

High Fidelity™

THE MAGAZINE OF AUDIO, VIDEO, CLASSICAL MUSIC, AND POPULAR MUSIC

How to Head Off Common Stereo-System Ailments

Planning Your Home Video System? Answers to 10 Basic Questions

Glimpse-of-the-Future Amp, 5 More New Components Tested

Culshaw's Tempest in a Tape Loop • Luther Vandross—Sittin' Pretty

Stereo Component Preview

- Sneak Peek at What's Coming This Spring
- Special Report from the Japan Audio Fair



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High Fidelity for Humans:

IT EVEN FINDS STATIONS WH



Finding your favorite station isn't always as easy as tuning to 123.

For example, now that digital station readouts are standard on most receivers you have to memorize the precise call numbers of all your favorite stations. Not an easy job if you have a dozen or so stations you tune in regularly.

That, however, is just one of the many unpleasant-ries you have to deal with if you own one of today's conventional receivers. On the other hand, it's just one of the many reasons you should own Pioneer's new SX-7 receiver.

The SX-7 is a product of Pioneer's unique new concept in component design and engineering called *High Fidelity for Humans*. The result is a line of com-

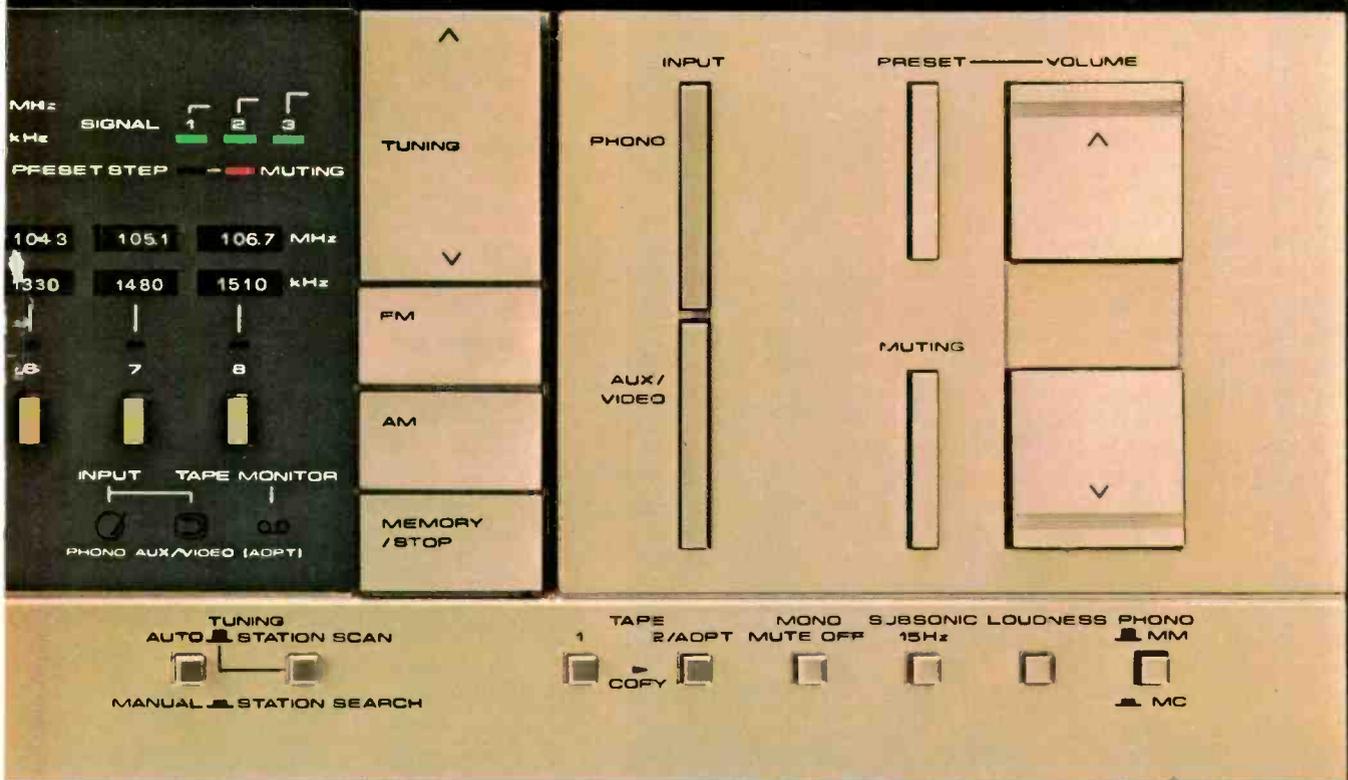
ponents that are as pleasant to live with as they are to listen to.

For instance, our receiver will commit to memory all your favorite stations. You can preset up to eight AM and eight FM stations. The moment you want to hear one you can recall it instantly.

Should you want to sample a variety of stations without any manual effort, simply press Station Scan. You'll hear five seconds of every strong station on the entire tuning band. If you discover a station you like you simply stop scanning.

Needless to say, not all stations have strong signal strengths. In the past you've had to struggle to tune in those stations with weak signals. The struggle's over. Due to the SX-7's ID Mosfet transistors you can

YOUR FAVORITE EN YOU CAN'T.



tune in weak stations as quickly and clearly as you can strong stations.

Drift, of course, is another way in which distortion has been allowed to sneak in and prevail where there once was music. The only remedy has been to simply get up and readjust your station. But with the SX-7 you won't have to bother. Because our Quartz PLL Synthesized tuning is designed to make drift totally impossible.

While these technological achievements make our components easy to live with, others just plain make your music sound better.

Our patented Non-Switching™ Push-Pull circuitry is a prime example. It eliminates the distortion created by output transistors as they click on and off,

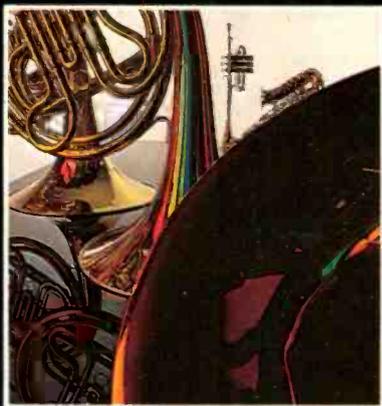
thousands of times a second, in response to music signals. The SX-7's Non-Switching circuits keep our transistors from ever completely switching off, so they don't have to click back on.

If it seems as though the SX-7 has many features you just don't find on other receivers, it's because it does. Which is why we invite you to visit your nearest Pioneer dealer. He'll show you the SX-7, and an entire line of new Pioneer receivers.

They're all designed to let you spend more time enjoying music and less time simply trying to find it.

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tation of the changing spectrum through a series of 132 LED displays. The peak hold button freezes the reading so you can adjust your equalizer to the frequency response you want.

The SA-1, when teamed with any one of our Sound Shaper® equalizers, completes your sound picture by offering you total control. And clearly, that's what custom-tailored sound is all about.

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Real Time
Spectrum Analyzer

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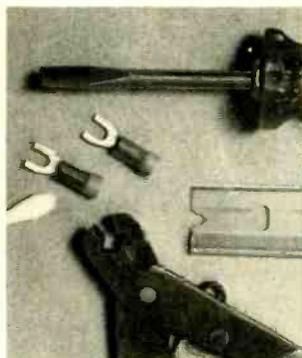
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Letters

Disc Warps

Might I call your attention to a not-so-amazing surer cure for warped records? ["Waging War on Warps," November 1981] It's using a thirty-second pressing cycle, in contrast to the fifteen- to twenty-second cycle so common in the industry. As LP prices climb to ever more absurd levels, I fail to understand why I should have to



invest in arcane gadgets that overcome slipshod manufacturing, just to obtain decent sound. The situation has become so ridiculous that I have stopped buying all domestic (and most foreign) pressings. That, too, is a sure cure for warped records.

Scott Marovich
Palo Alto, Calif.

I read with interest Peter Dobbin's article on correcting LP-record warp. Does anyone know of a way to straighten out warped 78-rpm shellac records?

K. B. Pennink
Detroit, Mich.

The method Dobbin described—involved warming discs between two sheets of glass in an oven for fifteen minutes—was based on a technique developed by one of our audio editors to restore warped 78s. As with all such techniques, try it first on an unimportant shellac.—Ed.

November's article on curing record warp was a lifesaver. I've also heard that the cheaper plastic record sleeves now on the market can cause stabilizer drift: The loss of plasticizing additives from the record's surface makes the disc brittle, thereby distorting sound.

I've been using the inexpensive poly-sleeves for about a year, and on some of my records I recently noticed a great deal of distortion. I'm uncertain about the cause of the poor sound, and the makers of the sleeves refuse to comment. To be on the safe side, I am now using the regular paper sleeves to avoid any possible further damage to my records.

John Rubner
Stoneham, Mass.

Ten years ago in HF [September 1972, page 54], Bruce R. Maier discussed sound degradation due to stabilizer drift from discs—in that instance, it

was caused by the use of an improper record-cleaning fluid. Record sleeves made of a plastic that is chemically incompatible with an LP's vinyl can also have such an effect. Unfortunately, it's almost impossible for the consumer to tell whether a cheap plastic liner is compatible.—Ed.

Missing Maple Leaf

I noticed with surprise your failure to find a Canadian judge for the Fourteenth Annual High Fidelity/International Record Critics Awards [December 1981]. There is certainly no lack of record critics in this dominion. Indeed, one periodical, *Music Magazine*, devotes numerous pages in each issue to record reviews. Moreover, both the *Toronto Star*, with the largest national circulation, and the *Globe & Mail*, Canada's national newspaper, have regular record columns. I doubt that HIGH FIDELITY went much out of its way to add a Canadian critic to the panel.

While this irritant could easily be corrected, it points to the general ignorance of Canadian recordings and music. Canadian-made discs are seldom mentioned in your columns (and then usually in an aside); Canadian performers are seldom identified as such when their works for foreign labels are reviewed. The last feature I can remember on Canadian musical life—past or present—was in 1967, a bow to our centennial year.

Certainly a magazine that has a large circulation in Canada has an obligation to its readers there. A minor beginning would be to ensure the presence of a Canadian judge capable of bringing qualified Canadian recordings to the attention of the IRCA panel. Surely if the Romanian company Electrecord's disc was worthy of nomination, Canada's Acquitaine label merits recognition.

John Stanley
Toronto, Ont., Canada

It's ironic that we should be called to task only after recognizing a problem, attempting to deal with it, and calling attention to it ourselves. We did locate a Canadian critic—doubtless one of those Mr. Stanley has in mind, at the Toronto Star. We just weren't able to get a response from him. As for Canadian-made recordings, they are seldom received for review.—Ed.

The New HF

Keep up the great work with your video coverage. Many audiophiles are also videophiles, and there is a need for authoritative information that your VIDEO TODAY section fills.

Hector F. Acevedo, President
Pop Music, Inc.
Mayaguez, Puerto Rico

I am pleased with your new design, but dismayed at the intrusion of video. I for one have little interest in the new TV gadgetry: I subscribe to read your excellent music coverage.

Robert M. Kelly
Woodbury, N.J.

I agree completely with John Figueras' letter [September 1981]. No more video, except as it relates to audio, and less car stereo coverage! I find it ominous that you are now calling yourself "The Magazine of Audio, Video, etc." Please drop the video and lay off the cars.

Marc Richman
Washington, D.C.

Your magazine would serve its readers better if you expanded your regular coverage instead of including a video section. For example, "CrossTalk" could be lengthened; you could run more feature articles and include more and longer product reports.

Mark Miller
Meadville, Pa.

I've been a subscriber almost since the very first issue of HIGH FIDELITY, but the magazine has turned into such a plug sheet for equipment—especially for video recording and playback gadgetry—that I find little that interests me. And with about 2,000 discs in my collection, I hardly need another Beethoven symphony, even if it is conducted by Carlos Kleiber. I'm not interested in these new, hotshot conductors like Riccardo Muti (the most overrated baton-wielder of our time) or in concertos and sonatas performed by Daniel Barenboim.

Edward H. Davidson
Urbana, Ill.

I am an avid reader of HIGH FIDELITY, and would like to extend my compliments to you for providing such a well-rounded and informative magazine. It contains a wealth of information not found anywhere else. "CrossTalk" is one of my favorite features; I'd love to see it expanded.

Jorge M. Ortiz
San Marcos, Tex.

I have been reading HF since the middle '50s and have a complete set starting in 1962. HF was the best in its field in years past because of its comprehensive classical record reviews and well-written pieces on music and musicians. I always would look forward to each new issue for guidance in buying new records. For some time you have published long, single-interest articles (such as those on Barber [June and July 1981] and Bartók [March and May 1981]) that made up most of the classical record coverage. The Barber and Bartók pieces were well done, but formerly you would publish a discography and also review lots of records.

I am not interested in video products; I don't plan to buy any new audio equipment for a few years; I do plan to buy ten records a month. Please return to your old style.

Neal Hand
Sacramento, Calif.

I enjoy HIGH FIDELITY very much, and look forward to reading it each month. I would like to emphasize, though, that not all of us enjoy classical music, which you spend more time reviewing than pop and rock. I feel this is also true for many other young readers and subscribers.

Bruce Temple
Chicago, Ill.

Unsentimental Journey

I think Mitchell Cohen's musical taste needs refining. In his very negative review of Journey's LP "Heavy Metal," [BACKBEAT, October 1981] Cohen complained about the "bleating" of Steve Perry. Well, Journey happens to be the most popular band in the U.S. and Perry's singing talent and vocal range are surpassed only by his songwriting abilities. Remember that "Escape" is No. 1 on most music charts, and that it contains at least four songs that are bound to be hits.

Todd Cravens
Rockford, Ill.

Copyright Wrongs

I was delighted to learn from Kenneth Cooper's review ["Telemann's Time Has Come Again," December 1981] that Telemann, more than two hundred years ago, protected the rights of creative and performing artists to the fruits of their labors. It is a subject that has been neglected in the long correspondence about the Ariès label, the Haverall Brian symphony, and its pseudonymous conductor, "Colin Wilson." I leave to the highly capable hands of John Canarina the defense of performers' rights—which are much like those of accountants, schoolteachers, carpenters, and shop clerks, all of whom are paid for their work.

A composer's symphony is his property and nobody has the right to use it without his permission. Whether or not a profit is made from its use and whether or not the motives are noble are irrelevant. All our nonprofit opera companies and symphony orchestras pay for the music they perform, except for compositions so old that they are no longer under copyright.

Will the people at Ariès tell the readers of HIGH FIDELITY whether or not they have been authorized by the copyright owner to record the symphony of the late Haverall Brian?

Leonard Burkat
Danbury, Conn.

Bargain-Price History

Very special compliments on "The Way We Might Have Been . . ." [December 1981]. But I've been unable to locate a source from which I could purchase the two Stokowski/Bell-Labs discs that Robert Long mentioned. Can you help?

Adrian H. Shuman
Hamilton, Ont., Canada

Your beautiful article on the early stereo recordings by Stokowski had a special meaning for me: Bell Labs has donated the remaining supply of records [most of them were given away to archives and libraries] to be used for fund-raising by the Infant Hearing Assessment Foundation. Founded by the organization of retired Bell System employees known as the Pioneers, the foundation sponsors research on the diagnosis of hearing disorders in infants. Anyone making a tax-deductible contribution of \$25 or more will receive a pair of discs: for a gift of \$15 we will send one disc. [Infant Hearing Assessment Foundation, 2625 Park Ave., Concord, Calif. 94529. Add \$2.00 for postage and handling.]

William C. Gilmore
Director of Development
IHAF
Concord, Calif.

Speaking Basically

Michael Riggs may have strayed a bit in his column "Sound and Sound Reproduction." ["Basically Speaking," October 1981]. For example, his "pebble-in-the-water" analogy confuses a displacement phenomenon with compression/rarefaction, which also occurs in water as sound waves. The bellows analogy is much better.

Riggs has also confused amplitude with intensity. Ten times the amplitude results in one hundred times the intensity, a 20-dB change. Perceived loudness is quite a different matter and is only indirectly related to either amplitude or intensity. The ratio of the intensity of the loudest

signal we can hear without pain to the softest signal we can perceive is in the order of 115 to 130 dB, approximately a trillion (not, as Riggs says, a million) to one. And the decibel is a power ratio by definition: It was not established to indicate the smallest intensity difference that can be perceived—a factor that varies at least from 1/3 to 3 dB. Measurement of sound level is the only sanctioned use of dB referred to a pressure standard that I know of.

Loudness, on the other hand, is a subjective factor. It is sometimes designated in sones, for which no satisfactory scale or method of measurement has been established. Equivalent loudness, measured in phons, may be established by aural balance against the intensity of a 1000-Hz signal. The concept of "twice the loudness" that Riggs mentions is affected by many variables in addition to the subjective reaction of the listener. Among the more prominent are conditioning of the ear, the frequency components and the peak factor of the subject matter, and the duration of the test signals. In my personal experience, three steps—never five—of 2 dB give me what I think of as twice the loudness.

I would suggest that Riggs might profit from digging into the concept of loudness a bit before attempting more exposition.

Herman T. Carter
Madison, N.J.

Relationships between the physical measurement of sound intensity and the subjective attribute of loudness are not accurately depicted in your October "Basically Speaking."

Michael Riggs states quite correctly that when a sound's amplitude is raised to produce a 10-dB increase in intensity, its subjective loudness is roughly doubled. An increase of 10 dB means that the signal's power is ten times greater, but this is equivalent to an increase in amplitude by a factor of $\sqrt{10}$, since power is proportional to amplitude squared. If we assume a sine-wave signal, then the wave is not ten times larger when measured linearly, as Mr. Riggs claims, but $\sqrt{10}$ times larger.

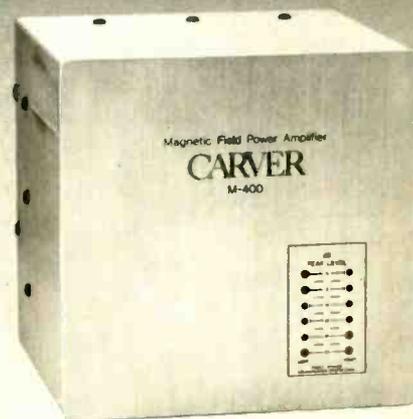
Furthermore, Mr. Riggs claims that doubling amplitude leads to a 3-dB increase in loudness. But doubling amplitude produces a 6-dB increase in intensity, not loudness, and doubling power leads to a 3-dB increase in intensity. It is true that, subjectively, a 10-dB increase is needed to produce a doubling of loudness, and—assuming a given amount of loudness—this doubling could be interpreted as a 3-dB increase on a subjective scale of loudness, since 3 dB corresponds to a 2:1 ratio. However, such extrapolated measurements should be differentiated from those made in the physical domain.

Les Bernstein
Dept. of Psychology
University of Illinois
Urbana, Ill.

Michael Riggs replies: *Starting with the easy ones, I plead innocent as regards the pebble-in-the-water analogy, which I used to introduce the concept of wave motion in a way that's easy to visualize. I immediately pointed out that the example given is of transverse waves and went on to state that sound consists of longitudinal waves, which do not propagate in the same way as ripples in water. And I did not, as Herman Carter implies, claim that the ratio of the intensity of the loudest sound we can hear without pain* (Continued on page 6)

"It is hardly conceivable that a small, inexpensive, lightweight cube such as this could deliver as much clean power as any but a few of the largest conventional amplifiers on the market—but it does!"

Julian Hirsch,
Hirsch-Houck Labs



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(Continued from page 5)

to the intensity of the softest sound we can hear is a million to one. What I did say is that it's more than a million to one—a range that encompasses his less conservative trillion-to-one figure.

On to the hard ones. It is true that the size of the smallest difference in intensity we can hear varies with frequency and loudness, but 1 dB is a reasonable and commonly cited average value. For the purposes of understanding the fundamentals of high fidelity (which is, after all, the intent of "Basically Speaking"), one does not need a psychophysics text. Nor is it necessary to introduce phons and sones, which rarely appear in any context directly relating to high fidelity equipment. Sticking with "dB SPL," which appears routinely, seems the better alternative.

However, I probably do go too far in simplifying the distinction between amplitude and power, for the sake of keeping the relationship between the physical and the perceptual as intuitive as possible. Because, as Les Bernstein points out, some confusion might result, I will make an effort to unravel the two concepts somewhere further on in the series.

Sound and Furie

I read Kenneth Furie's review [December 1981] of the Sutherland/Horne/Pavarotti Lincoln Center recital with utter disbelief but then realized that Furie was again true to form! His reviews of most singers are extremely negative; he dismisses them quickly and with much disdain. In fact, Sutherland sang gloriously, while Horne stole the show in the Rossini. Although I'm a Bergonzi fan, I even found Pavarotti pleasing. May their next concert be as successful!

Thomas R. Wilson
Clarendon Hills, Ill.

Perhaps Kenneth Furie should have been given space in an editorial column to express the extraneous opinions he tacked onto his review of the Sutherland/Horne/Pavarotti recital album. His comments certainly did not belong in what is supposed to be a criticism of recordings.

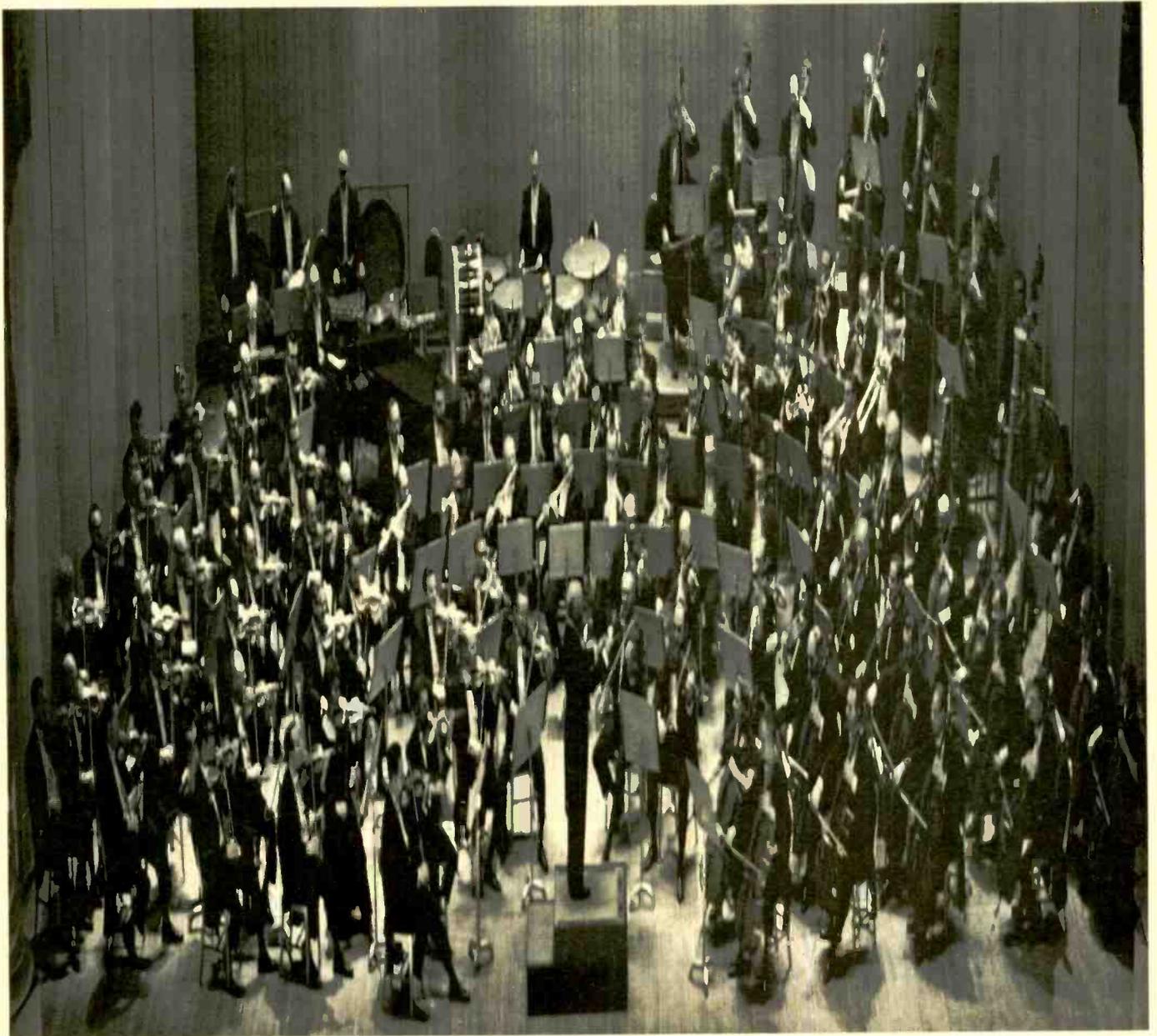
Carol Bryan
Charleston, W. Va.

Sound Screens

As an audio hobbyist who works in the accident-prevention field, I'm concerned about the inappropriate use of personal portables with headphones ["The Personal Portable Revolution," August 1981]. For safety's sake, people who are "wired for sound" should keep the volume low enough to remain in touch with the outside world when negotiating busy streets and sidewalks. While driving, watch out for pedestrians or cyclists wearing the telltale earphones: They're often more interested in the Top 40 than in the traffic around them. And remember that car stereo units often pack enough power to mask the sound of trains, fire trucks, and emergency vehicles completely. It's fine to crank up the volume on a lonely interstate or a quiet country road, but moderate the level in congested rush-hour traffic. It could save a life!

Jack Burke
Chicago, Ill.

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Sony introduces and UCX-S, the breakthrough



Sony's UCX-S is a revolutionary new audio cassette tape. A high-bias tape with a wider dynamic range than any other tape of its type. So wide, it actually expands the sound you can hear. (With minimal distortion, hiss or print-through.) That's why we call it Wide Fidelity Sound.

With new UCX-S, you can record the very high notes — as well as the very low. Either way, you'll hear everything with a clarity you've never heard before on a high-bias tape. And you can also record at higher volume levels, so you can record and hear the very soft sounds you lost before in background noise.

How did Sony do it? With three

Hear perfect reproduction from the lowest ranges of the bassoon...

to the highest reaches of the strings.



Philadelphia Orchestra photo by Don Hunstein for Columbia Records.

Wide Fidelity Sound tape that makes it possible.

major technological advances. (The kind you expect from Sony.) First, ultra-fine magnetic particles that are significantly smaller than any other conventional Type II tape particles. And a unique orientation process that aligns the particles so they are pointed in the same direction. (No mean feat when you consider there are some 500,000,000,000 magnetic particles in one millimeter of tape.) And third, a never-before-manufactured binder and process to assure a uniform, high density of particles.

If you want to get technical about it, here are the incredible specifications: Retentivity and Squareness higher than any other high-bias tape. Retentivity of 1800

Gauss, and that means greater Maximum Output Level and dynamic range. Squareness of 93%, an astounding figure, for better recording efficiency. (When you consider that no other tape of this type has ever reached even 90%, you'll realize just how phenomenal UCX-S's 93% is.)

Of course, the real test of UCX-S is not a question of numbers or percentages. It comes when you lean back, close your eyes and listen. You'll hear subtleties in the music you could only hear until now in the concert hall. You'll hear every instrument in the orchestra. You'll hear more than you've ever heard on a high-bias tape. You'll hear it on UCX-S, with Wide Fidelity Sound.

SONY.

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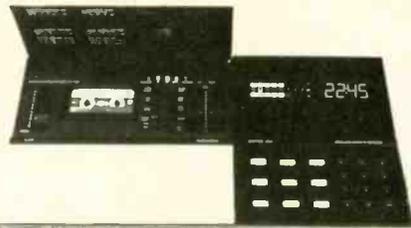
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Circle 29 on Reader-Service Card

AUDIO

High Fidelity News

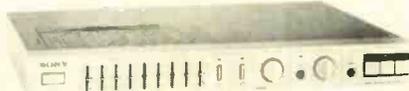
New equipment and developments by Dawn Gordon



B&O's Newest HX

Bang and Olufsen's Beocord 9000 cassette deck is expected to be available soon. The \$1,800 unit incorporates B&O's HX Professional headroom-expansion system, which continuously measures the signal applied to the recording head and adjusts the bias oscillator to deliver constant effective bias, maximizing high-level high-frequency performance with all kinds of tape. The deck—which has both Dolby B and C noise reduction, automatic tape-head demagnetization, and a tape counter that can measure both elapsed and remaining tape time—can be operated by remote control from the Beosystem 8000 receiver.

Circle 137 on Reader-Service Card



Creative Add-On

Combining an echo/reverb system and a stereo image-enhancement circuit with a graphic equalizer, the Model SEH-310 Hybrid Graphic Equalizer from Sony is said to make recording special effects a snap. The unit incorporates versatile switching facilities and a microphone-mixing input. The \$250 SEH-310 is intended for use with cassette decks, but complements other components as well.

Circle 138 on Reader-Service Card



Small Size, Big Sound

A new, compact satellite speaker system called SourceThree is available from Au-

dioSource. It consists of two satellite speakers and a subwoofer, the latter measuring 12 by 8 by 8 inches and claimed to produce better bass than many speakers twice its size. The acoustic suspension system has a frequency range from 47 Hz to 20 kHz and a power rating of 12 to 70 watts (11 to 18 1/2 dBW); it is priced at \$340.

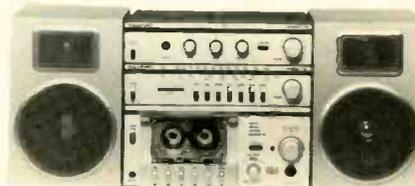
Circle 139 on Reader-Service Card



CM Goes CX

CM Labs' CM-678 CX decoder features a five-stage LED display for calibration of the unit during initial set-up. The decoder connects to the tape-monitor loop of any amp or preamp, and has a front-panel switch to restore the normal tape-monitor function. Also included is a bypass switch for discs that are not CX encoded. The CM-678 sells for \$100.

Circle 140 on Reader-Service Card



A Mini Blaupunkt

A micro-component system consisting of the A-60 integrated amplifier, T-60 tuner, and C-60 cassette deck is being introduced in the U.S. by Blaupunkt. The amp is rated at 15 watts (11 1/4 dBW) per channel into 8 ohms, and the AM/FM tuner has controls for total system program-source selection and a five-stage LED signal-strength indicator. The cassette deck offers Dolby B noise reduction, metal-tape compatibility, feather-touch controls, and LED recording-level indicators. The system price is \$765; a P-60 turntable (with a magnetic cartridge) and L-35 loudspeakers are optional.

Circle 142 on Reader-Service Card

Triple Stereo

Provisions for three pairs of loudspeakers are found on the Model 385R receiver from H.H. Scott. Rated at 85 watts (19 1/4 dBW)

(Continued on page 13)

Introducing TDK AD-X. The normal bias tape with Super Avilyn technology.

New TDK AD-X is the first normal bias audio cassette to use TDK's Avilyn magnetic particle—based on the renowned Super Avilyn formulation that has kept TDK the leader in audio and videotape technology.

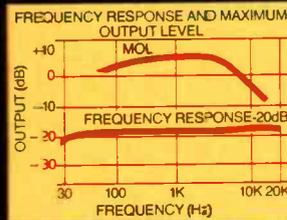
The Avilyn advantage offered in AD-X is demonstrably clear. You now can record and play back—in the normal bias/EQ position with complete compatibility for any cassette deck over a wider dynamic range and with far less distortion. Even at higher recording levels, the increased headroom in

new AD-X can easily handle strong signal input without over-saturation.

When you hear the brilliant playback resulting from the higher

MOL and lower bias noise you won't believe that your deck can "improve" so much.

The new AD-X has truly versatile applications. Its higher sensitivity makes it ideal for all-round home entertainment use and also suitable for any cassette player.



Avilyn magnetic particle achieves higher saturation and lower noise.

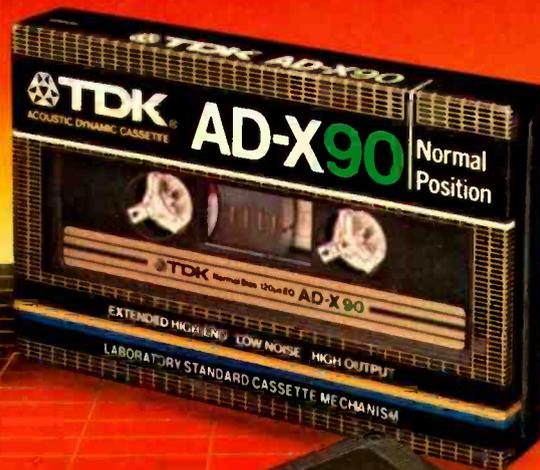
To ensure years of reliable use, AD-X is housed in TDK's Laboratory Standard Mechanism, and protected by TDK's lifetime warranty. With its distinctive packaging, you won't miss it.

So for high quality recordings in the normal bias/EQ position, snap in the new TDK AD-X. You'll discover that the Avilyn advantage means superior overall performance for you.

TDK
THE MACHINE FOR YOUR MACHINE



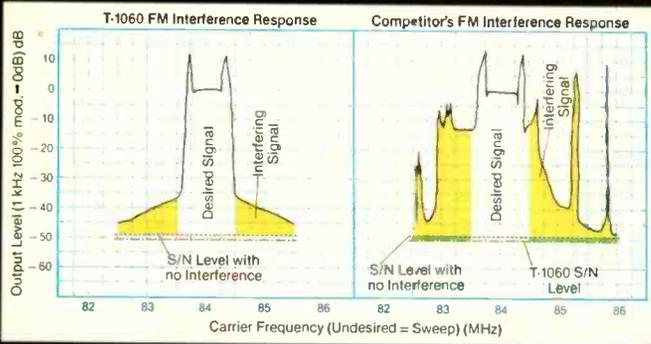
Record at higher levels with far less distortion.



Yamaha. Clarity plus clout.

Clearer-than-crystal FM reception.

You've probably heard a lot of noise about quartz-crystal tuners. Well, we don't make one. Instead, we developed a new tuner that's clearer



than crystal—the Yamaha T-1060. Its Computer Servo Locked tuning system has a super-accurate micro-fork oscillator, rather than a crystal oscillator, to lock on the desired reception frequency. This unique system eliminates the RF (radio frequency) signals that crystal oscillators produce within the tuner itself. The result is less distortion, less interference and better S/N ratio. And remarkably clearer music.

Plus the added convenience of the T-1060's

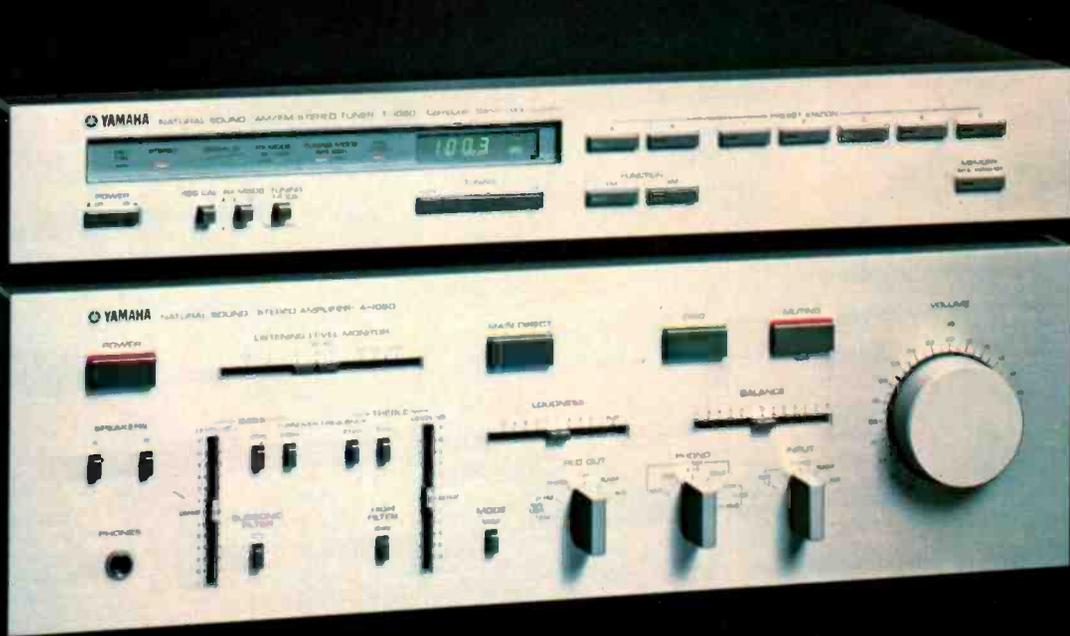
ten random access AM/FM presets, initial station set, and pushbutton auto search tuning. **Plenty of pure power.**

So now that you have this clearer-than-crystal signal, what better way to amplify it than with Yamaha's new A-1060 integrated amplifier. With 140 watts per channel at 0.005% THD (both channels driven into 8 ohms, 20-20,000Hz) you have plenty of clean, clear power. And because it comes from Yamaha's unique "X" power supply, that power is on tap instantaneously—as your music demands it.

Special high- f_t power transistors that eliminate switching distortion and a unique linear bias transfer system that virtually eliminates crossover distortion are further examples of Yamaha's commitment to music reproduction purity.

If that's what you listen for—the music and nothing but the music—these new separates are your clear choice. At your Yamaha dealer now. Or write: Yamaha Electronics Corporation, USA, P.O. Box 6660, Buena Park, CA 90622.

Yamaha. For the music in you.

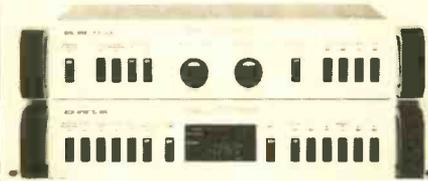


YAMAHA

(Continued from page 10)



per channel into 8 ohms, the 385R has dual-range peak-hold power meters that switch scale automatically according to power demand, a built-in moving-coil head amp, a digital tuning display, high and infrasonic filters, servo-lock tuning, and facilities for two-way tape copying and monitoring. This top-of-the-line model sells for \$600. **Circle 143 on Reader-Service Card**



Sumo Adds Two

Sumo has added two new products to its line of audio components. The Electra preamplifier (\$400) has a discrete phono section for moving-coil cartridges that is said to have exceedingly low noise and distortion. Charlie is the name of a digital frequency-synthesis FM tuner (\$460) with selectable IF bandwidth, a five-station memory, and bidirectional search modes. **Circle 146 on Reader-Service Card**

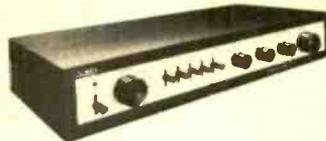


As You Like It

A turntable with an optoelectronic sensor that enables you to program as many as eight songs in any order is available from Onkyo. The Model CP-1028R has soft-touch controls, a repeat function, and a straight, static-balance aluminum tonearm. The supplied cartridge (Onkyo's Model OCH55V) has a spherical diamond stylus; its frequency range is said to be from 18 Hz to 25 kHz, with stereo separation better than 25 dB. Price is \$260. **Circle 144 on Reader-Service Card**

Versatile Preamp from QED

A remote power supply is said to eliminate hum and reduce noise in QED's new Model



7 preamplifier. The unit has two phono inputs with selectable cartridge-loading circuitry and can accept both moving- and fixed-coil pickups. Other features include a subwoofer output with a built-in electronic crossover, passive tone controls, a low-noise Bi-FET output stage, and two loud-

ness contours. (One, designed for small speakers, provides a mild boost to signals between 40 and 100 Hz while rolling off those below 40 Hz.) An "environmental enhancer" is claimed to improve stereo imaging when speakers are placed close together. The Model 7 sells for \$415. **Circle 141 on Reader-Service Card**

For a peek at what's rising on this year's equipment horizon, see Page 36.

and when you switch over to the 770's
you will smile and say...it's magic
because there is nothing like it
under the sun!

Mission North America, 89 Galaxy Blvd., Rexdale, Ont., M9W 6A4 Canada
Mission Electronics, George St., Huntingdon, Cambs., PE 18 6BD England

Circle 11 on Reader-Service Card

Practical answers to your audio questions by Michael Riggs

Loading Up

I understand that many phono cartridges require a particular capacitive load to deliver flat frequency response. I also know that it is possible to add capacitance to a system if it doesn't already provide enough for the cartridge being used. But how exactly does one go about this?—Ken Selring, Collegedale, Tenn.

If the total capacitance (found by adding the phono-input capacitance to that of the tone-arm wiring and the cables) is less than that recommended for a particular cartridge, you can indeed bring the total up to the desired value. The most direct method is to solder small capacitors of the proper value (within ± 50 picofarads) between the hot and ground terminals of your amplifier's phono input jacks or between the shields and the signal pins of your tonearm cables' phono plugs. A more convenient way, however, is to spend \$28 on a DB Systems DBP-6 Phono Equalization Kit, which will enable you simply to plug in 100 to 400 picofarads of additional capacitance (and to change the amount easily whenever a change in your system makes it necessary).

dB or Not dB

I am considering buying an amplifier whose frequency response is rated as 10 Hz to 60 kHz, ± 3 dB. But what does " ± 3 dB" mean, and at what points on the amplifier's frequency response does it apply?—John Potter, Oakdale, N.Y.

A decibel—abbreviated "dB"—is a standard unit of relative level (see "Basically Speaking," October 1981, page 20, and November 1981, page 27). The amplifier's response specification is telling you that for an input of any given amplitude, the output at any frequency between 10 Hz and 60 kHz will be no more than 3 dB stronger or 3 dB weaker than the output at some frequency the manufacturer has chosen as a reference. That amounts to a 6-dB difference between the weakest and the strongest output. If that 6-dB variation occurs within the audible band—say, between 30 Hz and 15 kHz—it will noticeably, perhaps severely, color any sound reproduced through the amplifier. But if, as seems more likely, the manufacturer has chosen a reference

frequency such that output in the audible band is almost invariably 3 dB higher and the output at 10 Hz and 60 kHz 3 dB lower, there should be virtually no change in the reproduced sound.

A more useful specification would be one that indicated the maximum variation within the audible band relative to the output at the generally accepted reference frequency of 1 kHz. By that definition, an acceptable deviation for a high fidelity amplifier would be about ± 1 dB; a maximum variation of $\pm \frac{1}{2}$ dB would rank as very good. Best of all would be a curve showing the exact deviation at every frequency in the audible band.

Symbol Logic

The metering on my Pioneer CT-F500 cassette deck is calibrated from -20 to $+5$ dB, and the Dolby symbol is at the $+3$ mark. I couldn't find any use for the symbol in the owner's manual. Can you enlighten me?—Scott Gregory, San Antonio, Tex.

In Pioneer's case, it probably just means that the designer wanted to keep the price of the 500 (an entry-level model) as low as possible by using the same meters as the CT-F1000, in which the Dolby tracking was adjustable and the symbol for Dolby reference level therefore obligatory. Some manufacturers, however, seem to think the inclusion of the symbol chic. Unfortunately, they don't always place the mark at whatever spot on the meter represents 200 nanowebers per meter (the Dolby reference level). As a result, such meters can be misleading if you try to calculate tape-overload points as so many dB above the Dolby reference point.

Earphonics

I have a better-than-average system: a Sansui AU-819 integrated amplifier and T-80 tuner, an Entre moving-coil cartridge in a Technics SL-1200 Mk. II turntable, a Nakamichi 582 cassette deck, a pair of Allison One speakers with the Allison Electronic Subwoofer, and a DBX range-expander/decoder unit. Recently I was given a pair of Sennheiser earphones. When I used them for the first time I was stunned by the sound quality—spacious, airy, and crisp, with

wonderful clarity. By comparison, my main system sounds colored and rather flabby. Is this normal, or is my system faulty?—Mansoor Ghouse, Nawala Rajagiriya, Ceylon

It's fairly normal for any new sonic experience to seem more vivid than the one to which you have become accustomed, and any good headphone will permit you to hear fresh details (including some that you'd just as soon not hear) of the program material and your system. But good speakers—including your Allison—have a distinct advantage in stereo imaging. If, after extended listening, you don't find the way the Allison represent space (and musical placements within that space) to be more natural, then you're correct in wondering whether the system is operating as it should.

Old Gold?

My present system consists of components I bought ten to twenty years ago, including a JBL SA-600 amplifier and a pair of Stromberg-Carlson 15-inch coaxial speakers in large Barzilay bass-reflex enclosures that I assembled from kits. I want to upgrade, and I wonder whether my speakers would sound as good with a new amp or receiver. Also, having been accustomed to these speakers for so long, is it likely that I would be satisfied with smaller speakers?—John W. Carr, San Francisco, Calif.

Your present speakers should sound at least as good with a new receiver or amp as they do with your JBL (which was a fine unit in its day). However, if you can afford to make only one change, I would suggest that you replace the speakers. Advances in speaker design over the last decade have far outstripped those in electronics technology, yielding clearly audible improvements in tonal balance, transparency, and stereo imaging. I cannot, of course, speak to your particular tastes, but I suspect you will find that just about any good, modern bookshelf or floor-standing speaker will outperform the units you now own. Take a listen, and let your ears decide.

We regret that the volume of reader mail is too great for us to answer all questions individually.

MAXELL IS PLEASED TO PRESENT AN EVEN HIGHER PERFORMANCE TAPE.



If you're familiar with Maxell UD-XL tapes you probably find it hard to believe that any tape could give you higher performance.

But hearing is believing. And while we can't play our newest tape for you right here on this page, we can replay the comments of Audio Video Magazine.

"Those who thought it was impossible to improve on Maxell's UD-XL II were mistaken. The 1981 tape of the year award goes to Maxell XL II-S."

How does high bias XL II-S and our normal bias equivalent XL I-S give you such high performance? By engineering smaller and more uniformly shaped epitaxial oxide particles we were able to pack more into a given area of tape. Resulting in a higher maximum output level, improved signal-to-noise ratio and better frequency response.

To keep the particles from rubbing off on your recording heads Maxell XL-S also has an improved binder system. And to eliminate tape deformation, XL-S comes with our unique Quin-Lok Clamp/Hub Assembly to hold the leader firmly in place.

Of course, Maxell XL II-S and XL I-S carry a little higher price tag than lesser cassettes.

We think you'll find it a small price to pay for higher performance.



IT'S WORTH IT.

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Harry James, Sammy Kaye and a panel of distinguished music authorities,
is proud to present . . .*

THE GREATEST RECORDINGS OF THE BIG BAND ERA

ARCHIVE COLLECTION

*The most comprehensive collection of
original big band recordings ever assembled.
And the first ever issued on superior proof-quality records.*

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"We wanted this collection to have it all! The great bands, the soloists and the singers. It's good to know this music is all here . . . all together . . . for now and the future."

—Count Basie

The greatest authorities on the music of America's big band era—musicians and music critics alike—have joined together, for the first time, to assemble the definitive collection of big band recordings.

This is a collection unlike any issued before. For the bandleaders, writers and critics who comprise this panel are the very same ones who shaped the big band era.

These experts enlisted the cooperation of the record companies which now hold the original master recordings of the big name bands. Thus, the panel was able to make its selections from virtually every big band performance ever recorded—making this the first such collection ever assembled from all the big band record labels.

As a result, this will be the most complete, comprehensive and authoritative collection ever devoted to big band music. And it will be the first ever available on proof-quality records of exceptional fidelity.

All the great bands, singers and soloists in their greatest recorded performances

The Archive Collection of *The Greatest Recordings of the Big Band Era* will be all-encompassing. A collection which reflects the musical diversity of the era. The crisp swing of Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw, the relaxed rhythm of Count Basie and Jimmie Lunceford, the bright dixieland of Bob Crosby, the sophisticated stylings of Duke Ellington, the dreamy delicate sounds of Ray Noble, the soft, sweet music of Guy Lombardo and Sammy Kaye. It will also include:

The musical forerunners of the era—Paul Whiteman, with Bing Crosby and Bix Beiderbecke; Fletcher Henderson, who influenced Benny Goodman and many others; the early sounds of Glen Gray and Fred Waring.

The nostalgic themes of the big bands—Glenn Miller's "Moonlight Serenade" . . . Tommy Dorsey's "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You" . . . Louis Armstrong's "When It's Sleepy Time Down South" . . . Vaughn Monroe's "Racing with the Moon."

The greatest hits of an entire generation—Charlie Barnet's "Cherokee," Duke Ellington's "Take the 'A' Train," Artie Shaw's "Frenesi," Frankie Carle's "Sunrise Serenade," Tommy Dorsey's "Opus One," Eddy Duchin's "Stormy Weather," and Benny Goodman's "Sing, Sing, Sing," with Gene Krupa.

The big band vocalists that audiences loved . . . and still remember. Frank Sinatra with Tommy Dorsey, Peggy Lee with Benny Goodman, Doris Day with Les Brown, Anita O'Day with Gene Krupa, Bob Eberly and Helen O'Connell with Jimmy Dorsey. And many more, including Perry Como, Lena Horne and Ella Fitzgerald.

The ultimate collection of original big band recordings

This is a collection that would be difficult—or impossible—for any individual to assemble. For these selections have been drawn from the archives of all the major record companies . . . and such vintage labels as Brunswick, OKeh, Vocalion, Bluebird and Perfect.

Many of these recordings—like Wayne King's "Melody of Love"—have been unavailable for years. Others are hard to find recordings of early radio broadcasts . . . such as Frank Sinatra's emotional farewell to the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, doing his spectacular rendition of "The Song Is You." Still others were only released on 78s—and never re-issued: Bob Crosby's "Black Zephyr" and Gus Arnheim's "A Peach of a Pair" with Russ Columbo.

In many cases, the panel considered several different versions of the same song, before selecting a particular recording for the collection. Thus, every selection will be a classic performance. An original recording of the era . . . recaptured on records of superior listening quality.

Superb quality for today's audio systems

These records will be produced to the highest standards possible by The Franklin Mint Record Society—judged by audio experts to produce some of the finest records available today.

Each recording will first undergo a painstaking restoration process—electronically "cleaned" groove-by-groove to eliminate extraneous surface noise and preserve the original brilliance of the music.

The records will be pressed in a dust-free "clean room" using a special vinyl that contains its own anti-static element. This meticulous pressing technique, together with the special record vinyl, results in a more rigid, durable and dust-resistant record. A proof quality record that actually sounds better than the original—and may be played through any audio system.

Hardbound albums and big band histories provided

In keeping with the importance of this collection, special hardbound albums have been designed to house and protect all one hundred proof-quality records.

Each album holds two long-playing records, together with an expertly written commentary—prepared by members of the advisory panel, and illustrated with photographs of the bands. A complete reference index to bandleaders, songs and solo artists will also be provided.

Available by subscription only

If you remember the big bands . . . if you've ever



Strict record pressing standards, and audio and visual inspection, assure high quality. Ordinary records (left) have static charges that attract dust, causing surface noise. But the special anti-static vinyl used in Franklin Mint records (right) assures clearer sound. Electrostatic meter tests show that the Franklin Mint record has only one-fifth the static charge of ordinary records.

wished to relive the music of that period . . . or if you've only just discovered this unique sound in American popular music . . . this is your opportunity. An opportunity to share and enjoy—with all the members of your family—the unforgettable sound of the big bands.

The collection may be acquired only by direct subscription. It will not be sold in record stores. To subscribe now, mail the attached application to The Franklin Mint Record Society, Franklin Center, Pennsylvania 19091. Please do so by March 31, 1982.

The Advisory Panel

COUNT BASIE for more than 40 years, leader of one of the most consistently swinging bands in history.

LES BROWN outstanding writer, arranger and leader of one of the era's most popular dance bands.

DAVE DEXTER, JR. a record producer for 31 years, former *Down Beat* editor and author of *The Jazz Story* and *Playback*.

LIONEL HAMPTON a leader whose exuberance has inspired musicians and audiences alike for more than five decades.

WOODY HERMAN who continues to be one of the most popular and successful of all leaders—discoverer of many talented musicians.

HARRY JAMES a brilliant trumpeter of both beautiful ballads and rip-roaring swing.

SAMMY KAYE "Mister Swing and Sway," master of the sweet sound—always popular, always danceable.

NEL McCAFFREY music critic and editor of *American Dance Band Discography* and *The Complete Encyclopedia of Popular Music and Jazz*.

GEORGE T. SIMON music critic, record producer, author of the definitive work on dance bands—*The Big Bands*—and *The Best of the Music Makers*.

RICHARD SUDHALTER jazz critic of *The New York Post*, author of *Bix: Man and Legend*, and a widely respected jazz cornetist.

JOHN S. WILSON jazz and popular music critic of *The New York Times*, author of *Jazz: The Transition Years*, *The Collector's Jazz: Traditional and Swing*, *The Collector's Jazz: Modern*.



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The unique design of the head assembly for the Reference

Series Model 105.2 and Model 105.4 is just one example of KEF's world-renowned research and engineering.

Each unit is housed in its own

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

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

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

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

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

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In Canada:
Smyth Sound Equipment Ltd., Quebec.



KEF

The Speaker Engineers

Basically Speaking

Audio concepts and terms explained by Michael Riggs

Music in the Groove

ONE WAG HAS SUGGESTED that if we had known in the early Fifties what we know today about the structure and behavior of elastic polymers (such as vinyl), the modern microgroove record would never have been invented: Everyone would have known right off the bat that it wouldn't work. Which proves, I guess, that sometimes ignorance really is bliss. The ten-inch shellac 78s of yesteryear usually were not up to the task of high fidelity reproduction. They were too noisy and had relatively poor frequency response. And because they broke easily and could hold only a few minutes of music per side, they weren't very convenient, either. The vinyl long-playing record so familiar to us today has none of these drawbacks.

The LP's longer playing time results from its lower playing speed (33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm instead of 78) and narrower grooves (hence the name "microgroove"). And its lower noise, especially, can be attributed to the improved material from which the disc is made, since vinyl yields a far smoother groove surface than shellac compounds. At their admittedly all-too-rare best, modern LPs can be almost totally free of ticks and pops.

The quality of the record's surface is important because the musical information is actually pressed into the face of the disc. Examined closely, the long spiral groove that runs from the record's rim to its label reveals itself as a V-shaped trench with tiny bends all along its path. These bends correspond to the music signal: the higher the frequency, the more closely spaced the undulations. They are "read" by a tiny diamond stylus shaped to ride against the groove walls. The areas of the stylus that contact the groove must be small enough to actually follow all the bends, rather than just riding over them, when they are packed close together.

As the stylus follows the wriggling groove, its motion is transmitted by the pickup cantilever to the generating elements that convert the mechanical motion to an electrical output. The frequency of that signal is the same as that of the groove modulation. The amplitude of the signal, however, is not necessarily in direct propor-

tion to the amplitude of the groove modulation. Magnetic cartridges are velocity-sensing, rather than amplitude-sensing, devices: Their output depends on the speed of the stylus's motion following the groove's modulation, not on the amount of its displacement as such.

The logical thing would seem to be to make records to complement that characteristic, so that for a signal of given amplitude, the groove velocity (commonly expressed in centimeters per second, or cm/sec.) remains constant regardless of frequency.

Unfortunately, this scheme has a couple of flaws. One is that, to maintain a constant velocity, the stylus would have to make larger and larger swings as the sig-

(This might seem exactly the wrong way to conserve groove spacing, but there is little musical energy below 50 Hz, so the excursions never get too wide.) Between 500 Hz and 2,120 Hz, there is another constant-velocity section; above 2,120 Hz the characteristic again is constant-amplitude, this time to boost signal components above vinyl noise at high frequencies.

Because modern LPs are cut with close to constant-amplitude characteristics, they can be played directly by piezoelectric (crystal and ceramic) pickups, which are amplitude-sensing devices. But as I mentioned, most high-quality cartridges are magnetic, and magnetic pickups are velocity sensors. To prevent records from sounding screechy and bass-shy when they're played with magnetic cartridges, phono preamps must include playback equalization to compensate for the recording characteristics and restore correct tonal balance.

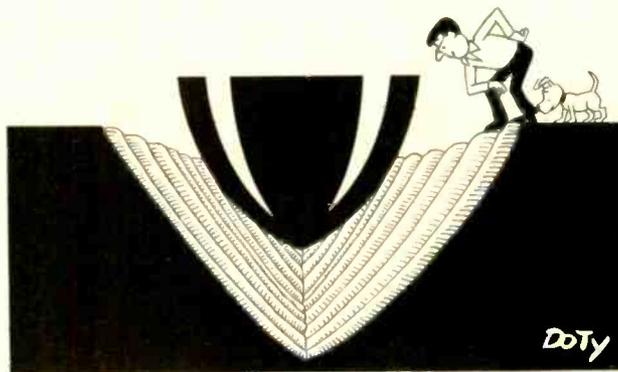
If all records were mono, as they once were, all the modulation would be side-to-side in the LP groove. A stereo pickup tracing such a groove would reproduce the same signal from both groove walls. But stereo requires that the groove hold two independent channels of information.

This is accomplished by putting the right-channel signal on one groove wall and the left-channel signal on the other.

If that seems incredible, take a moment to think carefully about the geometry of the situation. Each groove wall is at 45 degrees to the vertical, and thus they are at right angles to each other. The pickup's elements sense motion in one wall of the groove or the other, but each is insensitive to motion perpendicular to its assigned sensing direction. So if there is a signal in only one channel, which would create undulations in the one wall but leave the other smooth, the stylus would move only in the 45-degree plane that is perpendicular to the modulated wall and parallel to the smooth one. Thus one pickup element will generate a signal, and the other won't.

Adding a different signal to the opposite groove wall will further complicate the stylus motion, causing the vertical and lateral components to change instantaneously according to the varying groove modulations for the two channels. Thus, it is the vertical vector that, in essence, contains the stereo information.

HF



nal's frequency is lowered. For example, the undulations at 100 Hz must be twice the size of those at 200 Hz if the stylus velocity—and the cartridge output—is to remain the same. This relationship matters little at high frequencies, where it is possible to get high velocities (and therefore high amplitudes) without large stylus excursions, but low frequencies become real vinyl hogs. Without some compromise, it would be necessary either to cut records with very wide grooves to accommodate those wide bass excursions, thereby sacrificing playing time, or to accept high distortion.

There is a workable compromise embodied in the industry-standard RIAA equalization, which is now applied to every record made. The RIAA recording curve results in a disc with an almost constant-amplitude characteristic, which means that, for example, tones of equal amplitude at 100 and 200 Hz would go onto a disc with the 100-Hz tone 6 dB weaker in terms of groove velocity than the 200-Hz tone, but with the same groove-excursion amplitude. Below 50 Hz, it becomes constant-velocity.

New Equipment Reports

Preparation supervised by Robert Long, Michael Riggs, and Edward J. Foster.
Laboratory data (unless otherwise noted) supplied by Diversified Science Laboratories.

Sony Shows Us the Future



Sony TA-AX5 integrated amplifier. Dimensions: 17 by 3 inches (front panel), 12 inches deep plus clearance for connections. AC convenience outlets: two switched (100 watts max. total), one unswitched (100 watts max.). Price: \$410. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Sony Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: Sony Corp. of America, 9 W. 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

RATED POWER 18 dBW (65 watts)/channel

OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (both channels driven)
8-ohm load 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ dBW (95 watts)/channel
4-ohm load 14 dBW (25 watts)/channel
16-ohm load 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ dBW (60 watts)/channel

DYNAMIC HEADROOM (8 ohms) +2 $\frac{1}{4}$ dB

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD; 20 Hz to 20 kHz)
at 18 dBW (65 watts) \leq .058%
at 0 dBW (1 watt) \leq .011%

FREQUENCY RESPONSE
+0, -1/2 dB, <10 Hz to 24.8 kHz; -3 dB at 69.7 kHz

RIAA EQUALIZATION
fixed-coil phono +0, -1/4 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz; -1 dB at 5 Hz
moving-coil phono +0, -1/2 dB, 30 Hz to 20 kHz; -7 $\frac{3}{4}$ dB at 5 Hz

INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (re 0 dBW; A-weighting)
sensitivity S/N ratio
tuner input 18 mV 88 $\frac{1}{2}$ dB
fixed-coil phono 0.29 mV 77 $\frac{1}{2}$ dB
moving-coil phono 21 μ V 77 dB

PHONO OVERLOAD (clipping at 1 kHz)
fixed-coil 135 mV
moving-coil 9.3 mV

PHONO IMPEDANCE
fixed-coil 53k ohms at 1 kHz (complex)
moving-coil 105 ohms

DAMPING FACTOR (at 50 Hz) 55

HIGH FILTER -3 dB at 13 kHz; 6 dB/octave

INFRASONIC FILTER -3 dB at 13 Hz; 6 dB/octave

EVERY NOW AND THEN a product seems to sum up what's going on among its peers—to be a signpost of sorts, indicating which way you should look if you want a glimpse of the future. That's the way the Sony TA-AX5 integrated amplifier strikes us. It combines Sony's latest circuitry with a digital control scheme that has been conceived with both performance and usefulness in mind and does so within the confines of a package that is both lean and radical.

Part of the idea behind using an IC (the CX-789, which is a product of Sony's own semiconductor technology) as a control element in this integrated is that the signal no longer need be routed through the usual labyrinth of switches, potentiometers, and so on—each of which can contribute in one way or another to noise and distortion at the output. As a by-product, you get storable tone and filter settings and volume and balance settings that are accurately calibrated to one-tenth of a decibel! Since we regularly find jumps of several dB with detented conventional volume controls, the TA-AX5's 1-dB steps seem luxuriously subtle, while the fact that balance settings remain constant as you change volume settings, instead of wandering by several dB, is even more of a blessing.

The numerical readout for this function shows dB of attenuation, so the number goes up as the volume goes down. Since the only sensible reference is the full-volume setting, this scheme is rational; if you find the only sensible reference is the full-volume setting, this scheme is rational; if you find the numerical "contrary motion" off-putting, there's also an illuminating bargraph to show you volume settings in more

conventional form. As soon as you touch the BALANCE, this illuminating graph converts to a centering display; it reverts to a volume indicator when you touch the VOLUME once again. Both controls are rectangular plates whose two ends act as directional (down/up or L/R) stepping switches.

The tone/filtering section is more complex. A graph-like escutcheon sketches the functions and contains six small, round pushbuttons to control them. Beginning at the left, there is an on/off switch for the infrasonic filter, a selector for the lower (nominally 250-Hz) bass-control turnover, the higher (500-Hz) bass control, the lower (3-kHz) treble, the higher (6-kHz) treble, and the high filter (on/off). Lighting indicators above these controls show filter activation as a stylized high-pass or low-pass response curve and register the bass and treble selections numerically. When you press the BOOST (+) or CUT (-) buttons—of which there are separate sets nearby for bass and treble—the lit display also shows a progressive rise or fall in the appropriate end of the frequency range. The action is quite gentle (with about 10 dB of cut or boost at the extreme settings in the bass and even less in the treble), and the variable turnover points are genuinely useful for solving specific problems. The filter slopes, too, are on the gentle side. And when you've got all these controls set just where you want them, you can press the "Acoustic Flavor" MEMORY at the bottom of the panel and enter the whole shebang in one of the two "flavor" settings at the upper right. (The

...and then came the SE-9.

35 years ago, to satisfy listening preferences, serious music lovers had to redesign their listening rooms. Remove the drapes. Add a rug here. Rearrange the upholstered sofa there. Get rid of that crystal chandelier!

Bass and treble tone controls came later, and they helped—but only a little. When you needed a boost in that lowest bass region, you had to accept boosted upper bass and mid-range tones as well—whether you needed them or not.

By 1958, the first equalizers appeared. They allowed you to alter specific bands of tones to suit the needs of the listening room—and the music program. With special mics, a pink noise generator, and a real-time

analyzer, you could electronically adjust your system to your listening preference. If—that is—you didn't mind spending several thousand dollars and a half hour adjusting and readjusting controls to enjoy a half hour of listening.

Then came Sansui's remarkable SE-9 Compu-Equalizer. It takes the guesswork and the frustration out of equalization. At the touch of a button, the SE-9's built-in pink noise generator feeds its signals first to one speaker, then the other. Sounds picked up by the SE-9's calibrated microphone are then analyzed by its microprocessor. Sit back and watch in amazement, as the SE-9's motorized system moves each of its

16 fader controls (8 per channel) to create the curve that yields precisely flat response at your preferred listening location.

Touch another button, and the curve is memorized for future, instant recall. Move to another location—even another room—and the SE-9 can create and store a new curve—up to four of them.

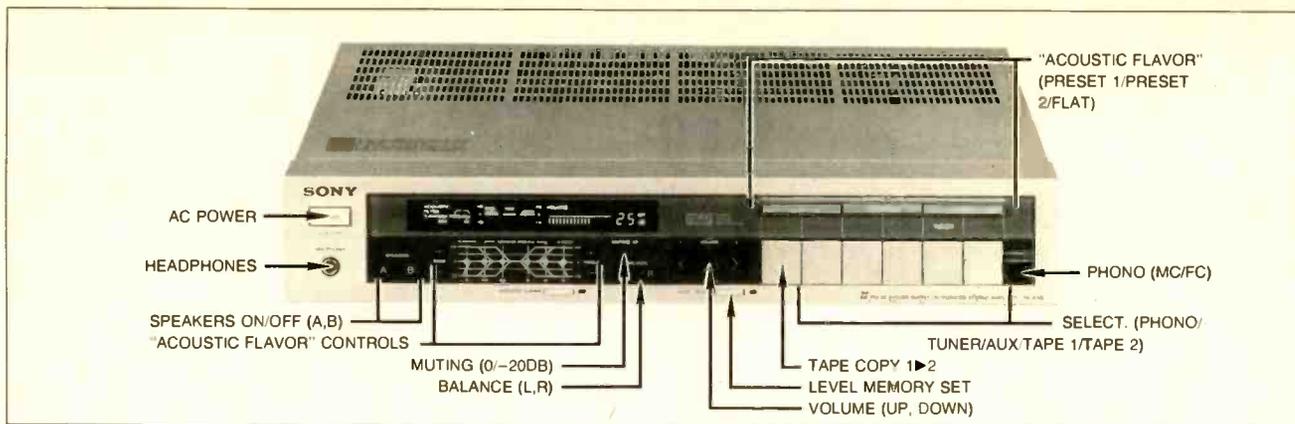
At last, after 35 years, a perfect equalization system without errors or frustration. And, at a price that makes perfect equalization affordable for all serious music lovers.

See the SE-9 and Sansui's truly complete line of high-quality components and systems at your Sansui dealer today. Or write to us for details.



SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORPORATION
Lyndhurst, New Jersey 07071, Gardena, CA 90248
Sansui Electric Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan

Sansui



third switch in that group defeats all tone and filter switching—whether at the memories or at the master panel). You can thus preserve independent speaker equalization for each of the possible speaker pairs, store two degrees of loudness compensation tailored to your particular taste (there is no other loudness contouring), or devise two kinds of touch-up equalization for old non-RIAA LPs; the tone-memory possibilities suddenly seem very useful despite our having done without them all these years.

There also is a memory function on the volume control. It can accept level differences of as much as ± 10 dB relative to the tuner input (which is fixed) for all the other sources. If, for example, you program it so that there always will be 5 dB more gain on the Tape 1 setting than on TUNER, attenuation will increase by 5 dB each time you go from tape to tuner, and decrease by 5 dB each time you go the other way, no matter what attenuator setting you started at. In effect, this produces the same result as those little screwdriver input-level adjustments that used to appear on the back panels of some fancy gear, but without the added bother associated with them—or the potentially degraded S/N ratios.

The amplifier circuitry is called Legato Linear by Sony, applying the musical term for a continuous, seamless melodic line to the unfrilled, notch-free appearance of waveform sinusoids that it reproduces even at low levels, according to the designers. The power supply is Sony's pulsed design, which doubtless contributes to the model's racing-trim spareness by minimizing the bulk of the power transformer.

The 8-ohm power rating is 65 watts (18 dBW) per channel, and the amp pumped out considerably more; the 2¼-dB headroom measurement indicates that it will deliver the equivalent of 20¼ dBW, or a little over 100 watts, on musical signals. And distortion is both very low and confined almost exclusively to the benign second harmonic, even at full power. The protective circuitry does not seem to like low-impedance loads, however: for whatever reason, waveform alteration (actually a notch, rather than the usual clipping) appears with the 4-ohm load when output power reaches 6 dB below the 8-ohm clipping level, restricting the useful power with the lower load. This will affect only users whose speakers dip to relatively low impedances in the power range, where most of the musical signal energy occurs, but it is a surprising limitation in a product that, otherwise, is so exceptional. (The only other possible snag: Fixed-coil phono input capacitance varies slightly with frequency.)

In concept and in outward looks—with its slate blue, charcoal gray, and silver a sharp break from traditional styling—the TA-AX5 is both radical and, in our view, trend-setting. There surely are audiophiles who will fight the trend—and they will find plenty of walnut veneer and rotary controls to suit their taste—but many more should be enthusiastic about what Sony has accomplished. If you take your stereo gear seriously, you owe it to yourself to have a look; if nothing else, a few minutes spent playing with the controls will tell you how much sheer fun the future may be.

Circle 133 on Reader-Service Card

Report Policy: Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by Diversified Science Laboratories. 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. HIGH FIDELITY and Diversified Science Laboratories assume no responsibility for product performance or quality.

About the dBW . . .

We currently are expressing power in terms of dBW—meaning power in dB with a reference (0 dBW) of 1 watt. The conversion table will enable you to use the advantages of dBW in comparing these products to others for which you have no dBW figures.

WATTS	dBW	WATTS	dBW
1.00	0	32	15
1.25	1	40	16
1.6	2	50	17
2.0	3	63	18
2.5	4	80	19
3.2	5	100	20
4.0	6	125	21
5.0	7	160	22
6.3	8	200	23
8.0	9	250	24
10.0	10	320	25
12.5	11	400	26
16	12	500	27
20	13	630	28
25	14	800	29



Controls on the TA-AX5 are integrated with illuminated displays that show the operating status of each function; tone/filter section is pictured here.

MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION.



In our zeal to build superb tape recording equipment in the extreme, we at Teac are sometimes driven to steal. From ourselves.

The extraordinary X-1000R illustrates this very well. In it, we have incorporated professional features originally designed for our TASCAM recording studio equipment.

These include a linear LED counter which measures tape in hours, minutes, and seconds. A Search To Cue (STC) and Search To Zero (STZ) capability. In addition, there's Auto Reverse in both directions, in play or record.

The X-1000R, as is current professional practice, employs DBX* noise reduction. An exclusive in home reel-to-reel. And also, as in professional recording equipment, full-tension servos guarantee high stability and accuracy. And low wow and flutter specs of just .03% @ 7½ IPS.

All of which add up to an impressive collection of features, we think you'll agree. And if we happened to borrow a lot of them from our professional designs, well that shouldn't bother you one bit.

TEAC MADE IN JAPAN BY FANATICS.

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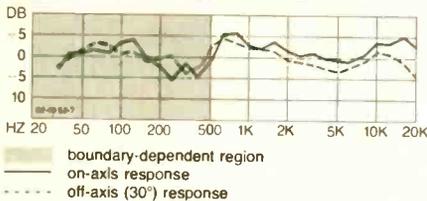
* dbx® IS THE REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF dbx INC., NEWTON, MA.



Audio Pro's Matched Set

Audio Pro B2-40/S2-7 three-piece loudspeaker system (two satellite speakers and a floor-standing bass module), in wood enclosures. Dimensions: satellites, 9 by 15½ inches (front), 6 inches deep; bass module, 14¾ by 20½ inches (front), 14¾ inches deep. Price: B2-40 subwoofer, \$695; S2-7 satellite speakers, \$395 per pair. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: 3Dgruppen ab, Sweden; U.S. distributor: Intersearch, Inc., 4720-Q Boston Way, Lanham, Md. 20801.

ROOM RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS



SENSITIVITY (at 1 meter; 2.8-volt pink noise; 250 Hz to 6 kHz) 92¾ dB SPL

PULSED OUTPUT (at 1 meter; 300 Hz) 117 dB SPL from 35½ volts peak



These Audio Pro S2-7 satellite speakers (directly above) are designed specifically for use in a three-piece system with the Audio Pro B2-40 subwoofer pictured at top.

WHEN WE REVIEWED Audio Pro's first "Ace Bass" subwoofer, the B2-50 (October 1980), we noted with pleasure its excellent performance and unusual versatility. Since then, the company has introduced a little brother, the B2-40, which has performance characteristics similar to those of the original (although bass extension and maximum output level are slightly reduced), but is more compact and substantially less expensive. Like the B2-50, it has a built-in electronic crossover and bass amplifier, along with separate, continuously variable controls for the sensitivity of the bass amplifier and the cutoff frequencies of the high- and low-pass sections of the crossover network.

The B2-40 can be used with just about any pair of speakers: minispeakers or nominally full-range systems that need just a little something extra in the bottom octave or electrostatic panels, for example. Here, though, we are reviewing it in conjunction with a pair of Audio Pro S2-7 satellite speakers designed specifically for use with the B2-40 (or B2-50) in a three-piece system. The S2-7 is a small, two-way speaker with a 7-inch woofer and a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter flush-mounted on its front baffle; the removable grille is acoustically transparent black foam. Amplifier connections are made via color-coded spring connectors on the back panel.

The S2-7s are designed to be hung on a wall, where they are agreeably unobtrusive. Because of their small size, however, they are noticeably bass-shy, making the use of a subwoofer virtually mandatory for full-range reproduction. This, of course, is the design premise of the system. Naturally, wiring the complete set-up is a little more involved than is the case with conventional speaker systems. The S2-7s are connected directly to the main speaker outputs of your amplifier or receiver. The B2-40 is then added by means of one of two methods. The first (and preferred) one is for use with separate preamps and power amps or with integrated amps and receivers having preamp-out/amp-in jacks. One end of a special adapter terminates in four cables with pin plugs: two for your preamp outputs, two for your power-amp inputs. The other end of the adapter is a DIN plug that mates with a jack on the B2-40's control panel. The output from the preamp passes through the B2-40's electronic crossover, which blends the two channels at frequencies below the low-pass cutoff setting and sends the resulting mono signal to the subwoofer's own amplifier. Information above the high-pass cutoff frequency is returned through the adapter to the power amp that drives the satellites.

The alternative connection is for amps and receivers that do not have preamp-out/amp-in jacks. In this case, the subwoofer and the satellites are all connected to the main speaker terminals. Although sometimes the only practical arrangement, this scheme has the disadvantage that the satel-

lites are driven over the full frequency range: The high-pass filter in the electronic crossover cannot be used.

Once the necessary connections are made, the system must be balanced by setting the satellite and subwoofer crossover frequencies and the sensitivity of the subwoofer amp. (The latter determines the output level of the subwoofer relative to that of the satellites.) The final decisions on these adjustments (especially the sensitivity setting) must be made by ear, but Audio Pro does give recommended starting points. Those for the crossover settings, at least, should be about right in most cases.

Diversified Science Laboratories used a separate preamp and power amp and adopted the manufacturer's recommended crossover settings—120 Hz for the low-pass section feeding the subwoofer, 100 Hz for the high-pass section feeding the satellites. As a result, only the frequency-response and distortion tests bring the subwoofer itself into play. The system sensitivity test (which is based on response to a pink-noise input rolled off below 250 Hz and above 6 kHz) and the power-handling tests (which are performed at 300 Hz) essentially place no signal within the passband of the subwoofer, even with the crossover's low-pass filter set to its maximum cutoff frequency of 200 Hz. And because the B2-40's two 5½-inch drivers are powered directly by the built-in amplifier, the impedance measurements also apply only to the satellites.

The overall impedance curve is smooth, but relatively low, remaining below 4 ohms over much of the audible range, rising to peaks of just over 6 ohms at 110 Hz (the bass resonance frequency) and over 11 ohms at 1.5 kHz (presumably the vicinity of the satellites' crossover frequency). Lows of about 3½ ohms occur at 375 Hz and above 11 kHz. Most (though not all) amplifiers should drive this load without difficulty, but we would recommend against paralleling another set of speakers with the S2-7s.

DSL found the system's sensitivity to be high and its power-handling capacity to be unusually good considering the compactness of the satellites. The Audio Pro can easily deliver as much volume as conventional full-range speakers, and with lower distortion than most. Indeed, distortion figures for the B2-40/S2-7 combination are unusually good, especially in the deep bass, where the distortion-canceling servo-controlled Ace Bass configuration really proves its mettle. At a modest level of 85 dB SPL, total harmonic distortion reaches a maximum of 1% at 160 Hz (just above the bass crossover), averaging about 0.5% over the full measurement range of 30 Hz to 10 kHz. Distortion increases at higher levels, but even at 100 dB SPL, it never rises above 5% (again at 160 Hz) and averages about half that; THD at 30 Hz is just barely more than 2%. This very impressive performance will be compromised somewhat if the entire

THE ONLY THING MINI ABOUT THE MINI-WIZARD IS ITS SIZE.

Sure, we built a super-compact auto sound system that's easy to install in any vehicle. But we made certain that was the only small-thing that went into the design of the MINI-WIZARD.

In fact, we used the latest computer age technology to create the ultimate traveling sound—in a very mini chassis. Imagine a stereo driven by 88 watts of power with a frequency response from 30 to 15,000 Hz (± 3 dB). Unique standard features include a five band graphic equalizer that can contour sound to your exact taste and vehicle acoustics. System-wide micro-processor electronics instantly respond to feather-touch controls. And an optional remote control can put the Wizard's magic into everyone's hands—not just the driver.

Experience the luxury of the computerized tuner that automatically scans radio frequencies and pauses at each station for your response. The MINI-WIZARD's memory will retain 5 FM and 5 AM stations. And you won't accidentally miss a favorite radio show while listening to a cassette. Pre-set Program Timing will eject the cassette, and your radio program will come on.

The extraordinary micro-processor controlled tape deck includes an APS function which allows you to pre-select songs and skip ahead or back up to five songs.

Inspect the complete and nearly endless list of features. Note the impressive specifications and TEN's advanced circuitry that defines and enhances signal reception, diminishes noise and decodes Dolby* recordings. The MINI-WIZARD meets the demands of an audiophile, within the price range of the discriminating consumer.

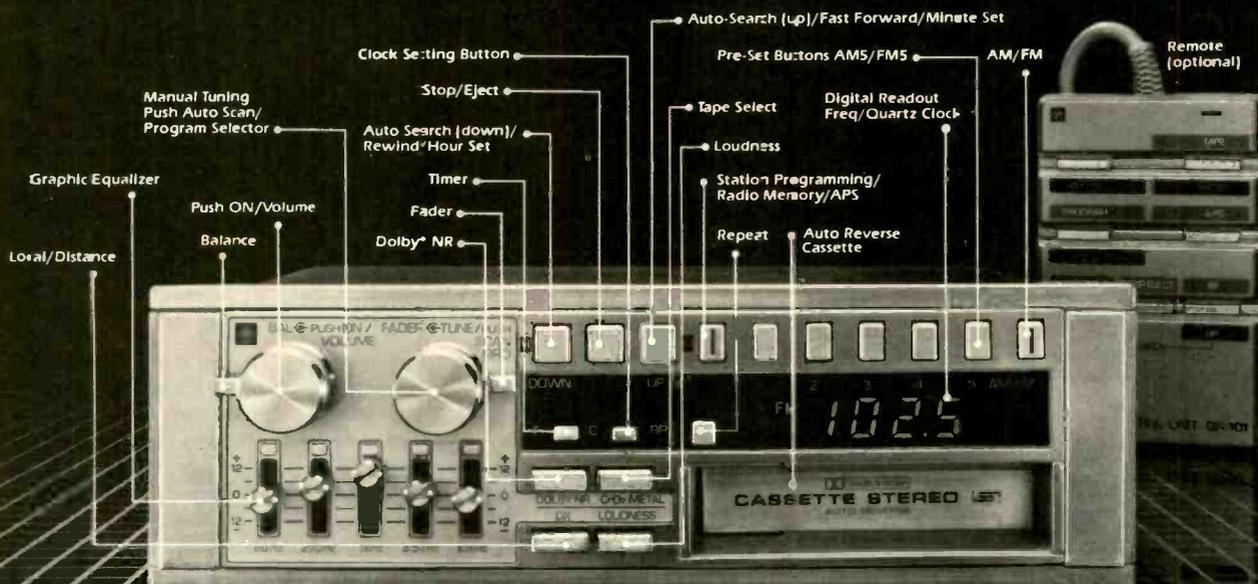
In Japanese, TEN means "heaven," the ultimate. In America, TEN is the best you can imagine. In car stereo, TEN-technology is the state-of-the-art. The MINI-WIZARD is a TEN—down to the smallest detail.



It has to be perfect
to be a Ten.

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In Canada: Norelco Canada Inc., Ontario
Manufactured by Fujitsu TEN Ltd.

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Circle 4 on Reader-Service Card

system is driven directly from your amplifier's speaker outputs, because the satellites' small woofers will then be driven down to very low frequencies, but we expect that most users will arrange to use the more elegant line-level connection.

The system's on-axis frequency response is within about ± 5 dB from 30 Hz to 20 kHz, the principal anomaly being a broad notch centered on about 300 Hz, probably caused by cancellation effects from floor and ceiling reflections. Off-axis response falls within about the same limits and is, if anything, a bit smoother, with a slightly subdued treble range because of the tweeter's directivity at high frequencies.

Setting the system up in our listening

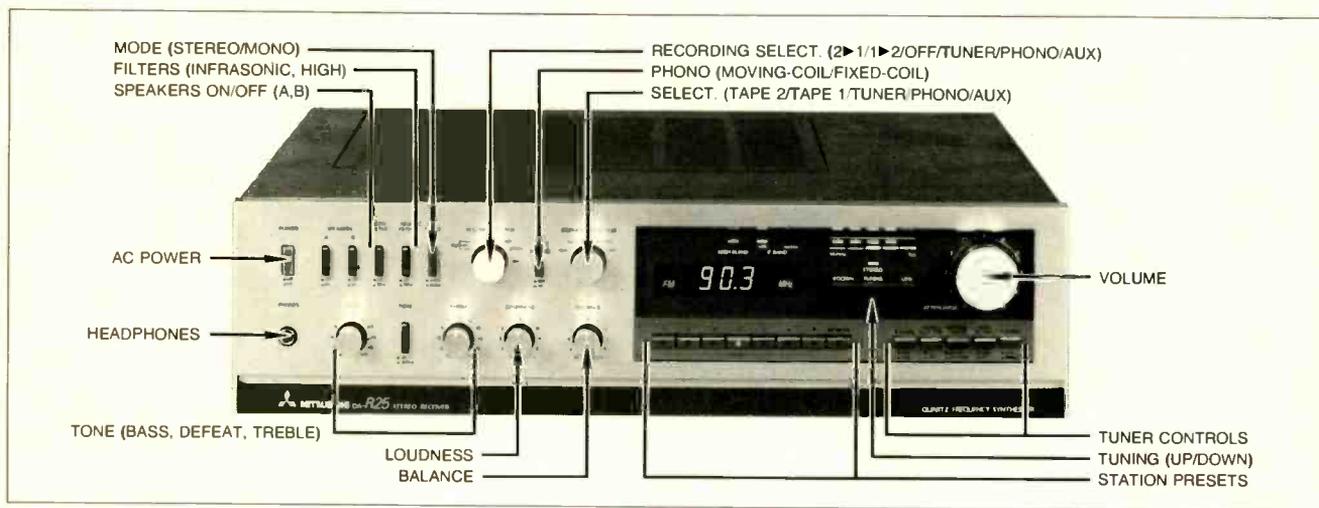
room was slightly more involved than usual, but we encountered no difficulties. Audio Pro's suggested crossover settings worked well, and it took only a few minutes to find a satisfactory setting for the B2-40's sensitivity control.

We hung the satellites on the rear wall, approximately at ear level and several feet in from the side walls; the subwoofer went against a side wall about midway up the length of the room. So positioned, the system sounds clean and essentially neutral, with no unnatural emphasis of any part of the frequency spectrum. (It would, of course, be easy to get a very heavy low end from this system just by turning up the subwoofer, and you probably have heard some

three-piece systems demonstrated that way. As the Audio Pro proves, this does not have to be.) Imaging is exceptional, and combined with the open, effortless quality of the B2-40's bass reproduction (a product, perhaps, of its unusual extension and freedom from distortion), it occasionally yields that elusive "you are there" sensation only very fine speakers can produce.

Although the B2-40/S2-7 combination is not inexpensive, we think many audiophiles will find it to be worth every penny. Few systems of any kind—three-piece or conventional—are at once as visually self-effacing and sonically distinguished as this one.

Circle 134 on Reader-Service Card

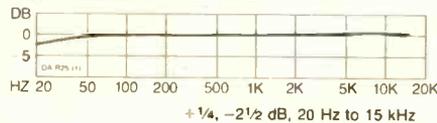


A Solid Receiver from Mitsubishi

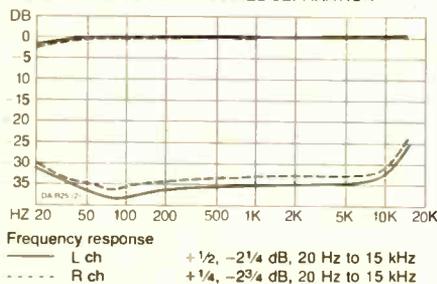
Mitsubishi DA-R25 AM/FM receiver. Dimensions: 18½ by 5 inches (front panel), 14 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. AC convenience outlets: two switched (200 watts max. total), one unswitched (200 watts max.). Price: \$540. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Mitsubishi Electric Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: Mitsubishi Electric Sales America, Inc., 3030 E. Victoria St., Compton, Calif. 90221.

FM tuner section

MONO FREQUENCY RESPONSE



STEREO RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION



WE HAVE YET TO TEST any gear from Mitsubishi that didn't strike us immediately as solidly built. The flimsy and the tacky are as inconceivable from its design studios as a pianissimo is from Ethel Merman: Each may have existed at some time, but we never encountered them. The DA-R25 does nothing to dispel our impression. Its sturdy heft when you remove it from its carton, the solid feel of the operating controls, and the sterling performance documented by Diversified Science Laboratories all contribute to our assessment.

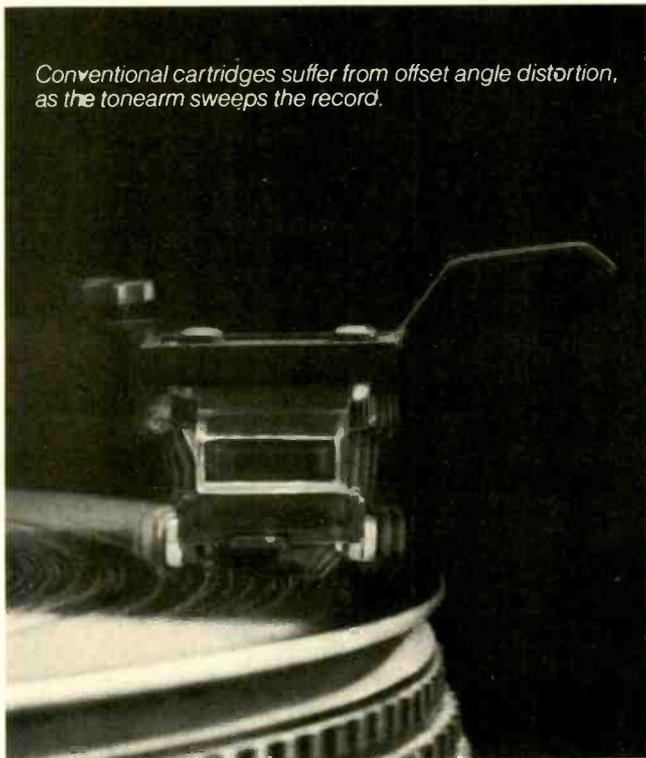
The front-panel controls include all the appurtenances of today's well-bred receiver: a choice of moving-coil or fixed-coil operation in the phono amp, separate taping and monitoring selectors with provision for dubbing in either direction between two decks, memory presets for seven FM and seven AM stations, defeatable tone controls, and even a continuously variable loudness adjustment whose action can be "tuned" to the sensitivity of your speakers and to your sonic tastes. This control is actually a sort of midrange attenuator that progressively introduces a broad trough, centered a little above 1 kHz, into the frequency response as you advance the knob. Thus both deep bass and extreme treble are "boosted" relative to the midrange by the

contouring action. If you prefer the bass-only boost that recent research suggests is a more accurate loudness corrective, you can use the bass control; because its action (like that of the TREBLE) shelves toward the edge of the audio band and is limited to a moderate ± 10 dB or so of boost or cut, its effect is very similar to the bass portion of the loudness contour. Both high and infrasonic filters are relatively effective for their respective uses.

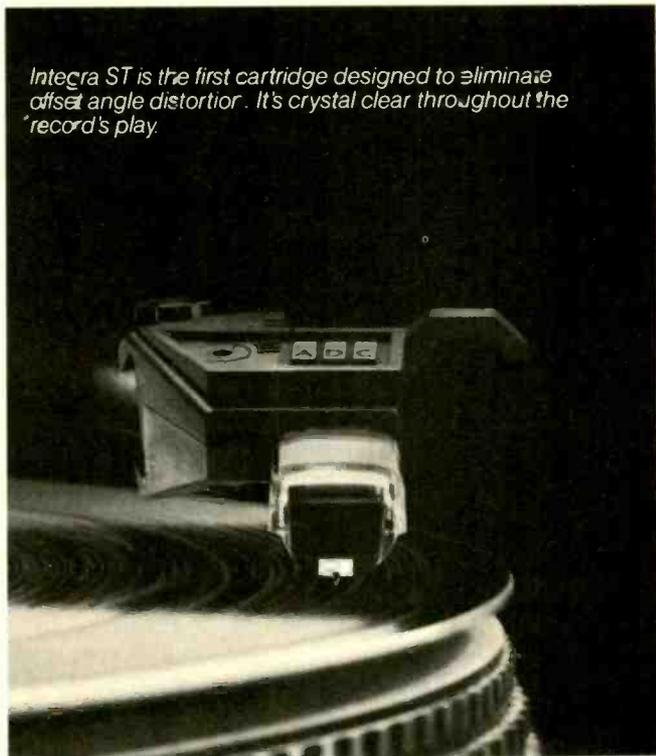
The amplifier section is rated for moderate power (17¼ dBW, or 60 watts, per channel), though the generous 2-dB dynamic headroom means that almost 100 watts per channel (a fraction under 20 dBW) can be delivered into 8-ohm loads on musical signals. At low power (0 dBW, or 1 watt) the distortion barely reaches 0.01%—the threshold below which we consider distortion altogether negligible. The distortion figures are a little higher at rated power, but they represent the benign second harmonic only. Response of the amp/preamp portion of the design is extremely flat with the tone controls defeated, but only reasonably flat with them activated and at their nominally flat settings. Because the deviation under these circumstances runs only about $\pm 3/4$ dB, it's of no significance when the tone controls are in use. The detented VOLUME is

The IntegraTM ST difference:

Conventional cartridges suffer from offset angle distortion, as the tonearm sweeps the record.



Integra ST is the first cartridge designed to eliminate offset angle distortion. It's crystal clear throughout the record's play.



Distortion-free

Integra ST adds tracking angle accuracy to all straight tonearms.

You can adjust your tonearm's weight, and anti-skate. But that's where it ends.

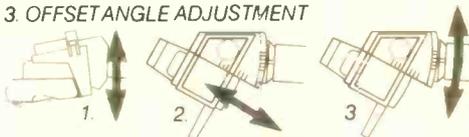
That's where the ADC Integra ST begins.

Unlike any cartridge before it, the Integra ST's Omni-Plane™ design eliminates all audible tracking angle distortion. Not just at one point, but throughout the record's play.

An amazing achievement for ADC engineers. An even greater improvement for your straight arm turntable.

See the adjustments only the Integra ST's Omni-Plane™ gives you:

1. VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE ADJUSTMENT
2. OVERHANG DIMENSION ADJUSTMENT
3. OFFSET ANGLE ADJUSTMENT



Integra ST lowers distortion to raise your whole system's performance.

Because the Integra ST tracks your records the same way the record companies cut them, you get unheard of accuracy and that means unheard of sound quality. Every nuance, every detail will be faithful to the original.

ADC

All carbon fibre construction.

While the ADC ST gives your straight tonearm more accuracy, its carbon fibre construction gives you less mass. At least 40% less. So it tracks the grooves better, and preserves your record collection longer.

And like our Integra for S & J type tonearms it's easy to install, easy to adjust. A single locking screw does it all.

The new Integra ST and original Integra Series.

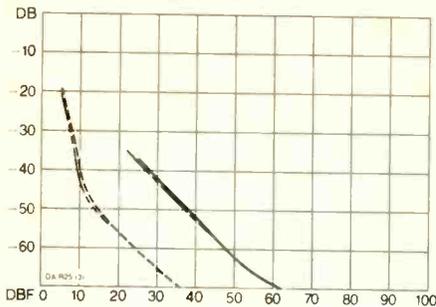
Audio Dynamics Corp.,
Pickett District Road,
New Milford, CT 06776.
In Canada BSR (Canada)
Ltd. Rexdale, Ontario.



Circle 9 on Reader-Service Card

Channel separation ≥ 33 dB, 30 Hz to 1 kHz;
 ≥ 23 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz

FM SENSITIVITY & QUIETING



— stereo quieting (noise), wide mode
 - - - mono quieting (noise), wide mode
 - - - stereo quieting (noise), narrow mode
 - - - mono quieting (noise), narrow mode

Stereo sensitivity (for 50-dB noise suppression)
 wide 37 $\frac{3}{4}$ dBf at 98 MHz, with 0.43% THD+N
 (39 $\frac{1}{4}$ dBf at 90 MHz; 38 dBf at 106 MHz)
 narrow 37 $\frac{1}{4}$ dBf at 98 MHz, with 0.39% THD+N

Mono sensitivity (for 50-dB noise suppression)
 wide mode 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ dBf at 98 MHz
 narrow mode 14 dBf at 98 MHz

Muting threshold 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ dB
 Stereo threshold 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ dB
 Stereo S/N ratio (at 65 dBf) 70 $\frac{3}{4}$ dB
 Mono S/N ratio (at 65 dBf) 75 $\frac{1}{4}$ dB

CAPTURE RATIO
 wide mode 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ dB
 narrow mode 2 dB

SELECTIVITY (alternate-channel)
 wide mode 68 $\frac{1}{2}$ dB
 narrow mode 71 $\frac{3}{4}$ dB

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD+N)

wide mode	stereo	mono
at 100 Hz	0.24%	0.22%
at 1 kHz	0.13%	0.038%
at 6 kHz	0.14%	0.088%
narrow mode		
at 100 Hz	0.30%	0.22%
at 1 kHz	0.17%	0.14%
at 6 kHz	0.22%	0.38%

STEREO PILOT INTERMODULATION
 wide mode 0.074%
 narrow mode 0.13%

INTERMODULATION DISTORTION (mono)
 wide mode 0.035%
 narrow mode 0.067%

AM SUPPRESSION 64 $\frac{1}{2}$ dB

PILOT (19 kHz) SUPPRESSION 68 $\frac{1}{2}$ dB

SUBCARRIER (38 kHz) SUPPR. >100 dB

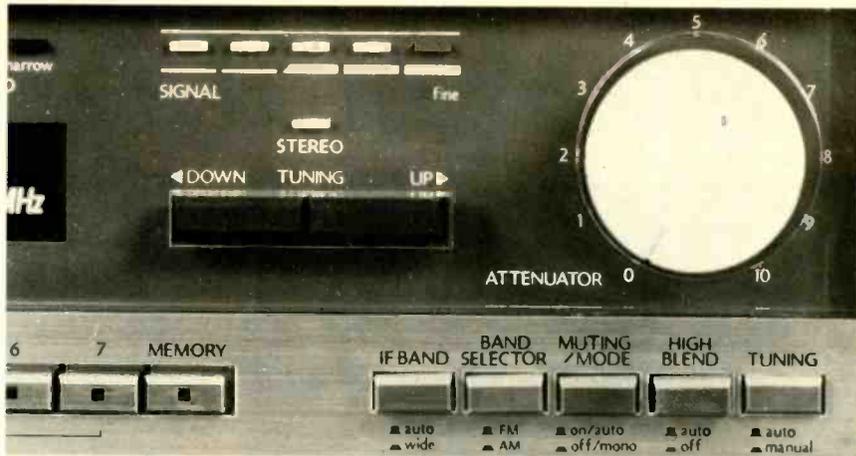
Where IF bandwidth mode is not specified, figures are similar or identical in the two modes and those shown are for the wide mode.

Amplifier section

RATED POWER 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ dBW (60 watts)/channel

OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (both channels driven)

8-ohm load	19 $\frac{1}{4}$ dBW (83 watts)/channel
4-ohm load	20 $\frac{3}{4}$ dBW (120 watts)/channel
16-ohm load	17 dBW (50 watts)/channel



The DA-R25's comprehensive tuner controls include a signal-strength meter, an IF-bandwidth selector, and an automatic high blend for weak stations.

less irregular than some in the progression of its increments, but toward the bottom of its range (where you would use it with speakers of relatively high efficiency) the steps become rather coarse, jumping 5 dB and more between some "notches."

The real star of the show, however, is the tuner section. It offers a choice of IF bandwidths: NARROW for minimum interference, particularly in tuning weak signals in crowded portions of the band, and WIDE for minimum distortion in the absence of strong competing signals. As you can see from the data, neither mode involves having to put up with less-than-good performance in any respect. Alternate-channel selectivity, for example, is superb even in the wide mode; adjacent-channel selectivity is better in both modes than most switchable tuners are in WIDE, and is actually somewhat better in WIDE than in NARROW. There is the usual coupling between the muting defeat and the mono-only reception

mode, though the separate preamp mode switch will let you turn stereo reception to mono without defeating the muting. We don't see why you'd want to do that, however, because of Mitsubishi's automatic-blend feature, which reduces noise with a crossfeed between channels when signal strength gets weak. Thus the point at which noise becomes intrusive is postponed automatically as signal-strength drops. In fact, we found we left the BLEND engaged during listening, defeating it only to hear the difference on weak stations.

All this adds up to a very fine receiver with exceptional features, flexibility, and performance for its moderate power rating. To put it another way, most companies save many of the R25's goodies for their top-of-the-line superspiffy models, which usually have more power and significantly higher prices. Mitsubishi offers the buyer a welcome luxury without ostentation.

Circle 135 on Reader-Service Card

DAMPING FACTOR (at 50 Hz)	270	INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (re 0 dBW; A-weighting)	
DYNAMIC HEADROOM (8-ohm load)	+2 dB re 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ dBW (60 watts)	aux	sensitivity 18.4 mV S/N ratio 86 dB
HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD; 20 Hz to 20 kHz)	at 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ dBW (60 watts) $\leq 0.017\%$ at 0 dBW (1 watt) $\leq 0.010\%$	fixed-coil phono	0.34 mV 76 $\frac{1}{2}$ dB
FREQUENCY RESPONSE	+0, -1/4 dB, <10 Hz to 29.6 kHz; -3 dB at 114 kHz	moving-coil phono	26 μ V 73 dB
RIAA EQUALIZATION	fixed-coil pickup $\pm 1/4$ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz; -1 $\frac{1}{4}$ dB at 5 Hz moving-coil pickup $\pm 1/4$, -1/2 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz; -4 $\frac{3}{4}$ dB at 5 Hz	PHONO OVERLOAD (clipping at 1 kHz)	fixed-coil 290 mV moving-coil 23 mV
		PHONO IMPEDANCE	fixed-coil 48k ohms; 80 pF moving-coil 100 ohms
		HIGH FILTER	-3 dB at 7 kHz; 12 dB/octave
		INFRASONIC FILTER	-3 dB at 21 Hz; 12 dB/octave

A Micro Seiki for the Masses

THE LAST TURNTABLE we tested from Micro Seiki (the DDX-1000, March 1977), though fairly expensive, was a thoroughly Spartan affair. True, it had provisions for mounting three tonearms at once, but it came with none. It was designed for the serious audiophile who just wanted a device to spin records very, very well—which, we found, was exactly what it did. We now

have an opportunity to examine what the same company is doing today to satisfy the needs of users at the opposite end of the market.

The MB-12 is a low-price semiautomatic turntable with a straight, low-mass tonearm. Removing the arm from its rest and pushing it toward the belt-driven platter starts rotation at either 33 or 45 rpm.



The Blaupunkt CR-2010. Richer, purer sound than you ever thought possible in a moving vehicle.

Autosound is only as good as the equipment it passes through. Which means that, in the case of the Blaupunkt CR-2010, the sound is exceptional.

The CR-2010 coddles and shapes highs and lows into a sound as full-bodied, as richly-textured, as anything you'll hear from a home stereo.

4 Channel Amplifier

Blaupunkt increased the conventional two channels to four, each with a maximum output of 7.5 watts. Even when hooked up to a front



The essential controls are fully illuminated. At the end, two-speaker system, the CR-2010's crisp reproduction will surprise you. Add two rear speakers and the home stereo effect is complete—sound that surges to new heights of clarity

and richness while holding its delicate balance through the magic of a built-in front-to-rear fader.

Holds Signal Longer

Drive away from the signal source of your favorite stereo station and what happens? Reception breaks up into a barrage of crackles and hisses. Not with the CR-2010. Thanks to the "Soft MPX" feature your Blaupunkt automatically shifts reception from stereo to mono *before* the hissing sets in.

Higher Volume without Distortion

The CR-2010 has a pre-amp output jack that lets you bypass the built-in amp and plug directly into a high power amplifier. Yet the boost in volume doesn't come at the expense of distorted sound. And at lower volume the clarity is actually enhanced.

Of course, you get Dolby Noise Reduction—but for FM reception

as well as tape. A Sendust Alloy tape head reproduces a fuller range of recorded frequencies.

Hear the Full Blaupunkt Line

The CR-2010 retails for only \$396.00** and is the latest in a full line of Blaupunkt AM/FM stereo cassette radios priced from \$290.00**

CR-2010 Features

- 4 channel (4 x 7.5W)
- Autoreverse Cassette
- Sendust Alloy Tape Head
- Auto Hi-Cut Filter
- Soft Mute
- Soft MPX
- Night Illuminated Controls
- Dolby Noise Reduction Circuit

*Dolby is a registered trademark of Dolby Laboratories.

Blaupunkts can be installed in virtually any car, import or domestic. For more information, write:
 Robert Bosch Sales Corporation
 2800 South 25th Avenue
 Broadview, IL 60153
 Robert Bosch Canada, Ltd.
 6811 Century Avenue
 Mississauga, Ontario L5N 1R1

**Suggested U.S. retail prices. The Blue Dot and Blaupunkt are registered trademarks of Blaupunkt Werke GmbH.

BLAUPUNKT
 ©1982 Robert Bosch Sales Corporation



Micro Seiki MB-12 semiautomatic single-play turntable ensemble. Dimensions: 17¾ by 14 inches (top plate), 5½ inches high with cover closed; additional 10 inches vertically and 2 inches at back required to open cover fully. Price: \$150. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Micro Seiki Co., Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Scientific Audio Electronics, Inc., 701 E. Macy St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90012.

SPEED ACCURACY

at 33 rpm 0.25% fast, 105–127 VAC
at 45 rpm 0.15% slow, 105–127 VAC

WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak)

±0.12% average; ±0.23% max.

TOTAL AUDIBLE RUMBLE (ARLL) –54½ dB

TO NEARM RESONANCE AND DAMPING

vertical 9 Hz; 24 dB rise
lateral 9 Hz; 4½ dB rise

STYLUS-GAUGE ACCURACY

set for 0.5 gram	0.7 gram
set for 1.0 gram	1.15 grams
set for 1.5 grams	1.6 grams
set for 2.0 grams	2.1 grams
set for 2.5 grams	2.6 grams
set for 3.0 grams	3.05 grams

TOTAL LEAD CAPACITANCE

90 pF

depending on which of the two speed-selector buttons on the left front corner of the MB-12's black plastic base you have pressed. When the pickup reaches the record's lead-out groove (or when you hit the reject button at the right front of the base), the arm automatically returns to its rest and shuts off the turntable.

Set-up is equally straightforward. The turntable rests on four isolation feet. Removing two transit screws frees the motor suspension. It is then necessary to slide the platter onto its bearing and pull the belt out from the platter's inner rim and over the motor capstan. (Speed change is mechanical, by means of a lever that shifts the belt between wide and narrow segments of the capstan.) The counterweight must be screwed onto the rear of the static-balance tonearm, which has a plug-in headshell secured by a setscrew. The final step, short of mounting a cartridge and balancing the arm, is attaching the dust cover. This is done by inserting the bottom tabs of a pair of friction hinges into slots on the rear of the base and then sliding the slots on the rear of the dust cover over the hinges' upper tabs.

Our only beef with the whole procedure is that Micro Seiki's owner's manual for the MB-12 is rather skimpy and may leave some who are inexperienced in the ways of turntables a little unsure of themselves in places. In particular, there is no mention at all of how to set correct stylus overhang or even that it is important. This omission virtually guarantees unnecessarily high tracing distortion unless you use a pickup-alignment "protractor" for setup.

Although the MB-12 ran a shade off speed in Diversified Science Laboratories' tests (a hair fast at 33 rpm, a split-hair slow

at 45), the degree of deviation is negligible; more important, the synchronous motor kept it running at the same speed regardless of line-voltage variations. Wow and flutter—especially the peak values—of the measurement sample are somewhat higher than we are used to seeing, mainly because of a prominent once-around wow component. This characteristic isn't readily apparent in our audition sample, however. Rumble also is higher than usual but, again, not enough so to be easily audible under most normal listening conditions.

The MB-12's strong suit turns out to be its tonearm, which is exceptional for a turntable in this price class. With a Shure V-15 Type III cartridge—whose weight and compliance are characteristic of most top-quality pickups—the low-frequency arm/cartridge resonance is both well-placed and well-damped. This means that many of the best high-compliance cartridges will work better with this turntable than with many more expensive models, most of which have tonearms of significantly higher effective mass than that of the MB-12's.

Which leads to an interesting—to some, perhaps slightly heretical—thought: For someone on a tight budget, combining an MB-12 with a really top-flight cartridge might make a lot of sense. It puts more money into the component that will have the greater effect on the system's sound without compromising its inherent performance with an inferior tonearm. With that in mind, we'd say that this bid by Micro Seiki for the low end of the turntable market is as successful in its own way as was the company's earlier swing at the high end. And that's a real achievement.

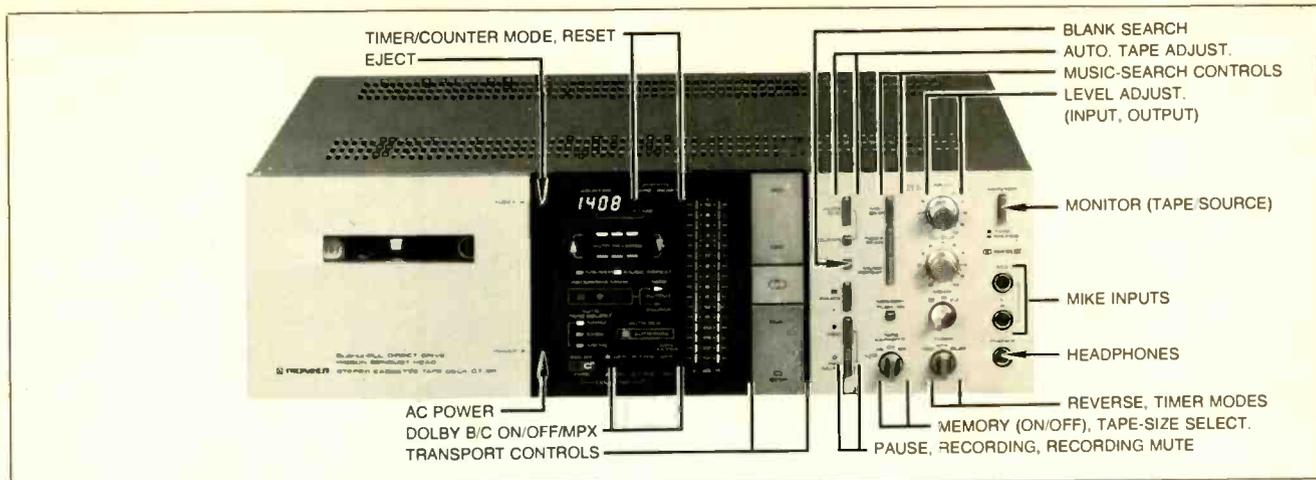
Circle 132 on Reader-Service Card

Pioneer's Do-Everything Cassette Deck

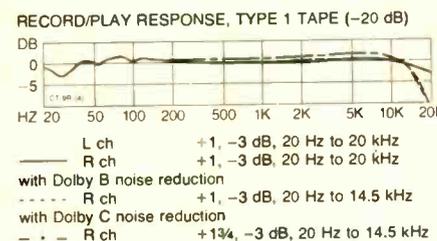
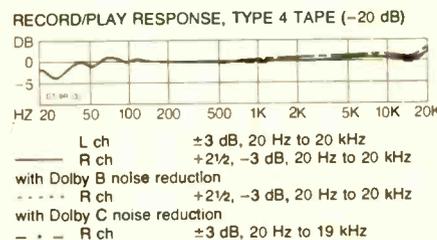
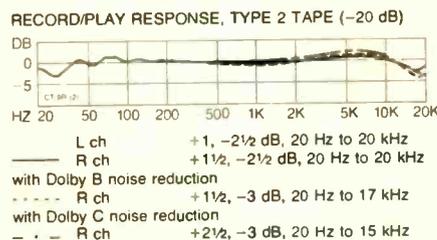
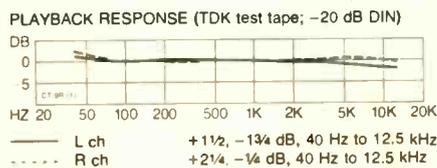
A FEW YEARS AGO it simply couldn't have been done: If you had talked of an automatic-reverse cassette deck with separate recording and playback heads, automatic tape matching and cueing aids, a device to let you know precisely how much recording time remains on the cassette in use, and a noise reduction system that would outperform Dolby B—and all for less than

\$750—most recordists would have questioned your mental competence. All those elements existed in one form or another, but nobody had combined them in a single deck, and nobody seemed likely ever to do so at such a price. But now it's here as the CT-9R, the top cassette deck in Pioneer's thoroughly revamped component line.

Like its siblings, the CT-9R features a



Pioneer CT-9R cassette deck, with Dolby B and C noise reduction and bidirectional playback. Dimensions: 16½ by 5 inches (front panel), 12 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$675; optional JT-216 remote control, \$50. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Pioneer Electric Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 85 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074.



S/N RATIO (re DIN 0 dB; R/P; A-weighted)

	Type 2 tape	Type 4 tape	Type 1 tape
without noise reduction	59¼ dB	57¾ dB	59 dB
with Dolby B	65½ dB	64½ dB	65¼ dB
with Dolby C	71¾ dB	71 dB	71 dB

central front-panel area in which illuminated diagrammatic elements tell you exactly how the deck is switched and what it is doing: a sort of status schematic. Once you become familiar with it, this panel can tell you from across the room what most decks will reveal only if you squint at their switch positions and panel markings—a significant plus with any component (as we remarked in reviewing the A-5 integrated amp for the January issue) and almost a necessity with a deck as complicated as this one. Not that Pioneer's designer hasn't done a yeomanly job of organizing the multitude of pushbars and so on: The layout is exceptionally clear, considering the number of elements involved, but the added visual aid is very welcome.

Some of the main controls are double-ended panels: PLAY and STOP, for example, and the two fast-wind modes. Many are narrow pushbars. Among them, only RECORDING is red, and atypically (among cassette decks) it is not an interlocking control: The deck will go directly into the recording mode if you simply push this one bar. If you don't want recording to begin immediately, you must first press PAUSE.

Also very direct in its operation is the tape matching. The initial setting is made by the deck itself after sensing the wells molded to the back edge of the cassette you insert into the transport. The CT-9R switches to "chrome" bias and EQ if the keyways are present next to the recording-prevention knockouts and to metal-tape bias and EQ on sensing the proper additional keyways. In the absence of any indicator notches, the deck stays set for standard ferric tapes. (There is no manual override to accommodate ferrichrome cassettes, for example, and if you have early or off-brand chrome or metal cassettes without the keyways, they could pose problems in this deck; fortunately, such keyless cassettes are rare.)

If you want to start recording without further adjustment, the deck will supply its programmed bias and EQ for the tape type it has determined you are using. Or, if you want to fine-tune the recording parameters

to your particular tape brand, you can use the BLE (for bias/level/equalization) adjustment. When you touch its pushbar—even during fast-wind modes, according to the manual—the automatic process begins, signaled by a winking of the AUTO-BLE pilot; after less than ten seconds, during which the blink rate grows faster and faster, the deck is adjusted for the tape you've inserted.

Diversified Science Laboratories used this control for final setup before using TDK SA for all Type 2 ("chrome") measurements (including those for which no tape is specified in our data). TDK MA for Type 4 (metal), and Fuji FX-I for Type 1 (ferric). In terms of all the usual properties—response flatness, high-frequency headroom, noise, and distortion—the results with SA are at least good and generally excellent. With both of the other two tapes, flatness of high-frequency response and freedom from high-level compression are even better than they are with SA. And, of course, the excellent response flatness implies—and, in this case, delivers—excellent Dolby tracking. With Type 2 tapes on this sample, we heard a slight brightening of tonal balance that disappeared when we switched to a premium Type 1 or Type 4 tape for our recordings.

In playback, there are a number of nice convenience features. First is the automatic playback-only reversing, which can be defeated or switched for either out-and-back or continuous operation. If you want to repeat only a single number, press MUSIC REPEAT; when the transport comes to the blank at the end of the music that's playing, it will rewind to the previous blank, cue up, and recommence playback. If you want to check the contents of a tape, press INDEX SCAN; the transport will play the first few seconds of each number and then shuttle ahead to the next, using the blanks between numbers as its cue for sampling. This ability to differentiate between recorded and blank sections is applied by BLANK SEARCH, which is programmed to stop wherever it finds a blank patch longer than 8 seconds and cue to the beginning, making it easy to

METER READING FOR DIN 0 DB

Type 2 tape	+8 dB
Type 4 tape	+6 dB
Type 1 tape	+4 dB

METER READING FOR 3% DISTORTION (333 Hz)

Type 2 or 4 tapes	+8 dB
Type 1 tape	+6 dB

DISTORTION (third harmonic; at -10 dB DIN)

Type 2 tape	≤1.47%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz
Type 4 tape	≤0.88%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz
Type 1 tape	≤0.75%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz

ERASURE (333 Hz; re DIN 0 dB)

≥70¾ dB

CHANNEL SEPARATION

49¾ dB

SPEED ACCURACY

0.6% fast, 105-127 VAC

WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak)

	average	maximum
playback	±0.07%	±0.09%
record/play	±0.10%	±0.15%

SENSITIVITY (re DIN 0 dB; 333 Hz)

line input	110 mV
mic input	0.50 mV

MIKE INPUT OVERLOAD (clipping)

48 mV

MAX. OUTPUT (from DIN 0 dB)

0.73 V

A Quick Guide to Tape Types

Our tape classifications, Type 0 through 4, are based primarily on the International Electrotechnical Commission measurement standards.

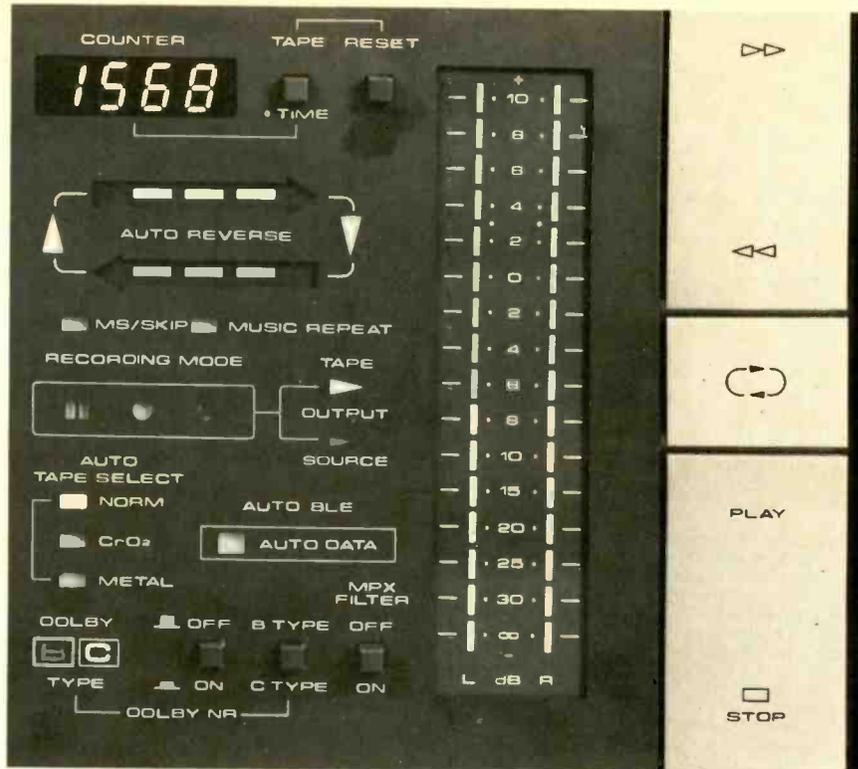
Type 0 tapes represent "ground zero" in that they follow the original Philips-based DIN spec. They are ferric tapes, called LN (low-noise) by some manufacturers, requiring minimum (nominal 100%) bias and the original, "standard" 120-microsecond playback equalization. Though they include the "garden variety" formulations, the best are capable of excellent performance at moderate cost in decks that are well matched to them.

Type 1 (IEC Type I) tapes are ferrics requiring the same 120-microsecond playback EQ but somewhat higher bias. They sometimes are styled LH (low-noise, high-output) formulations or "premium ferrics."

Type 2 (IEC Type II) tapes are intended for use with 70-microsecond playback EQ and higher recording bias still (nominal 150%). The first formulations of this sort used chromium dioxide; today they also include chrome-compatible coatings such as the ferricobalts.

Type 3 (IEC Type III) tapes are dual-layered ferrichromes, implying the 70-microsecond ("chrome") playback EQ. Approaches to their biasing and recording EQ vary somewhat from one deck manufacturer to another.

Type 4 (IEC Type IV) are the metal-particle, or "alloy" tapes, requiring the highest bias of all and retaining the 70-microsecond EQ of Type 2.



The CT-9R's display panel, to the left of the transport controls, includes vertical fluorescent recording-level meters and illuminated function indicators.

find the end of the recorded portion of unfinished tapes. (Don't hold the RECORDING MUTE down too long, or you may fool the search into stopping prematurely.) And MS/SKIP will jump forward over any blank spots longer than 8 seconds and recommence playback when it finds a signal once again; if you press the fast-wind control during playback with this switch on, the transport will skip over the rest of the selection and go on to the next.

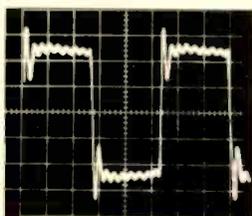
This deck's collection of features may sound bewildering—and is bewildering on

first meeting, despite Pioneer's manual, which is above average in its explanations—but its operation quickly becomes familiar and its operator fluent in making it do easily things most decks can't do at all. More important, perhaps, is that the things it will do are all worth doing. (Some decks, rather like trained fleas, accomplish prodigies to little practical purpose.) Add to this the design's technical competence and its innovative panel approach, and we find the CT-9R an exceptionally attractive product. **Circle 136 on Reader-Service Card**

European Refinement from AKG

AKG P-25MD fixed-coil phono cartridge with multiradial diamond stylus. Price: \$250. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: AKG, Austria; U.S. distributor: AKG Acoustics, Inc., 77 Selleck St., Stamford, Conn. 06902.

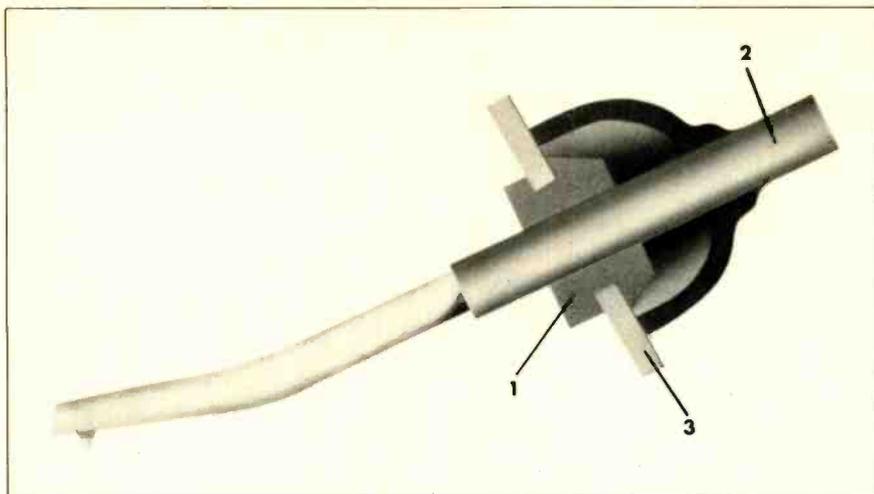
SQUARE-WAVE RESPONSE



THE MOST UNCONVENTIONAL FEATURE of AKG's original cartridge line was the company's proprietary TS-System suspension, which holds the stylus cantilever in place with a compliant grommet that passes through a hole in a thin metal support plate. The hole is barely wider than the cantilever tube, so that the assembly approximates a circular knife-edge bearing that allows the stylus relatively free movement laterally and vertically while preventing unwanted longitudinal or rotational motion. According to AKG, this results in lower distortion and crosstalk than is possible with more typical designs. For that reason, the company has retained the TS-System suspension in its three new pickups, of which the P-25MD is the top model.

Feeling that it yields the lowest possible moving mass, AKG has also stuck with the induced-magnet principle of transduc-

tion—a variant of the moving-iron approach whose actual operation more nearly resembles that of a moving-magnet pickup than that of a traditional variable-reluctance design. Like a moving-magnet cartridge, the AKGs have a magnetized element attached to the rear of the cantilever. The motion of that element relative to a set of pole pieces induces a fluctuating voltage in the coils. But where a moving-magnet cartridge uses a small permanent magnet, an induced-magnet pickup has a thin tube of a magnetically permeable material into which a magnetic field is induced by a relatively large, powerful magnet fixed to the cartridge body or stylus-assembly housing. AKG's new pickups incorporate a samarium-cobalt cylinder magnet, which is said to reduce their overall mass and to enable the use of lower coil inductances (the rating for the P-25MD is a mere 170 millihenries—



AKG's TS-System suspension uses a compliant grommet (1) to hold the stylus cantilever and armature (2) in place. The grommet passes through a hole in a thin metal support plate (3). Because the hole is barely wider than the armature, the assembly approximates a circular knife-edge bearing.

low enough to make it less sensitive to capacitive loading than most other fixed-coil pickups).

Another innovation common to all the new AKGs is a conductive plastic body that drains off electrostatic charges that might otherwise migrate from the record surface to the pickup housing and collect there, causing the disc and cartridge to repel each other and thereby lowering the effective tracking force. AKG says that the new body significantly reduces such tracking-force variations.

Unique to the P-25MD is AKG's new Analog-6 stylus, which has six facets

angled to approximate as closely as practical the shape of a record-cutting stylus. The goal here, as with other modern multiradial styli, is reduced tracing distortion.

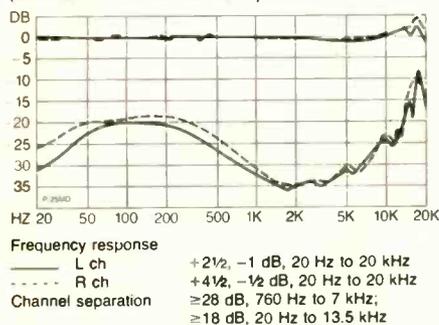
Whether because of the stylus shape or of some other design feature, the P-25MD produced quite respectably low harmonic and intermodulation distortion in Diversified Science Laboratories' tests. And its tracking ability, though not the very best DSL has measured, also proved very good, enabling the P-25MD to negotiate all bands of our standard pure-tone torture test at its minimum recommended tracking force of ¼ gram. However, best performance was obtained at the manufacturer's maximum recommended force of 1¼ grams, which was used for all other bench and listening tests.

DSL found the pickup's sensitivity to be lower than average (though not enough so to create incompatibility with any normal amplifier) and channel balance to be excellent. Working into the manufacturer's recommended load of 47 kilohms in parallel with 450 picofarads, the P-25MD produced very smooth response, with a slight dip of no more than 1 dB in the lower treble and a rise above 10 kHz to a peak of a few decibels near 15 kHz. Separation is very good over the entire frequency range and exceptional from about 500 Hz to 10 kHz.

Square-wave response is excellent, showing a single well-damped cycle of overshoot (the low-level ringing is an artifact of the test record) and no rounding of the waveshape. The vertical tracking angle (which, as measured by the twin-tone IM method at high frequencies, is also influenced by the stylus rake angle) is higher than the 20-degree DIN standard, but no more so than that of many other fine cartridges we have measured. (In any case, we have not found any clear correlation between these figures and a cartridge's sonic performance.)

Mounted in an SME 3009 Series II

FREQUENCY RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION
(test record: JVC TRS-1007 Mk. II)



SENSITIVITY (1 kHz) 0.70 mV/cm/sec

CHANNEL BALANCE (1 kHz) ±¼ dB

VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE 24-30°
(depends on test-record measurement band)

LOW-FREQUENCY RESONANCE (In SME 3009)
vertical 11.8 Hz; 14½ dB rise
lateral 11.8 Hz; 15½ dB rise

MAXIMUM TRACKING LEVEL (re RIAA 0 VU; 1¼ grams)
lateral +15 dB
vertical ≥+12 dB

WEIGHT
cartridge alone 4.8 grams
auxiliary weight 1.9 grams
plastic wedges 0.3 gram

Improved tonearm, which has an effective mass of approximately 9 grams, the P-25MD exhibited a strong low-frequency resonance at the upper edge of the 8-to-12-Hz range we consider optimum: no doubt the result of the cartridge's light weight and moderate compliance. This suggests that—unlike most other top pickups, which normally weigh more and have higher compliance, allowing only low-mass arms to extract their best performance—the P-25MD will work well in the medium-mass arms found on the majority of turntables now in use or on the market.

Probably because they alter the source material so little, today's best cartridges sound remarkably similar to one another. And so it is with the P-25MD. Its tonal balance is essentially neutral, with perhaps just the slightest touch of emphasis on high-frequency transients, such as from cymbals. Imaging is stable and spacious, and we have not been able to induce noticeable mistracking with the discs at our disposal. If there is any characteristic that does particularly distinguish this new AKG, it is clarity, which occasionally seems subtly more in evidence than with most other cartridges we have used. And we can find nothing in its sound to complain about, nothing that irritates, nothing that makes us want to try something new or return to some old favorite.

What impresses us most, however, is not so much that AKG has made a cartridge that ranks sonically among the best available, but that it has done so much to make life easy for the user. This begins with a design well suited to most available tonearms and ends with good instructions and an extraordinary array of standard accessories, including mounting hardware, a small screwdriver, an auxiliary weight for balancing tonearms not designed to accommodate pickups as light as the P-25MD, an unusually effective stylus-cleaning brush, a small amount of plastic damping compound for use in mounting the cartridge to the headshell of your tonearm, and a remarkably clever and effective aid to performing virtually all cartridge-alignment tasks. This last item consists of two pieces of plastic that are packed flat in the bottom of the cartridge case. Together, they enable you to align just about any cartridge for minimum lateral tracking error, zero lateral tilt, and correct vertical tracking angle (assuming the pickup is correctly designed in this respect), as well as set tracking force. In addition, they serve as a jig for the cartridge, headshell, and mounting hardware during installation. Truly among the most useful items we have ever seen packaged with a cartridge, they are the final touch to an engineering effort apparently directed at least as much to the everyday needs of typical music lovers as to the artificial trials of the laboratory. The result is a cartridge that should make many people happy.

Circle 131 on Reader-Service Card

Spring Stereo Component Preview

A sneak peek at what's new and what's next, based on first-hand reports from the Japan Audio Fair, the Audio Engineering Society Convention, and press previews.

Components you'll be seeing now and later this year began emerging from their developmental cocoons several months ago. First at the annual Japan Audio Fair in Tokyo in October, then at the Audio Engineering Society's show in New York City in November, and finally at a series of press previews during the final weeks of 1981, manufacturers unveiled their new 1982 models.

Some products—especially those seen in Japan—may never reach the U.S. market, so our coverage of this and the AES shows centers on what they portend for new and future U.S. audio components.

And, though this issue was prepared before the annual Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, many companies announced early what they "planned to announce," so our coverage here comprises the first exemplars of these introductions. Our complete roundup will commence on a more thoroughgoing basis next month.

1982 WCES Preview

you to record or play any preselected station or tape. Programming can be done up to a week in advance; as many as eight programs can be scheduled in a single day.

Pushbutton controls are linked to various displays indicating the operating status of each. The built-in graphic equalizer, controlled by UP and DOWN keys, will provide as much as 10 dB of boost or cut. Rated at 120 watts (20 $\frac{3}{4}$ dBW) per channel, the \$1,250 receiver includes a digital frequency-synthesized tuner with six AM and six FM station presets, provisions for three pairs of speakers, two-way tape dubbing, and fluorescent peak-power meters.

tweeter and Polk's Isophase crossover network. Although the Monitor Fours are full-range speakers, they can be used as satellites when mated to the Polk LF-14 subwoofer (not shown), which has a built-in passive dividing network with selectable crossover frequencies. The LF-14 costs \$280; the Monitor Fours are \$100 apiece.
Circle 121 on Reader-Service Card



You can wake up to high fidelity sound with Kenwood's new KR-1000 receiver. A Program Mode Commander retains four different signal sequences in memory; in combination with the built-in timer (and a tape deck with a timer feature) they enable



Design concepts adapted from Polk Audio's larger models are incorporated into the company's new Monitor Four loudspeaker. This compact speaker has a Trilaminar Polymer woofer coupled with a

An automatic-reverse function that operates in both recording and playback is one of the features of Akai's GX-F66RC cassette deck. The two-motor deck has a twin-field Super GX glass and crystal-ferrite head and Dolby B and C noise reduction. Other features include INTRO SCAN, which plays back the first ten seconds of each selection on the tape; BLANK SEARCH, which scans the tape for unrecorded sections more than three minutes long, lays down four seconds of silence, and then switches to RECORDING STANDBY; and a RANDOM SEARCH capable of selecting twenty programs in any order from as many as ninety-nine selections per cassette side. Price is \$475.
Circle 122 on Reader-Service Card



A combination graphic equalizer and CX noise reduction system will soon be available from Audio Control. The D-10X's ten-band octave equalizer provides 12 dB of boost or cut in each band. It also has an infrasonic filter to suppress unwanted low-frequency information from record warps. Calibration of the CX circuitry is via front-panel rotary controls and LEDs that read the level of a test signal from a disc supplied with the \$180 D-10X.

Circle 123 on Reader-Service Card



You can select what tunes will be on Hitachi's HT-L70 turntable, thanks to what the company calls Digital Random Program Selection. The \$370 linear-tracking design combines a quartz-locked, direct-drive motor with an automatic record-size and speed adjustment, viscous-damped cueing, and compact styling. The supplied cartridge is a standard plug-in type, using dual moving magnets and an elliptical stylus.

Circle 124 on Reader-Service Card



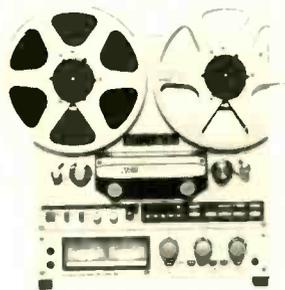
Scheduled for introduction this month is a new satellite speaker system from M & K Sound. Pictured here is one of the S-IIIB satellite speakers, which are designed to be used with the company's Volksworfer-IIIB subwoofer. Each S-IIIB incorporates a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter and a 6½-inch polypropylene midrange driver. The satellites are rated to handle from 15 to 200 watts (11¼ to 23 dBW) and each has two six-position crossover controls (providing a total of thirty-six different balance settings). The III-B subwoofer incorporates a twelve-inch driver with a dual voice coil and a built-in 100-watt (20-dBW) amplifi-

er. The III-B's electronic crossover is set at 100 Hz. Prices to be announced.

Circle 125 on Reader-Service Card



To improve sound quality by eliminating electrical interaction between power amp and preamp stages, Sony has incorporated what it calls Audio Current Transfer (ACT) technology in its TA-AX6 integrated amp. The amp is rated at 70 watts (18½ dBW) per channel into 8 ohms, from 20 Hz to 20 kHz, with no more than 0.004% THD, and sells for \$480.



DBX noise reduction and Extra Efficiency (EE) tape capability are the highlights of Teac's new X-1000R open-reel tape recorder. The transport system uses a dual-capstan, closed-loop drive with a full-tension servo control. Six-heads make bidirectional recording and playback possible, and the machine can accommodate reel sizes up to 10½ inches. Other features include solenoid transport controls and a five-digit tape counter that measures elapsed time in hours, minutes, and seconds. The X-1000R (\$1,400) has a rated signal-to-noise ratio of 100 dB with DBX noise reduction and EE tape.

Circle 126 on Reader-Service Card



Three new loudspeakers are available from Mordaunt-Short. The Carnival 3, Festival 3, and Pageant 3 (priced at \$395, \$525, and \$765 per pair, respectively) use low-loss, close-tolerance capacitors and high-power ferrite-core inductors. The mir-

ror-image pairs can be modified for horizontal mounting or used with the optional stands shown here.

Circle 127 on Reader-Service Card



Nakamichi's computing turntable, the TX-1000, is the first system to correct automatically for off-center or oversize spindle holes. The \$7,000 machine uses a sensor arm that measures the concentricity of the disc's lead-out groove and then recenters the record with a microprocessor-controlled movable platter prior to playing. After alignment, total wow and flutter is rated at 0.02%. The main platter is powered by a brushless, coreless, slotless, Hall-element direct-drive motor with quartz-referenced PLL-servo system. The TX-1000 can accommodate two tonearms, one of which may be twelve inches long.

Circle 128 on Reader-Service Card

A new application of digital technology is embodied in Acoustic Research's first non-speaker product in many years. Although AR does not like to call its Adaptive Digital Signal Processor an equalizer—because it can do things no conventional equalizer can do—it does perform a similar function. At the push of a button, the ADSP feeds pink noise alternately to the two speakers in a stereo system. A microphone placed at the approximate listening position picks up the output from the speakers and passes it on to the ADSP, which digitizes and stores the information. A built-in 16-bit microcomputer then uses proprietary software to analyze the data. Because the original noise is random, any nonrandomness must be the result of frequency-response aberrations caused by the loudspeakers or the room. Once the ADSP has determined what these errors are, it synthesizes a separate digital filter for each channel to cancel them as exactly as possible, thereby restoring flat frequency response in the vicinity of the microphone. (Because high-frequency response in the room changes significantly over distances of just a few inches, the ADSP does not operate above 1 kHz.) AR says that because the system is fully digital, the filters have no fixed center frequencies or slopes: They can assume virtually any shape and null out response spikes or notches only a few Hertz wide. The ADSP is still in the prototype stage, but according to AR, it will be available by the end of this year.

Circle 129 on Reader-Service Card
(Continued on page 38)

The New Year's No-Surprise Party

The Japan Audio Fair in Tokyo and the Audio Engineering Society Convention in New York reliably forecast the Winter CES.
by Robert Long

I'LL LET YOU IN on a little secret: In this issue we come on like high fidelity gurus, predicting what will be wowing you later this year, even though we had to write about the new goodies before they were unveiled at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. Pretty spunky of us, you say? Nonsense! Our secret is that the major trends were laid out before us the preceding fall at a pair of industry events, making prediction a snap. Of course, a lot of specifics will be revealed only in Las Vegas (and our April issue will be full of them). But as far as the major thrusts are concerned, there is little room for an upset in the stretch, because the industry must actually work years ahead of itself if marketable products are to be ready on time.

Take the matter of digital audio. The pace of "capability demonstrations" and prototype unveilings has been picking up in the last year or two, and the Japan Audio Fair last October made it plain that the pressure for early adoption of a digital-disc standard has increased radically. In 1980, an important segment of Sony's exhibit was given over to the demonstration of prototype compact discs—the Philips laser-read digital format—while Pioneer showed a

similar but incompatible format, also in prototype. In 1981, Pioneer joined Sony with a prototype Philips-format player, and so did many other companies.

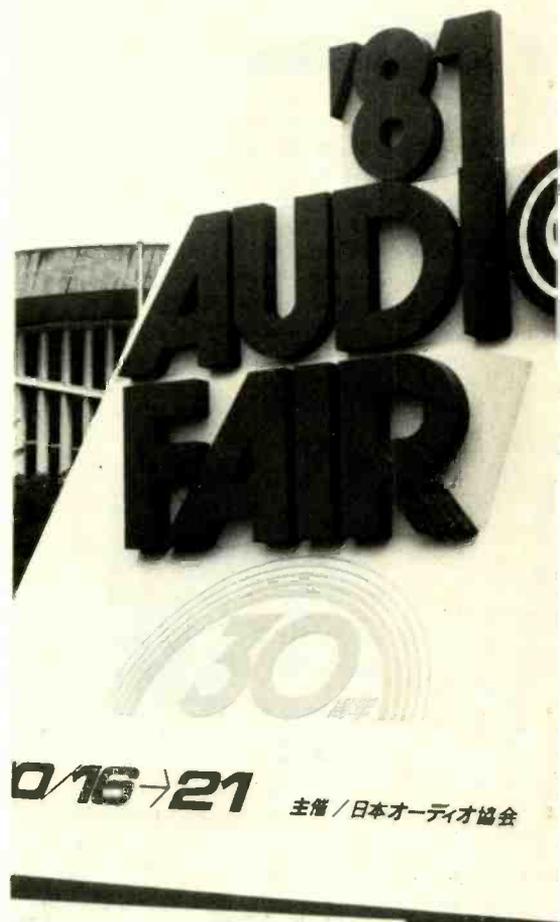
So commonplace were the players, in fact, that the gossip at the Japan Audio Fair centered not on which companies were "in the club," but rather on which were far enough advanced with their prototypes (and, in some cases, with their in-house integrated-circuit production) to get all the necessary electronics into the prototype. Some who lacked the ICs (and therefore the space) relied on outboard digital-to-analog converters tucked out of sight during the demonstrations; others proudly explained that they already could produce a self-contained player. The difference is in time rather than technology, of course; the have-nots can catch up soon enough since many suppliers are at work on the necessary ICs.

Because this digital revolution—impressive though it is—is not yet in production or even scheduled for production, it is subject to almost instantaneous change. Though the preponderance of the digital-disc prototypes in Tokyo followed Philips' lead, JVC's AHD format is there for anyone who wants to adopt it, and the conver-

sion from one format to the other conceivably could overtake the industry at any moment. For the present, then, the point is not the format, but the fact of digital audio discs as a concept whose time appears to be imminent.

So it appears reasonably certain that by the time you read this we will have witnessed a new round of digital-disc demonstrations, with the emphasis on the Philips-style compact disc, as attention-getters, but with introduction dates and prices yet to be announced. What was out of reach in 1981 is just out of reach this year.

A little farther beyond the consumer's grasp, but also moving closer, is a digital compact cassette. Until last year, digital audio tape systems generally relied either on open reels or on video cassettes to supply the tape itself. In Tokyo, and at the Audio Engineering Society Convention in this country in November, several companies came out with prototype decks in which the tape is essentially a regular audio cassette—usually loaded with metal tape. Transport speeds, track formats, and encoding patterns differ from one company to another (at least for the present), but all share a common thrust. In fact, the specif-



ics of any given system can be quite volatile; the message is not how far along any company happens to be at any given moment, but that each has committed serious engineering effort to the development of a compact digital cassette.

In a way, digital audio is the logical extension of the many microprocessor-based functions that have been appearing in componentry in the last few years. The trend continues, and based on what I saw in Tokyo I'd say we're entering a sort of second-generation microprocessor binge. The first round introduced rank upon rank of little pushbuttons—particularly in cassette decks, where various random-access systems were created by the microprocessor chips. The new wave, if I may call it that, goes in for flush squares and rectangles and applies microprocessors in less obvious ways. Digital volume controls are beginning to appear, for example, and may well become as commonplace as digital tuning circuits now are. Touchplate controls similarly seem to be catching the attention of more and more companies.

The imminence of digital audio colors much of what's being done.

As a result, the round knobs and heavily sculpted aluminum faceplates that have dominated electronics—particularly receivers—in recent years may well begin to look a little dowdy compared to the brisk, crisp styling that some companies will have shown in Las Vegas by the time you read this, though traditionalists who avoid what might be called "industrial" styling should have no difficulty satisfying their needs, in moderate-price equipment.

Performance factors in electronics continue to be enhanced by "supercircuits" (including those built into ICs) of one sort or another, though their effect may seem less obvious than that of the convenience features to the average music lover. In turntables, there are a number of new superhefty models whose sheer bulk helps to isolate and refine the act of tracing the record groove. Of these, the most original, perhaps, is the Nakamichi entry (detailed in the product preview on page 37), which senses and corrects for record eccentricity. And loudspeaker designers continue to exert their ingenuity in search of the ideal flat-diaphragm driver, among other things.

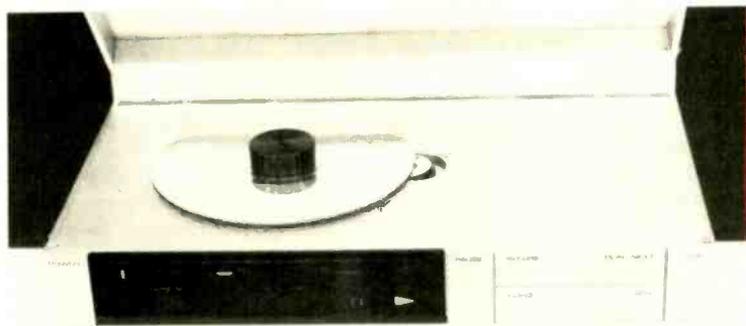
But a sense of the imminence of digital audio colors much of what is being done and said among audio manufacturers, as witness the Tokyo show and the New York convention. And that is certain to be true in Las Vegas, as well.

HF

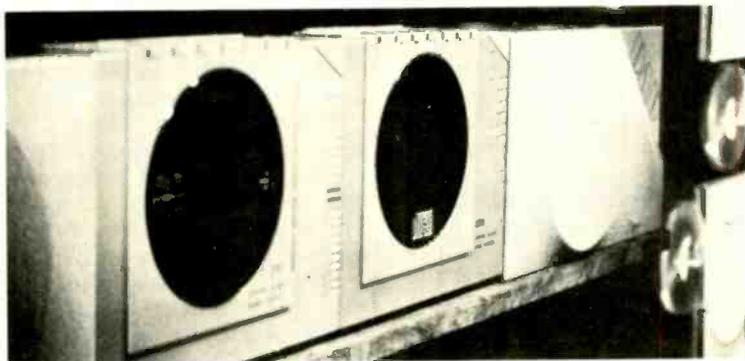
A Sampler of Digital Audio Equipment



This Philips-style laser-read digital record—the so-called compact disc—was the star of the Japan Audio Fair. These Aurex samples in the Toshiba display were merely mockups, however; no production discs are available yet.



Yamaha's prototype player for laser-read digital compact discs, one of many, is cleaner in styling than most.



Sanyo built a compact disc player (far dark circle) into a miniature stereo system that include a microcassette tape deck (left).



Among the ready-to-go (as opposed to rough-prototype) digital tape recorders is Sony's Beta-based two-piece (ADA converter plus deck) system.

An Ounce of Prevention . . .

Careful installation can save you from needless frustration and unnecessary repair bills.
by Edward J. Foster

YOU PROBABLY DON'T RUSH to the doctor every time you have a headache or a queasy stomach: You reach for a patent medicine, and only if that doesn't work do you traipse off to the medic. Of course, if you feel there's something seriously wrong, you head for the doctor immediately, but most of the time that's not necessary. It makes good sense to treat your high fidelity system the same way. You can cure many of its illnesses at home simply and cheaply—in fact, you can sometimes prevent them entirely.

The faults people experience with their high fidelity equipment often originate with poor installation, so here we will concentrate on how to do it right. In fact, to get top performance from your system, you really must install it properly—or hire someone to do it for you. Proper installation is basically quite simple; poor performance usually comes from rushing the job, "making do" with inadequate tools, or just not being careful enough.

The RCA Connection

The instruction manuals packed with components invariably tell you how to connect them to the other units in your system. Of course, you should follow the diagrams and instructions, but it's also important to inspect each connection before and after you've made it to be sure it is firm and clean and not inadvertently shorted. Except for the loudspeaker hookups, the antenna connections to a tuner or receiver, and the microphone and headphone plugs, signal connections on equipment sold in this country usually employ cables fitted with so-called RCA phono plugs. These pins (as opposed to DIN) connectors are small, convenient to handle, and reliable (if you treat them with respect). Actually, each plug makes two connections, one via the center pin and the other by the split collar that surrounds it. The center pin is the "hot," or signal, connection, and the collar is the

"cold," or ground, connection. It is important that both be made securely.

Most pin plugs are made of nickel- or cadmium-plated brass, which can tarnish. This tarnish, a film of oil, or just plain dirt will degrade the quality of the connection, so be sure that the surfaces of the plug and the jack are absolutely clean before you mate the two. You can use very fine sandpaper or fine steel wool to do the cleaning. (If you use steel wool, make sure no metal strings or dust are left in the connection.) Gold-plated plugs and jacks won't tarnish, but they can still pick up oil or dirt. Because the gold plate is very thin, you shouldn't abrade these connectors. Just use pure isopropyl alcohol (not rubbing alcohol) to clean their contact surfaces.

Whether adequate electrical contact can be made through a tarnished connection depends on the signal levels involved. "Line-level" signals will usually break through the oxide layer, especially if there is a reasonable amount of current flowing in the circuit. But low-level signals—from, say, a phono cartridge—may not break down the tarnish layer, so it's most important that these connections be absolutely clean.

Plugging Along

Insert phono plugs with a twisting motion. This will help clean the contacts, especially the one between the center pin and the inaccessible center sleeve of the jack. And be sure that the split outer sleeve of the plug has a firm grip on the outer circumference of the jack. A well-seated pin-plug connection should be physically secure and not too easy to unplug. When removing a cable, grasp the molded plug firmly and use the twisting motion again. Never yank on the cable to disconnect the plug; you're likely to break the delicate wires inside.

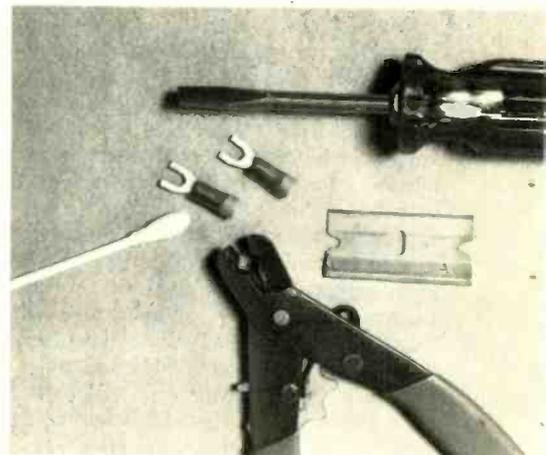
It's worth your while to use quality phono cables. Tarnish-free gold-to-gold

contacts are ideal, but you needn't buy gold-plated plugs to insert into nickel-plated jacks. Regardless of the material from which they're made, the connectors should be of proper size and fit securely, and the molded portion should support the cable firmly to prevent internal damage.

Bad phono-plug connections and poor cables are a major cause of intermittent sound, noise, and hum. If your system is exhibiting any of these symptoms, check every connection and replace any questionable cable before you rush off to the doctor. Check the entire cable, not just the plug ends. A pinch in the cable could have broken the internal wires or shorted them together. Although it is possible to repair a phono cable, it usually isn't worth the effort. New ones are quite inexpensive.

The Final Link

The other "major" connection in your system is between the power amplifier (or amplifier section of your receiver) and the loudspeakers. All sorts of exotic cables are



Some basic installation tools: a cotton swab, spade lugs, a razor blade, a wire stripper, and a screwdriver.

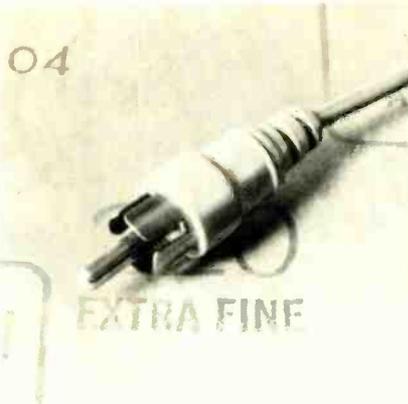
sold for this purpose, and some of them have been known to do more harm than good. All you really need is a cable with very low resistance. The longer the run between amplifier and speaker, or the lower the speaker's rated impedance, the heavier the cable must be.

Speaker wire is rated by a gauge number: the lower the number, the heavier the wire in the cable and the lower its resistance per foot. Cheap 22-gauge wire should never be used. The minimum I would suggest is 18 gauge, and that only for short runs to 8-ohm speakers. A cable of 16 or 14 gauge is always preferable, even if it is not absolutely required. There are even heavier cables on the market, but they get rather expensive and often it is cheaper to move the power amp closer to the speaker.

When connecting the speakers, make sure they are phased properly. Some diehards suggest that "absolute" phasing of the speakers is important—that is, that the speaker diaphragm should move forward when the original source of sound had created a momentary increase in pressure and backward when the original sound pressure was in the opposite direction. Others believe that absolute phasing is unimportant and, in fact, impossible to achieve, because there is no way of knowing whether phase integrity was maintained through the recording, disc pressing, and reproduction chain. No one would disagree, however, that the "relative" phasing between the two speakers is important. When fed identical signals, the diaphragms of both speakers must move in the same direction; otherwise, the stereo image will be destroyed and bass response will be impaired.

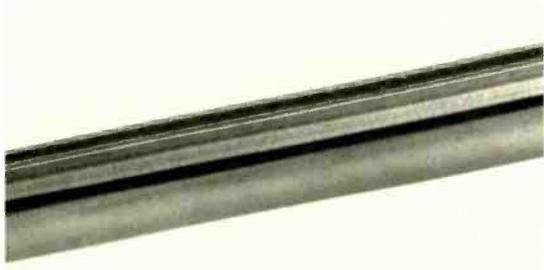
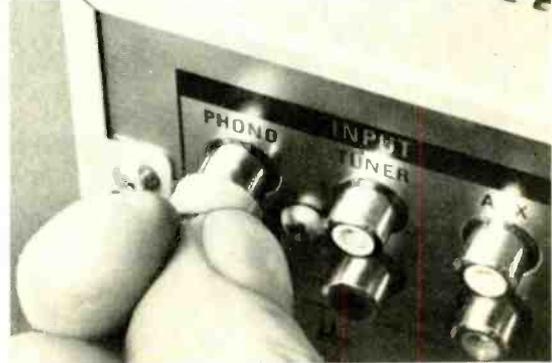
All that is required to maintain relative phase is to connect both speakers to the amplifier in like manner. It makes no difference which wire you connect to the amplifier's red output terminal or to its black output terminal, as long as you do it the same way on both amplifier channels. Similarly, it makes no difference which wire you connect to the red speaker terminal or to the black one, as long as you do it the same way on both speakers. Usually you can identify which wire is which in the pair by its color (copper or silver). "Lamp-cord" usually has a ridge molded into the insulation surrounding one of the wires, or there may be different colored threads in the two wire bundles.

There's a simple way to check relative phasing. Play an old mono record, or switch your amplifier into the mono mode. Set the balance control for equal level from both speakers. Stand somewhat in front of and midway between the two speakers and listen. If the sound seems to be centered directly in front of you, the speakers are in phase and properly balanced. If the sound comes from a specific point slightly to the left or right, the speakers are probably in phase, but the balance is off. Try readjusting the balance control and listen again. If,

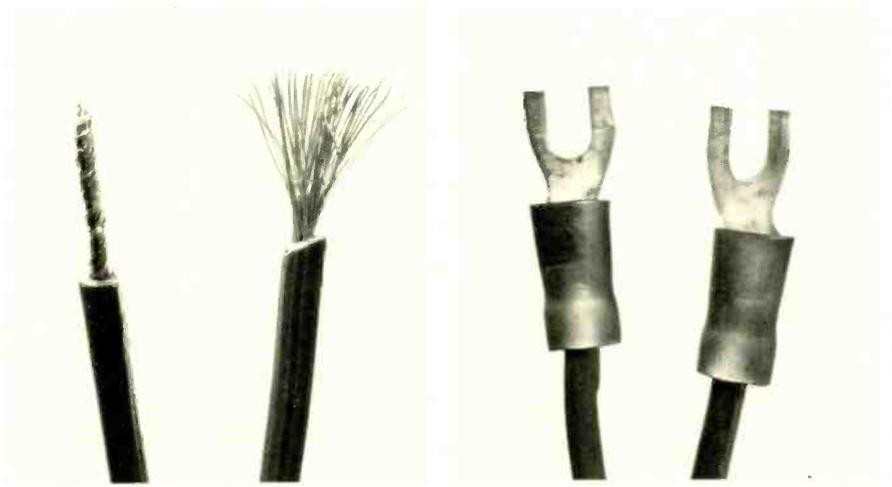


PHOTOS: ROBERT CURTIS

The pin plug (above left) makes the signal connection via a center pin and the ground connection via the split collar. To make a clean, solid connection, grasp the plug by the molded portion and insert it into the jack (above right). Then push it home with a twisting motion (right).

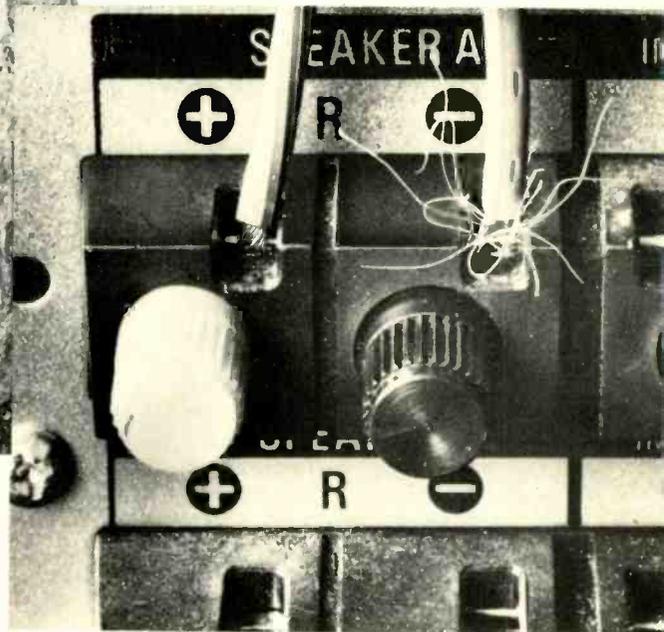
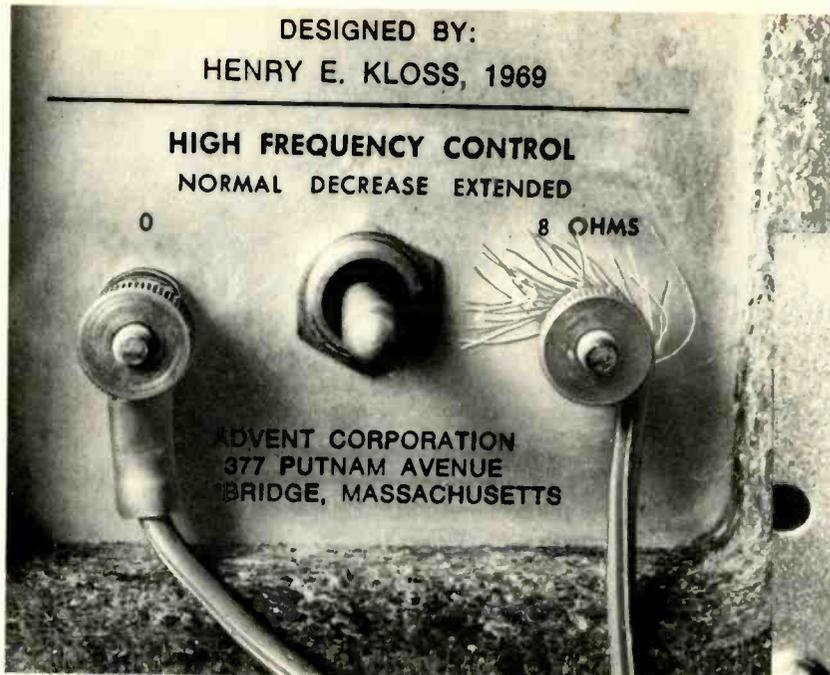


To maintain proper phasing between the speakers, it is important to know which conductor is which when connecting them to your amp. Lamp-cord conductors are color coded, or one side has a molded ridge, as at left.



Bare wires should be twisted together for ease of connection and to minimize the chance of an inadvertent short.

Spade lugs can be crimped on for the neatest, easiest connection to screw terminals, if your equipment has them.



Good and bad speaker connections: The spade-lug connection to the left-hand screw terminal and the twisted-wire connection to the left-hand push-to-insert terminal are neater and safer than the unkempt bare-wire connections to the right-hand terminals.

on the other hand, the sound seems to be coming from all around you rather than from a well-defined point, the speakers are out of phase. To correct the phasing, reverse one set of connections—that is, switch the copper- and silver-colored wires either at the amplifier or at the speaker (but not at both) on just one of the two channels. It makes no difference which one you switch, but don't switch both channels. (Of course, you should turn the system off before changing any connections!)

A good speaker cable has many strands of fine copper wire. You must make sure when connecting it to the amplifier and speaker that none of the strands from one conductor touch those from the other. If you're preparing your own wires (and there's no reason not to), first slice through the center of the insulation that holds the two wires together. Once you get the slit started, you should be able to pull the wires apart. Separate the parallel wires for a distance of two or three inches, and use a wire stripper to remove about one-half inch of insulation from each. (If you're careful, you can use a single-edge razor blade.) Try not to break any of the strands.

At this point you have many options. You can attach GR or banana plugs to the wires if your amplifier or loudspeakers will accept these connectors; you can crimp on spade lugs if they will fit the terminals; or you can eliminate plugs and lugs entirely.

With amplifiers and speakers that use push-to-insert terminals, your best bet is to use the bare wires as they are.

Spade lugs make the neatest connection to screw-type terminals, while GR or banana plugs are easy to disconnect. If you are using very heavy cable, you may find that there are too many strands to fit into the connector you have chosen. With a heavy cable it will do no harm to snip off some strands to fit the connection: Just do it neatly and twist the remaining wires together.

Some experts suggest soldering the strands together to form a single heavy pin, but I prefer not to. Twisting the strands together will usually hold them in place long enough to make the connection, and with the strands free to shift slightly as the connection is tightened, the resistance of the contact should be lower. The danger, of course, is that a loose strand might touch the adjacent terminal, but you can avoid this if you're careful.

Heading Off Hum

If your system is plagued by hum when you play records, even though you've checked every signal connection and each is clean and tight, it's still possible that the fault lies in the installation. An electromagnetic hum field surrounds every power line, so be sure that the cables carrying the low-level signals from the phono cartridge to the

amplifier are routed well away from power cords. Electric motors and transformers set up hum fields, too, so keep the signal cables away from them as well. Also, the magnetic cartridges commonly used in high fidelity systems can themselves pick up hum despite their magnetic shielding. Sometimes just moving the turntable away from an amplifier or reorienting it will greatly reduce audible hum.

Most high fidelity turntables have a separate grounding wire that is normally connected to the amplifier chassis. Make sure that the connection is clean and that the wire is intact. On rare occasions, you can lower hum by disconnecting the wire. But before you make any changes, turn off the power and turn down the volume. Increase the volume gradually after you have disconnected the wire and turned the system back on, in case the hum is severely worse with the connection broken. There's also a possibility that reversing the power plug will alleviate hum. Again, turn the system off, unplug the turntable, rotate the plug 180 degrees, and reconnect it. Leave the plug in the position that gives the least hum.

I've only touched on a few of the system problems that you can cure yourself. Remember, however, that proper installation is the sine qua non of optimum performance, and that care taken at this crucial step goes a long way towards ensuring trouble-free operation.

HF

VIDEO TODAY & TOMORROW™

VideoFronts

Latest video news and products by Dawn Gordon



An electro-servo pickup arm with self-cleaning diamond stylus is among the features in Sharp's VHD video disc player. Slated to be available by early summer, this unit offers video search (at up to 120 times normal speed in forward and reverse), still frame, frame-by-frame advance, variable speed control, and pause. A picture is visible in all forward and reverse modes. The player is capable of stereo playback and can be mated to an optional random-access unit (as in photo) that permits search and programming functions by chapter, by page, or by time. An optional wireless remote control operates all features on both units as well. Price has not been announced.

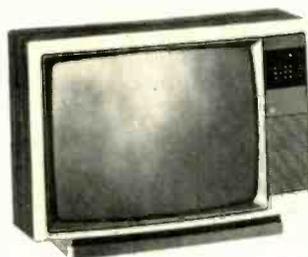


Input flexibility characterizes the Archer Video Selector from Radio Shack (Model 15-1260). Signal routing is possible from any of five inputs (four 75-ohm inputs and one input for computer connection) to any of three outputs, allowing you to view and record two different programs simultaneously. Signals from an antenna, cable-TV converter, VCR, video disc player, or home computer can be routed independently. Isolation is rated at 30 dB and maximum line loss at 3 dB. Price is \$80.

Elegant styling is the idea behind the new Classic Covers video cassette storage case.



The covers are textured in maroon fabric and trimmed in gold scrollwork. Cases are available in two different styles: a slip-in design (\$3.95) and a book style with its own slipcase (\$5.95). Both of the covers are available in VHS and Beta sizes.



An audio-out jack on Sylvania's CLA-308WR 25-inch color television receiver enables you to connect the set to an external speaker system. This table model also features a black-matrix picture tube, a comb filter for added sharpness, and 105-channel capability. The \$830 unit includes a "favorite station" scan, which can be programmed to eliminate unwanted stations, and an infrared remote control.



The ultrasmooth surface of JVC's new High Grade video tape is said to increase tape-to-head contact, thus improving both the video and color signal-to-noise ratios by 3 dB over conventional tape. The

new HG tape is available in VHS format in T-120 (\$30) and T-60 (\$23) lengths.



Earth-station owners can now get true stereo with the Series 4/SC Stereo Satellite Receiver from M/A-COM. The \$1,300 unit receives audio that has been matrixed with left and right channels on separate subcarriers (6.62 MHz and 5.8 MHz). When combined with the Series 4/MS Video Receiver, this unit links your stereo system to your satellite television receiver for video and stereo audio program reception. Frequency response is rated at 50 Hz to 15 kHz, ± 1 dB; separation is greater than 30 dB.



Designed to carry portable VCRs, these new video cases from Blackbourne have aluminum outershells and foam interiors with cutout spaces for equipment. The large case will carry a portable VCR, power pack, and camera. The smaller case accommodates a camera and power pack or a recorder and power pack with room for tapes. Both cases can be locked. Prices have not yet been announced.

An MOS image sensor replaces the conventional video tube in the VK-C1000 camera from Hitachi. This new all-solid-state design is said to



prevent the sticking, lag, and tube burn-in associated with conventional imaging tubes. The camera's f/1.4 lens has a 6:1 zoom with a macro setting. Horizontal resolution is rated at more than 260 lines. Other features include an automatic iris, a unidirectional condenser microphone, and an electronic viewfinder. The VK-C1000 weighs only 3.9 pounds. Price is less than \$2,000.



A tilting VCR cover that swings up and out of the way is available from Pyramid Manufacturing. The acrylic cover is trimmed in chrome and clamps onto the back of your VCR. It comes in four sizes to accommodate both table-model and portable recorders, and sells for \$35.

For more information, circle the appropriate number on the Reader-Service Card.

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M/A-COM	151
Blackbourne	152
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Pyramid	154

Planning Your First Video System— A Basic Introduction

You don't have to spend thousands of dollars for a quality setup.
by Dawn Gordon

THE VAST ARRAY of video equipment available today could perplex anyone. So much of it is new—not only to you, but to the people who sell it—that it's easy to fumble on your first go-round. To avoid the most commonly made mistakes, ask yourself the questions we've outlined here, consider our suggestions, then make your decisions.

Where Will I Put It?

The proper location of your video system should be determined by both aesthetic and practical considerations. It's impractical, for instance, to put your screen too close to a light source, since extraneous light—both artificial and sunlight—will wash out the picture.

You may want to group your audio and video systems in the same area, particularly if you have limited space. By interconnecting the two, you'll be able to hear the audio portion of your video programming to better advantage. For best results, place the loudspeakers so that they flank the television screen. One welcome byproduct of grouping the two systems is shorter cable runs—the shorter the run, the less degradation of the signal, be it audio or video.

There are many ways to display equipment in an attractive manner and save space at the same time. Wall units or shelves (with cables and wires concealed behind books and plants) are one approach; another is to place the various components in a clos-

et, with just the television receiver and speakers in the adjacent room.

How Much Should I Spend?

Video equipment is expensive, but you don't have to spend thousands of dollars to buy a quality system. One way to save is to incorporate your present television receiver into the setup. After all, it only functions as a playback monitor; you can always upgrade later.

If your budget is limited, you might want to purchase one piece of gear at a time. Portable VCRs are especially useful in this respect, because they come in two parts, the recorder and the tuner. Buy the recorder first. (They range anywhere from \$1,000 to \$1,400; average retail price is about \$1,100.) You won't be able to record off-the-air without the tuner, but you will be able to play prerecorded tapes and to record with a borrowed video camera. When you've saved up about \$400, buy the tuner.

Do I Need Time Shift?

Do you really need all those special features? (See November 1981, "Which Features Are Important?," page 58.) That depends on your needs. But there is one feature that all nonportable VCRs provide, and that's time shift, a provision for unattended off-air recording. There are two types of time shifting: twenty-four-hour/one-event and programmable/multi-event. In the

former, the tuner can be set to automatically activate the VCR's record function once for up to five or six hours—the maximum recording time of current Beta and VHS tapes. The multi-event units can be programmed to record as many as eight different events—even on different channels—for periods of up to two weeks. Again, the constraint on the amount you can record is the length of the tape. This type of timer does tend to raise the price of a VCR, but if you're away for extended time periods, you may want the option of never missing an episode of your favorite program. If you're a homebody, the less expensive, twenty-four-hour model should suffice.

Do I Want to Record?

If the off-the-air and live-recording options aren't important to you, a video disc player might be more practical than a video tape recorder. Neither the laser nor the CED disc player can record, but both have a distinct advantage: They're less expensive than their tape equivalents. Laser disc players cost about \$750, CED players list for \$500. In both cases the software ranges from \$15 to \$35.

Do I Need a Portable?

If you have the slightest inclination toward creating your own programming with a video camera, you should consider buying a portable video recorder. Most weigh between nine and fifteen pounds with the battery in place. (Tuners weigh even less, but you won't need one for camera recording in any case.) The battery can account for half the weight, so make sure there's one in the deck when you check for weight as you shop. The recorder will operate for up to an hour before you need to recharge; with such accessories as plug-in car adapters and extra battery packs, it can run for longer periods.

Which Format Do I Want?

The question here is not whether Beta is superior to VHS or vice versa; both systems are good and will be around for a long time. Because exchanging tapes is one of the more enjoyable aspects of VCR owner-



VCR prices have fallen dramatically in the seven years since the units were introduced. Sony's new front-loading SL-5000, with a list price of \$895, offers many more features than the company's considerably more expensive first Betamax.



New York Video's showroom exhibits a custom-built large-screen audio/video system. The table houses controls for a VCR and a Pioneer Laser Disc player (left). Images from a ceiling-mounted Kloss Novabeam fill the screen.

PHOTOS BY DAWN GORDON



Portable VCRs can make high-quality recordings both at home and in the field. Akai's VPS-7350, shown here, consists of a thirteen-pound recorder and its companion tuner/timer, which can be programmed up to fourteen days in advance.

ship, though, you should take into consideration the format your friends use, in order to ensure compatibility. And while you're at it, ask them which brands they've found to be the most reliable and which features they've used most and why.

What About Large Screen Television?

Large screen sets are great if you have the money and the room for them. There are two types of units, one-piece and two-piece. The former usually has everything—the projector, and a screen measuring forty-five to sixty inches diagonally—housed in a single large cabinet. Such systems sell for between \$3,000 and \$4,500. The two-piece units consist of a free-standing screen and a projector, which beams the image onto the screen from a distance of between six and twelve feet. The projector is often housed in a cabinet that can double as a coffee table; the screen measures between four and ten feet diagonally. Though less expensive than single-piece sets (the range is from \$2,500 to \$3,600), the two-piece units do take up more room. And remember: Your viewing distance should be at least twice the diagonal screen size (which is generally larger in two-piece sets), so if the screen measures six feet, you should sit

at least twelve feet away. With these figures in mind, you can accurately calculate how much space a particular projection system will take.

Both types are expensive, and both usually feature electronic or digital tuning, remote control, multiple inputs, audio-out jacks, a comb filter for increased sharpness, external-speaker amps, and cable-ready tuning. Find out if your dealer has trained technicians who can install and repair a large screen set in your home. If he does, make sure to ask whether such services are included in the purchase price of the set.

How Can I Get Stereo Video?

Even if your television set has no audio-out jack, you can connect your audio system to your VCR by patching the audio-out jack on the VCR to the aux input on your receiver. The result may not be true stereo, but it will certainly sound better than what comes out of your TV set's speaker. Many new sets simulate stereo, piping the audio through two speakers in the unit itself. And there are a few (mostly with large screens) that have stereo inputs for VCR and disc machines.

At this point there are only a few pre-recorded stereo video cassettes available

and a small number of VCRs with stereo capability. All laser players are equipped to handle stereo software, which is slowly entering the marketplace.

Where Shall I Buy It?

Video equipment is generally more expensive in department stores than in other outlets, simply because there tends to be less discounting. Still, department stores are convenient, they usually don't charge extra for shipping, and their return policies are fairly liberal.

A video specialty store may be a better place to shop. Though its prices may be as high as those of department stores, the salespeople are often more knowledgeable. Generally, they will either show you how to set up the unit yourself or, for a fee, have a technician to do it for you. One more advantage: Many specialty stores are also manufacturer-authorized service centers.

Consider discount outlets with care. Their prices may be great, but the sales personnel are sometimes not reliable in their quick recommendations. Also, shipping is rarely included in the purchase price, nor is servicing; returns—even of defective equipment—can be difficult. In general, shop around. Check with different retailers, and see what each offers. Remember that good service is just as important as good price.

Can I Rely on Salespeople?

Video is a new medium, and many salespeople know little more about it than you do. Most come from the audio field and have had to absorb a great deal of new terminology—and technology—in a short time. Forewarned is forearmed: Educate yourself before you get to the purchasing stage, and you won't have to depend solely on the advice of sales personnel. And always ask to see a VCR's instruction manual before you buy. Then you'll know exactly what you're getting and how it works.

What About Renting?

Renting a VCR can be a wonderful learning process and a great way to figure out which features you'll want when you make your final purchase. The same can be said for camera rental, which can also be a nice convenience. When you go on vacation, for instance, all you'll have to carry home is a cassette or two, and there's no worry about damage or theft.

What If Something Better Comes Out?

There probably will never be a "perfect" machine. Manufacturers can only upgrade their designs as far as the technology progresses, and they do try very hard to avoid obsolescence: Witness the continued capability for playback of the old Beta-1 format. You can always trade your old machine in for a new one; besides, if you wait around for the future to appear, you may never enjoy the present. **HF**

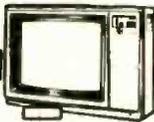
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PANASONIC PV-1370 VHS Recorder	\$ 749	QUASAR 5210 VHS Recorder	\$ 795
PANASONIC PV-1470 VHS Recorder	\$ 849	QUASAR 5310 VHS Recorder	\$ 895
		QUASAR 5610 Hi-Fi VHS Recorder	\$1050

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SONY TT-2000 Betamax	\$ 999	RCA VR-170 VHS w. Tuner	\$ 695
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Home Video & Pay Cable Highlights Edited by Susan Elliot

Video Cassettes

CONTEMPORARY FILMS

■ **Columbia Pictures Home Entertainment:** *Nobody's Perfekt* (sic), *Nice Dreams*, *Tommy*, *The Front*.

■ **Electric Video:** *The Seven Brothers Meet Dracula*, *Battle of the Sexes*.

■ **Magnetic Video:** *Rollerball*, *Hawaii*, *The Great Escape*, *White Lightning*, *Brannigan*, *Hell in the Pacific*, *Take This Job and Shove It*, *Sudden Terror*, *The Russians Are Coming*, *The Russians Are Coming*, *A Thousand Clowns*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Women in Love*, *March or Die*, *The Magnificent Seven*, *Irma La Douce*, *Thief*, *The Dogs of War*, *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Good the Bad and the Ugly*, *A Shot in the Dark*, *The Fortune Cookie*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, *Bananas*.

■ **Magnetic Video (rental only):** *History of the World—Part I*, *Dr. No*, *The Great Muppet Caper*, *Caveman*, *Eyewitness*, *Chu Chu and the Philly Flash*, *A Fist Full of Dollars*, *Rocky*, *La Cage Aux Folles II*, *For Your Eyes Only*, *Eye of the Needle*, *The Return of the Pink Panther*, *From Russia With Love*, *Zorro—the Gay Blade*, *What's New Pussycat?*

■ **Mastervision:** *Mutiny on the Western Front*.

■ **MCA Videocassette:** *The Four Seasons*, *An American Werewolf in London*, *The Incredible Hulk*.

■ **MGM/CBS Home Video:** *Clash of the Titans*, *The Billion Dollar Hobo*, *Return of the Streetfighter*, *Victory*.

■ **MGM/CBS (rental only):** *Tarzan the Ape Man*, *S.O.B.*

■ **Paramount Home Video:** *The Jazz Singer* (stereo), *Apocalypse Now* (stereo), *The Conversation*, *The Godfather*, *Mommie Dearest*, *Paternity*, *First Monday in October*, *Student Body*, *Bugsy Malone*, *The One and Only*, *Save the Tiger*.

■ **VidAmerica:** *Emanuelle in America*.

■ **Video Gems:** *Shinbone Alley*.

■ **Warner Home Video (rental only):** *Ice Dancing*, *Under the Rainbow*, *The Last Wave*, *The Kid from Not So Big*, *McQ*, *Jackson County Jail*, *Jesus*, *One on One*.

CLASSIC FILMS

■ **Columbia Pictures:** *Hellcats of the Navy*, *In Cold Blood*, *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad*, *Sahara*.

■ **Electric Video:** *A Taste of Honey*, *Room at the Top*.

■ **Magnetic Video:** *The Garden of Allah*, *The Spiral Staircase*, *Now—Voyager*, *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *The Legend of the Lone Ranger*, *The Alamo*, *Huckleberry Finn*.

■ **Mastervision:** *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, *Our Town*, *Chekov with Sir John Gielgud: The Fugitive/Desire for Sleep*, *Voldya in the Boarding House*, *The Wallet*, *Helen Keller: Separate Views*, *The Man and the Snake*, *The Return*, *The Pearl*, *The Great Stone Face* (Buster Keaton), *The Funniest Man in the World* (Charlie Chaplin), *Purlie Victorious*.

■ **MGM/CBS:** *North by Northwest*, *The Pirate*, *The Clown*, *Madame Bovary*, *Major Barbara*, *Woman of the Year*, *Till the Clouds Roll By*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *Ivanhoe*.

■ **Paramount:** *The Greatest Show on Earth*.

■ **VidAmerica:** *Joan of Arc*.

■ **Video Yesteryear:** *The Outlaw*, *The Little Princess*, *Santa Fe Trail*, *Work Police*, *Private Buckaroo*.

■ **Warner (rental only):** *The Miracle Worker*.

Video Discs

CONTEMPORARY FILMS

■ **Columbia Pictures (Laser Disc):** *It's My Turn*, *Seems like Old Times*.

■ **MGM/CBS(CED):** *Clash of the Titans*, *Logan's Run*, *The Goodbye Girl*, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, *Wifemistress*.

■ **RCA (CED):** *Up in Smoke*, *The Blue Lagoon*, *Rocky II*, *Carnal Knowledge*.

CLASSIC FILMS

■ **MGM/CBS:** *The Great Caruso*, *Guys and Dolls*.

■ **RCA:** *Blue Hawaii*.

SPORTS

■ **RCA:** *Superbowl XV*.

TV DOCUMENTARY

■ **MGM/CBS:** *The Royal Wedding*.

■ **RCA:** *Meet Mr. Washington/Meet Mr. Lincoln* (NBC Project Twenty).

On Pay Cable This Month

FEATURE FILMS (first run)

■ **The Movie Channel:** *Any Which Way You Can*, *Bustin' Loose*, *The Final Conflict*, *Eyewitness*, *Thief*, *Caveman*, *The Hand*, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, *I Sent a Letter to My Love*, *Secondhand Hearts*, *Death in Venice*, *Toby and the Koala Bear*, *Underground Aces*, *American Pop*, *A Fistful of Dynamite*, *Ode to Billie-Joe*, *Valentino*, *The Outsider*.

■ **Showtime:** *Any Which Way You Can*, *Bustin' Loose*, *Eyewitness*, *Omen III*, *Thief*.

■ **Home Box Office:** *Information not available*.

SPECIALS

■ **Showtime:** *Scrambled Feet* (with Madeline Kahn), *Barry Manilow in Concert* (Pittsburgh Civic Arena, 11/81).

Interpreting Schubert's Songs

Recent releases heard in the light of historical evidence and active traditions
Reviewed by David Hamilton

CONTROVERSY OVER THE appropriate manner of singing Schubert's songs is not new. Writing only thirty years after the composer's death, his friend Leopold von Sonnleithner censured what he called the "dramatic" approach, then apparently much in vogue: "as much declamation as possible, sometimes whispered, sometimes with passionate outbursts, with retarding of the tempo, etc." From his direct experience, Sonnleithner asserted that, above all, Schubert "always kept the most strict and even time, except in the few cases where he had expressly indicated in writing a ritardando, morendo, accelerando, etc. Furthermore he never allowed violent expression in performance." It appears that even Michael Vogl, the composer's preferred singer, overstepped these bounds, more frequently after Schubert's death.

Sonnleithner defined a general correlative to his specifically musical distinctions: "The Lieder singer, as a rule, only relates experiences and feelings of others; he does not himself impersonate the characters whose feelings he describes. Poet, composer, and singer must conceive the song *lyrically*, not *dramatically*. With Schubert especially, the true expression, the deepest feeling is already inherent in the melody as such, and is admirably enhanced by the accompaniment." Here, Sonnleithner seems to be advocating the impersonality of the ballad singer, who in most vernacular traditions delivers narrative, direct discourse of characters, and gruesome denouement to the same music and in the same neutral tone of voice. Goethe, of course, expected musical settings of his ballads to do just that—hence his expressed preference for Zelter's over Schubert's.

Perhaps Sonnleithner generalized too much. Without undertaking an exhaustive typology of Schubert's songs, we can easily establish their considerable diversity in point of view. Some are indeed simple strophic narratives (the setting of Goethe's *Heidenröslein*, for example), into which the intrusion of the narrator's own personality would surely be inappropriate. Many others are more descriptive than narrative. Some (such as the setting of Schiller's grim *Hellscap*, *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus*) lack an



Gerhard Hüsch's Schubert reminds us of the value of a true legato in this music.

explicit "I" in the text. And often, even when that first-person pronoun is actually present, it is essentially conventional rather than personal: The poetic persona is present only as a vessel for an emotional statement ("Auf dem Wasser zu singen") or contrast ("Lachen und Weinen"), or as the generalized supplicator in a religious situation ("Grenzen der Menschheit").

But Schubert also sets poems more intensely personal in content, in which the speaker's psychological condition is the true subject, and in which the piano, far from merely "enhancing" the vocal line, may constitute the central musical thread and an essential part of the song's expressive statement; in most of the Heine settings in *Schwanengesang*, for example, the speaker is no mere convention, but a very vivid psyche. And the two great cycles are still another matter; presenting, in the first person, successive stages in the emotional life of their protagonists, they build up personae of cumulative complexity and inevi-

tably acquire dramatic rather than lyrical import.

There are in fact many possible relationships among poet, composer, and singer in a song (this is by no means a simple matter; I refer the reader to Edward T. Cone's stimulating discussion in *The Composer's Voice*, Berkeley, 1974) and at least some of Schubert's songs strongly imply a much closer identification between the "I" of the poem and the singer than Sonnleithner's prescription permits. Even if Schubert agreed with Sonnleithner, he would not be the first composer in history who failed to comprehend the full import of what he was up to. (It may well be that Sonnleithner oversimplified in reporting what he remembered; another Schubertian intimate, Josef von Spaun, tells us that Schubert himself sang *Winterreise* to his circle of friends "in a voice wrought with emotion.")

For sure, twentieth-century singers of Schubert have not accepted any such impersonal view of their function—no doubt in part from the influence of subsequent composers such as Schumann and Wolf who have evidently envisaged a still more psychological and dramatic approach to the writing of songs. Lotte Lehmann, for example, advised young singers that "on the concert stage it is the unlimited power of your art which must change you into just that figure which you seek to bring to life"—a strong affirmation of impersonation over mere narration, and a preference we could in any case infer from the singer's recordings, as equally from those of more recent artists such as Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau.

Granting this general agreement among modern singers, it is still possible to observe changes of emphasis in the performance of Schubert's songs—and specifically his song cycles—over the last seventy-five years or so. Arabesque has now made available domestically for the first time some of the principal documents in the matter, Gerhard Hüsch's celebrated recordings, from the 1930s, of *Die schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise*, along with nearly all of his other Schubert recordings for HMV, including several never published on 78s. By a stimulating coincidence, this set has

encountered, on my recent-acquisition shelf, some other Schubert performances, including two additional recent versions of *Winterreise*: Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's fifth recorded traversal of the cycle, with Daniel Barenboim at the piano, and a new version by Ernst Häfliger in which the accompaniments are played on an 1820 Viennese fortepiano.

Hüsch's Schubert reminds us forcibly of the value of a true legato in this music; his voice is rich, firm, and full, and remains so from note to note, not diminishing to near-nothingness between syllables. (In his liner note, the singer speaks of diction "which supports, rather than interrupts, the melodic flow," and his singing perfectly exemplifies that achievement.) The crispness and clarity of his tone production bring rewards both verbal and musical: The clarity with which words are articulated, even in fast tempo ("Der Jäger"), is often astonishing, and yet the tone is always there on the beat, propelling the songs forward. Hüsch sings smoothly through a full dynamic range, commands a wide variety of tonal color and articulation, phrases with considerable breadth, and maintains a firm control of rhythm and tempo. In fact, the only significant technical flaw in his singing is a lack of flexibility; sometimes the voice slides across melismatic passages without really defining the individual pitches.

It's doubtful that these songs have ever been sung with more sheer vocal accomplishment and beauty, except perhaps by Hüsch's older contemporary Heinrich Schlusnus (who recorded only some individual songs from the cycles). But recordings tell us that such an approach to Schubert, emphasizing the vocal rather than the declamatory aspect of the songs, goes back at least to the turn of the century. One can begin with the famous 1905 recording of "Am Meer" by Gustav Walter (1834-1910) and trace the same song, sung with essentially the same word-tone balance (though with many other differences) by Anton van Rooy, Friedrich Brodersen, Hans Duhan, Alexander Kipnis, Schlusnus, Friedrich Schorr, Leo Slezak, and Richard Tauber, right up to the Hüsch version from 1937 that is released for the first time in the Arabesque set. (Whether this tradition has any direct connection with the way Vogl and Schubert might have performed the song is certainly dubious; Walter was born within a few years of Schubert's death, but he did not take up Lieder singing until after bidding farewell to the operatic stage in 1887. Also problematic is the pitch of his recording, which in Vol. 1 of *The Record of Singing* is transferred a minor third above the written key—hardly likely for a tenor more than seventy years old, in a song that other tenors take at written pitch and baritones transpose down as much as a minor third.)

Fischer-Dieskau has evolved a style appropriate to both large spaces and living rooms.



DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON

At the same time, study of early recordings of Schubert shows up other historic changes. Van Rooy makes a beautiful sound and forms the words well on the tone, but his conception of the song involves an almost entirely unmeasured rhythm, and the coherence thus impaired is further compromised by the poor pianist, who is forced to play his every chord perceptibly after his unpredictable master. The progression toward partnership and unanimity in such matters is not directly proportional to chronology (the aging Slezak, in 1928, is downright improvisatory, while in 1921 Brodersen recorded an extremely coherent, concentrated performance), but it is clear enough. With Hüsch and his regular accompanist Hanns Udo Müller (and with Gerald Moore, who plays in "Am Meer" and the three other unpublished songs from *Schwanengesang*), we have reached a state of consistently good rhythmic ensemble, although there remains a certain recessiveness on the part of the pianist, who generally restricts his dynamic level the minute the voice enters.

Like the character of a Schubert song, the relationship between its vocal and piano parts is individual, and general rules do not help much. The two song cycles present a particularly striking contrast. The essentially figurational, rhythmically uniform piano parts of the *Schöne Müllerin* songs reinforce the strong sense that many of these pieces are not merely songs, but also Songs—that is, that even in real life they might be sung. The first, "Das Wandern," is in spirit (though not in form) a walking song, the last "Des Baches Wiegenlied," is explicitly the lullaby of the brook, and many of the intervening songs might not implausibly be sung by the protagonist to

the accompaniment of his lute. (Peter Schreier has recently taken to performing this cycle with the accompaniments arranged for guitar, an error of excessive literalism that nonetheless confirms the specifically vernacular style of the piano writing.)

By contrast, very little in *Winterreise* is comparable. True, "Der Lindenbaum" has achieved in Germany the status of a folksong—but only at the cost of gross simplification, removing all the elements that relate it to *Winterreise*. In "Der Leiermann," of course, we hear a vernacular melody—played by the piano in imitation of the hurdy-gurdy, its function symbolic rather than stylistic. Like those of the still later Heine songs, the *Winterreise* piano parts are frequently complex in texture, knotty in harmony; they, not the vocal melody, often carry the central thread of the song's musical argument; they reveal more than the voice is telling us about the protagonist's condition.

An apparently artless approach, such as that espoused by Aksel Schiøtz (Seraphim 60140), can thus prove quite effective in *Die schöne Müllerin*, but such naiveté is not in character for the *Winterreise*'s fugitive from civilization—he knows too much. With his vocal sophistication and his richer, deeper tone, Hüsch presents an obviously different character from Schiøtz, but his basically straightforward and unaffected delivery of the *Müllerin* songs convinces in much the same way. Occasionally he falls into a stentorian vein that seems inappropriate: In "Morgengruß," he offers the maiden marching orders rather than affectionate sentiments. But both singing and playing here are of a high order of integrity and accomplishment. Müller's balancing and coloring of the ostensibly simple piano part of the last song is but one of many admirable details. (Alas, its second and fourth stanzas are omitted to fit 78-rpm limitations, as also the second stanza of the first song of *Winterreise*.) This performance has dated remarkably little, perhaps most obviously in the rather tearful climax of "Der Müller und der Bach."

Before discussing *Winterreise*, let me briefly consider Arabesque's package and the individual songs that fill it out. Most of these I wrote about in June 1979 when they were reissued by Preiser, and I still find the best of them quite overwhelming ("Lied eines Schiffers," "Widerschein," "Liebeslauschen") and am delighted to discover the four (not five, as claimed on the front cover) unpublished items. I'm sorry, however, that two important recordings are missing: Hüsch's breathtaking performance of "Dass sie hier gewesen," and the second of the three *Harfenspieler* songs—all three of which might better have been saved for another Hüsch recital (say, with *An die ferne Geliebte* and *Dichterliebe*, as on Preiser LV 105). Despite minor inaccura-

cies, the Arabesque presentation will serve; a leaflet gives the song texts and translations by Philip L. Miller, and the box liner includes a note by Hüscher as well as matrix and take numbers and recording dates and places, though it does not make clear which songs are on which sides, or which songs are accompanied by Gerald Moore. (That is revealed only on the labels, and incorrectly: Müller, not Moore, plays "Der Doppelgänger.") The transfer of *Die schöne Müllerin* is the same one issued by Electrola in 1962; the other recordings have been newly remastered, and more satisfactorily, by EMI's Keith Hardwick.

Hüscher's *Winterreise* shares the virtues of his performance of *Die schöne Müllerin* but is somewhat less satisfying. When we compare it with a modern performance such as Fischer-Dieskau's, we may notice first that the more recent singer lacks the vocal mastery of the older one; his tone is not as consistent in color, nor his legato as firm—and this was true even in Fischer-Dieskau's first recording of the cycle, in 1955 (now in EMI/Electrola C 175-01764/6, with his first recordings of *Die schöne Müllerin* and *Schwanengesang*), made when he was slightly younger than Hüscher was at the time of his recording. And Fischer-Dieskau conspicuously lacks Hüscher's easy command of a dynamic middle ground, which constitutes a necessary center for a basically "vocal" approach to singing Schubert.

This last defect may be the technical fact at the root of Fischer-Dieskau's tendency to dynamic extremes, of his extremely dramatic approach to these songs. There is also a historical background, which can be traced on recordings. In the later 1920s, Elena Gerhardt, a famous interpreter of *Winterreise*, recorded a selection of eight songs (once available on Rococo 5245); she was clearly past her vocal prime, putting

Häfliger retains a youthful sound in his *Winterreise*, more "vocal" than "dramatic."



DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON

forth much quavery tone and dubious intonation, but the intent of her conception is clear enough, with large-scale underlining of points by exaggerated ritards—or at least they sound exaggerated on records. In the second volume of *The Record of Singing*, Michael Scott relates the development of Gerhardt's style to the growth of the Lieder recital in large halls, the adaptation (transcription might not be too strong a word) of songs originally intended for essentially domestic circumstances to larger spaces, and his argument is certainly convincing. (A contemporary contrast to Gerhardt's approach can be heard in Richard Tauber's recording of a selection from *Winterreise*, recently reissued on Discocorp RR 529—

very much more "vocal," though marred by the singer's tendency to let his initial tempo impetus slacken and also by niggling little cuts in the piano interludes.)

Gerhardt sang in London's Wigmore Hall and New York's Town Hall, rooms that we think of as "recital halls." But Fischer-Dieskau sings in Royal Festival Hall and Carnegie Hall, spaces designed for orchestras, and this has entailed a further expansion of scale. At the same time, however, Fischer-Dieskau sings in living rooms, via recordings, and he has evolved a style of performance that comes to terms with both places, if not to universal satisfaction. (To my ears, at least, Gerhardt did not come to terms with recordings; her emphases may have worked in the hall, but via the microphone they sound absurd—in Scott's word, "pretentious.") Fischer-Dieskau has in general eschewed conspicuous use of tempo changes; his dramatic artillery has involved dynamics and diction—and an extraordinary concentration and study.

If we return to our comparison of Hüscher and Fischer-Dieskau recordings of *Winterreise* and listen beyond the sheer vocal contrast, we cannot escape another conclusion: The musical profile—harmonic, rhythmic, timbral—of these songs is drawn much more sharply by the modern singer and his associated pianists. The keyboard parts are accorded equal status, which was never the case with Gerhardt (you can hear Coenraad Bos following her in the final measures of "Frühlings Traum"), and they have clearly been subjected to the same kind of detailed analysis and projection as the words and vocal lines. You can hear this process take place over the singer's five recordings of the cycle, reaching, to my ears, the most satisfactory result in the last recording with Moore (in the third volume of the DG Schubert Lieder series, 2720 059, still available in Europe). Here the counterpoint of voice and piano melodies in "Erstarrung" is most perfectly balanced, the phrasing of the piano in "Frühlings Traum" is most precise, the dissonance of voice against piano at "wie weit noch bis zur Bahre" ("Der greise Kopf") grates most vividly. The new version with Barenboim strikes me as marginally less precise, and it is also subject to some pronounced tempo emphases from the pianist that were not characteristic of earlier versions. (An interesting development may be noted in "Wasserfluth," where for the first time in a Fischer-Dieskau recording the pianist plays his dotted rhythms to match the singer's triplets, as was surely Schubert's intention.)

On this occasion, I will omit my usual sermon about inconsistent transpositions of song cycles, instead merely quoting the author of a recent book on Schubert's songs, who says that the composer's key

(Continued on page 83)

SCHUBERT: Song Cycles and Songs.

Gerhard Hüscher, baritone; Hanns Udo Müller* and Gerald Moore†, piano. ARABESQUE 8107-3L, \$21.94 (mono; three discs, manual sequence). Tape: 9107-3L, \$24.94 (three cassettes). [From HMV originals, recorded 1933-39.]

Die schöne Müllerin (complete). * Winterreise (complete). * Schwanengesang: Ständchen*; Abschied†; Das Fischer mädchen†; Am Meer†; Der Doppelgänger*; Die Taubenpost†. Erlkönig. * Lied eines Schiffers an die Dioskuren. * Wer sich der Einsamkeit ergibt. * Wer nie sein Brot mit Tränen ass. * Der Wanderer. * An die Musik. * Liebeslauschen. * Der Musensohn. * Horch, horch, die Lerch. * Widerschein. *

SCHUBERT: Winterreise.

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; Daniel Barenboim, piano. [Cord Garben, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 118, \$21.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: 3301 237, \$21.96 (two cassettes).

SCHUBERT: Winterreise.

Ernst Häfliger, tenor; Jörg Ewald Dähler,

fortepiano. [Alfons Seul, prod.] CLAVES D 8008/9, \$23.96 (two discs, manual sequence) (distributed by Brilly Imports, 155 N. San Vicente Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211).

SCHUBERT: Schwanengesang.

Hermann Prey, baritone; Leonard Hokanson, piano. [Michael Horwath, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 325, \$10.98 [recorded in performance, 1978].

SCHUBERT, WOLF: Songs.

Peter Pears, tenor; Benjamin Britten, piano. [Sylvia Carter, prod.] BBC RECORDS REGL 410, \$7.98 (mono; recorded 1959-64) (distributed by Gemcom, Inc., P.O. Box 187, Hauppaug, N.Y. 11787).

SCHUBERT: Der Winterabend; Abendbilder; Ihr Grab; Das war ich; Die Götter Griechenlands; Der blinde Knabe; Das Lied im Grünen. WOLF: Frühling übers Jahr; Ganymed; Beherzigung; Spottlied; Der Scholar; Der Gärtner; Bei einer Trauung; Schlafendes Jesuskind; Die du Gott gebast; Führ' mich, Kind; Wie sollt' ich heiter bleiben; Wenn ich dein gedenke; Sankt Nepomuks Vorabend.

From a Garden

British composers of two generations, Tippett and Davies offer very different, equally rewarding visions. Reviewed by Nicholas Kenyon



Sir Michael Tippett: a humane composer

MISCHA SCORER

Davis' recording did so much to clarify; Philips, deleted), he turned to a stark, clearer style based on the opposition of contrasted material—a style that can be heard in the instrumental music from the Second Piano Sonata right through to the Fourth Symphony. He did not abandon lyricism—that, above all, marks him out as a humane composer of broad sympathies—but in *Priam* he disciplined it into a strict formal framework.

I have never seen *Priam* on the stage. Reviews of the original production, while generally enthusiastic, spoke of some dramatic and musical problems. This new recording (like the recent prizewinning

Priam is at once an exciting and a bleak work.

account of Harrison Birtwistle's *Punch and Judy*; Decca Headline HEAD 24/5, December 1981 HF) is the product not of a stage revival, but of a concert performance, mounted by the London Sinfonietta to celebrate Tippett's seventy-fifth birthday in 1980. It is an almost unqualified triumph. From the blazing fanfares of the thrilling opening scene to the stuttering, broken final bars as Priam lies dead, the score is projected with confidence, accuracy, and commitment rare enough in any recording but especially rare in an opera recording (where the whole is so often slightly less than the sum of its starry parts).

Priam is an opera about fate and fateful choice. In the opening scene, Priam and Hecuba decide to have their new son, Paris, killed because of a dream that he will bring about Priam's death. But the soldier dispatched to do the deed relents. The consequences, set in the midst of the Trojan War, provide the stuff of which the opera is built. Cries of war and strident brass calls dominate the central act. Elsewhere, Tippett, with daring simplicity, accompanies his soloists with sparse orchestration, often with a single instrumental line. (This must have provided problems of coordination in the theater; here the matching is precise.) Shooting violin figurations portray Hecuba's decisiveness; moaning cellos echo Priam's despair. Paris is given a rhapsodic

oboe and clarinet, Achilles a guitar, Andromache a cello. The pairings are not slavishly followed, however: even solo tuba, timpani, and double bass (playing harmonics) are used in similar fashion. Xylophone and piano, often used together, glint through the textures.

Tippett's own libretto refashions Homer into a philosophical discourse in which action is secondary, thought is primary. But it has pace and drama. Minor characters shed their roles to become members of an anonymous chorus; they describe a scene and it materializes. (One electrifying moment is the transition from narration to the first sensual sounds of Helen and Paris, crying together offstage in the throes of love.) There is a distinction throughout, well observed in this recording, between declamation of the story and expressive singing. In the former, the words are paramount, in the latter, the music; yet every syllable can be clearly understood here (and a full libretto is provided as well).

An opera written to this sort of formal plan could be lifeless. What makes *Priam* move compellingly from scene to interlude to scene is Tippett's transformation technique. His musical material is always recognizable (e.g., the grief-laden theme that returns as Priam contemplates the deaths that have resulted from his actions), but the fragments shift, combine, and develop. There are a few moments of cliché: A violent staccato chord associated with the intended murder of Paris, banal on its first appearance, returns too often in the same form. Some of the warring fanfares become counterproductive. And sometimes the contrast between blocks of material in the same scene is too great, as in Priam's penultimate meditation. Yet most of the text setting and structural planning of the opera is effective and telling.

In an enterprise that has clearly been given the most detailed preparation, the casting deserves special praise. Age, vocal color, and part have been perfectly matched. The senior partners, Norman Bailey (Priam) and Heather Harper (Hecuba), sing with distinctive freedom of inflection; sometimes less precise of pitch than others, they always capture the essence of a phrase. Bailey's cry "Let it mean my death," which spins around and through the written pitches, is wrenching. Opposite Priam, Robert Tear (Achilles) conveys an exotic,

OF LIVING BRITISH COMPOSERS. Sir Michael Tippett and Peter Maxwell Davies are among the most widely heard and admired in this country. Tippett is the most fertile and productive of that senior generation, born in the first decade of this century, who came to prominence around the time of the Second World War. Davies is among the most prolific and versatile of a middle generation, born in the Thirties, who sprang rather suddenly to attention in the early 1960s when William Glock took over the musical direction of the BBC and gave their work a hearing.

Both Tippett and Davies have visited and conducted here. Tippett's recent Triple Concerto has been played by the Toronto, Pittsburgh, and Boston Symphony Orchestras; Davies' recent Second Symphony was a Boston Symphony centennial commission. If the commercial record labels had any sense of occasion, we should now be welcoming recordings of that concerto and that symphony. But record companies being what they are, we hear only that those two are in the pipeline and welcome instead a major batch of overdue releases: Tippett's *King Priam* (1962) and Fourth Symphony (1977); Davies' *Ave maris stella* (1975) and a group of Renaissance and baroque realizations (1968–76). An imposing group of records, they provide powerful advocacy for two quite different, equally rewarding, musical personalities.

Tippett's second opera, *King Priam*, written between 1958 and 1961 and first seen the following year, seems in retrospect to mark a watershed in his career. From the involved, lyrical, sometimes confusing counterpoint and interwoven argument of *The Midsummer Marriage* (which Colin

to a Maze

DONALD SOUTHERN

almost sinister lyricism in his guitar-accompanied songs and a wild, barbaric splendor in the war cries that end Act II.

The middle generation includes Thomas Allen (Hector), strong and bluster, the man of action, and Philip Langridge (Paris), light and nasal, the man of love. Helen's slightly cardboard character comes to erotic life in Yvonne Minton's dusky voice, while Felicity Palmer's steely, brittle style well suits Andromache's music. Then in the smaller parts are some outstanding young singers, fresh-voiced, razor-sharp in their faithfulness to the text: David Wilson-Johnson (Old Man), edgy and cynical; Peter Hall (Young Guard), violently raucous; Ann Murray (Nurse) and Linda Hirst (Serving Woman), warm and sympathetic. Only Kenneth Bowen perhaps lacks a light enough touch for Hermes, god and messenger. Boy treble Julian Saïpe has a fine cameo as the young Paris. (The booklet should list, but does not, the soloists who make fine, pungent contributions to the vivid hunting scene and the ensemble of the wedding guests; in view of the outstanding orchestral solo playing, it should list the players as well.)

Priam is at once an exciting and a bleak work. It looks pessimistically at the possibilities of human relationships and human achievement: "The Soul will answer from where the pain is quickest," says the Nurse to Priam, and the king ends by cursing his life, which has no meaning, and his soul, which will not let him rest. "I do not want these deaths. I want my own."

That the whole vision comes into such clear focus in this new recording must be credited to David Atherton, who conducts with vigor, sensitivity, and total conviction. It may be heretical to suggest that *Priam* does not need to be staged; but here, the close attention we can give to the complex resonances of Tippett's libretto, the perfect balance and ensemble obtained in the recording studio, and the lack of any extraneous distractions combine to make listening to these records an engrossing and satisfying experience. All in all, a major achievement.

Tippett's *Fourth Symphony* was written for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. It really is reprehensible that this recording should appear a full four years after the work's first performance and two years after its taping, coupled with an insignificant and inappropriate work (which has already been recorded) on the second side. The *Fourth* is a rich and problematical piece that we should have been able to get to know well before now. At its first performances, I thought it an imaginative, beautiful work, which did not live up to its initial

promise. The material is never fully developed (which, though also true in *Priam*, is less disconcerting in the opera), and the literal recapitulation that takes up the latter part of the work is anticlimactic. Some of the ideas are wonderful: a brooding, rising horn theme; chattering wind and straining string figurations. But it seemed then to be something of a patchwork, and it seems more so now, in this frankly unsatisfactory performance.

The Chicago orchestra launched the symphony brilliantly and powerfully; but the British orchestra that first played it, the Scottish National, made it sound far more humane and ruminative. The Chicago recording shows exactly what is wrong. The playing is altogether too loud; pianos are routinely played *mezzo forte*, the brasses are strident, and the string tone is unrelentingly hard. Tippett's marking "radiance" becomes a hard, neon glare. Fast sections (at cue 40, for example) are rushed and breathless. There is, of course, some

Davies' music can be scary in its power of suggestion.

marvelous playing (horns, xylophone, and solo oboe at 68), and an authentic Tippett sonority is occasionally captured (the twittering ecstasy at 147, the naive dance of trills at 96). But the overall effect is a little careless: A bar before 66, one violin moves early, gratingly; just before 152 the brasses slip out of ensemble. The harp doesn't sound behind the viola, as indicated. There is a loose noise on the horn's static unison at 53. And so on.

The extraordinary close of the work, with a human breath eerily drawing us into nothingness, is most successfully done—and then the record clicks off with barely a second's pause. (Thirty minutes is a long side, but an extra five seconds here could scarcely have been a problem.) There is certainly room for a second recording of this puzzling but fascinating work.

To move from the music of Tippett to that of Davies is like going from a garden into a maze, from blues and greens to browns and black. The logic of Davies' music is altogether fiercer, more uncompromising; its complexity can be daunting, but its appeal is no less direct. For Davies writes with a tough coherence and a penetrating intelligence that immediately grip the attention. Once caught up in the web of the argument, the listener is held. Added to this strength has been, in recent years, an original set of



Peter Maxwell Davies: a fierce logician

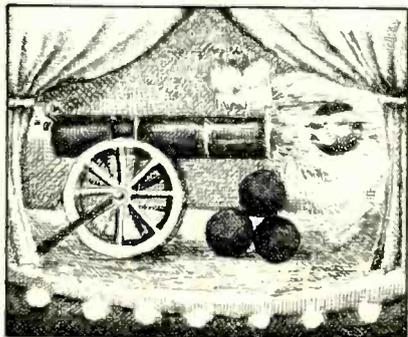
harmonic and textural devices inspired by Davies' solitary home on the island of Hoy, in Orkney, off the North coast of Scotland. He has written often of the effect of the sea and sky on his latest music, and while it is perhaps too easy to make programmatic equivalences, the radical effect of this inspiration on the sonority of Davies' works is always evident.

Ave maris stella, commissioned for the Bath Festival in 1975, is one of the finest of Davies' Orkney works. It has had remarkable success; in some six years, it has been performed by a dozen different ensembles in this country alone. Its most haunting aspect is difficult to define: a tense, almost demonic atmosphere that grows in the music and is exorcised only in its final shriek of pain. Its technical outline is easier to specify: The six players—flute, clarinet, marimba, piano, viola, and cello—operate on equal terms, though the stunningly virtuosic marimba part is more equal than the others. The work is a continuous nine-movement structure lasting half an hour, with elements of sonata-form organization that produce an introduction, transition, exposition, development, free recapitulation, and coda. The parallel with Beethoven's late quartets, pursued by Stephen Pruslin in his sleeve note, is intriguing, but not especially helpful to the listener. More illuminating is his description of the time of day each movement inhabits, beginning and ending with "the Hour of the Wolf, the time of utter suspension between night and day when nocturnal sounds have ceased and those of day have not begun."

This is really quite frightening music, scary in its power of suggestion. The piano (Continued on page 84)

Tempest in a Tape Loop

by John Culshaw



DEBBIE TILLEY

This concludes our series of edited excerpts from former Decca/London producer and HF contributing editor John Culshaw's autobiography. Putting the Record Straight, recently published by Viking Press. (Gordon Parry and James Brown were members of Culshaw's production team on the Otello project.)

By far the most important event in the first half of 1961 was the first stereo recording of Verdi's *Otello*, to be made in Vienna under Herbert von Karajan. There were several technical and musical problems to be overcome. Thus, in Act II, Verdi uses an instrument called the cornamusa in his stage band (although the part can be played by an oboe), and nobody was quite sure what it was. Gordon Parry eventually tracked down the instrument in Venice, and it turned out to be a kind of Italian bagpipe.

The principal difficulties lay, however, in Verdi's tumultuous opening scene, which not only used the principals and chorus in various perspectives, but called for thunder, a cannon shot, and (back to our old Sofiensaal problems with *Zarathustra*) an organ. [The *Zarathustra* project was described last month.—Ed.] Karajan also wanted a wind effect for the storm, which would provide the aural equivalent of the storm-blown flags he used in his stage production. I had no objection to this although it is not in the score, but we used it very cautiously, perhaps *too* cautiously, and I don't think it adds very much.

The cannon shot was on a loop of tape on a spare machine and had to be "fired"

on cue, for even as late as 1961 we had no facilities for the post-synchronization of effects; they had to be added while the music was being played, and if anything went wrong, over 200 people in the main studio had to stop and go back to the beginning. We delegated the firing of the cannon to one of the Italian *répétiteurs*. All he had to do was start the tape machine a fraction in front of the third beat of the twenty-seventh bar, and then stop the machine so that the loop did not go around again and so fire a second shot. The responsibility made him tense and nervous, which in turn made him excited. At the first attempt the cannon went off too early, and at the second and third it was too late. And each time I had no option but to stop Karajan and his forces from continuing.

The opening of *Otello* is not easy for anyone, and understandably the false starts annoyed Karajan. I told our Italian that I could no longer rely on his ability to count, and that on the next attempt I would cue him exactly when to press the button. He seemed greatly relieved, and we began the opening for the fourth time. I cued him fractionally ahead to allow for any delay in his finger reaching the button, and the cannon went off precisely on cue. We breathed a communal sigh of relief, until suddenly the cannon went off again: Our Italian, in his moment of triumph, had forgotten to stop the machine. We had to start again.

(I would have operated the thing myself, except that I had already broken my own rule about not handling controls by taking over responsibility for the organ, which was on yet another tape. Parry and James Brown had simply run out of fingers to control the mass of faders.)

The organ posed problems, quite apart from the fact that the Sofiensaal did not have one. It is not an organ part in the usual sense at all, but a very deep pedal, consisting of three adjacent notes (C, C sharp, and D), sustained for more than fifty pages of the full score, or about eight minutes. We decided that Verdi meant it to be felt rather than heard: a sort of low, disturbing rumble below the surface of the storm. Its main purpose seemed to be negative rather than positive: the audience notices it, consciously or unconsciously, when it stops rather than when it starts, for it stops when the storm has passed and after the triumphant *Otello* has made his return. It is an effect rather than a strand in the musical texture, but it rarely makes much point in the opera house, because it is either omitted altogether or simulated, rather pathetically, on an electronic organ.

What we wanted was a real sixty-four-foot pipe, and the only suitable one we knew of was in the incomplete Anglican cathedral at Liverpool. Fortunately we knew Noel Rawsthorne, who was the organist there, and he agreed that we might record the pedal, although when he found out exactly what it was and how long it lasted, he rightly suggested that the only suitable time to record it was in the middle of the night.

I have had some eerie experiences in my recording career, for there is something vaguely spooky about dark and empty theaters, and the studios at West Hampstead were believed to be haunted by the ghost of a woman who had committed suicide in the lavatory. (Certainly I often heard inexplicable footsteps crossing the floor of No. 1 Studio when I was in the basement and knew for certain that nobody else was in the building.) But nothing was quite as spooky as Liverpool Cathedral, empty at the dead of night and throbbing to the sound of Verdi's sustained organ pedal. It was the more so because Rawsthorne, rather than sit at the console for all that time, had devised a way of jamming two keys together and putting a weight on the appropriate foot pedal, so that the organ was in effect playing itself.

We knew that what emerged could not possibly be captured exactly on tape or disc, and indeed the first effect of the extraordinary sound was to blow out one of our speakers. But given the right fundamental, we were recording a sound as close as possible to what Verdi had had in mind; what was left of the Liverpool sound when our equipment was driven to its limits was better than any kind of lesser, complete sound that we could have easily accommodated by using an electronic machine or a smaller organ.

I think Rawsthorne understood what we were up to, which is more than I can say for various friendly but utterly bewildered policemen who wandered into the cathedral from time to time and who found, as I did, that the physical effect of the throbbing notes was too much to bear for more than a few seconds at a time. I feared, quite seriously, for the stained-glass windows, but our speaker was the only casualty. Karajan was so pleased with the result that we gave him the tape to use in the theater; he blew all the speakers at the first attempt. **HF**

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CLASSICAL

Reviews

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Kaja Danczowska, Krystian Zimerman: young Polish performers in a chamber-music debut of high artistry—See Franck, page 57.

NEUMEISTER/DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON

BACH: Notebooks of Anna Magdalena Bach.

Judith Blegen, soprano; Benjamin Luxon, baritone; Igor Kipnis, harpsichord and clavichord; Catharina Meints, viola da gamba. [Eric Salzman, prod.] NONESUCH DB 79020. \$23.96 (digital recording; two discs, manual sequence). Tape: DB1 79020, \$23.96 (two cassettes).

There are two notebooks of Anna Magdalena Bach. The earlier was compiled in 1722, the first year of her marriage to Johann Sebastian; only fifty pages now survive, containing five of the *French Suites* and a few miscellaneous pieces. The second was begun in 1725; it starts with early versions of some partitas but then turns into a fascinating musical commonplace book, filled with bits of vocal music, and sections of keyboard works by other composers—

especially the Bachs' talented children. As Georg von Dadelsen established, pieces were added to this book through some twenty years. Thus, the oft-repeated notion that the elaborate aria of the *Goldberg Variations*, found here, was an early composition borrowed for that work is not necessarily true; Magdalena could have copied it around 1741-42, as Bach worked on the variations.

The notebooks provide a delightful picture of the domestic music-making of the Bach family circle, and this recording sets out to provide a comprehensive portrait of the contents. Only the suites and partitas are omitted, save for a representative Fifth *French Suite*; almost all the trifles are there. This is a little hard on the listener; fewer tiny keyboard pieces might not have been a bad idea, though there is always the thrill of

recognizing a familiar childhood piano study among the forgettable numbers. Igor Kipnis takes pains to vary the sonority of these pieces, using clavichord as well as harpsichord; it is especially nice to hear the *Goldberg* aria on the more intimate instrument, though it is recorded too loud. There is a wide variety of idioms here, with an emphasis on the French. But the up-to-date minuets and polonaises by C.P.E. Bach show that the Bach household was not unaware of fashionable music. Kipnis offers a complete C.P.E. Bach sonata in place of the single movement Magdalena included. He is very effective in the chorale-prelude settings, but his rubato and hesitations in the dance movements become a bit irritating; less knowing subtlety and more innocent pleasure are needed.

The vocal pieces include the famous,

Critics' Choice

The most noteworthy releases reviewed recently

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concertos (5)*. Schnabel. Sargent. ARABESQUE 8103-4 (4). Oct.
 BEETHOVEN: *String Quartet No. 1 (orig. version)*. Pro Arte Quartet. LAUREL LR 116, Jan.
 BERLIOZ: *Requiem*. Tear, London Philharmonic. Previn. ANGEI DSB 3907 (2). Jan.
 BIRTWISTLE: *Punch and Judy*. Roberts, Wilson-Johnson. Atherton. DECCA HEADLINE HEAD 24/5 (2), Dec.
 DELIUS: *The Fenby Legacy*. Royal Philharmonic. Fenby. UNICORN-KANCHANA DKP 9008/9 (2). Feb.
 DVORÁK, MENDELSSOHN: *String Quartets*. Orlando Quartet. PHILIPS 9500 995, Feb.
 GLAZUNOV: *Orchestral Works*. Bamberg

Symphony. Ceccato. ARABESQUE 8091, Dec.
 HAYDN: *Miseri noi ... Funesto orror*; *Arias*. Mathis. Jordan. PHILIPS 9500 929, Feb.
 LISZT: *Hungarian Coronation Mass*. Lehel. HUNGAROTON SLPX 12148, Dec.
 MAHLER: *Symphony No. 5*. STRAUSS: *Tod und Verklärung*. Mitropoulos. NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC 881/2 (2), Nov.
 MAHLER: *Symphony No. 9*. Berlin Philharmonic. Karajan. DG 2707 125 (2), Nov.
 MOZART: *Flute Concertos (2)*. Bennett, Malcolm. ARGO ZRG 910, Dec.
 MUSSORGSKY: *Orchestral and Choral Works*. London Symphony, Abbado. RCA ARL 1-3988, Jan.
 ORFF: *Carmina burana*. London Symphony, Mata. RCA ATC 1-3925, Jan.
 PROKOFIEV: *Film Music*. St. Louis Symphony, Slatkin. VOX CUM LAUDE VCL 9004X (3), Jan.
 SCHUBERT: *Piano Trios (2)*. Les Musiciens. HARMONIA MUNDI FRANCE HM 1047/8

(2). Sept.
 SCHUMANN: *Symphonies (4)*. Philadelphia Orchestra, Levine. RCA ARL 3-3907 (3), Oct.
 SMETANA, SUK: *String Quartets*. Bohemian Quartet. PARNASSUS 1001, Feb.
 TCHAIKOVSKY: *Manfred*. Concertgebouw, Haitink. PHILIPS 9500 778, Dec.
 TELEMANN: *Instrumental Works*. Aulos Ensemble. MUSICMASTERS MM 20009, Dec.
 WEILL: *Songs*. Stratas, Weitach. NONESUCH D 79019, Feb.
 WOLF: *Songs (138)*. Various (Wolf Society recordings, 1931-38). EMI RLS 759 (7), Nov.
 GERMAN CHAMBER MUSIC BEFORE BACH. Cologne Musica Antiqua, Goebel. ARCHIV 2723 078 (3), Jan.
 LILI KRAUS PLAYS KEYBOARD FANTASIES. VANGUARD AUDIOPHILE VA 25003, Jan.
 KIRI TE KANAWA: *Song Recital*. CBS M 36667, Feb.
 HEAVY METAL. Film score by Elmer Bernstein. FULL MOON/ASYLUM 5E 547, Jan.

probably misattributed, *Bist du bei mir* (which another source tells us is by G.H. Stölzel), a funny little tobacco song, some chorales, and—most interesting—a domestic arrangement of the serene aria "Schlummert ein" from the baritone cantata *Ich habe genug*, here in a version for soprano, in G major. Judith Blegen and Benjamin Luxon do not always overcome their natural tendency to project to a concert hall; Blegen does so only by squeezing her tone uncomfortably, while Luxon sings with an amiability all too reminiscent of his Victorian ballads. In the chorales, some extra inner voices would have been welcome: affecting accounts of these pieces, plus other domestic miniatures very well selected, can be heard on a long-deleted Telefunken record by the Leonhardt Consort, with Agnes Giebel and others, "Quodlibet, Kanons, etc."

The only direct competition is on Musical Heritage (MHS 1663/4). This somewhat ancient, heavily Germanic presentation covers only the 1725 notebook. Marga Scheurich plays the keyboard pieces well, though the tricky registrations on her noisy harpsichord will be enough to deter many. I rather prefer the solid piety of Lotte Schadle and Raimund Gilvan to the perter renderings of Blegen and Luxon. (Gilvan, who sings *Gedenke doch*, is a tenor, not a baritone, and the sleeve wrongly announces *Ich habe genug* as a bass recitative and aria, though Schadle sings it.) But this recording misses the point of the domestic chorale settings by giving them to the Stuttgart Boys Choir. Sound is rather poor, and there is little documentation.

The Nonesuch set, enjoyable despite its flaws, has sound far better than Telefunken's or MHS's and is complemented by

sleeve notes and documentation of exemplary clarity and completeness by Robert Marshall. N.K.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 5*, in C minor, Op. 67. SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 8*, in B minor, D. 759 (*Unfinished*).

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Lorin Maazel, cond. [Steven Epstein, prod.] CBS MASTERWORKS IM 36711 (digital recording). Tape: HMT 36711 (cassette). [Recorded in concert, 1980; price at dealer's option.]

The Fifth was perhaps the least successful performance in Lorin Maazel's Beethoven symphony cycle with the Cleveland Orchestra (CBS M8X 35191, June 1979). This Vienna Philharmonic version, recorded digitally at a 1980 Tokyo concert, makes ample amends. It has a generally lithic, more punctilious quality, with the typical Maazel crispness and even a modicum of nervous energy. One or two annoying interpretive mannerisms (such as the drawing back before the fortissimo at first-movement bar 94 and the corresponding place in the recapitulation) tend to make the whole more theatrical than dramatic, but they were also present in Maazel's older readings (and in less exaggerated form, in the Cleveland Orchestra recording by Maazel's predecessor, George Szell, Odyssey Y 34600). In every way—including the elimination of the ill-advised fourth-movement repeat—this reading is a notable improvement.

The Schubert *Unfinished*, similarly refined, has no bothersome mannerisms. Not that Maazel overlooks details; note the woodwind articulation in those loud chords in the first movement's second theme.

Throughout he avoids smearing anything in haste. (This sometimes involves waiting a fraction of a second for hall resonance to clear, but again, the lapidarian never becomes the finicky.) The low-tensioned reading does, however, occasionally verge on becoming soporific. Maazel observes the first-movement repeat here, as in the Beethoven. He also follows the textual variant at the end of the exposition and recapitulation espoused by Szell (CBS MS 6975) and Haitink (Philips 9500 099); but unlike those conductors, he treads gently, so that the intriguingly pungent sound does not seem like a wrong note.

CBS provides spacious, luminous, well-balanced sound, and the surfaces are admirably quiet. H.G.

BOULEZ: *Sonatas for Piano (3)*.

Claude Helffer, piano. [Michel Bernstein, prod.] ASTRÉE AS 60. \$13.98 (distributed by AudioSource, 1185 Chess Dr., Foster City, Calif. 94404).

Boulez' three piano sonatas comprise perhaps the most impressive body of works in this genre written by a composer of the post-World-War-II generation. Although all three are unmistakably works of their own time (indeed, they reveal the principal line of European musical development in the late 1940s and '50s with special clarity), they also assert strong connections to the tradition of the sonata by retaining its most salient feature: the opposition of, and mediation between, contrasting gestures within an extended and essentially dramatic musical argument.

Each sonata deals with this opposition in a different way. The two-movement First, which appeared in 1946, when Bou-

lez was only twenty, and which immediately established him as a major figure of the youngest generation, presents its material in relatively sparse textures and in a highly compressed structure that plays off fluctuating rates of speed and energy.

The latter idea is taken up again in the Second Sonata, completed some two years later, but here it is developed on a much grander scale. Not only does the work last more than three times as long as its predecessor and contain twice as many movements, its textures are considerably fuller, its musical gestures more varied and more intense.

The Third Sonata, composed some ten years after the Second, poignantly reflects the creative plight of Boulez the composer in the years since he acquired international fame as a conductor. Although hailed by a number of critics, as well as Boulez himself, as a major breakthrough after the stifling rigors of total serialism, the work has remained a torso: only two of its projected five movements have been published and performed. Both employ aleatory procedures, but the element of chance is confined to certain decisions made by the performer, almost all of which are limited to choices among alternative routes to be taken along a meticulously controlled larger formal course. In both movements, entitled "Trope" and "Constellation-Miroir," the dialectical concerns of the earlier sonatas are still recognizable. In "Trope" they appear in the alternation of basic compositional "texts" with different types of "commentaries" upon them (the latter almost always characterized by greater rhythmic freedom), while in "Constellation-Miroir" they are evident in the opposition of sections featuring pointillistic textures against those of a blocklike character.

The sonatas are important and stimulating works, and it is good to have all three available on a single new disc. Excellent recordings of all of these works have appeared previously, however, and the renderings of Claude Helffer, a French pianist specializing in recent music, fail to match their standard. In comparison to Charles Rosen's performance of the First (CBS, unfortunately deleted) and Maurizio Pollini's of the Second (DG 2530 803), Helffer's readings are less incisive and less exact. He tends to play the music more on the surface, almost as impressionistic sound studies, whereas both Rosen and Pollini project tightly structured conceptions within which individual details are subsumed under and integrated within larger cohesive shapes. The formal complexities of these works require a firmly controlling hand, rather than Helffer's somewhat flabby approach, which threatens to dissolve the sonatas into a series of momentary effects.

Helffer's reading of the Third Sonata is better, no doubt due to the work's more relaxed pacing. Here comparisons with the

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Claude Helffer, here giving a master class at the Aspen Music Festival, plays Boulez.



George Crumb: delicate orchestration

one previous recording—also by Rosen, on the same disc as his First—are more difficult, since there are alternative versions of both movements. Curiously, Helffer plays the sections of "Tropé" in exactly the same order as Rosen, although he omits a few of the brief optional commentaries (all of which Rosen plays). In "Constellation-Miroir," however, Helffer presents the entire sequence of the six principal formal segments in reverse order, which, according to my score, is not "allowed." Boulez has in fact projected a "reverse" version of this movement, to be called simply "Constellation" (i.e., without the "Miroir"), but it consists of the same music played backwards. Helffer, on the other hand, plays the music within each section in the same order as the published score, thus producing a sort of mirror of the mirror.

Both sound and production are good, but there is no translation of Dominique Jameux's interesting and extensive French liner notes. R.P.M.

BRAHMS: Ein deutsches Requiem, Op. 45*; Schicksalslied, Op. 54.

Gundula Janowitz, soprano*; Tom Krause, baritone*; Vienna State Opera Chorus, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond. PHILIPS 6769 055, \$25.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: 7654 055, \$25.96 (two cassettes).

Few large-scaled choral works have fared as well on records as has Brahms's *German Requiem*, and its luck holds here. Bernard Haitink offers a reading to set alongside the many other really fine ones, by Karajan (Angel SB 3838), Solti (London OSA 12114), Leinsdorf (RCA LSC 7054), Klemperer (Angel S 3624), et al. (The "et al." applies to versions no longer available—not to Barenboim and Maazel.)

Haitink's aesthetic calls to mind Brahms's comment about Mürrzuschlag,

the high Alpine retreat where he began his Fourth Symphony: "The cherries are never sweet here." The approach is generally instrumental rather than vocal, the interpretation severe and not particularly effusive. Instead of Solti's Chicago version, with which Haitink's shares a certain deliberation, I kept thinking back to an old Deutsche Grammophon mono performance conducted by the late Fritz Lehmann. Klemperer and Toscanini, too, had some of this prickly sobriety, but their tempos—at least some of them—outpaced Haitink's stately procession.

The weightiness is kept in proper perspective: the sound of this first digital recording of the work, though rich in detail, avoids stressing instrumental asides. (Haitink himself brings out the brasses in the dirgelike second movement much as Klemperer did.) The darker instruments are emphasized, but without muddiness. I like the slight graininess of the cellos and basses at the beginning of the first movement and Tom Krause's comparable rasp in his two solos. Gundula Janowitz, fifteen years after her first recording of the work (with Karajan, DG 2707 018), retains much of her earlier flutelike appeal in the fifth-movement solo, and the Vienna State Opera Chorus sings admirably without quite matching Solti's Chicago Symphony Chorus. This is a reading of power, structural integrity, and honesty.

Haitink and his forces also do handsomely by the *Schicksalslied*, a more interesting filler than the usual ones—the *Haydn Variations*, the *Tragic Overture*, and even the *Alto Rhapsody*. H.G.

CRUMB: *Variazioni*. **HODKINSON:** *Fresco*.

Louisville Orchestra, David Gilbert, cond. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] LOUISVILLE FIRST EDITION LS 774, \$7.98 (Louisville Orchestra, 333 W. Broadway, Louisville, Ky. 40202).

Admirers of George Crumb's music will want this disc, which contains one of his relatively early works, written before he undertook the series of Lorca settings that dominated his output in the 1960s and '70s. *Variazioni*, an extended orchestral composition that dates from 1959, Crumb's thirtieth year, predates the strikingly exotic and atmospheric style established in these later pieces. It is much closer to what we now think of as the "mainstream" of earlier twentieth-century music; the influence of Berg and Bartók is especially evident.

The score consists of a theme and six variations, plus three additional Fantasia sections placed between variations. Although one can recognize the Crumb touch in the delicate treatment of the large orchestra and the frequent repetition of brief melodic figures, the overall formal conception, which builds continuously toward several climactic plateaus, seems far removed from the later music. Only in the more fragile Fantasias, with their greater rhythmic flexibility and freer structure, are there apparent hints of the style to come.

Sydney Hodkinson's *Fresco*, composed in 1968, is another expansive orchestral work, yet here the emphasis is more upon the development of instrumental color and texture. Hodkinson, who teaches at the Eastman School of Music and is also known as a conductor of new music, has sufficient technique and aural imagination to sustain interest through most of the composition's twenty-minute span, but the loose, episodic structure—common in this type of piece—lends the work a rather static character.

David Gilbert leads the Louisville Orchestra in solid, sympathetic performances of both pieces. R.P.M.

DAVIES: Ave maris stella; Tenebrae super Gesualdo; Renaissance, Baroque Realizations—Page 50.

DEBUSSY: Sonata No. 3. for Violin and Piano—See Franck.

DVOŘÁK: Requiem, Op. 89.

Teresa Zylis-Gara, soprano; Stefania Toczyska, alto; Peter Dvorský, tenor; Leonard Mróz, bass; Radio France Chorus and New Philharmonic Orchestra, Armin Jordan, cond. [Guy Chesnais and Michel Lepage, prod.] ERATO STU 71430. \$17.96 (two discs, manual sequence) (distributed by RCA).

Most connoisseurs of nineteenth-century Requiems would probably include Dvořák's setting among the big five, even if it is less frequently heard than Berlioz' monumental epic, Brahms's ecumenical embrace, Verdi's operatic drama, or Fauré's sweetly consoling view of eternity. Unlike those scores, Dvořák's Mass for the Dead resists easy adjectival description, and that no doubt provides a clue to its sporadic performance history. The composer responds with appropriate music for each section of the text—an ominous funeral march for the Dies Irae, a sobbing "Lacrymosa," a supplicating "Libera animas," an obligatory fugal "Quam olim Abrahae"—but the work as a whole does not strive to make an intensely personal statement. Dvořák avoids extremes, conveying a calming attitude of civilized serenity in the face of death without a hint of melodrama or sentimentality.

For all of its slightly abstract tone, the Requiem is wholly characteristic of Dvořák's best—a dignified score of lovely melodic inspiration, superbly proportioned and crafted with a disciplined master's touch. There should always be a recording at hand, and now that London has deleted the Kertész version of 1969, here is a new one to take its place. The exchange is not an especially happy one, and those who own the Kertész performance should count their blessings. Armin Jordan secures decent playing from his French forces, but the overall effect is rather soggy compared to the crisp definition and warm textural blends of the London edition. Part of the problem may be the muddy acoustic, which only proves that a later recording date in no way insures superior technology. Vocally, too, the newcomer is only adequate, and I miss the bright, primary colors of London's fine quartet of soloists (Pilar Lorengar, Erzsébet Komlóssy, Robert Hossfálvy, and Tom Krause). For those who must have the Dvořák Requiem, Erato's workaday effort provides no more than a serviceable stop-gap. P. D.

FRANCK: Sonata for Violin and Piano, in A. SZYMANOWSKI: Mythes, Op. 30. Songs (2) (arr. Kocharian)

Kaja Danczowska, violin; Krystian Zmich, piano. [Janis Rynke and William Lehner, prod.] ERATO STU 71430. \$10.98 (Epcos 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304, 3305, 3306, 3307, 3308, 3309, 3310, 3311, 3312, 3313, 3314, 3315, 3316, 3317, 3318, 3319, 3320, 3321, 3322, 3323, 3324, 3325, 3326, 3327, 3328, 3329, 3330, 3331, 3332, 3333, 3334, 3335, 3336, 3337, 3338, 3339, 3340, 3341, 3342, 3343, 3344, 3345, 3346, 3347, 3348, 3349, 3350, 3351, 3352, 3353, 3354, 3355, 3356, 3357, 3358, 3359, 3360, 3361, 3362, 3363, 3364, 3365, 3366, 3367, 3368, 3369, 3370, 3371, 3372, 3373, 3374, 3375, 3376, 3377, 3378, 3379, 3380, 3381, 3382, 3383, 3384, 3385, 3386, 3387, 3388, 3389, 3390, 3391, 3392, 3393, 3394, 3395, 3396, 3397, 3398, 3399, 3400, 3401, 3402, 3403, 3404, 3405, 3406, 3407, 3408, 3409, 3410, 3411, 3412, 3413, 3414, 3415, 3416, 3417, 3418, 3419, 3420, 3421, 3422, 3423, 3424, 3425, 3426, 3427, 3428, 3429, 3430, 3431, 3432, 3433, 3434, 3435, 3436, 3437, 3438, 3439, 3440, 3441, 3442, 3443, 3444, 3445, 3446, 3447, 3448, 3449, 3450, 3451, 3452, 3453, 3454, 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FRANCK: Sonata for Violin and Piano, in A. DEBUSSY: Sonata No. 3.

Kyung-Wha Chung, violin; Radu Lupu, piano. [Christopher Raeburn, prod.] LONDON CS 7171. \$10.98.

These two performances of the Franck violin sonata—so different in style yet both so faithful to the composer's very detailed and explicit markings—demonstrate how much leeway performers actually have in Romantic music. There is absolutely no reason to take the easy way out, as so many slovenly, ego-ridden practitioners do, with wanton disregard of the printed page!

Both readings display high artistry and virtuosic brilliance. DG's, by Kaja Danczowska and Krystian Zimerman, may be the "younger" interpretation—more free-wheeling and less calculated. Danczowska, who appears to be, like Zimerman, in her early twenties, was a pupil of David Oistrakh and Eugenia Uminska (who premiered on record one of the Szymanowski violin concertos). Her tonal quality is somewhat ascetic, with a slight nasal "twang" similar to that of her Polish compatriot Wanda Wilkomirska—who, incidentally, recorded the same Franck/Szymanowski coupling, minus the two songs. Zimerman, in his debut chamber-music recording (if the bravura Franck, with its organlike spread, can be called "chamber music"), supports his colleague with excitable bursts of speed and energy without ever swamping her in either balance or personality.

Kyung-Wha Chung and Radu Lupu, on the other hand, strive for a patrician luminosity and achieve it brilliantly. Here the pulse is a bit more symmetrical, and while the specified tempo changes are observed, they are calibrated into a more reserved entity (a case in point being the second-movement coda). Chung's faster, more pulsating vibrato produces a more soprano-oriented—some will say "slicker"—sound than Danczowska's huskier counterpart. Lupu similarly lightens textures and provides greater definition; in the second-movement development section, he clarifies all the imitations brilliantly. (One can hear them in Zimerman's account, but not nearly so arrestingly.)

Both performances set a perfect tempo for the finale—flowing and in the specified *alla breve* but with lovely repose and gentility. London's reproduction is bright-edged, even slightly metallic, but with attractive color; DG's is closer, more massive. Both are first-class.

The superb Danczowska/Zimerman performance of the Szymanowski *Mythes* admirably replaces the fine Wilkomirska/Barbosa account, now available only on cassette. (In Sync C 4010). Chung and Lupu give the Debussy sonata a light, volatile, tautly reserved reading in the "French" manner—miles removed from the wonderfully dark, impassioned account by Ginette and Jean Neveu reissued last year on British EML RLS 739. H.G.

HARRISON, L.: Instrumental Works.

Various performers*; Kronos Quartet†. [Carter Harman, prod.] COMPOSERS RECORDINGS SD 455. \$8.95.

Main Bersama-Sama*; Threnody for Carlos Chávez*; Serenade*; String Quartet Set†.



Lou Harrison: forerunner of minimalism

Many minimalists have professed a fascination with the methods, rhythms, and timbres of non-Western music and with stretches of simple melody unencumbered by complex harmonic underpinings. But there is nothing new under the sun; Lou Harrison was writing Eastern-tinged, melodic, and repetitive music before any of them, starting more than thirty years ago. Once a student of Schoenberg and Cowell, Harrison composed numerous serial and experimental works before his interest turned to Japanese, Javanese, and Chinese classical music, on the one hand, and Western medieval music and its old-style just intonation, on the other.

In this gathering of recent works, the medievalist, the orientalist, and the forerunner of minimalism are all well represented. In the three short pieces on the first side, the Indonesian gamelan provides soothing ostinatos (not so different from those Steve Reich's vibraphonists and marimba players produce but without the phase-shifting effect) through which solo melodies are woven. Best is the *Threnody for Carlos Chávez*, with its eloquent, nicely unfolding viola line, punctuated by sparkling chimes. The *Serenade*, for suling (bamboo flute, played by the composer), is nearly as entrancing, if not quite as intense. In fact, the only piece that doesn't quite come off is *Main Bersama-Sama*—partly, perhaps, because the sound of its French horn is too foreign to that of the omnipresent gamelan, but also because the sweet melody, played alternately by horn and suling, is often repeated yet never developed.

The second side contains a neo-medieval string quartet in five movements. From movement to movement, the styles change radically: The first is based on a troubador melody, pretty and consonant, with lots of parallel fourths; the second is more traditional-sounding, with a touch of Barberish romanticism; the third is a lively *Estampie*, with one instrument at a time taking the melody while the rest provide a rhythmic drone; the fourth is a gentle but passionate Rondeaux, similar in language to the second movement; and the fifth, like the third, employs percussive effects and a medieval dance texture, though with no drone—only some light thumping and a continuous, unharmonized melody in what the composer tells us is a Turkish mode. Surprisingly, given its variety of idioms, the piece holds together well and makes an attractively strange addition to the quartet literature.

The performances, though all committed, are not all first-rate. The Kronos Quartet could afford a bit more polish in both tone and intonation, and the solo horn does not always sound secure. Only Susan Bates, the violist in *Threnody*, is noteworthy among the players of Western instruments. Of the gamelan and suling, I can say only that they make a very appealing noise together. A.K.

HODKINSON: Fresco—See Crumb.

JANÁČEK: The Cunning Little Vixen.

CAST:
 Bystrouška Magdaléna Hajóssyová (s)
 Pásková Drahomíra Tikalová (s)
 The Fox Gabriela Beňačková-Čápková (s)
 Frantík Jiřina Marková (s)
 Pepík Jarmila Sovobodová-Žilková (s)
 The Rooster/The Jay Libuše Domanínská (s)
 Chocholka Božena Effenberková (s)
 The Young Vixen/The Frog Marie Koucká (s)
 The Cricket Irena Fillichová (s)
 The Grasshopper Gabriela Krčková (s)
 Lapák Ivana Mixová (ms)
 The Forester's Wife/The Owl Helena Buldřová (a)
 The Woodpecker Marie Mrázová (a)
 The Schoolmaster/The Gnat Miroslav Frydlewicz (t)
 Pásek Karel Hanuš (t)
 The Forester Richard Novák (bs)
 The Parson/The Badger Karel Průša (bs)
 Harašta Jaroslav Souček (bs)
 Kühn Children's Chorus, Czech Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra, Václav Neumann, cond. [Milan Slavický, prod.] PRO ARTE 2PAL 2012. \$19.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: 2PAC 2012. \$19.96 (two cassettes).

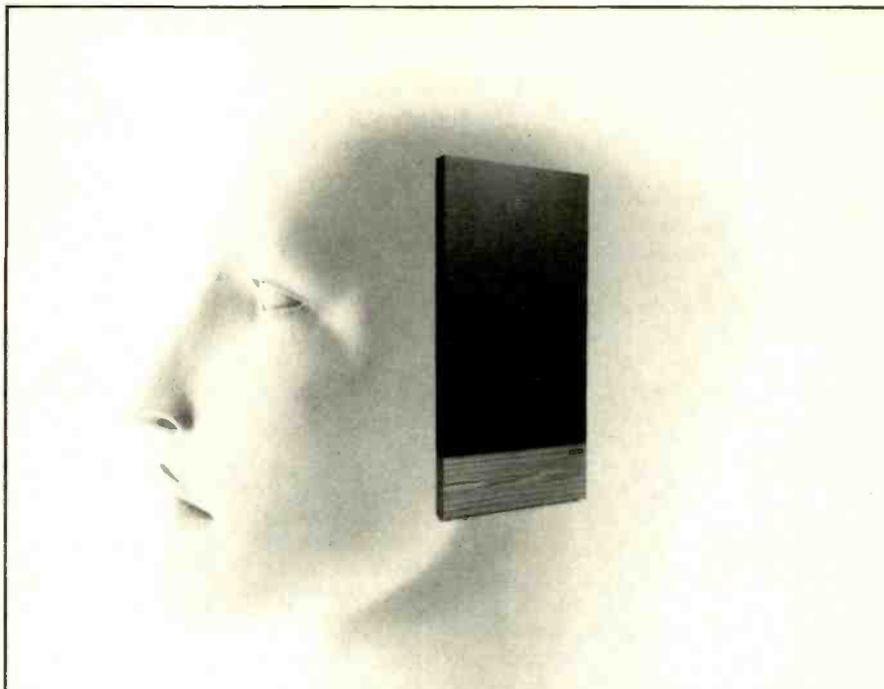
Most American opera-goers must now be familiar with *The Cunning Little Vixen* as performances become increasingly frequent. The New York City Opera's production was a big success last year; even critics resistant to Janáček's original methods succumbed to this enchanting animal opera, which depicts nature's life-renewing cycle

with unerring precision and deep affection for every creature on stage, be it fox, hen, frog, or human being.

Pro Arte's recording is the third to arrive here from Supraphon. The first, in mono, conducted by Václav Neumann and still unrivaled, circulated on the Artia label during the early 1960s, but those discs were replaced in 1972 by an imported stereo performance. Since that version, under Bohumil Gregor's direction, turned out to be a disappointment in nearly every respect. Supraphon wisely invited Neumann back to re-create his glowing interpretation. *Vixen* aficionados should also be alerted to the imminent arrival of the Charles Mackerras recording on London with Lucia Popp in the title role, a release due sometime between May and the end of the year.

Since Mackerras' Janáček opera series has so far produced three winners, many buyers will no doubt wish to wait, although the latest Supraphon effort is very fine. Blessed with warm, vibrant, yet sharply defined sonics, this recording allows us to hear the magical beauties of Janáček's exquisite instrumentation in all their glory, and Neumann's conducting penetrates right to the heart of the score. The Czech Philharmonic may not make the plush sounds of Europe's greatest orchestras, but the playing is everywhere alive to the music's fascinating blend of sweet and sour textures.

The vocal performances, as in all Czech-based recordings, are never less than authoritative, if not always easy on the ears; in this respect Supraphon's first *Vixen* remains unchallenged. Rudolf Asmus' Forster on those discs vividly captured the character's bluff heartiness and shrewd peasant wisdom, as he sensitively colored his mellow bass to make many telling effects. His successor, Richard Novák, is both a less supple and a less imaginative singer, although he misses few important dramatic points. Magdaléna Hajóssyová's Bystrouška may be a mite too shrill for comfort, but even this potential liability is not terribly distressing in view of her lively response to each of the *Vixen*'s adventures. The rest of the large cast is wholly acceptable. Gabriela Beňačková-Čápová's ardent Fox considerably more than that. P.G.D.



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LISZT: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 1, in E flat; No. 2, in A.

Claudio Arrau, piano; London Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. PHILIPS 9500 780, \$10.98. Tape: 7300 854, \$10.98 (cassette).

Jorge Bolet, piano; Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, David Zinman, cond. [Judith Sherman, prod.] VOX CUM LAUDE VCL 9001, \$8.98. Tape: VCS 9001, \$8.98 (cassette).

LISZT: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1.* Album d'un voyageur, Book I: Les Cloches de Genève. Années de pèlerinage, First Year: Vallée d'Obermann.

Nicholas Zumbo, piano; Royal Philhar-

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monic Orchestra, Paul Freeman, cond.*. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4359, \$4.95 (\$7.95 to members). Tape: MHC 6359, \$4.95 (\$7.95 to members) (cassette). (Add \$1.60 for shipping; Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Rd., Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724.)

The Richter/Kondrashin performances of the two Liszt concertos seem every bit as brilliant and expressive as they did twenty years ago. And they are well recorded; in Philips' splendid remastering (835 474), they remain exemplary, making all other recordings of this enjoyable but hardly profound music something of an exercise in futility.

Twenty years ago, Claudio Arrau might have rivaled Richter; he put comparable glitter at the service of spiritual substance. But now his scales lean to the side of sober justice. Like Liszt himself, Arrau is an expansively generous musical personality who thrives on rhetorical emphasis. Both were dashing, fire-breathing virtuosos in their youths. And just as Liszt aged with contrition and took churchly vows (having used up every available countess), Arrau has become superserious, turning his back on the callow aspects of his earlier days. At age seventy-seven, he seems to be playing it slowly to get it right.

Arrau's readings may be a trifle lumbering in octave avalanches, but lyrical moments are impressive. Moreover, his playing has welcome plasticity and expressive nuance. Since it is the more introverted, the A major Concerto is better served by Arrau's approach; the E flat begins heavily, and its accented tenuto strings should give sufficient warning to those who expect a modern approximation of Arrau's 1953 recording with Ormandy (Odyssey Y 34601, February 1978).

Jorge Bolet's performances, more conventionally paced, are beautifully smooth pianistically. His coloristic gifts are far more evident here than in his older Everest recording of the E flat Concerto with Robert Irving and the Symphony of the Air. His readings are framed in sleek, resonant, yet amply detailed sonics and deftly accompanied by David Zinman and the Rochester Philharmonic. The orchestral forces, apparently somewhat reduced, lend a light touch that enhances the opening of the E flat's third movement yet still muster sufficient sonorous appeal in the climaxes. All told, a fine release; but alongside the incandescent Richter and the characterful Arrau, it seems a little pale and nondescript.

Nicholas Zumbo, in his disc debut, is an earnest Lisztian. He paces his performances soberly, keeps his textures reasonably clear, and favors a kind of manly non-nonsense directness (save for a few admissible rhetorical stresses). But these performances of mere journeyman competence are not geared for the sort of competition they encounter. The orchestral work in the concerto lacks hair-trigger responsiveness. (The horns near the beginning of the third

movement don't have quite the requisite crispness.) And on both sides, the piano tone grows a mite hollow and clattery in climaxes. MHS, however, once again offers a good clean pressing. H.G.

PUCCINI: *Tosca*.

CAST:

Floria Tosca	Renata Scotto (s)
Shepherd	Dominick Martinez (boy s)
Mario Cavaradossi	Placido Domingo (t)
Spoletta	Andrea Velis (t)
Scarpia	Renato Bruson (b)
Sacristan	Renato Capecchi (b)
Cesare Angelotti	John Check (bs)
Sciarrone	Paul Hudson (bs)
Jailer	Itzhak Perlman (bs)

St. Clement Danes School Boys' Choir, Ambrosian Opera Chorus, Philharmonia Orchestra. James Levine, cond. [John Willan, prod.] ANGEL DSBX 3919, \$20.96 (digital recording; two discs, manual sequence).

COMPARISONS:

Callas, Di Stefano, De Sabata	Ang. BL 3508
Callas, Bergonzi, Prêtre	Ang. SBL 3655
Price, Di Stefano, Karajan	Lon. OSA 1284
Caniglia, Gigli, De Fabritiis	Sera. IB 6027

Quite apart from the question of how good a *Tosca* it is (rather good, as a matter of fact), this set is gratifying on the human level. Most of the participants are strikingly more interesting here than in the dispiriting recorded work they have lately been producing.

In Levine's case, this is probably the best thing I've heard from him on or off records. His reading is coherent and fluid, without the frenetic quality that has dogged even his Puccini, and with more singing quality than I can recall hearing before in his work. Listen to the sweeping orchestral tutti in Act I between Tosca's final exit and Scarpia's "Tre shirri," or for that matter to the effective shaping and grading of the accompaniment to the "Va, Tosca" monologue.

Only occasionally does Levine's inner-voice hunt backfire, as when he makes a virtual solo of the little off-the-beat trumpet figuration as Angelotti reveals himself to Cavaradossi. Occasionally, too, there seems to me a loss of tension in slower passages. And if other conductors have found more emotional nuance in the score (De Sabata and Prêtre, for example), this too is a relative matter. The point is that the performance works.

Having frequently complained about mechanical, uncomprehending choral and orchestral contributions to Italian-opera recordings made in London, I'm pleased to report that the singing and playing here are absolutely first-rate. And the sound, while not as seductive as, say, that of the Karajan/London set, is clear, detailed, and forceful. It's so nice to hear singers recorded in a balance other than extreme close-up that I'm reluctant to suggest that they might be a bit more forward. This perspective is certainly more flattering to the singers than the industry's current microphone-on-tonsils



Renata Scotto: better than recent *Toscas*

norm—competing singers and producers, please note.

There's not likely to be much controversy about the contributions of Domingo and Bruson, both of whom place near the top of their recorded fields. Cavaradossi is one of the few roles in which I have seen Domingo abandon his usual safety-first caution, and this recording captures a good deal more of the vocal excitement I recall than did his earlier one (with Price and Milnes, Mehta conducting, RCA ARL 2-0105).

The voice is in its best current condition, and wants only the extra weight and presence of a full-fledged *tenore di forza* (cf. Del Monaco or Corelli). For a sample, check out the phrase for which I criticized José Carreras in the Karajan/DG recording (2707 121, November 1980): "Qual occhio al mondo" in the Act I duet. This is as good a recording as Domingo has made, and a Cavaradossi as satisfying in its own way as those of Di Stefano (the first time, with De Sabata), Gigli, and Bergonzi.

Since Scarpia's music lies almost entirely in the meaty part of Bruson's voice (roughly, the octave between Fs), he has much his best recorded outing to date. Strictly from a vocal standpoint, this performance is a consistent pleasure to listen to, and it reminds us that, until the current drought set in, baritones used to relish Puccini precisely for his ability to make them sound good.

From the interpretive standpoint, though, Bruson is hardly present. The only times he steps out from behind his poker-faced mask are when he can score particularly telling vocal points, which sometimes produces odd results. It's hard to think, for

example, what dramatic point might be made by his underlining of the word "Entriamo." Still, the very ordinariness of Bruson's characterization makes a statement of sorts about Scarpia, which I find more believable than the traditional leering hysteria (cf. Milnes, Wixell, et al.). Gobbi (with both De Sabata and Prêtre) and Taddei (Karajan/London) are more interesting, but Bruson sings the music better.

About Scotto there is sure to be disagreement. But before we get to that, let's note how much better condition the voice is in than we would have expected from her recordings and live performances of the preceding several years. The voice still flies out of control at about A natural, and is far from ideally steady in the fifth or so below that; nor is there much usable bottom. All the same, Scotto has worked hard to stabilize the instrument within these boundaries, and even though it means that she has only one intensity level to work at, all-out, she manages a reputable vocal accounting of herself.

What sort of Tosca does this add up to? Distinctly limited in emotional range, for one thing, and not very likable, for another. Especially opposite as unthreatening-sounding a Scarpia as Bruson, her betrayal of Angelotti sounds less like an act of compassion for her lover than an expression of willfulness—sort of "You can have your old Angelotti, but I'll be damned if you'll get my Mario."

Of course no law says we have to like Tosca, and it's just possible that not all divas are paragons of loveliness. But the more objectively we view Tosca, the less apt we are to empathize with her ordeal, and the less likely we are to feel the brutality we mortals are capable of visiting on our brethren. I respect Scotto's achievement here, and I'll take the result over the unfortunate run of Toscas we've had in recent years, but I'm more comfortable with Callas (yes, in the stereo version too), Tebaldi, and Caniglia—and also, despite the applicable reservations, with Price (the first time, with Karajan), Nilsson, and the aged Milanov.

Levine has packed the supporting cast with Met regulars. Check, the sort of performer who benefits from being heard but not seen, makes a brave sound as Angelotti, but Velis and Capecchi are nondescript as Spoletta and the Sacristan. It's sobering to realize that we still have no successor to Fernando Corena in the basso buffo repertory. The interesting alternative Sacristans were recorded while he was still active: Alfredo Mariotti (with Nilsson and Corelli, London, deleted) and especially Giorgio Tadeo (with Prêtre), who radiates Christian charity and sings an "Angelus" of such eloquence as to nearly make a believer of me.

Perlman, the cast ringer, first sang the Jailer at the behest of Zubin Mehta, in a New York Philharmonic pension-fund concert with Luciano Pavarotti, at which time



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he said that singing those few lines made him far more nervous than fiddling ever did. As we can hear from the recording, for which he has learned the rest of the role (i.e., the word "L'ora!"), he took the job seriously. I've never heard a better Jaïler.

Although there are lots of distinctive individual efforts scattered around the *Tosca* discography, the four recordings I've listed as comparisons are the ones that have given me the most all-around satisfaction. I'd probably throw in a Tebaldi version if either were available, and I certainly expect to add the new recording to the list. Angel does seem to have a way with the opera.

K.F.

PURCELL: Choral Works.

Choir of Christ Church Cathedral (Oxford), English Concert, Simon Preston, cond. [Gerd Ploebusch and Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2723 076. \$32.94 (three discs, manual sequence).

Magnificat and Nunc dimittis, in G minor. Morning and Evening Service in B flat: Canticles. Te Deum and Jubilate, in D. Anthems: O God, Thou hast cast us out; O Lord, God of hosts; Remember not, Lord, our offences; Lord, how long wilt Thou be angry?; O God, Thou art my God; Man that is born of a woman; Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts; My heart is inditing; O sing unto the Lord; My beloved spake: They that go down to the sea in ships; Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; Jehovah, quam multi.

The lion's share of Purcell's church music was written before his twenty-sixth year, when he became heavily involved in writing music for the stage. All the more remarkable, then, are the stylistic range and technical accomplishment of his sacred works, a very fine sampling of which is offered here.

With their contrapuntal subtlety and chromatic expressionism, Purcell's "full" anthems (those without instrumentally accompanied solo passages) reveal a profound debt to Tudor forebears. His verse anthems inhabit quite another world; their colorful solo writing and lively accompaniments—and paradoxically, their more restricted harmonic language—show a keen awareness of contemporary developments in French and Italian music. Along with examples of these two forms, this album includes settings of canticles for the Anglican services of Matins and Evensong, the psalm *Jehovah, quam multi sunt hostes mei*, and the festal *Te Deum and Jubilate*.

There is a wealth of strikingly individual music here, some of it in pieces whose obscurity is entirely undeserved (e.g., the exquisite B-flat setting of the alternative Evensong canticle "*Deus misereatur*"). It benefits, moreover, from performances of a very high order indeed. Singing with both vigor and refinement, the Christ Church Cathedral Choir shows the greatest care in highlighting Purcell's richly colored suspensions and cross-relations—though never with any suggestion of exaggeration.

Bass David Thomas, fine as he is, cannot quite support the low notes Purcell wrote for the extraordinary John Gostling, but otherwise the soloists (presumably members of the choir) are outstanding. Gratifying, too, is the eloquent playing of the English Concert (with original instruments) in the *Te Deum, Jubilate*, and verse anthems.

On the negative side, conductor Simon Preston often seems to overdo the slow tempo in the more penitential works, depriving them of the urgency that is almost always central to the texts (e.g., *Remember not, Lord, our offences* and *Jehovah, quam multi*). And the tendency to swallow some vowels is a great surprise, coming from a choir that only a few years ago was cultivating a very bright and forward tone color. The pronunciations "mahnd" and "hahnd" for "man" and "hand" are hardly representative of speech anywhere—least of all in England.

Still, there is much to admire, and—apart from occasional constriction—the recording engineers have done their job decently. The album includes a booklet with complete texts and a useful introduction by the learned Watkins Shaw. S.C.

SAINT-SAËNS: Organ Works.

Daniel Roth, organ of the Church of St. Solomon-St. Grégoire, Pithiviers. [Grégo Casadesus, prod.] EMI FRANCE 2C 167-16306/8. \$41.94 (three discs, manual sequence) (distributed by International Book and Record Distributors, 40-11 24th St., Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Trois Rapsodies sur des cantiques bretons, Op. 7; Bénédiction nuptiale, Op. 9; Élévation ou Communion, Op. 13; Trois Préludes et Fugues, Op. 99; Fantaisie in D flat, Op. 101; Marche religieuse, Op. 107; Trois Préludes et Fugues, Op. 109; Sept Improvisations, Op. 150; Cyprès et Lauriers, Op. 156; Fantaisie, Op. 157; Fantaisie in E flat.

Although his fame rests largely elsewhere, Saint-Saëns was for twenty-four years the *titulaire* of a Parisian organ loft—first at St. Merry and thereafter at the fashionable Madeleine. These two positions exposed him to the two "schools" of French organ-building, and his compositions for organ predictably draw upon the stylistic influences of both classicism and romanticism.

Saint-Saëns's fondness for classical tradition manifests itself in two sets of three preludes and fugues; certain of the *Sept Improvisations*, on the other hand, show strong affinities with contemporary works of Viërne and (rather surprisingly) Tournemire. The music, though well crafted and mostly charming, does not always rise above a certain decorative superficiality. It is marred, too, by occasional reminders of the bourgeois taste to which composers such as Lefébure-Wély and Bastiste pandered.

Containing both classical and Roman-

tic elements, the organ at Pithiviers (Isnard, 1786; Cavaillé-Coll, 1890; Boisseau, 1962) is well suited to the music, and these recordings are both vivid and spacious, with particularly solid bass. (There are, however, a couple of audible tape bounces in the C major Fugue.)

Daniel Roth's performances are less successful. Much of the time, in fact, he contents himself with a disconcertingly literal approach that does nothing to animate the music. He seems somewhat inspired by the modally colored expressionism of the first and sixth *Improvisations*, but elsewhere the playing is frankly pedestrian, plodding along with scarcely a suggestion of rhythmic life.

The album includes a useful and informative article by François Sabatier (imperfectly translated into English). But while the present performances occupy a notable gap in the discography of French organ music, they do not really fill it. S.C.

SCHUBERT: Song Cycles and Songs—See page 47.

SCHUBERT: Symphony No. 8, D. 759—See Beethoven.

SZYMANOWSKI: Works for Violin and Piano—See Franck.

TIPPETT: King Priam; Symphony No. 4; Suite for the Birthday of Prince Charles—See page 50.

WOLF: Songs—See page 47.

WOLF-FERRARI: Il Segreto di Susanna.

CAST:

Susanna Renata Scotto (s)
Gil Renato Bruson (b)

Philharmonia Orchestra, John Pritchard, cond. [Roy Emerson, prod.] CBS MASTERWORKS IM 36733 (digital recording). Tape: HMT 36733 (cassette). [Price at dealer's option.]

COMPARISON:

Chiara, Weikl, Gardelli Lon. OSA 1169

If, like me, you didn't attend duly to London's 1976 recording of this remarkable intermezzo, now's the time to rectify the omission. And while the new recording is probably the one to have if you're having only one, either will do. In fact, the piece is so precisely written that both Pritchard and London's Lamberto Gardelli give perhaps their liveliest and most pointed performances on records.

Wolf-Ferrari (1876–1948) lived and worked suspended between the heritages of his Bavarian father and Venetian mother. He was raised in Venice but educated in Munich, and what we hear in *Segreto* accords with Barrymore Laurence Scherer's summation in his helpful CBS background

note: "Clearly Wolf-Ferrari set out on his own mission; he was influenced by many, but a disciple of none; he was inspired by the past but sought to beautify the present."

In plot, *Segreto* is even simpler than Pergolesi's *Serva padrona*, the obvious model. Count Gil is persuaded that his bride of a month has a lover, but the Countess' real secret is that she smokes cigarettes; Gil's jealous rages alternate with rapturous reconciliations and Susanna's smoking sessions. But this bare synopsis doesn't do justice to the delicacy of the text, and certainly not to the music, which has a false simplicity reminiscent of Weill's (different as the two composers are in actual sound): The basic melodic structures are simple and direct and hard to resist in their own right, but the real genius lies in the subtlety of their working-out.

The CBS recording is dated August 1980, which means that Scotto and Bruson must have come straight from the new *Angel Tosca* (reviewed above), dated July-August. Vocally, it was a good summer for Scotto, who sounds even better in this lighter writing and has more fun with the role than does London's vocally smoother Maria Chiara. Bruson and London's Bernd Weigl are fairly evenly matched. If neither rates among your more dynamic personalities, Bruson has an edge in Italianate fluency and vocal color.

CBS has a plus in the Scherer essay, while London's sound is brighter and more open. Both booklets include texts—the same English translation, in fact. Buy either recording and enjoy, and perhaps we can encourage the record companies to pursue this distinctive composer. K.F.

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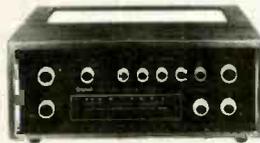
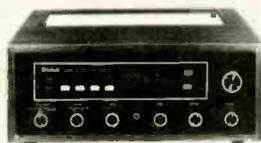
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Jaques, has a quality quite its own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects. Chief among its ingredients: an affectionate regard for the material, a delicate alertness to phrase and inflection, a tenderness and warmth of sentiment, and perhaps most distinctive of all, an elfin sense of mischief.

All these combined to lovely effect in the couple's first album, "After the Ball" (Nonesuch H 71304; 1974), a nostalgic bouquet gathered from turn-of-the-century dance halls and salons. Since then, their discography has been working backward and forward in time, shedding light on new patches in the history of the American popular song. Their recorded repertoire ranges from the simple, vigorous tunes of Henry Clay Work ("Who Shall Rule This American Nation?"; with Clifford Jackson, baritone; Nonesuch H 71317; 1975) to the contemporary drypoint vignettes of Leiber and Stoller ("Other Songs"; Nonesuch H 71346; 1978); it also includes a second splendid Gay-'90s collection ("Vaudeville"; Nonesuch H 71330; 1976), a tribute to the rakish, indestructible Eubie Blake ("Wild About Eubie"; CBS M 34504; 1977), a sugar-and-spice Irving Berlin anthology ("The Girl on the Magazine Cover"; RCA AGL 1-3704; 1979), and an omnibus of sophisticated duets from the '20s and '30s by various hands ("These Charming People," with Max Morath; RCA AGL 1-3703; 1977). Among the composers and lyricists represented on the last of these are Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, to whom Bolcom and Morris now devote an entire disc.

The program maintains the high standards in variety and shapeliness the artists set from their earliest live appearances and records. It begins with "I Didn't Know What Time It Was," in the briefly soaring middle section of which the touching precision of Morris' diction and the bell-like lightness and refinement of her lovely mezzo-soprano take on an especial radiance. The awakening to first love makes a sweet introduction to the Rodgers-and-Hart world of romance and innocence. Thus situated, Morris launches into a startlingly husky rendition of "The Lady Is a Tramp," swiftly establishing not only the songwriters' range, but also her own. The contrasts will never be so sharp again, and do not have to be: The stage is set for finer shadings.

Morris belongs to that rarest class of singers who, possessed of an easy technical mastery that gives eloquent voice to every grace of timbre, musicality, and intelligence, still can touch every phrase with the bloom and sheen of perfect freshness. Each crescendo, each ritard, every fleeting accent follows and enhances the shape of the unfolding line. Within a song, she can evoke and sustain a single mood (from the pouty jazziness of "Where's That Rain-bow?"; to the vulnerability of "This Funny World"); or she can subvert it in a moment,



Morris, Bolcom: elfin sense of mischief

as at the end of "Ten Cents a Dance," when her incongruous aura of innocence vanishes and leaves her suddenly hard-boiled. From track to track the tone may shift from mellow (as in the cheerful "A Tree in the Park") to somber (as in "He Was Too Good to Me," a lament for a departing lover described, with haunting ambiguity, as "too good to be true"); but the immediacy of expression and the vocal finesse are constants.

How uncommon Morris' gifts and abilities are, especially in the lighter repertoire, springs into high relief when she is joined for two duets (the wistful "Why Can't I?"; and the needling "Take Him") by guest artist Lucy Simon, whose quivering, wispy charm cannot mask short breath, narrow registers, and faltering support. But Morris' sterling qualities need no such foil to set them off.

The foil that *does* add luster to her interpretations is Bolcom's work at the piano. Where her phrases swell, his plush, rhapsodic flourishes buoy her higher; where she cuts capers, he sprays little cloudbursts of notes like bright confetti; where the air is too fragile to bear so rounded a second presence, he dims the lights and does not intrude. His accompaniments are splendid in themselves and gracious to the voice, with transparent textures to gleam against and biting rhythms to glance off in fetching rubato.

A word on the material: Hart's mani-

fest wit and brilliance as a lyricist have perhaps been celebrated too uncritically. His strings of short lines with rhymes that chime and chime tend to read much better than they sing. The failing may be Rodgers' when they give rise to melodic monotony, but that monotony often sounds metrically predetermined, as where the tune keeps looping up to a constant pitch and then drooping down in the evergreen "Bewitched." (A sample at random: "Romance—*fini!* Your chance—*fini!* Those ants that invaded my pants—*fini!*") Some of Hart's most quotable quotes make little or no prose sense in their own contexts, as "That's why the lady is a tramp" (which explains nothing and casts no aspersions) or "It never entered my mind" (which, against all known usage, paraphrases as "I never paid any attention"). These are not trivial blemishes. And yet, again and again, the Rodgers-and-Hart collaborations triumph over the flaws. The flowing middle section of "Bewitched" is more supple than the more famous stanza is brittle, and the various settings of the words "It never entered my mind" make the ritornello in the song by that name more affecting on each hearing.

Something similar happens on a larger scale with repeated playings of this entire album. Not only do scattered phrases or passages in the problematic numbers become more and more entrancing with increasing familiarity; so does every single song, including the less quirky, in their way more "perfect" ones—the hymnic "Where or When?" or "Spring Is Here," with its soft, morning-after disillusionment, reportedly Hart's own personal favorite. How he could have chosen is a real puzzle.

M.G.

PLACIDO DOMINGO: Operatic Recital.

Placido Domingo, tenor; Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini, cond. [Hans Weber and Günther Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2532 009. \$12.98 (digital). Tape: 3302 009. \$12.98 (cassette).

BIZET: Les Pêcheurs de perles: Je crois entendre encore. Carmen: Flower Song. DONIZETTI: L'Elisir d'amore: Una furtiva lagrima. Lucia di Lammermoor: Tombe degl'avi... Fra poco a me ricovero. HALÉVY: La Juive: Rachel, quand du Seigneur. MEYERBEER: L'Africaine: Pays merveilleux... O paradis. VERDI: Aida: Se quel guerrier... Celeste Aida. Emani: Mercè, diletti amici... Come rugiada al cespite... O tu che l'alma adora. Il Trovatore: Ah si, ben mio; Di quella pira.

Repertorially, the novelty here is Domingo's first commercial recording of music from *Ernani*, whose title role he has sung effectively but somehow hasn't yet recorded complete. This is also his first recording of "O paradis" in French, though the recording in Italian (in the 1972 "Domingo Sings Caruso" recital, newly reissued as RCA Gold Seal AGL 1-4140) included the

cabaletta, omitted here—as are the recitatives of "Je crois entendre encore" and "Ah si, ben mio."

The performances are attractive, even if their prevailing earnestness has less to do with the content of the individual selections than with a mood of all-purpose artistic seriousness apparently imposed by Giulini. This approach does seem to have helped Domingo vocally: In such purely lyric writing as the Donizetti excerpts, the area around the break is managed more smoothly than has been the case in recent years, though slow, sustained writing still causes him some unsteadiness, as in "Je crois entendre encore" and the main section of "Celeste Aida."

Interpretively, these performances are pretty much indistinguishable from Domingo's earlier versions, allowing for minor differences of tempo and for the present condition of the voice. As in the case of the Abbado *Ballo in maschera* (DG 2740 251, January), it would seem that abstract concentration, while helpful up to a point, is no substitute for emotional specificity. Note the urgency of the *Aida* recitative's opening lines, when the writing jolts Domingo out of his groove.

For all the care Giulini has taken shaping the accompaniments (listen to "Ah si, ben mio"), the Los Angeles Philharmonic sounds unpersuaded, or maybe just uninterested. It's also backwardly recorded. Domingo, too, might have benefited from a fairer balance, putting a bit more breathing room between him and the microphones.

K.F.

JOAN SUTHERLAND: Serate musicali.

Joan Sutherland, soprano: Richard Bonynge, piano. [James Walker, prod.] LONDON OSA 13132. \$32.94 (three discs, automatic sequence).

ROSSINI: Soirées musicales: solo songs (8, in Italian). Songs by Bellini (3), Campana, Cimara, Donizetti (3), Leoncavallo, Mascagni, Ponchielli, Respighi, Rossini (3), Verdi. Songs by Adam, Bizet, Chaminade, Dalayrac, David, Delibes, Fauré, Godard, Gounod, Hahn, Lalo, Meyerbeer, Saint-Saëns, Thomas.

Have you noticed how long it's been since anyone picked the standard nit of Sutherland's early years, her "diction"? Of course diction as such was never the problem, which might better have been described as a gap in communicative intent whereby words could recede into indistinguishability. In those days, though, there usually was a communicative intent, even if it was carried primarily by that astonishingly agile voice.

Not surprisingly, the increased attention that Sutherland paid to articulation (it can't be fun to roam the globe performing vocal prodigies only to read about your crummy diction) never filled the old gap, which would have required attention to the source of the expressive vagueness. It hard-

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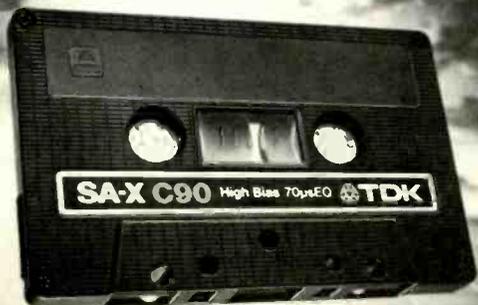
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CLASSICAL Reviews

ly mattered, however, as long as the voice remained healthy and continued to be fed by fairly spontaneous, albeit restricted, instincts. Unfortunately, some years ago, at the same time that the voice was losing its steadiness and focus, those instincts seemed to harden into a mechanical set that I associate with Modern Operatic Superstardom—cf. Sills, Scotto, Pavarotti.

In Sutherland's case, this mechanical set corresponds neatly to the emotional rigidity of her husband's music-making, which perversely won greater critical acceptance as it became, not necessarily metronomic, but at any rate more decisive. That the decisions were pulled out of a hat wasn't important; many listeners seem content if a musician merely gives signals that he knows what he's doing. What appears to have happened, though, is that prefab phrase shapes replaced whatever intuitive responsiveness Bonyng's early work had. (Compare the two *Puritani* recordings.) Here his musical deadpan is at once confined to the keyboard, meaning that there aren't even any orchestral colors to enliven it fleetingly, and spread out over six sides of salon songs, which Sutherland negotiates mostly by treading lightly, knowing that the higher the pitch or volume the more pronounced her wobble will be.

The program is arranged thus: The eight solo numbers from Rossini's collection *Soirées musicales* (sung in Italian) occupy the first side-and-a-half of four sides of songs by Italian composers (three of them in French), which are followed by two sides of French songs. According to the introductory note in the booklet, the program is designed to recall "the days of the French salon, the *soirée musicale*, and the Italian salotto," and it's conceivable a few of these songs might prove entertaining if we were at a party along with the Bonynges, and our hostess prevailed on Mrs. B to favor us with a tune or three—especially if we were all sufficiently refreshed. But six sides of the stuff?

It's not the songs themselves I'm complaining about, although Lord knows they are, on the whole, slight. What I don't hear, except with several of the French songs (Gounod's "Au printemps," Massenet's "Pensée d'automne"), is why they're being performed. There are some wonderful songs here—the *Soirées musicales* set and the Bellini numbers, to name eleven—and many others of potential interest, but it all rolls off the bolt like salon-song yard goods. Yes'm, six sides, coming right up. Will there be anything else?

"Songs that were rarely intended to be heard in the impersonal surroundings of the concert hall," we are told, "are now returned, with the aid of the gramophone, to their rightful place—the drawing room." The drawing room must have been an exceedingly dull place.

Brief notes on all the songs are included, along with complete texts. K.F.

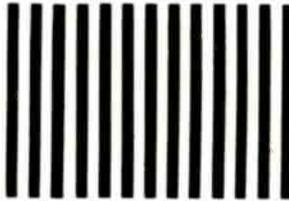
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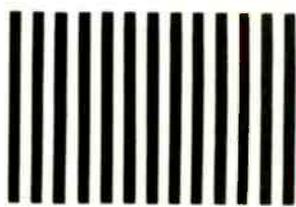
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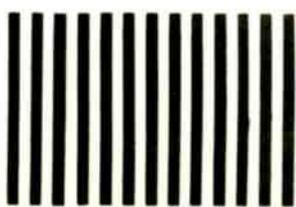
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The Tape Deck

Critiques of new cassette and open-reel releases by R. D. Darrell

Idiosyncrasies

Musical interpreters' "peculiarities" of constitution or temperament usually draw pejorative criticism, yet listeners—even professionals—rarely realize the extent to which idiosyncrasies color and shape their own musical tastes and judgments. In any case, it's always a refreshing relief to abandon cold objectivity for the warm comfort of uninhibited indulgence in one's personal, however quirky, likes and dislikes. Even a reviewer occasionally relishes doing so—without having to worry whether favorite programs are truly newsworthy, meet state-of-the-art technological standards, or justify their premium or bargain prices.

For instance: As a longtime card-carrying member of the Vincent d'Indy cult, I'm such a sucker for that now austere, now Romantic Frenchman's music that I revel in every new addition to a scant discography. So while I continue to slaver for the great Second Symphony, I welcome wholeheartedly a batch of mostly unfamiliar tone poems played by Pierre Dervaux and the Pays de Loire Philharmonic (Arabesque 9097-2, two cassettes, \$15.96). No matter that the best-known *Istar* (variations in reverse) needs a more sumptuous orchestra or that, like the ambitious *Wallenstein* trilogy, it isn't as lucidly recorded (1976) as the eloquent *Jour d'été à la montagne*, early *Forêt enchantée*, and more salonish but disarming *Tableaux de voyage* (1979). And it's sheer inspiration to preface the whole program with D'Indy's own "vocal autograph," rescued from one of the Pathé-Marconi recordings he himself conducted in the mono/78-rpm era.

One's responses to soloists—instrumentalists as well as singers—tend to be especially affected by the personal chemistry between artist and listener. And since oboist Heinz Holliger and flutist Aurèle Nicolet have enraptured me so often, I'm not at all surprised to find them as spell-binding as ever in the Camerata Bern's delectable set of four Telemann concertos for winds and strings (Archiv 3310 454, \$10.98). Yet while clarinetist Richard Stoltzman always has impressed me in the past as an exceptional artist, I'm inexplicably let down by his Mozart K. 622 Concerto, not quite elegant enough, and his own somewhat denatured transcription of the K. 191 Bassoon Concerto, with the English Chamber Orchestra under Alexander Schneider (RCA Red Seal ARK 1-3934, \$9.98). On the other hand, my first encoun-

ter with the young Polish violinist Kaja Danczowska leaves me a fervent admirer; she joins pianist Krystian Zimerman in a poetically evocative reading of the Franck sonata and some authoritatively idiomatic Szymanowski—the *Mythes* and two shorter pieces (DG 3301 330, \$10.98). And it surely isn't only my well-developed predilection for period-instrument authenticity that accounts for my mind-shaking delight in the Collegium Aureum's recording of the Beethoven *Eroica*: scaled down and sounding much as it must have originally, it seems all the more revolutionary in its lean, spare muscularity than in even its most grandiose present-day inflations (Pro Arte PAC 1029, \$9.98).

Recent musicassettes featuring idiosyncratic pianists, though outstanding technically, will appeal primarily to fans: Emil Gilels' magisterial Beethoven Piano Sonatas Nos. 8, 13, and 14 (DG 3302 008, digital/chromium, \$12.98); pianist-conductor Géza Anda's heavy-handed Mozart Piano Concertos Nos. 20 and 21 (Eurodisc 55 507, analog/chromium, \$9.98); and João Carlos Martins' bravura but often over-vehement reading of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* (Arabesque 7503, digital/ferric, \$9.98).

There are highly idiosyncratic recording companies, too, like MusiCelli, which specializes in performances and arrangements by Laszlo Varga, longtime principal cellist with the New York Philharmonic. Of its five cassettes so far (\$8 each, plus \$1 shipping, from MusiCelli, P.O. Box 31178, San Francisco, Calif. 94131), the two I've heard are admirably well recorded and processed. To be sure, Varga's virtuoso solo transcriptions of Bach's Violin Partitas, S. 1004 and 1006 (MC 105), may appeal only to fanatical cello specialists. But his transmutation of the Brahms Violin Sonata No. 2, with pianist Sylvia Jenkins, is unexpectedly effective—maybe even more "Brahmsian" than the original! And it is coupled (in MC 104) with a version of the Dohnányi Op. 8 Cello Sonata by Varga and Karen Rosenak that is far more idiomatic and better balanced than Nonesuch's debut taping (DI 79016, December 1981).

Mostly Mussorgsky. . . . For sheer programmatic inspiration (if not for conductorial personality), it would be hard to beat the Abbado/London Symphony miscellany that features the original, very different *Night on Bare Mountain* score, a *Khovanshchina* prelude and entr'acte, two shorter pieces, and four almost totally unknown

choral works (RCA Red Seal ARK 1-3988, \$9.98; no notes or texts). Then, if you can settle just for "highlights," the c. 1964 Bolshoi Theater *Boris Godunov* excerpts conducted by Alexander Melik-Pashayev are good, idiomatic value for the money (Quintessence P4C 7192, \$5.98; notes but no texts). But Kun Woo Paik's "complete" Mussorgsky piano music (Arabesque 9073, 9093, 9094, \$7.98 each) is more questionable. The Vol. 1 *Pictures at an Exhibition* reached me in what must have been a tonally defective processing. And since Vol. 2 is mostly confined to salonish trifles, it's only to Vol. 3 that I can give even a qualified commendation.

. . . **Plus Prokofiev.** Diverse collections always present duplication problems, but there's more than ordinary logic and appeal to Leonard Slatkin's anthology of choral and orchestral music from Prokofiev's three greatest film scores with the St. Louis Symphony (Vox Cum Laude VCS 9004X, two-cassette box, \$21.98; with an invaluable twenty-eight page booklet of notes and texts). The *Alexander Nevsky* cantata was first released a few years ago under the Candide label (CT 2182); the *Ivan the Terrible* oratorio (arr. Abram Stasevich) and *Lt. Kijé* Suite, both recorded in 1979, appear for the first time. Soloists—Claudine Carlson, Arnold Voketaitis, Samuel Timberlake—and chorus sing in Russian, although the overacted *Ivan* narration is in English; the readings are gripping, and the recording shows near-Slavic lambency.

Current Barclay-Crocker open reels feature labels other than Philips, lately predominant. First honors go to the award-winning Vol. 4 of the Academy of Ancient Music's period-instrument Mozart symphony series (Oiseau Lyre/B-C W D 170D3, \$26.95). But I also delighted in a 1976 batch of Vivaldi concertos by Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields: R. 443 (piccolo), R. 535 (two oboes), R. 539 (two horns), and R. 574 (winds and violin) (Argo/B-C F 840, \$9.95). That memorable milestone of early (1958) stereoism, Antal Dorati's complete Respighi *Ancient Airs and Dances* with the Philharmonia Hungarica still commands arresting vividness (Mercury/B-C G 75009, \$10.95). And for fanatical Beethovenians only, there's a coarsely played and recorded miscellany of real and phony works performed by obscure artists: the *Ritterballet* Music and *Tarpeja* March with the Jena Symphony actually by one J. F. Witt (Musical Heritage/B-C D 1506, \$7.95). **HF**

BACKBEAT[®]

Luther Vandross: The Jingle of Success

A longtime session singer who never lost the funk emerges as a major new pop/r&b artist.
by Crispin Cioe

RARELY DOES A SUCCESSFUL jingle and session singer rise far enough above that profession's inherent facelessness to establish a truly viable solo recording career. Until six months ago, Barry Manilow was the notable exception to that rule. But now there is another. Thirty-year-old Luther Vandross has sung lead on numerous TV and radio spots, from Juicy Fruit Gum ("there's nothing like the flavor of. . .") to Schaefer beer ("ah, hah, sittin' pretty"). He has sung backup vocals and written vocal arrangements for Donna Summer and Barbra Streisand (*Enough Is Enough*), David Bowie, Roberta Flack, Chic, Bette Midler, Sister Sledge, Ringo Starr, Carly Simon, and numerous others. Last October, he produced and wrote all the material for his own LP, "Never Too Much." Not only has it generated healthy sales and airplay, but it is original enough to signal the emergence of a major new pop/r&b artist.

"Never Too Much" is an album of contrasts: wordy but quite melodic, slick but essentially funky, mindful of soul music's past while keenly aware of contemporary r&b's sophistication. In person, Vandross projects openness and depth. We met in his recently redecorated Manhattan apartment overlooking the Hudson River. Amidst a lush color scheme of pale pink walls, black leather furniture, and floor-length mirrors, he talked about the road that led to his current success.

Backbeat: It's unusual for a debut album to be self-produced. How did you manage that?

Vandross: At first, every label passed on

signing me for that very reason. I had just decided I wasn't going to allow a company to put a producer on me who would say, "That's really nice, Luther, putting that A harmony in a C chord, and I love your bass lines," and then have the album notes read "produced by so-and-so." I wanted the precedent established at the beginning, because if you have a hit your first time out with a certain producer, it's unheard of to produce yourself on the next LP.

Backbeat: In other words, you were willing to hold out for the right deal.

Vandross: Absolutely. You see, I'm real specific about how I need things played—I stand there and sing the lines to the players. I like tracks that aren't too slick, that have the right feeling. I have my own production methods, too. For instance, I'd rather spend four hours rehearsing parts and overdubs and record them in two takes, than just go in and record for hours and hours until the parts were right. With me, it's ninety-nine percent feeling anyway. That's probably why I can produce myself: I have pretty good judgment. A guitarist may play something brilliant, but if it disturbs a certain peace on a track, then it's wrong for me.

Backbeat: What were your earliest musical influences?

Vandross: We lived in the Alfred E. Smith Housing Project on the Manhattan side of the Brooklyn Bridge. My sister was a singer in the Crests, which Johnny Maestro led—they had the hit song *Sixteen Candles* in the '50s. She was too young to go to rehearsals at night, so the singers would work out right in our living room. By the time I was in high school, I was singing in a sixteen-

piece group called Listen My Brother, which the Apollo theater owners sponsored. We had free access to the theater's shows, so we saw everyone perform there, and it was a great inspiration.

From an early age on, I was almost exclusively interested in female singers: the Shirelles, the Supremes, Dionne Warwick, Valerie Simpson. I acknowledged what Stevie Wonder, Teddy Pendergrass, Tony Bennett, and all the fabulous male singers did, but that's not what aroused my artistic libido. It was seeing Dionne seven months pregnant on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, singing the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*—things like that—which TKO'd me [knocked me out] musically.

Around the time I was a senior in high school, the Sweet Inspirations were coming on with a whole different style of harmonies. When I listened to the old Aretha Franklin albums, like "Lady Soul," I'd turn the balance knob on my stereo to the left to hear those girls sing—it was a total obsession. See, with the Shirelles and the earlier groups, it was strictly lead voice and do-me-sol harmonies. The Sweet Inspirations, led by Cissy Houston, used octave-doubling and sometimes even used sixths in a chord. Since there were only four of them, I first became aware of overdubbing by listening to their records.

Backbeat: The Sweet Inspirations were that influential?

Vandross: Oh yes. In fact, I would say Cissy Houston is the main reason that the field of background singing has grown so much in the past fifteen years. [Cissy sings on his new album.] Backgrounds used to be just



PHOTOS BY CHARLES RILEY

“oohs” and “aahs”—reinforcements of violin lines, like on the old Bacharach-David stuff with Dionne. But then Aretha hit in the mid-’60s, and suddenly background singers weren’t so faceless. Aretha would sing, “I take what I want. I’m a bad go-getter, yeah,” and the background singers didn’t sing “ooh” and “aah” anymore, they’d sing “what you want, get what you want, now”—that call-and-response thing. Cissy pioneered those kinds of parts. And then producers started choosing singers who didn’t just sing on pitch, but who could come up with the real stuff.

Backbeat: What was your first “professional” job and how did you get it?

Vandross: I had gone to college briefly, but I ended up back in New York once I realized I really wanted to be a professional singer. I hung out with my old high school friends, like Carlos Alomar, who is David Bowie’s guitarist. In high school, we had a whole clique of musicians who hung out and sang in the hallways. We sounded so good the teachers didn’t stop us; we could even do Andrews Sisters harmonies.

Well, Carlos was a great guitar player even in high school, and shortly after graduating he got a job playing with the Main Ingredient. David Bowie was recording at RCA studios one day when his guitarist didn’t show, so he asked the Main Ingredient’s producer, Tony Sylvester, to recommend someone. After auditioning for Bowie, Carlos got the gig on a permanent basis. When Bowie took his band to Philly to record the “Young Americans” LP, some of Carlos’ old friends and I went along to keep Carlos company and support him emo-

tionally. While they were recording [at Sigma Sound], I began to notice all kinds of spaces in that album’s title song. Bowie would sing, “We want the young Americans,” and then there would be a very open instrumental passage. So I remarked to Carlos, “There ought to be some ‘all nights’ [sung] in there or something.” Bowie overheard me singing and said, “That’s fantastic. Let’s record it!” We did, and then he wanted to know if I had any more ideas for the other songs. I ended up arranging and singing on the whole album, and then toured with David on both the “Diamond Dogs” and “Young Americans” tours.

Backbeat: That sounds like the classic overnight success story.

Vandross: That was virtually my first time in a studio, and I maintain to this day that experience is *not* what’s required for a suc-



cessful musical venture—it’s instinct, then experience. Instinctively—after years of listening, of course—I had good ideas for that Bowie session. But I sure didn’t know, for instance, that a Neumann U-87 microphone can’t be “hugged” too closely or it will muffle the vocal tone.

Backbeat: So Bowie played an important part in your early career.

Vandross: He encouraged me, that was the main thing. He said, “You’re going to have a career of your own, so for the tour I want you to work up some material and do a forty-five-minute set before the show.” So I opened every show on the road with Bowie’s band. Before we even started playing, the audience would yell “BOW-EE, BOW-EE.” We never got booed off the stage or

anything, but I still told David, “Look. I don’t care who doesn’t like me, but I’m not going out there again.” He just kept encouraging me. “Go out and develop what you know,” he’d say. “If these people aren’t right for you—so what? Here’s a chance to develop.”

Backbeat: When did the session work start?

Vandross: When we came off the road. Bowie had introduced me to Bette Midler, and I sang backups on her “Songs for the New Depression” LP, which is also how I met Arif Mardin. [Mardin produced the disc.] He started using me as a backup singer and vocal arranger on all the albums he produced, so I worked with Ringo Starr, Carly Simon, Chaka Khan, the Average White Band. . . . I also had a master tape of my own songs by that time, and Arif helped get me signed to Atlantic/Cotillion.

Backbeat: So “Never Too Much” really isn’t your first label deal?

Vandross: Well, I made two albums for Atlantic with my own band, which the record company named Luther, and which included Bernard Edwards and Nile Rodgers—the two founding members of Chic. But the albums weren’t successful, so I left Atlantic and got back into doing album sessions. Patti Austin recommended me to Quincy Jones for his “Sounds. . . and Stuff like That” LP. And arranger Leon Pendarvis helped me get used to the studio more. I was quite a bit heavier then and a little paranoid around strangers in a studio situation, but Leon put me at ease and helped me overcome being afraid of the microphone.



Backbeat: Why did you get into jingle work?

Vandross: I got to the point where I was making a good deal of money doing record dates, charging triple [union] scale wages against a flat fee, whichever came first, and so on. I was probably making more than other backup singers, partly because I had the chutzpah to ask for it, and partly because I was bringing in a vocal arranger's perspective and ideas. But jingle singing appealed to me because the sessions were usually over in an hour, whereas a record date might start at noon and get out at midnight.

When you're singing for, say, Chaka Khan, you're going to give it all up emotionally, because she's so honest and giving herself. And when you've been doing nothing but album dates for a few years, you start coming home at night with no voice, completely spent, and waking up the next morning raw and hoarse. On a jingle date, though, you go in and sing, "You're the Pepsi generation," the producer says "one more time," and then it's "bye!" And of course, the money can be fifteen to twenty times greater for jingles than albums, if you're a singer. So I just said to myself, "Jingles are the wiser thing to do now," and I started doing record dates on a much more selective basis.

Backbeat: You said earlier that you went for feeling and instinct. Jingle singing doesn't leave much room for that; how did you make the adjustment?

Vandross: I did have a slight inner conflict at first because I'd come up with hip vocal lines for a chewing gum jingle, say, and the ad agency or client in the control room just wouldn't want to hear about it. I had to learn that there's a certain way some clients and jingle producers want their music done. Ultimately it wasn't that big of an adjustment, because I like being able to do as the Romans do. And as I cooled out, I found that once you show some of the more open-minded jingle writers that you can do *exactly* what they want you to do, then they can appreciate your ideas. For example, Joey Levine wrote the NBC theme melody [sings sweetly], "We're proud to be NBC." Well, he let me do this to it [repeats the line with a gospel-ish, melismatic flurry of notes on four syllables]. And as I was singing, Joey just encouraged me, saying "more, more, go" from the control room.

Backbeat: Do you think jingle singers tend to lose their feeling for performing other types of music?

Vandross: A lot of times what happens is that they get caught up in the scene's whirlwind of sophistication and money. I never really got into it that way: I would leave those jingle sessions and come home and listen to the Sweet Inspirations. I consider the jingle world to be completely separate from other things I do musically. Besides, I just love singing—the act of singing. I

mean, the worst thing in the world to me is to be in bad voice. I can't even explain the fear and anxiety that creates in me, physically and emotionally. But I'm also harder on myself than other singers are. I'm into vocal tone, not just melodic movement. If the tonal color isn't right to me, then the performance isn't right. I had to learn that not all producers hear those distinctions; I used to stop a take, and the producer would say, "Why did you quit?" And I'd be thinking, "That last F really sounded weird to me."

Backbeat: Are you a fairly disciplined songwriter?

Vandross: I'm a moody writer—I write when I feel like it. My piano might go untouched for three or four months, and then I'll stay at it for a week or two and do nothing else. I started writing when I was quite young, though. I wrote *Everybody Rejoice (Brand New Day)* in the early '70s and it ended up in *The Wiz*. The material on my solo album was all written within the

"You're looking at a guy who really loves to sing."

last two years, except, of course, *A House Is Not a Home*, which I've loved since Dionne first recorded it.

Backbeat: Is your song *I've Been Working* pretty autobiographical? "After a long day of work, all I wanna do is play around/So I'm going out/for a little bit of love/and a whole lotta gettin' down."

Vandross: Well, sometimes I do work hard, and I guess I like to have things done just right in the studio. But I'd rather have a forever love affair than a series of one-night stands. . . . [laughing] well, let me think about that. No, I'm just kidding, the song is only an expression of one point of view that's around today.

Backbeat: Will you be producing any other artists?

Vandross: Yes, I'm doing Cheryl Lynn's next LP in a few months, and then my own.

Backbeat: Will your second album be more difficult than "Never Too Much"?

Vandross: No, I don't think so. The only hard part of producing myself is that sometimes I want to sing and go home, rather than stay and bounce violin tracks or combine handclaps to clear tracks for horns coming in the next day.

Backbeat: How is your time divided now?

Vandross: I've cut down on peripheral work a lot, because the priority now is to be in good voice when I go onstage. I'd still do any session for Arif Mardin. Or if a friend called, like bassist Marcus Miller who

played on my album, and he had budget problems, I'd go singing on his album for free all night—or all week—until he got what he wanted. But my record label wants me to cut way down on doing lead vocals on jingles because of the overexposure factor.

Backbeat: What might I hear you singing on the airwaves today?

Vandross: You might hear *Never Too Much*, followed by Burger King and Miller beer spots with my leads, followed by Chic's *Freak Out* with me very close to the mike on the group vocals, followed by Donna Summer and Barbra Streisand singing *Enough Is Enough*, again with me very close to the mike on backgrounds. So I'm keeping new lead vocal projects down to a respectable minimum, although I'm not turning down an American Airlines jingle, since that can mean the equivalent of a platinum single in this business.

Backbeat: Are live performances important to you now?

Vandross: Well, I've seen such a great reaction to our live shows recently that I really look forward to them. With recording, you don't know if people will like something until months after the session. But when I'm singing live, I'm always thinking things like, "Well, let me see whether they'll respond if I put this riff out there." And when the audience does get off, it's the most exciting thing I know.

I just did a show in Washington, D.C., opening for Aretha, and we sang together at the end. Well, let me tell you, we killed that audience—they're still removing the bodies from the theater. All the singers I love, like Dionne and Aretha and Bette Midler, have great wit, taste, and drama. I've tried to learn from watching and working with them. Being able to use all those things now is really the biggest thrill for me.

The day after our interview, Luther went back out on his national tour, which ended three weeks later at the Savoy in New York. As much as I had enjoyed listening to his album and talking with him, I simply wasn't prepared for the dazzling virtuosity of his live show. Using most of the musicians that played on "Never Too Much," his set was tight but warm, with sheer musicality coming through at every moment. After ending *A House Is Not a Home* with a heart-stopping, unaccompanied vocal cadenza, he introduced his band over the shuffling *I've Been Working*. Each of his superb backup singers—Tawatha Agee, Brenda White, Phillip Ballou, and Chic's Fonzi Thornton—received ample solo space. As the audience cheered them, Luther quipped, "You don't really think I'd have anybody on stage who doesn't sing as good as me, do you?" Later, after receiving a gold album onstage and singing numerous encores, he told an adoring home-town crowd, "You're looking at a guy who really loves to sing." That's the best possible reason for his having become a star. **HF**

Reviews



Laurie Anderson: "And when force is gone, there's always Mom . . . Hi Mom!"

AC/DC: For Those About to Rock We Salute You

Robert John "Mutt" Lange, producer. Atlantic SD 11111

On its new album, AC/DC suggests that its millions of fans "just keep on breaking the rules"—hypocritical advice considering that the band reached its current pinnacle by following the rules of heavy metal to the letter. Ever since the rise of Led Zeppelin, those rules have been set. A heavy metal band must have a vocalist who can imitate a man having an impacted wisdom tooth removed without anesthesia, a rhythm section that can pummel an innocent riff into submission, a lead guitarist/show-off, and lyrics that deal with sexism, satanism, and militarism. AC/DC scores high in each of the categories, and it has been rewarded accordingly.

It might enhance your appreciation of "For Those About to Rock We Salute You"—and at high velocity AC/DC does

have a surging energy that is hard to deny—if you picture the band on stage singing *Let's Get It Up* for eighteen thousand high schoolers with their fists high in the air. This is audience music, a celebration for packs of young males who go for volume and crude metaphors ("the moon is rising and so am I"). When AC/DC talks about long knives, they don't mean switchblades. Sinister messages are delivered on such numbers as *Inject the Venom*, *Put the Finger on You*, and *C.O.D.*, a song about venereal disease that contains the following maxim: "The sign of the sin is the size of the itch." (C.O.D., by the way, stands for "Care of the Devil.")

At more moderate tempos, it all wears thin, and Brian Johnson's tantrum tenor becomes excruciating. But at the moment, AC/DC is the band of consensus in its particular genre, the hero of hard rockers who find Queen too artsy. It has built up a following with a series of alliteratively titled LPs—"Highway to Hell," "Back in Black," "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt

Cheap"—that are without frills or concessions to crossover appeal. In a world where journeymen bands like Foreigner, REO Speedwagon, and Journey go for sleek melodies and harmonies to broaden their bases, the streamlined relentlessness of AC/DC is almost a relief. The fact that you or I might find *Evil Walks* or *Snowballed* unbearable is part of the point. AC/DC acknowledges that an element of rock & roll's heritage is the nerve to be divisive. Although this band wouldn't call it "nerve"—euphemism isn't its style.

—MITCHELL COHEN

Laurie Anderson: O Superman

Roma Baran & Laurie Anderson, producers. Warner Bros.

DWBS 49888 (12-inch, 45 rpm);

WBSP 49876 (7-inch, 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm)

Disaffected rock fans convinced that the genre's mainstream is failing largely through its own ennui need look no further than this startling EP for supportive evi-

dence. The work of a New York-based sculptor and conceptual artist, this modest two-song project has more to say than almost any big-league rock LP released during 1981. And it says it with fresh musical diction and a sly intelligence all too rare in modern pop or rock.

Although *Walk the Dog*, the second side, offers an antic, even chaotic mix of jerking rhythms, squealing reed textures, and frequently hilarious stream-of-consciousness lyrics, it's the title piece that qualifies as a moody, provocative triumph. Musically, Anderson employs the minimalist aesthetic that threads through serious experimental music, avant-garde jazz, and more recently, new wave-inflected pop and rock. Lyrically, she attempts nothing less than a State of the Union address on the American self-image.

It's a serious mission indeed, yet the song is initially intoxicating for the very playfulness with which Anderson oscillates from stately, solemn chorus to chatty, spoken verses. Both are balanced against the insistent pulse of a single, pitched syllable—a pointed "ha"—that sounds at first like a mock-serious clue to the work's humor, yet takes on a progressively ominous aura as the piece develops.

That's because Anderson moves from her opening invocation ("O Superman, O Judge, O Mom and Dad...") through a giddy encounter between phone answering machine and the singer's mother ("Hello, this is your Mother... Are you coming home?") to the song's real center—a message left by a mysterious caller:

Hello, is anybody home? Well you don't know me, but I know you.

And I've got a message to give to you: Here come the planes.

So you better get ready. Ready to go.

You can come as you are, but pay as you go.

Backlit by pale washes of synthesizer and that stylized laugh, Anderson's transition back into her more formal, sung melody underlines the revelation of that caller as "the hand that takes." The image lines up with the other icons she has been assembling as clues to her vision of a nation robbed of spirit and purpose.

That view, as well as the piece's anti-war warnings, culminate in a crucial verse:

'Cause when love is gone, there's always justice.

And when justice is gone, there's always force.

And when force is gone, there's always Mom... Hi Mom!

The singer seeks a killing maternal embrace and ties together the song's threads by describing her mother's arms as "automatic," "electronic," "petrochemical," and most pointedly, "military." That the last pun is almost eclipsed by the somber flow of the music and a final surge of



Cliff: rekindled ambition

mournful harmonies on synthesizer is both fitting and chilling. —SAM SUTHERLAND

Jimmy Cliff:
Give the People What They Want
Jimmy Cliff & Oneness,
producers. MCA 5217

Bob Marley's death last year left a proverbial black hole right in the middle of reggae music's universe. Jimmy Cliff—who came to prominence in the mid-Seventies as the renegade gunslinger of the classic cult film *The Harder They Come*—seems to be aspiring to fill the void that Marley left. Maybe it's unfair to suggest that rekindled ambition is the reason, but "Give the People What They Want" is easily one of Cliff's best albums in years.

Echoes of Marley's stubborn political stance and Marley and the Wailers' surging musical approach are both very much in evidence. That's not surprising considering the roster: Veterans Sly Dunbar (drums), Robbie Shakespeare (bass), Earl "Chinna" Smith (guitar), and Augustus Pablo (keyboards) are all top-rank Jamaican players closely aligned—stylistically and professionally—with the Marley clan.

All but one of the ten original compositions on this self-produced effort are political in nature. They espouse "equal rights and justice," "majority rule," and the struggle for dignity and freedom that is at the heart of the Third World's goals. Like Marley, Cliff's pleas for revolution are balanced by religious references to the "Cre-

ator" and "Ultimate Justice." On such songs as *Son of Man*, with Radcliff Bryan's scratchy rhythm guitar, and *Majority Rule*, with its assertive guttural attack, Cliff evokes the same mesmeric power that underpinned so much of Marley's work. The title track is especially spooky in its similarities: Background vocalists (the Tamblins) and horns combine with the same fiery interplay that often characterized the I-Threes/Wailers union.

If all this sounds calculated and imitative, it isn't: Cliff's cool, wavery tenor is all his own and the songwriting—spry and deceptively simple—bears his personal stamp. The singer shows his tender pop side on *Shelter of Your Love*; he has some fun even when he's being serious in *My Philosophy*, incorporating titles of some of his early hits (*Wonderful World*, *Beautiful People*, *Many Rivers to Cross*, and *The Harder They Come*) into a serious statement about social change. As to whether Cliff will ascend to the throne left empty by Marley, that's doubtful. But if he keeps trying as hard as he does here, no one will be disappointed.

—STEVEN X. REA

Jimmy Destri: Heart on a Wall
Michael Kamen, producer
Chrysalis CHR 1368

From the punky Farfisa chords of *Rip Her to Shreds* to the stark, high-tech synthesizer sheen of *Heart of Glass*, Jimmy Destri's keyboards have been central to supergroup Blondie's coy, cool character. On his own, as he is on "Heart on a Wall," he continues to be an able, imaginative writer; he also demonstrates that he is a songwriter of high caliber. He is not a singer, but his valiant attempts—in the forms of mumbles, grumbles, and shades-of-Bowie wavers—aren't embarrassing. Indeed, their amateurishness is engaging in a sloppy, fun way.

"Heart on a Wall" virtually shimmers with a spectrum of keyboard colorations: the churchy organ and bells sound of *Living in Your Heart*, the marimba motif of *Don't Look Around* (recalling the Rolling Stones' mellifluous ballads on "Between the Buttons"), the harpsichord-in-outer-space effects of the quirky *My Little World*, and the wonderfully goofy whistling organ line that courses through the instrumental *Little Metal Drummer*. This last also benefits from Blondie cohort Chris Stein's twangy lead guitar (which serves up a skillful, tongue-in-check Ventures riff) and Debbie Harry's high, shrill cooing.

Destri's tunes resonate with the sort of wide-eyed, fuzzy-headed sensibility that belongs to little kids. (In fact, a young girl merrily recites the phrase "You can follow me" over and over again on *My Little World*.) The keyboardist/composer tips his hat in the direction of a few significant influences, namely Bach (the grand organ afterword of *My Little World*), the nasal



EBET ROBERTS

Destri: wide-eyed sensibility

pop verve of the Easybeats (he quotes *Friday on My Mind* in the middle of *Numbers Don't Count [on Me]*), and the Rolling Stones, c.'67-'70.

With a band that includes Blondie drummer Clem Burke, bassist John Siegler, and guitarist Earl Slick, Destri has shaped a rich, spunky record that rocks with a strident, easygoing charm. Some of his moves falter, but the overriding effect is one of surefire smarts. "Heart on a Wall" is an eminently likable, listenable affair marked by a seductively oddball personality.

—STEVEN X. REA

Eye to Eye

Gary Katz, producer
Warner Bros. BSK 3570

As silent third partner in Steely Dan, producer Gary Katz has grown accustomed to comparisons between his few other clients and that spectral, sophisticated pop duo. This latest project, comprising songwriters Julian Marshall and Deborah Berg, actually shares more underlying musical traits with the Dan than any of Katz's other charges in recent years. Yet it's unlikely anyone will dismiss these often provocative songs as mere clones.

Marshall's layered keyboards serve as the spine for the fusion-edged pop arrangements, which sparingly apply guitar solos from such Dan studio familiars as Rick Derringer and Elliott Randall. As an arranger, Marshall's deceptively simple rhythmic clockworks are riddled with subtle percussive and harmonic variations. The focal

point, though, is vocalist Berg, whose sleek phrasing and melodic power lean toward jazz and classic pop, not rock.

As writers, she and Marshall rein their verbal ambitions to ride closely the propulsive flow of the arrangements, achieving the same effortless interplay of offbeat words and music so endearing in Steely Dan. But this duo's lyrics are not as successfully disciplined: Time and again, their intoxicating arrangements wind up scuttled by the grab bag of images and sardonic colloquialisms they raid in hopes of creating a neatly telegraphic style.

Both Berg and Marshall are admirably deft, intelligent melodists, and for some listeners the music's nimble flow may be enough in and of itself, particularly as wrapped in Katz's typically spacious, meticulous sonics. But close scrutiny of the lyric message reveals an off-putting pretentiousness.

—SAM SUTHERLAND

Chas Jankel: Questionnaire

Chas Jankel, Philip Bagenal, & Pete Van-Hooke, producers
A&M SP 4885

I hear that the title track of Chas Jankel's second solo album is all the rage on the dance floors of trendy New York night-spots. *Questionnaire* is a rowdy beats-per-minute salsa send-up, rife with blasting trumpets, crashing percussion, steel drums, and a walloping, rocksteady backbeat. But while it may be easy to dance to, *Questionnaire*—along with the seven other cuts on the singer/songwriter/multi-instrumentalist's LP—is puffy and lightweight, rendered all the more so by Jankel's bland, breathy, very-very-English vocals.

Jankel first came to attention as Ian Dury and the Blockheads' mainstay collaborator, cowriting such hits as *Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll*, *Hit Me with Your Rhythm Stick*, and *Sweet Gene Vincent*. Though the same spirited brand of pop/funk runs through his solo work, one sorely misses the eccentric, grizzly charm that Dury brought to the music. Basically, "Questionnaire" is a collection of highly danceable, thoroughly inane tunes.

Now You're Dancing and *Magic of Music* typify the approach: Both are energetic paens to the power of song. On the former, Jankel demonstrates his prowess as a lyricist, creating such unusual rhymes as "prune" with "moon" and "June." What plucks *Magic of Music* from the depths of mediocrity is Jamaican trombonist Rico Rodriguez, whose eloquent, loping notes permeate the reggae-ized composition.

Musically "Questionnaire" is hard to fault, Jankel plays just about anything and everything (keyboards, guitars, synthesizers, percussion) with polish and skill, and he is joined by the likes of Rico, the very able drummer Pete Van-Hooke, and backup vocalists Janie Romer and Laura (sister of



Jankel: danceable but inane

Tina) Weymouth. For dance-crazy advocates of ultraslick funk-guitar riffs, slam-bam drumming, and battle-ax bass patterns, Jankel's disc will be fairly satisfying. But if content and vocal ability still have any effect on record buyers' tastes, "Questionnaire" should prove to be a commercial bomb.

—STEVEN X. REA

Rockabilly Stars, Vols. 1 and 2

Epic EG 37618, EG 37621

These two double-record anthologies promise more than they deliver. As well-researched, informatively annotated, and attractively designed as they are, the albums' attempt at a comprehensive overview of rockabilly is thwarted by the quality of the music available. Many key rockers passed through CBS records—Carl Perkins, Billy Lee Riley, Mac Curtis, Rick Nelson, Sleepy LaBeef, and others—but they all did their best or most representative work elsewhere. It's not pleasant to hear Perkins on *Pointed Toe Shoes*, straining to recapture the spark he had when he was with Sun records, or to hear Riley so past his prime and drained of inspiration. "Rockabilly Stars" doesn't get across the absurd, freakish, carnal excitement that characterized vintage rockabilly at its height.

Forced to skip over the classic performances and the crazed one-shots cut on independent labels, "Rockabilly Stars" takes an alternate, more catholic approach. It spans countrified rock from its twangiest beginnings in the Fifties to Charlie Rich's

soulful *I Feel like Going Home* (1974). It makes stops at the warped instrumentals of Link Wray, and finds atypically rocking sides by country artists Marty Robbins, Johnny Horton, and Little Jimmy Dickens. There are such scattered treasures as the late Ronnie Self's hit *Bop-a-Lena*, Billy Brown's *Did We Have a Party*, all eighty-seven seconds of Ersel Hickey's *Bluebird Over the Mountain*, and songs (one per set) from a 1955 session by the Everly Brothers, who sound more bound for the Opry than for pop stardom.

Vol. 2 is the weaker of the albums, with two Mickey Gilley songs and two by the haplessly derivative Sid King & the Five Strings (*Sag, Drag and Fall* is a straight steal from *Flip, Flop and Fly*). It also features five songs by the chipper brother-sister act the Collins Kids and a pretty sharp *Rock Boppin' Baby* by sixteen-year-old Lorrie, a rare female rockabilly. Vol. 1 contains too many second-rate cover versions—Carl Smith, Bob Luman, Allan Rich, and Gilley fall far short of Eddie Cochran, Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Lloyd Price.

So "Rockabilly Stars" isn't the place to start your education in this branch of rock history. Start with Elvis' "Sun Sessions" (RCA APM 1-1675), investigate the extensive Sun reissue program by England's Charly records, and try such off-beat collections as "King Federal Rockabilly" (King 5016X). Then, once you're hooked, check out the peripheral pleasures of "Rockabilly Stars." —MITCHELL COHEN

Jazz

The Explosive Dorothy Donegan

Gus "Grant" Statiras, producer
Progressive PRO 7056
(Box 500, Tifton, Ga. 31794)

Dorothy Donegan is one of the great puzzles of contemporary jazz. No living pianist, with the possible exception of Oscar Peterson, can match her flamboyant technique. Always positive, she swings with a rugged guttiness that makes even Peterson seem almost effete. And if anyone has inherited Art Tatum's fingers, she has.

Yet she works almost entirely outside the jazz world, in Las Vegas-type clubs and restaurants that cater to naive audiences. She has learned to appeal to them with gimmickry, jumping up and down on the piano bench, flinging her legs up on the instrument, running around it, splashing her performances with obvious musical quotes. There is little emotional content in her playing, except when she gets completely warmed up and gives the piano her full, sincere attention.

"The Explosive Dorothy Donegan" was presumably recorded in a studio with

no physical audience—naive or otherwise—to which to camp. As a result, she simply gets down and swings. Backing her are Ray Mosca's sizzling cymbals and driving drums and Jerome Hunter's extravagantly rich bass. The two Donegan originals are both blues; no matter how much surface she puts on, Donegan is blue at the roots, and it shows both in her writing and her playing. Whether she is better off exaggerating her performances for an audience or, as in this case, playing without disturbance or inspiration is a question. This disc is a happy medium between the magnificent and the dire Donegan. —JOHN S. WILSON

Bob Florence Big Band: Westlake

Albert Marx, producer
Discovery DS 832

Bob Florence is a West Coast pianist and arranger. About twenty years ago—when big bands had settled into the deadly stereotype most are in now—he arrived on the scene with some rehearsal-band recordings that suggested a very positive, deep-rooted talent. His writing and conducting did not break new ground, they simply reaffirmed old ground.

He has rarely if ever been heard from since, so when a record such as this one appears, this listener, for one, perks up his ears. For the first eight and a half minutes of "Westlake," it sounds as though Florence really has come back to break through the muddy curtain of big-band arranging. The opening track (all of the pieces are Florence's) falls into the Duke Ellington-Billy Strayhorn groove. It is marvelously rich and moody with some lovely voicings and a thoughtful piano solo by Florence.

But then, contemporary big-band writing takes over. Not totally, but enough to make you think you are listening to one more anonymous group. *One, Two, Three* has an inviting Basie ensemble section with a cozy solo by Steve Huffsteter on flugelhorn, but the Basie derivation is too obvious. Florence doesn't have to be such a copycat. Bob Cooper's tenor saxophone rescues *Carmelo's by the Freeway*, an otherwise loose but amiable piece. *Autumn*, a solo for tenor saxophonist Pete Christlieb, drowns in its own tears. *Pumpkinette* again shows Florence to be the only significant soloist in the band. "Westlake" reveals enough potential to make one wish that Florence would sit down and really do something with his individuality.

—JOHN S. WILSON

Earl Klugh: Crazy for You

Earl Klugh, producer
Liberty LT 51113

Guitarist Earl Klugh's seemingly limitless ability to write and improvise simple but sumptuous melodies puts him in a league

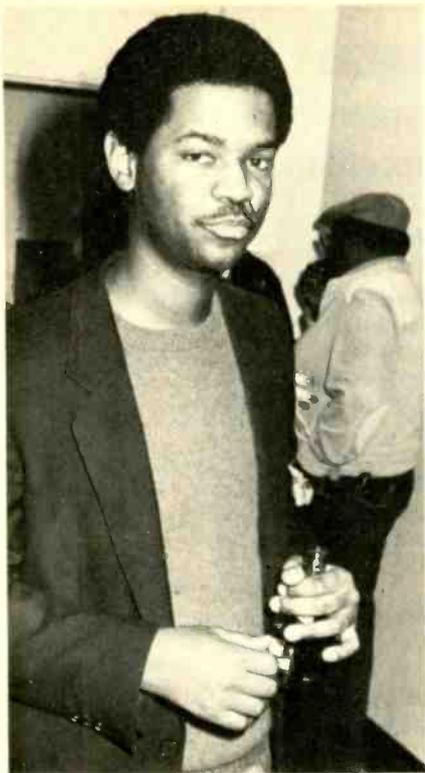


Donegan: blue at the roots

with such past and present pop/jazz virtuosi as Stan Getz, Vince Guaraldi, Chuck Mangione, and Spyro Gyra. These are musicians who aren't afraid to use fewer notes and just play pretty. Klugh's advantage is that his formidable technique is wrapped around a unique acoustic guitar style that is a real cross-breeding of diverse influences. Those cover both classical music and jazz, which dates back to stints as a teenager with George Benson and Yusef Lateef, and an early fascination with Chet Atkins' style of playing melody, chords, and bass line concurrently. The result is Klugh's ability to juxtapose, for instance, lush Wes Montgomery-style bop runs and octave voicings with florid arpeggios and classical chord configurations.

A style as sweet as his, though, can sometimes sound saccharine. On "Crazy for You," which was composed and produced by Klugh, the guitarist has enlisted five different arrangers and a variety of musicians, presumably to keep himself in challenging and fresh musical settings. For the most part that strategy works. Side 1 opens with *I'm Ready for Your Love*, arranged by Ray Parker, Jr., who also plays bass, electric guitar, and drums. Cushioned by Greg Phillinganes' sensitive synthesizer parts, Klugh adapts well to Parker's chugging, mellow backbeat. On *Twinkle*, which Phillinganes arranged, Louis Johnson's ultra-synco-pated thumb-style bass playing doesn't faze Klugh's relaxed, swinging flow one bit, and his solo is assured and chromatically inventive—one of the album's best.

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Klugh: still sweet

On Side 2 the guitarist's soporific tendencies come to the fore. The Johnny Mandel-arranged *Calypso Getaway*, with its vaguely Carib-flavored melody, sports some fine playing, but the middle-of-the-road arrangement sounds like that of a late-night talk-show theme. And with arranger Clair Fischer at the helm of a hefty string section on *Balladina*, the album enters the realm of doctor's waiting-room music. Side 2's redeemer is *The Rainmaker*, an uptempo 6/8 theme that's effectively dramatic, kicked along by Dave Matthews' bright horn charts and Brian Brake's propulsive drumming.

To Klugh's credit, production is exceptionally clean: The strings are spacious and resonant, the keyboard textures rich, his guitar tone and attack consistently superb. And his melodies can be memorable. As sophisticated, listenable background material, the album works fine. But when he's in the foreground and not adrift in a sea of strings, Klugh's music can be far more substantive. —CRISPIN CIOE

The John Lewis Album for Nancy Harrow

John Lewis, producer
Finesse FW 37681

This is an absolutely fascinating record. Rather than simply featuring a vocalist with small-combo accompaniment, producer/arranger John Lewis has ingeniously twisted and equalized the elements. Nancy Harrow's gently lyrical voice is just one part of

a mixture that makes imaginative use of Joe Kennedy's violin, Frank Wess's flute, and Lewis' piano.

Harrow is surrounded by the musical equivalents of the dots of Impressionist painters—brief stabs of sound that flow from one instrument to another. Solo passages open up every song: Wess's flute soars gloriously; Kennedy's violin stretches out long, lean lines; Lewis plays relaxed, insistent single notes that swing with the sinuous firmness that gave the Modern Jazz Quartet its rhythmic tone. (He was that group's music director.) Marc Johnson is a superb bassist, and drummer Connie Kay provides the very solid foundation that is his trademark.

Harrow, who has had a part-time singing career for the past twenty years, has a voice that tends to remind one of other singers. It used to be Billie Holiday; this time it's Mildred Bailey and at moments Sylvia Sims. Lewis has put her in such a complementary frame that for the first time she has the chance to fulfill her potential. Colors that were missing before now flow and intermingle with instrumental lines. The set's masterpiece is *It Never Entered My Mind*, a superb example of Lewis' impeccable rhythmic sense. Harrow rises with great sensitivity to the demands of the song. Kennedy and Wess flow warmly around her, and there is a wonderful piano solo. Two of the numbers are Lewis-Harrow collaborations: as one might expect, Lewis's melodies are close enough to the pop idiom to be accessible but different enough to be constantly interesting. —JOHN S. WILSON

Bob Milne: Boogie, Blues, & Rags

Jim Taylor, producer
Jim Taylor Presents JTP 113
(12311 Gratiot Avenue, Detroit, Mich. 48205)

I suspect Michigan pianist Bob Milne is known only by the kind of dyed-in-the-wool ragtime enthusiasts who attend Toronto's annual Ragtime Bash—one of Milne's few out-of-state appearances. But this disc should widen his scope of recognition. On it, he does not lock himself in with traditional fare; of the surprisingly few rags here, most are originals. They're written in a variety of veins, from the sprightly, light-hearted *Flypaper Rag* to the gentle, wistful *Apple Tree Grove*, which suggests the melodic feeling of some of the loveliest early rags.

But Milne is also a master of boogie-woogie. Two of his compositions on "Boogie, Blues and Rags" bring two grand boogie pianists to life. *Boxcar Boogie* has so much of Pete Johnson's powerhouse drive that you can almost see the ridge of flesh that sat atop the back of his collar as he played: *Steamboat Boogie Blues* has a less direct stylistic foundation but takes on the relaxed, swinging approach of Meade Lux

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Milne: boogie original

Lewis. Milne's ability to bring originality to a seemingly tired context is best revealed on *Frankie and Johnny*, a dramatic musical tour de force. With intelligently developed understatement, he makes the piece even more vivid than it is with lyrics. There is no sense of nostalgia here: Milne is here and now, vital and creative. —JOHN S. WILSON

Jimmy Rowles Plays Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn

Henri Renaud, producer
Columbia FC 37639

Jimmy Rowles is an unusually sensitive and perceptive pianist, a colorist who brings lovely, unexpected but impeccably logical shadings to his playing. In addition, his musical thinking can often be uncannily close to that of Duke Ellington and Duke's musical alternate, Billy Strayhorn. So when Rowles addresses himself to the compositions of Ellington and Strayhorn, he brings together three complementary yet distinct creative forces.

Having been an Ellington band admirer for thirty-five years, he was also close to some of the Duke's great sidemen. So we hear in these piano solos not only Ellington and Strayhorn, but Ben Webster emerging from "A" Train, Johnny Hodges' alto saxophone in some of *Blood Counts'* gorgeous phrases, and the distant call of Juan Tizol's valve trombone on *Lost in Meditation*. But the pulse in these performances is always Rowles's. Ellington has rarely been performed with such love, insight, and feeling for his inner mood. —JOHN S. WILSON

Audiophile Update

Recently received digital, half-speed remastered, and direct-to-disc recordings

Jazz

Wild Bill Davison and Eddie Miller

Play Hoagy Carmichael
Ralph Jungheim, producer
Digitally recorded
Realtime Records RT 306
(10391 Jefferson Blvd.
Culver City, Calif. 90230)

Freddie Hubbard:

Back to Birdland
Ralph Jungheim, producer
Digitally recorded
Realtime Records RT 305

Joe Marino Plays 28

All-Time Greatest Hits
Ralph Jungheim, producer
Digitally recorded
Realtime Records RT 302

Rob McConnell and the Boss Brass:

Live in Digital
Rob McConnell & Phil Sheridan,
producers. Digitally recorded
Dark Orchid Records 602-12018
(P.O. Box 248,
New Berlin, Wisc. 53151)

San Francisco Swing Express

Leo de Gar Kulka, producer
Digitally recorded
Sonicarts LS 29
(Evolution; 23757 Canzonet Street
Woodland Hills, Calif. 91367)

Software: Marbles

Jim Fairs, Larry Millas &
Software, producers
Digitally recorded
Headfirst Records HF 9707

Tower of Power Direct

Larry Brown, producer
Direct-to-disc
Sheffield Lab 17
(P.O. Box 5332
Santa Barbara, Calif. 93108)

Ross Traut: Ross Traut

Ross Traut & Cliff Carter,
producers. Analog Master
Headfirst Records HF 9709

Lesette Wilson: Now That I've Got Your Attention

Lesette Wilson, producer
Digitally recorded
Headfirst Records HF 9708

Pop

Genesis: A Trick of the Tail

David Hentschel & Genesis,
producers.
Half-speed remastered
Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab
MFSL 1-062

The Kinks: Misfits

Ray Davies, producer
Half-speed remastered
MFSL 1-070

Melissa Manchester: Don't Cry Out Loud

Leon Ware, producer
Half-speed remastered
Nautilus NR 33

The Moody Blues with The London Symphony Orchestra: Days of Future Passed

Hugh Mendl, executive producer
Half-speed remastered
MFSL 1-042

Kenny Rogers: Greatest Hits

Larry Butler, producer
Half-speed remastered
MFSL C 049 (cassette)

Sonic Bullets

Half-speed remastered
Realistic 51-7005 P 15850

Al Stewart: Time Passages

Alan Parsons, producer
Half-speed remastered
MFSL 1-082

Al Stewart: 24 Carrots

Al Stewart & Chris Desmond,
producers. Half-speed remastered
Nautilus NR 34

Al Stewart: Year of the Cat

Alan Parsons, producer
Half-speed remastered
MFSL C 009 (cassette)

James Taylor: Gorilla

Lenny Waronker & Russ Titelman,
producers. Half-speed remastered
Nautilus Recordings NR 29

Jethro Tull: Aqualung

Ian Anderson & Terry Ellis,
producers. Half-speed remastered
MFSL 1-061

Music in Print

Newly published collections of popular music Reviewed by Elise Bretton

Billy Joel: Songs in the Attic
Cherry Lane, 11 songs, \$8.95

While Kris Kristofferson, Mac Davis, and other award-winning m.o.r. idols are busy commuting between the recording studio and the Actors Studio, Billy Joel, who has the soul of a sideman, is out touring with his band. This collection is culled from an LP of live performances, taped during the summer of 1980. The material is not new, but Joel songs of any vintage are quality items. Lyrically, *I've Loved These Days*, *Captain Jack*, and *Everybody Loves You Now* all mix the good-timey with the profound. Musically, Joel knows just where to release the tension before he plunks us down on the harmonic carpet. As a pianist, Joel is an inspiration for every little kid who sulks and fidgets instead of diligently practicing his Czerny.

The Bob Marley and the Wailers Songbook
Columbia Pictures, 16 songs, \$9.95

Reggae masters Bob Marley and the Wailers were Jamaica's hottest non alcoholic export until Marley's death last year. A hybrid of calypso and ska, reggae's sinuous, pulsating dance beat provided a unique setting for their peace/brotherhood/liberation lyrics. The folio is well-produced and a fitting memorial; it would have been greatly enhanced by some explanatory notes on the Rastafarian terminology.

The Great Muppet Caper
Music & lyrics by Joe Raposo
Cherry Lane, 12 songs, \$7.95

This folio is a real disaster: Lackluster music and lyrics, harsh, cluttered color stills from the movie, and unappealing, made-for-Crayola artwork that turns the Muppets into grotesque caricatures. How have matters gotten so out of paw? Two of the selections are lyric-less melodies used in the film for underscoring. Of what value are these for the (mostly young) folio purchasers? Another number is a pallid replica of that old chestnut, *Notre Dame Fight Song*. Why not use the original? Yet another is a hokey, Tony Martin-Cyd Charisse-cast-of-thousands sendup that calls for a "tempo di extravaganza" (*Piggy's Fantasy*). That's amusing, but I would have preferred a little less self-congratulation and a little more substance.



Reggae master Marley

Carole Bayer Sager:
Sometimes Late at Night
Chappell Music, 12 songs, \$6.95

An optimistic record company has released Carole Bayer Sager's third solo album, from which this collection has been transcribed. Burt Bacharach, the lyricist's latest flame, is her collaborator on ten of these songs, with additional credits going to Peter Allen, Bruce Roberts, and Neil Diamond. Add to this information the fact that the artist is provocatively depicted on the cover, and it's not hard to guess that the songs all dwell on consummated relationships between consenting adults.

Though Sager's forte is clearly not singing, her lyrics cannot be faulted. Bacharach, on the other hand, has lost ground. In the past, his melodies (*Promises, Promises, Trains and Boats and Planes, Walk on By*, et al.) have been spiced with self-propelling, jagged rhythms that could stop the heart. But he is not at his professional best here. The finest number is Sager and Allen's *You and Me (We Wanted It All)*.

Sophisticated Ladies:
Vocal Selections
Music by Duke Ellington
Belwin Mills, 21 songs, \$7.95

The Broadway production that spawned this collection is an almanac of Ellingtonia, exuberantly sung and danced and richly orchestrated. There is no plot, no subtext, and no grand design; it is simply a lavish re-creation of the Cotton Club. Among the twenty-one selections are *Do Nothin' Till You Hear from Me, Mood Indigo, I'm Beginning to See the Light, and Solitude*. The original streamlined piano-vocal settings have been left intact, leaving you free

to embellish your own rendition with whatever styling comes to throat.

Starting Here Starting Now:
Vocal Selections
Music and lyrics by David Shire and Richard Maltby, Jr.
Fiddleback Music, 15 songs, \$6.95

Does your taste for singable love ballads demand more substance than *You've Got That Jordache Look?* Consider this off-Broadway score, a bicoastal collaboration between New Yorker Richard Maltby, Jr. and the West Coast's David Shire. Both enjoy the challenge of construction: Maltby's words are frequently on display in the *Sunday Times* crossword puzzle. As for Shire, give him a click track and he'll turn out any number of musical inventions.

Starting Here Starting Now characterizes itself as a revue, which is a somewhat faded genre evoking memories of up-tempo, internally rhymed special material with punch lines at the end of every eight bars. These songs, however, are up to the minute light rock; the melodies are well within the range of the average singer, and the lyrics are reflective of the lifestyle of today's slightly baffled generation. *I Don't Remember Christmas, What About Today*, and the title song are already staples on the cabaret circuit. Highly recommended.

Woman of the Year:
Vocal selections. Music and lyrics by John Kander and Fred Ebb
Tommy Valando Pub., 7 songs, \$6.95

This musical battle of the sexes misses fire. Lauren Bacall plays Tess Hardy, the omniscient TV personality who falls in love with and marries strong-willed cartoonist Sam Craig. Although the libretto and the stage action demonstrate that Tess and Sam live scrappily ever after, the music and lyrics, courtesy of John Kander and Fred Ebb, do not follow suit. Sam sings about how wonderful Tess is (*Sometimes a Day Goes By*), the chorus sings about how wonderful she is (*Woman of the Year*), her ex-husband's new wife sings about how wonderful she is (*The Grass Is Always Greener*), and then—in case you missed the point—she sings about how wonderful she is (*One of the Girls*). Two notators, Frank Metis and Paul McKibbins, have labored over the transcriptions, adding butterfly ornamentation here and there. **HF**

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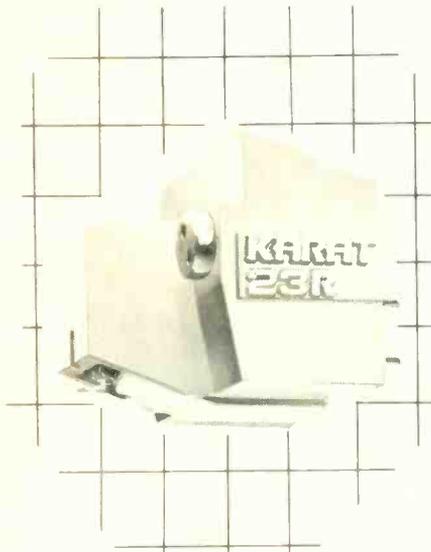
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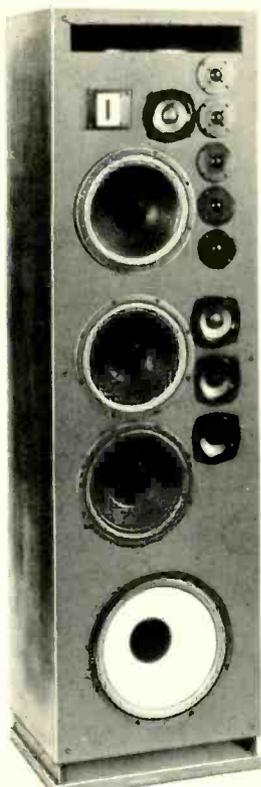
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—John Atkinson, August, 1981

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SCHUBERT'S SONGS

(Continued from page 49)

sequences "should be retained as far as possible, even in transpositions." The author? Fischer-Dieskau himself, who does not practice what he preaches; although he has tinkered with his own key sequence for *Winterreise* over the years, he has not come much closer to Schubert's; Hüscher, too, suits his own convenience.

This makes a difference, as one is reminded by Häfliger's new recording, which follows the keys of Schubert's manuscript (five of which were altered by the composer for publication). A tenor voice, too, projects a different sort of winter journeyer than a baritone, and Häfliger, though sixty-one at the time of the recording, still offers a basically youthful sound (as the even older Julius Patzak did not in his imperfect but often moving recording), though the voice is not light enough to embrace some smaller ornaments. This is a thoughtful and well-considered interpretation, more "vocal" than "dramatic," with much of the musical clarity of Fischer-Dieskau's readings, none of the mannerisms, and a good deal more spontaneity.

It is also the first recording of the cycle that I have encountered with fortepiano accompaniment, well played by Jörg Ewald Dähler. There are many details to relish: the pointed, pinched, almost "plucked" staccato, the strong clear bass lines, the distinct timbral registers, the clarity of low-register chords. The restored Franz Brodmann instrument seems to be in excellent working order, though I noted some imperfect damping at the end of "*Die Krähe*." The full chords in "*Das Wirtshaus*" are particularly effective, and the keyboard's treble line in this song's second couplet stands out nicely. If I have a reservation, it is that Häfliger's essentially operatic voice and technique are not an ideal match for the instrument, though surely closer than Fischer-Dieskau's—in fact, the latter's entire approach to the cycle depends on the dynamic resources of the modern grand piano. But the Swiss tenor is a sensitive singer, aware of the problem, and the performance is impressive and moving. (The Swiss packaging includes program notes in English but only the German texts of the songs.)

Hermann Prey has long stood in the shadow of Fischer-Dieskau as a song interpreter, and I am afraid the popular judgment is justified, for in spite of potentially finer vocal equipment Prey has not shown anything like the musical penetration or originality of the older singer. His new recording of *Schwanengesang*, made at a public concert (in front of a very quiet audience) at the 1978 Hohenems Schubert Festival, is not a pleasure: The voice is heavy and sometimes uncertain of pitch, the rhythm of both singer and pianist is stiff and stolid, and the climaxes of the big songs are rough and hectoring; Leonard Hokanson's

heavy emphases in "*Ständchen*" suggest that the serenader's guitar has strings of lead. (A more welcome consequence of that 1978 Hohenems Festival is a two-disc set, DG 2707 126, containing performance recordings of two Schubert stage works. *Die Freunde von Salamanka*, D. 326, and the fragment from 1811-12, *Der Spiegelritter*, D. 11. Conducted by Theodor Guschlbauer and sung with reasonable competence, these recorded firsts further increase our acquaintance with Schubert's stage music, its dramatic problems, and its undoubted beauties. For some unexplained reason, an aria is missing from *Die Freunde von Salamanka*, No. 10 in the score.)

To close on a happier note, let me call attention to a BBC/Artium disc that makes available radio recordings by Peter Pears and the late Benjamin Britten. Every one of these performances is something of a revelation, and I am happy to report that the BBC engineers did not mike Pears as closely as the Decca/London people, who tended to exaggerate a quaver in his tone that was in fact rarely distracting in the concert hall. Britten's shaping of the long introduction of "*Der Winterabend*," the inventor of Pears's climactic melismas in "*Abendbilder*," his variation of character among the strophes of "*Das war ich*" (of which Pears, like Fischer-Dieskau, sings only the first four stanzas), the pianist's staccatos in the bass register in "*Der blinde Knabe*"—these are just a few of the treasurable details on the Schubert side, and the overside Wolf is equally fascinating. (Still more Pears/Britten Wolf, and a concert performance of Britten's *Winter Words*, can be heard on a special Aldeburgh Festival fund-raising record, available from the American Friends of the Aldeburgh Festival, Suite 4/5C, 135 E. 83rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10028, for a tax-deductible contribution of \$50 plus \$5 packaging and postage from England; checks should be made payable to "AFAP-PP Fund.")

Relatively little of the history of Schubert song performance is available on current recordings; it is not a good thing when the domestic catalogs contain three versions of *Winterreise* by one singer (Fischer-Dieskau, of course) and only one other (by Hans Hotter), so the reissue of the Hüscher set certainly adds to our perspective. I have heard rumors of a historical anthology of Schubert singing planned by EMI, and nothing would be more welcome if intelligently assembled (and carefully pitched!); I hope it will dig far into the past, including samples of the two complete recordings of *Die schöne Müllerin* made before World War I. Documentary evidence of the composer's performances and recorded evidence of active traditions are not automatic guides to a good interpretation, or even necessarily relevant, but they do give us stimulating backgrounds against which to understand and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of modern performances. **HF**

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GARDEN/MAZE

(Continued from page 51)

part glances off appoggiaturas and suddenly lights up to the top half of the keyboard with crooked chords: the alto flute sinks low into winding lines and then floats high above the texture. The marimba cadenza (Sec. 6) is one heart of the piece, concentrated and brilliant; the interlocking cadenzas for all the instruments (Sec. 7), in which the material seems to disintegrate into sharp fragments, make up another.

This recording does not quite capture the full power of a fine live performance of the work. The acoustic is close and dry, with little atmosphere. The players are not Davies' original Fires of London (clarinetist Alan Hacker, flutist Judith Pearce, violinist/violist Duncan Druce, cellist Jennifer Ward Clarke, percussionist Gary Kettel) for whom he wrote the parts. With the exception of pianist Stephen Pruslin, who remains, these are new, young players, superbly accomplished, but not yet completely responsive to each other. Gregory Knowles manages the marimba part with deceptive ease, David Campbell is a clarinetist distinctively warmer than Hacker, and Philippa Davies is an outstanding flutist. Viola (Beverly Davison) and cello (Alexander Baillie) are not so well matched, though each is fine individually.

The performance is very well planned and paced, though there is one puzzle: an extremely slow start. The composer gives a metronome marking of dotted quarter = c.56, but the Fires scarcely make it to 30; the recapitulation in Sec. 8, also marked c.56, is only slightly faster. This creates problems with the tempo relationships throughout the work. The composer did not conduct the performance, but he must have supervised it. What speed will future players take as "authentic"?

The second side has another dark,

somber work, the *Tenebrae super Gesualdo*, which weaves Davies' own meditations on the music with versions of the original motets, somewhat luridly sung by Mary Thomas. This is unrelievedly gloomy.

For the countless concerts the Fires have given over the last decade or so, which have done so much to increase awareness and understanding of Davies' music, the composer has written or arranged many small works to serve as fillers or introductory pieces. Some are original miniatures; those collected on the last of these discs, however, are all based on the music of the past, by Dunstable, Bach, Purcell, and Scottish composers. Bach's C sharp major Prelude and Fugue from Book I of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, for instance, was arranged to precede *Ave maris stella*. To gather these occasional works onto one disc was perhaps unwise. There is diversity aplenty, and the methods of arrangement and sometimes parody are very different. Yet to one who has heard them in their context in Fires concerts, the result is like a whole meal of hors d'oeuvres. The only thing to do is to pick and choose.

I love the Bach, with its gentle send-up of Webern's techniques, splitting the lines between the instruments and clothing them in soft colors. (The playing here is almost sotto voce.) The most considerable piece is the Dunstable: a fairly straight transcription of the motet *Veni Sancte Spiritus/Veni Creator Spiritus*, followed by a terse but striking consideration of the material. The Scottish pieces are fun. However, the Purcell is hard to take, especially the decimation of a fantasia, raucously orchestrated with a screeching piccolo at the twelfth, and two pavans, reduced to smoochy fox-trots. At the end, the percussionist imitates a scratchy old 78-rpm record running down. An iconoclastic joke, I suppose, but why drag Purcell into it? **HF**

TIPPETT: King Priam.

CAST:

Hecuba	Heather Harper (s)
Andromache	Felicity Palmer (s)
Helen	Yvonne Minton (ms)
Nurse	Ann Murray (ms)
Serving Woman	Linda Hirst (ms)
Young Paris	Julian Saïpe (boy s)
Achilles	Robert Tear (t)
Paris	Philip Langridge (t)
Young Guard	Peter Hall (t)
Hermes	Kenneth Bowen (t)
Priam	Norman Bailey (b)
Hector	Thomas Allen (b)
Patroclus	Stephen Roberts (b)
Old Man	David Wilson-Johnson (bs)

Timothy Walker, guitar; London Sinfonietta Chorus. London Sinfonietta. David Atherton, cond. [James Mallinson and Chris Hazell, prod.] LONDON LDR 73006, \$38.94 (digital recording; three discs, manual sequence).

TIPPETT: Symphony No. 4; Suite for the Birthday of Prince Charles.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. [James Mallinson, prod.] LONDON LDR 71046, \$12.98 (digital recording).

DAVIES: Ave maris stella; Tenebrae super Gesualdo*.

Mary Thomas, soprano*; Timothy Walker, guitar*; Fires of London, *Peter Maxwell Davies, cond. [Antony Hodgson, prod.] UNICORN-KANCHANA KP 8002, \$11.98 (distributed by Euroclass Record Distributors, Ltd., 155 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10013).

DAVIES: Renaissance and Baroque Realizations.

Fires of London. Peter Maxwell Davies, cond. [Antony Hodgson, prod.] UNICORN-KANCHANA KP 8005, \$11.98.

BACH: Preludes and Fugues: in C sharp, S. 848; in C sharp minor, S. 849. DUNSTABLE: Veni Sancte Spiritus/Veni Creator Spiritus. KINLOCH: His Fantassie. PURCELL: Fantasia upon One Note; Fantasia and Two Pavans. Three Early Scottish Motets.

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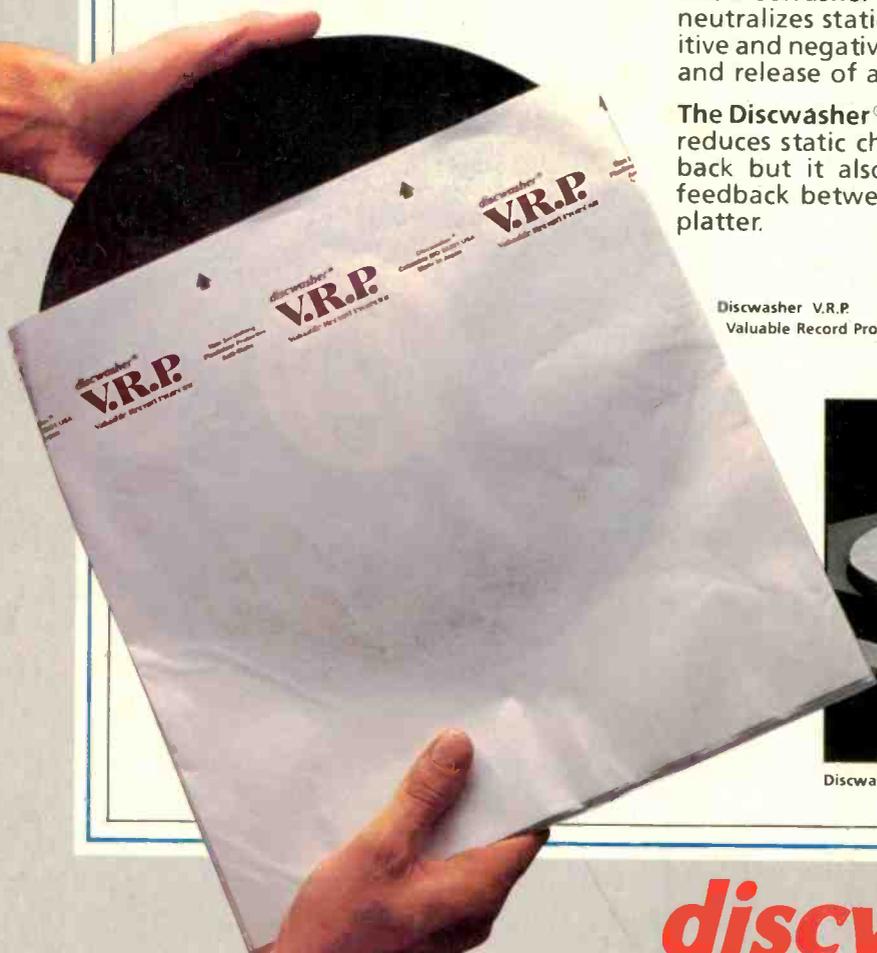
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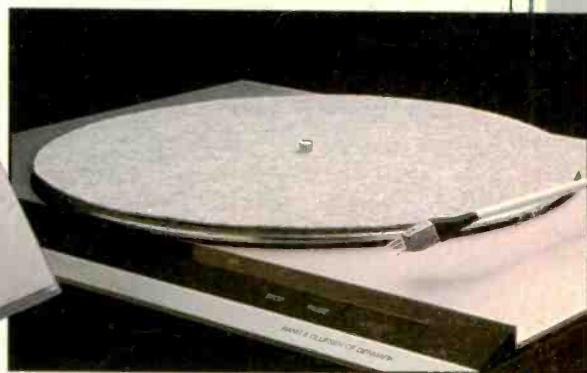
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