hand? That should increase the volume." This time the orchestral balance was perfect, much to Ravel's delight and relief.

The composer's paradoxical way of looking at things was perhaps epitomized in a projected volume on orchestration that was planned with the assistance of composer Georges Auric. "Ravel telephoned me one day," Auric recently recalled, "and said, 'I must see you immediately.' We made a rendezvous at a café, and he explained the following: 'I would like your assistance in writing two slim volumes, one on my relationship with Debussy and the other on orchestration.'" Auric, amazed at the projected format of the latter book, said, "Ravel was going to present a series of examples with commentary, taken from his own compositions, showing how *not* to orchestrate by highlighting passages

that were bungled!" Unfortunately, both volumes remained in the planning stages.

If reticence and a penchant for deliberately doing the unpredictable were key aspects of Ravel's character, another was elegance. My objective as a composer, he once explained, is to achieve "technical perfection. I can strive unceasingly to this end, since I am certain of never being able to attain it. The important thing is to get nearer to it all the time. Art, no doubt, has other *effects*, but the artist, in my opinion, should have no other aim."

The poet Léon-Paul Fargue, has written that "one of the most striking traits of this curious Pyrenean was his passion for perfection. This man, who was profoundly intelligent, versatile, precise, extremely well informed, and who did everything with a facility that was proverbial, had the character and qualities of an artisan. And he liked nothing better than to be compared to one. He liked doing things and doing things well. . . . His passion was to offer the public works which were 'finished,' polished to the ultimate degree."

Le Belvédère, Ravel's final official residence at Montfort l'Amaury, some thirty miles west of Paris, reflects a great deal of his fastidiousness. The villa, preserved exactly as the composer left it, seems as much a museum as a home. In fact, it now *is* a national museum open to the public. From the balcony one sees a sumptuous view of the flowing countryside of the Ile-de-France. The library reveals Ravel's demanding taste as a bibliophile, with its many rare and beautifully bound editions, and one notes a Japanese garden, many Japanese

Ravel and Recordings

Ravel's lifetime paralleled the development of the recording industry. From acoustical discs and piano rolls to electrical discs, the quality of sound reproduction made important strides during the opening decades of the twentieth century. From a historical viewpoint, it is clear that Ravel was the first composer to have had virtually all his major works recorded in his lifetime.

The following list includes recordings in which Ravel participated or which were made in his presence. For 78-rpm disc originals, only the U.S. release number is given; Welte-Mignon and Duo-Art are piano rolls.

- Pavane pour une infante défunte (1899). M.R., piano. DUO-ART (1921 or 1922)^{1,2}.
- Quartet for Strings (1902-3). Galimir Quartet. BRUNSWICK 90411/3 (1934)³.
- Sonatine, movements 1 and 2 (1905). M.R., piano. WELTE-MIGNON (1913)³.
- Miroirs. Oiseaux tristes; La Vallée des cloches (1905). M.R., piano. DUO-ART (1921 or 1922)^{1,2}.
- Introduction et Allegro (1906). Miss G. Mason, harp; Robert Murcie, flute; H. P. Draper, clarinet; string quartet, M.R., cond. COLUMBIA 67091/2D (1924).
- Gaspard de la nuit. Le Gibet (1908). M.R., piano. DUO-ART (1925).
- Valses nobles et sentimentales (1911). M.R., piano. WELTE-MIGNON (1913)³.

- Le Tombeau de Couperin. Toccata (1914-17). M.R., piano. DUO-ART (1921 or 1922)¹.
- Ronsard à son âme (1924). Martial Singher, baritone; orchestra, Piero Coppola, cond. VICTOR 4405 (1934).
- Chansons madécasses (1925-26). Madeleine Grey, soprano; flute, cello, and piano, M.R., cond. BRUNSWICK 85032/3 (1932)¹.
- Bolero (1927). Lamoureux Orchestra, M.R., cond. BRUNSWICK 90039/40 (1930)¹.
- Orchestra, Piero Coppola, cond. VICTOR 13659/60 (1930).
- Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in G (1930-31). Marguerite Long, piano; orchestra, M.R., cond. COLUMBIA 68064/6D (1932)⁴.
- Don Quichotte à Dulcinée (1932). Martial Singher, baritone; orchestra, Piero Coppola, cond. VICTOR 4404/5 (1934).

¹Now available on EVEREST ARCHIVE OF PIANO MUSIC X 912, devoted to Ravel piano rolls.

²Now available on TURNABOUT TV 4256, devoted to Ravel performances. (Note: From *Miroirs*, only "La Vallée des cloches" is included.)

³Now available on TELEFUNKEN 34, divided between Ravel and Debussy piano rolls.

⁴Now available in SERAPHIM IC 6043, a three-disc collection of historic piano-concerto recordings.

⁵Ravel also expressed approval of the 1927 recording by the International String Quartet, issued in England as National Gramophonic Society 78/81. On July 18, 1927, he wrote: "I have just heard the recording of my quartet performed by the International String Quartet. I am completely satisfied with regard to the sonority, the tempi, and the nuances" [*The Gramophone*, September 1927, p. 139].

prints, an Arabic coffee set (evidence of his penchant for the exotic) and finely wrought bibelots, mechanical birds, music boxes, and carved statuettes. The panels in the living room and the friezes in the bedroom were designed and painted by Ravel himself, and in the study, adjacent to the Erard piano and the composer's desk, there is a fine portrait of his mother, done by his uncle Edouard.

His mischievous humor often came to the fore when guiding his friends through the villa, for when his guests gazed in admiration at a "rare" Monticelli he would enjoy informing them that it was an imitation. Indeed, throughout the villa, one finds a curious combination of rare authenticity and flagrant pastiche as well as an aura of make-believe enchantment, not unrelated to the exoticism of *Shéhérazade* or the childlike humor of *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*.

To these small, immaculately polished rooms he added his Siamese cats, upon whom he lavished loving attention. The remarkable cats' duet from *L'Enfant*, which continues in the best tradition of the *Histoires naturelles*, bespeaks the composer's love of animals. He could name every bird and imitate every birdcall heard around Le Belvédère.

And when he visited conductor Manuel Rosenthal and his wife, or the Roland-Manuels, Ravel was as likely to play with their children as to con-

verse with his hosts. He enjoyed baby-sitting for the children of his friends Cipa and Ida Godebski, and he wrote *Ma Mere L'Oye* for the youngsters to play on the piano. (One of the children, Jean, told me, "Ravel enjoyed playing with our toys as much as we did.")

Extreme sophistication coupled with childlike wonder, a marked proclivity for perfection with many paradoxical aspects—all of this summarized Ravel's unique personality. But what about the great issues of life that all men must face: love, politics, religion, the meaning of life?

We have but little to go on, because of his reluctance to express his feelings. There is no evidence of any romantic attachments, but Rosenthal, who studied with Ravel in the 1920s, assured me that the composer was not insensitive to feminine beauty and charm. But in an unusual comment on matrimony, Ravel once observed that artists were generally unfit for marriage. "We are rarely normal," he wrote, "and our lives are even less so."

His political views were socialistic, and he was a friend and admirer of Léon Blum and Paul Painlevé. The one paper he subscribed to was the socialist organ, *Le Populaire de Paris*. At the outbreak of World War I, Ravel, now thirty-nine, was finally able to take direct political action. In a letter to Cipa Godebski, the composer explained his deci-

sion to enlist: "And now, if you wish. Vive la France! but, above all, down with Germany and Austria! or at least what those two nations represent at the present time. And with all my heart: Long live the Internationale and Peace! That's why I'm going."

The war years opened up a fresh chapter in his career. Turned down by the air force, he became a truck driver. Ravel transported war matériel, and on one occasion, near the front at Verdun, an enemy bullet came within inches of taking his life. A less dangerous assignment was described in a postcard to the critic Jean Marnold, written in April 1916:

The other day, I was assigned one of those "interesting missions" that you have told me you distrust. It consisted of going to X . . . in order to bring back a requisitioned vehicle, "abandoned" would be more correct. Nothing troublesome happened to me. I did not need my helmet, my gas mask remained in my pocket. I saw a hallucinating thing: a nightmarish city, horribly deserted and mute. It isn't the fracas from above, or the small balloons of white smoke that align the very pure sky: it's not this formidable and invisible struggle that is anguishing, but rather to feel alone in the center of this city that rests in a sinister sleep, under the brilliant light of a beautiful summer day. Undoubtedly, I will see things that will be more frightful and repugnant: I don't believe I will ever experience a more profound and stranger emotion than this sort of mute terror.

The struggle and terror of the war would find their way into the postwar compositions, ranging from the frenzied conclusion of *La Valse* through the austere violence of the *Chansons madécasses* and the pathos and drama of the piano concerto for the left hand.

Although born of Catholic parents and baptized as an infant, Ravel appears to have adopted his mother's free-thinking attitude toward religion. When an old friend of the family had attempted to "convert" his mother, the composer explained the outcome as follows: "Mama cooled this noble zeal considerably by stating that she would prefer to be in hell with her family, rather than in heaven all alone." Ravel tended toward agnosticism, relying upon his conscience and moral sensitivity. "Everyone has his shortcomings," he once wrote to Godzinski, "mine is to act only with complete conscience."

Rosenthal recalled for me Ravel's extraordinary generosity and the encouragement and financial assistance he gave to the many musicians, refugees from Nazi Germany, who found their way to Le Belvédère in the 1930s. Ironically, many of these musicians thought they were being helped by a fellow Jew—Ravel had set several Hebraic melodies with extreme sensitivity—and the infamous racial publications of the Third Reich listed him as being

of Jewish origin. Certainly most of his friends were Jewish—"nine out of ten," he once told Rosenthal.

Ravel's personal habits have been frequently described by those who knew him. Although a confirmed hermit when composing, he enjoyed Parisian night life, the endless discussions in cafes, the lights, the jazz, and the crowds. He was self-conscious about his height (about five feet, three inches), and light frame (about 108 pounds). To Roland-Manuel he resembled a jockey, to Colette a squirrel. "His thumbs were extraordinarily supple—thumbs of a strangler, we used to call them," Rosenthal recalled. No doubt, Ravel's ability to strike three notes at the keyboard with his thumb partially gave rise to some of the fiendishly difficult passages in "*Scarbo*" from *Gaspard de la nuit*. He was also conscious of his deficiencies as a pianist and conductor.

He was a heavy smoker of Caporal cigarettes and was attracted to stimulating condiments, exotic dishes, cocktails, and fine wines. He excelled in swimming and was an indefatigable walker. René Dommange, president of the publishing house Durand et Cie, recalled an afternoon luncheon at Le Belvédère. Toward evening, as he and Madame Dommange were about to drive back to Paris, Ravel asked if he might join them for part of the return trip. "We drove most of the way back, and then Ravel asked us to let him off.

"'But,' I protested, 'it's a long way back to Le Belvédère.'

"'Not at all,' Ravel replied. 'Some of my best work is done while walking. And the time passes very quickly.'

His meticulous grooming was counterbalanced by a curious disorder in his personal affairs. He was somewhat absentminded and often lost track of time, particularly in antique shops, when buying gifts or when examining rare editions for his library. "It was impossible to pin down Ravel for an appointment," the sculptor Léon Leyritz told me. "Shortly after we met I said I would like to do a bust of him and asked him when he could come to my studio to pose. Finally, after several unsuccessful attempts at a rendezvous, Ravel said, 'You know what? I will come to your studio tonight, but I will be with several friends.'

"'That's fine,' I replied, 'but what time?'

"Ravel appeared disconcerted. 'What time?' he repeated. 'Any time between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. Is that all right?'

Maurice Ravel died on December 28, 1937. Most of his contemporaries are now also gone. But those who remained long enough for me to interview all recalled him with great affection. The rest of us can recall him only through his music, an irreplaceable body of work that reflects his unique personality. And there we may hear, in the words of the poet Tristan Klingsor, "the ironic and tender heart that beats under the velvet vest of Maurice Ravel." ●

by Joseph Roddy

Ravel in America

His one U.S. tour brought him ovations, money, and advice from the *New York Times* on how to become a better composer.



Ravel aboard the *France* arriving in New York in 1928.

LATE IN THE SPRING of 1926, over aperitifs for three at the Café de la Paix in Paris, Maurice Ravel decided to make a tour of the U.S. It was to be his only one.

He was lured into putting himself on the American concert circuit by the expatriate French pianist E. Robert Schmitz and his wife Germaine. They had come to France from their home in New York to convince the 51-year-old composer that he should make the tour as a pianist, conductor, cynosure, and sightseer, the last being the role they thought would surely appeal to him. Schmitz was the president and chief aesthete of Pro Musica, a high-purposed organization given to sponsoring community concerts by eminent European composers. Pro Musica had put Béla Bartók on display here before Ravel arrived, and later would bring Darius Milhaud and Arthur Honegger.

The Schmitzes' invitations to Ravel began in 1922, and in his gracious refusals the composer cited both his limited attainments as a pianist and his distaste for being exhibited like a performer in a circus. His importuners confined their beckonings to the mails until late in May 1926, when they descended on him at Le Belvédère, his neobaroque villa on the edge of Montfort l'Amaury, west of Paris. The refusals Ravel supplied there were even more graciously turned than the written ones.

After being entertained at lunch and being guided through the gardens, the Schmitzes climbed in their car for the trip back to Paris. Their host suddenly asked to go along and then took them to the Café de la Paix for drinks. Amid the exchange of

Joseph Roddy is currently working on a book about Sol Hurok and the U.S.-Soviet cultural exchange.

pleasantries, Schmitz found himself saying that, if Ravel *had* decided to make the tour, his guaranteed fee would have amounted to \$10,000. "*Mais, c'est beaucoup d'argent, ça,*" the composer exclaimed, and after reflecting on its purchasing power he changed his mind. He agreed to make the trip, giving an average of two performances a week over a period of two months.

Back in the U.S. Germaine Schmitz collected \$5,000 from Mason and Hamlin of Boston, promising that Ravel would not put a finger to any piano but theirs during his stay, while her husband made sure the fifteen Pro Musica branches across the country would raise the other half of the guarantee that had cured Ravel of his reluctance. The composer wanted customs laws waived so that he could bring with him all the Caporal cigarettes he needed while in the land of Camels addicts. And the wine of his homeland would have to be provided, at least surreptitiously, to sustain him where something called the Volstead Act prevailed.

At Montfort l'Amaury, Ravel was thinking of writing a showpiece to travel with, a piano concerto carefully fitted to his capacities as a performer. He thought about it, but didn't do it. Instead, he spent weeks concentrating on outfitting himself so bountifully that he bought fifty-seven ties. He later decided that each was a half-inch too long, and Mrs. Schmitz patiently shortened them.

The composer and his trunks full of new clothes left from Le Havre aboard the *France* on December 28, 1927. (Exactly ten years from the day of departure, Ravel would die.)

In New York, he was already well known to musicians and concertgoers for works that are still



among the most familiar of his compositions: the big orchestral canvases of *Daphnis et Chloé*, *Rapsodie espagnole*, *Shéhérazade*, and *La Valse*; the piano trio, string quartet, and *Introduction and Allegro*; the *Tzigane* for violin and piano; and a clutch of piano works such as *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Gaspard de la nuit*, and *Pavane pour une infante défunte*.

Schmitz had turned over the booking of Ravel's tour, apart from its Pro Musica dates, to Lucy Bogue of the Bogue-LaBerge agency, which evolved into Colbert-LaBerge and is now Colbert Artists Management. As thirty-one performances were being lined up, including conducting engagements with symphony orchestras in New York, Boston, San Francisco, and Cleveland—and with a string ensemble at Wanamaker's department store in Philadelphia—the two-month stay Ravel had agreed to was almost doubled before the *France* docked on the morning of January 4, 1928.

The composer was installed in the Langdon Hotel at the corner of Fifth Avenue and 56th Street (it has been replaced by the Corning Glass building). Reporters, from whom he had been shielded at the pier, were invited to meet him the day after his arrival at the Langdon, where he made the surprising claim that the poet Edgar Allan Poe was the most important influence on his manner of composing. In the *Philosophy of Composition*, Poe recounts in precise detail how he wrote *The Raven*, and Ravel said that after reading it he abandoned the formless ways of the Impressionist he had been and reverted to a classical rigor in which his emotion and intellect were justly proportioned. "Poe proved that art must strike a balance between those two extremes," he stated, "for the first leads only to formlessness, and the second to the dry and abstract."

He spoke of Debussy as "the profoundest of musicians" but still a man who did not evince enough intellect in his creation. The case of Stravinsky was raised, and Ravel held that his later work was a search for "pure" music or an abstraction that was unattainable. He gave the back of his hand to Schoenberg. "The greatest musicians for me," Ravel told the reporters, "are Bach and Mozart."

The predictable questions about American music followed. What he had heard, he said, emphasizing that he had not heard much, had not given him an impression of distinct nationality. The distinctness he had in mind was in jazz. Ravel noted that while jazz had a considerable influence on composers all over the world, it seemed to have influenced American composers least of all.

To questions about his works in progress Ravel answered that he had a piano concerto in mind but little of it on paper. That can only have been the *Concerto in G*, which was given its first performance by Marguerite Long more than four years later. He had done some work on an operetta based on a libretto by Fernand Bousquet that he described as Pirandelloesque. Nothing, it seems, came of that. He said he had an opera in mind, too. But he would not name the book he hoped to base it on, because he had not yet told the author of his interest in it.

Two days later, Ravel was in Carnegie Hall to hear the Boston Symphony Orchestra's regular Saturday matinee. He watched Serge Koussevitzky lead performances of his *Alborado del gracioso* and *Ma Mere l'Oye* suite before the conductor indicated to the audience that the composer was in a stage box. After the *Daphnis et Chloé* suite, the audience rose to applaud, and Koussevitzky invited him to the stage—an homage, Ravel remarked to composer Alexander Tansmen, that he had never known in Paris.

From Carnegie Hall he was taken directly to a reception at the Cosmopolitan Club (on East 40th Street then), where Mrs. Thomas A. Edison and her daughter Mrs. John A. Sloane were his hosts. The guest answered to such resonant names as Hammond, Cravath, Flagler, Villard, Harkness, Carnegie, and Juilliard. Lucy Bogue, the tour manager, had persuaded her friend Mrs. Edison to round up the well-born to impress the guest of honor, on whom the impression was surely wasted. Between sips of tea there she told Mrs. Edison that what Ravel wanted most to get on with his composing on tour was a supply of red and blue pencils. (No existing Ravel autograph score shows that the pencils were so used, but they came in handy for some il-

luminant touches on postcards he sent back to his friends in France.)

With breakfast the next morning he was offered unleavened prose. The Sunday *New York Times* (January 8, 1928), in an editorial titled "Welcome, Mr. Ravel," advised the composer that while he was being received here "civilly by some, warmly by others," he might amount to more in the annals of music if he would only "produce something worth hearing, something original with an artistic quality, something of beauty, something with a promise of permanence. It is all too much to be feared that the present day's output will be forgotten in ten or fifteen years—or much less."

The Polish violinist Paul Kochansky, who combined a soloist's career in the U.S. with a teaching post at Juilliard, had persuaded his friend Ravel to be the center of interest at a private musicale that evening at the home of Mrs. Gerry Chadwick at 123 East 79th Street. Kochansky played *Piece en forme de Habanera* and the *Tzigane*, with the composer as his accompanist and, according to some of the guests, with the playful Ravel concentrating mock-powerfully on the music before him, which was upside down. (The 79th Street house is Marietta Tree's now. Duke Ellington, who played her household grand till two in the morning a few years back, was an ardent admirer of Ravel. Ravel himself would visit the Cotton Club in Harlem several times to hear Ellington, but he was never forward enough to introduce himself to the bandleader. They did meet by chance one time, however, when the Ravel entourage arrived at another Harlem night spot where Ellington and his band were relaxing.)

Koussevitzky had engaged Ravel to conduct the Boston Symphony Orchestra the following week for a program consisting of *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, the *Rapsodie espagnole*, *La Valse*, and *Shéhérazade*, with the solo sections sung by Lisa Roma, Ravel's interpreter for much of the tour. At the rehearsals it was not Ravel's stick technique, but his haberdashery, that was admired by the men in the orchestra, who said he arrived wearing a blue shirt and blue suspenders for their first session, and a pink shirt and pink suspenders for their second. He was being noticed, and he wasn't oblivious to any of the tumult around him. His brother in Paris was the first to learn from Ravel about his life's quickened pace:

The Copley-Plaza, Boston
13/1/28

My dear little Eduoard,

If I return to Europe alive, it will prove that I am long-lived! In short, until now, I've survived, and my manager assures me that I have gone through the worst. As soon as we arrived in the harbor, a swarm of journalists and cartoonists invaded the boat, with cameras and movie cameras. I had to

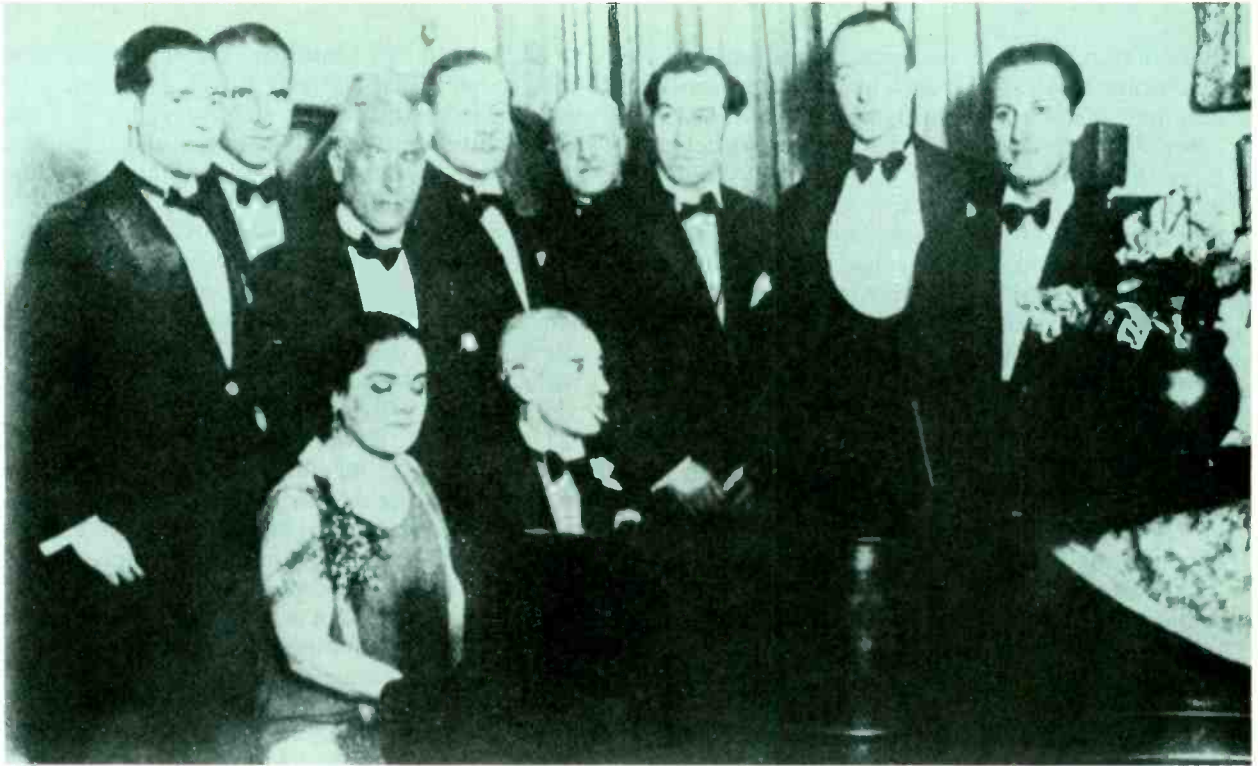
leave them for a moment in order to see our entry into the port: It was even a bit too late, but splendid all the same. I wasn't even able to practice the piano a little during my stay in New York (4 days which seemed like 4 months). As soon as I settled down at the Langdon Hotel, a little nothing of a hotel which has only 12 stories (I was on the 8th), and delightfully comfortable (an entire apartment), the telephone didn't stop ringing. Every minute they would bring me baskets of flowers and of the most delicious fruits in the world. Rehearsals, teams of journalists (photographs, movies, caricaturists) relieving one another every hour, letters, invitations to which my manager replies for me, receptions. In the evening, relaxation: dance halls, Negro theaters, gigantic movie houses, etc. I hardly know New York by day, cooped up in taxis in order to go to appointments of all sorts. I was even in a film, with makeup two centimeters thick. . . . I was forgetting the concert which the Boston Symphony played in New York, devoted to my works. I had to appear on stage: a standing audience of 3,500; a tremendous ovation, climaxed by whistling. Sunday evening, a private concert, and a gallop in evening dress for the train to Boston.

14/1/28

I continue: I have been relatively undisturbed here during the day between orchestral rehearsals (a marvelous orchestra). The day before yesterday a concert at Cambridge, yesterday at Boston: a triumph (they thought I looked English!). Koussevitzky told me that I was the greatest living French conductor. . . . When I think that I had to conduct the *Rapsodie espagnole* at sight! I'm doing it again tonight, returning immediately to New York for tomorrow's concert, setting out again for Chicago, where I will remain a few days, and from there on to Texas. Several free moments have enabled me to write to you; today, no receptions. Those at Cambridge and Boston were less exhausting than the one given by Mrs. Thomas Edison in New York: 200 or 300 persons filing before me and speaking English, more often French (it's amazing how many people speak our language here). As in New York, in the evening, relaxation: dance halls, Chinese theater, etc. . . . Affectionately to all, I embrace you.

Maurice

The New York debut of Ravel the pianist was to be January 15 at the Gallo Theater at 254 West 54th Street, with a supporting cast gathered and directed by the harpist Carlos Salzedo. Ravel arrived for rehearsals wearing white gloves, according to flutist Arthur Lora, the performance's only current survivor, who had been engaged by Salzedo to participate in the *Chansons madécasses* and the *Introduction and Allegro*. Even at the first session, Ravel's insufficiencies as a pianist were evident. When Salzedo was not satisfied that Ravel was holding up his part of the ensemble, he took over the Mason and Hamlin himself long enough to instruct the perfectly amenable composer in how his music should



At Eva Gautier's party: Ravel at the piano with his hostess, George Gershwin standing at right.

be played. Whether by design or incompetence, Ravel did not play the works that way at the performance.

At the concert, after the Hart House String Quartet performed Ravel's single work in that form, his "insufficiencies" became public knowledge when he played the *Sonatine*, which he had written over twenty years before but never learned to play very well. Yet the sight of him playing at all so pleased the crowd that he had to do the *Habanera* and *Pavane* as encores.

The Jan DeGaetani of that time in the new music circles in New York was Greta Torpadie, and Ravel accompanied her to the best of his abilities in the *Histoires naturelles*, another work he had had over twenty years to master. His part in the performance with Josef Szigeti of the newly minted sonata for violin and piano that same night has been described by the Hungarian in his memoirs, *With Strings Attached*: "It is probably my intense admiration for Ravel the composer that causes my subconscious to blue-pencil my memories of Ravel the pianist," Szigeti wrote. "As a wag put it on seeing Salzedo, master harpist and excellent pianist to boot, officiating as page turner for Ravel: 'What a pity it isn't the other way round—Salzedo at the keyboard, and Ravel turning pages.'"

Afterward Ravel was taken to yet another fashionable New York party given for him, this one by the singer and socialite Cobina Wright in her Madison Avenue townhouse, where she concentrated on showing how rich she was. She hired Hall Johnson's choir of Jubilee Singers and the dancers

from the Broadway production of *Showboat* to entertain her guest of honor and the other lions and lionizers present. The musicians on hand to share the bootleg champagne included Fritz Kreisler, Kochansky, Albert Spalding, Rudolf Ganz, Feodor Chaliapin, Olga Samaroff, Salzedo, Felix Salmond, Eugene Goossens, Bartók, Edgard Varèse, and George Gershwin. Elinor Glyn, Jane Cowl, and Bea Lillie were there too. To fill the rest of the room with peers who would not find the evening extravagant Cobina had invited the William Rhinelanders Stewarts, the Otto Kahns, the Cornelius Vanderbilts, the James P. Warburgs, the William Randolph Hearsts and others of that cut. With all the guests white and all the entertainers black, it was a model party for Manhattan in the Twenties. Surely one of the quainter discoveries Ravel made that night was that his socialite hostess had sung arias from his *L'Heure espagnole* and *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* at one of her Aeolian Hall recitals over a year earlier.

Ravel was distressed enough by his performance at the Gallo that he was up and practicing the piano before noon the next day. When Salzedo brought him the reviews in the morning papers and he learned that none of the critics had complained much about his inadequacy, Ravel closed the piano with a bang and said, "Then I don't have to practice." Instead, he went off to a long lunch at a speakeasy with Salzedo and Kochansky and their friends.

The combined tour-booking skills of Pro Musica and Bogue-LaBerge supplied Ravel with an itin-

erary of retraced routes and constant climate shifts. In Chicago he escaped from a huge dinner party in his honor at a North Shore mansion he identified as "chez Mme. Rockefeller McCormic, milliardaire," to get a meal of red meat at his hotel ("*Tout le monde sait que je suis carnivore*"). He had his picture taken in Hollywood with John Barrymore and Douglas Fairbanks, and he had breakfast there with Charlie Chaplin. He gazed at the Grand Canyon, ate pompano cooked in paper bags at Antoine's in New Orleans, shivered in the snows of Minneapolis, and roamed through silver mines near Denver. The northernmost point he reached on the continent was Montreal. And Ravel made a trip south by car to the Gulf of Mexico when he played at the Rice Institute in Houston.

While at Rice he gave a public lecture—in French of course; he still could speak no English—on contemporary music, including comments on "those elements that are contributing to the gradual formation of a veritable school of American music."

That this school will become notable in its final evolution I have not the slightest doubt, and I am also convinced it will realize a national expression quite as different from the music of Europeans as you yourselves are different from them May this national music of yours embody a great deal of the rich and diverting rhythm of your jazz, a great deal of the emotional expression of your blues, and a great deal of the sentiment and spirit characteristic of your popular melodies and songs, worthily deriving from, and in turn contributing to, a noble heritage in music.

When Ravel returned to New York in February for four more performances, he had a long talk with Olin Downes of the *Times*. Downes supplied his readers with the account Ravel had given him of the condition of music in the country. The orchestras in the U.S. were the best anywhere, in his judgment, but that was because their brasses were as predominantly German as their woodwind players were French. His initial impression that American composers lacked "distinct nationality" had hardened into a solid conviction.

"I think you know that I greatly admire and value—more, I think than many American composers—American jazz," he told Downes. "I have used jazz idioms in my last violin and piano sonata, but from what point of view? That, of course, of a Frenchman. Fascinated as I am by this idiom, I cannot possibly feel it as I would if I were an American. It is to me a picturesque adventure in composition to develop some ideas suggested by American popular music, but my musical thinking is entirely national. . . . I am waiting to see more Americans appear with the honesty and vision to realize the significance of their popular product, and the technique and imagination to base an original and creative art upon it."

The singer Eva Gauthier, a French Canadian who claimed that she and Ravel had been close ever since they made their debut together in Paris, regarded his entire tour as a mismanaged one and the artists engaged to appear with him as not competent to interpret his works properly. "The vocalists were unknown and could not speak French," she said, implying two reasons why she should have been engaged instead. Still, she was not too embittered, because she took Ravel to see Poe's home in the Bronx and to see Gershwin's show *Funny Face*, with Adele and Fred Astaire in the cast, at the Alvin Theater on West 52nd Street.

On March 7, Ravel's fifty-third birthday, Gauthier gave a party, for which the composer specified weeks in advance that he wanted a lot of red meat to eat and no women invited. He said women were always fussing over him and making him nervous. George Gershwin was one of the guests that night, and the hostess gave an account of what passed between them. After dinner Gershwin played some of his music, delighting everyone. It was then that the American composer asked the French one to teach him composition. "No," Gauthier's story has Ravel replying, "you are now first-class Gershwin. If you study with me, you will become second-class Ravel." (When traced beyond Gauthier, the story has only Gershwin as its source, and the suspicion is large that the exchange transpired only in his fancy. In another version of their talk, Ravel followed the request to become his student with an inquiry about the American's annual earnings. When Gershwin said they averaged about \$100,000, the visiting Frenchman allowed that perhaps the better arrangement would be for him to become Gershwin's student. In alternate versions of both self-tributes, Gershwin would have Ravel's lines spoken by Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Joseph Schillinger, Ernst Toch, or even Nadia Boulanger, depending on the company he wished to impress.)

After a performance at the Century Theater and conducting the New York Symphony at Carnegie Hall and at the Mecca Temple, Ravel gave his last New York recital at the Roosevelt Hotel on March 30. It was managed not by Lucy Bogue, but by the firm of Beckhard and MacFarlane, and the singer was Esther Dale, wife of Arthur Beckhard. (Miss Dale advertised herself as a pupil of Ravel's at Montfort l'Amaury, a reference she no longer cited once she had evolved into a Hollywood actress doing Ma and Pa Kettle movies.) The solo violinists at the last recital were accompanied by John Kirkpatrick—perhaps an indicator that three months of fairly steady work had not had an uplifting effect on Ravel the pianist.

He sailed from New York on the French Line's *Paris* at midnight April 21 and was back at Le Havre six days later with all of his trunks and the \$27,000 he had earned in his four months in America. ●



by Royal S. Brown

Ravel on Records

IT HAS ALWAYS been chic to bad-mouth catchall terms, such as Impressionism, used to describe artistic tendencies as they appear in the works of such different practitioners as Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel. But if the haze and fog that have thoroughly settled into our impressions of Impressionism are dissipated, what remains is not more haze and fog, but rather, first and foremost, the presence of certain sensorial elements, whether color and line or harmony and rhythm, that are not supposed to mean or represent anything other than themselves.

If both Debussy and Ravel initially indulged in a fair amount of apparent vagueness—and both moved toward a greater clarity of line and form later in their careers—it was not obscurity for its own sake, but an attempt (just as was Schoenberg's in a totally different way) to break down the various "meanings" that were being built into musical structure, meanings that tended to give the musical composition too strong a movement forward, so that a particular chord, for instance, could never be enjoyed for its own value, but instead was always leading into something else. As one example of a way this tendency was combatted, the music of Debussy and Ravel is filled with series of parallel chords, series in which even the simplest triad takes on a new sound because the same chord structure is repeated in any number of different keys. What is affirmed is the chord structure itself, heard from the point of view of diverse tonalities and not the chord's "meaning" vis-à-vis a certain key. Parallel chords of varying complexity can be heard, for instance, in the slow, lugubrious second movement ("Le Gibet") of Ravel's piano masterpiece, *Gaspard de la nuit*, in which a repeated B-flat octave throughout the movement further puts a halt to "normal" musical motion.

Immediate "literal" repetition (no repetition can really be literal, psychologically speaking) was an-

other device by which Debussy and Ravel were able to affirm the individual character of separate blocks of musical sound. The opening of Ravel's *Sonatine* for piano does not allow the initial theme to acquire any linear momentum, since the theme is broken up into small sections that are each repeated twice. The motion that results—and it is considerable—comes not so much from a harmonic or rhythmic language applied from without as from the accumulation of the firmly established musical entities. And, of course, *Bolero* carries the principle of repetition to an extreme no composer has ever been able to duplicate with the same effect.

These generalizations lead to a first conclusion that might be drawn concerning the performance of Impressionist music—Ravel's in particular. In this music where the motion is strongly generated from within the *internal* structures (and there is an enormously strong sense of structure, even if not in the traditional sense, in Debussy and Ravel), any strong interference from the personality of the performer tends to be disastrous. As a case in point one need go no further than the Connoisseur Society (2038) recording of the Ravel Violin Sonata and a violin-piano arrangement of the 1907 *Vocalise en forme d'habanera*. Here violinist Wanda Wilkomirska, who has been highly praised, so overwhelms both works with her gargantuan tone and her *Sturm und Drang* romanticism that the tensions between piano and violin, especially essential in the sonata, are totally swallowed up by an impassioned lyricism that could not be more ill-suited to the composer's intentions.

Ravel once claimed that he wanted his music not to be interpreted, but merely performed. And while there is a certain extravagance to this statement, it is nonetheless easy enough to see that, in the music of a Ravel, what is important is not any identification with the "soul" of the composer, but rather an understanding and feeling for the music's inter-

nal logic, which to a very large degree is built into the way the music was *composed* (the word, too often made synonymous with *written*, in fact implies the combination and arrangement of selected elements into a meaningful whole). This is music in which the composer is much more in control of the expressive content of his creation than in more conventional music, precisely because the meaning lies largely within the art. I find it significant that some of the foremost *interpretative* pianists of our time—Rubinstein, Horowitz, Serkin, for examples—have scarcely touched Ravel, at least on disc, and certainly not because they are incapable of playing the composer well. (Ravel, in fact, gave strong encouragement to Horowitz.) As for two notable interpretative conductors, Leonard Bernstein and Herbert von Karajan, their disc renditions of Ravel tend to show much too strongly the heavy hand of the artist, and their Ravel recordings remain out of the running for that reason.

As for the differences between Debussy and Ravel, I have always felt that, if Debussy's work has its closest nonmusical equivalent in the painting of Claude Monet, the painter whose general aesthetic and vision seem to parallel Ravel's the most is Edgar Degas. The former were concerned, it seems to me, with a world in which the human dynamism is subordinated to the haunting presence of immobile objects captured in all the splendor of an expanded instant of artistic perception. Even the theme of Debussy's opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* is that of a couple attempting to live outside of time. His music, for all its vitality, concentrates more on space than on time, and it does so principally via harmonic and rhythmic ambiguity intended not to obscure or to "dissolve structural form into Impressionist vapor," as one liner-note writer put it, but to present music in an entirely different perspective, one that might have been thought to be foreign to its nature.

Degas' *danseuses* and his women getting out of tubs, on the other hand, are always caught in the midst of a movement, and it strikes me that the same is true of Ravel's musical figures. And in the same way that Degas was constantly inspired by an art that in particular represents a reorganization of human participation in time—namely the dance—Ravel's work is pervaded by the dance, not just in its waltzes, its forlanas, its boleros, but in the basic rhythmic structure that pervades a major part of the composer's endeavors.

But of all the sensorial elements that were iso-

lated by the Impressionists and reorganized to create their own meanings and rhythms, none stands out as strongly as color. Of the diverse Impressionist artists, Ravel perhaps stands alone in the ability he had to deploy color—instrumental, in his case—in ways that opened up new universes of affective experience. Indeed, in the same way that French poet Victor Hugo was apparently able to translate all of language into verse, one has the impression that Ravel had the ability to reshape the entire world of sound into instrumental color, even though, interestingly enough, the majority of his orchestral compositions were originally written for the piano. Perhaps no single orchestration of another composer's music has ever been as effective as the arrangement Ravel did of Mussorgsky's piano work *Pictures at an Exhibition*—and if you have begun to take Ravel's efforts in this piece for granted, listen sometime to Stokowski's miserable orchestral transposition of the same piece on London Phase-4 (21006).

At this point, two more general criteria for Ravel performances seem to impose themselves. First of all, an essential element is a sense of flow and evenness. Not that the performer or conductor has to establish an inflexible pace (although this is exactly what Ravel has done in his own interpretations of his works). But to distort rhythmic structure with pregnant pauses, hesitations, sighs, and slurs, as does Bernstein in his excruciating *La Valse* (Columbia 31487) and as does Ernest Ansermet at the end of an otherwise strongly convincing rendition of the same piece (London 6367), is to destroy one of the basic structural elements of the composer's musical language. Secondly, it stands to reason that for Ravel, more so than for many composers, the over-all sound quality, with respect to both the playing and the recorded sonics, must be of capital importance in evaluating any disc. Thus, while Toscanini produces an exciting, intense, highly lyrical, and exceptionally well-played version (although *sans chorus*, which is a definite minus) of the second *Daphnis et Chloé* suite (RCA Victrola 1273), the necessarily inferior recorded sound must be considered a major drawback, since much of what goes on instrumentally in the music is simply not heard in its proper sonic balance.

With these ideas and criteria in mind, I offer the following selected discography. These key recordings—elements of a basic Ravel discography, if you wish—are listed beneath the titles; certain others are discussed in the material that follows.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

Bolero (1927); *Alborada del gracioso* (1905). Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Paul Paray, cond. MERCURY 75003.

We start with what is not only Ravel's most popular work, but one of the most over-

performed, overrecorded musical commodities of all time. There are no really *bad* recordings of *Bolero*. Ravel hated Toscanini's performance for being too fast, but it would have been interesting to have a Toscanini version on disc all the same. Ravel's own interpretation, with the Lamoureux Orchestra (Turnabout 4256), is the slowest and most

mathematical; the more ominous André Cluytens/Paris Conservatory Orchestra approach (Angel 36108) is a close second in slowness.

Lorin Maazel and the New Philharmonia Orchestra (Angel S 36916) offer perhaps the most high-pitched rendition, with excellent sound reproduction. *Bolero* certainly shows most strongly the Dionysiac side of Ravel's

musical personality, and Maazel certainly captures this element of the music (as does the cover art for his album). Morton Gould and his orchestra (RCA LSC 2345) come up with the most tricks: In order to highlight the melodic line, Gould has the solo instruments at the beginning play a few micro-beats behind the accompaniment. And at the end, he doubles the snare drum and has one coming from each speaker.

But to me, the perfect performance of *Bolero* has just been re-released in the Paray/Detroit Symphony disc. While working up to a truly shattering climax, Paray manages to stress every one of the essential instrumental subtleties of this extraordinarily orchestrated work in an impeccably balanced interpretation highlighted by full-bodied sound that is all the more amazing considering the fact that the record was originally released more than ten years ago. Especially striking is the manner in which the conductor highlights the weird sonorities of the orchestral combination, toward the beginning, in which the main theme is played (in C major) on the horn and celesta beneath the descant of a piccolo duet playing the theme in G and E major! The recording also contains the best *Alborada del gracioso*, a marvelously subtle and atmospheric orchestration, incredibly well played in this version, of a Hispanically flavored piece from the piano set entitled *Miroirs*.

La Valse (1919–20); *Pavane pour une infante défunte* (1899). Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond. RCA LSC 2664.

La Valse, a "choreographic poem," has had as many rotten performances as *Bolero* has had good ones. One reason for this probably lies in various conductors' attempts to treat the work as a piece of Viennese schmalz when actually *La Valse* seems to be more a memory of a certain style and everything it represents than the real thing. In other words, *La Valse* is the color, the rhythm, the mood of an entire genre, of an entire era.

Munch with the Boston Symphony and Maazel (see *Bolero*) give exciting, almost frenetic renditions of the work, and both have excellent, deep recorded sound. Pierre Monteux and the London Symphony Orchestra (Philips 835 258, with *Bolero*, *Ma Mère l'Oye*) give the music a more subdued sheen that nonetheless does not fail to rise to an electrifying pitch at the end; but the recorded sound lacks richness. My preference goes to the Munch disc, which also contains a good *Bolero* and one of the least slushy and yet most emotionally lyrical interpretations of the melancholy *Pavane pour une infante défunte* (*Pavan for a Dead Princess*). The latter was arranged from an 1899 piano piece whose title Ravel supposedly chose because he liked the sound of the words, which would be perfectly in keeping with the prevailing aesthetic attitudes of the period.

Rapsodie espagnole (1907). Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond. RCA VICS 1041.

Another way in which Debussy and Ravel escaped from the conventions and meanings of

traditional Western music was via musical idioms previously untapped by "classical" Western music. Although much has been said about the Eastern influence and the use of the pentatonic scale (an influence that shows up, for instance, in the "*Laideronette, Impératrice des pagodes*" movement of *Ma Mère l'Oye*), other musical genres, from Spanish dance rhythms and harmonies (which include numerous parallel chords) to jazz, likewise represented aesthetic realities that made their way into Ravel's music language. Certainly the Spanish style is felt in a number of his works, perhaps most notably in the *Rapsodie espagnole*, a four-movement suite that contains some of his most evocative scoring.

The *Rapsodie*, like *La Valse*, has not been marked by a plethora of good recordings. The one with the fewest exaggerations and best over-all atmosphere is probably the version by Munch and the Boston Symphony, coupled with Debussy's *La Mer*. Pierre Boulez and the Cleveland Orchestra (Columbia M 30651) beautifully re-create the *nachtmusik* mystery of the opening "*Prélude à la nuit*"; Boulez, furthermore, has a better feeling for the instrumental subtleties and dynamic nuances of this work than almost any other conductor. (The Paray renditions of both this and *La Valse* on the *Bolero* record are disappointing.) But Boulez' exceptionally drawn-out "*Habanera*" grates, and in general I find the conductor's approach to Ravel a bit too methodical and often surprisingly heavy.

Le Tombeau de Couperin (1917); *Menuet antique* (1895); *Une Barque sur l'océan* (1905). Paris Conservatory Orchestra, André Cluytens, cond. ANGEL S 36111.

This delightful suite, with its lilting, archaic quality, is an orchestration of four of the six movements of a piano suite; the other two movements include Ravel's only published fugue (five others were written at the turn of the century for the Prix de Rome contests) and a toccata. While the performance starts in a rather relentless, muddy fashion, the version by Cluytens gets well fast and maintains a perfectly apropos lightness of touch. Cluytens appropriately coupled it with the only available orchestral version of the rather modal *Menuet antique*, which has much the same flavor as the *Tombeau*. Besides decent renditions of *Alborada* and the *Pavane* (although the horn vibrato in the latter gets to me), this disc contains an orchestration of the short, shimmering *Barque sur l'océan*, also arranged from *Miroirs*. *Une Barque sur l'océan* was Ravel's first orchestral work to be performed in public (in 1907), and the orchestration was later repudiated by the composer (it was revived anyway in 1950).

The Boulez/New York Philharmonic disc (Columbia M 32159), while containing a better performance of *Une Barque sur l'océan*, features an overly careful, overly symphonic rendition of the more important *Tombeau*. A good alternate version (on a bargain label) of *Le Tombeau de Couperin* can be found on the London Stereo Treasury Series label (STS 15092) by Ernest Ansermet, whose lively performance is nicely recorded but with less than outstanding playing from the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande.

Valses nobles et sentimentales (1911). Philadelphia Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond. ODYSSEY Y 31017.

Originally a piano composition, the *Valses nobles et sentimentales* belongs very much in the line of *La Valse* but with less of a psychodelic turn to it. This suite of eight short waltzes, which were also later turned into a ballet entitled *Adélaïde ou le Langage des fleurs*, benefits from an exceptionally well-performed interpretation by Munch with the Philadelphia Orchestra, coupled with Fauré's *Pelléus et Mélisande* suite and excerpts from Berlioz' *Damnation de Faust*. The Boulez approach (see *Tombeau*) is remarkable in its clarity but much too weighty and brash for my taste.

Daphnis et Chloé (1909–11).

Complete. New Philharmonia Orchestra, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, cond. ANGEL S 36471.

Suite No. 2. Boston Symphony Orchestra, New England Conservatory Chorus, Claudio Abbado, cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 038.

If the Impressionist painters by and large avoided Greece and its "eternal subjects," preferring for the most part to remain in the present, the Symbolist poets and other turn-of-the-century French writers, who supplied Debussy and Ravel with various texts, found in antiquity certain basic models of human behavior and artistic form stripped of the patina of historical and psychological motivation. Both composers were somewhat caught up in this return to the past.

For his ballet *Daphnis et Chloé*, Ravel turned to a Greek pastoral romance whose elemental drama and basic setting afforded him the opportunity to deploy an exceptionally rich palette of instrumental sound creating moods ranging from the sunny, spacious tranquility of the opening to the frenzied bacchanalia of the finale. One of the major "instruments" used by Ravel here is a wordless chorus whose vocalizing at various points in the score adds enormous depth to the instrumental color. It seems to me that the chorus represents an essential element of the scoring, and nonchorus recordings of the two suites (usually the second), which consist of the second and third sections of this continuous one-act ballet, simply do not do full justice to the music, even though at least one truly excellent nonchoral version of both suites, by Bernard Haitink and the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam (Philips 6500 311), has been made.

Of the complete versions of the ballet—and the opening *Introduction et danse religieuse* contains some of the work's most striking and emotionally effective music—none really maintains a wholly convincing tension and atmosphere from start to finish. I had had fond memories of the Munch/Boston Symphony interpretation (RCA LSC 2568), but in recent listenings, I have found that Munch does not manage to sustain the ballet's dramatic impact, and there are certain portions that seem exceedingly weak and undefined. I have singled out the Frühbeck de Burgos performance because of the general excellence of the sound

quality, the truly sumptuous chorus work by the Ambrosian Singers, and a good, atmospheric, and often rousing interpretation. The complete *Daphnis* by Monteux (who premiered the work in 1912) and the London Symphony (London STS 15090) has a broad, symphonic quality; but to me the conductor has not captured much of the score's excitement and mood, and the sound lacks balance.

Nothing, however, can match the soaring (but unexaggerated) lyricism, the beautiful dynamic shading and broad, spacious sound of the Abbado/Boston Symphony rendition of the second suite on a Deutsche Grammophon release that, besides a splendid Debussy *Nocturnes*, includes a disarmingly simple and quite lovely *Pavane pour une infante défunte*. Munch's recording, with the Boston Symphony and an unnamed chorus, of the second suite on the "Ravel's Greatest Hits" album (a title that rankles me to the core), including his *La Valse* and Gould's *Bolero* and dreamy *Pavane*, is far superior to his efforts in the complete version. Indeed, Munch's suite, which begins a dozen or so bars before all the others, is apparently taken from another complete version RCA never saw fit to release. Whatever good moments there are in the Stokowski/London Symphony Orchestra performance on London Phase-4 (21059) are spoiled by the conductor's absurd obsession for "signing" his performances with some modification in the scoring—here a ridiculously extended solo chorus at the finale. There should be a law against this sort of egomaniacal tampering.

Ma Mère l'Oye (1908–1911). Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond. PHILIPS 6500 311.

Childhood was yet another domain toward which Ravel turned in order to capture a certain innocence in a pristine state not yet caught up in the "meaning" and temporality of the "civilized" world. I know of no music that recreates the poignant simplicity of childhood (seen, as is *La Valse*, through the filter of memory) quite as ingenuously as *Ma Mère l'Oye*.

As was so often the case, the five pieces making up the *Mother Goose Suite* were originally written for piano—in this case for simplified piano duet. There was later an orchestration (which is the version recorded by Bernstein on Columbia M 32873, in spite of the Schwann listing) and then an expansion, with an introduction and interludes, into a ballet. All of the recordings of the complete ballet communicate the music's charm, but none so well as the Haitink/Concertgebouw (see *Daphnis et Chloé*) on Philips, which also benefits from bright, full sound reproduction.

Things to come: Vox is planning to do a complete Ravel orchestral cycle with Stanislaw Skrowaczewski and the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra; a Volume III of the orchestral music is forthcoming from Boulez.

CONCERTANTE WORKS

Concerto for Piano, Left Hand, and Orchestra (1930–31). Julius Katchen, piano; London Symphony Orchestra, István Kertész, cond. LONDON 6633.

If I had to choose my favorite work by Ravel, it would probably be the Left-Hand Piano

Concerto (with the orchestration of *Alborada del gracioso* a close second), written for one-armed pianist Paul Wittgenstein. The opening of the concerto, for instance, with its low, low strings and its contrabassoon theme, ingeniously suggests the tonal space for that part of the piano to which the left hand is normally relegated, and it also evokes all the murky, mythic associations that have traditionally been attached to the left hand (our word "sinister" comes from the Latin word for "left"). But the concerto is not all darkness and gloom. Indeed, the opening theme, once it leaves the lower depths of the orchestra, takes on a strongly heroic and yet somewhat melancholy character, while the rest of this one-movement work moves through diverse musical moods, from the sparkling, marchlike theme in quick parallel chords toward the middle to the blues theme and jazz rhythms toward the end.

Orion (7028) has recently reissued a recording made by Wittgenstein, with Max Rudolf and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra (the disc also includes left-hand compositions and arrangements by Schubert-Liszt, Bach-Brahms and Reger). Although I like the overall feeling of this collaboration (Rudolf is a truly excellent conductor), Wittgenstein's playing, while energetic, unfortunately seems to catch about half the notes in the score.

The Entremont-Boulez/Cleveland Orchestra interpretation (Columbia M 31426) is a perfect example of tonal and rhythmic overkill, one of the most heavy-handed renditions I have ever heard. The François-Cluytens/Paris Conservatory Orchestra version (Angel S 35874), though more in the spirit of the work, suffers from the same flaws. The disc by Julius Katchen and István Kertész, which also contains excellent renditions of the Prokofiev Third Piano Concerto and the Gershwin *Rhapsody in Blue*, has the clarity of Boulez' orchestral accompaniment without the latter's ponderousness. The soloist turns in a beautifully paced, bright, and yet subtly expressive performance—one of the best ever recorded—of the almost impossible piano part. The Haas-Galliera collaboration, with the Orchestre National de l'Opéra de Monte Carlo (Philips 839 755), is only a shade behind the Katchen, and it is the one to have if you want a coupling of both Ravel piano concertos. The releases with Casadesus-Ormandy (Columbia MS 6274) and Browning-Leinsdorf (Seraphim S 60224) also have much to recommend them.

Concerto in G Major for Piano and Orchestra (1930–31). Werner Haas, piano; Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra, Alceo Galliera, cond. PHILIPS 839 755.

The more famous G major Concerto, composed for Marguerite Long, was begun before but completed after the Left-Hand Concerto; but it could not be more different in its basic nature. Where the Left-Hand Concerto is a single-movement, cyclically structured piece with a rather tragic poignancy to it, the G major Concerto, with its traditional three movements, has more flash and sheen than almost any other Ravel work, and the jazz element here stands out much more strongly than in the Left-Hand Concerto.

The G major has had a number of good recordings, and it is hard to choose, in particular, between the versions by Haas-Galliera, Katchen-Kertész with the London Symphony (London 6487), and Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli with Ettore Gracis and the Philhar-

monia Orchestra (Angel S 35567). I prefer the Haas by a hair, however, even though the piano part has been somewhat underrecorded, because of the exceptionally clear and even piano performance, with its full but unexaggerated lyricism in the second movement and the unbelievably smooth trill theme at the end of the first; furthermore, Galliera establishes a perfect instrumental balance and pace. Bernstein's performance, with the New York Philharmonic conducted from the piano (Columbia MS 6043) is truly soupy.

Philippe Entremont fares much better with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra on his Columbia release (M 31426) than he does with Boulez in the Left-Hand Concerto on the flip side. Indeed, Ormandy's talents as a concerto conductor have been singled out on many occasions, and he certainly complements Entremont's efforts with much greater success than does Boulez. If I have not discussed any of Ormandy's discs of the orchestral music, it is not because they are not good (the Philadelphia Orchestra has an especially rich Ravel "sound"), but because they seem to lack the spark of the truly outstanding performances.

The French mail strike kept me from hearing a recording, recently issued (in France), of both concertos, played by the late Jean Casadesus, with Pierre Dervaux and the Paris Conservatory Orchestra (Trianon 12555).

Tzigane, for Violin and Orchestra (1924). Edith Peinemann, violin; Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Peter Maag, cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 193 120.

The *Tzigane* is the one Ravel work I really cannot stomach. No doubt this is due to a serious flaw in my character, but I find that "classical" music is overburdened with impassioned excursions into Gypsiana that simply invite the most flagrant, flaired-nostril interpretations, and Ravel's "concert rhapsody" offers little improvement on these ethnic excesses.

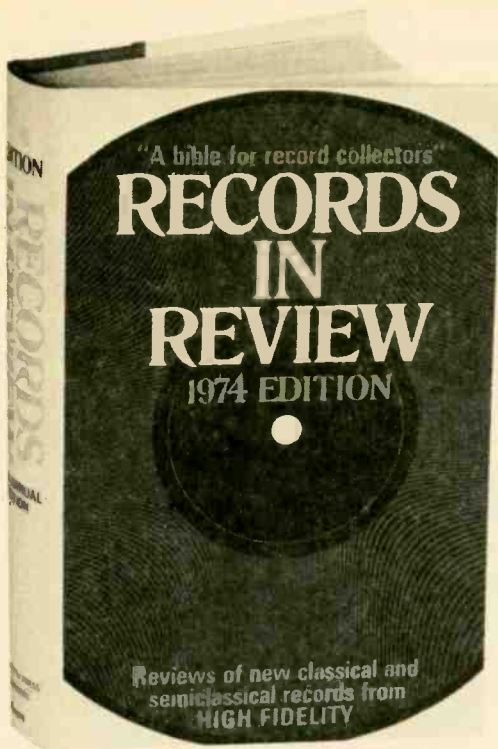
As it turns out, none of the currently available recordings of the *Tzigane* strike me as really bad, although my dislike for the piece may be responsible for a certain lack of discrimination here. Particularly good are the renditions by Arthur Grumiaux with Manuel Rosenthal and the Lamoureux Orchestra (Philips 802 708, with the Chausson *Poème* and the Vieuxtemps Fourth Concerto); by Henryk Szeryng, with Edouard van Remoortel and the Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra (Philips 6500 195, with the Lalo *Symphonie espagnole*), and by Aaron Rosand, who is unfortunately very poorly represented on disc, with Rolf Reinhardt and the Southwest German Radio Orchestra (Turnabout 34462, with the Saint-Saëns *Havanaise*, Op. 83, and diverse Gypsy-poo works by Sarasate). The expansive, rich interpretation by Edith Peinemann, with Maag and the Czech Philharmonic in a sumptuously recorded disc coupled with the Dvořák Violin Concerto, is my personal favorite. A violin-piano version (the original scoring) has been done by Christian Ferras and Pierre Barbizet on Mace (S 9048), also including the Enesco Third and the Debussy Violin Sonatas.

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SINGING A SONG is an intimate and concentrated activity, for the singer approaches the listener on a very direct, one-to-one basis. He isn't impersonating someone else, like the operatic performer, and he isn't part of a big, basically impersonal machine, like the soloist in an elaborate choral work. The externals of the song situation are apparently quite simple: The performer "talks" directly to the audience, telling a story, describing a scene, evoking an emotion, pointing a moral. In the course of doing these things, he may be temporarily called upon to assume a role, by way of telling us what someone else said, but this is not at all like a theatrical assumption—at most, say, like a "reading" of a play.

And yet this situation is only seemingly simple, for the singer is not really alone; not only is that pianist up there, but—invisible yet quite significant—also the composer and the poet. In a successful song performance, all of these people are distilled into a single personality: apparently that of the singer. I say "apparently," because that personality is in fact a composite, created especially for the occasion of a particular song—a juncture of the composer's view of the poet's words with the perceptions, skills, and taste of the singer and pianist in ensemble. Although upon reflection we may recognize the pianist's contribution to the performance as an individual musician, in direct experience we would not want to be aware of him as a separate personality, pulling in a different direction; he is like the landscape or still-life passages in a great portrait, framing, balancing, subtly commenting on and reinforcing the true subject. The message, the communication, seems to come from the singer's lips.

There are almost as many variations in the balance of these elements as there are songs, of course, and innumerable adjustments necessary along the way for this complex aesthetic process to work itself out satisfactorily. (I refer the reader to Edward T. Cone's recent book *The Composer's Voice* for an absorbing study of musical significance that starts from the internal relationships of the song situation.) We know that many poets, especially the better ones, have felt their work diminished by musical setting; yet as many, perhaps more, poems are enlarged thereby—think of Schubert's poet-aster friends. And, at the next stage, some songs appear to be inexhaustible, in that no one singer can illuminate their entirety, yet many interpretations are revealing, rewarding, involving.

Mutatis mutandis, other songs can be enlarged by the act of performance, made to seem more significant than they appear to be on the printed page—think of Madeleine Grey's Auvergne songs, Patzak's Viennese ditties, or McCormack's Irish tunes. In these cases, the singer envelops the song in a personality richer, more specific, more implicative than any the composer thought—or knew how—to put in, and we respond accordingly. Indeed, some songs, especially in the popular idiom, are written with limited specificity, precisely to allow room for the singer to occupy; all too often, he merely fills the empty spaces with a stock personality that doesn't differ from one number to the next. The real art is not simply making silk purses out of sows' ears, but making a distinctive silk purse out of each one.

the new releases

Martin Jackson



So You Want

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Joan Morris and William Bolcom—"just about perfect performers"

And when it comes to making purses from real silk—these too must be well and individually tailored. That means, of course, getting the words out clearly, shaping the phrases naturally and fluently, articulating the rhythms truly and with appropriate spring, achieving perfect ensemble with the accompaniment, for the singer who traduces these essentials has broken faith with the composer and poet, sacrificed the song to the cause of personal projection. Yet even doing all these things correctly is not enough, for the greatest of songs will expire before our very ears if intoned by a voice aspiring to the impersonal purity of, say, a flute. The words, the melodic ductus, the tempo, the articulation, the tessitura, and so on, of a song imply a personality—or, more usually, a range of possible personalities—appropriate to the "speaker" of that song, and the singers who take a clear position within that range are, most often, those to whose performances we most eagerly return.

One such, as we are happily reminded by Odyssey's memorial package, is the late Jennie Tourel. Listen to Debussy's *Chansons de Bilitis* and hear how every word is colored, not in any obvious pictorial way, but characterfully and inwardly. In the first song, the girl is "*un peu tremblante*," and the descending interval on the last two



by David Hamilton

to Sing a Song?

Cathy Berberian, and Joan Morris.

on" "After the Bali," an album of turn-of-the-century songs.

syllables is shaded with a gently vibrating portamento. In the second song, the man tells her of a profoundly erotic dream, and then gazes at her so tenderly that she lowers her eyes "*avec un frisson*" (with a shiver)—but Tourel declines to color this much deeper emotion with the same kind of flourish; this has been a more internal, even sobering experience. (For a contrast, listen to Eva Gauthier's old record. She audibly shivers, and somehow you feel sure that she bodily shivered up there on the stage as well!)

In a way, I'm reluctant to go through this performance picking out such details, for fear of making Tourel seem a fussy singer; she wasn't, not at all. She never breaks a line, but always keeps it alive, the words naturally bound into the legato tone, the consonants propelling the vowels into the next notes. To fragment Debussy's lines with finicky accentuations would be musically wrong, and it would also misrepresent the song's persona, conferring an inappropriate sophistication upon the naive young girl of the poem. (I regret to report that in some pressings the transfer has weakened the tone of George Reeves's piano—indeed, bestowed a flutter upon it. This playing was never comparable in wit and control to Cortot's gorgeous work in support of Maggie Teyte's more pallid

singing, but it was honest and well attuned to the singer. A set with a 1C stamper number on side 4, however, proved much better than the 2B pressing that I heard first.)

Also impressive are the *Chansons madécasses*, a reading more objective than Madeleine Grey's "official" recording but quietly breathtaking in its poised, rapid delivery of text. There is a bit of strain here in the cries of the second song, and this also limits the effectiveness of "Field Marshal Death" in the Mussorgsky cycle; still, despite the use of Rimsky's bowdlerized musical text, Tourel's incisively colored singing of the first three songs and Leonard Bernstein's superbly intense piano playing make this a memorable performance.

The songs are the heart of this Tourel set—a repertory typical for her in its catholicity (five languages are represented) and also in its avoidance of the German tradition that most other singers considered central. I would happily have sacrificed the Spanish and Portuguese material in favor of the best of her Rachmaninoff recordings, with the masterful accompaniments of Erich Itor Kahn, but the little songs given here do confirm Tourel's ability to confer importance on trivia: In the Ginastera, her drooping portamentos do more to build the gloomy mood than does the writing itself, and the Obradors lives entirely in the singer's skill at impersonation and suggestion. A few selections come from a 1947 session at which the piano was rather distantly positioned and Tourel in somewhat dry voice, but the stylistic authority is still tangible.

The back of the album lists Prokofiev among the composers, but he is nowhere to be found; presumably inclusion of the song from *Alexander Nevsky* was planned at some point. I would have bypassed the Rossini selections, which make some effective points but are not really comfortable vocally; the previously unpublished *Norma* recitative, from a group of selections recorded in 1945 with Stella Roman, misses true ease and breadth of style. On the other hand, the *Carmen* arias are first-rate, climaxing in an imposing, gripping Card Scene that admirably demonstrates the art of pointing, coloring, and accenting words without losing the line.

In one major respect, *Odyssey* has done Tourel an injustice: Her art surely deserves full texts and translations, but we get only dinky paraphrases.

Cathy Berberian's record inserts a new wrinkle into the recital situation, for she is not simply singing songs; she is impersonating someone else who is singing songs. That someone else is a slightly pompous, slightly nervous French lady of the era of Marcel Proust, begowned by Erté and furnished with appropriate period screens and potted plants, as well as an apparently sedulous (but in fact enormously fluent and stylish) accompanist. This is an "idea" recital, in which Miss Berberian is exploring the fine and not always fixed line between good taste and bad: We hear mediocre music performed straight (Hahn, Cui), good music made bad (Silcher's songs on Beethoven instrumental themes), bad music of "high" moral tone (Mrs. Parkhurst's temperance song), good music of "low" moral tone (Offenbach), and so on. The amateur performer is also under the gun for attitudes (as exemplified in the lady's skittish introductory remarks)



Cathy Berberian and Jennie Tourel—two approaches to the fine art of singing a song.

and accomplishments: sudden, unmotivated contrasts in "Les Filles de Cadiz," the grotesque inappropriateness of the Chaliapin mannerisms in "The Song of the Flea," the acute distortions of the Purcell number.

Some of this has more to do with Anna Russell than with the French lady in her salon, although this discrepancy troubles me less on the record than it did in the hall, where all the visual apparatus so firmly upheld the initial characterization. It's all really very clever and resourceful, but I haven't found it to stand up well under repetition. That the singing often lacks ultimate polish is not really the problem, either. Rather, who wants to listen often to these songs sung by that French lady, who is precisely the type of singer to impose her own prejudices and inadequacies on every number she sings? In a way, the stunt, so skillfully and wittingly conceived, undermines the sustained musical value.

From Miss Berberian, it is exceptionally illuminating to turn to Joan Morris, who is working with even less promising material: popular songs of seven and eight decades ago. As I suggested earlier, this kind of music intentionally leaves the performer ample scope for a variety of interpretations; Miss Morris finds a distinct and convincing voice and spirit for every song on her list, and—most importantly—she never condescends to the songs, never exploits them as camp. Nor does William Bolcom at the piano, in the face of what could have been equivalent temptations.

In fact, they are just about perfect performers, she with her lively, always natural diction, lilting phrasing, and sweet, oh-so-true tone; he with his unfailing rhythmic verve, sensitive dynamic control, and unobtrusive, idiomatic variations of the original plain-Jane accompaniments; and the pair of them with their absolute unanimity of musical impulse and style. They respect the original point of each song, often a narrative one, and they are serious about paying attention to the surviving evidence of the tradition. Miss Morris, who provides informative, literate notes, tells us that she based her performance of "I've Got Rings on My Fingers" on Blanche Ring's original recording, but this is no slavish imita-

tion—in fact, I like it much better than Blanche Ring's, for it is steadier and more vivacious.

There are some lessons in this lovely record, which I leave the listener to work out at his leisure. Harry von Tilzer will doubtless not replace Schubert in my life or yours, but the sheer pleasure of music-making *con molto amore* is a tangible one; very few musicians do anything as well as Miss Morris and Mr. Bolcom do these songs. A bow to Nonesuch, too, for an impeccable production job: a double-fold album, with the extravagance of complete texts—surely not necessary, I thought, because Miss Morris pronounces with a clarity that Demosthenes himself might envy. Not necessary, but very useful when the irresistible impulse to sing along takes hold of you.

B **TRIBUTE TO JENNIE TOUREL.** Jennie Tourel, mezzo-soprano; various accompaniments. ODYSSEY Y2 32880, \$6.98 (two discs, mono) [recorded 1942–52].

BELLINI: Norma: Sgombra e la sacra selva. **BIZET:** Carmen: Habanera; Seguidilla; Chanson bohème; Card Scene. **ROSSINI:** La Cenerentola: Nacqui all'affanno. Il Barbiere di Siviglia: Una voce poco fa. L'Italiana in Algeri: Cruda sorte. Semiramide: Bel ragazzo lusinghier. **BIZET:** Adieu de l'hôtesse arabe. **CHOPIN:** Maiden's Wish; Melancholy. **DEBUSSY:** Trois Chansons de Bilitis. **GINASTERA:** Triste. **MUSSOROSKY:** Songs and Dances of Death. **NIM:** Paño murciano. **OBRAADOR:** Coplas de curro dulce. **RAVEL:** Chansons madécasses; Vocalise. **VILLA-LOBOS:** Cancão do carreiro.

CATHY BERBERIAN AT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL. Cathy Berberian, soprano; Bruno Canino, piano. [Ralph Mace, prod.] RCA RED SEAL LRL 1-5007. \$6.98.

BEETHOVEN-SILCHER: Wiedersehen; Though thou so blest. **CUI:** The Statue at Tsarskoe Selo. **DELIBES:** Les Filles de Cadiz. **HANN:** Offrandes. **LIZA LEHMANN:** There Are Fairies at the Bottom of Our Garden. **LOEW:** Tom der Reimer. **MUSSOROSKY:** The Song of the Flea. **OPFENBACH:** La Pêrichole: Tu n'es pas beau. La Boulangère: Que voulez-vous faire? **MRS. PARKHURST:** Father's a Drunkard. **PURCELL:** Nymphs and Shepherds. **RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** The Rose and the Nightingale. **ROSSINI:** Petite caprice à la Offenbach (piano solo). **SAINT-SAËNS:** Danse macabre. **SULLIVAN:** The Mikado: Tit-willow. **WECKERLIN (arr.):** Maman, ditest-moi. **WOK:** My Grandfather's Clock.

B **AFTER THE BALL.** Joan Morris, mezzo-soprano; William Bolcom, piano. [Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] NONESUCH H 71304, \$3.98.

BALL: Will You Love Me in December as You Do in May? **COLE-JOHNSON:** Under the Bamboo Tree. **DRESSER:** On the Banks of the Wabash, Far Away. **HARRIS:** After the Ball. **HOWARD:** Good Bye, My Lady Love. **MILLS:** Meet Me in St. Louis. **LOUIS, MALLY:** Love's Old Sweet Song. **PETRIE:** I Don't Want to Play in Your Yard. **SCOTT:** I've Got Rings on My Fingers. **SHIELDS:** Waltz Me Around Again, Willie. **STROMBERG:** Come Down Ma Evening Star. **VON TILZER:** A Bird in a Gilded Cage; Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie.

Previn plugs a *Sleeping Beauty* gap admirably, while Bonyngé and Rozhdestvensky add variety to the *Nutcracker* discography.

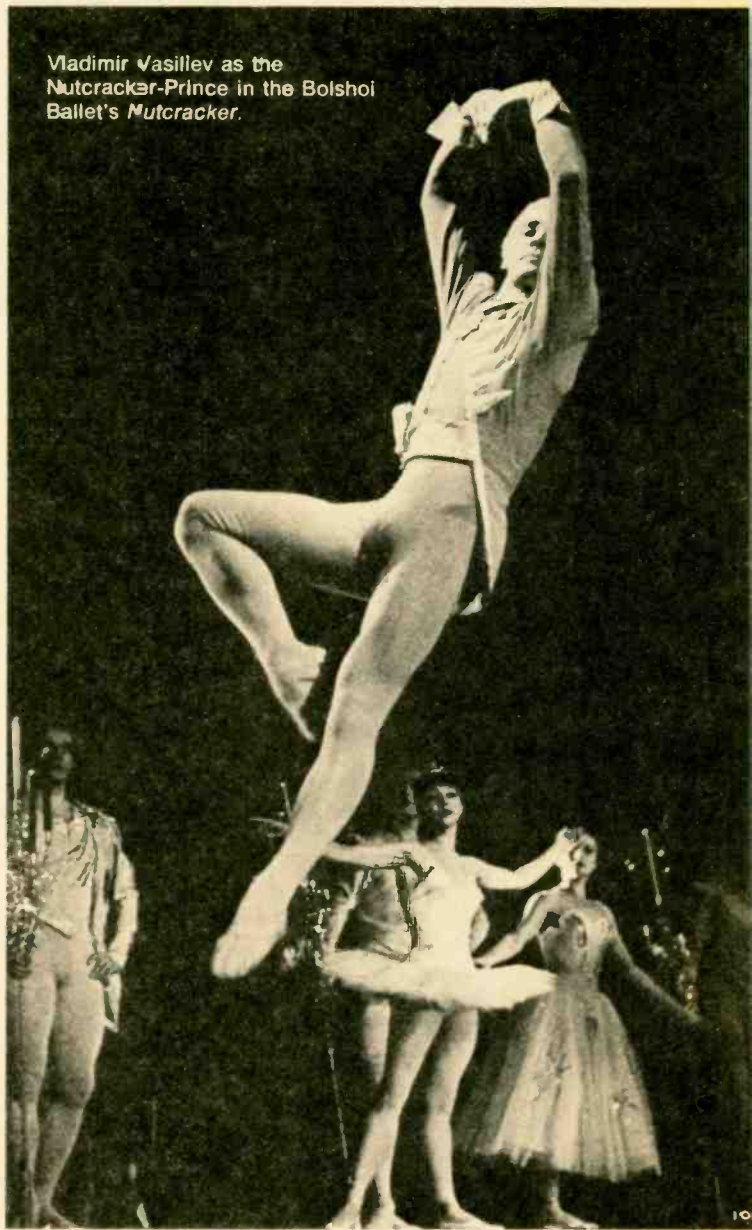
THE CHOREOGRAPHY of Marius Petipa (1818–1910) and of Lev Ivanov (1834–1901), his assistant at the Imperial Ballet of St. Petersburg, has today become the very basis of the *danse d'école*, the classical ballet style that stresses harmony, clarity, and form and that, in the hands of such modern masters as Ashton and Balanchine, continues to yield works of remarkable beauty and expressiveness. Petipa's *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake* (of whose four acts Ivanov actually choreographed the second and the fourth), and to a lesser extent Ivanov's *Nutcracker*, are cornerstones of the international ballet repertoire, a source of unending stimulation for choreographers, dancers, and public alike. *Sleeping Beauty*, in particular, constitutes a veritable theology of classical ballet.

Tchaikovsky's share in the success of these works—and in the very fact of their survival—is something of an irony, since in the composer's lifetime not a single one of his ballets received much appreciation. *Swan Lake*, originally choreographed by Julius Reisinger in 1877, was a failure (the Petipa-Ivanov staging, which survives to this day, did not take place until 1895); *Sleeping Beauty* met with disapproval, both from progressives like Stasov, who thought ballet a trivial diversion, and from the general public, which concurred with the tsar in finding the music unmelodious, overly complex, and unsuited to dance; *The Nutcracker*, first presented in a double bill with the composer's one-act opera *Yolanta*, was tepidly received. Only after Tchaikovsky's death did these works receive their due.

For his ballet music he took as guide and inspiration the scores of Delibes, particularly *Coppélia* and *Sylvia*. From Delibes, Tchaikovsky learned a great deal: how to evoke place and atmosphere, how to supply the right kind of melodic and rhythmic impulse for dancing, how to sustain interest by providing sufficient variety, and finally how to achieve dramatic coherence. Tchaikovsky also added much of his own: a deeply romantic eloquence, great orchestral richness, and above all the use of symphonic elaboration for dramatic ends. With these qualities he decisively enlarged the expressive possibilities of dance. Nothing before his time had hinted at such things as the conclusion to Act IV of *Swan Lake*, which depicts the drowning of the Swan Queen and her prince and their subsequent transformation; or at the brilliant scene in the prologue of *The Sleeping Beauty* showing the wicked fairy, Carabosse, attempting to place a fatal curse on the infant princess; or at the battle between the Nutcracker and the Mice.

Nevertheless, as Stravinsky pointed out in 1921 at the time of Diaghilev's ill-fated production of *Beauty* (or *The Sleeping Princess*, as the impresario insisted on naming it): "Tchaikovsky's outstanding gift of melody explains a great deal of his success as a ballet composer; for it is melody and rhythm that are essential to all ballet music, and no amount of ingenious contrapuntal development or devices of orchestration can make up for them." Listening anew to *Sleeping Beauty* and *Nutcracker* makes one eager to concur, especially in face of the noble expansiveness Tchaikovsky finds for such great dance occasions as, in the former, the Rose Adagio, the Vision Scene, and the entrée of the final pas de deux, and, in the latter, the Waltz of the Snowflakes and, again,

Vladimir Vasiliev as the Nutcracker-Prince in the Bolshoi Ballet's *Nutcracker*.



Tchaikovsky's Bible for Balletomanes

by Dale Harris



Margot Fonteyn, here with Michael Somes in a Royal Ballet production, made *Sleeping Beauty* particularly her own.

the entrée of the final pas de deux. At the same time, one marvels anew at the composer's brilliance at devising textures and colors that are both enchanting and dramatically apt: to take only two examples, the combination of flute and clarinet in the Bluebird pas de deux in *Beauty* and in *Nutcracker* the combination of full orchestra and wordless chorus for the journey to the Kingdom of Sweets.

We were in need of a first-class, up-to-date, and absolutely complete recording of *The Sleeping Beauty*. Good as Previn's recent *Nutcracker* is, his *Beauty* is even better. To this long, rich score Previn brings complete mastery. I am especially delighted to see that he pays particular attention to the work's ceremonial stateliness. *Sleeping Beauty* is, after all, the culmination of courtly spectacle in the theater, and a lot of the music is grave, sumptuous, and noble—not only in the actual court dances, but also in the flowing grandeur of such passages as the Rose Adagio. But of course a lot of the music is brilliant, too, and Previn propels it with infectious brio. The Act III divertissements and the Polonaise, for example, are imbued with exhilarating propulsive energy. Nor is Tchaikovsky's sweetness neglected: The fairies in the prologue are lovingly delineated.

Most of Previn's tempos accord with what one would be likely to hear in the theater. Occasionally he is too fast for dancing (e.g., the princess' entrance in Act I and her solo after having pricked her finger) and sometimes too slow (the farandole in Act II), but most of the time he sounds in perfect accord with what one knows theatrical conditions would require. From the London Symphony he secures good, often brilliant, playing. The recording is clear and spacious. A helpful synopsis is included and also some notes, though these are obviously addressed to British, rather than American, readers.

Both *Beautys* currently in Schwann are sonically outclassed by this new album. The two-disc performance by the Philharmonic under George Weldon is rather stolid and is, moreover, heavily cut. The three-disc Ansermet/Suisse Romande is, by comparison, only slightly cut, but cut it is. Ansermet is not as consistently satisfying as Previn, but his performance is often beguiling nonetheless.

In the case of *Nutcracker* there is more choice. The

Ansermet/Suisse Romande is wonderfully graceful, and the Rodzinski/London Philharmonic is very fine. Previn, as I've suggested earlier, is also good.

Unlike Previn's *Sleeping Beauty*, neither of the two new performances is decisively better than its competitors. Rozhdestvensky and the Bolshoi Theater Orchestra are lively and full-blooded as well as, quite often, astonishingly fast—e.g., the Trepak, which makes one breathless simply to listen to. They are sometimes also rather heedless. Oddly enough, though the performance moves along swiftly, it sounds a bit thick and heavy, but the congested, opaque recording (which reportedly dates back more than a decade) must take some of the blame for this.

Richard Bonyngé and the National Philharmonic, if not so fast, are fleetier, more nimble. Bonyngé also finds greater glamor in this music. The narrative sections of Act I are delightful, and the entrée of the final pas de deux is properly majestic (Rozhdestvensky simply moves with professional dispatch through the latter). All in all, I find Bonyngé's approach very persuasive. His natural instinct for ballet music serves Tchaikovsky well: His tempos are happy, and the whole work moves with liveliness and charm. The orchestra is on the whole very accomplished, and London has given it a recording of such depth and clarity as to place the album sonically above all the other *Nutcrackers* in Schwann. Both albums come with synopsis and notes.

Now that stage performances of Tchaikovsky's ballets are a familiar feature of theatrical life, recordings of excerpts prove disconcerting. As we hustle from one part of the score to another we yearn for restitution of Tchaikovsky's grand over-all conception—and, too, for evidence of his great variety as a dance composer. The familiar suite from *Nutcracker*, though Tchaikovsky's own, is especially inadequate in suggesting the eloquence and charm of the whole work, and that from *Sleeping Beauty* (posthumous, despite the opus number) is merely tantalizing.

In any case, Seiji Ozawa shows little instinct for the shape of this music. There is hardly any sense of the dance structure in his performances. Aided by good playing from his French orchestra, Ozawa occasionally achieves some wonderful coloristic effects but often at the expense of propulsiveness. His Trepak is leaden, and his Rose Adagio lacks both breadth and climax. There are good notes but no synopsis. The recording is first-rate, and Philips' pressing, as always, is exemplary.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Sleeping Beauty*, Op. 66. London Symphony Orchestra, André Previn, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.] ANGEL SCLX 3812, \$21.98 (three discs, automatic sequence).

TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Nutcracker*, Op. 71. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Richard Bonyngé, cond. LONDON CSA 2239, \$13.96 (two discs, automatic sequence).

TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Nutcracker*, Op. 71. Bolshoi Theater Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, cond. COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M2 33116, \$13.98 (two discs, automatic sequence).

TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Sleeping Beauty: Suite*, Op. 66a; *The Nutcracker: Suite*, Op. 71a. Orchestre de Paris, Seiji Ozawa, cond. PHILIPS 6500 851, \$7.98.

Comparisons—Sleeping Beauty:

Ansermet/Suisse Romande

Weldon/Philharmonia Orch.

Comparisons—Nutcracker:

Ansermet/Suisse Romande

Previn/London Sym.

Rodzinski/London Phil.

Lon. CSA 2304
Ang. SB 3579

Lon. CSA 2203
Ang. SB 3788
West. WGS 8147

by Kenneth Furie

The Bittersweet Charms of *The Mikado*

Royston Nash's first recording as D'Oyly Carte music director heralds a happy era for the company.



David Wedgbury

Sandford, Jones, Reed, Ayldon, and Holland in the D'Oyly Carte production of *The Mikado*.

The Mikado ISN'T Sullivan's greatest score—there are some half a dozen that equal or surpass it for sheer prodigality of inspiration—but it is surely Gilbert's best libretto. As a lyricist Gilbert was almost as consistently first-rate as his partner, but as a dramatist his theatrical instincts weren't nearly so consistent as Sullivan's. The most extreme instance of this gap is *Princess Ida*: Sullivan's score, arguably his finest, is an embarrassment of riches, thanks in large part to Gilbert's uncommonly deft lyrics; but the play itself is simply an embarrassment.

Not *Mikado*, though, whose story, characters, and lyrics are uniformly top-notch. The libretto is so good that *anybody* could have set it and made a grand entertainment of it. As we are coming to realize ever more strongly, though, Sullivan wasn't "anybody"; it is his remarkable musical skills and his range of human sympathy, quite different from Gilbert's, that make *Mikado* so much more than merely a grand entertainment.

The stormy partnership of Gilbert and Sullivan is one of the most remarkable of artistic collaborations. They were separated by a gulf not only of personality, but of artistic temperament. The undeniably facile Gilbert had a wonderful eye (and ear) for the absurd; it seems as if he could find a ridiculous angle on just about anything. But beneath the cleverness there really isn't very much. Describing him as a satirist seems to me quite misleading;

he was clever and frequently audacious, but he rarely displays either the subtlety or the commitment of a true satiric writer.

The dimension that Gilbert lacked—depth—Sullivan supplied. Miraculously he transformed Gilbert's cartoon caricatures into living, breathing puppets. And he did it without sacrificing any of the wit. Take, for example, Gilbert's almost-obligatory dowagers. It's unimaginable that he responded with anything but scorn to such grotesques as Lady Jane and Katisha. Yet Sullivan saw in them something more. If you listen carefully to the *Mikado* Act I finale, you will hear him breathing life into Katisha not only in the lovely (assuming it's well sung) solo "The hour of gladness," but, even more striking, in his characterization of the taunting crowd, with its real and menacing cruelty. Cartoon cruelty, to be sure, but chilling nonetheless. Properly performed, Katisha's "Ye torrents roar" should project not only blistering rage but deep hurt. Yes, she's ludicrous, but she's as sensate as anybody else on the stage.

Perhaps it is the degree to which Sullivan *cared* about these silly automatons of Gilbert that made the trio form so congenial to him; in trios, far more than duets, he could create and contrast his characters. In *Mikado* alone there are "Three little maids," "I am so proud," "Here's a how-de-do," and "The criminal cried." There are even

more possibilities in the augmented trio, as in the three-against-one "So please you, sir, we much regret" and the three-against-two "See how the fates their gifts allot."

One reason we so seldom perceive the true range of Sullivan's talents as a musical dramatist is the generally slipshod musical standards of most productions. This is fortunately less true on records, thanks in large part to two conductors, Malcolm Sargent and the D'Oyly Carte's long-time music director Isidore Godfrey. Capable as Sargent's early G&S recordings (when he was with the D'Oyly Carte) are, there is a striking change in the recordings he made for EMI in the late Fifties and Sixties. His tempos had in general broadened considerably, and in his casts he used almost exclusively real singers. As a result, notwithstanding the occasional touch of oratorio stodginess, the works consistently yielded new dimensions only hinted at previously. Godfrey was never so strikingly individual a G&S conductor, but he was almost invariably the model of sensibility. His work was always alive and judiciously proportioned.

Godfrey's immediate successor at the D'Oyly Carte, James Walker, made only one complete recording, the Phase-4 *Pinafore* that was disastrous in nearly every respect. Nervous Savoyards will be relieved to learn that the company is back in good hands. Royston Nash's first recording is simply wonderful. He has all the balance and poise of Godfrey, and in addition he demands even more scrupulous respect for the musical text.

One of my great regrets about Godfrey's conducting is his laissez-faire attitude toward the comedy baritone parts. He spent much of his early years with the company letting Marty Green do whatever he pleased, which was almost invariably less interesting than what Sullivan wrote, and apparently never recovered. It's especially unfortunate because John Reed in his younger years really had quite a pleasant voice, though he seldom used it. Now that the voice has aged considerably, a conductor has finally gotten him to *sing* his music, on pitch and in rhythm. Better late than never, and Ko-Ko is his finest recorded accomplishment. (With this recording, by the way, he has now done all his roles from the Learned Judge to the Duke of Plaza-Toro, plus a snatch or two of Scaphio.)

Only four of the ten *Mikado* cast members participated in the *Pinafore* debacle. In addition to Reed they include Valerie Masterson (who has since left the company), a predictably secure, winning Yum-Yum if not particularly memorable; Pauline Wales, fully adequate to the lesser role of Peep-Bo; and John Ayldon, the *Mikado*. The latter is one of the major surprises of the new set, for in truth he wasn't very good as Dick Deadeye. How a mediocre Dick Deadeye becomes a superb *Mikado* is beyond me, but the evidence is on the records. The voice now sounds big and full, and his reading is delightfully straightforward. A larger-than-life personality like Donald Adams could get away with all sorts of liberties, in large part because he sang the music so well. But with such *Mikados* as Darrell Fancourt and Owen Brannigan, I often feel that the gimmickry is designed as a substitute for singing.

The lower male regions are very well populated indeed, with a most impressive newcomer for Pish-Tush and the return of Kenneth Sandford for Pooh-Bah. The latter is a particular joy for me; Sandford has long been

one of my favorite G&S singers, and he hasn't been heard since the *Princess Ida*, on which Hildebrand proved one of his less effective roles. Pooh-Bah is perhaps his greatest, and while the voice is marginally more extended than when he first recorded it, this remains for me *the* Pooh-Bah. It's a pity he still hasn't recorded the dialogue, which he does so wonderfully, but the sung portions of his characterization are altogether admirable.

Michael Rayner, the new Pish-Tush, has probably the finest baritone ever heard on D'Oyly Carte recordings. The bright, beautiful voice is handled with great agility—the tricky sixteenth-note passages in "Our great Mikado, virtuous man" are dashed off with ease and assurance.

Colin Wright may not be the most forceful Nanki-Poo I've heard, but he handles his part capably; he is certainly a better singer than Ralph Mason, the dreary Ralph of the *Pinafore*. The one weak spot in the cast is Lyndsie Holland, the company's new alto, but she too is a tremendous improvement over her predecessor, Christene Palmer. The voice still has some of that English-oratorio-contralto hootiness, but she's not a bad singer.

When you add in the Royal Philharmonic's excellent playing and Decca/London's truly brilliant engineering, you've got a pretty impressive package. If only the spoken dialogue had been included, this would have been the clear front-runner. (The only possible reason I can imagine for its exclusion is the fear that it wouldn't have fit on four sides, which I find hard to believe.) As it is, there is tough competition from the previous D'Oyly Carte stereo recording and from Sargent's Angel recording.

The 1958 D'Oyly Carte recording is one of my favorite G&S recordings. Godfrey was at his inspired, buoyant best. The company then boasted, in Peter Pratt and Ann Drummond-Grant, the finest comedy baritone and contralto in its recorded history. There are in addition the matchless *Mikado* and Pooh-Bah of Donald Adams and Kenneth Sandford, a fine romantic pair in Jean Hindmarsh and Thomas Round, and a sturdy Pish-Tush from Alan Styler. Sargent's recording has all his familiar virtues including an exceptionally strong cast—Monica Sinclair made even more of *Katisha's* music than Drummond-Grant.

It's almost impossible for me to choose among these three recordings, and for that matter the 1950 D'Oyly Carte recording (Richmond RS 62004) remains valuable for Margaret Mitchell's Yum-Yum and Leonard Osborn's Nanki-Poo. Certainly the orchestral playing and sonics of the new set are a powerful attraction, and the whole production bodes well for the forthcoming *Jolanthe* (with dialogue), already released in England. Thanks to Royston Nash and some fine young singers, the D'Oyly Carte's future suddenly looks a lot brighter.

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN: The Mikado.

The Mikado	John Ayldon (bs)	Go-To	John Broad (bs)
Nanki-Poo	Colin Wright (t)	Yum-Yum	Valerie Masterson (s)
Ko-Ko	John Reed (b)	Pitil-Sling	Peggy Ann Jones (ms)
Pooh-Bah	Kenneth Sandford (bs-b)	Peep-Bo	Pauline Wales (s)
Pish-Tush	Michael Rayner (b)	Katisha	Lyndsie Holland (a)

D'Oyly Carte Opera Chorus; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royston Nash, cond. [Ray Horricks, prod.] LONDON OSA 12103, \$13.96 (two discs, automatic sequence).

Comparisons:

Pratt, Adams, Hindmarsh, Round, Sandford, Godfrey
Evans, Brannigan, Morison, Lewis, Wallace, Sargent

Lon. OSA 1201
Ang. SBL 3573

classical

reviewed by

ROYAL S. BROWN
 ABRAM CHIPMAN
 R. D. DARRELL
 PETER G. DAVIS
 SHIRLEY FLEMING
 ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN
 KENNETH FURIE
 CLIFFORD F. GILMORE
 HARRIS GOLDSMITH
 DAVID HAMILTON
 DALE S. HARRIS
 PHILIP HART
 PAUL HENRY LANG
 ROBERT C. MARSH
 ROBERT P. MORGAN
 ANDREW PORTER
 H. C. ROBBINS LONDON
 JOHN ROCKWELL
 SUSAN THIEMANN SOMMER



Michel Corboz
A celebratory mass.

Friedrich Bach must have been a musician of good and catholic taste, for the breadth of the repertory at Bückeburg would put to shame many of today's musical organizations. Most of the Italians, from Pergolesi and Scarlatti to Jommelli and Tartini, were performed, but also Handel, Stamitz, Schobert, Gluck (*Iphigénie en Tauride*), Haydn, and Mozart (*Entführung*)—the whole galaxy of contemporary and near-contemporary music.

We are obviously dealing with a well-schooled, many-sided, and thorough musician, but how does he stack up when compared with his more celebrated brothers? Well, as a composer he is not in their class; his very large output shows him to be a decent average composer, an excellent craftsman altogether familiar with the prevailing taste and techniques, but devoid of any personality and originality. He went with the times, changing his style as he gained new impressions.

The early symphonies (1768-72) recorded here are of the Italian overture-sinfonia type. Bach has a rather engaging élan, and his allegros have a real symphonic spirit, but he does little with his material, the development sections being unadventurous; and on the whole he exhibits more knowledge of the style than skill and talent in its exploitation. Many of his symphonic subjects are good—Haydn would have gone to town with them—but there are too many unmotivated sequences and stereotyped bass formulas, and his harmonic scheme is meager. The orchestral writing is, however, excellent and in some ways even ahead of Haydn.

Every once in a while, as in the D minor Symphony (No. 3), we see some flashes, but then the routine takes over. The clincher is Symphony No. 20. This is a four-movement "German" symphony, pleasant, euphonious, and in good style—but the date is 1794! Mozart was already dead. Haydn was a world-famous elderly composer, and Friedrich, who performed many a Haydn symphony, was hopelessly antiquated as compared to his exact contemporary.

Helmut Müller-Brühl presides over a good orchestra but shows little finesse. The conductor does catch Bach's ever-present élan, and the tempos are brisk, but otherwise he simply keeps his men moving in good order. The sound is pretty good. P.H.L.

BACH: Mass in B minor, S. 232. Felicity Palmer, soprano; Helen Watts, alto; Robert Tear, tenor; Michael Rippon, bass; Amor Artis Chorale; English Chamber Orchestra, Johannes Somary, cond. [Seymour Solomon, prod.] VANGUARD VSD 71190/2, \$20.94 (three discs, automatic sequence). Quadriphonic: VSO 30037/9, \$20.94 (three SQ-encoded discs).

B **BACH:** Mass in B minor, S. 232. Yvonne Perrin and Wally Stämpfli, sopranos; Magali Schwartz, mezzo; Claudine Perret, alto; Olivier Dufour, tenor; Niklaus Tüller and Philippe Huttenlocher, basses; Chorus and Orchestra of Lausanne, Michel Corboz, cond. RCA VICTROLA FVL 2-5715, \$6.98 (two discs, automatic sequence) [from MUSICAL HERITAGE MHS 1769/70, 1973].

Neither of these recordings is the answer to the B minor Mass problem, but both are welcome stopgaps.

The carefully produced Somary/Vanguard version scales few heights, but in its workmanlike way it is probably the most reasonable facsimile we have so far. Somary keeps the show moving, and the English Chamber Orchestra is first-rate throughout. There is precision and spirit in its playing, and the many important solos are skillfully handled. Among the soloists, only Helen Watts is truly distinctive, and even she gets off to a rocky start in the soprano II part of the "*Christe eleison*"—by the "*Qui sedes*," however, she has settled into her normal memorable form. Michael Rippon sings both bass solos attractively, but he communicates little real involvement; listen to Friedrich Schorr's "*Et in Spiritum sanctum*" to hear what I mean. Felicity Palmer and Robert Tear negotiate their music with reasonable accuracy.

Of course the crux of this gargantuan score (or rather these scores, since it seems unlikely that Bach ever thought of the Mass's four independent components as a single work) is the choral writing, of a breadth and purposeful complexity far beyond anything else I know. It may well be that what one sees clearly on the printed page is unrealizable by mere human throats. It is surely true that every recording to date has fallen from grace in this department.

Somary's chorus—sizable but not excessively so—is not especially ingratiating tonally, but the choristers are quite accurate musically and they have been well enough recorded to reproduce Bach's intricate polyphony more

B **BACH, J.C.F.:** Symphonies (7). Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Helmut Müller-Brühl, cond. NONESUCH HB 73027, \$7.96 (two discs).

Symphonies: No. 1, in F; No. 2, in B flat; No. 3, in D minor; No. 4, in E; No. 6, in C; No. 10, in E flat; No. 20, in B flat.

Of the four famous musician sons of Sebastian Bach, Johann Christoph Friedrich (1732-95), the second youngest, is the least known; few of his many works are published, and he has not yet been properly investigated. Until his eighteenth year he studied with his father (in the company of Kirnberger, Altnikol, and other promising young musicians) and then must have been pronounced fit for business, for at this age he entered the service of the house of Schaumburg-Lippe in Bückeburg, where he remained to the end of his life, hence the designation "the Bückeburg Bach." The Bückeburg musical establishment was one of the best princely *Hofkapellen*, with a decidedly Italian orientation. Bach's predecessors were all Italians.

It is not easy to follow Friedrich Bach's trail beyond his vital statistics. Unfortunately, Burney, who is a good source for eighteenth-century minor masters, got his notes scrambled when he wrote them up upon his return to London—he has Friedrich confused with Wilhelm Friedemann. We do know, however, that Friedrich was well thought of, a good conductor, and a virtuoso keyboard performer whose performance of his father's works was superior to his famous brothers' renditions. We also know that he traveled, visiting his brothers in Hamburg and London, was well read (studied at Leipzig University), and was a close friend of Herder's, who for some years was the court chaplain in Bückeburg. The friendship resulted in the setting of a raft of cantata, oratorio, and song texts by his distinguished literary friend.

Explanation of symbols

Classical:

- B** Budget
- H** Historical
- R** Reissue

Recorded tape:

- Open Reel
- ◻ 8-Track Cartridge
- Cassette

clearly than any previous recording. The "Et incarnatus est" and "Crucifixus" from the *Symbolum Nicenum* are very lovely indeed. And from what I have heard of previous Vanguard quad choral recordings, the quad version may be clearer still.

I missed the Corboz edition in its recent MHS issue but am glad to catch up with it in the new Victrola issue, for the performance is indeed a worthy one. Corboz uses a very small orchestra and chorus and sets generally quick tempos, both of which are conducive to the right sort of spirit—i.e., celebratory rather than solemn. Alas, the producers have largely squandered the sharp focus of their small chorus by plunking it into a reverberant cathedral-like environment. I know this is church music, but for heaven's sake can't it be kept out of the church—at least for recording purposes?

Corboz' large group of nondescript soloists is adequate, but this music calls for the most supple, expressive singers. Still, the performance is a fine one and a good buy.

Useful notes, texts, and translations with both sets. K.F.

B **BACH: Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin (6), S. 1001–6.** Georges Enesco, violin. OLYMPIC 8113/3, \$14.94 (three discs, rechanneled).

H **BACH: Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin (6), S. 1001–6.** Paul Zukofsky, violin. [Seymour Solomon, prod.] VANGUARD VSD 71194/6, \$20.94 (three discs).

BACH: Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin (6), S. 1001–6. Břetislav Novotný, violin. [Eduard Herzog, prod.] SUPRAPHON 1 11 1101/3, \$20.94 (three discs).

Sonatas: No. 1, in G minor, S. 1001; No. 2, in A minor, S. 1003; No. 3, in C, S. 1005. Partitas: No. 1, in B minor, S. 1002; No. 2, in D minor, S. 1004; No. 3, in E, S. 1006.

Consider the varieties of personality brought to bear, in these three albums, on the Bach Unaccompanied. In Enesco (1882–1955) we have a Romanian, the renowned violinist/composer/teacher of two generations ago who embodied in his makeup a touch of the gypsy; in Zukofsky, an American, a thirty-ish, intensely serious, relentlessly penetrating instrumentalist who gives much of his time to contemporary music; in Novotný, a Czech, a fifty-year-old quartet leader who served seven years as concertmaster of the Prague Symphony and who is an unknown quantity as a soloist in the United States, though he has toured here with the Prague String Quartet. A bemusing array of backgrounds, and a windfall for the Bach fancier.

Yehudi Menuhin said of Enesco, "I have never heard any other violinist to equal him"; Henryk Szeryng explains that he learned much of what he knows about music—but not about the violin—from Enesco; Enesco himself said, "Many violinists equaled or outshone me; but I alone could release the spring that welled up in my heart." (He released a little too much of it sometimes, when attacked by bursts of Romanian abandon, and carefully guarded against transmitting too much of this to his pupils, Menuhin included.) The date of these Bach recordings is something the reference books fail to divulge, but it is worth keeping in mind that they were made by an artist six years older than Casals, and though Enesco cannot be said to have "rediscovered" the sonatas and partitas as Casals did the cello



Paul Zukofsky and Georges Enesco—interpretations of the Bach sonatas generations apart.

suites (that honor belongs to Joachim), we may safely surmise that the recording studios were not exactly resounding to performances of these pieces when Enesco arrived to make his complete set. From evidence in James Creighton's *Discopaedia of the Violin* (University of Toronto Press, 1974), Enesco was the only violinist of his generation—which means, historically, the first violinist ever—to record the entire set.

He did the job impressively, with an emphasis on lyricism, an awareness of dynamic shaping, a sense of logic, and in the Chaconne an elegant concept of the opening statement and remarkable nobility and poise throughout. This is not to say that the intonation is perfect (it isn't) or that the violinism in general is as smooth and flawless as that of the modern brand of young prizewinners. The three fugues, for example, tend to sound a little stiff-jointed, and that of the A minor Sonata doesn't prance rhythmically as it has been known to in other hands (nor does the third Double of the B minor Partita dance in a way that Casals might have made it on his own instrument).

What current ears would probably question most is rhythmic irregularity. It was the custom in days of yore to take some liberties if you felt like it, and Enesco does so, sometimes for expressive purposes and sometimes to get out of a little technical hot water. The Siciliano of the G minor Sonata is a case in point; no contemporary artist would allow himself the leeway of push and pull that Enesco does here—but it is not excessive, for his taste was too well founded for that. The Presto immediately following is exact enough, and the dexterity impressive. Underlying any whiff of "period" atmosphere or any idiosyncracies—of which there are surprisingly few—there is the imprint of a knowing musician and a sensitive performer.

The sound is hoarse and muffled, though not impossibly so. But let's not quibble—this is a valuable document and most welcome.

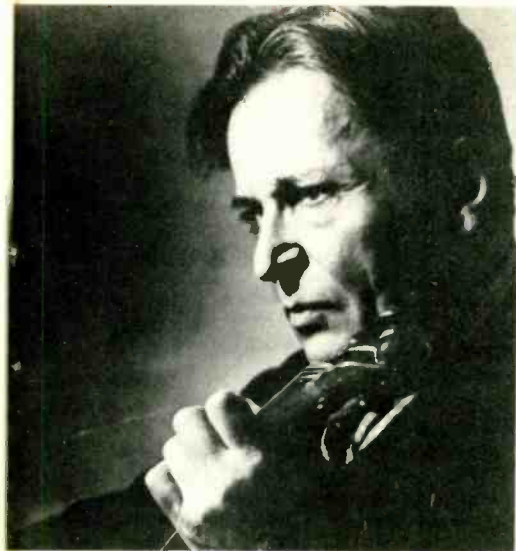
When Enesco recorded his Bach, and even when much younger artists recorded theirs, it would never have occurred to them to include detailed written commentary on such matters as bowing and fingering; this was saved for the teaching studio or for a late-night smoke with

colleagues. But times have changed, and the LP disc has made armchair experts of us all. Messrs. Zukofsky and Novotný, therefore, each include fairly painstaking explanations of what they are up to, and it is just as well that we be reminded of the myriad small but essential decisions that have to be made throughout each of these movements.

It will come as no surprise to anyone familiar with Zukofsky's Paganini *Caprices* to learn that his discussion is precise and scholarly. It will also come as no surprise that he is intractable. When he is convinced that a movement should proceed in a certain manner, that is the way it goes, whether the results are agreeable or not. This was spectacularly the case with the *Caprices*, which were unorthodox and at times unpleasant as well as unconvincing. It is less so here, but Zukofsky still drives a hard lesson. Having arrived at a decision about the tempo of the A minor Grave, for instance, he sticks to it: It is slow, almost tortuously so; having decided that the Sarabande of the B minor Partita ought to get along with sparse use of vibrato, he renders it in a rather doleful manner, largely unadorned and sometimes whining in tone (and we all know that when Zukofsky whines it isn't because he can't help it; if he whines it is because he intends to). The fugue movements are generally fast and always polished; he turns them off with a light touch that calls attention to their surfaces rather than their underpinnings. And his rhythm everywhere is crisp and electric—strikingly so, for instance, in the Allemande of the B minor Partita.

There is, in fact, only one point on which I cannot swallow Zukofsky's Bach, and that is on the matter of his exorbitantly fast tempos not only for presto movements (like the G minor) but even for gigue and bourrées (*vide* both in the E major Partita). His display of sheer speed in these cases seems to me absurd. The music neither breathes nor has a chance to "sound," and I would bet my last stylus that no eighteenth-century violinist in his wildest moments ever imagined that his instrument could be made to go at such a rate. Zukofsky is too serious an artist to be simply indulging his ego, which leaves me without an explanation for what he does here.

Which brings us to Břetislav Novotný, the



dark horse who hereby establishes himself, in my book, as one of the important Bach interpreters of our day. His performances are unfailingly strong and clear, both graceful and masculine. The dance movements dance, the phrasing breathes, the dynamic plateaus are clear-cut and well-ordered. His seriousness of purpose is sometimes very much to the fore. He may verge on extreme deliberation in the G minor Adagio, and in his determination to bring out the bottom line in the Siciliano of that same sonata he may render the melody less smooth than it might be. But bear with him: He will take you through a fugue that is springy and resilient, more militant than Henryk Szeryng's for instance, but with a similar clarity of articulation, and he will conclude with a Presto that is perfectly paced and clarification clear. In the Chaconne he keeps a firm hold on the thematic line, sets forth the chords cleanly and with a minimum of fuss, and in general builds a strong-chiseled movement based on an absolutely solid rhythmic foundation. Despite his European thoroughness, he is everywhere elegant and civilized; though somewhat less urbane than Szeryng, he belongs in the same class insofar as these works are concerned, and he is a violinist you will want to hear if the sonatas and partitas are important to you. S.F.

BADINGS: Octet—See Wellesz: Octet.

BEETHOVEN: Sonatas for Piano: No. 31, in A flat, Op. 110; No. 32, in C minor, Op. 111. Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano. LONDON CS 6843, \$6.98.

Further evidence of Ashkenazy's artistic growth. He has kept his supreme virtuosity intact, but it has taken on a granitic grandeur altogether appropriate for the world of late Beethoven. The alternation of serene delicacy with tempestuous angularity, the scrupulous clarity of voicing (the contrapuntal first movement of Op. 111 is especially arresting in that respect), the resourceful use (but never overuse) of pedal—in complete accordance with Beethoven's specified wishes—and the fierce solidity of the playing give the authentic aura.

Best of all, for all his deep probing, Ashkenazy solves the interpretive problems in the most direct, unpretentious way imaginable. Not for him the contrived soul-searching, the redundant *rallentandos*, the melodramatic pauses of some "specialists"—everything here is profound but also *natural*.

The two performances, however, are not equally successful. Op. 110 has the advantage of superior recorded sound, somewhat warmer and mellower, and the playing is well-nigh ideal in every respect. Ashkenazy's tempos are rather broad and monumental, but there is at all times a unifying proportion and flow. The manner in which the recitatives evolve into the first slow movement, the differentiation between the first slow movement (doleful but strong) and its subsequent G minor variant (much more faltering), the perfect pacing of both the fuga and its constantly accelerating inversion are all models of judgment and perception.

With Op. 111, however, I kept wanting the first movement to "go" more. The tempos are a bit lethargic, the grandeur spread with a slightly cautious, even heavy, hand. For all the impeccable playing, this beginning sounds too self-consciously titanic, and there is a decided hard twang to the closely microphoned piano tone. The variations, though, are beautifully judged. Here, of course, a slow tempo is appropriate, and the rhythmic ambiguities (e.g. the implied but not specifically indicated sharpening of note values as the elaborations flow to their inevitable climax) are splendidly achieved. And what remarkable clarity in the complex chains of multiple trills! Some of the rapt atmosphere and vaporous introspection Schnabel achieved here in his incomparable 1932 recording may be missing, but that might be partly attributable to the dry, clinical acoustics.

In any event, from a pianistic standpoint, this is one of the most perfectly *played* Op. 111s I have ever encountered, if less than the most exalted. H.G.

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 1, in C minor, Op. 68. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, István Kertész, cond. LONDON CS 6836, \$6.98.

Kertész' Brahms First offers the Schwann catalogue premiere of the first-movement repeat. (Neither the Abbado/DG nor the Boult/EMI edition has yet been released domestically, and the Bolberitz/Hungaroton doesn't rate a listing in Schwann.) You may as well be warned that this repeat causes quite a shock: three chords in the winds for a first ending, then that loud "bump" in timpani, brass, and woodwinds that begins the *allegro*. You may think the stylus has bounced back half an inch! Interesting to hear, of course, even if the structural necessity of that repeat is not particularly apparent.

Otherwise, this *isn't* just another Brahms First. The late Hungarian conductor's typical propulsive speeds, crisp and clean sense for articulation and rhythm, are an antidote to the mushiness and gargantuan pretense of so many readings. Strings and winds are in good balance, without obtrusive forcing of anything through the texture (e.g., the clarinet's "Woody the Woodpecker" figure at bar 19 in the Poco *allegretto*, the sinister snarl of the contrabassoon beginning at 20 in the finale, and many cello details). Kertész avoids an excessive slowdown at the big chorale theme's

return in the final coda, though his steadiness seems unbending at the *piu tranquillo* episode at the end of the third movement. Except for the usual woolly Viennese oboe, the playing is bright and spankily alert.

All in all, this joins the top choices of really outstanding Firsts (Sanderling, Haitink), and I shall be looking forward to the balance of Kertész' Brahms symphony cycle. A.C.

BRUCH: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 1—See Tchaikovsky: Concerto.

CAGE: Winter Music. **FLYNN:** Wound. George Flynn, piano. [Ilhan Mimaroglu, prod.] FINNADAR QD 9006, \$6.98 (Quadradisc). Tape: QT 9006, \$7.97 (Q-8 cartridge).

John Cage has required us to expand and revise our thoughts about music, but as a composer he has produced very little work that I find of sustained interest. *Winter Music* is a denial of all the traditional elements of music, a series of tone clusters (some of which are distant relatives of more traditional chords) played in an order that is largely determined by chance, and for me this becomes twenty minutes of monotony, music without apparent form or content. What gives the record some interest is that Flynn plays the work with obvious conviction (I'm delighted *he* finds something there) and that the use of CD-4 quad permits the apparent sound source to move about the room, as if there were a piano in each corner. For about five minutes, that's attractive. Then you expect something more, and it never happens.

Flynn's own *Wound* is influenced by his "perception of the violence both in Vietnam and at home in the streets and on the college campuses." It is thus protest music, anxiety music, and it has genuine force of statement and genuine movement. Its twenty-two minutes may be too long as well, but the work sustains attention and projects forcefully the composer's vision. The quad engineering helps here, but it's less important. The intent is to "draw the listener into the midst of [the] turmoil" of the work. It does. R.C.M.

CHOPIN: Scherzos (4); Chants polonais (2). Antonio Barbosa, piano. [E. Alan Silver, prod.] CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CSQ 2071, \$6.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

Scherzos: No. 1, in B minor, Op. 20; No. 2, in B flat minor, Op. 31; No. 3, in C sharp minor, Op. 39; No. 4, in E, Op. 54. Chants polonais (arr. Liszt): No. 1, The Maiden's Wish; No. 12, My Joys.

This may well be Barbosa's most successful recording to date. The misleadingly named scherzos are anything but jocular in mood, and he plays them in a wild, woolly manner, alternating brio with soulful lyricism. Spontaneous, caressing phrasing adds a welcome improvisatory touch to performances that still manage to cohere and move inexorably to their climactic peaks. I can pay no greater compliment than to say that Barbosa plays the scherzos in the manner of Artur Schnabel and with almost equal distinction. The breadth, temperament, and dynamic range are really out of the ordinary, even with a somewhat monochromatic instrument.

The two Liszt transcriptions are solidly exe-

cutted, but Barbosa's filigree lacks the dewdrop clarity and singing line of Josef Hofmann's on his 1935 studio recording (International Piano Library 110).

The engineering is superb—more immediate and impactful than on the concurrently released Beethoven sonata disc (CSQ 2068). For once, my review copy (a test pressing, not a commercial copy) is beautifully quiet. H.G.

FAURÉ: Quartet for Piano and Strings, No. 1, in C minor, Op. 15; Quartet for Strings, in E minor, Op. 121. Artur Rubinstein, piano (in Op. 15); Guarneri Quartet. [Max Wilcox, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0761, \$6.98.

This recording, released to commemorate the Guarneri's tenth year, is very apt. The four-some has always had an affinity for Fauré; there is obvious love and feeling for his sonority and style.

The new disc is beautifully played and exquisitely well reproduced. The instrumental lines are wonderfully clear in this highly directional recording, and clarity really is a blessing in a work so diffusely blended as the string quartet. The piece was written practically on Fauré's deathbed (he was still revising it when the end came), and as in many of his last works the harmonic scheme is very dense, although consummately wrought. The Vox recording by the Loewenguth Quartet didn't misrepresent the music, but the new version is far superior in every way: richer in conception, tonally more vibrant, technically more exciting. The added virtuoso zip gives the Guarneri's high-powered interpretation an extra dimension.

Artur Rubinstein displays his regal style in the earlier C minor Piano Quartet, but in truth that modest work ideally needs a pianist who can merge more completely into the ensemble. At the 1966 Marlboro Festival, Murray Perahia, Isidore Cohen, Samuel Rhodes, and Ko Iwasaki gave a truly revelatory performance, and even Rubinstein, whose playing here is rather Brahmsified, comfortable, and unadventurous, and the Guarneri, in good but by no means inspired form, must bow to the memory of that once-in-a-lifetime rendition. I kept looking for more rhythmic tension and phrase characterization. In the Marlboro performance, for example, at the beginning of the third movement the first two string entrances were made dead "white," without any vibrato; when the third instrument entered with a touch of coloration, the effect was exquisite—like sap flowing in a tree in spring. In the new version, I never felt that these fine players had analyzed the work to any comparable degree. Even on disc, the old Columbia mono recording by Horszowski and the New York Quartet had more swirl and blend.

Whatever my reservations about the piano quartet, this disc is worth having for the string quartet alone. H.G.

FLYNN: Wound—See Cage: Winter Music.

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN: The Mikado. For a feature review, see page 73.

GOTTSCHALK: Piano Works. Leonard Pennario, piano. [Patti Laursen, prod.] ANGEL S



Leonard Pennario
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The Union, Op. 48; Danza, Op. 33; Pasquinade, Op. 59; The Last Hope, Op. 16; Le Bananier, Op. 5; Bamboula, Op. 2; The Banjo, Op. 15; Souvenir de Puerto Rico, Op. 31; Ojos criollos, Op. 37; Minuit a Seville, Op. 30.

This release brings us the first new Pennario recordings in some years. Each of his ten selections has been recorded before in one Gottschalk collection or another, but the present program is probably the most comprehensive of those confined to a single disc. It certainly displays the most bravura, even flamboyant, virtuosity. And it well may be the most brilliantly recorded—although the combination of extremely high modulation levels with Pennario's steel-finger strength results in some rather hard, however clean and realistic, tonal qualities.

Most satisfactory interpretively, to my ears, are such jingoistic or salonish showpieces as *The Union*, *The Last Hope*, and *Minuit à Seville*, which Pennario milks for all their specularity yet without any taint of condescending camping-up. In the Creole, Caribbean, or other Afro-Hispanic dance and march pieces, his zest and éclat are highly effective, yet seldom if ever as delectable as Eugene List's more subtly seductive Vanguard readings. R.D.D.

HANDEL: *Messiah* (arr. Mozart, K. 572). Edith Mathis, soprano; Birgit Finnila, mezzo; Peter Schreier, tenor; Theo Adam, baritone; Austrian Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Charles Mackerras, cond. [Gerd Ploebusch, prod.] ARCHIV 2710 016, \$23.94 (three discs, manual sequence).

Baron Gottfried van Swieten (1733–1803) was a figure characteristic of the Age of Enlightenment—aristocrat, diplomat, connoisseur of the arts, musician, bibliophile—and his influence was considerable in all the fields he dabbled in. He helped negotiate with Frederick the Great the first partition of Poland, but he also played an important role in the genesis of Haydn's two great oratorios and was responsible for the discovery, for southern German Catholics, of the music of Handel.

Returned to Vienna from assignments in London and Berlin with several Handelian

scores in his luggage, Van Swieten commissioned various musicians to flesh out what was considered to be archaic orchestration, so that his noble friends, in whose palaces the oratorios were performed, would hear the fine *Hofkapelle* in its accustomed full classical splendor. Mozart, always in need of money, reworked four of Handel's scores, among them *Messiah*, which Archiv now presents for the first time in an integral recording (sung, of course, in German).

Less than half a century separates the composition of *Messiah* (1742) from its version by Mozart (1789), but during that relatively brief interval the changes in style and manner of performance were so extensive that baroque performance practice was almost completely forgotten. The versatile, improvising *maestro al cembalo* disappeared; only in opera and oratorio did he accompany the secco recitatives with simple chords. The dazzling clarino trumpeter also vanished, leaving his descendants in the classical orchestra wondering how on earth those fancy runs and melodies could be played on their instruments used mainly for proclamative fanfares to enhance the tuttis and cadences.

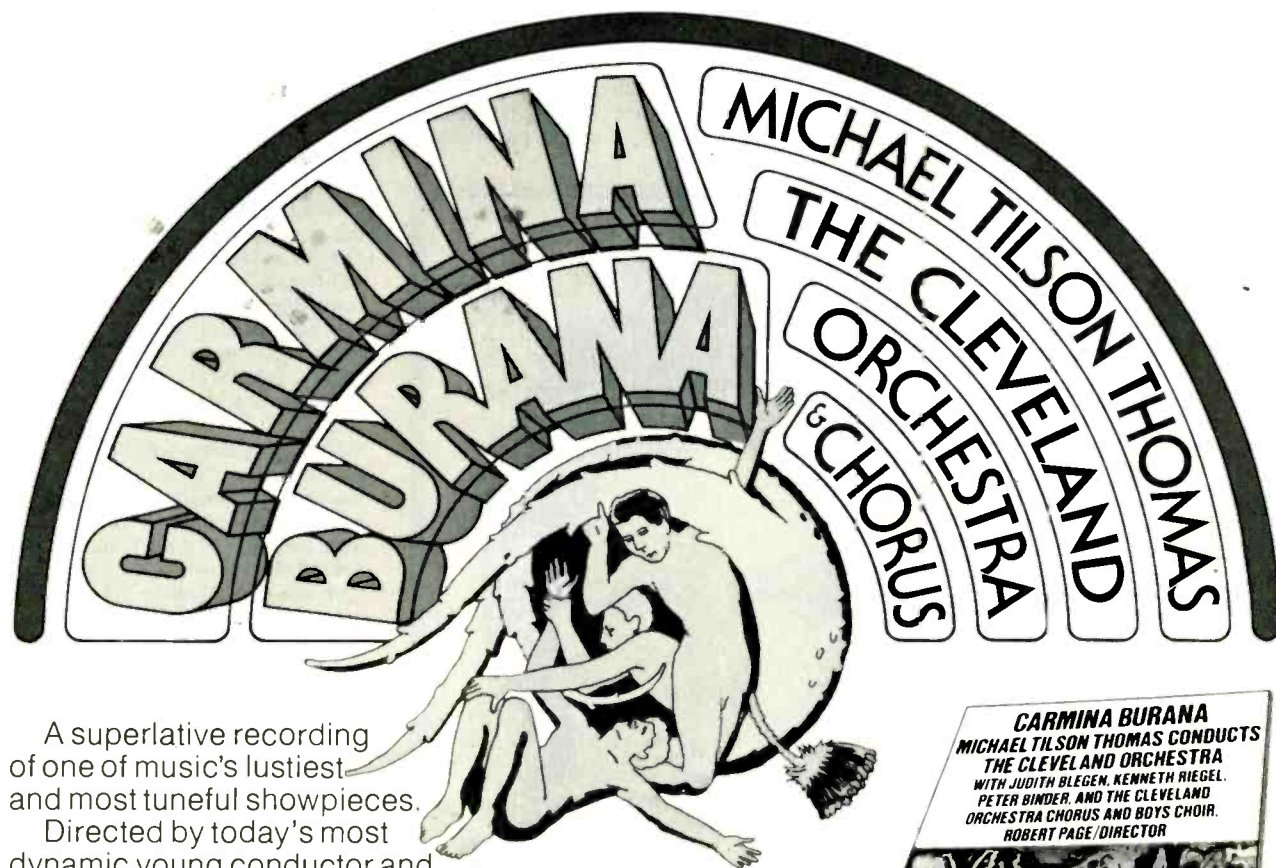
The Enlightenment enjoined the world to live in the present, declaring the living to have all the rights and to be entitled to act in light of their own understanding and concept of things; historical and stylistic considerations were as yet unknown. So Mozart in all innocence "completed" *Messiah*, not realizing that with this popular score he helped open the door to the subsequent manhandling of old masters during the nineteenth and a good part of the twentieth century. It is perhaps superfluous to say so, but the difference between Mozart and a hack arranger is something to behold.

The procedure was simple. Van Swieten brought home from London a copy of the 1767 edition of *Messiah* published by Randall and Abel; then a copyist was hired, with instructions to write out the vocal and string parts as they were in the original, leaving some empty staves for Mozart to add the complete classical symphony ensemble.

The result was not, however, a simple case of orchestration; a creative artist of Mozart's phenomenal imagination cannot withstand the temptation to meddle, to impose himself on the score. Whenever he spotted a good idea, he carried it further, playing with the thematic material, splicing in imitations, inventing new counterpoints and counter-themes, writing viola parts to the three-part accompaniments (thus dispensing with the continuo), and so forth. But he went even further. "If God be for us" was replaced by an entirely new and magnificent recitative of his own composition. Unfortunately, Mozart also cut a great deal, and shifted singers at will—soprano to bass, tenor to alto, and various other combinations. Since the rearranged score (first published in 1803), with its much-amended German translation, was a mare's nest anyway, it presented the editor of the volume for the new critical edition of Mozart's collected works, now being published by Bärenreiter, with a difficult task, but one which he resolved very creditably.

A comparison of Handel's original score with Mozart's arrangement is fascinating, even though we are constantly taken aback by the results. The changes range from simple *colla parte* additions to virtually recomposed

EXCELLENCE FORTISSIMO.

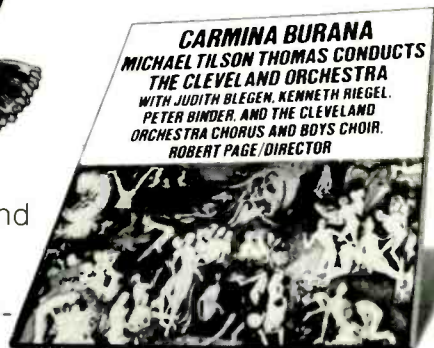


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pieces. "The people that walketh in darkness," with the added woodwind solos and imitative countermelodies, is an almost new work. Everything is beautifully done, but the warm clarinets rob the piece of its mystery. The same is true of "O thou that tellest good tidings"; it is very attractive but not Handel. The "Pifa" too sounds marvelous and thoroughly modern with all those parallel wind chords, but the original version for strings alone is more pastoral in character. The duet "O death where is thy sting" was given two obbligato viola parts. Most interesting is the conversion of the great rage aria "Why do the nations" into an alto-

gether Mozartean opera number. The addition of trumpets and drums, with their typical *symphonic* rhythms and accents, instantly changes the character of this piece.

The classical composers did not like empty measures, which is not to say that they wrote scores full of black notes like the chamber-music scores of a Brahms or a Fauré: no, transparency and airiness were always uppermost in their minds. But they were alert to opportunities for a nice bit of imitation or for some complementary rhythms. When Mozart got to "Thou shalt break them," with its sharp motif and many small pauses, the temptation

was too much, and he went to work with an aroused imagination. It is a marvelous piece, a veritable lesson in the art of composition, but much more Mozart than Handel.

There are also a few numbers that did not come off so well. The little curlicues of the bassoon in "Every valley" are a bit funny; the trumpets and drums hurt the infinite grace of the madrigalesque choruses; the two a cappella spots sound ponderous with the trombones added; and the horns in the Hallelujah Chorus seem forlorn. An amusing situation arose with the aria "The trumpet shall sound." In the first place, the German translation mistakenly reads, "The trombone shall sound," but Mozart ignored both, substituting a horn! He did cut this aria rather severely, and I think that in this instance he was right; it is the only number in *Messiah* that is redundant.

Edith Mathis' performance is somewhat inconsistent. In the quieter numbers she sings very nicely, but when the excitement mounts she becomes unsteady. In "All they that see Him" she scarcely hits one right tone, then she turns around and sings "Thy rebuke" not only steadily, but very beautifully. Birgit Finnilä is the best all-round member of the cast, and she does not pour coals on the dark hues of her voice as most oratorio altos do. Peter Schreier is good, while Theo Adam, though he has some trouble with the coloraturas and the low notes, holds his own elsewhere.

On the whole, however, the performance is not very satisfactory, which is surprising, because Charles Mackerras knows Handel and *Messiah* intimately. Perhaps he missed his usual English crew, who have *Messiah* in their bones. Most of the *affettuoso* pieces are very slow—"He was despised" is positively comatose. The fast "duet" choruses are also a little slow and sung staccato instead of *leggiero*, but the Austrian chorus is beautifully in tune. In general, the great score appears somewhat subdued, the few dramatic spots lack bite, and the tremendous perorations, like the concluding "Amen," are more nearly stodgy than majestic. Mackerras double-dots a lot, even where the procedure is not desirable. It is not at all certain that this French instrumental device was used by German and English dramatic composers. Also, the *senza ripieno* passages are too thin, considering the presence of a full symphony orchestra. But the conductor deserves praise for his tactful handling of the ubiquitous *colla parte* trombones.

The sound is variable, though mostly quite good. In some instances the soloists are too close to the microphone, but the terror of baroque recordings, choral sound, is very good.

Well, what shall we say about this curious, interesting, provoking, grudgingly admired, but also baffling production? The lengthy "justification" printed in the early Breitkopf score does not have to be quoted—the title tells the whole story: "Handel's *Messiah*, made usable for our times by W. A. Mozart." Andreas Holschneider, who reconstructed the score and wrote the excellent notes for this recording, is right when he states that this is "a valuable piece of interpretative history" and thus worth publishing and recording. And of course anyone interested in the mental processes of genius will find some extraordinary things to ponder. P.H.L.

HOLST: Choral Symphony, Op. 41. Felicity Palmer, soprano; London Philharmonic

A Singer to Savor

by Paul Henry Lang



A MIXED BAG of arias from widely separated works, even if by the same composer, is always disconcerting to the reviewer—and should be so to the nonprofessional listener too. Moods and situations, techniques and even styles, change too abruptly, separated only by the ten-second empty run of the stylus. We hardly get used to the sensuous melodies of Handel's Italian works when we are hurled into stark English music drama, the ragged, raving recitative of the furies-possessed heroine of *Hercules*. But this time all carping will be suspended. I won't even discuss Raymond Leppard's customary improvements on the original composer or the anachronistic ornamentations inserted into Handel's perfectly satisfactory vocal lines, because this disc belongs to Janet Baker.

We often hear the lament that the "golden age of singing" is past. Well, if this singing is not golden, I don't know what to call it. Janet Baker has a magnificent voice, which she handles with

consummate skill and artistry. She can be vehement and wild, like that imperious Dejanira whom she impersonates, but no vehemence can threaten impeccable delivery. She can be tender, with pianissimos that float on air, and the great Handelian melodies issue from her throat as if sculptured in three dimensions. The elaborate coloraturas she takes in her stride, employing just the right amount of virtuosity while keeping such passages part of the general musical fabric rather than tossing them out as spectacular sallies.

A mellifluous treat, this record is, but the listener should consume it in sips, for this music and this singing must be savored, like good brandy.

HANDEL: O Numi eterni (*Cantata Lucretia*); Arias. Janet Baker, mezzo-soprano; English Chamber Orchestra, Raymond Leppard, harpsichord and cond. PHILIPS 6500 523, \$7.98.

Arias: Rodelinda: Pompe vane di morte! ... Dove sei, amato bene? Ariodante: Dopo notte. Serse: Ombra mai fu. Hercules: Where shall I fly? Atalanta: Care selve. Joshua: O had I Jubal's lyre.

Choir and Orchestra, Adrian Boult, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.] ANGEL S 37030, \$6.98.

The September 21, 1974, centennial of the composer most Americans know only by his *Planets* received scant attention in this country. But the Holstians among us can celebrate it belatedly by listening—in all likelihood for the first time—to a major work, the Choral Symphony, written around the time (1923–24) when Holst gave up all his other activities to devote himself entirely to composition.

As many other creative artists have discovered in comparable circumstances, such new, long-dreamed-of freedom may be a stimulus as dangerous as it is potent, often tempting fledgling wings into riskily overambitious flights. In Holst's case, the vast potentials of a large-scale work for chorus and orchestra (intended for and first performed at the Leeds Festival of 1925) led him into setting lengthy Keatsian texts ranging vertiginously all the way from the sublime (*Ode on a Grecian Urn*) to the near-ridiculous (the sometimes doggerel-ish verses for the present first, third, and fourth movements). No one can be surprised, then, that the music itself varies enormously: from the dryly routine or almost silly, at its worst, to its magnificently eloquent best. But at both extremes it always is distinctively characteristic of uniquely British choral and orchestral traditions and of the often enigmatic Holstian personality itself.

I hesitate to commend this symphony to listeners who are not already favorably disposed toward British music in general and that of Holst (or perhaps Vaughan Williams) in particular. But to listeners of such disposition, even the shortcomings will be no real handicap to the work's decidedly rewarding over-all enjoyment.

Not least among the attractions here are those of a highly appealing if sometimes a bit shaky soprano soloist and a well-trained, earnestly fervent chorus—both persuasive proponents for the aforementioned British choral traditions. The London Philharmonic, under the baton of the composer's longtime friend and propagandist Sir Adrian Boult, copes expertly with the now highly imaginative, now perhaps overcerebral orchestral scoring, and the EMI recording, made in London's Kingsway Hall in early March 1974, admirably combines ample power with expansive warmth.

Angel's American production warrants high marks for including Imogen Holst jacket notes plus a leaflet of the full Keats texts, but it will be given low ones by anyone who gets a pressing as rough-surfaced as my review copy.

R.D.D.

B HONEGGER: Sonata for Violin and Piano, No. 2; Sonatina for Cello and Piano; Sonatina for Violin and Cello. Primož Novšak, violin; Susanne Basler, cello; Annette Weisbrod, piano. MUSICAL HERITAGE MHS 1869, \$3.50 (Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

I know of few works that open in a more startlingly beautiful fashion than the Honegger Second Violin Sonata (1919), whose first movement is a kind of icy Sicilienne in which violin and piano flow together in a bittersweet, occasionally polytonal harmonic relationship.

Throughout, the soaring, lean lyricism of the violin line, in which the composer never employs anything resembling a double or triple stop, is softened by the large, dissonant, but exceptionally subtle chords—one of Honegger's trademarks—in the piano.

The cello sonatina, arranged from the 1921 clarinet sonatina (which can be heard in an excellent performance by Drucker and Hambro on Odyssey Y 30492), is remarkably similar in construction to the Second Violin Sonata, even to the inclusion of a fugato in the first movement. Where the sonata ends in a rather stark *perpetuum mobile*, however, the finale of the cello sonatina, although also played at a slapdash pace, turns jazzy at spots, no doubt inspired by the original instrument. Personally, I much prefer the clarinet version—one of the beauties of both the clarinet sonatina and the violin sonata is the pitch separation maintained by Honegger between the two instruments; the deeper tones of the cello, on the other hand, somewhat muddle the occasionally Hindemithian incisiveness of the scoring.

In spite of its title, the 1932 violin-cello sonatina is a much more developed work than the two earlier pieces on this disc. And although the composer still tends to stress the separate lines played by each instrument, there is often a mellowness and sense of unity here that seems to foreshadow, in the basic feeling evoked, the early Shostakovich string quartets. But in the last movement, the jocular antiphony of the opening bars and the constant presence of what sounds like a nursery tune seem to revert somewhat to the simplism of the "Les Six" aesthetic, with which Honegger was rarely in tune.

I am especially impressed by the full-toned, beautifully phrased lyricism of Primož Novšak's violin performance, in comparison with which Susanne Basler's cello playing suffers somewhat, particularly in the violin-cello sonatina. Annette Weisbrod's piano accompaniment in the violin sonata and cello sonatina perfectly complements the string playing; I can only wish that the piano part had been recorded with the same brightness that highlights the string instruments.

But these flaws seem quite minor in comparison to the over-all value of this disc (originally produced by RBM records in Mannheim, Germany). The recording offers an excellent introduction to the subdued treasures of Honegger's chamber music and contains an immensely sensitive interpretation of a twentieth-century masterpiece, the Second Violin Sonata. R.S.B.

MENDELSSOHN: Songs Without Words (complete); Gondellied, Op. 102, No. 7; Al-bumblatt, Op. 117; Klavierstücke (2), Op. posth.; Kinderstücke (6), Op. 72. Daniel Barenboim, piano. [Gunter Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 052, \$23.94 (three discs, manual sequence).

An agreeable surprise, Barenboim's tempos are natural-sounding, the phrasing completely musical and expressive, the tone painting engagingly vigorous and full-bodied. This is not mournful, soul-searching pseudo-interpretation, but rather music-making of warmth, joy, and natural communicativeness.

Barenboim manages to enter the tonal world of nearly every one of these pieces. Note, for instance, how his rather straight,

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brisk account of that perennial pianola favorite *Spring Song* minimizes the often objectionable arpeggiations and manages to convey the feeling of plants sprouting and buds bursting into bloom. Another favorite, the *Spinning Song*, does not try to break the speed record Rachmaninoff set in his 1928 recording; Barenboim rather plays it much as Artur Schnabel did in his encore performance last winter: a broad, sturdy tempo that allows the music to breathe and flow.

Very occasionally Barenboim reverts to type with a bit of crass overpedaling and digital smudging and with a few exhibitionistically overemphasized rhythmic mannerisms.

The booklet includes an informative essay, "Songs Without Words, or Great Love for Little Things," by Karl Schumann; it almost redeems the offensively fulsome tribute to Barenboim by DG's resident critic/PR man. The recording is beautiful, the surfaces a trifle noisy. H.G.

B **MESSIAEN:** *Méditations sur le mystère de la sainte trinité*. Olivier Messiaen, organ. MUSICAL HERITAGE 1797/8, \$7.00 (two discs; Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

B **MESSIAEN:** *Visions de l'amen*. Katia and Marielle Labèque, pianos. MUSICAL HERITAGE 1762, \$3.50.

The nine (three times three) *Meditations on the Mystery of the Holy Trinity* form the first major organ work by Messiaen since *Le Livre d'orgue* (1951), although a short *Verset pour la fête de la dédicace* was written in 1960. Messiaen composed the *Méditations* in 1969, but the premiere was not given until March 1972, in Washington, D.C., of all places, with Messiaen himself at the organ.

In light of the complexity of such recent orchestral compositions as *Chronochromie* and *Couleurs de la cité céleste*, not to mention an older piece such as the *Visions de l'amen* (1943) for two pianos, the *Méditations* is a surprisingly linear work episodically and separately stressing elements—Gregorian chant, birdcalls, Indian rhythms—that have become more or less constant in the composer's musical language. In the second meditation, for instance, one is aware of three basic elements—the plainchant theme, played with no embellishment or harmonization, which is unusual for Messiaen; the birdcalls; and various semicircular chords that create more or less arbitrary breaks that effectively halt any forward movement. At no point are these elements combined or developed, so that their repetitions within the movement simply affirm their presence and their underlying, nonmusical relationship with each other.

Throughout, it is almost as if Messiaen were looking back on the various building blocks of his musical technique and cataloguing them. What is new—in a way—about the *Méditations* are the extramusical pretensions, and I do mean pretensions. For the *Méditations*, Messiaen worked out what he calls a "communicable language" whereby all the letters of the alphabet have been assigned specific pitch and rhythmic values, so that the spelling out of certain words implies the formation of a theme or melodic fragment. Fortunately, in the elaborate notes that accompany this album, the composer fully admits the arbitrariness of



Olivier Messiaen
A catalogue of his techniques?

such a practice, and his intentions in devising this "communicable language" were no doubt at least partially to emphasize the chance involved in any wordly orders, whether musical themes or words (in this way, there is a definite surrealistic orientation to Messiaen's aesthetic).

Yet I cannot help but suspect a certain amount of bad faith in all this, since the words Messiaen has chosen to spell out in certain movements come from important texts of Christian theology, such as St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*. I get the feeling that Messiaen is much more convinced of the bonds existing between signifiers (words, themes) and their meanings than he lets on, and, by the time I had listened to the music and waded through the interminable verbal elaboration of the composer's personal mysticism vis-à-vis the work, I had the impression of having sat through a long and yet ultimately rather simplistic sermon.

This very simplism does have its effect, especially in the later meditations; and by closing your eyes and trying to forget the composer's preaching, you can feel the effect of some striking aesthetic parallels, such as the one existing between the organ-played bird songs echoing throughout a dark, pillared cathedral and an actual birdcall resounding in a thick forest.

Strangely, however, Messiaen's performance (on the restored Cavaillé-Coll organ of the Paris Church of the Sainte Trinité) of his own vision does not seem all that inspired. Another recording of the *Méditations* has been done by Almut Rössler as a part of a complete Messiaen organ cycle; but for the moment, it is available only in Germany, and I have not had a chance to hear it. Musical Heritage has faithfully duplicated the rather lackluster sonics of the Erato original, although with some variable hiss level and a bit of distortion. On the other hand, the surfaces are infinitely better. One warning: Although Musical Heritage has labeled the records for automatic sequence, the discs in my album followed the original Erato manual sequencing.

As for the *Visions de l'amen*, this is another of the few Messiaen works I tend to find gratifying, this time more for musical than for extramusical reasons. Of the four versions of it, this one by the Labèque sisters, although good

enough, stands third behind the ones by the Messiaens (Vega 8509) and Serkin/Takahashi (RCA ARL 1-0363), but ahead of the John Ogdon/Brenda Lucas rendition (Argo ZRG 665). R.S.B.

R **MOZART:** *Concertos for Violin and Orchestra: No. 3, in G, K. 216; No. 5, in A, K. 219*. Arthur Grumiaux, violin; London Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. PHILIPS 835 112, \$7.98 [from 900 012, 1962].

MOZART: *Concertos for Violin and Orchestra: No. 1, in B flat, K. 207; No. 3, in G, K. 216*. Pinchas Zukerman, violin; English Chamber Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim, cond. [Paul Myers, prod.] COLUMBIA M 32301, \$6.98. Tape: MT 32301, \$7.98. Quadriphonic: MQ 32301 (SQ-encoded disc), \$7.98; MAQ 32301 (Q-8 cartridge), \$7.98.

MOZART: *Concertone for Two Violins and Orchestra, in C, K. 190*. **PLEYEL:** *Sinfonia concertante for Violin, Viola, and Orchestra, in B flat, Op. 29*. Isaac Stern, violin; Pinchas Zukerman, violin and viola; English Chamber Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim, cond. [Paul Myers, prod.] COLUMBIA M 32937, \$6.98.

In their respective Mozart concerto cycles, it is somewhat surprising to find Pinchas Zukerman sounding considerably "older" than the fresh, springy, youthful Arthur Grumiaux. Zukerman gives luxuriant, slowish, even somewhat placid performances; Grumiaux has more rhythmic thrust, more resilience, more elegance, a generally tighter hold—he makes a melodic line come alive in an incomparable manner.

No doubt the contrast is due in good part to the conductors. Barenboim's sound is opulent, his tempos slow; his willingness to ease into a rubato before the start of a recapitulation is marked, his search for full sonority (as when he leans heavily on the horns in the first-movement exposition of No. 1) sometimes not quite successful. Davis is crisp, clean, more chiseled—Szell-like, but even more electric than Szell in the opening of No. 5 (with Isaac Stern on Columbia MS 6557). The Grumiaux/Davis approach does bear some resemblance to the Stern/Szell, though Stern's tone on the old Columbia recording comes through as thinner and his phrasing is sometimes more winsomely shaped—the finale of No. 5 is a case in point. But if you know the Stern/Szell, you will have an idea of what awaits you with Grumiaux/Davis.

One must assume that it was Colin Davis' temperament that spurred Grumiaux to deliver such zestful performances—among the most exciting things of his I have heard. The violin tone has a wonderful clear ring, and the spirit in a movement like the Allegro of No. 5 is nothing short of jubilant. (With Philips' belated reissue of the Grumiaux/Davis Nos. 3 and 5, their complete cycle is finally in the domestic catalogue simultaneously; Nos. 1 and 4 are on 835 136, No. 2 and the K. 364 Sinfonia concertante on 835 256. The Zukerman/Barenboim cycle is now missing only No. 2, recently recorded; Nos. 4 and 5 are on Columbia M 30055.)

The Mozart/Pleyel disc is of marginal interest, unless one is consumed with a desire to hear the only listed recording of any of the

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Pleyel sinfonie concertanti, and even then the rewards can be harvested quickly. The work is in two movements, both fast, and therefore there is no exploitation of the kind of succulent violin/viola sonorities that Mozart capitalized on in the Adagio of his own Sinfonia concertante, K. 364. The writing is pleasant, classical, routine, with the violin in the lead much of the time, modestly supported by viola sometimes in parallel thirds, sometimes dovetailing, occasionally emerging on an equal basis. Neither soloist tries to get more out of the music than Pleyel put there: the playing is proficient, nothing more. Zukerman is modest, never pushing the viola to the fore, and Stern has fleeting problems with intonation.

The Mozart concertone—a work of his seventeenth year, far less interesting than the K. 364 for violin and viola—gives prominence to a solo oboe as well as the pair of violins, and its pungent voice is a good counterbalance. There is as much emphasis on the orchestra as the soloists, however, and this is not a work one would seek out to enjoy a bountiful offering of Mozartean violin playing. Barenboim's support in both works is solid but not patrician. S.F.

MOZART: Così fan tutte.

Fiordiligi	Montserrat Caballé (s)
Dorabella	Janet Baker (ms)
Ferrando	Nicolai Gedda (t)
Guglielmo	Wladimiro Ganzarolli (bs-b)
Despina	Ileana Cotrubas (s)
Don Alfonso	Richard Van Allan (bs)

John Constable, harpsichord; Chorus and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Colin Davis, cond. [Erik Smith, prod.] PHILIPS 6707 025, \$31.92 (four discs, manual sequence).

Comparisons:

Lorengar, Berganza, Davies, Solti/London Phil. Lon. OSA 1442
L. Price, Troyanos, Shirley, Leinsdorf/New Philharmonia RCA LSC 6416

Without tempering my enthusiasm for the Solti *Così*, about which I went on at some length last October, I must accord the newcomer an equally hearty welcome, at least insofar as the work of Colin Davis and Montserrat Caballé is concerned.

Much of my description of Solti's work applies equally to Davis': "sane, beautifully balanced and shaped, free of eccentricity or vulgarity." Solti's London Philharmonic is a better orchestra than Davis' Covent Garden ensemble, and the difference shows in the fullness of the strings and in the boldness and clarity of the brasses. But the Covent Garden orchestra in turn has the considerable advantage of knowing the opera intimately from its work in the pit, and for that matter the woodwinds—beautifully shaped by Davis—hold their own quite nicely. Davis secures really outstanding ensemble playing (and singing), far better than what he got from the same orchestra in *Don Giovanni*.

Even more notable is the considerably greater authority Davis now shows in pacing the opera: there is a sense of theatrical pulse I found woefully missing in *Don Giovanni*. Of course *Così* is, as I noted in connection with the Solti recording, a much more straightforward piece than either *Don Giovanni* and *Figaro*—the conductor's job is basically to execute what Mozart has indicated fairly clearly. Still, it is refreshing to hear Davis so poised and animated after such a long (at times seemingly endless) series of tentative, even half-baked recordings.



The Guarneri Quartet—offering genuine competition with the Mozart quartets.

It's a good thing Caballé's *Aida* (Angel SCLX 3815, reviewed last month by Andrew Porter) was released before the *Così*, even though they were recorded in the opposite order: Without the evidence of her vibrant, anguished *Aida*, I don't think I would have believed her Fiordiligi. The voice has never been more ravishing or under such complete control. Gone is the haze that in recent years has made everything she's sung sound like a *Granados* song—except in some patches of recitative, where she moons deliberately and hilariously to characterize Fiordiligi's more outrageous languishing. Gone for the most part are the unceasing glottal attacks, replaced by crisp, controlled articulation. The passage-work is far cleaner and more fluent than in the days when she was still considered a Bellini-Donizetti specialist. There is both fire and pathos in her intensely musical characterization of this enormously endearing creature. For a sample, try her radiant, haunting "Per pietà," even though she and Davis don't seem to have worked out their tempo disagreement—Caballé's desire to hold back the tempo is amply justified by the way she sustains the musical line.

I wonder whether Janet Baker's *Dorabella* would have been so disappointing with a less spectacular Fiordiligi, but disappointing it remains—through no fault of Caballé. In her first full-length recorded exposure in a regular-repertoire role, it becomes clear that Baker's voice doesn't really fill the operatic framework. She is of course a wonderful artist, but the demands of the music give her a great deal more trouble than I would have expected; for the first time I can recall, she scoops repeatedly, which contrasts painfully with Caballé's dead-center attacks. Even when the notes are adequately realized, her delivery is so neutral as to sound anonymous. *Dorabella* has simply escaped her, and pretty though much of her work is I have to rate it below that of Berganza, Troyanos, Ludwig, Merriman, and even Minton.

In the ensembles, though, Baker holds her own very capably, and that dichotomy applies to the rest of the cast as well. Nicolai Gedda, for example, is in middling good voice (for these days), and his musical intentions are frequently quite good. I like, for example, what he tries to do with "Ah! lo veggio," in which he aims for a feel of surging sweep; the voice, alas, lags all too conspicuously behind the in-

tenion—he just can't deliver what he wants to.

Both lower male voices are on the gruff, nondescript side, but Wladimiro Ganzarolli deserves credit for making the most of his limited vocal resources. I suspect that the very young Richard Van Allan is trying to sound "old" to match the character; possibly he merely finds the tessitura too high—this is baritone, not bass, country. In any event, some very nice phrases alternate with far more that are huffed rather than sung.

Ileana Cotrubas has more voice than many Despinas one encounters, but that simply indicates that the part is often seriously undercast. Surmounting the part's substantial technical hurdles isn't enough—if the singer hasn't enough voice and imagination to make something of the character (and certainly Mozart and Da Ponte have provided plenty of opportunities), Despina can become awfully tedious. Cotrubas sings well, but it's all in one tone color and it's all delivered fairly mechanically. For a really satisfactory Despina, one has to go back to Lisa Otto on the deleted Karajan/Angel mono set, but Lucia Popp has the right idea and might have been more effective still with a livelier conductor than Klemperer.

I don't want to overstress the cast's individual difficulties, since the performance has such a wonderful sense of life, especially in the ensembles. But we are dealing with some pretty stiff competition, and Davis' lovers are manifestly weaker than Solti's imposing lineup of Lorengar, Berganza, Davies, and Krause. Leinsdorf's cast too is stronger, and his often underrated recording still seems to me a serious contender.

Now that we have three note-complete recordings, I would urge strongly that your first *Così* be chosen from this group, fine as many of the other recordings are. I simply don't see any justification for the cuts that were, until recently, accepted virtually without question. On the plus side for the new Philips set is a really superb recording job—everything clear and natural. By comparison I am now aware of some acoustical gimmickry and added resonance in the Solti set, but it is hardly obtrusive. Much as I treasure Caballé's Fiordiligi, I would stick with Solti on the strength of his cast. K.F.

MOZART: Quartets for Strings: No. 14, in G,

K. 387; No. 15, in D minor, K. 421. Guarneri Quartet. [Max Wilcox, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0760, \$6.98.

MOZART: Quartets for Strings: No. 16, in E flat, K. 428; No. 17, in B flat, K. 458 (*Hunt*). Guarneri Quartet. [Max Wilcox, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0762, \$6.98.

MOZART: Quartets for Strings: No. 19, in C, K. 465 (*Dissonant*); No. 22, in B flat, K. 589. Tokyo Quartet. [Cord Garben, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 468, \$7.98.

The six quartets Mozart dedicated to Haydn have received notable recordings in the past, including the currently available budget-priced sets by the Budapest (*Odyssey Y3 31242, mono*) and the Hungarian (*Vox SVBX 589*). The Guarneri, however, will provide genuine musical competition once the third record of its series is released: the Tokyo Quartet, here heard in the last of the *Haydn* group and one of the later *Prussian* quartets, could do the same if it proceeds further along these lines.

For depth of content and richness of invention, these Mozart quartets are all but unsurpassed in the chamber-music literature, although the *Prussian* quartets are often valued less than the earlier *Haydn* series. The artists are thus dealing with what Artur Schnabel used to call "music better than it ever can be played," and no performance is likely to be so fine as to preclude another in which a change of perspective brings a change of emphasis and—seemingly—content. The playing of the Tokyo Quartet is lighter, cooler, more classical than that of the Guarneri, which in contrast is warmer, more deeply colored, more Romantic. The recording techniques emphasize this difference. But in both cases Mozart is well served: taste, insight, and skill dominate both groups. All three of these records are very much worth acquiring and raise hopes for further such releases from the same sources.

R.C.M.

MOZART: Symphonies: No. 25, in G minor, K. 183; No. 40, in G minor, K. 550. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Istvan Kertész, cond. [Christopher Raeburn, prod.] LONDON CS 6831, \$6.98

In this second volume of "My Favorite Mozart," an oddly inept title for what are in effect memorial albums for a gifted young conductor (I reviewed Vol. 1, Symphonies Nos. 29 and 35, in October), we are given the two existing Mozart symphonies in the minor mode, the "little" G minor of 1773-74 and the great work in the same key from his final years. It is an imaginative coupling (the "little" G minor is, I think, a much-neglected work), and the performances have the suave, lyric quality of the Vienna Philharmonic under the direction of a musician who respects its traditions and lets it play as its heart dictates.

The result is high-calorie Mozart, less for musicologists than for those who feel these works need the tonal warmth and expressive underlining that go beyond any performance practices of the composer's day. The recorded sound is ripe and full with a hefty string tone that, especially in the earlier work, gives the winds more competition than they deserve. For my taste, a chamber-sized ensemble is preferable here, but not everyone will agree—especially in Vienna.

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Vienna ensemble and the beauty of its playing, combined with the sensitive variations in nuance it brings to each phrase, produce something of a summation of a style and an attitude. This is Viennese Mozart in *excelsis*, homage to the composer and the conductor, and a poignant reminder that both were lost to music too soon.

R.C.M.

PLEVEL: Sinfonia concertante in B flat, Op. 29—See Mozart: Concertos for Violin and Orchestra.

RACHMANINOFF: Pieces (5), Op. 3; Preludes (10), Op. 23. Ruth Laredo, piano. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] COLUMBIA M 32938, \$6.98.

Miss Laredo's new association with Columbia begins with this disc, the initial offering in a complete traversal of the Rachmaninoff piano works. Columbia has shrewdly coupled the often-heard preludes with the less frequently heard Op. 3 pieces; Miss Laredo plays well, but she could hardly be expected to cross swords successfully with a titan like Richter, whose incredible collection of thirteen preludes is on Melodiya/Angel SR 40235.

Miss Laredo's lyrical impulses, the tidiness of her fingerwork, her honest, unpretentious phrasing are clear assets in this often drooled-over repertoire. Less commendable are an occasional vehemence that verges on tonal brittleness and the habit of sometimes adhering too rigidly to a rigorously set basic tempo. These are, of course, traits of Rudolf Serkin, one of her mentors, but they sound much better in Brahms's Op. 119 or in Beethoven's *Dia-*

belli Variations than in Rachmaninoff's confectionary tone-spinning.

The Op. 3 pieces fare particularly well here. Miss Laredo's freshness of feeling stands her in excellent stead and augurs well for the *Correlli* Variations, the etudes tableaux, and the two sprawling sonatas.

Columbia's bravura sound makes Miss Laredo sound like a bigger, more scintillant player than did Connoisseur Society's more lyrically inclined mike placement. H.G.

SCARLATTI, D.: Stabat Mater. A. SCARLATTI: O magnum mysterium; Domine, refugium factus es nobis. Charles Spinks, organ; Schutz Choir of London, Roger Norrington, cond. [Michael Bremner, prod.] ARGO ZRG 768, \$6.98.

Verdi, when asked his opinion of *Tristan und Isolde*, expressed great admiration but added that this music is not for Italians because "we are descendants of Palestrina." The composer of "*La donna è mobile*" a descendant of Palestrina? Well, listen to this recording, and you will see the meaning of this cryptic statement.

Here we have Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725), a Sicilian active in Rome, Venice, and Naples, famous as the composer of over a hundred operas that determined the course of musical history for a century to come. His son, Domenico (1685-1757), was the composer of half a thousand "sonatas"—scintillating, witty, ironic, bracing, the first truly modern works for keyboard. But the recording under consideration offers none of this; it presents beautifully sung sacred choral

music in a polyphonic style as far removed from the two Scarlattis' known style of composition as it could be. We know very little about Domenico's vocal music, but we should have realized that one who at the age of thirty was made the successor of the highly regarded Tommaso Baj as master of the papal chapel must have been active in church music. Indeed, it was not until his forties, and after his removal to Madrid, that Domenico embarked upon the career for which we know him.

In the rich stylistic heritage of the Scarlattis, the *stile antico* (or *alla Palestrina*) plays an important part. Most of Alessandro's sixteen extant Masses and Domenico's motets are in this style, which means pure vocal polyphony accompanied only by a basso continuo, as in Bach's motets. Now this is not archaic Palestrinian imitation like so many of the nineteenth-century Caecilian compositions, but baroque music to the core, passionate, dramatic, and profoundly expressive. Verdi was right, for the spirit of what is understood in invoking the name of Palestrina—choral euphony and beautiful part writing—is gloriously present.

Domenico's *Stabat Mater*, for double chorus of five parts each, is a large work setting to music Jacopone da Todi's bittersweet poem of *amor sanctus*—holy love. The expressive range of the music is vast, from trembling piety and gentle compassion to the jubilant fugue that crowns the work in the Alleluia. The constant entry and withdrawal of the ten parts weaves a magnificent tapestry of dazzling vocal color.

The first of Alessandro's motets, *O magnum mysterium*, is also for double choir, eight parts. It is more Palestrinian than his son's *Stabat Mater*; each of the choirs is treated as an entity, but the gossamer part writing unifies them transparently, lending the work an ineffable grace. The other motet, for five parts, is altogether tonal, glowing, and singularly reminiscent of Handel.

The performances are outstanding. Perhaps the continuo cello and bass impinge a little on the choral basses in the *Stabat* (though the organ is commendably discreet), and in a very few spots, as in the Alleluia, there are some accents that I doubt are indicated in the score. But on the whole this is choral singing at its best, beautifully balanced and exquisitely in tune. The sound is very good, except in the fortes where the choral treble is a bit shrill. It is too bad that this *morbus choralis* should affect such a fine performance; could not the versatile engineers get together and find a serum that would cure the disease forever? P.H.L.

STRAUSS, R.: Don Quixote, Op. 35; Der Rosenkavalier: Waltzes (arr. Kempe). Paul Tortelier, cello; Max Rostal, viola (both in Op. 35); Staatskapelle Dresden, Rudolf Kempe, cond. [David Mottley, prod.] ANGEL S 37046, \$6.98.

Comparison: Fournier, Szell/Cleveland Odys. Y 32224

There is a double appeal here: one as the first American representation of Kempe's extensive new series of the Strauss orchestral works with the great Dresden orchestra, which has been winning lively praise abroad; another as a technologically updated replacement for the long-popular Tortelier/Kempe *Don Quixote* (with a different violist, Giusto Cappone, and orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic), which re-



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mains in print on Seraphim S 60122.

Sonically, the sumptuous warmth and brilliant vividness of the new version outdo all earlier ones. Interpretively, however, Tortelier, able as he is, sometimes comes dangerously close to sentimentality and never—at least for me—matches the humor and nobility of Fournier in the 1961 Szell/Cleveland version, now on Odyssey. Nor does even Kempe himself, one of the most authoritative Straussians around since the death of Clemens Krauss, quite match Szell's superbly dramatic eloquence. Nevertheless, this *Don Quixote* is a fine one, and in any case the present disc is well worth having if only for its coupling: the conductor's own arrangement of the Act I and II waltzes from *Der Rosenkavalier*, played and recorded with seductive sweep and kaleidoscopic brilliance. R.D.D.

STRAUSS, R.: Four Last Songs; Tod und Verklärung, Op. 24. Gundula Janowitz, soprano (in the songs); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. [Hans Hirsch and Hans Weber, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 368, \$7.98.

STRAUSS, R.: Four Last Songs; Operatic Excerpts. Leontyne Price, soprano; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. [Richard Mohr, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0333, \$6.98.

Operatic excerpts: Guntram: Fass' ich sie bang. Der Rosenkavalier: Da geht er hin. Die Frau ohne Schatten: Awakening Scene (with Patricia Clark, soprano; Ambrosian Opera Chorus).

Richard Strauss brought his long, productive career to a close with four songs for soprano and orchestra. The *Four Last Songs*, however, are not in any formal sense a song cycle. Strauss, who was at work on a fifth song at the time of his death, conceived of this material only in vague terms as a group and never settled such matters as the sequence of numbers. At the posthumous world premiere in 1950—Wilhelm Furtwängler conducted the Philharmonia Orchestra and the soloist was Kirsten Flagstad—the order was "*Beim Schlafengehen*," "*September*," "*Frühling*," "*Im Abendrot*." The more satisfactory order usually heard today ("*Frühling*," "*September*," "*Beim Schlafengehen*," "*Im Abendrot*," as on both records under review) was subsequently devised by Ernest Roth. Strauss himself seems to have thought of the Eichendorff poem, "*Im Abendrot*," as something quite separate from the three by Hesse. Though it was the first to be composed, he recognized its valedictory nature and, from the initial performance on, it has always been placed last.

In Roth's sequence the group has remarkable cohesion. The songs make a lyrical progression from joy at awakening spring to twilight resignation before the approach of death. A mood of autumnal melancholy, of ripeness and fulfillment, pervades the group. The final vision of harmony and repose at the conclusion of "*Im Abendrot*" gathers up and resolves the emotions expressed by the preceding songs. As the couple, hand in hand, grow weary of wandering, they feel the solemn presence of death in the sunset and are greeted by the Transfiguration theme from the composer's own *Tod und Verklärung*, followed by the sound of larks trilling in the air above them.

This is music of ineffable, mysterious beauty, the fruit of a lifetime's passion for or-

chestral color and the soprano voice. Until now none of the commercial recordings has been entirely worthy of the music—though the long-deleted Böhm/Della Casa version came close. (It is currently available in England on Ace of Clubs ACL 318, coupled with the Ferrer/Walter Mahler Rückert songs.) The Szell/Schwarzkopf performance (Angel S 36347) is best avoided, the conductor being prosaic and the soloist being both unenrichably mannered and technically weak.

The new recording by Karajan and Janowitz therefore supplies what for me is a long-felt need. Karajan's present-day rhapsodic manner suits this introspective music to perfection. His textures are prodigiously smooth and transparent. Every orchestral strand is discernible, yet part of a richly blended whole. For the first time on records certain details—like the celesta in the second half of "*Beim Schlafengehen*"—make their proper, surprising effect. The Berlin Philharmonic plays, moreover, with virtuosity and lambent beauty of tone.

Gundula Janowitz shares in this success. Technically she is splendid. The high-lying melisma is smooth and unforced, the low notes are secure, the long phrases are easily encompassed. And on this occasion her lack of vibrato gives a wholly appropriate detachment to her interpretation. She sounds purged of human cares, radiant with confidence. The instrumental quality of her voice, in fact, suits Karajan's manner perfectly. Together they create a mood of exalted lyricism.

The comparison with Leinsdorf and Price is damaging to the latter pair. After Karajan Leinsdorf is unsubtle, even clumsy. Nearly all the details that contribute so much to the success of Karajan's reading are obliterated by what seems like a fundamental insensitivity to poetry. Instead of a web of translucent sound, Leinsdorf proffers a series of thick orchestral smudges. In any case, the New Philharmonia, though a good orchestra, cannot compare with the Berlin Philharmonic in sheer mellifluousness.

Leontyne Price, too, is not at home in this music. Her breathy, plangent tone fails to create the right spiritual ambience, and her technique is often strained by Strauss's demands. Notwithstanding some beautiful top notes, Price's familiar weakness in the middle and lower registers militates against success. Like her overcautious German, nothing here sounds quite natural enough. The same is true of the operatic numbers on the reverse side, especially the *Rosenkavalier* monologue, which in the last resort is little more than a series of cautiously enunciated syllables. The *Guntram* aria, a passionate Wagnerian outburst, suits her best and is, in addition, the first vocal music from this opera to enter the commercial catalogue.

As for Karajan's reverse side, it is fascinating to have the youthful *Tod und Verklärung* on the same record as the ripe fruits of his old age—especially since the sixty-year compositional span is bridged by the composer's self-quotation. Karajan's performance of the tone poem has all the qualities of his *Last Songs*, and the sheer sound of the orchestra in this music is awesome. However, in this case I would prefer more musculature, a slightly leaner approach, though at the same time I would be loath to dispense with very much of Karajan's ravishment.

Both discs come with texts and translations. D.S.H.

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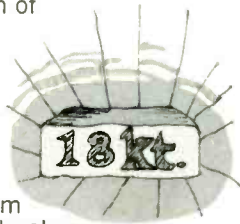
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TCHAIKOVSKY: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D, Op. 35. **SAINT-SAËNS:** Introduction and Rondo capriccioso, Op. 28. Eugene Fodor, violin; New Philharmonia, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. [John Pfeiffer, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-0781, \$6.98. Tape: ARK 1-0781, \$7.95; ARS 1-0781, \$7.95. Quadriphonic: ARD 1-0781 (Quadradisc), \$7.98; ART 1-0781 (Q-8 cartridge), \$7.95.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D, Op. 35. **BRUCH:** Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 1, in G minor, Op. 26. Mayumi Fujikawa, violin; Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Edo de Waart, cond. PHILIPS 6500 708, \$7.98.

Appropriately enough, the Tchaikovsky concerto provides a comparison between two second-place winners of the Tchaikovsky competition—Mayumi Fujikawa having taken that prize in 1970, Fodor in 1974. If you expect birds of a feather, you will be surprised to find them quite different.

Fujikawa's approach—abetted by her conductor and orchestra—is one of understatement, a somewhat soft but beautifully wrought lyricism, markedly patrician and conveying a sense of pure concentration. The music's contours are slightly flattened: No big thing is made of arriving at harmonic destinations, and De Waart's orchestral dynamic contrasts are more modest than Leinsdorf's. Fodor, without being extreme about it, goes in for more virtuosic drive and sometimes, in maintaining his momentum toward the next important note in a phrase, tends to neglect some of the niceties along the way. His is a more overtly exciting performance, and Leinsdorf supports him in this concept, giving plenty of orchestral bite in the tutti passages, some deferential ritards before the soloist's entrances, and an altogether mighty attack at the start of the finale. In the slow movement, Leinsdorf makes a good bit more of the wind parts than De Waart does, and with fine effect.

If comparisons are to be made, Fodor lines up more or less with Zukerman (with Dorati on Columbia MS 7313), while Fujikawa, though a shade more reticent, shares a certain similarity of outlook with Kyung-Wha Chung (with Previn on London CS 6710), another elegant performer.

Fodor's filler, the Saint-Saëns *Introduction and Rondo capriccioso*, is turned out with great panache, not as insinuating in color as some performances, but full of resilient rhythmic thrust; the violinist has an innate ability to lean into a phrase that is wonderfully suited to this music. Miss Fujikawa maintains her characteristic patrician bearing in the Bruch concerto. Once again, she does not exhibit the intensity of Perlman (with Previn on Angel S 36963), for example, but her performance is so well scaled on its own terms that what she does seems just right. Not quite the same can be said for De Waart, who often soft-pedals important counterlines in the orchestra and thereby slights certain aspects of the solo-orchestral relationship. S.F.

TCHAIKOVSKY: The Nutcracker; The Sleeping Beauty. For a feature review, see page 71.

VIVALDI: Violin Concertos. Arthur Grumiaux, violin; Staatskapelle Dresden members, Vit-

torio Negri, cond. PHILIPS 6500 690, \$7.98. Concertos: in A minor, Op. 9, No. 5; in E minor, Op. 11, No. 2 (*Il Favorito*); in G minor, Op. 12, No. 1; in E, P. 246 (*L'Amoroso*).

You would have to search far to find a more civilized set of Vivaldi performances. Grumiaux's sweet-toned playing and his non-idiosyncratic view of the music combine to create poised, urbane renditions that strive after no special effects and avoid exaggerations. The fiddle work is well-nigh perfect, the dynamics well graded, the phrases well shaped, the rhythm pungent where it should be. Allegros are taken at a sensible pace, and the orchestral work, a little less highly inflected than in some versions, serves the soloist well.

The selection of works, too, is interesting, for the Op. 11 contains a remarkable variety of ideas even by Vivaldi's standards, and *L'Amoroso's* first movement boasts a particularly sinuous solo line. I found the Op. 12 fairly run-of-the-mill, but Grumiaux makes all these works worth listening to. S.F.

B WELLESZ: Octet. **BADINGS:** Octet. VIENNA Octet. LONDON STEREO TREASURY STS 15243, \$3.49.

Strange that a composer as distinguished as Egon Wellesz should be represented in American record catalogues with nothing more than this one work, but this one is so beautiful it almost compensates for the neglect of the rest of the composer's music.

The octet, for five strings plus clarinet, bassoon, and horn, has a generally Brahmsian ring to it, but its conservative character is ennobled by a musically aristocratic pen. Wellesz is the last of the gentleman composers. I don't mean to suggest that he is a stuffily academic composer; he is one of those rare conservatives who have something passionately important to say within a generally traditional framework, and the conservatism of his idiom fades in importance compared to the expressive eloquence of his handling.

On the other hand, the Badings octet, for the same combination of instruments, is of interest primarily for its clever handling of an essentially academic problem: the construction of an entire three-movement work on a single theme. The scherzo is particularly zestful and well shaped.

Performances throughout are magnificent. If those eight members of the Vienna Philharmonic did nothing but play the C major scale for thirty minutes, it would be worth the hearing. Recordings are first-class, too. A.F.

recitals and miscellany

AFTER THE BALL. For a feature review, see page 68.

CATHY BERBERIAN AT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL. For a feature review, see page 68.

MUSIC FOR LUTE: Vol. I, England. Konrad Ragossnig, lute. [Gerd Ploebusch, prod.] ARCHIV 2533 157, \$7.98.

MY LUTE AWAKE! Anthony Rooley and James Tyler, lutes. OISEAU-LYRE SOL 336, \$6.98.

The Archiv recital by Konrad Ragossnig is the first release in a series of six discs to be devoted to European lute music of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Side 1 is given over entirely to John Dowland; Side 2 includes a goodly portion of Francis Cutting and a smattering of Daniel Batchelar, Baruch Bulman, Thomas Morley, Robert Johnson, Anthony Holborne, and Anon. They make an engaging assortment, and the pieces are wisely assembled with an ear to variety.

It will come as a surprise to nobody that Dowland remains perhaps the most consistently impressive of these Elizabethan gentlemen. The expressive power of *Forlorne Hope Fancy*, with its unsettling, grim descending chromatic bass line, is quite a shocker in the context of the more usual dance pieces typical of the era, and the perennial *Semper Dowland*, *Semper Dolens* (what a key to the man's character!) is as serious a piece of writing as one would expect in the literature of a more "serious" instrument. There are lighter moments, of course, as *My Lady Hundson's Puffe* and *Mrs. Winter's Jump* testify. Daniel Batchelar's *Mounsiers Almaine* and the anonymous *Sir John Smith His Almaine* are among the quick-stepping choices on Side 2; pavans by Bulman and Morley are characteristically minor-mode and melancholy.

Ragossnig's performances may not be to everybody's taste: He is something of a Prussian. His tone is hard (so is the close-up recorded sound), his rhythm no-nonsense. His ornamentation seldom displays the charming throwaway quality of Julian Bream's but instead is tapped out with the brisk purposefulness of a good IBM typewriter. Accents are spit forth with bulletlike accuracy, and color is largely a matter of sharp contrasts with only rare gradations between hard and mellow. Not for Ragossnig the beguiling ease and deceptive geniality of Bream: his mind is just as analytical, but unlike Bream he lets the steel framework of his structures glitter through the velvet. There is, in fact, not much velvet to begin with. This quality lends an unusual monumentality to some of the pieces and challenges the listener to sit up and take note.

Anthony Rooley and James Tyler, on the other hand, set out good-humoredly to seduce, and they do so. They are more casual, less probing (a comparison of Cutting's *Greensleeves* on both discs makes the point), and they tend accordingly to move at a faster pace—their *Semper Dowland*, *Semper Dolens* is perhaps twice as fast as either Ragossnig's or Bream's. Rhythms are sprightly and deft, and pieces like *Jigge* and *A merry moode* (both anon.) radiate vitality, though they might have benefited from a more highly developed sense of coloration.

A considerable amount of editing has gone into this collection, which often involves "reconstruction" of the second lute part or outright arranging for two lutes. It all works well, and this recital, too, is skillfully gauged for variety in pace and spirit. S.F.

DAVID MUNROW AND NEVILLE MARRINER: Works for Recorder, Strings, and Continuo. David Munrow, recorders; Christopher Hogwood, harpsichord; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond.

[Christopher Bishop, prod.] ANGEL S 37019, \$6.98.

TELEMANN: Suite for Alto Recorder, in A minor. **HANDEL:** Concerto for Alto Recorder, in B flat (arr. Hogwood, from Concerto for Organ, Op. 4, No. 6). **SAMMARTINI:** Concerto for Soprano Recorder, in F.

In this country David Munrow is known most widely through his musical scores for the originally BBC TV series "The Six Wives of Henry VIII" and "Elizabeth R.," but to a smaller audience of old-music specialists he is most highly esteemed for his recorded programs with the Early Music Consort of London, which he founded around 1967. In Great Britain, he is also famed as a recorder soloist and for a successful Radio-3 series aptly entitled "Pied Piper." In short, he's something of a renaissance man as well as a Renaissance-

and baroque-era musical exponent—an astonishing career for anyone as young as Munrow appears to be in the present disc-jacket photograph. In any case, American listeners already impressed by his composing, arranging, and conducting talents must now be flabbergasted by his scintillating executant virtuosity and tickled pink by the sassy wit that galvanizes its liveliest moments, particularly those starring the larkly twittering of the soprano recorder.

The music Munrow plays in infectiously zestful collaboration with Marriner's fine strings-and-continuo ensemble is mostly familiar (at least to baroque-era connoisseurs), but it is not often heard in these forms. The Telemann suite has been best known in the past featuring a flute (*flauto traverso*) rather



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than the *flauto* (alto recorder) the composer specified. There have been earlier recorder versions of both this magnificent suite and Giuseppe Sammartini's inexhaustibly high-spirited concerto for the higher-pitched soprano instrument—most notably by the European specialist Frans Brüggen with Harmoncourt's all-ancient-instruments Concentus Musicus ensemble for Telefunken, which I regret I haven't been able to hear for comparison purposes. But fine as I'm sure they are, I doubt that they can radiate as much interpretive personality and sheer *joie de vivre* as the vivid recordings of the delectable Munrow/Marriner performances.

Yet what's most novel, and perhaps controversial, here is the (musically only) familiar Handel concerto. It is an arrangement (by Christopher Hogwood, who doubles throughout as the discreet continuo-harpsichordist) of the work designated in the autograph manuscript as "*per la Harpa*," but which is usually considered to star, along with its Op. 4 companions, the organ. Since Hogwood retains the original orchestral parts intact, one doesn't necessarily have to agree with his plausible jacket-annotation argument in order to accept the alto-recorder adaptation on its own engaging and decidedly Handelian merits. Musically right or wrong, it's a joy to hear—far more so, for me at least, than any recorded organ or harp version I've heard. R.D.D.

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI: Recital. Luciano Pavarotti, tenor; Orchestra of the Teatro Comunale di Bologna, Richard Bonyngue, cond. LONDON OS 26391, \$6.98.

BONONCINI: Griselda. Per la gloria d'adoravi. **HANDEL:** Atlantida. Care selve. **A. SCARLATTI:** Già il sole dal Gange. **BELLINI:** Ma rendi pur contento. Dolente imagine. Malinconia, ninfa gentile. Vanne, o rosa fortunata: Bella Nice. **TOSTI:** La Serenata: Luna d'estate. Malia; Non t'amo più. **RESPIGI:** Nevicata; Ploggia; Nebbie. **ROSSINI:** La Danza. (All arr. Douglas Gamley)

In March 1974, Luciano Pavarotti gave a concert in Avery Fisher Hall, New York, that—especially in the second half, when the voice had settled down—was immensely satisfying, the highlights being the Respighi songs included on the present recital and a Tosti group different from those heard here.

Unless memory plays me false, Pavarotti was in better shape last March than when he made this recording. Only rarely does he sound completely at ease. "*Care selve*" is nicely enough done, yet the poise and technical mastery without which this ravishing music

cannot be fully realized are simply not to be found. A comparison with John McCormack's version is sobering indeed. Pavarotti's beautiful voice, with its thrilling upper register, seems constrained by caution.

One catches a glimpse of his spontaneity in the wonderfully assured flicks up to high A in Rossini's "*La Danza*," but most of the time the tenor leaves an impression of incipient nervousness, the remainder of the Rossini song being less high-spirited than strenuous. Throughout the recital he shows a regrettable tendency to aspirate difficult passages. He ends "*Dolente imagine*," for example, with "*l'antico hardor*." Some of the high notes cause him trouble: The pair of Fs that he takes pianissimo in the Bononcini aria lack substance.

One finds, too, some inattention to detail on Pavarotti's part: not enough variation in the dynamics of Tosti's "*La Serenata*"; singing through the eighth-note rests at the beginning of "*Ma rendi pur contento*"; raising the pitch of the penultimate note of "*Nebbie*."

Another cause for dissatisfaction is the substitution of the original accompaniments in favor of arrangements by the same Douglas Gamley whose handiwork recently went a long way to smothering the charm of Joan Sutherland's "*Songs My Mother Taught Me*." The overblown Mantovani-like accompaniment of "*La Serenata*," with its astonishing glissandos and flourishes, is possibly a factor in Pavarotti's overassertive manner. "*Ploggia*," which attempts to describe rain and awakening nature, elicits from Gamley a veritable orchestral tone poem as background. These are merely the most egregious examples of Gamley's vulgarity.

What is to be deplored in general is the choice of orchestral accompaniment for the Bellini, Tosti, and Respighi songs, whose very charm lies in their intimacy. Perhaps a simple piano might have drawn more delicacy from Pavarotti in pieces like "*Malinconia, ninfa gentile*" and "*Bella Nice*," which now are delivered flat-out.

No review of this recital, however pejorative, should fail to applaud the choice of material. The Respighi songs, in particular, are superb evocations of mood and scene.

I have not seen the finished package, but London promises texts and translations.

D.S.H.

JENNIE TOUREL: Tribute. For a feature review, see page 68.

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Belt, rim, or direct drive?

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In direct-drive systems, the motor rotates at record speed and drives the platter directly, without need for intermediate coupling. The result is a somewhat quieter and smoother platter rotation than is achieved with any



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The rim-drive Dual 1229Q. Fully automatic plus multi-play. \$259.95, less base and dust cover.



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other system. But direct drive motors require a much more expensive technology.

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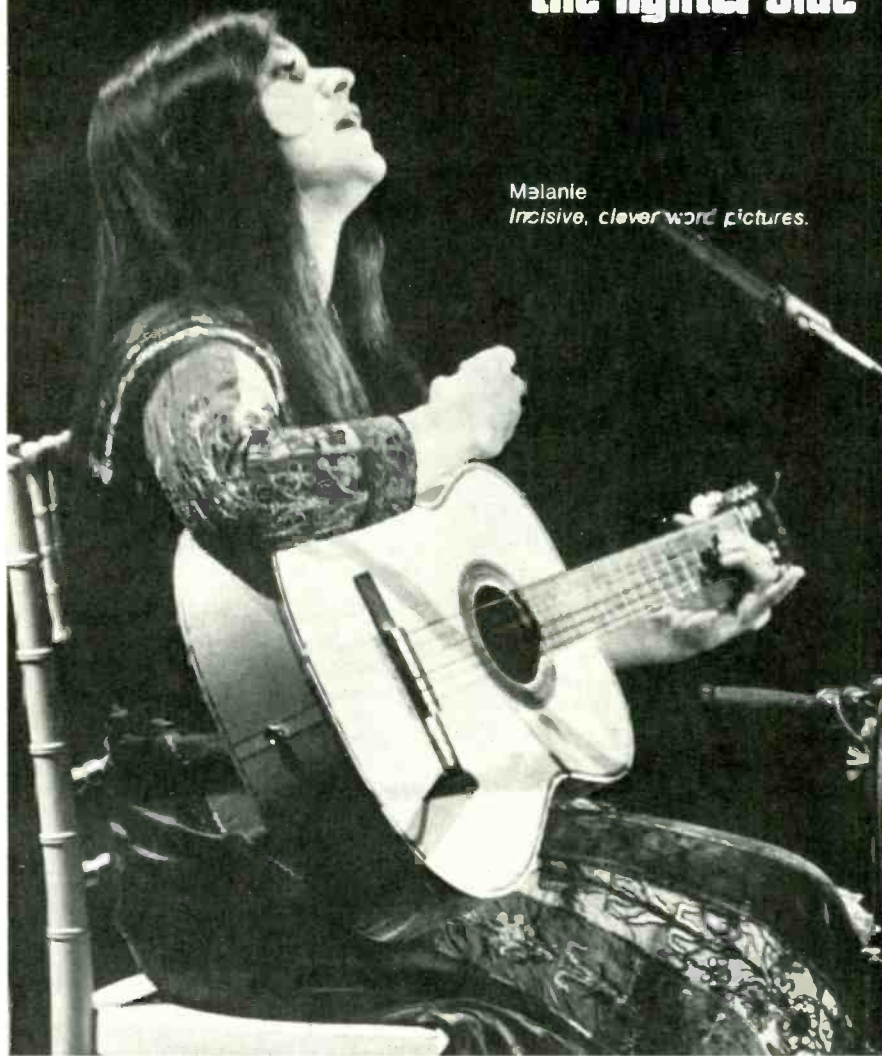
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the fighter side



Melanie
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Explanation of symbols

* exceptional recording

Recorded tape:

- Open Reel
- 8-Track Cartridge
- Cassette

* **MELANIE:** *As I See It Now.* Melanie Sara, vocals and guitar; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Yankee Man; Record Machine; Eyes of Man; Stars Up There; Don't Think Twice, It's All Right.* [Peter Schekeryk, prod.] NEIGHBORHOOD NB 3000, \$6.98.

This recording is Melanie's first since she, her husband/producer Peter Schekeryk, and their record label Neighborhood departed Paramount in favor of a distribution arrangement with Clive Davis' Arista Records. The record is a good one—though I don't mean to suggest that Melanie has ever made a bad one.

The album contains nine Melanie originals and two standards, the Gus Kahn/Walter Donaldson "Yes Sir, That's My Baby" and Bob Dylan's "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right." These two are handled appropriately, with the Dylan tune standing out. Melanie has always been the best female interpreter of Dylan. Her "Don't Think Twice" is quiet, thoughtful, and innovative.

Best by far are the original songs. "You're Not a Bad Ghost, Just an Old Song" is pleasant, up-tempo; "Sweet Misery" is a fine country tune. "Yankee Man," which opens the disc, is a superb love song, one that well might become a standard. "Record Machine" is a clever ballad wherein the singer dreams idly of

how people will remember her in years to come. "As I See It Now" is a magnificent, dramatic song about hope and striving sometimes beyond hope.

As a lyricist, Melanie has done well with her habit of making observations without drawing conclusions. She draws incisive and clever word pictures, then leaves it to the listener to add morals and meanings. M.J.

DON McLEAN: *Homeless Brother.* Don McLean, vocals, guitar, and banjo; rhythm, keyboards, horns, strings, and vocal accompaniment. *Winter Has Me in Its Grip; LaLa Love You; Homeless Brother;* eight more. [Joel Dorn, prod.] UNITED ARTISTS LA 315G, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CA 315H, \$7.98; ● EA 315H, \$7.98.

After a long hiatus—more than a year—Don McLean is back. The composer/performer has not only returned, but returned with his best LP to date.

Produced by Joel Dorn (the man who brought us Roberta Flack, among other major recording achievements), "Homeless Brother" presents eleven tracks, each given an understated, carefully wrought musical setting. At the center of it stands the sweet-voiced McLean, spinning out a new set of cotton-candy songs. He sings about the joys of winter, true love, the hideous life and death of a hobo named Andrew McCrew, and other equally sentimental subjects. Most of his songs are treacle; McLean is one of the world's most ardent sentimentalists. Dorn, however, has thrown him a sponge. The dry wit of the production job makes these soap-opera lyrics almost palatable.

McLean delivers superlative performances of the golden-oldie "Crying in the Chapel" and the lovely George Harrison song "Sunshine Life for Me." He has also written a jolly number, "Wonderful Baby," which would be perfect for the Chordettes or the McGuire Sisters.

Huge chunks of "Homeless Brother" are delightful. H.E.

* **JONI MITCHELL AND THE L.A. EXPRESS:** *Miles of Aisles.* Joni Mitchell, vocals, piano, guitar, and dulcimer; Tom Scott, woodwinds and reeds; Max Bennett, bass; John Guerin, drums and percussion; Robben Ford, electric guitar; Larry Nash, piano. *You Turn Me On I'm a Radio; Big Yellow Taxi; Rainy Night House;* fifteen more. ASYLUM AB 202, \$11.98 (two discs). Tape: ●● AC5 202, \$12.98; ● AT8 202, \$12.98.

Recorded primarily in Los Angeles' Universal Amphitheatre, this two-record set is an ideal representation of a delight-filled evening with Joni Mitchell. The composer/performer has never been in better voice: her high soprano ranges glowingly over eighteen of her own songs—two of them debuts—and each is given a vocal treatment that is as gentle and caressing as it is rich.

Backed by the L.A. Express, Joni takes full advantage of the group's subtle musicianship and supplies some striking vocalise to complement the virtuoso woodwinds and reeds playing of the leader, Tom Scott. Each of the Scott musical settings gleams with perfection.

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Joni Mitchell—a captivating listening experience.

As for the tunes, Joni sings her "greatest hits." They include "Woodstock," "A Case of You," "Blue," "Circle Game," "All I Want," and "Both Sides Now." A distinctive body of work, the Mitchell catalogue has not dated, and these selections are if anything even more capable of evoking a deep-seated emotional response. Of course, some of these items are more like bad prose than expert song-writing. The most banal of them is usually accompanied by a striking lack of melody. And Mitchell's intellectual content does on occasion seem better suited for a junior-high-school recess than a meeting of adult minds. But for the most part, Joni Mitchell is a distinguished popular artist, and "Miles of Aisles" is a captivating listening experience. H.E.

CASHMAN & WEST: Lifesong. Tommy Cashman and Jerry West, guitars and vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Rock Me to Your Music; Maury; The Dutchman; New York Woman; Tuna Fish Song; Three Stones from the Sun*, four more. [Steve Barri, Terry Cashman, and Tommy West, prod.] ABC DUNHILL DSD 50179, \$6.98. Tape: ● H 8023-50179, \$7.95.

Cashman & West are old pros in commercial folk music, having had their own semi-successful trio, Cashman, Pistilli, & West, plus having produced the recordings of the late Jim Croce. "Lifesong" is their newest effort, and it's a good one.

Quiet folk ballads, upbeat good-time songs, and moderately hard rock are treated with respect. Best is their reading of Mike Smith's superb ballad "The Dutchman," but Cashman & West's own "Three Stones from the Sun" is also of much note. "Tuna Fish Song" is an absolute delight, being about a man in love with tuna sandwiches.

A few of the ballads become predictable lyrically, with characters who are always searching for something or always watching "the sun rise in her eyes." But this is a minor fault. In all, "Lifesong" is worth owning. M.J.

EDDIE KENDRICKS: For You. Eddie Kendricks, vocals; Leonard Caston, Jimmie Has-

kell, Sanford Shire, Jerry Long, and Greg Poree, arr. *Please Don't Go Away; One Tear; Time in a Bottle*, five more. [Frank Wilson and Leonard Caston, prod.] TAMLA T6 335, \$6.98. Tape: ● T 335C, \$7.95; ● T 335T, \$7.95.

Eddie Kendricks is not so much a singer as part of a sound I like, which includes a certain low-key rhythmic approach, soft r&b-oriented tunes, and mellow if not original arrangements.

Kendricks is an ex-member of the Temptations who has finally made it comfortably on his own with hits such as "Keep on Truckin'." His recent hit, "Tell Her Love Has Felt the Need" (I don't understand the title, but I like the tune), is not included in "For You." In fact, my intuition tells me that much or all of this set has been on the shelf at Motown.

Motown music is nearly always formulaized, and this is no exception. But there are levels even within the restrictions of the formula, and this is what could be called creative formula music. I like it. M.A.

O'NEAL TWINS. Edgar and Edward O'Neal, vocals; Leon Russell, keyboards and guitar; rhythm accompaniment. *Smile; Sinner Man; I'm a Pilgrim and a Stranger*, eight more. [Leon Russell, prod.] SHELTER SR 2125 \$6.98. Tape: ● SRT 2125, \$7.98.

I can see why producer/artist Leon Russell took a chance with this oddball pair. The album cover is so horrendous that, if it had not been for Russell's name and the label (Russell's company, Shelter), I'd never have let it get near my equipment. It features a photo of the O'Neals, smiling and overweight, in pink shirts, maroon slacks, and white shoes, against a blank backdrop—the sort of cover on Keely Smith discs of the '50s.

But the O'Neal Twins can sing, no question about it. While you can tell they're good, they never relax here. Their style is loose, gospel-oriented, as is their message. Religioso pop. But what should be loose comes off formal because of nerves or clutching or trying too hard or whatever.

I'd like to hear the O'Neals two albums from now, if they can get into some new material as well as those tunes that are obviously their old safes. Because their spirit is warm and loving. If anyone can make them happen, it is Leon Russell. M.A.

FIRST CLASS. Tony Burrow, Chas Mills, John Carter, and Del Jon, vocals; Robin Shaw, vocals and bass; Eddie Richards, vocals and drums; Spencer James, vocals and lead guitar; Clive Barrett, vocals, piano, and organ. *Beach Baby; Won't Somebody Help Me; What Became of Me*; seven more. [John Carter, prod.] UK UKS 53109, \$6.98.

UK Records is terribly frank about its new instant superstar act, the First Class. States UK on the record jacket: "In many ways the First Class is filling a large gap in British pop music. Groups like Dawn and the Fifth Dimension have delivered excellent middle-of-the-road material from America for years. But Britain has never come up with a competent competitor."

UK has hoped that the First Class would be that competitor, and its wildest dreams have come true. Does the world need a British Fifth Dimension? Whether it does or not, now it has one, an eight-man musical unit that makes pleasing, lightly rocked music filled with rehashed Beatles and Beach Boys harmonies that are as attractive as they are derivative. Sparked by the huge hit single, "Beach Baby," this debut disc is energetic, jolly—and compelling. Sometimes it is also embarrassingly mindless, but that's what makes "middle of the road" music appealing to those who are happy only when they are walking in the middle of the road.

The nucleus of the First Class has appeared on a number of hit records under the names Brotherhood of Man, White Plains, the Ivy League, and Edison Lighthouse. The new name has more class. So does this disc. H.E.

STACKRIDGE: Pinafore Days. Andy Davis, Paul Karas, Keith Gemmill, Mutter Slater, Roy Morgan, Rod Bowkett, Mike Evans, vocals; instrumental accompaniment. *Pinafore Days; The Last Plimsoll; Spin 'Round the Room; The Galloping Gaucho; Dangerous Bacon; God Speed the Plough*; four more. [George Martin, prod.] SIRE SASD 7503, \$6.98.

This British band was produced by George Martin, who produced the Beatles, and that is really all that need be said to describe it.

Stackridge gives every impression of having been raped by Eleanor Rigby on Penny Lane. The music is confectionary and pretty—a shallow copy of the Beatles during their "Sgt. Pepper" days. The album even ends with an orchestral production number, as did the "Sgt. Pepper" album. "Pinafore Days" is baroque and slight. "The Galloping Gaucho" gallops entirely too fast, and "Dangerous Bacon" is frantic.

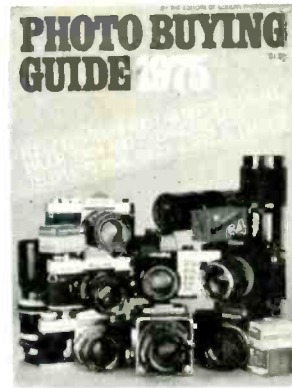
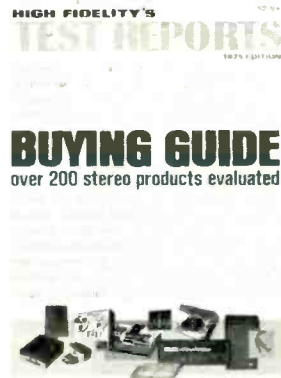
This ill-advised recording winds up with a song titled "Humiliation," which is appropriate. M.J.

JERRY JEFF WALKER: Walker's Collectibles. Jerry Jeff Walker, vocals and guitar; vocal

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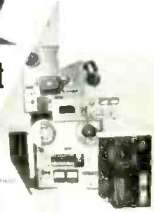
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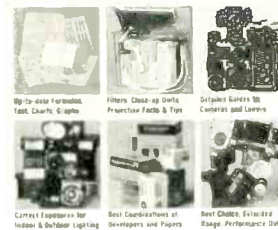


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and instrumental accompaniment. *Salvation Army Band; Will There Be a Way; She Left Me Holdin'; I Like to Sleep Late in the Morning; My Old Man; Rock Me, Roll Me; The First Showboat; Well of the Blues; O. D. Corral*, one more. [Michael Brovsky, prod.] MCA 450, \$6.98. Tape: ●● C 450, \$7.98; ●● T 450, \$7.98.

Walker is the folksinger who became famous, and perhaps even rich, due to the popularity of his "Mr. Bojangles." But years have passed since that hit, and Walker has slipped in the polls. He plays colleges and small clubs, presenting a country-fied-folk-music act that is essentially dull. His talent as a songwriter has not, with the exception of "Mr. Bojangles" and few others, proved extraordinary. And his singing is plain ordinary.

With this recording, Walker lifts himself above the mediocrity that has marked his career the past few years. He has a good rock-a-billy band behind him and some tunes of more than casual note. The Dixieland arrangements on several songs make them sparkle brightly, and the heavy doses of rock-a-billy are similarly exciting.

True, a few songs are country music of a sort that is entirely too familiar. "She Left Me Holdin'" and "My Old Man" are among these. "O. D. Corral" is a dope-generation cliché, horribly sung. At times, during the ballads, Walker sounds like he is imitating Kris Kristofferson, a feat that his vocal range does not allow him to perform with skill.

Yet for all its faults, this album is a good one and a sign that perhaps Jerry Jeff Walker is not, as he seemed so long to be, a one-hit wonder. M.J.

ELECTRIC FLAG: The Band Kept Playing. Michael Bloomfield, guitar; Buddy Miles, vocals and drums; Nick Gravenites, guitar and vocals; Barry Goldberg, keyboards; Roger "Jellyroll" Troy, bass and vocals. *Sweet Soul Music; Every Now and Then; Inside Information; The Band Kept Playing*; six more. [Jerry Wexler, prod.] ATLANTIC SD 18112, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 18112, \$7.97; ●● TP 18112, \$7.97.

The Electric Flag was a big-band rock group that made a lot of good music in 1967, then fell apart. This reunion contains the heart of the old group but not, alas, the soul.

Columbia and Atlantic vied for the rights to release the band's albums and, so the story goes, reached a novel understanding whereby they alternate releases. On the basis of the music contained in "The Band Kept Playing," vying for the rights to the Electric Flag is rather akin to competing for a berth on the *Titanic* on April 15: this vessel seems bound only for the Island of Lost Soul. Its music is a lifeless, moronically repetitive copy of black soul music circa 1967.

The old Electric Flag excelled at playing upbeat, rockish versions of traditional blues. Its reading of Howlin' Wolf's "Killing Floor," contained in its first and best album, "A Long Time Comin'" (Columbia CS 9597), is a classic. On this reunion L.P., the only worthy songs are in that vein: "Inside Information," a Ray Charles-style blues; and "The Band Kept Playing," the title song—a modified shuffle blues. The rest is bad—dominated by Buddy Miles, a good drummer who should stick to the sticks and avoid such overtaxing endeavors as singing and songwriting. M.J.



Johnny Winter—a subtle performer who's best when he's not roaring.

PETER ALLEN: Continental American. Peter Allen, vocals, keyboards, and songs; orchestra and rhythm section, William Eaton, arr. and cond.; Cissy Houston, Kenny Vance, and Linda November, background vocals arr. *Just a Gigolo; Pretty Pretty; I Honestly Love You*; six more. [Joel Dorn, prod.] A&M SP 3643, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 3643, \$7.98; ●● BT 3643, \$7.98.

Gene Lees once reviewed the hole in a record (it was cut unevenly; the album was by Dinah Shore). I once reviewed Liberace's jacket (jeweled beyond reality).

For years I have waited for a liner note worth a review. The opportunity has now been provided for me by Joel Dorn, the strange and probably brilliant producer of this strange and probably brilliant album by singer/songwriter Peter Allen that I do not understand.

I should like to quote the liner note in its entire glory: "A&M Records asked me to write liner notes for this album. Instead of one liner note, I have written three. Choose the one you like best. 1. I would like to thank Ellen Greene for turning me on to Peter Allen. 2. In order to create something that will last slightly past eternity, the foundation should be made of fire. 3. Joe Williams is one of the most underrated artists in America."

Thank you.

M.A.

JOHNNY WINTER: John Dawson Winter III. Johnny Winter, lead vocals and guitar; Randy Jo Hobbs, bass; Richard Hughes, drums; rhythm, keyboards, vocal, and horns accompaniment. *Rock & Roll People; Golden Olden Days of Rock & Roll; Self-Destructive Blues*; eight more. [Shelly Yakus, prod.] BLUE SKY PZ 33292, \$6.98. Tape: ●● PZT 33292, \$7.98; ●● PZA 33292, \$7.98.

This album features a smashing jacket portrait of albino blues guitarist/superstar Johnny Winter in formal clothes, looking for all the

world like a refugee from a lawn party hosted by Jay Gatsby. It is a terrific photograph, as dazzling as the performances on the disc it decorates. "John Dawson Winter III" is an attempt to create a super-commercial super-entertaining Johnny Winter. The result is an album that is basic and thoroughly accessible.

Simple and savage, this music is blues-rock, dished up with perfection and bearing all the clichés the mindless element of the rock concert has always adored. By sheer grit, Winter maintains his dignity through this teeny-bopper-oriented assault. Indeed, when he is not roaring, the L.P. becomes much more effective.

Winter's composition "Stranger," for example, is a soulful example of vivid writing, playing, and singing. "Love Song for Me," another original ditty, is a delightful send-up of country-and-western-music superstardom. Cynthia Weil and Barry Mann's "Lay Down Your Sorrow" is a potent and dramatic blues excursion.

Johnny Winter is a subtle, thrilling performer. He has made a striking album. It's a shame that his artfulness has been continually underplayed during this disc, even though I understand that a performer seeking a mass audience often has to create what that mass audience will accept. H.E.

LOU REED: Sally Can't Dance. Lou Reed, guitar and vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Ride, Sally, Ride; Animal Language; Baby Face; N.Y. Stars; Kill Your Sons; Ennui; Sally Can't Dance; Billy*. [Steve Katz and Lou Reed, prod.] RCA CPL 1-0611, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CPK 1-0611, \$7.95; ●● CPS 1-0611, \$7.95.

There must be a reason for Lou Reed's popularity. The Velvet Underground, from which he sprouted, was not a big enough band to give one of its members sufficient thrust for Reed's current high-flying orbit. And on his own he

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CIRCLE 11 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

has not produced a great deal of artistic note, save "Berlin" (APL 1-0207), which had good intentions and a lot of merit but was rather depressing; not what you would consider a commercial product.

Reed's new album, "Sally Can't Dance," does contain a hit song, the title one. But overall this album too is rather brooding and dark, lacking interesting melodies and intelligent thoughts. Much is made of the darker side of life.

"Ride, Sally, Ride," the opener, is a ballad with sweeping, romantic music and lyrics about a teenage lesbian who is dragged by the hair up and down the gutters of the East Village. "Animal Language," which follows it, concerns a dog whose barking annoys the neighbors to the point where they stick a gun in his mouth and pull the trigger. And so it goes. "Kill Your Sons" is about a male maniac for whom electroshock treatment, Thorazine injections, and a host of mental hospitals do no good. The title tune, the hit, is a monstrously torrid tale of terpsichorean immobility (the heroine dopes herself out).

The only funny line in the entire album comes in the middle of "Ride, Sally, Ride," when it is suggested, "Take off your pants, don't you know this is a party?" And the only intelligent spot is the final song, "Billy," about two childhood friends who grow up and apart.

There is a line in "Ennui" that goes, "You're a certain kind of person I can do without." Well, Lou Reed is a kind of performer I can do without. I cannot find a meaning for his popularity, unless it is that millions of adolescents want to kill themselves. Which, for the average rock-concert audience, is an idea at least worth considering.

M.J.



DINO AND SEMBELLO. Dino (Ralph Palladino), songs and vocals; John Sembello, songs, vocals, and guitar; Meco Monardo and Mike Stoller, strings, horns, and rhythm arr. *Feels So Good; Holy Moment; Pearl's a Singer*; seven more. [Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller, prod.] A&M SP 3657, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 3657, \$7.98; ●● 8T 3657, \$7.98.

A friend recently asked, "Want to hear a hit?" Just as some people automatically say no, I automatically say yes, because I hate to miss anything. He played "Dancin' Jones" from this album by Dino and Sembello, whom I'd never heard of. The song says, "You know my baby, Shady Sadie, got a dancin' jones. Every time she hears the Stones, she just gotta shake her bones." For years, a jones was an exclusively black term for a habit—you choose what kind. The best street terms start black and fade their way to fame and fortune. But cut the philosophy, and what you have with "Dancin' Jones" is a dynamite tune, written, sung, and produced equally well. Whether or not it becomes a hit is strictly operational, because it *is* a hit.

From there the recording gets better. It gets more like an album, as is proper. There is a difference between a successful single and a successful album; the challenge is to cover one without losing the other. If anyone can bring it off, it's the veteran production/writing team of Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller, who have always had a special understanding of what the people like to hear.

The song-writing credits go to Dino and

Sembello and also to producers Lieber and Stoller. Presumably, everyone stayed involved with the songs till everyone was comfortable. The songs show it. They're free and easy, simple but not dumb, fun but not silly, wide-ranged but not floating off.

Among my favorite tracks are "Pearl's a Singer," "The Best Thing," and "Neighborhood." This last song, according to bio information, was the one that originally got Lieber and Stoller interested in the project, and I'm not surprised.

Congratulations all around on a clear-eyed album.

M.A.

GENESIS: The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway. Michael Rutherford, bass and twelve-string guitar; Tony Banks, keyboards; Peter Gabriel, voices and flute. *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway; Fly on a Windshield; Broadway Melody of 1974*; twenty-three more. [John Burns and Genesis, prod.] ATCO SD 2-401, \$9.98 (two discs). Tape: ●● CS 2-401, \$10.97; ●● TP 2-401, \$10.97.

This English group, heavily involved with theatrics, recently spent its time touring the U.S. in order to present performances of this original rock opera. Performed in front of an abstract slide show, *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*—while it is as precocious and pretentious as anything you may ever see or hear—is also chock-full of inventive musical ideas, intricate melodic themes, and superior craftsmanship.

A Puerto Rican street kid bangs into a wall. He then finds himself in a cocoon. He is taken to a factory, escapes, and encounters Death as well as three snake women. The lad transforms himself into Slipperman and must mutilate himself in order to be delivered from this shape. He does and sees his brother drowning. After rescuing him, he winds up back on the New York City streets.

All this and pretty pictures and English hard rock too. Who can complain?

H.E.

LINDA RONSTADT: Heart like a Wheel. Linda Ronstadt, vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *You're No Good; Faithless Love; When Will I Be Loved*; seven more. [Peter Asher, prod.] CAPITOL ST 11358, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 4XT 11358, \$7.98; ●● 8XT 11358, \$7.98.

KINKY FRIEDMAN. Kinky Friedman, guitar and vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Rapid City, South Dakota; Homo Erectus; Lover Please; Something's Wrong with the Beaver; They Ain't Makin' Jews like Jesus Anymore*; six more. [Steve Barri and Willie Nelson, prod.] ABC ABCD 829, \$6.98.

We have here two different approaches to country music. Ms. Ronstadt, the closest the pop scene comes to a sex symbol, is rather straight about her singing. She does country music that is fairly traditional, even though most of the songs are recently written. "Faithless Love" and "Heart like a Wheel" both are good, familiar country songs. But now and then Ms. Ronstadt adds an influence from rock or soul. "You're No Good," the opening tune, is rendered in a style reminiscent of Aretha Franklin. Over-all, this album is pleasant, but one may rightly question whether pleasant is good enough.

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CIRCLE 3 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Kinky Friedman made a lot of waves a year or so ago with a tour of American folk clubs as Kinky Friedman and the Texas Jewboys. The act could have been called My Son, the Country Singer. It was outrageous, hilarious, and fun, at least for the first hour. Friedman provided half banter and half music, and most of his audiences paid more attention to the former than to the latter.

Now, having shifted from Vanguard to ABC, Friedman seems determined to reverse that equation. His second album is more serious than the first, even to the point of being deadly. One or two of the songs bog down before they begin, and a good half of them go by without having left any impression. They seem confused, with a lot of images but nothing interesting enough to latch onto.

"Rapid City, South Dakota" is a fair country song, but *only* fair. "Lover Please," an old song by Billy Swan, is done well. The only tune on the LP that hits any sort of mark is old-style Kinky: "They Ain't Makin' Jews like Jesus Anymore," which might be subtitled "Kinky Friedman Meets Archie Bunker." M.J.

* **JOSÉ FELICIANO;** And the Feeling's Good. José Feliciano, vocals, acoustic and electric guitars, and congas; rhythm accompaniment; Greg Adams, horn, trumpet, and flügelhorn arr.; Larry Muhoberac and Barry Alan Fasman, string arr. *Chico and the Man (main theme); I've Got to Convince Myself; Virgo;* seven more. [José Feliciano and Janna Merlyn Feliciano, prod.] RCA CPL 1-0407, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CPK 1-0407, \$7.95; ●● CPS 1-0407, \$7.95.

José Feliciano is at the hub of it—pop music at its best. In many ways he *is* the hub. When others were scratching their heads, he figured out how to make the then-new trends his own with "Light My Fire," an enormous hit. You can bet it was played to death by musicians. In finding commercial appeal, Feliciano also found himself, found the ability to keep growing without losing his essence (this last is tricky). He is still at the center of the circle of taste, excitement, and intelligence in music. He has a perfect understanding of the function of the rhythm section in today's music. He was one of the first to use his voice as a part of that rhythm section.

It is José Feliciano's unfortunate karma that the public neglects the importance of his influence. They would rather praise the inactive, aged, or escaped (Ledbetter, Chubby Checker, the Everly Brothers, ad infinitum). Feliciano has expressed bitterness over this, but it is to his credit that it never shows in his music. So throw out all the philosophizing, and you still have one of the hottest singer/guitarists that ever graced American music.

Two of the songs in this set concern "Chico and the Man," a TV series I do not know. One of them, the theme, is tame and proper and censor-proof. The other, "Hard Times in El Barrio," is exciting and real and dominates the album. Both were written by Feliciano and his wife Janna.

Feliciano puts his uniqueness on Stevie Wonder's "Golden Lady," a golden tribute. Congratulations to somebody named Ralph Graham for writing a song called "Differently" and to Feliciano for having the brains

to record it. It says, "I take cream in my coffee, sugar sometimes honey in my tea, but that's not all of me. . . . So am I different when I try and do things differently? . . ." It is the only time I have ever heard such a subject approached without becoming a lecture, and there is nothing more disagreeable in the arts than sermonizing. Feliciano's emotional reading proves how much the song means.

Year after year José Feliciano keeps on truckin' successfully through minority status, blindness, and a generalized low-grade neglect that would make a lesser man paranoid. My hat is off to him. On top of that, he has never made an album I didn't like. M.A.

theater and film

THE ODESSA FILE. Original film soundtrack recording. Composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber. [Andrew Lloyd Webber, prod.] MCA 2084, \$6.98. Tape: ●● C 2084, \$7.98; ●● T 2084, \$7.98.

More *sturm und dregs* from the clichéd keyboard of the man who brought the world *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Perhaps sensitive to criticism that *JCS* was anti-Semitic, Webber has now turned anti-Teutonic, which even three decades after the war is still safe.

The music in this album is a farce, being no more than German restaurant music augmented with occasional orchestras, choirs, and rock bands. I really suspect that Webber couldn't decide which German cliché to use—the strolling accordionist entertaining lunchtime schnitzel-nibblers, or the hobnailed march—so he alternated them. The *Odesa File* soundtrack left me not knowing whether to burp or salute. M.J.

THE MAD ADVENTURES OF "RABBI" JACOB. Original film soundtrack recording. Composed by Vladimir Cosma. LONDON PS 652, \$6.98.

How do you write music for a film about a French Catholic jingoist (played by the rubber-faced Louis de Funès) and an Arab revolutionary who disguise themselves as rabbis (in order to escape both the police and the Arab's fellow countrymen) and find themselves caught up in a large-scale Parisian bar mitzvah? For the title theme, the solution used by Vladimir Cosma, whose name has been associated with several recent European films, was to set up the big pop-orchestra sound (with heavy strings) typical of a certain French style (Michel Magne comes immediately to mind) and to spice it occasionally with harmonic and rhythmic patterns whose mildly Semitic flavor could go either way. This theme, a delightfully warm and happy invention, appears several times in different forms throughout the disc.

Other cuts include some plush, rather Francis Lai-type swirl music ("Love at First Sight") to accompany the visual motive of a spinning helicopter that is to carry away the loving couple (the revolutionary and the bigot's beautiful red-haired daughter); some rather nondescript pop sounds ("Crazy Soldiers"); some truly creepy suspense music to suggest the terror of a bubble-gum factory at

night: and some more genuinely Israeli music. as in the "Dance of the Young Hasidim." on which one P. Gumplowicz also collaborated.

The recorded sound is typical of London records, which is to say excellent, and it greatly contributes to the enjoyment of this delightful disc, particularly if you have seen the film.

R.S.B.

jazz

LOUIS ARMSTRONG: Mostly Blues. Louis Armstrong, trumpet and vocals; Jack Teagarden, trombone and vocals; Bud Freeman, tenor saxophone; unidentified clarinetist; Fats Waller, piano; Al Casey, guitar; George Wettling, drums. *Swing That Music; Tiger Rag; Storyville Blues*; six more. OLYMPIC 7124, \$4.98 (mono).

ELLA FITZGERALD AND CHICK WEBB: Ella Sings, Chick Swings. Taft Jordan, trumpet; Sandy Williams, trombone; Louis Jordan and Teddy McRae, saxophones; Tommy Fulford, piano; Bobby Johnson, guitar; Beverly Peer, bass; Chick Webb, drums; Ella Fitzgerald, vocals. *Blue Lou; Limehouse Blues; Breakin' Down*; seven more. OLYMPIC 7119, \$4.98 (mono).

JIMMIE LUNCEFORD: The Greatest Jazz Band. Freddy Webster, Pee Wee Jackson, Bob Mitchell, and Paul Webster, trumpets; Fernando Arbello, Russell Bowles, and Trummy Young, trombones; Willie Smith, Dan Grissom, Ben Waters, Joe Thomas, and Earl Carruthers, saxophones; Ed Wilcox, piano; Al Norris, guitar; Truck Parham, bass; Jimmy Crawford, drums. *Battle Axe; Blue Afterglow; State and Tioga Stomp*; seven more. OLYMPIC 7123, \$4.98 (mono).

Everest's Olympic Gold Medal Collection seems to be of varied and dubious origin, which leads one to wonder what royalties, if any, are being paid and to whom. Still, the inclusion in the jazz series (which now numbers nearly thirty discs) of the recordings listed above makes it significant because, from the point of view of the listener and collector, these are invaluable reports on the work of some of the greatest performers in the jazz world.

The Lunceford disc, dated 1942-43 when the band is usually considered to have passed its peak, is a glowing refutation of that notion, even though many of the pieces are built around vocals by Dan Grissom. Instrumentally, the band was still brilliant; the Sy Oliver-influenced Lunceford style was still in its glory. This is a valuable addition to the Lunceford discography, taken from Lang-Worth Transcriptions, although there is no acknowledgement of the source in the very generalized liner notes.

The Armstrong set has been a familiar underground jazz item for many years, performed at a jam session on New York radio station WNEW in 1938 by an incredible all-star lineup that brought together Fats Waller, Jack Teagarden, and Bud Freeman with Armstrong, all of them at the height of their prowess. And the prowess shows through on most pieces—but God save us from Armstrong's dreary "Brother Bill."

In some ways the best of these three discs is the Fitzgerald/Webb set, not because the individual performances are particularly out-

standing, although there are excellent solos by Taft Jordan and Sandy Williams, but because of the feeling of the band on the stand that is conveyed by these reproductions of broadcasts. The band—an octet from the full Webb band—is a swinging little combo with occasional vocals by Ella Fitzgerald (twenty-one at the time, 1939). The spirit of these performances comes through particularly strongly when you hear Ella, slightly off-mike, urging on soloists. If you were ever near a bandstand in the Thirties, your imagination can take care of the rest. J.S.W.



FREDDY RANDALL-DAVE SHEPHERD JAZZ ALL-STARS: Live at the Montreux Jazz Festival. Freddy Randall, trumpet; Dave Hewitt, trombone; Dave Shepherd, clarinet; Danny Moss, tenor saxophone; Brian Lemon, piano; Kenny Baldock, bass; Johnny Richardson, drums. *Someday, Sweetheart; Embraceable You; Beale Street Blues*; four more. BLACK LION 214, \$6.98.

An unself-conscious Swing Era feeling that is very hard to find in the U.S. these days is the enlivening element in the work of this English group, led by Freddy Randall, a trumpeter who goes back to the 1940s. The general aura is that of the Eddie Condon crowd, but without the Condonites' weariness and cynicism. These are musicians whose hearts are really still with the swing bands and their peripheral offshoots, although in styles they are a varied lot.

Randall has a warm, burry tone that carries suggestions of Bunny Berigan, but without any direct copying. He is his own man, just as tenor saxophonist Danny Moss is, even though in the latter's playing one hears at times breathy echoes of Ben Webster and Don Byas, at other times Bud Freeman's buoyant bounce, and at still others the soft, clean lines of Lester Young. One of the most provocative sidemen is Brian Lemon, a pianist who is a background figure through most of the disc but steps out with a beautifully calculated unaccompanied stop-time solo on "Hindustan." Even Johnny Richardson, the drummer, has an unusual touch in his use of the kind of small, flat-toned cymbal that is a signature of Cliff Leeman.

The weakest member of the group is the nominal co-leader, Dave Shepherd, a clarinetist who is obviously reaching for Benny Goodman but has been overwhelmed en route by Peanuts Hucko. J.S.W.



SONNY ROLLINS: The Cutting Edge. Sonny Rollins, tenor saxophone; Stanley Cowell, piano; Masuo, guitar; Bob Cranshaw, bass; David Lee, drums; Mtume, conga; Rufus Harley, bagpipes. *The Cutting Edge; To a Wild Rose; Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*; two more. MILESTONE 9059, \$6.98.

Sonny Rollins is such a provocative and commanding saxophonist that he can be fascinating even when he is being boring. The title piece of this set, recorded at the Montreux Jazz Festival, is a prime example of his frustrating habit of setting up a riff and repeating it endlessly. In this case it is a jumpy, jagged riff

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that sounds like a warm-up to something. But it leads nowhere and finally comes to an arbitrary, inconclusive stop. There is more of the same on "First Moves," although this time the underlying rhythm figure is a bit more propulsive. These are both instances of Rollins' sextet working basically as an ensemble, since there are no real solos as such—Rollins is simply playing lead. A little of this sort of thing goes a long, long way.

But when Rollins turns to his melodically creative side, it is a completely different story. Working with the most unlikely kind of material (MacDowell's "To a Wild Rose," for example), he creates absorbing melodic variations and sustains them at tempos so slow and relaxed that most jazz soloists would have died of ennui before they got through. Not Rollins, though. His "To a Wild Rose" is an eight-and-a-half-minute solo, including one of his superb unaccompanied sections, and it is worth every second. "A House Is Not a Home," not one of the most stimulating songs in most circumstances, suits his purposes equally well, assisted this time by a fitting piano solo by Stanley Cowell.

Rollins' power as a swinging saxophonist comes to the fore on "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," where his penchant for long, deliberate buildups, so pointless on "The Cutting Edge" and "First Moves," is used brilliantly as the whole sextet, joined by Rufus Harley's bagpipes, takes off and moves. Harley, supported by Rollins' saxophone, plays the most valid jazz solo I have heard from a bagpipe, and guitarist Masuo has his lone chance to play one of the charging, churning solos that are highlights of Rollins' club performances.

J.S.W.



ERIC DIXON SEXTET: Eric's Edge. Sonny Cohn, trumpet; Frank Hooks, trombone; Eric Dixon, tenor saxophone; Lloyd Mayers, piano; Ivan Rolle and Martin Rivera, bass; Bill English, drums. *Background Blues; Lady Be Good; Blues for Ilean; five more.* MJR 8124, \$5.95 (Master Jazz Recordings, Box 579, Lenox Hill Station, New York, N.Y. 10021).

For all his prominence as a soloist with Count Basie's band, Eric Dixon has had few recordings under his own name. This collection, on which he is surrounded by a pair of Basie-ites (Sonny Cohn, trumpet; Frank Hooks, trombone) and an astutely chosen rhythm section, is a vivid demonstration of Dixon's forceful musical personality.

Five of the eight tunes are Dixon originals, and all eight are Dixon arrangements. As an arranger, his big-band feeling is constantly evident even when he has only six pieces to work with. He makes the most of his three-man front line, avoiding long, unsupported solos for the most part and giving his musicians figures and riffs that can be mined for distinctive colors. His originals are catchy, melodic pieces that lend themselves to the miniature-big-band approach.

Sonny Cohn, who is just coming out on his own after ten years with Basie, is a versatile spark plug, as he was with Basie, playing strong open trumpet, crisply muted passages, and some growl trumpet that is startlingly like Cootie Williams. Dixon is an even stronger, more exultantly shouting saxophonist than he

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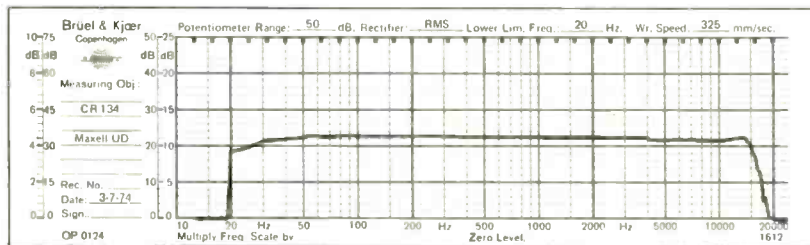
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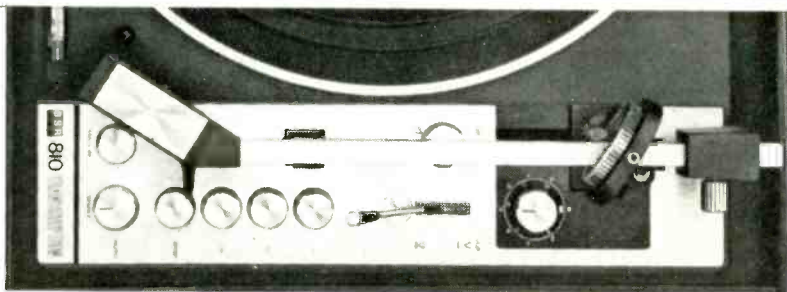


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has appeared to be with Basie. Here he is much closer to the scooped, soaring lines of Buddy Tate, a style that has an inherently driving attack that lifts all the pieces on this disc. Bill English's drumming, strong and steady, is an important factor in that driving attack, whether he is providing a heavy Ellingtonian backbeat for "Things Ain't What They Used to Be" or dancing lightly in the Basie manner through "Jumpin' at the Woodside," a piece on which Dixon's conceptions as both arranger and performer are at their best. J.S.W.

in brief

SAM COOKE: You Send Me. RCA CAMDEN ACL 1-0445, \$2.98.

This is the first album I ever received that had no inside sleeve; I guess at the Camden price something has to give. But when you want a little skip down memory lane, you can't do better than Sam Cooke, whose sense of romance was so special that he survived the dumbest of all pop-music eras and is held in even higher regard now than he was then.

M.A.

JOHNNY MATHIS: The Heart of a Woman. COLUMBIA KC 33251, \$5.98. Tape: ●● CT 33251, \$6.98; ● CA 33251, \$6.98.

On this outing, Johnny sings a group of songs by composer/producer Johnny Bristol as well as a number of recent rhythm-and-blues hits. They are performed with a noticeable lack of authenticity, and the Bristol tunes are far from compelling. Johnny has had better days in the recording studio.

H.E.

KIKI DEE BAND: I've Got the Music in Me. ROCKET 458, \$6.98. Tape: ●● C 458, \$7.98; ● T 458, \$7.98.

This album includes Ms. Dee's hit title tune. Her first album was much more low-key, full of sweet ballads and beautifully sung. But this one's the hit, because it conforms to market needs. Also is very good. Plenty of time for ballads later. Produced by Gus Dudgeon of Elton John fame and released on their MCA-distributed Rocket label. Fine job.

M.A.

ESSRA MOHAWK. ASYLUM 7E 1023, \$6.98.

Bass-voiced Ms. Mohawk is a composer whose work ranges from fascinating to dreadful, but whose singing is always compelling. There's a demonstration of real talent here as well as a display of potential. With the proper artistic supervision, an Essra may eventually become as popular as a Joni, Laura, or Carole.

H.E.

ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK: His Greatest Hits. PARROT PAS 71067, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M 79667, \$7.97; ● M 79867, \$7.97.

So what if he looks like a Jewish hit man and has a name that sounds like a Ukrainian epithet? The boy is a star. This album includes ten of his best known.

M.J.

THE ROTO Rooter GOOD TIME CHRISTMAS BAND. VANGUARD VSD 79347, \$6.98.

This seven-man band steams its way through oom-pah-pah versions of "On the Good Ship Lollipop," "South of the Border," "Happy Trails to You," and other songs of this ilk. It makes for one of the all-time worst Christmas records; indeed, this record qualifies as one of the all-time worst in any genre.

H.E.

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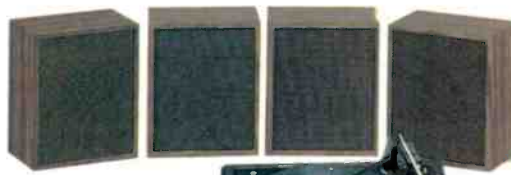
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The better-known Second Symphony is scarcely less spellbinding in its tonal evocation of the Big Smoke, London. Yet its earlier well-nigh definitive Barbarolli tapings have both gone out of print. That in itself would justify a new version, but Previn wisely makes the most of more recent sonic technology as well as stressing the work's structural strength, instead of attempting to compete with Barbarolli's more impressionistic/programmatic approach: RCA/Stereotape ERPA 3282 C, 7½-ips reel, \$7.95.

Bach in the Old and New Worlds. Turning from the Spanish piano repertory, in which she is nowadays above all competition, Alicia de Larrocha now reveals what Bach and Mozart might sound like if they had been born Iberian grandees. Here are completely persuasive answers to any wonder you may have had about the onetime immense respect commanded by Busoni's broadly dramatic, however Romantic, transcription of the Bach Chaconne, or about what made the nineteenth-century Grand-Manner Mozartean tradition so impressive in works like the K. 485 Rondo, K. 475 Fantasia, and K. 331 Sonata with the *Rondo à la Turca* finale. And for good measure, the nobly magisterial pianism is captured in gleamingly bright recording and silent-surfaced Dolby-B processing: London/Ampex E 46866, 7½-ips reel, \$8.95; 0 56866 cassette and 0 86866 cartridge, \$7.95 each.

How different, yet commanding no less conviction, is the Canadian Glenn Gould's far more informal and personalized approach. His zestful "Bach With-

out Wig" playing is sheer joy in the last two French Suites (completing the set of six begun in last year's Columbia MT 32347). And Gould's way, idiosyncratic as it may be, is capable of capturing the dramatic forcefulness as well as the bubbling vivacity of the S. 381 *Overture in the French Style*: Columbia MT 32853, Dolby-B cassette, \$7.98.

Indeed it seems that almost any distinctive, single-minded interpretive insight can valuably illuminate different facets of Bach's protean genius. It's when a wishy-washy attempt is made to compromise between contradictory stylistic approaches that any and every *real* Bach is blurred. I, for one, can't be persuaded to suspend disbelief in what might be termed a Harvard Square or Back Bay Bach. Composer/teacher/conductor John Harbison's Bostonian/Cantabrigian Cantata Singers avoid the overlarge choral and orchestral forces of the old Handel and Haydn Society days' miscalculations. But they haven't done their homework at the New School of Bachian performance. Their use of modern instruments for Bach's oboi d'amore and da caccia, etc., might be excused on the grounds of practicality, but not the use of an uncalled-for double bass, which not only is anachronistic, but results in a wholly nonbaroque bottom-heaviness. Yet even objecting purists must welcome (with qualifications) the first tapings of three fine cantatas, Nos. 7 (a particular joy), 44, and 101; the earnest singing and playing of obviously young performers, of whom only the bass soloist, Mark Baker, achieves true distinction; and above all the clean ungimmicked recording and nonpareil yet budget-priced Dolby-B chromium-tape processing: Advent D 1016, 72-minute cassette, \$5.95.

The Dybbuk in Manhattan. Leonard Bernstein's latest major work, composed as *Dybbuk Variations* for Jerome Robbins and the New York City Ballet Company, has been criticized for echoing many of his earlier compositional mannerisms and influences. But if there is nothing startlingly new here, Bernstein is still writing with characteristic deftness, and his devotees can still find much to fascinate them, most especially in the composer-directed performance and the cleanly lucid yet vivid recording. The music's theatrical effectiveness is of course best evoked in the unexaggerated quadriphonic version (Columbia MAQ 33082, Dolby-B Q-8 cartridge, \$7.98), yet in stereo the atmospheric loss is relatively slight and there is perhaps somewhat sharper-focused detail (Columbia MT/MA 33082, Dolby-B cassette/cartridge editions, \$7.98 each).

Haydn, with Salomon, in London. Unlike its current discographic epiphanies, the

magnificent Haydn symphonic canon on tape seems to have been shrinking rather than expanding. With both the Beecham/Angel reels of the twelve "Salomon" symphonies and the Wölkke/Vanguard reel of the last six long out of print, a very special welcome awaits Advent's budget-priced musicassette set of all twelve in Leslie Jones's cool but engagingly zestful readings with the Little Orchestra of London, recorded c. 1969: Nonesuch/Advent E 1001/3, three Dolby-B double-play cassettes, \$6.95 each. So far I've heard only the first of these, but its Nos. 93, 94 (*Surprise*), 102, and 103 (*Drum Roll*) are surely representative of Jones's relatively small-scaled readings, of the uninflated and crisply turned performances, and of the transparently detailed recordings.

And there can be double rejoicing over a newer taping of Haydn's Nos. 99 and 100 (*Military*): Deutsche Grammophon 3300 402, Dolby-B cassette, \$7.98. For one thing, it—and the batch of eight other current releases over which I give it precedence—reminds us that all new DG cassettes are incalculably enhanced in value now that Ampex has discontinued (I hope only temporarily!) DG open-reel processings. But more to the immediate point, it represents the first tape example of Jochum's appropriately London-made series of all twelve last symphonies, a series for which it sets the highest standards for infectiously spirited performances and the warmest of pellucid recorded sonics. I trust that its ten symphonic companions, released in disc editions about a year ago, will soon join the present pair in the musicassette repertory.

Romeo and Juliet on the Verona/Moscow Axis. There's a serendipitous consolation prize available for balletomanes in general and Prokofievians in particular who can't afford or haven't the playback means for last December's superb two-reel set of the London/Ampex complete *Romeo and Juliet* ballet. The gifted young Edo de Waart, recording for the first time with his own Rotterdam Philharmonic (and in its own "De Doelen" Hall), plays eight relatively short and three longer excerpts from the fifty-two-item score: Philips 7300 305, Dolby-B cassette, \$7.95. Four of his selections are drawn from the composer's first concert suite, the rest include all seven in the second suite, but the sequence is rearranged to follow, roughly at least, that in the ballet score. If De Waart doesn't always quite match Maazel's magical poignance, he comes very close to it while bringing his own distinctive individuality to more pointed witty and forceful moments, and he too is beautifully recorded. Nothing can substitute for the ballet in its entirety, but, failing that, the present set of excerpts is next best. ●

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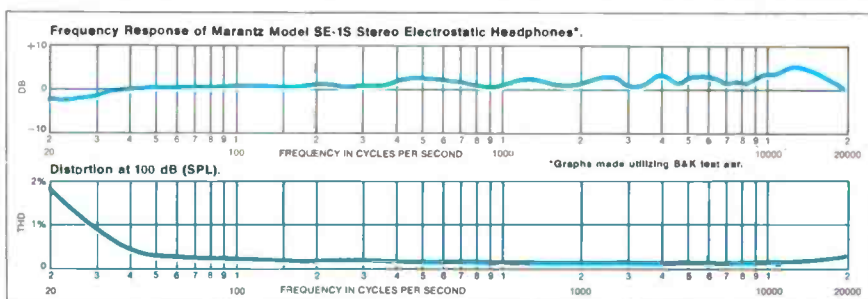
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Similarly, a phono cartridge has no idea what's holding it in the groove, as long as it's properly held. If your other hand were holding it, correctly aligned, with the right amount of downward force and without resisting its movement across the record, it would perform faultlessly.

That's really all there is to it.

The basic point is that the turntable and tonearm have exceedingly simple and purely mechanical functions, just like a chemist's analytical balance or a gyroscope. That's why turntable manufacturing is, above all, a matter of precision and integrity, with the emphasis on perfect operation rather than hi-fi pizzazz or features for features' sake.



Of course, theoretical perfection in an actual mechanical device is an unrealizable ideal. But even though 100% is impossible, there's a big difference between 99.9% and 98%.

It's in this most fundamental sense, we feel, that Garrard turntables are in a class by themselves.

For example, in the case of the Zero 100c changer and the Zero 100SB single-play automatic, tracking error has been reduced to a virtually unmeasurable quantity (in effect, zero) by the geometry of the tonearm design. Rumble, wow and flutter figures are also coming ever closer to theoretical perfection in these and other top Garrard models. (The Zero 100c and the Zero 100SB are both priced at \$209.95.)

To a less spectacular degree, the lower-priced models, from \$49.95 up, also come quite close to the theoretical ideal because of this emphasis on fundamentals.

Remember: all we want is to make your record revolve perfectly and to position your phono cartridge perfectly.

And we're almost there.

For your free copy of The Garrard Guide, a 16-page full-color reference booklet, write to Garrard, Dept. G-3, 100 Commercial Street, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.



Garrard
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