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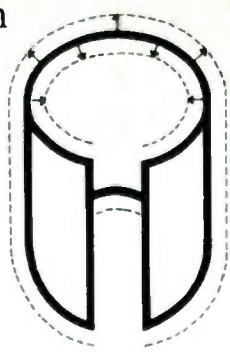
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A collection of vintage audio equipment is displayed against a light blue background. In the center, a silver amplifier with two glowing green meters is prominent. To its right, a stack of components includes a silver tuner with two glowing yellow meters, a white Sony tuner, and a silver Sony amplifier with multiple knobs and buttons. The text is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

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MARCH 1976

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HIGH FIDELITY



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Roy Lindstrom

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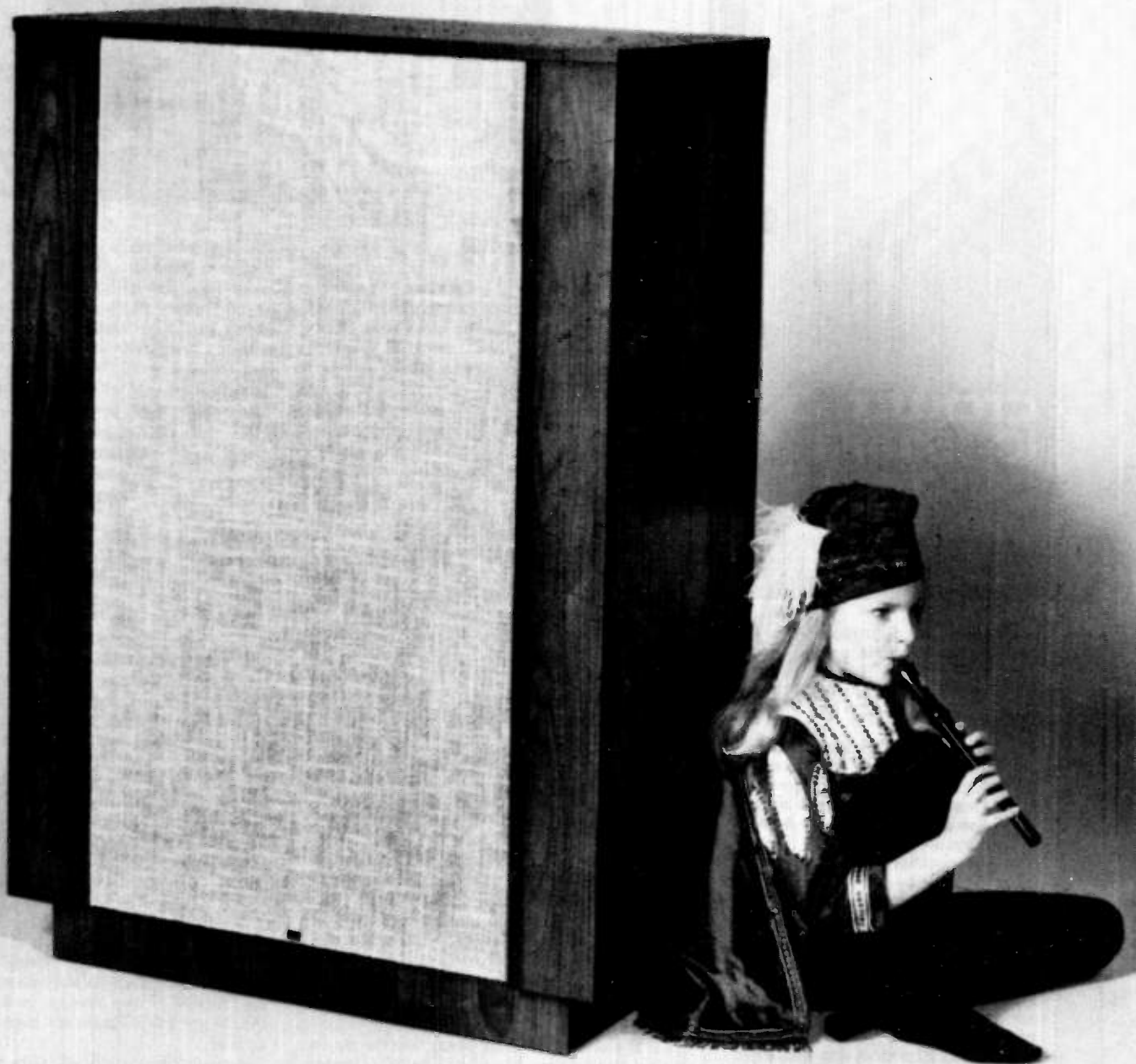
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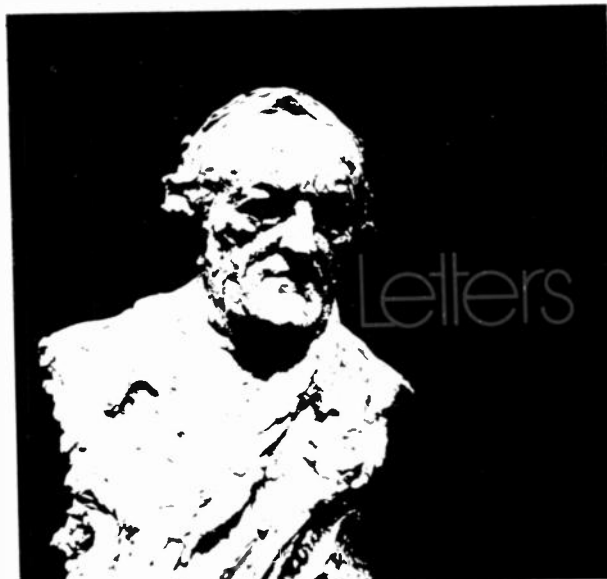
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Richard Wagner—his lost letter found.

Wagner in America

On the subject of an "American" Wagner, Klaus Liepmann notes that there had been "many flirtations with the U.S." before the 1880 proposal described. I think the specific link between Wagner and Chicago may be of interest to your readers.

There is an obvious link, of course, in the person of Theodore Thomas, who eventually settled in Chicago and founded the Chicago Symphony. Thomas was both a champion of Wagner's music and a fundraiser for Bayreuth. (Liepmann notes that, for advice in dealing with Wagner's proposal, John Sullivan Dwight directed Dr. Jenkins to Thomas.)

Besides that obvious link, there is, among others, the one described by Caroline V. Kerr in her collection of Wagner's letters, entitled *The Bayreuth Letters*:

An episode which should have been humiliating to Wagner's countrymen was the liberal offer made to him by Chicago.

This city wished to celebrate its renaissance after the "Great Fire" of 1871 by building a theatre for Wagner, over which he was to assume the personal direction, with the liberty of choosing his own personnel.

This offer he was unable to accept, but the confidence in his art, which a city was ready to give, deeply touched him, and more than once, in moments of deepest depression, he referred to this offer, and often gave expression to a lingering regret that he had not taken his art work and his family to a land which held out such hospitable arms to him and his ideas.

It is probably accurate to say that the above mentioned germ of a plan to build a theater to symbolize the city's rebirth culminated in the construction of the Auditorium Theater in 1886. As a replacement for the Bayreuth Festspielhaus, it wouldn't have been a bad choice, since it is a beautiful Adler

and Sullivan building (recently restored) that has perhaps the most marvelous acoustics of any hall in the nation. It served as the home of Thomas' Chicago Symphony in the orchestra's early years and housed Chicago's opera until 1929. In addition, the Auditorium was the largest permanent indoor theater constructed to that date, seating 4,200 people.

Arthur U. Clifton
Chairman/Founder
Wagner Society of America
Chicago, Ill.

When you published my article "Wagner's Proposal to America" in your December issue, I hoped that the lost letter would somehow reappear. Within a week of publication, this hope was fulfilled. A brother of Newell Jenkins, John F. Jenkins, to whom I had sent the article, writes that he has found the letter "at Greenfield [his home], together with a translation . . . [and] other letters from Cosima, Siegfried, etc. I did not even know they were here until recently, when I went through the files."

No matter how or why, the historical letter is safe in hand on this side of the ocean! I agree with Newell Jenkins, who says, "Were it not for HIGH FIDELITY, this letter might never have been found."

Klaus Liepmann
Cambridge, Mass.

In the concluding paragraph of "Wagner's Proposal to America," Klaus Liepmann poses the question: "Who had such an abiding interest in the Wagner-Jenkins letters that he got hold of them and made them disappear?"

A plausible hypothesis (although admittedly one lacking conclusive evidence) is that Cosima Wagner disposed of them. According to Robert W. Gutman in the ninth footnote to Chapter 9 of *Richard Wagner: The Man, His Mind, and His Music*, "Wag-

Coming in April:
HIGH FIDELITY's 25th Anniversary Issue

ner distributed copies of his private edition of *Mein Leben* to close friends with the understanding that they never discuss the contents of the book. After his death, Cosima recalled these gifts . . . most were destroyed. . . ." He continues to say that Cosima had also forced deletion of compromising material from the publications of Wagner's letters to Mathilde Wesendonck and from the Uhlig correspondence. This was all in an attempt to "edit her ideal Wagner into paper existence."

In light of these facts, it does not seem improbable that Cosima could have attempted to destroy all evidence of any American flirtations on Wagner's part.

Robert M. Phillips
North Babylon, N.Y.

Since the letter discussed in the article was missing from Newell Jenkins' apartment, Mr. Phillips' hypothesis that Cosima Wagner disposed of it is highly unlikely. But coincidentally, an English translation of that letter that had been in the Boston Public Library was also discovered missing. Mr. Liepmann now gives us more information on that document: "Dr. Jenkins wrote to John Sullivan Dwight, enclosing a translation of Wagner's letter. In the Boston Public Library I found Jenkins' letter but not the enclosure. Further research revealed that the translation was returned to Dr. Jenkins upon the request of Cosima, who felt that too many people in America were already becoming aware of the immigration project. This is probably the translation mentioned by John Jenkins."

Mr. Liepmann adds, "Another German musician who preferred the artistic climate of America to Europe was Hans von Bülow, who on February 6, 1876, wrote to Cosima from Chicago: 'I do not intend to recross the Atlantic. I have found my real fatherland here. ("Wherever I can be of use, that is my Fatherland," as we once read in Goethe's *Wanderjahre*.) In fact, I consider myself henceforward dead and buried as far as Europe is concerned, and I am now taking the first steps to obtain citizen's rights in this free country.'"

Out with the Old?


I'm tempted to give Mr. Rosen ["Charles Rosen—Artist, Scholar, or Polymath?", November 1975] a taste of his own rejoinder, "I'm sorry, you're wrong," because I don't agree with his insight: "Listening to contemporary music is largely not an ability to accept the new, but a willingness to renounce the old." One does not renounce tonality to be able to have atonality in the sense that one renounces life to have death.

Tonal and atonal systems are theoretically quite opposed; nevertheless, I believe that man's inability to perceive anything except in nuclear relationships renders atonality subject to the same conceptual frontiers as tonality. In other words, we hear atonality in tonal terms, not on its own atonal terms, and it would be impossible to do otherwise. Therefore, there is no need to renounce the old for the new. Today's new is merely tomorrow's old.

Jaime Herrera
El Paso, Tex.



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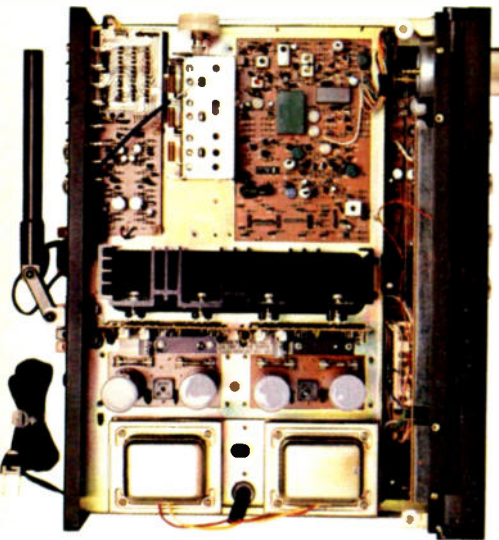
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System Square Wave Tilt	$< 5\%$	a. 50Hz	± 12 dB
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Damping Factor (1kHz @ 1 watt)	> 30	FM Sensitivity	
Power Amplifier Input Sensitivity	< 1.2 V	a. IHF	1.9 μ V
Power Amplifier Input Impedance	33 kilohms	b. -50 dB (mono)	3.5 μ V
Power Amplifier S/N (40 watts)	> 90 dB	c. -50 dB (stereo)	35 μ V
Power Amplifier Square Wave Rise Time	< 1.5 μ sec	Ultimate S/N	-70 dB
Preamp Input Sensitivity		Capture Ratio	2 dB
a. Aux	< 150 mV	Image Rejection	-80 dB
b. Tape Mon.	< 150 mV	Spurious Response Rejection	-80 dB
c. Phono	< 2.5 mV	IF Rejection	-90 dB
Preamp Input Impedance		AM Rejection	-60 dB
a. Aux	30 kilohms	Alternate Channel Selectivity	80 dB
b. Tape Mon.	30 kilohms	Multiplex Separation (1kHz)	40 dB
c. Phono	47 kilohms	FM Harmonic Distortion (1kHz)	
Preamp Input S/N		a. Mono	0.3%
a. Aux	> -75 dB	b. Stereo	0.4%
b. Tape Mon.	> -75 dB	Pilot Suppression	-55 dB
c. Phono	-67 dB	De-Emphasis	75 μ sec
Preamp Harmonic Distortion	$< 0.15\%$	Mute Level	Variable
a. Aux	-47 dB	Mute Suppression	-65 dB
b. Tape Mon.	-47 dB	Stereo Indicator Threshold	
c. Phono	-37 dB	(Pilot signal expressed a. "off" as % of base band) b. "on"	$< 3\%$
			$> 6\%$
		Audio Output	0.5V
		AM Sensitivity	> 250 μ V/m
		AM Signal for 1 watt Output	< 150 μ V/m
		AM Selectivity	35 dB
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		Image Rejection	-75 dB
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The Singers Unlimited step out:
Bonnie Herman, Gene Puerling, Don Shelton, and Len Dresslar

The Best Pop Vocal Group—Ever?

by Gene Lees

AT A SHOP in Manhattan that specializes in hard-to-get records, a copy of an old Hi-Lo's album was sold recently for a cool fifty bucks. The Hi-Lo's are enshrined in our memories as the best vocal group that ever was, and a good many people wonder what happened to it.

I have good news and bad news. First the bad news: It died. Now the good news: It has been reincarnated. And the Singers Unlimited is even better than the Hi-Lo's.

The new quartet has made eight albums for the German MPS/BASF label, which is recording more good American music than most American record companies. But MPS has always had poor distribution in the U.S., and you have to search for Singers Unlimited albums and even pound on a counter now and then while demanding in an authoritative voice that they be ordered for you.

Two of the members, Gene Puerling and Don Shelton, were with the original Hi-Lo's. Puerling, in fact, founded the Hi-Lo's and wrote its vocal arrangements. He does the writing for this quartet too, but it is infinitely more complex, since he overdubs on multitrack machines, sometimes going up to twenty-seven voices. Puerling writes wonderful harmonic things—textures and tensions and weaving inner lines that are sung with

eerily accurate intonation, beautiful blend, and absolute ease. Ease in doing difficult things is one of the hallmarks of art, and this seeming lack of effort is one of the most striking things about the group.

One difference between the Singers Unlimited and the all-male Hi-Lo's is a remarkably talented Chicago woman named Bonnie Herman, the lead voice of the Singers. Her singing is a poignant combination of vulnerable innocence and un-self-conscious sensualism. She has impeccable taste in phrasing and attack, and her voice is not easily forgotten. "She's a chameleon. She can be anything she wants to be," says pianist/arranger Clare Fischer, the onetime accompanist for the Hi-Lo's who recently wrote the orchestral arrangements for a Singers Unlimited recording.

What happened to the Hi-Lo's? How did this new group come into being?

"Our demise was really rock," Puerling said. "Toward the end, we were sitting one day at the Tropicana in Las Vegas, and Don Shelton laid it on us that he'd had an offer from a group called the J's and Jamie in Chicago. It was a good offer, and we all told him he should take it. I tried replacing him, but it never really worked, and the group fizzled.

"I went to Chicago too and tried get-

ting into the commercials field, but that didn't work either, and I moved to the San Francisco area.

"Then one day I got a call from Don Shelton saying that the J's and Jamie had broken up and that maybe we should try to put a group together again. I flew to Chicago and had a meeting with Don and Len Dresslar, who was also with the J's and Jamie and who's now our bass singer. We got together with Bonnie Herman, and I began to do some writing. Then we decided to try an experiment. I wrote an arrangement for multiple voices on 'The Fool on the Hill,' and we went into the studio to try overdubbing it. It took us thirty hours to do, with all the voices. Now we do an entire album in thirty hours.

"I played the tape for Audrey Morris, the singer and pianist, who's an old friend. She's also a friend of Oscar Peterson's, and she played it for him. Oscar took it to MPS in Germany, and they signed us. We did our first album in 1967, with Oscar. I don't think it's our best. We only had two days with Oscar before the recording. After that we did an album called 'A Cappella,' which was released in this country under the title 'Try to Remember.' 'The Fool on the Hill' is in that one."

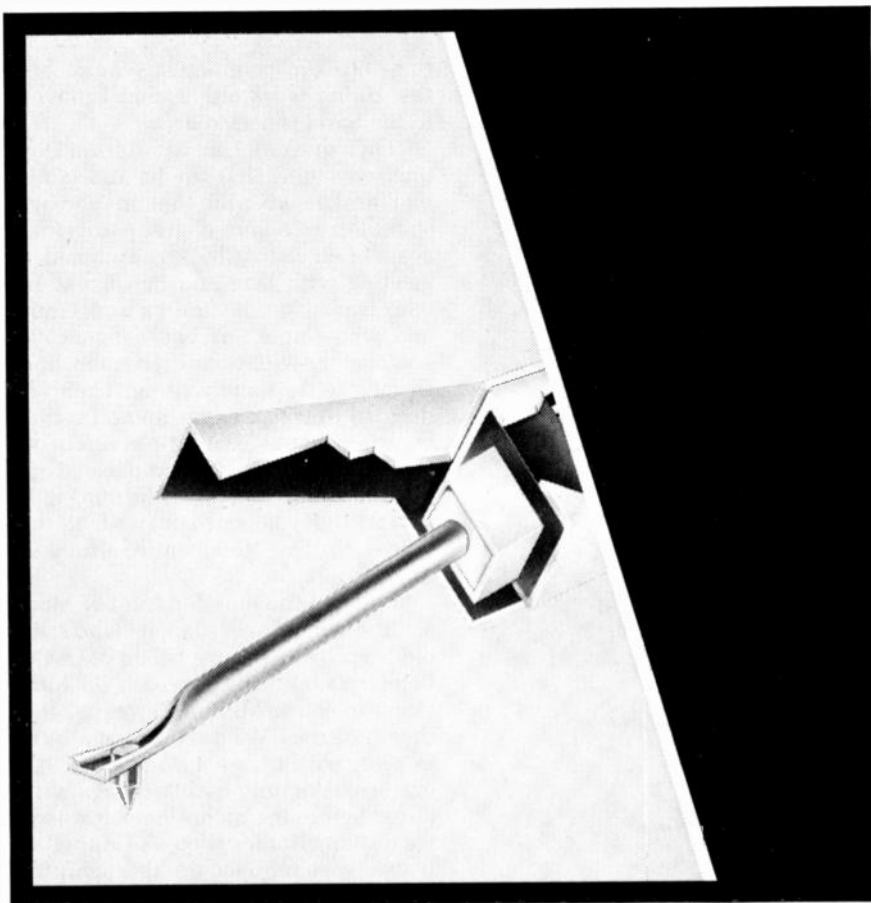
There is a problem in recording the quartet with instrumental accompaniment: Because the string bass takes over the root-motion function, Dresslar doesn't get a chance to use that beautiful bottom register of his voice; indeed, the group isn't heard much below midregister, and there is a loss of richness. A good many people prefer the a cappella albums.

Herman, Shelton, and Dresslar are all based in Chicago, where they are active in the commercials business. Puerling, who still lives near San Francisco, works on nothing but the Singers Unlimited. "I tell myself," he said, "that I should get into other things—the studio scene, perhaps—but the group takes up an awful lot of time and . . . frankly, I just can't see myself going into anything else. It's very satisfying, and I love it."

Amazingly, Puerling never studied music formally: "I took two piano lessons when I was a kid and hated it. In fact, I once flunked music in school. I've always just dug vocal groups. I got interested in choral classes in junior high school in Milwaukee, and I organized little choruses.

"I don't recommend not studying, though. That's something I want to get into more, studying. Now it's just through ear."

I just had to tell Puerling an anecdote that illustrates how professionals feel about him and Singers Unlimited.



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CIRCLE 29 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

One day I was sitting at the piano, working out the chord changes of "Emily." A harmonic sequence at the end was giving me trouble, so I called Johnny Mandel on the quite reasonable assumption that, since he wrote the tune, he should know the changes. He gave them to me, then asked, "Have you heard the Singers Unlimited do it?"

"Yes."

"Good," Johnny said. "Now throw out my changes and use Gene Puerling's." ●

Singers Unlimited on Records

IN TUNE. MPS 20905. Accompanied by the Oscar Peterson Trio. Neither group is heard at its best.

TRY TO REMEMBER. MPS 20903. A cappella. This is one of Singers Unlimited's finest.

CHRISTMAS. MPS 20904. A cappella, with harmonies kept comparatively pure and simple. One of the prettiest Christmas LPs around.

INVITATION. MPS 22016. Accompanied by the Art Van Damme Quintet. There are nice moments, but the group doesn't stretch out enough.

FOUR OF US. MPS 21825. Accompaniment by piano, bass, drums, guitar, with occasional additions of flute and alto saxophone by Don Shelton. Les Hooper, who wrote the instrumental arrangements, seems to know how to give support discreetly. Very attractive.

A CAPPELLA 2. MPS 22343. Simply stunning.

FEELIN' FREE. MPS 22607. This recording has just come out, so keep your eye out for it. Pat Williams' instrumental accompaniments work beautifully. The album is brighter, more up-tempo, and the group gets a chance to swing more. In a word, superb.

SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY. This one will be released in a few months. Watch for it, because the large-orchestra arrangements are by Robert Farnon, whom we seldom get a chance to hear any more. The problem of integrating Singers Unlimited with orchestra has been solved, and with Puerling and Farnon this is a sort of summit meeting of huge arranging talents. "Sentimental Journey" is gorgeous.

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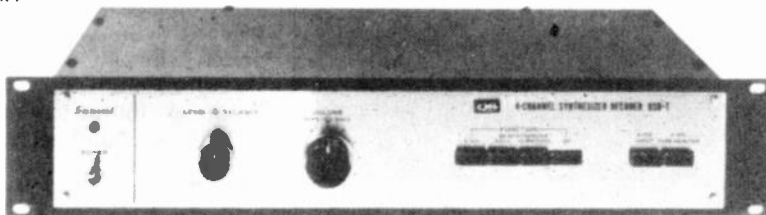
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All 4-channel Sansui receivers command excellent cost-to-performance ratios. The QRX-7001¹, at less than \$880.00,* delivers a full 35 watts per channel, min. RMS, all channels driven into 8 ohms, from 20Hz to 20kHz with no more than 0.4% total harmonic distortion. Every design element of this outstanding receiver lives up to Sansui's reputation for advanced high quality high fidel-

ity performance. Available in the same series are the QRX-6001¹, at less than \$760.00,* and the QRX-5001², at less than \$600.00,* with many of the same outstanding features.

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QRX-5001

QRX-7001

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Behind the Scenes

RCA on Broadway. When Thomas Z. Shepard left Columbia Masterworks to become a vice president and classical a&r chief of RCA Records, we reported ["New and Views," June 1974]: "He doesn't expect to have much time for studio work, recognizing that his primary responsibility is administrative. But we weren't surprised to learn that he expects to produce some original-cast albums ('that's my fun'), something RCA hasn't done much of recently." So we still weren't surprised when RCA announced that it would record (and Shepard would produce) albums from two big-name, Broadway-bound musicals.

Pacific Overtures is the latest collaboration of producer/director Hal Prince and composer/lyricist Stephen Sondheim, and Shepard is almost a third member of that team, having produced recordings of their *Company*, *Follies*, and *A Little Night Music*. (The last recording he produced for Columbia was of Prince's revival of *Candide*; his first RCA recording was a London-cast *Little Night Music*—he had already coproduced Columbia's original-cast album with Goddard Lieberson.) John Weidman's book is set in Japan after Commodore Perry's 1853 "visit"; the cast is all-Asian.

Rex features perhaps the biggest of all Broadway names: composer Richard Rodgers. This is Rodgers' first collaboration with lyricist Sheldon Harnick, whose previous credits include *Fiorello!*, *She Loves Me*, *The Apple Tree*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*. Sherman Yellen's book "is a story of intrigue and romance in the court of Henry VIII of England." Nicol Williamson is scheduled for the title role.

Karajan's Lohengrin. Scheduled for completion in January was Herbert von Karajan's latest operatic project, a complete *Lohengrin* for EMI. According to last word, the cast was to include René Kollo in the title role, Anna Tomowa-Sintow as Elsa, Ursula Schröder-Feinen as Ortrud, Siegmund Nimsgern as Telramund, and Karl Ridderbusch as the King. The orchestra, of course, is the Berlin Philharmonic. Release is scheduled for May.

Buffalo, Cincinnati. Two American orchestras that haven't been heard from on disc for a while have resumed recording, under their respective music directors.

With the Buffalo Philharmonic, Michael Tilson Thomas has finally begun work on the complete works of Carl Ruggles, one of the two projects announced at the time of his signing as an exclusive Columbia artist. The compositions recorded are *Sun Treader*, *Evocations*, *Men and Mountains*, and *Portals*. Thomas' other announced project, the complete works of Pérotin, has yet to materialize.

Meanwhile, the Cincinnati Symphony has signed a two-year contract with Vox to record three discs in the 1975-76 season and four in 1976-77, all conducted by Thomas Schippers. Already on tape is Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, with soprano Sung-Sook Lee, mezzo Florence Quivar, tenor Kenneth Riegel, bass Paul Plishka, and the Cincinnati May Festival Chorus. (Schippers should know the piece; his New York Philharmonic recording is still in the Columbia catalogue.)

RCA's operatic futures. RCA is planning what promises to be a busy operatic summer. Three projects are penciled in: a new *Forza del destino* with Leontyne Price, Plácido Domingo, and Sherrill Milnes, conducted by James Levine; *Andrea Chénier* with Renata Scotto; and the first stereo commercial recording of Montemezzi's *Amore dei tre re*, with Anna Moffo.

Nonesuch in St. Paul. Barely past thirty, Dennis Russell Davies has already accumulated an impressive list of credits (chronicled in the August 1975 *MUSICAL AMERICA*, when he was Musician of the Month), chief among them the conductorship of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (since 1972) and the music directorship of California's Cabrillo Festival (since 1974). Now he has added recordings to the list. A pair of records taped by Nonesuch in November in St. Paul's House of Hope Presbyterian Church will be released this month, and the occasion will be marked by promotional activities in St. Paul.

One disc contains three eighteenth-century works: a J. C. Bach G minor Symphony (Op. 6, No. 6), the Michael Haydn symphony that once masqueraded as Mozart's "Symphony No. 37" (Mozart *did* write the introduction), and the Mozart K. 62a Cassation (billed as a first complete recording). The other disc, recorded with a Ford Foundation grant, offers two new works by William Bolcom, written for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra: the

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More separation: "Separation, measured between right and left channels at a frequency of 1 kHz, did indeed measure 35 dB (rather remarkable for any cartridge)." **FM Guide, The Feldman Lab Report.**

Less distortion: "...the Empire 4000D/III produced the flattest overall response yet measured from a CD-4 cartridge—within ± 2 dB from 1,000 to 50,000 Hz." **Stereo Review.**

More versatile: "Not only does the 4000D/III provide excellent sound in both stereo and quadriphonic reproduction, but we had no difficulty whatever getting satisfactory quad playback through any demodulator or with any turntable of appropriate quality at our disposal." **High Fidelity.**

Less tracking force: "The Empire 4000D/III has a surprisingly low tracking force in the $\frac{1}{4}$ gram to $1\frac{1}{4}$ gram region. This is surprising because other cartridges, and I mean 4 channel types, seem to hover around the 2 gram class." **Modern Hi Fi & Stereo Guide.**

For the complete test reviews from these major audio magazines and a free catalogue, write: Empire Scientific Corp., Garden City, N.Y. 11530. Mfd. U.S.A.









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Output Voltage per Channel at 3.54 cm/sec groove velocity:	3.0	3.0	3.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Channel Separation	more than 35dB	more than 35dB	35dB	35dB	35dB	35dB	30dB	30dB
Tracking Force in Grams:	$\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$	1 to 3	1 to 3
Stylus Tip:	miniature nude diamond with .1 mil tracing radius **4 Dimensional	miniature nude diamond with .1 mil tracing radius **4 Dimensional	miniature nude diamond with 1 mil tracing radius **4 Dimensional	nude elliptical diamond .2 x .7 mil	nude elliptical diamond .2 x .7 mil	nude elliptical diamond .2 x .7 mil	elliptical diamond .3 x .7 mil	spherical diamond .7 mil
For Use In:	turntable only	turntable only	turntable or changer	turntable or changer	turntable or changer	turntable or changer	changer only	changer only
								
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It has a direct coupled power amplifier stage. As well as direct coupled FET amplifiers in the tone control and buffer stages.

Its bass and treble controls have a turnover frequency selector that starts at 250HZ/500HZ for bass and 2.5kHz/5kHz for treble.

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Of course, if you're going around looking for a turntable, by all means take a look at our PS-4750 (cartridge sold separately).

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1971 *Commedia*, for (almost) 18th-century orchestra and the 1975 song cycle *Open House* (texts by Theodore Roethke), with tenor Paul Sperry, who sang in the work's premiere last October.

Another quad first. To the list of repertory making its quadriphonic bow may be added the complete organ works of Bach. The rather unexpected source is Delos, the small West Coast company. Organist Wolfgang Rüksam plays the Metzler organ of Frauenfeld, Switzerland, and at the end of 1975 fourteen discs' worth had been taped. The miking, Delos director Amelia Haygood told us, aims for a maximum of direct, rather than reverberant, sound; the result will be issued on SQ discs. Four volumes should be available by March, containing, respectively, the six organ concertos, a miscellaneous collection, the eighteen Leipzig chorales, and the *Orgelbuchlein*.

Boult's Elgar. Despite his advanced age and poor health, EMI continues to coax Sir Adrian Boult into the recording studio as often as possible. Among other repertory planned, he has lately been returning to Elgar. On tape or planned are a complete *Dream of Gerontius* (with the London Philharmonic Choir and New Philharmonia Orchestra, and soloists Helen Watts, Nicolai Gedda, and Robert Lloyd) and the two symphonies (with the London Philharmonic).

Incidentally, Boult's 1969 EMI recording of *The Kingdom* (the only complete recording ever made) has now received its first domestic release. Connoisseur Society issued the two-disc set, its first vocal release, as the initial product of a new licensing arrangement with English EMI similar to that with Pathé Marconi, the French EMI affiliate ["Behind the Scenes," July 1975].

Treigle Memorial. The Norman Treigle Memorial Fund announces a new stereo LP assembled from "previously unknown private tapes" made available to the nonprofit fund, "set up by his colleagues to establish scholarships for young American singers" after the bass-baritone's death in February 1975 at the age of forty-seven.

The contents: "seventeen songs of faith, including traditional hymns, oratorio, spirituals, and a rock prayer which is the only music known to have been composed by Norman Treigle himself." The price: \$6.50 post-paid, from the Norman Treigle Memorial Fund, Box 1137, Ansonia Station, New York, N.Y. 10023.

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Stress analysis photos show concentrated high pressure with elliptical stylus (left), reduced pressure, less groove distortion with Shibata stylus (right).

The AT15Sa even helps improve the sound of old, worn records. Because the Shibata stylus uses parts of the groove wall probably untouched by other elliptical or spherical styli. And the AT15Sa Shibata stylus is mounted on a thin-wall tapered tube, using a nude square-shank mounting. The result is less mass and greater precision than with common round-shank styli. It all adds up to lower distortion and smoother response. Differences you can hear on every record you play.

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CIRCLE 21 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Too Hot to Handle

Your magazine continues to disregard television. Though high fidelity and TV are branches of the same industry, where is the link between them? And what surprises me most is the lack of public awareness. Even among those who invest heavily in stereo equipment, TV sound appears to be considered adequate. Your magazine should take up this ridiculous anomaly. I'm beginning to think it really is too hot to handle.—Ronald Pataki, Jersey City, N.J.

You don't make plain whether you're complaining of TV sound as broadcast or as reproduced on typical home receivers. Either way, we agree with all but your statement that we haven't given the problem adequate coverage. TV sound often is execrable, and we've made no bones about it. We have, for example, given particular coverage to various schemes involving stereo sound for video, which—if they had achieved wide acceptance—could have tied the two industries closer together and focused attention on the manifest inadequacies of TV sound. But even when we ran our article (in the August 1974 issue) on recording TV sound—which enumerated the inadequacies in considerable detail—the reader response was largely from specialists of one sort or another. Many of our general-purpose listening/viewing readers may have been awakened to the shortcomings, but if so they didn't choose to let us know about it. So the situation remains: Broadcasters pay little attention to audio quality because the receivers are so bad; receiver manufacturers don't bother because so much that is broadcast is so bad (and a good sound system can show it up even more vividly); viewers, by and large, don't seem to notice.

I power a pair of KLH-6 speaker systems with a Sherwood 7300 receiver. The tweeter of each system has on separate occasions burned out under relatively moderate amplification—each time while playing the same piece of music. The speakers were repaired under warranty, but I was under the impression that these speakers, being inefficient, could easily handle all the power my Sherwood could dish out (42 watts continuous per channel). Was I right?—Peter J. Perna, Newark, Del.

While what you mean by "moderate amplification" is not clear (the position of your volume control?), amplification is not the issue. Power—in this case power delivered to the tweeter—is. A low-efficiency loudspeaker just makes less sound for the same input power by comparison with an efficient one; it is not necessarily harder to burn out.

That your failures are both associated with the same selection suggests that this music has some unusual properties inimical to tweeters, which characteristically will handle far less power than typical woofers. Pru-

dence would suggest that this and similar music be played at lower volume levels in the future—or that the speakers be replaced with ones that can handle more power.

When I play back cassettes I have recorded on my Sony TC-177 I often hear peculiarities at the beginning of the tape—a muffling of the sound or a slight fluctuation of the level. I have read that the tape can skew when it starts up and produce effects like this, but they don't seem to occur in the middle of tapes, only at the end. What, if anything, am I doing wrong?—G. F. French, Burlingame, Calif.

You may be starting your recordings too close to the splice between the leader and the recording tape. The operators on every cassette assembly line we've seen in operation wear gloves to prevent finger oils from getting onto the tape's magnetic coating, to minimize the anomalies in response occasioned by the handling necessary in making the splice. But still we find that—even in the best brands and in open-reel tapes as well as cassettes—response tends to fluctuate in the first few inches following the splice. And a drop in sensitivity will, with Dolby processing, produce a muffling in the output. The only cure we know of is to allow a few seconds of "wasted" tape before you begin recording.

I have Bose 901 Series II speakers with equalizer. I plan to purchase the Soundcraftsmen preamp 2217 with equalizer. Would the additional equalizer be a waste of money? Should I expect to hear more distortion when using both equalizers at the same time?—Jack Young, Smithtown, N.Y.

There is no reason why you should not use a second equalizer with your Bose speakers. The Bose equalizer is designed to correct a frequency-response problem inherent in the drive. The Soundcraftsmen equalizer is useful for correcting program deficiencies and, to a lesser extent, room acoustics.

The only condition we can imagine that would tend to substantially increase the distortion of your system is an attempt to get more bass from the Bose speakers than they now deliver. This should not be done, but correction of bass-shy program material is perfectly acceptable.

Do you consider the Marantz 1060 amplifier to be of sufficient quality and to have sufficient power to be used with a pair of AR-2ax speakers? My room is 14 by 12 by 8 feet. Are these speakers suitable for use in a room this size?—Baden Edwards, Tasmania, Australia. The Marantz 1060 is certainly of good enough quality to match a pair of AR-2ax loudspeakers, and the power output (30 watts per channel) is quite adequate, especially in a fairly small room. The usual rule of

JBL Loudspeaker Components



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Realistic? Pioneer? Marantz?

Realistic STA-225
Stereo Receiver
About \$400

Which one has Auto-Magic tuning?

Of the top three hi-fi receiver brands, only Realistic* makes perfect tuning an instant electronic reality on the FM band. We call our creation Auto-Magic* because "like magic" is how it works. Now you only need a tuning meter to show relative station strength, not for fishing around for optimum reception.

Realistic is also the audio brand that helped knock out the \$20 to \$30 extra charge for wood receiver cabinets. By not charging extra! Now you see why Radio Shack sold over 3,000,000 Realistics in 1975 and really merits your next "good music" purchase.

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Great sound since 1923

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CIRCLE 23 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

thumb states that a bookshelf-size acoustic suspension speaker requires an amplifier with 25 watts of output power to drive it, so you have a little bit to spare.

The Phase Linear 400 power amp has been criticized on the grounds that it does not have a regulated power supply. However, according to Phase Linear, its power supply can deliver a lot more power on short bursts of output. I've also heard that with the "perfect" power supply there would be no difference between the continuous power ratings and the dynamic power ratings. Other manufacturers seem to promote the strict regulation of their power supplies as being a virtue of their product. I would appreciate it if you could clarify this matter for me.—Nancy E. Willmott, Detroit, Mich.

The transformer and rectifier used in any power supply are imperfect and have losses involved in their operation. The net result is that, as more current is delivered to the load, the supply voltage gets lower. In order to deliver rated output power, the supply must therefore show a reserve of voltage under light load conditions. Assuming that proper margins exist in the amplifier itself, the only effect of this extra voltage is to allow a slightly higher output power for brief transients. Since this is not a problem, it does not make sense to regulate the supply, especially since a regulator would add appreciably to the cost of the product.

Why don't the makers of stereo cassette tape recorders put a separate record button on each channel so we can record different material on each of the two tracks?—Stanley B. Gilson Jr., New York, N.Y.

The license (from Philips of the Netherlands) under which stereo cassette recorders are built in effect forbids such an arrangement in a machine made for the consumer market. And since channel separation is generally only about 20 dB, even on some fine cassette decks, there would probably be too much crosstalk between the two channels to do you much good anyway.

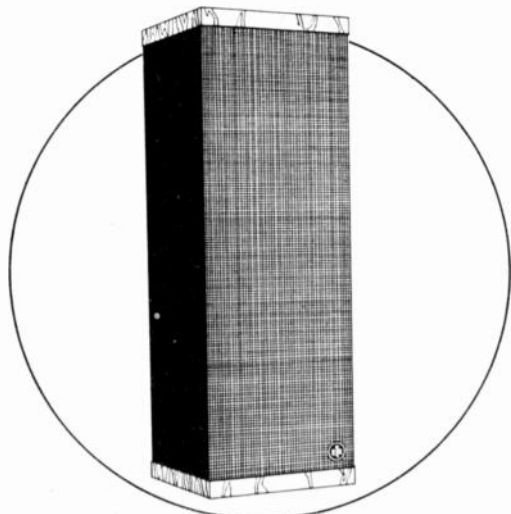
Some while ago I went to an audio dealer to buy a Watts Dust Bug. He replied that he didn't sell the product because it interferes with the proper tracking of the tone arm and increases record wear. Is this true?—Loren Grossman, Toronto, Canada.

Your dealer seems to have confused the Dust Bug with a brush device that is mounted on the tone arm (although this too can be made to behave properly). The Dust Bug is mounted independent of and makes no contact with the tone arm. The only mechanical side effect we have ever observed with a Dust Bug is a slight slowing of the turntable (easily corrected via a variable-speed control) due to increased drag. We know of no reason to suspect increased disc wear.

I recently purchased a Wollensak 4765 cassette recorder and was surprised to read in the operating instructions that demagnetization (degaussing) of the tape heads is never required. Will I damage the heads if I attempt to demagnetize?—Fred M. Bindman, Silver Spring, Md.

The automatic degaussing feature on your unit will take care of a major source of residual magnetism. However, manual degaussing will not hurt if done carefully and, in fact, may help.

The Column Restated! RTR reaches new heights with the 240D music system.



RTR 240D - \$229

In 1970, RTR introduced you to the column concept. Now the all-new 240D restates the column in a system of towering reproduction capability.

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CIRCLE 26 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

**LISTEN TO OUR DIRECT-DRIVE TURNTABLE.
YOU WON'T ONLY HEAR HOW ACCURATE IT IS.
YOU'LL SEE IT.**



Your valuable record collection deserves to be heard on the best equipment. And that includes the best turntable.

The Toshiba deluxe Model SR-355 turntable has a built-in stroboscope that lets you see just how accurate it is.

The SR-355 is a totally manual, direct drive unit. It's equipped with a DC servo-motor, an S-shaped static-balanced tonearm with damped arm elevator, stylus force adjustment, and anti-skate adjusting knob. The screw-in cartridge shell fits a universal mount. And the platter is made of die-cast aluminum.

Its wow/flutter measurement is .04% and the two operating speeds (33 $\frac{1}{3}$ and 45) have a 2% adjustment.

Sit back and enjoy your music on the Toshiba SR-355 turntable.

It may be the first time you really hear it.

The stroboscope offers
2% adjustment of the two operating speeds.



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Cartridge not included

CIRCLE 39 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

MARCH 1976

21

Cooking on the Back Channels

Not long ago we were approached by a gentleman from Audio Pulse, which has a prototype of an audio delay unit. Would we like to hear it? Well, we're always ready to lend an ear or two to a new audio idea.

Audio Pulse is a newly formed division of Hybrid Systems, a Boston-area manufacturer that has up until now specialized in computer technology. In concept, an audio delay unit is a simple device. A signal is fed into its input and emerges from its output after a predetermined time (perhaps several milliseconds) but is otherwise unchanged. Other devices have been available for this use—echo chambers, tape loops, spring reverberators, and the like—but all suffered from marginal performance or exorbitant price or both. Their purpose is, of course, to add synthetic reverberation to existing recordings—or live sounds, for that matter.

We had been aware that computer technology had been applied to this problem, but we also knew that the equipment available carried very high prices. The Audio Pulse mechanism is the first that we've seen designed for the consumer market. (The company expects to sell a stereo unit for about \$500.) The device takes a music waveform

and changes it into a string of digits that chase each other through a series of storage cells and are converted back to a music waveform at the other end. This in itself would produce only a single delay, insufficient for convincing simulation of reverberation, so several different delays are used. In addition, signals are fed through the unit several times and are even bounced back and forth between its two channels.

The over-all effect is astonishingly realistic. With the simulated reverb fed through the back channels of our four-channel setup (our guests denied all connection with conventional quad, even in the placement of the speakers), we could, by twisting a few knobs, turn our rather "dead" listening room into a small auditorium, a large concert hall, a cathedral, or even a cave (a somewhat bizarre effect). Moreover, the reverberance came from in back of (and seemingly all around) us, rather than just from in front, putting us effectively in the middle of the acoustic "space"—which, of course, can't be accomplished with conventional stereo. An additional feature allows some reverb to be fed into the front channels, which heightens the effect even more.

Subsequent developments suggest that this idea may be catching on; a second Boston-area company reportedly plans to introduce a similar unit, and as redoubtable a manufacturer as Phase Linear also has something in the works. Audio Pulse hopes to be in manufacture sometime this month.

CIRCLE 152 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



And the Music Is So Restful, Too

Here it is, folks: a solid walnut enclosure for your whole stereo system. Well, maybe it's not quite what you had in mind. But James L. Anderson, a mortician who lives in Metairie, Louisiana, finds that it works quite well. He assures us that, contrary to appearances, the system—which includes a JVC VR-5535X receiver, an Akai CS-500 cassette deck, a Roberts four-track stereo-video recorder, and a Garrard turntable, in addition to the Creative Model 88 speakers seen (grieving?) at the sides—is alive and well.

Cassettes of the Future? (Part I)

There are relatively few cassette tapes, out of scores on the market, to which recorders actually are adjusted in manufacture. Manufacturers can often seem downright obscurantist on this point. Yet, if you use a tape with a recorder adjusted for a significantly different type, the unavoidable result is a high-low imbalance in the sound.

TDK SD was the choice of recorder manufacturers a few years ago. Then Maxell came along with UD, and producers of decks found that it would deliver a little better performance than SD if the decks were readjusted for UD—meaning slightly higher bias. So UD became the tape, and some tape manufacturers actually came out with very close matches: Fuji's FX, TDK's Audua, Nakamichi's EX, even Maxell's own UD-XL are examples. They're not identical, of course, but they are (mercifully) interchangeable without mismatch to the recorder.

It would be helpful, then, if there could be a standardized terminology about tape types. Say we called the bottom rung Group I, for a good tape of modest price—something like BASF SK might serve as the model. Group II could be SD and compatible tapes. Group III could be UD and its match-mates. Perhaps Group IV could be chrome and not TDK's SA (which in terms of bias and equalization, if not output, is interchangeable with chrome). Then both cassettes and deck switch positions could be unequiv-

Can a speaker be all things to all people?

Say music enthusiasts — “I have to relisten to all my Pink Floyd and Frank Zappa albums because I realize now I never really heard them before. Freaks me right out!” *LARRY ROGAK, N.Y.*

About accuracy — “Elton John sounds like Elton John and not Wayne Newton with a sinus condition. All kinds of music sound great, from Percy Faith to Led Zepplin.” *GRANT HOWES, MICHIGAN*

You can play it loud — “I once read it was not possible to have a rock concert in your home, but with the B·I·C Venturi it is possible.”

RICHARD KNES, ILLINOIS

Or play it low — “I feel I must write...to thank someone that realizes there are a few of us who don't like our stereo and quad up blasting our eardrums. These Formula 2 are great at any volume.” *MRS. GAIL MCAULOF, CALIFORNIA*

From professional users — “I am a disc jockey and work with some of the finest sound equipment available... I purchased a set of your Formula 4's after a year of shopping around... In my opinion none sounded better at any price.” *DAVID FOOR, FLORIDA*

And audio engineers — “I am an audio engineer at (AM, FM, TV broadcast station)... An excellent speaker and a great design concept.”

PHIL JONES, SOUTH CAROLINA

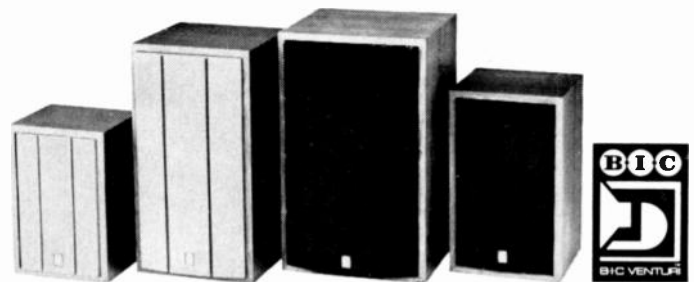
Even people who sell audio — “You've really got the product... my recommendation 9 times out of 10 is B·I·C Venturi.” *DAVID WILLIAMS, TEXAS (DEALER)*

And those who've lived with it — “Nearly a year ago I purchased a pair of Formula 6... the performance has substantiated my original beliefs.”

JERRY GRETZINGER, MICHIGAN

So join this fellow who says — “I could not be more pleased with the performance of your product, nor with myself for having the good sense to have chosen them!” *RONALD BERTHEL, N.Y.*

Because you can believe — “I was somewhat skeptical about the claims in your advertisements... I purchased a pair of Formula 6... Your speakers surpass all the claims made... They are fantastic!” *RANDOLPH L. KRUMM, N.J.*

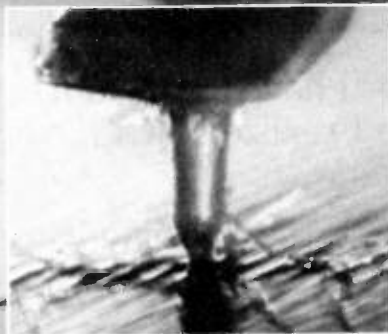


WRITE FOR OUR 20 PAGE CONSUMER GUIDE TO LOUDSPEAKER PERFORMANCE: B·I·C VENTURI, WESTBURY, N.Y. 11590.

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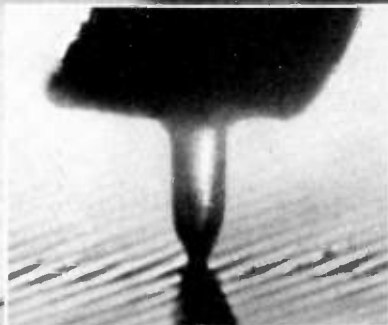
B·I·C VENTURITM

**This is what happens
every time you play a record.**



Photographed at 200X magnification with 1.5 gram tracking force on an Empire 598III turntable.

**This is what happens
after you apply Sound Guard.TM**



Photographed at 200X magnification with 1.5 grams tracking force on an Empire 598III turntable.

Introducing Sound Guard.™

The first product ever that protects records against wear, without resulting loss in frequency response or fidelity.

Every time you play a record you destroy some of its sound. The culprit is friction. An inevitable result of a hard, diamond stylus tracking soft, vinyl grooves.

Under 200X magnification you can see the damage occur. Tiny shavings of vinyl curl off the record like metal off a lathe.

You literally see sound being worn away. After repeated playings your ears begin to confirm what your eyes have seen.

Until now, no product could protect records against wear without interfering with sound fidelity.

An answer from outer space

From Ball Corporation research into dry lubricants for NASA's Orbiting Solar Observatories came a breakthrough in micro-coatings that can function for long periods under extreme conditions.

One derivative of this new technology is a microscopically thin, dry film that molecularly binds itself to vinyl. Developed into a record preservative this product is now known as Sound Guard.*

How Sound Guard works

Just spray Sound Guard on (it has a non-aerosol pump sprayer). Then buff it with the soft, durable velvet buffing pad provided in the kit.

Sound Guard puts an ultra-thin, dry film on the groove surfaces to substantially reduce wear. (It's self-limiting and may be applied repeatedly without buildup. The film thickness is less than 0.000005".) One bottle will protect about 20 LP's.

Sound Guard is *dry*—not wet



over this new product. Along with audio experts who've tested it, we believe Sound Guard is the long-awaited breakthrough in sound

and sticky like silicone-type products—so dust or dirt won't accumulate on the stylus or in the grooves. And since it has an anti-stat built in, Sound Guard actually prevents records from attracting dust.

But does Sound Guard adversely affect frequency response or fidelity? For conclusive proof, we asked the most respected of the independent audio laboratories for an exhaustive evaluation. Their results were astounding!

Test results

1. The application of Sound Guard to a stereophonic or CD-4 quadrasonic disc does not in any way degrade audible frequency response.
2. Sound Guard increases the life of the records by significantly reducing record wear.
3. Sound Guard significantly retards increases in random noise content (surface noise) and total harmonic distortion caused by repeated playing.
4. Records treated with Sound Guard do not attract dust as readily as untreated discs. (Complete test results will be mailed with every order.)

Like it or your money back

We're understandably excited

fidelity protection.

As of now, the only way you can buy Sound Guard is by ordering direct. Just fill in the coupon (or write: Sound Guard, P.O. Box 3300, Muncie, IN 47302) and enclose your check or money order payable to Sound Guard. \$5.99 for one Sound Guard kit plus \$1.00 for postage and handling.

For two or more kits, pay \$5.99 each and we'll pay postage and handling. If not satisfied return the unused portion and we'll refund your money or replace the product at your option.

Sound Guard keeps your good sounds sounding good.

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Yes, I'm interested in Sound Guard.

Please send me *one* Sound Guard kit. I am enclosing a check or money order for \$6.99 (\$5.99 plus \$1.00 for postage and handling).

Please send me _____ Sound Guard kits. I am enclosing a check or money order for _____ (\$5.99 each kit—postage and handling *free*).

Make check or money order payable to Sound Guard.

Name _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(please print clearly) HF-3-E



*Sound Guard is Ball Corporation's trademark for its record preservative. Copyright ©Ball Corporation, 1976.

ocally labeled for compatibility; the manufacturers of each would know what to expect of the other's products; the purchaser would be freed from guesswork. Glorioski!

We were ruminating on this subject recently with Ted Nakamichi of Nakamichi Research, and he seemed somewhat taken aback. His company, it seems, has been considering an approach along these lines. Three cheers for Nakamichi! Perhaps others are, at this very moment, thinking along similar lines. But it will take much more than a few manufacturers to make such a system work.

The industry would have to agree on bias currents, recording equalization curves, and Dolby-level adjust-

ments. But if it did, you could buy a Group II tape and know that it would deliver flat response with any deck bearing the Group II label or with a Group II switch position. You would know, if you bought a Group III deck, that any Group III tape would be good but that, if you saved a little money by buying Group II, you'd have to give up some high-end response—and even more with a Group I tape.

From March 1 to 3 the International Tape Association, representing both hardware and software manufacturers, will be meeting in Tucson. Is it too much to hope that some member of the industry will bring the subject up for discussion?

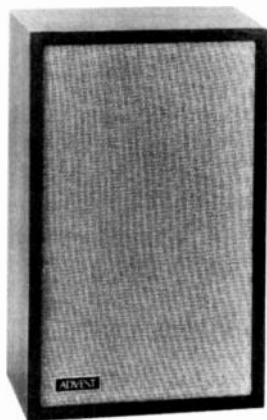
Cassettes of the Future? (Part II)

And while we're on the subject of tape types, we might mention that there seem to be growing rumblings within the industry about chrome. Two deck manufacturers have told us they expect chrome (and ferrichrome) to disappear from the market within a few years. They give several reasons: By comparison to a good ferric, chrome's distortion is higher; it wears tape heads a little faster; it is more brittle and therefore harder to coat permanently onto ultra-thin backings; the raw particle is relatively unreliable (one man-

ufacturer says as much as 60% is rejected for tape manufacture as out of spec); and—far from keeping up with the rapid development of ferric particles—it presents little hope of significant improvement. At this writing at least one deck manufacturer is thinking of adjusting its high-bias position for TDK SA instead of chrome; at least one tape manufacturer plans to recall all its chrome product.

But, again, one manufacturer in each field does not a landslide make.

Equipment in the News



Advent/3 is smaller yet

Advent Corp. is now marketing a two-way acoustic suspension speaker system, the Advent/3. The compact unit, measuring 16 by 10 by 6½ inches deep, has an impedance rating of 8 ohms and is said to need a minimum of 10 watts of amplifier power. Its frequency range is the same as that of the original Advent Loudspeaker except for the lowest half-octave of bass. The drivers and crossover network provide an octave-to-octave tonal balance as close to the original Advent's as possible. The manufacturer claims that the Advent/3 provides listeners with a higher-performance alternative to other systems in its price range. The speaker costs approximately \$50.

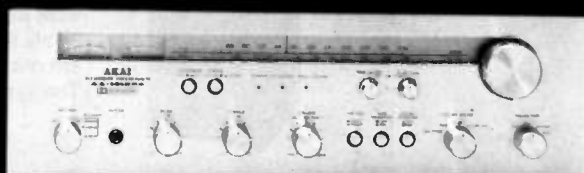
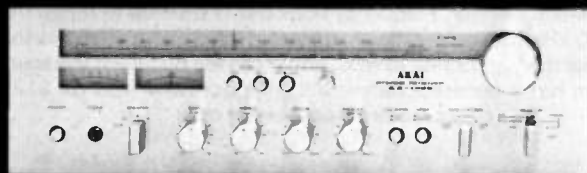
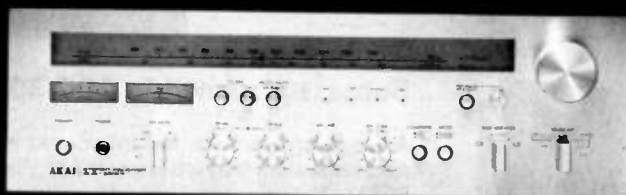
Sansui offers high power in new receiver

The Model 9090 stereo receiver from Sansui features direct coupling throughout, from input to the power amplifier. The receiver is also equipped with signal-strength and tuning meters, a phase-locked loop stereo demodulator, microphone-mixing circuit, and 4-channel adaptor input. Capture ratio is 1.5 dB, and selectivity is 85 dB. With both channels driven into 8-ohm speakers, according to Sansui, the 9090 has an audio power output of 110 watts per channel continuous (rms) over the range from 20 Hz to 20 kHz with 0.2% total harmonic distortion. The receiver, which costs about \$750, has a cabinet with walnut veneer.

CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



AKAI COMES ON STRONG!



We've been around this business a long time. Making a name for ourselves. A strong name. Akai. Worldwide, one of the strongest names going in tape equipment.

And now we're stronger than ever.

Introducing the Akai 1000 Series. Our powerful new line of Stereo and Quad receivers. We put this line together with one purpose in mind: to turn out the best line of receivers, for the money, in the business. As far as we're concerned that's exactly what we've done.

The strength of the 1000 Series starts with its engineering. It's every bit as strong as the quality that made our tape equipment famous.

Next, strong performance characteristics and features.

We honestly don't know

where you'd find, for the price, a line of receivers that comes on with better sound and more versatility than ours. If that sounds like a strong statement, a visit to your Akai dealer may convince you it's not strong enough.

As for styling, look for yourself. Look again. It's brushed aluminum. Clean. Handsome. Superb. Everything styling ought to be. Period.

As for value, we couldn't make it stronger. A high to low price range to fit the needs of just about anyone.

The Akai 1000 Series. With power output from 14 to 80 watts per channel, it's got the quality, performance, looks, value. And with a receiver line like that, you've got to know we're comin' on...strong!

AKAITM
COMIN' ON STRONG!

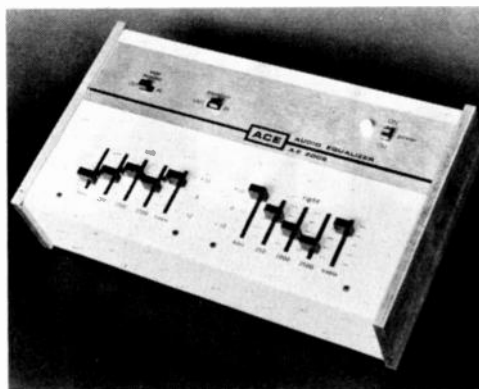
Akai 1000 Series receivers from \$300 to \$900 suggested retail value.

For more information write Akai America Ltd., 2139 Del Amo Boulevard, Compton, California 90220

A full-range equalizer from Ace Audio

The Model AE2002 audio equalizer from Ace Audio Co. is available both in kit and factory-wired versions. Each of the 5 bands per channel covers a 2-octave range, with each channel having separate controls. The equalizer is claimed to have full response down to 20 Hz and out to 20 kHz. With the maximum output at 8 volts rms, Ace Audio rates the unit at 2 volts output to a 10K load. Switches for power, tape monitor, and equalizer detent are provided, as well as an unswitched AC convenience outlet. The kit, designated AE2002K, is \$84.25; the wired model, AE2002W, is \$133.75. A construction manual is provided for \$2.25 and a schematic diagram for \$1.00.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Successor named to ADC-303AX speaker

Audio Dynamics Corp. has introduced its Model 303AX-2, a bookshelf speaker system that is designated as the successor to the popular ADC-303AX. The new model has a 10-inch acoustic suspension woofer and a wide dispersion tweeter. Frequency response is claimed to range from 37 Hz to 20 kHz. The walnut-finish cabinet is filled with a sound-absorbent material that, according to ADC, enhances the quality of the sound. The system has a textured, removable grille cloth and sells for \$129.

CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Southwest Technical's CD-4 demodulator

A complete CD-4 demodulator is available in kit form from Southwest Technical Products Corp. of San Antonio, Tex. The unit, designed by Lou Dorren of Quadracast Systems, Inc., is built around an integrated circuit and can accommodate the Technics semiconductor cartridge made by Panasonic as well as the more familiar magnetic cartridges. The kit is offered with power supply and case for a total cost of \$50. A Technics cartridge is available for an additional \$25.

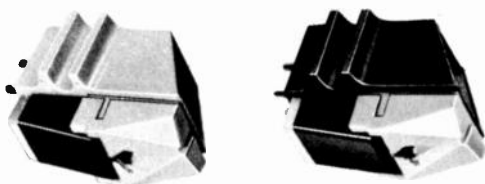
CIRCLE 157 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Two new magnetic cartridges from Fidelitone

Two magnetic cartridges, the JT-322 and the JT-311, have been added to the audio line of Fidelitone, Inc. The JT-322 features a compliant shank material, a dampener-with-ring system that is supposed to catch sound waves very precisely, and a claimed frequency response from 10 Hz to 45 kHz. It is applicable to CD-4, matrix systems, and 2-channel stereo and has an elliptical diamond stylus. The JT-311 is a stereo cartridge with a frequency response from 10 Hz to 28 kHz. It, too, uses compliant shank material, and its small stylus tip, says Fidelitone, makes for excellent trackability. The JT-322 sells for \$54.95; the JT-311 costs \$16.95.

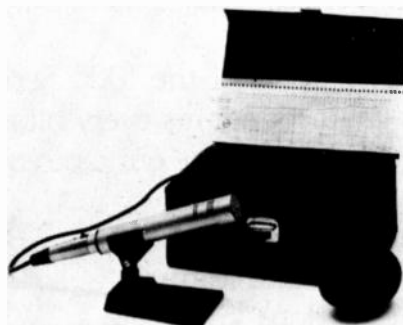
CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Revox introduces unidirectional microphone

Now available from Revox Corp. is its 3500 unidirectional moving-coil microphone, which has cardioid characteristics. According to Revox, use of a pressure gradient transducer and an efficient magnetic circuit results in outstanding performance and high sensitivity despite the microphone's small size. The company also claims that the 3500, which may be used stand-mounted or hand-held, is especially suited for tape recording. With an impedance of 600 ohms and a claimed response from 40 Hz to 18 kHz, the microphone comes with colored windshield, clamp, table stand, and presentation case. Its termination is of the Cannon XLR type. The Revox 3500 costs \$165.

CIRCLE 151 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



STEREOTECH

"You'll hear more from us!"



Make sure you get your moneys worth when you buy a stereo. Modern technology, solid state electronics and contemporary engineering permits most equipment available today to have comparable performance. If performance is the only measurement you make you will be in danger of not getting the most for your money.

Stereotech performance has been designed to be "State of the Art" and high value. Not only must each Stereotech perform but each Stereotech product must deliver long trouble-free life. Careful engineering combined with time consuming life and stress testing of each component part that goes into a Stereotech have assured the performance of Stereotech. Handcrafted construction and unit by unit testing assures you that the Stereotech you get will perform to your expectations.

To prove the value of long life, Stereotech will give you a 5 Year Factory Service Policy when you invest in a Stereotech. Not only is long life promised without additional cost but is assured by this Stereotech offer - - - Full details are at carefully selected dealers. That's right, Stereotech isn't everywhere; only at those specialists that think enough of you to invest in facilities that can care for your needs properly.

Or, send us the coupon. We will rush data to help you select the right stereo dealer plus full information on Stereotech and the right stereo for you.

Stereo Technology Division
 1010 Conklin Rd.
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P	81	I	82	L	83	S	84	U	85			G	86	B	87	R	88	D	89	O	90	N	91	X	92			F	93	Z	94
U	95			C	96	S	97	R	98	M	99	YY	100	I	101			P	102	M	103	B	104	Y	105			X	106	D	107
		F	108	ZZ	109	U	110			O	111	L	112	T	113	N	114	B	115	I	116	M	117	U	118			Z	119	Q	120
		L	121	Y	122	B	123	O	124	P	125	U	126	R	127	X	128	YY	129	S	130	M	131	N	132			J	133	YY	134
O	135			L	136	W	137	Y	138	R	139	X	140	V	141	S	142	T	143	A	144	K	145	N	146	P	147			D	148
I	149	G	150	YY	151	Y	152	V	153	L	154			O	155	Z	156	S	157			Q	158	U	159	N	160	M	161	W	162
P	163			C	164	Z	165			A	166	J	167	N	168	L	169	M	170	S	171	C	172	R	173	B	174	X	175	D	176
I	177	Y	178			S	179	X	180	U	181			E	182	N	183	F	184			H	185	O	186			V	187	ZZ	188
P	189	L	190			T	191	D	192			W	193	I	194	M	195	B	196	X	197	K	198	YY	199	O	200			C	201
G	202	L	203					X	204	J	205	B	206	N	207	U	208	E	209	D	210	I	211			Z	212	F	213	Y	214
Q	215	X	216	ZZ	217																										

DIRECTIONS

To solve these puzzles—and they aren't as tough as they first seem—supply as many of the Output words as you can in the numbered dashes following the Input. Unless otherwise specified in the Input, the Output consists of one English word. "Comp." means compound, or hyphenated, word.

Transfer each letter to the square in the diagram that bears the corresponding number. After only a few correct guesses you should begin to see words and phrases emerging in the diagram, which when filled in will contain a quotation related to music, recordings, or audio.

The words in the quotation are separated by darkened squares and do not necessarily end at the end of a row.

Try to guess at these words and transfer each newly decoded letter back to its appropriate dash in the Output. This will supply you with further clues.

A final clue: The source of the quotation—the author and his work—will be spelled out by the first letters in the Output, reading down.

The answer to HiFi-Croctic No 10 will appear in next month's issue of *High Fidelity*.

INPUT	OUTPUT	INPUT	OUTPUT
A Unit of electrical resistance	<u>144</u> <u>41</u> <u>166</u>	P The signal energy from two or more uncoordinated channels	<u>189</u> <u>5</u> <u>102</u> <u>26</u> <u>125</u> <u>163</u> <u>81</u> <u>49</u> <u>147</u> <u>66</u>
B Following <i>Die Lehár's</i> most popular operetta (2 Ger wds)	<u>12</u> <u>104</u> <u>115</u> <u>174</u> <u>27</u> <u>196</u> <u>60</u> <u>73</u> <u>87</u> <u>206</u> <u>36</u> <u>123</u>	Q ___ <i>Festivals</i> , by Respighi	<u>21</u> <u>120</u> <u>158</u> <u>215</u> <u>63</u>
C High fidelity pioneer	<u>52</u> <u>172</u> <u>164</u> <u>201</u> <u>96</u>	R Device that amplifies strong signals more than weak ones	<u>98</u> <u>88</u> <u>127</u> <u>173</u> <u>10</u> <u>139</u> <u>57</u> <u>42</u>
D German-American pianist and composer (1833-94) <i>The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers</i> (full name)	<u>176</u> <u>89</u> <u>13</u> <u>192</u> <u>59</u> <u>210</u> <u>107</u> <u>25</u> <u>75</u> <u>148</u>	S. A roller to clamp tape against the capstan shaft (2 wds)	<u>142</u> <u>171</u> <u>130</u> <u>179</u> <u>84</u> <u>97</u> <u>7</u> <u>72</u> <u>50</u> <u>157</u>
E Musical unit	<u>182</u> <u>80</u> <u>209</u> <u>33</u>	T German composer (1866-1905) piano pieces, including a concerto	<u>56</u> <u>113</u> <u>191</u> <u>143</u>
F St ___ <i>Passion</i>	<u>213</u> <u>93</u> <u>108</u> <u>64</u> <u>46</u> <u>16</u> <u>184</u>	U. An electronic instrument (2 Fr wds)	<u>126</u> <u>181</u> <u>95</u> <u>43</u> <u>208</u> <u>1</u> <u>159</u> <u>118</u> <u>30</u> <u>110</u> <u>54</u> <u>20</u> <u>85</u>
G <i>Rosenkavalier</i> baron	<u>37</u> <u>150</u> <u>202</u> <u>86</u>	V Control a component's tendency to respond to a signal no longer present	<u>153</u> <u>141</u> <u>187</u> <u>15</u>
H Unit of a signal's intensity (abbr)	<u>61</u> <u>185</u>	W German brand of recorder	<u>137</u> <u>193</u> <u>162</u> <u>39</u>
I Ratio of signal output to input, expressed as a percentage	<u>149</u> <u>116</u> <u>71</u> <u>82</u> <u>211</u> <u>23</u> <u>194</u> <u>177</u> <u>6</u> <u>101</u>	X Jazz guitarist (1919-42) associated with bebop, played with Benny Goodman (full professional name)	<u>216</u> <u>128</u> <u>180</u> <u>140</u> <u>67</u> <u>53</u> <u>44</u> <u>19</u> <u>197</u> <u>77</u> <u>106</u> <u>32</u> <u>4</u> <u>175</u> <u>204</u> <u>92</u>
J Italian composer (b 1911) radio opera, <i>I due timidi</i>	<u>205</u> <u>167</u> <u>35</u> <u>133</u>	Y Platform of a tape recorder on which the motor, reels, etc. are mounted	<u>122</u> <u>105</u> <u>138</u> <u>9</u> <u>178</u> <u>214</u> <u>38</u> <u>152</u> <u>70</u>
K Words O and ZZ to friends	<u>145</u> <u>58</u> <u>198</u> <u>78</u>	Z Vary in pitch	<u>212</u> <u>94</u> <u>165</u> <u>156</u> <u>18</u> <u>45</u> <u>119</u>
L Jazz bass player (b 1913) recorded <i>Satchmo</i> with Armstrong (full professional name)	<u>154</u> <u>136</u> <u>2</u> <u>169</u> <u>112</u> <u>203</u> <u>83</u> <u>190</u> <u>28</u> <u>121</u> <u>65</u>	YY Italian-American composer (b 1899) <i>Negro Heaven</i> , <i>Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves</i> (full name)	<u>151</u> <u>100</u> <u>40</u> <u>129</u> <u>55</u> <u>199</u> <u>29</u> <u>76</u> <u>134</u> <u>8</u>
M German composer of operettas (1862-1947) <i>Frau Holle</i> , <i>Kleopatra</i> , etc (init and last name)	<u>103</u> <u>170</u> <u>195</u> <u>161</u> <u>22</u> <u>11</u> <u>131</u> <u>69</u> <u>117</u> <u>99</u>	ZZ Violinist Milstein	<u>48</u> <u>188</u> <u>217</u> <u>109</u> <u>68</u> <u>24</u>
N Of a microphone, sensitive to sounds within a very narrow angle	<u>31</u> <u>114</u> <u>207</u> <u>168</u> <u>146</u> <u>17</u> <u>91</u> <u>132</u> <u>79</u> <u>62</u> <u>183</u> <u>160</u> <u>47</u> <u>3</u>		
O Cannonball's brother (full professional name)	<u>200</u> <u>155</u> <u>111</u> <u>14</u> <u>135</u> <u>34</u> <u>90</u> <u>124</u> <u>51</u> <u>186</u> <u>74</u>		

Solution to last month's HiFi-Croctic appears on page 4.

The Beogram® 4002. A turntable unequalled in concept, performance, and design.

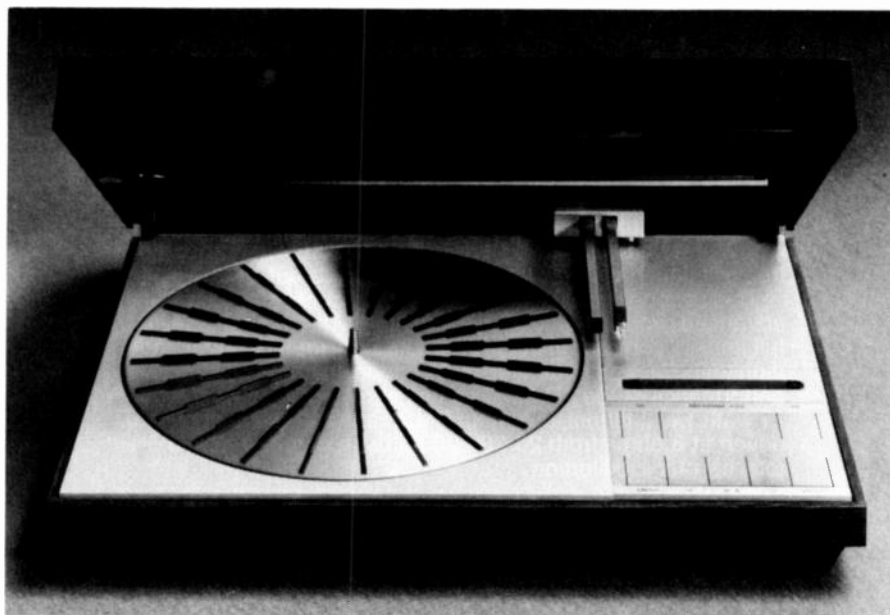
As you and your audio system gain in sophistication, you begin to define high performance far more critically. You also become sensitive to the many details which separate the good products from those considered exceptional. It is at this point that Bang & Olufsen becomes more important, and components such as the Beogram 4002 turntable are worth your careful evaluation.

Exceptional resistance to vibration. A leaf spring pendulum suspension system (patented) actually transforms horizontal shock into vertical motion, damped by the entire chassis assembly.

Electronically controlled tangential tracking. A sophisticated system operated by its own DC motor. It eliminates the problems of angular distortion, skating force, horizontal and vertical friction.

Complete stylus protection. The raising and lowering of the tone arm is automatically controlled by a pneumatically damped, solenoid operated system which functions via independent electronic circuits.

An extraordinary cartridge. The Beogram 4002 comes with the MMC 6000 cartridge, Bang & Olufsen's finest. It features an effective tip mass of only .22 mg., tracks at one gram, and has received critical acclaim throughout the world.



One touch music. A finely engineered control panel allows fully automatic operation (cueing cycle: 2 seconds) by depressing a single micro switch. Power assisted manual operation permits you to scan the entire record in either direction at fast or slow speed.

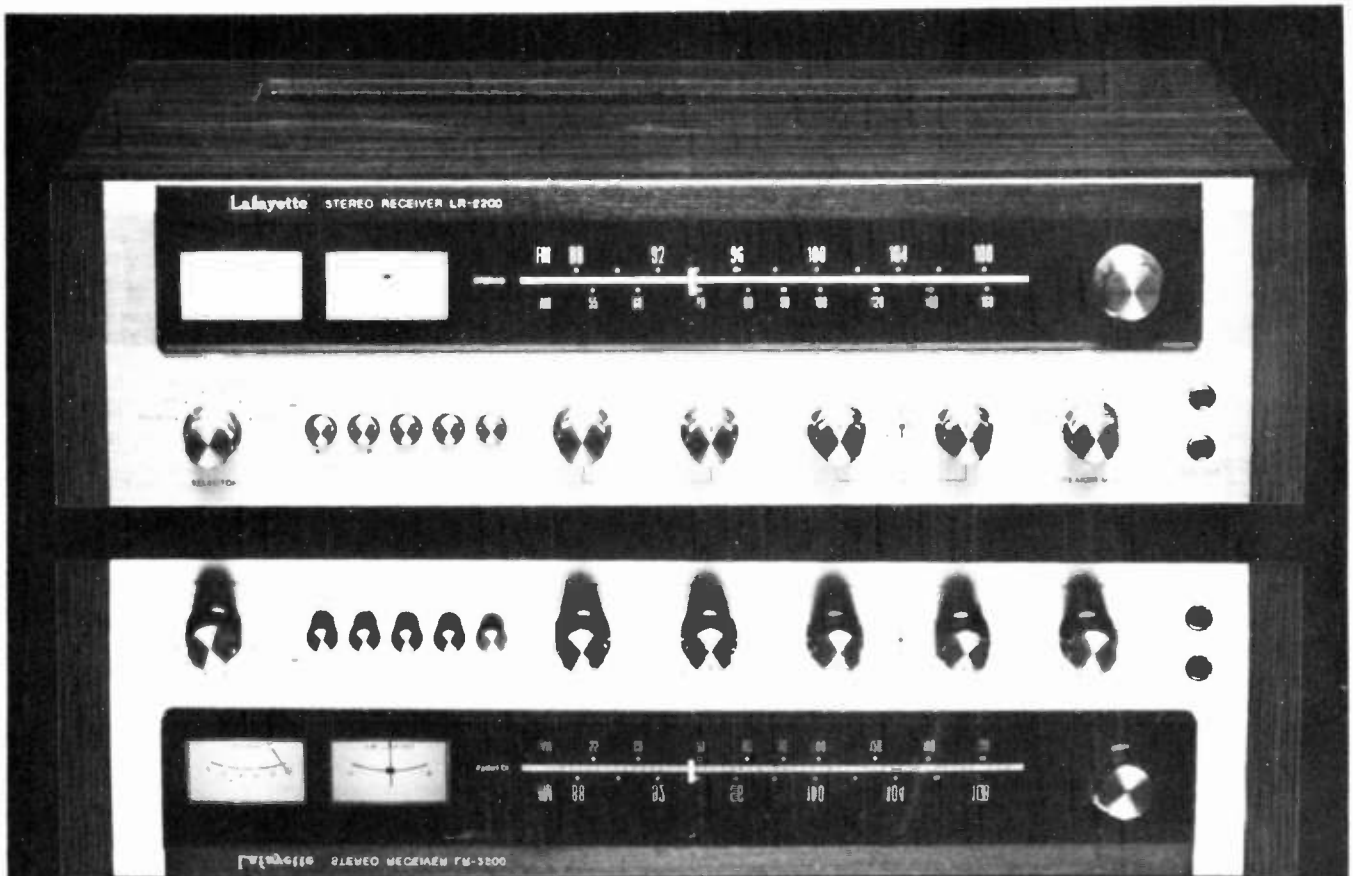
CD-4 capability. An optional CD-4 demodulator/phono preamplifier can be installed in the turntable housing, the optimum location for CD-4 reproduction.

Stable, accurate drive system. A high torque DC motor with integrated electronic speed control drives only the turntable platter via a precision ground, flat rubber belt.

Elimination of warp wow. An extremely short, low mass tone arm, which weighs only 8.4 grams with cartridge, eliminates the distortion caused by warped records.

Bang & Olufsen

Bang & Olufsen of America, Inc., 515 Busse Road, Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007



The Image of Performance

The new Lafayette LR-2200 has the look of performance many receivers try to achieve. But real performance comes from within. That's where the LR-2200 stands out.

This serious receiver performs to the highest standards with advanced circuitry, a most selective AM/FM stereo FM receiver, full music controls including two tuning meters, dual tap monitoring jacks and derived four channel matrix. The sensitive performance of the LR-2200 comes across powerfully through 27 watts per channel, minimum RMS. Both stereo channels are driven at 8 ohms from 20-20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.5% total harmonic distortion.

The Lafayette audio designers performed in the creation of the LR-2200. Lafayette put the most features, the cleanest specifications, the most power for any receiver Lafayette has ever offered for this price. 299.95

Because Lafayette performed in the creation of this receiver it will perform for you. For years.

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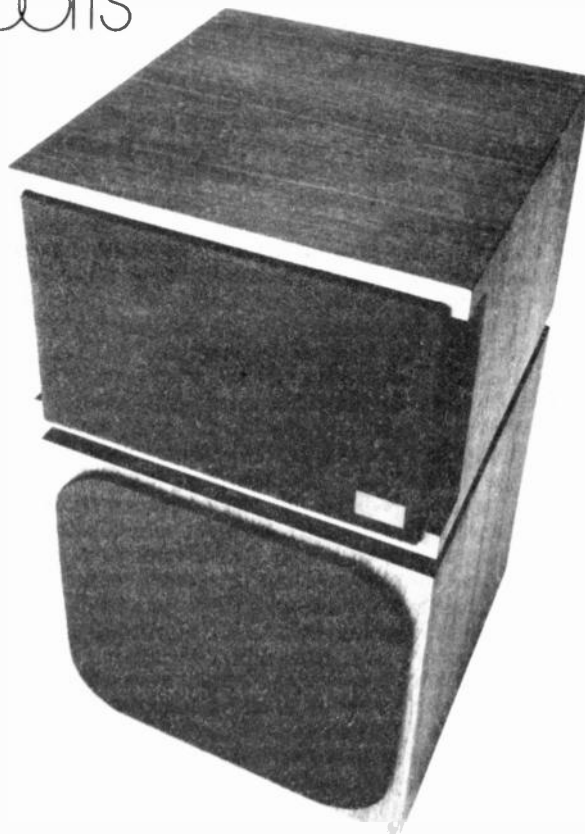
CM-15A: Full-Range Feedback in a Speaker

The Equipment: CM-15A, a full-range loudspeaker system with amplifier feedback (servo) connections, in walnut-veneer enclosure. Dimensions: 32 by 17 inches (front), 17 inches deep. Price: \$500. Warranty: five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: CM Laboratories, 327 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, Conn. 06854.

Comment: The Model CM-15A is a very unusual loudspeaker—in both its design philosophy and its sound. It starts out as a three-way system with a woofer, midrange driver, and dual tweeters aided by a piezoelectric super-tweeter, but it has an additional feature that makes it behave in a way that is profoundly different from what one would expect. That feature is, of course, the feedback control that is applied to the system.

Negative feedback is normally used in amplifiers, where its benefits include lower distortion and lower output impedance. Seeking to minimize speaker distortion as well, the designer of the CM-15 (and the LWE designs that preceded it before CM Laboratories bought LWE's loudspeaker business) has found a way to include the speaker in the amplifier feedback loop. This arrangement (which is purely electronic, requiring no external transducers at the loudspeaker) allows the speaker to "talk" to the amplifier and tell it when the acoustic output departs from accurate correspondence with the amplifier input signal. The amplifier responds virtually instantaneously with a corrective drive to the speaker.

If the CM-15A is to be used with an amplifier not made by CM Labs, some internal modifications to the amplifier are necessary. The manufacturer informs us that all CM dealers are competent to perform the modifications. As an alternative (that, incidentally, can void no warranties) CM offers a "black box" (price \$75) that makes all the connections. We tested the system with the CM-912 power amplifier, with which it is designed to work.



This speaker is equipped with some interesting controls. In addition to the usual, continuously adjustable balance knobs for the midrange and tweeters, there is a ROOM GAIN control that regulates bass response to suit room dimensions. For small spaces the ANECHOIC setting (which gives the flattest response) is recommended; for larger rooms STUDIO and AUDITORIUM settings, each of which raises the frequency of maximum bass reinforcement, are provided. In our listening room, the ANECHOIC position was preferred, as was a halfway setting for each of the balance controls. (This can be improved upon, as we will see later.) The lab used the same room setting with the balance controls—which can turn their drivers fully off—wide open.

REPORT POLICY Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by CBS Technology Center, 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 Technology Center assumes responsibility for product performance or quality.

Due to the special nature of this model, the test procedures used at CBS Technology Center had to be modified somewhat. It was not possible to carry our pink-noise testing below 63 Hz without damage to the woofer. This result is predictable: The feedback system increases power and attempts to maintain flat output, even in an anechoic chamber (where the testing is done). A sweep-signal check of frequency response shows a strong bass output that remains nearly flat to about 26 Hz—a result that our listening tests handily confirm.

The system is very efficient, producing reference output (94 dB at 1 meter on axis, 200 Hz to 6 kHz) for just 0.8 watt input. Yet it can accept a continuous 100-watt input (for an output of 112 dB) without excess distortion, with pulse power reaching a level of 166.5 watts average (333 watts peak—the amplifier's limit) for an acoustic output reaching 117 dB. The dynamic range, therefore, is excellent. Moreover, the sound is so clean that we found ourselves listening at levels approaching these figures. We noted also that the recovery from high-level pulses is excellent; there is virtually no audible hangover.

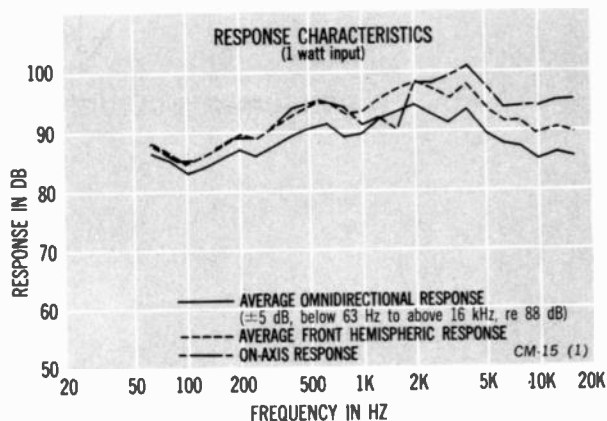
Third-octave frequency response of the CM-15A as measured in the CBS anechoic chamber is smooth, but with a strongly rising high end and a moderate peak around 5 kHz. This characteristic makes white noise extremely bright and harsh. The balance controls, to our ears at least, flatten this nicely. But we got even better results by running the drivers wide open and applying tone-control equalization, which the unit accepts unusually gracefully—without the sense of strain or ancillary response peculiarities that often result from overequalization. Probably a graphic equalizer would do even better. But any such equalization must come before feedback. High-frequency dispersion is good, with tones in the neighborhood of the upper limit of hearing remaining audible to about 40 degrees off axis. Oddly enough, the system sounds slightly better off axis than dead on, such small colorations as there are becoming less noticeable as one moves to either side. This presumably contributes to the fine stereo imaging that we observed.

The impedance curve shows peaks at about 65 and 350 Hz and dips to 7.5 ohms at 110 Hz. There is a secondary trough at about 1.5 kHz, where the value approaches 4 ohms, the manufacturer's rating of the system. The load is thus safe for just about any amplifier, though obviously there is no provision for driving extension speakers in parallel with the main ones.

This—as the dimensions indicate—is a massive loudspeaker. While it cannot easily be made inconspicuous, its appearance is sufficiently composed to allow it to blend well into its surroundings. One significant help is that the servo system, in a sense, "corrects for" the speakers' position in the room, increasing flexibility of placement. (Be careful to allow access to the controls on the back—the CM-15A is no lightweight.)

As we have said many times before, the perfect speaker does not yet exist (if it ever will), and no one speaker is for all tastes. In this light we would characterize the sound of the CM-15A as bright and sharply etched—most suitable for the person who likes to listen to music in detail. It will reproduce almost anything you would want to hear from your system and recordings, and maybe some things that you would prefer not to hear. Putting the matter succinctly, it is an extremely accurate transducer. And for a not-too-hefty price it holds its own against some of the best speakers around.

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



CM-15A Speaker Harmonic Distortion*

Output Level (dB)	Frequency			
	80 Hz		300 Hz	
	% 2nd	% 3rd	% 2nd	% 3rd
70	0.45	0.40	0.20	0.30
75	0.45	0.20	0.20	0.30
80	0.70	0.35	0.20	0.24
85	1.10	0.60	0.23	0.23
90	1.70	0.60	0.23	0.17
95	3.00	1.30	0.40	0.58
100	5.00	3.50	0.50	1.30
105			0.50	1.60
110			0.50	1.60
112			0.50	1.60

*Distortion data are taken on all tested speakers until distortion exceeds the 10% level or the speaker produces the spurious output known as buzzing, whichever occurs first.



Strange, It Doesn't Look Like the 6-B

The SAE digital tuner shown at the head of our January-issue report on the Mk. VI-B was, in fact, a lower-priced model, the Mk. VIII. Here—with apologies to any readers who may have been confused by the differences between the front panel as described in the text and that shown in the illustration—is the *real* Mk. VI-B.



Technics SL-1500: It Just Plays the Record

The Equipment: Technics SL-1500, a two-speed (33 and 45 rpm) manual turntable with integral tone arm and base, and dust cover. Dimensions: 14½ by 17¾ inches (top) by 5½ inches high; 16 inches high with dust cover fully open. Price: \$199.95. Warranty: two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Matsushita Electric, Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Panasonic (Matsushita Electric Corp. of America), 1 Panasonic Way, Secaucus, N.J. 07094.

Comment: Electronic direct-drive turntables have been with us for some time now, and many of us are inclined to take their characteristics for granted: excellent speed regulation, low wow and flutter, practically nonexistent rumble—and a high price. With the SL-1500, "the direct-drive turntable for people who can't afford direct-drive turntables," the folks at Panasonic have come up with a significant price reduction, and they have done so by simplifying manufacture and eliminating frills rather than by compromising performance. Tests made at the CBS labs show that the SL-1500 is in the same ballpark as the SL-1100A (HF test reports, September 1973). In fact, the newcomer actually excels the earlier model in some areas.

The SL-1500 has exactly one moving part (excluding the tone arm, of course): The platter itself, which weighs in at 3 lbs. 4 oz., is the rotating part of the motor. The stator assembly is a part of the base. It's hard to see how a basic drive system could be made much simpler.

The only assistance offered to the user in handling the tone arm is a cueing lever, which is easily accessible and is smooth and well damped in its operation; there is no automatic start and no automatic shutoff. A selector switch near the arm can choose 33, 45, or OFF. At the left front corner of the base are two knobs (one for each speed) for fine-speed adjustment. In the lab the adjustment ranges check out at -7.4% to +7.2% at 33, -3.1% to +5.7% at 45. Just in back of these knobs is a prism that casts a strobe light on the edge of the platter, which is appropriately marked with rows of dots for both 50- and 60-Hz AC power. The unit is effectively shock-mounted and is equipped with the low-capacitance wiring and cables needed to accommodate CD-4 demodulators. The over-all styling is simple, pleasant and serene.

The SL-1500 requires a few seconds for its speed to stabilize after initial turn-on. From then on, its rotation is rock steady, a fact that the unmeasurable speed deviation recorded by the lab confirms. Flutter (ANSI/IEEE weighted) measures 0.05% average (with an instan-

taneous peak value of 0.1%). Rumble, measured with ARL/CBS weighting, is -64½ dB, within 3½ dB of the best figure we have yet found. The tone arm is virtually without friction—a property that, in our listening tests, allowed a somewhat recalcitrant CD-4 cartridge to track with reasonable accuracy some discs on which there previously had been unacceptable sonic breakup. The 10-Hz resonance of the arm (tested with a Shure V-15 Type III cartridge) is well damped, showing a mere 1½-dB rise. As the "Additional Data" chart shows, error in stylus-force settings is slight.

There is no provision for adjusting the antiskating for the type of stylus—not even a table in the instruction manual. (Elliptical styli generally develop a little more skating force than conicals, slightly less than CD-4 types.) The matter seems to be critical only for some CD-4 pickups, so the discrete-disc listener probably should experiment with antiskating compensation to achieve optimum results from his cartridge.

The antiskating mechanism itself, which allows a somewhat smaller range of compensation than we have found to be typical, delivers a force that is nearly proportional to the knob setting throughout its range.

On balance, we must credit this turntable with being outstanding in most of its performance even if it is merely good in one or two areas. Those who demand the ultimate in convenience may find it too spartan and single-minded. But if your highest priority is reproducing music from disc—rather than pampering yourself—the SL-1500 deserves serious consideration.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Technics SL-1500 Turntable Additional Data

Stylus-force gauge accuracy (grams)		
	Setting	Measured
	0.5	0.45
	1.0	0.95
	1.5	1.45
	2.0	1.95
	2.5	2.45
	3.0	2.9
	3.5	3.4



Top-of-the-Line Headset from Stax

The Equipment: Stax SRX Mk.3 Ear Speakers, and electrostatic stereo headset with SRD-7 impedance-matching/switching adapter in metal case. Dimensions: (adapter unit) 4½ by 2½ inches (front), 7½ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections, with 2-foot amplifier cable; headphones have 8-foot cable that plugs into adapter. Price: \$144.90. Warranty: one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Stax Industries, Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: American Audioport, Inc., 317 Professional Bldg., 909 University, Columbia, Mo. 65201.

Comment: Stax electrostatic headphones have been available in Japan for some years and, though local distribution has been extremely spotty, have built a considerable reputation among the more adventurous of American audiophiles. Now, thanks to American Audioport, they should be more readily available.

The SRX Mk.3 is a new design, having a thinner diaphragm than other Stax models, a feature intended to result in fuller and more accurate bass response. The adapter, which requires a power-line connection, supplies the polarizing voltage necessary for an electrostatic headset and matches the low impedance of amplifier speaker

terminals to the high input impedance of the transducers. The front panel of the adapter is fitted with two six-pin sockets to accommodate two Stax headsets. A large knob in the center of the panel switches the polarizing voltage and the audio on and off. In the off position, audio is fed to four terminals on the back of the adapter that duplicate the amplifier loudspeaker connections. Thus turning the phones on automatically disconnects the loudspeakers. A pilot light shows when the adapter is on.

The headset itself is fairly light in weight (10.5 oz.) and has earphones that are vented at the back—offering, therefore, little isolation from sounds in the room. By the same token, a person within several feet of a listener wearing these phones would have no difficulty in recognizing a familiar selection. While the earpieces are not heavily padded, they bear gently on the ears and are quite comfortable. The tradeoff for this comfort is the relative ease with which the unit can be dislodged by movements of the wearer's head.

The sound of the SRX Mk.3 is clean and accurate, so much so that the unit is very unforgiving of faults in the program material that one might find tolerable listening via loudspeakers. FM tuner hiss and disc surface noise prove very unpleasant, but clean program material is reproduced with pristine clarity. Like other electrostatics, this model is relatively inefficient, so fairly stringent demands are made on the amplifier.

Though headphone frequency response is partly a function of the coupling between the earpieces and the particular listener's ear, we found bass fundamentals sound clear and distinct down to about 30 Hz. At the opposite end of the spectrum, response seems flat to about 15 kHz, falling off to inaudibility at about 17 kHz. In between, there is no audible evidence of peaks or dips. Dynamic range is also very good; loud transients attack and decay gracefully except possibly in the presence of extreme high-frequency energy. And in these cases, of course, even the finest phono cartridges find themselves *in extremis*.

After listening for a time through the Stax we could almost forget that we were wearing a headset. The chief reminder really is the failure of material recorded for loudspeaker reproduction to blend into a convincing sonic image. But this is scarcely the fault of the SRX Mk.3—except for its merciless clarity, which makes the experience unusually frustrating. This can be coped with, at the expense of "moving back" from the music, by rolling off the treble slightly. More germane, however, is the fact that with suitable material these headphones offer an astonishing listening experience.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Kenwood's KR-9400: A Feature-Loaded Super Receiver

The Equipment: Kenwood Model KR-9400 stereo FM/AM receiver in metal case with laminated wood ends. Dimensions: 22 by 6½ inches (front), 14¼ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$749.95. Warranty: two years parts and labor, shipping prepaid. Manufacturer: Trio Electronics, Japan; U.S. distributor: Kenwood Electronics, Inc., 15777 S. Broadway, Gardena, Calif. 90248.

Comment: The KR-9400 is a high-powered receiver capable of excellent performance and loaded with features. Let's get directly to them. The tuning dial is very wide but is not very finely calibrated (except for the ubiquitous logging scale, which in our experience most users seem to find something of a nuisance if, indeed, they use it at all). The large tuning knob at one end handles well; at the other end is a row of pilot indicators for the selected program source



plus one to indicate whether a stereo pilot is present when FM is selected.

Below the center of the dial are two meters: one for conventional center tuning, one that can be switched to indicate signal strength, multipath, or signal deviation. (For AM tuning, only the signal-strength function operates, of course.) This adds up to an unusually comprehensive complement of functions. In the signal-strength mode the second of these meters reads full scale for even fairly weak signals—meaning that it is intended to tell you how marginal a really marginal signal is (which is useful) rather than how strong a strong one is (which matters little). In the multipath mode it can be used with an antenna rotator, tuning the antenna for maximum meter deflection. Signal deviation is essentially a measure of the station's modulation level. The instruction manual suggests use of this mode for recording (in conjunction with your deck's meters), but we found the calibration too difficult to read for this suggestion to be very useful.

To the left of these meters are ON/OFF pushbuttons for FM MUTING, TONE [control] DEFEAT, and FILTERS (high and low). The FM section is so sensitive and the FM muting set so low that we could find few spots in our station-crowded dial where it would mute, though we could find some fairly noisy spots where nearby channels overlapped. To the right of the meters are five more ON/OFF buttons: MULTIPATH and DEVIATION (these two referring to meter functions, of course), FM DOLBY NR, AF MUTING, and LOUDNESS. The AF (audio frequency) muting simply drops output by about 20 dB (18½ dB in our sample, as measured by CBS). The Dolby switch is an equalizer, compensating for the difference between the 75-microsecond de-emphasis built into the FM-tuner section and the 25-microsecond de-emphasis required for correct balance in Dolby broadcasts. This switch alters the sonic balance of the signal from any program source and does not switch the connections for a Dolby adapter. (More of that in a moment.)

Below the dial panel are, from left, an ON/OFF lever for AC power, a rotary speaker switch with five options (OFF/A/B/A+B/C) for controlling the three sets of speaker connections on the back panel, and a stereo headphone jack (which is live in all positions of the speaker switch). Next are three tone controls (bass, midrange, and treble) with detented positions calibrated in 2-dB steps of cut or boost. The balance control, which is not detented, also is calibrated in nominal 2-dB steps though of course the extreme position (10) in each direction completely cuts off one of the channels. The volume control is detented and arbitrarily calibrated from 0 to 10.

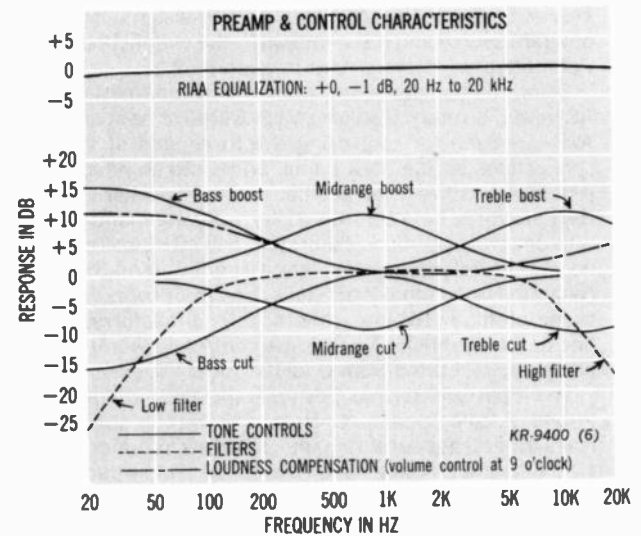
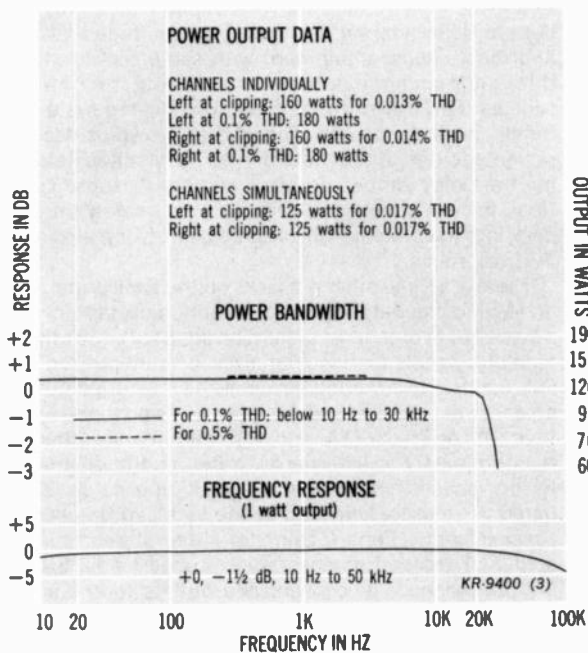
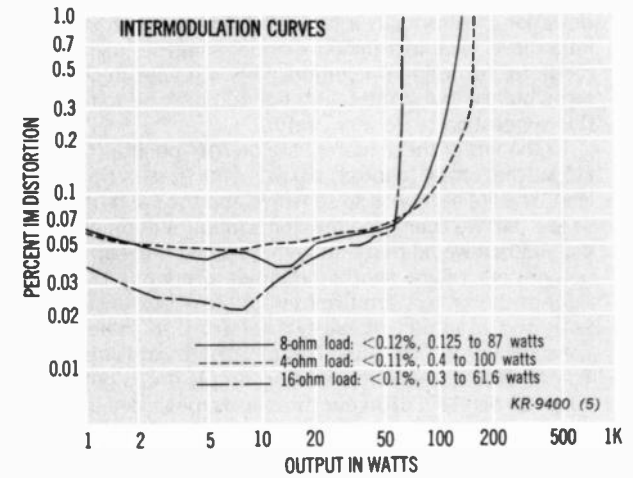
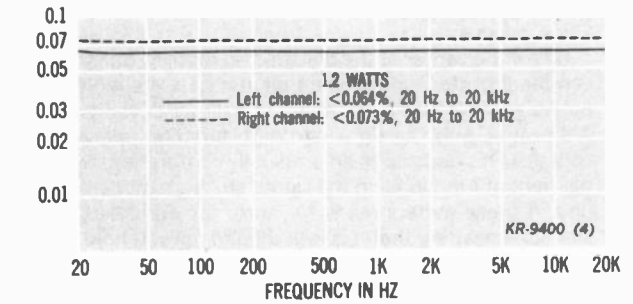
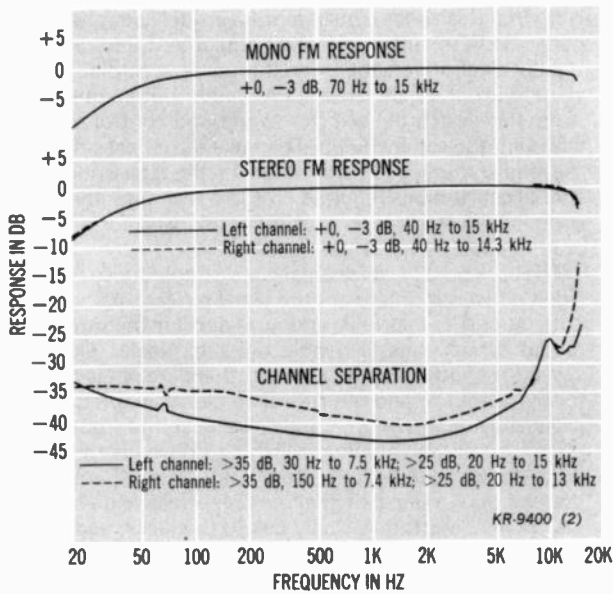
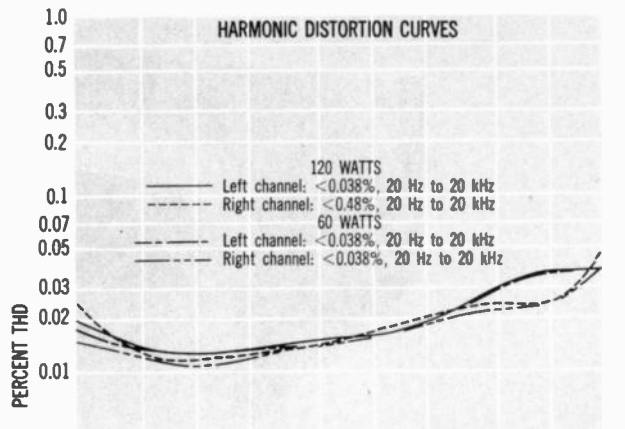
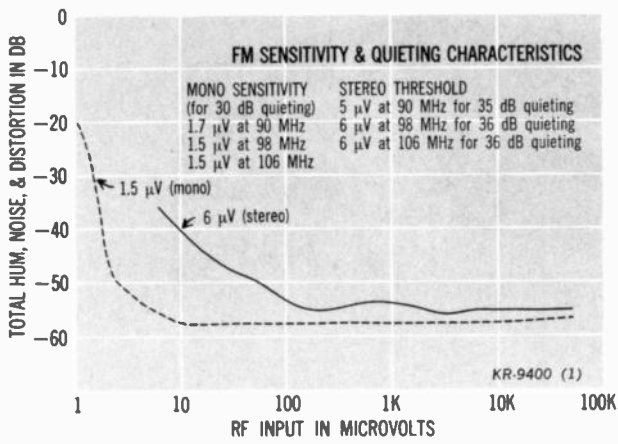
The input selector has positions for AM, FM, PHONO 1, PHONO 2, MIC, and AUX. Next are four levers: MODE (STEREO/REVERSE/MONO), TAPE MONITORS (SOURCE/A/B), TAPE DUBBING (SOURCE/A-TO-B/B-TO-A), and SOUND INJECTION (ON/OFF). This last is a mixer that will combine whatever signal the selector is set for with the tape feed when

the dubbing switch is in either of the dubbing (A-TO-B or B-TO-A) positions. Next to the INJECTOR switch is a MIX LEVEL knob, and below it is a mono phone jack for the mike input. Note that this is not a mike feature crudely adapted from public-address and storecasting equipment, but one with a great deal of versatility for the home recordist. If you want to use the receiver as a PA system, with a mike, you need only switch the selector to MIC and control speaker level with the volume knob. The mike signal goes through the regular preamp circuitry, reaching the tape without the special connections required on some receivers; the mixer is unusually versatile in that it can be used for any program source, not just the mike.

The back panel is surprisingly uncluttered for so feature-laden a receiver. There are the usual pin-jack pairs for inputs (PHONO 1, PHONO 2, and AUX) and for the input and output connections to handle two tape decks, plus DIN sockets for both decks. In addition, there are pin-jack pairs for the output to and return from a Dolby adapter. These jacks are supplied with jumpers, because the front panel has no quasi-tape-monitor switching to bypass the Dolby jacks when the FM-DOLBY feature is not in use. (Remember that the front-panel switch alters only effective de-emphasis.) If you do attach a Dolby box to the jacks, you would have to turn its Dolby circuit off for normal listening. If you also want to use the Dolby unit with a recorder—or are using the Dolby-FM feature built into some recorders—you can follow the instruction manual's suggestion that these same Dolby connections be used. Then, however, you have to use the tape-monitor (or record/play) switching on the deck or Dolby adapter to choose between tape and source and must choose equipment with some sort of straight-through switching option for listening to non-Dolby sources. This makes for a rather complicated system; it is better, in our opinion, to connect the Dolby-plus-deck components to one of the tape-monitor connection sets, leaving the Dolby jumpers in place and saving those connections for use should you ever want to hook a third tape deck into the system—which could be a strong plus among avid recordists.

There are three other pin jacks on the back panel. One is an FM detector output (for a quadriphonic adapter, should a discrete FM broadcast system be adopted); the other two feed out signals for scope analysis of multipath in tuned FM signals. The antenna terminals have knurled nuts with screwdriver slots and accept bared wires or spade lugs. Either 300- or 75-ohm FM antennas can be used; there also is a terminal for an external AM antenna, though the usual ferrite loopstick is built in. A grounding screw accepts bared wires gracefully, and spade lugs can be used. The speaker connections (again, for three stereo pairs) are spring-loaded and engineered for bared leads. Switched and unswitched AC convenience outlets (one each) are provided.

The amplifier section is indeed a hefty brute. It meets its

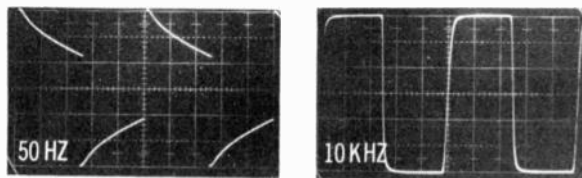


rating of 120 watts per channel at 0.1% harmonic distortion handily at all frequencies and at all measured power levels. With such a low distortion rating, some amplifiers fail to make it in our -20 dB (1%) power test—in this case at 1.2 watts—because of crossover distortion and/or noise. But all the CBS measurements on the KR-9400 in this test are more than 25% below the spec. And at the other extreme of the dynamic range, the receiver will pump out up to 180 watts (which is beyond clipping) before the distortion rating is exceeded. Since the lab had to drive the amp beyond clipping to reach 0.1% THD, little extra power was developed before distortion shot up to our standard 0.5% for power-bandwidth measurements. For this reason, only the central portion (around 1 kHz) of the 0.5% curve was measured.

In terms of intermodulation distortion, however, the lab data are not as impressive. Kenwood rates the KR-9400 at 0.1%, without specifying output level. Though intermodulation does stay below this figure throughout what might be considered the normal operating power range, even at 4 ohms it rises above the figure in our test sample before rated power is reached. And at 8 ohms (the impedance specified for the power rating), intermodulation rises sharply above about 100 watts. That's still plenty of power, only a fraction of a dB below the 120-watt rating, but it does raise a question about the usefulness of the rating.

The lab's noise measurements also are not quite as good as those published by Kenwood, but here the test method seems to supply the explanation. The lab measures with the volume control at its maximum setting—which, in our experience, manufacturers often do not. Presumably Kenwood has used an alternative technique. In any event the lab figures represent excellent noise performance, if not the exceptional (or, at -93 dB for the high-level inputs, almost incredible) performance suggested by the manufacturer's specs.

The FM quieting curves for both mono and stereo are excellent. Quieting of total hum, noise, and distortion is 50 dB by the time a stereo input has reached little more than 50 microvolts or by the time a mono input has reached only 2.5 microvolts. In the signal-strength range encountered in typical suburban locations, stereo quieting is around 55 dB while that of mono broadcasts approaches 60 dB. These figures, combined, mean that—for a receiver—the KR-9400's dial is unusually crowded with listenably quiet stations. Alternate-channel selectivity is excellent—as the lab measurement confirms, though it is not quite as good as Kenwood's spec. Deep-bass response of the FM section is not as flat as we would like (though of course the FCC's station performance standards themselves don't extend below 50 Hz); separation, though it does not quite meet the spec, is measurably and audibly excellent. The AM tuning section performs unexceptionably.



Square-wave response

Kenwood KR-9400 Receiver Additional Data

Tuner Section			
Capture ratio	1.2 dB		
Alternate-channel selectivity	78 dB		
S/N ratio	68 dB		
THD	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.07%	0.80%	1.1%
1 kHz	0.10%	0.14%	0.21%
10 kHz	0.26%	4.4%	4.4%
IM distortion	0.1%		
19-kHz pilot	-66 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-68 dB		
Amplifier Section			
Damping factor	47		
Input characteristics (for 120 watts output)			
	Sensitivity	S/N ratio	
phono 1 & 2	2.5 mV	64 dB	
mike	2.6 mV	64½ dB	
aux	162 mV	83 dB	
tape A	162 mV	83½ dB	
tape B	162 mV	83 dB	

It should be obvious that such complaints as we have are almost exclusively with Kenwood's specs, rather than its product. We would, perhaps, have liked monitor-type switching in the Dolby connections; less-equivocal dial calibrations would have made tuning easier; high-blend noise cancellation for weak stereo FM broadcasts is conspicuous by its absence in so feature-filled a design. But these are minor points. Essentially the KR-9400 is both extremely capable and extremely versatile. The mixing feature in particular is one of the best of its type we've seen. This is a super receiver.

CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

The Model 25, Jensen's Top Speaker

The Equipment: Jensen Model 25, a full-range loudspeaker system in enclosure. Dimensions: 18¾ by 31 inches (front, including integral base), 15¾ inches deep. Price: \$239. Warranty: five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Jensen Sound Laboratories, Div. of Pmcors, Inc., 4310 Trans World Rd., Schiller Park, Ill. 60176.

Comment: The Model 25 is the most sophisticated member of Jensen's new "optimum performance concept" line

of loudspeakers. It is, not incidentally, the largest and most expensive of the line. The concept involves improvements in the drivers as well as an unusually wide range of adjustment in the balance controls for the midrange drivers and tweeter.

With its removable two-tone grille cloth, divided by a dark, slanted bar across the middle, the Model 25 is not visually reticent, but the harmonious browns in which the scheme is worked out prevent garishness. The par-



ticleboard cabinet is faced with an attractive veneer of real walnut. The smoked-plastic bar can be removed for access to the balance controls, which are mounted beneath it. As the dimensions indicate, this is a speaker too large for bookshelf mounting; floor placement puts the tweeters at about 8 inches below ear level for normal seating.

The Model 25 is a three-way system using two midrange drivers with a single tweeter and with crossovers at 1 and 5 kHz. As characterized by tests in the CBS anechoic chamber, the system is quite efficient, producing the standard output of 94 dB of sound pressure level, or SPL (200 to 6,000 Hz, at 1 meter on axis), for an input of 1.7 watts. A steady input of 80.6 watts at 300 Hz for an output of 111 dB is accepted by the unit without buzzing or excessive distortion. Pulse power reaches 268.7 watts average (537.3 watts peak)—the limit of the test amplifier—without excessive distortion. Maximum SPL under these conditions is 119 dB, indicating an excellent dynamic range. The measured nominal impedance is 6.7 ohms (at 90 Hz), with the impedance rising gradually with frequency. The bass-resonance impedance peak is at about 60 Hz.

In listening we found a robust bass and a somewhat distant perspective to be the dominant characteristics of this loudspeaker. Over-all the sound is warm and well blended—transients are somewhat softened, and instruments tend to merge into a homogeneous sonic structure. But the range of adjustment in the balance controls allows the listener to change the character rather markedly. That for the midrange has greatest effect (lowering output by up to about 4 dB with respect to its maximum setting) in the octave below 1 kHz but also makes some alteration in response far into the treble. The tweeter control has an adjustment spread of 5 dB or more over most of the range from 3 to 20 kHz, exceeding 15 dB at some frequencies in the CBS tests. It also has some minor influence on response as low as 500 Hz. The lab found the frequency response flattest with the midrange control set halfway and the tweeter control fully to the right.

Jensen has an ingenious color coding system for these controls to indicate their effects on the respective drivers.

Each driver has a surround of its representative color: blue for the woofer, yellow for the midrange, red for the tweeter. Each control is surrounded by concentric rings of blue and one other color. Thus, as the midrange control is turned from left to right blue becomes weaker and yellow stronger; for the tweeter, red grows stronger and blue weaker as the control is turned.

But, balance controls notwithstanding, frequency response of the Model 25 departs considerably from flatness. There is a peak in the lower midrange that imparts a certain guttiness to violas and cellos, followed by a trough in the upper midrange. The output has secondary peaks around 5 and 10 kHz, declining smoothly after that but still audible at 18 kHz. Toward the opposite pole, bass output holds up well to about 40 Hz, where doubling begins to take over. White noise is reproduced with a throaty weightiness, but the highs retain sufficient brightness and are well dispersed to about 40 degrees off axis, at which point some falling off is observed. The omnidirectional frequency response, as measured in the CBS anechoic chamber, remains within ± 5 dB from 35 Hz to 12.5 kHz.

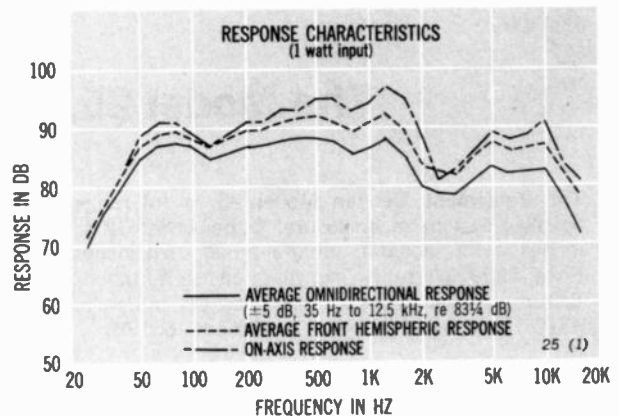
Like virtually any loudspeaker, the Model 25 is not equally at home with all kinds of music, nor with all kinds of listeners, for that matter. Its personality is very much in the Jensen tradition, which stretches back some quarter-century. It produces a "big" sound with no skimping in the bass. And, within limits, its controls offer more than average flexibility for tailoring that sound to your room and tastes. If these considerations are high on your priority list, by all means listen to the Model 25 and the junior members of the new Jensen line.

CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Jensen Model 25 Harmonic Distortion*

Output Level (dB)	Frequency			
	80 Hz		300 Hz	
	% 2nd	% 3rd	% 2nd	% 3rd
70	0.21	0.28	0.23	0.33
75	0.21	0.17	0.20	0.33
80	0.23	0.16	0.17	0.40
85	0.33	0.17	0.16	0.45
90	0.62	0.40	0.15	0.50
95	1.1	0.33	0.32	0.65
100	2.1	0.20	0.95	0.68
105	3.0	0.30	1.7	0.82
110			5.0	1.7
111			4.2	2.1

*Distortion data are taken on all tested speakers until distortion exceeds the 10% level or the speaker produces the spurious output known as buzzing, whichever occurs first.



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AR-2020
Stereo, Fall, 1974



Heathkit AR-2020
AM/FM 4-Channel Receiver

“Real hi-fi performance at a rock-bottom price”

AR-2020
Hi-Fi Stereo Buyer's Guide, Fall, 1974

“As far as sound quality is concerned, the AA-1640 will probably be a new standard of excellence to which other high power hi-fi equipment will be compared...our listening panel described the sound as 'Overwhelming in clarity and definition. Virtually a new standard of excellence.”

AA-1640
Hi-Fi Stereo Buyer's Guide,
September/October 1975



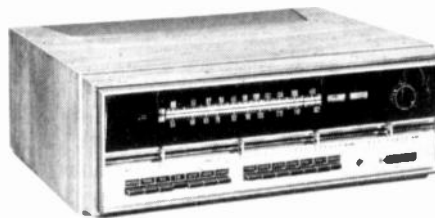
Heathkit AA-1640
Stereo Power Amplifier

“The electrical performance of the Heath AA-1640 makes comment superfluous. In every respect it ranks with the finest high-power amplifiers on the market. We were constantly impressed with the conservatism of its construction and ratings.”

AA-1640
Stereo Review, May 1975

“On every count, the completed AR-29 either met or exceeded its published performance specifications—and did so with only the normal adjustments spelled out for the kit-builder”

AR-29
High Fidelity Test Reports, 1974



Heathkit AR-29
AM/FM Stereo Receiver

“The secret of Heath's success, I think, lies in the preparation of their excellent manuals. If you follow their step-by-step instructions, you can't go wrong, no matter how complex the end product.”

Stereo, Fall, 1974



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An examination of some

The Many Paths to Noise Reduction

by Robert Long

LET'S CONCEDE ONE SALIENT FACT right from the start: In the best of all possible audio worlds, noise reduction would be neither necessary nor desirable. Noise-reduction circuitry adds to the complexity and cost of our equipment; it also adds measurable (though seldom audible) distortion. In the never-never land of ideal audio, there would be no significant noise to reduce. Recording-studio air-conditioners would not rumble, nor would turntables. Tape hiss would be a supersonic whisper; all FM stations would be strong enough and all tuners good enough to deliver, say, at least 70 dB of dynamic range. Mass-produced records would retain the mirrored perfection of the lacquers from which their masters are processed; pops and clicks would be as self-healing as mosquito bites. The word "hum" would retire to its original meaning: a happy offhand vocalise.

Our real world is—and for the predictable future will continue to be—quite different. Some of the reasons are technological: Signal-to-noise ratios in some areas simply are as good as we know how to make them. Others are economic. We can reduce tape hiss, for example, by using higher transport

From the top:
Advent Model 100A, one of many Dolby B units
IAD Model B3A Dynamic Range Expander
Phase Linear Model 1000 Autocorrelator with
Peak Unlimiter and Downward Expander
DBX Model 124, one of its encode/decode units
Burwen Model DNF-1201 Dynamic Noise Filter
Pioneer Model RG-1 Dynamic Processor

ingenious devices that make our sonic universe quieter

speeds or wider tracks, but that raises both tape costs and, to some extent, the cost of the transports needed to handle the bulkier tapes. And the digital audio-processing systems that, in theory, would prevent all accretion of noise and distortion in signals stored and manipulated in digital form are extremely expensive.

So we live with more noise than we would like and seek ways to reduce it. When we find those means we often discover, concurrently, some of the fascinating byways of the human psychoacoustic mechanism—perceptual quirks that alter the way we “hear” noise reduction by contrast to the way we might expect to hear it: as the simple removal of noise content. One’s subjective perceptions, that is, may be quite different from the objective “fact” of mere noise reduction. Some of the subjective phenomena that we will be discussing are easily explained in terms of commonly accepted psychoacoustic law (or, perhaps, lore); others are not so easily explained. So it must be understood as you read this article that the subjective value judgments it contains are mine and that your psychoacoustic mechanisms may not always behave identically.

Two particular effects—“psychoacoustic syndromes” might be an appropriate term—stand out among those that we will have cause to refer to repeatedly when we come to discuss the several noise-reduction systems. For want of better (or at least, widely recognized) terms, let’s call them the Change Factor and the Expectation Factor.

The Change Factor

It is axiomatic that the ear is far more sensitive to change than it is to precise continuous values. At 10% fast, for example, a deck will make music sound almost a whole tone sharp (theoretically undetectable unless you have perfect pitch), slightly bright (which could be misconstrued as a function of the equalization in the recording), and ever so slightly rushed (normally a function of performing style, rather than reproducing equipment). The average listener, deprived of any standard of comparison, may simply feel that the sound or the performance or both are not quite as good as they might have been. But let the speed waver by as

little as $\pm 1\%$ and even the tin-eared may find that it sounds “tinny,” while the more acute listener won’t tolerate the wow. The ear, it seems, is some ten times (or more) as perceptive of speed change as it is of speed *inaccuracy*.

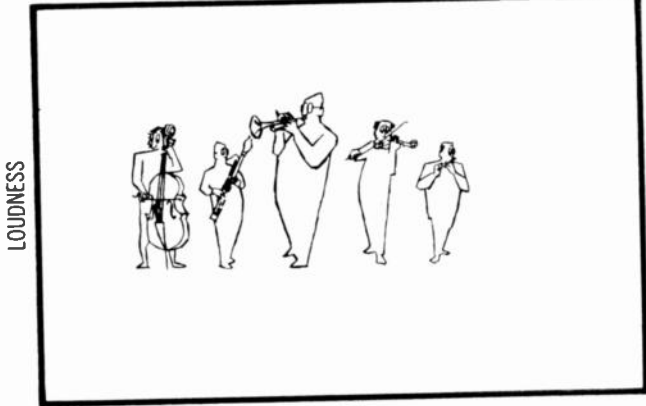
Our perceptions of noise behave much the same way. The steady hiss of tape or FM can be “tuned out,” while disc or AM “crackle,” even at the same absolute sound level, tends to distract attention from the music. Take another example, from a lower frequency range: How often have you suddenly realized, while sitting in your kitchen, that the refrigerator motor has just turned off? You didn’t hear the motor running at all—not consciously—but you felt a sense of relief when it stopped. So it is with much of the steady-state noise that is both measurable and audible in high fidelity. We may notice rumble (which can come from the disc as well as your turntable, of course) only when the stylus is removed from the disc or when it has just settled into the groove, though we ignore it throughout the music—and even between cuts on the disc where there’s no music to mask the rumble.

The moral of this story should be obvious: Noise that is only temporarily removed may be more apparent than noise that is not removed at all, particularly if noise levels are inherently high. This is what is often called “breathing” (a term that is particularly appropriate where high-frequency noise, such as hiss, is varying in level) or “pumping.” Dynamic devices that alter level—in at least part of the frequency range—in response to changes in program content do indeed “pump” the gain of the system up or down in one respect or another. The trick is to do this in a way that will not permit the ear to hear it as pumping. But, because change is involved and because the ear is so sensitive to change, this is a difficult trick to pull off.

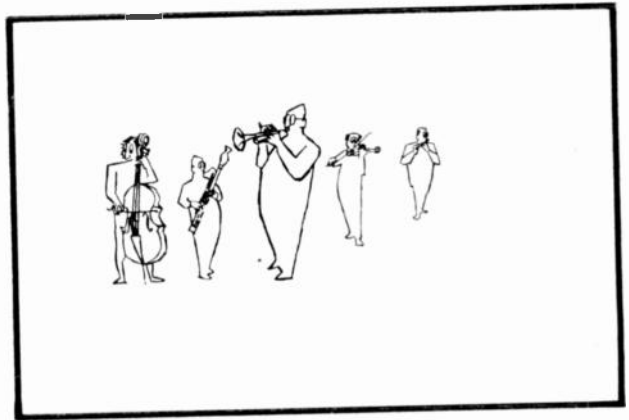
The Expectation Factor

If noise comes and goes precisely with the signal—or almost so—it tends to sound like part of the signal. We expect it to be part of the signal and perceive it as such because of its simultaneity. Hiss that is “synced” to a flute solo, for example, may be perceived as a breathiness of tone on the part of

DOLBY



Original music is fed to Dolby B encoder . . .



. . . which compresses highs, keeping them away from . . .

the flutist; if the hiss were constant, the ear would find it much easier to ignore. For this reason I find flute solos to be a particularly stringent test for dynamic devices. Similarly, the human voice can take on all sorts of peculiar edge, grating, or even strangling qualities if certain types of noise are gated to synchronize with the singer.

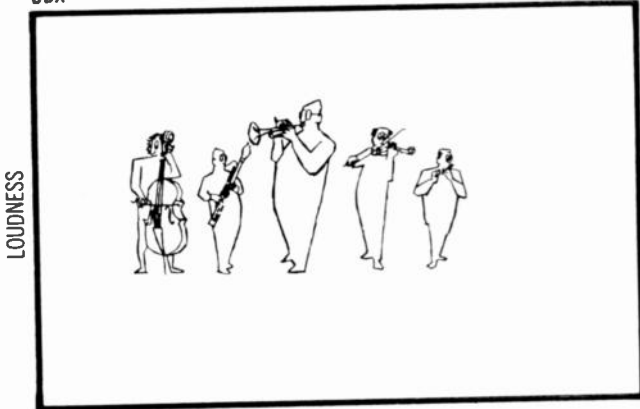
These examples represent the simultaneous operation of what we are calling the Expectation Factor and the Change Factor; but aural expectations can produce unexpected effects even when there is no change. Let's say that you apply a noise-reduction device to reduce hiss (which obviously is the most intrusive form of noise with most program sources) and that you find the program content now sounds rather wanting in highs. This does not mean, necessarily, that you have filtered out some of the music's overtone range along with the noise. You may have "heard" overtones under the hiss simply because you expected them to be there.

The most dramatic demonstration of this phenomenon I've heard was set up some years ago by the Advent people when they first offered Dolby

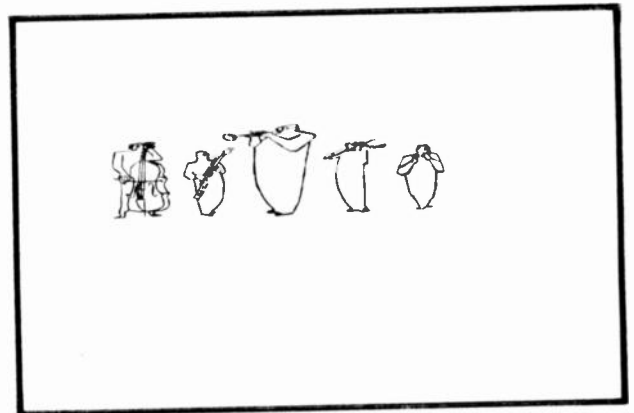
equipment to the consumer market. They had a relatively noise-free signal source plus a hiss source that could be switched in and out. With the hiss turned on there actually seemed to be more highs and even a little more "space" in the recording; when it was switched off, the music suddenly sounded rather lackluster. It's as though the ear, knowing all the little high-frequency noises and so on that attend musical (or extramusical) sounds, listens for them and, because it finds a "signal" (actually noise) at those frequencies, believes it is hearing them. I have no idea how the mechanism actually works—I only know that it does work.

The fact that we do, subjectively, "hear" overtones in high-frequency noise, and feel deprived of those overtones when the noise is removed, raises a fine philosophical point: If listening experience A is more satisfying than listening experience B, does it really matter if B is technically the more correct? Does it matter, in other words, whether the overtones we hear are in the recording or in the listening, as long as we feel they are necessary for best possible reproduction of the recording?

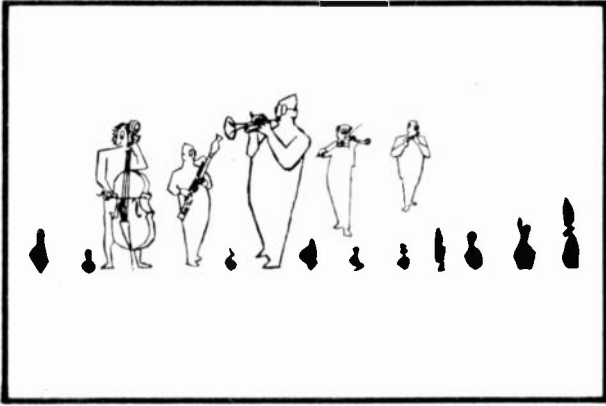
DBX



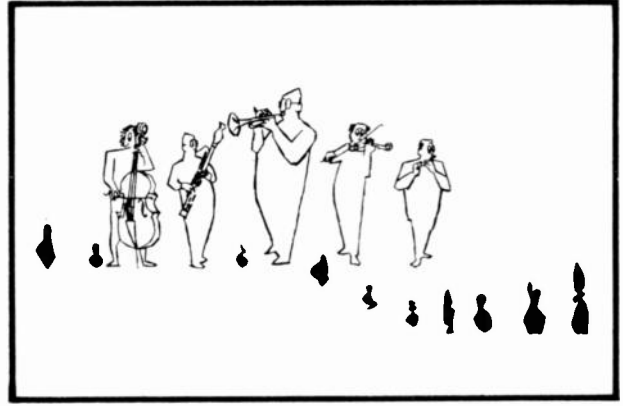
Same music, when fed to DBX encoder, is compressed . . .



. . . to half its original loudness range, keeping it farther . . .



... noise (black blobs) picked up in recording. Decoder ...



... re-expands highs, reducing noise at the same time.

Hum a Few Bars, and I'll Filter It

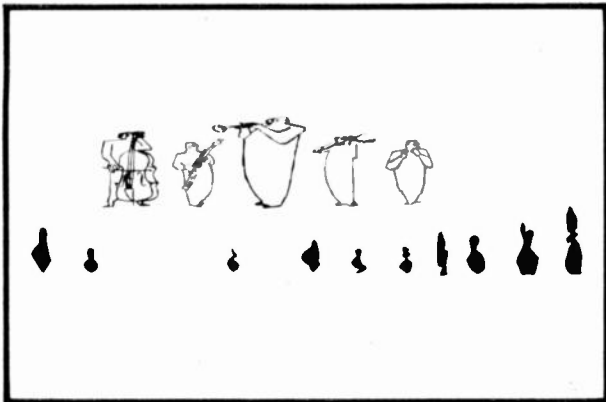
Hum and hiss—the most common forms of noise—can, of course, be filtered. The technique is crude by today's standards, perhaps, but it can be effective if the noise you are seeking to eliminate is beyond the frequency range of the music, if your filter has a steep enough response "skirt" to suppress the noise without impinging on the music, and if the nominal cutoff frequency is between the music and the noise.

Those "ifs" put a premium on flexibility of controls, of course. Most receivers today offer few options in this respect, and many have quite gentle (often 6 dB per octave) skirt slopes. One reason, surely, is that in general the steeper the slope, the greater the phase distortion introduced by the filter. One might contend that the average listener, particularly with a modest system, will find rumble, hum, and hiss more audible than phase distortion. But the fact remains that the garden-variety filters of much current componentry are not very useful.

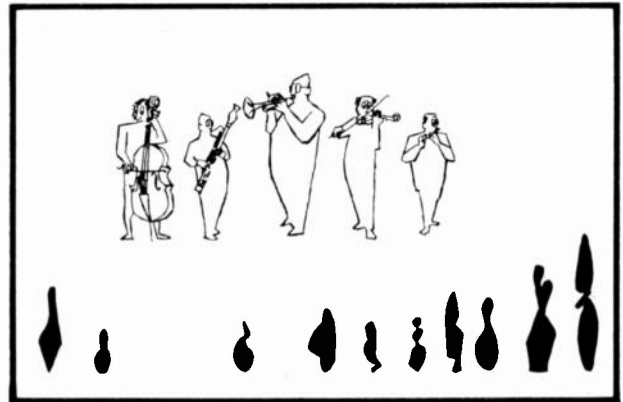
The fancier the component, the higher the likelihood of really useful filters. Graphic equalizers of one sort or another often can be used for this purpose, and there are some highly effective separate filter units on the professional market. (See, for example, the Crown VFX-2 crossover/filter; HF test reports, October 1975.) The primary limitation of any of the more sophisticated filtration devices lies not in their design, but in the wide frequency range of modern signal sources. If the noise you're seeking to filter out is audible, sooner or later you will find wanted signal at the same frequency, and the filter will therefore become undesirable. To solve this dilemma we must turn to other means.

Dynamic Filters

A not-so-modern mutation of simple filtering is what Scott (some twenty-five years ago) called the Dynaural Noise Suppressor. It would begin to roll off the highs (and hence the high-frequency noise) only when program levels fell below a preset threshold at which the music no longer was loud enough to mask the noise. If crudely managed,



... above noise. Expansion in the decoder affects ...



... all music and noise, restoring music and lowering noise.

such devices are given to severe breathing and therefore have never gained widespread popularity. But two modern—and effective—derivatives are available in consumer equipment.

One is Dynamic Noise Limiting, introduced some years ago by Philips specifically to reduce audible noise in cassettes. DNL is a nonadjustable system whose values are carefully chosen to reduce cassette hiss by just enough to achieve an appreciable improvement but not by enough to cause serious unwanted side effects. It was incorporated into cassette decks (see HF test report on the Norelco 2100, February 1973) from several manufacturers and has been available in Europe as a separate add-on unit. It has almost disappeared from the American market, though it is included—along with Dolby B—in the Nakamichi 1000 deck (test reports, August 1973).

Unlike DNL, which was conceived as a single-purpose device, the Burwen Dynamic Noise Filter is highly flexible. (See the HF test report on the Model 1201, April 1975.) Three basic variables can be controlled in one way or another: sensitivity, bandwidth, and time characteristics.

Sensitivity, of course, refers to the program level below which filtration begins. The bandwidth of the remaining signal obviously is the measure of the frequency range over which the filtration operates—the size of the “bite” it takes out of the highs. Time characteristics refer to the speed with which the bandwidth closes down in quiet passages and opens up once again when program levels rise.

Generally a very fast “rise” is desirable in any dynamic device of this sort so that sharp transients in the program will not be dulled. An equally fast decay is not equally desirable. Too fast a decay can do peculiar things with such phenomena as the natural decay or reverberance in the music, producing an unnatural effect. And in a dynamic filter such as the Burwen, the greater the degree of filtration, the greater the chance of audible side effects for a given decay time. By increasing the decay time, the Burwen’s “78” setting gives its severe filtration a more gradual closing-down as levels drop than the gentler settings and hence keeps audible side effects under control.

The Encode/Decode Systems

So far, we’ve been talking about units intended to get rid of—or at least ameliorate—noise that already exists in the program source. But an important group of so-called noise-reduction devices might better be called noise preventives. These are all systems that involve some sort of compression, to keep signals up away from noise that may be expected to creep in, and later expansion to return the signal to its original form, pushing the noise that has been picked up while the signal was in its

encoded form “out of the way” (by reducing its level) at the same time.

The best known of these devices, surely, is the Dolby B circuit. (The A circuit is used exclusively in professional work.) It encodes (compresses) only the upper end of the frequency range and hence is a preventive only for high-frequency noise like tape and FM hiss. It delivers, subjectively, very close to the nominal 10 dB of improvement.

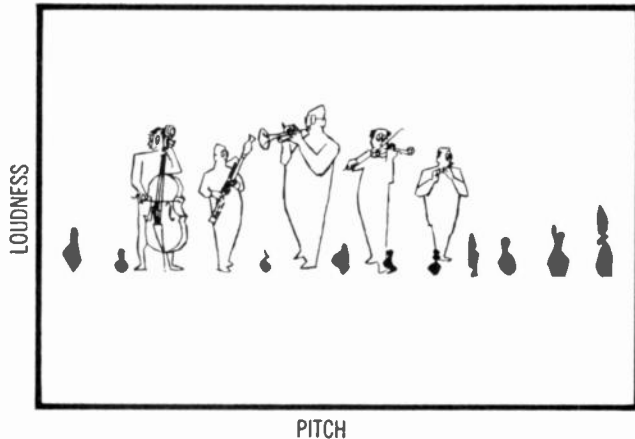
JVC’s Automatic Noise Reduction System is very similar. While some advantages are claimed for ANRS over Dolby B, the two are interchangeable to the extent that program material encoded by one system can be decoded by the other with little, if any, audible “mismatch.” The reason that ANRS has not been widely adopted outside JVC’s own products appears to be its proprietariness: Why should a competing manufacturer adopt the JVC system when it can use one from Dolby Laboratories, which—since it manufactures no products—is not a competitor?

At this writing, JVC has just introduced a new version of ANRS—Super ANRS. It has an additional switch (specifically the Super feature) that adds even more high-frequency compression in recording and expansion in playback. The purpose is not to keep low-level highs even farther above the noise, but to keep high-level highs farther away from tape overload (see the feature article on recording in the February issue), allowing higher recording levels with music that (like much of rock) is unusually rich in high-frequency content.

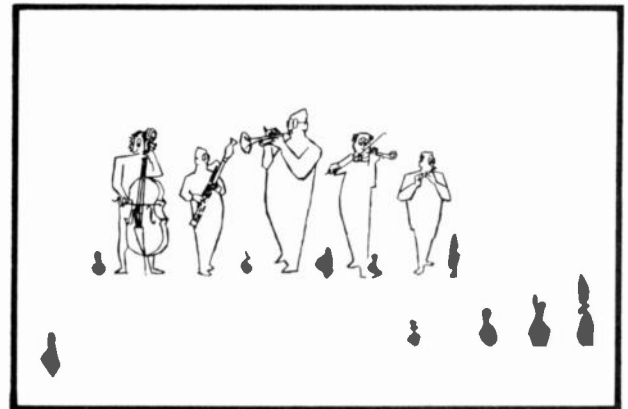
The DBX system differs from Dolby B in that it uses much more compression and expansion (2:1—that is, a 60-dB dynamic range is compressed to 30 dB, then re-expanded to 60 dB) and in that it manipulates the entire frequency range—not just the highs. Originally intended for tape recording (Teac now offers it built into tape decks), it also has been applied to disc recordings to deliver a potential dynamic range of something like 100 dB—in other words, a range approaching that of the human ear. The catch for discs is that they must be encoded during recording, and then they can be played satisfactorily only via the DBX decoder. Still, a few discs cut this way are available.

In taping, too, the DBX system offers considerably greater potential dynamic range than Dolby B. By the same token, it puts a greater premium on the operation of the tape system in one respect. A dropout in the tape or a momentary loss of good tape-to-head contact will, with Dolby B, result in a loss in highs; with DBX it will result in a more severe loss in level across the entire frequency range. Obviously DBX is not recommended for use with cheap tapes and poor transport designs; in good company, however, it can yield excellent results.

AUTOCORRELATOR



Given music and noise of our Dolby and DBX examples . . .



. . . the Phase Linear circuit reduces noise selectively.

And, unlike the Dolby system, it does not require critical adjustment of levels. Dolby is designed to begin compression—and expansion—below a predetermined signal level (Dolby reference level). If the levels are not correctly aligned with Dolby B, the highs can sound overbright or dull, depending on the “direction” of the misalignment, because of under- or over-expansion and because the remainder of the frequency range is not affected by the processing. Since DBX treats all frequencies at all levels to the same, reciprocal compression and expansion, the actual signal levels at the DBX processor are immaterial as long as they are above its inherent electronic noise and below its inherent electronic overload.

(Incidentally, DBX styles itself dbx. We use capital letters, however, to make clear the proprietary nature of the trade name—just as we do with any proper name.)

The Autocorrelator

This brings us to a unit that is, at present, unique: the Phase Linear Autocorrelator. It is available in two forms—built into the Model 4000 preamp and on its own as the Model 1000. It is the only unit that seeks electronic means of distinguishing between noise and signal in the same frequency bands and at or near the same loudness levels. In theory, the circuit can make the distinction and reduce the level of the noise component while reproducing the signal component unaltered. In practice, its ability to do so is far from absolute, yet audibly greater (to my ear) than that of any other noise-remover on the market.

The clue to its operation is in its name. Noise characteristically is uncorrelated; that is, it is totally random. Not all noise—a scratch on a disc, for example, reproduces as a transient in which all frequencies theoretically appear simultaneously and are therefore correlated to that extent. Music and other organized sounds characteristically are cor-

related in terms of repeating waveforms and harmonic interrelationships.

There are two controls for the Model 1000's Autocorrelator: one for high-frequency noise reduction, the other for removing rumble. That for the highs has by far the greatest audible effect, though the rumble portion is capable of up to 15 dB of noise suppression at 20 Hz, while hiss can be lowered by only 10 dB—albeit in a frequency range to which the ear is particularly sensitive, of course.

The knobs vary the frequency range over which noise is removed. The instructions tell you to turn each until the noise in its frequency band is gone but the music unimpaired. And if the noise is random enough, that's just about the way it works. As you begin turning down the knob for the highs, for example, any hiss becomes progressively more muted. Sooner or later (and assuming that there are highs in your program source), the music too will begin to sound muted.

Since crackle is less random than hiss, it is more difficult to suppress. The sound of cymbals lightly touched with wire brushes, being less coherent than that of, say, violins, is more difficult to preserve. And in trying to find the optimum setting the ear can easily believe it's losing program highs when it's losing only noise. If this phenomenon leads you to set the control too high in the presence of fairly loud noise, the noise can be gated with the signal to produce an effect approaching the breathing of conventional dynamic filters.

This appears to be, at least in part, a function of a particularly ingenious circuit feature of the Autocorrelator. It is designed to “predict” where the overtone structure of a given, sensed fundamental should fall and to open up the bandpass to let the predicted harmonics through. It is as though the circuitry is examining each little bundle of energy to determine whether it should be suppressed by 10 dB or left as it is and, as you rotate the knob, is becoming progressively more critical in making its decisions. Too high a setting

will give the noise the benefit of the doubt; too low a setting will "condemn" all but the most unequivocal of music components.

The bass control operates similarly but for frequency range. Often it will remove low-level, low-frequency "garbage" that you weren't particularly aware of before, but that—once it's gone—you realize had materially compromised the realism of the sound and added to listening fatigue. With some recordings, the improvement is quite astonishing.

Expanding Audio

The other main feature of the Phase Linear Model 1000, while unique, generically is one of a rapidly growing group of audio circuits that may be called program expanders. Phase Linear's bears two names, specifying two interrelated functions. The first is the Downward Expander (DE). It reduces

the level of very-low-level passages, counteracting the compression that was used in recording (or broadcasting) to keep quiet sounds "out of the mud." Maximum expansion is 3 dB; that is, it can add 3 dB to the bottom of the program's dynamic range.

The Peak Unlimiter (PU) works similarly at the top of the dynamic range and is intended to undo the peak-limiting type of compression that is most commonplace in broadcasting, where it is used to prevent overmodulation of the station's carrier. Above a threshold point (set by a large knob—symmetrical to the treble Autocorrelator knob on the 1000—which shifts the thresholds of all expander functions simultaneously upward or downward within the dynamic range), the Peak Unlimiter adds upward expansion. A light-emitting diode below the control knob flashes when peaks are going beyond the threshold. Below the threshold,

IF YOU WANT AN EXPANDER . . .

As the accompanying article makes plain, I'm not exactly enthusiastic about the potential of program expanders for noise reduction, but they obviously do have a place in a modern stereo system for restoring the dynamic range compromised by compression in the recording and broadcast studios.

The Pioneer is less complex in its operation at any particular setting than the PU/DE circuitry of the Phase Linear, but its operation is variable for different total expansion factors: 6, 8, 10, 12, and 14 dB. I generally end up with the 8- or 10-dB setting, though I avoid the FM stations that compress heavily—the sort of thing for which the higher settings are designed. Thanks partly to a very efficient control circuit and partly to a release characteristic that is initially fast and then slows down considerably, the action of the unit is extremely difficult to hear. On moderately noisy program material you can hear it, however. At the 8-dB setting it compares very roughly with the Phase Linear in this respect, if you use the Autocorrelator. (With the Autocorrelator switched off the PU/DE action is easier to hear because of pumping in the noise.)

The IAD is also adjustable—a continuous control varies expansion from zero to some 20 dB (!), with a row of LEDs, displaying the expansion actually at work, in steps of approximately 2 dB. That is, if the third LED from the left lights on peaks, you presumably are getting some 6 dB of expansion. (The IAD presents one minor practical annoyance, incidentally. There is no on/off switch; IAD's instructions are to plug the three-prong AC cord into a switched outlet on your preamp. But offhand I can't think of a single component fitted with grounding AC convenience outlets.) The release time on the IAD is unusually slow, a subject of some debate. I tend to favor a slow release time because it minimizes the possibility that the expander will exaggerate dynamic changes within individual musical phrases; some listeners

prefer a faster release because it allows expansion of sudden transients without undue upward shifts in the audible level of accompanying instruments. And when a sudden accent comes along in noisy programs, the IAD will shift the noise level sharply upward behind the transient, then slowly taper the noise off again. This does not sound like true breathing and is less annoying to my ear, but it can be distracting.

The Phase Linear PU/DE circuit does the best job of restoring the "punch" softened by peak limiting in FM broadcasts (the Pioneer is my second choice), but with the Autocorrelator switched off it produces the most audible noise modulation in noisy programs.

But some caveats are in order. Any expander can, at best, undo with precision only one sort of compression: whatever sort is exactly reciprocal to the expander. Where the expansion is inexactly related to the compression, audible (if subtle) peculiarities begin to creep into the sound. And the expanders—particularly the adjustable ones—easily can be overused. Though the extra vividness they lend the music may seem attractive at first listening, the rule is that, if you can hear the expansion as such, you soon will tire of its unnaturalness. A corollary of this statement should be obvious: Music of limited dynamic range (chamber music, for example) that therefore has not been compressed will not benefit from an expander. (Also, matrixed-quad fans should beware of expanders that control the two channels individually, which makes hash of the encoding. Both the IAD and the Peak Unlimiter appear to control both channels in tandem.)

But where the music has *audibly* been compressed, as so much of our program material is these days, an expander can help to restore it. And even if the restoration is demonstrably "unnatural" in some minor points, its effect can be more convincing—and more exciting—over-all than program material with no expansion. R.L.

there's another expander at work, stretching each 10 dB of level variation in the program to about 11 dB, for a maximum of about 3 dB total increase.

This, plus the maximum of 1½ dB added at the top by the PU, plus the 3 dB of the DE, adds up to a 7½ dB maximum increase in the dynamic range available from this portion of the Model 1000. If you add in the 10 dB of high-frequency noise suppression offered by the Autocorrelator, you get a total increase of 17½ dB.

At least one manufacturer has made the point that, since program expansion alone increases dynamic range, it is to that extent a form of noise reduction. When noise is severe enough to demand reduction, however, it also is severe enough to fluctuate somewhat with the expansion and draw attention to itself because of what I've called the Change Factor. That is, an expander can make a serious noise problem worse—not better.

But if the noise is down far enough so that you don't hear it except in the quietest passages, use of an expander does indeed increase dynamic range. And any significant increase in level tends to mask the noise so that—although the expander is raising it on an absolute basis (along with the signal)—you aren't aware of its fluctuations. But to buy an expander on the expectation that it will remove noise is, to my way of thinking, a mistake.

So What Works Best?

Let's begin with the preventive systems: DBX, Dolby B, and ANRS. I have heard complaints about them on the ground that they "do" things to the signals processed through them. But I have yet to hear any artificial quality in their processed signals that can be ascribed to the systems. I can't prove that every transient comes out exactly as it went in; but I can hear no difference, and that's enough for me.

In terms of raw available dynamic range, DBX is the clear winner. If a good cassette deck with Dolby or ANRS will deliver something like 60 dB, the same deck with DBX should deliver 80 dB or more, even allowing for the fact that its compression forces the signal's high frequencies tighter against the tape's overload limit and therefore forces you to keep peaks (as read by the recorder's meters) at lower levels. (DBX recommends maximum meter readings of -3 VU with most open-reel decks, -7 VU with most cassette units.) With a good open-reel deck, a dynamic range of 100 dB might not be an unreasonable expectation.

DBX also has a significant advantage in being uncritical of levels for correct operation. But Dolby B has several clear advantages. It already delivers approximately the dynamic range one might need for commonly available signal sources (e.g., the 60 dB cited above, which presupposes the use of chrome or SA tape), to that extent making

moot the question of whether any extra dynamic range is desirable. It is less disastrously affected by significant level fluctuations (say, due to poor tape-to-head contact) in related equipment. It already has been adopted for prerecorded tapes and FM broadcasting—neither of which is likely to adopt DBX because undecoded DBX is unlistenable, while undecoded Dolby is merely somewhat shrill.

So it looks as though Dolby B (with ANRS as an alternative) will remain the noise-prevention system of choice for most consumer purposes, with many amateur recordists choosing DBX for its extreme dynamic range, which can pay off in live recording. DBX is widely used by professionals already, and for this very reason.

Among the noise-removal devices, I find the Autocorrelator both the most fascinating and the most effective, though no denoiser (including the Autocorrelator) is a cure-all. It can only improve the apparent noise, and—like competing devices—it will do so only if used judiciously. It is at its best where rumble and hiss are barely audible. In this situation, pressing the Autocorrelator button is like removing a veil from the sound.

As rumble increases, the Autocorrelator continues to do an excellent job in the bass. The treble is more problematical. If the Autocorrelator is set so that it just takes out objectionable hiss with low program levels, higher levels can allow the hiss back in (presumably mistaking it for overtones) with a resultant instability in noise content. The effect is not as obvious as pumping in conventional dynamic devices, but it lends a curious coarseness to the resulting sound. If the Autocorrelator is readjusted for more aggressive noise removal, program highs may appear to suffer—though here we can easily run afoul of the Expectation Factor. But to repeat, even allowing for all that, and even with fairly high noise levels, I find the Autocorrelator over-all the most satisfactory of the noise removers.

Of the general-purpose dynamic filters I've used, the Burwen strikes me as the best. Again, it will attack only so much noise without audible side effects, but it too can effectively remove the veil in already-good signals. So can DNL, but since it is engineered specifically for cassettes its range of capabilities is sharply limited.

To repeat, noise-free program material is preferable to even the best of denoisers—if only one could find truly noise-free programs. Nonadjustable denoisers (like DNL) or nondynamic denoisers (like filters) have limited capabilities; the remainder must be used with discretion if their best potential is to be realized. But that potential is considerable, given a reasonably good signal source. They are, so to speak, great for shining up the apple; just don't expect them to remove worms and bruises. ●

by William Warriner



EVERY SECOND of our lives, we are bombarded by wave energy. We swim in it, half consciously, like fish in the ocean. Its gross currents—which are variations in atmospheric pressure—come to us as sound, and human ears can get a reading on a good portion of its spectrum. But electromagnetic energy is something else. We are equipped to detect some of its wave activity with skin (check your sunburn) and with the eyes. Yet the known electromagnetic spectrum from direct current through light to cosmic rays contains 60 octaves, and our eyes respond to but one octave at around 10^{15} (1 quadrillion) hertz. Clearly there is a lot going on that we don't know about.

Broadcast energy—people making waves, so to speak—is a powerful current in our neighborhood

of the ocean. Of course it has a job to do and does it, but sometimes it also lets us hear peculiar things: disembodied voices, strange whistles, heavenly music—and when heavenly music has a commercial tagging along, we naturally become suspicious about its provenance. The current has swept us into the little-charted sea called radio frequency interference, or RFI in the textbooks. The following are some scenarios of confrontations with its terrors.

First scenario: You are sitting in your living room trying to hear broadcast information (a string quartet), and another signal source (an automobile ignition system) expresses itself through your loudspeaker. We call that noise since we don't like it, but this is an arbitrary definition. (Dandelions may be weeds to you; to Euell Gibbons they were food.) The automobile can't work without those pulses. The tuner doesn't understand the difference and is just obeying orders.

In scenario No. 2, the original broadcast energy itself is defined as noise when it trespasses upon the wrong circuits. They may or may not be audio

If your stereo system picks up signals it shouldn't,
there may be simple ways of eliminating them

R_x for RF Interference

circuits. For example, a few years back, an Air Force radar installation near Willingboro, New Jersey, lowered its sights from satellite tracking to look for sea-launched ballistic missiles and was immediately accused of interfering with local radio, television, stereo sets, hearing aids—and heart pacemakers.

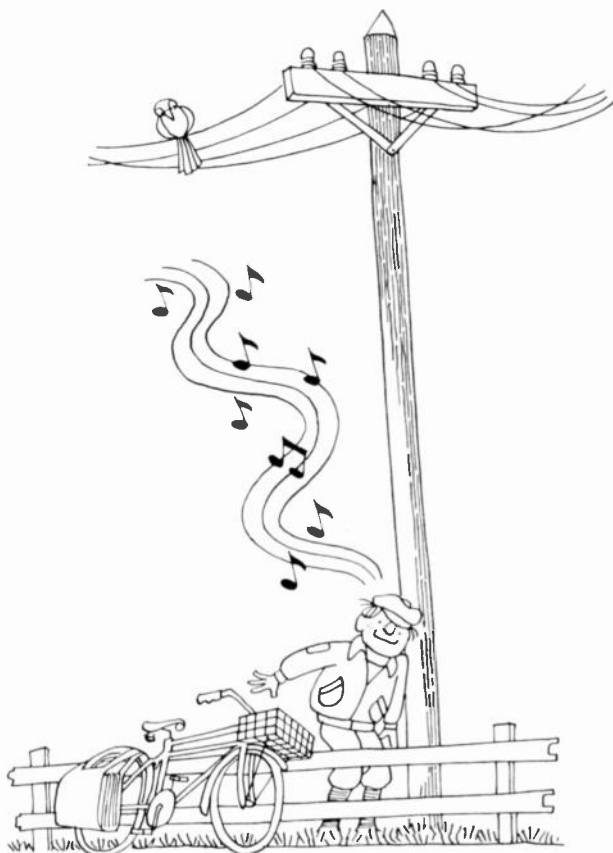
Scenario No. 3, the spookiest, can make you want to take up Eastern philosophy in your spare time. Broadcast information can turn up in places where it is not only unwanted, but unlikely, and not as inarticulate noise, but as a fully translated audio program—maybe a string quartet, but more likely Elton John. Frederic B. Jeuneman, a scientist writing in *Industrial Research* magazine for October 1971, told this tale: "When he was a boy, a friend of mine lay on his iron bedstead and upon touching the frame heard a local radio station. His parents, not believing the story, had no interest in observing the phenomenon."

I was happy to read that from a proper authority, because when I was a kid nobody believed my story either. I was befriended by a musical telephone pole. It had a big old transformer on top, and it was located along my morning newspaper route on New York State Highway 7, a good half mile from any human habitation. When I parked my bike and climbed over the guardrail and stood up close, I could hear an FM station from Binghamton, fifteen miles away.

The explanation of these phenomena can be quick and almost painless. The components of a simple AM radio receiver are common enough: a detector followed by an amplifier, followed by a transducer. Start with the fact that any diode can

serve as a detector, passing an alternating current in one direction only and so rectifying it. A poor electrical connection can behave as an imperfect diode, and some rectification may occur at the junction. The rest, frequently, is a matter of resonance. If coupling exists with any vibrating body, there is your potential transducer. If the RF signal is strong enough, amplification may be unnecessary. A child touching a bed can serve as an antenna or may tune the welded seams of his strange receiver. A telephone pole has miles of wire acting as an antenna to pick up the initial RF; its transformer coil generates a magnetic field, which conceivably could be modulated to produce mechanical vibrations at audio frequencies in the metal casing. If you are so inclined, you can spend a free evening or more cataloguing the combinations that can add up to accidental radio.

The point is that it is naive to think that the components of a radio receiver occur only when assembled willfully and with intent to receive. Thinking that radio comes only from tuners is like a city kid thinking that milk comes only from plastic cartons. People have picked up radio programs with the fillings in their teeth. I know of a Boston recording studio that had to rebuild its entire mixing console because audio from a nearby FM rock station showed up in everything it put on tape. An elaborate PA system, moved from a past Newport Jazz Festival to the ballroom of a Miami hotel, not only reproduced the tape-recorded music it was supposed to play, but included *sotto voce* the continuous patter of a disc jockey working half a mile away. In the Toronto CBC studio where he creates his radio productions, Glenn Gould had to have



every piece of audio equipment "debugged." Any audio engineer will have his own RFI war stories to tell.

Of course the same thing can happen in your home audio installation, where it is no fun at all, and exorcising the spurious voices can be a lot of trouble. There are three ways to deal with RFI. You can try social action, you can putter around with your installation, or you can construct corrective circuitry. This last approach is beyond the scope of this article, but a lot can still be done with the first two.

Social Action. If your RFI is from a ham radio operator, listen for his call letters and use them to get his name and phone number from the Federal Communications Commission. Call him. Be friendly. Explain your problem. He has taken an oath to be nice. He should be able to share his knowledge of electronics to help solve the problem and may even be willing to look at your setup and lend a hand.

If your RFI is from a commercial radio station, you may get some help from its chief engineer. Some chief engineers are harassed and crotchety. Others are downright talkative and full of good ideas. It's worth a phone call to find out.

Except for rare cases of unlicensed or just plain sloppy operation, the offending transmitter is approved by the FCC, and nothing is going to change that fact, so RFI has to be corrected in your own equipment, not in the transmitter. Some high fidelity components are more thoughtfully designed than others, and two amplifiers (or turntables, etc.)

of otherwise equal quality may differ in RFI susceptibility. If you live near a broadcast tower (or a ham or a taxi dispatcher), this is something to think about before you make a decision to buy equipment.

Puttering. Frequently RFI can be eliminated by making minor changes in wiring or even by rearranging a high fidelity installation. RFI is such a skittish thing that almost anything you do will work sometimes. But as with any ghost, there is no one thing that will work every time.

Here is what will almost always not work: (1) Turning the AC plug around (except on rare occasions with very cheap amps that have no input power transformer). (2) Moving parallel wires so they are no longer parallel (if your wiring is the main culprit, they are acting as an antenna—and length is a bigger factor than position). (3) Cleaning, dusting, and lubricating plugs and other contact points (usually these actions won't affect the physical gap in which rectification is taking place).

It seems that RFI often eludes pure logic, so the rational procedure is to take the simplest corrective actions first.

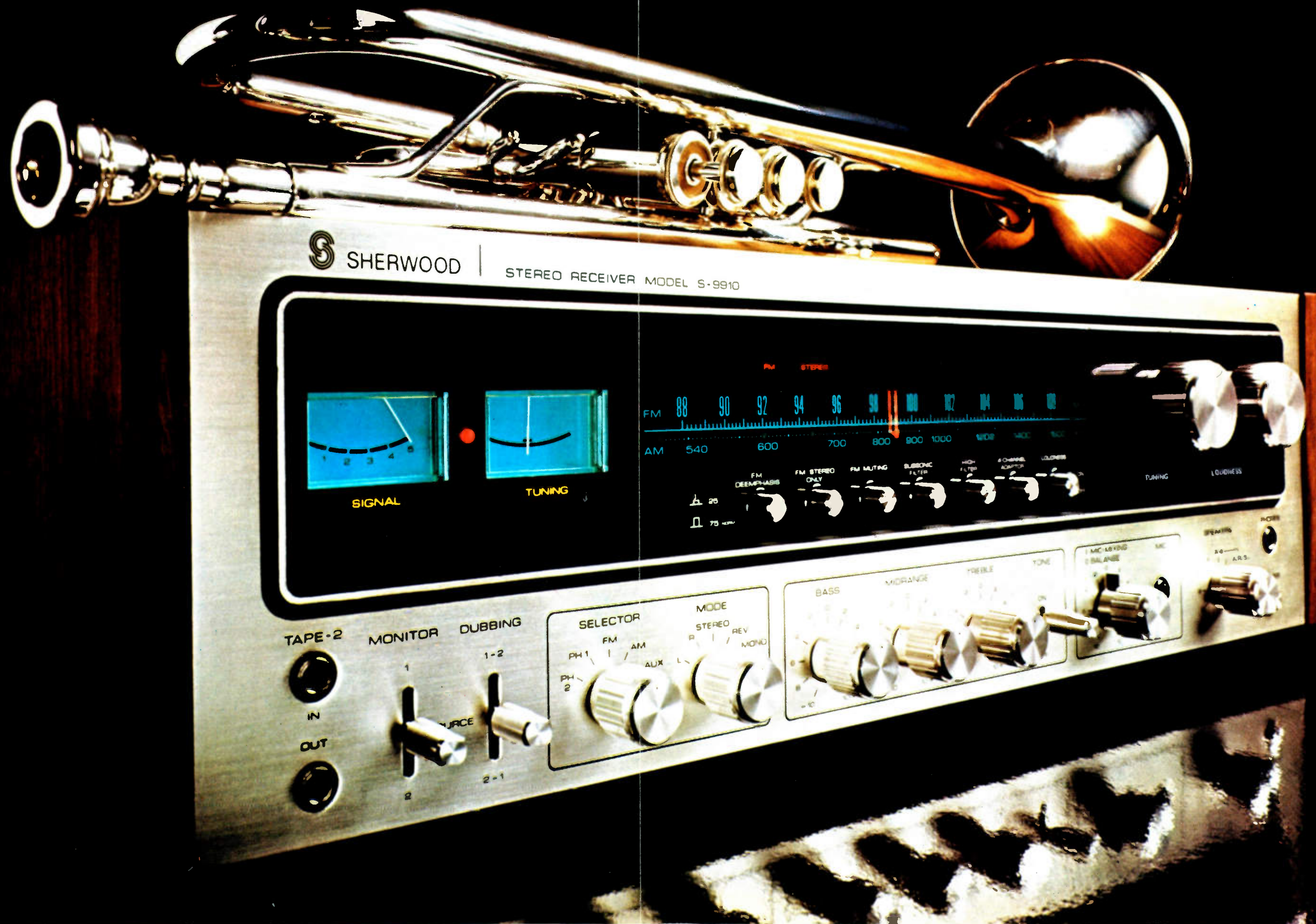
CUT LEADS. Begin by turning the preamp volume control (or whatever volume controls are available) down to zero. If the level of the unwanted program is unaffected, you can usually assume that the RFI is entering after that point in your system. There is a good chance that it is at the output end of the amplifier. Since virtually all high fidelity amplifiers have feedback from the output stage, the speaker leads can act as an antenna, feeding the signal *in* at the output. One simple course of action is to shorten or lengthen the speaker wires a few inches at a time and look for improvement. If the wires are acting as a resonant antenna, altering the length should detune the circuit. But don't go too far—you may simply establish a new resonance.

TIGHTEN CONTACTS. This measure, next in order of simplicity, can be accomplished with the teeth—but a pair of pliers is better. Remembering that rectification often occurs at a poor contact point (a pseudo-diode), approach the phono plugs (RCA plugs) in your installation one at a time and compress the ground tabs so they will make tighter contact.

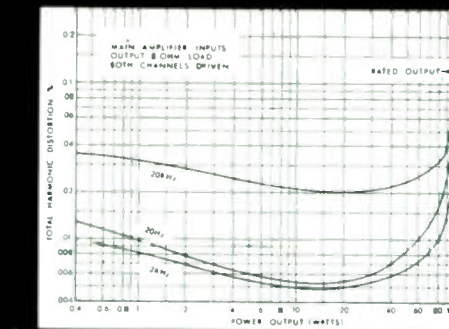
REARRANGE COMPONENTS. In theory, you can localize the RFI rectification point to a particular component—preamp, phono cartridge, etc.—by unplugging each piece of equipment, exclusive of amplifier and speakers, one at a time. Do so with the volume at zero. If the RFI disappears when you unplug the turntable, you may think you have isolated it in the turntable or phono cartridge, but this may not be true.

You can test the first hypothesis (rectification in the phono cartridge) by tightening the contacts on the cartridge output leads, or by substituting an-

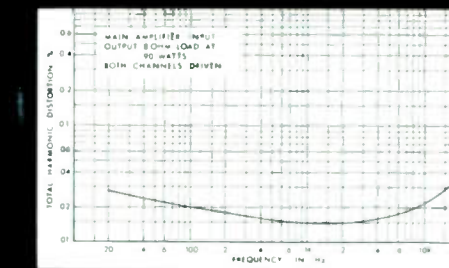
Everything you hear is true.



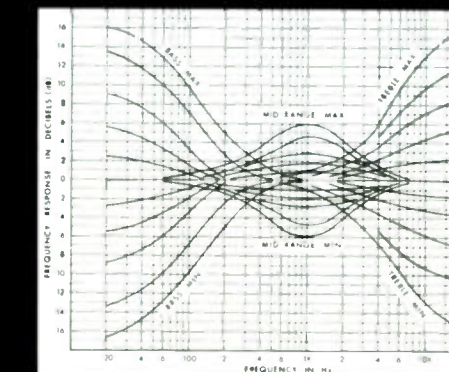
Power Output vs Distortion



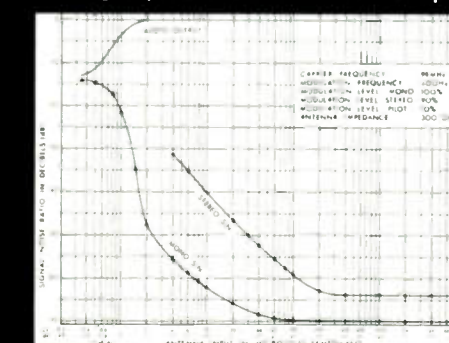
Distortion vs Frequency



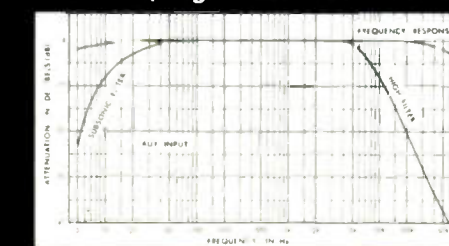
Tone Control Characteristics



FM Signal/Noise Ratio vs Antenna Input



Subsonic/High Filter Characteristics



It has all the power you need [at the lowest achievable level of distortion]: 100 watts per channel, minimum RMS [both channels driven at 8 ohms, 20-20,000 Hz; with total harmonic distortion no more than 0.1%]. The componentry used to achieve this rating features exceptional stability characteristics: a parallel OCL direct-coupled output configuration... twin 15,000 μ f filter capacitors... and a zener regulated secondary power supply.

It has all the controls you need for fully flexible centralized operation: 5-position Mode switch, 6-position Selector switch, 8-position Speaker switch. Two Tape Monitor circuits [with a two-way, inter-deck dubbing capability]. Front-panel Mic Input and Mixing, with a frequency response suitable for use with a professional caliber microphone. And a Main-In/Pre-Out switch, which allows independent usage of the main amplifier section. You can operate two speaker groupings, two turntables, three tape decks and any auxiliary equipment—with no discernible white noise.

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An Interview with Alexander Kipnis

by James Drake
and Joseph Tempesta

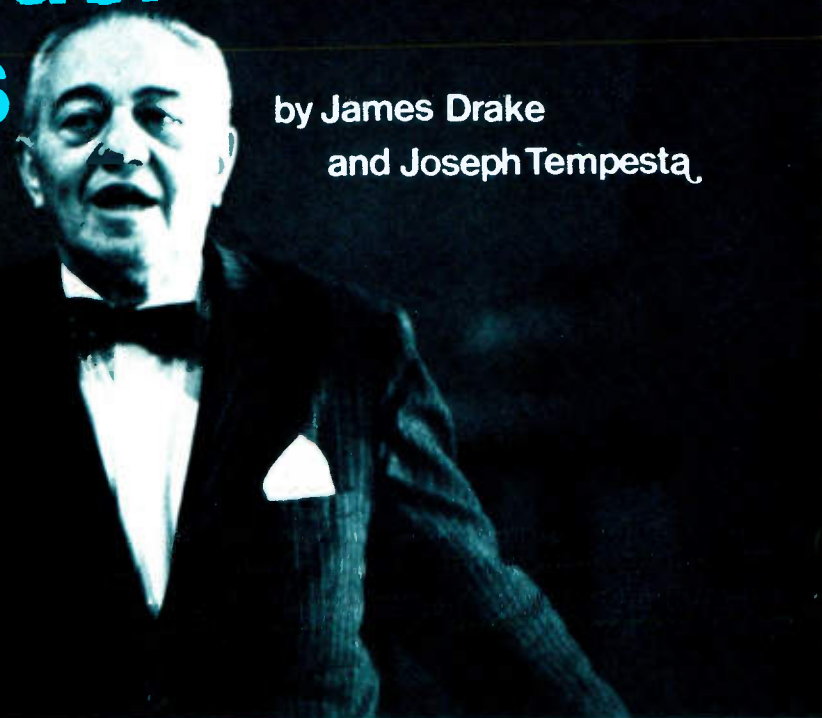


Photo: Warren B. Syer

When Mary Garden began a lecture tour of the United States after she had retired from the operatic stage, she was asked by a *New York Times* interviewer which male vocalist she considered the greatest interpreter of Debussy. "It is not a Frenchman, but a Russian," she answered. "It is Alexander Kipnis." Now eighty-five and a well-respected voice teacher, the successor to Chaliapin in the Russian repertoire and the master of French, German, and Italian opera is enjoying a renewed appreciation on long-playing records. A superb musician whose career spanned three continents in three decades, Alexander Kipnis reflects on his recordings, his roles, and the legendary singers with whom he performed.

Is it true, Mr. Kipnis, that the rich bass voice you possess was once that of a boy soprano?

It seems to be a trick of nature that most boy sopranos eventually become bassos, while most boy altos seem to become tenors. I had a high soprano voice as a boy, and I sang both coloratura and straight arias.

As a boy in the Ukraine I was greatly influenced by Russian folklore and especially by the music of the Russian peasants, although no one in my own

Dr. Drake, associate director of continuing education and education professor, and Dr. Tempesta, associate professor of history, both of Ithaca College, conducted this interview under the auspices of the Gustave Haenschen Oral History Project.

family either played or sang. Once in a while I can remember my mother singing as she would be working around the house, and later on I was astonished to recognize what she sang as "*La donna è mobile*" or Schubert's *Serenade*. Where she heard them, I don't know.

My father made his living by selling heavy fabrics for winter coats, and he too neither played nor sang. He died very young—I was only twelve when he died—but he was a very learned man, although music was not a part of his background. So as a boy, my own musical influences were mainly from the music of the Russian peasants. I would hear their songs at twilight when they would play and sing for themselves, and by the time I was four or five years old I had learned most of their songs.

other turntable, or another cartridge. But these measures are becoming complicated, so the Rule of Simplicity leads us to the second hypothesis: Rectification may not be occurring in the phono cartridge at all.

The fact is that dominant tuning may depend on the relative position of two components, and the audio cable running between them may function as the antenna. The simplest action is of the trial-and-error type: Move the turntable, or preamp, or amp, or all three, or every component you own into new orientations by the compass and into new positions relative to each other. If nothing else, you may end up with a lovely new arrangement of the living room.

□ **REROUTE GROUNDS.** Even if you don't succeed in isolating a rectification point precisely, with a little luck it is sometimes possible to bypass it. If you have a separate preamp and amplifier, try taking an independent wire and connecting the two chassis from ground to ground. You can also try a wire from the amplifier ground to the house current ground (the screw in the center of the switch-plate on the power outlet). Or you can go from chassis ground to earth ground (the old connect-it-to-the-water-pipe routine). When these tactics are successful, the RF may still be there, but you will have simply rerouted it around the unidentified rectifying junction. Of course you may also have picked up some unwanted hum in the process by forming ground loops, in which case you should disconnect the extra ground wire or wires and try another approach.

□ **IMPROVE SHIELDING.** The shielding on the audio cables (patch cords) may be inadequate or nonexistent. If the patch cords are not made of shielded cable, replace them with cords that are. If they are made of spirally wrapped shielded cable, try replacing them with the braided type (theoretically, your dealer should know which is which). In some cases you will be forced to abandon simplicity altogether and replace the standard audio cables with foil-shielded wire (such as Belden cable #8451), which has two conductors to connect to the phono plugs in the normal fashion, plus a foil wrapping that is in contact with a bare wire. In each cable the bare shield wire should be terminated only at one end and on the ground of a phono plug, preferably at the center of the system.

□ **WRAP AND TRAP.** Long audio cables and AC power lines can both collect RFI. You may be able to prevent the RF current from entering an amplifier (or any component that you suspect of audio rectification) by applying the following gimmick. Get a ferrite transformer core from an electronics dealer or an old TV set—one in which the hole in the middle is big enough for line plugs to go through and still have room. Now take a suspected cable/line cord, pass it through the center of the core, and wrap it spirally around the ring several

times to form a coil. This constitutes a "common-mode trap." The device will pass a differential (two-way) signal, such as AC, but will inhibit a common-mode signal, one that is induced equally on both conductors and is traveling in the same direction on both. The RF is a common-mode signal, and we can hope that you will eventually find a cable or cord on which the wrapping procedure makes the RFI disappear.

Resort to major surgery. We are running out of simple tactics. You can replace the lamp-cord speaker lines from your amplifier with shielded cable. You can resolder all the phono plug sockets in sight. But if you still have RFI, you will have to consider corrective circuitry, which means wiring in filters or bypasses, usually inside the chassis of the audio components. If you want to try this yourself, you can find relevant schematic diagrams in *The Radio Amateur's Handbook*, in William Orr's *Radio Handbook*, in *The Audio Cyclopedia*, and in the April 1975 issue of *Radio-Electronics* magazine.

If you are not prepared to translate the schematics into hardware, call a high fidelity repairman, and get out your checkbook and practice writing large numbers until he arrives.

But be philosophical. Puttering and soldering aside, surely the inscrutability of our electromagnetic ocean is most interesting. Some emanations, for example, seem hard to explain as errant human broadcast information. A friend of mine, who used to frequent a fried-chicken restaurant (sole tenant in a remodeled old carriage house), reports that late at night the building sang a bleeping song that sounded like a Grade-B science-fiction movie. The song was finally found to be coming from the old brick chimney. There was nothing on the roof: no telephone lines, no antennas, no metal junctions. And the song came only around midnight—at the witching hour. Curiouser and spuriouiser, as Alice might have put it.



The word is out.



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What prompted you to make singing your own career?

I first studied music for a single, practical reason—I wanted to avoid becoming an ordinary Russian soldier. In Russia, a man who knew music could become a military bandmaster and upon being drafted would immediately become an officer. . . . And so I began my career with the full intention of becoming a bandmaster. I had to study two instruments, one brass and the other string, and so I learned the trombone and the double bass. This was . . . quite before I was aware that I had a voice.

My vocal studies began rather accidentally at the Warsaw Conservatory, where I was graduated as a conductor. Like most others, the Conservatory had a choir and students were required to sing in it as part of their musical training. The chorus master took me aside and told me that I had a better voice than the others, and he urged me to develop it. So I took some lessons from an Italian teacher there, and I went as often as I could to the opera. I became very involved with singing, and like every young musician and young singer I thought I knew everything about the voice. I realized later on that, in spite of the fact that I had heard many great singers, I knew very little about vocal production.

Which of the singers you heard as a young artist made the deepest impression upon you?

Unquestionably, Mattia Battistini made the most profound impression on me then, and I heard him in his prime. He had the kind of voice that made the voices of the other cast members sound like tin in comparison to a golden bell. And of course the size and phrasing he brought to an aria—he was not a good-looking man, but what a singer! Believe me, when he would appear in *Ballo in maschera* or *Quo vadis*, the audience would sit in awe of him, wondering how a man could possibly sing that wonderfully. For me, hearing Battistini was almost disastrous, because I thought to myself, "What's the use?" I could never sing like that! But, fortunately, the drive that a young singer has and that lets him continue after a disappointment kept me trying and trying again.

The French basso Marcel Journet also impressed me, I must say. His range was so colossal that he could sing both the baritone and the basso roles. I heard his Escamillo and his Méphistophélès when I was singing in Wiesbaden—this was just after the close of World War I. The first performance I heard Journet in was *Faust*, and part of it was unintentionally comical.

If you know the opera, you'll know that Méphistophélès' first line in the opera is "Me voici" ("I am here"), which he sings after he has been summoned by the weary philosopher Faust. Staging Méphistophélès' entrance is a bit of a problem, be-

cause his entrance has to be dramatic and magical, and so typically the staging calls for an entrance from below the stage, by way of an elevator. The stagehands wait for Faust's lines summoning the Devil, and then they start the elevator so that Méphistophélès can utter his "Me voici" in time.

Except in this performance. Here I was, sitting in the opera house eagerly awaiting Journet's appearance as the Devil, and at the appointed moment the tenor, as Faust, sang "Satan, appear," and then came a tremendous crescendo—but no Marcel Journet! Suddenly, we heard "Me voici" coming from beneath the stage! He sang almost two pages of the score before they finally started the elevator. You see, the whole cast was singing in German, except for the tenor and for Marcel Journet, who sang their parts in French. But the stagehands, who spoke only German, were waiting for a German cue from their French Faust!

But once he finally got on-stage, he sang incredibly. To tell you about his range—I will never forget his "Le veau d'or" in *Faust*. He took a high G in it, and he sang it like the best baritones. Imagine that!

Both of these great singers are considered part of the "Golden Age." Do you believe in a Golden Age?

Each generation has its share of great voices, though I don't think it is wise to speak of them as members of a Golden Age. When I was a young singer in Bayreuth, I remember a group of us sitting and talking with Siegfried Wagner. Someone in the group asked him, "What do you think of today's singers compared to those of the past?" He replied by saying that, while the singers of the past were indeed great artists, we had as great artists in the present. During the course of his answer he paid me a great compliment by saying that I sang the role of Gurnemanz in *Parsifal* as well as an earlier basso had. . . .

Many critics consider your Gurnemanz in *Parsifal* to have been your greatest role. Would you agree with them?

Gurnemanz requires a beautiful voice, and it makes extreme legato demands of the singer. I feel that I gave my best to that role, and so vocally speaking I would agree that Gurnemanz was my best part. But vocally and dramatically, my best role was Boris Godunov. I have rather strong views about Boris, because it is a distinctly Russian opera involving a distinctly Russian character. In spite of the success that some singers have had in the role, I really don't believe that a singer can perform it well unless he is Russian by birth and speaks the language natively. Ezio Pinza, at least in my judgment, is a good illustration of my

point. While his Boris was in many ways well received, in my opinion it was absolutely the wrong part for him. He had no knowledge of the character and absolutely no knowledge of the Russian language. In my case, the music seemed to fit my own character—and, of course, I had a natural advantage in knowing the language.

You sang Varlaam to Chaliapin's Boris early in your career. Did you incorporate much of his characterization into your own?

Perhaps dramatically I might have, but not vocally. When I sang with him his voice was already shattered, even though he was not very old. I had not heard him prior to [that], . . . though I think he was principally a great actor more than a great singer. During that particular performance, I and the other cast members sang in Italian, while Chaliapin sang in Russian. Many years later I also sang the part in Russian to an Italian cast.

At that stage in your career, what other roles would have been in your repertoire?

It would have included, among others, the role of Titurel as well as Gurnemanz in *Parsifal*, since in Bayreuth and then in Wiesbaden, where I sang for five years in my early career, I had to agree to alternate the two roles with a colleague. I also sang Colline in *La Bohème*, Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Kečal in *The Bartered Bride*, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, Sparafucile and Monterone in *Rigoletto*, and Ramfis in *Aida*.

What tenors might have sung Radamès to your Ramfis in Aida then?

I sang with Giovanni Martinelli, whom I admired greatly as a person and as a singing actor, although the bloom of his voice was already gone by the time I sang with him. I also sang with Beniamino Gigli and Giacomo Lauri-Volpi in *Aida*, and of the two I found Gigli's voice more suited to the role. I felt that Lauri-Volpi's voice was somewhat too lyrical in timbre for *Aida*. But I admired them all.

You certainly gathered the admiration of your own fellow artists, not the least of which was Mary Garden's admiration for you. What roles would you have sung with her?

I sang with her in several operas, among them *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame*, *Thaïs*, *Sapho*, and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. She had what I would call an almost "sexless" voice, which is the way the voice of a *Mélisande* should be. I think her characterization of the boy juggler in *Le Jongleur* was so convincing because of this sexless quality in her vocal production. She was definitely a better ac-

trix than a singer, and though she could color her voice in a number of ways she did not have the voice for *Salome*. That is a role that requires, first of all, a very sexy voice and one that has an enormous top to enable the singer to rise above the waves of the Strauss orchestration. But somehow she managed it.

As an actress she was totally involved in her parts. I will never forget the first performance of *Pelléas et Mélisande* we sang together. In the segment of the opera in which Arkel sings "*Si j'étais Dieu . . .*" ("If I were God, I would take pity upon the hearts of men"), she fell into my chest and cried so hard that even after the curtain had rung down she was still weeping. And in the last act, in which as Arkel I showed her child to her, I was startled to see real tears in her eyes. Afterward she wrote me a letter and in it paid me a very great compliment, saying that she had never seen or heard anything like my Arkel.

You are credited with the discovery of undoubtedly the most famous of all Wagnerian sopranos, Kirsten Flagstad. How did this come about?

I first met her in Oslo and sang with her there, only to find that she had never sung outside Scandinavia. When I first tried to speak with her she didn't understand me, either in German, Russian, or French. She spoke only Norwegian at the time, and the mezzo-soprano in the company served as our translator. I asked Flagstad if she would like to sing outside the Scandinavian countries. And when she said that she would I recommended her to the general manager of the Berlin State Opera, and he invited her to sing some small parts in Bayreuth. I also recommended her in Brussels, and she was engaged to sing Sieglinde there. This was her first appearance outside Scandinavia, and from there, of course, her career was simply one success following the other.

Flagstad's repertoire, at least in her prime years, was Wagnerian, while your repertoire was remarkably diverse. Do you consider the great Wagnerian roles more difficult than, say, the Verdi or Mozart roles you sang?

I sang a number of Wagnerian roles, including Wotan, Hagen, and Pogner in *Die Meistersinger*, in addition to the two *Parsifal* roles I mentioned earlier. If I may use Wotan as an example here, it is a typically Wagnerian role, and the difficulty with it is that it is too high for a bass and too low for a baritone. It is essentially a dramatic baritone part, and like most other Wagnerian roles it is very long and requires the singer to make certain vocal adjustments in order to meet its demands. And the demands, naturally, are different from those in the Mozartean or Verdian repertoire.

Of the Wagnerian parts I sang, Pogner seemed in demand wherever I appeared, and in fact my first appearance in the United States was as Pogner. It got to the point that when I was offered my Metropolitan contract I asked that Pogner be excluded from my repertoire. I had sung it so much that I no longer had a proper artistic interest in it. Of the Wagnerian roles in general, and in comparison to those in other repertoires, I am of the opinion that in the past one didn't have to be, shall we say, a great singer in order to be successful in the Wagnerian parts. The problem with most Wagnerian singers, even those today, is that if the Wagnerian scores are taken away from them they simply do not sing well. In the Wagnerian operas the orchestral score indicates everything—even the acting. Wagner indicated almost every gesture, every step in the score. So a singer doesn't create a Wagnerian part in the sense that he or she creates a part in, say, *Faust* or *Don Giovanni*.

Curiously, *Hans Sachs* did not form a part of your repertoire, even though it is considered a brilliant dramatic role.

It is a brilliant dramatic role, unquestionably. But I refused to sing the part, and I did so solely on political grounds. I refused it at a time when Adolf Hitler's propaganda forces were nearing their zenith, and I wanted no part in any of it. I was not German by birth, and hence I did not feel myself possessed of Germanic blood or to be a member of some elite German race. I was singing in Bayreuth at the time, and I discovered that Hitler was a member of the audience during several of my performances there. He was the guest of Winifred Wagner.

Were you ever introduced to him?

I tactfully refused an introduction to him. During the 1933 season at Bayreuth, Mrs. Kipnis and I were staying in an apartment that the conductor Karl Muck had formerly occupied, and one day, quite unexpectedly, Winifred Wagner personally asked me if I should like to meet Hitler. . . . He would be her guest, and I should come accordingly. The very thought of meeting Hitler actually made me ill—I can't tell you how I felt. But I felt as if I were somehow trapped. I would not accept, for obvious reasons, and yet having signed my contract well before 1933 I could hardly refuse coldly an invitation from Winifred Wagner directly. Too, the invitation was sudden, and I had no other social obligations that could justify my not accepting her own invitation.

I was growing more desperate as time wore on, and so my wife and I went for a walk near where we were living. We happened to meet the Ernest Newmans on the street, and, as we had wanted to spend an evening with them during our stay in



Pieperhoff

In Bayreuth, 1933, as Pogner, the role Kipnis asked not to sing at the Met.

Bayreuth, we asked whether or not they had plans for that evening. To our relief they had no definite plans, and so we immediately extended an invitation to them. What would have been the horror of having to meet Hitler therefore became one of the happiest times I can recall. That evening we talked and laughed and played and sang, we dined well and drank our shares of fine red wine—from seven in the evening till three in the morning.

Fortunately for all of us, you recorded almost all of the parts you performed. Do you recall your first sessions in a recording studio?

Very well. My first recordings were made for the German Odeon company, after World War I—these were acoustical recordings, as were all phonograph records until the mid-1920s. I was not happy with my acoustical recordings, and I don't think it is possible to judge any artist who made records by that process solely on the basis of what the records contain. The process itself placed certain limitations on the singer. Typically, the studios in which these recordings were made were not very large, and either from an opening in one wall of the studio or else from a boothlike structure in the room a large horn would project, into which the singer was supposed to focus the voice.

What made recording difficult in the acoustical process was that the most powerful tones in the voice, the fortissimo a score might call for, could not be recorded fully without ruining the master record. As singers, we were instructed to move away from the horn when a fortissimo approached and then move very close to it when the soft tones, or pianissimi, were called for. This made the whole matter of making an acoustical record a rather unnatural feat. Too, everything one sang had to be made to fit the four minutes of which records of that time were capable of playing. This often meant that tempi had to be accelerated, or in some way altered, to make the aria fit the record-



Warren B. Syer

During a master class at the Berkshire Music Center in Tanglewood, Kipnis makes a point for a young soprano who has just sung Schubert's *Erlkönig*.

ing. And then in the end the final recordings captured only a part of the singer's timbre and certainly not the full resonant tones a member of an opera house audience would hear.

The first electrical recordings were an improvement, but mainly in that more of the voice's timbre could be captured on the master recording. Still, everything had to be made to fit the four-minute playing time. . . . And even in the first electrical recordings, the fortissimo was still difficult to record satisfactorily. I remember asking one of the engineers I happened to be working with during one of my early electrical sessions whether or not I should sing a certain note as forcefully as the score called for. He told me that if I did he could record it, but that after ten or so times the record would no longer be playable.

I made both acoustical and electrical recordings for the British HMV company by virtue of their connection with the German Electrola company, which was organized by Deutsche Grammophon, with whom I made recordings after I left the Odeon company. Because of the link between HMV and Victor at the time, I recorded for Victor when I came to the United States. And later on I also recorded for Columbia.

Do you have definite preferences among your recordings?

Again, I would not consider the acoustical recordings I made representative of what my voice was like at the time they were made. The interpretation I brought to the arias is evident in the records, but the timbre of my voice was not completely captured on them. Among the electrical records I

made, I was the happiest with my recordings of Brahms songs, which I did with Victor, and with my Hugo Wolf Society recordings and finally with my *Boris Godunov* records. As far as the actual sound quality of my records is concerned, I generally prefer those I made for the HMV company to those I made for Victor.

Seraphim has now re-released many of your recordings. Are you pleased with the reissues?

In every sense, yes. Seraphim has re-released them with my consent, and we mutually selected which ones would be issued. They asked me if I might be interested in writing the album notes, which I did, and I am very much impressed with the actual fidelity of the re-recordings. I have been fortunate because most of my records (except for the Victor Brahms songs, which RCA reissued many years ago) have been reissued in recent years either in Europe on the Austrian Preiser label or in this country on the Seraphim, Victrola, and Columbia labels. I gave my best to each of my recordings, and it gives me a great sense of pleasure to know that my records are being heard by people I did not have the privilege of singing for in an opera house.

This may be an unfair question, but we'll ask it anyway. If you could magically surround yourself with the greatest singers in your own lifetime—all the vocal ranges included—who would be some of the singers you would choose to sing with you?

It is not an unfair question, but it is a difficult one to answer. It would depend upon the repertoire

partly. But I can at least tell you some of the singers I greatly admired during my career, although I'm sure that I may not remember to mention many that I would otherwise, if I had a great deal of time to compile a list.

If I had to choose among tenors I could sing with, my choices would be Lauritz Melchior in the Wagnerian repertoire and Jussi Bjoerling in French and Italian roles. I sang with both of them many, many times, and Melchior and I were very close friends. His voice was, to my thinking, unique in this century—he had not only volume, but warmth as well. If you listen, for instance, to the last act of his *Tristan*, where acting is inconsequential and the voice alone matters, his is superb. And Bjoerling—well, anyone who has listened to any of his recordings knows what a great tenor he was, and, of all the Italian tenors I personally sang with, I consider him the greatest. After Caruso, he had the finest tenor voice of our century. But Caruso is still the crowning achievement in singing. He is what any singer would hope to be. He was a dream that may never again be realized, and it would have been a privilege to have sung with him.

I would also choose Jacques Urlus, as well as Alfred Piccaver, the fine English tenor, and Giovanni Martinelli, Beniamino Gigli, and Leo Slezak. I sang with all of them, and in their own ways each was a great tenor, a great artist. Among baritones, I would choose those I was much impressed with when I heard them or sang with them. Battistini would be at the very top—there were no other baritone voices like his. And I would also want Titta Ruffo, Leonard Warren, Michael Bohnen, Lawrence Tibbett, and Giuseppe de Luca. De Luca was in a class by himself, one of the greatest singing actors of our time. I was also very much impressed by the baritone George Baklanoff, especially in *Rigoletto* and in *Tosca*. He was a superb actor, and he treated the character Scarpia in *Tosca* the way he should be treated. With Baklanoff in the character, you could watch Scarpia gradually evolve from the nobleman he first was to the savage character he became. Too many baritones ignore the fact that this is a nobleman, this Baron Scarpia, and from the moment he makes his entrance they treat him as if he were Méphistophélès.

Sopranos would be very difficult to choose among, because there were so many great ones. I admired both Lotte Lehmann and Kirsten Flagstad in the Wagnerian roles, and I would choose them first. And in the Italian repertoire, my first choice would be Zinka Milanov, who I think possessed one of the greatest voices of our century. I sang with her many, many times, both early in her career and then later on, and we did a number of recitals together. And my choices would surely include Rosa Ponselle, Elisabeth Rethberg, Geraldine Farrar, and Amelita Galli-Curci. And one

immediate preference I would have among mezzosopranos would be Louise Homer—she could sing as high as the finest dramatic soprano, and she was a beautiful woman as well.

Bassos would be very, very difficult for me to choose among, both because there were—and are—many great ones and because my own conception of the basso voice leads me not to prefer certain singers that are perfectly fine artists in their own right. I would choose Marcel Journet, for instance, but I would not choose Pol Plançon—he was just not my sort of voice. I would choose Nicolai Ghiaurov, but perhaps I would not immediately choose Cesare Siepi—only because our styles are different. But Cesare Siepi is a very fine, very highly respected artist, and that is as it should be. I am only speaking about my own concept of singing here, and so I would not want to be taken as suggesting that Siepi today or Plançon in the past are anything less than great singers.

And Ezio Pinza?

I had an artistic regard for Pinza's singing. He had a fine voice, he worked very, very hard in those roles he sang, although he was not a profound musician by any means. But if you happened to sing in the same clef that he did, and if you happened to sing well, you could not count on being a friend of Pinza's. I say this out of personal experience, having sung with him in *Don Giovanni* where I, as Leporello, had to imitate the Don's voice. Pinza had a rapid vibrato in his voice, and over-all his voice was lighter in timbre than mine was. So, at the appointed time in the opera, I did a vocal caricature of Pinza as the Don, making my voice lighter and adding a tremolo to it. He stood in the wings hating the laughter I got from the audience, and, when he had his turn to do a similar caricature of me, the audience did not react so favorably because he could not make his voice dark enough or his vibrato even enough to make a convincing vocal imitation of my Leporello. From then on we were not friends, and by his own choice.

A last question: You are scheduled to sing an 8 p.m. performance, let us say. What would you do during that day to prepare for the performance?

I had a very definite routine that I followed during my singing career. After eating lunch I would usually lie down for a time, sleeping for perhaps an hour or so. Then I would go for a long walk, possibly two miles. Later I would have one or two cups of tea and two pieces of dry toast. Then, about an hour before the performance, I would be in my dressing room putting on makeup and getting into costume, vocalizing a little bit for myself, always starting lightly, and then slowly, gradually, I would be in full voice. Then I was ready. ●

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*For the prospering Polish Record Center in Chicago,
Bacewicz and Karłowicz are no joke*

by Gabrielle Mattingly

OPERATING OUT of a small storefront in the Polish section of Chicago, the Polish Record Center of America shares unprepossessing quarters with a travel agency and lures as few as fifteen retail customers a week into its lair. But the importer does a \$100,000-a-year business, supplying ethnic retailers in North America with Muza, Pronit, and Veriton records, all products of Polskie Nagrania, the Polish state record company. The demand used to come mainly from Poles in search of the popular tunes of their youth in their homeland; now the classics are the big money-maker.

Muza, the classical label, has more than 600 records in its catalogue, many of them recordings of music available from no other source. Into this category fall the current best-selling composers of the PRC: Bacewicz, Karłowicz, Paderewski, Penderecki, and Szymanowski, all of the twentieth century, and none, with the exception of Penderecki, well known in the West. Paderewski (the best-known name, although not as a composer) wrote the work that has been the PRC's top seller for several months: The epic, sprawling *Polonia* Symphony (Muza SXL 0968) initially sold out in a day and sold out promptly each time it was re-ordered.

Who is buying these recordings, and how are they finding out what's available? PRC's manager Jozef Zielinski (also a conductor) says that most of

his business is with retailers around the country who stock imports, especially classics. He also sells Muzas to Peters International, the largest of the record importers, and to independent wholesale-retail dealers like August Rojas of Los Angeles, who specializes in classics for the connoisseur. Rojas, in fact, influences the purchase orders that go to Poland. "If Rojas orders a particular thing," Zielinski says, "I know I will have to have twenty times more of it than some other thing."

Mail-order customers, another large group of buyers, were introduced to Muzas through the PRC's ads in nationally distributed music magazines and catalogues. Unless released on Philips, Deutsche Grammophon, or some domestic label like Mace or Bruno, Polish recordings are seldom reviewed, so these intrepid music lovers must usually order their Muzas without foreknowledge, a risky method of buying records, especially when names like Rozycki, Noskowski, Zarebski, Kurpinski, and Szabelski are involved. (Interested readers may write for records and a catalogue to the PRC, 3055 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, Ill. 60618.)

Not everything offered by the PRC is esoteric, of course. Among its most popular items are thirty-four discs encompassing the complete works of Chopin played by such Polish artists as Witold

Malcuzyński and Regina Smendzianka, Wieniawski played by violinists Bronisław Gimpel and Wanda Wilkomirska, and the operas of Poland's scarcely noticed nineteenth-century composer Stanisław Moniuszko, whose *Halka* is the country's national opera.

More than anything else, buyers seem to focus on what has been and is being done in this century. Among Polish composers, one name stands out above all others: Karol Szymanowski (1883–1937). He is a shadowy cosmopolitan figure among early twentieth-century European composers, although lately some interest in his large output has been awakened in this country. Dense in texture and impressionistic, almost a synthesis (if one is imaginable) of Reger, Strauss, Scriabin, and Debussy, Szymanowski's music has never really caught on outside Poland, even when championed by such eminent and influential interpreters as Arthur Rubinstein and David Oistrakh. His creative value hasn't yet been widely assessed, but he probably deserves a place next to Frederick Delius in the musical pantheon.

Muza offers a good sampling of Szymanowski's oeuvre, mostly in stereo. The newest releases from the PRC are his Second Symphony (SXL 0981), a collection of songs (SXL 0980), and the Piano Sonata No. 3 (SXL 0973), dating from 1917 but sounding of more modern vintage. Earlier releases of interest are the opera *King Roger* (SXL 250/51) and the two violin concertos (SXL 0383) played—one each—by Wilkomirska and Charles Treger, winner of Poland's Wieniawski International Violin Competition in 1962.

A four-record survey of Szymanowski's orchestral, instrumental, vocal, and chamber music is offered in acceptable mono as well. Practically everything in this set is also available in more modern recordings; the most notable exception is the most attractive item, the *Symphonie Concertante for Piano with Orchestra* (once recorded by Arthur Rubinstein). For good measure, a seven-inch 45 of the composer playing two of his *marzkas* is included.

A good introduction to Szymanowski's style is the ballet-pantomime *Harnasie* (SXL 0249). The overside is devoted to music from the opera *Pan Twardowski* (1921) by Ludomir Rozycki (1884–1953), who after Szymanowski is the best-known member of the "Young Poland" movement that was formed in 1905 by Polish composers then studying in Berlin.

Mieczysław Karłowicz (1876–1909) was a short-lived contemporary of Szymanowski from whom much had been expected. His output (fourteen opus numbers plus some unpublished manuscripts) is almost entirely orchestral, symphonic poems predominating. None of the diffuseness that characterizes Szymanowski's music is heard here; Karłowicz is always clear and straight-

forward without being blatantly obvious or simple. His command of orchestral forces is impressive, as is his sense of form, which never falters even in long rhapsodic works. What makes his premature death all the more regrettable is that his music possesses real individuality. If he had lived out a normal life span, there can be no doubt that the name Karłowicz would have been an important one in twentieth-century music.

Judging by sales at the PRC, however, he has been discovered by many Americans. His violin concerto (XL 0179) is his best-known work (though not his best) and has been issued domestically several times. The Muza recording, in mono, offers Wilkomirska in top form, backed by Witold Rowicki and the Warsaw Philharmonic. As a filler, Muza offers one of Karłowicz' last works, the symphonic poem *The Sorrowful Tale*. Three other symphonic poems and an orchestral rhapsody are available on two discs (XL 0269 and XL 0290) performed by the Warsaw Philharmonic under Stanisław Wislocki, the leading champion of Karłowicz' music. A recent Muza issue (SXL 0862) features some lovely unpublished songs by the youthful Karłowicz sung by baritone Andrzej Hiolski.

His celebrated minuet aside, Jan Paderewski (1860–1941) is usually thought of not as a composer, but as a great pianist or famous politician. Yet his catalogue of compositions is lengthy—an opera, a cantata, a symphony, several works for piano and orchestra, an unfinished violin concerto, and numerous piano solos and songs.

With the advent of the so-called Romantic revival, American recording companies have paid





IGNACE JAN
PADEREWSKI



MIECZYSLAW
KARLOWICZ



KAROL
SZYMANOWSKI



GRAZYNA
BACEWICZ

some attention to Paderewski, particularly the flashy virtuoso vehicles for piano and orchestra. These works are undoubtedly calculated to spotlight Paderewski the Pianist rather than Paderewski the Composer. His *Symphony in B minor*, the *Polonia*, is a purely orchestral work and as such is a better example of his music: It is closely related in mood and style to Rachmaninoff's *Second Symphony*. Especially interesting is the Muza recording of *Variations and Fugue in E flat minor*, Op. 23 (SXL 0570), which is coupled with the sonata in the same key, Op. 21. Both of these works for solo piano were written in 1903, a year that the busy virtuoso set aside solely for composing. "I think this is my best piano composition," he wrote in his *Memoires of the Variations and Fugue*. His masterly handling of the four-part concluding fugue displays an originality of conception and execution that is not a hallmark of his eclectic style, a style that at the same time never lacks personality.

Scarcely known in the West, the redoubtable Grazyna Bacewicz (1913-69) has been called "the world's greatest woman composer" and has remained a Western cosmopolite throughout her remarkably fecund career, counter to the nationalist trends of between-the-wars Poland and the Socialist realism dictates of the Communist regime. Her forte is structural unity, a skill possibly developed under the tutelage of Nadia Boulanger when Bacewicz studied with that great pedagogue in pre-war Paris. The pervading influence upon her, however, was Béla Bartók, although the ghost of Szymanowski often hovers in the background, as it does with most Polish composers of her generation. In any event, Bacewicz' music never gives the slightest indication that it was written by a Pole—or a woman.

Though Muza doesn't list any of her four symphonies or seven violin concertos, she is nevertheless well represented, and practically all recordings of her works are available from the PRC. Three recent issues feature five mature large-scale works. The two piano quintets on SXL 0608

span thirteen years (1952-65) and give a good sampling of her style while demonstrating her mastery of form and consummate skill in writing for strings. (She was a concert violinist and a skilled pianist.) The *First Piano Quintet* is a powerful work echoing Bartók and Shostakovich; the *Second* evinces a mild flirtation with serialism, superimposed on her earlier style, that characterizes the last period of her creativity. The *Viola Concerto* of 1968 (SXL 0837) continues this vein; to a lesser extent, so does the *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra* of the same time. A most interesting work is her *Second Piano Sonata* (SXL 0977), which, more than any other, shows her indebtedness to Szymanowski, notably that composer's *Third Piano Sonata*. A good introduction to Bacewicz is Muza XL 0274, which contains four symphonic works dating from 1953 through 1965.

The reputation of Krzysztof Penderecki is well established in the West, and most Muza recordings of his work have been released in this country by Philips and Mace. Inexplicably, the PRC continues to receive a heavy demand for his music, even when the recordings are duplicated on more readily available labels. The same is true for Witold Lutoslawski. Several interesting items by this composer are offered by the PRC, notably the *First and Second Symphonies* (XL 237 and SXL 0453, respectively).

Despite increased sales of Polish classics, the over-all volume of Polskie Nagrania sales for 1974-75 in this country was down appreciably from 1972-73. When I asked about the immediate future of Polish record sales in the U.S., Zielinski replied: "In this business, you have to be doing fifteen things to stay alive. Selling records counts as just one thing. Sales are down except for the classics, but this doesn't reflect diminished interest in Polish music. It's entirely the economy. If it comes down to eating or buying a recording of some Polish composer you've never heard of and whose name you can't pronounce, most people will buy something they can eat. Still, the popularity of the classics seems to grow every month." ■



The New Releases

A Song Team for Schoenberg and Schubert

*Jan DeGaetani and Gilbert Kalish bring idiomatic ease to Schoenberg's subtly erotic *Hanging Gardens* and fresh insight to Schubert songs.*

by David Hamilton

ALTHOUGH BOTH SIDES of Nonesuch's new release by the team of Jan DeGaetani and Gilbert Kalish are enthralling, pride of place must go to Schoenberg's *Book of the Hanging Gardens*, of which we have not had a convincing recording for some eight years—that is, since *Son-Nova 2* disappeared from the catalogue. That performance by Bethany Beardslee and Robert Helps captured to near-perfection the intensity and mystery of these subtly erotic songs, and it was recorded with still-startling presence and clarity.

DeGaetani and Kalish bring comparable expertise to their rendition. Like Beardslee and Helps, they have no difficulty with the idiom: The asymmetrical rhythms, the wide-ranging, irregular vocal line, and the dynamic extremes are uttered with even more security and conviction than most singers muster in, say, Mozart. As a result, we listeners don't have to wrestle with the sense of uncertainty, even discomfort, that marks the two other currently available

recordings of the cycle. However different from all previous songs, in these performances Schoenberg's George settings are unmistakably songs—lyrical expressions—rather than strenuous mechanical tasks to be accomplished only with considerable strain.

Schoenberg didn't specify a vocal category; the score merely says "voice and piano," and the vocal part, written in the treble clef, ranges from A flat below middle C up to the A two octaves higher, with extended phrases, rather than occasional isolated notes, at both extremes. (The first performance was sung by Martha Winternitz-Dorda, a coloratura soprano who specialized in operatic roles like the Queen of the Night.) For DeGaetani's mezzo, this involves a certain strain in the high-lying passages—in contrast to Beardslee's expansive freedom—but also a greater warmth and variety of color in the lower registers. Aside from the sheer physical intensity of the top notes, this is a cooler, more withdrawn performance than Beardslee's, with a somewhat less de-

... and Schoenberg in the Cabaret?

SCHOENBERG'S "CABARET SONGS" (*Brettli-Lieder*) actually antedate his brief direct association with Ernst von Wolzogen's Berlin literary cabaret, the *Ueberbrettli*, in late 1901. Three of them use poems from *Deutsche Chansons*, a 1900 anthology including the work of Bierbaum, Dehmel, Falke, Liliencron, Wedekind, and other young writers who sought to reach a wider audience—and certainly did, for the book sold thirty thousand copies in its first year. During 1901, Schoenberg also set several other poems in similar style, but it was "*Nachtwandler*" from *Deutsche Chansons* that impressed Wolzogen. This seems to have been the only one of the songs actually performed, although without much success. Scored for the oddly balanced combination of piccolo, trumpet, snare drum, and piano, it tells of a nocturnal carouse in mock-military terms; the idiom is fundamentally close to Brahms (particularly that of the *Zigeunerlieder*), unrelated to the military songs that Mahler had written in the 1880s.

The other songs, in more conventionally popular styles, are accompanied only by piano. They never lack characteristic touches of elaboration and subtlety. Marni Nixon sings them with a flair that will pleasantly surprise those who remember her deadpan Webert performances in the Robert Craft complete set. The voice isn't quite so pure as it was, but the diction is vastly more idiomatic, the entertainer's gusto very palpable.

On the other side of the disc, she and the admirable Leonard Stein (director of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute) turn to more serious matters, nine Schoenberg songs from the decade 1893–1903. Only one of these has been published so far: "*Gedenken*," also recorded by Helen Vanni and Glenn Gould on Columbia M 31312. There are some attractive songs here (the influence of Hugo Wolf is distinctly audible, along with that of Brahms), including an expressive setting of Hofmannsthal's "*Die Beiden*." If Nixon is occasionally impelled to demand of her voice a tonal weight greater than it naturally commands, these honest and musical performances are still a good introduction to this literature.

Good sound, and an authoritative commentary by Stein, running from the back liner into a four-page insert that also contains complete texts and English translations. D.H.

SCHOENBERG: Brettli-Lieder; Early Songs. Marni Nixon, soprano; Leonard Stein, piano. [Peter Dellheim, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-1231, \$6.98.

Brettli-Lieder: Galathea; Gigerlette; Der genügsame Liebhaber; Einfaltiges Lied; Mahnung; Jedem das Seine; Arie aus dem Spiegel von Arkadien; Nachtwandler (with Andrew Lolya, piccolo; Ray Crisara, trumpet; Morris Lang, snare drum). **Early Songs:** Mein Herz das ist ein tiefer Schacht; Ein Schilflied; Mädchenlied; Mädchenfrühling; Die Beiden; Waldesnacht; Deinem Blick mich zu bequemen; Gedenken; Nicht doch!

tailed underlining of the text (I miss Beardslee's hollow sound on "*der kalte, klare Morgen*" at the end of the sixth song, for example), but very beautiful in its own way. And Kalish's playing is finely articulated, if recorded with something less than the immediacy and focus that Son-Nova accorded Helps. Too often, sustained piano notes drop over the threshold of audibility sooner than they should in a really well-balanced setup.

Those who are fortunate enough to own the older recording will find this new one a fascinating complement; those who aren't so fortunate should acquire this one at once.

And not only for the Schoenberg, because DeGaetani and Kalish have something special going in Schubert as well. Their program mixes four well-known titles with five relative rarities, and each song has been carefully thought out on its own terms. "*Blondel zu Marien*" and "*An mein Herz*" have been recently available only in the big Fischer-Dieskau packages, and in both cases I much prefer the warm detail of the new recording to the rather routine work of the celebrated baritone. DeGaetani's *fioritura* in the first of these songs is of a purity and lightness rarely heard.

"*Heidenröslein*," simple and warm, comes up bright as a new penny, and Mignon's "*Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*" carefully balances the more pas-

sionate middle section against the need for making the major climax at the repeat of the pensive opening strain. Also very good is "*Schäfers Klage*," the contrasting middle part sparkling and then shading into melancholy.

"*Rastlose Liebe*" is particularly hard to bring off; if taken at a suitably impetuous pace, it almost always comes out shrill or strenuous (or both), while a slower tempo emasculates the rhythmic drive. DeGaetani and Kalish make the right choice, and even if the singer sounds under stress at times, shape and impulse are preserved, the piano galloping forcefully along. "*Sprache der Liebe*" and "*Ganymed*" fall into a reverielike trance that, though lovely to hear, sacrifices something of their potential.

And, finally, one performance that is likely to be controversial: "*Der Musensohn*," taken at a tempo markedly faster than any I've ever heard in this song. Just to be sure, I checked out sixteen other recordings, going back to Elena Gerhardt a half-century ago, and found none that sent Goethe's poet rambling through field and wood at such a clip. Schubert's marking is *ziemlich lebhaft* (rather lively), which doesn't suggest anything extreme. But DeGaetani and Kalish are so proficient that they don't sound as if they're doing anything extreme. There is no sense of strain, but rather a light, exhilarating whirlwind of perpetual motion. Though it may be "wrong,"

it does recognize the clearly propulsive intent of the piano part and the vocal rhythm, raising it to the nth degree of exuberance—and it does rather make everybody else's performance sound just a bit stodgy.

Tradition is often a fine thing, but it deserves to be re-examined now and then. That's what I like about these performances. They are not willful or eccentric, but proceed from the musical text and from a desire to present the music and the words as directly and clearly—and coherently—as possible. The singing is always true, the diction almost impeccable (the "almost" referring to DeGaetani's *u*, which tends to acquire about half an umlaut even when none is called for), the piano playing superior in its steadiness and tonal shading. Even when I disagree with

the results, I have learned from this record; at its best, it makes most other Lieder singing sound fussy.

Nonesuch's thoughtful packaging includes valuable notes by Robert Erich Wolf and fine translations: for Schubert, by Stephen Ledbetter; for the Schoenberg, by Wolf, who again (as in his *Pierrot lunaire* for Nonesuch) brilliantly evokes in English the steamy elegance of *Jugendstil* poetry.

B **SCHOENBERG:** *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten*, Op. 15. **SCHUBERT:** Songs. Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano; Gilbert Kalish, piano. [Marc J. Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] NONESUCH H 71320, \$3.96.

SCHUBERT: Schäfers Klage lied; Rastlose Liebe; Blondel zu Marien; Der Musensohn; Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt, D. 877/4; Heidenroslein; Sprache der Liebe; An mein Herz; Ganymed.



Universal Pictures

Herrmann used an imaginative pizzicato tremolo to accent the horror of Arbogast's (Martin Balsam) murder in *Psycho*.



20th Century-Fox/MOMA

Herrmann's score for *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* (with Gene Tierney and Rex Harrison) is subtle, moody, and fitting.

Bernard Herrmann and the Subliminal Pulse of Violence

*Superb new recordings
mark stages in a composing
career: from the soft-hued
Ghost and Mrs. Muir to
the brutal Psycho.*

by **Royal S. Brown**

TWO OUTSTANDING NEW RECORDINGS, released just before Bernard Herrmann's death last Christmas Eve, represent very different phases of the film composer's career. Joseph L. Mankiewicz's warm and bittersweet *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* (1947) was only the seventh film Herrmann had written for. And although the soft-hued, beautifully orchestrated score (one of his personal favorites) ranks among his best, it has never attracted a great deal of attention. *Psycho*, composed in January and February of 1960, was Herrmann's thirtieth feature-film score and his sixth in succession for director Alfred Hitchcock. The brutally obsessive, string-orchestra-only music has come to be considered one of the classic examples of the immense emotional dimension a score can add to its film.

The film *Psycho* has more importance on many different levels than almost any movie made in the U.S. since *Citizen Kane*, which Herrmann also scored. For though the American cinema had produced its share of horror pictures and of films that have chipped away at the solid facade of well-ordered American causality, none brought out so vividly, so unrelentingly, just how close the elements that would destroy this facade lay beneath the surface of everyday reality. Always a master at transforming the basic decor of Americana into absurdist objects in a Kafka-esque labyrinth, Hitchcock turned the ordinary bathroom shower into a gruesome trap.

Herrmann's style in *Psycho*, as has been pointed out often enough, broke with several sacrosanct tenets of film scoring, notably by largely avoiding themes per se and by limiting the instrumentation to a string orchestra. Particularly intriguing is the harmonic technique: Much of the music is shaped around a single seventh chord—also used in the prelude to Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1959)—heard at the outset of the prelude. (The final chord of the score, however, expands to a multiflatted ninth.) Because of this essentially chordal orientation, Herrmann is able to avoid the aural relief of harmonic resolution, and the listener is no more able to latch onto a comfortable resting place in the music than he is in the film.

A tension is created between the indefiniteness of the harmonic language and the exaggerated definiteness of the rhythmic idiom, which in many places is so relentless, so heavily accentuated that the listener is aware not so much of temporal divisions as of a subliminal pulse suggesting primordial violence. Furthermore, at least in the prelude and its reappearances, Herrmann alleviates what might be the music's tendency to excess by introducing, from time to time, a short, ascending-descending motive that seems to draw everything slightly back toward reality, bleak as it might be.

But there is no alleviation when it comes to the murder scenes (and the "Discovery" sequence). Hitchcock had at first wanted no music here, and it was only at the composer's insistence that the director, dissatisfied with his nonscored first efforts, relented. The result is one of the most remarkable segments in the history of film music: a series of slashing, shrieking strokes starting in the high violins, descending in superimposed, open minor ninths, and repeated with the addition of one of the most macabre of all musical effects, the glissando. One is reminded of Thomas Mann's description of the glissando as "a naturalistic atavism, a barbaric rudiment from premusical days" used by the fictitious composer in *Dr. Faustus* to create "images of terror" in his musical vision of the apocalypse. Throughout the score Herrmann uses the string orchestra as if its resources were anything but limited: for instance, the pizzicato tremolo preceding the second (Arbogast's) murder sequence.

It should go without saying that, if ever a soundtrack recording was needed, it was for *Psycho*. It is astonishing that none was issued at the time of the film, and it was almost ten years before that omission was even partly remedied, with the appearance of the London Phase-4 "Music from the Great Movie Thrillers"—read Hitchcock films—(SP 44126), which includes a fifteen-minute "Narrative for Orchestra" based on the *Psycho* music.

But a complete version was needed, and Unicorn has now provided that, allowing one to follow the progressions and accumulations of the music's cells. Among the sequences revealed here and not heard on the Phase-4 release are the nervous, monochromatic snippets of "Temptation"; the extended bit of converging contrary motion as Sam and Lila come closer to the "Discovery" in "The Hill"; and the combination of bitter nostalgia and horror-suspense in "Bedroom" and "Toys."

Herrmann's tempos are quite similar to those on the earlier recording. The prelude in both is taken at

almost exactly the same pace, which is to say some twenty beats per minutes slower than on the soundtrack. In fact, now that I'm used to the slower tempos of the Unicorn performance, I find the Phase-4 version quite acceptable, especially with its amazingly present sound. But the new prelude is more subtle, more dynamically varied. The murder sequences are much more effective here, thanks to Unicorn's more reverberant recording.

Herrmann and the string players of London's National Philharmonic are obviously deeply involved in a performance that, while not always mirroring what is heard in the film, brings back with overwhelming effectiveness *Psycho*'s sledgehammer impact and reveals the staggeringly wide-range accomplishment of a musician working within a self-imposed system of restraints. In a word, the disc is invaluable.

Were it not for the moody harmonies—much more triadic than *Psycho*'s but nonetheless characteristic—the *Ghost and Mrs. Muir* score would almost seem not to be by the same composer. Yet first and foremost one is struck, as in *Psycho*, by the thorough appropriateness of the music for the film, one of the many outstanding efforts by Mankiewicz, who has shown particular skill in film adaptations of theatrical works (*Julius Caesar*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Sleuth*). There is, for instance, a marvelous title theme whose sealike swell (suggesting the locale) melts wistfully into a typically rich, nonthematic chordal progression in the high strings.

Here, too, one has the chance to appreciate the exquisite subtlety of a master orchestrator. In addition to the lovely transparency created by the frequent winds-and-harps combinations, the score is filled with unexpected, emotion-stirring shifts in instrumentation, often in the middle of a melodic phrase. And, yes, even though some of the score tends toward the nonthematic, *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* contains some strikingly beautiful melodies, the most haunting of which belongs not to the ghost of Captain Gregg (Rex Harrison), but to Lucy Muir (Gene Tierney).

I was greatly impressed both by Elmer Bernstein's interpretation of the score and by the airily spacious and clear recorded sound, which greatly enhances the latticework textures of the instrumentation. Bernstein's disc also features an exceptionally imaginative use of directionality—the two harps, for instance, are divided between the speakers, and the movement from one to the other adds a nice touch to a seascape that momentarily takes your breath away.

For once, the liner notes accompanying both releases (Fred Steiner for *Ghost*, Christopher Palmer and Steiner for *Psycho*) provide fairly complete information on the films (a full list of credits would have been nice, though) and an extremely useful breakdown of the various cues, with some often fascinating additional commentary.

PSYCHO. Original film score by Bernard Herrmann. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernard Herrmann, cond. [Christopher Palmer, prod.] UNICORN RHS 336, \$7.98.

THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR: Original film score by Bernard Herrmann. Elmer Bernstein, cond. and prod. FILM MUSIC COLLECTION ALBUM 4, \$8.00 plus 60¢ handling to members only (annual membership \$10; Elmer Bernstein's Film Music Collection, Box 261, Calabasas, Calif. 91302).



Antal Dorati



Rafael Kubelik

Masterly Miniatures

*Findings of the Slavonic Dances and Legends
concern the difference between miniatures and minor music.*

by Abram Chipman

sical min-
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ing in their
i. 2 and 7);
umor (Op.
er sorrow

... of, or a warm and exuberant joy
(Op. 46, Nos. 1, 5, and 6; Op. 72, No. 1). Such simple
descriptions, furthermore, will just not do; most of
these moods—and others too—appear at least fleet-
ingly in each piece.

Although the dances are charming and touching in
the four-hand-piano originals, the composer's or-
chestration adds much more in dazzling and
resourcefully applied color. In either format, the lis-
tener will quickly come to appreciate the flawless
proportion, not only within each number, but within
each set of eight. Each sequence nicely balances tem-
pos, keys, dynamic scales, and ethnic sources. (The
melodic material is original, but Dvořák drew on at
least ten different dance types from various Eastern
European countries.) One must approach each set as
an eight-movement work, and fortunately we now
have an ample selection of recordings that treat the
music that way.

For several years, Václav Neumann's three-disc
Telefunken set (36.35075, filled out with the three
Slavonic Rhapsodies, the *Czech Suite*, and *The
Wood Dove*) has had that field to itself in this coun-
try. Though I am second to none in my admiration
for the Czech Philharmonic (which had previously
recorded the music under Václav Talich and Karel
Sejna), I find the Telefunken performances sopor-
ific—inexorably uninflected in pacing and phrasing,
with distant and overly generalized sonics.

Far more to my taste is the approach of George
Szell in his two integral recordings with the Cleve-
land Orchestra: a superb mid-Fifties mono set (with
his own transcription of the Smetana E minor Quar-
tet as a filler) and a stereo remake that Columbia has
issued in various guises, most recently "complete" on

a single disc—a format made possible by chopping
out all the repeats!

Now Columbia has restored these performances,
in their entirety, on *Odyssey*. Szell and his orchestra
brought to this music an individualized profile, an in-
tensity, and a dynamism that in my view have not
been matched by the composer's countrymen: the
blazing fury of Op. 46, No. 8; the proud grandeur of
Op. 46, No. 6; the boldly crooning trumpets in the trio
of Op. 46, No. 3; the sweep and lilt of Op. 72, No. 2; the
steeply controlled rubato in the central section of
Op. 72, No. 3; the tempestuous splendor of Op. 72, No.
7; the almost Beethovenian compassion of Op. 72, No.
8, which can so easily border on the maudlin. (One
persistent mystery in Szell's performance of this fi-
nal dance: Why eviscerate the pair of tutti chords at
the end by reducing the scoring to winds and pizzica-
to strings and dropping the dynamics?) The *Odyssey*
transfer has retained the solidity and detail of the
original uncut Columbia.

By coincidence, Antal Dorati's new *Turnabout*
recording of the *Slavonic Dances* with the Bamberg
Symphony follows hard on the heels of Mercury's
Golden Import reissue of the set he made near the
end of his Minneapolis Symphony tenure. Neither
ensemble is on a par with the Cleveland Orchestra or
even the Czech Philharmonic, but both are under
crisp control here, delivering the pulsating drive that
characterizes Dorati's approach to the music. For the
most part the interpretation hasn't changed much: a
broad and swaggering Op. 46, No. 4; a heroic, driving
Op. 46, No. 8 (comparable to Szell's); a perky and
buoyant Op. 46, No. 7. In both accounts Dorati takes
a brisk and tough-minded view of Op. 72, Nos. 2, 4,
and 8, as if he were uncomfortable with their emo-
tional content. There are minor interpretive changes:
The Minneapolis performances contained a mini-
mum of rubato, even by the Szell standard; the Bam-
berg discs reveal subtle *Luftpausen* at transitional
passages and moderate slowdowns for the central
sections of Op. 46, No. 3, and Op. 72, No. 2.

The Mercury engineering is closer and drier, with

brighter winds and tighter bass transients. In two-channel playback, the Turnabout QS-encoded discs sound more resonant but also less transparent. The differences are marginal, and individual systems and ears will be more comfortable with one or the other.

Rafael Kubelik too made an earlier recording of the *Slavonic Dances*, but his Vienna Philharmonic mono version is easily superseded by his new pair of DG discs. Though the Bavarian Radio Symphony is even less tidy than either of Dorati's orchestras, it more than compensates with its bravura zest, plasticity, and sparkle, to say nothing of the consistently limpid and expressive solo woodwind work. The open and airy sonics, the tricky rhythmic articulation of the timpani, and the clarity of doubled winds and strings are all joyous assets.

Although Kubelik's Op. 46 is well-paced, flexibly molded, and thoroughly enjoyable, it is in Op. 72 that he sheds new light. The rubato of No. 2 is the most voluptuous in any of the complete sets, without lapsing into the heavy bathos of Stokowski's single version (a filler on the recently issued London SPC 21117). Kubelik is puckishly jovial in the trio of No. 6, yet makes No. 4 an atmospheric nocturne of almost unbearable poignancy (No. 8 too is deeply felt). This is the most freely expressive, lightest, and most gracious Op. 72 we have had.

One might characterize the Kubelik and Dorati approaches as, respectively, "poet and peasant." (Szell's more abstractly symphonic approach is something else again.) It is helpful that the Turnabout and DG editions have been issued as pairs of single discs, thus allowing a purchaser to complement Kubelik's illuminating Op. 72 with Dorati's Op. 46. The Szell and Dorati/Minneapolis sets can be had only as a whole, and neither starts Op. 72 at the beginning of a side. (Odyssey's automatic sequencing is especially inconvenient.)

The full price of the Mercury and DG editions is partly offset by their more generous fillers. Turnabout offers none at all; Odyssey has Szell's *Carnival Overture*, one of the half-dozen or so best on records—he whips up the outer sections brilliantly but brings more repose to the middle section than most conductors do. Dorati/Mercury offers a side's worth of the familiar *Bartered Bride* orchestral excerpts in a reading as taut and incisive as one could ask, though shy on sly and folksy humor. Each Kubelik disc has a filler. The *Scherzo capriccioso*, with Op. 46, gets a flowing and affectionate reading, less precise and martial than the Neumann/Czech Philharmonic (Nonesuch H 71271) but with great point and wit in the solo playing; Kubelik's customary lateral division of first and second violins pays even handsomer dividends here than in the dances. The Op. 72 filler, *My Home*, is not top-drawer Dvořák, but Kubelik's leisurely reading makes a better case for it than the crisper and more ferocious Kertész version (London CS 6511 or CS 6746) or the bigger and more bombastic Rowicki (Philips 6500 287).

The complete Dvořák collector, as well as piano-duet hobbyists, will want the keyboard format of the *Slavonic Dances*, and, of the recordings available, only the new Supraphon consistently keeps the music above the pleasant salon level. Vlastimil Lejsek and Věra Lejsková, a Brno-based husband-and-wife team, probe deeply into cross-rhythms and inner voices (note Op. 72, No. 1) and have a grand time with

the shifts of rhythm and the play of light and shade in these scores. Gruffness and tenderness are projected with equal authority, and the dynamic changes are explosive. Brendel/Klien (Turnabout TV-S 34060) and Eden/Tamir (London CS 6614—Op. 46 only, with ten Brahms *Hungarian Dances*) play well and stylishly, but Lejsek and Lejsková bring out such color and detail that, briefly, one may not miss the orchestration. Turnabout's single budget-priced disc (at the cost of some omitted repeats) does have a considerable price advantage, and the pleasant, clean Turnabout sound is superior to the rather shallow-toned Supraphon.

The Lejsek/Lejsková set is filled out with four of the ten Op. 59 *Legends*, like the *Slavonic Dances* originally written for piano duet but better known in the later orchestral form. (Beecham was fond of No. 3, certainly the catchiest of the *Legends*.) Here, however, the orchestration seems to me all but essential, and I am pleased that Supraphon has concurrently released a new recording of all the *Legends* conducted by Jiří Pinkas.

The melodic appeal of the *Legends* may not quite match that of the *Slavonic Dances*, but at its best this is prime Dvořák, and there is ample poetry and warmth, with modest but effective use of the orchestra. In mono days, Supraphon made a superb recording of the *Legends* with Sejna conducting the Czech Philharmonic, but in recent years we have had to make do with the 1972 version by Raymond Leppard and the London Philharmonic (Philips 6500 188). Serviceable as that recording has been, in this case a second-rank Czech orchestra proves preferable to a first-rank foreign one. The Brno State Philharmonic has its rough edges, but its sheer robustness and limpid expressivity in this music puts the rather "up-tight" London Philharmonic in the shade. Some spluttery surfaces aside, the Supraphon pressing is smooth, the sonic ambience rich and detailed.

[B] **DVOŘÁK:** *Slavonic Dances (16), Opp. 46 and 72; Carnival Overture, Op. 92.* Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond. [Paul Myers and Thomas Frost, prod.] ODYSSEY Y2 33524, \$7.96 (two discs, automatic sequence) [from COLUMBIA M2S 726, 1965].

[R] **DVOŘÁK:** *Slavonic Dances (16), Opp. 46 and 72. SME-TANA: The Bartered Bride: Overture; Polka; Furiant; Dance of the Comedians.* Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. MERCURY SRI 2-77001, \$13.96 (two discs, manual sequence) [from SR 2-9007, 1959].

[B] **DVOŘÁK:** *Slavonic Dances (16), Opp. 46* and 72*.* Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. TURNABOUT QTV-S 34582* and 34583*, \$3.98 each QS-encoded disc.

DVOŘÁK: *Slavonic Dances (16), Opp. 46* and 72*;* *My Home Overture, Op. 62*;* *Scherzo capriccioso, Op. 66*.* Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Rafael Kubelik, cond. [Rudolf Werner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 466* and 2530 593*, \$7.98 each.

DVOŘÁK: *Slavonic Dances (16), Opp. 46 and 72; Legends, Op. 59, Nos. 1-4.* Vlastimil Lejsek and Věra Lejsková, piano. [Jaroslav Krček, prod.] SUPRAPHON 1 11 1301/2, \$13.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

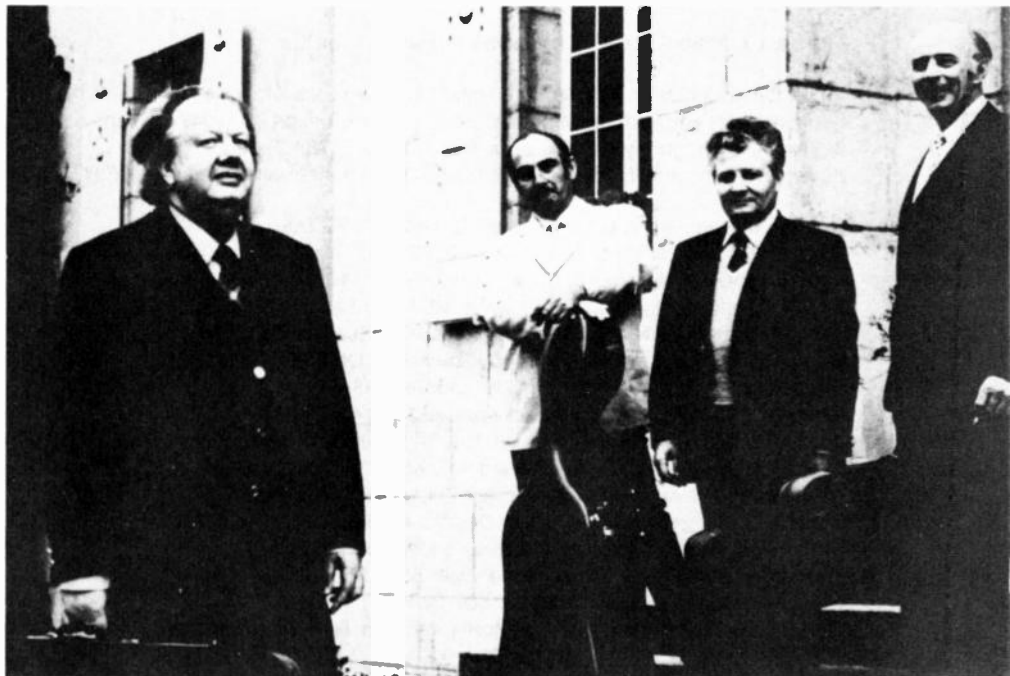
DVOŘÁK: *Legends (10), Op. 59.* Brno State Philharmonic Orchestra, Jiří Pinkas, cond. [Zdeněk Zahradník, prod.] SUPRAPHON 1 10 1393, \$6.98.

Slavonic Dances, Op. 46: No. 1, in C; No. 2, in E minor; No. 3, in A flat; No. 4, in F; No. 5, in A; No. 6, in D; No. 7, in C minor; No. 8, in G minor. **Slavonic Dances, Op. 72:** No. 1, in B; No. 2, in E minor; No. 3, in F; No. 4, in D flat; No. 5, in B flat minor; No. 6, in B flat; No. 7, in C; No. 8, in A flat.

Classical

reviewed by ROYAL S. BROWN

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The Végh Quartet—impeccable and revelatory Beethoven.

BACH: Brandenburg Concertos (6), S. 1046–51. English Chamber Orchestra, Johannes Somary, cond. [Seymour Solomon, prod.] VANGUARD VSD 71208/9, \$13.96 (two discs). Quadriphonic: VSO 30049/50, \$15.96 (two SQ-encoded discs).

Much of Johannes Somary's recorded work has left me with a feeling of cool respect; it has taken his Bach finally to turn me on. Last year's B minor Mass (Vanguard VSD 71190/2, March 1975) had not only disciplined and clear-textured choral work (not unknown in his Handel oratorios), but also original and cogent ideas about tempos and ornamentation. In the Brandenburgs, there are fewer surprises but a dominant vigor, well-built expressive line (within what is acceptable in a modern framework), and alert and confident execution.

In No. 1, brisk tempos are the rule, even for the Menuet—an idea that may have originated on records with Boyd Neel, though Somary misses Neel's rollicking treatment of the Polonaise. Like so many conductors,

Somary understates the poignant tragedy inherent in the Adagio, a movement I confess preferring to hear in the "anachronistic" style of Casals (especially in his earlier, long-deleted Prades set). Carl Pini here plays a genuine violino piccolo, and the rendition includes apt embellishments. No. 2 is moderately lively throughout, with a secure, if not roof-raising, performance of the clarino trumpet part by John Wilbraham.

Somary's solution to the phantom-middle-movement problem of No. 3 is a brief harpsichord cadenza from Harold Lester. The rhythmic and dynamic characterization of the two outer movements is excellent, with superb clarity and stereo separation of the respective trios of violins, violas, and cellos. David Munrow and John Turner are the recorder soloists in No. 4. Unless you're heretical enough to want flutes in this work (I do), there's nothing to complain of here.

In No. 5, Lester's harpsichord cadenza is delivered with real ferocity, and the ensuing tutti attack will jolt you right out of your chair. Also notable in the first movement is the smooth blend of flute and violin. The slow movement includes an expressive cello reinforcement of the lower keyboard voice, which I have not encountered often. No. 6 is not memorably expressive, but Somary has chosen his instrumentation wisely: Gambas are used instead of cellos to help differentiate the lower "concertino" voices from the continuo, which here substitutes a violone for double bass.

Somary provides good liner notes, and the engineering is warmer and mellower than usually provided him. While nobody could ever declare one set of the Brandenburgs the best for all time and tastes, the

new one adds a serious contender to the elite group. It is less than a year since Vanguard issued the Davison/Virtuosi of England set, on Everyman (SRV 313/4 SD, September 1975), and that is a hard act to follow. That Somary's account is no anticlimax speaks volumes of praise. A.C.

BEETHOVEN: Quartets (6), Op. 18. Végh Quartet. TELEFUNKEN 36.35042, \$20.94 (three discs, manual sequence).

Quartets, Op. 18: No. 1, in F; No. 2, in G; No. 3, in D; No. 4, in C minor; No. 5, in A; No. 6, in B flat.

BEETHOVEN: Quartets (3), Op. 59. Quartetto Italiano. PHILIPS 6747 139, \$15.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

Quartets, Op. 59: No. 1, in F; No. 2, in E minor; No. 3, in C.

With Op. 18, the Végh Quartet completes its second recorded Beethoven cycle, and one senses here a subtle shift in its interpretive values. The group's wisdom and deep involvement were unmistakable in their set of the middle quartets (Telefunken 36.35041, September 1974), but they were accompanied by a certain deliberation. Even there, however, there were exceptions—for instance, the fast-paced finale of Op. 59, No. 2—and in Op. 18 the Végh seems to have gained momentum. These performances of Beethoven's most virtuosic quartets are not only technically impeccable, but interpretively revelatory as well—indeed, quite the best segment of an altogether distinguished series. (The late quartets, for the record, are on Telefunken 46.35040, August 1975.)

From the opening phrase of Op. 18, No. 3 (the Végh follows the conjectured order of composition rather than the published se-

Explanation of symbols

Classical:



B Budget
H Historical
R Reissue

Recorded tape:

●● Open Reel
●● 8-Track Cartridge
●● Cassette

Critics' Choice

The best classical records reviewed in recent months

- ADAM:** Cello Concerto. **BARBER:** Die Natali. LOUISVILLE LS 745, Dec.
BACH: Sonatas and Partitas. Milstein. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 047 (3), Jan.
BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 7. Casals. COLUMBIA M 33788, Feb.
BERLIOZ: Symphonie fantastique. Karajan. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 597, Feb.
CHERUBINI: Requiem in D minor. Muti. ANGEL S 37096, Dec.
CHOPIN: Waltzes. Ciccolini. SERAPHIM S 60252, Jan.
DALLAPICCOLA: Il Prigioniero. Dorati. LONDON OSA 1166, Jan.
DVOŘÁK: Cello Concerto. Harrell, Levine. RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-1155, Feb.
DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 7. Neumann. VANGUARD/SUPRAPHON 7. Jan.
GAGLIANO: La Dafne. Musica Pacifica. COMMAND COMS 9004-2 (2), Feb.
HERRMANN: Symphony. Herrmann. UNICORN RHS 331, Feb.
PENDERECKI: Magnificat. Penderecki. ANGEL S 37141, Jan.
ROSSINI: Overtures. Marriner. PHILIPS 6500 878, Feb.
SCHUBERT: Quintet in C. Guarneri Quartet, Rose. RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-1154, Feb.
SCHUBERT, SCHUMANN: Songs. Ameling. PHILIPS 6500 706, Dec.
SCHUMANN: Songs. Fischer-Dieskau. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 543, Dec.
SIBELIUS: Symphonies Nos. 5, 7. Davis. PHILIPS 6500 959, Dec.
TIPPETT: A Child of Our Time. Davis. PHILIPS 6500 985, Feb.
WEBER: Euryanthe. Janowski. ANGEL SDL 3764 (4), Feb.
WORK: Songs of the Civil War Era. Morris, Jackson, Bolcom. NONESUCH H 71317, Feb.
BOSTON MUSICA VIVA: 20th-Century Chamber Works. DELOS DEL 25405 and 25406, Jan.

quence), one hears these sublime and inventive works interpreted as "Beethoven" rather than "early Beethoven." In place of the customary, and certainly appropriate, sense of wide-eyed, youthful wonderment, the Végh strives for a grander emotional scale. In the second and fourth measures of the scherzo of Op. 18, No. 1, the cello's eighth notes are stressed in such a way as to point up that movement's uncanny—and for me previously unsuspected—resemblance to the second movement of Op. 130. The thematic resemblance between the opening of Op. 18, No. 2, and the second scherzo of Op. 131 is intensified by the Végh's treatment. The tough, organic, yet highly expressive third movement of Op. 18, No. 5, anticipates the variation movements of Opp. 127 and 131 (not to mention those of the Opp. 109 and 111 Piano Sonatas). Such details—and countless others in all six performances—are subtly pointed and, however unusual, always in the context of uncommon attentiveness to the letter of the score.

The Budapest Quartet took a similarly ripe view in its stereo Op. 18, but the result verged on italicized overinflection and lacked brio, notably in the heavy opening movements of Nos. 5 and 6. The Budapest's more straightforward 1951 set remains preferable. The Végh, by contrast, always delights with sprightly, well-scanned rhythm. My only half-quibble is with the finale of No. 1; it is brilliantly headlong and well-articulated, but the idiosyncratic structural pointing is a trifle arbitrary. I unhesitatingly call the Végh's accom-

plishment the best Op. 18 we have had, and Op. 18 has always been uncommonly well treated on records, with excellent sets currently available from the Budapest (the 1951 performances, Odyssey 32 36 0023), the Hungarian (Seraphim SIC 6005), the Juilliard (Columbia M3 30084), and the Bartók (Hungaroton SLPX 11423/5).

With the release of the three "Rasumovsky" quartets, the Quartetto Italiano's Philips cycle lacks only Op. 18, Nos. 2 and 4. The Italiano's Op. 59 is analogous to Claudio Arrau's well-known approach to many of Beethoven's piano sonatas: rich in tone; rather broad; lyrically, and often rhetorically, inflected.

Though the broadly paced opening movement of Op. 59, No. 1, has a bit too much exaggeration of detail for my taste, the scherzo is beautifully sprung rhythmically and clear as a bell texturally. The rich Adagio is eloquently songful, and the "Russian theme" finale, while on the sedate side, is convincingly dancelike. In the quasi-cadenza that leads to the finale, the first violin is rather spread in tone and overly careful in its phrasing.

The Italiano's performance of Op. 59, No. 2, does not seem to me ideally appropriate to this very different work, with its pistol-shot opening and Eroica-like terseness. Right at the outset, the quartet lets the air out of the sails with ritardandos on the sixteenth-note figurations of bars 4 and 7 that nullify the breathless impact of the silent bars 5 and 8. At several points in this movement the Italiano does work up to the requisite speed and tautness, only to

dissipate the admirably accumulating momentum with a rhetorical effect. The Molto adagio second movement is expressive, but again a bit soft and bland; rhythmic details tend to be generalized and smoothed away. Though the Allegretto is not slow, the rhythm is on the slack side, especially in the trio. The Presto finale goes at a good clip and is helped by the strong presence of the lower voices, but it comes too late to save the performance.

Op. 59, No. 3, is admirable in every way—a reading full of thrust and impact. The tempos are middle-of-the-road (no attempt to rival the New Music Quartet in following Beethoven's metronome markings), but nonetheless rhythmic and exciting. One of the best performances in the Philips cycle.

Both the Végh and the Italiano are generous but not compulsive about repeats. Philips' sound is rather similar to Telefunken's in the welcome prominence of the lower voices, and the Philips pressings too are superb. H.G.

BIRTWISTLE: The Triumph of Time*; Chronometer†. BBC Symphony Orchestra, Pierre Boulez, cond.*; tape realization by Peter Zinovieff†. ARGO ZRG 790, \$6.98.

It's marvelous how a properly chosen visual image can color and direct one's reaction to a piece of music. One can't hear Hindemith's Concert of the Angels without seeing Mathis Grünewald's celestial musicians flying about; similarly, Pieter Brueghel's engraving called *The Triumph of Time*, well reproduced on the sleeve for this record, dominates one's feelings about Harrison Birtwistle's magnificent score.

In his notes, Birtwistle says the musical ideas he employs here had already crystallized before he saw the picture, and he paraphrases Beethoven's "more an expression of feeling than tone painting." Nevertheless, he goes on to draw parallels between his work and Brueghel's, especially in their slow, inexorable march. That sounds romantic and obvious, more like Mahler than Birtwistle, but the music doesn't; it sounds like Birtwistle and him alone.

The engraving is a very complicated allegory. Time rides in a cart pulled by the horses of day and night, calmly devouring one of his own children and surrounded by every conceivable symbol of impermanence, destruction, decay, oblivion. Birtwistle speaks of his work as suggesting "the over-all image of the procession: a freeze-frame; only a sample of an event already in motion; parts of the procession must already have gone by, others are surely to come; a procession made up of a (necessarily) linked chain of material objects that have no necessary connections with each other. . . ."

The music grips one's attention from the first note and holds it through a symphonic fabric as bitterly magnificent and as devoid of sentimentality, good nature, or affirmative escape as Brueghel's colossal print. The performance by Pierre Boulez and the BBC Symphony is as fine as the score, with that perfect clarity, that sec quality that is so characteristic of Boulez.

Chronometer, on the other side, is a tape

piece based on the sounds of all manner of clocks and clock-bells, some of them clearly identifiable in terms of their sources, some completely transformed.

The record reminds me a little of those percussion pieces put out in the early days of stereo to amaze us with the fidelity of the sound and with the fact that it could be made to come now from one speaker and now from the other. And several times during the course of *Chronometer* the sound seems to project itself free of the speakers and to exist in space before you. But this is no audio trickster's piece of jugglery. If *The Triumph of Time* sounds like Pieter Brueghel, *Chronometer* sounds like Hieronymus Bosch; those creaks and croaks and shrieks

and gallopings could come only from the great Flemish artist's depiction of hell. A.F.

B **BORODIN:** Quartet for Strings, No. 1, in A. Borodin Quartet. ODYSSEY/MELODIYA Y 33827, \$3.98.

The work that the Russian music specialist M. D. Calvocoressi hailed as the earliest first-rate example of chamber music by a Russian composer was not the well-known Tchaikovsky First Quartet of 1871 or the Borodin Second (famous for its Notturmo slow movement) of a decade later, but the now practically forgotten Borodin First of 1875-79. That quartet once enjoyed consid-

erable esteem, and Borodin himself, only a month or two before his untimely death, relished the news that it had been successfully performed overseas, in Buffalo, New York. Yet when has it been played recently in this country? I wonder how many discophiles own one of the only two recordings I can trace, both by the Vienna Konzerhaus Quartet for Westminster: first a 1950 mono LP, then a 1963 stereo disc that apparently won scant attention although it didn't go out of print until 1971.

It's a joy to report that the present resuscitation of this unjustly neglected work, appropriately carried out by the Russian ensemble named after the composer, eloquently demonstrates not only Boro-



Pro Cantione Antiqua

Bringing the Fifteenth Century to Life

by Susan T. Sommer

REVIEWING EARLY MUSIC can be a disheartening task; so often the repertoire or the performances are undistinguished. In Archiv's new collection of Dufay and Dunstable motets, we now have a recording that reveals the sheer musicality of these major works of the fifteenth century on their own terms. The combination of magnificent music and superb performance makes this one of the most beautiful records I have ever heard.

The isorhythmic motet is a triumph of musical organization, a structure of hierarchic rhythmic patterns reflecting an organic unity and proportion that, according to the medieval mind, mirrors the proportions governing the universe. It is easy to describe isorhythmic techniques in forbidding intellectual language; intricate repetitive patterns lend themselves to intricate repetitive prose, too often irresistible to the theorist or the historian. It is more difficult to recall that these motets were written by musicians, and it takes a human performance to remind us of the humanity of their creators.

There are four isorhythmic motets on this disc: the splendidly elegant *Supremum est mortalibus* and the early Italianate *Vasilissa ergo gaude* by Guillaume Dufay, and *Preco prohemencie* and *Veni Sancte*

Spiritus by his great English contemporary, John Dunstable. The uncompromising structure of the Dunstable works, which bring together pre-chosen melodic, rhythmic, and symbolic patterns in a dazzling set of combinations, makes them potentially even more forbidding than the Dufay motets. Interspersed among these monumental creations are five songlike motets—no less wonderful, but warmer and sweeter in their effect on the listener. One recalls the brilliant fan vaulting of a late Gothic cathedral, the glow of a Van Eyck altarpiece.

But cathedrals are there for the looking, at least for those who can afford the trip. Music, on the other hand, is dependent on the performance, and performance of early music has had to wait for a good deal of scholarly spadework and instrumental training before even the outlines of the artifacts began to appear. The past quarter-century has seen an explosion of musicians who specialize in the prebaroque styles. But technique, even virtuoso technique, is not enough to make a truly great musician. Great music speaks through the heart as well as the body, and it must be absorbed into the heart in congenial surroundings. Even the greatest performers need to live with a piece or a style before they can share its life and communicate it to others. With

this record, masterpieces of early music have finally been united with the technique to perform it and the understanding to bring it to life after centuries of oblivion.

What is it about Bruno Turner and the Pro Cantione Antiqua's performance that leads me to such unaccustomed rhapsody? Although the group is relatively new, I have not always enjoyed its recordings. Occasionally it is too austere in its sound and too unremitting in its tempos for my taste. In the Dufay and Dunstable motets, however, a small ensemble made up of the very best singers of this music makes a sound that is clear but never cold, beautifully molded to the subtle contours of the melodic curves yet bright and forthright when the music calls for precise definition. The instrumental support of the rebecs and winds, when it is used, underscores the lines without obscuring the essentially vocal nature of the music. The lyrical performances of Dufay's exquisite *Flos florum* and *Alma redemptoris Mater* by Paul Esswood and James Bowman respectively can only be matched for beauty of sound and subtlety of dynamics by the trio of lower voices, Ian Partridge, James Griffett, and David Thomas, in Dunstable's warm but spacious *Salve Regina*.

The isorhythmic structures are so delicately balanced that only when they move at the right speed in their own atmosphere can all the pieces fall into place. In this set, the tempos are ideal. Suddenly the ear can perceive the complex but logical and completely satisfying way in which separate and distinct melodic and rhythmic lines interrelate. It is a breathtaking experience.

Now it is all available for anyone with \$8.00 on this fine Archiv disc. The sound is of high quality throughout; texts and translations are provided, and the trilingual notes by Turner are interesting enough to inform and perhaps encourage listeners to learn more on their own.

DUFAY AND DUNSTABLE: Motets. Pro Cantione Antiqua; Hamburg Wind Ensemble for Old Music, Bruno Turner, cond. [Andreas Holschneider and Gerd Ploebesch, prod.] ARCHIV 2533 291, \$7.98.

DUFAY: *Supremum est mortalibus*; *Flos florum*; *Ave virgo quae de caelis*; *Vasilissa ergo gaude*; *Alma redemptoris Mater*. **DUNSTABLE:** *Veni Sancte Spiritus*; *Salve Regina*; *Beata Mater*; *Preco prohemencie*.

din's generally acknowledged inventive powers, but formal and contrapuntal skills extraordinary for an amateur and self-taught musician, as the chemical engineer was presumed to be. And even if the work itself were less immediately delectable than it unmistakably proves to be, this disc still would be a "must" for the infectious enjoyment and (at times almost too much) enthusiasm with which it is played—a radiance fully captured in the glowingly warm Melodiya recording. Add Boris Schwarz's helpfully informative jacket notes and a budget price to make up a true best buy! R.D.D.

BRAHMS: Violin and Viola Sonatas. Pinchas Zukerman, violin and viola; Daniel Barenboim, piano. [Günther Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 058, \$23.94 (three discs, manual sequence).

Sonatas for Violin and Piano: No. 1, in G, Op. 78; No. 2, in A, Op. 100; No. 3, in D minor, Op. 108; Scherzo in C minor, from FAE Sonata. Sonatas for Viola and Piano: No. 1, in F minor, Op. 120, No. 1; No. 2, in E flat, Op. 120, No. 2.

The Brahms violin sonatas have always been handsomely represented on records, with a discography that includes such memorable performances as those of Busch/Serkin (Nos. 1, 2), Szigeti/Horszowski (No. 2), Szigeti/Petri (No. 3), Kochanski/Rubinstein (No. 3), De Vito/Fischer (Nos. 1, 3), and Goldberg/Balsam (Nos. 1-3). Even so, there is always room for a new edition as passionate and resplendently reproduced as the new Zukerman/Barenboim set, which is fully competitive with the best.

As might be expected, Zukerman and Barenboim treat the music in all-out emotional fashion. Their tempos are for the most part leisurely, with a good deal of expressive leeway. Zukerman's vibrato is lavish, but his sound is so potent and intense that one gladly accepts the excesses when they come. Barenboim plays with enormous sweep and energy; yet in the violin sonatas, at least, he never covers his partner. His is rugged, bass-oriented Brahms playing—heeding finer details, but mostly pursuing a grand line and quasi-orchestral contrasts and sonorities. He achieves considerable textural contrasts, even though his is not a particularly colorful style. Best of all, one senses an unflinching continuity and architecture despite the momentary indulgences. The sound, from New York's Manhattan Center, is rich and sonorous.

There was no logical reason for making this a three-record set, for the three violin sonatas and the early "FAE" Scherzo are accommodated neatly on the first four sides. I suspect that many will regret that the third disc, with the two viola sonatas, was included, for the performances are far less persuasive. The most serious problem is faulty balance, probably the result of several factors.

First, I would guess that Zukerman is less secure on the viola than on the violin, which he has been playing brilliantly most of his life. His viola playing here is not exceptional: The sound has nowhere near the soaring projection of his violin playing. (The tone is rather scrappy and uneven, with an irregular vibrato and fractionally unreliable intonation.) Second, Zukerman

Daniel Barenboim
and Pinchas Zukerman—
*Passionate and
resplendent Brahms
violin sonatas.*



Christian Steiner/Polydor

puts himself at a further disadvantage by adhering to Brahms's own frequently gauche transcription from the clarinet-sonata originals, a case of absurdly misplaced purism. The composer doesn't seem to have fully comprehended the viola's possibilities as a solo instrument, and viola technique has improved immensely since his day; as a result, certain adjustments must be made for the music to sound properly. While Brahms's octave lowering occasionally provides a luscious sonority that the clarinet could not duplicate, much of the time the downward transposition makes no sense at all (except to accommodate less-skilled players), and in that register much of the passagework is simply covered by the piano. Twice in the first movement of the E flat Sonata Brahms begins a descending line in the viola's "comfortable" middle register and then, in midphrase, has to shift upward when he runs out of notes!

Even granting that handicap, Zukerman's musical grasp of the viola sonatas seems far less imaginative than in the violin sonatas, and Barenboim too sounds far less at home. The keyboard rendering alternates between excessive preciousness (the drooping tempos and languishing reverse accents in much of the E flat Sonata) and boorish inconsiderateness (the contrived rubato when the piano takes the main theme near the beginning of the first movement of the F minor Sonata).

Unlike the violin sonatas, the viola sonatas have not been well treated on disc. There are exceptions: The Primrose/Firkusny coupling (Seraphim 60011) has plenty of temperament and dash, not to mention the sheer beauty of Primrose's sound; Primrose also uses a judiciously edited version of the solo part (his own?) that keeps much of what is good in

Brahms's arrangement but affords the viola greater brilliance when needed. For my taste, however, the slightly placid performances by Georg Schmid and Magda Rusy (MHS 691) come closest to conveying the true character of these elusive works, in particular the E flat Sonata. Although Schmid, like Zukerman, uses Brahms's text, he gets better balance from his pianist and recording engineers. H.G.

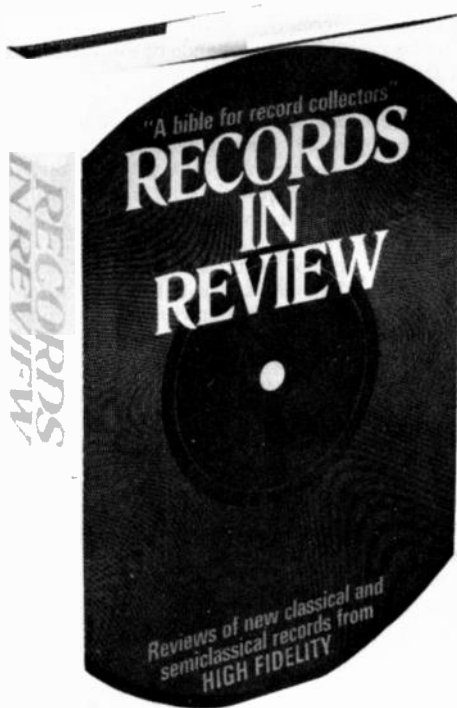
BRITTEN: Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra—See Prokofiev: Cinderella.

B **CARTER:** Double Concerto for Harpsichord and Piano with Two Chamber Orchestras*; Duo for Violin and Piano*. Paul Jacobs, harpsichord; Gilbert Kalish, piano; Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, Arthur Weisberg, cond.* Paul Zukofsky, violin; Gilbert Kalish, piano.* [Helmuth Kolbe* and Joanna Nickrenz**, prod.] NONESUCH H 71314, \$3 96.

The condition of dichotomy is fundamental in much of Elliott Carter's recent music, and the present coupling brings together two intriguingly different manifestations of the principle. In each case, the tonal contrast between two instruments is the germinal force of the piece, with all the musical dimensions aligned to dramatize that basic opposition of sonic character.

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tallic percussion and the final click of the claves. Carter creates a world of sound—or, rather, two worlds of sound that fade in and out, contrast, coalesce, collide, and finally disintegrate. There is wit here, and high drama in the slow movement, where, after accelerating and decelerating patterns have woven circles (literally, in space) around solemn sustained winds, the keyboards compete in cadenzas, the piano outpacing the harpsichord and then, so to speak, outrunning itself in frantic accelerando, leaving a breathless silence to be timidly broached by silvery bell sounds.

There is virtuosity unbounded and color—not only for the soloists, but also for the four percussionists. With all its complexity, the Double Concerto is very much a gut experience: One feels the players strained to limits, and one feels the shape of the piece very directly—its tensions and climaxes, its growth, stasis, and collapse after the final tearing confrontation of the two groups with their irreconcilable musical habits.

This new recording—the third to date of the Double Concerto—is the best yet. From this statement should be inferred no slight on its predecessors, both of which represented “the state of the art” when they were made. There are valuable things to be heard in them, especially the crystalline brio of pianist Charles Rosen. But the piece has been played ever more frequently in recent years, and perhaps most frequently by the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, yielding a tangibly more cohesive execution of many details. The openness and clarity of the recording helps, too.

The Duo for Violin and Piano is one of two chamber works that Carter completed in 1974. (A recording of the other, an ebullient brass quintet, should be along from Columbia soon.) Here the dichotomy of sonority is unadorned: The sustained tone of the bowed violin is set against the constantly decaying tone of the piano, without external mediation. Alongside the concerto, the colors are austere, and so is the argument. The piano begins with long notes, the violin with much activity, and the roles develop from there, alternating aggression and withdrawal. Again, the utmost in virtuosity is demanded, and the performance is pretty remarkable. I could wish for kinder sounds, and less rhythmic freedom, from Paul Zukofsky's violin; the close miking lends a raspy quality that is not, I think, part of the work's own character. Gilbert Kalish's playing is, quite simply, fabulous in its accuracy and directness.

Illuminating notes by the composer complete another of Nonesuch's admirable contributions to the recorded literature of American contemporary music. D.H.

B **DEBUSSY: Piano Works.** Aldo Ciccolini, piano. SERAPHIM S 60253, \$3.98. Suite bergamasque; Pour le piano; Deux Arabesques; Réverie; Ballade; Danse.

Ciccolini rightly plays these works in a “romantic” rather than “impressionistic” style. He has plenty of color and nuanced delicacy but is not loath to accent boldly and take rhythmic license: His controlled yet swashbuckling treatment does wonders with the Preludes of *Pour le piano* and the

Suite bergamasque. Ciccolini's ostinato playing is remarkable in the Menuet and Passepied of the Suite bergamasque, while sensuality and formal considerations are ideally blended in songfully meditative pieces like “Clair de lune” from the Suite and the Sarabande of *Pour le piano*. Réverie, and Ballade.

The rippling filigree of the two Arabesques doesn't preclude attention to larger basic structure—note how Ciccolini adroitly builds the chordal superstructure behind No. 2's scintillant figures. The superbly vital, symphonic, and angular statement of the Danse reminds the listener of the work's original title, *Tarantelle styrienne*; the spirited little piece could scarcely sound more orchestral, even in Ravel's 1925 orchestration.

An irresistible bargain, with a distinct plus in the sharply etched yet impactively atmospheric reproduction. H.G.

DVOŘÁK: Slavonic Dances; Legends; et al. For an essay review, see page 77.

FAURÉ: Barcarolles (13). Jean-Philippe Collard, piano. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2078, \$6.98.

Like so many musical terms, “barcarolle” can be applied to a broad variety of styles; about all that is expected is a mildly rocking 6/8 or 12/8 rhythmic flow. Fauré's thirteen barcarolles, composed between 1883 and 1921, range in genre from the sicilienne (No. 4 in A flat, Op. 44) to the nocturne (No. 10 in A minor, Op. 104; No. 2 in G, Op. 41; and at least the openings of several others).

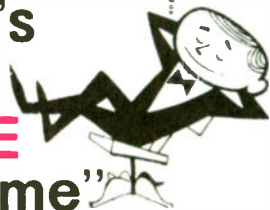
For all that variety, the barcarolle remained especially suited to Fauré's unparalleled gift for writing lovely keyboard figuration. The supple filigree continually weaving its way in short ripples back to the point of departure beautifully enhances the essential barcarolle lilt. In addition to the stylistic variety, Fauré's harmonic language ranges from a Chopinesque fullness in the early barcarolles to an almost inscrutable vagueness in the later ones. In No. 7 in D minor, Op. 90, the occasional appearance of some rather Debussyesque chords leading to unexpectedly romantic resolutions creates some startlingly rich effects.

Unless you want the complete Fauré piano music, in which case Evelyne Crochet's sets on Vox (SVBX 5423 and 5424) are recommended, Collard's recording of the barcarolles is a must. These are much warmer, more resonant performances than Jean Doyen's on Musical Heritage (MHS 1772, September 1974), made so by Collard's fluid pedaling and his beautifully rounded tone definition. One or two pieces with minor flubs might have been redone, and the sound quality is not brilliant, but these are minimal drawbacks in an otherwise exceptional album. R.S.B.

B **GLIÈRE: Symphony No. 3, in B minor, Op. 42 (Ilya Murometz).** Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Nathan Rakhlin, cond. COLUMBIA/MELODIYA MG 33832, \$7.98 (two discs, automatic sequence).



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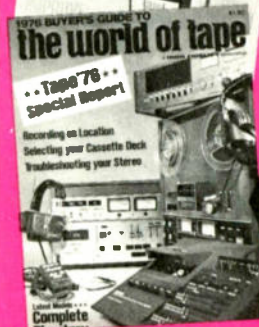
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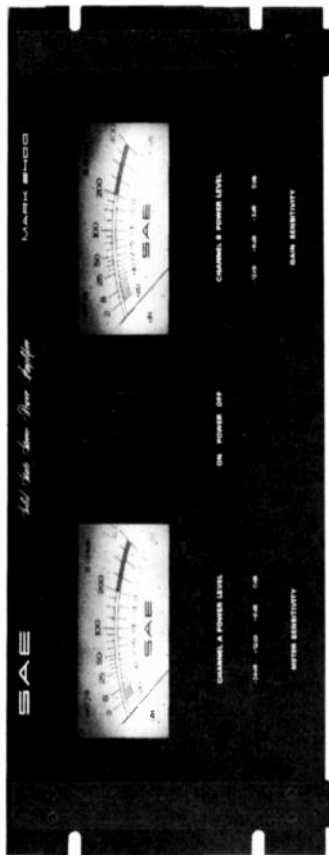
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Comparison:
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ma charmante, épargnez-moi, O. 182; Suis-mois, O. 253.

Whether one considers duplications the bane or the glory of today's enormous discographic treasure house, it's not too often that we can profitably compare two versions of the same work that are both first-rate in distinctively different, wholly complementary ways. Back in June 1972 I wrote a rave review of the incandescent recorded performance by Ormandy of the apotheosis of symphonic romanticism, Glière's *Ilya Murometz* Symphony. That achievement still sounds as thrilling as ever, but now whatever it may have lacked is supplied by the new Melodiya recording, and its every merit is paralleled by comparable (or even superior) yet markedly contrasting merits.

Most significantly, at least to purists, the new version is complete—the first such full-score recording since the Scherchen/Westminster mono set of 1953. It runs a bit over fifteen minutes longer than Ormandy's moderately cut, almost exactly hour-long reading (although Rakhlin's often slower, indeed often nobly deliberate tempos account for part of the longer duration), and it's almost twice as long as the cruelly abbreviated 1958 Stokowski/Capitol edition currently available in a Seraphim reissue.

Rakhlin—who hasn't been heard on records, as far as I know, for a good many years—proves that in the interim he has grown into a truly magisterial conductor able to provide a reading of impressive epic breadth, virile dramatic impact, and rhadamanthine somber power. Where Ormandy is sensuously poetic and his Philadelphians tonally opulent, Rakhlin is spellbindingly bardic and his Moscow orchestra tonally darker and rougher but muscularly gripping. The recording techniques, too, are no less polarized: RCA's glowing, lucid, softly focused; Melodiya's more sharply focused, more vividly realistic, and boldly "ringing."

For many home listeners nowadays the musical adventures of the mythical bogatyr *Ilya Murometz* may seem too highly romanticized as well as far too long even in Ormandy's trimmed-down version. But, although they may fear that the still longer and far more grimly "Russian" Rakhlin version may be more than they can stand, they are sure to be jolted if not transfixed by its potent basilisk fascinations (or at the very least by programmatic evocations and sonic scene painting that put the best Hollywood film scores to shame). If for nothing else, this release is surely unique for the incredibly sustained intensity of many of its passages and for the almost imperceptible rises in its monumentally long crescendos.

At the reduced price of this two-disc set, there can be no complaint over the fact that the third side contains no more than the eight-minute Scherzo, especially since this enables the symphony's four movements to be distributed unbroken, one to a side.

R.D.D.

GOTTSCHALK: Piano Works, Album 2. Leonard Pennario, piano. [Patti Laursen, prod.] ANGEL S 36090, \$6.98. Tape: 4XS 36090, \$7.98; 8XS 36090, \$7.98.

Battle Cry of Freedom, O. 62; *Berceuse*, O. 27; *Mazurk in F sharp minor*, O. 298; *Grand Scherzo*, O. 114; *Polka in B flat*, O. 273; *Tournament Galop*, O. 264; *Columbia*, O. 61; *Marguerite*, O. 158; *La Gallina*, O. 101; *Ballade*, O. 271; O.

Unlike most sequels, this one (to Angel S 36077, March 1975) proffers just as brilliant playing and recording and even more imaginative and rewarding programming. At least four of the twelve selections here are, to the best of my knowledge, recorded firsts: the irresistibly toe-tickling, flashily virtuoso *grande valse brillante*, *Marguerite*, and three little pieces rediscovered only recently and published last year by the New York Public Library—the now sparkling, now nostalgically songful *Mazurk*, the amusingly insouciant if old-fashioned *Polka*, and the gentle, disarmingly simple *Ballade*.

But if the rest of the program is not brand-new, it is exceptionally well varied—from the jingoistic *Battle Cry of Freedom* through such catchy divertissements as *La Gallina*, *Suis-moi*, and the *Tournament Galop* to the truly charming O, *ma charmante* and the salonish *Berceuse*. And all is topped by two of the composer's masterpieces: the truly grand *Grand Scherzo* and the fascinatingly jaunty *Columbia rhapsody* on Foster's "My Old Kentucky Home."

As in his earlier program, Pennario plays with obvious relish and dazzling bravura—lacking only the more relaxed and lilting grace of the best Gottschalk performances by Eugene List, just as the glittering sonics lack only a warmer acoustical ambience.

R.D.D.

HANDEL: Organ Concertos (12). Herbert Tachezi, organ; Vienna Concentus Musicus, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, cond. TELEFUNKEN 36-35282, \$20.94 (three discs, manual sequence).

HANDEL: Organ Concertos (16). E. Power Biggs, organ; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Adrian Boult, cond. COLUMBIA D3M 33716, \$13.98 (three discs) [from K2S 602, 1958, and M2S 604, 1959].

The Handel organ concertos, most of which were written for performance between acts of the composer's oratorios, are one of the high points of baroque chamber music. They raise particularly difficult performance questions—and not only those of ornamentation, always a problem area in baroque music. Handel's notation here is especially sketchy: For example, not only are the cadenzas left to be improvised by the organist, but frequently, also, lengthy passages within the main body of the movements and even entire movements. In this and other regards, these two sets of recordings provide a fascinating, instructive comparison.

The Columbia release, a bargain reissue of the Biggs/Boult version originally issued in separate two-disc sets, takes an essentially "traditional" position. Although a baroque organ is used (one apparently often played by Handel himself), the orchestral instruments are modern. Ornamentation is kept to a minimum; the improvised sections, when included at all, tend to be short in length and tame in conception. Several of the movements to be entirely improvised are simply omitted, and in one of these,

marked *Adagio e Fuga* (in Op. 7, No. 3), only the *Adagio* appears. Dynamics remain essentially constant for given musical segments, producing the well-known baroque "terraced" effect, and tempos are on the slow, safe side.

Herbert Tachezi and the Vienna Concentus Musicus present a very different picture of this music. A hallmark of the group is the use of authentic instruments, and this holds here both for the organ and the orchestral instruments. (Another difference is the use of harpsichord as a continuo instrument.) As a result, the ensemble balance is quite different: The organ is better able to hold its own in tutti passages, where it is completely inaudible in the Columbia version—indeed, I suspect it usually is not playing at all; and the woodwinds (mainly a pair of oboes, almost always playing in unison with the first and second violins) have a much more telling effect on the over-all sonority. But beyond such specific matters, the sound is in general much less homogeneous than is the case with modern instruments, not only when various instruments play simultaneously, but also within the playing of an instrument alone, where timbre varies considerably depending upon register, dynamic level, or both.

This last point is related to another important matter: Tachezi, Harnoncourt, and the Concentus Musicus do not accept the absence of dynamic detail in Handel's score as an indication that constant levels are to be maintained within each musical segment. Rather, they take this as an invitation to inject their own performing personalities into the score, an accepted practice in baroque times. This lends their playing a higher degree of variety, particularly evident in the use of dynamic swells over short groups of notes.

Perhaps the most noticeable difference, however, is the vastly more adventurous attitude toward ornamentation and elaboration. Handel's basic two-part organ writing is more consistently filled out with inner voices, and the ornamentation is both freer and more extensive. Moreover, repeated sections (always taken, another significant distinction) are normally treated as opportunities for variation and elaboration. The cadenzas, improvised sections, and improvised movements are longer and musically more developed. Finally, the whole approach to the baroque style is much more aggressive and sharply focused: Tempos are brisk, trills begin off the principal note (Biggs usually ignores this generally accepted baroque practice), and individual voices are differentiated in articulation.

In fairness it should be said that the Biggs/Boult set is certainly successful within the framework of its assumptions. But after hearing the new recording it is impossible not to be struck by the relative lifelessness and, above all, the lack of surface color of the older one. This is not to say that the Harnoncourt version is entirely without problems. Details of articulation are often slavishly adhered to in the larger ensemble, so that frequent recurrences of material—as in the opening movement of Op. 4, No. 1—result in a certain stiffness. Also, tempos are occasionally so flexible that continuity is lost, as happens in the first movement of Op. 7, No. 5, where the slower tempo of the sections for organ alone repeatedly inter-

rupts the forward motion and produces a mannered effect.

Despite these minor reservations, the Telefunken set provides a wonderful example of how fresh baroque music can sound when approached in a spirit of recreation. (It is ironic that the "old"—i.e., original—approach to this music seems to create a much livelier and more "up-to-date" quality.) The Columbia reissue is admittedly a bargain. And even with the crowding of four discs onto three, the sound remains remarkably clean. (It should be noted that nothing from the original sets has been lost in the transfer. Repeats are frequently omitted and in one case—the second Menuet of Op. 7, No. 3—a complete movement is missing, but these were missing before.)

One also gets four additional concertos (published without opus number and based largely on other music by the composer). But the over-all superiority of the newer set seems evident. R.P.M.

HENZE: Kammermusik I–XII*; In Memoriam: Die weisse Rose. Philip Langridge, tenor*; Timothy Walker, guitar*; London Sinfonietta, Hans Werner Henze, cond. [Peter Wadland, prod.] OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 5, \$6.98.

Hans Werner Henze used to be the contemporary composer best—or perhaps, with Benjamin Britten, equal best—represented on records; their works were recorded almost as fast as they were written. What

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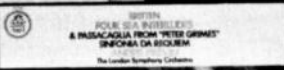
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Decca/London did for Britten, Deutsche Grammophon did for Henze. But now Deutsche Grammophon has struck the whole of its extensive Henze series from the British catalogue; in this country, only three of the DG records remain. The Decca/London group has come to Henze's rescue, with this new Oiseau-Lyre release and, on its Headline label, *Composes* and the Second Violin Concerto (to be reviewed next month).

Kammermusik, as it seems to be called now, was originally entitled *Kammermusik 1958*, with the subtitle "über die Hymne 'In lieblicher Bläue' von Friedrich Hölderlin." It belongs in time and in spirit with Henze's Kleist opera *Der Prinz von Homburg* (also composed in 1958), in which a romantic German prince is lost in classical dreams, amid a world of Prussian militarism. And it precedes the outpouring of love music in the early Sixties: *Arioso*, *Being Beauteous*, the *Cantata della fiaba estrema*. It is another manifestation of that encounter that seems to be the inspiration of so much German art from Goethe onward—between the German poet/painter/composer and Mediterranean antiquity. As Henze puts it:

This time it is an encounter between Germany and Greece in the vision of a poet whose mind is clouded with madness, who stammers in fragments with beautiful, apparently incoherent phrases. I can feel and understand this link to the ancient world. In our eyes, our landscapes alter and take on Hellenic features.

Hölderlin's translations of *Antigone* and *Oedipus Rex* have been set by Carl Orff. Britten has composed a Hölderlin cycle. Hölderlin (1770-1843), like Goethe and Schiller, looked to ancient Greece as a Golden Age but mingled his dreams of antiquity with an ardor for the restoration of that age. His writings, in the words of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "are the production of a beautiful and sensitive mind"—but it was also a mind increasingly disturbed; from 1807 he was in an asylum. What once seemed mad came in time to seem modern; Stefan George and Rilke are his disciples.

The beautiful text of *In lieblicher Bläue* is furnished with the record, and also—but not in parallel, not even on the same page—an English translation. Henze's *Kammermusik*—and this is nowhere made plain—is not simply a setting of it, but a series of twelve movements. Three movements are for the instrumental octet (clarinet, horn, bassoon, and string quintet), three are for tenor and guitar, three are for tenor and the instruments, and three are "tentos" for the guitar solo. (Is "tento" a form of the Spanish *tiento*, a kind of *ricercar*?) These Three Tentos have been recorded separately by Julian Bream, on RCA LSC 2964. In the score, each is titled by a phrase from one of the songs.

So *Kammermusik* is at once a setting of and meditations and improvisations upon the Hölderlin text. It was begun in Greece, composed to a commission from Hamburg Radio, first performed there and then soon afterward in England, where I heard it with its original soloists, Peter Pears and Julian Bream. Philip Langridge sings it very ably but without matching Pears's sensitivity to words, line, and tone; he is clear and steady, but there is not much sense of rapture.

Timothy Walker's playing of the guitar solos seems to me highly accomplished; I have not made a direct comparison with the Bream version. The London Sinfonietta instrumentalists are excellent—especially the clarinet of Antony Pay. The recording, in excellent balance, produces an effect of intimacy without cramping.

In 1963 Henze added an epilogue to the piece, for the octet—an Adagio to mark the sixtieth birthday of Josef Rufer. It includes a "semi-quotation" from Schoenberg's First Chamber Symphony. It is played here, and it is a beautiful piece of music.

In *Memoriam: Die weisse Rose* is a double fugue for seven winds and strings, written for the Congress of European Resistance Movements held in Bologna in 1965. "The White Rose" was an anti-Nazi student group that formed in Munich in 1942; its founders were executed a year later. The piece, a moving one, is mainly elegiac, with some dramatic incident. It is composed in the spirit of Bach's *Musical Offering*.

I have never been, or wanted to be, a person who listens to and judges music "absolutely," uncolored by associations—in this case those brought to a hearing of *Kammermusik* by my own romantic feelings about Hölderlin, Greece, and the German-Greek encounter that has produced so much art I value. The allusive artists—Berlioz, Tippett, Henze, Crumb are examples who spring to mind—illuminate, reinterpret, and enrich my imaginative world. *Kammermusik* can be analyzed and shown to be an excellent piece of construction. (So I discovered when working carefully through two movements to be sure of this; a study score is published by Schott/Belwin-Mills.) More simply, I would commend it as a romantic vision, "the production of a beautiful and sensitive mind." A.P.

MARTINU: *Concertos for Violin and Orchestra, Nos. 1-2.* Josef Suk, violin; Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Václav Neumann, cond. [Eduard Herzog, prod.]. SUPRAPHON 10 1535, \$6.98.

The contrast between Bohuslav Martinů's two violin concertos is all the more striking because both works immediately signal their composer. The First (1932-34) strikes out in directions that recall Albert Roussel, in the rather brittle vigor of the churning rhythmic language, and on occasion the Stravinsky violin concerto, in the sometimes acid leanness of the harmonic and instrumental textures and the manner in which the violin soars above them. The Second (1943) moves into a universe of much deeper emotivity, opening with the broad, dark, and calmly tragic lyricism of the first movement; clearing the clouds in the subtly *giocoso*, highly syncopated second movement; and ultimately bursting, as so often happens in the composer's music, into a hazy Brahms-cum-Dvořák sunlight in which the brooding overtones announced in the first movement have almost vanished.

Both works have immense appeal. I have always found the Second Concerto (which I knew via an old Artia recording with Bruno Belcik, also conducted by Václav Neumann) one of Martinů's most moving com-

positions, in spite of some awkwardness caused, it seems to me, by indecision as to which emotional direction to pursue. But the earlier work comes as something of a revelation. In addition to the neoclassical spaciousness and energy, there is intriguing use of instrumental effect, particularly striking in the strings/woodwinds/violin interplay opening the charmingly ingenious second movement.

Both concertos put the violinist through quite a workout, demanding almost non-stop playing and frequent shifts from wide-range, leaping passagework to bursts of broad, soaring lyricism. But Josef Suk obviously has this music in his bones; even the occasionally harsh bowing adds a not unwelcome coarseness here and there. Suk's is a highly Slavic style, with a rich vibrato and a soulful tendency to swell in the midst of the most meaningful notes of certain melodic passages, and there is no question that it perfectly suits the composer's aims.

Neumann keeps the orchestra under excellent control—no small feat, as Martinů tends to treat the solo violin as almost its equal. With Supraphon's decent, if unexciting, recorded sound, this record should attract listeners of all musical persuasions.

R.S.B.

MATHIAS: *Dance Overture, Op. 16; Invocation and Dance, Op. 17; Ave Rex, Op. 45**; *Concerto for Harp and Orchestra, Op. 50**. Osian Ellis, harp*; Welsh National Opera Chorus*; London Symphony Orchestra, David Atherton, cond. [James Mallinson, prod.] OISEAU-LYRE SOL 346, \$6.98.

This recording of four works by William Mathias introduces the young Welsh composer to American audiences.

Three of the works are short and fill one side of the disc. The *Dance Overture* is one of those brilliant, happy, breezy, folk-tune-type pieces that are an English specialty; Vaughan Williams used to run up three of them every morning before breakfast. Mathias is no Vaughan Williams, but the composition is nevertheless a pleasing example of its tradition. In the *Invocation and Dance* the style takes on a slow introduction and develops a big climax; this is actually a short, one-movement symphony that should do marvelously on the semi-pop concert circuit. *Ave Rex* is a delightful cycle of five carols for chorus and orchestra. It is much more rugged and brilliant than such things usually are but has a superlatively lovely slow movement to balance its vigor.

A harp concerto by a Welsh composer and with a soloist named Osian ought to be the last word in bardic weep-strain, laugh-strain, and glory-strain. But Mathias' work is rather poky and academic, except in its *Adagio appassionato*, wherein it at least hints at its potentialities. A.F.

MOZART: *Piano Works.* Claudio Arrau, piano. PHILIPS 6500 782, \$7.98.

Fantasy in D minor, K. 397; Fantasy/Sonata in C minor, K. 475/457; Rondo in A minor, K. 511.

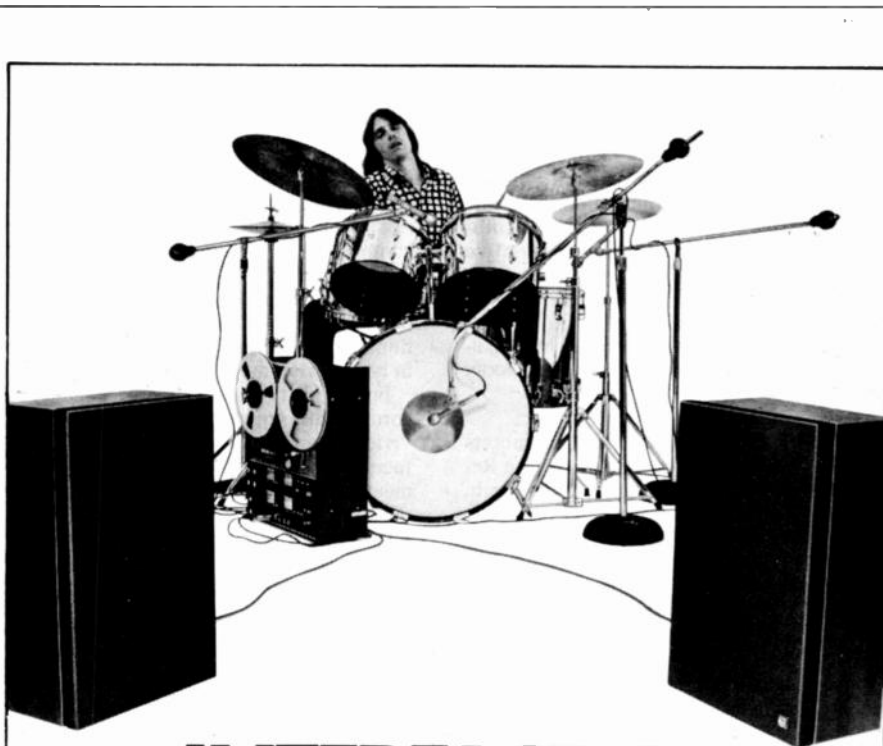
Arrau has of late played strangely little Mozart for a pianist who plays so much Beethoven. This disc includes just those se-

lections one might have expected to appeal to so "serious" an artist, perpetually in search of musical profundities. All four works are in a minor key and are either strongly influenced by Bach (the prelude-like introduction to the K. 397 Fantasy, the highly contrapuntal K. 457 Sonata) or permeated by a vein of somber emotionalism.

The C minor Fantasy, K. 475, gets a compelling statement. Arrau's tone—solid, velvety, varicolored—is monumentally impressive, and he uses it with excellent taste in a moderately paced interpretation full of clarity and acumen. The rhythm is notably well sprung, and the phrase scissions are unflinchingly logical. The Alberti bass at the beginning moves ahead at just the right measured clip, neither too ruminative nor

too pushed. One constantly feels the important distinction between downbeats and secondary accents, and the many little personal touches never disrupt the metric progress. A truly three-dimensional performance.

The ensuing C minor Sonata, K. 457, I find less satisfying. This logical, impersonal view of tragedy makes its greatest impact in a sort of noninterpretation that merely unfolds the phrases and formal dimensions with patrician, compassionate impersonality. Arrau tries to humanize the music by reading between the lines, and I don't think the lines can take it. Too often the rhythm becomes overloaded by little caesuras and adjustments, and the powerful gravity of the music is thus compromised. To cite just



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one unsettling detail: Arrau executes the trills at the beginning of the first movement directly after the upward arpeggios, so that they begin, or appear to begin, a fraction too soon.

The D minor Fantasy, K. 397, begins with a lot of caressing rubato and an unusually big sonority. At one point in the final D major allegretto section, Arrau takes a long appoggiatura in the left hand that strikes me as a shade willful and studied. Otherwise this is a relatively uncontroversial reading—robust and full-throated. "Full-throated" also describes Arrau's treatment of the highly vocal A minor Rondo, K. 511. His tempo is rather broad, his handling of the arialike passagework always ready to yield to some inflection or expressive device. A near-Chopinesque account, almost the opposite of Schnabél's severe, but equally perceptive, performance (Seraphim 60115).

Try to hear this record for yourself. The pianism is exceptional in its articulation and voicing, even with Arrau's liberal pedaling. The interpretations are distinguished too, though except in the K. 475 Fantasy they lack some of the symmetry and spontaneity I want in Mozart. The technical work is up to Philips' usual superlative standard. H.G.

OCKEGHEM: Maria Motets. Prague Madrigalists, Miroslav Venhoda, cond. TELEFUNKEN 6.41878, \$6.98.

An admirable selection of beautiful motets by one of the master composers of the Renaissance. Texts celebrating the Virgin Mary inspired Ockeghem to some of his finest works, among them settings of the famous Marian antiphons, *Salve Regina*, *Ave Maria*, and *Alma redemptoris Mater*, and a most elegant motet, *Gaude Maria*.

The performances by the Prague Madrigalists, the well-known Czech vocal and instrumental ensemble conducted by Miroslav Venhoda, are both expressive and vital. Still, they are occasionally marred by intrusive doublings and other instrumental hokum. Attractive, but perhaps not for purists. S.T.S.

PROKOFIEV: *Cinderella*, Op. 87 (excerpts from the ballet). **BRITTEN:** *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, Op. 34. London Symphony Orchestra, Andrew Davis, cond. [Paul Myers, prod.] COLUMBIA M 33891, \$6.98.

Comparison—Cinderella (complete):
Rozhdestvensky/Moscow Radio Sym.

Mel./Ang. SRB 4102
Comparison—Young Person's Guide:
Britten/London Sym. Lon. CS 6671

This is the Columbia-label debut of the up-and-coming young British conductor who won the musical directorship of the Toronto Symphony last fall. And, since I've heard him on records before only as a continuo player, it's my first chance to realize how impressive his credentials are as a potential super-virtuoso.

Barely into his thirties, Davis already commands remarkable self-assurance, a sure, taut grip on his players, and genuine powers of personality projection. Here he gives high-voltage performances of such



Angel Records

Jean Martinon
Reveling in Ravel.

disparate materials as thirteen of the fifty items in Prokofiev's *Cinderella* ballet and Britten's familiar orchestral *Young Person's Guide*. (The *Guide* is done, as in the composer's 1964 London recording, without didactic narration. The latter was fine for the original sound-film presentation and in recorded versions for school or self-educational use but rapidly becomes superfluous in home listening.)

Both performances are appropriately recorded with comparable forcefulness and vivid presence. But while this disc is likely to appreciate in value as a historical documentation of a world-famous conductor's early career achievements, I must qualify my commendation of it to aficionados of either Prokofiev or Britten in general or of these particular works. For Davis' (undoubtedly temporary) weakness is his present propensity for overintensity, needless emphases, and even a suggestion of arrogance. As a consequence, his *Cinderella* excerpts lack the warmth and balletic grace of the 1967 Rozhdestvensky/Angel complete set (or of the 1962 Ansermet/London disc of mostly the same selections), and his *Young Person's Guide*, electrifying as it is, lacks the more relaxed verve and humor with which the composer himself infuses this showpiece. Of course Davis' faults are characteristically those of an uncommonly gifted youngster, and he is still well worth hearing—and watching out for in the future. R.D.D.

PUCCINI: *Mass in A*. William Johns, tenor; Philippe Huttenlocher, bass; Gulbenkian Foundation Chorus and Orchestra, Lisbon, Michel Corboz, cond. RCA RED SEAL FRL 1-5890, \$6.98. Quadriphonic: FRD 1-5890 (Quadradisc), \$7.98.

Puccini's *Mass*, a youthful work dating from 1880, remained unpublished—though not, as RCA's liner notes claim, unknown—until 1951. Father Dante del Fiorentino, who instigated the work's publication, called it *Messa di Gloria*, though its original title is simply *Mass for Four Voices and Orchestra*—the four voices being tenor, baritone, bass, and mixed chorus. There is no soprano solo.

In the twenty-five years that have followed the work's resuscitation, Puccini's *Mass* has hardly become a familiar repertory piece. The composer himself consigned it to oblivion and ransacked it for subsequent compositions: The opening of the *Kyrie* found its way into *Edgar*, and the charming, dancelike *Agnus Dei* became the madrigal sung at Manon Lescaut's Act II *levée*. Nevertheless, though it is unlikely that the *Mass* will ever make a wide appeal to concertgoers, one can only welcome a new recording of this unpretentious piece and say that, quite apart from its interest to Puccinians, it is at the very least easy to listen to. Hardly any of this music bespeaks religious conviction, but a great deal of it reveals the musical fluency—if not yet the quality, the sheer vigor, the sweep—that marks Puccini's mature operas.

Michel Corboz' performance, a little slack and easygoing, is disarmingly affectionate. Chorus, orchestra, and soloists are capable, I assume that Philippe Huttenlocher, listed as a bass, takes on both the bass and baritone assignments. The Erato recording is resonant. No text is supplied, and no notes on the performers. D.S.H.

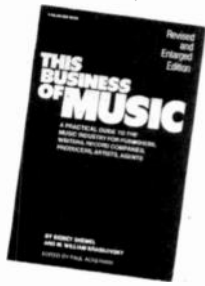
RAVEL: *Orchestral Works*, Albums 1–2. Orchestre de Paris, Jean Martinon, cond. [René Challan, prod.] ANGEL S 37147 and S 37148, \$6.98 each SQ-encoded disc.

Album 1: *Bolero*; *Rapsodie espagnole*; *La Valse*; *Shéhérazade*; *Ouverture de féerie*. Album 2: *Daphnis et Chloé* (complete ballet; with Paris Opera Chorus).

The most novel item in the initial installments of Jean Martinon's new Ravel series is the previously unrecorded *Shéhérazade* Overture, composed in 1898 for an opera Ravel never wrote. As it turns out, the overture, though not without a certain Orient-flavored charm, has more fluff than substance. Its excessive motivic repetitions and whole-tonisms give the impression of Debussy viewed through Dukas-colored binoculars. Furthermore, although the performances of the short works on Album 1 are fully competent, especially in the multi-hued *Bolero*, I had the feeling that conductor and orchestra were not always in perfect sync.

But the *Daphnis et Chloé!* Of all the recordings of the complete ballet made so far, this is certainly the most satisfactory over-all. Martinon shows exceptional sensitivity in delineating the horizontal progression of the work's many episodes, almost sneaking up on its frequent shifts in direction before the listener is aware of them, so that the sense of balletic, as well as musical, flow develops in amazingly subtle waves. In addition, within the vertical structures he creates more depth of instrumental color than any other conductor, including the vertically oriented Pierre Boulez (Columbia M 33523, December 1975).

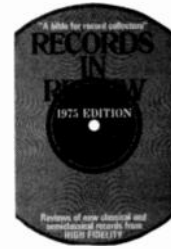
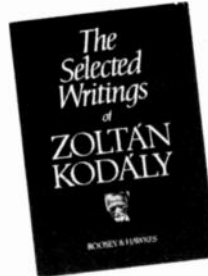
Martinon obviously revels in Ravel's breathtaking tonal spectrum, which leads him to open the ballet in a manner some may find excessive. Yet never before have I heard the glorious instrumental expanse leading the spectator into *Daphnis* shaped with such richness. And throughout, the multiplicity of orchestral nuance enhances all of the ballet's other elements—in particular the harmonies, which take on an uncanny fullness. The whole rendition lacks



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only a more energetic "Bacchanale" and a less sour flute solo toward the end of the "Pantomime" to make it definitive.

The recorded sound has a certain mellowness that characterizes a number of quadriphonic recordings I have heard in stereo. But there is no lack of brilliance and depth here, and, if Angel's sound does not match Columbia's in the hair-raising up-front sonics given Boulez, it does seem perfectly molded around Martinon's conception of the work. And I must say that the mellowness of sound has a particularly good effect on the brass, which Martinon rounds out with special care throughout both of these records. Unfortunately the surfaces of my copies were less than great, and the *Daphnis* was also pressed badly off-center. R.S.B.

SCHOENBERG: *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten; Brettli-Lieder; Early Songs.* For an essay review, see page 73.

SCHUBERT: *Sonata for Piano, in B flat, D. 960.* Gabriel Chodos, piano. [Giveon Cornfield, prod.] ORION ORS 75179 \$6.98.

Chodos' interpretation of the Schubert B flat Sonata, one of the high points of the classical repertory, is planned along heroic lines, with elaborately pointed detail, grandiose tempos, and yet a pervasive directness and simplicity that I find quite touching.

Chodos repeats the first-movement exposition, and I approve wholeheartedly; the dramatic first ending, as I have previously

noted, transforms a dreamy nocturne into a commanding edifice. The second-movement tempo rightly heeds the qualifying "sostenuto" more than the basic "andante"; the requisite flow is always present, but the music takes on a meditative seriousness that carries the listener hypnotically through all the magnificent changes of tonality. The scherzo, like Schnabel's, is moderately paced, yet delicacy is never seriously slighted in this precise, rhythmically reliable reading. The finale, while not overly fast, always moves with impetus.

Chodos' account of the sonata ranks with Curzon's (London CS 6801) and Michèle Boegner's (MHS 1042) as the finest currently available. The piano sound could do with more richness and space around it, and my pressing was noisy. H.G.

SCHUBERT: *Songs.* Elly Ameling, soprano; Dalton Baldwin, piano. PHILIPS 6500 704, \$7.98.

Im Abendrot; Die Sterne; Nacht und Träume; Der liebliche Stern; Rosemunde; Romance; Der Einsame; Schlummerlied; An Sylvie; Das Mädchen; Minnelied; Die Liebe hat gelogen; Du liebst mich nicht; An die Leute; Der Blumenbrief; Die Männer sind méchant; Seligkeit.

This is another excellent recital from what must surely be the finest Lieder partnership today. "An die Leute," with its perfect accord between rippling accompaniment and lighthearted vocal line, is a good example of the rapport between Elly Ameling and Dalton Baldwin—and also of the extraordinary quality each artist achieves: the pianist with his subtlety of rhythm and certainty of touch, the soprano with her delicacy of manner and purity of style.

There is not a song here that they fail to bring to life. For example, "Der Einsame," that marvelously affectionate portrait of self-satisfaction, is as vivid as any version I know. By the time we get back to the cricket in the final stanza we have experienced an entire life-style. And, as always, Ameling never sacrifices the music for dramatic effect. The small but telling emphasis she gives to "bang" (anxious) in the first stanza of "Der liebliche Stern" is enough to mark her as an uncommon artist.

It ought to be mentioned that in the first part of Side 1, Ameling's voice does not sound as tonally pure as it usually does. Whatever the reason, a couple of songs that call for sustained tone, like "Im Abendrot" and "Nacht und Träume," are marked by a tone that is both cloudy and flickering. By the middle of the side all is well, and thereafter there is no impediment to one's pleasure. The last song of all, "Seligkeit," is, in fact, as perfect a Lieder performance as I know.

The recording is a little close. There are texts (not always in agreement with what Ameling sings) and translations (some literal, some for singing). D.S.H.

SCHUBERT: *Songs.* For an essay review, see page 73.

SMETANA: *The Bartered Bride (in German).*
 Marie Teresa Stralatas (s)
 Esmeralda Janet Perry (s)
 Ludmila Margarethe Bence (s)
 Háta Gudrun Wewezow (ms)
 Hans René Kollo (t)
 Wenzel Heinz Zednik (t)



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Bavarian Radio Chorus and Orchestra, Jaroslav Krombholz, cond. [Hans Richard Stracke, Oscar Waldeck, and Theodor Holzinger, prod.] Eurodisc 89 036 XGR, \$23.94 (three SQ-encoded discs, manual sequence; distributed by German News Co., 218 E. 86th St., New York, N.Y. 10028).

Comparison:
Lorenger, Wunderlich, Kempe EMI 1C 153 28922/3

Anyone interested in acquiring an authentic *Bartered Bride* will have to search in specialty shops for one of the Supraphon versions that at various times have circulated in this country—either the 1960 Chala-bala set or, better yet, the 1954 Vogel. The present recording is, of course, inauthentic. Though the difference between *Prodaná Nevěsta* and *Die verkaufte Braut* is largely a matter of vocal coloration and rhythmic stress, there is no doubt in my mind that the original Czech imparts a greater vigor and liveliness to Smetana than can ever be achieved in translation. Nevertheless, even *Die verkaufte Braut* the opera

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made-is made... Berry, who, intelligent artist though he is, sounds out of his element in these rustic caperings, for which he seems to lack the necessary common touch. The remainder of Krombholz's cast, however, is good, espe-

cially the Wenzel of Heinz Zednik. Orchestra and chorus are first-rate.

Heard stereophonically, the quadriphonic recording is extremely rich, though the highs sound constricted and the vocalists are too near the microphone. (Perhaps the latter has to do with the fact that, though made in a regular recording studio, the performance actually constitutes the aural portion of a Munich television production.) An eight-page booklet with photographs of the production and notes on the artists (in German only) is included, but no text. The German text used here is a new translation by Kurt Honolka; though it preserves some of the familiar phrasing of Max Kalbeck's old version, it is otherwise more up to date in diction and should have been printed in the booklet. D.S.H.

SMETANA: *The Bartered Bride*: orchestral excerpts. For a review, see page 77.

STRAUSS, R.: Also sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30. Norman Carol, violin; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. [Jay David Saks, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-1220, \$6.98. Tape: ● ARK 1-1220, \$7.95; ● ARS 1-1220, \$7.95. Quadriphonic: ARD 1-1220 (Quadradisc), \$7.98; ART 1-1220 (Q-8 cartridge), \$7.95.

Comparisons:
Ormandy/Philadelphia
Haitink/Concertgebouw

Col. MS6547
Phil. 6500 624

No historically minded discophile is likely to find any recording that surpasses this one in documenting the changes in audio

technology that have taken place since 1964, when Ormandy and the Philadelphians first recorded *Zarathustra* for Columbia. The earlier version was hailed as something of a sonic landmark in its own day (and indeed it still sounds mightily impressive), but the new one is—even in stereo only—a super-spectacular of the mid-Seventies.

If that's what you want in a *Zarathustra*, fine. If, however, you're more interested in the musical performance than its recording, you'll find no comparable interpretative growth in Ormandy's present reading: It's just as episodic, even more mannered (the violin-solo passages are much more saccharine), and generally more overtly sensationalized than before.

I find no real challenge here to such orthodox, portentously dramatic readings as the recent one by Susskind for Turnabout (QTV-S 34584), much less the transcendently poetic one by Haitink for Philips, which for me continues to reign supreme. Technically, the latter masterpiece also is far closer to what a fine orchestra actually sounds like in a fine hall, but I must concede that that is scarcely as hair-raisingly thrilling as some of the out-of-this-world sonics of this new RCA disc. R.D.D.



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STRAVINSKY: *Concerto for Piano and Winds**; *Ebony Concerto**; *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*; *Octet*. Theo Bruins, piano*; George Pieterse, clarinet*; Netherlands Wind Ensemble, Edo de Waart, cond. PHILIPS 6500 841, \$7.98.

STRAVINSKY: *Octet*; *Pastorale*; *Ragtime*; *Septet*; *Concertino*. Boston Symphony Chamber Players. [Thomas Mowrey, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 551, \$7.98.

Comparison:
Stravinsky

Col. M 30579, MS 7054

Here are two substantial helpings of Stravinsky, primarily from the middle period, including several works not currently available save in the composer's own versions.

First, let me offer almost unreserved praise for the Netherlands Wind Ensemble disc; in intonation, unanimity, balance, and dynamic precision, it pretty consistently surpasses earlier recordings. Chord successions are clearly and logically voiced, textural overlaps and augmentations are seamlessly achieved, and the phrasing never fails of sensitivity and (where apposite) wit. I like the way Theo Bruins's piano chordings match the weight of the wind sonorities, the feathery staccatos that George Pieterse achieves in the *Ebony Concerto*'s last movement, the impulse and verve of all the playing, and the clean, natural recorded sound. I'll still hang on to the Stravinsky versions—they have a certain angular elegance, even at their most unkempt—but this Philips disc now takes pride of place for these four works.

The Boston disc doesn't reach quite the same exalted level but should prove useful nevertheless, for it supplements some of Stravinsky's least satisfactory recordings. Notably among those is the *Pastorale*, in which the Columbia disc offers a limp oboist and a flat violinist. The Columbia *Septet*, which banishes the important piano part to the rank of distant accompaniment,

is also of limited value, and here we have no trouble discerning the work of Gilbert Kalish (who seems to be on just about every record I review these days—a happy circumstance!). *Ragtime* may have more swagger at the composer's hands, but the new one is certainly neater. Honors are more even in the other two pieces, but this is certainly a record for Stravinskians to consider seriously. D.H.

STRAVINSKY: Sonata for Piano, in F sharp minor. **TCHAIKOVSKY:** Sonata for Piano, No. 3, in G, Op. 37. Paul Crossley, piano. PHILIPS 6500 884, \$7.98.

The late Igor Stravinsky believed his early (1903–4) piano sonata to have been lost, but the manuscript was in fact preserved in the Leningrad State Public Library and (along with a 1902 Scherzo for piano) has recently been edited by Eric Walter White and published by Faber Music. Now the earliest Stravinsky work on records (it predates the Symphony in E flat), it is something less than a prefiguration of future genius.

Like the symphony, and in some ways like the Tchaikovsky sonata with which Paul Crossley has ingeniously chosen to couple it, the Stravinsky sonata proceeds with a rather balletic squareness of phrasing, relying on repetitions and sequences to fill out its leisurely approximation of classical procedures. Neither of these sonatas is closely or concisely argued in the Beethovenian sense, or pregnantly, allusively discursive in the manner of the German Romantics, although Stravinsky surely aims higher in terms of emotional weight, and none of his movements is as insubstantial as Tchaikovsky's fluffy Scherzo. Less than a decade from here to *The Rite of Spring*—that's a long way, and this record will let you measure the distance aurally.

Crossley strikes me as an admirable advocate, a clean and straightforward player who doesn't force the music beyond its expressive capabilities. I suspect that the showier bits of the Tchaikovsky could be still more effectively flaunted (perhaps Richter does that, on a Monitor record that I wasn't able to lay hands on in time), but that is no great matter. Philips' sound is gorgeously natural, and the surfaces are impeccable. D.H.

VIVALDI: Juditha triumphans.

Vegaus	Elly Ameling (s)
Juditha	Birgit Finnila (ms)
Holofernes	Julia Hamari (ms)
Abra	Ingeborg Springer (ms)
Ozias	Annelies Burmeister (ms)

Jeffrey Tate, harpsichord; Berlin Radio Soloists' Ensemble; Berlin Chamber Orchestra, Vittorio Negri, cond. PHILIPS 6747 173, \$23.94 (three discs, manual sequence).

Vivaldi, his name a household word today, was a discovery of the twentieth century; we might even say that real appreciation of that eighteenth-century composer is no more than a generation old. At the opening of our century, writers on music began to wonder who this fellow was whose concertos Bach found good enough to transcribe for his own purposes. In 1903, when the German musicologist Arnold Schering published his important history of the in-

strumental concerto, the musical world suddenly became aware of the existence of a major composer hitherto unrecognized; then in 1948 Marc Pincherle's fine study and thematic index of Vivaldi's concertos made it clear that here was a key figure of baroque music.

Yet our picture is still incomplete, because with the exception of Corelli, who never wrote vocal music, most major composers of the Italian high baroque made their reputation with operas and church music, and all we know of Vivaldi are comparatively few of his hundreds of concertos and the *Gloria*. Vivaldi research is still groping, made inordinately difficult by his more than usual baroque self-borrowings, lack of information about his activities before 1705, and the absence of reliable dating of his works. Surely "Op. 1," appearing when he was twenty-seven, could not have been the first work of this incredibly productive composer. The real unknown, however, is the operista, Vivaldi the dramatic composer. We must always remember the great influence opera exerted, from Monteverdi to Wagner, on all branches and genres of music, and Vivaldi was indeed a prolific composer of operas and concerted sacred music; one theater in Venice alone produced eighteen of his operas.

This was an age in which opera, oratorio, and cantata formed one large family of dramatic music. Even Carissimi, who composed oratorios but no opera, is a pure musico-dramatist, and the Italian oratorio, in which the role of the chorus is minimal, can hardly be distinguished from opera. This recording of one of Vivaldi's two Latin oratorios is therefore most welcome as a representative specimen of a totally unfamiliar portion of his oeuvre. Since performance and recording are both excellent, and the conductor is also a musicologist who hews closely to the original manuscript from which the recording was made, we get a good and authentic glimpse of Vivaldi the dramatist.

While Bach had to struggle at the Thomasschule with a largely inadequate musical establishment, Vivaldi, at the Pietà, the great orphanage-conservatory in Venice where he was resident music master for decades (though there were some interruptions), had at his disposal superbly trained instrumentalists and singers. Reliable contemporary observers repeatedly stated that the orphaned-girls' orchestra was superior even to the famous Paris opera orchestra. So Vivaldi could experiment to his heart's content with a veritable laboratory. The consumption of music at the Pietà was enormous, and most of it was furnished by the resident maestro.

As we listen to *Juditha triumphans*, composed in 1716, we soon realize that Vivaldi's style is a union of the two genres that were the epoch-making contribution of Italy to musical history: opera and the concerto. Opera furnished new means of expression to instrumental music, while the concerto endowed opera with orchestral organization, also creating such subspecies as the aria concerto, i.e. arias with an obligatory solo instrument. A glance at Bach's arias in his cantatas and Passions will immediately confirm this. Recent research discloses that it was not only Vivaldi's exciting new genre, the concerto, that fascinated the Ger-

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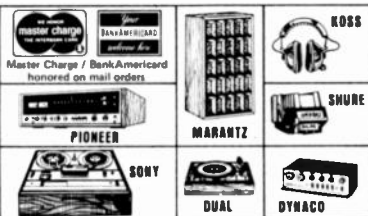
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man cantor, but his vocal music too; even the B minor Mass shows this influence.

Vivaldi was called the "Red Priest," but he was a redhead in more than one sense. His impetuosity (which at times led him to sloppiness and mere sequencing) is vividly present in this oratorio, and without its adverse features. The first aria in moderate tempo is No. 15; then we continue with unabated sprightliness, the violins dancing around the voices at top speed, until No. 27, and the next restrained piece is No. 46; but there is not one real adagio or largo in the entire work.

Vivaldi's coloristic imagination, unprecedented for his time, is present everywhere. In the rousing opening and final scenes, the trumpets and drums create a festive and triumphant clangor; in No. 15 a viola d'amore solo with the accompaniment of low strings conjures up most unusual sounds; other solo-with-strings combinations—clarinet, trumpet, oboe with organ, etc.—are equally original and surprising. One aria is accompanied by four large lutes and harpsichord, still another has a mandolino concertato with pizzicato strings—the variety is endless and the fine extended ritornels offer ever new sonorities.

The arias are of the da capo variety. The writing is idiomatically vocal, though very demanding, as there are many extremely virtuosic coloratura passages—some of Vivaldi's girls must have been young Tetrizinis. We have here a large work filled with prevailingly captivating music, but there are some features that considerably diminish our enjoyment of this splendor of color, good tunes, and rich imagination.

This is an oratorio in which not one male voice is heard. *Juditha* having been composed for the girls of the Pietà, this is understandable, nor was the Italian public of the early eighteenth century disturbed by sopranos and altos in men's roles; there were some opera troupes consisting largely or entirely of women and castratos. Still, to us it is disconcerting to hear Holofernes sing exactly in the same range as Judith. In fact, in our recording, since the two impersonators of these roles are both altos (Julia Hamari is billed as a mezzo, but her voice is dark as the night) and have very similar voices, it is difficult to distinguish them without the libretto before us. The exclusively high tessitura does eventually create aural fatigue. Also, Vivaldi's almost unrelieved propulsive pace, which at first is exhilarating, makes one long for a little variety. It is quite possible that the secco recitatives, which are excellent and full of meaty music, do supply this variety, but if so the harpsichordist effectively cancels it (about which more in a minute).

The performance is very impressive. The sultry-voiced altos, Birgit Finnilä (*Juditha*) and Julia Hamari (*Holofernes*), are both secure and sonorous; Ingeborg Springer (*Abra*), a mezzo, and Annelies Burmeister (*Ozias*), the third alto, are also good, though at times the latter sounds like a countertenor. But the star is Elly Ameling, the lone soprano (*Vagaus*). She has everything: voice, musicality, temperament, and agility. Her delivery of the magnificent and extremely agitated aria, No. 51, is spectacular; the coloratura rolls off effortlessly and the high tones sound like glockenspiel bells.

One must add that the bevy of altos is not a bit fazed by the coloratura either, but all of them have a little difficulty with the trills.

The chorus is first-class, the orchestra crisp and accurate. Conductor Vittorio Negri is entirely at home in the style, matches Vivaldi's fast pace with gusto, and keeps excellent balance between voices and instruments. He deserves an extra compliment for not permitting silly embellishments in the da capos; whatever is done is discreet and in good taste. Unfortunately, he did permit the harpsichordist to get out of hand, the one blot on the performance.

Jeffrey Tate, the harpsichordist, is a solid musician. His "straight" accompaniments in the fast pieces are admirable and unusually well recorded, but whenever there is the slightest opportunity he concertizes. In the secco recitatives he plays his instrument like a harp, arpeggiating through the whole length of the keyboard. There is never a respite, and even the final cadences are made into productions. Tate actually converts the "dry" recitative into an inundated one. Imaginative continuo playing was part and parcel of the baroque style, but all theorists caution the accompanist never to interfere with the composer; here the torrent of additional music completely changes the character of these carefully composed recitatives, palpably preventing the singers from singing freely and expressively. Too bad, because otherwise this is a distinguished recording and the sound is remarkably and consistently good. P.H.L.

Recitals and Miscellany

SHURA CHERKASSKY: Kaleidoscope. Shura Cherkassky, piano. [Peter Wadland, prod.] OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 7, \$6.98.

ALBONIZ: Tango, Op. 165, No. 2. * CHAMINADE: Autretfois, Op. 87. GLAZUNOV: Waltz in D, Op. 42, No. 3. GODOWSKY: Alt Wien; Waltz. HOPMANN: Kaleidoskop, Op. 40, No. 4. MOZKOWSKI: Caprice espagnol, Op. 37. RAMBAU: Tambourin. * RUBINSTEIN: Melody in F, Op. 3, No. 1. SAINT-SAËNS: The Swan. * SCHUBERT: Moment musical, in F minor, D. 780, No. 3. * J. STRAUSS: Wein, Weib, und Gesang. * TCHAIKOVSKY: Nocturne in C sharp minor, Op. 19, No. 4. [* arr. Godowsky.]

In a printed interview that accompanies this recital, Shura Cherkassky reaffirms his image as a lovable eccentric but also sheds light on the playing to be heard: "Beauty of sound," he sadly exclaims, "simply doesn't concern most pianists!" And in the realm of tonal beauty, few pianists could hope to challenge him. His playing here, gorgeously recorded, has a truly seductive quality that commands, and holds, respectful attention.

The album title "Cherkassky Kaleidoscope" obviously derives from the Josef Hofmann piece, but Chaminade's *Autretfois* provides even more insight into both playing and repertoire. While many pianists have of late espoused a "Romantic revival," Cherkassky is one of the very few capable of dealing meaningfully and flexibly with

the redundant, often decadently embellished, passagework indigenous to this literature. Like Moriz Rosenthal's disciple Robert Goldsand, he doesn't merely play the notes in literal—or quasi—"expressive"—manner, he invests the idiom with craftsmanship, coloristic inner-voice detail, and a vocally derived ebb and flow. In his hands, this old-fashioned collection of tidbits makes a compelling, if ephemeral, case for itself.

Hofmann's own performance of *Kaleidoskop* can be heard in the International Piano Archives' issue of his April 1938 Casimir Hall recital (IPA 5007/8, reviewed this month). Cherkassky's account is admirably fleet and, of course, incomparably better reproduced, but it lacks his onetime mentor's robust flair and forward drive. In the Schubert-Godowsky F minor *Moment musical*, also contained in that Hofmann album, the comparison is all to Cherkassky's advantage: His phrasing is more continent, less pulled-about than Hofmann's, and he minimizes those gaudy inner voices and vulgar counterpoints.

Elsewhere too one notes that Cherkassky's phrasing is as tasteful and symmetrical as it is freewheeling. His finely spun legato and prismatic (kaleidoscopic?) nuance rarely degenerate into the simpering self-indulgence all too often encountered in "idiomatic" performances of this repertory. Rubinstein's *Melody* is for once a melody, and not a gob of goo; the Tchaikovsky C sharp minor *Nocturne*—almost too aristocratic a work for such a collection—has real breeding in this sophisticated, poetic reading. Cherkassky deals admirably with the repeated notes of the Moszkowski *Caprice espagnol* and gives the Strauss-Godowsky *Wine, Women, and Song* its spare, intellectualized due. (How different Godowsky's arrangement is, in its caustic, modernistic style, from the typical turn-of-the-century Strauss-waltz arrangements of Tausig and Schulz-Evler.) In fact, some enthusiasts might find these accounts of the Saint-Saëns-Godowsky "Swan" and the Albéniz-Godowsky *Tango* too reserved and straitlaced.

This is not a record for constant replaying, but in moderate dosage it can give real pleasure. If one must do these things, this is the way to do them. H.G.

NICOLAI GHIAUROV: *The Volga Boatmen and Other Russian Favorites*. Nicolai Ghiaurov, bass; Kaval Balalaika Orchestra and Chorus, Atanas Margaritov, cond. [James Mallinson, prod.] LONDON CS 26398, \$6.98. *The Cliff*; *Song of the Volga Boatmen*; *The Little Oak Cudgel*; *Bandura*; *Styen'ka Razin*; *Along Petersburg Street*; *In the Dark Forest*; *Dark Eyes*; *Dear Little Night*; *The Twelve Brigands*; *Farewell, Joy*.

As this recital shows, Russian folksongs, still too little known in the West, are capable of expressing a wide range of emotions and moods: passion ("Dark Eyes"), melancholy ("Dear Little Night"), solemnity ("The Twelve Brigands"), jollity ("Along Petersburg Street"). Some of them, especially those that incline toward sadness, are deeply affecting, like "Farewell, Joy" or, for that matter, the familiar "Song of the Volga Boatmen."

As the latter song reminds one, in this field any bass is bound to invite comparison

with Chaliapin, though in point of fact Chaliapin recorded only a few of the titles heard here. But where a direct comparison can be made, one finds that Ghiaurov has avoided imitation. In "Styen'ka Razin" and in "The Little Oak Cudgel" (or "Dubinushka," as it is more familiarly known), Chaliapin is incomparably more vivid and dramatic, indulging in all of his famous vocal specialities, like the use of *parlando* and of protracted *pianissimos* such as the one that concludes his version of "Styen'ka Razin." Ghiaurov is much more restrained, more lyrical, more smooth. His approach strikes me as no less valid than his predecessor's. Certainly, the effect he produces in a song like "The Twelve Brigands," which deals with the conversion to Christianity of a cruel Cossack, is both beautiful and powerful.

Here and elsewhere the Kaval Chorus gives fine support, especially in the bass line, where, as one might expect, it is particularly strong. It also sounds very good in the one item for chorus alone, "In the Dark Forest." The balalaika playing is colorful. (Chaliapin had to make do with piano in his "Styen'ka Razin," and the result is much less effective.) The recording, made in the Sofiensaal, Vienna, is deep and rich. Translations of the Russian texts and translations are enclosed. D.S.H.

 **JOSEF HOFMANN:** Casimir Hall Recital. Josef Hofmann, piano. INTER-

NATIONAL PIANO ARCHIVES IPS 5007/8, \$15 (two discs, mono) [recorded in concert, April 7, 1938] (International Piano Archives, 331 W. 71st St., New York, N.Y. 10023).

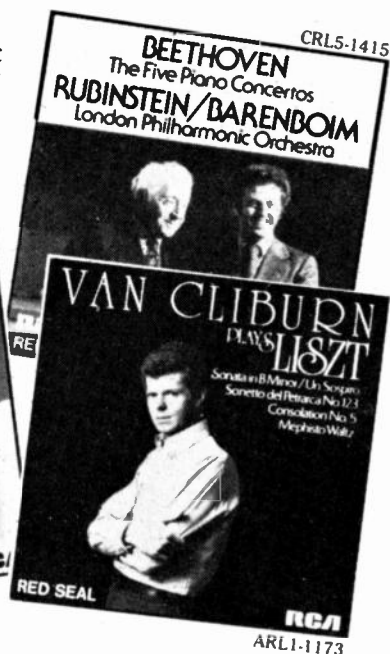
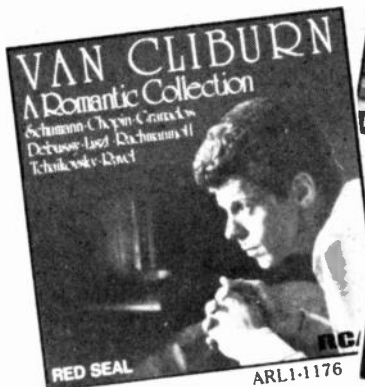
BEETHOVEN: Sonata No. 21, in C, Op. 53 (*Waldstein*). **SCHUMANN:** Kreisleriana, Op. 16 (abridged). **CHOPIN:** Ballade No. 4, in F minor, Op. 52. *Nocturne in B*, Op. 9, No. 3. *Polonaise in E flat minor*, Op. 26, No. 2. *Waltzes: in E flat*, Op. 18; in D flat, Op. 64, No. 1 (arr. Hofmann). **HOFMANN:** *Kaleidoskop*, Op. 40, No. 1; *Penguins*. **SCHUBERT-GODOWSKY:** *Moment musical in F minor*, D. 780, No. 3. **STOJOWSKI:** *Caprice oriental*, Op. 10, No. 2.

This year is Josef Hofmann's centenary, and his pitifully few commercial recordings (even though he died as late as 1957) make impossible any tribute like the five-album series RCA issued for Rachmaninoff in 1973.

Hofmann's recorded legacy has been substantially augmented by the International Piano Archives (formerly Library), by way of live recitals and broadcasts. IPA president Gregor Benko (who also helped prepare RCA's Rachmaninoff series) was instrumental in getting RCA to issue its unpublished 1935 Hofmann sides (on Victrola VIC 1550, filled out with recital material from the IPL's collection). IPA itself has issued Hofmann performances of both Chopin concertos (the F minor on IPA 501, the E minor on IPA 502; both with Barbirolli and the New York Philharmonic); a coupling of the Beethoven G major (with Ormandy and the Philadelphia) and the Rubinstein Fourth Concerto (with Karl Kruger and the Detroit Symphony) on IPA 503; the 1923 Brunswick acoustical recordings (IPA 103);

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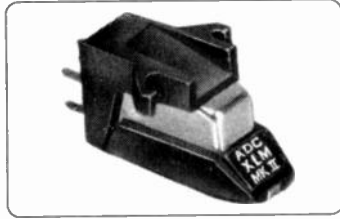
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the complete Metropolitan Opera House Golden Jubilee recital of 1938 (IPA 5001/2; part of this was once issued on Columbia); and, perhaps most important, a series of splendid-sounding electricals made, but never issued, by HMV in 1935 (IPA 110, coupled with the earliest Hofmann recordings, made for G&T in 1904).

This latest album preserves Hofmann's last recital in his tenure (1927-38) as director of the Curtis Institute of Music. (Casimir Hall, now known as Curtis Hall, was named for Hofmann's father.) The IPA has issued the concert in cooperation with Curtis to celebrate the school's fiftieth anniversary. The discs are handsomely presented, with an informative brochure documenting its early years and offering some interesting photographs, including a delightful one of Hofmann and Stokowski at a costume party. Ezra Rachlin's elaborate appreciation of Hofmann's *Waldstein Sonata*, though, is a highly inaccurate treasure map: There is no "chromatic progression" to point up in bars 154-55 of the first movement; as for the "plunge downward" cited at bar 304 of the first movement and the "questioning and answering voices" at bar 29 of the Adagio, those movements end at, respectively, bars 302 and 28!

Hofmann's pianism has become something of a legend in the years since his retirement, and he was indeed a great instrumentalist. His fluency was limitless, his digital independence virtually complete; he could apparently play anything at any tempo. His facility allowed him to bring any voice to the fore at will, and his astonishing rhythmic equilibrium enabled him to introduce all sorts of off-beat accents without disturbing the downbeats and basic pulse. He commanded an unusually wide dynamic range and is reputed to have been an extraordinary colorist. (The latter is substantiated only by the well-reproduced HMV recordings; his tone in the Curtis recordings is rather hard and percussive, presumably because of the subpar on-location recording.) His legato playing was of silken smoothness. He was also a great showman: He had the assurance, unpredictable personality, and sense of timing to startle an audience and hold its attention. He was apparently fond of improvising his interpretations; as many of his live-performance recordings show, it was a Hofmann credo never to play a phrase the same way twice.

The case for Hofmann as a great interpreter, however, seems dubious. He had many arresting ideas about the pieces he performed, but more often than not his performances reflected the detached thinking of an inventor concerned with his gadgets and cleverness rather than the profound and heartfelt wisdom of a musician eager to penetrate to a composition's essence. The individualistic conceptions of Rachmaninoff could sound outrageously wrong-headed, but they nevertheless seemed to grow out of an intense and reasoned line of thought. Hofmann didn't so much read between the lines of a work as obliterate them. All too often his departures from the printed text assume an aspect of freakishness—garish voicing, oversized dynamics, ruptured phrasing, a cold and languishing

sentimentality best suited to cocktail music. I doubt whether even Hofmann's staunch devotees would contend that he was a greater musician than Beethoven, Schumann, and Chopin.

"Anarchistic" would best describe Hofmann's *Waldstein*. The *pp* marking at bar 14 et seq. is rattled off as an assertive *f*; the left-hand arpeggios ten measures later ruthlessly obliterate the right hand. There is a huge, tasteless ritard at the broken octaves of measure 31 et seq., and the choralelike second theme is pulled like taffy (but stomped out in the repetition). The chromatic ascent at measures 152-53 is revealed with unusual clarity, but while making that point Hofmann destroys the more important buildup of tension in the development. The slow movement (*Molto adagio*) becomes a flippant *allegretto*, and the concluding rondo (*Allegretto moderato*) is transformed into a Weberian *moto perpetuo*, full of glint and glitter and little substance. Hofmann eschews the explicit pedal indications and breaks up long harmonic blocks into mincing little fragments; he also subjects the movement to all sorts of violent tempo changes and gear shifts. Ironically, the series of *sforzando* markings beginning at bar 260, which one would have thought perfectly suited to Hofmann's assertive style, is blandly ignored.

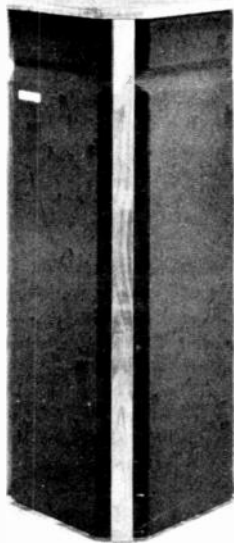
There are, to be sure, incredible felicities in the execution itself—the precision of the filigree in the second statement of the rondo theme; the pearly, even trills of the coda. But the interpretation is so disdainful of Beethoven's directions as to be completely invalid.

Schumann's *Kreisleriana* is a Romantic piece *par excellence*, and one is always interested in hearing how one of the authentic Romantic master pianists dealt with it. The opening flourish is galvanically played, but before long the voicing gets out of bounds (never out of hand—the execution is simply breathtaking). The introspective second section is manipulated vacuously, suggesting a dapper suit turned inside out. The penultimate piece, though, gets an impressive reading of tremendous accuracy and attack, and I like the rhythmic spring and charm of the whimsical last section. (Nos. 3 and 4 are omitted entirely, and the second intermezzo of No. 2 is cut.)

The Chopin E flat minor Polonaise starts out brilliantly. Hofmann hesitates a bit on the repeated chords and captures a brooding atmosphere that suits the outer section to perfection. Alas, midway through the piece he apparently lost concentration and began indulging in monkeyshines—e.g., the huge, startling hammered-out pedal point in the trio. The B major Nocturne is fidgety in its insensitive fast tempo and treacly rubato, while the E flat Waltz, bracing in its exuberant rhythm, is knocked senseless with battering accents that tease and startle the unsuspecting listener.

The F minor Ballade is particularly interesting for a tiny memory slip that reveals Hofmann's inattentiveness to one of the work's most important aspects: In this sublime work, Chopin begins his inward-turning chromatic theme simply and successively embellishes it on each repetition, erupting at the end in a violent coda; Hof-

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mann absentmindedly embellishes the theme on its first appearance!

The final side is devoted to the encores. Hofmann's own pyrotechnical arrangement of the Minute Waltz was obviously inspired by Moriz Rosenthal's, and it comes off as distinctly second-best. Godowsky's vandalization (there is no other word for it, really) of the popular Schubert F minor Moment musical is made even more offensive by Hofmann's self-indulgent phrasing; Shura Cherkassky's far more tasteful performance on his new Oiseau-Lyre recital (reviewed this month) makes the disarrangement far more palatable. The remaining pieces—two of Hofmann's own and Stojowski's Caprice oriental—are mostly about gorgeous pianism; as such they are ideally suited to what Hofmann draws from them.

Many who heard Hofmann contend that his performances of the masters were beyond reproach. Both Harold C. Schonberg and B. H. Haggin, for example, wrote glowingly of his performance of the Beethoven Op. 111 Sonata. But Haggin contends that Hofmann's musical conscience (though not his technical facility) eventually deteriorated through boredom and repetition. That hypothesis is lent credence by comparison of the beautiful 1935 HMV recording of the Chopin F sharp Nocturne with the speeded-up, toyed-with account in the Academy of Music recital three years later. Regrettably, the "bad" records far outnumber the "good" ones. The Casimir Hall recital preserves the work of a man who still played the piano supremely well but had apparently ceased to care about anything that I could identify as artistry or musicianship.

H.G.

HERBERT VON KARAJAN: Prussian and Austrian Marches. Wind Ensemble of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. [Hans Hirsch and Hans Weber, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2721 077. \$15.96 (two discs).

Herr Musikdirektor Karajan evidently believes that military marches deserve better performances than they are ever given by army bands. Five years ago he made a small effort to prove the point with a batch of Beethoven essays in this genre (DG 139 045, with Wellington's Victory), played by Berlin Philharmonic wind and percussion players. Now he leads the same ensemble in a panoramic survey of Prussian and Austrian march repertoires from the time of the Thirty Years War onward, discreetly stopping well short of anything particularly associated with World War II.

Some of the composers' names and even some of their marches will be familiar to American listeners: Beethoven, Frederick the Great (attrib.), Fučík, M. Haydn (attrib.), Komzák, Piefke, J. Strauss II, Teike, and J. F. Wagner. Others are of mainly Central European renown: Ertl, Henrion, Lindemann, Von Moltke, Mühlengerger, Preis, Radek, Schwammel, Seifert, Sonntag, and Wagnes. But even the best-known names and music aren't necessarily the most interesting or martially effective. In any case, even the unaccustomedly skillful perform-

ances (in "concert" rather than strict parade style) and powerfully vivid, if a bit harsh, recordings aren't likely to make so long and specialized a program consistently enjoyable to listeners who are neither music historians nor band-music specialists (or of course veterans of the German or Austrian armed forces). Any of these, however, will relish not only the sonic contents of this handsome album, but also its trilingual annotations (by Johann Schade) and some thirty magnificent color illustrations that have been drawn from old prints.

R.D.D.

MADY MESPLÉ: Coloratura Arias. Mady Mesplé, soprano; Paris Opera Orchestra, Gianfranco Masini, cond. [René Challan, prod.] ANGEL S 37095, \$6.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

BELLM: I Capuletti ed i Montecchi: Eccomi in lieta vesta ... Oh! quante volte. La Sonnambula: Ah! se una volta sola ... Ah! non credea mirarti ... Ah! non giunge. **DOMIZETTI:** Lucia di Lammermoor: Il dolce suono ... Ardon gl'incensi. **ROSSINI:** Il Barbiere di Siviglia: Una voce poco fa. La Gazza ladra: Di piacer mi balza il cor. **VERDI:** Rigoletto: Gualtier Maldé ... Caro nome.

In her native France, Mady Mesplé has made an enviable reputation through her dedication to contemporary music and to the work of composers like Erik Satie. When it comes to the standard operatic repertoire she is, naturally enough, much less renowned. Intelligence and sensitivity can go only so far to compensate for a lack of vocal amplitude, stamina, and sensuousness—as anyone who heard Mesplé as Gilda at the Met can testify.

On this recital she is at a serious disadvantage. Her bright shallow tone, with its lack of variety and substance, can hardly begin to do justice to music that, above all, requires expressive vocal coloration. In light of the title conferred upon this recital, one can only say that it's high time we revised our ideas about coloratura arias. Though the Lucia mad scene requires great vocal flexibility, this music, like Giulietta's lament from *I Capuletti* and Amina's plaintive air from *Sonnambula*, depends on its power to move, not to astonish. The fioritura in *Lucia* is not abstract decoration, but the means whereby the heroine communes with herself. "Caro nome" too is a dreamy recollection of love, not an excuse for a final burst of agility. Though Mesplé handles the florid passages with great skill and can ascend with ease to F in *altissimo*, she simply doesn't have the right kind of voice for psychological revelations, and without these most of the music here is subverted. All she is able to do is skim over the surface.

Gianfranco Masini conducts in a style only too familiar: He plods along listlessly, so that the long *Sonnambula* excerpt, for example, seems endless. Because of a cut after "Ah! non credea," there is an awkward join, both psychological and musical, between this and the joyful cabaletta, "Ah! non giunge." The Lucia has been bereft of supporting chorus and soloists. "Caro nome" lacks the final reprise with its magical, long-held trill.

The recording sounds very bright. There is some pre-echo. Texts and translations.

D.S.H.

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Capital Records

The Band—a hit that goes damned far.

*** THE BAND: Northern Lights—Southern Cross.** Richard Manuel, vocals and keyboards; Rick Danko, vocals and bass; Levon Helm, vocals and drums; Robbie Robertson, guitar; Garth Hudson, keyboards; Byron Berline, fiddle. *Forbidden Fruit*; *Hobo Jungle*; *Ophelia*; *Acadian Driftwood*; *Ring Your Bell*; *It Makes No Difference*; *Jupiter Hollow*; *Rags and Bones*. CAPITOL ST 11440, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 4XT 11440, \$7.98; ● 8XT 11440, \$7.98.

This recording is easily the Band's best since "Music from Big Pink" was issued in 1968. And since the latter may be considered one of the top ten LPs ever made by a rock group, the arrival of "Northern Lights—Southern Cross" is an important event indeed.

During the years that have passed since "Big Pink" skyrocketed Bob Dylan's former backup band to national prominence, the Band has honed and polished its techniques. Its peculiar brand of country rock has become more distinctive and refined, novelty having been replaced by majesty. Robbie Robertson's song-writing has likewise improved. He composed the music and lyrics for all eight tunes on this album, and he did a fine job.

Best of all is "Acadian Driftwood," a folktale about a French-Canadian family driven from its home and resettled in Louisiana, this historical vignette is poignant and deeply moving, yet without melodrama. Another song that ranks high is "Rags and Bones," a cityscape as seen through the eyes of a ragpicker. "Forbidden Fruit" is an up-tempo and very pleasing sermon on the subject of being satisfied with

one's lot, and "It Makes No Difference" is as fine a love song as I have heard in some time. "Jupiter Hollow" is a dreamlike series of impressions set off in the composer's mind, apparently, by a glimpse of the northern lights. "Ring Your Bell" is an upbeat tune about an outlaw on the run, and "Ophelia" is a similarly up-tempo chronicle of lost love. Finally, there is "Hobo Jungle," a downbeat, somewhat distressing account of a world where "nobody knows where they're going, but, at the same time, nobody's lost."

Throughout the LP, one encounters excellent musicianship, especially by Robertson on guitar and by the two keyboard players: Richard Manuel, who concentrates on piano and clavichord, and Garth Hudson, who favors organ and synthesizer. In all, "Northern Lights—Southern Cross" is a work of subtle magnificence that grows on the listener with each hearing. Like Babe Ruth, rock music strikes out a lot—but when it connects, the hit goes damned far.

M.J.

*** TOM SCOTT: New York Connection.** Tom Scott, reeds, synthesizer, arrangements, and most songs; Ralph MacDonald, percussion; Hugh McCracken and Eric Gale, guitars; Gary King, bass; Steve Gado, drums; Richard Tee and Bob James, keyboards. *Dirty Old Man*; *Midtown Rush*; *Uptown and Country*; six more. [Tom Scott and Hank Cicalo, prod.] ODE SP 77033, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 77033, \$7.98; ● 8T 77033, \$7.98.

From the sound of it, this is a rare project

where everything went right. Tom Scott is often billed in the trades and tabloids as the boy wonder of the record business. I remember him as young, but I never remember him as a boy. He operated with the grownups almost from the beginning. At twenty-six, he has surpassed nearly everyone who does what he does, which is play all reeds, write, and orchestrate.

Scott worked for several years with a rhythm section called the L.A. Express, all of whose members toured extensively with Joni Mitchell, with Scott doing a great deal of the arranging. He decided to go to New York and record with the cream of that city's musicians (names listed above). The result is one of the fullest and most alive albums I've heard in years. Perhaps the reason is that everyone involved was asked to do the thing he does best and then allowed to do so.

After the basic tracks were recorded in New York, he and coproducer/engineer Hank Cicalo brought the tapes home to L.A., where he interwove an amazing array of colors—flutes, saxes, Lyricon, and other synthesizers. Scott did for himself what he has been doing for other people's albums

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for years: He sweetened, deepened, accentuated.

Among the highlights are Scott's tune, "Dirty Old Man"; "Uptown and Country," with slide guitar, harmonica, and other antics by Hugh McCracken; "Time and Love," by Ralph MacDonald and Bill Salter; "You're Gonna Need Me," by pianist Richard Tee, who plays it with amazing grace along with guitarist Eric Gale on bass and a smoking L.A. brass section.

Scott's last LP for Ode, "Tomcat," was a hit. Square that and you have the beginnings of this. Whether it will hit, only God and Tiny Tim know for sure, but this is one album about which it can be fairly said that the music is its own satisfaction. Applause to Scott, Cicalo, and the family. M.A.

*** SUPERTRAMP: Crisis? What Crisis?** Roger Hodgson, vocals, guitars, and keyboards; Bob C. Benberg, drums and percussion; Dougie Thomson, bass; John Anthony Helliwell, wind instruments and vocals; Richard Davies, vocals and keyboards. *Easy Does It; Sister Moonshine; Ain't Nobody but Me*; seven more. [Ken Scott and Supertramp, prod.] A&M SP 4560, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 4560, \$7.98; ●● 8T 4560, \$7.98.

"Crime of the Century," last year's Supertramp debut LP, brought to these shores the music of an English group with a top artistic and commercial reputation. That disc proved an intriguing but uneven demonstration of the band's ability to bring to life the mundane experiences and far more vivid fantasies of a group of prototypical English youths. However, along with an American tour last winter, it won the rock quintet a goodly number of devoted fans.

"Crisis? What Crisis?," the follow-up LP, will solidify Supertramp's reputation. It is a totally entrancing recording that puts on display dazzling virtuosity accompanied by honest musicianship. All of the numbers are composed by group members Roger Hodgson and Richard Davies, but each is written in a different style. Folk rock rubs shoulders with electric rock blues, and ballads exist side by side with rock anthems. With provocative lyrics and a gift for melody, Supertramp has been able to create a disc to be enjoyed as well as analyzed. The mind reels—and in this case it's a sensation that one will find thoroughly delightful.

H.E.

*** DIONNE WARWICKE: Track of the Cat.** Dionne Warwick, vocals; rhythm, strings, horns, and vocal accompaniment arranged by Thom Bell. *His House and Me; Jealousy; Once You Hit the Road*; five more. [Thom Bell, prod.] WARNER BROS. BS 2893, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M5P 2893, \$7.97; ●● M8P 2893, \$7.97.

I listen to this album, and I hear irony. Dionne Warwick, as we all know, became famous alongside Burt Bacharach and Hal David, functioning brilliantly as their demo singer. She did other things well, but her real impact was her purity with their songs.

Time passed. The charming tightness of the Bacharach/David style lost favor. Indeed, what major force in pop music ever



Dionne Warwick
Flourishing under strong leadership.

dated faster? Warwick too lost momentum. There followed a long searching period for her, testing new material and attitudes. Every hustling producer in the business was sure he could make her hit again, but none did.

Meanwhile back in Philadelphia, Thom Bell, a man of low profile and high output, was producing an endless string of hits for groups such as the Spinners and the Stylistics. (His excellent song-writing partner is Linda Creed.) Nobody understands the record medium or pop-r&b-crossover song-writing any better than Bell. Many of his songs bear a resemblance to Bacharach-David material. It is as if he caught the essence—the catchiness—but loosened the rigid time concepts. There is no dancing to Bacharach, and record buyers like to dance. Thus the irony—that this longtime distin-

guished representative of the best of black pop music should be the man to extend a familiar but limited white style. I rush to add that this view comes from a reviewer's eye; Thom Bell is a leader, not a follower, and there is no one like him in our business.

Warwicke's first outing (and hit) with Bell was "Then Came Love," in which she shared the stage with the Spinners, whose lead singer deferred to her with the utmost graciousness. The Spinners don't need help in making their long string of Bell-inspired hits. Here at last is Warwicke's own album with Bell at the helm. "Track of the Cat" is as well planned and executed as all of his others. Warwicke flourishes under strong leadership, singing with precision and conviction. Several tracks are receiving air play, and all are good.

The recording is a prize example of what it is, and that says a great deal for all involved. M.A.

*** PAUL WILLIAMS: Ordinary Fool.** Paul Williams, vocals; keyboards, horns, strings, and rhythm accompaniment. *Flash; Lifeboat; Lone Star*; seven more. [Paul Williams, prod.] A&M SP 4550, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 4550, \$7.98; ●● 8T 4550, \$7.98.

During the past few years, this elfin, whimsical, and extremely talented composer/performer has succeeded in creating a slew of hit tunes, while also developing for himself a substantial following as a recording and concert artist, film composer, TV personality, and actor. "Ordinary Fool," Paul Williams' latest recorded outing, will not only please those fans, but inevitably win him more.

The disc contains nine compositions, including "Lonely Hearts," the theme from *Day of the Locust*; "Old Souls" from *Phantom of the Paradise*; and "Ordinary Fool," which will be heard in the forthcoming *Bugsy Malone*. Six of the songs were written by Williams alone, three with partners. Each is a carefully produced and well-sung

Critics' Choice

The best pop records reviewed in recent months

- AMERICA:** History. WARNER BROS. BS 2894. Feb.
BILL BLACK'S COMBO FEATURING BOB TUCKER: The World's Greatest Honky-Tonk Band. HI/LONDON SHL 32093. Jan.
CLAUDE BOLLING: Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano. COLUMBIA M 33233. Dec.
BLOSSOM DEARIE 1975. DAFFODIL BMD 102. Jan.
STÉPHANE GRAPPELLI. PYE 12115. Jan.
STEVE KUHN: Trance. ECM 1052. Feb.
BARRY MANILOW: Tryin' to Get the Feeling. ARISTA AL 4060. Feb.
FREDA PAYNE: Out of Payne Comes Love. ABC ABCD 901. Feb.
MIKLÓS RÓZSA CONDUCTS HIS GREAT FILM MUSIC. POLYDOR SUPER 2383 327. Jan.
TINA TURNER: Acid Queen. UNITED ARTISTS LA 495G. Dec.
FATS WALLER: The Complete Fats Waller: Vol. 1, 1934-35. RCA BLUEBIRD AXM 2-5511. Feb.
TIM WEISBERG: Listen to the City. A&M SP 4545. Dec.

specimen of the art of commercial song-writing. "Flash," as basic as basic can be, is an irresistible rhythmic excursion; it could easily climb to the top of the pop charts.

Ordinary? A fool? Paul Williams is neither. What is he, then? The best answer I can come up with is: a gold mine. H.E.

THE CHIEFTAINS: The Chieftains 5. Paddy Moloney, uilleann pipes and tin whistle; Sean Potts, tin whistle; Michael Tubridy, flute, concertina, and tin whistle; Sean Keane and Martin Fay, fiddles; Derek Bell, harp, oboe, and timpan; Peadar Mercier, bodhran and bones; Ronnie McShane, bones. *The Timpan Reel; Give Me Your Hand; Three Kerry Polkas; Breton Music; The Chieftains' Knock on the Door; The Robbers' Glen; The Goose and Bright Love; The Humours of Carolan; Summertime, Summertime; Kerry Slides.* [Paddy Moloney, prod.] ISLAND ILPS 9334, \$6.98.

When the average American thinks of Irish music, he most likely thinks of the Clancy Brothers. The Chieftains, however, are recognized in Ireland as being among the finest purveyors of traditional Irish music.

The group, made up primarily of former workers in the Dublin post office, has been at it for better than a decade but only now is coming to attention in the U.S. "The Chieftains 5" (fifth LP, that is: there are seven men in the band) is a masterpiece of Celtic gaiety. The Chieftains play such instruments as the bodhran (a drum made by stretching goatskin over a round frame, rubbing it with dung, and curing it in the sun) and the traditional uilleann pipes, the Irish version of bagpipes. The songs are newly composed, by piper Paddy Moloney, but of traditional form and intent.

As with all folk music from the British Isles, there is that charming and undeniable harking back to the medieval and baroque, especially as played on fiddle and pipes. "The Robbers' Glen" is evocative of the times when nomadic Gaelic tribes were, according to the liner notes, "so incomprehensible to the orderly English" they were considered robbers. And "Summertime, Summertime" changes color and texture marvelously as it depicts the changing of seasons from spring through fall. This is instrumental music seriously played but containing all the humor and good feeling of the Irish. M.]

*** CAYENNE.** Ajay Avery, vocals, drums, and percussion; John Dupree, bass; Clair Louis Hinton, vocals, guitars, banjo, harmonica, and percussion; John Salz, vocals, guitars, piano, and percussion. *Make Your Move; Just What You Do; Timbuktu;* seven more. [Rick Stanley and Cayenne, prod.] BUCKSNORT BR 01, \$6.98.

Cayenne is the house band at Rainbow Cattle Company, a San Francisco gay bar whose patrons usually dress as cowboys. These customers will find the group's appeal appropriately matched by its music: folk rock that is spirited, melodic, and rhythmic. Indeed, all the ingredients on this disc blend together to produce a listening experience that is a delight.

I don't know what Cayenne plans to do with its career, but this disc—properly dis-



The Chieftains—among the finest purveyors of traditional Irish music.

Island Records

tributed and publicized—could and should earn a fair degree of national attention. H.E.

RITA COOLIDGE: It's Only Love. Rita Coolidge, vocals; rhythm, orchestral, and vocal accompaniment. *Born to Love Me; I Wanted It All; Am I Blue;* seven more. [David Anderle, prod.] A&M SP 4531, \$6.98. Tape: ♣ CS 4531, \$7.98; ♣ 8T 4531, \$7.98.

Rita Coolidge is one of those interesting people who have had an extensive recording career and no hits. It's not supposed to go that way, but sometimes it does.

I first heard of her when she toured as a member of Joe Cocker's Mad Dogs and Englishmen entourage. She was a great backup singer. Soon she went on her own for A&M. Later she married Kris Kristofferson and quietly receded into the background of his performing career. She sounds very much the same now as she always has: a lovely lady with a dependable, lovely voice, simple and true to her material.

This album is really a combination of two projects, both of which work well enough. Most of the tracks are in the straight pop formula, but two are from the past, "Mean to Me" and "Am I Blue," accompanied in fine fettle by Barbara Carroll, Chuck Domanico (he sounds particularly wonderful when he plays in this style), and Colin Bailey. Coolidge sounds exactly the same on all tunes, regardless of roots—pure and spaced out.

The more I write the more I can't find anything wrong. What I can't do the most is care. M.A.

HAROLD MELVIN AND THE BLUE NOTES: Wake Up Everybody. Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes, vocals; orchestral accompaniment. *Wake Up Everybody; Keep On Lovin'; You Know How to Make Me Feel So Good;* four more. [Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff, prod.] PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL PZ 33808, \$6.98. Tape: ♣ PZT 33808, \$7.98; ♣ PZA 33808, \$7.98.

MFSB: Philadelphia Freedom. MFSB, all in-

strumentals. *Zach's Fanfare #2; Get Down with the Philly Sound; Philadelphia Freedom;* eight more. [Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff, prod.] PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL PZ 33845, \$6.98. Tape: ♣ PZT 33845, \$7.98; ♣ PZA 33845, \$7.98.

THE O'JAYS: Family Reunion. The O'Jays, vocals; instrumental accompaniment. *Unity; Family Reunion; You and Me;* four more. [Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff, prod.] PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL PZ 33807, \$6.98. Tape: ♣ PZT 33807, \$7.98; ♣ PZA 33807, \$7.98.

Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes, MFSB, and the O'Jays are all prime examples of the ascendancy of the "Philadelphia sound" as the nation's most popular rhythm-and-blues music. Created by producers Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff, this sound is creamy soul music, polished yet full of sprightly rhythms, equally satisfying as either listening or dancing music. However, these three discs—all successful, though uneven in quality—demonstrate that too much of the Philly sound can be wearisome.

"Wake Up Everybody" delivers an utterly compelling title track; Harold Melvin, one of the most persuasive r&b singers around, pours gallons of feeling into the inspirational lyric. The instrumental group MFSB, in its "Philadelphia Freedom" LP, produces a lively dance hit in "The Zip." The O'Jays trio has a big, big hit: "I Love Music," another up-tempo exhortation. But then the recordings disintegrate into dreariness, and one is left with endless repetitions of the Gamble-Huff formula. H.E.

RINGO STARR: Blast from Your Past. Ringo Starr, drums and vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *You're Sixteen; No No Song; It Don't Come Easy; Photograph; Back off Boogaloo; Only You (And You Alone); Beaucoups of Blues; Oh My My; Early 1970; I'm the Greatest.* [Richard Perry, George Harrison, and Pete Drake, prod.] APPLE SW 3422, \$6.98. Tape: ♣ 4XW 3422, \$7.98; ♣ 8XW 3422, \$7.98.

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This single-disc compilation of tracks from Ringo Starr's several solo albums underscores just how much that man has given the world of popular music. While other ex-Beatles have cornered the market on headlines, Ringo has provided a great amount of lighthearted, happy music. Songs like "You're Sixteen," "No No Song," "Oh My My," and "I'm the Greatest" cannot be taken too seriously, but they are a lot of fun. "Photograph" contains George Harrison's worthy lyric of lost love, although it's presented in such an up-tempo, offhand manner that it sounds to the casual listener like just another fun song.

The only low points on this album are when Ringo gets too campy. In the old 1955-56 Platters song "Only You" and in the country tune "Beaucoups of Blues," his normally cheerful singing bogs down in bathos. M.J.

*** KIM CARNES.** Kim Carnes, vocals and keyboards; rhythm, strings, and vocal accompaniment. *Bad Seed; Nothing Makes Me Feel As Good As a Love Song; Good Old Days;* eight more. [Mentor Williams, prod.] A&M SP 4548, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 4548, \$7.98; ●● 8T 4548, \$7.98.

Some producers churn out product as fast as it comes their way, and that is their security. Others wait, however long or uncomfortably, until they feel that special click with an artist.

Mentor Williams seems to fit in the second category. He must have felt that special knowing a few years ago with Dobie Gray, whose hit "Drift Away" he both wrote and produced. Since that happy cresting, Williams has not been inactive, but he has kept a low profile. Now here he comes again, laying it all on the line for singer/writer Kim Carnes. She is every bit the talent that Gray is though the similarity ends there.

As a new performer, Carnes is in competition with a scattering of attractive ladies awaiting their slot: Patti Dahlstrom, pretty and talented but too dark and unhappy so far; Harriet Schock, who wrote "No Way to Treat a Lady" but can't yet relax into artist status; Chi Coltrane, another good near miss (as yet). The list is long. Kim Carnes stands out. For one thing, her songs,



Kim Carnes
A clear and shining presence.

co-written with Dave Ellingson, for the most part, are not just strong, but consistently so. And they are clear enough to get cover records. Carnes's voice is supple but husky, easily contemporary rather than working at it.

Throw away all those credentials and she still has what counts most: that clear and shining presence, that X factor that breaks so many hearts forever. Nobody knows for sure if a new artist has this mysterious presence until the album is made—that truth is the core of this horse race.

At any rate, Mentor Williams' intuition, luck, and considerable skill have provided Ms. Carnes with a distinguished stage for her recording debut. The album mix is fine, but a little too hot for my taste. The acoustic piano in particular is overbrilliant and often too far out in front. M.A.

MELANIE: *Sunset and Other Beginnings.* Melanie Sarka, guitar and vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Perceive It; I've Got My Mojo Working; Loving My Children; Almost Like Being in Love; What Do I Keep; Afraid of the Dark; Where's the Band; You Can't Hurry Love; Sandman; People Are Just Getting Ready; Dream Seller; The Sun and the Moon.* [Peter Schekeryk, prod.] NEIGHBORHOOD NL 3001, \$6.98.

Melanie as an interpreter and Melanie as a singer of her own compositions are two entirely different and quite unequal things. Though she has, on occasion, written a worthy song, most of her compositions are a bit on the dull side—pretty impressionism, words strung together because they roll nicely from the tongue, regardless of whether they mean anything. On the other hand, Melanie's versions of music written by others have often been brilliant. Her "Carolina in My Mind" is a classic, and nobody has touched Phil Ochs's "The Chords of Fame" and Randy Newman's "I Think It's Going to Rain Today" in the exquisite manner she has.

On "Sunset and Other Beginnings," this gap is perfectly apparent. True, by recording Lerner and Loewe's "Almost Like Being in Love" and even Holland-Dozier-Holland's "You Can't Hurry Love," she is putting her own work in with some pretty fancy company. In no way do her songs measure up to the company they keep. "Perceive It" is interesting and "The Sun and the Moon" pleasantly tragic, but they are no more than vehicles for her very expressive voice. She has employed better vehicles in the past and, in fact, does on other cuts on this LP. Melanie should consider doing so more often. M.J.

DONNA SUMMER: *Love to Love You Baby.* Donna Summer, vocals; string and horn accompaniment; Mike Thatcher, arr. *Full of Emptiness; Love to Love You Baby; Pandora's Box;* four more. [Peter Bellotte, prod.] OASIS OCLP 5003, \$6.98.

Donna Summer is one of those Americans who had to go to Europe to find success in music. She is already hot there, and the single from this set, "Love to Love You Baby," is getting hotter by the day in the U.S. charts. Summer is a singer of huge

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range and talent. She sings high and low, loud and soft, laid back and out front, and through it all she maintains her sweetness.

The title track, nearly seventeen minutes long, takes up all of Side 1. (There is a shortened version for radio.) It is built on the currently popular disc mode—continued repetitions of the title line and little else for lyric, plus convincing sounds of a woman making love. All of this built primarily around one repeated chord in a pocket groove, featuring harmonic interludes, strings, an annoyingly polite bass solo, and various other production values in vogue. It works, and it holds.

But Side 2 tells another story. All five songs were written by producer Pete Bellotte and one of the two keyboard players, Giorgio Moroder (he was also the mixdown engineer, and the sound is gorgeous). They are tedious, stiff, and stiffly played, with blunt and limited harmonies. I have rarely heard less prettiness five times in a row. (The fifth is a reprise of the first.) Donna Summer sings beautifully throughout, but her work has almost nothing to do with the songs. "Full of Emptiness" is a tragic-type lyric crooned lightly. "Need-a-Man Blues" is another kind of tragedy, sung with out-of-place sauciness.

The obvious intent is to sell Summer for sexy, and from the album photos it is clear that she is beautiful. But she doesn't make it as a torch singer—she has no bitterness, no desperation, no dark passion. She only sounds true when she's having fun, on the hit side.

Recorded in Germany, the disc has the uncommonly good sound we have come to expect from that country's best studios. But good sound doesn't make good music. The rhythm section is tense and dull and dated. It has none of the free flow of the best American rhythm sections. I would love to hear this lady record with any number of fine producers closer to home. It would not be hard to find material to fit her essence, instead of boxing her into inferior material.

Welcome to Donna Summer, a lady with a bright future. M.A.

DAVID BLUE: Com'n Back for More. David Blue, guitar and vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Com'n Back for More; Oooh Mama; When the Rains Came; Who Love; Save Something (for Me Tonight); Lover, Lover, Lover; Hollywood Babies; 23 Days #2; Any Love at All; Where Did It Go.* [John Guerin, prod.] ASYLUM 7E 1043, \$6.98.

This performer started out as David Cohen, changed his name to David Blue, changed it to S. David Cohen, then changed it back to David Blue again. Tune in tomorrow for the next episode of his wanderings through the wonderful world of surnames.

If indeed there is to be another name change, might I suggest Robert Goulet? For in "Com'n Back for More," Blue has created an ordinary collection of ordinary love songs, which neither his considerably evocative voice nor the assistance of such luminaries as Bob Dylan (harmonica) and Joni Mitchell (background vocals) can make special. Blue has written all the songs himself except one: Leonard Cohen's rather routine "Lover, Lover, Lover."

Among Blue's compositions, "Hollywood Babies" attempts to break out of the romantic mold but does so by painting a picture of Hollywood decadence, as if another statement on that subject could possibly be useful. "23 Days #2" is an interesting if gloomy portrait of an angst-ridden woman, and "Where Did It Go" is confusing enough lyrically to hold one's attention for a little while. M.J.

JOHN DENVER: Windsong. John Denver, guitar and vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Windsong; Cowboy's Delight; Looking for Space; Spirit; Shipmates and Cheyenne; Late Nite Radio; Love Is Everywhere; Two Shots; I'm Sorry; Fly Away; Calypso; Song of Wyoming.* [Milton Okun, prod.] RCA APL 1-1183, \$6.98. Tape: ●● APK 1-1183, \$7.95; ●● APS 1-1183, \$7.95.

There is something to be said for type-casting. That is, you always know what you are going to get. Those who watch Jacques Cousteau usually expect to see fish. Those who purchase a John Denver album anticipate polite, melodic visions of soaring eagles, snowcapped mountains, babbling brooks, the roar of the sea, or a rainbow, with perhaps a lonesome old dogie thrown in. In short, a travelogue.

That is precisely what Denver has given us in his newest RCA album, "Windsong." The only really serious diversion from this well-trod trail is a tune titled "Late Nite Radio," which is one of those songs composers produce when on the road between dates and stuck in a motel room alone at three in the morning. Denver has found his niche and, as evidenced once again, plays it well. M.J.

Theater and Film

* **FAREWELL MY LOVELY.** Original film soundtrack recording. Composed and conducted by David Shire. [David Shire, prod.] UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA 556-G, \$6.98.

This is David Shire's first soundtrack album. Fortunately, it will not be his last—a Hindenburg disc is forthcoming on MCA. Anyone who has seen such pictures as *The Conversation* (the music for which is entirely solo piano) or *The Taking of Pelham 123* cannot help but have been affected, even if on an unconscious level, by the moodiness of Shire's evocative scores.

His dimly lit night-jazz for Dick Richard's *Farewell My Lovely* continues this excellence. In fact, it must be considered one of 1975's outstanding film scores, both for the depth it adds to the movie and for the sheer quality of the music as heard on this disc, which presents even more than is heard in the film. For starters, Shire has come up with a Philip Marlowe theme that, while certainly suggesting the Thirties setting so well recaptured by the film, has a definite Sixties-Seventies blues feeling. A

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(Stereo Review, February, 1975)

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more high-pitched, sireny "Velma" theme likewise probes deeply into the listener/spectator's emotions. And there are brief moments when the music has an almost fairy-tale sadness, slightly recalling Brian Easdale's exceptional ballet for *The Red Shoes*. Throughout, Shire uses his orchestra with great skill, with some striking highlighting of certain themes in the solo winds.

He also travels widely between a couple of nicely orchestrated period numbers and some ultramodern string and percussion sounds, with one stop for some vintage but thoroughly classy action music ("Take Me to Your Lido"). The success of these diverse styles, particularly the rather avant-garde ones, proves a rather interesting point: Because of the more abstract function it plays, film music need not necessarily relate to the specific time reality of the film. There is, in fact, a haunting timelessness to David Shire's scores, and, if they work especially well in their movies, it is because they suggest the broadest, rather than the most limiting, implications of the cinematic situations. *Forewell My Lovely* is a perfect example of this. The excellent performances and sound are an extra bonus here.

R.S.B.

PSYCHO; THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR. Original film scores by Bernard Herrmann. For an essay review, see page 75.



*** COUNT BASIE: Basie Big Band.** Pete Minger, Frank Szabo, Dave Stahl, Bobby Mitchell, and Sonny Cohn, trumpets; Al Grey, Curtis Fuller, Bill Hughes, and Mel Wanzo, trombones; Jimmy Forrest, Eric Dixon, Danny Turner, Bobby Plater, and Charlie Fowlkes, saxophones; Count Basie, piano; Freddie Green, guitar; John Duke, bass; Butch Miles, drums. *Front Burner; Freckle Face; Orange Sherbet*; six more. PABLO 2310 756, \$7.98.

While the course of Woody Herman's band can be charted by a nervous, jagged line as it has moved relatively rapidly through a succession of short-lived peaks interspersed with only slight dips, Count Basie's chart is more like a swooping roller-coaster ride—a high point followed by a long, gradual descent until a sudden surging lift takes it to the top again. The Count is back at a peak, with all the elements meshing beautifully.

The band on this record is one of Basie's very best, and the album is the best his band has made since his memorable debut on the Roulette label in 1957 (with an album that included "Li'l Darlin'," "The Kid from Red Bank," "Whirly-Birds," "Splanky," and "Fan Tail"). The foundation for the disc is a set of arrangements by Sam Nestico that updates and polishes the Basie style established almost twenty years ago by Neal Hefti. His writing for the saxophone section is superb—reminiscent of Benny Carter—and he uses the brass with imagination

and subtlety. Although his arrangements are often relatively complex, the effect is of simplicity, ease, and casualness.

To carry out Nestico's charts, the band is built around a rhythm section that conjures up fond memories of the classic Basie team: Jo Jones, Walter Page, Freddie Green, and the Count. Green and Basie are still here, fresh as ever and not only untouched by the years, but seemingly inspired by the revitalization of the band as a whole. John Duke is the steady, walking bass the Basie formula calls for, and Butch Miles is far and away the best drummer Basie has had since Jones. He plays with an awareness of the total sound and with exquisite sensitivity when Basie is fingering those marvelously explicit piano phrases, sparking the band in the full ensembles, and using his explosive capabilities with wonderfully effective discrimination.

Except for its early days before World War II, the band has not had particularly distinctive soloists (capable, yes, but not distinctive), and this one follows in that tradition. Al Grey, the veteran Basie trombonist, is the only soloist who adds vitalizing personal color. But as long as Basie is at the keyboard, there is little need for a coterie of personalities.

J.S.W.

*** KEITH JARRETT: The Köln Concert.** Keith Jarrett, piano. [Manfred Eicher, prod.] ECM/POLYDOR 1064/65, \$9.98 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: ●● CF 1064, \$11.98; ●● 8F 1064, \$11.98.

*** KEITH JARRETT: Back Hand.** Keith Jarrett, piano, wood flute, and obi drum; Dewey Redman, tenor saxophone, musette, and maracas; Charlie Haden, bass; Paul Motian, drums and percussion; Guilherme Franco, percussion. *Inflight, Kuurn, Vapallia, Backhand*. [Ed Michel, prod.] ABC/IMPULSE ASH 9305, \$6.98 (QS-encoded disc). Tape: ●● H 8027-9305, \$7.95.

Recorded live at the opera house in Köln (Cologne), Germany, in January 1975, Keith Jarrett's "Köln Concert" is a multifaceted set of improvisations whose soul-jazz roots reach out in mind-blowingly diverse directions embracing styles both classical and non-Western. Indeed, Jarrett's supple, mult textured, and highly accented keyboard meditations in many ways parallel the cyclical, spiraling structures of Indian raga improvisations rather than the more linear movement of even the most free-form "traditional" Western music. Toward the end of Part 1, he often repeats a kind of downward strum that definitely brings a sitar to mind.

This Indian effect is felt most forcefully in the opening halves of Part 1 and of Parts 2-A and B. In each case Jarrett sets up a harmonic base that is not so much a point of modulation and return as it is a constant. Granted, the harmonic obsessiveness of Part 1 lies in its rocking up-a-major-second, down-a-major-second shifts rather than in a single drone (while the repeated D of Part 2's opening does give such a drone effect). Of course, Jarrett is not trying to sound like any one thing. Nonetheless, without the non-Western transparency and temporal cyclism he creates throughout, such devices as the step-up, step-down quasimodula-

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tions would sound naive, even amateurish, as they in fact do in the hands of so many pseudo-soul musicians. In Jarrett's hands, they sound so beautifully ingenuous that they can bring tears to the eyes.

What makes the "Cologne Concert" even more captivating is the over-all fabric of meaning. I would hope I am not guilty of imposing certain preconceived ideas on the music. I can only say that, each time I listen to the almost vocal, bluesy theme that opens Part 1, I have the feeling of a call to prayer, whereas the short, six-minute Part 2-C that closes the concert communicates a warm, mellow sense of fulfillment, a movement outward after prayer or meditation. Between these two extremes, Jarrett somehow manages to do a long-running, simultaneous translation on the piano of the many languages heard during profound journeys into his own soul.

One reason he is able to accomplish this is his prodigious command of the keyboard, a fact noted by Robert Hurwitz in his feature review of two other Jarrett albums (May 1975). Characteristic of his style, for instance, are frequent breakaways into fast passagework executed with perfect smoothness and accuracy and always falling completely into the rhythmic pulse. Jarrett brings into play many more facets of the instrument's potential than most jazz-oriented pianists. There is some nicely contrasted use of the soft pedal here and there; the loud pedal is employed not only for sustaining, but also as an instrument in itself, to create an echo-percussion effect. Particularly moving is the way the pianist builds up swells of climaxes and then suddenly tapers off into a theme-snippet or chord-progression heard and felt earlier in the piece.

This live-concert recording, Jarrett's longest solo effort on disc, reproduces with lovely clarity his somewhat metallic-sounding piano. Almost all extraneous audience noises (except the applause at the endings) are eliminated. Jarrett himself is heard from time to time with some impassioned humming that adds to the over-all effect. A totally novel, beautiful, and warm listening experience.

Three of the cuts on "Back Hand" fall into more conventional (albeit recent) jazz patterns. I especially like "Backhand," with its appealing main theme (often presented in a piano-sax duet) and a drums-bass break featuring some really hair-raising, offbeat rhythmic patterns. "Vapallia" uses the fairly standard free-jazz technique of setting slow thematic material against a frenetic counterpoint of nonthematic punctuation centered around the percussion. As in many Jarrett compositions, the work splits in two, closing with a soothing return to a more conventional idiom and showing his understanding of the importance of contrast. The fourth piece, entitled "Kuom," eliminates the piano altogether and features Jarrett and his colleagues playing a variety of instruments (along with the regular bass)—wood flute, oboe drums, musette—to produce an often fascinating, hypnotic impression of Near Eastern or African rhythmic, motivic, and instrumental interplay.

Even though the set is in more familiar territory, "Back Hand" continues to demonstrate Jarrett's unmistakable musicianship and originality, whether in the

thematic ideas (note the nicely off-center theme of the opening "Inflight"), the expanded use of the various instrumental categories, or the rich, interlocking textures. The album may not have "Cologne Concert's" unique soul, but it does feature superb playing of some very complex material. The bass-emphasized recorded sound (as heard in stereo) is excellent. R.S.B.

CHARLIE BYRD: Top Hat. Charlie Byrd, guitar; Nat Adderley, cornet; Joe Byrd, electric bass; Johnny Rae, drums; Depo Indetto, percussion. *Some Time Ago; Lonely Town; Blame It on My Youth*; five more. FANTASY 9496, \$6.98.

Charlie Byrd was the first to break through the pattern that Charlie Christian set in 1940 and that dominated the jazz guitar world for almost twenty years. He reminded people that the guitar is capable of a great deal more than Christian's looping, extended lines. Even a breakthrough eventually wears out, and Byrd, for all his varied abilities, has had a hard time sustaining interest in his records in recent years. But this set revitalizes him.

It also gives Nat Adderley a sense of direction. Until the death of Cannonball Adderley, Nat had worked in his brother's shadow and followed wherever he led. Now Nat will be making his own choices.

For Byrd, the presence of Adderley's cornet provides a change of pace and sound that penetrates the obviousness of the old guitar-led trios and quartets. In fact, the two pieces played by the old Byrd formation—without Adderley—are unexciting as compared with those performed with Adderley.

Not to go overboard, even Nat's contribution does not rescue the selections on the second side of the disc. So it would appear that more imagination and better judgment are required in producing an effective Charlie Byrd or Nat Adderley record. J.S.W.

*** THAD JONES-MEL LEWIS BAND: Suite for Pops.** Thad Jones, Jon Faddis, Stephen Furtado, Jim Bossy, Lew Soloff, Snooky Young, Marvin Stamm, Virgil Jones, and Cecil Bridgewater, trumpets; Jimmy Knepper, Quentin Jackson, Billy Campbell, Eddie Bert, Janice Robinson, Earl McIntyre, Cliff Heather, Jack Jeffers, and Dave Taylor, trombones; Jim Buffington, Peter Gordon, Earl Chapin, Julius Watkins, Ray Alonge, French horns; Jerry Dodgion, Ed Xiques, Billy Harper, Eddie Daniels, Ron Bridgewater, Frank Foster, Greg Herbert, Lou Marini, and Pepper Adams, saxophones; Roland Hanna, piano; George Mraz, Richard Davis, Steve Gilmore, bass; Mel Lewis, drums; Leonard Gibbs, congas; Dee Dee Bridgewater, vocals. *Meetin' Place; The Summary; The Farewell*; four more. A&M 701, \$6.98.

Jazz Interactions, the New York organization that presents, supports, and helps to create jazz musicians, commissioned Thad Jones to compose this musical recollection of Louis Armstrong for a concert in 1971. Recorded in 1972 (except for "The Farewell," which was re-recorded in 1975), the suite was finally released late last year. One

cannot imagine why there has been such hesitancy about getting it out. It is the most completely realized work, both in creation and performance, that the Jones-Lewis band has produced.

Jones has not reached for the obvious, simplistic reflections of Armstrong—nothing of his music, nothing of his style. Instead, he has written his impressions of the man and the situations and background that produced him. Originally the suite consisted of three sections: an exposition on Armstrong's universality, a statement expressing his directness and musical honesty, and a farewell that becomes a joyous New Orleans funeral. For the recording, three sections were added, all an outgrowth of the funeral setting and including an exquisite expression of pensive peacefulness, "Only for Now," played primarily by Jones.

For all the skill and imagination that have gone into the full suite, the most interesting segment of the record is a wild card, thrown in to fill out the first side: "Toledo by Candlelight," part of an unfinished suite that Gary McFarland was writing for the Jones-Lewis band at the time of his death. It has the body and the fascinating angularity that are typical of McFarland, a gutsy quality that extends from Jerry Dodgion's wry opening on soprano saxophone to thickly textured, insistent ensembles that churn up a surprising variety of emotional reactions. The addition of this piece in no way diminishes the effect of "Suite for Pops," which stands on its own, but rather balances it with a taste of some totally different sounds. J.S.W.

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As we have found out during the twenty or thirty years of re-recordings of the arrangements of the Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, and Benny Goodman bands, nothing is served by the perpetuation of performances that are already on disc. So why these Paul Whiteman reproductions?

Well, recording conditions have changed even more since Whiteman's time than since Goodman's or Dorsey's or Miller's. And in this album, using arrangements from the Whiteman Collection at Williams College, the solos are not copies, but "in the style of" the originals. Dick Sudhalter knows the Beiderbecke routines, but even on as definitive a piece as "Singin' the Blues" he finds his own way of using the style. And although singer Chris Ellis has none of Bing Crosby's projection, he is—within his own limited, microphone-oriented style—suitably present.

Sudhalter and Keith Nichols on trom-

bone are consistently evocative soloists, but John R. T. Davies, who takes the alto sax parts, is inexcusably clumsy. J.S.W.

In Brief

CARLY SIMON: The Best. ELEKTRA 7E 1048, \$6.98. Tape: ●● TC5 1048, \$7.97; ●● ET8 1048, \$7.95.

For anyone who may have just returned from a long stay on Mars, this collection is a way to catch up on one of the better talents of the past few years. M.A.

DUKE AND THE DRIVERS: Cruising. ABC ABCD 911, \$6.98. Tape: ●● H 8022-911, \$7.95.

In its LP debut, Boston's most popular local band proves that it can create enough pulsating rhythm and good cheer to satisfy rock fans all over the country. H.E.

THE STYLISTICS: You Are Beautiful. Avco AV 69010, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CAS 69010, \$7.98; ●● 8TC 69010, \$7.98.

Arranged and conducted by Van McCoy, "You Are Beautiful" is as much to be danced to as listened to. The Stylistics, a soft-voiced but rhythmic rhythm-and-blues quintet, has never been shown to better advantage. H.E.

LINDA LEWIS: Not a Little Girl Anymore. ARISTA AL 4047, \$6.98.

Female soul singing, most of it in a range only dogs can hear. A good tweeter-tester. M.J.

BACK STREET CRAWLER: The Band Plays On. ATCO SD 36-125, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 36-125, \$7.97; ●● TP 36-125, \$7.97.

This English rock quintet, featuring former Free member Paul Kossoff, creates music that is alternately predictable and challenging. One hopes that a skilled producer, rather than the group itself, will produce Back Street Crawler's second LP; then the wheat might be sifted from the chaff. H.E.

DAVID WERNER: Imagination Quota. RCA APL 1-0922, \$6.98. Tape: ●● APK 1-0922, \$7.95; ●● APS 1-0922, \$7.95.

On his second LP, David Werner has begun to shed the David Bowie influence and develop a quirky musical identity of his own. However, the Bowie sound and approach remain scattered throughout this disc. H.E.

PERRY COMO: Just Out of Reach. RCA APL 1-0863, \$6.98. Tape: ●● APK 1-0863, \$7.95; ●● APS 1-0863, \$7.95. Quadriphonic: APD 1-0863 (Quadradisc), \$7.98; APT 1-0863 (Q-8 cartridge), \$7.95.

Perry Como has been famous all my life, and he still makes me feel good. Tight, orderly production by Chet Atkins, and some quiet and wonderfully written material. I love this man's singing. M.A.

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More Q-reel Grand Prix entries. Seekers of *ne plus ultra* quadriphonic engineering and real-time reel-tape processing now are proffered two more luxury releases. Ambiphon's allied label, Sonar (Box 455, Kingsbridge Station, Bronx, New York 10463), decants old wine from new bottles in the archly named "Verry Merrie Olde Tyme Musick": QR 1120, Q-reel, \$19.95. And Sonar has processed the "Winds of Alamar" program (QOD 7.5 DA101, Q-reel, \$20; in Dolby-B, \$25. Also 15-ips, 10½-inch reel, \$40; Q-8 cartridge, \$7.50) from Quadratrak (4114 Wexford Court, Kensington, Maryland 20795).

The Sonar Music Men's fifteen short, mostly Renaissance instrumental pieces will be familiar to specialists, but even they have never heard the music ring out as thrillingly as it does here. Yet it's sad that only five selections feature period instruments, for cornetts and sackbuts never have been recorded as well before; while the modern instruments used elsewhere are just as vividly recorded, they are tonally anachronistic even when a tuba is not included. Nevertheless, purists must tolerate such gaffes for the privilege of hearing Farnaby's "Construe my meaning," Dowland's "Can she excuse," and a Susato pavan brought back to gloriously vibrant life.

I leave it to experts in country-rock, if that's the Quadratrak program's genre, to evaluate its six pieces by the Iguana singers/players. But even I relished the jauntiness of Don Falk's "Happy One—Sad One," the imaginativeness of Budge Witherspoon's "Sailing Ships," and the fascinatingly novel (to me, anyway) timbres of the dumbeg, pedal steel, Crill bass, Steel-O-Copter, Wexford bells, H.I.P. and Fender Rhodes pianos—all superbly captured in panoramic quadriphony by engineer Gene Eichelberger.

"Gone up with a merry noise." Exciting as such state-of-the-audio-arts demonstrations may be, there are more solid satisfactions in hearing old favorites endowed with appeals enhanced by techniques that never distract primary attention from the music itself. Current exemplars: Q-reel pioneer Vanguard's re-illuminations of Handel's *Fireworks Music* and the Mussorgsky-Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition* (VSS 24 and 25 respectively, Dolby-B Q-reels, \$12.95 each). It's probably the latter work that will win most attention since its quadriphony, while unexaggerated with only a few sound sources in back, so potently intensifies the dramatic power of Ra-

by R. D. Darrell

The Tape Deck

vel's showpiece scoring. In stereo, this reading by Mackerras scarcely challenges those by Ansermet, Toscanini, et al., and the recording of the first-rate New Philharmonia performance may seem unduly reverberant. But everything is miraculously sea-changed in the expanded dimensions of quadriphony.

Yet for me there are even more rewarding miracles achieved by the somewhat more fully "surround" technology in Somary's straightforward performance of the *Fireworks* in its original oversize all-wind-and-percussion scoring. In mono or stereo, several earlier versions using the specified 24 oboes, 12 bassoons, etc., sounded far too raw, if not wholly grotesque, to most ears. Skillfully spread and balanced as the augmented English Chamber ensemble is here, the glorious music not only makes a truly glorious noise, but evokes a festival exuberance surely unmatched in all the years since the composer's own memorably spectacular 1749 performance in London's Green Park.

Ragtime redivivus: second wind. Quadriphony as such is only one of many attractions in the British tribute to Scott Joplin, the recording of *The Prodigal Son* ballet (retitled *The Entertainer* for better domestic pull) imaginatively scored and idiomatically played by Grant Hossack with the London Festival Ballet Orchestra: Columbia MAQ 33185, Dolby-B Q-8 cartridge, \$7.98; stereo cassette/cartridge editions, \$7.98 each. In this ineffably delectable work the tunes are Joplin's best, including many unfamiliar ones, and the scoring is concerto-grosso-like for solo piano, small jazz band, and symphony orchestra. The recording, with some back sources as well as ambience, is well-nigh ideally airborne.

The lasting vitality of the Joplin revival also is demonstrated by continued pianistic delving into this quintessentially American repertory. First honors go once again to pioneer Joshua Rifkin, whose Vols. 1 and 2 are

combined in the Nonesuch/Advent F 1042, Dolby-B double-play cassette, \$7.95. His lead evidently has inspired Dick Hyman to comparably lilting and lyrical versions—at least if Hyman's five-disc set of the complete Joplin piano rags may be judged by the sixteen "Classic Rag" exemplars in RCA Red Seal ARK/ARS 1-1257, cassette/cartridge, \$7.95 each. But Hyman is not given the warmer ambience of the Nonesuch recording or the noiseless surfaces of the deluxe Advent tape processing. And while pianist Roger Shields enjoys the benefits of Dolby-B quieting in his collection of rags by Joplin, Lamb, Scott, Matthews, and others (SMG/Vox CT 146, \$5.98), he plays in stiffer barroom style with more brittle recorded tonal qualities. But there's still lots of lusty musical fun here.

Musical fat/lean extremes. No omnivorous audiophile ever lacks considerable variety, but few of his listening contrasts are likely to be as drastically polarized as those I've just experienced in hearing two versions of perhaps the most uninhibitedly romantic of all symphonies, Rachmaninoff's Second, immediately followed by the four little Mozart quartets for flute and strings. If you're willing to risk auditory schizophrenia, go to it too!

But you'll be much safer sticking to—temporarily at least—either romanticism or rococoism alone. For the former, Previn's your best choice, since his new London Symphony version (complete this time) prodigally spares nothing in either emotional or sonic riches: Angel 4XS/8XS 36954, cassette/cartridge, \$7.98 each. Ormandy, whose speciality this Rachmaninoff warhorse long has been, also uses the uncut score for the first time, but now he seems to have lost genuine personal interest in the work, for there is unexpected perfunctoriness in both his present reading and the Philadelphia's recorded performance: RCA Red Seal ARK/ARS 1-1150, cassette/cartridge, \$7.95 each.

Mozart himself was perfunctory in only partially filling a Dutchman's commission for a batch of flute works, among them three of the four quartets played with well-nigh ideal grace by William Bennett and the Grumiaux Trio and recorded to airy perfection in Philips 7300 401, Dolby-B cassette, \$7.98. But light, fluffy, and mercurially evanescent as the music may be, it still has some of Mozart's unique magic. In any case, what a relief, after the storm of Rachmaninoffian passion, to bask in Mozartean sunshine! ●

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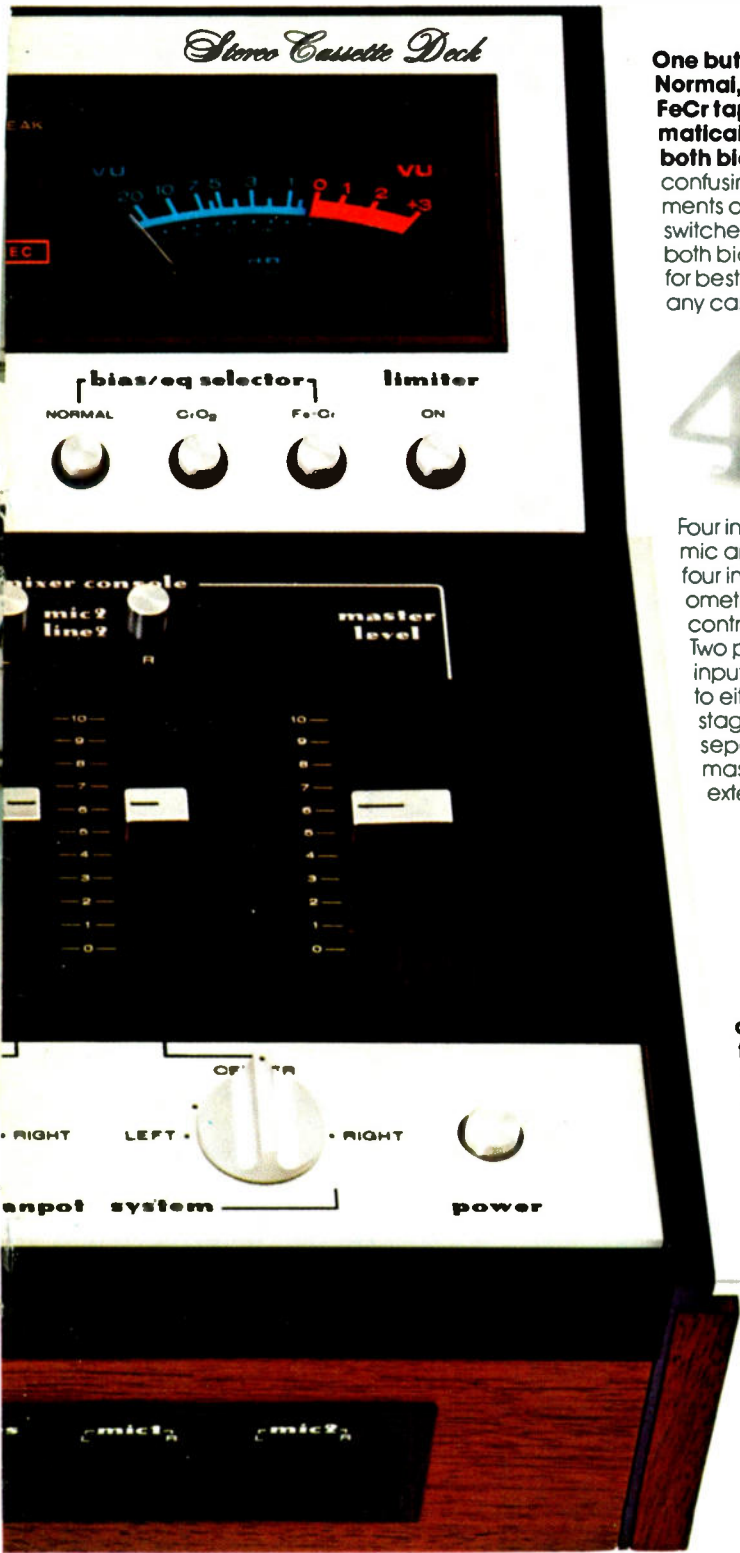
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