

April 1979 \$1.50

HIGH FIDELITY

ICD © 08398

Audio Heads into the '80s *Cassette-Deck Technology on the Move... More Microcomponents... From Winter's Consumer Electronics Show and Elsewhere, a Comprehensive Report on New Spring Products*



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Carver



Fred Astaire the Musician —
Not Just a Pair of Dancing Feet
In Backbeat: Oak Ridge Boys

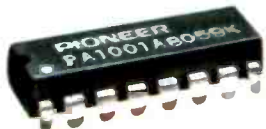
THE RIGHT WAY.



when combined with lower audible frequencies.

Most of our competitors use a standard high band filter to cancel out this signal. Unfortunately, it also cancels out some of the music.

Pioneer created a special integrated circuit that eliminates this pilot signal without affecting the music.



A pilot signal canceling circuit that lets you hear only music and nothing more.

Which means that you're assured of hearing everything the musicians had intended you to hear. Nothing more. And nothing less.

Obviously, the SX-780 is the

only receiver that gives you this feature in this price range. The others give you the noise.



An accurate picture of what you're listening to.

WATTAGE METERS THAT LET YOU SEE WHAT YOU'RE HEARING.

When a receiver has wattage meters, it lets

you see exactly how much power is going through your speakers. So that it not only helps prevent unnecessary damage due to overloading, it helps you make cleaner FM recordings.

Of course, the SX-780 has other virtues conspicuously absent from our competitors' models. Like a built-in wood grain cabinet. Which is something others give you the option of paying extra for.

But what really separates Pioneer's SX-780 from others is more than just a matter of wood cabinets, wattage meters, metal bottoms, DC power, or even price.

It's our commitment to giving you a quality hi-fi receiver, no matter how much, or how little, you plan to spend.

So if you're planning to spend less than \$400, you couldn't ask for more than the SX-780.

PIONEER
We bring it back alive.

POWER 45 watts per channel min. at 8 ohms from 20-20,000 hertz with no more than .05% total harmonic distortion.
FM SENSITIVITY Stereo: 37.0 dBI

S/N RATIO Stereo: 72 dBI
CAPTURE RATIO 1.0 dBI
POWER METERS 2
SPEAKERS A, B, AB
TONE CONTROLS Dual
TAPE MONITORS 2

PIONEER DID IT

INTRODUCING THE SX-780.

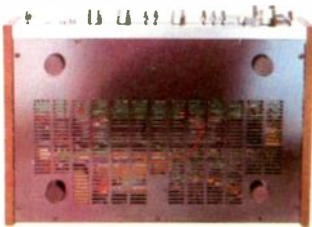
It seems that our competitors think they've mastered the art of building a moderately priced receiver.

Unfortunately, most of them appear to be the work of cost reduction engineers, rather than high fidelity engineers. People whose jobs depend on the cost of what goes into a receiver, not the sound that comes out of it.

At Pioneer, on the other hand, we build a receiver that sells for under \$400 with the same care given to a receiver that sells for over \$1000.

A perfect example is the SX-780.

It offers the kind of features, value and sound you won't find in any other comparably priced receiver.



Metal shields our SX-780 from spurious noise.

metal. It's designed to shield the tuning section from spurious noise and keep CB interference from getting in the way of your music.

Equally important is the fact that our bottom has a special ventilating system that allows air to circulate freely around the heat sinks. This not only reduces FM drift due to overheated tuning elements, but increases the life expectancy of the circuitry.

A DC AMPLIFIER WITH THE POWER TO ELIMINATE DISTORTION.

The SX-780 features the same DC power configuration found in today's most expensive receivers.



DC power supply found on the most expensive receivers.

A STRONG CASE FOR THE METAL BOTTOM.

If you turn over our SX-780, for instance, you'll notice the bottom is made of heavy gauge

It provides cleaner sound and richer, more natural bass because it eliminates feedback and something called TIM (transient intermodulation). Transient intermodulation is a form of distortion that can keep you from hearing the subtle overtones in your music.

Which interestingly enough is why receivers with a conventional power amplifier might possibly be able to match the specs of the SX-780, but never the sound.

A PILOT SIGNAL CANCELING SYSTEM THAT'S UNHEARD OF IN THIS PRICE RANGE.

All stereo FM stations in America broadcast their music over a pilot signal of 19,000 hertz.

If not eliminated, this signal tends to create an extremely high pitched sound



**THERE ARE A LOT
OF WAYS TO BUILD
A RECEIVER THAT SELLS
FOR UNDER \$400.**

YOU CAN
LEAVE OUT
DUAL WATTAGE
METERS LIKE
MARANTZ DID.



YOU CAN INSTALL
AN INEXPENSIVE
PRESS BOARD BOTTOM
LIKE TECHNICS DID.
INSTEAD OF
A METAL ONE.



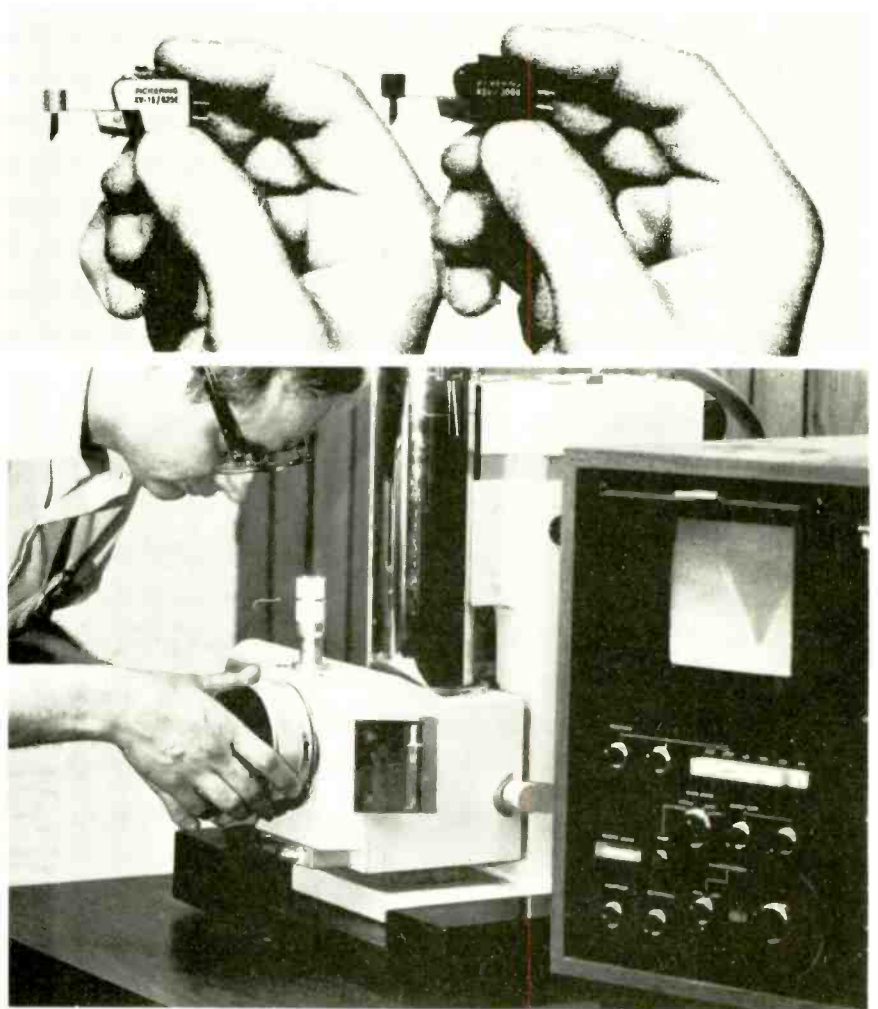
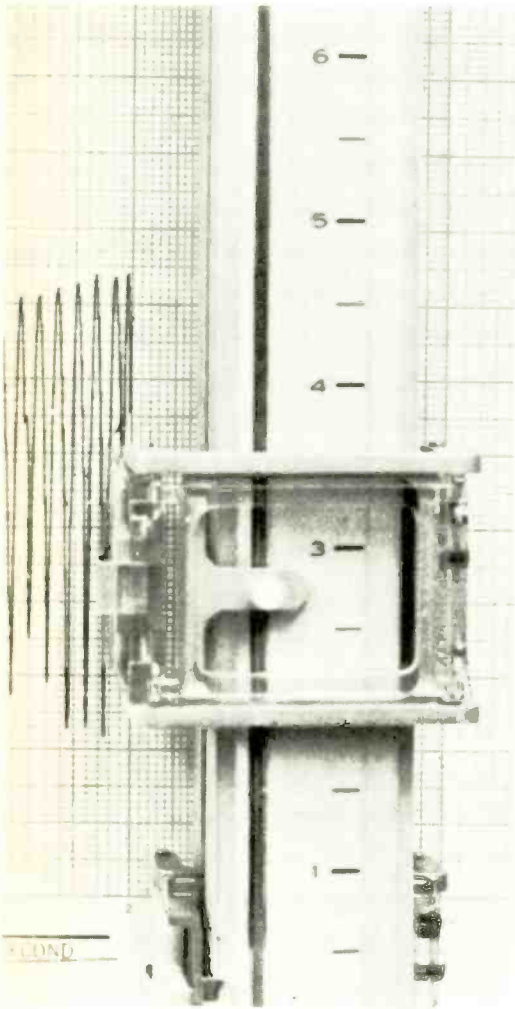
YOU CAN USE
A CONVENTIONAL POWER
AMPLIFIER LIKE
KENWOOD DID.
INSTEAD OF
AN ADVANCED
DC AMPLIFIER.



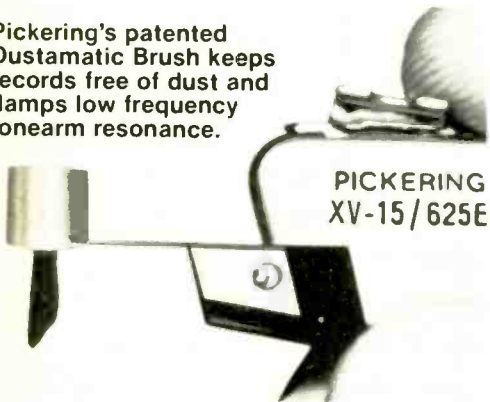
YOU
CAN USE
STANDARD
HIGH BAND
FILTERS LIKE
YAMAHA DID.
INSTEAD OF SPECIAL
INTEGRATED CIRCUITS TO CANCEL
THE UNWANTED FM PILOT SIGNAL.

Only the most sophisticated research and development in this industry could create

Two sources of perfection in stereo sound!



Pickering's patented Dustomatic Brush keeps records free of dust and damps low frequency tonearm resonance.



It takes real effort and skill to become the acknowledged leader in the industry, and even more to stay ahead.

Pictured above are just a few of the advanced electronic devices that Pickering employs in product research and custom-designed development. At left above, the XY plotter on Pickering's Real Time Analyzer and, at the right above, Pickering's remarkable Scanning Electronic Beam Microscope capable of 160,000 times magnification.

Pickering's engineering department is responsible for creating these two outstanding cartridges that, as one reviewer stated: "The XV-15/625E offers performance per dollar; the XSV/3000 higher absolute performance level."

Both the XSV/3000 with its trademarked Stereohedron Stylus tip for the least record wear and the longest stylus life achievable so far... and the XV-15/625E... represent best buys at their price levels. Audition them today at your Pickering Dealer.

 **PICKERING**

"for those who can hear the difference"

For further information write to Pickering & Co., Inc., Dept. HF, 101 Sunnyside Blvd., Plainview, N.Y. 11803

HIGH FIDELITY

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The Politics of Audio

This issue's lead article on new components derives primarily from the newly important Winter Consumer Electronics Show, held again this year in Las Vegas. The January WCES, like the just plain CES held each June, is sponsored by the Electronics Industries Association. From this last sentence, one may deduce an entire revolution, quiet but thoroughgoing, in the high fidelity marketplace.

For years, the EIA presented a trade show each spring in Chicago. The "trade," however, was not the high fidelity industry alone, but the entire consumer electronics industry: citizens' band radios, digital watches, TV sets, video games, voice-controlled toy cars, calculators, pinball machines. Since so much of what we buy is electronic, and nearly all of its international, it sometimes seemed as though the only thing left to do would be to hold an International Everything Show, where all the world's manufacturers would gather in one spot to exhibit whatever they had to sell.

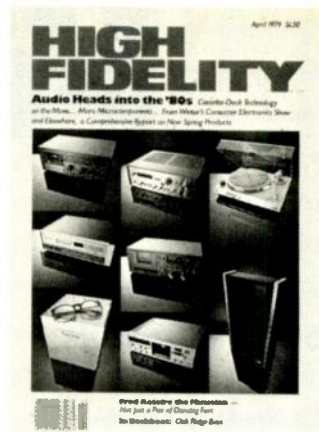
While at first the high fidelity industry held back from the EIA's shows, over the years it emerged as the major contingent of the CES. Audio manufacturers found June a reasonable time to exhibit their goods, and they would generally tell their research and development departments to schedule new products for the shows. Dealers could look over the wares, make suggestions for improving prototypes, and place orders. Then during the summer months manufacturers could produce the equipment and fill the orders. New merchandise would thus appear on dealers' shelves during the fall selling season, when students were stereoizing their dorms, and component customers were poised for the annual Christmas pounce.

The CES eventually became the largest annually held trade show in the country. Since the dynamics of imperialism mandates expansion, what about two shows a year? As the industry grew, and as new goods proliferated throughout the year, the pre-Christmas peak no longer seemed so much higher above the rising valleys. Also, for many mass industries, including many of the gaudies who exhibit at the CES, a winter show aimed at the following season's young-man's-fancy market would be well scheduled. Some high fidelity manufacturers were originally skeptical about a WCES, but the shows proved surprisingly effective. By this year, it had apparently become second only to the CES itself as the largest annual American trade show.

Why? It came shortly after Christmas, when dealers had both empty shelves to fill and Christmas profits to invest in inventory. Many audio manufacturers were now telling their r&d departments to meet WCES deadlines to entice consumers away from the competition. As usual, some of the "new" was merely a change of panel, color, and knobs to justify a different model number—and, of course, price—but as our coverage of these products elsewhere in this issue makes clear, a good deal of it has been genuinely innovative.

So customers may now begin to notice a second seasonal peak of new high fidelity products—and readers a second yearly "new products" issue of HIGH FIDELITY.

Leonard Marcus



Photos by Bob Brody

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Up to now you had to choose between the turntable you wanted and the turntable you could afford.



Technics MKII Series. The SL-1300 MKII automatic, the SL-1400 MKII semi-automatic and the SL-1500 MKII manual.

You expect a quartz turntable to give unparalleled speed accuracy. And these do. What you didn't expect were all the other advantages Technics totally quartz-controlled direct-drive system gives you.

Like torque that cuts buildup time to an incredible 0.7 seconds. And at the same time maintains 0% speed fluctuations with loads up to 300 gms. That's equivalent to 150 tonearms tracking at 2 gms. each.

And that's not all. Technics MKII Series adds quartz accuracy to whatever pitch variation you desire. In exact 0.1% increments. At the touch of a button. And instantaneously

displayed by the front-panel LEDs.

And to take advantage of all that accuracy, Technics has a low-mass S-shaped universal tonearm that's so accurate, friction is down to 7 mg. (vertical and horizontal).

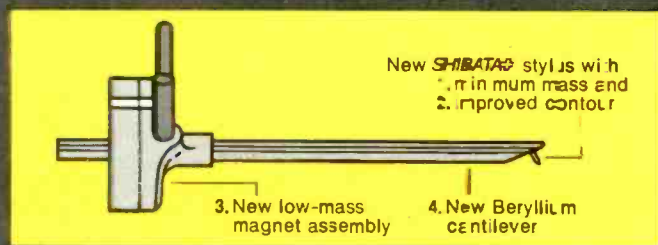
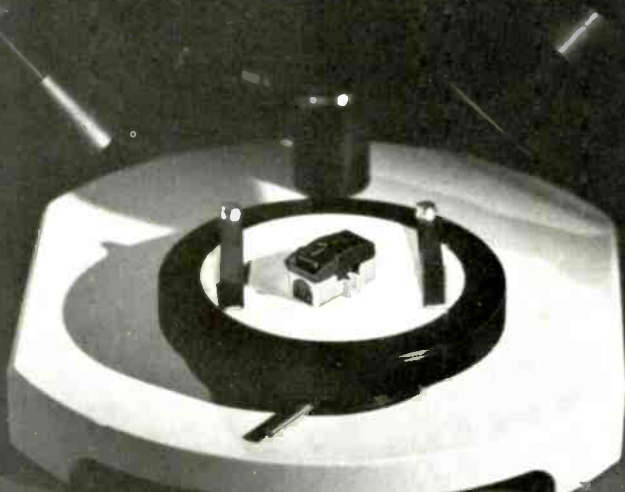
Technics MKII Series. Compare specifications. Compare quartz. And you'll realize there's really no comparison.

MOTOR: Brushless DC motor, quartz-controlled phase-locked servo circuit. SPEED: 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ and 45 RPM. STARTING TORQUE: 1.5 kg · cm. BUILDUP TIME: 0.7 seconds (= 90° rotation) to 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ RPM. SPEED DRIFT: Within $\pm 0.002\%$. WOW & FLUTTER: 0.025% WRMS. RUMBLE: -78 dB. PITCH VARIATION: $\pm 9.9\%$.

Technics MKII Series. A rare combination of audio technology. A new standard of audio excellence.

Technics
Professional Series

Announcing four tiny advances with room-filling benefits!



In the tiny world of the stereo cartridge, microscopic differences in dimensions are all-important. Which is why the extremely low moving mass of the new AT15SS is a major achievement in stereo technology.

For instance, to the best of our knowledge our new stylus is the smallest whole diamond used in series production. In cross-section, it's 36% smaller than our best previous model. It is also nude-mounted to further reduce mass at the record surface. And the square-shank design insures exact alignment with groove modulations.

All this is so small you'll need a microscope like the one above used by many A-T dealers to see the details. If you look very closely you'll also see we've slightly revised the contour of the Shibata tip. The combination of minimum mass and new contour which we call Shibata+ offers outstanding stereo reproduction, especially of the latest high level recordings.

But there's more. Extremely low distortion results from a new ultra-rigid

Beryllium cantilever which transmits stylus movement without flexing. And flatter response plus better tracking is achieved by a new method of mounting our tiny Dual Magnets to further minimize moving mass.

Four tiny differences, yes. But listen to the new AT15SS or the hand-selected AT20SS for ultra-critical listening. You'll find out that less IS more. At your Audio-Technica dealer now.

Note: If you own a current AT15Sa or AT20SLa, you can simply replace your present stylus assembly with a new "SS" stylus assembly to bring your phono system up to date.



Model AT15SS
\$200.00

Model AT20SS
\$250.00



audio-technica
INNOVATION □ PRECISION □ INTEGRITY

AUDIO-TECHNICA U.S., INC., Dept. 49H, 33 Shiawassee Avenue, Fairlawn, Ohio 44313

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COMING NEXT MONTH

Listeners to quality broadcasts keep hearing about such mysterious entities as NPR (National Public Radio), PBS (Public Broadcasting Service), BFA (Broadcasting Foundation of America), and CPB (Corporation for Public Broadcasting). What are they, how do they affect what you hear on public and classical music commercial radio stations, and why does a new Carnegie commission want to get rid of some of them? Next month, in **FM: Today and Tomorrow**, we will discuss these questions as well as the coming use of satellites to create new networks of good-music broadcasters.

And speaking of good music, we will present **The Philadelphia Orchestra Finds a New Record Company**. It was bad enough when Boston's once RCA-exclusive orchestra went over to a foreign record company, Germany's Deutsche Grammophon, but now *et tu, Philly?* At any rate, we will soon find Philadelphia performances coming from England's EMI colossus (Angel Records here) and emanating from a new recording site as well.

Also in May will be the conclusion of this month's new-products coverage (car stereo and home video), **BACKBEAT**, equipment reports, record reviews, and other regulars.

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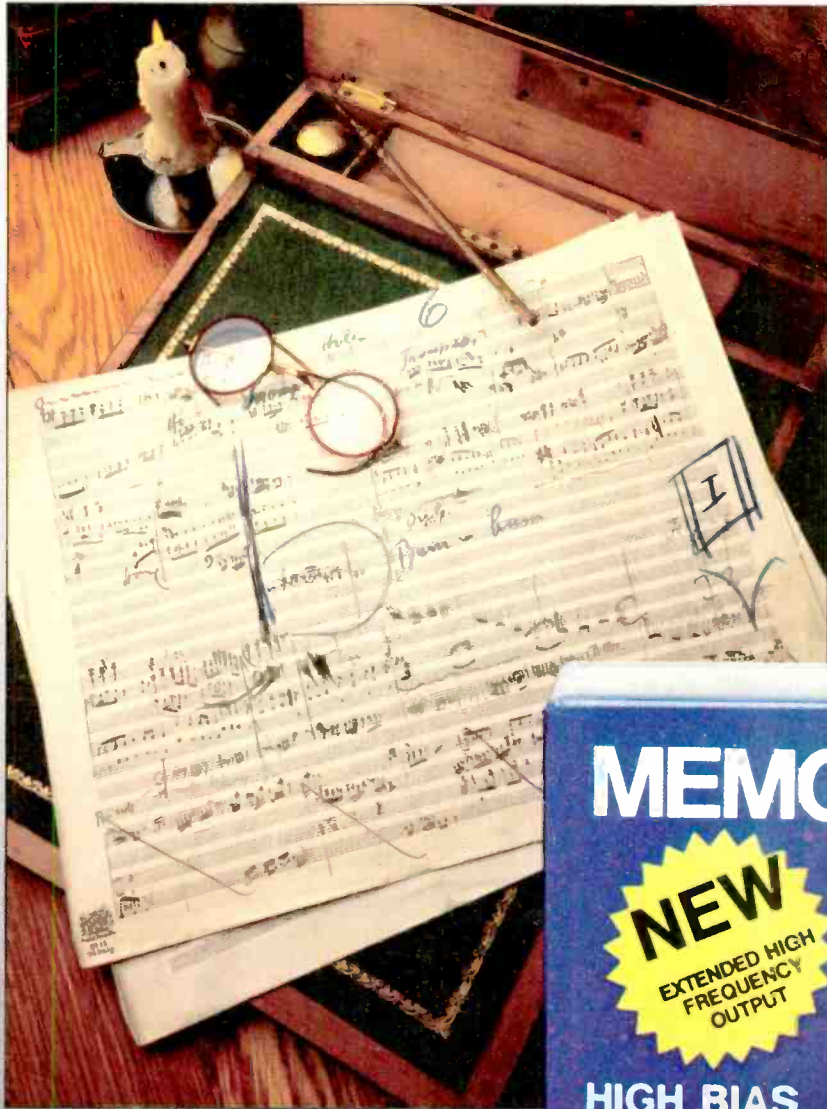
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WHICH NEW HIGH BIAS TAPE WINS WITH MAHLER'S FOURTH SYMPHONY?



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

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

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

Now play back the tapes.

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

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

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

MEMOREX

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



THE SPARKOMATIC SOUND. CAR STEREO FOR THE TRAVELIN' MAN DRIVEN TO PERFECTION.

Sparkomatic car stereo has taken its directions directly from you, the travelin' man. The result is a redefinition of sound and style for the auto audiophile. A new generation of car stereo loaded with high-performance high fidelity features. And engineered with such extraordinarily efficient reception and sound reproduction capabilities that comparison to high

price home components would not be exaggerated.

Sparkomatic's *ears of experience* have produced perfection in high performance high fidelity. So if you're a travelin' man looking for the ultimate in sound, visit a Sparkomatic dealer to see and hear our full line of 20 styles from basic models to state-of-the-art High Power digital units.



SS 100. If you're a travelin' man who gets down to basics by going under-dash with your car sound, Sparkomatic's continuous play 8-track car stereo installs compactly and easily. Accurate slide controls for volume, tone and balance, program selector and program indicator lights are featured. (An under-dash cassette SS 200, is also available.) The sound of these Sparkomatic under-dash units is outstanding—and that's an understatement.

SR 301. To the travelin' man who says car stereo should look and sound sensational, we say Sparkomatic SR 301 cassette AM/FM stereo (or SR 201 8-track model). They're unmatched in eye and ear appeal even by much higher priced car stereos. And features abound, like balance and fader controls, FM muting, rotary controls for volume, tone and tuning, automatic key-off and push-button eject, locking fast forward and rewind and 10 watts of power. If you're into pure listening pleasure, Sparkomatic talks your language.

SR 330. Any travelin' man with a passion for performance and a lust for good looks will respond to Sparkomatic's auto reverse cassette AM/FM stereo SR 330 (or SR 210 8-track AM/FM stereo). This is all out car stereo sound that sits proudly in your dash like a high performance music machine should. Expect no less than *feather touch* electronic controls, separate bass, treble, balance and fader adjustability and an array of cassette handling features. Under the skin there's the guts of 12 watts of power. Whatever you like to hear, Sparkomatic's got your number here.

SR 2400. For the travelin' man in touch with the times, *High Power* car high fidelity should make your adrenalin flow. Sparkomatic's SR 2400 model digital 8-track AM/FM stereo with a precise digital clock is *super-charged* sound. (Other High Power models also available). A full 45 watts of clear audio power over an incredibly wide dynamic range qualifies these stereo machines as the optimum in auto audio. Highly advanced high fidelity features include *feather touch* electronic controls for all major functions and sophisticated tape handling capabilities. When you want to turn up the power, Sparkomatic is the name to turn to.

SPARKOMATIC

For the Travelin' Man™

For our free catalogs on Car Stereo and Car High Fidelity Speakers, write: "For The Travelin' Man", Dept. HF, Sparkomatic Corporation, Miford, PA 18337.

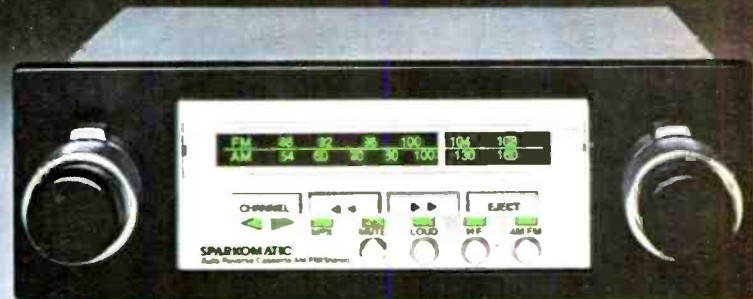
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SS 100



SR 301



SR 330



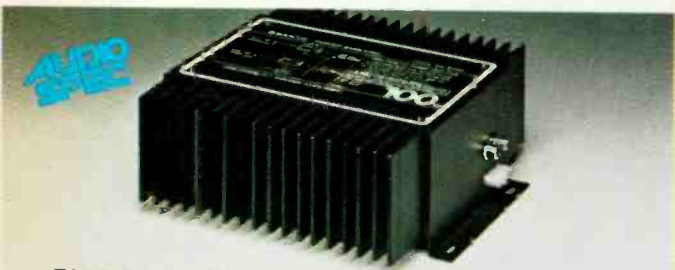
SR 2400

Superb* Awesome** Outrageous***

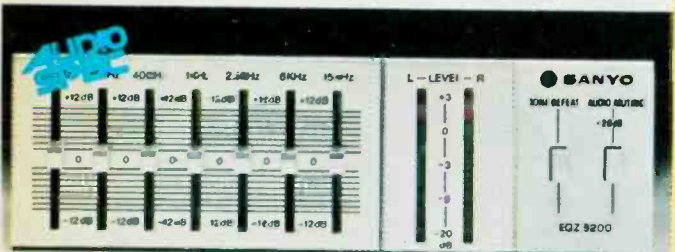
Great car stereo sound used to be an all-or-nothing affair. Either you blew a bundle, or you settled for second best. Now meet the Sanyo Expandables. Car components engineered to let you work your way up from "superb" to "outrageous." In steps that your budget can handle.



FT646 AM, FM, Cassette. Sendust Alloy head. 40-19,000Hz $\pm 3\text{dB}$ with metal tape. 1.5 μV FM sensitivity [JHF]. \$219.95†



PA6100 Stereo Power Amp. 50 watts RMS per channel into 4 ohms 20-20,000Hz, with no more than 0.05% total harmonic distortion. \$149.95†



EQZ6200 Graphic Equalizer. 7 frequency bands with 12dB boost or cut. LED signal level meters. Audio mixing & equalizer feature. \$69.95†

*Step 1: "Superb."

Start off your system with one of Sanyo's new AUDIO/SPEC car stereos and a pair of Sanyo speakers. You'll get great specs, great sound, and the superior engineering of the world's largest tape equipment manufacturer.

Some models give you Dolby noise reduction, Sendust Alloy heads (for all tapes *including metal particle*), and electronic tuning with digital readout of frequency, time, and date. You can also get super-low distortion preamp level outputs — highly recommended for Step 2.

**Step 2: "Awesome."

Whenever you're ready to really *feel* the music, get hold of an AUDIO/SPEC high fidelity power amplifier. We've got four models, with 25 to 60 watts RMS per channel into 4 ohms. *All rated per FTC home hi-fi specs, with full 20-20,000Hz power bandwidth and no more than 0.05% total harmonic distortion!* Some have a unique motor-driven fader for balancing front and rear speakers.

The amplifiers accept preamp level or high level (speaker) inputs, so they'll work with just about any radio/tape unit. Awesome!

***Step 3: "Outrageous."

If nothing less than the ultimate will do, plug in a Sanyo AUDIO/SPEC graphic equalizer between your radio/tape player and the power amp. With 7 bands of precise control, you can customize the sound to fit your taste and your car's acoustics. In seconds, you can actually "re-engineer" any recording to bring out any vocal or instrumental range. Hear it, and you'll be hooked!

The Sanyo Expandables are at better auto sound dealers now. Check out the features and the phenomenal sound, and start planning *your* Expandable system.

Then watch it grow on you.

The Sanyo Expandables: great sound that grows on you.



Sanyo Electric Inc., 1200 W. Artesia Blvd., Compton, CA 90220

Write for your free copy of our information-packed booklet, "How to buy car stereo (without getting taken for a ride)"

Letters

Which Way Is Up?

Has Acoustic Research come up with a real departure in speaker design, or was the picture of the AR-90 upside down ["Equipment in the News," February]?

Stephanie Martin
Hyattsville, Md.

Our apologies to Acoustic Research and to our readers for printing the picture of the AR-90 speaker upside down. Here it is again, right side up.



Tut Tut

I have enjoyed your articles, reviews, and equipment test reports for many years. The covers are usually interesting and indicative of the magazine's content. However, the cover of the January issue [a rendering of the Tutankhamen mask with the features of Earth, Wind & Fire's Maurice White] is in abominable taste!

To have taken one of the most beautiful treasures of antiquity and reduced it to a caricature is artistic license in its crudest form. The cover story about the group claims that the members are "heavily into Egyptology." If that is so, they should certainly appreciate this priceless object and not allow such an insult to Tutankhamen to be printed. The artist might just as well have physically marred the mask; the result is aesthetically the same. Any face other than the one that belongs there is a bastardization of a supreme work of art.

D. Charles
N. Plainfield, N.J.

Reader Charles seems to equate our January cover with painting a moustache on the Mona Lisa. In our own defense, and that of the accomplished artist, Philip Slagter, we offer as evidence the care, restraint, and manifest admiration of the original that the rendering clearly displays. But if, as we suspect, many will convict us of bad taste anyway, we must insist that Earth, Wind & Fire not be made victims of guilt by associ-

ation. Like most magazine-cover subjects, they had no complicity in the result beyond a willingness to appear.

Thanks, Audio Industry

This letter expresses a sentiment I feel every time I switch on my phonograph: gratitude to the audio equipment industry for the high standards of ethics, innovation, and quality most of its members have maintained over the years.

Since the days when Saul Marantz and his wife built their superb equipment, Rudy Bozak supplied low-resonance woofers to Emory Cook, and David Hafbr personally answered correspondence to Dynaco, no industry has come even close in supplying honest value per dollar, in my experience. Much of my equipment has been functioning flawlessly for a decade or so at a cost of about ten cents per hour of use.

R. A. Duis
Schloss Laxenburg, Austria

There's No Business...

I have just read Conrad Osborne's article "The Broadway Voice" [January and February] and found it amazingly detailed and informative. I had always thought Olivia Newton-John simply had tuberculosis and that was why she sang that way.

Brian Charboneau
New Orleans, La.

As a busy singer (soloist with the Bronx Arts Ensemble, a newly formed chamber music group) and voice teacher at both the Ninety-second Street Y Music School and the Riverdale School of Music, I applaud Mr. Osborne for telling it the way it is. Bravo to him and to HIGH FIDELITY for publishing the article.

Edith Gordon Ainsberg
Riverdale, N.Y.

Farwell on Record

Irving Lowens indicates in his review of the New World recording of vocal and instrumental works by Arthur Farwell [November] that "not one date of the compositions recorded is cited." This is not true. In only two instances are the dates not specifically given, and these can be determined from the comprehensive jacket notes by Gilbert Chase.

Furthermore, while it is quite possible for people to disagree about the quality of any performance, it seems to me that these are quite good. Mr. Lowens does not take into account that not much of Farwell's music has been performed or recorded; hence, it seems unlikely that a precedent for performance techniques has been established. Performance techniques and taste in listening lie with the artist and with the listener. If both are satisfied, a performance is successful, aesthetically and financially.

It occurs to me that Mr. Lowens believes that not many people will have purchased such an obscure record as New World 213 and that he is, therefore, safe in making any remark he chooses. I wonder if most critics do not thrive upon this kind of situation. If



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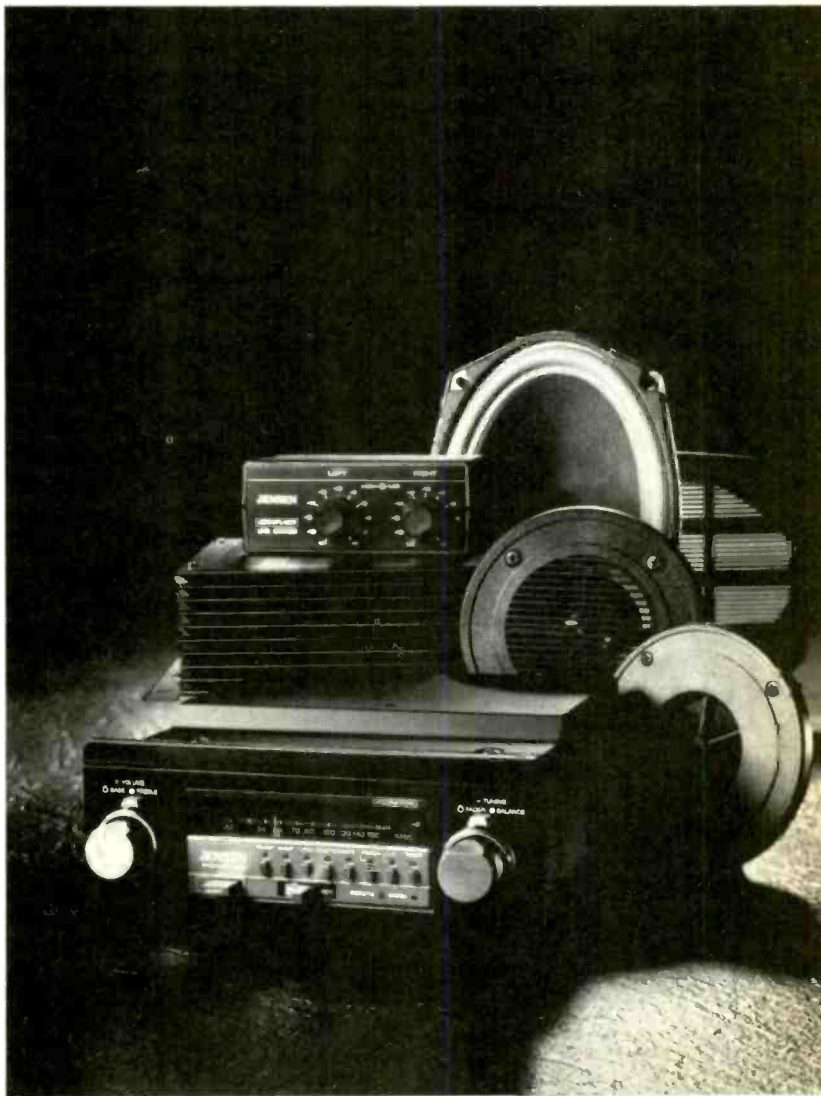
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so, they are not true to themselves nor to those who rely upon their judgment. My own rule is this: If a well-known critic puffs a performance, be cautious; if he damns it, rush in with abandon.

Dr. La Monte Crape
Butler, Pa.

Irving Lowens replies: Dr. Crape is quite correct on one point—with a bit of diligent research, the dates of the Farwell compositions can be determined from the jacket notes. There can, however, be little disagreement about the inferior quality of the performances. In gauging this, it is surely not sufficient to state that if both the artist

and the listener are satisfied, "a performance is successful, aesthetically and financially." After all, the composer's wishes must be taken into account, as well as the outrage registered by such acknowledged specialists in American music as Neely Bruce.

The Envelope, Please

Ladies, gentlemen, and distinguished guests: It is with the greatest pleasure that I rise to accept BACKBEAT's Critics' Choice '78 Purple Heart Award, Fourth Prize, for the Record Company that Took the Most Chances, With or Without Success, that

you so graciously bestowed upon us in the January issue. That the award was made to "all independent jazz labels," rather than to Star Jazz by name, was obviously a minor clerical inadvertency that we are delighted to overlook in the spirit of this festive occasion. We accept the award both proudly and humbly in the realization that it has been granted to us in recognition of "Jazz You Like It" and "Justice Makes Love," the albums upon which we sacrificed the maidenhead of the Star Jazz label.

I cannot and do not stand alone in accepting this honor. The sacred tradition of all such ceremonials requires that "the little people who made it happen" be acknowledged.

First, then, God, we take note of the Beiderbecke - Armstrong - Hackett - inspired trumpet work of Teagarden/Carmichael alumnus Tom Justice. Somehow, Justice's genius, chops, and taste survived, undiminished, the nearly three decades of musical mayhem that preceded the now budding renaissance of jazz. And we are indebted to the Same Source for the other marvelous artists we were able to muster for our premiere albums: clarinetist Ernie Goodson, pianists Bobby Rosen and Ray Thompson, bassmen Tom Sheeder and Gene Hoover, trombonist Hank Bredenburg, drummers Red Hawley and Damon Buckley, and guitarist Frank Applegate. Penicillin can't even touch the infectious licks of these giants.

Credit must be shared also with the gutsy DJs at WSBR, WLRN, WTMI, and other stations that have violated every precept of contemporary broadcast programming by playing goodies we resurrected, like "My Honey's Loving Arms," "Keeping out of Mischief Now," and "The Old Spinning Wheel" on one album, and the ballad jazz tunes like "Nancy," "Judy," and "Emaline" on the other. And the listeners, bless 'em, who called in and asked for more.

Thanks, too, to Pickwick International, the giant distributor that Took a Chance and is putting our albums into record stores where the diligent searcher may ferret them out of the mountains of Top 40 discs and Chart Busters.

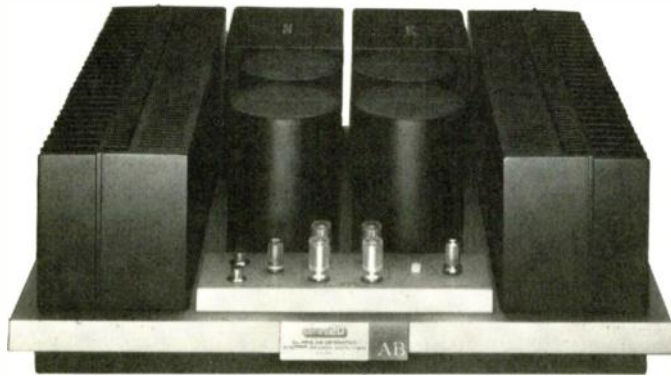
It is still too early to tell whether Star Jazz will wind up With or Without Success. But it is certain that we would not have been in contention under either category without the crapshooters who might have thought that they were investors.

Will Connelly
President/Producer/Sweeper-Up
Star Jazz Records, Inc.
Plantation, Fla.

Minor clerical inadvertencies aside: Here's the lookin' at ya, Star Jazz, and all your independent-jazz-label brethren, and may it be With Success rather than the other thing.

Pirate Records, Cont.

As an attorney, I feel the force of David Hamilton's legal and ethical objections to "private" recordings ["Who Speaks for Cal-las?," January]. Nevertheless, I purchase them by the dozens—not in lieu of commercial recordings, but to supplement these (no



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CIRCLE 60 ON PAGE 99

unfair competition here). I do this because it seems to me that the record companies are shirking their ethical responsibilities (perhaps for solid financial reasons) to record commercially the performances that are circulated by the underground.

As long as the pirate items are properly identified as such, there would seem to be no ethical, and few legal, problems. The problem comes when someone does not realize what he is purchasing. It would be far better to review the merits and defects of such productions (as you have done in this instance) than to avoid reviewing them for fear of, in effect, endorsing the concept (an argument incomprehensible to my legal mind). Pirate recordings are here to stay, so one might as well enjoy these treasures.

Lawrence S. King
New York, N.Y.

Scapegoat

It is ironic that Gene Lees, who has been using Bob Dylan as a scapegoat for years, should wrongly attribute to him the authorship of "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" in "War Songs II: Music Goes AWOL" [January]. The song was written by Pete Seeger.

Peter Whitehead
Stockbridge, Mass.

WERM Returns?

Your readers may like to know that I have been engaged in compiling a successor to *The World's Encyclopedia of Recorded Music* ever since the publication of the *Third Supplement*, having collaborated with Messrs. Clough and Cuming from the time of WERM's original appearance.

A new volume was originally planned for the early 1960s, but this had to be abandoned. The work has subsequently come under the auspices of the British Institute of Recorded Sound, our national sound archive. Francis Clough died in 1977, having retired from the project some years previously, but at least one other member of the former editorial team is still actively interested. Some of the fruits of many years of labor have been incorporated in composer discographies (e.g., Holst, Grainger, and, most recently, Medtner) published in the Institute's journal *Recorded Sound*.

There is now an urgent need to make plans for publication before the accumulation of information becomes unmanageably large and before the years take their toll of the compiler's energy, and 1980 suggests itself as a neat cutoff date for a new volume—or rather, set of volumes. Much work is necessary in order to prepare the material for the press. There is also the need to finance publication, and perhaps this letter will catch the eye of those who could help in this respect or make useful suggestions.

As it stands, a new WERM would provide much data on recordings not easily traceable elsewhere, but there are certain areas where more information is needed. If any of your readers can provide news, especially by way of catalogs and other printed matter, on records of serious music issued

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The FM Guide (Canada):

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in recent years in such places as South America, Japan, Yugoslavia, etc., it would be gratefully received by the undersigned, as would information on vocal or little-publicized releases. Executives of record companies could help by supplying catalogs of their output and regular material on new releases, and copies of records likely to present musicological problems of identification would also be more than welcome.

Eric Hughes
British Institute of Recorded Sound
28 Exhibition Rd.
London SW 7, England

Low-Torque Tape Reels

In response to the letter in your February issue, we supply the seven-inch tape reels with four-inch inner cores that A. E. Zimmerman is looking for.

Jeffrey S. Lane
Saxitone Tape Sales
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Several readers responded to Mr. Zimmerman's request. Other companies that supply the reels are Recording Supply Co., 1233 Rand Rd., Des Plaines, Ill. 60016, The Sound Investment Co., Bldg. 2A, DeKalb Peachtree Airport, Chamblee, Ga. 30341, and Seymour's, Inc., 350 West 31st St., New York, N.Y. 10001.

AR Antiskating Device

Frank N. Moyer, who wrote you ["Too Hot to Handle," December] concerning the problem of selecting a cartridge for his Acoustic Research turntable—which lacks antiskating—may be interested to know that Audio Innovative Products (P.O. Box 1607, Portsmouth, N.H. 03801) manufactures an antiskating device for AR turntables.

Gordon Marsh
Dayton, Ohio

Hands Across the Sea

I am a 24-year-old Polish student in technical school and have a great enthusiasm for high fidelity equipment, music, and electronics. I have some friends in Poland who are interested in the same subjects, but I have no friends abroad. I write to you in the hope that you can help me find someone who would like to correspond with me.

Jacek Rajpold
Sienkiewicza 28 m. 38
97-300 Piotrkow Tryb.
Poland

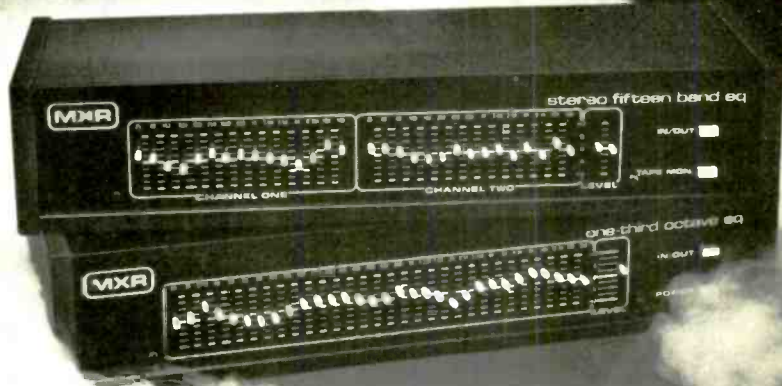
A Matter of Origin

In his review of Johan Roman's Swedish Mass (December), Irving Lowens refers to Claude Genetay as a French musicologist. Despite his name and family origin, Mr. Genetay is a native Swede, born in 1917. Since 1970 he has been chairman of the chamber music division of the Swedish Radio.

Alan Stout
Evanston, Ill.

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Stir dem branches
Mir divis fine;
Low frimso d.
Over shine



Hornet's Nest

by John Culshaw

LONDON—When, a few months ago, I was a visiting Fellow at the University of Melbourne, my attention was drawn to a letter written by Wagner and posted from Bayreuth on October 22, 1877. It was in reply to a letter from a Mr. E. Sander in Swanston Street, Melbourne, who had written enthusiastically about the first performance of *Lohengrin* in Australia in August of that year. There is nothing new about this correspondence, for it was published in the *Musical Times* in 1907, but if only for one reason it is odd that it has been ignored by most of Wagner's biographers. In his reply, Wagner writes: "Please do try to have my works produced in English, for only then can they be fully comprehended by an English-speaking audience."

I am at the very least reluctant to thrust my hand into the hornet's nest of opera in translation, but, with the thought of Wagner's letter fresh in my mind, I returned to London and invited a group of friends to listen to a passage in a recording and write down exactly what they heard. The passage in question lasted thirteen seconds and contained thirteen words. After many hearings, the ver-

sion that we eventually agreed was the most accurate went as follows:

Stir dem branches
Mir divis fine;
Low frimso da son
Over shine.

Well, we had lost a word on the way; there was some discussion about whether "divis" was one word or two, and some doubt about "over." But the crux of the matter was the language itself, and since everyone present knew the music and guessed the recording, there was no hesitation in deciding that it was meant to be English. It was in fact the beginning of the Immolation Scene in the English National Opera recording of *Twilight of the Gods*, and the words should be:

Sturdy branches
Building his pyre
Now bring to the shore
Of the Rhine.

I mean no discredit to Andrew Porter's excellent translation nor to Rita Hunter's performance when I say that the passage is not at all exceptional in being incomprehensible.

By coincidence, I had also received a letter from a stranger in Seattle who complained at length—although why to me I know not—that she had scarcely understood a word of the Seattle Opera *Ring* cycle in English, whereas she had got by quite well with the aid of a synopsis in the German version; and that, of course,

opens up the whole hornet's nest. She was concentrating on hearing the words in English, whereas Wagner's meaning—despite what he wrote to Mr. Sander in Melbourne—lies in his music. Yet there are passages that gain enormously by being sung in English to a non-German-speaking audience: Wotan's crucial monologue in Act II of *The Valkyrie*, or Mime's self-condemnatory thoughts toward the end of Act II of *Siegfried*. But for every passage that gains in translation, either in *The Ring* or elsewhere, I would guess there are half a dozen that lose a great deal in the process.

I can propose no solution to the problem, although we should at once eliminate a few absurd offerings, such as an international cast and chorus, not one of whom can speak a word of Russian, performing *Boris Godunov* by means of phonetics. I do not want to hear the "authentic" *Carmen* (whatever that may be) with spoken dialogue in fractured French. But then, to turn the point upside down, what is the object of performing a comedy like *Don Pasquale* in Italian for the benefit of an English-speaking audience that responds not with laughter, but as if it were hearing *Par-sifal*?

What it comes down to is that narration as such gains greatly through translation, whereas the words in any high or frenetic passage in any opera are likely to be incomprehensible in any language—although musically they will seem more comfortable in the original. But then there is the question of intrusive accents. Sometimes they can be endearing: Nothing in the world would make me part with Renata Tebaldi's "Eef I luffed you." On the other hand (and although I make no claim to be a linguist), I knew from the very opening line of the recent Karajan *Salome* that his Narraboth was neither German nor Austrian. (He turned out to be Polish.)

It may be that none of this matters at all, except to a few, and it is doubtless something we shall have to live with in the opera house. Yet in modern recording conditions it should be possible to get accents right and to make most of the words audible. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau is sometimes accused of affected enunciation, but I for one would rejoice if other singers followed his example. And, incidentally, his English is perfect: Witness the *War Requiem*. It is perfect because of long and intensive study and a concern for the meaning of words—and that is the heart of the problem. It is possible to do better than "Stir dem branches." ●

In his feature review of Richard Dyer-Bennet's recording of *The Lovely Mill-ress* in this issue, Andrew Porter addresses the related question of *Lieder* rendered into English.

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It's a strange, but true fact—the better your hi fi equipment, the more hiss, hum and rumble you will hear. Just as a quality high fidelity system provides richer music through its wide frequency response and greater dynamic range, it also has a better ability to reproduce irritating flaws contained in the source material. You can make a major improvement in your system by eliminating much of the hiss, hum and rumble that's inherent in the source material itself.

Many noise reduction systems have some success, but only one can silently remove 10dB of the hiss, hum and rumble that is contained in unencoded records, tapes and FM. That one system is the Phase 1000 Series Two.

As you reproduce recorded music, the 1000 Series Two analyzes the millions of incoming waveforms to find signals similar to a sine wave—a highly "correlated" waveform with periodic repetition. Like a guitar note. Or a piano note. Or a vocal note.

The 1000 Series Two electronically analyzes the signal to find fundamental musical tones, and their harmonics. Where these are missing, there is no music. The 1000 can then safely assume there is noise.



THE PHASE 1000 SERIES TWO

If the 1000 Series Two identifies a fundamental waveform, it instantly orders one of its silent bandpass gates to open. If no music is present, the gates remain shut. The 1000 removes a full 10dB of hiss, hum and rumble—without affecting music!

The 1000 Series Two overcomes another flaw—dynamic compression. Live music has great dynamic range with as much as 100dB between the loudest and the quietest passages. But tape recorders have limited range, so studio engineers compress the dynamic range to less than 50dB. FM broadcasters compress the signal even more, in order to facilitate transmission. The 1000 is the only Noise Reduction System that can correct this compression on unencoded material. It expands dynamic range by a full 7.5dB, for a more open, lively sound.

The Phase 1000 Series Two may very well improve your sound more than any

other single component you could add, regardless of the quality or price of your hi fi system. The 1000 is an improved version of the Phase Linear Autocorrelator, now with second generation, low noise, high slew rate integrated circuitry for quiet, distortion-free performance. It's easy to utilize with any stereo receiver, integrated amp or preamp/amp, and is a valuable addition to Dolby* and dbx systems. (These systems are very effective in preventing noise from being added in the re-recording stage, but don't reduce noise in the original recording.) When you play conventional records through the 1000, you cut tape hiss. (Expensive direct-to-disc records are cut directly onto a master, primarily to avoid the taping stage with its inherent hiss.)

Ask your Phase dealer to play any record, tape or tuner through the 1000 Series Two. Then listen to the music. Not the noise.

Phase Linear[®]
THE POWERFUL DIFFERENCE

FCC Probes RFI

The Federal Communications Commission, which has been receiving some 80,000 complaints annually about radio frequency interference to home electronic equipment, is soliciting comments on what if anything it should do to alleviate the problem. Basically, the commission is interested in finding out how serious a problem RFI is, how much consumers know about its causes and cures, and whether or not more consumer information about its causes and cures would be helpful. Another question of serious concern is whether the public would prefer a mandatory solution regulated by the FCC, a voluntary solution administered by equipment manufacturers, some other form of action, or no change in existing policies. At the moment, the FCC has authority only over transmitting equipment, and one purpose of the inquiry seems to be to determine whether to support congressional efforts to extend that authority to home electronic gear.

Readers who wish to respond may obtain the "Interference Feedback" checkoff form by writing to the Federal Communications Commission, Consumer Assistance Office, Washington, D.C. 20554, or by calling Erika Ziebarth Jones, Consumer Assistance Office, (202) 632-7000; Frank Ross, Office of the Chief Engineer, (202) 632-7093; or your local FCC field office. For more comprehensive information about the RFI problem, interested parties are encouraged to request the entire Notice of Inquiry.

HIGH FIDELITY urges its readers to participate in this survey and make their views known. The actions eventually taken by the FCC in this area not only will bear on your enjoyment of your electronic home-entertainment equipment, but may influence the cost of such equipment in the future. Indeed, as we have said in the past, measures that dictate specific circuit configurations (should the FCC choose to go that route) to reduce RFI could also grossly inhibit performance in audio components. Replies are due by May 1.

The Case of the Lively "Corpse"

We were reminded recently of Mark Twain's statement that "the reports of my death are greatly exaggerated" when news came of a reorganization at Tandbergs Radiofabrik A/S in Norway. The company, which has been operating with government participation for some time, has divested itself of some unprofitable product lines and appears to be spinning off its data-processing operation (which is profitable) into a new organization in which Siemens of Germany will be a participant.

The high fidelity division, which builds the tape equipment and receivers marketed here by Tandberg of America, has received government capitalization and guarantees of some \$24 million as part of the reorganization, and it appears that deliveries from Norway were not even interrupted while the restructuring was under way. This contrasts sharply with reports last December in the financial press, stating that Tandberg was in bankruptcy. Apparently the plans to close down the least profitable portions of the enterprise were grossly misconstrued. Indeed, Tandberg says it already has several new products that it will be introducing later this year—hardly the undertaking of a corpse, corporate or not.

New High-End Musicassettes

In Sync Laboratories, Inc., has negotiated an agreement with Connoisseur Society, Inc., to license substantial portions of the latter's catalog and release the selections as a new line of "state-of-the-art" prerecorded cassettes. Connoisseur Society Laboratory Series Cassettes, as they will be called, will be made from duplicator masters recorded at 15 ips rather than the slower speeds normally used in commercial duplicating and will be recorded on second-generation chromium dioxide tapes such as BASF Pro II and du Pont Crolyn II. The extra headroom of such formulations is said to eliminate the need for compression, limiting, and gain riding.

In addition, the new tapes will be processed by means of Dolby B. Since professional Dolby B processors normally include a low-pass filter that limits high-frequency response to 16 kHz, In Sync has, with the assistance of Dolby Laboratories, modified the encoder to bypass this filter. Promised response of the new cassettes will extend beyond 20 kHz.

The first releases include pianist Jean-Philippe Collard playing the four Rachmaninoff concertos, Michel Béroff playing Bartók piano works, Ivan Moravec in a Chopin album, Lionel Rogg playing Liszt organ music, and Serge Baudo conducting Rousel.

JBL/Subotnick Celebration

Following a long and honorable tradition in which works of art are commissioned to commemorate important occasions, JBL premiered Morton Subotnick's electronic piece *A Sky of Cloudless Sulphur* at the opening of its new 420,000-square-foot plant in Northridge, California, last November 19. Subotnick's *Silver Apples of the Moon* on Nonesuch was the first electronic composition ever commissioned by a record company. *A Sky of Cloudless Sulphur* will be released this spring by CBS Records.

Also . . .

- The Institute of High Fidelity filed a request last December that the FCC give an effective date for the broadcast of AM stereo. Stated intents of the IHF are, among other things, to enable the consumer to be better informed as to when the equipment he or she will be purchasing can receive stereo AM broadcasts and to allow for an orderly marketplace transition. Six months from the date that the rule is published in final form was suggested as a reasonable effective date.

- A forty-six-page booklet, *The Multitrack Primer*, written by audio specialist Dick Rosmini is available from Teac Corporation of America for \$4.95. It covers not only such subjects as studio setup and layout, impedance matching, and microphone selection, but such interesting wrinkles as how to build a tent and a baffle. Both writing and graphics are refreshing in style and unusually informative in content.

- *Tape Editing* by Joel Tall, known as the inventor of the modern tape splicing block, is published by Elpa Marketing Industries, Inc., and sells for \$2.00.

The new Sansui rack-mountable receivers:



An uncommon combination.

It used to be that if you wanted the advantages of rack-mounted components, you had to have a professional's knowledge of complex equipment connections. And be rich enough to afford near-professional prices.

Sansui has changed all that. We've combined the convenience and sophisticated look of rack mounting with the value and all-in-one simplicity of receivers, to produce two very uncommon components.

The new TA-500 rack-mountable receiver, so good that we call it a tuner/amplifier, is distinguished by its pure DC power amplifier section, with wide frequency response and low TIM — assuring you the most realistic music reproduction in its power/price class. Power rating is an ample 50 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20-20,000Hz. And total harmonic distortion is inaudible — no more than 0.05%.

In performance, appearance and overall "feel" the TA-500 seems much more expensive than it is. The FM section, for example, has

a sensitivity of 10.8dBf (1.9 μ V IHF T-100) and a 75dB signal-to-noise ratio, outperforming most separate tuners in its class.

Sansui is also introducing the new TA-300 receiver, at 30 watts per channel with no more than 0.06% THD under the same conditions. With specifications and features that are highly competitive with other receivers in its power/price class, plus its rack mounting advantages, the TA-300 is sure to be one of this year's most popular components.

Both models are luxuriously designed with the same styling and satin black finish used in Sansui's most expensive professional products; and they perfectly complement our full range of useful and exciting rack-mountable accessories, from tape decks to mixers to microphone drawers. To get an earful of our rack-full, visit your nearest Sansui authorized dealer.

SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.

Lyndhurst, New Jersey 07071 • Gardanc, Ca. 90247
Sansui Electric Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan
Sansui Audio Europe S.A., Antwerp, Belgium
In Canada: Electronic Distributors

Sansui

The first time you hear the L220's, before you know what's happening to you, you smile.

Later, when you find the words, you'll be able to talk about things like "texture" and "detail" and "subtlety." But right now it's all feeling. It's love at first sound.

Crank them up. Try 110dB. Go ahead. That's what they're there for. Drench yourself in pure sound. Crisp, tight, spacious, clean — certainly. But something well beyond. Something powerful, uncompromising, awesome.

Now turn them down for a minute and listen with your eyes. The L220's are tall, tapered, elegant — appearing more slim than they actually are.

Now slip the grille off and feast your eyes on the components: New high frequency elliptical ring radiator. New

refracting wave guide for the midrange. A 14" woofer with a massive, twelve pound magnetic assembly. A 15" passive radiator. Four superb individual performers. How do they work together? Magnificently.

Conventional Staggered Baffle Array



The L220 Flat Baffle Array

To attain proper phase relationships, the acoustic centers of the drivers must be aligned. The JBL L220 design accomplishes this while retaining the flat baffle necessary to prevent spurious reflections.

That breathtaking stereo imaging you hear is not by accident. It's by design. The components are in precise

JBL's new L220.

Because there's no such thing as too much music.

vertical alignment. They are in precise acoustical alignment, too. The time domain response, the phase linearity is flawless. JBL's engineers accomplished this without creating one of those staggered baffle fronts that cause as many problems as they solve.

Come celebrate the L220's. They're yours for \$1,750 a pair. They're a whole lot of loudspeakers from the people who gave high performance sound a first name: JBL.

JBL

GET IT ALL.



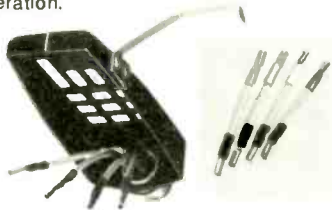
Last year, 35 of the top 50 albums were recorded or mixed in studios using JBL loudspeakers. Shown here: Criteria Studios, Miami, Florida.



The better your ear,
the more you
need new
Audio-Technica
**VITAL
LINKS!**

Every wire, every connection in your stereo system is a source of trouble, a chance for losses which can keep your system from achieving its full potential.

Introducing three new Vital Link wire sets from Audio-Technica... each a positive step toward ideal performance and trouble-free operation.



Start at the cartridge with the AT609 Head Shell Wire Set. Color-coded, insulated wires with 14 strands of pure silver Litz wire, terminated in corrosion-free gold terminals. No losses, no Intermittents. Easy to install. Just \$6.95 and worth every penny.



Between turntable and amplifier (or any two stereo components) use new AT610a High Conductivity Cable. A stereo pair 60" long, plus an independent ground wire with lugs. Each gold-plated plug is color-coded. Both resistance and capacitance are far

below ordinary cables. Only \$7.95.

For the most critical installations use our AT620 Super-conductivity Cable Set. Two individual cables, each 48" long, with heavily gold-plated plugs. Inside the wire shield is a second conductive layer of polypropylene shielding. Special foam dielectric keeps capacity low, while superb conductivity is assured by using Litz-wire inner conductors with maximum surface area which reduces high frequency losses. The set lists for \$29.95.



From phonograph cartridge to loud-speaker, each audio system is a chain, no stronger than its weakest link. Connect your system with Vital Link cables from Audio-Technica. At your A-T dealer now. Or write for our complete audio accessory catalog.

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CIRCLE 3 ON PAGE 99



Too Hot to Handle

You people wrote a rave review of the new Shure V-15 Type IV cartridge [June 1978]. I have a friend who argues that the Stanton Longhair brush also is grounded and does the same thing as the new Shure. How do their specs compare? How are they at neutralizing static and picking up dust?—Alexander Rysman, Waterville, Md.

The Stanton brush is not grounded and, according to Stanton, was not designed to be. The idea is to let the brush build up a static charge to pull the dust off the record and hold it. If the record surface is clean at the point of stylus contact, static charge on the disc is unlikely to make its presence known.

What your friend may have been referring to is the fact that Stanton's stylus assembly is grounded and so tends to drain off the charge at the point of contact. Most stylus assemblies are not grounded.

I have updated my system by purchasing a pair of Koss CM-1030 speakers and a Philips 212 turntable. I like an extremely prominent high end, so I drive my Kenwood 8006 at twelve o'clock with the treble all the way up and bass slightly boosted. This achieved what the salesman said would never happen: I blew a fuse on the left speaker and the output of the left channel of my amp. When my system is on, I hear a steady whooshing sound of power. Before the purchase of the Koss I used Electro-Voice 15A speakers for three years with the same amp and had no problems. What am I doing wrong?—Wayne L. Dunn, Yonkers, N.Y.

In our tests of the Koss CM-1030, we found the impedance to be 5 ohms in the treble region. This should be a perfectly safe load for an amplifier under normal conditions. Your penchant for full treble boost is not normal. It's likely that you were demanding too much high-frequency power from the amp or that it went into oscillation. The steady whooshing sound may be indicative of oscillation, but more probably it is simply the effect of the tremendous boost you're giving to high-frequency noise. Whatever the response of your ears to such boosted highs may be, they're straining your equipment. If you must persist, a larger amp will be needed.

I recently acquired a Pioneer CT-F7272 cassette deck, and since I have practically no more space for disc recordings, I am considering getting rid of a number of discs after taping cherished excerpts. I hesitate to do so only out of uncertainty about the life expectancy of cassettes. I have heard from friends that they know of old tapes that have faded.—James B. Greer, Greeley, Colo.

With modern tape formulations and binders, "fading" as you call it, should not be a problem. But in the cassette format, print-

through is. Assuming care in the use of both media (correct stylus force, vertical disc storage, appropriate premium cassettes for your Pioneer, etc.), the archival properties of the discs should exceed those of the cassettes for that reason, in our opinion.

Being a somewhat myopic and impatient person who acquires new phono cartridges with fair regularity and abhors the hassle of bolting them into headshells, I have devised what I consider to be a neat bypass for the entire problem. What I do is to discard the mounting screws and coat the mating surfaces of the cartridge and headshell with a thin layer of silicone rubber cement of the type available from General Electric or Dow Corning, adjust the overhang, and press the two together. After the rubber has cured (which takes twenty-four hours) any excess rubber that has been forced out of the gap should be cut away with a razor blade. Not only is the cartridge firmly secured, but the extra compliance of the silicone rubber may even help to isolate it from resonances found in the tonearm and headshell. And discarding the screws helps to lower the effective mass. To dismount the cartridge, rock it gently from side to side until the bond is broken and peel the rubber skin away from all surfaces. I have used this method for some months now with apparent good results. Am I harming anything?—Norman J. Klug, Beaverton, Ore.

Your idea sounds okay to us, provided you are certain that the cement does not react with the plastic of the cartridge body or headshell. Thanks for passing it along.

Is there any way to modify a Dokorder 8140 tape recorder to increase the record/playback speeds from 3¾ and 7½ ips to 7½ and 15 ips? If so, would this appreciably improve the signal-to-noise ratio and/or the frequency response? Would it cause any problems?—Maurice Libby, Yorkton, Sask., Canada.

Aside from the fact that we weren't very impressed with Dokorder's quality and doubt that it is a good bet for long-term reliability, we don't recommend that you try to change the basic characteristics of a tape deck. Although it can be done, the modifications are extensive. Not only must the mechanical transport be modified, but you must also change the recording and playback equalizations. Such modifications are well beyond the capabilities of the amateur, and you are better off trading in your deck for one that is designed to do what you want.

We regret that, due to the volume of reader mail we get, we cannot give individual answers to all questions.



maxell

1

Our 7" reel is designed to gather tape. Not dust.

Something as insignificant as a speck of dust can mess up a perfectly good recording.

So at Maxell, we've developed an ingenious device that keeps dust

from collecting on our tape. Our take-up reel.

Instead of gaping holes that let dust in, our specially molded polystyrene design actually forces dust out.

So if your take-up reel is picking up more than it should, pick up ours.

You'll find it comes attached to something even more impressive.

Our tape.

maxell



INTRODUCING THE EMPIRE EDR.9 PHONO CARTRIDGE. IT SOUNDS AS GOOD ON A RECORD AS IT DOES ON PAPER.

It was inevitable . . .

With all the rapid developments being made in today's high fidelity technology, the tremendous advance in audible performance in Empire's new EDR.9 phono cartridge was bound to happen. And bound to come from Empire, as we have been designing and manufacturing the finest phono cartridges for over 18 years.

Until now, all phono cartridges were designed in the lab to achieve certain engineering characteristics and requirements. These lab characteristics and requirements took priority over actual listening tests because it was considered more important that the cartridges "measure right" or "test right"—so almost everyone was satisfied.

Empire's EDR.9 (for Extended Dynamic Response) has broken with this tradition, and is the first phono cartridge that not only meets the highest technological and design specifications—but also our

demanding listening tests—on an equal basis. In effect, it bridges the gap between the ideal blueprint and the actual sound.

The EDR.9 utilizes an L. A. C. (Large Area Contact) 0.9 stylus based upon—and named after—E. I. A. Standard RS-238B. This new design, resulting in a smaller radius and larger contact area, has a pressure index of 0.9, an improvement of almost six times the typical elliptical stylus and four times over the newest designs recently introduced by several other cartridge manufacturers. The result is that less pressure is applied to the vulnerable record groove, at the same time extending the bandwidth—including the important overtones and harmonic details.

In addition, Empire's exclusive, patented 3-Element Double Damped stylus assembly acts as an equalizer. This eliminates the high "Q" mechanical resonances typical of other stylus assemblies, producing a flatter response, and lessening wear and tear on the record groove.

We could go into more technical detail, describing pole rods that are laminated, rather than just one piece, so as to reduce losses in the magnetic structure, resulting in flatter high frequency response with less distortion. Or how the EDR.9 weighs one gram less than previous Empire phono cartridges, making it a perfect match for today's advanced low mass tonearms.

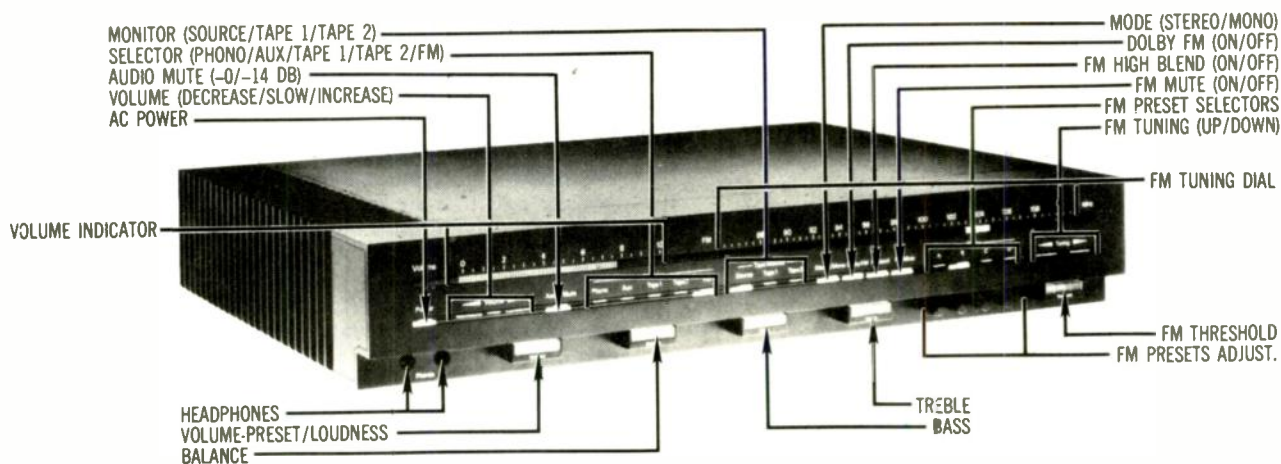
But more important, as the EDR.9 cartridge represents a new approach to cartridge design, we ask that you consider it in a slightly different way as well. Send for our free technical brochure on the EDR.9, and then visit your audio dealer and listen. Don't go by specs alone.

That's because the new Empire EDR.9 is the first phono cartridge that not only meets the highest technological and design specifications—but also our demanding listening tests.

Empire Scientific Corp. **EMPIRE**
Garden City, N.Y. 11530

New Equipment Reports

Preparation supervised by
Robert Long, Harold A. Rodgers,
and Edward J. Foster
Laboratory data (unless otherwise noted)
supplied by CBS Technology Center



The Receiver, Nakamichi Style

Nakamichi Model 730 stereo FM receiver, in metal case. Dimensions: 19¾ by 4 inches (front panel), 14¾ inches deep plus clearance for connections. Accessory AC outlets: 2 switched (100 watts total). Price: \$1,200; optional RM-730 remote-control system, \$190. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Nakamichi Research Japan; U.S. distributor: Nakamichi Research (U.S.A.), Inc., 1101 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, Calif. 90401.

The Nakamichi brand name has become something of a specific against boredom; while the astonishment factor, so to speak, has varied from product to product, no model bearing that name has ever struck us as ordinary, and some (certainly the Model 1000 cassette deck among them) have been in the vanguard of fresh thinking on engineering, styling, and marketing. The Model 730 lies closer to that extreme than to the commonplace, though its touch-sensitive switching and digitally oriented design are not unique. Getting to know it has been an intriguing experience.

The most obviously "digital" of its features is the volume control: a complex of touchbars by means of which the output level is stepped upward or downward. Since there is no knob or slider to betray volume setting, a luminous panel calibrated from 0 to 10 displays it as a bar graph. Touching the DECREASE or INCREASE bars produces fairly rapid changes in output; for fine adjustment, you simultaneously touch the SLOW bar. If you want to limit the maximum volume to which the INCREASE can drive the 730, the PRESET bar (actually a horizontal slider with a calibration window in its front face and a center detent at the full-on position) can be moved to the right. When it's

slid all the way, attenuation is 22 dB (compared to 14 dB for the MUTE feature). And when it's slid to the left of the center (full-on) position, loudness compensation is introduced along with the attenuation. Thus for either loudness or limited-maximum-output operation, the touch-control VOLUME can be left at a "normal maximum" level, set with the PRESET/LOUDNESS slider centered, and the level thereafter adjusted at the slider. It sounds complicated, but it works.

The behavior of the FM tuning (there is no AM section) is "digital" in the sense that in normal operation it can be set only at discrete positions dictated by receivable stations; if, for some reason, you want to tune between stations, you must switch to one of the four presets and deliberately misadjust it. When you press UP or DOWN, the orange pointer will begin gliding in the appropriate direction until you remove your finger; then it will continue to the nearest "receivable" station (as de-

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. Samples normally are supplied on loan from the manufacturer. 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.

Nakamichi Model 730 Receiver

Tuner Section

Capture ratio	1½ dB		
Alternate channel selectivity	80 dB		
THD + N	L ch	R ch	Mono
80 Hz	0.09%	0.09%	0.06%
1 kHz	0.07%	0.07%	0.065%
10 kHz	0.43%	0.43%	0.16%
IM distortion	0.045%		
19-kHz pilot	-65½ dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-67½ dB		
S/N ratios (at 65 dBf)			
stereo	67½ dB		
mono	70 dB		
Muting threshold	16 dBf		

Amplifier Section

Manufacturer's rated power 20% dBW (105 watts)/ch.		
Power output at clipping (both channels driven)		
L ch	20% dBW (120 watts)	
R ch	20% dBW (120 watts)	
Dynamic headroom (at 1 kHz)	¾ dB	
Frequency response	+ 0, -½ dB, < 10 Hz to 20 kHz + 0, -3 dB, < 10 Hz to 57 kHz	
RIAA equalization	± ¼ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz	
Input characteristics (re 0 dBW (1 watt); noise A-weighted)		
	Sensitivity	S/N ratio
phono	0.5 mV	78 dB
aux	10 mV	85½ dB
tape 1, 2	10 mV	85½ dB
Phono overload (clipping)	130 mV at 1 kHz*	
Harmonic distortion (THD + N; 20 Hz to 20 kHz)		
at 20% dBW (105 watts) output	< 0.021%	
at 10 dBW (10 watts) output	< 0.019%	
at ¼ dBW (1.05 watt) output	< 0.031%	
Intermodulation distortion		
8-ohm load	< 0.035%, -3 to 20½ dBW (0.5 to 112 W)	
4-ohm load	< 0.050%, 0 to 20½ dBW (1 to 121 W)	
16-ohm load	< 0.035%, -6 to 18½ dBW (0.25 to 69 W)	
Damping factor at 50 Hz	50	
*Depends on setting of tape outputs; see text.		

NEW MEASUREMENT STANDARDS

In making comparisons between current reports and those published in the past, readers are cautioned to pay particular attention to the reference levels and similar test criteria cited. S/N ratios for electronics, in particular, are measured very differently now that we have adopted salient features of the new IHF amplifier-measurement standard. While we believe that the new technique (which also implies a saner approach to loading of all inputs and outputs) will result in measurements that more perfectly reflect audible, in-use effects, they cannot be compared directly to the numbers resulting from the former, more conventional lab measurements.

terminated by the setting of the FM-THRESHOLD control—like the volume PRESET/LOUDNESS, BALANCE, and tone controls, a window-calibrated slider) and, after fine-tuning itself, stop there, at which time green rectangles light on either side of the pointer. (In hand-tuning the presets, only one rectangle will light if the centering is imperfect.) There are no tuning meters, but because of the way the tuner zeros in on broadcast signals, none are needed; there is no means of adjusting an antenna rotator for minimum multipath.

Luminous green bars indicate which of the touchbar-switch options are engaged. One of these is for Dolby FM, which in the 730s delivered in the U.S. includes full Dolby-B decoding (optional elsewhere). Another is for mode; it lights when STEREO is selected but goes out when an FM station with no subcarrier has been selected, even though the receiver will revert to stereo operation as soon as a stereo station or a different source is chosen. When the receiver is shut off, it "remembers" all its settings until the power is restored—even if it is disconnected from the wall socket, thanks to four supplied penlight cells that are rated for a two-year life expectancy. Thus, although the switching is electronic, its settings will be the same when you switch it on as they were when you last used it.

If you don't want anyone to muck about with your system in between, you can disable the receiver by turning off a MASTER POWER switch tucked away discreetly on the back panel. Also on the back panel are a level adjustment for the outputs to the tape-recording jacks (both pairs), antenna connections for both 300-ohm twinlead and 75-ohm coax, a 20-dB attenuator that can be switched in where FM signal strengths are exceptionally high, a set of pre/main jumpers, and a multipin socket for the RM-730 remote-control system. The RM-730 consists of a battery-powered, infrared-beam control device not much bigger than a pack of superlong cigarettes plus an infrared receiver that plugs into the socket via a 4-foot cord, allowing the receiving unit to be placed conveniently to pick up the beam. The control duplicates the on/off, station pre-selector, tuning-scan, and volume touchplates of the main front panel.

Obviously the initial experience of using such an ensemble can be either engrossing or a little daunting, depending on whether you are adventurous or the sort who prefers the comfort of familiarity. We found the controls and cosmetics so engrossing and the internal electronics so unobtrusive—because they're so good—that it was difficult to focus on performance as such. Muting at turn-on and during FM scan seemed the natural activity of an organism, rather than a question of voltage sensing and timing capacitors. (For overload conditions, incidentally, the 730 turns itself off altogether.) In normal operation, the electronics are dead quiet; we never encountered the slightest whisper of crosstalk between sources. You simply point a finger (or the control unit) in the appropriate direction, and the 730 gives you what you demand.

But not flawlessly. Until we were really familiar with its behavior patterns, our demands were fumblingly put, and the 730 obeyed in kind. As our touch became surer, we became aware that the touchplates—which, according to Nakamichi, respond to the slight moisture normally present on the skin—don't always sense the presence of a finger in the dry indoor heat of a New England winter. Still, when the touchplates failed to respond (which was relatively rare), a second or third pass of the finger usually brought them around. And the remote control, whose "touchbars" actually appear to be conventional microswitches, always did exactly as it was told.

Beyond these qualified and relatively minor complaints, the 730 behaves beautifully. At full power, harmonic distortion over most of the frequency range measures down near

QUALITY IN REVERSE

AKAI's Quick Reverse record cassette decks at popular prices.

Now instead of interrupting great moments in music when it's time to flip the cassette, AKAI's two newest popularly-priced decks automatically reverse the tape and continue to record or play back with virtually the same quality. And with AKAI's unique Quick Reverse — another new feature — directional change is virtually instantaneous.

In addition, the deluxe GXC-735D is loaded with all the other features that make the difference between a good deck and a great one. Things like AKAI's exclusive GX (glass and crystal ferrite) head, guaranteed* for 150,000 hours — the equivalent of playing 24 hours a

day for 17½ years. As well as feather-touch controls, Dolby† memory rewind, Quick Reverse and dramatically recessed red/green illuminated VU meters. Not to mention the kind of specs serious component buyers all over the world depend on AKAI to deliver. (For the more economy-minded, there's the CS-732D. Same great Quick Reverse record/playback feature with Dolby and tape selector — a lot of AKAI quality for not a lot of money.)

Hear them both at your AKAI dealer, or write AKAI, P.O. Box 601C, Compton, CA 90224. They'll reverse your thinking about automatic recording.

GXC-735D: Wow/Flutter — less than 0.045% WRMS; S/N Ratio — better than 56 dB, weighted at FeCr position, with peak level at 3% THD. Dolby on improves up to 10 dB above 5 kHz. Frequency Response — 35-16,000 Hz (\pm 3 dB) using FeCr tape.

CS-732D: Wow/Flutter — less than 0.06% WRMS; S/N Ratio — better than 56 dB, weighted at FeCr position, with peak level at 3% THD. Dolby on improves up to 10 dB above 5 kHz. Frequency Response — 35-15,000 Hz (\pm 3 dB) using FeCr tape.

AKAI

You never heard it so good.



*limited warranty
†T.M. Dolby Labs, Inc.

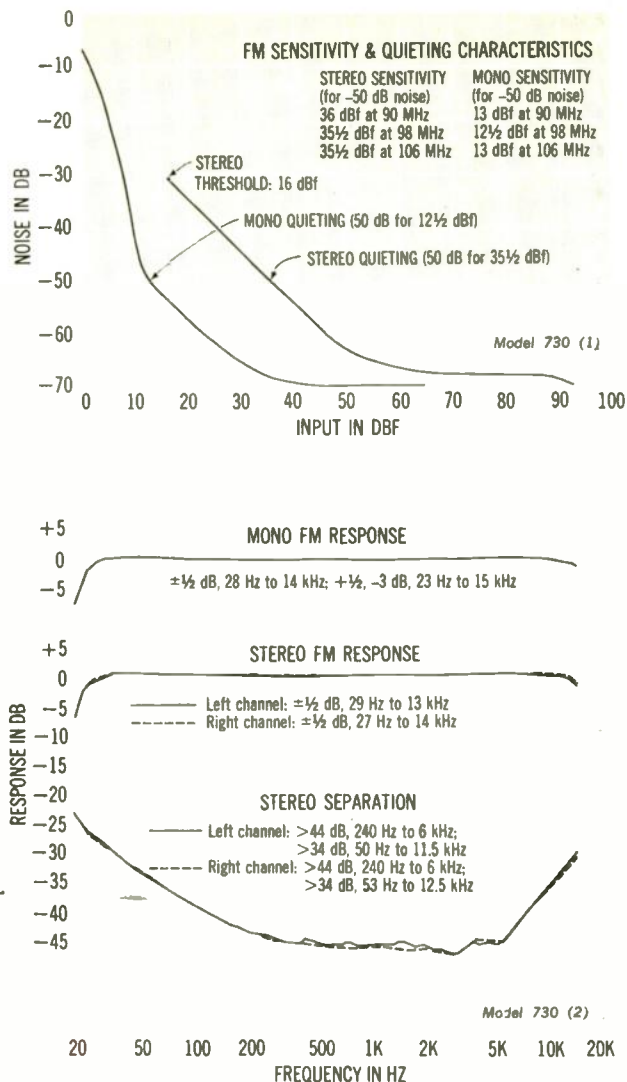
0.005% and rises to 0.012% only at 10 kHz, above which all spurious products are outside the audio band. And even near the 0-dBW level (20 dB below the 105-watt rating), where noise begins to influence THD + N measurements, the figure runs a negligible 0.03% or so. These figures, plus those for IM, confirm the aural evidence: The amplifier section need take second place to no separate amp we know of except those in the superpower category—and then only by a few dB, in most cases.

The preamp section is quiet (the electronic switching precludes transients, while thermal hiss is vanishingly low) and delivers exemplary RIAA equalization. Phono overload is high enough to be no cause for concern. In checking this property, however, the lab discovered that it measures lower (50 millivolts) with the tape-output level control turned to maximum. The manual recommends setting the control at its midpoint, which not only delivers appropriate levels to the recorders with which we checked the 730, but also leaves good headroom with normal phono input voltages. With high input voltages and the control at maximum—and we would expect the control to be set there only to compensate for a low-output pickup, which would not deliver such voltages—the buffer amp in the tape-output circuit evidently becomes the limiting factor.

The tuner, too, is very good—again, competitive with separate tuners in all respects. Aside from the usual technology involved in keeping response flat, distortion low (two respects in which the 730 is notable), and so on, such factors as the muting threshold and the station-sensing threshold options strike us as very well chosen for the type of user who will be gratified by the receiver's highly individual personality.

That very individuality presupposes that it will not be a product for all buyers—not even one for all buyers who can afford it. Inveterate knob-turners are given nothing to turn (once the FM presets are adjusted); meter-readers have nothing to read; those who take pleasure in the feel of a well-crafted switch will feel nothing but the slight ridge of the touchbars. The 730 is designed neither for the old-fashioned nor for the would-be engineer; it is a very modern, very sophisticated, and very capable receiver that will delight those for whom these properties count as virtues.

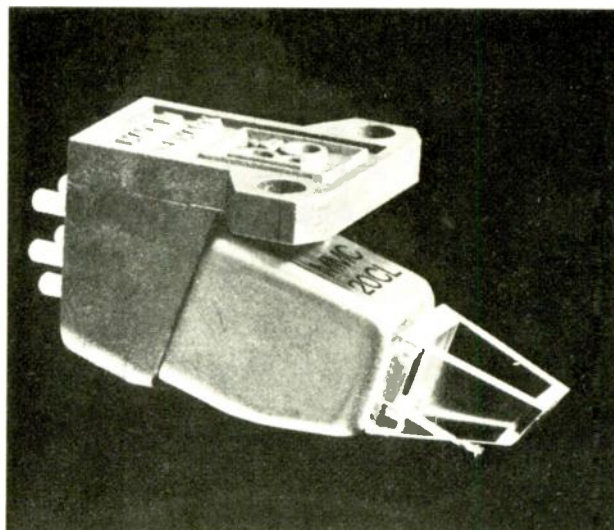
CIRCLE 136 ON PAGE 99



A Pickup with a Jewel of a Cantilever

B&O Model MMC-20CL stereo phono cartridge with Contact Line multiradial diamond stylus. Price: \$200. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Bang & Olufsen, Denmark; U.S. distributor: Bang & Olufsen of America, Inc., 515 Busse Rd., Elk Grove Village, Ill. 60007.

An astute engineer of our acquaintance once remarked that divine Providence must watch over phono cartridges, for it is difficult to see how they work as well as they do. What the gentleman doubtless had in mind were the numerous opportunities for signal degradation—mechanical, magnetic, and electrical—between the groove pressed into the vinyl and the input terminals of the preamp. Cartridge designers, for their part, have taken to heart the dictum about helping themselves by dealing with problems such as minimizing effective stylus tip mass, achieving good contact with the groove walls, and building highly linear mechanical-to-electrical transducers. The engineers at Bang & Olufsen traditionally have been in the forefront of the effort, and now that company's design team has, in the MMC-20CL, developed a novel approach to the problem of minimizing cantilever flexure.



GIANTS
OF

JAZZ

Louis & Bessie, Benny & Bix, the Hawk, the Duke... flawlessly reproduced in original recordings on your choice of 12" LPs, tape cartridges or cassettes.

Begin by hearing the immortal Louis Armstrong in 40 of his greatest original recordings. A sampling: *Dipper Mouth Blues* (1923), *Gut Bucket Blues* (1925), *Willie the Weeper* (1927), *Ain't Misbehavin', That Rhythm Man* (1929), *Star Dust, Blue Again* (1931), *Some Sweet Day* (1933), *On the Sunny Side of the Street* (1934), *When the Saints Go Marching In* (1938), *Marie* (1940).

Now, TIME-LIFE RECORDS introduces a spectacular recording project: GIANTS OF JAZZ—featuring such legendary artists as Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Coleman Hawkins, Duke Ellington, Bix Beiderbecke, Benny Goodman, Bessie Smith, plus the great instrumentalists and singers in a collection that virtually nobody could duplicate.

Vintage recordings from many labels

Drawing on vintage material from such labels as Vocalion, Blue Bird, Okeh, Brunswick, Gemett, Victor and Columbia, these albums present the greatest original recordings of those legendary performers—including many that are virtually unobtainable, and some that were never issued.

In brilliantly restored monaural sound

Each of these recordings has been reproduced in the original monaural sound... no electronic gimmickry, no rechanneling. Columbia Records engineers have developed an unparalleled system to restore each of the classic tracks you'll enjoy in GIANTS OF JAZZ.

America's most original music

You'll hear the sweetest, saddest, happiest, most original and important music America ever created. And from Duke Ellington's evocative *Caravan* to Coleman Hawkins' matchless *Body and Soul*, Bix Beiderbecke's brilliant *Riverboat Shuffle* to Billie Holiday's sassy *Miss Brown to You*, you'll hear jazz the way it really sounded during the Golden Age. Your 10-day free audition will prove it. Mail the attached card—no postage necessary. If card is missing, mail the coupon today.

You've got to hear it to believe it!

AUDITION LOUIS ARMSTRONG for 10 days FREE!

BONUS GIFT: WHO'S WHO OF JAZZ, John Chilton's definitive book, a \$10.95 comparable value revised especially for TIME-LIFE RECORDS. With 370 pages and 135 new entries. Plus extra bonus with every album: a frameable, full-color portrait of the artist.



RPACRO

TIME-LIFE RECORDS

Time and Life Building, Chicago, IL 60611

YES! I would like to audition *Louis Armstrong*, my introduction to GIANTS OF JAZZ. Please send this three-record album to me along with John Chilton's *Who's Who of Jazz*, and enter my subscription to GIANTS OF JAZZ. If I decide to keep *Louis Armstrong*, I will pay \$19.95 plus shipping and handling, and the book will be mine to keep at no additional cost. I will then receive future albums (each one containing three 12-inch records) from GIANTS OF JAZZ, shipped an album at a time approximately every other month. Each album will cost \$19.95 plus shipping and handling and will come on the same 10-day free-audition basis. There is no minimum number of albums that I must buy and I may cancel my subscription at any time simply by notifying you. If I do not choose to keep *Louis Armstrong* and the accompanying book, I will return the complete package within 10 days, my subscription for future albums will be canceled and I will be under no further obligation.

Check here if you want two tape cassettes and book instead of records. (\$2 extra.) RVAC84

Check here if you want two eight-track cartridges and book instead of records. (\$2 extra.) RUAC85

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

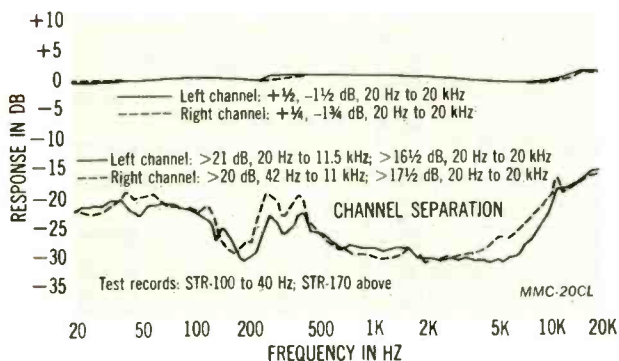
City _____

State _____ Zip _____
(or Prov.) (or Code)

Send no money: Just mail this coupon today.

Bang & Olufsen MMC-20CL Phono Pickup

Sensitivity (at 1 kHz)	1.00 mV per cm/sec.
Channel balance (at 1 kHz)	$\pm < \frac{1}{4}$ dB
Vertical tracking angle	20°
Low-frequency resonance (in SME 3009 arm)	
vertical	8.8 Hz; 3½ dB rise
lateral	7.6 Hz; 2½ dB rise
Maximum tracking level (re RIAA 0 VU; 1.0 gram VTF)	
300 Hz	+ 18 dB
1 kHz	+ 12 dB
Weight	
including mount	5.3 grams
without mount	4.0 grams
Tip dimensions	
tip radii	6.6 by 12.7 micrometers
scanning radii	6.3 micrometers



The problem, of course, is not new. Briefly described, it occurs when the cantilever bar on which the tip is mounted proves insufficiently rigid to handle the violent accelerations transmitted to it by the record groove and begins to bend and spring back. Under these conditions, the mechanical motion at the input to the magnetic transducer need not resemble the motion of the stylus tip closely at all, with the predictable result that the signal becomes distorted. Attempts to stiffen the cantilever without adding too much mass have included the use of tapered aluminum tubing, double-walled aluminum tubing, and even switching to beryllium, a material considerably stiffer than aluminum. The Bang & Olufsen team

has gone a step further and introduced cantilevers made of single-crystal sapphire, which is said to be 40% stiffer than beryllium and five times as stiff as aluminum.

B&O has also paid attention to the linearity of the magnetic transduction system and finds that it is best with a tracking force of 1 gram. And that is the recommendation—there is no range of tracking forces. Actually, since the force gauge included with the cartridge is accurate to 0.1 gram, the correct setting is 1 gram ± 0.1 gram.

For whatever reasons, the new construction has no extraordinary effects on the lab data. Second harmonic and intermodulation distortion are somewhat lower than average. Sensitivity is about average for this class of pickup, and the balance between channels is excellent. High-level tracking and separation are both adequate, and so is frequency response, although a broad dip occurs in the upper midrange. Low-frequency resonances of the MMC-20CL mounted in the SME-3009 tonearm are not especially heavily damped, but the vertical amplitude peak, the principal troublemaker when it comes to warp tracking, is at a reasonable frequency.

On a first hearing, the sound of this pickup seems almost disappointingly bland. The high-end "sizzle" associated with many cartridges—and with moving-coil types in particular—is notably absent. The first indication of the true quality of this device came, for us, in listening to voices. It would not be correct to say that the unit is particularly kind to voices; rather its unusual accuracy, especially in the critical midrange, allows the essential sound of a well-produced voice to be heard in all its glory. As a case in point, the fact that Janet Baker outsings her colleagues by a spectacular margin on one of the records we used for testing is made (all too) obvious by the MMC-20CL.

After that, it became clear to us that what seemed like blandness was probably the lack of a nearly universal type of distortion. We verified this by playing one of our "hotter" jazz records, where the highs were softened only imperceptibly, if at all, and the almost dazzlingly complex texture was resolved with an unusual degree of transparency. We found that, in listening at very high levels, listening fatigue remained well below what one would ordinarily expect. All in all, this is one of the most neutral and smooth-sounding cartridges we have heard.

In our opinion, this pickup is well designed and well worth hearing, but a word of caution is in order concerning auditioning it: Give it time. Its special quality lies more in the bad things that it manages not to do than in an extroverted display of virtuosity. But all a cartridge must do to reach perfection is reproduce what is in the groove—contributions of its own are not required. The B&O may not scale that unlikely pinnacle, yet it has a fine sense of accuracy (which makes it unforgiving toward poor recordings) and maintains its poise even when strained by heavy or complex modulation.

CIRCLE 131 ON PAGE 99

A Latter-Day but True-Blue Bozak

Bozak LS-300 speaker system in wood enclosure. Dimensions: 17¾ by 26¾ inches (front), 12¾ inches deep. Price: \$260 (walnut finish), \$270 (teak finish), \$280 (ebony finish). Warranty: "limited," ten years on drivers, two years on cabinet. Manufacturer: R. T. Bozak Sales Co., P.O. Box 1166, Darien, Conn. 06820.

Bozak fans may have had misgivings about the future of their favorite loudspeaker company since its founder and guiding

light, Rudy Bozak, retired. While all speakers are said to exhibit some personality, the Bozak sound borders on the unique—rich, round bass, smooth, mellow treble, often described as "musical." These virtues have characterized the line virtually since its inception three decades ago and questions could understandably arise as to whether the new regime would keep them intact. Bozak lovers can rest their concerns. The new LS-300 is fully in the established tradition.

While the LS-300 maintains the familial sonic character of

If your choice is sonic excellence over watts per dollar, you'll prefer one of these LUX tuner/amplifiers.

LUX amplifiers and tuners, whether single-chassis or separates, were never intended to compete with typical receivers—those that equate output power with performance. We have a different attitude.

Our audiophile/engineers design for those subtle amplifier and tuner qualities that contribute significantly to sonic performance under actual musical conditions. We're interested in more than the way our equipment measures during sine-wave lab testing. We're vitally concerned with the way it performs in the real world with musical material.

So it's no wonder the acclaim that initially greeted our separate amplifiers and tuners has been matched by our combined tuner/amplifiers.

For example, *Stereo Review* said this about the Luxman R-1050: "The excellent audio-distortion ratings... obviously place it among the cleanest of the currently available receivers... operation and handling (is) as smooth and bug-free as its fine appearance would suggest."

High Fidelity described our R-1120 this way: "As beautiful to behold as to hear... an effortless quality to the sound that just radiates class... the

FM tuner is impressive, to say the least."

And *Audio* summed it up with this: "Lux seems to have the ability to produce product after product that just sounds better."


Our tuner/amplifiers come in a wide range of power to suit every need (and speaker efficiency) from a top of 120 watts per channel for the R-1120 to 30 watts for the new, modestly-priced R-1030.

Whichever of our four models you choose, you'll get only one standard of sonic excellence.

LUX.

LUX Audio of America, Ltd.

160 Dupont Street, Plainview, New York 11803 • In Canada: White Electronics Development Corp., Ontario



Luxman R-1120. 120 watts per channel, total harmonic distortion no more than 0.03%.* Switchable turnover points. 12-LED peak level display with selectable sensitivity. Closed-lock-loop FM tuning circuit. Direct-coupled preamplifier equalizer stage and direct-coupled DC power amplifier. Outputs and switching for electrostatic speakers.

Luxman R-1050. 55 watts per channel, total harmonic distortion no more than 0.05%.* 12-LED peak level display with selectable sensitivity. Dual-gate MOSFET front end. Direct-coupled preamplifier equalizer stage and direct-coupled DC power amplifier. Connections for two decks, two phonos, auxiliary; tape-to-tape dubbing.

Luxman R-1040. 40 watts per channel, total harmonic distortion no more than 0.05%.* 12-LED peak level display with selectable sensitivity. Special negative feedback-type bass and treble controls. Tuner section with linear-phase filters and phase-locked-loop multiplex IC. Direct-coupled preamplifier equalizer stage and direct-coupled DC power amplifier.

And the new Luxman R-1030. 30 watts per channel. Our lowest-priced tuner/amplifier, yet total harmonic distortion is no more than 0.05%.* Among its features: our special negative-feedback tone controls.

*Minimum continuous power, both channels driven into 8 ohms, 20-20 kHz.

Bozak speakers, it does so by following modern wisdom. Vintage top-of-the-line Bozaks have been characterized by multiple drivers in each baffle and large, sealed enclosures. This model uses a single driver in each of its three bands, and the enclosure is vented to enhance the bass response of its 8-inch woofer.

The drivers, each of which is a cone type designed and manufactured by Bozak, are arranged for minimum time dispersion. Together, the woofer and tuned enclosure yield a response that holds up to about 32 Hz and rolls off rapidly (at about 24 dB per octave) below that. The nonadjustable crossover networks are claimed to be phase-amplitude corrected. The rated impedance (4 ohms) is essentially confirmed by the lab data, which give a nominal impedance of 4.7 ohms; at no point in the spectrum does the impedance dip below 4 ohms.

Bozak claims that the LS-300 is an appropriate mate for amplifiers in the 15-watt (11¼-dBW) to 300-watt (24¼-dBW) range. We beg to differ—at least as far as the low end of the range is concerned. Music-band efficiency is 79½-dB SPL at 1 meter, with a 0-dBW (1-watt) input, and the 91¼ dB SPL that a 15-watt amp could produce at that distance does not translate to what we'd call realistic listening levels. Although, with a continuous 300-Hz sine-wave input, the LS-300 begins to buzz at the 19-dBW (79½-watt) input level—producing a 106-dB sound pressure level—it handles music signals at that frequency with greater ease. Peak sound pressure levels of 117 dB can be achieved and before clipping is evident.

With a 0-dBW input, distortion is low throughout the band between 30 Hz and 10 kHz; above 250 Hz, it is less than 0.5%. Pushed by enough power to achieve a 100-dB SPL at 300 Hz, the speaker just about doubles its distortion from 300 Hz up and increases it more drastically yet at lower frequencies. Below 60 Hz, the third harmonic distortion exceeds 10% at these levels.

On-axis frequency response is within ± 4 dB from 40 Hz to 16 kHz. The front-hemisphere response curve parallels the on-axis response quite well, suggesting reasonably good dispersion in this region; the average-omnidirectional curve falls off more rapidly at high frequencies, implying that less total high-frequency energy is being radiated than that at low frequencies. Overall, the omnidirectional curve slopes smoothly by about 2 dB per octave above a few hundred hertz. Pulse response at 300 Hz is good; that at 3 kHz shows signs of multiple reflections from the cabinet.

We listened to a pair of LS-300s with an amplifier capable of 200 watts per channel into 8 ohms and more into 4-ohm loads. While the speakers did not tax that amplifier completely, we would not have been comfortable with less power reserve. In true Bozak tradition, they produce a heavier, darker-than-average sonic impression. Highs are velvety smooth and, compared with many other speakers, on the dull side. Some bass cut and treble boost helps to restore a more typical balance, but we suspect that Bozak devotees will prefer the sound of the LS-300 as is.

If we were to divide loudspeakers into classical-music and rock-music camps, these would definitely fall into the former. The LS-300 has an uncommon ability to gloss over the flaws in a closely miked recording—flaws that, although they are in the recording and therefore theoretically should be reproduced, are distracting nonetheless. For example, while a closely miked violin tends to sound rough on many speakers, it is polished smooth by the LS-300s, resulting in a somewhat distant but less irritating sound. Similarly, the hard edges of a tightly recorded piano are honed away. If you try to improve the immediacy of the sound by driving the system harder, it rapidly soaks up the power, and bass distortion (as well as an occasional buzz) becomes evident. Even at normal listening levels, the LS-300 leads us to suspect that some of the extra bass



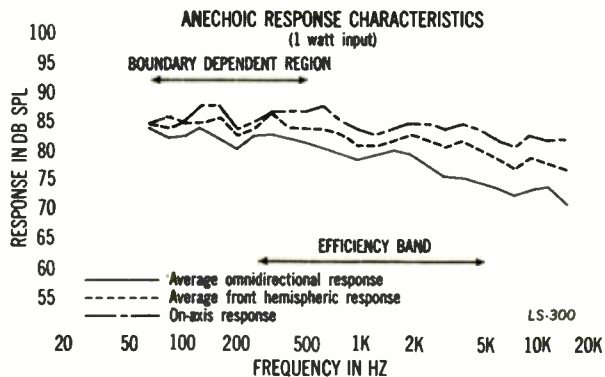
Bozak LS-300 Loudspeaker System

Average omnidirectional output, 250 Hz to 6 kHz
79½ dB SPL for 0 dBW (1 watt) input

Continuous on-axis output at 300 Hz
106 dB SPL for 19 dBW (79.4 watts) input

Pulsed output at 300 Hz
117 dB SPL for 30¼ dBW (1,042 watts) peak

"Nominal" impedance 4.7 ohms at 180 Hz



richness comes from added harmonics.

The listener seeking analytic clarity in a speaker system, one who wishes every subtlety and flaw revealed, will probably not find the LS-300 appealing. For three decades, however, Bozak has attracted listeners who crave smooth musical reproduction, who have frequented the dress circles of major halls, and who prefer their recordings to sound much the way music sounds from there. They will be gratified to find a new Bozak design in the time-honored tradition.

CIRCLE 133 ON PAGE 99

(more)

FISHER INTRODUCES THE WORLD'S FIRST CASSETTE DECK WITH WIRELESS REMOTE EDITING.

Tape recording will never be the same.

In Fisher's 41 years of audio leadership, we've introduced many important high fidelity "firsts." But we honestly think the new CR4025 tape deck is one of our most exciting and practical innovations.

Remote electronic editing is as important an advance in tape recording as the cassette.

Now for the first time, you can *really* enjoy creating your own personal music library from FM broadcasts or record albums. The editing is done electronically while recording. A great leap forward from the old way of recording... without jumping up and down every 3 minutes to edit.

Fisher's wireless remote electronic editor makes tape recording a pleasure. The CR4025 tape deck has a built-in wireless receiver that operates the deck's solenoid-actuated Pause mechanism. The remote control transmitter operates the Pause control instantly from up to 20 feet away. Relax, listen, and capture the selections you want to keep at the push of a button.

New guide to buying high fidelity equipment. Send \$2 for Fisher Handbook with your name, address to Fisher Corp., 21314 Lassen St., Chatsworth, CA. 91311.

Zap! You eliminate any commercial or announcer's voice from your off-the-air FM broadcast recording... or skip any unwanted track on an album you're taping from.

Of course, this fantastic convenience wouldn't be worth much if you had to sacrifice performance. Fortunately, you don't — the CR4025 has the excellent frequency response and extremely low wow & flutter that you expect from Fisher, plus Dolby noise reduction for clean, noise-free recordings.

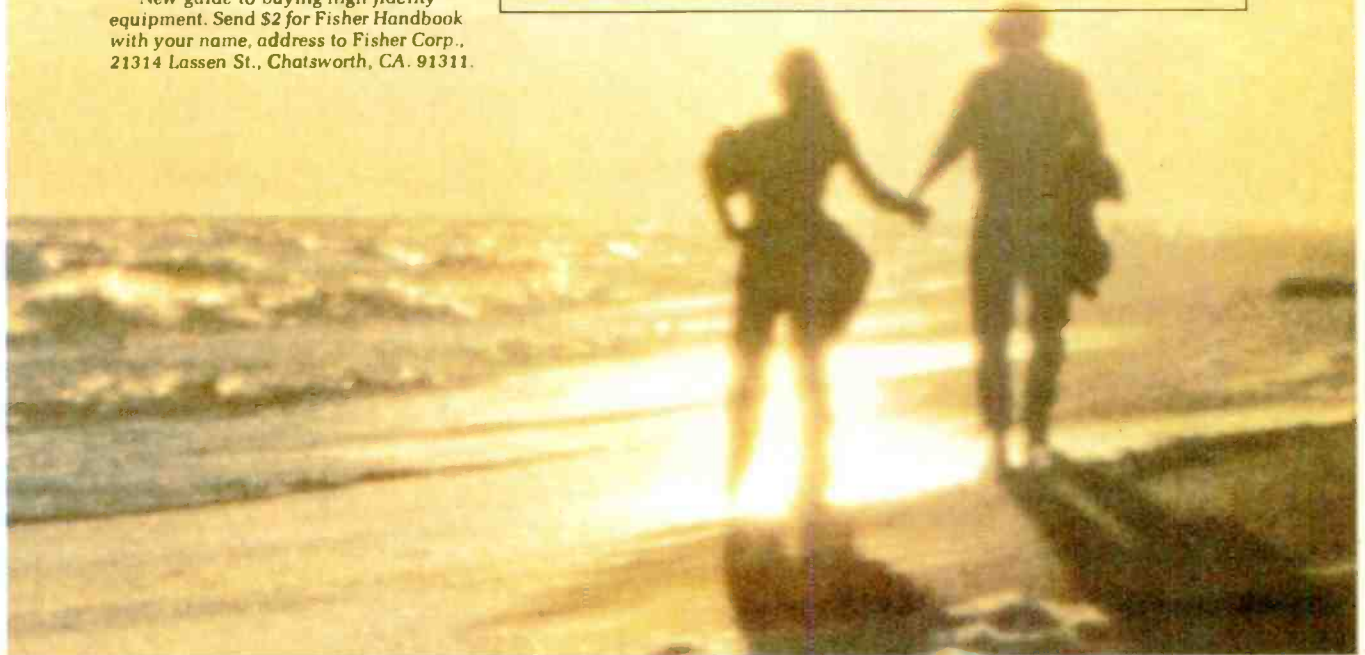
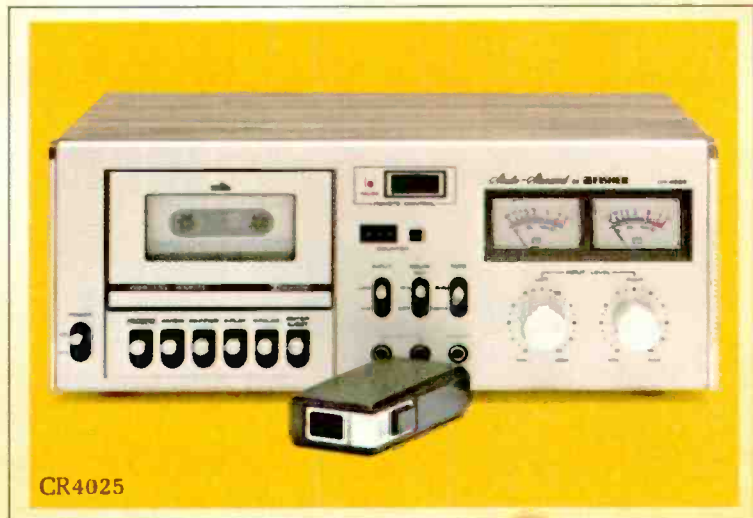
The Fisher CR4025 is priced at \$270* and is available at selected audio stores or the audio department of your favorite department store.

New guide to buying high fidelity equipment. Send \$2 for Fisher Handbook with name and address to Fisher Corp., Dept. H, 21314 Lassen St., Chatsworth, Calif. 91311.

*Manufacturer's suggested retail value. Actual selling price is at the sole discretion of the individual Fisher dealer.

 **FISHER**

The first name in high fidelity.



The Bose® 901® Series IV: A new approach to room acoustics creates a major advance in performance.

It's well known that living room acoustics are a major factor in how any speaker will sound in your home. Recently, an ambitious Bose research program analyzed speaker performance in dozens of actual home listening rooms. The study showed that, while rooms vary greatly, their principal effects can be isolated to specific types of frequency unbalances.

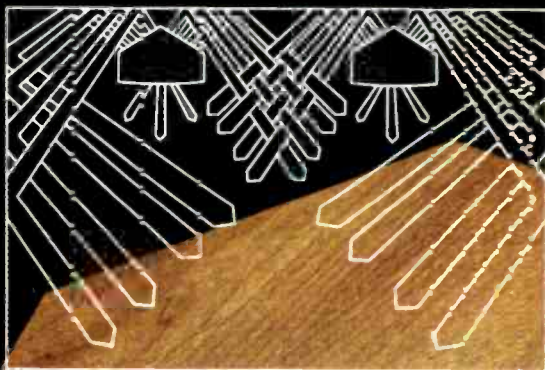
Based on this research, the electronic Active Equalizer of the new Bose 901® Series IV speaker system has been totally redesigned. New controls allow greater capability for adjustment of room factors

than conventional electronics, and make possible superb performance in almost any home listening room.

These new room controls also let us develop a basic equalization curve with no compromises for room effects, allowing still more accurate tonal balance. In addition, an important improvement in the design of the 901 driver makes possible ever greater efficiency and virtually unlimited power handling.

These innovations combine with proven Bose concepts to create a dramatic advance in performance in practically any listening room, with virtually any amplifier, large or small, the 901 Series IV sets a new standard for the open, spacious, life-like reproduction of sound that has distinguished Bose Direct/Reflecting® speakers since the first 901.

The 901 Series IV Direct/Reflecting speaker creates a life-like balance of reflected and direct sound.

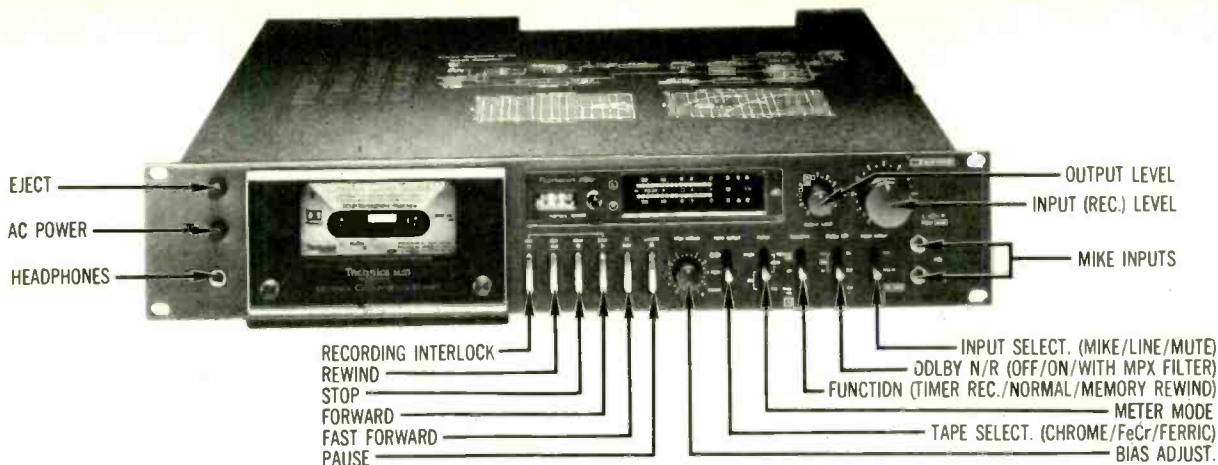


The 901 Series IV Direct/Reflecting speaker creates a life-like balance of reflected and direct sound.



BOSE®
The Mountain Framingham,
Mass. 01701

Covered by patent rights issued and pending.



Technics RS-M85: Slim and Regal

Technics RS-M85 stereo cassette deck in rack-mount case. Dimensions: 19 by 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches (front panel), 15 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$700; optional remote-control device, Model RP-9690T, \$100. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Matsushita, Japan; U.S. distributor: Technics by Panasonic, 1 Panasonic Way, Secaucus, N.J. 07094.

If you've been waiting for a quartz-locked, direct-drive, front-loading cassette deck with a slim profile, you need wait no longer. Technics has applied the technology it pioneered for turntables to the RS-M85 cassette deck. That technology had already found its way into open-reel decks and into certain top-loading cassette machines, but, according to Technics, until now existing motors were too large for a slim-line direct-drive front-loader.

In the RS-M85, a coreless DC motor drives the reels, and what Technics calls a "quartz-locked, planar-opposed, DC brushless, coreless, slotless, direct-drive capstan motor" powers the capstan. Kings have managed to get by with shorter titles, but lab tests on the deck bear out the regal quality. Speed stays precisely on the mark over the full line-voltage range that might be experienced—rarely the case in cassette mechanisms—and flutter is vanishingly low. To what extent this smoothness of operation is attributable to the capstan-motor or spooling-motor design is incidental. The RS-M85 has as precise a cassette-drive mechanism as we've experienced.

The deck is fully logic-controlled with solenoid operation of the internal workings. Thus, it can be commanded via the optional RP-9690T remote-control unit, which plugs into the back panel. It can also be set up for timer-controlled recording or playback.

Six short-throw rockers select the mode of operation. The record, play, and pause modes are indicated by illuminated dots on the rockers. The modes are interlocked, and you can shift between any two of them directly. The RECORD button must be depressed just prior to PLAY to assure that the transport receives the command to record. But there is an attendant advantage: The RECORD button can be pressed by itself to activate the recording circuitry in advance for setting levels without engaging the transport. A tap of the PLAY button at any subsequent time will start the recording process. The PAUSE is exceptionally good—especially for a solenoid-oper-

ated machine. No clicks are recorded, and the RS-M85 starts almost instantly and without initial wow.

New fluorescent-type recording meters are used, with a choice of VU (average-reading) or peak-indicating "ballistics." In the latter mode, which we prefer, a front-panel switch offers a choice of two brightness levels, and the brightness range is further enhanced by a rear-panel control. The -20-to-+8-dB range of each meter is divided into twelve segments, the four above the 0-dB mark shown in outline, while those below are solid double bars. In the region around 0 dB, each segment represents approximately a 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -dB change in level.

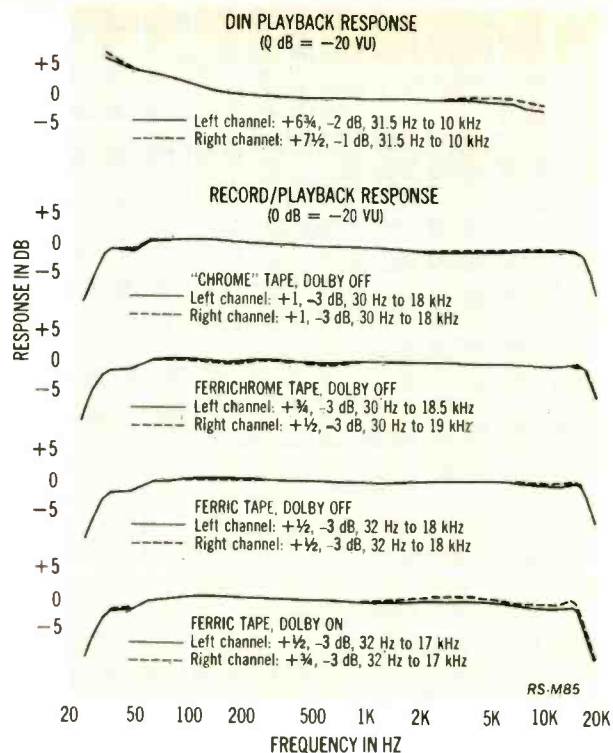
According to the lab, the +3 indication corresponds to a DIN-0 recording level. We found the meters easy to use, and having the signal levels of the two channels displayed as closely spaced parallel bars simplifies the balancing procedure with fluctuating input signal levels.

Supplementing the three-position tape-select switch is a bias-adjustment control, which affords a $\pm 15\%$ fine adjustment about each of the nominal bias settings. In the absence of test circuitry for establishing the proper bias, the user is advised to record FM interstation noise and adjust the control until the best match is achieved with the real McCoy. Starting points are suggested in the manual. Self-contained test signals for setting the bias would have been a valuable addition.

Once the lab set the bias for best response on each of the three types of tape—using test instruments, of course—the record/play response of the RS-M85 proved excellent and remarkably free of low-frequency bumps. Maxell UDXL-I ferric, Sony ferrichrome, and TDK SA chrome-equivalent ferricobalt give nearly equivalent responses, with the ferrichrome winning out at the treble end and the ferricobalt in the bass. With the Dolby circuitry in use, the response curve on the ferric hardly changes, and the high-frequency noise drops 10 dB just as it should. Playback-only response is good, though not as tightly controlled as the record/play response. Erasure is essentially total, and the channel separation is excellent. Use tests with the tapes and bias settings determined by the lab were very gratifying. We can hear little difference in apparent frequency response among the three tapes. It is remarkably smooth and extended on each. Cymbals and brass are bright and very clean for the cassette medium. The same clarity is apparent on the woodwinds, and transients are sharply repro-

Technics RS-M85 Cassette Deck

Speed accuracy	no measurable error at 105, 120, or 127 VAC	
Wow and flutter (ANSI)	playback: 0.025% record/play: 0.030%	
Rewind time (C-60 cassette)	75 sec.	
Fast-forward time (same cassette)	75 sec.	
S/N ratio (re DIN 0 VU, Dolby off, CBS weighting)		
playback	L ch: 54¼ dB	R ch: 54 dB
record/play	L ch: 50 dB	R ch: 49½ dB
Erase (333 Hz at normal level)	71 dB	
Channel separation (at 333 Hz)		
record left, play right	48½ dB	
record right, play left	47¾ dB	
Sensitivity (re DIN 0 VU)		
line input	L ch: 92 mV	R ch: 92 mV
mike input	L ch: 0.37 mV	R ch: 0.36 mV
Meter action, either mode (re DIN 0 VU)	L ch: 3 dB high R ch: 3 dB high	
THD (at -10 VU)	<0.53%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz	
Maximum output (re DIN 0 VU)		
	L ch: 1.1 V	R ch: 1.1 V



duced. For the lower noise level afforded by the 70-microsecond playback curve, we'd choose the ferrichrome and chrome-equivalent tapes over the straight ferrics.

Properly set up for the tape being used, the Technics RS-M85 performs as a practically flawless cassette recorder.

Pitch is rock stable, and warbling piano is unknown. The controls are logically arranged and interlocked; on-the-fly editing is easy and precise, and the metering is equal to its task. In short, the RS-M85 is a regal, compact two-head deck.

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A Sleek Thoroughbred Amp

Luxman 5L-15 stereo integrated amplifier, in metal case. Dimensions: 16 13/32 by 5¾ inches (front panel), 15¾ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. AC convenience outlets: 1 switched, 1 unswitched (100 watts each). Price: \$995. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Lux Audio, Japan; U.S. distributor: Lux Audio of America, Ltd., 160 Dupont St., Plainview, N.Y. 11803.

If you're one of those people who stay awake nights worrying about the insidious effects of distortion on home music listening, the Luxman 5L-15 is just what you need to restore a sense of repose and tranquillity. Not only does this integrated amp's tone-controls have a very low THD spec to begin with, but the rating leaves a generous safety margin. The specified 0.02% is approached—and not too closely at that—only at 20 kHz (where the spurious products lie beyond audibility) and at very low levels (where the fact that the lab measures total harmonic distortion plus noise—THD + N—may be significant). Assuming that our test sample is representative of the general run of product, the owner of a 5L-15 can expect distortion levels that approach 1/10 of spec from moderate listening

levels upward. Performance with respect to IM distortion closely parallels that for THD.

This exemplary behavior on the part of the amp is attributable, according to the manufacturer, to "... skillful circuit designing ... to accelerate the switching speed at the driver stage [and allow] a notching [crossover] distortion level that is incredible in [Class B] amplifiers." Whatever the nature of this circuit design, it does its job very well indeed.

But the demands made on an amplifier by music cannot be satisfied by low distortion alone. This unit shows its competence with a dynamic headroom level approaching that of designs using auxiliary output devices that switch in on demand. Frequency response, which actually does extend to DC unless a blocking capacitor is switched in via a rear-panel control, differs but negligibly from a straight line within an octave on either side of the audio band, with high-frequency rolloff of less than 1 dB at 100 kHz. A pilot light changes color from white to red to warn of potential speaker damage if a source with appreciable DC leakage is connected to the amp; at dangerous DC levels the amp shuts itself off. After turnon—or in response to instantaneous overloads—the output remains

We just can't quit when we're ahead.



Consider the Sony Audio PS-X70 turntable.

Think of it as a professional transcription turntable, for home use. At a price your audio conscious hobbyist can afford.

Think about two discrete servo-controlled motors. One for the platter. Another for the tonearm.

And while you're thinking about motors, think about Sony's hesitation-free BSL motor. No brushes. No slots. And absolutely no cogging. Just even, uniform rotation. Hour after hour. Year after year.

Our own Quartz-locked Magnedisc servo control system makes Sony direct-drive turntables immune to voltage fluctuations. It takes servo control to a new level of accuracy, by measuring turntable speed at the outer rim of the platter—not at the motor.

There's more you should know: front-mounted feather-touch

controls, electromagnetic braking, special four-clamp head-shell connector, even resonance-free SBMC cabinet with fluid-filled feet to eliminate acoustic feedback.

But perhaps the most amazing thing about our PS-X70 is that it's not alone.

It's just the top of our line. A whole line of new Sony Audio turntables, most of which have most of the features we've listed here.

And every one is designed as a system. With electronic, magnetic, and mechanical technologies contributing to a balanced level of audio performance no single innovation could achieve.

We know about turntable innovation. We practically wrote the book: direct drive, servo control,

Quartz lock, carbon fiber tonearm, Sony gave you them all. Long before almost anyone knew they existed.

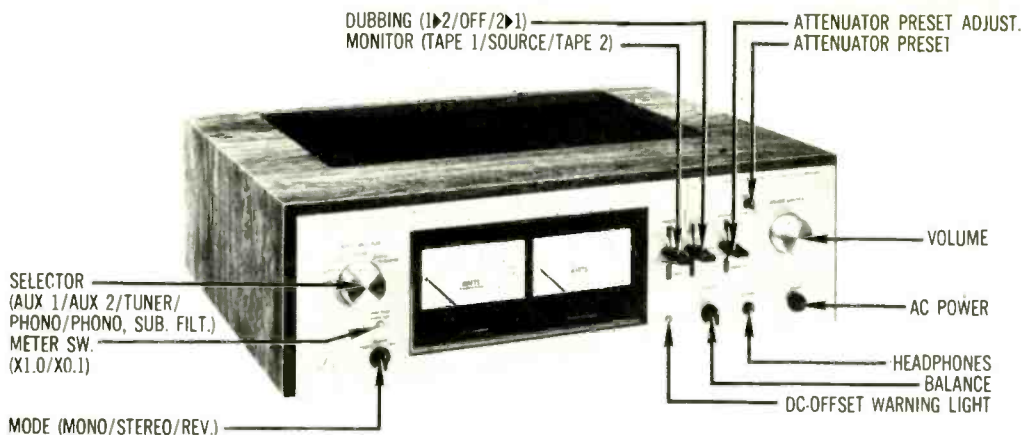
But we also know that innovation alone can't make a great audio component. Sound makes a great audio component.

Like the sound you get from our PS-X70 turntable.

Quit, just because we're ahead? Not Sony Audio. Not on your life.

SONY[®] AUDIO

Sony Industries, 9 West 57th Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10019.
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Luxman 5L-15 Integrated Amplifier

Manufacturer's rated power 19 dBW (80 watts)/ch.

Power output at clipping (both channels driven)
 L ch 19½ dBW (95 watts)
 R ch 19½ dBW (95 watts)

Dynamic headroom (at 1 kHz) 2½ dB

Frequency response +0, -¼ dB, 10 Hz to 40 kHz

RIAA equalization +¾, -0 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz

Input characteristics (re 0 dBW (1 watt): noise A-weighted)

	Sensitivity	S/N ratio
phono	0.37 mV	79½ dB
tuner	35 mV	91 dB
aux 1, 2	35 mV	91 dB
tape 1, 2	35 mV	89 dB

Phono overload (clipping point) 205 mV at 1 kHz

Harmonic distortion (THD + N; 20 Hz to 20 kHz)

at 19 dBW (80 watts)	<0.013%
at 10 dBW (10 watts)	<0.009%
at -1 dBW (0.8 watts)	<0.010%

Intermodulation distortion

into 8 ohms	<0.007%, -3 to 20 dBW (0.5 to 98 W)
into 4 ohms	<0.007%, 0 to 20½ dBW (1 to 121 W)
into 16 ohms	<0.007%, -6 to 18 dBW (0.25 to 64 W)

Damping factor at 50 Hz >100

Infrasonic filter -3 dB at 50 Hz; 6 dB/octave

output signal entirely or reduce it by anything between 15 and 40 dB, depending on the setting of a nearby rotary control. Human engineering of the front panel is neatly dealt with: The controls that are likely to be used most often are larger than the others and centrally located. The only cause for complaint might be the fact that the throws of the lever switches are stiff enough to require a bit of care in their use if the 5L-15 shares a common support with an underdamped operating turntable. The SUBSONIC filter in the phono section is reasonably successful in suppressing out-of-band signals but, due to its slow rolloff, discards a good chunk of bass as well. Lux says the slope (6 dB per octave) is dictated by stability considerations relating to the DC response of the amplifier.

The sensitivity of the various inputs is such that no problem should be encountered in interfacing the Luxman with other equipment. The thumbscrew terminals to which the loudspeaker leads connect are somewhat unusual; they are not quite as easy to use as the common spring-loaded type, but they grip the wires with great tenacity.

A bonus offered by the 5L-15 is a set of output jacks that feeds a signal to a peak-indicating readout device. This is, of course, redundant to an extent with the self-contained meters, but they don't constitute one of the more attractive features of the amp anyway. The scales are compressed but not sufficiently to keep the pointers high enough to allow one to read much information from them. A switch raises their sensitivity by 20 dB, but full-scale indication is only 1 watt in this mode, so even moderate listening levels can pin them.

Letting the Luxman strut its stuff in a real-life listening setup, we were generally pleased with what we heard and saw. As would be expected from any fine amplifier, the 5L-15 is essentially neutral in its sound. It may offer just a trace of extra clarity to extremely high partials and sharp transients, as from metallic percussion instruments, but the effect is subtle. And the slight rise at the top end of the phono EQ curve may contribute a touch of extra brightness to the sound, though certainly not in any obtrusive way.

Cosmetically, the 5L-15 appears to have refined a spare, almost antiseptic look into a particular sort of elegance. The fact that the pilot light is white and turns red only in an emergency condition seems entirely consistent with the overall laidback personality the amplifier projects. From both the functional and aesthetic points of view, this strikes us as a very well-realized design. The small ways in which this thoroughbred shows its temperament are confined to nonessentials, and it has the performance capability to run with the best in its class.

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(more)

mutated for about 10 seconds, and the pilot flashes white to indicate the standby condition.

Weighted signal-to-noise ratios are excellent; the phono stage makes an especially good showing once you allow for its greater sensitivity and consequent input-noise amplification. Equalization is close to exact, with just a slight rise near the upper limit of the band. The phono overload margin should be sufficient for just about any cartridge.

Switching flexibility of the control section is par for the course. Two tape decks are accommodated (one via a DIN input/output connector in addition to pin jacks), and two-way dubbing is possible. An ATTENUATOR control can either kill the

Our theory sounds fantastic.



© 1977 Koss Corp.

In an industry where trial and error methods are common, the Koss Theory of loudspeaker design may seem out of place. But once you hear the unmatched Sound of Koss in the new CM 1020 loudspeaker, you'll know our computerized theory helped make the optimum 3 bandpass speaker a reality.

The Koss Theory eliminates the guesswork in speaker design by selecting parameters for the best possible performance. That's why every part of the CM 1020 works superbly both alone and as part of the whole.

The dual ports, for example, enhance the woofer's front sound waves and dampen excessive woofer movement. There are two ports instead of one because two allow for improved cabinet tuning and greater structural stability. This added stability keeps the cabinet walls from beginning to flex causing unwanted sound-waves.

The port-augmented 10-inch woofer is a special de-

sign that provides a 3 dB gain in electrical efficiency and a 3 dB down point of 31 Hz while offering maximally flat response over the low bandpass. To capture all the presence and musical energy from 300 Hz to 3.5 kHz, the CM 1020 features a performance synthesized 4½-inch midrange driver. Handling the high bandpass is a 1-inch dome tweeter linked to a unique acoustic transformer. This Koss tweeter produces the highest energy output and lowest distortion of any 1-inch direct radiator tweeter on the market. Finally, to unite all these outstanding elements, Koss developed a unique, seamless crossover network.

Though we've tried to describe the superiority of the Koss CM 1020, nothing can match the thrill of a live performance. Ask your Audio Dealer for a demonstration, or write to Fred Forbes c/o the Koss Corporation for a free brochure of Koss CM loudspeakers. After experiencing the CM 1020, you'll agree: hearing is believing.

KOSS® CM 1020 SPEAKER SYSTEM hearing is believing™

KOSS CORPORATION, 4129 N. Port Washington Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53212
Koss International London, Dublin, Paris, Frankfurt • Amsterdam • Koss Limited Ontario • Koss K.K. Tokyo

An Easily Affordable "Top" Speaker

Grafyx SP-Ten speaker system in walnut-grain vinyl enclosure. Dimensions: 15 by 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (front), 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep. Price: \$169. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Grafyx Audio Products, Inc., 310 Kirk Rd., St. Charles, Ill. 60187.

Designing a loudspeaker system with cost as no barrier is in many ways simpler than coaxing good sound from an inexpensive system. When price dictates the number of drivers, the complexity of the crossover, and so on, the designer's ingenuity is taxed to supply a method of combining these elements into a good system. Grafyx Audio Products has shouldered this burden throughout its four-product line.

Even the top model, the SP-Ten, is relatively inexpensive. It is a two-way vented system with a 10-inch woofer and 1-inch dome tweeter; crossover between the two occurs at 2 kHz. There is no balance adjustment, but—judging from the on-axis anechoic response curve—the two drivers are matched exceedingly well: Response is within $\pm 2\frac{1}{2}$ dB from 63 Hz to 16 kHz. Dispersion is good out to the 8-kHz region, beyond which the omnidirectional response falls off at roughly 6 dB per octave. Average response is within $\pm 3\frac{3}{4}$ dB from below 63 Hz to 10 kHz.

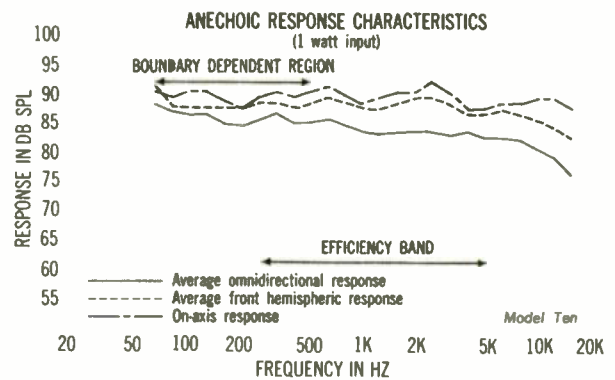
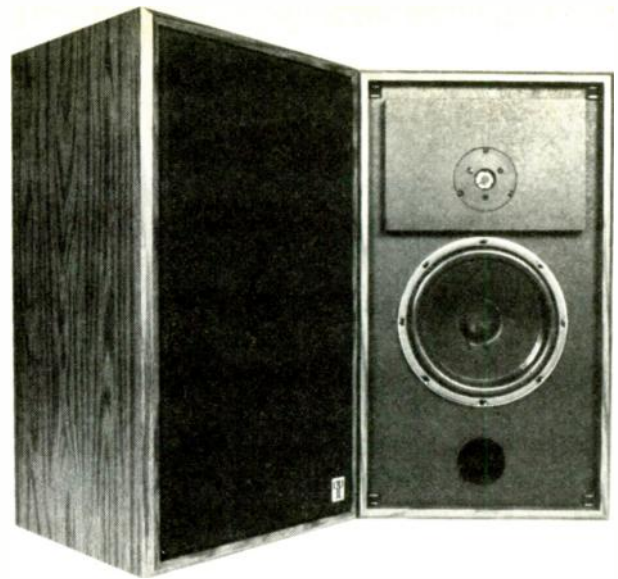
The impedance characteristic of the SP-Ten—virtually independent of frequency—is exemplary. Nominal impedance measures close to the 8-ohm rating, and at no point in the audio band does impedance fall below 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ohms. Paralleled pairs should present a suitable load for any amplifier, especially in view of their relatively high efficiency. This salutary characteristic is accompanied by an ability to accept a rather large input power: Peak power handling is substantial for any system and remarkable for this size and price range. Pulse response is reasonably good, albeit with some sign of reflections on 3-kHz bursts.

Except at very low frequencies (below 70 Hz), the distortion generated is predominantly second order—generally preferable to third order—and totals less than 1% with a 0-dBW (1-watt) input. Over much of the region where musical energy is concentrated, the THD remains under 0.5%; even at 30 Hz, THD is less than 1.5%. At a drive level equivalent to 100 dB SPL at 300 Hz, distortion is less than 2.5% above 70 Hz—and, again, the second harmonic predominates. At 30 Hz, the distortion reaches 4%—unusually low for these conditions.

For our listening tests we adopted the manufacturer's recommended placement—off the floor, with the tweeter at ear level. Bass reproduction is quite tight and yet extended. When the speaker is driven very hard by a direct-to-disc organ recording ("The Great Organ in the Methuen Memorial Music Hall," Telarc 5036 DD-2), some doubling becomes noticeable on powerful passages and there is intermodulation with the lower midrange. At more conservative listening levels, the bass response is both extended and adequately clean.

The tweeter used in the SP-Ten is bright and responds quickly to transients, making it adept at reproducing brass instruments and the metallic idiophones such as cymbals and tambourines. For better or worse, other sounds are also given added sparkle and definition, much as they would receive in a very live recording hall. Violins tend toward the steely, the upper register of the piano brightens, singers take on an edgy quality, and sibilance is emphasized.

Whether such forwardness of the tweeter is a positive or a negative factor will depend on personal taste. The brilliance and exceptionally good bass response of the SP-Ten may well



Grafyx Model Ten Loudspeaker System

Average omnidirectional output, 250 Hz to 6 kHz
84 $\frac{1}{4}$ dB SPL for 0 dBW (1 watt) input

Continuous on-axis output at 300 Hz
111 dB SPL for 20 dBW (100 watts) input

Pulsed output at 300 Hz
117 dB SPL for 26 $\frac{1}{4}$ dBW (420 watts) input

"Nominal" impedance 7.2 ohms at 120 Hz

delight the listener who is drawn to rock, pop, and jazz but a classical-music buff may find the sound a bit hard, especially after long periods of listening. Slight reduction of high-frequency input via a treble control will at least alleviate this characteristic.

The "zingy" personality of this speaker is likely to appeal to many, and its high efficiency makes it a good match for amplifiers of modest power: A mere 13 dBW (20 watts) per channel can produce concert-hall levels, and the constant load presented to an amplifier suggests that the electronics will face favorable conditions. In light of its moderate size and price and its good performance, the Grafyx SP-Ten is a worthy addition to the loudspeaker population.

CIRCLE 134 ON PAGE 99

THE JVC SEPARATES.

Sensitive tuners, plus DC amplifiers that help eliminate sonic backlash.

If you've ever listened to a JVC music system with a separate tuner and amplifier, and thought, "One of these days..."

Well that day is here. The new JA-S44 DC integrated stereo amplifier, with its exclusive built-in SEA graphic equalizer and dual power meters, provides clean, uncannily-accurate music reproduction, with all the power you're ever likely to need.* And it has dual power supplies—not one for each channel, as in conventional designs—but one for its Class A-operated preamp/ tone control section, and a second which performs even heavier duty for its Class B-operated DC power amplifier section. This unique design practically eliminates both inter- and intra-channel crosstalk and distortion, or what we call "sonic backlash." The results: increased tonal definition and brilliance, especially with high-level transient signals.

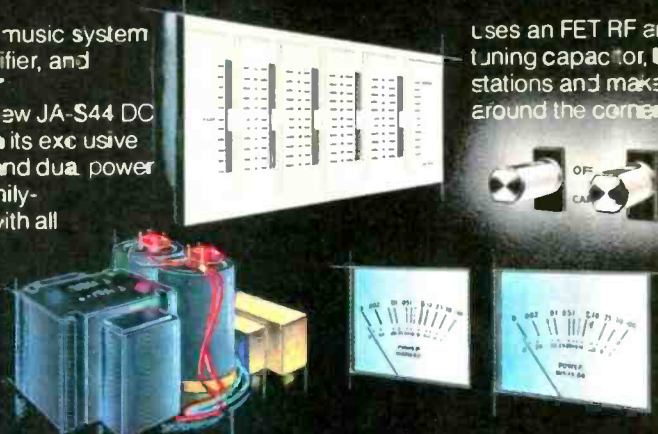
Our "Tri-DC" design in the JVC JA-S55 and JA-S77 further eliminates distortion-causing capacitors within the DC phono equalizer, DC tone control and DC power amplifier sections, providing frequency response from 5Hz to 100kHz (+0, -1, 0dB).

The new JVC JT-V22 AM/FM stereo tuner is a standout in its class. With an FM front end that

uses an FET RF amplifier, combined with a \bar{E} -gang tuning capacitor, the JT-V22 brings in the most timid FM stations and makes them sound as though they're just around the corner. Or, if you're in an area where FM stations are a hair's length away from each other on the dial, it delivers clear, interference-free reception. The JT-V22, to help you make sure you're on target, has both signal strength and center-channel tuning meters.

Probably the most significant advance in recent FM tuner technology is JVC's Phase Tracking Loop circuitry in our new top model—JT-V77. This advanced circuit provides high signal-to-noise ratio as well as excellent interference rejection and freedom from multipath effects and adjacent channel interference. It's still another example of JVC's innovative engineering. But sounds speak louder than words. See and hear these magnificent, well-designed separates at your JVC dealer soon.

JVC High Fidelity Division, US JVC Corp., 58-75 Queens Midtown Expressway, Maspeth, N.Y. 11378. Canada: JVC Electronics of Canada, Ltd., Ont.



Top JA-S22 Bottom JA-S55 Top JT-V77 Bottom JA-S77



We build in what the others leave out.



JT-V22, JA-S44

*45 watts/channel, min. RMS, 8 ohms, from 20Hz-20kHz, with no more than 0.02% THD. Rack-mount handles and wood-grain cabinets optional.

tech talk:

45 watts RMS minimum per channel, into 8 Ohms.
From 20 to 20,000 Hz. With not more than 0.08% THD.

explained.

The easiest way to decipher amplifier specs like those above is to look at the first and last figures. What's in between can be said for just about any good stereo. It's there because the Federal Trade Commission requires it. What you need to know is this. The higher the wattage, the more power you get. The lower the THD, the less distortion you get.

But good specs aren't everything. Compare this MCS Series® 45 Watt System to other audio systems, and you'll find it's just as important to look for great features. Like the tape dubbing switch on our amplifier, that lets you hook up two tape decks and record from one to the other. The signal strength and FM tun-

ing meters on our tuner. The Dolby® noise reduction system on our cassette deck. The DC servo motor in our direct drive turntable. And our bass-reflex 3-way speaker system.

You don't even have to understand the technology to know what you're getting. It all translates into sound. The MCS Series 45 Watt System complete with rack, only \$999.

Full 5-Year Warranty on speakers. Full 3-Year Warranty on receivers, turntables, tape decks, tuners and amplifiers. If any MCS Series® component is defective in materials and workmanship during its warranty period, we will repair or replace it—just return it to JCPenney.



MCS[®]
Series

IT MAKES EVERYTHING CLEAR.

Sold and serviced at JCPenney

Still another debut: Oiseau-Lyre. The prestigious Lyre-Bird label, which has graced so many rare score publications and recordings, now comes—just before its first open-reel releases are expected from Barclay-Crocker—to musicassettes. British processed, in Dolby encodings, of course, these cassettes are distributed in the U.S. by London Records and list at \$8.95 each. The first three examples augur well for the future, by both their technological quality and musicological interest. And the latter is not confined to the baroque and earlier era repertory for which Oiseau-Lyre productions have been chiefly famous.

Indeed, my initial encounter has been with the first full stereo program devoted to Godowsky's fabulous Chopin elaborations (KDSLCL 26). They are fabulously played, too, by one of the few contemporary pianists ideally equipped to do so: Jorge Bolet, a one-time pupil of Godowsky's son-in-law, the late David Saperton. Except for the too heavily pedaled first of eight études (there are also six waltz paraphrases), these recorded performances are no less impressive for their solid sonic "ring" than for their phenomenal digital bravura.

Then there are two exemplars of Oiseau-Lyre's more characteristic Florilegium series of novel musical explorations: Johann Christian Bach's six *Favorite Overtures* of 1763, played by the Academy of Ancient Music led by Christopher Hogwood (KDSLCL 525), and a curious program of Dowland's ayres and dances in contemporary arrangements by Morley, Simpson, and Anon., played by Anthony Rooley's Consort of Musicke (KDSLCL 533).

The London Bach's Italian opera overtures are lightweight but delectable, especially the infectiously vivacious No. 4, *Il Tutore e la pupille*, and No. 6, *Astarte, rè di Tiro*. The child Mozart must have relished some of these same works when he was in London in 1764, but it's doubtful that any theater orchestra then could have played them as well as Hogwood's ensemble does in these brightly crisp recordings. The Consort's performances are meritorious enough, but even when the viols are augmented by recorders, cittern, and bandura, the quite closely miked sonics—still more the pervasive lugubriosities of the music itself—test the endurance of even specialists. And, exceptionally, there are no notes here, where they are particularly needed.

Giulini's three Nincths. Even while he was scantily represented on records,

by R. D. Darrell

The Tape Deck

Carlo Maria Giulini maintained a consistently firm hold on many aficionados. Now that he is more actively recording again, he is rapidly becoming a charismatic cult figure. Four current releases are sure to accelerate that trend, for three of them (with the Chicago Symphony) are devoted to the mightiest Nincths of the symphonic repertory: Bruckner's (Angel 4XS 37287, \$7.98), Dvořák's, and Schubert's (Deutsche Grammophon 3300 881 and 3300 882, \$8.98 each). All three masterpieces are played with exceptional tonal beauty and recorded with notably rich sonic warmth and expansiveness. Each is distinctively, even idiosyncratically, interpreted—and that is where listeners will be magnetically drawn or repelled.

The mystically atmospheric, lovingly expressive Bruckner reading is the most quintessentially Giulinian. For most it will be profoundly moving, but some others will long for a more down-to-earth, muscular approach. In contrast, the Dvořák *New World* is, while lyrically songful, more tautly vigorous. And probably only fanatical Czechophiles will find its warmth those of a hothouse rather than the countryside.

Giulini's Schubert is the most controversial of these interpretations. Its unrelieved somberness, generally slow tempos, and insistence on observing all the third-movement repeats make excessive demands that only wholehearted devotees can meet. If you can, however, you will be greatly rewarded, not least by some of the most magical, true pianissimos on record.

From the inner Mozartean sanctum. Almost any taped chamber music is relatively rare and precious, but none more so than Mozartean examples. And for me, the most rewarding Mozart of all are his chamber works for strings with a woodwind or keyboard instrument. So I'm especially delighted to report the release of four new musicassettes.

They are led by Philips 7300 607

(\$8.98), with the incomparable Heinz Holliger starring in the delectable Oboe Quartet, K. 370, and—with his oboe replacing the first violin—in the String Quintet, K. 406, which was itself transcribed by the composer from his K. 388 *Serenade for Woodwinds*. Superbly played not only by Holliger, but also by his colleagues Krebbers, Schouton, Munk-Gerö, and Decroos, these performances are beautifully balanced tonally; it's in personality projection that the star dominates. But he discreetly merges with the ensemble of flute, oboe, viola, and cello in the accompaniment to the out-of-this-world ethereal tones of Bruno Hoffman's glass harp in the *Adagio and Rondo*, K. 617, which Mozart wrote for the blind glass-harmonica player Marianne Kirchgessner.

There have been many fine recordings of the great Clarinet Quintet, K. 581, probably the most highly esteemed of all Mozart's works for "mixed" chamber ensembles, but surely none boasting more beautiful clarinet playing than Richard Stoltzman's in RCA Red Seal ARK 1-2863 (\$7.98). His Tashi colleagues play well, and they are all recorded with uncommon sweetness, yet overall this version is just too sweet and gentle to reveal the music's full depths. More equably and completely successful is the Tashi coupling, the E flat Quintet, K. 452, for piano (Peter Serkin), oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon—notable for its sparkling humor and zest no less than for its poetic tenderness.

I am less happy with the performances (the music's a delight!) of the two Piano Quartets, K. 478 and K. 493, in RCA ARK 1-2676 (\$7.98), where neither an uncharacteristically over-careful, even heavy-handed Arthur Rubinstein nor the somewhat over-expressive Guarneri Quartet is in the best form—and where some extraneous background (traffic?) noise is evident in the second and third movements of K. 493. Of course, this is nit-picking to be disregarded by those who find romantic grandeurs here.

Finally, there is a brightly vivacious, however lightweight set of the four Flute Quartets, K. 285, 285a, 285b, and 298, by Andreas Blau with members of the Amadeus Quartet in Deutsche Grammophon 3300 983 (\$8.98). The Berlin Philharmonic soloist plays with assured grace and pleasing if rather small tone in what are stylistically as well as sonically engaging rococo versions. But for more of what lies under this music's shining surfaces, one must turn back to the William Bennett/Grumiaux Philips versions (7300 401). ●

The standard bearers.



The high bias standard.

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

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



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

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

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

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

TDK
The machine for your machine.

*In the unlikely event that any TDK cassette ever fails to perform due to a defect in materials or workmanship, simply return it to your local dealer or to TDK for a free replacement.

Audio Heads into the '80s

From Winter's Consumer Electronics Show and Elsewhere, a Comprehensive Report on New Products for Spring

by Robert Long and Harold A. Rodgers

THERE IS AN ELECTRICITY abroad in the high fidelity community that, only a few years ago, would have been unknown at this time of year. Major introductions to the trade generally have occurred in the late spring or early summer, allowing several months for the manufacturers to assimilate the comments elicited by their prototypes, set final production plans and cosmetics, and deliver the finished products to their dealers in time for the fall selling season. But this year—as witness, in particular, the annual Winter Consumer Electronics Show (open only to the trade) in Las Vegas—all sorts of new equipment was unveiled early, preparatory to spring delivery.

We can guess at some reasons for the change. One may be the international phenomenon of inflation. Since Japanese manufacturers account for the lion's share of the market and traditionally (in their home market) prefer offering new models to raising prices on existing ones, whole new—though only marginally different—lines are needed if increased manufacturing costs are to be satisfied. And indeed some of these products are only marginally different. At the same time, however, the rising value of the yen has cut noticeably into

the edge that Japanese manufacturers have enjoyed in international markets, making "pizzazz" increasingly important if they are to hold their ground. The loss of price advantage also has accelerated plans for Japanese manufacturers to build or assemble here the consumer products (particularly TV receivers, but some audio equipment as well) destined for the North American market, which itself may account for some product changes.

The biggest single area of change—the one in which activity and argument are the most feverish—is surely the cassette deck. And of the many "hot" ideas embodied in the new models, the ability to record on the metal-particle tapes (which are part of the excitement) is by far the most provocative. For that reason, we begin this report with tape equipment and continue with other home-audio gear. Two other subjects of intense interest in the last year or two will be saved for the May issue: video equipment, which, at least potentially, has immense implications for audio's future via digital technology, and car stereo, which continues to attract converts among manufacturers of home components.

Tape Equipment

There is—and will continue to be, to our way of thinking—argument about every one of the major thrusts now overtaking the consumer audio tape field. And that means the cassette field almost exclusively in the present context, since the eight-track format is virtually a dead issue and the open reel is more or less on "hold" pending a rational assessment of the impact that metal tapes and digital

ON THIS MONTH'S COVER (top to bottom, from the left): B.I.C. T-4 two-speed/metal cassette deck, Crown FM-1 digital FM tuner, Carver Corp. M-400 "magnetic" power amplifier, Pioneer SA-9800 "nonswitching" integrated amplifier, Teac Model 124 Syncaset cassette deck, Luxman K-12 metal-ready cassette deck, Aiwa AP-2600U quartz-locked direct-drive turntable, BTM ESTranslator Model 300 loudspeaker system.

techniques can have on its somewhat splintered markets. There are some new decks in the well-recognized semipro format: Akai (with a bidirectional transport), Philips, and Teac's Tascam Series all have attractive models, while Sony hints that it may have at least one later this year. But don't expect any precarious departures from established norms until at least some of the smoke has cleared.

In digital equipment (some of which, at least chez Sony, is specifically aimed at the consumer market, albeit at prices that are sure to limit its acceptance), the "smoke" consists partly of questions about code standardization. Since both sampling rates and error-correction codes vary from one analog/digital system to another, tapes made with one brand often can't be played with another; until they can, some companies deeply committed to a digital future believe, there is no point in offering even semipro digital gear. So, despite all the prototype demonstrations of the last few months, digital equipment is not right around the corner for the home (or basement-studio) market.

Metal-particle tape is. TDK and Fuji have added their names to the roster begun by 3M, and BASF says it expects to do likewise next summer. While Ampex, Maxell, Memorex, and others report that their labs are ready to go with the metal particles, production is being held off for the time being. As a consequence, and because samples are scarce even from those manufacturers that have announced production, deck manufacturers wonder how long it will take to get reliable and plentiful supplies into stores; for their part, the tape manufacturers opine that at least some of the cassette decks designed to use the metal tape will not turn out to be "real" products in terms of general availability. Some captains of the industry, it seems, are yelling "full speed ahead" from the bridges of their respective ships even while they're giving much more cautious instructions to their engine rooms.

Nonetheless, there is considerable momentum in the fleet. Tandberg and JVC announced their metal-compatible decks late last year; by January, the list had swelled to about a dozen—depending on how you count. In addition to questions about whether individual models are "for show" or "for real," the retrofit concept confuses that count.

Lux, for example, has two "metal-particle" models—its first tape decks of any kind. The K-12 (at just under \$1,000) is a two-head deck that will be delivered metal-ready; the three-head 5K-50 (at twice the price) includes an optional factory conversion to metal tapes at a later (so far unspecified) date. Both include Lux's BRBS (Bridge Recording Bias and Signal amps), said to improve phase linearity, bias leakage, distortion, dynamic range, and response over conventional recording-amp designs, partly through the use of direct coupling between the amp and the recording head.

Eumig, too, has a retrofit program: For \$200 it will adapt the two-head Model CCD (the \$1,300 deck with which it entered the American audio market last year) to work with metal. The three-head professional model, FL-1000, will be delivered metal-ready. Other announced or rumored metal-now models range from professional-style decks of high-end specialists like Technics (the RS-M95, with three heads, microprocessor tension control, quartz-locked direct drive, and quick-response two-color fluorescent bar-graph metering) to top models in lines that are aimed more toward the mass market, like Sanyo's (the \$500 RD-5372, also with three heads but far more consumer-minded in both features and styling).

When, late last year, Nakamichi introduced the front-loading, two-head Model 580 deck, insiders expressed disappointment that it turned out not to be metal-ready. Hadn't Nakamichi been among the first to encourage and demonstrate (in prototype) the developing technology? The pat answer was that the time was not yet ripe. The new year evidently had a ripening effect, since Nakamichi now has two metal-ready models—both based on the 580 transport but using three heads. The Model 582 includes separate recording and playback electronics and therefore is capable of instantaneous monitoring; the Model 581 retains the third head as, in Nakamichi's view, the best way of handling metal tapes, but it reduces cost at no expense in performance by giving up the monitoring feature and asking a single preamp stage to serve in both recording and playback.

Two-speed cassette decks (adding 3¼ ips to the standard 1½) are, in some circles, considered an alternative to metal tapes in the top-performance sweepstakes. B.I.C./Avnet, which first introduced the higher speed (if we ignore Teac's prototypes of a decade ago), now has four home models, topped by the T-4, which allows metal-tape recording in addition. (B.I.C. also is first in offering this year a two-speed automobile cassette player.) So far, Yamaha is the only other company to have demonstrated a two-speed deck (the K-40, with automatic tape matching for LH ferric and chrome) in this country. Another prototype, shown in Japan, had the metal capability as well. Yamaha says it is interested in both technologies, though it remains unclear exactly when, at what price points, or in combination with what features they might be brought to the American market.

Another striking departure, making its debut this year in the Teac Model 124, is Simul-Sync (the equivalent of Ampex's Sel-Sync). Philips, as patent holder and licensor of the cassette format, has heretofore blocked in consumer equipment any move that would make it possible to record in mono on a single track of the cassette stereo pair since that would degrade the signal-to-noise ratio with respect to the normal mono track, which cov-



Open-reel equipment basically is standing pat with successful pro and semipro formats; Philips' first NAB-reel deck in consumer distribution is N-4520.



Metal-particle tapes, certainly this year's most talked-of development, can be recorded on several decks introduced this season; this is Nakamichi Model 582.

ers the full stereo-pair width. Technically, the Teac does allow this, but with the intent of permitting one track of the pair to be re-recorded in sync with whatever is on the other—yielding stereo sound, not mono. Since only one channel can be overdubbed, the system is not nearly as flexible as that in Teac's classic 3340 open-reel model, for example, but it provides a capability totally new in the consumer cassette format.

Two familiar names have made their appearance in tape gear for the first time: Thorens, with the \$1,000 PC-650 three-head cassette deck slated for sale by midyear, and Sherwood, with the two-head CD-200 CP. And among brands already recognized for their tape gear there are many new models, some of them with bidirectional transports. Akai has two models—GXC-735D and CS-732D—both of which reverse automatically in both recording and playback modes. While the prices we have quoted so far are on the hefty side, Akai, Sansui, and others have kept budget-conscious buyers in mind as well. Sanyo even has a \$130 model that includes straight-line signal level indicators, generally reserved for top models in those lines offering them.

Some lines do not; Mitsubishi, for example, has introduced two high-spec models (in addition to its mini-sized designs) that achieve quality without resorting to such radical departures. But Pioneer, Teac, Technics, Lux, Eumig, B.I.C./Avnet, Rotel, and others are exploring this type of level metering with interesting results. The means vary

(liquid crystals, fluorescent panels, LED displays, and so on), but the intent basically is the same: a fast-acting, peak-reading display that lines up the two channels next to each other for easiest user assessment of instantaneous levels in both channels simultaneously. Some versions include some sort of peak-hold option; some use color coding for the overload portion of the metering range. Our initial experience with them, however, indicates that they are not equally usable, depending on such things as ambient light and the kind of information one wants from them. Some are calibrated only every 3 dB or so near the critical 0-VU level, while others are so quick-acting that the eye has difficulty following their readings. We doubtless will have much to say about their comparative virtues and shortcomings in future test reports. While we applaud a potentially useful development, we would urge readers in the meantime to try out these recording-level indicators for as long as possible in advance of purchase; many are admirable, but familiarity with some may breed contempt.

Simultaneous with its entry into tape equipment, Lux has announced that it is in the raw tape business—and with a unique product. The Luxman cassette shells, which will be available as C-60s and C-90s of both ferric oxide and ferricobalt, are the first to incorporate adjustments for skew angle. All tapes skew to some extent, yet for ideal reproduction (of ultrahigh frequencies and inter-channel phase information in particular) it is important that the tape traverse the playback head

Variouly called microcomponents and minicomponents, compact separates are making a bid for a corner of our crowded world; this ensemble comes from Technics.



gap at the same angle (azimuth) at which it crossed the recording gap. The Luxman shell offers separate adjustments for recording-head skew (between the erase-head opening and the central opening used for combination record/play heads) and playback (the central opening). It also is fitted with a timing wheel from which Luxman decks read out elapsed recording times and has an extra-large pressure pad for optimum head contact.

The scarcity of metal tapes appears to be easing. Scotch is producing C-60s (its first Metafine samples were C-45s, suggesting very limited supplies), and Fuji has announced distribution of its product. (So has Sony for its microcassettes—suggesting that it will be able to go to metal tape in its standard cassettes as well.) TDK's are clearly labeled as samples at this writing; the company says it will announce distribution, price, trade name, and formulation parameters only when the Electronics Industries Association of Japan announces the metal-tape standards on which it has been at work for some months, but that could happen before this issue reaches you. BASF, too, has been supplying limited quantities of its prototype tape to the trade, though actual marketing evidently will not occur before the announced introduction dates (August in Europe, September here).

BASF has made two changes in its tape line. Its original chrome formulation now is called Studio II (the superchrome remains Professional II), while the ferric Studio tape, now called Studio I, has been reformulated for upgraded performance and a somewhat higher bias point. Sony has introduced a ferricobalt called EHF that, it says, outperforms the chromium dioxide type, which it supersedes as the No. 2 formulation in the line. (Ferrichrome is the premier type.) Sony also is using redesigned SP Mechanism shells intended to improve winding properties and prevent binding. The Memorex entry in the nonchrome "chrome" field—called High Bias—was announced late last year and now is in full-scale distribution.

Slewing rate has resurfaced because of relationship to low transient intermodulation; Kenwood KA-907 is identified as a "high-speed DC integrated amplifier."



Electronics

Historically, each successive act of the electronics spectacular has become harder to follow than the one before. In former years, one could leave a trade show so dazzled by the high-power amplifiers, super-quiet preamps with infinitesimal distortion, and quintessentially clean tuners as to wonder naively, "What will they come up with next?" Yet, if the answer to that question has become, "Not a heck of a lot," it is more a reflection of the height of the plateau the state of the electronics art has scaled than of any lack of effort on the part of industry research and development teams. With the power race slumping and distortion figures already threatening to provoke a crisis in the world supply of zeroes, what is a manufacturer to do to spur the interest of prospective customers? Judging from the offerings for spring 1979, the answers lie in small refinements in circuitry, new convenience features and signal-processing functions, and an appeal to a new set of visual aesthetics. In short, this season's equipment may not sound much different from that of last season, but it will look different, be easier to operate, and provide marginally better performance.

One of the more noticeable developments is the quickening trend to minicomponents started by Mitsubishi last summer. The latest companies to dip a toe into these waters are Technics and Toshiba, each with a three-product line consisting of a power amp, preamp, and tuner. And, from what we have seen in Japan, other companies are ready to join the party if those now involved meet with substantial success.

Demonstrating that the movement to reduced size is not confined to the far side of the Pacific, Carver Corporation, a new company headed by Bob Carver of Phase Linear fame, introduced a basic power amplifier that in spite of its small volume (less than 1/5 cubic foot) and light weight (about 12 pounds) pumps out 200 watts per chan-

Whole new electronics lines continue to appear; from Marantz comes Series 7, whose SC-7 preamp includes independent input switching for two tape decks.



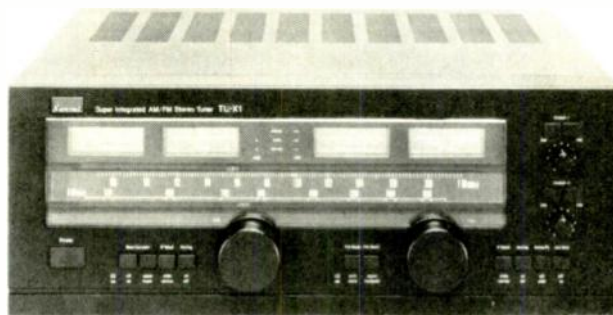
nel and runs cool besides. Both the Technics and Carver amps depend partly on power-supply innovations for their compactness, while Toshiba, somewhat surprisingly, has pulled off the trick with a conventional supply.

Independent of its size, the Toshiba tuner typifies another trend: use of a digital readout and synthesized tuning controlled by a quartz-regulated oscillator. Tuners of this general type were introduced by Hitachi, Nikko, and Crown. The Crown unit, which marks the company's first entry into the tuner market, uses a surface acoustic wave (SAW) filter for extra selectivity with minimum group delay. The Marantz ST-7, part of its fresh Series 7 line spanning component categories, also incorporates SAW filters and quartz-lock servo tuning; the latter feature is to be found in the top models from Pioneer and Aiwa as well. Extending its emphasis on replication of input waveforms at the system output, Technics has designed SAW filters and a circuit to prevent "jitter" (temporal instability) into its ST-8077 tuner.

Kenwood's new tuners feature the pulse-counting detector already developed for its high-end line. A stepdown model, the DA-C7 tuner-preamp, was introduced by Mitsubishi to make many of the features of the DA-C20 available to a wider range of consumers, and Sherwood's S-32CP tuner launches the Certified Performance line. Spectro Acoustics has a new tuner in the upper midprice category, and Sharp has brought out a low-cost matching tuner/integrated-amplifier pair. Sansui filled in the middle and lower parts of its separates line with several matching sets of tuners and integrated amps and introduced a DC integrated amp with high slew rate and 160 watts per channel. Its top separate tuner, the TU-X1, incorporates what are essentially two independent high-performance tuners: one for FM, and one for AM, the latter with such esoteric niceties as switchable IF bandwidth and sideband cancellation.

Pioneer's TV-audio tuner, introduced last year,

Sansui TU-X1 is exception to FM-only rule in high-end tuners; its AM section has unique array of features for optimizing signal quality in the oft-ignored band.



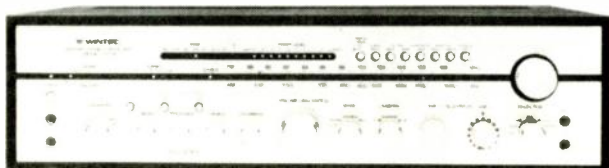
has not precipitated many imitators, though the Finney Company announced the Teletuner Model T-82.

Synthesizing the complexity of the C-1 and the spare approach of the C-2, Yamaha's new C-4 preamp—together with its companion M-4 power amp (120 watts per channel)—now tops the company's high-end separates. Marantz Series 7 offers the choice of an integrated amp at 150 watts per channel or the same electronics and performance on two separate chassis. Sony's slim-profile TA-N86B power amp, which teams up with a matching "straight path" preamp with no tone controls, can be switched to operate as a Class A amp with 18 watts per channel, a Class B amp with 80 watts per channel, or a 200-watt mono amp.

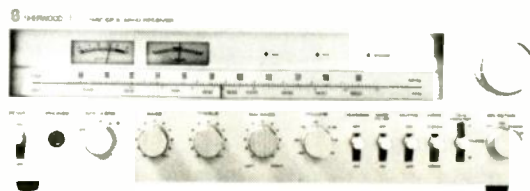
Technics, showing the first fruits of its new systems for evaluating amplifier distortion and performance (one method allows comparison of input and output waveforms with an actual music signal), introduced five DC integrated amps and two separate basic amps of modest power. Designed to defeat transient distortion while maintaining excellent steady-state characteristics, the DC integrations from Kenwood feature high-speed output stages promising exceptionally rapid slew rates. Nikko has added three integrated amplifiers to its line, as well as the Alpha VI power amp, which, with its rated 300 watts per channel, is one of the few new products to qualify as a behemoth. Aiwa's electronics line has expanded to include a quartz-controlled digital FM tuner and an integrated amp.

Power MOSFETs, hitherto available in a limited number of Hitachi products, have begun to spread through the line, appearing in a power amp and an integrated, both incorporating DC circuitry. The company's new receiver stands pat with bipolar devices but employs Class G output stages for increased dynamic headroom. Denon's TU-1000 FM tuner uses a digital readout and quartz-locked tuning. Like the tuner, the balance of Denon's new

Pace of TV-audio entries, now slow, may pick up if stereo soundtracks are introduced here, following Japan's lead; Wintec R-1120 receiver offers TV-audio tuning



Meanwhile, there's plenty of attractive "standard" gear around; Sherwood S-7650 CP (for Certified Performance) receiver exemplifies good specs, clean styling.



electronics—two preamps and two power amps—list extremely low crosstalk among their desirable performance features. RTR is launching its Monogram series of professional products: a preamp and three power amps featuring "soft" clipping and output stages that operate in Class A at low power and convert to Class AB at higher levels.

Circuitry to minimize the crossover or "notch" distortion characteristic of Class B or AB operation but retain their efficiency is the salient feature of the latest integrated amps from Pioneer and power amps from the Pioneer-built Series 20. The three "nonswitching" integrations, as they are called, also incorporate DC amplification and fluorescent power-monitoring devices. Threshold continues to apply a more time-honored if less power-efficient method of suppressing crossover distortion without resorting to heavy feedback; its new Model 400 amp runs in straight Class A.

The hybrid Class A power amp from Infinity has a solid-state output section, but the input stage uses vacuum tubes for the "warmth and sweetness" they are said to contribute to the sound. Model BA-150 from Audionics, also a hybrid design, works the other way around—solid-state low-level stages, vacuum-tube driver and output stages. In addition, CMOS digital circuitry controls the operating points of the output tubes, and the amount of feedback is switch-controlled. Crown's new SA-2 power amp contains two electrically separate channels and uses "smart" protection circuitry that allows limiting only when a built-in computer senses that the power transistors are about to leave their safe operating area. BCW's latest consumer high fidelity product is the Model 103, a preamp with adjustable phono-cartridge loading as well as an infrasonic filter that

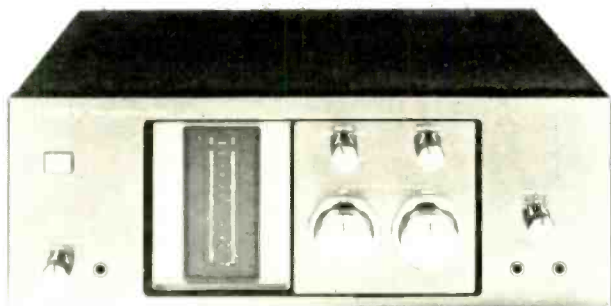
cuts off at 18 dB per octave. New electronics, including a preamp and a moving-coil head amp, were introduced by Great White Whale.

In addition to the FM tuner mentioned earlier, the Sherwood Certified Performance line comprises two integrated amplifiers and four receivers, all designed to sell for relatively low prices. Also available for comparatively little cost is the DH-102 pre-preamplifier module from David Hafler Company; intended for installation into the DH-101 preamp, the module is adaptable to other units that can supply the necessary power. NAD, another contender in the realm of budget high fidelity, offers a matching FM tuner and integrated amp, the latter featuring a soft-clipping circuit. On the other hand, Rotel, shooting for the high end in power as well as market stance, is delivering the RB-5000 power amp, rated at 500 watts per channel and hitherto seen only as a prototype. The matching preamp includes a graphic equalizer.

Considering the number of separates introduced this spring, activity in receivers has been relatively quiet, and the battle to see who could cram more wattage onto a single chassis along with a tuner and preamp section seems to have abated considerably. Nikko's five receivers are led by a model rated to deliver 100 watts per channel, with DC amplification featured in the two top units. Two of the four models in the new Wintec line—spaced, as usual, 3 dB apart in power—are capable of tuning to the audio portions of TV broadcasts. Sansui and Fisher filled in the low-to-middle portions of their lines with two models each; one from the former operates down to DC, and one from the latter incorporates a five-band graphic equalizer. Realistic (Radio Shack) and Optonica both have new vanguard models that extend the range of available

Direct drive has become a way of life in turntables; logic in Mitsubishi's quartz-locked DP-EC20 (right) can sync cassette-deck start with stylus touchdown.

Only home digital encoder on market so far is Sony's PCM-1, intended for the recordist who wants to go digital with existing tape deck to minimize conversion cost.



power upward to 120 and 125 watts, respectively. Bose broke new ground with two smartly styled receivers designed for good performance and good value rather than exorbitant specs—principally, though not exclusively, in conjunction with its own Direct reflecting speaker line.

Signal-processing devices are showing some continuing strength, and Soundcraftsmen has brought out a preamp that, in addition to a graphic equalizer, has two loops for external accessories and can accommodate three tape recorders—with three-way dubbing control! Whether the emergence of the Tate SQ decoder integrated circuit will have any significant resuscitative effect on quadriphony remains to be seen, but in the meantime Audionics has used the chip in a high-performance SQ decoder. Given the relative lack of encoded software, the company expects the device to be used primarily in the "surround synthesis" mode and for extraction of ambience.

Also useful for extraction of ambience as opposed to generating artificial reverberation is the SD-550, Sound Concepts' improved "box." Using a straight delay line and some frequency contouring, the system exploits the Haas effect to allow recorded ambience to be heard, although it can add reverberation to "dry" program material as well. The Acoustic Dimension Synthesizer, a digital time-delay unit from ADS designed to add reverb, is essentially the ADS 10 without loudspeakers and built-in power amps. Nikko is entering the ambience-synthesis field—formerly an American specialty—with a versatile model that it expects will sell at considerably below the \$600 norm for domestic ones.

DBX has added an optional remote control for its 3BX three-band expander plus two stepdown

models, the 1BX and 2BX, using one and two bands, respectively. A new Dynamic Noise Filter from Logical Systems offers up to 15 dB of hiss reduction and is said to be useful in either recording or playback.

Audio Control has brought forward two new graphic equalizers, one incorporating a spectrum analyzer; Nikko has a ten-band model with rack-mount styling; and a budget-priced five-band model should be available from Superex sometime soon. SAE and Sansui have new four-band parametric equalizers. Symmetry Audiophile Systems' phase-compensated electronic crossover, whose summed outputs will deliver an intact square wave, is making its debut. There also are new electronic crossovers from Sony and JSH. And among outboard control boxes to increase the versatility of existing systems is a whole line from Dubie Corporation.

This season's price pinnacle for consumer signal-processing equipment may well be with the Sony PCM-1, a \$4,000 device that connects to a video cassette recorder to allow digital recording and playback in a thirteen-bit format. But possibly the most talked-about signal-processing device of 1979 isn't yet available as a separate: The Sonic Hologram Generator, which operates on the phase relationships between stereo channels to give a psychoacoustic impression of three-dimensional space, is a major feature of the new preamp (which includes an Autocorrelator) from Carver.

Head amps and other ancillary hardware for moving-coil cartridges continue to proliferate. Thorens is introducing both a transformer and an amp, and Yamaha has a separate head amp due later this spring. Marcof, a young company, has a low-cost head amp, while Electro Research Mar-

keting offers a strain-gauge pickup plus matched preamp (said to have 7-MHz frequency capability) for \$2,000.

Record-Playing Equipment

Were it necessary to characterize the record-playing equipment for early 1979 in terms of dominant buzzwords, "moving-coil" and "quartz-lock" would be the most likely candidates. The latter feature has come into prominence as the icing on the cake of direct-drive turntables, so to speak, although there is no obvious reason why a quartz-controlled motor could not be coupled to a platter by a belt. More to the point, perhaps, direct drive seems on the verge of relegating belt drive far into the background, despite the claims and rumors—unsubstantiated in current products, as far as we can tell—that it is likely to bombard a stereo system with infrasonic rumble. The trend may change at next summer's Consumer Electronics Show, but among the turntables introduced for this spring, belt drive was almost confined to budget models and one or two esoterica.

The love affair between dedicated audiophiles and the moving-coil cartridge still is going strong. Strong, too, are the prices found in some of the more exotic lines, as the \$660 FR-7 from Fidelity Research demonstrates, but there has been movement in the opposite direction. If others have breached the price barrier associated with moving-coil designs, Audio-Technica has fairly demolished it with the AT-30E, which sells for \$100. Yet the company remains committed to the moving-magnet principle, using it in its new top models, AT-24 and AT-25, priced at \$250 and \$275, respectively. Empire, in its highest-priced pickup ever, the \$200 EDR-9, has retained its fixed-coil transduction system while introducing a new stylus geometry said to reduce record wear substantially.

Osawa, importer of the Satin line of moving-coil pickups, added some members of that company's 117 series and has a budget-priced "moving-permalloy" cartridge to be marketed under Osawa's own name. Like the Satin 117 series, the Series 9000 cartridge from NAD delivers enough output voltage to make a head amp unnecessary; it also weighs remarkably little for a moving-coil type. Designed to fit only Thorens turntables, the MC pickups from that manufacturer are based on the EMT studio cartridges. And two MC pickups from Yamaha should see daylight late in the spring.

The Thorens pickups, one version of the Yamaha prototypes, and one version of the radical-looking Concorde series from Ortofon embody an interesting mini-trend—that of building cartridges in integral headshells to reduce mass (the Ortofon is said to weigh less than many standard headshells alone) and simplify installation. The idea has been used by Audio-Technica and Nagatron-

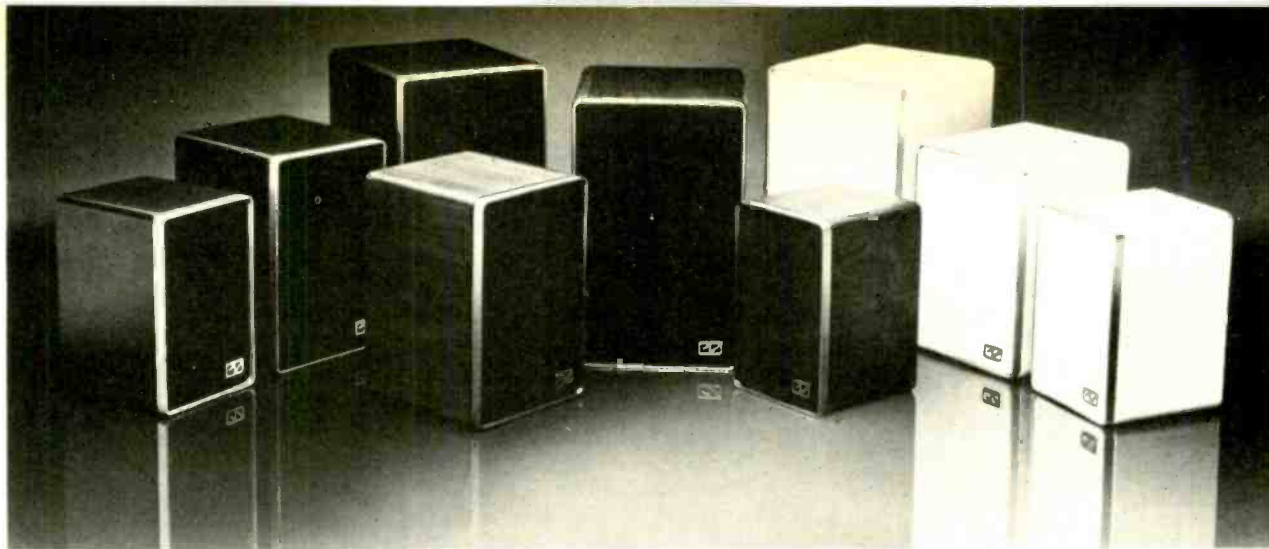
ics as well. With the exception of the Thorens, the integrated pickup/headshell combinations are designed to plug directly into the "standard" tubular tonearms that are available, both separately and in turntable ensembles, from many manufacturers.

Quartz-controlled speed lock permeates the new turntable lines from Sony and Technics quite thoroughly, being included in four of six models from Sony and all four from Technics. The Technics SL-5350 is billed as the first quartz-locked changer available to the audio field. As might be expected, all these models from both companies use direct drive. Aiwa's AP-2600U, another direct-drive turntable with quartz-lock, adds digital readout of speed.

But belt drive is not dead yet. Philips announced delivery of not only its Project 7 turntables (pre-viewed in June) that use belt drive in conjunction with quartz-lock servo control of platter speed, but a low-priced, belt-driven, semiautomatic model as well. At the high end of belt drive, there is the Ariston RD-11S imported by Osawa and available without tonearm for \$500. And two units were introduced by Thorens; Kenwood—which uses belt drive in its budget semiautomatic model—offers a choice of belt or direct drive in its midpriced models. Kenwood's direct-drive Audio Purist model is available either with an integral low-resonance tonearm or a choice of two bases for mounting tonearms from other sources. Two direct-drive models from Garrard feature improved motors that suppress cogging and a new speed-sensing circuit, while the duo from Visonik—one belt drive, the other direct—incorporate straight tonearms designed for minimum mass. Hitachi's automatic direct-drive model adds quartz control to its Unitorque motor, with an independent motor to power automatic functions. A pair of high-end direct units from Mitsubishi use integrated-circuit logic controls in addition to quartz-lock drive.

Loudspeakers and Headphones

New speakers—and even new speaker companies—continue to abound in bewildering profusion. This season's crop has its quotient of designs that are radical either in presenting new approaches or in addressing old ones in new guises. Peter Scheiber (of quad-matrix fame) and designer Dan Queen have returned to the "grail": the pulsating sphere. Their prototype for the Peter Scheiber Sonics loudspeaker (which is expected to retail for \$2,000 per pair) configures a fairly large enclosure so that the sound generated by the drivers all seems to emanate from a "pulsating oblate-sphere transducer" 3 inches high and 12 in diameter. Another design, called the Space Frame, from Organic Audio also seeks to simulate coincident sound genesis with multiple drivers—in this case



Miniature speakers abound in this season's new-product entries; here General Sound shows off an entire line in its Micron Series.

by placing four tweeters on arms that keep them equidistant from (and therefore producing a virtual image at) the midrange driver.

Mitsubishi has re-explored laminar woofer-cone construction for three of its speakers. The cone surfaces are made of plastic with glass fiber reinforcement; between them is an aluminum honeycomb ("like that used in radar domes") for rigidity. Infinity is using polypropylene to make woofer cones that are unusually light, stiff, and acoustically inert for its most recent products and has extended the electromagnetic induction tweeter (EMIT) principle to a midrange driver (EMIM). Both are incorporated in the new Reference Standard 4.5 system, selling (at \$3,000 per pair) for less than half the price of the original Reference Standard. Glass fiber reinforces the cylindrical thermoplastic drivers in Advanced Electrodynamic Systems' Cybele, which has a 9-inch woofer and passive radiator.

The columnar-speaker concept is undergoing re-examination in the Speckman Galatian Series from JWS Acoustic Design Corporation. Optional legs or suspension chains hold the system off the floor so that sound from the downward-firing woofer will propagate freely; higher frequencies are handled by upward-firing drivers at the top of the enclosure for 360-degree Omnipresent sound, which is virtually unaffected by room placement, according to Speckman. Available exterior finishes for the cylindrical enclosures range from burlap to mink.

BTM Manufacturing Company currently champions the perennial virtues of electrostatic drivers in a whole line called EST—for Electro-Static Translators; Pedersen Acoustics, in its Model HF-1 (\$6,000 per pair), claims to be making "the first serious attempt at a high-quality horn-loaded loudspeaker system since the original Paul Klipsch design." ESS continues to add lines employing Heil drivers: The latest are called Eclipse (two floor-standing models with walnut cases and two vinyl-

clad bookshelf models) and Linear Efficiency (beginning with a \$150 bookshelf speaker). Leak has incorporated its Isotweeter, using an ultrathin diaphragm bearing a printed-circuit "voice coil," into its four-way 3090 (\$870) Monitor system, whose midrange/treble section is swivel-mounted atop a 15-inch transmission-line woofer section.

The large majority in the vast speaker market, however, still concerns itself with regular dynamic drivers in relatively conventional configurations. Designers working within this "standard" tradition currently are addressing such factors as room coupling and sound propagation, diffraction and freedom from "time smear," optimum loading and impedance control, and other areas in which, they feel, the traditional approaches have yet to be optimized. But by far the most popular trend among these designers is that toward minispeakers ("satellites") to be used with or without subwoofers that—either in pairs or via a single unit that combines both channels—extend and solidify the bass. The idea has been with us for at least two decades, but its current vogue dates from the many minis that followed in the wake of the ADS 200 and 300 models a few years ago. Now the concept is bidding to displace the bookshelf speaker as a way of life.

One new example of the three-piece system (two minis plus a common subwoofer) comes from Ultralinear: the TriModal TM-116, which sells for less than \$300 for the complete ensemble. RTR has opted for a somewhat different approach, both in taking up the popular pyramidal shape for its minis (which it called satellites) and in recommending separate subwoofers for each channel; it calls the former the PS-1 Pyramid, the latter the DAC-1 Rhombus. One of the "classics" in this field, Visonik's David line, has been revamped in some respects and includes four basic Davids plus two subwoofer models. General Sound, which introduced its Micron Series of minis (all employing the Time-Align design technique) last summer,

has added the Model 1011 Bass Extender, to be used with the Microns to create what the company calls Extended Range Audio Systems ERAS 3. CCL, erstwhile importers of the Swedish Sinus line, includes among its domestically built five-model Modular Acoustics group a satellite-and-subwoofer system. And Audioanalyst is delivering the previously announced BassMatrix subwoofer designed to go with its PhaseMatrix speakers.

The CVM line from Acusta Craft includes two CVW floor-standing woofer systems, but chooses panel format for its three CVS satellites. (In addition, there are three CV full-range floor-standing systems.) Bass alignments for the woofers, which are vented, are designed with the help of a computer, and all models are available both assembled and in kit form.

Infinity's entry in the mini category is called InfiniTesimal and employs both the EMIT tweeter and the polypropylene woofer; like many other models, it is available with or without a mounting bracket for automotive use. Acutex, which has entered the speaker market with some handsome rosewood bookshelf-sized models as well, calls its mini MTS. Also representative of the genre is the Isophon DIA-2000, available from Walter Odemer Company. Among Scott's new speakers is a home model approaching mini size, the Controlled Impedance Model 166. Only slightly larger is Sansui's J-33 (\$450 in mirror stereo pairs), with a striking black lacquer piano finish. And the line from AAL, a relative newcomer to the consumer audio market, runs the gamut from the true mini Micro 100 and the miniature-bookshelf-design Studio 50 to the monsters in its Disco and Pro lines.

The AAL Studio series (one of three, in addition to the Micro 100, in its home lineup) includes an add-on tweeter containing four horn-loaded piezoelectric drivers. Superex (of headphone fame, though it is moving into other areas of componentry and expects to go into electronics in the near future) also has an add-on tweeter powered by two 1-inch fabric-dome drivers.

The number of slant-faced systems is, perhaps, the most obvious index that "phase coherence," "Time Alignment," or whatever term a particular designer chooses to use is still very much among us. RTR's Model 800D lines the four drivers up, one above the other; atypically, the upper portion of the slanted baffle is cut away so that it approximates the front surface of a pyramid. Great White Whale's Point 5 and minimum-diffraction Point 4 likewise slant the grilles for coplanar driver mountings equidistant from the listening position. The midrange and tweeters are not mounted in a continuous baffle with the woofer, however (in the Point 5, multiple midrange drivers and tweeters fire in various directions), while the subwoofers are flat-plane drivers aimed downward—partly to minimize nonaxial gravitational forces. Technics,

in its latest Linear Phase speakers, continues the "stacked boxes" (one per driver) that it has been using in the quest for waveform fidelity in the combined array. In the RS-8 from Tangent (a British company whose speakers have recently been introduced here), the baffle panels are vertical, with setbacks between drivers, while the sides are slanted to create what might be described as a semipyramid.

Qysonic, which also is concerned with phase integrity, is emphasizing slim, very vertical enclosures. The relatively small, ultrasvelte Tad II uses no crossover and incorporates electro-mechanical phase compensation. Polk Audio's Real-Time Array Reference Monitor System (RTA-12) also is slim. The pedestal-mounted system bears two polymer-laminate bass/midrange drivers plus a foam subwoofer on the front panel and houses the tweeter in a grille-enclosed "pent-house" at the top.

Some engineers (perhaps most notably, in the public mind, Roy Cizek) believe that careful impedance-matching consistency, so that all system elements (including the driving amplifier) load each other optimally and predictably, is an oft-neglected criterion of speaker design. Fried Products, in discussing its Super Monitor, raises the question of linearity in both impedance and phase. Fried also is readying the Model D subwoofer. Both systems may, incidentally, be available in kit form at considerable dollar savings with respect to their assembled prices: \$4,000 and \$1,000, respectively, per pair. Celestion, too—in announcing three more Ditton speakers for its line—emphasizes the care it has taken to keep impedance curves relatively flat, as has Marantz with its Model F²⁷, part of the Series 7 line.

Among the more intriguing current systems that do not mount all drivers in the front plane is the Ohm I (\$1,200 per pair), whose top surface holds the woofer and tweeter plus one of the super-tweeters; the other and the subwoofer are in the front panel, along with vents for both woofer and subwoofer. Since the model is intended for extremely high power handling (it is rated to 1 kilowatt, or 30 dBW!), air flow in the woofer vent is used as cooling for the crossover: The higher the level, the more heat is generated but the greater the air velocity to dissipate it. Jensen has gone to radical tweeter placement by adding one at the back, and angled upward, in its new premier model, the System B, which also can be canted backward within its "cradle" base in rooms where that will aid dispersion. And Design Acoustics continues its line of speakers designed for omnidirectional dispersion and flat acoustic power response in the D-4A.

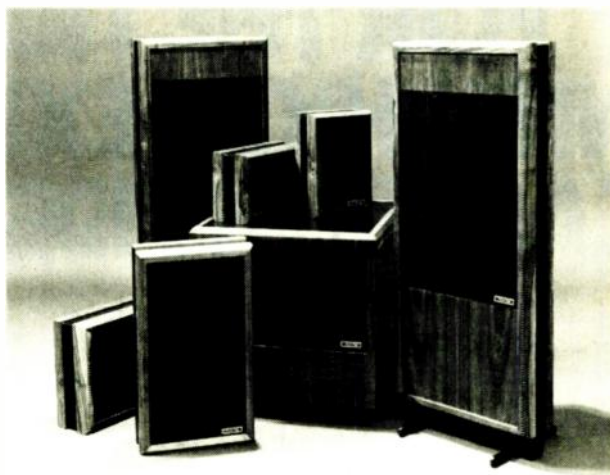
At first glance, the EPI 500 gives the impression of nonfrontal drivers—actually a pair of side-mounted passive radiators in a three-way system

all of whose drivers are front-firing. The announced design goal of the system is high power handling (100 watts continuous, 500 on peaks) with high efficiency (minimum power rating is 15 watts) in an accurate reproducer offering essentially uniform impedance. Altec's recent contribution to what might be called the dispersion front—the Mantaray "constant-directivity" horn, used (in concert with Altec's Tangarine radial phasing plug) to load a compression driver handling the upper frequency range—has been incorporated into the Model 14, an under-\$500 floor-standing system with an all-walnut-veneer finish, even on the back. New in this model is Altec's Automatic Power Control, which automatically reduces power drive when the system is threatened with overload.

But even with all this, we have covered only some of the highlights of the season's speaker introductions. Whole new lines are available from such companies as DFS (Series J models range from big bookshelf to small floor-standing sizes, and Series T consists of three floor-standing towers), Sonrise, Unitronex (the Impact series, which is said to capture the essence of the so-called disco sound), BES (the Module II redesigns of the Bertagni planar speakers), DWD (the ERT speakers, using ferrofluid cooling), and SMC (a British line shown here for the first time in Las Vegas). And, of course, there always are "fill-in" models being added to familiar lines. If we were to lay all the loudspeaker models announced for or available on the American market end to end—well, we wouldn't have much time left for listening.

While Koss Corporation, the progenitor of the breed in stereo headphones, left its already comprehensive line essentially intact for this season, other companies made their bids, some with quite intensive new offerings. Beyer Dynamic has several models, of which one, weighing just 2.3 ounces, is shooting for the flyweight championship. The ET-1000—apparently the new flagship of the line—is said to be the first electrostatic set developed and produced in West Germany. Beyer will inaugurate its own U.S. distribution system later this spring, at which time its DT-444S—a self-contained, cordless headset using infrared transmission—will become available.

Two distinct lines of headphones were introduced by Sony: The Z series, which aims at state-of-the-art performance, has three models ranging in price from \$70 to \$100, while the top of the three-member S series goes for \$50. A high-performance model intended for monitoring and a budget model round out the roster. A pair of headsets from Pioneer, Models SE-2 and SE-6, are of the open-air variety and are designed especially to produce minimum ear fatigue after extended use. Wharfedale, the well-known British loudspeaker manufacturer, found the makings of what it con-



Planar speakers—of which several companies are adding new models—minis, and subwoofers all are combined in the CVM Series from Acusta Craft, a new company.

siders a first-class headphone in the technology of its Isodynamic tweeters and has proceeded with its first entry into this area. Sennheiser, in the meantime, has added the lightweight HD-420 to its line.

... And Matched Systems

In some ways, the most astonishing development of 1979 is the announcement of a high-end matched multibrand system, called Centurri-Mark 1, whose "modified" components are, to a certain extent, tailored to each other. Among them are a collection of electronics from DB Systems, Cizek loudspeakers, and a record-playing ensemble (including a "hand selected" 103D cartridge) from Denon. The use of through-designed systems for optimizing the relationship between a speaker and its driving amplifier—the key point of modification—isn't new, of course; compact systems have often taken the approach, though usually more as a route to minimum cost than to maximum performance.

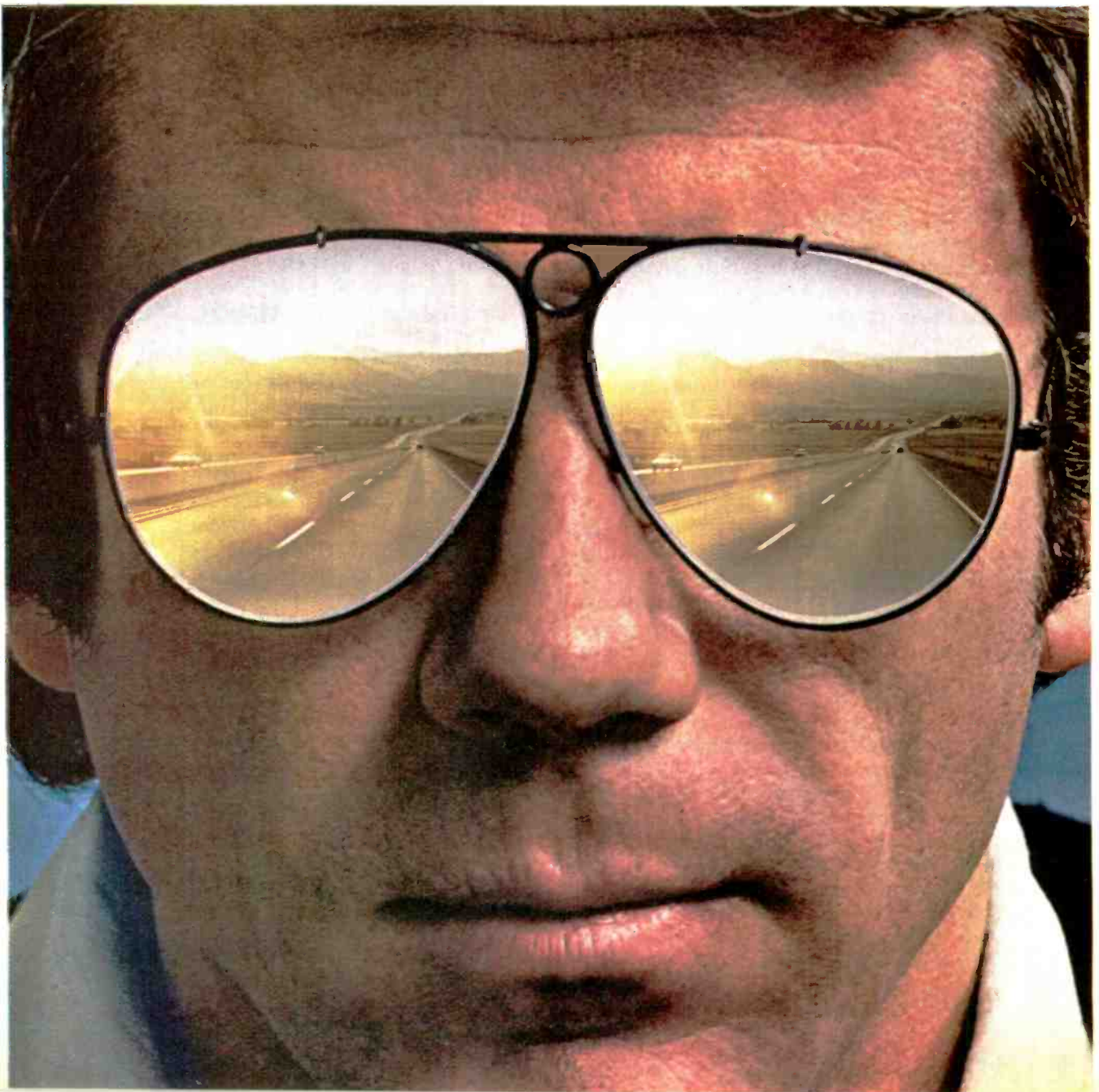
The intent here is a state-of-the-art system in which no care (or expense) is spared. Within that context, we're startled to encounter noninterchangeable components, interchangeability long having been the watchword of the component field. Yet a strong case can be made—in both the amp/speaker and the pickup/toner interfaces—for custom matching at the design stage as the only sure route to optimum behavior in the resulting system. It will be interesting to see whether other brands adopt the idea, though the resistance that integral cartridge/arm systems have encountered in the marketplace seems to argue against it. ●

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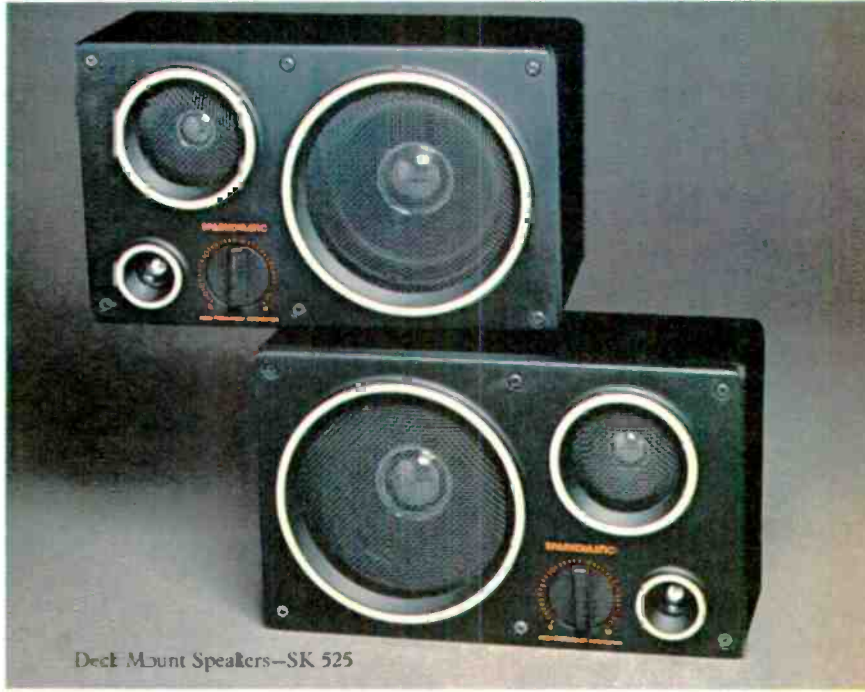
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More than Just a Pair of Dancing Feet

A composer, pianist, and singer, Fred Astaire has generally been dismissed as a musician—except by his peers.

by Benny Green

The many songwriters who wrote for Fred Astaire, including Jerome Kern, George and Ira Gershwin, Cole Porter, and me, were very lucky. He knew his way around a song and put his heart into it before his feet took over.

—IRVING BERLIN, 1979

IN THE SPRING OF 1972, I had a long conversation with lyricist Johnny Mercer, in the course of which he echoed the words of Cole Porter by saying that, in a lifetime of enduring the considerable ordeal of hearing strangers sing his verse, he had long ago come to the conclusion that his favorite singer was Fred Astaire. Not that Astaire was necessarily the best singer in his experience, or the most imaginative; Mercer was saying that, if he had his choice of a singer to introduce a lyric he had just written, that choice would be Astaire.

Mercer, who wrote lyrics for five Astaire films (*Second Chorus*, *You Were Never Lovelier*, *The Sky's the Limit*, *The Belle of New York*, and *Daddy Long Legs*), explained that Astaire was the best man for allowing your work to come through in unadulterated form. As a general rule, his method was to stick meticulously to the written melodic line and the exact phrases of the lyric; in this regard his scrupulousness was matched only by his instinct for understanding what the writers had been getting at.

Such humility is rare in show business, where performers tend to arrogate to themselves all the subtleties and profundities of the work they interpret, taking upon themselves the right to make editorial amendments, usually with disastrous effects. When

English writer/musician Benny Green's latest book is a biography of Fred Astaire. He also recently produced 'The Fred Astaire Story,' thirteen one-hour programs, for the British Broadcasting Corporation.



Mercer talked of Astaire's ability to allow the work to come through in unadulterated form, he was saying that Astaire doesn't presume to know better than the writer.

But Mercer was also telling us something even more unusual; he was offering us a thumbnail sketch of a man whose respect for and grasp of the principles of good song writing are so comprehensive as to mark him out from everyone else in his field. If we add the approval of Porter, and remember also that the Gershwin brothers always looked forward to writing for Astaire, that Irving Berlin once observed that had Astaire not been around songs like "Cheek to Cheek" and "Isn't This a Lovely Day" would never have been written, that the arch-martinet Jerome Kern was quoted as

saying it is ridiculous to suggest Astaire could do anything bad, and that Astaire introduced so many songs that became standards, it begins to be apparent that, whatever the world at large may have made of his singing and however blatantly record producers and critics may have undervalued it, those who matter most in this regard—the songwriters themselves—have considered him one of the major popular singers of his epoch.

Astaire's work as a singer is so little thought of that many of his vocal recordings remain unavailable and, indeed, are hardly known to the oafs who currently mismanage the recording industry. This neglect has led to another, more interesting kind of neglect. In the biographical dictionary issued by the

American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), the curious researcher will find "Astaire, Fred" listed as the composer of eight published songs; in fact he has composed many more. Of course it is not unknown for singers to be credited with lyrics—the ASCAP dictionary credits Sinatra with four songs, Crosby with seven—but Astaire has written, not the words, but the music.

He has never made a secret of his musicianship; it is simply that people have never taken much notice of it. There is a moment in *Follow the Fleet*, for example, where Fred, as a performing sailor, sits at the piano and rattles off a chorus of a song; it is clearly Fred playing that piano, and it is revealing that the style he discloses is the sort of vigorous

Astaire as vocalist (below, in Silk Stockings, 1957) and as critic (left, in The Gay Divorcée, 1934)



ragtimey approach that relies on the left hand for strong rhythmic impulse and is reminiscent of the playing of one of his earliest friends, George Gershwin. Before the interested collector dashes out to bid for an album of *Follow the Fleet*, however, he should know that there is apparently nobody in the record industry who thinks such an item worth making available.

Some time ago this scandalous situation was redeemed somewhat by the appearance of four of the Fred-and-Ginger soundtrack performances—*The Gay Divorcée* paired with *Top Hat* (Soundtrak 105) and *Swingtime* with *Shall We Dance* (Soundtrak 106). It would be churlish to complain in the face of such a windfall, but then, there is always a certain pleasure in being churlish, and I wonder which baboon decided to bitch

the verse of that exquisite Berlin song “Isn’t This a Lovely Day” from *Top Hat*. In musical comedy, the verse originally evolved in order to provide a causeway across which the embarrassed performer might make the difficult transition from speech to music, and Berlin built that causeway with unusual felicity; the *Top Hat* soundtrack issue was mutilated before reaching the shops. Still, the frustrated Astaire collector knows that a flawed pearl is better than none at all.

The songs from the movie version of *The Band Wagon* (Columbia Special Products AML 4751) make a fascinating comparison with the original tracks of the stage version, an early 1930s experimental RCA long-playing record that began with the priceless period announcement: “Due to this record

playing twenty minutes, the music of the first act will be played on this side of the record. Then you may turn me on my back and hear the second act.” But of Astaire’s Broadway days, the most valuable available recordings are two Monmouth/Evergreen LPs (7036E and 7037E), despite those *Es* indicating that they have been electronically rechanneled for stereo. The former is of the 1926 London production of *Lady Be Good!* and features some piano playing by Gershwin and a miscellaneous second side with songs from *The Gay Divorcée* and that cinematic dinosaur *Flying Down to Rio*; the latter, of the 1928 London production of *Funny Face*, has a side on which Gershwin accompanies three songs from that show and four from *Tip-Toes*.

Astaire’s 1935–58 Brunswick

Singing along with Red Skelton in a scene from Three Little Words (1950), and as one-fourth of a barbershop quartet in The Belle of New York (1952)



studio recordings of many of his film hits have been gathered in Columbia's two-disc "Starring Fred Astaire" (PSG 32472), about half of which also once appeared on Epic's "Nothing Thrilled Us Half as Much." And in the mid-Seventies, MGM reissued some of the late soundtracks, including *Silk Stockings* and *Three Little Words*—available only briefly—and *Easter Parade* (SES 40). United Artists has had some Astaire recordings of more recent vintage, all made in England. In 1975 he and Bing Crosby shared an album called "A Couple of Song and Dance Men" (LA 588G), then each recorded two solo LPs, of which only one apiece was ever issued in the U.S. Fred's was "Attitude Dancing" (LA 580G), which included both contemporary songs and his own

"That Face" and which UA has just deleted in time for his eightieth birthday May 10. Assiduous musical detectives might also unearth copies of his Kapp album "Now" (KS 3049), made with the Pete King Orchestra in the late 1950s, containing such rare old vaudeville pieces as "The Girl on the Magazine Cover" and "Lady of the Evening." And among the other interesting unavailable releases is "Three Evenings with Fred Astaire," on his own label, Choreo, which came from TV shows in 1959, 1960, and 1961.

Recently, DRG's Stet label released vocals from the musically undistinguished 1951 film *Belle of New York* (DS 15004). Because there were too few songs in the score to fill an album, the second side had eight other songs,

including five of Astaire's own composition plus one really oddball item, a sort of monologue set to music, "The Martini," whose contents would probably be of more interest to a bartender than to a music lover.

What does this jumble amount to? The realization that Astaire's vocal performances are not so much unavailable as diffused, that their compilation and collating has been willful or perverse or slovenly, or all three. Why is this so? Because of the peculiar structure of the recording industry and the hopeless interlocking complexity of its connections with the old Hollywood studio system. Never since Astaire became a star has there been an executive in control of any considerable catalog for long enough to make

Ginger Rogers with the flute and Astaire's trademark haberdashery, clowning for Irving Berlin at the piano, in Top Hat (1935)



aesthetic, as distinct from financial, sense of the mess.

Fortunately, in the early Fifties producer Norman Granz struck up a professional acquaintance with Astaire and persuaded him to embark on the one recording episode in his life that makes any sort of sense. Granz had the idea of re-recording all the standard Astaire songs in a jazz context, with a small group improvising behind him. Astaire the pianist, songwriter, and occasional drummer was shrewd enough to know that a performer who works with the likes of Oscar Peterson, piano, Ray Brown, bass, and Charlie Shavers, trumpet, is being granted the ultimate accolade. Verve's exquisitely packaged four-disc "The Astaire Story," issued in 1953, became a collector's item. Its recent

resurrection on three discs, again by DRG (DARC-3 1102; see the feature review by John S. Wilson in this issue), followed by a similar re-release by Book-of-the-Month Records, must be described as a major event.

What is revelatory about these recordings is the way in which changes of tempo and accompaniment, added to the occasional dropping of a key here and there, cause familiar material to take on unfamiliar contours, in the most benign sense. Astaire revitalized his entire repertoire, and one can only speculate on the delight of Astaire the aspiring piano virtuoso at working with a virtuoso like Peterson. (Two of the tracks are extraordinary duets between Peterson's fingers and Astaire's feet; at another point, where Fred introduced an ancient

song of his own called "Not My Girl," he takes the first piano chorus and Peterson the second.) The Granz sessions showed what can be achieved when the recording executive's sensibilities tell him that his artist ought to be treated like one.

But what is really required to put affairs in order is the musical equivalent of the literary world's collected edition—a set embracing the entire output, in a uniform style and with sensible, literate annotations. Of course too many people have fingers in the pie for that to happen, at least for a generation. In the meantime, the collector has to approach the career of one of America's most skillful singers, one of the few who is also a consummate musician, with hope rather than optimism. Perhaps if he hadn't become so famous as a dancer—

Left, with sister Adele in 1926, and below, taking a percussion break during his Norman Granz sessions



All photos courtesy Museum of Modern Art, except Fred and Adele Astaire: courtesy Edward Jablonski; with percussion: Bettmann Archive. Drawings by Randall Enos

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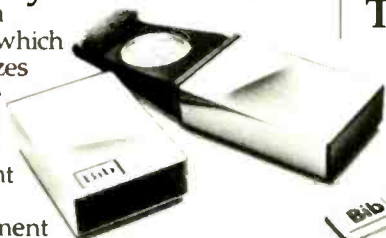
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The New
Releases

“The Astaire Story” Reissued

by John S. Wilson



Tapping a recording

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NORMAN GRANZ was one of the phenomena—if not the major phenomenon—of the recording world in the 1940s and '50s. Starting with a benefit jazz concert in Los Angeles, he invented the concept of the touring jazz troupe with his Jazz at the Philharmonic and not only recorded the concerts, but made voluminous and varied recordings of the array of jazz stars who took part. He became the first jazz-made millionaire when he sold his huge record catalog almost twenty years ago.

That Granz should have had such monetary success was remarkable, because he was both a practicing idealist and a pragmatist who did everything “wrong.” He fought segregation long before that became fashionable. He refused to present his concerts to segregated audiences. He insisted that the artists in his troupes, most of whom were black, receive first-class accommodations and treatment everywhere they went.

He also went against accepted recording practices by flooding the market with so many releases year after year that even reviewers could not keep up with them, much less the paying customers. In the studio, he let his artists do pretty much as they wanted to. In 1948 and 1949, for example, for the LP “The Jazz Scene,” he commissioned ten musicians to record whatever they wanted to play, at whatever length, with whatever instrumentation, and taking as much studio time as they

thought they needed. On another occasion, he put Art Tatum alone in a studio with a piano to play several marathon sessions that resulted in thirteen LPs containing 121 selections.

Granz was a record producer who was willing to take chances with the artists he believed in. So it was not really surprising—even though the idea seemed a bit startling—when in December 1952 he brought Fred Astaire together with a small jazz group led by pianist Oscar Peterson to record the songs with which he had been closely associated during the peak years of his career, 1926 to 1944. [Astaire is the subject of a feature article in this issue.] Astaire had rarely been heard in a jazz setting before (although he had recorded with Benny Goodman's orchestra and with Bob Crosby's band), but on the surface it seemed logical that his rich rhythmic instincts should fit in well with a jazz musician's involvement in rhythm.

The results were released in 1953 in a very flossy, limited-edition, hard-cover album, “The Astaire Story,” comprising four 12-inch LPs, a gallery of Gjon Mili photographs and David Stone Martin drawings, and statements by Granz and Astaire. It has now been reissued in simpler form: three discs in a box containing all the material in the original album plus two instrumental pieces by Peterson's quartet plus a booklet reproducing the photos, the drawings, and commentary. And twenty-five years later the set evokes the same hope, curiosity, and exasperation as when it first came out.

The primary shock of these records is that the tempos are almost all wrong. Wrong? Well, at least let's say they are different from the tempos we remember from the performance of the numbers on film. That would be all right, if they worked. The problem is that they don't work. They tend to be slow—so slow that Astaire's voice, which in the beginning had limitations that he turned to his own advantage but, by 1952, had lost much of its pliability, is constantly extended in his attempts to sustain the long distances between notes. And although he makes valiant efforts to imbue these funereal tempos with some rhythmic lift, the musicians who accompany him simply plod along, making the weight of the pieces even heavier.

Peterson is primarily a whirlwind virtuoso soloist, and one gets the feeling that he is mightily relieved when, at the end of the album, he can finally cut loose in three instrumental pieces with no concern for Astaire. During the vocals, that concern is expressed not with any contributory sensitivity, with colors or accents that would complement the singing, but simply by staying out of the way.

Would that Alvin Stoller on drums had had an equal desire to be unobtrusive. His heavy, leaden beat is incongruous in a musical association with a man who is the very essence of light-footed rhythm. Of the other musicians in the group—Flip Phillips, tenor saxophone, Charlie Shavers, trumpet, Barney Kessel, guitar, and Ray Brown, bass—the only one who makes a positive contribution to the accompaniment is Shavers, whose muted trumpet gives Astaire the counterpoint that sets off his singing to advantage.

This is not to say that the entire project is a disaster. Once one adjusts to the fact that this is not going to be the Astaire of fond memory—whose accompaniments by Johnny Green, Leo Reisman, and Ray Noble were

The Art of Eduard van Beinum



by Abram Chipman

part of the suave aura that he generated—one begins to discover the merits of this very different Astaire. In place of that willowy quality that marked his earlier singing—a lithe, bending, sinuous sound—he had become a more openly studied singer in the Sinatra vein, with a close, intimate projection, beautifully shaded inflections, and a deep sense of involvement in every clearly enunciated syllable. On “I Used to Be Color Blind,” “The Way You Look Tonight,” and a magnificent “I Concentrate on You,” he shows that he can be a superb singer at slow tempos. And everybody comes to life on “Steppin’ Out with My Baby,” where Astaire seems to strut vocally and the band, led by Shavers’ trumpet, swings through a riff that might have come from John Kirby’s little band. The old warmth, the smoothness of phrasing that one expects of Astaire, come through “They Can’t Take That Away from Me” and a lovely but relatively unknown Cole Porter song, “So Near and Yet So Far.” On the other end of the scale are inexplicably listless, lackluster treatments of two of Astaire’s most spirited songs, “The Continental” and “The Carioca,” and a plodding excursion through what should be the light fun-and-games of “Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off.”

Most of the performances lie somewhere between these extremes. Astaire is never less than immaculate in his attention to the details that might get a performance off the ground, but he is constantly undercut by the surrounding circumstances. The only time the accompanists really seem to feel at home is on “Oh, Lady Be Good!,” on which Astaire plays a minimal vocal role. The backing is so consistently colorless that it is like emerging from a dark tunnel into bright sunshine when Astaire sits down at the piano to open “Not My Girl” with a lively, bright, positive piano solo. It is a brief, exhilarating moment before he turns the keyboard back to Peterson’s soft monotones. The set also contains some dance segments on which the drumming becomes entangled in Astaire’s tap figures.

In a way, “The Astaire Story” is in the tradition of the Jazz at the Philharmonic concerts, where one had to sit through an inevitable amount of junk—the battles between honking saxophones and screeching trumpets—to hear a few brilliant performances. There are some excellent spots, but one is appalled that an opportunity such as this was, to a great extent, wasted, that Astaire was caught in such awkward circumstances, and that all the joy and romance has been drained from most of these joyous, romantic songs.

R THE ASTAIRE STORY. Fred Astaire, vocals and piano; Oscar Peterson, piano and celeste; Barney Kessel, guitar; Charlie Shavers, trumpet; Flip Phillips, tenor saxophone; Ray Brown, bass; Alvin Stoller, drums. [Norman Granz, prod.; Hugh Fordin, reissue prod.] DRG DARC-3 1102, \$23.98 (three discs) [from CLEF/VERVE 1001/4, recorded 1952].

ASTAIRE: I’m Building Up to an Awful Letdown; Not My Girl. **BERLIN:** Change Partners; Cheek to Cheek; I Used to Be Color Blind; I’m Putting All My Eggs in One Basket; Isn’t This a Lovely Day; No Strings, Puttin’ on the Ritz; Steppin’ Out with My Baby; Top Hat, White Tie, and Tails; You’re Easy to Dance With. **CONRAD:** A Needle in a Haystack; The Continental. **GERSHWIN:** A Foggy Day; Fascinating Rhythm; Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off; Nice Work if You Can Get It; Oh, Lady Be Good!; ‘S Wonderful; They All Laughed; They Can’t Take That Away from Me. **KERN:** A Fine Romance; I Won’t Dance; Lovely to Look At; The Way You Look Tonight. **PETERSON:** The Astaire Blues. **Jam Session for a Dancer, The Second Astaire Blues.** **PORTER:** I Concentrate on You; I’ve Got My Eyes on You; Night and Day; So Near and Yet So Far. **SCHWARTZ:** Dancing in the Dark; I Love Louisa; New Sun in the Sky. **YOUmans:** The Carioca.

Note: “The Astaire Story” has also been reissued, on disc and tape, by Book-of-the-Month Records; for prices and ordering information, write to Book-of-the-Month Records, Camp Hill, Pa. 17012.

THE TWENTY YEARS since Eduard van Beinum’s death has been an interval notoriously unkind to the memories of great artists whose only lack was charisma. Now Philips’ splendid retrospective album promises a new lease on the conductor’s reputation.

Van Beinum became associate conductor of Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw Orchestra in 1931, was elevated to Willem Mengelberg’s co-conductor in 1938, and remained in sole command from the end of the war until his death in 1959, following a heart attack suffered in rehearsal. He was incontrovertibly a conductor of the first rank. Less dictatorial than Mengelberg, he also eschewed his predecessor’s Romantic interpretive liberties. Without overreacting to the lush excesses of the nineteenth-century school, as many of his era did, Van Beinum gracefully combined plangent lyricism with classical restraint and proportion. Generally, he seemed less strict about rhythm than his Concertgebouw successor, Bernard Haitink, but rarely displayed the stolidity that sometimes creeps into the latter’s work.

In maintaining the Concertgebouw as one of the world’s finest instruments, Van Beinum nurtured the forward trumpet sound, the deep rasp of trombones, the finesse and character of the winds, and the crispness and unanimity of the strings. He had no use for Mengelberg’s string portamentos and glissandos, or for seductive trailing of the beat by oboe and horn solos. Haitink in turn seems to have “tamed” the brass, but the basic Concertgebouw sound has maintained its essential consistency and uniqueness through the half-century it has been documented on records.

Van Beinum was a major champion of Bruckner in the early LP era (his Seventh Symphony is available in England on Decca’s Eclipse label), and the previously unissued live performance of the Fifth Symphony included here adds immeasurably to our appreciation of that colossal work, even with the rich variety of modern recordings. (See my January review of the Karajan and Masur.)

Textual purists, although spared the Schalk editorial distortions, may yet cavil at such details as the failure to play the opening fortissimo outbursts truly staccato, slight tempo distensions in the first movement, prolongation of rests in the slow movement, and failure to

slow down at S in the finale. Yet one readily overlooks these when confronted by the hypnotic delicacy and mystery of the first movement, where metrically more even readings convey exhausting grandiloquence. The slow movement (unfortunately broken between sides) is as radiantly beautiful as I've heard it, the string tone at B more luminous than in the Concertgebouw's subsequent recordings under Eugen Jochum and Haitink, and in the scherzo Van Beinum coaxes nimbler flow and surer intonation. The finale, though of course lacking the sonic clarity of the newer versions and showing signs of orchestral fatigue, climaxes with grand nobility and commitment.

All the other recordings in the set were issued before, appearing domestically on Epic in the mid and late Fifties. To begin with the earliest works, the two J. C. Bach sinfonias need not worry those with apprehensions about heavy nineteenth-century treatment. While the string ensemble is hefty, it is also precise, and the phrasing is suitably crisp. Mozart, on whom Van Beinum lavished consummate skill, is represented by an estimable Symphony No. 29, even if the Menuetto is a shade complacent for my taste and the finale has less dash and brio than such conductors as Davis, Marriner, and Walter have brought to it.

Mendelssohn's *Italian* Symphony is briskly played, even to the acceleration of the middle section of the third movement—a touch I haven't encountered elsewhere, but one that has remained convincing to me over the years that I've lived with and loved this performance. The first-movement repeat is observed. The bounding vigor of the Concertgebouw's playing, with its dash and bite even at the finale's breathless tempo (with crisp timpani articulation of the saltarello rhythm), has to be heard to be believed. The orchestra not only brings it off, but has energy left for miracles of shading and color. This stands as one of the really great *Italians* on disc.

Van Beinum recorded five Schubert symphonies; the two included here—the Sixth and *Unfinished*—are rather ordinary. Nor does this *Scheherazade*, careful and tasteful, rate better than honorable mention.

On the other hand, Van Beinum's account of the 1919 *Firebird* Suite remains one of the most exciting the phonograph has offered. Not a question of loud, whopping climaxes, to be sure, but of awesome control over dynamics, an insistence on making every accompanying string tremolo clear and taut, applying the most urbane shadings imaginable to woodwind solos. The Concertgebouw brasses are in their element here.

Bartók and Kodály were Concertgebouw traditions; Mengelberg premiered major works of both. This time around, I like Van Beinum's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* better than I recalled—forward-moving, alert in ensemble, apt in Hungarian flavor, lacking only the advantage of stereo in this specifically antiphonal piece. The coupled *Háry János* Suite is peppery and swaggering, one of the work's most effective recordings.

Debussy was not always Van Beinum's strong suit. The brief *Berceuse héroïque* and *Marche écossaise* (issued in this country for the first time in stereo) are, in fact, the best available performances of those jewels, but the *Images* still strike me as aimless and tentative (although one appreciates having the set complete on one side). The *Nocturnes* come off slightly better, per-

haps because of the less opaque recorded sound, perhaps because of the thrilling impact of the Concertgebouw trumpets in the processional episode of "Fêtes."

The miscellaneous short pieces are never less than well done. Noteworthy among them are the elegant Grieg *Elegiac Melodies* and a knockout *Finlandia*.

Most of these performances are in undoctored mono; Philips' presentation doesn't make it easy to sort out the stereo items and is also regrettably lacking in recording dates and information about the music. (Much about the conductor is included.) The sound is consistently acceptable, but Philips has since captured the warm bloom of the Concertgebouw acoustics more effectively. Indeed, Decca/London also did so in its earlier Van Beinum recordings, some of which (not enough!) have been reissued.

I'm already fantasizing a sequel to this set, to include Van Beinum's orchestral Brahms, the delectable Mozart Posthorn Serenade, Mahler's *Das Lied*, and perhaps the Bruckner Eighth and Ninth Symphonies and the Beethoven Second. As an incentive to prospective purchasers of the present collection, I would point out that for an impressive proportion of this repertory SCHWANN lists few (or no) significantly superior performances.

EDUARD VAN BEINUM: Art of. Concertgebouw Orchestra, Eduard van Beinum, cond. PHILIPS 6768 023, \$53.88 (eight discs, mono and stereo*) [Bruckner previously unreleased; remainder from various originals, 1954–59].

J. C. BACH: Sinfonias, Op. 18: No. 2, in E flat, No. 4 in D.* BARTÓK: Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta. BERLIOZ: Le Carnaval romain, Op. 9. BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 5, in B flat. DEBUSSY: Images pour orchestre (3): Nocturnes (3, with Women's Voices of the Collegium Musicum Amstelredamense).* Berceuse héroïque.* Marche écossaise.* GRIEG: Elegiac Melodies (2), Op. 34.* KODÁLY: Háry János: Suite. MENDELSSOHN: Symphony No. 4, in A, Op. 90 (*Italian*). MOZART: Symphony No. 29, in A, K. 201. NICOLAI: Die lustigen Weiber von Windsor: Overture. RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: Scheherazade. SCHUBERT: Symphonies: No. 6, in C, D. 589; No. 8, in B minor, D. 759 (*Unfinished*). SIBELIUS: Finlandia, Op. 26; Valse triste, Op. 44.* SOUSA: The Stars and Stripes Forever.* STRAVINSKY: The Firebird: Suite (1919 version). THOMAS: Mignon: Overture.

Lieder in English?

The advantages of hearing songs in our own language are suggested by Richard Dyer-Bennet's recording of Schubert's *Lovely Milleress*.

by Andrew Porter

THERE IS A GOOD DEAL to be said for singing songs in a language that is both that of the singer and that of his or her listeners. Arguments about "the sounds the composer had in mind" fall to the ground when, as in most of *Die schöne Müllerin*, the songs are strophic, and different lines, different words are set to the same music in successive verses or in reprises. Moreover, *Die schöne Müllerin* is, in the words of its poet, Wilhelm Müller, a "monodrama"—as it were a small domestic opera in which the stage is set, the characters are played, and the action is conveyed by one singer and one pianist. A listener needs to follow the drama. In the concert hall, he



Nancy Garniez and Richard Dyer-Bennet taking a bow

cannot do so if, not knowing German intimately, he must keep his eyes glued to a text sheet rather than observe the "acting"—the subtle changes of expression in the eyes, of bearing, of tension in the hands—by which a great Lieder singer helps to bring dramatic songs to life. On the phonograph, there is perhaps more to be said for sticking to the original language—but again the listener needs to know it, not merely to perceive in a general way how it works and what it means, if a performance is to be understood and appreciated in detail.

I got to know my first Schubert in English, piping "Who rides through the night, through the wind so wild," and "My rest is gone, my heart is sore," and "Yonder stands a poor old hurdy-gurdy man." Later, I learned German—but when I came across Harry Plunket Greene's record of "Der Leiermann" sung in the Paul England translation I discovered the intense delights of hearing my own language inflected by a great musician in a way that was never at odds with Schubert's music. It's a good translation; "Und die Hunde knuRRen" is matched by "Only snarling monGRels"; that hint of the growling dogs' bared teeth sounds through in either language.

Two winters ago, in Alice Tully Hall, Richard Dyer-Bennet and Nancy Garniez invited us in from the cold to hear the small springtime tragedy recounted in verses that Müller headed "to be read in winter." Mr. Dyer-Bennet spoke the scene-setting prologue and the epilogue to Müller's monodrama, and sang the songs in his own English translation. A few days earlier, in Town Hall, Benjamin Luxon had sung the cycle in German. (A translation was printed in the program, but the house lights were turned off, so that was no use.) There was no doubt as to which performance was more communicative.

Dyer-Bennet has had a long career communicating with audiences—in recitals and on records—as a ballad singer. His *Lovely Milleress* in recital was not everything one had hoped for; nor is it in this album, which was recorded in 1976. In becoming an "art singer" he has metaphorically changed his check shirt for a suit and tie; that is to say, he doesn't handle Schubert's words and the rhythms as freely as he does those of his ballads. He sounds a little too respectful, and so the result lacks

the expected vividness. (Schubert's own favorite interpreter, Michael Vogl, would take great liberties with his friend's written text and, particularly in strophic songs, vary lengths and speed, and even add decorations to illustrate particular words.) But every word is clear, and the feeling is right.

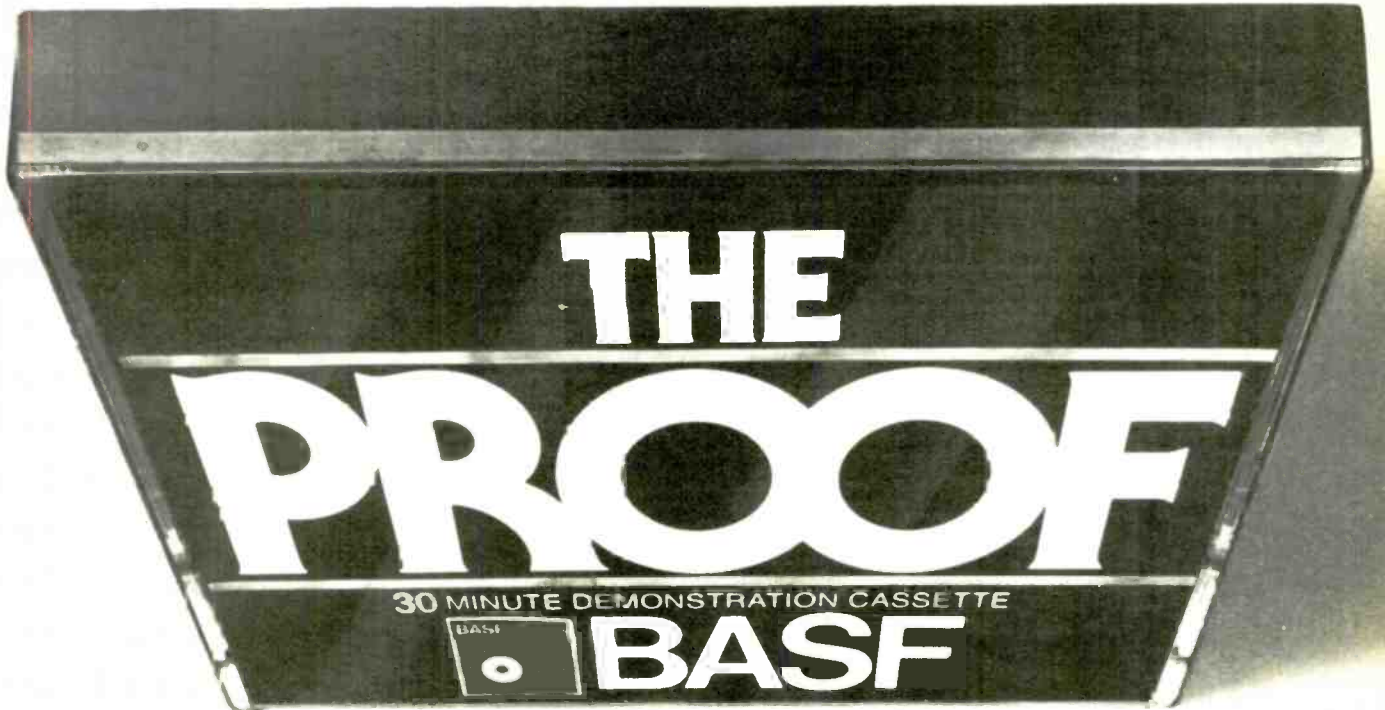
Dyer-Bennet was sixty-three when he made this recording, in September 1976. His voice, which he describes in a liner note as having been "limited to begin with," certainly doesn't have the variety and resourcefulness that a complete account of the *Schöne Müllerin* needs. The cycle is taken down a semitone, but the tenor has trouble in sustaining the resultant A flats of "Un-geduld"; he can't sweep through the bold arpeggios of "Die böse Farbe" and ring out on the Fs. As singers go, sixty-three isn't all that old. Santley made wonderful records in his seventieth year, and Henschel in his seventy-eighth. Those singers don't sound cautious; Dyer-Bennet does. I feel that if, even with his thread of voice, he took more chances, showed more energy and gusto, employed expressive rubato, and essayed more variety of tone color, the cycle would begin to mean more. What I miss is demonstrated in Plunket Greene's record of "Der Leiermann," in David Bispham's of "Hark, hark, the lark," and in Santley's "Simon the Cellarer." (The last two have been reissued in the EMI album "The Record of Singing.") It is verbalized in the six pages devoted to "Der Leiermann" in Plunket Greene's volume *Interpretation in Song*.

Garniez uses a big, sonorous modern piano and subdues it to Dyer-Bennet's dynamics. What Schubert needs is a light, clear instrument that can be struck hard without drowning the singer, can ripple freshly without high-powered brilliance, and can sound low notes without becoming muddy. The timbres are ill matched, but in the recording the voice and the piano are well balanced, in an easy, "domestic" acoustic that suits the cycle and its presentation very well.

To anyone still dubious about the wisdom of singing Lieder in English, I recommend Frederic Kirchberger's article "The German Song Cycles" in the *NATS Bulletin* (National Association of Teachers of Singing) for December 1972. Kirchberger declares roundly that "truly successful performances of the great German song cycles for average audiences are rare in this country; they will remain almost impossible without the use of English translations." And he lists the ways in which so many existing translations err. He himself has translated *Die schöne Müllerin*, *Winterreise*, and Schumann's *Dichterliebe*. He avoids most—perhaps not all—of the pitfalls. So does Dyer-Bennet, whose English version of *Die schöne Müllerin* is published by G. Schirmer. Just a few things in it jar me. The repeated "meinen, meinen" in "Am Feierabend" is lost; the important word "liebte" is displaced, and flicked off to a sixteenth note, in "Der Neugierige." But, a few inversions apart ("You well know what I have in mind," "fall in slumber deep"), it sings and sounds naturally. Not "just another *Schöne Müllerin*" then, but a *Lovely Milleress* with pleasures complementary to those of the German-language recordings.

SCHUBERT: *Die schöne Müllerin* (in English). Richard Dyer-Bennet, tenor; Nancy Garniez, piano. [Warren B. Syer, prod.] DYER-BENNET 33674/5, \$16 plus \$1.50 postage (two discs, manual sequence; Dyer-Bennet Records, Monterey, Mass. 01245).

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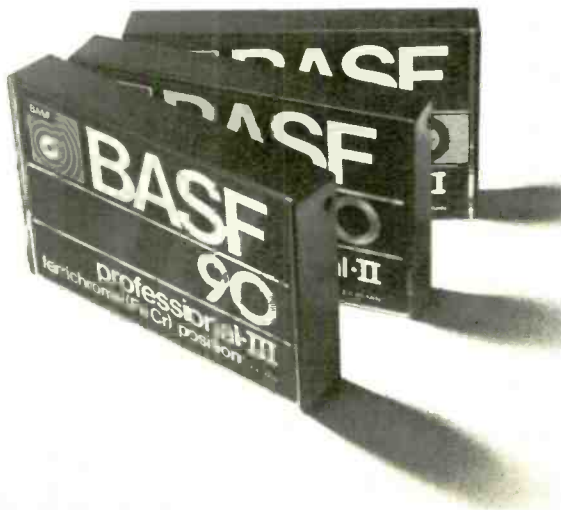
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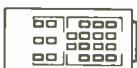
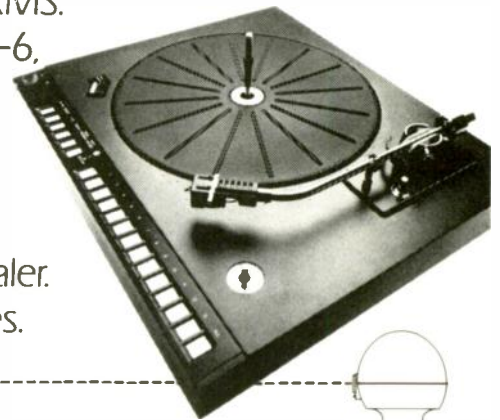
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Classical

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Colin Davis—a *Missa* without interpretive or electronic trickery

BACH: *St. Matthew Passion*, S. 244. Ernst Häfliger, tenor (Evangelist); Barry McDaniel, baritone (Jesus); Elly Ameling, soprano; Birgit Finnilä, alto; Seth McCoy, tenor; Benjamin Luxon, baritone; various other soloists; Harold Lester and John Constable, organs; Ambrosian Singers, English Chamber Orchestra, Johannes Somary, cond. [Seymour Solomon, prod.] VANGUARD VSD 71231/4, \$31.92 (four discs, manual sequence).

Somary's *St. Matthew Passion* is the work of a Bach conductor of commendable skill and taste. He has an acute sense for suitable tempos, almost always securing a "right" pulse for each section of this mammoth work. I would have preferred a bit more movement in the opening chorus and in the soprano aria "*Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben*," but even this likely minority opinion concerns only two numbers out of seventy-eight. Otherwise, my only reservation with Somary's direction has to do with the monotonous legato of the orchestra's playing: surely more should have been made of the "flogging" motif in the alto recitative "*Erbarm' es, Gott*," and in other places as well I felt a need for more pointed articulation and a stronger sense of pulse.

The chorus is a disappointment, producing a big operatic sound quite at variance with anything Bach can have heard. Such a sound is not so inappropriate for Handel's dramatic works, but here it lends an inescapably secular aura that does nothing to enhance the unity of aesthetic effect. We miss the indispensable clarity, transparency, intimacy, perhaps even naivete. I do not insist

on the use of boys for the treble parts, but if a mixed chorus is employed, it needs to produce a considerably leaner and less vibrato-laden sound than this. We need to know from the very tone of the chorus that we are listening to Bach and not to Brahms.

Fortunately, most of the soloists seem more sensitive to the delicacy of such distinctions. Veteran Evangelist Ernst Häfliger sings as if to the manner born: While his Gs and A's are not as effortless as they once were, and while such details as portamento and *messa di voce* are perhaps overdone on occasion, his performance remains entirely creditable. Barry McDaniel, while miked rather too closely, is similarly gratifying in the role of Jesus. Birgit Finnilä has an unduly hard tone (and weak lower register) for my taste, and Benjamin Luxon's baritone is arguably too luscious for Pilate, but otherwise the major casting seems quite convincing. (Some of the minor casting is more questionable.)

Although Vanguard's sound is highly detailed, I find it curiously blunt and lacking in luster—rather like a photograph slightly out of focus: The colors are basically intact, but there's something vaguely unsettling about the overall effect. There is also constriction in loud passages, and levels of pre- and post-echo sometimes rise past acceptable limits. S.C.

BEETHOVEN: *Missa Solemnis*, Op. 123. Anna Tomova-Sintov, soprano; Patricia Payne, alto; Robert Tear, tenor; Robert Lloyd, bass; John Constable, organ; London Symphony

Chorus and Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. PHILIPS 6747 484, \$17.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: ♪ 7699 086 \$17.95.

Comparisons:
 Toscanini/NBC Sym. RCA (Germany) AT 200
 Klemperer/New Philharmonia Ang. SB 3679
 Giulini/New Philharmonia Ang. SB 3836

This is a *Missa* without interpretive or electronic trickery. Works of this complexity don't play or record themselves, but Davis and the Philips crew have solved technical and interpretive problems without highlighting their involvement.

The conductor never resorts to point-making (such as Solti's meretricious ritards in the Gloria—London OSA 12111, September 1978), nor does he bathe the music in opulence (as with Karajan's Romantic violin-concerto ambience in the "*Benedictus*"—Angel SB 3821, August 1975). The recording similarly achieves a natural balance without calling attention to itself. Textures are clear enough, with appropriately biting brass, reedy woodwinds, and compact, assertive timpani. The massed and solo voices are on the grainy side and the strings are not outstanding for warmth, but the performance can be easily followed with score: Shapes and tempo relationships are correct; agogic and dynamic markings are heeded.

Without aid of score, though, it is possible to feel shortchanged by the performance and unstimulated by the sound. The performance falls short in momentum and affirmation; nor does it suggest the last degree of beatific warmth and repose. The microphoning is too remote for such moments as the interchange between clarinet and bassoon and then first violins beginning at bar 74 in the Kyrie.

Most of Davis' tempos are well chosen. The Kyrie has breadth without losing shape; the Gloria begins loosely, but later sections fall into place naturally. Davis does his most committed work in the two final movements: The Sanctus, while not overly warm or subtle in its coloration, has selfless sincerity, and the Agnus Dei builds well.

Although Davis' solo quartet is more evenly matched than Solti's, none of his singers has an especially striking voice. Bass Robert Lloyd is granulous in his Agnus Dei solo, but gruffness is by no means out of

Explanation of symbols

Classical:

B Budget
H Historical
R Reissue

Recorded tape:

●● Open Reel
 ●● 8-Track Cartridge
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character in this music. The chorus is somewhat woolly and never quite unanimous in attacking high notes; it is not the equal of Solti's Chicago Symphony Chorus, Klemperer's Philharmonia Chorus, or Toscanini's Robert Shaw Chorale.

Davis' is a creditable *Missa*, better than Solti's and on a par with Jochum's (Philips 6799 001, May 1973) and Böhm's (DG 2707 080, November 1975). But I still prefer Klemperer's, Toscanini's, and, in its flawed way, Giulini's. H.G.

BEETHOVEN: Sonatas for Piano: No. 17, in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2; No. 18, in E flat, Op. 31, No. 3. Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano. [Richard Beswick, prod.] LONDON CS 7088, \$7.98. Tape: ●● CS5 7088, \$7.95.

Ashkenazy's rather free approach to these two sonatas of Op. 31 will have, I suspect, admirers and detractors in equal number. Since the D minor (or *Tempest*) Sonata is an unusually introspective work and the E flat major an unusually capricious and playful one, Ashkenazy's bold contrasts and impulsive freedom here are a welcome departure from the tepidity that detracted from his recent accounts of Op. 10, Nos. 1 and 2 (CS 7024, May 1978). At the same time, some of

his metric exaggerations sound a bit too untrammelled, even Chopinesque. Moreover, a few textual options, though defensible, impart an anachronistic flavor to the performances—in particular the celebrated spot in the exposition of Op. 31, No. 3's scherzo, where Ashkenazy elects to alter Beethoven's writing to correspond to what he might have written if his keyboard had gone higher into the treble. All repeats are observed.

The highly reverberant sound too robs the music of weight and intimacy and at times is even annoying in its slight clatter. These versions, to be sure, deserve investigation, but my own taste in this music is better served by Brendel (Philips) and Hungerford (Vanguard)—not to mention Schnabel's Op. 31, No. 2, and Haskil's and Kempff's Op. 31, No. 3. H.G.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 6, in F, Op. 66 (*Pastoral*). London Symphony Orchestra Eugen Jochum, cond. [Christopher Bishop prod.] ANGEL S 37530, \$7.98 (SQ-encoded disc). Tape: ●● 4XS 37530, \$7.98.

Jochum's views on the Viennese countryside have changed little since his 1970 Concertgebouw recording (newly reissued as

Philips Festivo 6570 159); tempos have become perhaps a shade slower, and the numerous ritards still more pronounced. Somehow I find Jochum's controversial ideas to be presented with more firmness of purpose, and with stronger sense of basic pulse, in the new recording, though the Concertgebouw version could hardly be called wildly eccentric. As before, the first-movement exposition repeat is omitted, but the far more important scherzo reprise is faithfully observed.

While the Philips engineering remains impressive, the new Angel is more stimulating and immediate. The clarity of texture in no way robs the sonority of warmth, and the dialogue in the "Scene by the Brookside" involving clarinet, bassoon, and first violins at the start of the recapitulation is better clarified here than I can recall hearing on records (usually the bassoon gets buried). In the scherzo, the strings articulate so clearly that one can readily discern the grace notes, and at every turn balances and phrasing aim for clarification rather than shock effect. The "Thunderstorm" is broadly paced and may disappoint those who look for lightning rather than mere thunder and raindrops.

Although my own tastes in this work are more closely paralleled by the lean, classical statements of Karajan (the most recent Berlin version, DG 2531 106), Dorati (Mercury SRI 75119), Haitink (Philips 9500 256), and the classic—in a different sense—accounts of Toscanini (in Victrola VIC 8000), De Sabata (World Records SH 235), and Erich Kleiber (London Treasury R 23233), Jochum's latest is a performance that I expect to return to frequently. If you admired the Walter/Columbia Symphony (*Odyssey Y 33924*), the Giulini (*Angel S 36684*), the Furtwängler/Vienna (German EMI 1C 047 00807 or Unicorn WFS 9), and of course the older Jochum readings, take your cue from there. This is elevated music-making. H.G.

BRAHMS: Quartets for Strings: No. 1, in C minor, Op. 51, No. 1; No. 2, in A minor, Op. 51, No. 2; No. 3, in B flat, Op. 67. Alban Berg Quartet. TELEFUNKEN 26.35447, \$17.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

There is a New Viennese School in performance as well as composition: These readings, more notable for classicism than for Romantic effusion, contrast instructively with the slow tempos, slurpy portamento, and indulgent sentimentality of groups like the Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet a generation ago. The Alban Berg Quartet has recorded a good bit of Haydn and Mozart, and it renders Brahms in much the same manner: with finely sprung rhythm, an incisive sonority, and an avoidance of turgid rhetoric. If its Schubert A minor Quartet (Telefunken 6.41882, August 1976) seemed a mite bloodless and overcivilized, Brahms is magnificently served.

These tremendously proficient players approach Brahms's syncopes, rhythmic displacements, and wide-spanning figurations in an instrumental rather than vocal fashion. Toughness and sinew are expressed in clear articulation and a tone quality that veers toward astringency. The already ani-

Critics' Choice

The most noteworthy releases reviewed recently

BACH: Brandenburgs Nos. 2, 5; Cantata No. 202. Battle, Levine. RCA ARL 1-2788, March.

BACH: French Suites. Leonhardt. ABC/SEON AX 67036/2 (2). Inventions; Sinfonias. Leonhardt. ABC/SEON AX 67037, March.

BEETHOVEN: Piano Sonatas Nos. 28–32. Pollini. DG 2709 072 (3). Sonatas Nos. 9, 10, 18. Hungerford. VANGUARD VSD 71252, Feb.

BOYCE: Symphonies (8). Marriner. ARGO ZRG 874, Jan.

BRAHMS: Songs. Ameling, Baldwin. PHILIPS 9500 398, March.

BRUCH: Violin Concertos Nos. 1, 2. Accardo, Masur. PHILIPS 9500 422, March.

BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 5. Karajan. DG 2707 101 (2), Jan.

COPLAND: Appalachian Spring Suite. **IVES:** Three Places in New England. D. R. Davies (chamber versions). SOUND 80 DLR 101 (3M digital recording), March.

DEBUSSY: Preludes, Book I. Michelangeli. DG 2531 200, March.

DOHNÁNYI: Chamber Works. HNH RECORDS 4072; HUNGAROTON SLPX 11624, 11853, March.

DVOŘÁK: Cello Concerto. Perényi, Oberfrank. HUNGAROTON SLPX 11866, Feb.

FRANCK: Symphony in D minor. Cantelli. RCA ARL 1-3005, March.

LECLAIR: Violin Concertos. Schröder. TELEFUNKEN 6.42180, Jan.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 4. Von Stade, Abbado. DG 2530 966, Jan.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 5; Symphony No. 10: Adagio. Levine. RCA ARL 2-2905 (2), Feb.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 6. Karajan. DG 2707 106 (2), Jan.

MOZART: Piano Sonatas, K. 280, 281, 311, 330. Zimerman. DG 2531 052, Jan.

PUCCINI: Madama Butterfly. Scotto, Domingo, Maazel. COLUMBIA M3 35181 (3), Feb.

PUCCINI: Turandot. Caballé, Freni, Carreras, Lombard. ANGEL SCLX 3857 (3), March.

STRAUSS, J. (arr. Dorati): Graduation Ball. Dorati. LONDON CS 7086, Jan.

TELEMANN: Works for Oboe. Holliger, et al. PHILIPS 9500 441. Works for Winds. Baron, Roseman, Weisberg, et al. NONESUCH H 71352, Jan.

VERDI: Otello. Scotto, Domingo, Milnes, Levine. RCA CRL 3-2951 (3), Feb.

WILLIAMSON: Vision of Christ-Phoenix; Symphony. Wicks. CHALFONT C77 015, Jan.

ZELÉNKA: Orchestral Works. Camerata Bern. ARCHIV 2710 026 (3), March.

FELLINI'S CASANOVA. Original film soundtrack recording. CAM SAG 9075, Jan.

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mated tempos (though the first movement of Op. 67 is less precipitate than in the 1932 Budapest version, in Odyssey Y4 34643; it is closer to the Budapest's stereo performance, Columbia M2S 734) seem even more militant because the Berg takes pains to give all phrases, whether fast or slow, an unambiguous shape and pulse, a clear position in the overall design. One could say as much for the stereo Budapest performances, though the tone quality there—whether from the shriller reproduction or from the players' advanced age—is less solid at the bottom and more strident on top. H.G.

BRAHMS: Symphonies (4); Tragic Overture, Op. 81. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. [Michel Glotz, Cord Garben, Hans Hirsch, and Magdalene Paßberg, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2711 022, \$35.92 (four discs, manual sequence). Tape: ♫ 3371 041, \$35.92.

Symphonies: No. 1, in C minor, Op. 68; No. 2, in D, Op. 73; No. 3, in F, Op. 90; No. 4, in E minor, Op. 98.

Comparisons:
Karajan/Berlin Phil. DG 138 924/7
Karajan/Vienna Phil. (No. 2 only) Ang. (Japan) EAC 30106

The Brahms symphonies have figured prominently in Karajan's discography from the outset: the earliest example we have on current LP is the 1949-50 Vienna Philharmonic Second (Japanese Angel EAC 30106, imported by Capitol), which has the widest tempo fluctuations, the most exotic rubato, and the most eye-popping ritards I've heard in that score. In Karajan's two Berlin/DG cycles, the trend is generally toward spikier rhythms, swifter tempos, and less lush tone and phrasing—tendencies accentuated by the engineering of the new set, which is closer and less corpulent in the midbass than the 1964 one.

Karajan's Brahms First has maintained through its five phonographic documentations, if memory serves, a veritably tropical porousness and torpor. The instrumental canvas is a dewy gauze; phrases curl up and disappear like puffs of incense—a performance to accompany meditation on the decay of Western civilization. In the Second, the slow but steady, contentedly bucolic 1964 version gives way to a more mobile, urgent romp that is thoroughly of the twentieth-century school. The distance Karajan has traveled from the old Vienna account is astonishing.

His 1964 Third, like the 1962 Vienna Philharmonic one (likely to reappear on London Treasury), is positively elephantine next to the new recording, a powerful and taut reading that does not slight the lyricism of the middle movements. (The Third is filled out with a so-so Tragic Overture.) The 1964 Fourth was a little better controlled than this one, which I find somewhat more exciting if uneven in its details. Karajan omits all the exposition repeats.

Owners of the earlier Karajan cycle probably needn't rush to replace it. Those looking for "basic library" Brahms symphonies could do far worse than this set, but SCHWANN lists a number of competitors—Abravanel (Vanguard Cardinal VCS 10117/20), Levine (RCA, single discs), Böhm (DG 2711 017)—who offer a more consistent approach, each in his own way. A.C.

BRITTEN: Les Illuminations—See Debussy: Pelléas et Mélisande.

CHOPIN: Preludes (24), Op. 28; Waltz in A flat, Op. 34, No. 1; Ballade No. 2, in F, Op. 38. Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano. [Richard Beswick and James Walker, prod.] LONDON CS 7101, \$7.98. Tape: ♫ CS 7101, \$7.95.

London has finally disclosed the game plan for Ashkenazy's unfolding cycle of the Chopin piano works. The completed project will occupy fifteen discs: Vol. 1, already issued (CS 6844, November 1975), comprises the Etudes, Opp. 10 and 25; Vols. 2-15 will offer the balance in reverse chronological order (which does not necessarily correspond to the opus numbers)—an approach that allows a far more revealing glimpse of Chopin's creative process than does lumping the works by genre. (The Op. 28 Preludes are a different matter: they were composed as a cycle and are presented in that manner.)

By any reckoning, Ashkenazy's preludes belong in the select (and diverse) company of the recordings by Pollini (DG 2530 550), Perahia (Columbia M 33507), Argerich (DG 2530 721), Arrau (Philips 6500 622), and Moravec (Connoisseur Society CS 1366—I haven't yet heard his recent Supraphon remake). Ashkenazy has a way of expounding detail without detracting from the whole. Each prelude shows a refreshing freedom from routine: The C major is a bit broader and more rhetorical; the G major has meticulous left-hand clarity; the E major's controversial double-dotted notes are set forth assertively.

The F major Ballade is more heroic and sharply articulated than I recall from Ashkenazy's various earlier recordings (though I was unable to ascertain whether it is the same performance heard on CS 6422; presumably the earlier London recordings are to be superseded). The A flat Waltz is intriguingly delivered in a manner that combines patrician, symmetrical rhythm with bold accents and dramatic surprises.

The rather distant pickup captures an unusually wide dynamic range, and after a while the listener anticipates explosive outbursts in the more dramatic works. Yet the visceral excitement is realized without sacrifice of control or discipline. An inspired disc. H.G.

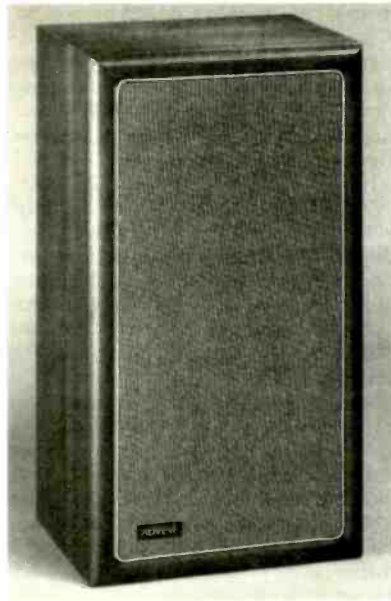
DEBUSSY: Pelléas et Mélisande (excerpts). **BRITTEN:** Les Illuminations, Op. 18. Maggie Teyte, soprano; John Ranck, piano. DESMAR GHP 4003, \$7.98 (mono) [recorded in concert, January 15, 1948].

DEBUSSY: Pelléas et Mélisande (excerpts).
Mélisande Genevieve Marthe Nespoulos (s)
Genevieve Claire Croiza (ms)
Pelléas Alfred Maguenat (b)
Golaud Hector Dufranne (b)
Arkel Armand Narçon (bs)

Orchestra, Georges Truc, cond. PEARL GEMM 145, \$8.98 (mono) [from French COLUMBIA originals, recorded 1928] (distributed by Qualiton Records).

Debussy's first Mélisande was Mary Garden, who recorded only the briefest of excerpts from this, her most famous role: the little song Mélisande sings from the tower

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as she is combing her hair. On that occasion the piano accompaniment was played by the composer, though if you want to learn much about his playing you will have to go elsewhere, for there aren't many notes here. (The remainder of that 1904 session, Debussy's only appearance before the recording horn, was devoted to the *Ariettes oubliées*, and perhaps someday we will be granted a good LP reissue of these obviously important recordings.) The Garden/Debussy Pelléas excerpt was recently reissued, from a fairly clean original copy, on Desmar IPA 117, a collection of early piano recordings. The dubbing is about a semitone too high, but if you can correct this you can clearly hear the vibrant Garden tone, her true pitching and naturally flowing rhythm.

Debussy's second Mélisande was another Scotswoman, the eighteen-year-old Maggie Teyte, whom the Opéra-Comique management sent to him for coaching when Garden left for America. After singing the part with success in Paris, Teyte sang it occasionally in London (1910 and 1930)—and then apparently not again until March 1948 when, almost sixty, she made her New York operatic debut at the City Center.

The preceding October in London, Teyte made her only studio recordings from the opera, with Gerald Moore at the piano: Geneviève's reading of the letter from Golaud (Act I, Scene 2), and a portion of the fountain duo (IV, 4) in which she sang the lines of both Pelléas and Mélisande: these were recently reissued in EMI's Teyte retrospective album (RLS 716). A few months later, she sang passages from the opera at a Town Hall recital, of which Desmar has turned up a recording in quite decent sound, except for a few loud notes that blast. I suppose this ought to be reckoned a document of some historical standing, though a curious one indeed.

The excerpts are as follows: the letter scene (I, 2), complete except for a speech of Arkel's: the opening of the grotto scene (II, 3); Yniold and the sheep (IV, 3); and a slightly longer stretch of the fountain duo than she had recorded in London (IV, 4). If you consult a libretto or score, you will see that only in the last of these are there any significant lines for Mélisande—most of the record is devoted to Teyte singing Pelléas, Geneviève, Yniold, and Arkel, without any perceptible attempt at ventriloquial differentiation. You certainly need the text sheet that Desmar has provided to tell the characters apart.

More distractingly, Teyte's declamation is decidedly poky. In the letter, she has a way of gabbling through the shorter notes and then landing quite heavily on the final accent of each line, rendering the lines isomorphous and monotonous. In fact, there is a certain sameness to Debussy's setting, but nothing is gained by punching the listener in the nose with it (the passage is marked "quiet and unstressed," in any case).

When she gets to the relatively expansive lines of the fountain scene, Teyte is more warmed up, if still short of breath, and the sound, though brittle and unsensuous, is generally true and clear. To no particular avail, I fear, for this whole long sequence could hardly be more boring, less dramatic

or atmospheric. If this is "authentic," then the whole French tradition of performing the opera, as heard on recordings from the '20s, '30s, and '40s, is all wrong. In years gone by, Teyte may have been a wonderful Mélisande, but you couldn't prove it from these recordings. (The EMI excerpts are more varied and artful.) As for historical authority—well, I don't suppose Teyte coached Arkel and Yniold with the composer! At most, she might be remembering how some of the original singers read their lines at the Opéra-Comique—but aesthetic judgment here must surely overwhelm such faint historical supposition.

The only one of the major roles that Teyte doesn't take a crack at is Golaud. By coincidence, recordings of the original Golaud, Hector Dufranne, have just been reissued by Pearl: they are part of a selection of excerpts from the opera recorded in Paris in 1928 (and once available on Columbia/Entré RL 3092). The passages are as follows: from Act I, the first scene and most of the second; from Act II, the first scene and most of the second; the tower scene (III, 1) complete; and the interlude from Act IV. By this time, Dufranne was fifty-eight years old, but his voice retained remarkable ease, warmth, and flexibility, while the menace at the end of the tower scene is vivid.

The set's other attraction is the beautiful Geneviève of Claire Croiza, also a famous interpreter of French song. The young lovers are rather pedestrian: Compare Marthe Nespoulos combing her hair pallidly with the vivid echo of Mary Garden! Armand Narçon's few lines as Arkel are not ideally focused. The Pearl dubbing is made from shellac copies, with some surface noise but a much wider frequency range than in the Entré release: voices are more vivid and orchestral detail clearer—conductor Georges Truc clearly knew what he was doing.

Returning to the Teyte disc: It was doubtless praiseworthy of her to program Britten's *Les Illuminations* back in 1948, when the cycle was still "new music," but the publication of this shaky performance is no service to her memory. Only rarely (in the last song, for example) is she sufficiently comfortable to deliver even so much as a single line with something like the authority that we know from her best recordings. Much of the time, the effort of singing the notes leaves little room for her customary clarity of diction, and numerous ensemble flaws supervene. John Ranck's playing is expert, but the piano accompaniment is a poor substitute for Britten's sinuous and coruscating string writing.

In addition to the insert with texts and translations, Desmar gives a biographical note on Teyte's career. Pearl has biographies, but no text. D.H.

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El Amor brujo, Teresa Berganza, mezzo-soprano.

Ambrosian Opera Chorus (in *La Vida breve*), London Symphony Orchestra, Garcia Navarro, cond. [Rudolf Werner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 108, \$17.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: ●● 3370 028, \$17.96.

Comparison—*La Vida breve*: De los Angeles, Frühbeck de Burgos Ang. SBL 3672

La Vida breve is a curious work. Originally in one act, it was changed, at the suggestion of André Messager, into the two-act version we have today. Possibly for that reason it seems both too long and too short.

Too short, for one thing, because the characters remain unrealized and the plot inchoate. Even the heroine Salud—who, after having been betrayed by her lover Paco, arrives at his wedding celebration, curses him for his faithlessness, and then falls dead at his feet—is little more than the projection of certain strong feelings, a character sketch rather than a character. Salud at least obtrudes herself upon one's attention, whereas Paco and the rest are the merest ciphers. As for plot, there is virtually none, merely an incipiently dramatic situation that is arbitrarily brought to an end, rather than resolved, by the love-death of Salud. All these are elements that we feel need expansion.

At the same time, so great a proportion of the opera is taken up with background material—the atmospheric sounds of workmen at a nearby forge, vendors' cries from the street outside, elaborate dances, Andalusian nuptial songs, a pair of interludes—that, for all the beauty of such passages, we feel impatient to return to the foreground incident on which, after all, everything hinges. *La Vida breve* is also disconcerting stylistically: a combination, though hardly a blend, of the wistful and the violent, of gentle lyricism and *verismo*. Falla's music is often very beautiful, especially the orchestral passages, but it lacks the individuality of his later compositions.

This opera needs a taut, compelling performance to bring out its best features, as does the wonderfully engaging Gypsy entertainment *El Amor brujo*. Garcia Navarro sounds like an adept musician—it is no easy matter to conduct such rhythmically tricky music as effectively as he does—but he is hardly dynamic enough to infuse *La Vida breve* with the right kind of conviction. He is rather better in *El Amor brujo*.

Teresa Berganza as Salud gives a very unrestrained performance: passionate, vividly enunciated, vocally harsh. (Her chest register is much in evidence—effectively so—but her top notes are decidedly uncomfortable.) It must be said that, despite her commitment, no real characterization emerges, though for this the composer should probably be held responsible. José Carreras sings attractively in his brief exchanges with Berganza, and the supporting cast is highly satisfactory. So is the British chorus, which contrives to sound authentic, no doubt under the influence of guitarist Narciso Yepes and baritone Manuel Mairena, who join forces at the wedding entertainment to sing a flamenco song that is for me the highlight of the performance. The London Symphony plays with elegance,

but the recording lacks the brilliance this music ideally requires.

The rival *Vida breve* on Angel, now some thirteen years old, has on the whole more to recommend it: a still highly satisfactory recording (though, oddly enough, both versions bring the off-stage voices that contribute so much to the atmosphere of Act I far too close); a good, if occasionally white-voiced, performance from Victoria de los Angeles as Salud, more lyrical than Berganza but equally committed; and, above all, tauter, more persuasive conducting from Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos.

DG provides a libretto with English, French, and German translations. D.S.H.

HANDEL: Acis and Galatea.

Galatea Jill Gomez (s)
Acis Robert Tear (t)
Damon Philip Langridge (t)
Polyphemus Benjamin Luxon (b)

Nicholas Kraemer, harpsichord; vocal ensemble, Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. [Chris Hazell, prod.] ARGO ZRG 886/7, \$17.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: ●● KZRC K114K 22, \$17.96.

HANDEL: Acis and Galatea.

Galatea Norma Burrowes (s)
Acis Anthony Rolfe Johnson (t)
Damon Martyn Hill (t)
Polyphemus Willard White (bs-b)

Nicholas Kraemer, harpsichord; vocal ensemble, English Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner, cond. [Gerd Plöbsch and Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2708 038, \$17.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: ●● 3375 004, \$17.96.

Comparison: Sutherland, Pears, Brannigan, Boult Ois. SOL 60011/2

Acis and Galatea was Handel's first English-language theatrical piece (c. 1718-19), and hearing it one is bowled over by the absolute certainty with which he assumed Purcell's legacy. He simply entered through the wide open door into the world of dreams and visions to pluck flowers. This is the poetic geography of another world—not that of the heroic Old Testament figures for which we know him, but that of the free play of the fairy tale's decorative fantasy. *Acis* is among Handel's most accomplished works, its beguiling melodic charm, smiling eroticism, and lyric sincerity recalling the spirit of the ancient legend as no one was able to do before or after.

Both of the new recordings—like the older one conducted by Adrian Boult—had to readjust the forces employed at least somewhat, because the musical establishment of the Duke of Carnarvon (later Duke of Chandos) at Cannons was a mere skeleton, consisting of five singers and seven instrumentalists; there was no viola and no contrabass, and the two oboists doubled recorders, so that those instruments could never play together. Though the Archiv people go severely according to the book, they relent sufficiently to add three more violins to each part, another cello, a contrabass, and a bassoon; Neville Marriner simply uses his excellent St. Martin-in-the-Fields orchestra. Unlike the Oiseau-Lyre recording, which employed a small chorus, the new versions use only the "coro" of the baroque opera—that is, an ensemble formed by the protagonists, though in both cases a separate group of singers

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does the job. Since *Acis* is not an opera but a dramatic serenata, and its superb choral numbers are the real thing, I would have approved following the eighteenth-century practice of having the soloists sing with the chorus; a doubled—or, even better, trebled—ensemble would have given the taste of a bona fide chorus, something that a single voice to the part cannot do. (When Handel revived *Acis*, he performed it with his full opera establishment, taking care of the missing elements as he did with some of the *Chandos Anthems*, also composed for the meager “chapel” at Cannons.)

Despite the fleshing out of the ensemble, the Archiv orchestra sounds thin, pale, and colorless, and the sound of the solo violin is abominable. This is a matter, not of technical competence (though the English Baroque Soloists do sound like high-grade amateurs compared to Marriner’s first-class professionals), but of doctrine: It is supposed to be historically accurate to play “old” music with a dead and vibratoless sound. I don’t know where this idea originated, but Corelli’s pupil Geminiani, who lived in London at the time of *Acis*, enchanted the English public with his highly expressive, warm, and colorful violin tone and wrote a much-admired treatise on violin playing, in which he stated that vibrato is “indispensable” in string playing.

Argo presents a splendid chamber orchestra, every member playing his instrument as it should be played; the sound is handsome without being opulent, the balances superb. Marriner also improved the continuo considerably by alternating the harpsichord with a comely little positive

organ. And it is delightful to hear a glockenspiel; Handel is known to have liked and used it whenever he could get hold of one. (The historically literal-minded, so devoted to dull colors, ought to know that Bach himself petitioned his superiors for a set of chimes for his organ.)

Neither party, however, succeeded in assembling a homogeneous group of singers. The two Galateas, Norma Burrowes (Archiv) and Jill Gomez (Argo), are pretty good (if not in the class of Oiseau-Lyre’s Joan Sutherland), but the tenors are not equal to the occasion. True, *Acis* is a “gentle youth,” not a heroic figure, but neither is he unmanly. Anthony Rolfe Johnson, the Archiv *Acis*, sings in an almost constant mezza-voce, just pining away; in fact, both he and the Damon, Martyn Hill, often sound more like falsettists than tenors. Hill sings smoothly if not with much temperament; some of his songs, like the lovely “Love in her eyes sits playing,” are commendably delivered.

Argo’s *Acis*, Robert Tear, tries to make the character more masculine but cannot control his voice; whenever he sings a crescendo he is Heldentenor-ing, and he barks a little when he sings dotted rhythms. Philip Langridge, as Damon, is much better, though he too is a little precious. All the tenors suffer from a large overdose of appoggiaturas, which—especially those taken from below—can make even Hercules sound like a weakling. Appoggiaturas depend on the context; when to use them calls for musical, not theoretical, judgment.

Archiv has the better Polyphemus in Willard White, a solid and mellifluous bass

who understands the delicate mixture of the pastoral, the lyric, the dramatic—and the comic! Polyphemus is only half a monster, the other half is comical and a bit ironical. His singing of “O ruddier than the cherry” is delightful, and he has a finer voice than Oiseau-Lyre’s Owen Brannigan. Argo’s Benjamin Luxon is fairly good but not so sophisticated and technically solid as White. The “chorus” singers are fine, with an edge to Argo’s. The singers’ diction is generally poor.

The Argo performers, so alive and musical, unfortunately mess up the da capo arias with those silly ornamentations that are considered stylish but for me deform the glorious melodies. (Oiseau-Lyre found an even more drastic solution: Most of the da capo repeats were simply omitted.) A choice is not easy; I incline to the Argo set, but get at least one of them. P.H.L.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 2, in C minor (*Resurrection*). Elizabeth Ander, soprano; Alfreda Hodgson, mezzo; Ambrosian Singers, Symphonica of London, Wyn Morris, cond. [Isabella Wallich, prod.] PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLE 064/5, \$15.96 (two discs, automatic sequence).

There is so much to the *Resurrection* that even the least successful recordings shed light on some aspect, and the line between the outstanding versions—still, in my book, those of Klemperer (Angel SB 3634), Bernstein (Columbia M2 32681), Haitink (Philips 802 884/5), and Walter (Odyssey Y2 30848)—and the highly acceptable ones becomes increasingly blurry.

This new version has its share of executive virtues, beginning with the deep, velvety sound, in impressively quiet pressings. The bass-drum trill between Nos. 28 and 29 in the finale and the organ part at the end have well above average impact. First and second violins are divided, and for the first time in the symphony’s discography the violas are placed, advantageously, on the left. Unfortunately the side break in the finale comes at No. 21 instead of No. 29. The Symphonica of London sounds admirably virtuosic, and the Ambrosian Singers know their business. Both soloists are solid.

Wyn Morris offers the stateliest *Resurrection* I’ve heard. Other conductors on record have dotted the i’s and crossed the t’s more precisely, or more elaborately scaled the work’s gradations of pace and sound; Morris is more the orator than the dramatist, scholar, or tone painter. His statement is noble, ceremonial, unforced in its strength and cumulative weight. One is inclined to overlook the moments of ensemble laxness, given the exalted spirit and reverence of the whole.

Jack Diether’s notes—highly informative

Correction

The review of Mahler’s Symphony No. 5 in our February issue was by Abram Chipman. Some printing gremlin seems to have eaten his initials.

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about motivic relationships in the symphony—are a solid plus. A.C.

PROKOFIEV: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in D flat, Op. 10.* Romeo and Juliet, Op. 64: No. 2, Scena; No. 9, Dance of the Maids with Lilies. **RAVEL:** Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in D.* Pavane pour une infante défunte. Andrei Gavrilov, piano; London Symphony Orchestra, Simon Rattle, cond.* [John Willan, prod.] ANGEL S 37486, \$7.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

PROKOFIEV: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 3, in C, Op. 26. **RAVEL:** Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in D. Tedd Joselson, piano; Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Eduardo Mata, cond. [Peter Dellheim, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-2910, \$7.98. Tape: ●● ARK 1-2910, \$7.98; ●● ARS 1-2910, \$7.98.

Prokofiev composed his spunky First Piano Concerto at the age of twenty-one. It is a saucy work of no great emotional substance, full of scurrying momentum, nose-thumbing insolence, and slashing age-of-steel devices. As such, it is a perfect showcase for the Soviet pianist Andrei Gavrilov (born in 1956) and English conductor Simon Rattle (born 1955). The pianist phrases with whimsical flexibility and tempers his sonority, which can ring out when required but can also emerge with enchanting delicacy and humor.

Gavrilov and Rattle are less successful with Ravel. Their performance of the left-hand concerto, though spirited, is a bit unsubtle: Excessive speed sometimes imparts a lightweight, brash quality where measured, sinister drama would serve better. (When is Leon Fleisher going to record his demonic interpretation?) The Prokofiev and Ravel solo pieces are attractive, though perhaps the *Pavane pour une infante défunte* is overwrought for a work of such cameolike restraint. Angel's sound is live, thunderously forceful, and clean as a whistle.

RCA's surfaces, by contrast, are comparatively noisy, but the RCA sound too is close-up and clear, perhaps a shade beefy. The spotlighting of instruments is sometimes unkind to the Dallas Symphony (its trombones, when so ruthlessly exposed, sound a mite raw). Judged by themselves, these are very good performances—mostly robust and unaffected. Unfortunately, the competition includes some truly distinctive versions, and I miss Bernstein's zippy freedom (Columbia MS 6043) and Michelangelo's marblelike perfection (Angel S 35567) in the Ravel G major Concerto, the caustic qualities of Graffman/Szell (Columbia MS 6925), Browning/Leinsdorf (Seraphim S 60224 and RCA, deleted), and Janis/Kondrashin (Mercury SRI 75019) in the Prokofiev Third Concerto, and the cool refinement of Argerich and Abbado (DG 139 349) in both scores. H.G.

RACHMANINOFF: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 3, in D minor, Op. 30. Mirka Pokorná, piano, Brno State Philharmonic Orchestra, Jiří Pinkas, cond. [Zdeněk

Zahradnik, prod.] SUPRAPHON 1 10 1950, \$8.98.

Comparisons:
Giesekeing, Barbirolli IPA 505
Rachmaninoff, Ormandy/Philadelphia in RCA ARM 3-0296

Pokorná begins this concerto very deliberately, and the precise string syncopes accompanying her produce an orderly, firm pulse that brings to mind the 1939 Giesekeing/Barbirolli air check issued some years back by the International Piano Archives (December 1972). That was an eccentric performance, and this one is too; it is also, as is usually the case with eccentrics, quite inimitable.

As soon as the orchestra takes up the main theme, Pokorná and conductor Pinkas go galloping off (hotly pursued by the warm-toned but less than virtuosic orchestra) at a tempo something close to the other extreme, the Rachmaninoff/Ormandy recording. The tempos are only part of it; many outbursts and volcanic spurts excite and perplex, even when some of them seem more inadvertent than intentional. Pokorná is a temperamental, impulsive player with considerable technical ability that nevertheless is something short of what is asked of her here. The result is an unpolished but intriguingly strong-willed account—Rachmaninoff's Third as Janáček might have composed it. There is ample lyricism here, and drama of a sort—but hardly any of the macabre ambience most people associate with this work.

Pokorná plays the shorter first-movement cadenza and the usual triplet (rather than quadruplet) variant in the finale; the performance is uncut. It's all totally unidiomatic, but for some perverse reason I really like it. Supraphon's sound is mellow, the pressing quiet. H.G.

RACHMANINOFF: Symphony No. 2, in E minor, Op. 27. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Yuri Temirkanov, cond. [John Willan, prod.] ANGEL S 37520, \$7.98 (SQ-encoded disc). Tape: ●● 4XS 37520, \$7.98.

Comparison:
Previn/London Sym. Ang. S 36954

RACHMANINOFF: Symphony No. 1, in D minor, Op. 13. St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin, cond. [Marc Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] CANDIDE QCE 31099, \$4.98 (QS-encoded disc). Tape: ●● CT 2183, \$4.98.

Comparisons:
Sanderling/Leningrad Phil in Ev 3218/3
Previn/London Sym. Ang S 37120

Yuri Temirkanov performs the Second Symphony uncut and impresses a strong personality on the Royal Philharmonic, which along with its tonal richness and technical fluency somehow takes on the brass vibrato, violin portamento, and slight woodwind nasality one associates with Russian orchestral sound.

Temirkanov plainly loves the symphony, as suggested by his enthusiastic response to indicated ritards and his intuitive rubato. I was a little put off by his fast, but not consistently sustained, tempo for the pining Adagio, which André Previn gave more ap-

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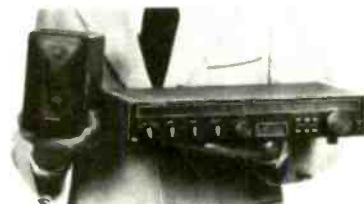
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appropriately long-spanned and controlled treatment in his Angel recording, my previous favorite among uncut versions. But Previn's restraint in the scherzo and the finale may not be to everyone's taste; Temirkanov throws caution to the winds and captures the hedonistic wildness of the music. In Previn's favor is his mastery of dynamic terracing, agogic phrasing, and tonal shading.

Leonard Slatkin seems less involved, even less analytical, in his approach to the First Symphony. The reading seems to proceed from bar to bar, as in the lyrical effusions of the first movement's lengthy countersubject. Kurt Sanderling molded this passage with throbbing life, and Previn presented it as a moment of regretful contemplation after the opening onslaught; in Slatkin's hands, it meanders. Much the same can be said of the other movements, so that no challenge is offered to Sanderling (if you can tolerate the sonic limitations and distortions of the rechanneled Everest edition) and Previn.

The St. Louis Symphony plays efficiently, but the close-up engineering underscores the lack of interpretive subtlety.

A.C.

RAVEL: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra—See Prokofiev: Concerto No. 1.

RZEWSKI: The People United Will Never Be Defeated! Ursula Oppens, piano. [Joanna

Nickrenz, prod.] VANGUARD VSD 71248, \$7.98.

Until now, Frederic Rzewski has been a relatively little known avant-gardist who was active in the 1960s in Rome, Berlin, and (more recently) New York. In the early 1970s, he began to write politically motivated music and developed a strong interest in such minimalist composers as Terry Riley, Philip Glass, and Steve Reich, as well as in the songs of the political left (mostly modeled after the small masterpieces in that genre by Hanns Eisler) and the urban folk-popular music of Latin America.

In 1975, commissioned by the Washington Performing Arts Society to write a piece for Ursula Oppens, who was appearing in its Kennedy Center piano series, he produced a set of thirty-six variations on the Chilean song "El Pueblo unido jamás será vencido!" by Sergio Ortega. The tune, which grew out of the Chilean Socialist movement, has become, since the murder of Allende and the Pinochet coup d'état, a much-loved musical symbol of the Chilean resistance.

The work, completed late in 1975, was quite successful at its Washington premiere, and when Oppens performed it in New York it scored a sensational triumph, inducing the *Times's* usually reserved Harold Schonberg to call it a landmark in the history of piano music. I wouldn't go quite that far out on a limb, but I certainly would agree that this fifty-minute set of variations is a remarkable achievement. It stamps

Rzewski as one of the major figures of our time.

The variations are essentially tonal in orientation and recall, to a certain extent, the architecture of the *Goldberg Variations* and (at times) the variation techniques of Brahms. Rzewski makes use of parody techniques—quotations from the Italian song "Bandiera rossa" and the Brecht-Eisler "Solidarity Song" grow naturally from the Chilean tune—and on several occasions calls for the pianist to whistle. In other variations, tone clusters and savage dissonances rub elbows with frankly luscious nineteenth-century harmonies and scintillating passages demanding the utmost in pianistic skills. Above all, the piece grips the interest consistently despite its enormous length.

Oppens plays the work with tremendous verve and surmounts its formidable difficulties with ease. The recording, supervised by the composer, is first-rate. This is one disc that no fancier of contemporary music should miss.

I.L.

SCHUBERT: Sonata for Piano, in B flat, D. 960. Lazar Berman, piano. [John Fraser, prod.] ANGEL S 37495, \$7.98.

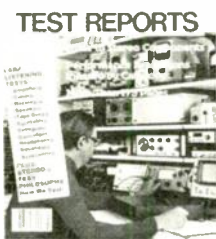
R **SCHUBERT:** Sonata for Piano, in B flat, D. 960. **BRAMMS:** Waltz in A flat, Op. 39, No. 15; Intermezzo in B flat minor, Op. 117, No. 2. **CHOPIN:** Scherzo No. 1, in B minor, Op. 20. Vladimir Horowitz, piano. RCA RED SEAL ARM 1-2873, \$7.98 (mono) [from

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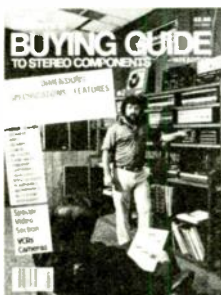
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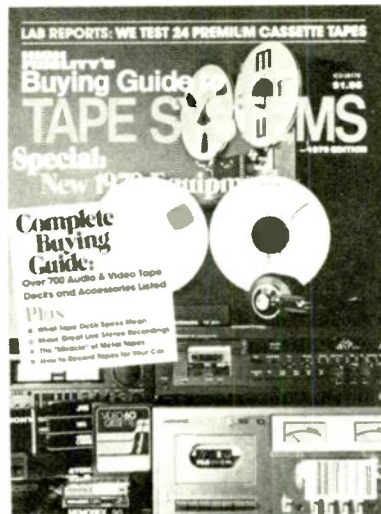
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various originals, 1950-53]. Tape: ●● ARK 1-2873, \$7.98. ●● ARS 1-2873; \$7.98.

SCHUBERT: Sonatas for Piano: in B flat, D. 960; in C, D. 840. Daniel Barenboim, piano. [Wolfgang Stengel and Günther Brest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 995, \$8.98.

Berman's metrically uncomprehending performances of Liszt's Schubert-song transcriptions have suggested that he has never heard the originals, and the unique language of Schubert's B flat Sonata poses even greater barriers for him. Musicians of far greater sophistication have been challenged by its subtle requirements—for muted, nocturnal simplicity, for drama often merely implied but always present, for structural coherence applied neither too rigorously nor too obtrusively. This performance flails aimlessly (attempts at "expression" are mostly limited to ritards at phrase ends) in a monotonously pretty sonority of characterless uniformity. The long first-movement repeat is observed (neither Horowitz nor Barenboim does so); in this instance, it compounds the sprawl. Angel's reproduction is resonant and agreeable.

Horowitz' 1953 concert recording is also far removed from orthodoxy (as established by Artur Schnabel's 1939 recording), but at least it is interesting in its perversity. The constant teasing and breaking of phrases, the attempts at evading staidness

with capricious shifting of color and gears, the introduction of an alien sophisticated hypertension are sometimes maddening but often riveting: a kind of anti-Schubert. Suspicious bass notes abound (especially in the second movement); certain figurations (e.g., in bar 75 of the Andante) are recomposed; many harmonies are amplified and given a singularly un-Schubertian sensuality; the spiritual breadth of the music is replaced by hedonistic frivolity. Yet a certain inspired ingenuity makes this a performance to hear.

Filling out the Horowitz disc are two works by Brahms and one by Chopin. The Brahms B flat minor Intermezzo is agitated, untrammled, and limpid; the A flat Waltz is rather stickily insipid. The Chopin B minor Scherzo (deriving from the same 1953 recital as the Schubert sonata) is one of those mad-scientist readings Horowitz gives from time to time: The frequent over-weighting toward left-hand chords and the fragmentation of right-hand filigree contrast instructively with his fall 1975 Carnegie Hall performance of the piece, the one sane one I have heard him give. The aging mono sound is thin and slightly murky but still full of attractive color.

Barenboim's notions on how his two Schubert sonatas go are beyond cavil, but the performances realize them incompletely. His tempos suggest breadth without dwelling upon rumination, and the phras-

ing—especially in the sturdier D. 840 (Barenboim plays the two-movement version of this unfinished sonata, also recorded by Serkin, Kempff, and Brendel)—projects both detail and sweep, with just enough metrical freedom to intensify structure without disjointing it. Less congenial are the pianist's basically metallic, opaque tone (well caught in a bold, close pickup) and an intangible but nevertheless damaging tendency to externalize Schubert's more piercingly introspective moments. The first two movements of D. 960 suffer particularly, and the ensuing scherzo hardly has the prescribed *delicatezza*. In sum, clear but prosaic renditions.

Although Barenboim is a contender in D. 840, I continue to prefer the three versions noted above, of which only Brendel's (Philips 6500 416) is currently listed; the long out-of-print Serkin deserves reissue. With Schnabel's D. 960 available only as an import (in German EMI 1C 147 01557/8) and Fleisher's out of print, the most recommendable recordings are Gabriel Chodos' (Orion ORS 75179), Michèle Boegner's (MHS 1042), the rather prim and proper Clifford Curzon (London CS 6801), and the recent Serkin Carnegie Hall version (in Columbia M2 34596). H.G.

SCHUBERT: Die schöne Müllerin (in English). For a feature review, see page 73.



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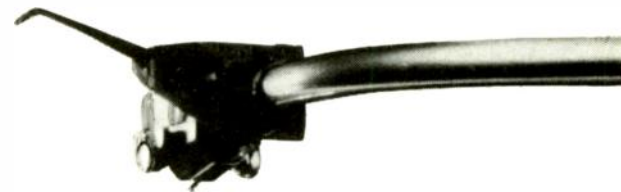
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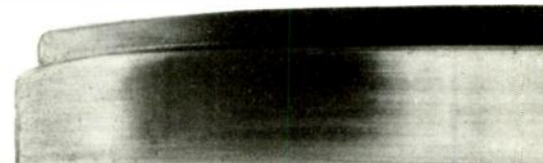


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SCHUBERT: Songs (orchestrated). Hermann Prey, baritone; Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, Gary Bertini, cond. RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-3002, \$7.98.

Erlkönig (two versions—orch. Liszt and Berlioz). An Schwager Kronos; Memnon; Geheimnis (orch. Brahms). Ständchen (orch. Offenbach). Im Abendrot; Gesänge des Harfners, Gruppe aus dem Tartarus; Prometheus (orch. Reger).

In that same pre-phonographic era when much orchestral music was published in piano arrangements so that it might be accessible to all, there was also apparently a demand for orchestrations of songs for concert use.

As you see from the contents of this intriguing record, distinguished names were called upon. Brahms is the most conservative, the most chary of adding lines or altering textures; his three orchestrations (two further ones have apparently been lost) really sound well and avoid stylistic incongruity. Reger, on the other hand, goes a good deal further in the *Harfenspieler* songs—not so far as to use a harp, actually, but frequently adding counterpoints and soupy doublings in the violins. His version of "Im Abendrot" is more tasteful.

The origin of the Offenbach setting of "Ständchen" isn't known to the annotator; in the second stanza, brief imitative lines are added in the winds, and the tune of the postlude is given to trumpets, transporting us to the beer hall. Most interesting of all is

the comparison of "Erlkönig" orchestrations by Liszt and Berlioz. (Reger set this song too, and I wish his version had been included as well.) They're in different keys—Berlioz sticks to Schubert's original G minor, Liszt sets it a tone lower; Prey heroically sings it in both keys! Each composer is particularly stirred by the problem of coloring the Erl-King's speeches; the Berlioz, in particular, is a virtuoso piece of work.

Prey's somewhat muscular singing is less of a problem in this context than it would be with piano; it's tolerable, and so is the orchestral work despite some muzzy string playing and a somewhat "canned" acoustic. Texts and translations are advertised on the liner but were missing in my copy; better check before purchasing this interesting curio, which ought to fascinate students of orchestration and of any of the transcribing composers (though perhaps not single-minded Schubertians). D.H.

SIBELIUS: Symphonies (7). Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel, cond [Marc Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] VANGUARD EVERYMAN SRV 381/4, \$15.92 (four discs, manual sequence).

Symphonies: No. 1, in E minor, Op. 39; No. 2, in D, Op. 43, No. 3, in C, Op. 52; No. 4, in A minor, Op. 63, No. 5, in E flat, Op. 82; No. 6, in D minor, Op. 104, No. 7, in C, Op. 105

SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 1, in E minor, Op. 39. Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, cond. [Severin Pazukhin, prod.] WESTMINSTER GOLD WG 8361, \$3.98. Tape: ●● 5008-8361X, \$5.95.

SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 5, in E flat, Op. 82; Er Saga, Op. 9. Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. [Jay David Saks, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-2906, \$7.98. Tape: ●● ARK 1-2906, \$7.98.

Comparison—complete symphonies Davis/Boston Sym.

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Nobody will be surprised at the polished and assured sound of the Philadelphia Orchestra. The occasionally raucous work of the Moscow Radio Symphony too is to be expected, along with the fire and passion of its playing. What may surprise is how secure and nearly top-rank the Utah Symphony is here; it may not produce the most sweeping sonorities, but its musicianship, warmth, and intonation leave little to be desired.

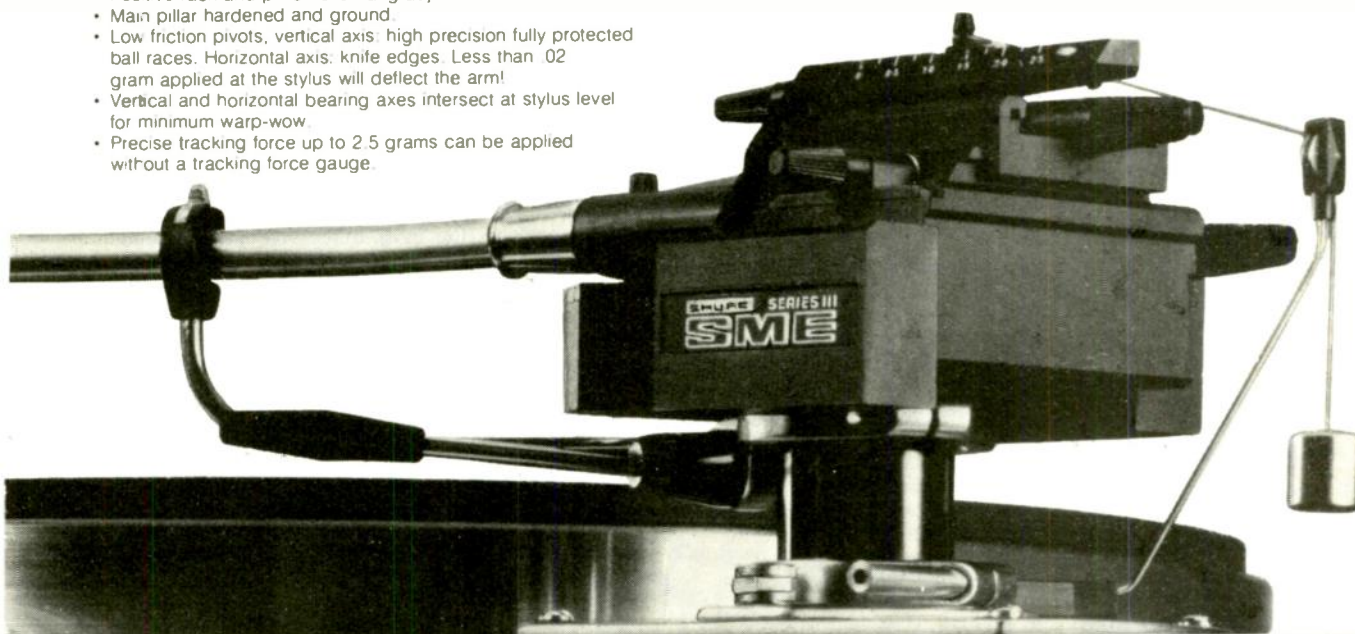
Abravanel's First Symphony is light, brisk, somewhat retiring—less charismatic than those of Stokowski, Barbirolli, Bernstein, and Davis. Rozhdestvensky is more deliberate, letting some of the nineteenth-century bathos expand a bit. Abravanel's Second is tightly reined—no hysteria, dis-

Continued on page 94

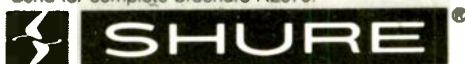
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tension, or bombast here. I like this unostentatious, earnest, almost quietly devotional reading.

The Third, split between discs in Vanguard's tightly packed four-disc format, lacks drive in the opening movement, and the tempo changes in the finale are under-characterized, but the middle movement is convincingly leisurely. The Fourth receives a somber, darkly eloquent reading, though not as propulsive as some. Among the things Abravanel understands better than many rivals are the blunt phrasing of the brass calls in the first movement, the eerie effect produced by using tubular bells rather than glockenspiel in the finale, and the expressive point of the lowered dynamics in the oboe part at the very end.

In the Fifth, both Ormandy and Abravanel do less than complete justice to the first movement's gradual acceleration. Ormandy is a little more spacious, but his reading doesn't cut very deep. I do like the coupled En Saga, however, which has all the bounce, thrust, and swagger I remember from Ormandy's Columbia mono version, along with a certain mellowing. Everything is carefully articulated and precisely recorded.

The intimate and sweet sound of the Utah Symphony is well suited to the archaic delicacy of the Sixth (as was that of the Finnish National Orchestra under Georg Schnéevoigt, Turnabout THS 65067). Abravanel's slow tempos in the middle movements, however, lack contrast; either the third movement or the wispy middle section of the second ought to serve as a scherzo. In contrast to the Sixth, the Seventh needs the deepest and fullest string sonority it can get. That factor, the lack of absolute control and unanimity in manipulating contrapuntal and transitional passages, and insufficiently animated pacing are major drawbacks to Abravanel's rendition.

There is much to enjoy in the Vanguard set, which certainly represents good value. Still, nothing in this batch of Sibelius can match Colin Davis' Philips cycle in its general perceptiveness, the aplomb and stunning beauty of the Boston Symphony's playing, and the magnificent sonics. A.C.

STRAUSS, R.: Don Quixote, Op. 35*; Don Juan, Op. 20*. Tibor de Machula, cello*; Klaas Boon, viola*; Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond. PHILIPS 9500 440 \$8.98. [†from 6500 481, 1974]. Tape: ●● 7300 647, \$8.95.

STRAUSS, R.: Don Quixote, Op. 35. Viktor Simon, cello; Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, cond. [Severin Pazukhin, prod.] ABC CLASSICS/MELODIYA AB 67023, \$7.98. Tape: ●● 5306-67023H, \$7.95.

Comparisons:
 Fournier, Szell/Cleveland Odys. Y 32224
 Rostropovich, Karajan/Berlin Phil. Ang. S 37057

Rozhdestvensky's is a brash Don Quixote, idiosyncratic and unsubtle but uninhibitedly enthusiastic. Cellist Viktor Simon, who is overprominently recorded, plays with swaggering assurance, though for magisterial flamboyance he yields to his

compatriot Mstislav Rostropovich, in Karajan's Angel recording. The competent but rather colorless violist in the Sancho Panza role is not identified. If this high-spirited, episodic reading (whose powerful 1972 Melodiya sonics candidly expose the Moscow Radio Symphony's frequent tonal coarseness) offers no challenge to the best-liked Don Quixotes, the ardor and relish of soloist and conductor leave a vivid and sharply etched impression.

To anyone who knows the earlier Haitink/Concertgebouw *Heldenleben* and *Also sprach Zarathustra*, it should be enough to credit the present release with the same supreme virtues of lucidity, poetic eloquence, and virile dramatic power. The soloists' roles are better understood and realized by the Concertgebouw's principal cellist and violist, Tibor de Machula and Klaas Boon, than by the soloists in any other recorded version I know, and both characterize with more humor and pathos, with more distinctive personality, than many more famous virtuosos.

In every respect—interpretation, execution, sonic beauty and strength, authentic auditorium ambience—this Don Quixote must rank high among the finest to date. And yet I still reserve top honors for the 1961 Fournier/Szell/Cleveland version, now on *Odyssey*.

Unlike most Don Quixote discs, Haitink's includes a filler: his surprisingly impetuous Don Juan, first released in 1974 with his Elgar *Enigma Variations*. R.D.D.

STRAUSS, R.: Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40. Peter Mirring, violin; Dresden State Orchestra, Rudolf Kempe, cond. [David Mottley, prod.] SERAPHIM S 60315, \$3.98. Tape: ●● 4XG 60315, \$4.98.

STRAUSS, R.: Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40. Daniel Majeske, violin; Cleveland Orchestra, Lorin Maazel, cond. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] COLUMBIA M 34566, \$7.98. Tape: ●● MT 34566, \$7.98.

Comparisons:
 Mengelberg/N.Y. Phil. Victrola AVM 1-2019
 Reiner/Chicago Sym. Victrola VICS 1042
 Beecham/Royal Phil. Sera. S 60041

The Maazel/Cleveland *Heldenleben* is perhaps the most impressive yet for sonic weight and power; certainly its battle is the most realistically stentorian. Yet for all the performers' bravura, their musical characterizations lack memorable distinction. The Hero himself is tense and arrogant but scarcely impetuous or exuberant enough; his Helpmate (as depicted by violin soloist Daniel Majeske) is stickily sentimental; the Adversaries (Critics) lack proper malevolence; and even the magnificent sonorities of the Hero's epiphany lack radiance.

The Kempe/Dresden performance, which reaches us belatedly but at budget price, is as magisterial as previous releases from this Strauss series would have led us to expect. Particularly notable are the swaggering exultancy of the Hero, the engaging yet unselfish charm of Peter Mirring's Helpmate, the lucidity of the battlefield tumult, the golden sonority and exaltation of the "Works of Peace" and "Escape from the World" sections. The

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sound is fresh, transparent, and robust, though the Seraphim surfaces are less than ideally quiet. (The cassette edition is likely to be better processed.)

Without eclipsing the 1954 Reiner and 1961 Beecham versions, the Kempe/Dresden *Heldenleben* makes a strong claim to preferred status among modern recordings. Still, none of them has equaled the 1929 Mengelberg/New York Philharmonic performance (reissued on RCA Victorla, April 1977) in thrilling drama—fierce, arrogant, malevolent, at times schmaltzy—or, for that matter, in orchestral playing. R.D.D.

VERDI: *La Battaglia di Legnano*.

Lida	Katia Ricciarelli (s)
Imelda	Ann Murray (ms)
Atrigo	Jose Carreras (t)
A Herald; A Squire	Mieczyslaw Antoniak (t)
Rolando	Matteo Manuguerra (b)
Marcovaldo	Jonathan Summers (b)
Federico Barbarossa	Nicola Ghiuselev (bs)
Consuls	Hannes Lichtenberger, Dimitri Kavrakos (bs)
Podesta	Franz Handlos (bs)

Austrian Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Lamberto Gardelli, cond. PHILIPS 6700 120, \$17.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: ●● 7699 081, \$17.95.

La Battaglia di Legnano is a short opera (107½ minutes in this recording) and an exciting one. Verdi composed it in Paris, under the influence of his first direct, extended exposure to French opera. *Il Corsaro* follows *Jerusalem* in the catalog, but that picture had been gestating for some years.

The idea of *La Battaglia* came fresh from Cammarano in April of 1848, the year when revolutions broke out all over Europe, and it was first performed, with triumphant success, in a Rome just about to declare itself a republic, the following January. On the first night, the last of the four acts was encored in toto (which is not quite as formidable an encore as it sounds, since it lasts only thirteen minutes). The Neapolitan librettist took a play by Joseph Méry (one of the creators of *Don Carlos*) set in the Peninsular War, and popular in Italy, and shifted its setting to Lombardy, its period to the defeat of Barbarossa by Italian patriots in 1176. This was a thin disguise for a contemporary Lombardy eager to throw off Austrian rule—and succeeding for a while, after the Milan revolt of April 1848. But the revolutions in Milan and in Rome were put down. In progressive Florence, the score of *La Battaglia* was published, but in Milan it was published as—and, until Italian censorship eased, it was usually performed as—*L'Assedio di Arlem*, with the specific political bite blunted.

Cammarano added the patriotic episodes to Méry's play, to make it one that, in his words, "should stir every man with an Italian soul in his breast." Verdi himself devised some of the most dramatic situations—such as the sudden, tremendous appearance of Barbarossa at the Como Council. The two themes of the opera—heroic Italian resistance to the foreign invader, and an emotional triangle caused by

the fact that the soprano, believing that the tenor she loves has died in battle, has married his friend the baritone—are not really connected. *La Battaglia* is no *Don Carlos*, in which personal and political destinies are tight-woven. But it moves so swiftly and it contains so much stirring music that in a good performance one is carried along irresistibly.

This is a good performance. The chorus is important in *La Battaglia*. I don't know how large the Austrian Radio Chorus is, but it sounds bigger and more stirringly energetic than the all-purpose, accomplished Ambrosian Singers who are assembled for so many of the operas recorded in London. At the end of the very first number, as the women in the balconies add their cries of "Viva l'Italia!" to the rallying hymn of the Lombard League sung by the men in the street below, the sheer theatrical quality of Verdi's score leaps out from the records. The Council at Como, which opens Act II, and the solemn conjuration in the crypt of Sant' Ambrogio, which opens Act III, are equally vivid. However, the lilting women's chorus that opens the second scene is a shade heavy, insufficiently graceful.

Lamberto Gardelli is a very fine conductor of the work. The orchestral playing is admirable. Rhythms are incisive but not driven. The soloists are encouraged to be expressive, but there is no sagging. Many extraordinary things, formal or instrumental, or both, distinguish the score. Gardelli brings them to life in an intense, picturesque, yet

wonderfully natural way. He does not seem to be saying: Listen to this detail, to this delicate piece of orchestration, to this remarkable harmony. Or: Mark well how beautifully my first oboe plays. Without nudging his listeners, and equally without any display of excessive bravura, he directs a performance that is brilliant, powerful, coherent, stirring, and tender where it should be.

The recording is big, clean, bright, spacious, and "spatial" to just the extent that gives musical perspectives to the big scenes without causing a listener to be distracted by attention to the clever engineering. The discs seem to have been cut at rather a low level, but, since the surfaces on my set were immaculate, there was no problem about simply turning the volume control up high to set the room ringing with Verdi's brave sounds. About the solo singing I shall express some reservations. Let me stress first that they are made in the context of a whole performance that has made me admire *La Battaglia* more than ever before.

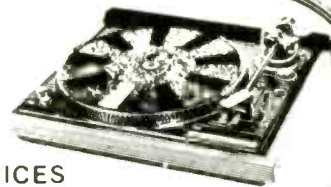
The reservations concern light casting of the two most important roles, the tenor and the soprano. Verdi composed Arrigo for Gaetano Fraschini, his favored tenor. And although Fraschini could be elegant and light (Corrado in *Il Corsaro* and Riccardo in *Ballo* were also written for him), it was for dramatic power that he was renowned. Arrigo and Stiffelio (another Fraschini part) are steps toward Otello. They call for a tenor who has metal in the voice. And while José Carreras has many, many virtues, I don't hear metal in his sound. He is not heroic in his opening phrases, and he doesn't hold a big, long line through the final trio, which he launches and should dominate. Amedeo Berdini, in the old Cetra set of *La Battaglia*, is more convincingly a *tenore di forza*—not that he is in any other way preferable. His sustained notes grow unsteady, and both his timbre and his phrasing are monotonous. Carreras sings with expression, never makes an unattractive or unmusical sound, and only once seems unaware of what the opera is about (when, swiftly hiding Lida on the balcony when her husband is heard approaching, he cries out "*Su quel veron*" in full voice). I'd rather hear Domingo in the role—a Domingo at his best, of course—but, all the same, I thoroughly enjoyed hearing Carreras.

The first Lida was Teresa de Giuli-Borsi, the soprano who triumphed in *Nabucco*. (Strepponi sang the first eight performances of that opera, but it was De Giuli who starred in the unparalleled run of fifty-seven performances when *Nabucco* was revived in the autumn season.) She was an Abigail—a role in which one doesn't readily cast Katia Ricciarelli—but she must have been delicate as well as dramatic: Verdi wanted her for Gilda. Whatever can be done by nice feeling, sincerity, honesty of purpose, application, and a voice with some appealing timbres Ricciarelli does. She makes me feel like a brute when I express the wish that she had a more secure and more flexible technique, one that would enable her to trace the Chopinesque lines of the opening cavatina more evenly and to be brilliant mistress of its cabaletta. Instead, she gets through the cabaletta

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rather heavily. It lacks energy. And here Gardelli—it's the only moment I question his tempos—is curiously staid. Caterina Mancini, in the Cetra set, carries bigger guns. She is ample, forthright, and full-voiced where Ricciarelli is cloudy. But she doesn't always fire those guns accurately, while Ricciarelli wins me over by the emotional commitment of all her phrases. Nevertheless, when Imelda, Lida's *ancella*, sings with her, the clear, pure, accurately focused tones of Ann Murray reveal something that this Lida lacks.

Matteo Manuguerra is well cast as Rolando. The first Rolando was Filippo Colini, a smooth high baritone of the old school (Stankar in *Stiffelio* seems to be a vocal portrait of him) who could evidently manage occasional outbursts of force and anger, but not many of them. Unlike Nabucco, Rolando doesn't need in his vocal personality what is nowadays called *charisma*, but only very good singing. And that Manuguerra provides. He makes a fine sound and an appropriate one. My only reservations are that he sings out from the very start of Rolando's aria, rather than with the quiet intensity implied by Verdi's marking (*ppp, con passione*); that he underplays the contrasts of *f* and *pp* that fill the cabaletta; and that he evidently has no trill. The Cetra offers the young Rolando Panerai. I remember him as the finest Nabucco I ever heard, but his Rolando is disappointing—plain, ordinary, and less well sung than Manuguerra's.

Of the cabaletta Manuguerra sings only one verse, and that's the way the number stands in the current Ricordi score: Julian Budden makes a point of the "novel form." But in the Escudier score there is a standard two-verse cabaletta. The Ricordi seems to have a bowdlerized text: "Pontefice" is changed to "sacra mano"; "Dio" becomes "angelo" in one place and later "il ciel." These must be concessions to ecclesiastical censors; the changes cause Carreras to sing "angelo" to music that Verdi wrote for "demon." The Escudier score probably represents what Verdi first composed, and future performers of *La Battaglia* should consult it. Although Hopkinson's recently published catalog says that "no copy has been traced," there are copies in the Juilliard Library and the Boston Public Library.

Prima or *primo* categorize the soprano, the tenor, and the baritone, and all the other roles are dubbed *seconda* or *secondo*—except Federico Barbarossa, described simply as *basso profondo*, without "first" or "second" categorization. The role is very important but also very brief—no aria, but the launching lines of the Act II finale, both its *adagio* and its *stretta* ("Il destino d'Italia son io"). Nicola Ghiuselev launches them powerfully, *con terribile accento*, as specified. The other parts are neither here nor there, and they are well enough taken. I have mentioned Ann Murray; the good sound of Dimitri Kavrakos, the Second Consul, should also be noted. A.P.

VERDI: Quattro Pezzi sacri. Leipzig Radio Chorus and Orchestra, Herbert Kegel, cond. PHILIPS FESTIVO 6570 111, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 7310 111, \$6.98.

Ave Maria; Stabat Mater; Laudi alla Vergine Maria; Te Deum.

Comparison:
Giulini/Philharmonia

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This is very much a "northern" view of Verdi's *Four Sacred Pieces*, a cool and solemn account of what Herbert Kegel seems to regard as a series of fascinating but abstract musical challenges. The challenges are handsomely met by the estimable Leipzig Radio Chorus and Orchestra. Verdi's dynamic markings are carefully followed, rhythms are firm, textures well judged. Moreover, striking details abound: sensitively modulated *morendos*; a beautifully attacked high A—sung *dolcissimo*, as marked—from the sopranos halfway into the *Laudi alla Vergine Maria*; a good blend of voices throughout.

Yet the performance, given Kegel's approach, is of necessity emotionally vacant. The religious and spiritual sentiments inherent in the three Latin liturgical texts and in the *Laudi* (an excerpt from the last canto of Dante's *Paradiso*) seem not to mean anything very specific to the Leipzigers, who convey little more than an attitude of generalized religious respectfulness. What is needed in this music is not respect, but reverence, a point of view that, without slighting the technical interest the Pezzi sacri indubitably hold, nevertheless springs from the conviction that they are statements of religious feeling. Statements, as one might expect from Verdi, in dramatic guise—emotionally expressive, sensuous, intensely human, quintessentially vocal in conception, in a word "southern."

I realize that my view of this music owes a great deal to long familiarity with Carlo Maria Giulini's Angel recording, an impassioned performance that brings out all the human feelings implicit in the composer's declarations of faith. Giulini's forces are admittedly "northern," and I still find Janet Baker's *Te Deum* solo inappropriately cool in timbre, but under his direction the magnificent Philharmonia of 1963 vintage and Wilhelm Pitz's brilliant, 240-strong chorus are converted into true Verdians.

The Leipzig recording is slightly muffled and remote, and there are no texts. Julian Budden's excellent notes are not carefully proofread. D.S.H.

VIVALDI: Concertos for Violin and Strings (12), Op. 9 (*La Cetra*). Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Iona Brown, violin and cond. [Chris Hazell, prod.] ARGO D99D 3, \$26.94 (three discs, manual sequence). Tape: ●● K99K 33, \$26.94.

Vivaldi's *La Cetra* (*The Lyre*), fourth and last of his named sets of violin concertos, raises both his development of virtuosic solo techniques and his near-operatic dramatization of thematic materials well above the levels of his earlier achievements in *L'Estro armonico* (Op. 3), *La Stravaganza* (Op. 4), and *Il Cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione* (Op. 8). Yet oddly its recorded history has been a checkered one; as I write, SCHWANN lists no complete recording of Op. 9, although Musical Heritage Society lists a fine one with Carl Pini and

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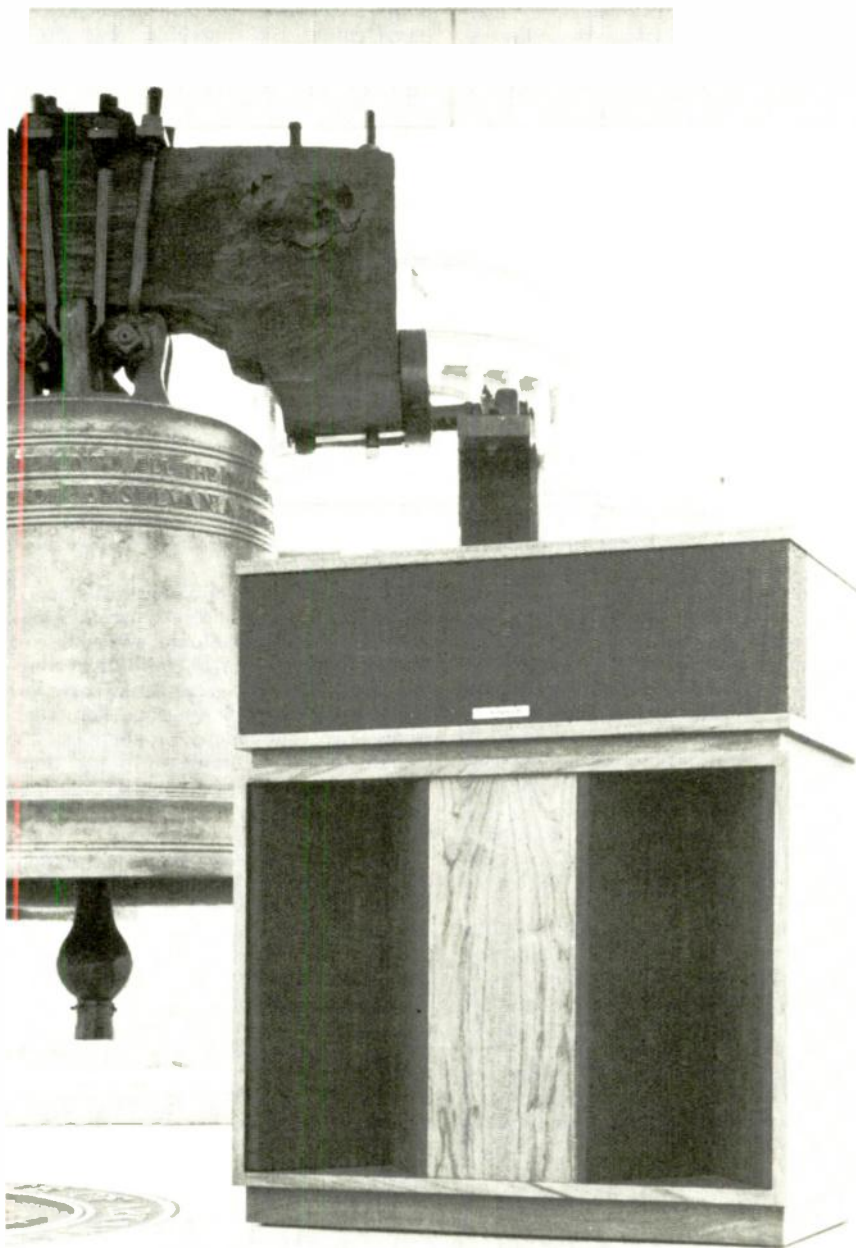
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CIRCLE 12 ON PAGE 99

the Accademia Monteverdiana Orchestra conducted by Denis Stevens.

Except for No. 9, which is a double concerto, the concertos of Op. 9 are for solo violin. Two of them call for scordatura—the abnormal tuning of the soloist's instrument: In No. 6, the lower strings are tuned up from G and D to A and E; in No. 12, the G string is raised to B and the top string lowered from E to D. But these are only some overt differentiations: for all the characteristic Vivaldian and general baroque-era formulas employed, each of these works boasts its own individuality. Note especially the chromatic ostinato (quasi-chaconne) accompaniment to the pathetic solo cantilena in the Largo of No. 3, the arresting dynamic contrasts that open the first movement of No. 4, the exceptionally full-blooded vitality of the No. 7 Allegro movements, the inventiveness of No. 10's first-movement Allegro molto and second-movement Largo cantabile, and perhaps above all the lusty swagger of No. 12's fast movements and its Largo's dramatic anticipation of the slow movement of the Beethoven Fourth Piano Concerto.

Vivaldians familiar with Argo's Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields sets of Op. 3 (ZRG 733/4, December 1973) and Op. 4 (ZRG 800/1, July 1975) conducted by Neville Marriner will find the present release meritorious even above and beyond their expectations. It stars Iona Brown (who was outstanding among the several soloists in Op. 3) as soloist and, now, as conductor as well; in both roles she is superb. As fiddler, she demonstrates assured bravura virtuosity while discreetly avoiding—better than most Vivaldian interpreters using modern instruments—romanticized expressiveness, yet with no loss of poetic lyricism. As conductor, she consistently maintains taut yet elastic control, electrically invigorating animation, and an irresistibly infectious relish of the music itself—characteristics enhanced by the gleaming clarity and vividness of the recording.

My only complaints are piddling. The otherwise informative notes fail to include complete personnel identifications, especially that of the continuo keyboard player (here on the organ in several concertos, on the harpsichord in the rest). And there's also a failure to name the editor of the performing edition used. One can only guess that the man in both cases is again Christopher Hogwood. R.D.D.

Theater and Film

QUO VADIS. Music from the original film score by Miklós Rózsa. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Miklós Rózsa, cond. [Raymond Few, prod.] LONDON PHASE-4 SPC 21180, \$7.98. Tape: •• SPC5 21180, \$7.95; •• SPC8 21180, \$7.95.

Miklós Rózsa's music for the 1950 *Quo Vadis* marked a breakthrough in his development as a film composer. From the edgy and broodingly introspective scores for Forties films noirs such as *Brute Force* and *Lost Weekend*, he moved on to the more expansive and ceremonial style of Fifties historical and ceremonial dramas (*Ivanhoe*, *Plymouth Adventure*, *Madame Bovary*) and then two Biblical epics (*Ben-Hur*, *King of Kings*), for which genre he created an unprecedented and indelibly distinctive idiom.

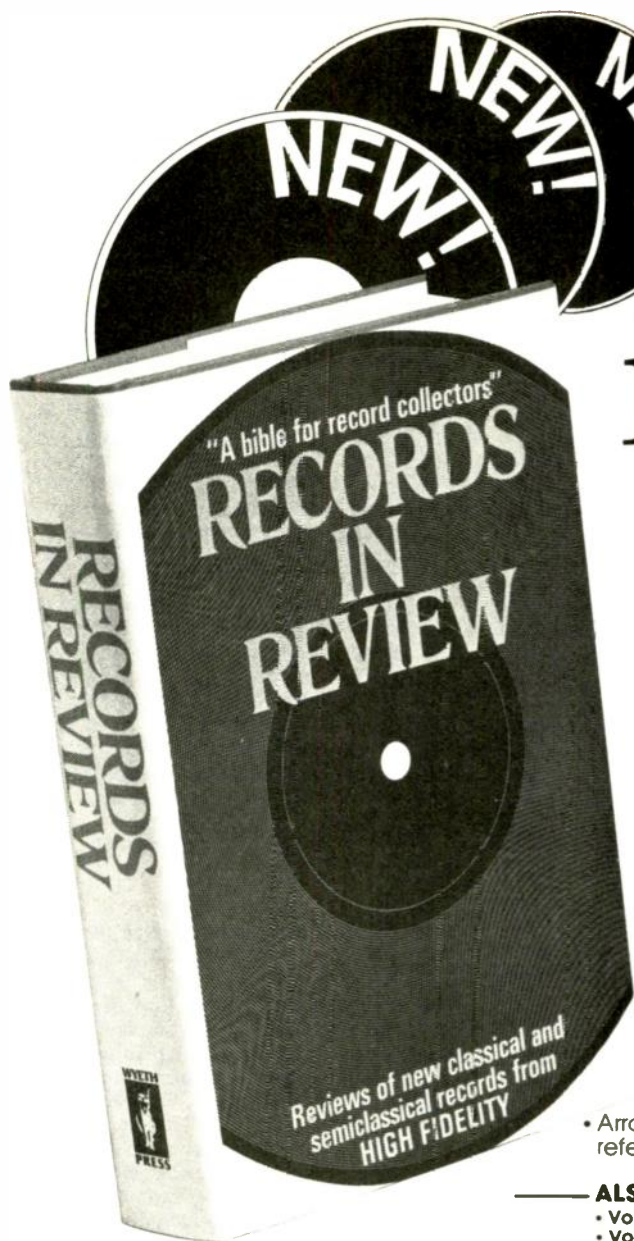
In many respects, Rózsa's music for *Quo Vadis* carries the greatest conviction among the three films set in the Roman epoch. The composer first came to this kind of material with a fresh perspective inspired in part by the miraculously ready-made compatibility between the modal harmonic language of his Magyar heritage and the simple triadic structure of much primitive, pre-European music (as Christopher Palmer points out in his typically thoughtful liner note). Although much has been made of the "authenticity" of this score, since no samples of Roman music survive Rózsa's efforts in this direction were of necessity limited. He sought to approximate the probable sounds of ancient musical instruments while adapting early Christian plainsong, whose roots go back to the Greek sources presumed to have influenced Roman music.

But this broad and vibrant musical canvas bears no traces of forced archaizing: It is pure, red-blooded Rózsa, minus the excessive pomposity and religiosity that were to seep into the more gargantuan scores for *Ben-Hur* and *King of Kings*. In fact, *Quo Vadis* is so contemporary-sounding as to contain—in the "Burning of Rome" and "Chariot Chase" sequences particularly—unconscious echoes of the Prokofiev Fifth Symphony.

In his main ideas—the *Quo Vadis* hymn, the hero Marcus' theme, and the long-breathed and inexpressibly moving music for the Christian slave girl Lygia—Rózsa instills a dignified sense of forbearance and piety. The marches, of course, are fraught with the ruthless and arrogant tread of Roman imperialism, whereas in the frenetic banquet dances and large crowd scenes, Rózsa conveys his customary sweep and monumentality, with undertones of impending catastrophe.

This disc offers considerably larger extracts from the score than the old ten-inch MCM soundtrack LP, although several relatively brief but significant passages from the latter—such as "Roman Bacchanale" and "Siciliana Antica"—are omitted. Moreover, in spite of its technical crudities, the older disc, with its dry and harsh sonics, was sometimes more successful in registering the metallic ornateness and sheer barbaric splendor of such sections as the "Assyrian Dance" and the Roman triumphal march "Ave Caesar."

Nonetheless, the new recording offers a much richer, smoother, more symphonic, and less fragmentary impression of the score. With its lustrous playing and sumptuous sound, it should serve well for years to come. P.A.S.



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CHOPIN: Piano Works. Malcolm Frager, piano. [Robert Woods, prod.] TELARC DG 10040, \$14.95 (Soundstream digital recording; distributed by Audio-Technica).

Polonaise in A flat, Op. 53. Andante spianato and Grande polonaise brillante, Op. 22. Variations brillantes, on the rondo from Halevy's "Ludovic," Op. 12. Mazurkas (4), Op. 6. Tarantella in A flat, Op. 43. Contredanse in G flat.

Malcolm Frager has had quite a bit of experience with early pianos, but he is heard here—with a vengeance—on a modern concert grand. This digital recording captures the dynamic spectrum with striking, on occasion crushing, completeness. The treble emerges with a directness that dispels any haze, and the bass is so rich that it makes Frager's bold, direct performances of the two polonaises on Side 1 uncomfortably aggressive. Although I am not among that growing band of critics who oppose performances of Beethoven, Schubert, and Chopin on modern pianos, I must admit that a nine-foot grand in a smallish acoustical setting does seem a bit much.

The shorter works on Side 2 sound less overpowering—their textures, while glittery, are sparer and less weighted toward

the low end. Frager delivers the problematic Op. 43 Tarantella in a beautifully taut manner and characterizes the Op. 12 Halevy variations without inflating or reducing their scale. The four Op. 6 Mazurkas (Chopin's first published set) are set forth with flair, taste, and simplicity.

HARRIS GOLDSMITH

POP/JAZZ

BENNY GOODMAN: The King. [Benny Goodman and Glen Glancy, prod.] CENTURY CRDD 1150, \$13.95.

In his notes on this album, Herb Wong states that it is Benny Goodman's "first contemporary direct-to-disc record." That serves as a reminder that Goodman is one of a dwindling number of veterans who made records when direct-to-disc was the only way to do so. In fact, he just barely missed the pre-electrical era, having made his first records (electrically) in 1926, when some studios were still making acoustical recordings. Since then, he has gone through every stage of recording technology—from 78 to 33 rpm, from mono to stereo (and now) to direct-to-disc. And, as "The King" demonstrates, Goodman's material has remained essentially the same. Every piece here but one, "Here's That Rainy Day," is from his pre-World War II repertory.

That does not mean that these renderings are simple refreshings. There are three numbers by an octet and solos by Cal Collins on guitar, Buddy Tate on tenor saxophone,

and Wayne Andre on trombone as well as several traditional quintet pieces. Through them all, Goodman maintains a rather light and feathery style with little evidence of the grainy, gummy touch that enlivened his early playing. This is the relaxed elder-statesman Goodman, who plays with seeming effortlessness even when he carries on a challenging unaccompanied duet with Collins on "Limehouse Blues."

Surprisingly little use is made of the full eight-man group. The horns at times can be heard muttering and moaning gently behind Goodman or Collins, and there are some solo spots (Jack Sheldon, trumpet, is the third horn). But it works as a full ensemble only twice: on the opening and closing of "Makin' Whoopee" (which sounds surprisingly uncertain), and in an exuberant, rocking finish to "Limehouse Blues."

The merits of the album, aside from the familiar talents of Goodman, lie almost entirely with Collins. In fact he is the primary beneficiary of the direct-to-disc process. His string sound is beautifully full and rounded on his solos, and his color and shading are never lost in the ensemble passages. He builds a lovely solo on "I've Got It Bad," stirs up Goodman on that "Limehouse" duet, provides several inviting introductions and interludes, and gives the rhythm section a fresh, lively sound.

JOHN S. WILSON

GREAT GUITARS: Straight Tracks. [Carl E. Jefferson, prod.] CONCORD CJD 1002, \$7.98.

One of the consequences of bringing three guitarists together with a rhythm section (in this case, bass and drums—no piano) can be a performance that becomes a string of solos. On "Straight Tracks," the surfeit of solos is heightened by the fact that all three artists—Charlie Byrd, Herb Ellis, and Barney Kessel, are single-string performers.

Furthermore, the dark sobriety of Ellis' and Kessel's playing—occasionally relieved by Byrd's simplicity and light, airy gambols—is intensified by the direct-to-disc process. The definition of their guitars (and of Joe Byrd's bass) is fuzzy and muffled, while Charlie Byrd's is clean and pure.

JOHN S. WILSON

LA 4: Just Friends. [Carl E. Jefferson, prod.] CONCORD CJD 1001, \$7.98.

The LA 4 might have been better billed as the LA 2 on this direct-to-disc recording. Laurindo Almeida's guitar, unaccompanied or with just Ray Brown's bass behind it, is beautifully recorded: rich, full, resonant, clean and precise, with none of the fingering rattle that is usually picked up by close miking. But Bud Shank on alto saxophone (drummer Jeff Hamilton is the unobtrusive fourth member) produces sounds that are breathy and furry, harsh and gritty, tight and shrill. His solos are bland and limited to an unattractive range (except when he gets into some bebop on "Just Friends," the title song). And it's all mercilessly emphasized by the recording process.

JOHN S. WILSON

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Backbeat



Joe Bonsall, Duane Allen, Bill Golden, Richard Sterban

The Oak Ridge Boys Go Secular

By Todd Everett

There are differences between singing gospel music, which the Oak Ridge Boys used to do for a living, and singing country music, which they do now for an even better living. "In gospel music," explains the Oaks' Bill Golden, "you're usually working with very little background instrumentation. The singers compensate for the relatively thin sound by holding out phrases longer, and they tend to get overdramatic." And, of course, there's the subject matter.

The Oaks' experience in gospel music goes back a good three decades. What they're doing now, and have been doing on their last two albums, still sounds like what you might hear in a tent show between sermons and the collection. But some audiences tend to think of them as religious men gone secular: selling, as it were, out.

That presumption is open to challenge, both historically and in the Boys' own minds. What cannot be

challenged is that the quartet is one of the hottest acts in country music today and stands a good chance of reaching an even wider audience: one that will (if things work out as planned) have people talking about them in the same context as such pop harmonizers as the Beach Boys and (pause, gasp!) the Bee Gees. Or at least the Four Seasons. In addition to fifteen Dove awards and four Grammys for their work in the gospel area, in 1978 they were (in *Billboard's* generally reliable estimation) a top singles and albums country group, the country vocal group of the year, and the ninth best-selling country albums act. They were also named '78's Vocal Group of the Year by the Country Music Association. Yet just one and a half years earlier—prior to signing with ABC—they were strangers to the secular charts.

The original Oak Ridge Quartet, which this group is not, began as the Country Cut-Ups in Knoxville, Tennessee, during World War II. On weekends they played their basically (though not exclusively) gospel fare at the nearby atomic energy plant in Oak Ridge. They disbanded following the war and came together again ten years later with the new name. Baritone Bill Golden heard them and, duly impressed, became the first of the current lineup to join. As older singers left for one reason or another, Duane Allen, from Taylortown, Texas, moved over from a Knoxville group called the Prophets, followed two years later by bass Richard Sterban. Sterban, from New Jersey, had been working with the Stamps, who backed Elvis Presley for several years. Tenor Joe Bonsall arrived in 1971 with credits that included a stint as a regular on Dick Clark's *American Bandstand*, dancing the stroll, calypso, popeye, and whatever else was in vogue at the time.

Between 1971 and 1976, the Oak Ridge Boys recorded for Columbia, Warner Bros., United Artists, and Heartwarming—a strictly gospel label. Surprisingly, they sold the most albums on Heartwarming, which was distributed through highly specialized outlets and the concessions set up at revues they played. "We were selling a quarter of a million albums that way," says Sterban. "The politics at those shows was really strong. You'd take less salary for a performance than you might otherwise if you could bargain to get your albums and eight-tracks set up in a prominent position in the lobby. There was a lot of jockeying for the best location."

Nowadays, the only competition that the Oak Ridge Boys have among vocal groups is the Statler Brothers—a quartet of great talent who (again in *Billboard's* figures) sold *more* singles and albums than the Oaks in 1978. In fact last January the Oaks were on Dick Clark's *American Music Awards* presenting an award to Kenny Rogers for Best Country Vocalist and losing one to the Statlers (who weren't there). Still, the Statlers have been somewhat instrumental in the Oaks' recent successes, if only by default. The Oaks' experience with Paul Simon serves as a case in point.

"[Paul] was producing Maggie and Terre Roche," recalls Golden, "and was looking for some background singers. He asked around, trying to find the best gospel quartet that he could. Someone suggested one—I won't say which—and he played some of their records and decided that they were terrible. Then someone else suggested us. We sat with him for a couple of hours, singing gospel songs, and then he decided to use us." The song was *If You Emptied Out All of Your Pockets You Could Not Make the Change*, from the Roche sisters' fine but overlooked "Seductive Reasoning" on Columbia.

"Later, we asked Paul to write something for us. We'd already recorded *Love Me like a Rock*, before we even met him. That didn't hurt. But when he finally *did* write a song for us he decided to keep it for himself. But he used us as background vocalists"—on *Slip, Slidin' Away*, for which they received a gold record.

At this writing, the Oaks are in the process of recording their own album—the third of their country renaissance—scheduled for release this month. The morning following the ill-fated awards, they assembled at Nashville's Woodland Studios for vocal overdubs on four songs. Three of the Boys were still wiping the sleep out of their eyes: They'd been up late the night before, watching Vanderbilt's basketball team upset league-leading Alabama by two points, with two minutes remaining in overtime. The fourth Oak chastised them for not calling and waking him up at home to see the game. The Oak Ridge Boys are full-time sports fans: Bonsall was wearing a Phillies baseball shirt (Philadelphia is his hometown). "Maybe," someone mused, "if we sing the National Anthem at a game, they'll give us warmup jackets." (After their two-day stay in Nashville they were headed for MIDEM—a music industry convention in France. While others look forward to this annual spree on the Côte d'Azur, the Oaks were slightly peeved: "Do you realize that we'll be in France for the Super Bowl?")

The first number they worked on was Rafe Van Hoy's *Sail Away*. A relatively young Nashville writer, Van Hoy includes among his successes the current Oaks hit, *Cryin' Again*. As they did for the rest of the day, the singers referred to typed, Xeroxed lyric sheets provided by the song's publisher. There was no notated music—not even chord-change indications.

"They're singers," explained producer Ron Chancey, "so what they do is sing. The instrumental arrangements are worked out by the band and myself for the most part. Then the boys take tapes of the instrumental tracks home with them and work out their own parts."

There may be as many as four solo voices on a less than three-minute Oaks song, with Sterban's bass rumbling, Bonsall's tenor wailing, and Golden and Allen each raising his own shouts of melodic joy. In all, the exultation and constantly changing textures are pretty damned irresistible.



The Oaks onstage with Garland Craft at the piano—"audiences can't sit still"

The basic band arrangements are taken from the songwriters' demonstration tapes, reworked for more of an Oak Ridge Boys flavor. That consists of a relatively full instrumental backing, with a busy-sounding drummer, occasionally screaming electric guitars, and vocal parts that are sometimes doubled to sound like a fuller chorus. The Oaks' four-member touring band is as much a rock & roll outfit as it is country, with leader-pianist Garland Craft a bizarrely caped figure who could pass for Wolfman Jack at a respectable distance. Ironically, they won last year's Country Music Association award for Best Instrumental Group, despite the fact that they don't play on the Oaks' records—the usual Nashville session crew does—and the probability that the large portion of CMA's voting membership has probably never heard them.

The singers had already laid down the scratch vocals (rough takes used solely to guide the instrumentalists) and were ready with their polished parts. They work until everything sounds "right," but not "perfect." As Allen put it, "You don't want it *too* tight; it won't sound real." There are exceptions to this general procedure: *Y'All Come Back Saloon*, one of their first records for ABC, was done live, with the vocals and instrumentals recorded simultaneously. It was also their first major hit, and about the most obvious indicator one could ask for of their desire to move out of religious music. "We figured," says Sterban, "that a song about a saloon would pretty well indicate that we were moving out of the churches."

Actually, they'd been trying to go secular for a while, despite their huge gospel successes. At one point they enlisted the services of manager Larry Goldblatt, one of the founders of the American Song

Festival and one-time manager for Blood, Sweat & Tears. The association brought some new bookings, but not a whole lot of interest. And then the Oak Ridge Boys met Jim Halsey.

Though Halsey is one of the leading figures in country music, stories about him are more likely to appear in financial publications than in fanzines. His clients include Tammy Wynette, Freddy Fender, Don Williams, Mel Tillis, and Roy Clark, who is reputed to be country music's highest-paid performer.

Besides the pressure that he is able to exert in some circumstances, two of Halsey's strongest attributes are his good ear for an act of potentially wide appeal and a staff with the ability to book television dates for those acts. So when he signed the Oaks, they were all but assured of exposure—working tours, clubs, and Las Vegas showrooms with established Halsey acts, as well as appearances on TV shows hosted by Mike Douglas, Dinah Shore, and the like. All that remained was for the Oaks to come up with something worth watching.

That they did—partly on their own and partly with the help of Halsey's on-staff tailor, Harvey Kranz. (You think Roy Clark dreams up those outfits himself?) Each of the four wears a different stage costume, with such un-gospel-like accouterments as open-at-the-collar shirts, scarves, hats, and whatever else feels comfortable and looks flashy. Golden, whose outfit and beard cause him to resemble somewhat a forty-year-old Barry Gibb, has even led some people to label the Oaks "the Bee Gees of country music."

They were also already extremely effective live performers when Halsey found them. In fact that was what persuaded Chancey and ABC to sign them.

"Halsey has several acts on the label," says Chancey, "and it seemed to him to be a logical place for the Oaks. My reaction was that they are a gospel group, and that neither I nor the label had any use for an act that—by the very nature of the music they sing—wouldn't get any airplay.

"But when I saw them perform, I was converted immediately. Their show is fantastic. They're fine singers, great-looking, and move around a lot on stage. Audiences can't sit still."

As Chancey sees it, his main chore is to make sure that record buyers have a similar reaction to the group on disc. "When I audition material, I look for a chorus that will take their harmonies well and for an overall sing-along feel. The song should work onstage and allow their energy to be projected into it."

The sessions at Woodland provided ample evidence of Chancey's ability to find the right material. In addition to the Van Hoy tune, they recorded a Sonny Throckmorton ballad—*There Must Be Something About Me that She Likes*—and *I Have Found Somebody to Love*, an insistently pulsating rhythm number by Buzz Cason and Steve Gibson. (Cason, long on the Nashville scene, is currently a leading commercial jingle writer and singer.) Most unlikely,

most difficult to record, yet still sounding like those tent shows was *My Radio Sure Sounds Good to Me* by Larry Graham of Graham Central Station. It's a sing-along for sure, but it's doubtful that audiences will sense the long day's work laying down the complex vocal parts. One is reminded that, though Graham is a black r&b singer from Oakland, California, his own church background is as strong and as insurmountable as that of the Oaks.

For despite the flashy clothing, songs aimed at a wider audience, and bookings that pay up to \$20,000 for a single performance, the Oak Ridge Boys remain basically true to their roots. "It's true," Golden confesses. "We can't get away from gospel. We've been singing it too long." This, just after Bonsall had finished relating an obscure Biblical tale involving Noah and his sons, commenting, "There's enough sex and violence in the Bible for anybody. Look at the Book of Kings. What those guys pulled on each other makes the Mafia look like a bunch of sharecroppers."

What about the old Oak-Ridge Boys? Do they approve of what the new Oaks are doing? "Everybody says that they're proud," Golden pauses. "Of course, if we'd taken this direction and *not* been successful, it might have been another story." ●

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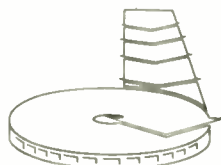
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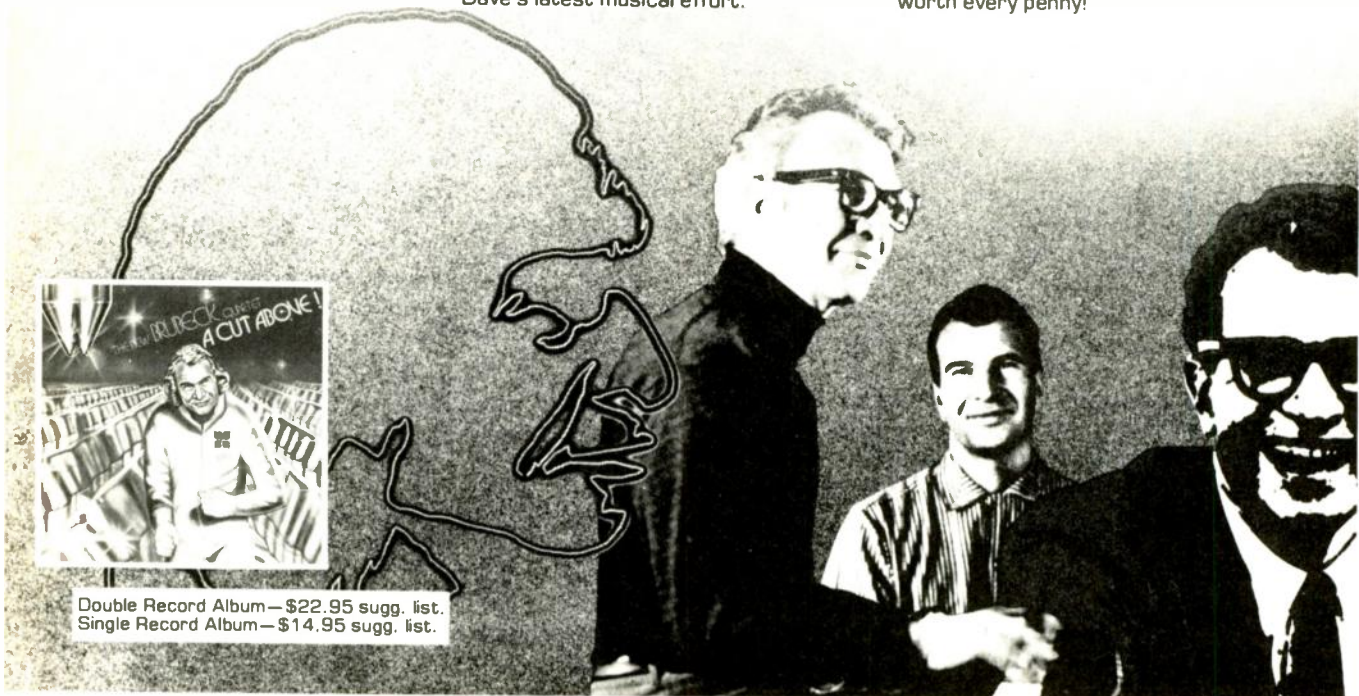
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Music Publishing in the Seventies: The Truth Hurts

by Bruce Pollock

Tin Pan Alley. The name evokes countless celluloid images from musicals that immortalized its greats—Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Rodgers & Hart. But the greats wouldn't have gotten there were it not for their respective publishers: Waterson, Berlin & Snyder; Harms; and Chappell. For in those days (back in the '20s through the '40s), says Rick Smith of April/Blackwood music, "the publisher had a strong controlling role in the music that was heard and enjoyed by the American public. Songwriters were out peddling their wares trying valiantly to get a publisher interested, because he was the guy who went to the bands—Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Benny Goodman—and got the stuff played on the radio, or in concerts." Keep in mind that at the time records were still a relatively rare commodity.

Even into the Fifties, when the record industry began the ascent to its current multibillion-dollar status, the publisher remained the hit-maker—the nucleus around which the entire musical world spun. Singers, producers, and a&r men filled the waiting rooms of Don Kirshner's Aldon Music, Leiber & Stoller's Hudson Bay Music, and other offices in Manhattan's famed Brill Building. There they waited for the latest from writers like Carole King & Gerry Goffin,

Bruce Pollock is the author of Popular Songwriting 1955-1975; Me, Minsky, & Max; and The Face of Rock & Roll.

Doc Pomus & Mort Shuman, Neil Sedaka & Howie Greenfield. Those were the days when singers did not write songs and songwriters did not sing; each developed his crafts distinct from the particular pressures of the other. Singers signed with record companies, whose a&r departments were responsible for matching them with the proper material. Writers signed with publishing companies, under whose auspices they toiled (mostly in teams) in small cubicles, turning out such three-minute gems of teenage passion and torment as *Will You Love Me Tomorrow*, *I Love How You Love Me*, and *Da Doo Ron Ron*. And if they were lucky, publishers could expect as many as a hundred cover recordings of their original copyrights by the likes of Johnny Mathis, Andy Williams, and Connie Francis.

But change was only as far away as Greenwich Village, where Bob Dylan was sowing the seeds of what was to become the "singer/songwriter" phenomenon. Self-contained groups like the Beach Boys were catching on as well—bands that not only wrote their own songs, but produced and arranged their own records. These two entities—the singer/songwriter and the self-contained group, gradually nudged the publisher off his pristine and historic perch as main man. The song—i.e., his product—was no longer the thing. The artist was the thing, and the term "song" came to connote whatever the artist wrote for his records. His material, based on his own experience, was often complex

in lyric, odd in meter, and extremely personal. For the most part, only its creator could interpret it effectively. (How many Joni Mitchell covers have you heard lately?) Bands too strived to create unique brands of rock & roll, and by the late Sixties, the music publisher's roles as discoverer of hit songs, developer of enduring talent, and manipulator of the public's taste and trends were almost totally supplanted by the record company.

In a way, it's easy to understand how this happened as quickly as it did. The elimination of the middleman/publisher as a song source was logistically

The singer/songwriter . . . gradually nudged the publisher off his historic perch as main man.

easier for record companies and producers and more attractive economically for the artist—now he could collect royalties as an artist, as a writer, and, if he formed his own publishing company, as a publisher. Many artists use large, established publishers to collect that writer royalty for them and to attempt to get other singers to record their songs. For his administrative and promotional services, the publisher can earn up to 50% of a song's income. (The total publishing—or mechanical—royalty is 2¾ cents per song. The writer's share is usually half of that.) But, whereas in the Tin Pan Alley days singers and producers couldn't wait to get the publisher's next offering, nowadays publishers can't wait to get the rights to the output of the next Cheap Trick, Yes, or Foreigner—"not necessarily because the groups are writing coverable songs," says Smith. "The advent of rock & roll, in essence, has made a lot of new material not particularly coverable, because it gets so closely identified with an act. But you can still earn money on the original from the acts' record sales."

And even when publishers do get those rights, they often don't get their full share. "It's rare when you can get 100 per cent of a copyright," Smith says. Because when a publisher does administer the self-contained act's material, that act comes to the negotiating table equipped with a recording contract, a team of lawyers, and all the clout it needs to get what it wants.

The implications of this tail-wags-dog state of affairs reach far beyond the publisher's reduced influence and/or his staff writer's loss of a job. As Marv Goodman of ATV music puts it, "The songs are suffering," and particularly rock & roll songs. "If a group is in a recording situation, they don't have to worry about polishing every song. If the lyrics to it don't come out in time, it's okay, because it's going to get released, and if it doesn't get played on the radio, as a single, that's okay too—they'll collect royalties from its

being on the album. So you get filler—things the band can slough over. There is the problem of scansion, the lack of rhyme—things that never would have passed with a professional."

And even if that group is smart enough to look for outside material, they might not find it in a publisher's recent stash. "For a long while," continues Goodman, "anybody who wrote rock & roll was thrown out of the publisher's office because there was no market for it. You either wrote middle-of-the-road, or you went hungry. So now there are no writers of good rock & roll, and the vacuum is becoming readily visible. A lot of rock bands with one hit single can't follow it up. They look for material, and all they get from publishers are either album tracks that everybody knows, or things that are three, four, or five years old.

"It reached a point where, let's say, seven-eighths of the moneymakers on the chart were artist/writers or writers who became artists. What this did was to create a situation where publishers could no longer sustain a staff of professional writers who were not artists, because there were no outlets for their material."

And this is still the case. If you watch the charts, you'll notice that, in any given week, 75 to 80 of the Top 100 Singles were written either by the artist or his producer. "You may have the same number of songs being written in any particular year," says Rick Smith, "but you have fewer places to get those songs recorded. I'll go to my friends at CBS Records [CBS owns April/Blackwood] and say, 'Who do you have who's looking for material?' From their roster of over 300 artists, they may be able to come up with, in a three-month period, ten names."

This helps explain the tendency of late for writers to bypass publishers entirely. For instance, if a writer wants a slot on Barry Manilow's next album, he'll go directly to the producer. After all, money talks, and if he can offer the publisher's share to the producer, he may have some added leverage. "There is a general lack of confidence in publishing executives," concedes Goodman, but for reasons different from those that Smith would probably give. "The reason the writers

"The professionally trained songwriter is a vanishing breed."

are not coming around," says Goodman, "is that the publishing companies have not been guiding them. How do you learn to write great songs if you don't have somebody who knows what to tell you?"

The economics of the situation, however, make it well nigh impossible for most publishers to maintain and train a staff of writers. "The professionally trained songwriter is a vanishing breed," says Goodman.

"It's ten times easier to work a Billy Joel catalog than to work a brand-new staff songwriter," agrees



Oscar Hammerstein & Richard Rodgers circa 1942—prime representatives of the golden era of music publishing and popular songwriting



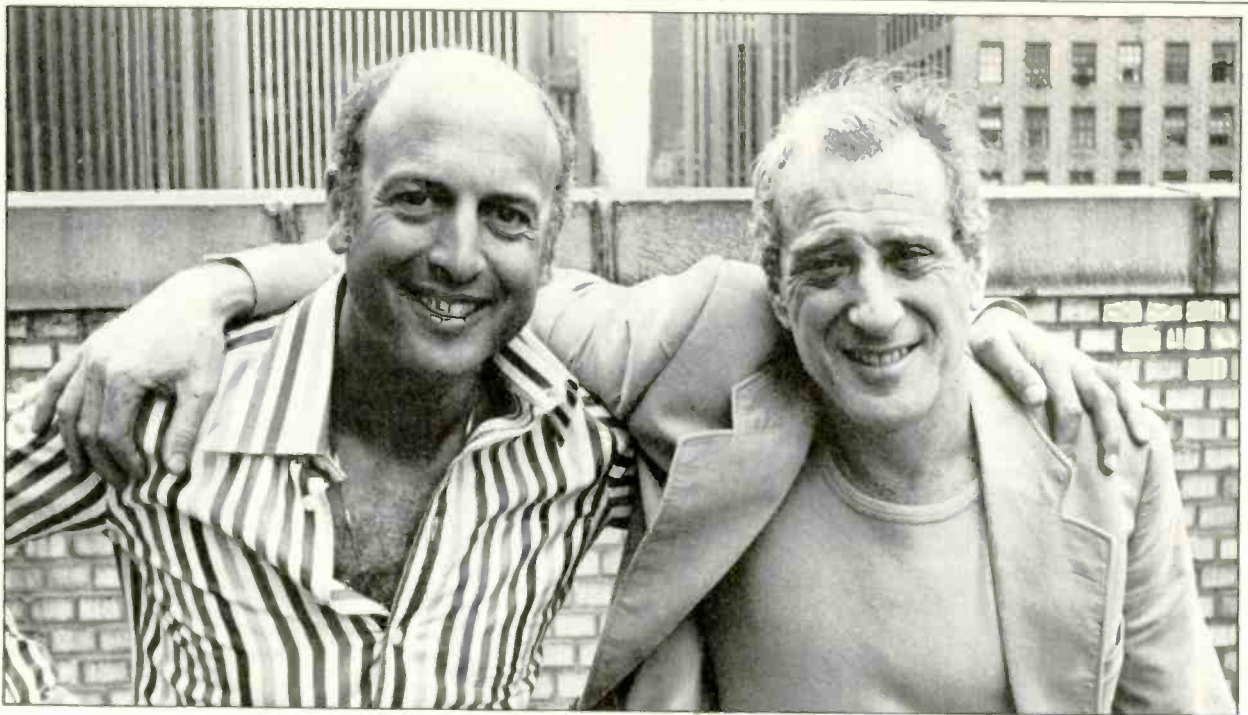
Bobby Darin and Don Kirshner circa 1963



Kirshner with Carole King and Gerry Goffin circa 1965



Neil Sedaka, Carole Bayer Sager, and Karla Bonoff: three writers-turned-singers



Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller—a collaboration that's still working



April/Blackwood's Rick Smith



Chappell's Irwin Robinson



Screen Gems' Lester Sill

Smith. "Yet we still sign them." That makes April/Blackwood an exception to the rule.

If publishers can't place new material and aren't fostering new writers, what *are* they doing, aside from peddling their catalogs of musty gems? Irwin Robinson of Chappell says, "Either you're generating mechanical income from getting cover records, or you're finding the act who's going to go out and sing its own songs." "Finding the act"—i.e., talent scouting—is one of the publisher's new methods of earning a living. Smith calls it "creative investment." This can mean signing an act, producing a master, and finding a record company to distribute that master. This makes the publisher eligible for both the publishing *and* the producer royalties. Or it can mean signing a writer who can sing. First the publisher will work the writer's songs, just as he did in the old days. Then, if one of

them is recorded and becomes a hit, both the writer and the publisher are in a good position to negotiate a recording contract—the songs are worth more, and so is the artist. Carole King is one of the earliest examples of this, as are Paul Williams, Randy Newman, Harry Nilsson, Neil Sedaka, and Mac Davis. More recent successful writers-turned-singers include Carole Bayer Sager, Karla Bonoff, and Bruce Roberts. "In many cases," says Robinson, "we had writers who started out as pure writers and who expanded into the recording area because, as the number of covers slowed up, they said to themselves, I have to do something to make up for this emptiness."

And how are publishers surviving and even, according to reports in the trades, thriving? Well, there is still money to be made from Broadway and the Nashville scene. (Many country singers do not write their

own material.) But, ironically, by far the greatest source of revenue comes from the very singer/songwriters and self-contained acts that were so instrumental in the publisher's precipitous decline. The reason is simple: Record sales in 1962 were estimated at \$687 million; now they're up to \$3.5 billion. So even though many of the publishing royalties are going straight to the artists and producers, and even though the percentage share of those that do accrue to publishers is smaller, the sheer number of units sold keeps their heads well above water. Robinson notes: "Publishers by and large still rely on mechanical and

"When you talk about getting a record, you're talking about making a master. Record companies have no desire to invest in the potential of a demo."

performance income as their two largest sources." And Lester Sill of Screen Gems says, "Publishers prosper because of their enormous catalogs." Just as it's easier for a singer/songwriter to get other people to sing his songs once he himself has recorded them, it's child's play for a publisher to run with his collection of blasts from the past. The theory is that a proven hit will prove itself again, while the unknown newie, never before recorded, is just too chancy.

But what about the newer publishers, ones that don't have enormous catalogs and aren't—as most are—owned by record labels? From his enclave high atop the Brill Building, Freddy Bienstock of Hudson Bay says: "I think to start from scratch today as a publisher is virtually impossible, unless you acquire a catalog or have a tie-in with an artist or record company. It was possible in the heyday to open a little office and listen to a songwriter, like the song, and take it to a&r men, but those days are gone."

"Big publishers aren't hurting at all," agrees Sill. "It's the small publisher who is getting hurt."

Don Kirshner, whose Aldon Music staffed Goffin & King, Mann & Weil, and Sedaka & Greenfield, also bemoans the current state of affairs: "Today the independent publisher is almost extinct. Economically, when I started we had a better chance. These days, unless you're established, the costs are prohibitive." Included in such costs is the escalating elaborateness of the publisher's demo. "A Bobby Darin used to do a demo for us on piano, and Carole King would do her high harmonies, so the demo would cost maybe \$60. Today, studio costs alone are \$150 an hour. So who can afford it? Maybe the talent will come along, but

the economics of the business really prevent it."

Yet, according to Leonard Feist, president of the National Music Publishers Association, a new generation of independents is out there, ready and willing to turn things around. Al Corwin of Sudden Rush is one. Founded three years ago, the company has had only one big hit to date with a tune recorded by the Imperials (Little Anthony's old group). It went to the Top 10 in England and the Top 30 on the r&b chart here. "There are two arguments," Corwin says. "One is that the great song will come through. The other is that it's all political. I think political is where it's at." He may be a newcomer, but it sounds like he's learning fast. "Most people in the industry either don't recognize or ignore the fact that there is a clique—an intelligentsia that knows what's going on and who is pushing the buttons. The closer you are to them, the faster and better chance you have of something happening."

"When you talk about getting a record, you're talking about making a master. [Record] companies have no desire to invest in the potential of a demo. On some occasions I've felt that, because we had a demo that was almost a master, the producers thought it was good and ran with it."

This may well be another reason that publishers are getting into the producer act. After all, if a song's demo has to be "almost a master" for a producer or a&r man to take it, the publisher may as well go just one step further and produce the final master himself. Corwin feels that, in today's market, this is more the rule; the exception is placing an individual song with an outside artist.

It all seems kind of sad in a way: The independent struggles to gain the contacts who "push the buttons," but, from a *new*-business standpoint, the established houses with the contacts are really no better off as they struggle to place the fresh and finely crafted work of their few remaining professional songwriters. Of course publishers—and the trade papers—will tell you that things couldn't be better. As they hastily recut all their country classics for the discotheque, they want you to know they've ridden out the crisis of self-containment and have, in fact, evolved to a higher form. The golden days have returned. Soon, they assure you, it will become fashionable again for people not to write their own songs. For pure stylists with great voices to be signed by record companies in significant numbers—new Sinatras, a new Ella Fitzgerald. For entire albums to be filled with the careful gems of writers who do not perform. For those albums to go gold, then platinum, then zinc. For the 80:20 ratio of records on the charts to flip-flop in the direction of the outside song. For standards to emerge from the rock & roll generation, songs capable of sustaining any number of meaningful interpretations. In short, for the music publisher to regain his status at the top of the hill. When that day comes, I'd like to be there to write the liner notes. ●

Input Output

Instruments and Accessories

AKG C-33 Stereo Condenser Microphone System. To anyone who has done classical recording and has been exposed to stereo microphones, AKG is no stranger. Doing remotes over the last seven years, I have used everything from a pair of Electro-Voice RE-10s to a complicated array of dynamics, condenser, and ribbon models, all connected to a 24-input board. But my preferred way to record still is with two microphones or with a single stereo mike. My personal favorite has been the AKG C-24, and its mono brother, the C-12, has been a permanent part of my studio equipment for a long time. I have access to a half-dozen of these beauties, whose owner counts them among his prized possessions.

The C-12 and C-24 are tubed-preamp mikes, with a warmth and crystal clarity that is really hard to find elsewhere. It will be no surprise, then, that when AKG announced discontinuation of the C-24 in favor of an FET-preamp model (the C-422) many of us were not thrilled. But the new C-33, the subject at hand, turns out to be a pleasant product.

The C-33 is basically two of AKG's 450-series preamps and two CK-1 capsules mounted in a single housing. Or, more simply, an AKG C-451 (or 452) with a Siamese twin. The 451/452 has been in studios for quite a while—serving faithfully as a high-hat mike, acoustic-guitar mike, or general workhorse for condenser applications—as well as in concert halls, where it is used in M/S-style recording or for picking up ambience and rear channels for quad. The credentials of this mike are impeccable, either singly or paired in this new housing.

Offered—at a net price of \$725—as an “economical” approach to X/Y or coincident-pair recording, the C-33 is fixed in cardioid polar patterns. (The C-24 and C-422 can be changed to any of nine patterns.) While remote pattern selection can be very handy, the cardioid pair is useful for most applications, so the C-33 is a good basic tool. The lower capsule is fixed with respect to the main housing, and the upper capsule can be rotated up to 180 degrees. AKG has abandoned screw-on connectors in favor of an XLR-style five-pin connector be-

tween the mike and signal-splitter box (supplied) and standard XLR-3 connectors for the signal output to the mike lines. The C-33 can be phantom-powered with anything between 0 and 52 volts. The system includes a 66-ft. cable, a well-designed shock mount, and a windscreen, all attractively finished in what's called “satin black” chrome.

We tested the mike on sounds ranging from acoustic guitar to pop vocals, with stops in between for a Steinway grand piano and a disco drum kit (with an overhead stereo pickup). Like the mono version, it performed beautifully. The flexibility of the 180-degree rotation was very useful for the drum kit and the solo acoustic guitar, from which it captured an unusually realistic sound. Ordinarily two big condensers right in front of a guitarist would seem bulky, and the C-33 gets the same spacious effect without intimidating the musician with rampant technology. The piano was rendered with a beautifully open stereo sound, and an oscilloscope confirmed for the eye what the ear already knew: that the signal was “true” stereo.

The most critical test was the pop vocal. I used only the lower, fixed capsule and observed a sound slightly different from that of the AKG C-451. Being built from essentially the same components, both should sound alike. But to my ear, there was some difference, with the C-33 free of a certain harshness that's evident in the 451. While the 451 wouldn't be the first choice for a vocal mike in most cases, the C-33 works well for that purpose. This type of comment is, I realize, viewed by some engineers as nonsense, and because both mikes use the same parts, the point is hard to argue. But many others will agree that there are subtle differences between even two microphones of the same model, and that they become apparent in a head-to-head comparison.

In any event, the C-33 proved itself to me as an excellent instrument. If you're planning to do some location recording and have a good hall in which to record, I suggest you give it a try. In a studio with plenty of tracks to spare, try it on acoustic guitar or as an overall pickup for a string section. Whatever you do, you aren't likely to be disappointed. Just for the record, rated frequency response of the C-33 is 20 Hz to 20 kHz, and nominal impedance is 200 ohms, balanced.

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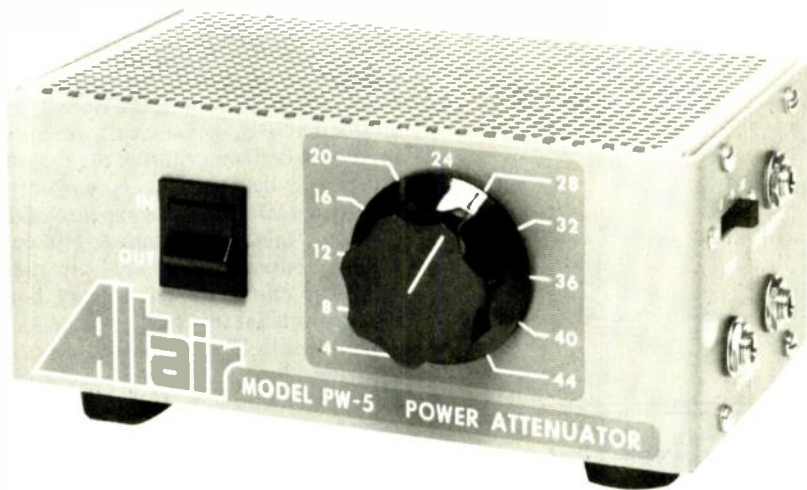
Altair Model PW-5 Power Attenuator. As a recording engineer, it's been my constant aim to provide faithful reproduction with a bare minimum of distortion. Even the name of this magazine implies the criterion of keeping distortion at arm's length. And here we are, examining (in part) the relative merits of one type of distortion over another. But we are aware (albeit sometimes reluctantly) that it has become a part of the electro-musical language of the Sixties and Seventies; thus we undertook to examine the Altair Power Attenuator.

The PW-5 is a basically simple idea, and an excellent one. By attenuating the signal sent to a speaker system, a musician can turn up his amplifier to produce overload distortion without producing additional loudness. The benefits are obvious to guitarists. The particularly desirable sound that is achieved by turning your amp all the way up is paid for, frequently, by a deafening loudness. The PW-5 puts an end to this. Not a distortion box, per se, and not the sort of MASTER VOLUME found on some amps, the attenuator is a volume pot that comes between the power amp section and the speakers.

A little background: A “distortion” box, usually foot-activated, overdrives its own electronic circuitry and feeds its distorted output to the input of your stage amp. Basically, you're stuck with that preprogrammed sound—which, characteristically, does not sound like true amp distortion. The master-volume concept uses the principle of overdriving the preamp section as the signal passes through it and delivering the distorted signal to the power amp section, which then passes it on to the speakers.

The PW-5 is different in that it permits overdriving the output stage of your amp—the power-amp section. Well, you may say, what does it matter whether it's the preamp or the power amp that is overdriven? The plain fact is that it sounds different, and guitarists have long preferred the sound of power-amp distortion. For heavy metal, or good old rock & roll, it's the distortion of choice among the discriminating. So there it is. The PW-5 lets you open the amp up all the way (in most cases) to get all the distortion you can handle but without blowing out your eardrums.

The output of your amp (what usually goes to the speakers) is connected to the input of the PW-5. The outputs of the at-



Altair Power Attenuator—distortion without deafening loudness

tenuator (two of them, wired in parallel) feed directly to the speakers via phone connections. A big rotary knob permits you to decrease the level to the speakers by up to 44 dB in 4-dB increments as you turn up the master volume on your amp. A switch at the side of the PW-5 reduces the output by an additional 15 or 30 dB, depending on the setting. There is also a LINE OUTPUT jack, which may be connected to a studio direct line, so the distortion can reach the console without speaker miking if you prefer. This also will minimize miking problems in stage applications: Why risk the feedback if you don't have to?

In addition, the PW-5 permits high-distortion, low-volume practice sessions—very handy for homes, apartments, or hotel rooms. And the manufacturers happily point out that it would be extremely useful in music stores, where—without it—folks are constantly testing equipment at usually high volume levels.

The in/out switch on the front panel should be marked in large letters: "Think for five seconds before operating this switch!" Let's say you're using the PW-5 to attenuate your output by 40 dB or so and an accidental or careless flick of the switch cuts out the box. The result could turn your brains to farmer cheese. There are a couple of other things to watch out for, too. Don't ever turn the amp on before all the connections in and out of the PW-5 are completed. (Operating a tube amp, for instance, with no load—no speaker attached or the PW-5 improperly connected—can lead to a smoking output transformer.) Also, connecting the outputs back into the amp will produce a nasty feedback loop, so don't. And make sure that the attenuator

is properly ventilated during use, since all that loudness that's not getting to your ears is being dissipated as heat through the walls of the perforated-metal housing.

Our guitar-accessory tester—who is incorrigibly idiosyncratic and wishes, for reasons of his own, to remain anonymous—lived with the PW-5 for more than a week and availed himself of the opportunity to compare it with a well-known distortion box. His subjective opinion is that it sounds better than the distortion box. He adds, however, that it's a tradeoff, since the PW-5 is larger and heavier and requires more attention to connections and precautions. For the record, it was tested using a Fender Pro-Reverb amp and a Randall RG-70. The Fender is a tube job, and the Randall a solid-state unit.

In any event, the PW-5 represents a new approach to an old and cumbersome problem: how to get "that sound" without "that loud." Altair has used quality components here. The sturdy-looking device weighs about 3½ pounds and measures approximately 4 by 8 by 5½ inches. It lists at \$65.

The frequency response into 600-ohm lines is within ±3 dB all the way out to 20 kHz, and the speaker outputs are rated at ±0.2 dB from DC to 20 kHz. The PW-5 is recommended for use with amps rated at up to 300 watts into 4-ohm loads or 150 watts into 8-ohm loads. Actual attenuation will vary slightly depending on source and load impedances, but with any ordinary amp/speaker system the actual values will be no more than 6 dB away from the markings on the PW-5, which shouldn't be a problem.

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FRED MILLER

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McGuinn, Clark & Hillman: The Gamble of Contemporaneity

by Sam Sutherland

McGuinn, Clark & Hillman. Ron & Howard Albert, producers. *Capitol SW 11910*, \$7.98. *Tape: ●●4XW 11910, ●●8XW 11910*, \$7.98.

Roger McGuinn, Gene Clark, and Chris Hillman have stressed that their new collaboration isn't intended as a resurrection of the Byrds, and it's easy to understand why, even without the evidence of their new Capitol album. No one wants to compete with a legend, even one of his own devising.

In retrospect, the Byrds cast a formidable shadow over rock's last fifteen years, despite a career that was both artistically and commercially more checkered than the band's lofty niche suggests. From the jangling folk/rock of the original quintet to later forays into psychedelia and country/rock, traces of its music have shown up on acts throughout the '70s from the Eagles to Tom Petty. The intervening years since 1973's disappointing reunion album (which led founder McGuinn to formally retire the band name) have only served to magnify the group's mythic proportions.

Such a legacy makes the trio's current wish to look forward, not back, admirable. But under the guidance of producers Ron and Howie Albert, their intent has become a gesture of renunciation. Any aural signatures of the original style—McGuinn's chiming electric twelve-string, Hillman's cascading bass lines, and the close, high harmonies of their voices—have been rendered face-

less by the burnished production finish, if not obscured altogether. Broad washes of strings, busy horn charts, clavinet funk, and Latin syncopations relentlessly argue that this is music of the moment, informed by the trends of 1979—not by the older and presumably outmoded fashions of a lost decade. For all the precision of the studio ensemble, for all the craftsmanship of the featured artists and their producers, contemporaneity is achieved at the expense of distinction. "McGuinn, Clark & Hillman" is more consistent than any of its members' solo efforts in recent years, but it also projects far less personality.

On his solo LPs, McGuinn has toyed with the lilting Caribbean accents that surface here, while Hillman has explored similarly Latin-styled contexts with the group Manassas and on his own Asylum solo works. In those projects, however, both artists' original country and folk influences remained tangible. Here, the common ground covered in past collaborations—particularly country music, the prime mover for both Clark and Hillman at the inception of their ca-



Hillman, McGuinn, Clark—not what we expected



Clockwise from the top: Hooker, Davis, Earheart, Cameron, Smith, McDade

reers—is avoided.

Were some new focal point offered, the shift might be justified. But these ten performances follow a strict democratic principle that only heightens the already tenuous nature of the new union. Lead vocalists and songwriting credits are carefully divided, with the net effect of three solo projects sharing the same piece of vinyl, despite the superficial coherence provided by the Alberts' modish settings.

More crucial is the perspective. With the exception of Clark's writing, which stretches to include an attractively restrained mysticism (*Feelin' Higher*) and a sadder-but-wiser view of rock decadence (*Backstage Pass*), the material is dominated by romantic archetypes. That approach seeks to jettison the loftier—and occasionally pretentious—social and ideological strains in all three men's past work: according to the members themselves, quoted in a prerelease interview with the *Los Angeles Times*' Robert Hillburn, the mood of the times makes such ruminations obsolete. Perhaps, but the mood of these songs is at times perilously close to the psychobabble of the Me Decade, which is hardly progress.

It would be unfair to overlook the professionalism at work here, or underestimate its potential for success. Ironically, a new generation of record buyers and disc jockeys (whose memories of the Byrds, the Flying Burrito Bros., the Dillard & Clark Expedition, and the threads that bind them are dim at best) could

easily reward this new trio. That raises the chilling prospect of comparisons with Firefall, Crosby, Stills & Nash, and other Byrds descendants. I prefer to hope that in the future a little more confidence in their own instincts and a lot less cosmetic surgery will restore clarity and depth to the work of McGuinn, Clark, and Hillman. ●

The Amazing Rhythm Aces. Jimmy Johnson, producer. *ABC AA 1123*, \$7.98. *Tape: ●● 51123AA, ●● 81123AA, \$7.98.*

After four albums of low-key, self-contained Southern rock, the Amazing Rhythm Aces have made a substantial shift in recorded style. They've done so through a single personnel change and the enlistment of an outside producer. Whereas former lead guitarist and producer/engineer Barry "Byrd" Burton emphasized the Aces' laconic, country-edged ensemble sound through consistently spare production, his successor attempts a more expansive (and presumably commercial) scale. Horn arrangements, a trio of female vocalists, and a second drummer are added at strategic points to buttress the band's grittier r&b elements, while the overall sonic finish burnishes away most of the rough edges that were a conscious feature of the early recordings.

These technical embellishments and the smoother, more conventional instrumental stylings of Burton's replacement—Duncan Cameron—inevitably ob-

scure some of the back-porch intimacy so central to the Aces' charm. But producer Jimmy Johnson at least grounds his revisions in the group's regional milieu. He himself has been a Muscle Shoals blues, rock, and soul session guitarist, and he understands the Aces' Memphis roots. Thus, while initially startling through its tougher, cleaner delivery, Al Green's *Love and Happiness* is less of a departure than it might seem. Russell Smith's clipped singing stretches comfortably to pay homage to Green's taut vocal mannerisms, and he likewise pulls off a fairly successful cover of Naomi Neville's *Lipstick Traces*. Here too, Johnson's editorial insertions—in this case, lively horn choruses—reflect the clear New Orleans flavor of the song's origin.

But the success of those two performances only emphasizes a more serious deficiency, one more likely to concern prior fans than the potentially wider group at which "The Amazing Rhythm Aces" is aimed. Songwriter Smith's balance of wry humor and unvarnished romanticism provided a focal point for past albums; the new set's high points are the Green and Neville remakes. Nowhere does Smith match the power of his earlier ballads like *Dancing the Night Away* or *Burning the Ballroom Down*. On *Rodrigo, Rita and Elaine* he does attempt an ambitious operatic miniature that is flavored with country and bluegrass instrumentation and dramatized through featured vocal roles by Tracy Nelson and Lisa Gilkyson.

Cameron's one songwriting contribution, *Homestead in My Heart*, suggests where this realigned group may be headed. His warm baritone, at once stronger yet more conventional than Smith's, is cushioned by pedal steel and electric guitar motifs and lush vocal harmonies, inviting comparison with the Eagles' country/rock ballad lexicon. Such models could bring the Aces more exposure than at any point since their wise and funny debut single, *Third Rate Romance*. But they also risk a loss of identity. s.s.

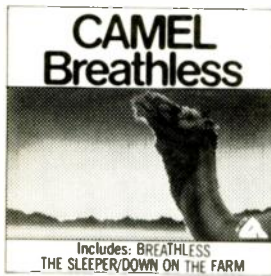
The Babys: Head First. Ron Nevison, producer. *Chrysalis CHR 1195*, \$7.98. *Tape: ●● CCH 1195, ●● 8CH 1195, \$7.98.*

The Babys have spent most of their four years together trying to decide whether to live up to their name and appeal to the Leif Garrett set or be true to their blues/rock influences and probably attract an older crowd. The departure of keyboard player Mike Corby—a holdout for the teenybopper approach—apparently has

Continued on page 121

New Acts

BY CRISPIN CIOE



Camel: Breathless. Camel & Mick Glossop, producers. *Arista AB 4206, \$7.98. Tape: ATC 4206, AT8 4206, \$7.98.*

Guitarist Andrew Latimer leads this re-formed English progressive rock sextet. There are some gorgeous instrumental passages here, especially on *Wing and a Prayer*, as well as

what must be the only rock tune ever written in a 19/8 time signature. High-level playing and bell-like production predominate, and some of it does, indeed, leave one breathless.

Desmond Child and Rouge. Richard Landis, producer. *Capitol ST 11908, \$7.98. Tape: 4XT 11908, 8XT 11908, \$7.98.*

Singer/writer Desmond Child and the trio Rouge (Diana Grasselli, Myriam Valle, and Maria Vidal) could be New York's biggest new act since Kiss. The vocal group's sound is sophisticated rock/disco, but the lyrics and harmonies propel the genre far beyond its usual limitations. Child chronicles modern urban themes even more directly than Springsteen, and the three women, who alternate lead vocals, create absolutely soaring effects together.

The Fabulous Poodles: Mirror Stars. Muff Winwood, John Entwistle, Howard Kilgour, & the Fabulous Poodles, producers. *Epic JE 35666, \$7.98. Tape: JET 35666, JEA 35666, \$7.98.*

Acerbic British satire, this, with a pronounced backbeat, musically evocative of the Small Faces and early Who. Taking their initial cue perhaps from Zappa, the Poodles' satiric roots are nonetheless firmly ensconced in the Kinks, circa *Well-Respected Man*. If the band's playing and singing continue to evolve up to the level of their wit, the Fab Poos could make some noise.

Medusa. Skip Drinkwater, John Lee & Gerry Brown, producers. *Columbia JC 35357, \$7.98. Tape: JCT 35357, JCA 35357, \$7.98.*

What we have here are first-class jazz rock fusion vets in a sincere and successful effort to flat out rock & roll. Bassist John Lee and drummer Gerry Brown have been a stable

rhythm unit with such luminaries as Larry Coryell, and it's interesting to hear them lead their band through sheet-metal rock. In fact, a couple of these songs, especially *Soul Free*, indicate right where Jimi Hendrix might be today had he stuck around.

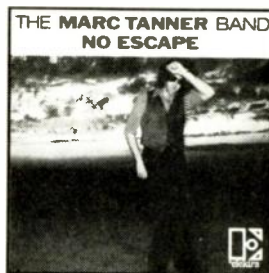


Andy Mendelson: Maybe the Good Guy's Gonna Win. Harry Maslin, producer. *Arista AB 4207, \$7.98. Tape: ATC 4207, AT8 4207, \$7.98.*

This singer/songwriter/pianist would appear to be Arista's belated answer to Elton John. Formerly Andy Pratt's keyboardist, Mendelson's promising debut reveals unabashed m.o.r. proclivities, a supple tenor voice (when it's not buried in overlush arrangements), and material that mixes imagery, styles, and riffs cleverly. Come to think of it, so does Elton's.

The Police: Outlandos d'Amour. The Police, producers. *A&M SP 4753, \$7.98. Tape: CS 4753, 8T 4753, \$7.98.*

Offhand, I'd say this is the most accomplished and provocative new group to ride in on the New Wave. Led by former Curved Air drummer Stewart Copeland, the trio blends fast-paced pop and rock anthems with some thoroughly lived-in Afro-reggae influences. And, wonder of wonders, they sing great, with lots of tough but true harmonies.



The Marc Tanner Band: No Escape. Nat Jeffrey & Glen Spreen, producers. *Elektra 6E 168, \$7.98. Tape: TC5 168, ET8 168, \$7.98.*

For the most part, the impeccably clean sound quality of Marc Tanner's first album keeps the rock out of the roll. His band comes on a little like the Doobie Brothers riding the old Grand Funk Railroad with Eddie Money taking tickets. But Tanner can definitely write, and I detect a potentially hot live show here.

Tonio K: Life in the Foodchain. Rob Fabroni, producer. *Epic JE 35545, \$7.98. Tape: JET 35545, JEA 35545, \$7.98.*

Californian Tonio K is a genuine rock & roll eccentric. Though he's a veteran of the Crickets (long after Buddy Holly's exit), his album is, if anything, closer to Dylan's "Highway 61" in feeling, with Earl Slick and Albert Lee outstanding on guitars. Tonio K seeks out the dark places of the heart, as in the vampirish *How Come I Can't See You in My Mirror?*, and it's all done with a dollop of humor and a truckload of raw power.

settled the image question, and Chrysalis Records proudly says it will stop pushing the band in teen mags to further emphasize its "legitimacy."

But the Babys have yet to show any evidence of having achieved that legitimacy through musical originality. Their third album, "Head First," is but another collection of tired Bad Company clichés, with strings, backup singers, and other diversions included in hopes of relieving the tedium. The group lacks a powerful instrumentalist to spark the proceedings and many of the songs just plod on and on.

Their biggest asset is bassist, vocalist, and major songwriter John Waite, who—since the release of this album—has abandoned his bass chores in favor of singing full-time. His voice is unfortunately close to Paul Rodgers', reinforcing the band's debt to Bad Co. He does pull off the world-weary bluesman's pose effectively on *Every Time I Think of You*, the album's first single and a song that resembles the Babys' Top 20 hit of last year, *Isn't It Time*.

Only when they get out of the blues/rock rut does anything interesting happen. *California*, which has Top 40 possibilities, is a pleasant, acoustic guitar-driven song that centers on the group's move from England to the West Coast. And the title track is a powerful, straight-ahead rocker with an engaging guitar hook. But the Babys need to vary their offerings more if they want to play in rock's big leagues. J.S.

Shirley Bassey: The Magic Is You. Nick DeCaro, producer. *United Artists UALA 926H, \$7.98. Tape: CA 926H, EA 926H, \$7.98.*

There is a problem with the kind of music that singers like Shirley Bassey purvey. This kind of "sophisticated" pop is but a highly glossed decadence of what used to be a pure, substantive writing style. Its practitioners, like the Romans of the Dark Ages, pull down the ruins of temples and build shacks in their place. The truly witty and adult popular art of such writers as Rodgers and Hart, the brilliant worldweariness of such interpreters as Peggy Lee singing *Black Coffee* and *Cigarettes*, are gone. In the place of wit is a banality too dull to be called cliché, just as the 1930s Manhattan nightclub has been replaced by the coarse, Vegasy surf 'n' turf supper club.

"The Magic Is You" is typical Dark Ages product. Three of Bassey's renditions manage to stand out. The Antonio Jobim bossa nova, *How Insensitive*, is a reminder that frothiness need not preclude grace. Her version of Neil Sedaka's *You Never Done It like That*, though



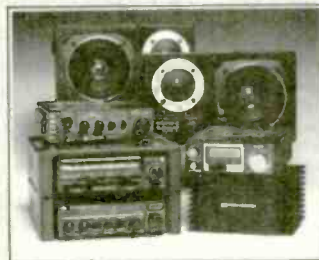
The Babys: still not ready for the Bigtime

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CIRCLE 8 ON PAGE 99



The Boomtown Rats: aficionados will prefer Side 2

risqué rather than sexy, comes over quite warm and earthy. Best of all, *Don't Cry for Me Argentina*, from the musical *Evita*, suggests that her true artistic milieu is the stage rather than tinsel showbiz. Aside from some moments of reasonably articulate self-pity in *This Is My Life*, the rest can be summed up by the fact that *Anyone Who Had a Heart*—that monument of infantile lyrics and vulgar melodic writing—is the most memorable track, if only by the dynamism of its awfulness.

It takes a Sarah Vaughan to breathe the illusion of musical life into this kind of material, and Bassey doesn't even try. All her genuine expertise is wasted on us because, as my twelve-year-old daughter bluntly put it, "She doesn't mean what she's singing." J.S.R.

The Boomtown Rats: A Tonic for the Troops. Robert John Lange, producer. *Columbia JC 35750, \$7.98. Tape: ●● JCT 35750, ● JCA 35750, \$7.98.*

Don't be deceived into thinking that "A Tonic for the Troops" is one album, despite the fact that its ten tracks occupy a single vinyl disc. Simply reverse the last cuts on each side. *Like Clockwork* and *Joey's on the Street Again*, and the true schizophrenia of the Boomtown Rats' second album will become apparent. Side 1 is mainstream, deft rock & roll with enough sax breaks and good-time choruses to please the Stones/Springsteen contingent. Side 2 is a relentless series of threats to the status quo, a worthy follow-up to the Rats' debut single, *Lookin' After No. 1*.

But the band doesn't suffer from this dichotomy. Rather, it appeals to both factions of rock and may even follow Elvis Costello in spanning the usually unbridgeable gap. Lead singer Bob

Geldof's vocals are wild and gutsy, yet he's a real audience charmer capable of sarcastic good humor—particularly on the perverse reggae tune, *Living in an Island*. Throughout the album, the Rats display an instrumental virtuosity not anticipated from the direct-approach New Wave school. The keyboard leads of Johnnie Fingers reinforce the twilight-zone uneasiness of *Like Clockwork*, and stunning guitar and saxophone work emphasize the life-force of *Mary of the 4th Form*.

Minus *Joey* and plus *Clockwork*, Side 2 comes closest to the real, in-person challenge posed by the Rats. After all, they earned their British reputation as New Wave superstars (a contradiction?) from blazing singles like *Number One, Mary*, and *She's So Modern*—not from flimsier tracks like *Me and Howard Hughes* and *(I Never Loved) Eva Braun*. Those ready to take a deep breath and plunge into the streetwise world of randy schoolgirls, self-preservation, and the admonition of *Don't Believe What You Read* will prefer the second side. For the Boomtown Rats are at their best when unrestrained. I.G.

Marvin Gaye: Here, My Dear. Marvin Gaye, producer. *Tamla T364 LP, \$13.98 (two discs). Tape: ●● C 364C1, ●● T364 TI, \$13.98.*

A two-record concept album about conjugal love, "Here, My Dear" is a fascinating failure, as flawed as it is ambitious. In some respects it seems almost designed to be off-putting. The front cover drawing portrays Marvin Gaye in Greco-Roman drag amidst columnar statuary; an inscription reads "love and marriage." On the back, the same scene has deteriorated to ruins that are labeled "pain and divorce." *Anna's Song*, an



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apparent reference to Gaye's ex-wife Anna Gordy Gaye, exhaustively recapitulates the ups and downs of the marriage. It is the centerpiece of an album whose original material alternates between open letter and interior monologue.

In the scope of its ambition and the lavishness of its production, "Here, My Dear" bears many resemblances to Gaye's 1971 masterpiece, "What's Goin' On," possibly the most eloquent evocation of social upheaval to come out of the Motown era. In that album, Gaye introduced a moody aural collage in which the brooding inner voices threatened to burst out of the production; the result was ominous, tense, exhilarating. "Here, My Dear" struts the same sort of echoy mélange, thick with strings, horns, and chorus. The atmosphere is even more ruminative, the rhythms lighter.

But when turned to soap opera, as opposed to social drama, these textures become repetitive, even pretentious. True, there are some lovely moments: *I Met a Little Girl*, an evocative, if overlong memory montage; *When Did You Stop Loving Me*, *When Did I Stop Loving You*, a recurrent melodic theme with Cuban percussion; and the light soul/disco



Marvin Gaye—a lavish autobiography

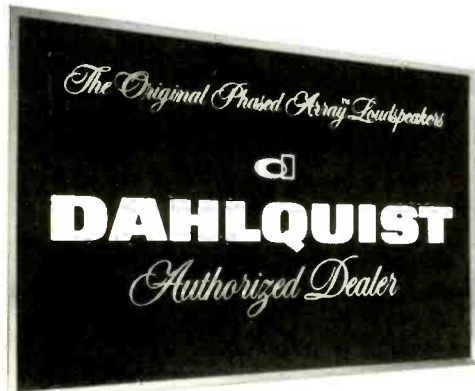
of *A Funky Space Reincarnation*. But the narrator too frequently adopts a conversational singing style that lacks dramatic punch, so the details of the marriage (the album covers the union from courtship through divorce settlement) become the stuff of soap opera: realism without art. Most serious of all, the material is not tuneful enough to sustain four sides—a difficulty compounded by the sound's laidback dynamic evenness. Had Gaye

edited all this into a single disc, it might have come together. S.H.

The Good Rats: Birth Comes to Us All. Stephan Galfas & John Jansen, producers. *Passport* PB 9830, \$7.98. *Tape*: ●● PBC 9830, ●● PB8 9830, \$7.98.

Long Island's Good Rats are just about the last band from whom one would expect a change of direction, and a pol-

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The Good Rats

ished one at that. Its personnel (local Italian) and orientation (blue-eyed soul) have remained virtually unchanged in the last decade, and lead singer Peppi Marchello has always been most comfortable in the role of an intense yet friendly maniac. So it comes as a shock to discover that the Rats' newest LP, "Birth Comes to Us All," was partially recorded in London at the Who-owned Rampart studio and coproduced by no less of a technical craftsman than John Jansen. It is a further surprise that they have attempted a concept album, exploring the frustrations of children and memories of old men.

Despite the fact that concept albums are well out of style, "Birth Comes to Us All" is more successful than not. Peppi's gut-churning vocals are held in perspective and the use of guest artists Larry Fast, Peter Wood, Richard Tee, and Manfred Mann complements his somewhat awkward lyrics with easy-on-the-ear, precise breaks. When on *City Liners* he laments the end of his teenage frivolity, his bravado recollections are neatly accompanied by the rhythmic coolness of Tee, guitarist John Tropea, and conga player Jimmy Maelin. Joe Zangrando's raucous saxophone perfectly supports the "get away with it" theme of the dangerously preachy *Juvenile Song*, lending conviction to Marchello's sarcasm.

"Birth Comes to Us All" will probably not make the Good Rats any more of a nationally acknowledged band than they are now. Too much of Peppi's authoring and delivery is Statement From On High rather than evocation, giving us little chance to contemplate his genuine insights. But given their acceptance of studio proficiency on this album, the Rats may at least take pride in their most skillfully recorded message to date. T.G.

David Grisman: Hot Dawg. David Grisman, producer. *Horizon SP 731, \$7.98.* Tape: ♦♦ CS 731, ♦♦ 8T 731, \$7.98.

Lead mandolin? Only bluegrass aficionados are likely to see the immediate logic, yet the instrument itself is a quiet titan, spanning works from Beethoven to Bill Monroe and playing an integral role in folk ensemble styles throughout Europe and the Americas. David Grisman, who turned from progressive folk/rock to more formal bluegrass projects (Old & in the Way and Muleskinner among

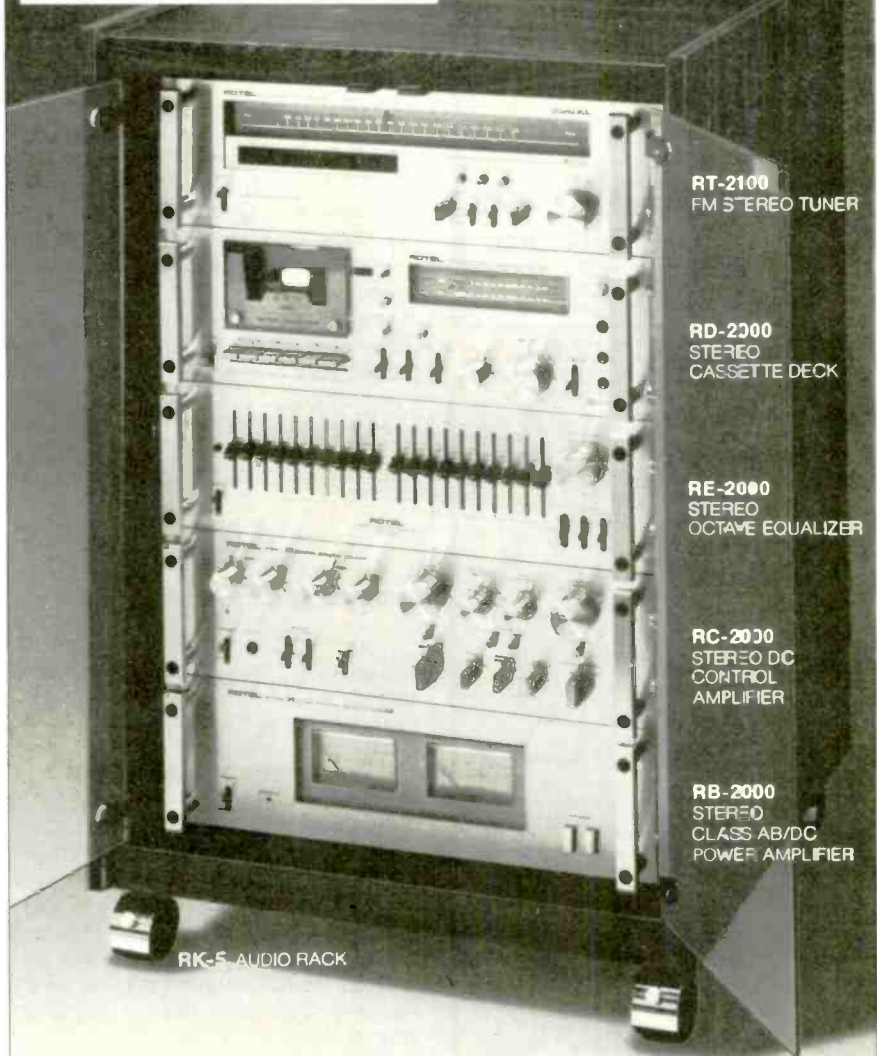
them) during the early '70s, has spent the past few years recasting his skill into an acoustic ensemble context. It is one that slips gracefully across generic boundaries to showcase not only his mandolin's subtle lyricism, but its central strength as a foil for its stringed sisters—guitar, double bass, and violin.

Although Grisman's new album (and first for Horizon) is being released under his name, its "star" is really his deceptively effortless quintet: guitarist Tony Rice, violinist Darol Anger, mandolinist Mike Marshall, and bassist Buell Neid-

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linger, who recorded "The David Grisman Quartet" for Grisman's Kaleidoscope label. The leader's arrangements are at least as prominent as his playing. Rather than simply set up his own solos, he weaves an elegant, ecumenical chamber music style that bridges swing, classical, and multiple ethnic and folk sources.

The measure of his success—as well as of his partners' skill and empathy—is the warmth and lack of self-consciousness that pervade these performances. What may seem a dilettante's folly on paper is timeless in sound, the tonal palette as familiar as the music is fresh and sophisticated. Grisman's self-effacing virtuosity is reflected by his fanciful tag—"Dawg"—for his style. That explains the record's title and evokes the informal, conversational ease with which these musicians interact.

Three songs see additional players, and among them Stéphane Grappelli shines brightest. Sitting in as Anger's replacement on two of the set's nine songs, the septuagenarian violinist finds one of the most natural performing contexts he could hope for. Grappelli's own triumphs with Django Reinhardt in the legendary Le Quintet de Hot Club are a major and apparent influence on Grisman's arranging style. As performed here, *Minor Swing* (a Grappelli-Reinhardt classic) is in itself sufficient justification for an already richly satisfying album. s.s.



Cobb—back in circulation



Amram—creative schizophrenia

JAZZ

David Amram: Triple Concerto. Max Wilcox, producer. *Flying Fish Records.* *GRO 751.* \$7.98.

David Amram is so doggedly enthusiastic about his love of music that it can be difficult to separate the man from his work. *Triple Concerto* is, in his own words, "a summing up of a lifetime spent where there are no more walls in music and where playing, singing, improvising, and conducting all flow back into composing." Hard to argue with that kind of sincerity—especially since it has such a ring of truth.

Amram is an inveterate jam-session habitué and has been a frequent participant in virtually every extracurricular gathering of musicians from Middle East oud players to uptown jazzmen. Unfortunately, despite his wide-ranging eclecticism, despite the late-night grooving and the multi-instrumental adeptness,

Triple Concerto doesn't sound much different from a "third stream" piece—the sort that was popular in the late Fifties and early Sixties. (The term, apparently invented by Gunther Schuller, describes pieces that blend the stream of jazz with the stream of classical music.)

As with so many of its' genre, *Concerto* suffers from creative schizophrenia. Amram juggles his four elements—woodwind quintet, brass quintet, jazz quintet, and orchestra—with great skill, and there is certainly no questioning his craft as an orchestrator. But too often the orchestra (the Rochester Philharmonic) seems either to be running through a catalog of contemporary composition techniques (a bit of Gershwin here, a trace of Schumann there, a sprinkling of Bernstein for seasoning) or attempting to play jazz phrases that it simply can't properly articulate. The brass and woodwind quintets are only marginally better, and the jazz quintet—most of whose music is

apparently notated—gets lost in the proceedings. Only baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams escapes the oppressive orchestral overlay to whip off an occasional fiery run. The others, including the fine alto saxophonist Jerry Dodgion, are locked in, either by the restrictions of Amram's composition or by an almost total lack of room in which to make a creative move.

Side 2 is Amram's *Elegy for Violin and Orchestra*, with Howard Weiss as soloist; ironically, it is the more interesting piece. The violin line, unquestionably classical in style and manner, is underpinned by some brilliantly conceived brass and string textures. It, far more than the *Triple Concerto*, tells us that Amram is a gifted composer, no matter whom he jams with. D.H.

Arnett Cobb: The Wild Man from Texas. Jacques Morgantini, supervisor. *Classic Jazz CJ 102*, \$7.98.

This record provides both a retrospective and a definitive contemporary view of Arnett Cobb. Until recently, the tenor saxophonist had been laid up in his hometown of Houston, Texas, recovering from an automobile accident in the mid-'50s in which both legs were broken. Under the circumstances, it was easier for him to play with local groups or whoever was passing through than to travel. But since 1973 he has been on the road again (on crutches), playing in New York and Europe.

"The Wild Man from Texas," recorded in France in 1976, brings him together with the late Milt Buckner. The two played together in the Lionel Hampton band in the '40s, when Cobb was earning his reputation as "the wild man of the tenor sax" by carrying on and extending Illinois Jacquet's extroverted style. He is no longer the wild man he once was, not even on the riff pieces that were his specialties, like *Dutch Kitchen Bounce*, *Smooth Sailing* (both of which he wrote), and *Flying Home No. 2*.

But he still has a Big Texas tone, a grainy, gutty quality at times, and an urgent way of jabbing and twisting phrases. And his approach to the ballads—*Where or When*, *The Nearness of You*, and *Ghost of a Chance*—is relaxed, thoughtful, and sufficiently inventive to disdain clichés.

Buckner's organ is kept in the background, but his light, dancing style on vibes sparks a swinging vitality that brings the spirit of Hampton to the performance. Cobb seems more content to lope along at moderately fast tempos and, summoning memories of Ben Webster, to brood gently and sensitively over the phrases of his ballads. J.S.W.

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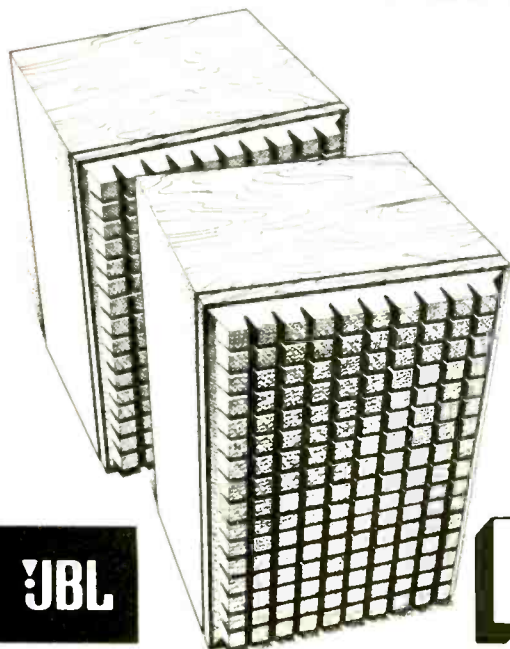
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Stan Getz: Another World. Stan Getz, producer. Columbia JG 35513. \$9.98 (two discs). Tape: ●●JGT 35513, ●●JGA 35513. \$9.98.

"Another World" is an excellent Stan Getz collection that shows off the tenor saxophonist's soaring lyrical power, romanticism, and adventurousness. Getz has also written the liner notes, and has done so with the same grace and humor that characterize his music. In addition to covering the obligatory background information on his musicians and the recording circumstances, he has made some thoughtful comments on electronic music, polls on musicians, and the ideal studio that he is building near his home outside New York. If all musicians wrote as clearly and perceptively, liner-note space could become a fascinating area for instruction and illumination. His essay is polished and well written and as lean and provocative as a Getz solo—I haven't the least doubt that he wrote it himself.

The two-disc set is also of special interest because, despite Getz's expressed reservations about electronic music, it includes his debut as an electronic saxist on the title tune. Initially discreet in his use of the Echoplex (or perhaps feeling



Getz—going electric

his way into it), he eventually takes on the jittery, swirling sound that lacks distinctive tonality and seems to be the common denominator of all electronic music. And, as is so frequently the case with electronic music, the tune does not swing. Furthermore, the electric keyboard solo of Andy Laverne—Getz's new pianist—fails to sustain the graceful propulsion that Getz and the rhythm section establish on *Sum Sum* (though Laverne's instruments do work in supportive roles).

Along with two standards, *Willow Weep for Me* and Mercer Ellington's
Continued on page 131

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Blue Serge, the program is made up of originals by Laverne and bassist Mike Richmond that reflect the group's travels in Israel and Scandinavia. In general, Getz, Laverne on acoustic piano, and Richmond maintain consistent and probing solo levels throughout. J.S.W.



Hassell—internationalism that works

Jon Hassell: *Earthquake Island*. Jon Hassell & Kevin Eggers, producers. *Tomato TOM 7019, \$7.98.*

Tomato refers to this record as "music from the global village." The phrase does have a nice ring to it—suggesting a provocative intersection of sounds and music from the world's many cultures. But often the idea doesn't work and results in a jazz saxophonist playing bebop licks over a Brazilian rhythm section, or African percussion and Indian ragas blending poorly with Western musicians who have no understanding of poly-rhythms or microtonal melody.

What, then, is one to think of an ensemble that includes a Memphis-born, avant-garde trained trumpeter (Jon Hassell), a Czech bassist (Miroslav Vitous), two Brazilian guitarists (Ricardo Silveira and Claudio Ferreira), an Indian tabla player (Badal Roy), and a black American singer (Clarice Taylor). Clearly, Hassell's band is as global village-y as one could possibly ask for. And, more ominously, it encompasses all the possible musical styles—Indian, African, Brazilian, and American—that have interacted so badly in the past.

I won't keep you in suspense any longer: Hassell has brought things together beautifully. And he has done so, I think, through a willingness to lean in

whatever creative direction seems to work best. Much of the music, for example, evolves in the shadow of Miles Davis, particularly the Miles of *Bitches' Brew* and *In a Silent Way*. Hassell's trumpet playing on *Sundown Dance* recalls the Davis-influenced sound of Chet Baker. But he moves beyond that style's jazz base with an almost hypnotic exploration of repetitive rhythms and two- and three-note melodic motifs.

In other pieces, like *Tribal Secret*, he attaches an avant-garde quality—a minimalist sound—to African and Indian rhythms. And, to his credit, Hassell is not intimidated either by disco music or by lyric melodies. In *Voodoo Wind* he punches out almost ten minutes of rhythms that would work very well indeed at your neighborhood dance palace, but he does not fall prey to the easy blues licks and r&b patterns that characterize so much jazz-oriented disco. Hassell simply lets the rhythms happen. Similarly, in the album's last piece, *Adios, Saturn*, he allows a lovely fragment of melody to fade in and fade out of our consciousness.

The key, I think, is the word "allows." Hassell's guiding hand is very subtle indeed. One constantly senses that the music is evolving of its own accord, that the musicians are doing what they do, that all these disparate elements actually do belong together. Global village music? Who can say. But it is good music, and worthy of your attention. D.H.

Michael Gregory Jackson: *Karmonic Suite*. Paul Bley & Carol Goss, producers. *Improvising Artists IA 37,38,57, \$7.98*

Guitarist Michael Gregory Jackson's work with various members of the New York avant-garde has always been provocative and suggestive of more to come. "Karmonic Suite" is the album we have been waiting for—the opportunity, finally to hear Jackson with the leisure time and the freedom to stretch out and show us what he has to say. It is far-ranging and—from the listener's point of view as well as the performer's—demanding. On three of the nine tracks Jackson plays solo guitar, both electric and acoustic. On another he plays a five-minute solo on "guatemalan marimba," and on another he plays bamboo flute and gongs.

The remaining tracks are duets with saxophonist Oliver Lake. Even here Jackson finds a range of musical dialect. On *Karmony (Love for Life)* he reads an original poem to Lake's alto saxophone accompaniment. On *We Have the Power*, he complements Lake's alto with electric guitar. *Spirit's* instrumentation is acoustic guitar and flute, and *Cooperative De-*

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velopment is a conversation between soprano sax and Jackson's drums and percussion. Jackson isn't kidding around here: He is good enough to play those instruments with anyone.

Understandably, I suppose, the Lake tracks lean toward the freely articulated, disjunct patterns of New York loft jazz. The even interaction on *Spirit* makes it the easiest-flowing track, but don't overlook *Power*, in which Jackson dredges sounds out of the guitar that would have done justice to Jimi Hendrix.

Best of all, however, are the solo guitar tracks. On them, Jackson suggests that he is aggressively—and successfully—exploring an extremely personal new language for the instrument. On acoustic guitar it involves a difficult, multifinger plucking technique that plays off one line against another. On electric guitar, he shows his understanding—as few jazz guitarists have—that the combination of amplifier and instrument make up an entirely new instrument. He is still exploring it, still finding sounds and textures that please him, but already his vocabulary is far more extensive than that of the obvious jazz fusion competitors who come to mind. D.H.

Seawind: Light the Light. Tommy Lipuma, producer. *A&M ST 734, \$7.98.*
Type: ●● CS 734, ●● 8T 734, \$7.98.

Seawind specializes in a laidback version of near-jazz fusion that I associate with California. Its music has various contemporary roots, the most obvious being the Brazilian funk/jazz favored by Flora Purim, Milton Nascimento, Azar Lawrence, and (on his own albums) Wayne Shorter. On "Light the Light," that influence is at its most obvious on Purim's *Free* with its Brazilian percussion and gutsy keyboards—Purim-Dudziak synthesized touches inclusive. Plangent and dreamy by turns, it has one of those on principal nonwhistleable melodies. The result, though unfocused, is agreeable and tightly played.

That same tightness pervades *Hold onto Love*, a midtempo ballad for dancing with a soaring guitar solo. *Light the Light* is a nice piano-and-rhythm number whose classic r&b riffs and fat-dripping baritone sax make for a fine easy strutter. Unfortunately, lead singer Pauline Wilson doesn't quite have the voice to match.

Morning Star moves from a Wayne Shorter-ish soprano sax intro through pretty, tasteful mid and uptempo sections with deftness and style. But it also exemplifies the major problem with "Light the Light," in that it is essentially derivative. That's okay in itself, but

Seawind has failed to digest its sources, touching too many bases too lightly and leaving too little a mark. In *Enchanted Dance*, for instance, there are quirky sections where voice-as-instrument dovetails nicely with the reeds. But since the bulk of the tune is a flugelhorn solo, the general effect is a little like ricotta cheese eaten off a spoon: What starts out seeming fresh ends up bland.

Seawind's lack of focus is at its most obvious in *Follow Your Road*, a slow ballad in the rhapsodic vein favored by many current r&b singers. The band performs it as if playing in their sleep. *Imagine* is one of those dippy middle-class soul duets with one foot in pop and no particular center. Including this kind of material with the jazz-oriented tracks—in an apparent strategy of "something for everybody"—only adds to the overall impression that Seawind hasn't yet started blowing where it listeth. J.S.R.

The George Shearing Trio: Windows. Hans Georg Brunner-Schwer, producer. *MPS 0068.200, \$7.98.*

Since the 1978 breakup of his quintet of thirty years, pianist George Shearing has been enjoying a new stylistic freedom. He has admitted that the lure of money might bring the group back together on special occasions, but as long as he continues to make records as enlivening as "Windows" he needn't be concerned. In the trio he leads here, he casts himself in the role of costar with Danish bassist Niels-Henning Orsted-Pedersen, whose big, burgeoning tone, amazingly fast fingering, and use of sliding and sprung notes provide an ideal balance to Shearing's light, jaunty, crisply precise playing. The third member of the group—guitarist Louis Stewart—plays a secondary, supportive role through most of the disc, and his mellow, soft-toned solo style dovetails nicely with the bass and piano.

The program, for once, is as interesting as the playing. It includes a pair of bebop standards in Miles Davis' *Tune-Up* and Oscar Pettiford's *Tricotism*, a stunningly sunswept treatment of Chick Corea's *Windows*, on which Stewart shines, and an equally gorgeous, atmospheric development of *It's a Lazy Afternoon* that is primarily Orsted-Pedersen's vehicle. Shearing's humor is constantly—but not oppressively—present, particularly in *No Moon at All*, which is partly fugue and partly boogie-woogie, and in Orsted-Pedersen's joyous, jumping piece *Cowboy Samba*. Orsted-Pedersen and Shearing seem to bring out the best in each other, and their best has been beautifully recorded in MPS's Villingen Germany studio. J.S.W.

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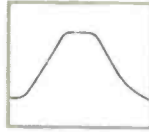
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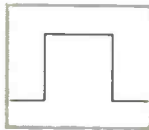
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