

Stereo Review

JULY 1972 • 60 CENTS

H-H LABS TESTS THIRTY-THREE STEREO HEADPHONES



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re of everything.

Four new and completely different AM-FM stereo receivers with increased performance, greater power, unsurpassed precision and total versatility.

SX-525 AM-FM STEREO RECEIVER — 72 WATTS IHF



SX-625 AM-FM STEREO RECEIVER — 110 WATTS IHF



Experts agree...



(Seated left to right) Fred Petras, Contributing Writer, Tape Recorder Annual and Stereo & Hi-Fi Times □ Michael Marcus, Acoustics Editor, Rolling Stone □ Harry E. Maynard, Commentator, Men of Hi-Fi, WNYC-FM □ George W. Tillett, Editor, Audio Magazine □ Steve Katz, Guitarist, Blood, Sweat & Tears □ Bobby Colomby, Drummer, Blood, Sweat & Tears □ Ken Ketch, Pres., Sound Room, Grand Rapids & Kalamazoo, Mich.

Pioneer has mo

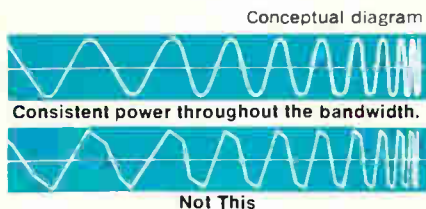
SX-727 AM-FM STEREO RECEIVER — 195 WATTS IHF



SX-826 AM-FM STEREO RECEIVER — 270 WATTS IHF



Long before the current wave of consumerism, Pioneer had established its reputation for superior quality craftsmanship. This reputation has been continuously augmented by our commitment to building high fidelity components with a measurable extra margin of value. Our four new receivers — SX-828, SX-727, SX-626, SX-525 — are designed to meet a wide range of requirements and budgets. Yet each unit incorporates a significant array of features and refinements built into the top new model — the SX-828. Regardless which new Pioneer receiver you finally select, you are assured it represents the finest at its price.



More meaningful power.

When it comes to power, each model provides the most watts for your money. This is meaningful power. Power that is consistent throughout the 20-20,000 Hz bandwidth (not just when measured at 1,000 Hz.) Especially noticeable at the low end of the spectrum with improved bass response, the overall effect is greater frequency response and low, low distortion.

Model	IHF Music Power 4 ohms	RMS @ 8 ohms Both channels driven @ 1KHz
SX-828	270 watts	60+60 watts
SX-727	195 watts	40+40 watts
SX-626	110 watts	27+27 watts
SX-525	72 watts	17+17 watts

Direct-coupled amplifier circuitry and twin power supplies improve responses.

Of course, having power to spare is important; but directing it for maximum performance is even more vital. In the SX-828 and SX-727, you will find direct-coupled circuitry in the power amplifier combined with two separate power supplies to maintain consistent high power output with positive stability. This means transient, damping and frequency responses are enhanced, while distortion is minimized. In fact, it's less than 0.5% across the 20-20,000 Hz. bandwidth.

Ultra wide linear FM dial scale takes the squint out of tuning.



You can't expect great music without great specifications.

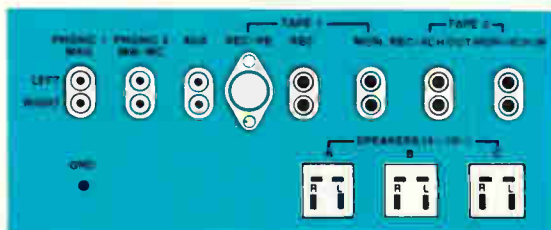
Pioneer's reputation for high performance capability is thoroughly reinforced in these four receivers. Listening to them substantiates it; the specifications tell the reasons why. Since Field Effect Transistors increase sensitivity, they're incorporated into the FM tuner section of each unit. For example, the SX-828 uses 4 FET's. You get greater selectivity and capture ratio with Integrated Circuits and Ceramic Filters in the IF stage. Here's a mini spec list.

	SX-828	SX-727	SX-626	SX-525
FM Sensitivity (IHF) (the lower the better)	1.7uV	1.8uV	2.0uV	2.2uV
Selectivity (the higher the better)	+75dB	+70dB	+70dB	+45dB
Capture Ratio (the lower the better)	1.5dB	2.0dB	2.5dB	3.0dB
Power Bandwidth	All exceed by a wide margin the usable sound frequency spectrum			

Inputs and outputs for every purpose including 4-channel sound.

Depending on your listening interests and desire to experiment in sound, each receiver provides terminals for a wide range of program sources.

Inputs:	SX-828	SX-727	SX-626	SX-525
Tape monitor	2	2	2	2
Phono	2	2	2	Phono/Mic.
Auxiliary	1	1	1	1
Microphone	2	1	1	Phono/Mic. (as above)



Outputs:	SX-828	SX-727	SX-626	SX-525
Speakers	3	3	3	2
Headsets	2	1	1	1
Tape Rec.	2	2	2	2

Someday, if you want 4-channel sound, all models have 2 inputs and 2 outputs to accommodate a unit such as Pioneer's QL-600 Quadralizer Amplifier. With it, and two additional speakers, perfect 4-channel sound is simply achieved.



Exclusive protector circuit for speakers.

Another example of Pioneer's advanced engineering is the automatic electronic trigger relay system designed into the SX-828 and SX-727. Since the signal is transmitted directly to the speakers because of the direct-coupled amplifier, this fail-safe circuit protects your speakers against damage and DC leakage, which can cause distortion. It also guards against short circuits in the power transistors. It's absolutely foolproof.

Versatile features increase your listening enjoyment.

Our engineers have outdone themselves with a host of easy-to-use features. All four units include: loudness contour, FM muting, mode lights, click stop bass/treble tone controls with oversize knurled knobs, and an ultra wide linear FM dial scale that takes the squint out of tuning. Except for the SX-525, they all employ high and low filters. Enlarged signal strength meters make tuning easier than ever. Center tuning meters are included as well in the SX-828 and SX-727. Further sophistication is offered on the top two models with a 20dB audio muting switch — the perfect answer to controlling background music. As the senior member of the family, the SX-828 is

endowed with speaker indicator lights (A,B,C,A+B,A+C) and a tuning dial dimmer for creating a more intimate lighting atmosphere.

Some day other stereo receivers will strive for this total combination of power, performance, features, precision and versatility. Why wait? Pioneer has more of everything now.

See and hear these magnificent receivers at your local Pioneer dealer. SX-828—\$429.95; SX-727—\$349.95; SX-626—\$279.95; SX-525—\$239.95. Prices include walnut cabinets.

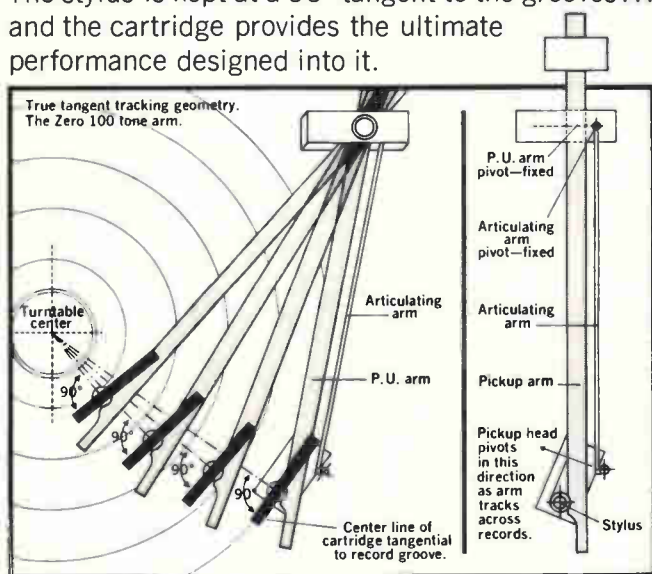
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The results have been recorded by experts in their reviews of the Zero 100. Some of them are saying things about this instrument that have never been said about an automatic turntable before.

They have confirmed that they can *hear* the difference that Zero Tracking Error makes in the sound, when the Zero 100 is tested against other top model turntables, in otherwise identical systems. Until now, we cannot recall any turntable feature being credited with a direct audible effect on sound reproduction. Usually that is reserved for the cartridge or other components in a sound system.

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Stereo Review

JULY 1972 • VOLUME 29 • NUMBER 1

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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

By WILLIAM ANDERSON

END OF THE HEINZ PERIOD

"POP music...evokes the deepest feelings of the shallowest men," wrote Margot Hentoff in *The New York Review* not long ago on the subject of (who else?) Rod McKuen, who seems to be well on the way to replacing Edgar Guest as the ideal whipping boy for middle-American taste. Like all good aphorisms, the statement has wit and a surface reasonableness that tempts off-the-cuff credibility—but I just don't believe it. Granted that popular music, at least lately, has been manufactured largely by musically unschooled folk using the simplest of musical materials, it does not follow, as Ms. Hentoff seems to imply, that it is incapable of carrying deep meanings, that those who listen to it do so to exercise their feelings, or that those feelings are the deepest of which they are capable. (It is, after all, no proof of the quality of their palates that kings and presidents eat the lowly but nourishing hot-dog—an analogy I will not pursue further.) The making of such flat generalizations about music, it seems to me, is quite simply impossible until we know more than we do now about the nature of all music and what it means both to those who create it and those who "consume" it. In the case of pop music, I am more and more persuaded that it is what it is because it has to be. What the vast majority of people seem to look for in music is no more than a presence, a comforting, uninvolved, undemanding background susurrant (ask Muzak). But however fine it is, music that asks for attention, that demands involvement, that "evokes the deepest feelings" will simply not be widely popular—not because people lack the capacity for either attention or involvement, nor because they *have* no deep feelings, but because they choose not to exercise them on anything but a superficial level in music.

It is a minor source of wonder to me that music, certainly an enormously time-consuming (and therefore important) activity of human kind, should be so little understood, so little studied by the social, behavioral, and psychological sciences. Too bad, for we might then have some hard information either to prove or disprove the entirely subjective reactions of Ms. Hentoff, me, and composer Alec Wilder, who offers the opinion in his recent book, *American Popular Song—The Great Innovators, 1900-1950*, that popular music comes in three levels of sophistication: theater songs, film songs, and Tin Pan Alley songs—in descending order. Though Mr. Wilder is far from out of touch musically, that phrase "Tin Pan Alley" certainly is: the kind of music it describes is now practically extinct, its decline dating almost precisely from the year—1950—that Mr. Wilder considers the "twilight" of the great tradition in American song writing. Hardly mere coincidence, for the Tin Pan Alley song fed on the style and example of the American musical theater which, despite some brilliant exceptions, had also lost its grip on public taste by the end of the Forties. Thus, for about the last twenty years, we have been standing on an even lower rung of Mr. Wilder's ladder of sophistication, in what might be called the Heinz Period—fifty-seven or more varieties of folk music. As sophistication goes, moreover, this is surely the bottom, so there is nowhere to go but up.

There are signs that the upward movement has already begun. Even the most casual listening will reveal evidences of increasing sophistication in both the composition and the execution of current pop music, and such examples as *Tommy* (not an opera, really, but a musical), *Hair*, *Godspell*, and (Lord help us all!) *Jesus Christ Superstar*, despite their obvious shortcomings, are not so much evidence of unseemly ambitions as they are tributes to the form and the staying power of a somnolent but still viable genre. The portents are good, and the Greek models for a Roman renaissance are still very much with us. We celebrate one of the most inspiring of these models—Jerome Kern—in an article in this issue, the first in a new series on the great composers and lyricists of the American musical theater.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"Quo Vadis, Leonard Bernstein?"

● May I commend you on the publication in May of Eric Salzman's excellent piece on Leonard Bernstein ("Quo Vadis, Leonard Bernstein?"). Undoubtedly, there will be many who will take Mr. Salzman to task for the unashamedly laudatory tone of the piece. As Mr. Salzman implicitly points out, such critics seem to equate popularity and wide appeal with commercialism, selling out, and a general lack of seriousness. Though surely this is sometimes the case, and though there may be many who "appreciate" Lennie for the wrong reasons, it would be wise to remember that this most involute of musical personalities has suffered some of the bitterest invective in recent memory. Meanwhile, he has gone quietly about the relatively thankless business of single-handedly revitalizing the American music scene. His honesty, commitment, and involvement have brought him sneering charges of insincerity, and his attempts to bring great music to larger audiences without bastardizing and "pablumizing" the music itself have been all but laughed off and quickly forgotten. We would do well not to forget that beneath the volatile showmanship there is a consummate musician; rather than wait for Bernstein's death and suddenly "remember" this fact (as seems to be the American way), we ought to welcome what Mr. Salzman has done for us: reminding this sensitive and brilliant man that his very real contributions to the music world have not gone entirely unnoticed.

JON BOWDEN, *Music Editor,*
Arts & Music Magazine
Riverdale, N.Y.

The Editor replies: "Our thanks to Mr. Bowden for reassuring us that the point of Mr. Salzman's piece was not missed. America's ivory towers are not only still standing, but they are stubbornly defended as well, and as long as 'popularizer' continues to be a dirty word in the vocabularies of America's cultural administrators, the arts will be but rootless air plants in the conservatories of exquisites. As critic Benjamin DeMott pointed out in a recent (March 25) issue of Saturday Review, this is an enormous (and enormously important) subject: '... the continuing national obliviousness to the job of learning how to exchange, how to "popularize" without lying, how to effect nonexploitative communication

between levels of mind in a democratic society.' We must get it straight once and for all: there is nothing wrong with knowledge if it wants to teach; there is nothing wrong with ignorance if it wants to learn."

● Eric Salzman, in his article on Leonard Bernstein (May), makes the claim that Mr. Bernstein is currently the sole representative of the Romantic tradition. I take nothing away from Mr. Bernstein's abilities, but would suggest that if Mr. Salzman really wants to hear the one survivor of the Romantic epoch who is still active on the podium and in the recording studio, who was born when Liszt, Wagner, Brahms, Franck, Bruckner, and Tchaikovsky were still alive, and who was ninety years old on April 18, then he should waste no time in going to the next concert given by Maestro Leopold Stokowski. His performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the American Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall were electrifying, and thoroughly deserved the standing ovations they received. It was well worth my coming all the way from London to New York to hear Stokowski enter his ninety-first year with such a dynamic explosion of music-making.

EDWARD JOHNSON
London, England

We refer Mr. Johnson to Eric Salzman's review (April) of two Stokowski performances from the Twenties—Beethoven's Seventh and Schubert's "Unfinished"—reissued on the Parnassus label for evidence that Mr. Salzman shares his view of Stokowski's stature. "Perhaps," Mr. Salzman says, "old Stoky will again receive the recognition he once had and which he is certainly still due."

● Eric Salzman's musings about Lenny have an urbanity and polish not always commensurate with their subject. Bernstein's saga is quite boring, and his future plans do not interest me any more than Glenn Gould's, Nikolaus Harnoncourt's, or, for that matter, John Lennon's. I can see that he is someone of note in New York circles, but I hope STEREO REVIEW transcends that blighted city.

MANNY MANDELBAUM
Melrose, Mass.

We are with Mr. Mandelbaum in one respect: we also hope that STEREO REVIEW trans-

cends provincialism—indeed, that we transcend it as successfully as Leonard Bernstein has.

Record-Quality Misconception

● I must attempt to rectify some of the misconceptions and misrepresentations contained in the letter of Dan Wallack (May). The critics of poor record-quality control and noisy pressings are not, as a group, agitated by a "minuscule imperfection," as Mr. Wallack contends. Rather, it is the assortment of grossly apparent (through a high-quality playback system) thumps, pops, ticks, etc., which raise the ire of the critical listener. Furthermore, what is desired is not some "utopian ideal" depicted by Mr. Wallack, but merely the kind of clean pressing well within the range of technical feasibility and currently being consistently offered by such companies as Philips.

Mr. Wallack's comparison of the extramusical sounds of a "live" concert with record noise is clearly not legitimate. Having sat through many concerts myself, I can state that the coughs and rustlings accompanying any concert, though sometimes distracting, are not generally comparable in relative audibility to the objectionable record-surface noise I described above. Indeed, the spatial dimensions of a concert hall and the sonic ambiance of a "live" concert tend to dampen most audience noise to unobjectionable levels. Also, such noise as is heard in a "live" concert is heard but once by the concertgoer, while the noise on a recording is obviously heard every time the record is played (a prospect tending to increase its capacity to annoy).

ANTHONY F. GRAMZA
Urbana, Ill.

Critics on the Met

● I enjoyed Stephen E. Rubin's article about the critics and the Met ("Changing the Guard at the Met," April) not because the critics were so good, but because they were so bad. Mr. Rubin is a good journalist, but what a sorry, cautious, unimaginative, opinionated lot the critics are! And how ill-informed! One of them speaks enviously of Covent Garden; he should have heard as many operas there as I have. What's wrong with Covent Garden is that it is just too English. And what the Met needs more than anything else is money. Pity not one of your critics mentioned it.

LATHROP CRAWFORD
London, England

● Stephen E. Rubin's article "Changing the Guard at the Met" in your April issue was fascinating. I was not surprised that the various music critics Rubin interviewed did not agree among themselves in their recommendations for what Goeran Gentele, the new General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera, should do to revitalize the Met. But, had these critics read Robert S. Clark's article "Learning from Callas" in your March issue, I think they would all have agreed at least that the first thing Gentele should do is hire Mme. Callas to coach the Met's singers.

JOHN C. LOWE
New York, N.Y.

Rózsa's Cello Concerto

● It seems ironic indeed that the issue of STEREO REVIEW (April) carrying the announcement of the formation of a Miklós Rózsa Society in its Letters column also con-

(Continued on page 10)

Twelve years — Five major advances



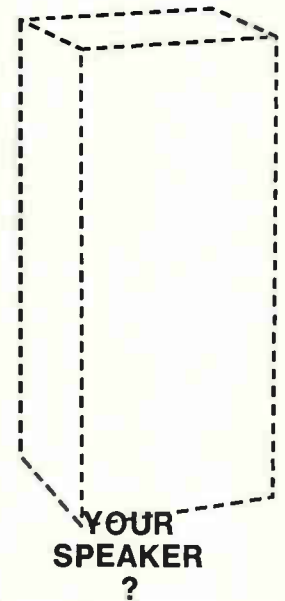
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CIRCLE NO. 10 ON READER SERVICE CARD

tains another attack on Rózsa's Cello Concerto by Bernard Jacobson. Mr. Jacobson, in fact, couldn't even wait for a recording of the work to tear it apart—his comments were gratuitously (and irrelevantly) inserted into a review of a concerto by Vladimir Vlasov, a Russian composer whose music is only remotely, if at all, similar to Rózsa's.

Perhaps Mr. Jacobson would dismiss the thousands who enthusiastically applauded Rózsa after the U.S. premiere of the Cello Concerto as musical illiterates. But how does Mr. Jacobson explain the fact that the soloist, Janos Starker, a musician of taste and intelligence, feels the work to be not "dumbfoundingly empty" but, rather, a masterpiece? Perhaps, having heard the piece but a few times, Mr. Jacobson feels he is nonetheless more qualified to appraise it than is Mr. Starker, who knows the work inside out. I, for one, will continue to agree with Starker, not only because his opinion is the more valid, but also because, having myself heard the piece more than a few times, I know he is correct.

MARK KOLDYS
Dearborn, Mich.

Mr. Jacobson replies: "Maybe Rózsa's Cello Concerto sounds better that way—inside out, I mean. Seriously, however, since Mr. Koldys is fortunate enough to 'know' the answers to aesthetic questions, whereas I, poor fellow, am just a critic whose dealings are in mere opinion, there is plainly no point in my arguing with him. We will only begin to have a chance of understanding each other when Mr. Koldys has read a few basic philosophy texts and found out the difference between factual statement and value judgment, between knowledge and belief (whether true or false).

"As for the mention of Mr. Starker, whom I hold in high regard, let me just say that—like all but a handful of exceptional performers in this age of nineteenth-century-oriented musical training—even he is susceptible to the attractions of instrument-fodder, by which I mean gratefully written works without much musical value. This, too, I stress, is an opinion. Mr. Koldys doubtless 'knows' better."

Sounding Off on the Moog

● I see there are still some people who think the Moog synthesizer sounds "like some monstrous Wurlitzer being played by a robot." I am referring to Paul Kresh's review of the cassette "Everything You Always Wanted to Hear on the Moog But Were Afraid to Ask For" in the April tape section of STEREO REVIEW.

Mr. Kresh seems terribly uninformed about the Moog's characteristics. To say that arrangers for it "parrot the orchestral languages" and that they have "a marvelous gift for mimicry" is a prime example. Although the Moog can sound a great deal like a violin, castanets, or a guitar, it is incorrect to say that it mimics them. A parrot can recite words, but that is as far as the bird can go. The Moog is an incredibly complex electronic instrument which, in skilled hands, comes very close to achieving the "fat" sound that composers long to hear. It generates a more perfect wave than a regular musical instrument, which gives it its appealingly rich voice. By using filters, shapers, oscillators, and a good head, it gives the music a deeper, more full-bodied sound.

Perhaps the sound heard by the reviewer was somewhat altered by the cassette medium. I don't believe you can hear the same

music from a narrow tape as from a vinyl disc played on a fine stereo system.

JEFFREY D. BIPES
Minneapolis, Minn.

Music Editor James Goodfriend comments: "When any composer I respect writes a piece that I can respect expressly for the Moog, then I will begin to respect the Moog as a musical instrument. As long as it plays only transcriptions, it is merely a gimmick. The keyed trumpet was also a gimmick until Josef Haydn wrote a magnificent concerto for it, for until then there was no music for it to play that it could play better than the instruments for which that music was originally written. Of course, the keyed trumpet faded into oblivion when the valved trumpet was invented, because the latter could play the music better than the keyed trumpet could. That is the risk the Moog may also run when and if it establishes itself as a musical instrument. But it hasn't even done that yet. The point is that the instrument—any instrument—is a medium, and the medium is not the music; the music is the music."

"Swing, Volume I"

● In his review of RCA's "Swing, Volume I" (February) Joel Vance pays me a compliment by calling my liner notes "thorough and enthusiastic," and then proceeds to misinterpret what I said to a degree that compels me to set the record straight.

I did not state that Bunny Berigan was "soulful because he played with burr-tone" (whatever that may be), but that he was one of the few white swing trumpeters who employed lip vibrato. This statement did not by any stretch of the imagination imply that he was lacking technical training (he wasn't) or further imply that black players were supposed to lack technique. Where Mr. Vance got these odd notions I don't know, but it certainly wasn't from my notes.

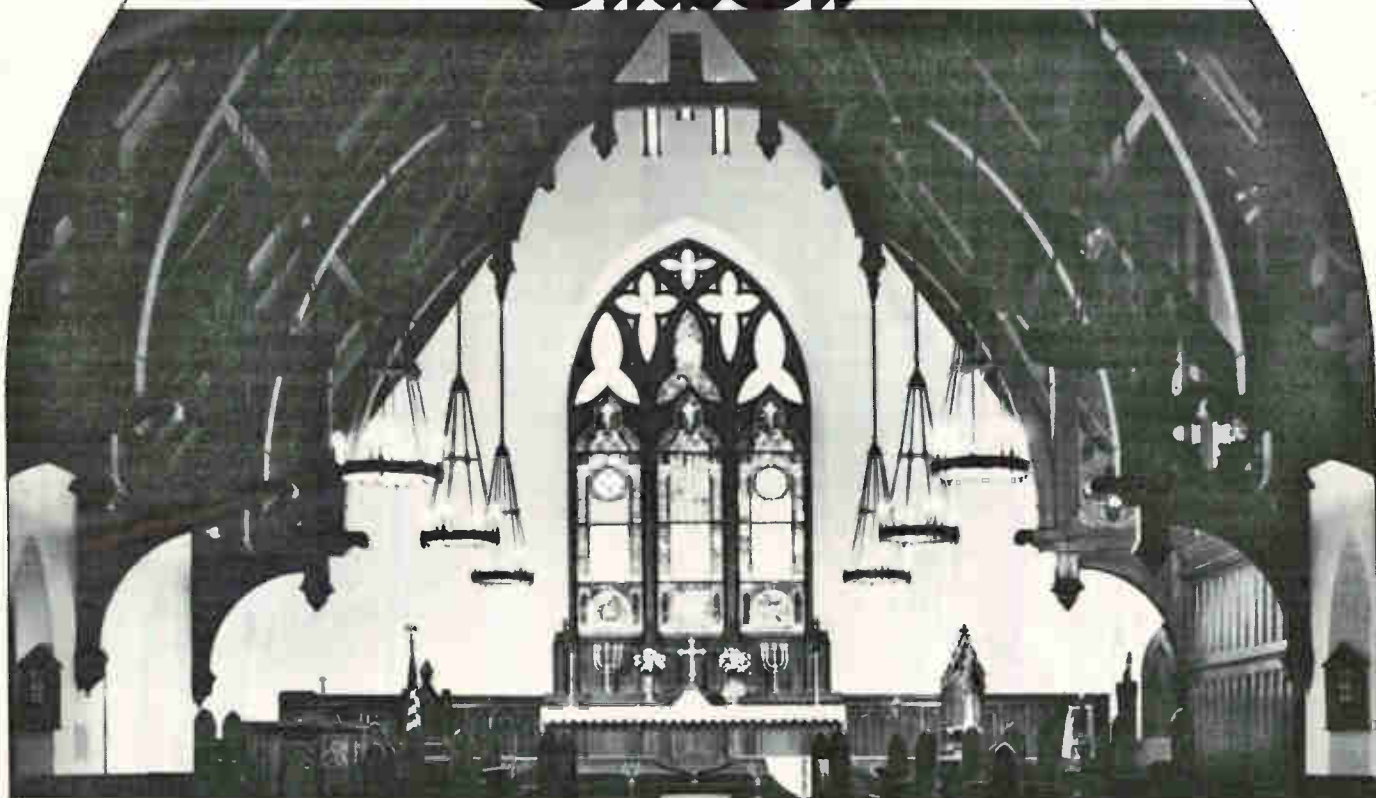
Apparently, Mr. Vance can't read, and it seems he can't listen either. Frankie Newton is not backed by Fats Waller on three cuts, but by James P. Johnson. Extrapolating from this error, Mr. Vance claims that "Fats' playing behind trumpeter Jabbo Smith a decade earlier was a lot jazzier," but on the only date Fats made with Smith, he plays pipe organ, not piano, and these are not very "jazzy" records at all.

Mr. Vance's long diatribe against Mezz Mezzrow seems out of place in a review that scarcely deals with the music on the album at all. His comment that Eddie Condon "organized the first integrated jazz recording date in 1929" is erroneous: Jelly Roll Morton recorded with the New Orleans Rhythm Kings in 1923, and there are other earlier instances. His observation that "black players in the Thirties may not have had any formal training" is arrant nonsense, and his comments about New Orleans clarinetists are pointless.

Mr. Vance concludes by calling on RCA to issue various recordings which are already available. To wit: the Condon Footwarmers sides are on the "Vintage Jack Teagarden" LP, the Bix/Hoagy Carmichael sides and some of his Goldkette things are on the "Legend of Bix Beiderbecke" album, and there are five Jelly Roll Morton LP's in the RCA catalog. (Curiously, Mr. Vance started out by commenting that there is almost too much Morton among the RCA reissues.) Furthermore, the contents of the "Swing" album in-

(Continued on page 12)

HERESY IN THE CHURCH



Most of the congregation of Holy Cross Episcopal Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, thought the Rector had just started speaking louder. At the pulpit, where there was a microphone, his voice sounded exactly the same as it did at the altar, where there was no microphone. Just louder. There was no difference in voice quality. When told that the new P.A. system was installed, some members were disappointed. It "didn't sound like a P.A. system."

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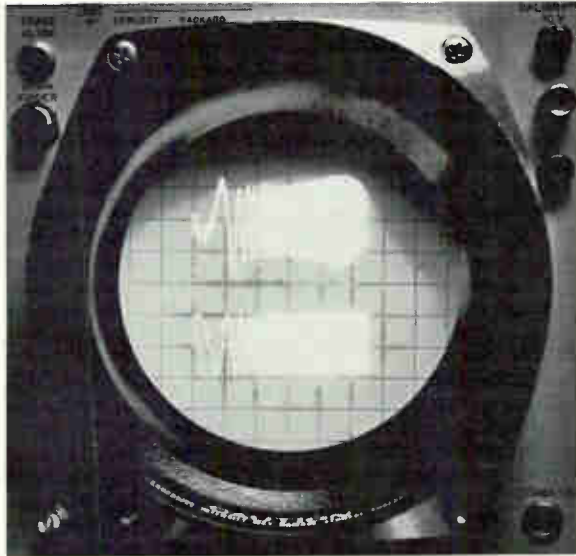
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7,500 Hz	0.2
Distortion (%)	3.0
Dropout	0
Saturation Level (dB)	+15.0
Signal to Noise Ratio (dB)	63
Erasure (dB)	69

cludes not "two others" as listed, but *three* additional tracks.

DAN MORGENSTERN, *Editor*
Down Beat
New York, N. Y.

Mr. Vance replies: "I quote from Mr. Morgenstern's liner notes: 'Unlike most white (i.e., legitimately trained) trumpeters, [Berigan] employed a lip vibrato, which added soulfulness to his lovely tone.' That is what he said, even if it is not what he meant. The inferences I drew from his statement refer to an attitude about jazz that is most certainly that of far too many critics, historians, and musicians who distort what jazz was and is. Therefore my comments about New Orleans clarinetists are not pointless, nor is my opinion of Mezzrow out of place, nor my comments on Thirties musicians arrant nonsense.

"Musicians who matured in the Thirties had the benefit of hearing the first generation of jazzmen, some of whom had legitimate training and could show a youngster some of the technical ropes or inspire by example. The wider distribution of records also influenced Thirties jazzmen who learned, in part, by ear.

"I erred on the Johnson-Newton cuts. Whether or not Waller with Smith was or wasn't 'jazzier' is a matter of opinion. And Morgenstern is correct historically about the Morton-NORK sessions, which I knew about, incidentally, but for personal reasons I consider the Condon date the first really integrated one.

"Thanks for the Footwarmer tip. The complete Bix/Hoagy sides have not been available for fifteen years, unless you can find the ten-inch 'X' (Victor) LP; the only one of them on the 'Legend' LP is Barnacle Bill. 'Too much' of Waller and Morton means that not every record they ever cut was great, very good, or even good, but RCA seems intent on issuing every side it has in the vaults. 'Two others' instead of three additional tracks on the album is a typographical error brought on, perhaps, by wishful thinking."

Short-changing Sinatra

● I haven't yet seen a correction in STEREO REVIEW regarding an important omission from Henry Pleasants' list of "every song recorded by Frank Sinatra from his first recording session in 1939 to the present" ("Frank Sinatra—A Great Vocal Artist Retires," November). It is *The Road to Mandalay*, originally recorded for the "Come Fly with Me" LP (conducted by Billy May) and later replaced by *French Foreign Legion* (Nelson Riddle) after protests from an old lady who I seem to remember was Rudyard Kipling's grand-daughter or something. This, however, didn't prevent Sinatra from performing his swinging version of the song at the now-demolished Sydney Stadium during his second tour of Australia in 1961. This song, along with *Angel Eyes* and *One for My Baby*, were for me the highlights of a truly memorable concert.

RON HERBERT
Austinmer, N.S.W.

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ters and mid-ranges are acoustically isolated from the back pressures of the woofers. The nominal impedance of all systems is 8 ohms, and power-handling capabilities range from 30 watts music power for the smallest (Model 101) to 50 watts music power for the large Model 105. All the systems have fretwork grilles, and they closely resemble the top-of-line Model 105 shown. Dimensions range from 20 x 10½ x 7½ inches to approximately 24 x 13½ x 12 inches. The prices of the intermediate models are \$89.95, \$99.95, and \$109.95.

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tape-monitoring circuits are used for the equalizer's installation), route an equalized signal to a tape machine for recording, and bypass the equalization for flat response. The frequency response of the RP10-12 is 20 to 20,480 Hz ± 0.25 dB when the controls are centered. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion are both under 0.08 per cent for a 2-volt output. Input and output impedances are 100,000 and 600 ohms, respectively, and maximum output into a typical high-impedance load is 7 volts. The Soundcraftsmen RP10-12 is supplied with a walnut-finish wood cabinet (18 x 5¼ x 11 inches overall) or with a panel for relay-rack mounting. Price: \$349.50.

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with existing material on other tracks. The recording and playback electronics for the TCA-43 are contained in two separate modules, each of which has two channels with recording-level meters and controls (separate for microphone and line inputs), concentrically mounted playback-level controls, and record-interlock pushbuttons for both. Each module also has a stereo-headphone jack and a source/tape monitoring switch.

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(Continued on page 16)



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4¾ x 7¼ inches for each electronics section. Price: \$729. The wood mounting cradle shown is \$15 extra.

Circle 117 on reader service card

Design Acoustics D-12 Speaker System



● **DESIGN ACOUSTICS**, a new company, has introduced the D-12 speaker system, which, by use of multiple drivers mounted to project in various directions, achieves close to complete omnidirectional performance. A twelve-sided (dodecahedral) vented enclosure is used, with a downward-facing 10-inch woofer, a 5-inch mid-range that faces upward, and nine 2½-inch cone tweeters—one each for nine of the enclosure's ten side-directed facets. The output of the mid-range is restricted to the frequency range of about 700 to 1,500 Hz to maintain dispersion. Frequencies below their intended operating ranges are kept from the mid-range and tweeters by capacitance crossover networks with slopes of 6 dB per octave. The woofer and tweeter outputs can both be varied 3 dB by means of jumper interconnections at a terminal strip on the enclosure's lower

rear edge. The system's nominal impedance is 8 ohms; a 50-watt continuous input of pink noise will produce a 103-dB sound-pressure level in the reverberant field of a 4,400-cubic-foot room with moderately high damping. Amplifiers capable of 100 watts continuous output per channel can be used safely; at least 20 watts per channel is advised. On the pedestal supplied, the D-12 stands 30 inches high and about 22 inches across at its widest dimension. The pentagonal grille-cloth panels can be ordered in shades of avocado, gold, orange-red, ivory, blue, and the black shown. With black panels the exposed wood surfaces are finished in walnut, including the upright of the pedestal. The models with other grille-cloth colors come with black lacquered surfaces and chrome-plated pedestal. Price: \$325.

Circle 118 on reader service card

Bib Model 42 Groove-Kleen



● **REVOX** is importing the Bib Model 42 record cleaner, a pivoted aluminum arm with brushes at the end that track the disc as it plays to remove dust. A small brush of sable bristles initially dislodges the dust particles, after which they are collected on the pile of a velvet cylinder that rides just ahead of the sable brush on its own pivoted subassembly. An adhesive base with a height adjustment and

rest for the cleaning arm secures the device to the motorboard of a turntable. An adjustable counterweight controls the downward force the brushes exert on the disc surface, and therefore the amount of drag on the turntable's rotation. The Model 42 comes packaged with a small accessory brush for cleaning dust from the velvet cylinder. Price: \$7.50.

Circle 119 on reader service card

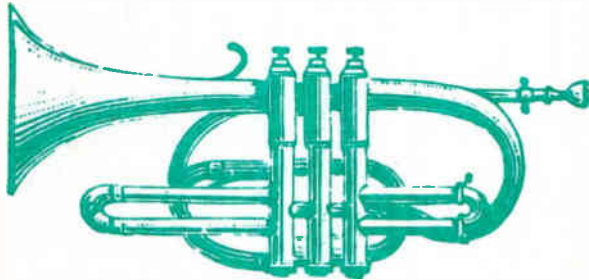
Norman Laboratories Model Five Equalizer



● **NORMAN LABORATORIES'** Model Five Acoustic Equalizer is a stereo device specifically designed to augment the low bass performance of ten of the most popular U.S.-made bookshelf speaker systems. Anechoic measurements of the systems were used to create compensation curves for response rolloff at the extreme low frequencies. This compensation, in the form of electronic bass boost, is provided by the Model Five, with the appropriate predetermined contours selected by means of a trio of three-position slide switches in the rear of the unit. The correct settings for each of the ten speakers are listed in the instruction manual. (It should be noted that these equalization settings will substantially increase demands on the amplifier's low-frequency output capability.) A front-panel rotary control permits four increments of additional bass boost to be obtained for different acoustical circumstances. There are also two simi-

lar five-position controls for the mid-range and treble frequencies; these afford an overall adjustment range of roughly ±4 dB over about two octaves of their respective frequency areas. Since the Model Five will tolerate an input of up to 10 volts at mid-frequencies before overload, it can be connected between preamplifier and amplifier as well as in the tape-monitor loop of an integrated amplifier or receiver. (The equalizer has the usual tape inputs, outputs, and monitor pushbutton to replace those used in its installation.) Distortion is under 0.1 per cent and the signal-to-noise ratio is 82 dB, both referred to a 1-volt output level. Input and output impedances are said to be compatible with any combination of associated components. The overall size of the Model Five, including a walnut-finish wood cabinet that is supplied with the unit, is 11½ x 3½ x 7¾ inches. Price: \$87.

Circle 120 on reader service card



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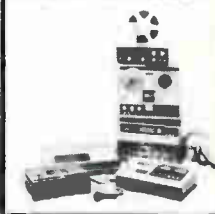
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“Many professional audio people, including our reviewer, use the AR-3a as a standard by which to judge other speaker systems.” *Electronics Illustrated*, March 1972



From the beginning, AR speaker systems have been characterized by independent reviewers as embodying the state of the art in home music reproduction.

Standard of performance

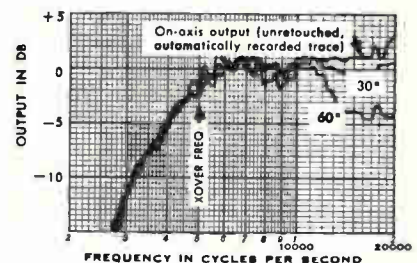
Soon after the AR-1 was introduced, as AR's first “top-of-the-line” speaker system, the *Audio League Report* stated, “We do not specifically know of any other speaker system which is comparable to [the AR-1] from the standpoint of extended low frequency

1954. The AR-1 upset many previously held notions about the size required for a speaker to be capable of reproducing the lowest audible frequencies. The ‘book-shelf’-size AR speakers set new standards for low distortion, low-frequency reproduction, and in our view have never been surpassed in this respect.”

Durability of accomplishment

AR's research program is aimed at producing the most accurate loudspeaker that the state of the art permits, without regard to size or price. *Consumer Guide* recently confirmed the effectiveness of this approach, stating that “AR is the manufacturer with the best track record in producing consistently high-quality speakers,” and summarized their feelings this way:

“The AR-3a was judged by our listening panelists to be the ultimate in performance.”



Frequency response of AR-3a tweeter: top curve measured on axis, middle and lower curves measured 30° and 60° off axis, respectively.



Frequency response of the AR-3a 12-inch woofer, radiating into a 360° solid angle (hemisphere).

The AR-3a is the best home speaker system that AR knows how to make. At a price of \$250 (in oiled walnut), the AR-3a represents what *Audio* magazine recently called “a new high standard of performance at what must be considered a bargain price.”

response, flatness of response, and most of all, low distortion.”

Seventeen years later

In a recent review of the AR-3a, published in *Stereo Review*, Hirsch-Houck Laboratories made the following observation:


“For the benefit of newcomers to the audio world, the AR-3a is the direct descendant of the AR-1, the first acoustic suspension speaker system, which AR introduced in

Please send detailed information on the AR-3a speaker system to

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SR-7

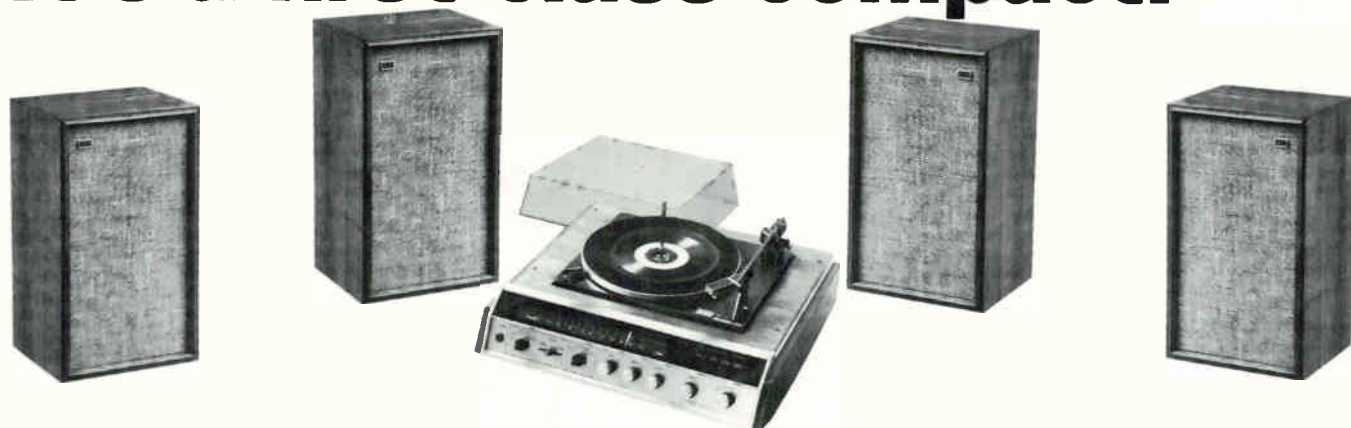


Acoustic Research, Inc.
24 Thorndike St., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02141

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The 4-channel Sansui MQ2000 is not a second-class component system.

It's a first-class compact.



Sansui has never made anything but components until now. So our engineers just couldn't break the old habit when we asked them to come up with a four-channel compact. They took the ingredients of a state-of-the-art component system and packed them into a single housing, then crowned them with an acclaimed, first-line automatic turntable and magnetic cartridge.

The MQ2000 complete four-channel music center. It's an AM/FM receiver. A decoder for all compatibly matrixed four-channel recordings and broadcasts. A four-channel synthesizer for your entire collection of conventional stereo records, as well as for regular stereo broadcasts. It can handle any discrete four-channel source, taped or otherwise, and can take any adapter for any future four-channel medium that might come along.

Total IHF music power: 74 watts. FM sensitivity: 5 microvolts IHF. Normal-level response: 30 to 30,000 Hz ± 2 db, with harmonic or IM distortion below 1% at rated output.

The automatic turntable is Perpetuum Ebner's Model 2032 with calibrated stylus-force adjustment, variable-speed control, damped cuing, anti-skating and a host of other features. The cartridge is Shure's M75-6, specially recommended for four-channel discs.

The speakers are Sansui's exciting new AS100 two-way acoustic-suspension designs. Not scaled-down performers made just to go along with a package, but full-fledged performers in their own right—regular members of Sansui's new AS speaker line. Two of them come as part of the package, because most people already have a stereo pair, but you can match up another pair of Sansui's regular line, if you wish, for a perfectly balanced system. Wait till you hear this at your franchised Sansui dealer!



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It sounds like reel-to-reel. It looks like cassette. It is. It is the new Sansui SC700.

Close your eyes and your ears tell you you're listening to a reel-to-reel deck of the highest caliber. Open your eyes and you know that cassette recording has finally made the grade.

The performance-packed, feature-packed SC700 Stereo Cassette Deck incorporates Dolby™** noise reduction, adjustable bias for either chromium dioxide or ferric oxide tapes, three-microphone mixing and specs that will make your eyes—as long as they're open—pop even wider.

Undistorted response is 40 to 16,000 Hz with chromium dioxide tape and close to that with standard ferric oxide tape. Record/playback signal-to-noise ratio is better than 56 to 58 db with Dolby in—and commendably better than 50 db even with Dolby out! Wow and flutter are below 0.12% weighted RMS.

A DC servo motor (solid-state controlled) assures rock-steady speed. The tape-selector adjusts both bias and equalization for ferric-oxide or chromium-dioxide formulations. The large, slant-panel VU meters are softly illuminated. Contourless heads keep response smooth, and a head gap *one micron* narrow brings high-frequency output right up to reel-to-reel standards.

With so much in its favor, Sansui engineers decided it deserved all the features of a first-rank open-reel deck, and more: Pause/edit control. 3-digit tape counter. Separate record/playback level controls (independent but friction-coupled). Automatic end-of-tape shut-off with full disengagement and capstan retraction . . . and much, much more.

The SC700 is practically a self-contained recording studio. Which makes it quite a bargain at \$299.95.

*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories Inc.



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If you've been waiting to try BOSE 901'S in your home, now is the time.

No, that's not a new nameplate for our BOSE 901 speakers. The 901 has no nameplate and needs none. Those are special Home Trial Demonstrators. They sound the same as the regular 901's, but they have carrying handles to make it easy for you to get them home, so you can find out for yourself how good they are.

By now you have probably heard that the BOSE 901 DIRECT/REFLECTING* Speaker System has received more acclaim, by equipment reviewers and music critics, both in the U.S. and abroad, than any other speaker, regardless of size or price*. And we've been urging, for several years now, that you ask your BOSE dealer to demonstrate the 901's in A-B comparison with the biggest and most expensive speakers he carries, regardless of their size and price. But what counts most (regardless of size or price), is how they sound in your own living room.

We believe that if you live with BOSE 901's for a week, you won't be able to give them up. We've made up these special 'Home Trial Models', so our dealers won't have to worry too much about letting you try them. The big name on the grillcloth is a not very subliminal reminder of where all that great music is coming from.

Most BOSE dealers are participating with us in this offer: Take a pair of 901's home and listen to them for a week. After that, we'll leave the rest to your own judgement.

You can hear the difference now.

*Literature and copies of the reviews are available on request. The BOSE 901 is covered by patent rights. Issued and pending.

BOSE
Natick, Massachusetts 01760

AUDIO QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

By LARRY KLEIN *Technical Editor*



FM Hiss

Q. *I have a stereo tuner and find that there is usually a hiss in the stereo mode which I suppose is generated by the multiplex circuits. There is no hiss in mono. Can one of the noise-reduction units reported on in your December 1971 issue be connected between my tuner and amplifier to reduce hiss?*

ALBERT ENG
Vacaville, Cal.

A. First of all, the hiss is probably not generated by the multiplex circuits in your tuner. From your description, it appears that there is not enough signal strength on stereo broadcasts for your tuner to be "quieted." (With a stereo broadcast, it takes more signal at the antenna terminals to achieve the same noise level heard in mono.) On the assumption that this is the case, it would make sense for you to: (1) check your tuner's sensitivity specifications to determine if they are adequate for your location; (2) check to determine if your specific tuner lives up to its specifications—it may need overhaul or alignment; and (3) determine if your antenna is adequate for your tuner and location (your dealer or the tuner's manufacturer should be able to answer these questions for you). I suspect that your investigations will lead you to the conclusion that it will make more sense to get a better tuner and/or antenna than a noise-reduction unit.

Frequency-of-Repair Records

Q. *I feel that you missed two important points in your discussion on the value of frequency-of-repair data in the March Q & A column. The speed with which a manufacturer can act to correct design faults brought to his attention is all too often not rapid enough to save a significant number of customers annoyance and expense. The second point is that there exists a brisk business in used components. Information on the reliability of these used compo-*

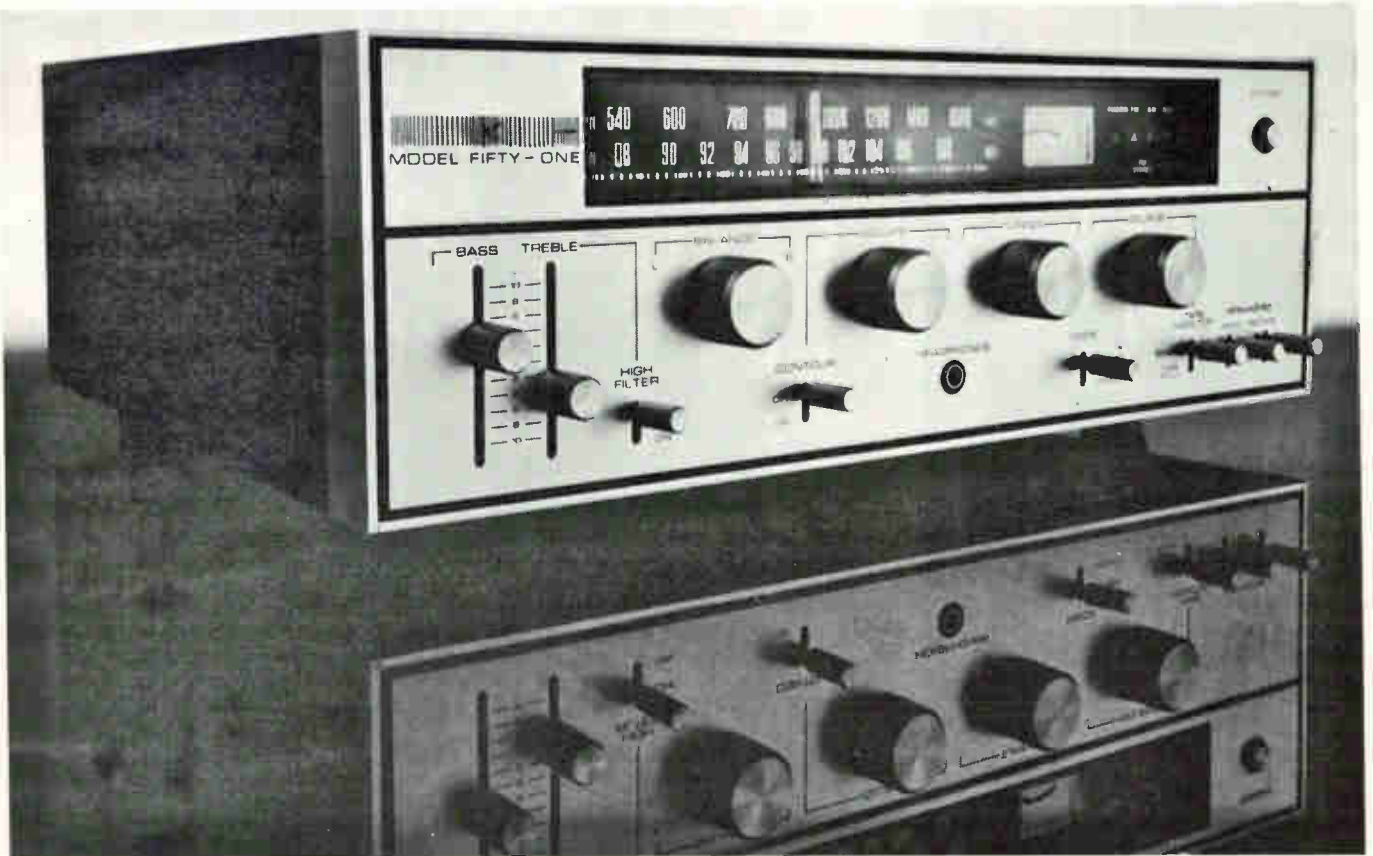
nents would be extremely helpful for a used-equipment shopper.

BARRY WINTHROP
Brooklyn, N.Y.

A. True, manufacturers frequently cannot act fast enough to prevent components with built-in design flaws from reaching the customer. But how would frequency-of-repair data help either the manufacturer or the consumer? The first persons to become aware that a problem exists are the dealers who sell the merchandise. And they have to sell a significant number of a particular model and have enough complaints come in on a specific aspect of its performance before they can be sure that the problem is indeed inherent in the model. If one out of every five units sold provokes a specific complaint, they know something's amiss. The dealers and the warranty stations will ultimately communicate their findings to the factory, which also may be getting direct returns from unhappy consumers. It may take a month or more after the product has been shipped to stores to alert the company's engineering staff that a problem exists "in the field." They then, as rapidly as possible, redesign a circuit or tighten their specifications for a part, and the new production from that time on doesn't have the problem. By the time the word that 20 per cent of the units have a built-in flaw gets through the grapevine to the small dealers, the customers, or the audio publications (none of them having handled enough samples to generalize on their experiences validly), the problem may have been eliminated.

Other factors also invalidate frequency-of-repair records as a guide to shopping for used equipment. Unlike the situation with cars, for example, where a given model may tend to drop its drive shaft after 100,000 miles, I know of no equivalent situation with audio equipment. As far as electronic components are concerned, old tube amplifiers need
(Continued on page 24)

For \$239.95* we think you deserve something more than just another stereo receiver. KLH introduces something more.



Most stereo receivers that cost between \$200 and \$250 don't sound half bad. Some even look kind of nice, if not exactly sexy. And they usually work more times than not. Perhaps they can best be described as predictably adequate.

To us, that doesn't sound too thrilling.

We figure a couple of hundred dollars or so entitles you to something more. Something like our new Model Fifty-One AM/FM Stereo Receiver. For one thing, it has big de-

pendable power; it'll drive loudspeakers that leave lesser instruments gasping. It looks more expensive than similarly priced stereo receivers. And it feels more expensive too. Each knob, switch and sliding control gives you a real sense of authority. Stations literally lock in when you turn the dial. The controls are crisp and flawless. No mushiness here. Also, both the AM and FM sections will pull in stations you didn't even know were on the dial. But most important, the Fifty-

One has the overall quality that most people expect from KLH. And you get it all for just \$239.95† (including walnut-grain enclosure).

Make sure you see and hear the Fifty-One soon. It's at your KLH dealer now. You'll recognize it immediately; it's the sexy one that sounds great.

For more information on the Model Fifty-One, write to KLH Research and Development, 30 Cross St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139. Or visit your KLH dealer.



†Suggested east coast retail price; suggested retail price in the south and in the west \$249.95
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new output and rectifier tubes, switches usually become noisy or intermittent, and electrolytic capacitors dry up. Old tape recorders will have some of the above problems plus worn heads, worn drive belts, idlers, bushings, etc. Old record players will have equivalent mechanical problems. These things happen to all brands and models.

In my view, anyone interested in used equipment will learn more from reading the original test report on the product than he could from checking a frequency-of-repair listing—if one could be compiled. True, the test lab may have tested one of the 80 per cent that worked well (to return to our earlier example), and the used unit may be one of the early 20 per cent with the uncorrected defect. But anyone who buys a used *anything* without a ten-day money-back guarantee deserves what he gets.

A Long, Long-Play Disc

Q. I recently heard about a technique that can record on a 7-inch, 33 1/3 rpm disc the amount of playing time normally found on a 12-inch disc. Do you know anything about this breakthrough?

R. SUSSKIND
New York, N.Y.

A. I suspect that the Fleetwood "Microsonic" disc that you are referring to may be something less than a "breakthrough." I recently received a press kit from them that included a sample of their first full-scale recorded effort: *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Included in the press kit was a statement that the U.S. Testing Co., Inc. had "surveyed 1,000 households known to be record purchasers, primarily in the teen and young adult markets," and that those participating judged the 7-inch sample they received "to be of the same quality as a 12-inch" with "fidelity rated A." I don't know if the record used in the sampling was the same one I found in the press kit, but what I heard was a 6-dB-per-octave rolloff starting at about 300 Hz and continuing on down to the lowest recorded frequencies. In short, the bass was severely attenuated. This came as no surprise, since it quickly answers the question of just how a 7-inch disc could provide so much playing time. Bass notes produce much wider groove swings than treble notes, and if you eliminate the bass, the grooves can be packed much more closely together; it's that simple.

Fleetwood claims to have patents pending on their "microsonic" process, and since there is nothing patentable in having no bass, there may be something more to their technique than meets the ear. But even using a graphic equalizer I was not able to get satisfactory bass. Aside from the lack of low end, the record sounded okay.

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Binghamton, N.Y. 13903

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We Call It Total Energy Response

At Jensen, our new woofers, tweeters and purring mid-range speakers are really sounding off.

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Total Energy Response gives every Jensen speaker a fuller, richer sound than ever before. It improves musical balance throughout a listening area, so your whole component system sounds better.

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D 150

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CIRCLE NO. 14 ON READER SERVICE CARD

AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES



WOW AND FLUTTER

IF A turntable makes one revolution every 0.555 second (33 $\frac{1}{3}$ revolutions per minute), its speed is accurate — that is, it is correct for playing LP records — and a recording of Chopin's "Minute Waltz" will run just as long as the original performance. But correct and accurate speed does not necessarily mean *regular* speed. Speed irregularities are usually cyclical (they follow a recurrent pattern), relatively rapid waverings that average out to what is nominally accurate speed. (Noncyclical speed variations, such as would be caused by a slipping turntable-drive mechanism, mean either that the design itself is at fault or the turntable needs servicing.) To some extent wow and flutter, the cyclical types of speed irregularity, will always be present, although they can be minimized by care in design and manufacture.

The only difference between wow and flutter is the rate at which the speed fluctuations occur — a significant distinction only because *the rate affects the way each is perceived*. Flutter is anything from a shuddering warble (low flutter rate) to a muddiness and lack of clarity in the reproduced sound (high flutter rate), and it ranges from about ten speed-fluctuation cycles per second on up. Wow, the term for slower rates of wavering, gives reproduced music an almost painful, groaning intonation. Both record players and tape machines can suffer from audible wow and flutter. Some common causes are: worn or dirty rotating parts (flutter), a deformed record-player idler wheel (wow), high internal friction in a cassette (wow and flutter), or an off-center disc hole (wow). The long, steady tones of a piano or other instrument that has no vibrato are the best detection material.

Wow and flutter measurements are made using a recorded test tone of about 3,000 Hz, a frequency at which the ear is very sensitive to changes in pitch. What is measured is the amount of deviation from the test frequency introduced by the player or recorder, expressed as a percentage of the test frequency. For example, 0.1 per cent flutter with a 3,000-Hz test tone means a cyclical deviation of 30 Hz. Straightforward as this may seem, the correlation between the numbers and the audible effects is not too well established. Audibility also depends on both the frequency of the test tone and/or program material and the rate of fluctuation, and these effects can only be determined statistically through experiments with volunteer listeners. Nevertheless, as in rumble measurements, a few "weighting" systems have emerged that try to cope with the variables. Most prominent are the DIN (German National Institute) system and the more recent IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) standard. Similar as these are, there exist differences between them that are probably the result of different hearing sensitivities of individuals. In testing, STEREO REVIEW keeps to an unweighted system of wow-and-flutter evaluation in which 0.15 per cent speed irregularity or less has usually proved audibly acceptable, with 0.2 per cent being "borderline." Unfortunately, what is "acceptable" to one individual may not be equally acceptable to all.

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CIRCLE NO. 32 ON READER SERVICE CARD



TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **TESTING STEREO HEADPHONES:** Headphones, like loudspeakers, have the task of converting electrical signals to acoustic energy. It is not surprising, therefore, that somewhat similar laboratory test and evaluation techniques are used for both. Loudspeaker response is measured in an artificial environment, either anechoic or reverberant; headphones are usually tested with a coupler (it was designed by the American National Standards Institute—ANSI, formerly ASA), which may be thought of as an artificial ear.

Just as the laboratory environment for speaker tests differs greatly from that of a normal listening room, the ANSI coupler provides a poor simulation of even a hypothetical “average” human ear, let alone that of any given individual. Primarily designed for testing and rating communications and telephone headsets, it provides reasonably valid results only from 300 to 5,000 Hz, which is far short of the range encompassed by any modern stereo headphone costing more than about \$6.

Frequency-response and distortion measurements made with some type of wide-band artificial ear can be useful for comparing headphone performance, in the same way that loudspeaker measurements can aid in the evaluating process. In both cases, they are no substitute for critical listening, since our understanding of the relationship between measurements and the subjective reaction of the human listener is sketchy at best. Unfortunately, for headphone testing we know of no technique for instantaneous comparison between headphone sound and the original program analogous to the simulated “live-vs.-recorded” technique we use for loudspeaker testing.

In the past, we have rarely presented test reports on stereo phones. Part of our reluctance, quite frankly, was caused by the difficulty of interpreting our measurements. In the absence of any reliable

reference standard or agreed-upon test technique for wide-range headphones, we felt that the evaluation would be little more than a personal listening test. However, we finally embarked on a large-scale test of some thirty headphones in the hope that we could in the process develop test techniques that would correlate with our listening comparisons to provide a relatively solid basis for our conclusions. We believe we have achieved our goal and that the test reports in the survey of representative headphones for this issue present a reasonably valid picture of the levels of stereo-headphone performance being offered today.

For acoustic measurements we used a nonstandard, home-made coupler. It consisted of a piece of 3/4-inch plywood with a calibrated microphone mounted flush with its surface. The earpiece under test was centered over the microphone, with a one-pound weight pressing it to the board. The test signal, for frequency-response measurements, came from a power amplifier driven from the swept oscillator of our General Radio response plotter; the microphone output was connected directly to the synchronized chart recorder. The toneburst response over the full audio range of each phone was examined on an oscilloscope.

We then drove each phone with a 1,000-Hz test signal until the test microphone's out-

put had 1 per cent total harmonic distortion (THD; this was usually second-harmonic) and noted the drive voltage at which this occurred. The calibrated microphone output voltage enabled us to establish the actual acoustic sound-pressure level (SPL) at the 1 per cent distortion point. In a few cases, the phone under test had a severe response irregularity at 1,000 Hz, so we used a 400-Hz signal for the distortion test. Several of the phones had more than 1 per cent THD at any level sufficient to drive our distortion analyzer, and could not be rated in this part of the test. Even in these cases, however, the

TESTED THIS MONTH

●
ADC XLM Phono Cartridge
BSR 810X Automatic Turntable
Pioneer SX-727 AM/FM Receiver

phones were not ruled out for serious high-fidelity listening, since the distortion was typically no more than 1.5 to 2 per cent up to a rather high SPL.

The sensitivity—how much audio power is required for a given SPL (we used 100 dB as a reference level)—was tested with an octave of random noise centered at 1,000 Hz, to avoid problems with narrow-band response irregularities in the headphones. The impedance of the headphones was measured by driving them from a high-impedance source and plotting the voltage across the phones on the chart recorder. Substituting precision resistors for the phones then provided calibration points on our charts.

Acoustic isolation—the degree to which a phone's ear seal excludes external noises (and, generally, prevents the headphone sound from reaching others in the room)—was measured with a "white-noise" signal from a loudspeaker directed at the artificial ear. The drop in microphone output when the earpiece was placed over it was a measure of the isolation. This was later supplemented by listening tests, in which we judged the relative *audible* effectiveness of the ear seals. Interestingly, this second test proved to be a much more satisfactory method, since the relative audibility of energy passing through the ear seals is a function of frequency, and

our measurements did not employ weighting that could have correlated with ear response.

The final test, of course, involved listening to the phones, and comparing them in pairs when this seemed advisable. One model—the Koss ESP-9—performed so outstandingly in our tests that we compared each of the others against it to estimate the practical significance of some of their response irregularities (the ESP-9 had a nearly ideal tone-burst and frequency response).

The full story of the headphone tests is presented elsewhere in this issue. Reviewing the entire program, we feel confident that the strengths and weaknesses of the various models have been fairly and accurately presented. Since all phones, like loudspeakers, have their individual imperfections, it would be foolhardy to try to apply any overall ratings of quality. As with speakers, there will be many cases where your choice will differ from ours. This is not to say that some phones are not both subjectively and objectively better than others. But when you are trying to choose among a variety of imperfections occurring in a variety of areas, taste certainly plays a part. Fortunately, if our test group is at all typical of the present offerings of headphone manufacturers, the odds are heavily in favor of your getting a satisfactory phone.

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

Audio Dynamics ADC-XLM Phono Cartridge



● THE new ADC-XLM cartridge is offered as an improved version of the ADC 10E Mk IV, which we found to be outstanding in a previous test (STEREO REVIEW, December 1971). The XLM is externally quite different, and the stylus assemblies of the two cartridges are not interchangeable. In addition to having a low-mass stylus (the "LM" stands for "low mass"), the ADC-XLM cartridge weighs significantly less than the 10E Mk IV. This gives it an additional tracking advantage when playing warped records.

Like the other ADC cartridges, the XLM uses the induced-magnet principle. Its stylus has a rated compliance of 50×10^{-6} cm per dyne. The nominal tracking force is 0.6 gram, with a useful range of 0.4 to 1 gram. The stylus tip is elliptical, with radii of 0.3 and 0.7 mil. The coils of the ADC-XLM have a low winding inductance (the electrical equivalent of mass) and, as a result, the car-

tridge's overall frequency response is relatively unaffected by differences in cable and preamplifier input capacitance. Price: \$50. A similar cartridge, the ADC-VLM (\$40), uses the identical body design, but has a less compliant stylus designed to track at forces above 1 gram.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The ADC-XLM was able to track high-velocity test records at low and middle frequencies at the same forces we used with the 10E Mk IV (0.4 and 0.6 gram, respectively). No other cartridge we have tested has matched this achievement. We used 0.6 gram throughout our other tests.

The XLM output was about 3 millivolts for a 3.54 cm/sec (centimeters per second) recorded velocity, which was slightly lower than that of the 10E Mk IV. The frequency response with the CBS STR-100 test record showed less than ± 1.5 dB variation up to 20,000 Hz, using a standard 47,000-ohm load and 235 pf (picofarads) of input capacitance. Although we had found the 10E Mk IV quite sensitive to load capacitance, the XLM was almost immune. Increasing the capacitance to 470 pf increased the output in the 6,000 to 20,000-Hz range by a decibel or less, with no effect on the overall response limits. The channel separation was better than 25 dB up to about 6,000 Hz, falling gradually to between 10 and 15

(Continued on page 32)

HIGH FIDELITY

(May 1972) on the

LAFAYETTE LR-440

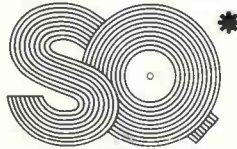
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springs to life, providing 4 separate channels of amplification and sound. And the front panel features a full complement of controls enabling you to manipulate the sound to suit your taste, and room acoustics.

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How to get 4 dimensional sound from your 2-channel stereo records, tapes, and FM stereo broadcasts? Simple. Just set the LR-440's Function switch to "Composer". A Lafayette exclusive, the "Composer" effectively derives 4 dimensional sound from conventional

stereo sources. You can recreate the true "ambience" of the original concert hall or studio—right in your own listening room! And for added versatility, the rear panel of the LR-440 features a full selection of input and output jacks.

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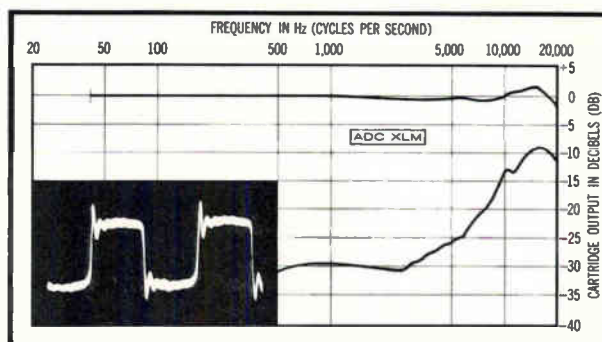
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dB in the 10,000 to 20,000-Hz octave. We used the CBS STR-120 record to measure the cartridge response to 50,000 Hz, and found that some 10 dB of separation was maintained all the way to 35,000 Hz, where the crosstalk fell below the noise level. The 1,000-Hz square-wave response showed some overshoot and about two cycles of ringing at about 20,000 Hz. The cartridge had very good shielding against induced hum.

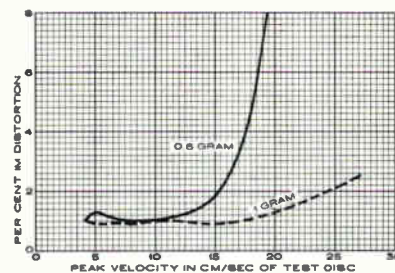
The IM distortion measurements were very similar to those we made on the 10E Mk IV. At 0.6 gram, the distortion was low (under 1.5 per cent) for 14.3 cm/sec and lower velocities; the distortion increased rapidly above 18 cm/sec. We increased the force to the allowable maximum of 1 gram, which reduced the distortion to a very low 2.5 per cent at the very high velocity of 27.1 cm/sec.

In the "trackability" test, the ADC-XLM was essentially identical to the 10E Mk IV, delivering perfect reproduction of the Shure "Audio Obstacle Course" record at 0.75 gram. At 0.6 gram, the only audible mistracking occurred on the highest level of the bass-drum band. (In these listening tests, we disregarded the high-level orchestral bells, since no cartridge we know of can track them!).

● **Comment.** The ADC-XLM is an excellent example of how an outstanding cartridge can be further refined in the important areas of reduced cartridge mass and winding inductance. This is the only cartridge we have seen that is really capable of tracking almost all stereo discs at 0.4 gram when installed in a good tone arm. (We obtained satisfactory results with the Shure SME 3012 and the Empire 980 arms; doubtless there are others also suitable for this low force.) Nevertheless, we felt more comfortable with a tracking force of about 0.7 gram, which not only gives absolute assurance that the cartridge will track any recorded velocity it is likely to encounter, but makes the



The upper curve represents the averaged frequency response of the cartridge's right and left channels. The distance (calibrated in decibels) between the two curves represents the separation between channels. The oscilloscope photograph of the cartridge's response to a 1,000-Hz square wave is an indication of a cartridge's high- and low-frequency response and resonances. Most program material on discs has velocities well below 15 cm/sec, and it only rarely reaches 25 to 30 cm/sec. Distortion figures shown are therefore not directly comparable with figures obtained on other audio components, but are useful in comparing different cartridges.



arm somewhat easier to handle. As we commented in our review of the 10E Mk IV (and it applies equally well to the XLM), this would be a very hard cartridge to surpass at any price. At \$50, it seems to be in a class by itself.

For more information, circle 105 on reader service card

BSR McDonald 810X Automatic Turntable



● **THE BSR McDonald 810X "Total Turntable"** package consists of a BSR 810 automatic turntable installed on a wooden base, fitted with a Shure M91E cartridge, and supplied with a tinted plastic dust cover. The BSR 810 turntable has a 12-inch cast-aluminum balanced platter, whose weight is specified at 7 pounds. It is driven by a synchronous induction motor, capable of operation from 100 to 130-volt or 200 to 260-volt power lines. This, plus the interchangeable motor-shaft bushings supplied to adapt the unit to either 50- or 60-Hz power sources, makes the 810 ideal for those who need a machine that will work both in the United States and overseas.

The 810 is a two-speed (33 $\frac{1}{3}$ and 45 rpm) turntable, with a rocker-type mechanical switch for speed change. Surrounding the speed-selector switch is a ring that varies

the speed approximately ± 3 per cent. A stroboscope disc forms a center insert for the ribbed rubber mat. The tone arm, which is an aluminum tube of square cross-section, is mounted on dual gimbal pivots, with four miniature ball-bearing assemblies for low friction. At the rear end of the arm there is a counterweight adjustable by a knob on its side. Once the arm is balanced using the counterweight, any tracking force from 0 to 6 grams can be dialed by turning a calibrated scale on one of the gimbal pivot rings.

The arm is relatively long—8 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches from pivot to stylus—and has a removable plastic phono-cartridge slide to simplify installation and cartridge inspection. The stylus overhang can be adjusted for minimum lateral tracking error, using a removable index post on the motor-board as a guide for positioning the cartridge. The post is then replaced by a soft brush that removes dust from the stylus each time the arm returns to the rest. The finger lift on the arm is well shaped for easy handling.

The BSR 810 has an unusually complete array of operating controls and adjustments, yet is simple to use. In either automatic or single-play operation, pressing one of three buttons (7, 10, or 12 inches) initiates the playing cycle and indexes the arm for the selected record size. A rotary knob (it looks like one of the pushbuttons) selects single-play or automatic mode. Two interchangeable spindles are supplied: a short single-play spindle that ro-

(Continued on page 34)

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They're the new Revox/Dolby B tape recorder and the Beyer DT 480 headphones. And both of them come with excellent credentials.

The Revox/Dolby B is the most recent version of the critically acclaimed Revox A77, a machine which was described by the *Stereophile* magazine as, "Unquestionably the best tape recorder we have ever tested."

Listening to tapes made on the new Revox with its built-in Dolby Noise Reduction system is a revelatory experience. Tape hiss is virtually nonexistent. The music seems to emerge from a background of velvety silence. And at 3¾ i.p.s. the absence of extraneous noise is truly startling.

As for the Beyer DT 480

headphones, they are in a class by themselves. Their superb frequency response and enormous dynamic range permit you to critically monitor and evaluate recording quality and balance. Add featherweight comfort and an ingenious "ear seal" that effectively screens out ambient noise and you begin to understand why a modified version of the DT 480 was chosen as the European Din Standard in headphones.

Together or separately, our remarkable silent partners could open your ears to recording possibilities you never knew existed.

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CIRCLE NO. 58 ON READER SERVICE CARD

tates with the turntable, and an automatic spindle that simply drops into the turntable center hole. It supports (and drops, quite gently) a stack of up to six records of the same size and speed. The automatic spindle must be lifted out to remove records from the turntable.

In the single-play mode, the 810 can also be used manually. Pressing the **MANUAL** button starts the turntable rotating, and the pickup can be lowered to the record either manually or with the cueing system. The cueing action is smooth and damped during lift as well as descent. The BSR 810 has a unique, effective automatic arm lock. A few seconds after the arm returns to its rest, it is automatically locked in place to prevent accidental damage to the stylus or a record. Moving the cueing lever disengages the lock, as does pressing one of the start buttons.

When the single-play spindle is inserted and the mode switch set to **AUTO**, the 810 will repeat a record indefinitely. The **STOP** button must be used to return the arm to its rest and shut off the motor. In automatic operation, pressing **STOP** will drop the next record (if there is one on the spindle) and return the pickup to the rest before shutting off the motor. Any record in a stack can be rejected by pressing the starting button.

The arm-indexing position is controlled by a knob on the motorboard instead of the usual screwdriver adjustment. This can be a convenience when using records having different lead-in groove widths. Anti-skating correction is applied by a calibrated knob, with separate scales for conical and elliptical styli. The BSR 810X's dimensions are 17 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches wide, 12 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches deep, and 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches high (with dust cover in place). It weighs 22 lbs.

The BSR 810 automatic turntable alone is available for \$149.50. The 810X Total Turntable package comes with a tinted plastic dust cover and is already mounted on a handsome walnut base that has a storage compartment for unused record spindles and other accessories. The Shure M91E cartridge is installed and correctly positioned. The normal retail price for these components is about \$240, but the 810X package can be purchased for less than \$190.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The turntable rotated at exact speed with the vernier control at its center setting, and the vernier adjustment range was +3, -2 per cent. Speed was unaffected by a line voltage change of 95 to 140 volts. The wow and flutter were very low—respectively 0.03 and 0.045 per cent at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm, and 0.05 and 0.04 per cent at 45 rpm. The unweighted rumble was -31 dB including both vertical and lateral components, and -36.5 dB with vertical rumble canceled out by paralleling the two cartridge channels. With the CBS RRLL weighting (which correlates with the relative audibility of different rumble frequencies), the rumble was -54 dB. It was predominantly 30 Hz, the motor-revolution rate. This low rumble is typical of other top-grade turntables, both



Most of the BSR 810X's controls and adjustments are very handily grouped along the right side of the turntable's motorboard.

single-play and automatic, that we have recently tested.

The arm tracking-force dial calibration was very close at 1 gram (the actual force was 1.05 grams), but at higher settings the true force was 10 to 12 per cent higher than indicated. There was only a 0.05-gram decrease in force (at 1 gram) when playing the top record of a six-record stack. The arm friction, as indicated by the freedom with which the arm floated when balanced, was very low.

The tracking error was less than 0.6 degree per inch of radius over the entire record, and was typically under 0.4 degree per inch. These are normal (and negligible) errors for a properly designed arm of this length. The anti-skating compensation was slightly lower than required when its dial was set to agree with the 1-gram tracking force we used. Exact compensation required a setting of 1.3 grams. This difference is so slight that it can safely be ignored.

The cueing system worked very smoothly, with negligible outward drift (less than one groove) of the pickup during descent. The change cycle required 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ seconds at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm and 10 seconds at 45 rpm—times typical of most automatic turntables.

● **Comment.** The BSR 810X, undeniably a well-constructed and attractively styled record player, was also a very easy one to operate. The controls had a smooth, positive feel and action. The Shure M91E cartridge (which we tested in July 1969) is an ideal choice for the low-friction arm of the 810 turntable, and will track any record at 1 gram. Like the 810X, the Shure cartridge ranks with the very best in overall quality. It would be difficult to match the overall performance, flexibility, and convenience of the Total Turntable package with user-assembled components, at its price. Anyone who has installed his own cartridge and made the necessary positioning adjustments will appreciate the convenience of buying a quality "ready-to-play" unit.

For more information, circle 106 on reader service card

Pioneer SX-727 AM/Stereo FM Receiver



● PIONEER's moderately priced SX-727 has a degree of operating flexibility and electrical performance previous-

ly found only in some of the most expensive receivers. The amplifiers of the SX-727 are rated at 37 watts per channel continuous into 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with less than 0.5 per cent distortion. Six other power ratings are also given in the specifications, thus enabling the shopper to make comparisons with other equipment rated by less rigid standards.

The FM tuner has a two-stage FET r.f. amplifier, complemented by IC's and ceramic filters in the i.f. section.

(Continued on page 36)

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And make every drink
with the perfect martini gin,
Seagram's Extra Dry."**



**Seagram's Extra Dry.
The Perfect Martini Gin. Perfect all ways.**

Seagram Distillers Company, New York, N.Y. 90 Proof. Distilled Dry Gin. Distilled from American Grain.



The SX-727's three pairs of speaker outputs accept the special plug-in connectors supplied with the receiver. One of these is shown in place, without the speaker leads attached.

was flat within ± 0.5 dB from 30 to 11,500 Hz; it was down 2.6 dB at 15,000 Hz. The AM tuner was unexceptional in quality, with restricted high-frequency response that was down 6 dB at 2,300 Hz.

The audio section of the SX-727 easily surpassed its ratings in every respect. The output clipped at almost 60 watts per channel (continuous) into 4 ohms, 44 watts into 8 ohms, and 25.4 watts into 16 ohms. Harmonic and intermodulation (IM) distortion were very low. HD was under 0.05 per cent at most frequencies and power levels up to 40 watts per channel into 8 ohms, and reaching a maximum of 0.2 per cent at 20,000 Hz and 40 watts output. For a 1,000-Hz test signal, the distortion was under 0.03 per cent from less than 1 watt to slightly over 40 watts (it was below the noise level at power outputs much below 1 watt). The IM distortion remained under 0.1 per cent at all power outputs from 45 watts to 15 milliwatts, and reached 0.3 per cent only at the very low minimum measurable level of 1.5 milliwatts. This indicates a virtually complete absence of "crossover distortion," which means that in this area the unit is comparable to the finest amplifiers we have tested.

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For more information, circle 107 on reader service card

On November 18, 1971, a capacity audience of three thousand people filled the Jubilee Auditorium in Edmonton, Canada to experience the music of Procol Harum live in concert with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and the Da Camera Singers. It was recorded in its

entirety. From the tapping of the baton at the opening of "Conquistador" to the cries of the seagulls in "A Salty Dog." All the dynamics and exuberance of that night, captured forever.

"Procol Harum Live in Concert with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra." On A&M Records

USE THE POWER VOTE

It took a 77-man group and Procol Harum to record this album.

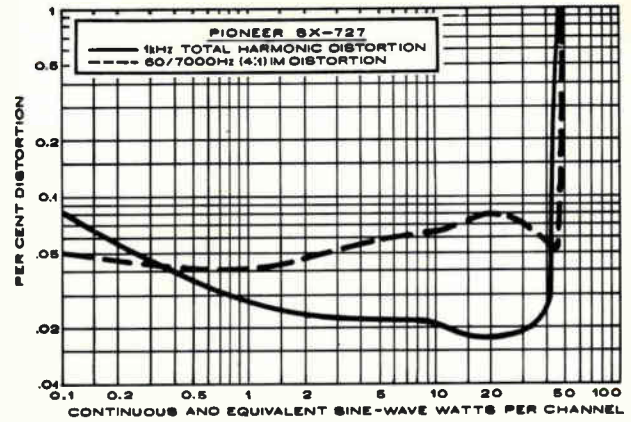
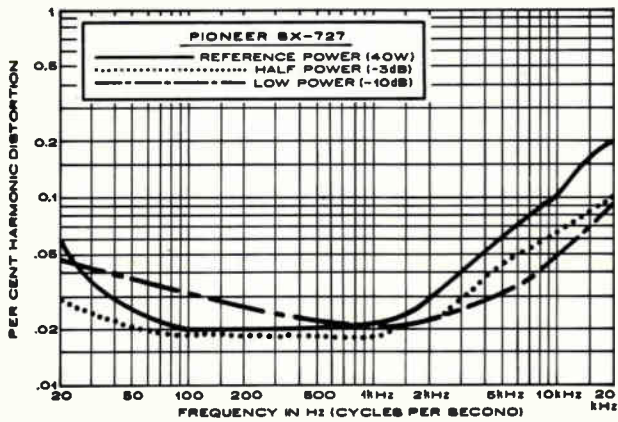
In Concert with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra

**"Our summer drink secret?
Pre-chill the glasses in the freezer.
And make every drink
with the perfect martini gin,
Seagram's Extra Dry."**



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The Perfect Martini Gin. Perfect all ways.**

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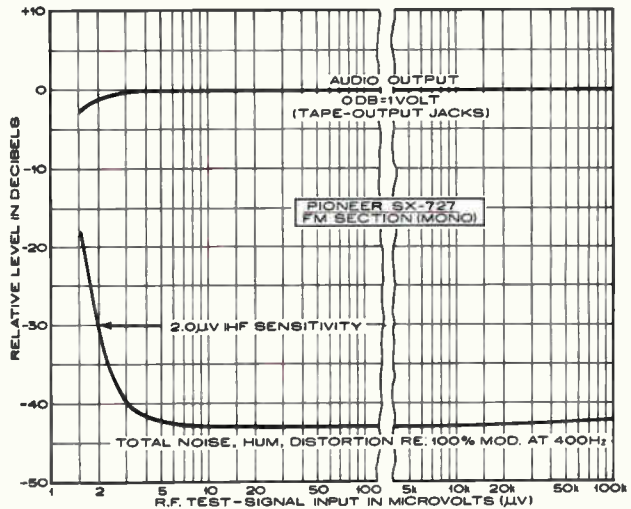


The FM tuning-dial scale has linear calibration intervals, and there are two tuning meters: zero-center for FM, and signal-strength for FM and AM.

The SX-727's array of operating features is impressive. The power switch also selects one of three pairs of speakers, or two combinations of two pairs simultaneously. Like other Pioneer receivers, the SX-727 uses convenient plugs to which the speaker wires are connected before they are plugged into the rear of the receiver. Next to the speaker selector is the phone jack, followed by the bass and treble tone controls, of which there are two each, concentrically mounted for separate adjustment of each channel. They are detented, with five positions of both boost and cut plus a center "off" position for flat response. Two pushbuttons control the low- and high-cut filters.

In the center of the control lineup is the balance control. At its right are the FM interstation-noise muting and audio-muting pushbuttons (the audio-mute button drops the volume by 20 dB for temporary listening interruptions). Next is the volume control, followed by the loudness-compensation and stereo/mono pushbuttons. Two others control tape-monitoring for two tape recorders. With these buttons one can also dub from one recorder to the other, monitoring from the playback amplifiers of the second recorder.

The input-selector knob has positions for AM, FM MONO, FM AUTO (automatic stereo/mono switching), two magnetic-phono cartridges, a microphone, and a high-level AUX source. The front-panel microphone jack accepts a single mono microphone, the signal from which is



fed into both channels. The microphone signal is present at the tape-output jacks, but there is no independent control of microphone level.

In the rear are the normal inputs and outputs, including FM and AM antenna terminals (there is also the usual pivoted AM ferrite-rod antenna) and three a.c. convenience outlets, one of which is switched. The preamplifier outputs and main amplifier inputs are brought out to separate jacks, normally joined by jumper plugs. This facility can be used to connect external electronic-crossover networks, equalizers, and similar accessories. The TAPE 1 connectors are paralleled by a DIN socket. The TAPE 2 inputs and outputs can be used for connections to and from an external quadrasonic decoder and separate stereo amplifier to convert the system to four-channel operation. The Pioneer SX-727 is supplied complete with a walnut-finish wooden cabinet. Price: \$349.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** We measured the IHF sensitivity of the SX-727's FM tuner at 2 microvolts. A 50-dB signal-to-noise ratio was achieved with only a 2.5-microvolt input, and the ultimate quieting was 74 dB (better than the rated 70 dB). These figures indicate that the Pioneer will provide more listenable stations than some other FM receivers that may have slightly better sensitivity, but without the Pioneer's very steep limiting curve. The image rejection and alternate-channel selectivity were also exceptionally good: 95 dB and 90 dB, respectively—both considerably better than Pioneer's ratings. The AM rejection was 57 dB, and the capture ratio was a good 1.6 dB. The stereo FM separation was among the best we have measured, exceeding 40 dB from 300 to 2,000 Hz; it was no lower than 19 dB at the extremes of 30 and 15,000 Hz. The FM frequency response

(Continued on page 38)



You don't get into the Smithsonian Institute on hearsay.

When we invented the stereophone, we never dreamed our invention would be mentioned in the same breath with Thomas Edison's Phonograph and Alexander Graham Bell's Telephone.

The Sound of Koss has been music to millions of ears since we invented the Stereophone. But the honor of being accepted by the Smithsonian Institution was music to our ears . . . and a little mind boggling. When your Stereophones are placed side by side with the great inventions of Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell, it's kind of hard not to come away rededicated.

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The dedication of a selection of early and contemporary Koss Stereophones into the Smithsonian's electrical science collection brought back a lot of memories. The first Stereophone, the Koss SP-3. The first (and now patented) Self-Energizing Electrostatic Stereophones. The first driver designed exclusively for Stereophones.

The world's finest Stereophones

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Our PRO-4AA—on display in the "Design is . . ." exhibit at the Smithsonian's new Renwick Gallery—offers a response 2-full octaves beyond other dynamics on the market. Our Koss ESP-9 Electrostatic Stereophone provides a distortion-free, wide-range frequency response never before possible in headphones . . . flat ± 2 db monitoring over the entire audible spectrum of 10 octaves. Our Koss ESP-6 Electrostatic Stereophone is the world's only patented self-contained, self-energized Stereophone. And our K 2 + 2 Quadrafone was the first and is the only 4-channel headphone on the market.

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Take your favorite tape or record to your Hi-Fi Dealer and hear what a difference the Sound of Koss can make. You'll hear everything you've heard before, only better. Crystal clear highs. Rich, deep bass. And

you'll hear things that you didn't even know were in your tapes or records. In fact, listening to your music thru Koss Stereophones is like getting a whole new music library.

Hearing is believing

The Sound of Koss is an institution with audiophiles. But hearsay will never do it justice. You've got to hear it to believe it. So take a record or tape to your Hi-Fi Dealer or Department Store, and hear why the Sound of Koss is worth hearing . . . from \$15.95 to \$150. Write for our 16-page color catalog, c/o Virginia Lamm, Dept. SR-172. It's the last word in Stereophones. Or visit us at the Smithsonian.



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CIRCLE NO. 34 ON READER SERVICE CARD



The SX-727's three pairs of speaker outputs accept the special plug-in connectors supplied with the receiver. One of these is shown in place, without the speaker leads attached.

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Procol Harum & Live

entirety. From the tapping of the baton at the opening of "Conquistador" to the cries of the seagulls in "A Salty Dog" All the dynamics and exuberance of that night, captured forever.

"Procol Harum Live in Concert with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra."

On A&M Records

USE THE POWER 16 VOTE

**It took a 77-man group and Procol Harum
to record this album.**



In Concert with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra



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The theory: Because cassette tape has a smaller surface and plays at a slower speed, it can't perform as well as open reel tape.

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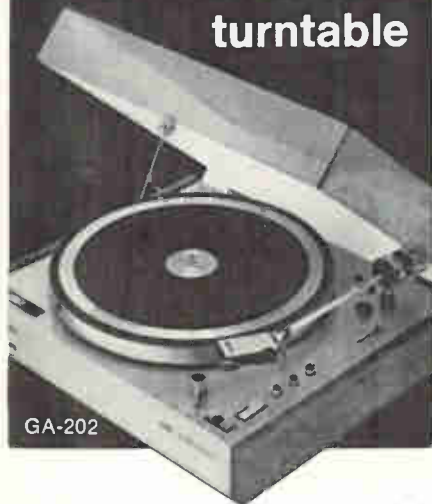
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CIRCLE NO. 44 ON READER SERVICE CARD

GOING ON RECORD

By JAMES GOODFRIEND

Music Editor



SONGS AND WALTZES

IT was certainly more than twenty years ago—how much more, I really can't remember—that the late Olin Downes, then chief music critic of the *New York Times*, urged composers and all those interested in a serious American music to make a deep and thorough study of the American popular song. How many composers followed that advice I am not prepared to say. But so far as published musicological and analytical material is concerned, nothing, until now, has come to my attention. With all the doctoral theses on musical subjects assigned and written in this country, one would think that *someone, somewhere*, would have done work in this field, and that a knowledgeable publisher would have sensed the importance of such a study and made it available to a broad public. But, except for compilations of titles and dates, leading ladies and record numbers, no such thing happened, and it has fallen to the lot of a professional composer and songwriter to take the time from his creative work to give us an investigation of the work of his colleagues.

There is something both sad and ironic too in the fact that this book comes at a time when the American popular song, as it has been known for forty or fifty years, is practically a dead art form. There are new songs today, and some fine ones among them, but they are of a different sort entirely. *White Rabbit* and *You've Got a Friend* are really no closer to *Time on My Hands* than they are to Purcell's *Bess of Bedlam*.

Alec Wilder's *American Popular Song, The Great Innovators 1900-1950*, edited and with an introduction by James T. Maher (Oxford University Press, 1972, \$15.00), is the first book I have seen that actually gets into the meat of popular song. It is a technical book in the sense that it talks about melody, harmony, and rhythm instead of offering anecdotes and biography, and Wilder is certainly not above discussing such mat-

ters in specific instances and in specifically musical terms.

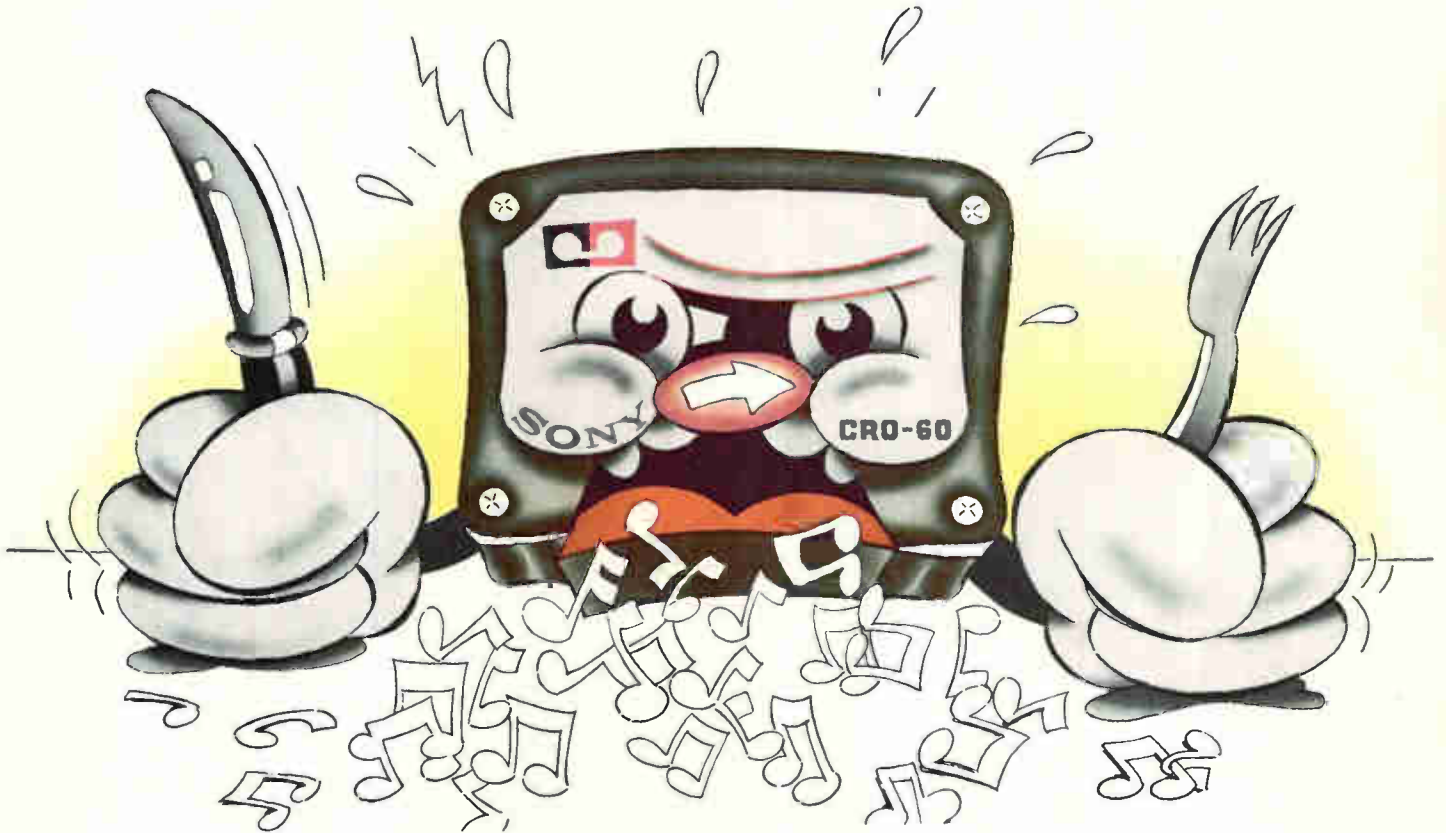
But the fact that the book is technical should not faze even the general reader. For the difference between reading an analytic criticism of *Stardust* and one of Mozart's "Prague" Symphony is not only that one knows the former cold and may not have *that* sort of familiarity with the latter, but that one can hold the whole of the first easily in one's head, can understand references to specific melodic and harmonic points through reference to the words, and, in short, can follow the analysis easily without ever having to go to the piano.

Furthermore, the reader should not get the idea that what Wilder has accomplished here is an objective *academic* exercise of the sort that tabulates intervals and counts commas. It is, rather, a personal, informal affair, with the author's biases out in the open and his enthusiasms sparkingly evident. It is also delightfully written. It is, in fact, much like spending a few hours in Wilder's company talking about popular songs, and I can think of few pleasanter ways to spend a few hours.

The book is full of intriguing observations, such as this one on Gershwin: "The constant, and characteristic, repeated note found throughout Gershwin's songs is a basic attestation of this aggressiveness. I believe that his most popular melodies contain this drive, while those I consider to be more moving, and more interesting musically, are, for the most part, his less commercially successful, more graceful, delicate melodies." And this one on Rodgers' *Blue Room*: "In it is the first instance of a Rodgers stylistic device which he continued to use throughout his career, that of returning to a series of notes, usually two, while building a design with other notes. . . . Here he keeps returning to B and A while ascending from D to E to F-sharp, to G and A."

(Continued on page 42)

Sony's new chromium dioxide cassette tape is hungrier for high frequencies.



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This means more recorded sound than standard cassette tapes before distortion sets in.

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These high-performance tape configurations take advantage of the added performance of today's highly sophisticated recorders by providing wider dynamic range, greatly improved signal-to-noise ratio, extended frequency response, and reduced tape hiss.

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Both of these comments are indicative of one of the things Mr. Wilder is trying to accomplish in this book: the defining of the *stylistic* elements that characterize the songs of the major writers. It isn't an easy task, but he has made an extraordinarily successful pioneering effort, and in so doing he has thrown new light on the *craft* of song writing, the construction of a melody through patterned repetition, as opposed to the "it came to me in a flash" description of the birth of a tune. Another of his objectives has been to set up some standards of quality in evaluating popular music. This is an even harder thing to do than the first, but again, he has given us an excellent start on it. "There are three levels of sophistication in the music of American popular songs: theater songs, film songs, and Tin Pan Alley songs, reading downward in that order." That is a good way to begin, and it is how Mr. Wilder begins. Sometimes the evaluative comments come out in colorful terms. In referring to notes in the second and third measures of Rodgers' *You Are Too Beautiful*, he writes, "In fact, though they're the hallmark of the song, those two notes are the only ones I find bearing the smell of cigar smoke." And he is completely aware of one of the peculiar pitfalls of popular music criticism. "I sometimes had to steel myself," he writes, "to maintain detachment, mistaking memories evoked by certain songs for their intrinsic quality." Wise man.

Without further belaboring the matter, let me simply say that I consider this to be a significant and delightful book, a joy to agree with and to disagree with, and above all, to learn from.

HANS FANTEL's *The Waltz Kings: Johann Strauss, Father and Son, and Their Romantic Age* (William Morrow, \$6.95), is also about popular music—but of another world. And it is not so much Fantel's object to describe that music as it is to describe that world. To say that the book is entertaining—even though it is—would be to put the wrong light on things. Rather, it is fascinating, a brooding study of two really far from happy men and their intrinsically far from joyous milieu, one that gives us, instead of the *joie de vivre* of the waltz, its *Weltschmerz* and its psychology. "It is music that is always 'in love' but never erotic," Fantel writes. "It is tender but shy, and in tune with that Catholic fear of women that, in its happier manifestations, changes lust to adoration. In the embrace of the waltz which is not an embrace, the Victorian dualism of body and spirit is both affirmed and resolved. . . ."

Fantel's book is as personal as Wilder's, and unlike it in every other respect save that of the richness of its many flavors. It is another book to be devoured. *Bon appétit!*

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STEREO REVIEW

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Still the favorite of the purist who insists upon a full-size professional turntable.

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From years of listening, these record lovers know that on a Dual, any Dual, records are preserved indefinitely and continue to sound as good as new no matter how often played. Yet over the years, they have purchased more "high-end" Duals than any other model. Readers of this magazine, for example, have purchased more 1219's than any other turntable at any price. That is quite a tribute for a turntable that sells for \$185.00.

The reasons for the 1219's continued popularity vary from purist to purist. To many, it's the tonearm, centered and balanced within the two concentric rings of a gyroscopic gimbal. With horizontal bearing friction less than fifteen thousandths of a gram. When a cartridge actually arrives that can track at a quarter of a gram, this tonearm will do it full justice.


To others, the 1219's platter is important. It's a full-size 12 inches in diameter, cast in one piece non-magnetic zinc alloy,

and individually dynamically balanced. To drive this massive seven pound platter, there is a powerful continuous-pole motor that brings it up to full speed in less than half a revolution. Then the motor's synchronous element takes over to hold speed at absolute constancy.

We find that most people interested in a turntable of the 1219's caliber use it primarily in its single-play mode. So the tonearm was specifically engineered to perform precisely as a manual tonearm: parallel to the record instead of tilting down. This is accomplished by the Mode Selector which lowers the entire tonearm base for the single-play mode. And raises it for the multiple-play mode.

To the purist, all of the 1219's many precision features are important. But in the end he buys this Dual for the same reason a non-purist buys it. For its uncompromised performance and absolute reliability.

If you'd like to know what the independent test labs say about the 1219, we'll send you complete reprints of their reports. Plus a reprint of an article from this magazine that tells you what to look for in record playing equipment.

Better yet, just pay a visit to your franchised United Audio dealer and ask him for a demonstration. 



United Audio Products, Inc., 120 So. Columbus Ave., Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10553

Exclusive U.S. Distribution Agency for Dual.

CIRCLE NO. 18 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Scriabin's Poem of Ecstasy

ALEXANDER SCRIBIN's friend and fellow musician Leonid Sabaniev has reported that Scriabin once remarked to him: "To be regarded merely as a musician would be the worst fate that could befall me. . . . It would be terrible to remain nothing more than a composer of sonatas and symphonies." To Scriabin, the music he composed represented merely the outward artistic expression of the paramount truths of his existence: his religious and philosophic beliefs.

But this personal credo was, to a considerable extent, confused and confusing. From Nietzsche he took such aspects of the *Übermensch* (Superman) concept as glorification of the ego; from Karl Marx he learned about the theory of socialism and embraced certain of its principles, though in his own life he expected complete leisure for his dreaming, made possible by constant financial patronage; and from the mystical religions of the Orient he developed his fanciful notion of building a temple in India to be dedicated to ultimate beauty, in which the arts would be united on an exalted plane of unbridled sensuous expression. His highly chromatic harmonies were means to this end, and his *Poem of Ecstasy*, *Divine Poem*, and *Prometheus* are musical mosaics that call for "corresponding" colors and perfumes to be utilized in their performance if the audience is to receive the full sensuous impact of their message.

In 1903, when Scriabin was thirty-one, he resigned from the faculty of the Moscow Conservatory in order to devote himself to creative work. In the dozen remaining years of his life he managed to combine composition and performance, and to live the life of a man of unusual creative talents. In 1906 he toured America, giving recitals in New York, Chicago, and Detroit; in the summers of 1910 and 1911 he traveled up and down the Volga River as soloist with an orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky; and in the spring of 1914 he paid a visit to England.

The *Poem of Ecstasy*, according to the British Scriabin expert Eaglefield Hull, was begun in 1905 at a villa near Genoa, Italy, where the composer had secluded himself with Tatiana Schloezer, the companion for whom he had recently left his wife. He completed the score in Switzerland in 1907. The two themes of the prologue have been labeled

"Striving after the Ideal" and "Awakening of the Soul." The first subject of the sonata-form middle section has been seen as symbolic of the soaring flight of the spirit; the next one apparently typifies "Human Love," and the following one summons the Will to rise. The other themes return at the end, and the work ends in a blaze of orchestral color. Hull has written:

The basic idea of this, the fourth chief orchestral work of Scriabin, is the Ecstasy of untrammelled action, the Joy in Creative Activity. . . . We have then in this imposing symphonic creation a piece of wonderful beauty, full of rich themes, well developed and combined, with masterly counterpoint and modern harmony of a hue of which the like has not been heard before. It is musically logical, full of contrast, design and color. At times the texture is quite simple; at other moments of great complexity. Altogether it is a work of great originality and high poesy.

WITH the extraordinary revival of interest in the music of Scriabin in recent years, the *Poem of Ecstasy* has come in for its share of new recorded performances: four of the half-dozen currently available recordings are products of the recent past—those conducted by Claudio Abbado (DGG 2530 137), Donald Johanos (Candide 31039), Zubin Mehta (London 6552), and Eugene Ormandy (RCA LSC 3214). A fifth version, Yevgeny Svetlanov's (Melodiya/Angel S 40019), is not much older. But it is the earliest of all the recordings currently listed that finds the greatest favor with me—Leopold Stokowski's (Everest 3032). Like none of his competitors, Stokowski is able to delineate the languorous passion of the music at the same time that he successfully conceals the seams of its structure. In other hands, the score tends to sound unbearably episodic, but Stokowski unifies it in a thoroughly convincing manner. The recording, a product of the late 1950's, is not the last word in sonics, but it is full and well-balanced, and the Houston Symphony plays very well. Those for whom nothing less than the ultimate in reproduction will suffice are directed to the Abbado recording—a good performance in its own right, but lacking Stokowski's conviction.

Reel-to-reel tape fanciers have only one version available: Mehta's (London L 80202). This, too, is a well-realized account of the score, but without the special Stokowski magic.

I Wonder Why

Love O' Mike

Jerome Kern

NESTING TIME

COMSTOCK ELLIOTT CO.

THE NEW MUSICAL COMEDY

OH BOY!

IVY SUTHERLAND and BO WOODHOUSE

BY JEROME KERN

THE CHOIRBOYS ARE CALLING

Leave it to Jane

JANE WOLFE

BY JEROME KERN

WHIP-DOOR-WILL

MARILYNN MILLER and LEON ERROL

SALLY

KA-LU-A

GOOD MORNING DEARIE

ANNE CALDWELL

JEROME KERN



ONE LOVE MEY

MARILYN MILLER

SUNNY

BY JEROME KERN

OL' MAN RIVER

TURNING THE WHEEL

SHOW BOAT

BY JEROME KERN

WHY WAS I BORN

Sweet Adeline

THE NIGHT WAS MADE FOR LOVE

THE CAT AND THE FIDDLE

JEROME KERN

OTTO HARBACH

THE SONG IS YOU

PEGGY FEARS

music in the air

OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN 2ND

JEROME KERN

THE TOUCH OF YOUR HAND

ROBERTA

JEROME KERN

OTTO HARBACH

ALL THROUGH THE DAY

Centennial Summer

TECHNICOLOR

JEROME KERN

JEROME KERN

The Franz Schubert of the American musical theater

By ALFRED SIMON



ONCE UPON a time there was a certain hack conductor of Broadway musicals of whom it was said, "He hates *all* music—even Jerome Kern's." What a condemnation! For how can anyone with the least interest in the American musical theater *hate* the music of Jerome Kern? Some may prefer the vitality, the humor, the harmonic and rhythmic surprises of Gershwin. Some may lean toward the elegance, wit, and sophistication of Porter. And some may argue for the merits of the Rodgers that went with Hart or with Hammerstein. But Kern was where it all began, the first master songwriter of the American musical theater. If you find it hard to believe that *They Didn't Believe Me* was written in 1914, so do I, so did George Gershwin, so does everybody. In its purely American quality, its total divorce from both operetta and music hall traditions, its informality, its sophistication, its style, it could have been written up to thirty years later. But it *had* to have been written by Jerome Kern, for it bears his personal stamp.

Just what is it that makes a Kern song so endearing, so very special and personal? A question like that seems almost impossible to answer, yet the composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim handled it, I think, quite well:

A Kern song is almost always recognizable, even to the untrained ear. It has a "feel," a "sound" that is distinct and unique. The melody has an enduring freshness. The harmony is usually simple and not very inventive or eventful, yet graceful and clear and full of air. The melodic rhythm is perhaps the strongest point—a direct and simple motif developed through tiny variations into a long and never boring line. There are few syncopations in a Kern melody, and when they occur, they are of the most elemental sort. And yet a Kern line is seldom dull. Each phrase grows out of the preceding one. Kern knew the technique of small-form composition so well that, like any trained composer, he was able to utilize it unconsciously. All of his best songs have that economy indigenous to the best art: the maximum development of the minimum of material.

Jerome David Kern was born on January 27 (Mozart's birthday, incidentally), 1885, in New York on East 56th Street, between First Avenue and what is now Sutton Place. Perhaps unlike most

of his peers, Kern was raised in a family atmosphere in which music played an important part. His mother, a proficient pianist, gave Jerome and his two brothers their first lessons, and we can guess that many happy evenings were spent in the parlor of their private house, with four Kerns at two pianos, playing music for eight hands.

We can also guess that virtually all the music they played was European in origin. Mrs. Kern, who was of Bohemian descent, introduced the younger members of the family to some of the folk songs of the old country, which her composer son later used to delightful advantage. One example is *Pick Yourself Up*, first heard in the Astaire-Rogers film *Swing Time*. It is derived from the same folk air that Smetana used in a piece called *The Merry Chicken Yard*, and it also served Jaromir Weinberger handsomely for his Polka in *Schwanda*. Another Bohemian melody was adapted by Kern for Cap'n Andy's entrance march in *Show Boat*.

Kern began musical studies of a more formal nature only after graduation from high school. His teachers, some associated with the New York College of Music (and all, at that time, quite distinguished musicians), included Alexander Lambert, Paolo Gallico, and Albert von Doenhoff. But at this point a small crisis developed in Kern's musical career. His father, like so many middle-class parents in those days distrustful of music as a profession, insisted that his son go into Papa's merchandising business, and gave him a job in the family furniture store. Jerome, like so many middle-class sons in those days, obeyed. One of his first assignments was to arrange for the purchase of two pianos for the store, but the younger Kern, through some slight misunderstanding, ended up buying two *hundred* pianos instead. And that was the end of Jerome's whirl at business life. Mr. Kern allowed his son to enroll at the New York College of Music (where he studied piano and harmony for about a year) and even somehow managed to dispose of the two hundred pianos at a profit.

Kern's first real—that is to say, musical—job was that of general assistant at the T. B. Harms Com-



At the old New York College of Music, the young, bespectacled Kern studied piano and harmony, basics for composition.

pany, the leading publisher of theater music, which later became the life-long publisher of all Kern's music. During his apprentice period, Kern served for a time as pianist in R. H. Macy's sheet-music department, where he demonstrated the latest hits. It was good, practical experience, certainly. But the most valuable and important work he had in those days was assisting as rehearsal pianist for new musicals whose songs were to be published by T. B. Harms. The then budding composer saw to it that his own tunes were heard by theatrical producers and music directors at opportune times during the rehearsal breaks.

Many of the Broadway shows in the early years of the century were middle-European operettas in which additional music, with a bit more American flavor, could be and was interpolated. And not only was Kern, as rehearsal pianist, in the right place at the right time, he was, because of his musical background and enthusiasm, the ideal talent for such assignments. Consequently, such Viennese delights as Leo Fall's *The Dollar Princess* and Oscar Straus' *A Waltz Dream* and such British imports as *Mr. Wix of Wickham*, *Fascinating Flora*, and *Fluffy Ruffles* included Kern songs here and there when they reached Broadway. Generally, these songs had no particular distinction, being mainly comedy and production numbers to speed up the action. Nevertheless, one of them, *How'd You Like to Spoon with Me*, added to *The Earl and the Girl* (1905), became more popular than any of the Ivan Caryll songs in the original score. Kern himself had a special fondness for this lilting number for many years.

While Kern had been gradually developing his own style before 1914, it was not until that year that the first of his truly distinctive and outstanding songs appeared. This was *They Didn't Believe Me*, composed for *The Girl from Utah*, an English musical despite its title. Among those who were particu-

larly impressed by this tenderly beautiful and yet oddly original song was the then fifteen-year-old George Gershwin. Many years later he recalled: "Kern was the first composer who made me conscious that most popular music was of inferior quality, and that musical-comedy music was made of better material. I followed Kern's work and studied each song that he composed. I paid him the tribute of frank imitation, and many things I wrote at this period sounded as though Kern had written them himself." And, indeed, there is no doubting that influence in several early Gershwin songs, notably *I Was So Young, You Were So Beautiful*.

By the middle of the 1910-1920 decade, the vogue for European musicals was beginning to dwindle, thus perceptibly broadening Kern's opportunities. Among the shows that replaced the imports in the public's affections was a series of intimate musicals known as the "Princess Theatre Shows." Many of these had much more distinction and charm than what Broadway had been accus-

HOW KERN DOES IT

A CLOSE look at *They Didn't Believe Me* might give the reader some idea of Kern's composing style, some of the touches that are, if not uniquely his, still typical of his work. There are a few harmonic novelties in the song, but what is more interesting is the way the overall melodic line is constructed. The chorus begins with four rising notes ("And when I told . . ."), but when that musical and lyrical idea returns, in the middle of the song, the sequence of four notes begins an octave higher and descends instead of ascending ("And when I tell . . ."). Following that, where one expects a reprise of the line, "They didn't believe me . . .," the music takes another course entirely ("That I'm the man whose . . ."), and then, four measures after one had expected it, when one now expects something different, Kern brings back the line ("They'll never believe me . . ."), and adds to it, to finish, a slight modification of the melody that originally set "Your lips, your eyes . . ." ("That from this great big world . . ."). What has been accomplished is an exquisite blending of the new and the familiar, the latter always presented in an unexpected but still perfectly natural way.

Another good example is *The Last Time I Saw Paris*, whose poignant quality depends very much on the harmonic dissonance on the word "last," a dissonance which is resolved when the melody moves down a note to the word "time" over the same harmony. In typical Kern fashion, however, that same little one-note movement is used again later, the dissonance being resolved this time by the melody's moving up rather than down (from "dodged" to "the").

—James Goodfriend

tomed to seeing—perhaps because Kern wrote the music for most of them. His ability to come up with one delightfully fresh score after another, moreover, was almost staggering. Take the year 1917, for example. January 11 marked the Broadway opening of his *Have a Heart*, and just four nights later, on January 15, another complete Kern score, *Love o' Mike*, had its premiere. There followed a period of inactivity—five whole weeks without a single Kern opening!—but then, on February 20, came the greatest of his hits, *Oh, Boy!*, which ran for well over a year, quite remarkable in that era. (*Till the Clouds Roll By* was the favorite song from *Oh, Boy!*, and remained so much a standard over the years that it became the title of the film biography of Kern made about thirty years later.)

Next on the composer's 1917 agenda was *Leave It to Jane*, which had a comparatively modest run then, but an off-Broadway revival in 1959 made it the longest-running Kern show in New York history. The melodious score was something of a revelation to modern audiences not lucky enough to have been around 'way back when the lazily swaying *Sirens' Song* was just one of many Kern numbers regularly sung and hummed around parlor pianos across the country. Later in 1917 came a very lavish revue called *Miss 1917*, with music by both Kern and Victor Herbert. The cast was so top-heavy with expensive "names" that the producers decided to economize, and they did so by paying the rehearsal pianist, a young man named George Gershwin, only \$35 a week.

Kern's composing pace slackened a bit during the last years of the decade, but somehow it made little difference in the number of distinctive songs he turned out. For instance, buried in the score of the 1918 hit *Oh, Lady! Lady!!* (and dropped from the show before opening night) was a song called *Bill* which, slightly revised, turned up nine years later as

a highlight of *Show Boat*. In fact, however, most of the more durable of Kern's songs were written from about 1920 onward. For instance, in *Sally* (1920) Marilyn Miller introduced *Look for the Silver Lining*, *Whip-Poor-Will*, and *Wild Rose*. The first of these is quite generally known, and the other two, though perhaps familiar mostly to show-tune fanciers, remain hardy tunes nonetheless.

The following year, Kern, responding easily and flexibly to the early-Twenties craze for Hawaiian melodies, wrote *Ka-lu-a*. And though he was not as adept at writing rhythm numbers as ballads in the romantic vein, he was once again in step with the faster-paced fashion with a song from *Stepping Stones* called *Raggedy Ann* which, like *Ka-lu-a*, found great popular acceptance with the fox-trot crowd. The true gem of *Stepping Stones*, however, is the ballad *Once in a Blue Moon* which, in its simple purity, could easily have been one more adaptation from a Bohemian theme—except that its opening strain closely resembles an old *American* folk song, *Go Tell Aunt Rhody*. Even though these songs enjoyed temporary popularity, it wasn't until 1925 that another lasting hit by Kern appeared. This was *Who?*, from the 1925 hit *Sunny*, one of his few livelier up-tempo songs to become a standard.

By the mid-Twenties, Kern was becoming increasingly impatient with the conventional musicals and their predictable formulas. Years before, he had said: "It is my opinion that the musical numbers should carry the action of the play, and should be representative of the personalities of the characters who sing them. Songs must be suited to the action and mood of the play." Sometimes, especially in the Princess Theatre shows, he had worked with dramatic material that lived up to his hopes; more often, he was saddled with mediocre books. But it was not until 1926 that the perfect opportunity for the implementation of his ideas came along. That op-

Kern worked with some of the best and the most prestigious lyricists in the business. From left to right, he is seen with Oscar Hammerstein II (Show Boat, Sweet Adeline), with Dorothy Fields (Swing Time), and with Ira Gershwin (Cover Girl).



Brown Brothers



Jablonski Collection



Wide World



KANDER ON KERN

The creator of *Cabaret* pays tribute to an illustrious predecessor

THE first tune I can remember ever plunking out (with one finger) on our shiny, black Mason and Hamlin is *Ol' Man River*. I was about five years old, I think, and ever since then I've been a Jerome Kern addict. Of all my heroes rising out of our musical theater, Kern is by far the most appealing. It's hard to explain why one is attracted by a particular composer's style, but with Kern it's simple. Melody. Incredible, elegant melody that seemed to pour out of him endlessly and effortlessly. And how profligate he was with those melodies, and how abundantly they populate his scores! In *Show Boat* the underscoring by itself is rich enough and inventive enough for the whole of another musical.

A Kern melody, like a Schubert melody, has an adventurousness and, at the same time, an inevitability that make it stick in the memory at first hearing. But *Yesterdays*, from *Roberta*, so simple to remember and to sing, is really quite complicated harmonically. And any pianist knows how easy it is to get lost following the twisted chromatic path of *All the Things You Are*, while it all seems so natural for the listener. Part of this "naturalness," I think, comes from the fact that Kern is very much a "first line" composer. "You are the promised kiss of springtime," "Don't ever leave me," "Fish gotta swim, birds gotta fly"—the settings of all those first lines (and you can play this game for hours) strongly outline the musical direction of the song, tell us where we're going, make us comfortable, and set up our expectations. And then how totally Kern fulfills those expectations!

But it's silly for me to try to explain why his melodies work so satisfactorily. No one is really able to do that. Kern was simply endowed with a wonderfully rich creative gift that communicated beauty to many, many people. He's my favorite. And when I grow up I want to be just like him. —John Kander

portunity was, of course, *Show Boat*. Edna Ferber's richly drawn novel of life on the Mississippi, at the Chicago World's Fair, and other colorful locales in the late nineteenth century was almost made for Kern's music. And with the sensitive and gifted Oscar Hammerstein II as his ideal collaborator for the book and lyrics, the result was by far the most artistically successful creation of the American musical theater up to that time.

The score includes at least five of Kern's best-loved songs (*Ol' Man River*, *Make Believe*, *Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man*, *Why Do I Love You?*, and the previously mentioned *Bill*), plus comedy and production numbers, choral music, and a wealth of fine incidental music—by turns lyrical, joyous, and brooding—to underscore the dramatic action. Initially skeptical at the prospect of turning *Show Boat* into a musical, Edna Ferber was completely won over when she heard how Kern and Hammerstein had caught the spirit of her novel. In 1939 she wrote:

As the writing of the play proceeded . . . I heard bits and pieces of the score. . . . I had heard *Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man* with its love-bemused lyric. I had melted under the bewitching strains of *Make Believe* and *Why Do I Love You?* and Gaylord Ravenal's insolent and careless gambler's song [*Till Good Luck Comes My Way*]. And then Jerome Kern appeared at my apartment late one afternoon with a strange look of exaltation in his eyes. He sat down at the piano. He doesn't play the piano particularly well and his singing voice, though true, is negligible. He played and sang *Ol' Man River*. The music mounted, and I give you my word, my hair stood on end, the tears came into my eyes, and I breathed like a heroine in a melodrama. This was great music. This was music that would outlive Jerome Kern's day and mine. I have never heard it since without that emotional surge.

Encouraged by the enormous success of *Show Boat*, Kern and Hammerstein wrote another period piece, *Sweet Adeline*, whose locales included (among others) Hoboken and Cuba at the turn of the century. The show, far more leisurely in character than *Show Boat*, was nevertheless a charming vehicle for Helen Morgan, who had already made such a sensational splash with *Show Boat*. The score contained many songs to suit her typically wistful singing style, including *Why Was I Born?*, *Don't Ever Leave Me*, and *Here Am I*. (Miss Morgan can be heard singing two songs from *Show Boat* and one from *Sweet Adeline* on RCA's Vintage Series album LPV-561.) *Sweet Adeline* was warmly received by the critics, but it wasn't able to withstand the chilling effect of the 1929 Wall Street crash, which occurred less than two months after the opening. It deserved a better fate, but it lasted only six months.



Oliver

In the original cast of *Show Boat*, produced by Florenz Ziegfeld in 1927, were (left) Norma Terris and Howard Marsh as Magnolia and Ravenal, and (right) Helen Morgan as Julie. The *Captain Andy* in the production was Charles Winninger.



Brown Brothers



Memory Shop

The third motion-picture version of *Show Boat* (produced by MGM and sometimes to be seen on late television these days) featured Kathryn Grayson, Howard Keel, and Ava Gardner, with Agnes Moorhead, Joe E. Brown, and Robert Sterling.

Two years later, in 1931, came *The Cat and the Fiddle*. The Otto Harbach libretto, set in Brussels, had to do with the conflict between a young Rumanian composer of serious music and an American girl who wrote popular songs. Once again, Kern made the most of an original dramatic situation. Not as immediately endearing as *Show Boat* or *Sweet Adeline*, the score did have such attractive numbers as *The Night Was Made for Love*, *She Didn't Say Yes*, *Try to Forget*, and the particularly lovely *Poor*

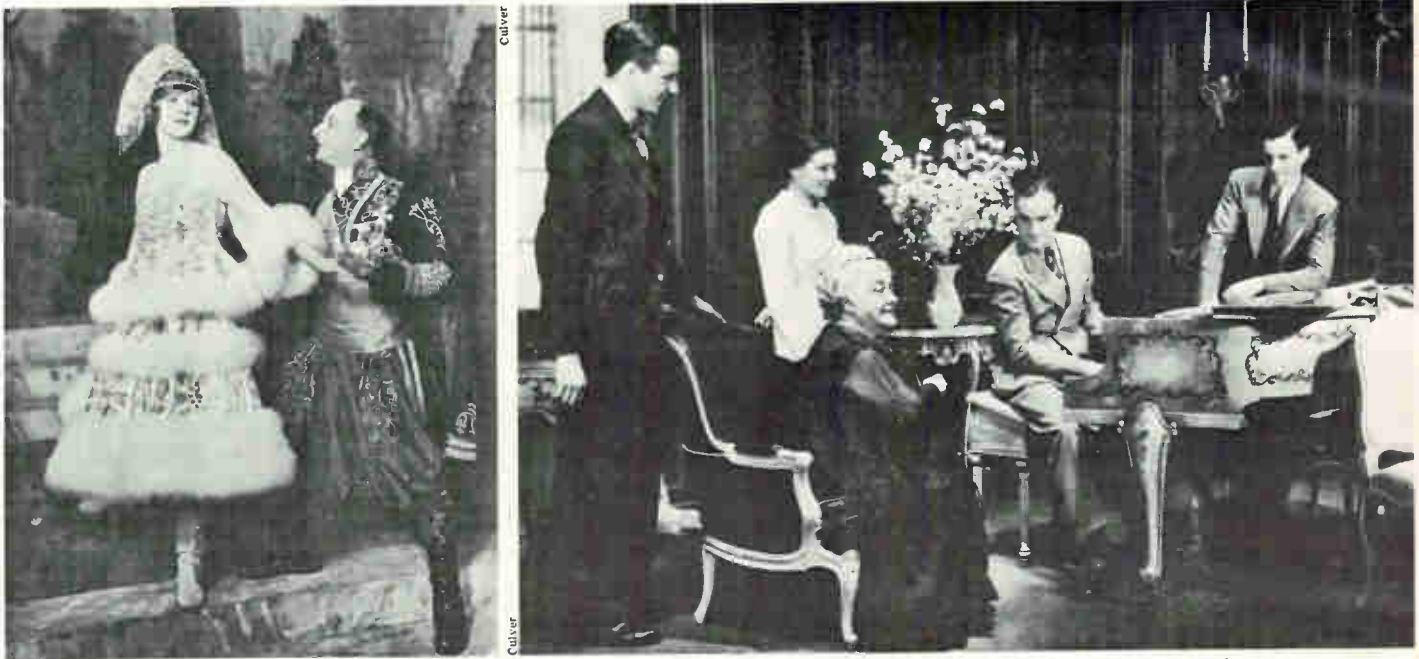
Pierrot, which is closer to an art song than it is to a typical show tune. In addition, there was much inventive and atmospheric background music which went several steps beyond *Show Boat* in sophistication. A highlight, for example, was an amusing two-piano fugue in which the hero and heroine battled musically. Altogether, *The Cat and the Fiddle* was one of the most arresting scores ever written for the Broadway theater—a fact that is heavily underlined by the Robert Russell Bennett orchestrations.

The following year, Kern returned to Broadway with his (and Oscar Hammerstein's) *Music in the Air*. A lovely, mellow show with a superbly melodious score to match, it combined, in a way, the nostalgic appeal of *Sweet Adeline* with the more urban feeling of *The Cat and the Fiddle*. The story of a pair of naïve youngsters who travel from their Bavarian village to sell a song to a music publisher in Munich, it provided ample material for both Kern and Hammerstein to develop the contrast between bucolic serenity and metropolitan bustle. Those too



Oliver

Edna Ferber on *Show Boat*: "... music that would outlive Jerome Kern's day and mine."



Marilyn Miller in *Sally* (1920) was as beautiful as they say she was; Leon Errol played opposite her. On stage, Roberta featured Bob Hope (at the piano), ex-Senator George Murphy (behind it), Ray Middleton, Tamara, and Fay Templeton.

young to remember the show may immediately wonder what the tender little song was that the youngsters were trying to peddle. It was, of course, *I've Told Every Little Star*, another of Kern's typically folk-style melodies. The finest number in the score, however, and perhaps the finest Kern had composed up to this point, was *The Song Is You*. This song would lend itself to the most intricate and lengthy kind of exposition, but suffice it to say here that the transition from the middle strain back to the original theme is one of the most deftly constructed, harmonically adventurous, and musically exciting effects ever heard in a theater song.

Kern reverted to a much more conventional formula for his next show, *Roberta*, in 1933. There was little in the story line to challenge his inventiveness, but he still came across with a bouquet of melodies, several of which are still around today. Among them were the melancholy *Yesterdays* (not to be confused, of course, with the Beatles' singular *Yesterday*), *Let's Begin*, *The Touch of Your Hand*, and one other that has a particularly interesting history. Otto Harbach, the lyricist for *Roberta*, was going through some Kern manuscripts and came across a jaunty little theme which had once been intended to accompany a tap dance in *Show Boat*. He suggested to the composer that he slow down the tempo and expand the theme into a full-length ballad. Kern did, and produced one of the greatest—if not the greatest—standards in his whole list of works: *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*.

The last Broadway show for which Kern wrote a score was a failure: *Very Warm for May* lasted less

than two months on Broadway in 1939. Its one significance is that it was the source of one of the crowning glories of all American theater music, the ballad *All the Things You Are*. This song is a classic example of what Stephen Sondheim had to say about Kern's melodies, the whole song being artfully constructed from a single rising interval, a few repeated notes, and an exquisite modulating sequence for the release. Both Kern and Hammerstein, who wrote the lyrics, were surprised at the success of the song because of its frequent changes of key—though they are what keep things fresh and moving. But I was happy to learn from Hammerstein himself that, of all the many songs he and Kern wrote together, *All the Things You Are* was their favorite.

Like most of his colleagues in the musical theater during the early Thirties, Kern joined the big parade to Hollywood. Whatever misgivings his admirers might have had about such a move were soon dispelled, for not only did Kern retain his innate musical taste in his work for the movies, but he added a new and subtle dimension of sophistication. His first important assignment was to compose two additional songs for the Astaire-Rogers film version of *Roberta* (1935). To this already bountiful score, then, were added *Lovely to Look At* and *I Won't Dance* (the latter had been used previously in a London show called *Three Sisters*). More important than the assignment itself, however, was the fact that it marked the beginning of his collaboration with one of the great lyricists of the American theater, Dorothy Fields.

The first complete score by Kern and Fields was for the Lily Pons film *I Dream Too Much*, in which the diminutive opera star introduced the sparkling *Jockey on the Carousel* and the rapturous waltz for which the picture was named. After that auspicious beginning, the new team turned out a real classic among film scores. This was *Swing Time*, one of the better Astaire-Rogers pictures, which contained *The Way You Look Tonight* (one of the few Academy Award winners to deserve that honor), *A Fine Romance*, *Bojangles of Harlem*, *Pick Yourself Up*, *Never Gonna Dance*, and the swirling *Waltz in Swingtime*. Three other Kern-Fields songs deserve mention: *Just Let Me Look at You* (a beauty that deserves to be better known), *You Couldn't Be Cuter*, and *Remind Me*. The last is an odd case because it is one of the rare instances in which Kern, starting with a lovely theme, rather overdeveloped the song and then seemed to have trouble finding his way back musically. But the Dorothy Fields lyrics are characteristically graceful, and the song is a winning and original one, if difficult to sing.

It is not surprising that in Hollywood Kern was able to team up with practically all the best lyricists. There was Oscar Hammerstein, for one, with whom he wrote two extra songs for the 1936 version of *Show Boat* (as though that score were not already rich enough!). The following year they collaborated on the score for a period piece called *High, Wide and Handsome*. Although Kern had been composing mostly in a lighter vein, this film proved that neither he nor Hammerstein had lost any of their ability to write in a softer, more gracious style: *Can I Forget You* and *The Folks Who Live on the Hill*

have such nostalgic appeal that they could well have been written for *Show Boat* or *Sweet Adeline*.

Other top lyricists with whom Kern worked were Ira Gershwin, Johnny Mercer, E. Y. Harburg, and Leo Robin. When he wrote *Dearly Beloved* with Mercer, Kern expressed the hope that one day it might replace *Oh, Promise Me* as a wedding song (to some slight extent it did, as did, for a time, Vincent Youmans' *Through the Years*). Another Kern-Mercer song, *I'm Old-Fashioned*, reflects some of the gentleness and innocence of the early Kern years, and this same feeling is beautifully expressed in the lyrics.

One of Kern's greatest hits was *Long Ago and Far Away*, written for the Gene Kelly-Rita Hayworth film *Cover Girl*, but it didn't have a very promising beginning. It seems that Ira Gershwin had written more than a dozen lyrics for this ingratiating melody, but none of them really suited him. Finally, composer Arthur Schwartz (turned producer for this film) telephoned Gershwin and told him that he needed the song as soon as possible—it was going to be recorded in a day or so. The lyricist, reasonably satisfied with his latest attempt but not exactly proud of it, reluctantly submitted it to the studio. When the picture was released, Gershwin was astounded: "It turned out that this number was the biggest hit I'd had in any one year, with sheet-music sales of over six hundred thousand."

Kern's last film was *Centennial Summer*, which was completed and released in 1946, a few months after his death. Its nineteenth-century setting was ideally suited for a number of Kern's earlier unpublished songs, and whoever finally assembled the



At left, Kern sits with his twenty-year-old daughter Elizabeth Jane and her fiancé, Richard A. Green, Hollywood director and brother of orchestra-leader-arranger-composer Johnny Green. Above, Mr. and Mrs. Kern vacationing in Mexico in 1935.

posthumous score deserves enormous credit. Of all the charmingly nostalgic songs that graced the picture, perhaps the wistful *In Love in Vain* (lyrics by Leo Robin) was the best, though *All Through the Day* (lyrics by Hammerstein) cannot be far behind.

THIS account has so far been concerned only with Kern's stage and film music, which, of course, constituted the greater part of the composer's enormous output. Now and again, however, he wrote songs independent of a production, though usually without much success. The great exception came about when Oscar Hammerstein, deeply upset by the German invasion of Paris in World War II, wrote a lyric expressing his feelings and asked Kern to set it to music. *The Last Time I Saw Paris* may be minor Kern melodically, but it perfectly captured the spirit of Hammerstein's lyrics, and the song became a hit because it was a timely expression of a shared sentiment. But it is, in fact, a rather unusual song for Kern, mostly because of its extreme simplicity and dependence on harmony, though it has Kern's economy in the use of materials. Unfortunately, many singers have a way of overdramatizing this simple little song. It is always more effective when sung as the sheet music directs: "simply — with rhythm preserved — not sadly."

During the early Forties, Kern was commissioned by Andre Kostelanetz to compose one of three orchestral portraits of famous Americans (the other two commissions went to Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson). Kern's choice of subject was Mark Twain, and the piece he wrote, an attractive suite in four sections, had its premiere in Cincinnati in May, 1942. Critics, and some lovers of Kern's music as well, have called the work second-rate, but I don't agree. Granted that it falls into the category of "light concert music," which is somewhat out of fashion today, it is nonetheless full of charming themes throughout, including an engaging little polka (still *another* Bohemian tune?), a soaring, lyrical melody that cries for a lyric, a rousing march, and a pensive, haunting air that has the quality of an American folk tune. Perhaps not the *greatest* Kern, but undeniably pleasant listening.

In 1945 Kern returned to New York to work on two projects. The first was a revival of *Show Boat* at the Ziegfeld Theatre, which had housed the original 1927 production. For this revival, Kern and Hammerstein, who were to be the producers, wrote still another new song (they had already written two additions for the 1936 film version). This one, called *Nobody Else But Me*, turned out to be the very last song Kern composed. The second project was what eventually turned out to be Irving Berlin's *Annie*

JEROME KERN ON RECORDS

CONSIDERING Kern's importance in the American musical theater, and the length of his career, he has received very skimpy representation on records — aside, that is, from individual songs in personality collections. Of those I hesitate to say very much, because the particular renditions any of us prefer are so personal a matter. Your taste may run to Mel Tormé's performance of *The Folks Who Live on the Hill*, Bobby Short's *Bojangles of Harlem*, Frank Sinatra's *Ol' Man River*, Mabel Mercer's *Poor Pierrot*, or (getting far out) Lennie Tristano's *Yesterdays* — or, then again, it may not. There are hundreds of such individual recordings, performed in dozens of styles, certainly an adequate selection.

But complete (or incomplete) show recordings are another matter. Fortunately (and coincidentally) we now have, at long last, an almost completely complete version of *Show Boat* — Stanyan's just-released two-disc recording of the current London production (see review on page 96). The most satisfactory version of "highlights" now available is the one recorded for RCA by the cast of the 1966 Lincoln Center production (RCA LSO 1126). Among the other highlights recordings are *Roberta*, featuring Jack Cassidy, Joan Roberts, and Stephen Douglass (Columbia Special Products COS 2530), and the recently released *Sunny* (Stanyan SR 10035), with Jack Buchanan and Binnie Hale, recorded by the London cast in 1926 and originally released on 78's. That does not make a very big list, and we certainly could use a recording of *The Cat and the Fiddle*, at the very least.

Happily, however, there are two other records containing large quantities of Kern songs, for the most part the less familiar ones. One of them is in Ben Bagley's "Revisited" series (Columbia Special Products COS 2840), a disc that features Bobby Short, Barbara Cook, Harold Lang, Nancy Andrews, and Cy Young, and includes such songs as *Put Me to the Test*, *Never Gonna Dance*, *I Have the Room Above*, and *Some Sort of Somebody*. The other is a set that confines itself, interestingly, to Kern's last seven years, and it concentrates mostly on the composer's Hollywood career, including also six songs from *Very Warm for May*, Kern's last Broadway score (Monmouth-Evergreen MES 6808). So far as instrumental renditions go, there is Robert Russell Bennett's beautifully orchestrated *Symphonic Story of Jerome Kern*, a chronological survey of ten songs well played by the Pittsburgh Symphony under the direction of William Steinberg (Everest 3063). That, of course, puts the music in a rather classical light, and it brings me to a rather obscure recording that is a particular favorite of mine.

POSSIBLY the best tribute ever accorded Kern on records was a set of six twelve-inch Decca 78's (later transferred to a ten-inch LP and long since deleted) on which the Gordon String Quartet plays a number of the composer's best-known songs interspersed with some of his less familiar incidental music. The music lends itself remarkably to such chamber treatment, and the quartet performs these beautiful Charles Miller arrangements with love and understanding. In fact, it is both fascinating and revealing to note the kinship to the lyricism of Schubert in these melodies when played this way, and it is a more than subtle reminder of what the "old country" contributed to the making of American music.



Culver

The 1935 RKO film of *Roberta* (there was another version in 1952) starred the nimble Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.



Memory Shop

In 1936, Fred Astaire introduced the Kern-Fields Bojangles of Harlem in the RKO motion-picture musical *Swing Time*.

Cover Girl, a 1944 Kern-Gershwin collaboration, featured Gene Kelly, Rita Hayworth, Phil Silvers, and Edward Brophy.



Memory Shop

Get Your Gun, the original plans for which would have reunited the team of Kern and Fields, with Dorothy's brother Herbert also working on the book.

It was not to be. Tragically, Kern was stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage while walking on Park Avenue one November afternoon in 1945. He was removed to the hospital on Welfare Island situated, oddly enough, just across the river from where he had been born sixty years before. In the *Jerome Kern Song Book*, his friend Oscar Hammerstein wrote this moving account:

He lay unconscious in the same institution in which Stephen Foster had died. The critical nature of Jerry's condition did not permit his removal to a private hospital. He was in a ward with some fifty or sixty other patients — mental cases, drunks and derelicts for the most part. The doctors had gathered this heterogeneous group together and explained to them slowly and clearly who the new patient was, and asked them to be very quiet and not create the usual disturbances that characterized this room. Not one man disobeyed. The nurse in charge did not go home that night. She extended her duty for that day to twenty-four hours. When Mrs. Kern expressed her gratitude, the nurse answered simply that he had given so much pleasure to her and to the world that she thought she would like to give up something for him.

On November 11, Kern died without regaining consciousness. Among the many tributes paid to him then and subsequently, this one by Richard Rodgers in the *New York Times* perhaps best sums up the man and the music:

Kern was typical of what was and still is good in our general maturity in this country in that he had his musical roots in the fertile middle European and English school of operetta writing, and amalgamated it with everything that was fresh in the American scene to give us something wonderfully new and clear in music writing in the world. Actually, he was a giant with one foot in Europe and the other in America. Before he died he picked up the European foot and planted it squarely alongside the American one. . . .

If we were to look for one example of each extreme of his geographical range, we might find *Look for the Silver Lining*, with its almost beer-hall simplicity, at one end, and discover *Ol' Man River*, with its deep turmoil and strong native inflection, at the other. Both are fine music, and both are Kern.

Composers, being human like the rest of us, have been known to betray a competitive jealousy from time to time, but not about Kern. He has been called — not, I think, extravagantly — the Franz Schubert of the American musical theater. If he ever wrote a bad note, I have not heard it.

Alfred Simon was Director of Light Music for radio station WQXR for twenty-five years and is co-author of two forthcoming books: The Gershwins and Songs of the American Theater.



RCA Records

JORGE BOLET

“Every human being has a Romantic content within himself”

By GREGOR BENKO

DURING the craze for Baroque music that occupied performers, record companies, collectors, and (perhaps to a lesser extent) concert audiences during the 1950's and 1960's, there were always people in the music world who prophesied that the Baroque revival would be followed by a Romantic revival. Those of us who have been eagerly awaiting such a change in trends see an encouraging sign in the attention that is currently being given to the Cuban-born pianist Jorge Bolet. In the season just past, Bolet was the soloist at the opening-night concert of the New York Philharmonic at which he played Liszt's *Totentanz*, with Pierre Boulez conducting. In reviewing the concert, Harold Schonberg, music critic for the *New York Times*, pronounced Bolet “one of the great Liszt pianists of the century.”

Bolet's engagements last season included other appearances with the Philharmonic playing works by Liszt and Chopin, the first performance in this century of the piano concerto by Giovanni Sgambati (a friend and pupil of Liszt) at Frank Cooper's fourth annual Romantic Music Festival at Butler University, and a solo recital at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center in New York. The critics praised his enormous, beautiful singing tone and his understanding of the Romantic style of playing. I, for one, believe the Romantic revival *is* gaining momentum, that Bolet is the great Romantic pianist who has been waiting for it to happen, and that he is the pianist many of us have been waiting for. RCA apparently shares this opinion, for they have arranged to release a number of recordings of works by Liszt which Bolet made in Europe, and they have signed him to an exclusive contract to make additional recordings of Romantic repertoire in this country.

When I interviewed Bolet just before a concert in Indianapolis, I asked him to comment on the Romantic revival. He said, “When I was a child, the Romantic performers were really in the driver's seat—the pianists, the violinists, the cellists, most of the great conductors, they were all ‘Romantics.’ Then the pendulum swung over to the other side. ‘Musicology’ became the rage, and we had a whole bunch of purists who sort of, well, not necessarily

misunderstood Romantic music, but had no affinity for it. They snubbed it as being not really worthwhile, not really great. There was nothing but Bach and Beethoven and Mozart and perhaps Schubert. Musicians like George Szell, Rudolf Serkin, Artur Schnabel, and even Wilhelm Backhaus swung to that side. They had a great deal of influence in musical circles and exercised that influence over their students and the young pianists they trained.

“But I think we have now come full circle again, and people are awfully tired of Bach's ‘Mighty 48,’ as mighty as they are, tired of the thirty-two Beethoven sonatas, the Diabelli Variations, the Goldberg Variations, and so on. I think audiences never repudiated the Romantic repertoire itself. They are still enthralled whenever they hear Romantic music because it appeals to the senses, it appeals to the heart and soul. But perhaps audiences *have* repudiated performances of this music that are musicologically correct but non-Romantic and therefore stylistically wrong.

“I think it was audiences, not performers, who made the Baroque revival happen, but whether the Romantic revival will have the same impact on musical life will depend on the performers. The greatness of Bach will shine through in almost any competent performance, but Romantic music—works like the Sgambati and Liapounoff concertos—needs a performer who plays in the right style. Played in the right style, much of the Romantic repertoire becomes great music, but played in the wrong style it becomes cheap, banal, and everything else the purists say it is.”

Jorge (he pronounces it “George”) Bolet (the “t” is *not* silent) dates the beginning of his career from an evening in 1923 when he heard a recital in his native city, Havana, Cuba, by the pianist Rudolph Ganz. He decided that night, at the age of ten, that he could be nothing but a pianist who gave public concerts. When he was thirteen, he was sent to Philadelphia to study with David Saperton at the Curtis Institute of Music. After Bolet graduated, he studied abroad for a year with Moriz Rosenthal. World-wide fame and a big career seemed imminent. In 1936 he

won a Naumburg award, and in 1937 he was the first winner of the Josef Hofmann award, which stated that he was "a pianist and musician; scrupulous in detail; deep in insight; broad in sense of style and proportion; modest in manners; forceful in utterance; touched with poetry, and deeply devoted to music."

He returned to Curtis for studies in conducting, first with Boris Goldovsky and then with Fritz Reiner. "The conductor's experience came in handy when I was in Japan with the army of occupation," he said. "After VJ Day I conducted the Japanese premiere of *The Mikado*." But the big career never seemed to arrive. Ten years ago Bolet was selected to supply the piano playing for the soundtrack of a movie based vaguely on the life of Franz Liszt (*Song Without End*, starring Dirk Bogarde and Capucine).

"The film brought me fame in a way," he said. "But in a way it also hurt me. In the minds of a lot of people it meant that I had 'gone Hollywood,' that I had somehow sold out. Many people felt that I must have made a fortune from the movie and had quietly gone away to live the good life, giving up public performance. Nothing could be further from the truth. I played and played in America, but never got anywhere, so I went to Europe and built a career there. Three years ago I returned to the United States and made Bloomington, Indiana, my home. Now I teach at Indiana University with my old Curtis classmates and friends Sidney Foster and Abbey Simon."

Bolet has built an impressive career in Europe, and in this country he has made numerous records, has appeared with almost every major American orchestra, and has played dozens of solo recitals in New York and elsewhere. Why, at age fifty-seven, has he not yet had a bigger American career? "Well, maybe because my repertoire, which seems to be fashionable today, wasn't always so fashionable," he answered. "Maybe my playing has changed or matured recently. The movie was a mixed blessing, and maybe my records weren't all so good. For instance, the disc of several Liszt *Transcendental Etudes* was recorded in the modern manner, with takes and re-takes and re-retakes. By the time we were done, the notes were there, but little of the *music*. I've now recorded all the *Transcendental Etudes* and the *Consolations*, plus some song and aria transcriptions of Liszt to be released here by RCA. They were recorded in Spain in a much more old-fashioned way—I just played the way I would in a concert hall—and if I say so myself, they're not so bad." (The first of them, "Franz Liszt's Greatest Hits of the 1850's," has been released and is reviewed on page 76 of this issue.)

Bolet is an unusual pianist not only in repertoire but as a "natural" who needn't concern himself much about the mechanical aspects of practicing. "I practice mentally almost constantly but at the keyboard very little. My mechanism isn't perfect, but I've always had an easy time at anything purely mechanical. Anything that requires a close hand position is a problem for me; I thrive on any kind of open hand position." Commenting on the enormous eruptions of sound that he can produce, he said, "Well, I don't exactly have an anemic build, I have a good, heavy forearm and upper arm, and I play the piano with weight. The idea is to produce the sound from the bottom of the key, to push the key all the way down and to keep pushing on, to get the full sound."

He is a giant figure—six feet three and a half inches tall with a broad build—and his dark good looks and suave

manner make him seem very much the Romantic hero. "I've been called a Romantic specialist many times, but that's not really true. Being a specialist in one area of music implies that one plays the other parts of the repertoire less well. But the bulk of the piano repertoire is Romantic music and should be studied and played with the precepts of Romanticism in mind.

"Romanticism was not just a period in music and letters and art that passed like any other fad, but a basic part of human nature. Every human being has a Romantic content within himself, and most people would rather hear music that has a personal message. In Romantic music the artist has a greater chance of being individualistic, of expressing a personal point of view. The purists would not have you play Bolet-Beethoven or Beethoven-Bolet. But audiences come to a concert not to hear the music play itself, not to hear Beethoven's Fifth Symphony alone, but to hear what Bernstein does with it. And when they come to hear me they come to hear what *my* viewpoint is, to hear what I do with the music.

"The performance of Romantic music is stylistically very difficult. The performer has tremendous leeway, but this does not mean that *anything* goes. Romantic music must be played with great freedom. The only way to achieve freedom and flexibility in playing any piece of music is by imposing on yourself the greatest rhythmic discipline possible. The youth of today must learn that there is no real freedom without discipline. In three years at Indiana University I have heard some absolutely marvelous playing from students, absolutely *great* performances of the classical, modern, or Impressionistic repertoire, but I have not heard one performance of a Romantic work there that I thought was really good."

ASKED to name the pianists of the past who had most impressed him, Bolet said: "The two pianists who, in my mind, tower above all the others I have heard, and I've heard practically all the great ones, are Hofmann and Rachmaninoff. There is nothing like them today. Hofmann always gave the impression that he was improvising whatever piece he was playing. But he played like the god he was only under special circumstances, such as his Carnegie Hall recitals. Rachmaninoff was a more even performer. Unlike Hofmann he did not constantly look for something fresh and new in the music he played. Nevertheless Rachmaninoff was not only a great, great pianist, but also a great, great Romanticist. He was perhaps the last great composer-performer and the last of the great transcribers."

Bolet plays many transcriptions in his recitals, and he commented that this was not part of current musical fashion. "For years the very idea of piano transcriptions made the purists cringe. They seem to reject anything in music that gives pleasure or fun. They say, 'When you play music you must suffer.' Well, there is no suffering in playing an operatic transcription of Liszt. You play it purely for enjoyment, to tell the audience, 'Now, you all know this tune, listen to what Liszt made of it.' Is there really anything morally wrong with transcribing something for the piano and making it into a great piano piece? And some transcriptions are both great piano pieces *and* great music. Bach, Liszt, Mozart—they all made transcriptions of their own and others' music, and as Arthur Loesser pointed out, we really should feel no shame at all if, when hearing these transcriptions, we also experience enjoyment."

HIRSCH-HOUCK LABORATORIES TESTS THIRTY-THREE STEREO HEADPHONES

By Julian Hirsch

THE excessive "togetherness" that sometimes results from urban living has created a few special problems for audio enthusiasts. Apartment dwellers, separated from their neighbors by walls that are all too often virtually acoustically transparent, must limit their listening volume, especially during the evening hours. On the other side of the coin (or should I say wall?), a neighbor's audio system, TV set, or radio can at times interfere with *your* listening enjoyment. Stereo headphones are often the best response to such unwelcome sonic visitors. Headphones can provide considerable isolation against external sound, and the music enjoyed by a headphone wearer need not be heard even by others in the same room.

Like loudspeakers, headphones come in a wide variety of sizes, shapes, sound characteristics, and prices. At their worst they can be as execrable as a \$4.98 speaker system, but the best of them can match or surpass the performance of a pair of fine speaker systems at a fraction of their cost.

Most headphones contain miniature dynamic speakers, from 1½ to 3½ inches in diameter, mounted in enclosures (ear cups) and coupled to the ear drum through a (usually) well-sealed air cavity. The tightness of the seal around the ear affects the low-frequency response (for those phones designed to be sealed) as well as the acoustic isolation. This last point is particularly important if you are going to be monitoring live tape recordings with head-

KEY TO THE CHART

- The **RELATIVE RESPONSE** column is a condensed but subjectively valid indication of the measured low- and high-end response of each phone relative to its mid-range (approximately 300 to 2,000 Hz). Many of the phones had elevated or depressed low- and high-end responses, and these general trends have been identified as "up" or "dn" (down). When the averaged low-frequency or high-frequency output level was similar to that of the mid-range, we gave it a "flat" rating.
- **OVERALL RESPONSE SMOOTHNESS** was rated on a scale of A to D in order of increasing irregularity of the measured curve. Although this classification was based on our somewhat arbitrary judgment, we tried to avoid a "nit-picking" attitude. In both the overall response smoothness and **TONE-BURST** columns, A means outstanding, B is better than average, C is average, D is below average, and F is poor.
- **TONE-BURST** response can be degraded by severe frequency-response dips or peaks, whether originating in the phone or in the coupler setup. When the tone-burst degradation occurred at a frequency where there was a clearly identifiable peak or hole in the response curve, we tended to minimize its importance since it could have been a characteristic of our test set-up. On the other hand, some phones had a ragged frequency response over a wide range and lacked reasonably good tone-burst response above 2,000 or 3,000 Hz. We felt that this provided grounds for a low rating.
- The **OUTPUT AT 1 PER CENT HARMONIC DISTORTION** uses a scale of 1 to 3 as a guide to the maximum level attainable. All the phones were easily able to deliver at least a 100 dB SPL without severe distortion—in fact, the distortion was usually well under 1 per cent at this rather loud level. The headphones whose output rating is given as an asterisk (*) had slightly above 1 per cent distortion at all measured levels. Even the lowest rating of 3 corresponds to a low-distortion output of 100 to 110 dB, which is more than comfortably loud. On the other hand, the phones rated at 1 could deliver over 120 dB (the highest was almost 130 dB), a literally ear-splitting level, without exceeding 1 per cent distortion. A 2 rating indicated 110 to 120 dB. Your own listening tastes should determine the importance of this factor in your selection of headphones.
- **SENSITIVITY** ratings are included as a matter of general interest, since any of the phones can be driven by the least powerful amplifier (and some—the higher-impedance ones—can be driven directly from a preamplifier or tuner output). The ratings are given in the amount of input power in milliwatts (1 milliwatt, or mW, equals 0.001 watt) required to achieve a 100-dB output. A rating of 1 means less than 5 mW, 2 means 5 to 20 mW, 3 means 20 to 50, and 4 means 50 to 100. It's possible that a phone with a 3 or 4 rating may not deliver all the volume desired with a receiver that has too large a dropping resistor at its headphone jack. Any service technician can solve the problem by shunting each dropping resistor at the jack with another resistor with the same or slightly lower value.
- **ISOLATION** ratings are based largely on our subjective judgment. The lower the number, the better the isolation. Except for the non-isolating phones and the AKG-150, Kenwood KH-71, and Superex ST-F, which have partial isolation, most headphones do a satisfactory job of confining their sound to the wearer's ears and keeping external sounds out.
- The **IMPEDANCE** of dynamic phones ranges from about 5 ohms to over 2,000 ohms. Because of their high sensitivities (only milliwatts are required for a high listening volume), any phone, of high or low impedance, can be driven from the headphone jack of an amplifier or receiver. These jacks are internally connected to the speaker outputs through a pair of isolating resistances, typically about 200 ohms. However, a few tape recorders (and preamplifiers) have headphone jacks designed to drive high-impedance phones, and should be used with phones rated at several hundred ohms or higher; otherwise, the headphone impedance is not an important consideration.
- The **WEIGHT** of a phone has some relationship to its comfort, but is not the sole determinant. Headphones weigh from 5 ounces to 25 ounces, with the average being about 15 ounces. There is considerable variety in headband shape and padding, as well as in the softness and shape of the ear seals. Few of us would buy a hat without trying it on; the same precaution is advisable when shopping for phones. Although the lightest phones are most likely to be comfortable, a well-designed heavy phone can fit so well that its weight will hardly be felt. On the other hand, regardless of weight, there were some that just never felt "right" on us; your reaction to the same phones might be quite different.
- The connecting **CORDS** are usually about 9 or 10 feet long, either straight or coiled (marked C in the chart). Both types have their advantages and disadvantages. Longer cords are provided on some phones (you can walk from room to room while wearing the Telex Studio 1 or the E-V/Game phones without running out of "stretch"!); the electrostatic phones have two cord lengths specified, the second of which is the length from power-supply/transformer to the amplifier's speaker terminals.

HEADPHONE TEST RESULTS

Make and Model	Relative Response		Overall Response Smoothness	Tone Burst	Output @ 1% Harmonic Distortion	Sensitivity	Isolation	Impedance in Ohms	Weight (oz., less cord)	Cord (ft; C=coiled)	Price
	Low	High									
AKG K-150	flat	flat	B	B	1	1	5	600	9	6	\$39.00
Beyer DT 100	flat	flat	B	C	2	2	3	400	12	10	57.50
Beyer DT 480	flat	flat	C	C	2	2	3	200	17	10	75.00
Clark 200	flat	dn	D	D	2	1	3	10	15	9C	29.00
Clark 100A	dn	up	D	C	2	2	4	20	14	9C	50.00
E-V/Game HP-20	dn	dn	D	D	1	1	3	10	14	25C	29.95
E-V/Game HP-30X	flat	flat	C	D	1	1	4	18	17	25C	39.95
Kenwood KH-71	flat	dn	D	C	1	1	5	10	19	10C	49.95
Koss KRD-711	flat	up	B	B	3	3	3	280	13	10C	29.95
Koss PRO-4AA	up	flat	B	B	2	2	2	18	25	10C	60.00
Lafayette SP-55	dn	dn	D	F	2	2	4	8	11	5	11.95
Lafayette F-990	flat	dn	D	D	1	1	3	10	20	6.5	29.95
Martel MBK-68	dn	flat	C	B	2	2	3	20	12	7	38.35
Pioneer SE-20A	dn	flat	D	C	1	1	3	10	14	8	24.95
Realistic Nova Pro	dn	dn	C	B	2	2	4	5	17	10C	29.95
Realistic PRO-1	up	flat	B	C	2	2	3	300	25	10C	49.95
Sansui SS-2	dn	dn	C	C	1	1	4	9	11	6.5	14.95
Sharpe 10B	dn	flat	C	B	1	2	2	10	16	10C	39.95
Sharpe 770	dn	flat	B	B	*	3	1	18	18	10C	100.00
Superex ST-F	dn	flat	B	A	*	1	5	20	9	15C	24.95
Superex ST-PRO-B VI	flat	flat	B	D	2	2	3	20	20	15C	59.95
Sylvania SP20	flat	flat	C	B	*	2	3	20	10	15C	19.95
Telex Studio 1	flat	flat	C	D	3	4	3	200	25	25C	69.95

Note: The following models have little or no acoustic isolation.

AKG K-100	dn	flat	C	A	1	1	—	600	10	9C	29.00
Fisher HP-100	dn	flat	B	A	3	2	—	70	9	8	49.95
Olson PH-192	flat	dn	D	D	3	1	—	7	16	6	30.00
Pioneer SE-L20	dn	flat	B	A	*	1	—	5	8	8	29.95
Pioneer SE-L40	dn	flat	B	A	*	1	—	5	9	9	39.95
Sennheiser HD-414	flat	flat	B	A	2	1	—	2,000	5	10	39.95

Note: The following are electrostatic headphones; sensitivity is listed in watts required for a sound level of 100 dB.

Koss ESP-9	flat	flat	A	A	3	1.25	2	50	22	5+6	150.00
Lafayette F-2001	dn	flat	C	D	*	2.50	5	80	16	9C+9	62.95
Stanton Isophase	flat	flat	B	C	3	0.50	3	40	8	11+6	159.00
Superex PEP-77C	dn	flat	B	B	3	0.20	2	50	14	15C	99.00

33 STEREO HEADPHONES 33



AKG K-150



Beyer DT 100



Beyer DT 480

phones, because you'll want to eliminate the direct sound from the performers. Most phones use rubber or plastic foam, or liquid-filled plastic rings, to provide a tight, yet comfortable seal.

Some dynamic headphones are designed to be totally non-isolating, with plastic-foam pads that rest lightly on the ears with no sealing action. Most of these phones provide respectable bass response, and at reasonable listening levels they can effectively override room noise, but some sound from them can also be heard quite clearly by others nearby.

A third type of headphone uses the electrostatic principle. Each earpiece contains a miniature electrostatic speaker—a thin plastic-film diaphragm suspended between two metal conductor grids. Electrostatic loudspeakers are widely respected for their superior smoothness, wide frequency range, and excellent transient response, and most electrostatic headphones share these characteristics. Since they require both high signal voltages and d.c. "polarizing" voltages (typically several hundred volts) for their operation, most electrostatic phones are used with combined power-supply/step-up transformer control units. However, they can usually be operated independently of the a.c. power line, since they can convert part of the audio signal to d.c. to provide the polarizing voltage.

The power-supply/transformer control boxes of electrostatic phones must be driven from and connected directly to the amplifier's speaker terminals. They cannot be connected to the normal headphone

jack of an amplifier. All of the control boxes have terminals to which the regular front-channel speaker leads are connected, and have a switch to activate either the speakers or the phones. Alternatively, they can be connected to the second set of speaker terminals provided on most amplifiers and receivers.

OUR stereo-headphone test procedures are described in this month's *Technical Talk*. As we expected, our measured frequency-response curves for most of the phones were alarmingly irregular. Yet we found that almost all the phones in our test sounded at least inoffensive, and usually acceptable or better. Some were excellent by any standard. To avoid possible reader problems with curve interpretation, we have reduced our data to tabular form, with the explanations and notes immediately adjacent to the table.

In order to provide a wide range of choice for the headphone shopper, we asked the major headphone manufacturers to send in both their top-of-the-line and their "best buy" models. Not every manufacturer responded, and it is conceivable that a manufacturer's choice did not in fact represent his "best buy." Although we did not test every model of every manufacturer (an impossible task, considering the profusion of phones available), we feel that the data presented will enable any interested reader to make a good choice at his chosen price level.

Although it is a minor point, there is an annoying

Kenwood KH-71



Koss KRD-711



Koss PRO-4AA



Lafayette SP-55





Clark 200



Clark 100A



E-V/Game HP-20



E-V/Game HP-30X

lack of standardization in the identification of the left and right channels on headphones. To confuse the situation further, we have no assurance that amplifier manufacturers adhere to any standard in wiring their headphone jacks. Fortunately, the right-left localization can usually be corrected by simply turning the phones around on one's head.

The tested acoustical and electrical characteristics of the headphones included in our survey are given in the accompanying table. Brief comments on the external physical characteristics of the headphones, grouped alphabetically and by type, follow.

Conventional Dynamic Phones

● **AKG K-150.** The unusually small, light earpieces are mounted on a slim, plastic-covered spring headband. The ear cushions, which are solid rubber (not foam), rest on the ears rather than around them and provide a small amount of isolation.

● **BEYER DT 100 AND DT 480.** These two phones are very similar in performance, appearance, and construction, with a light headband and rectangular ear cups that fit comfortably over the entire ear. They are fully modular in construction—the cord unplugs, and with a small screwdriver each earpiece can be detached and removed for repair or replacement. The DT-480 is slightly heavier and more sensitive than the DT-100. Both types are available in a wide range of impedances, from 5 to 2,000 ohms for the DT-100 and from 5 to 200 ohms for the DT-480.

● **CLARK 200 AND 100A.** These phones are similar in external appearance, with rather compact earpieces. The 200 has fairly firm padded ear seals; the 100A uses soft foam rubber cushions.

● **E-V/GAME HP-20.** These are fairly bulky but light phones, with relatively firm foam-filled ear seals. The cord is detachable, and includes a control box that can rest in the wearer's lap. The box has separate level controls for the two earpieces, and a stereo/mono switch. Except for the 2½-foot straight section that contains the control box, the 25-foot cord is of the coiled type.

● **E-V/GAME HP-30X.** These are bulkier and heavier than the HP-20, with venting holes on the side of each earpiece. The ear seals are very soft, comfortable rings of plastic-covered foam.

● **KENWOOD KH-71.** This unusual headset has shallow earpieces, fitted with soft pads and ported on their rear surfaces. Over the back of each earpiece is a "clamshell"-shaped reflector, providing a small amount of isolation from ambient sounds. The vinyl-covered headband is well padded with plastic foam.

● **KOSS KRD-711.** The earpieces and headband of the KRD-711 (also known as the "Red Devil") are molded from bright red plastic. This phone is also available in black as the K-711. The ear cups of soft foam rubber are pressed rather firmly, but comfortably, against the ears by the springy plastic headband.

● **KOSS PRO-4AA.** These are professional-grade headphones, very ruggedly and heavily constructed. The liquid-filled pads seal the ears with great effectiveness, which may be the reason for the exceptional bass response. The left earpiece has mounting hardware for a communication microphone.

● **LAFAYETTE SP-55.** These are the least expensive phones of the group. The light molded-plastic earpieces are well made, with oval foam-rubber ear seals. The headband and earpiece yokes are lightly constructed, with a simple, snap-on air-filled vinyl jacket over the two wires of the headband. The earpieces dangle loosely from their yokes, with no tendency to face each other unless worn. The cord is rather short.

Lafayette F-990



Martel MBK-68



Pioneer SE-20A



Realistic Nova Pro



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Realistic Pro-1



Sansui SS-2



Sharpe 10B

● **LAFAYETTE F-990.** These are conventionally styled, with rather bulky earpieces and softly padded ear cushions and headband.

● **MARTEL MBK-68.** The oval earpieces are molded in black plastic, and black vinyl covers the single-piece spring-steel headband. The ear seals fit comfortably over the ears. These are among the lightest dynamic headphones of the isolating type included in our tests.

● **PIONEER SE-20A.** The rather bulky earpieces have vinyl-covered foam seals. The earpiece positioning range favors large heads (or hairdo's) since we had to move them up as far as possible to use the phones.

● **REALISTIC NOVA PRO.** Each earpiece has its own level control. The vinyl-covered foam seals are rectangular in shape, covering the ears effectively and without undue pressure.

● **REALISTIC PRO-1.** This is indeed a "pro" phone, made for Radio Shack by Koss and closely resembling the Koss PRO-4AA in appearance, construction, and performance. Unlike the Koss version, the PRO-1 has a thumbwheel-operated volume control in each earpiece, and it has no microphone fitting. Its electrical impedance is also considerably higher than that of the PRO-4AA.

● **SANSUI SS-2.** These light, inexpensive phones provide somewhat less isolation than most, but have very high efficiency and output, together with a sound quality comparable to some far more expensive phones.

● **SHARPE 10B AND 770.** The oval ear seals are liquid filled and isolate with better-than-average effectiveness. The 10B headband fits rather tightly on the head, but can be bent out if necessary. The 770 headband was less tight and very comfortable to wear. The sound isolation afforded by the Sharpe ear seals is far greater than that of any other phones (the "deadness" one experiences when wearing them is not unlike that "heard" inside an anechoic chamber). Each earpiece of the 770 is individually fused and has its own volume control.

● **SUPEREX ST-F.** These are the lightest of the conventional phones, perhaps because their construction in many respects resembles that of the group of non-isolating phones. The first 3½ feet of the cord leaving the phones is straight, with a sliding clip that can fasten to the wearer's clothing to isolate him from the drag of the remainder of the cord, which is coiled.

● **SUPEREX ST-PRO-B VI.** These are relatively bulky phones, with the same coiled and straight cord system, with clip, used on the ST-F. Each earpiece contains a dynamic woofer and a ceramic tweeter.

● **SYLVANIA SP-20.** This is physically a very "flat" headset, with earpieces of minimal depth. The headband is rather tight but is not uncomfortable with the liquid-filled cushions.

● **TELEX STUDIO 1.** These are unusually bulky phones and are also among the heaviest tested. Ruggedly built, they have oval foam-rubber ear seals that make the earpieces look much larger than they really are. The massive headband is also well padded. Each earpiece has its own slider-type volume control and a slider-type tone control able to boost bass and cut highs (or *vice versa*) at its extremes, while providing flat response in its center position.

Non-Isolating Dynamic Phones

● **AKG-K-100.** The earpieces are simple plastic hemispheres, pivoting on the "ball joint" ends of a one-piece plastic headband. A padded insert band provides three positions of adjustment for different head sizes. Instead of the usual sealing cups, the flat surfaces of the earpieces are covered with thin plastic foam (about ¼ inch thick), open in the center.

● **FISHER HP-100.** Each earpiece is covered by a rounded rectangular slab of plastic foam, about ⅜ inch thick. Slightly larger than the ear, they fit comfortably

Telex Studio 1



AKG K-100



Fisher HP-100



Olson PH-192





Sharpe 770



Superex ST-F



Superex ST-Pro-B VI



Sylvania SP20

with firm pressure from the plastic-covered headband.

● **OLSON PH-192.** Externally these phones look quite conventional, with bulky earpieces and soft ear cushions. However, the back of each earpiece is open (perforated grilles are used), eliminating any isolation provided by the cushions. Each earpiece has a slider-type volume control.

● **PIONEER SE-L20 AND SE-L40.** These are also "open" phones, but the round foam earpads are smaller than the ear (about 2 inches in diameter) and give a somewhat different sensation to the wearer. Except for their colors, cord lengths, and prices, the SE-L20 and SE-L40 appear to be identical. They use detented stops for setting the earpiece position—an arrangement that we found very convenient.

● **SENNHEISER HD-414.** In basic design and construction, these phones resemble some of the other units, except that the round foam earpads are softer, about 3/4 inch thick, and approximately the size of the ear. The headband is of one-piece plastic construction. These are, by a wide margin, the lightest headphones we have worn.

Electrostatic Phones

● **KOSS ESP-9.** The headset is similar in external construction to the Koss PRO-4AA, even to the inclusion of a communication-mike mounting stud. The 5-foot cable plugs into an energizer control unit, approximately 4 x 5 x 7 inches. From this unit, a 6-foot cable goes to the amplifier's speaker terminals. Terminals are provided on the energizer box for connecting the displaced speaker leads, and a switch feeds the amplifier outputs either to the speakers or to the phones. Another switch on the energizer can be set for AC or SE (self-energized) operation. In the latter mode it is necessary to drive the phones momentarily to a high volume to develop polarizing voltage, after which the level can be

reduced. This procedure is not required when AC operation is employed, in which case the energizer unit is plugged into a wall outlet by means of the detachable line cord provided.

● **LAFAYETTE F-2001.** This phone is used with a totally self-energized (no a.c. line cord) control unit, measuring about 3 3/4 x 2 3/4 x 6 inches. Sockets are provided for the simultaneous use of two Lafayette electrostatic headsets. Nine-foot leads go to the amplifier outputs, and a switch in the rear of the energizer drops the volume by 3 dB when required. Like the other electrostatic energizer/control boxes, this one has a switch to reconnect the speakers. The oval-shaped earpieces are light in weight, rather shallow, and large in diameter. Although they have soft foam-filled cushions, they are much larger than the ear and for this reason provide little acoustical isolation.

● **STANTON ISOPHASE MK III.** These headsets present an unusual appearance. The large earpieces, with rectangular pads, are freely pivoted at the ends of a large springy headband. A padded plastic cover at the top of the band has a knob that extends or contracts the two ends of the band for a proper fit. These are extremely light phones, and the band exerts little pressure on the head. Nevertheless, the isolation is moderately good, and the phones can be worn for extended periods without fatigue. The energizer/control box, which measures about 3 x 5 1/4 x 8 inches, is a.c.-powered, with a switch to reconnect the speakers. The speaker leads go to spring-loaded connectors mounted on the cable from the energizer about a foot or two from the amplifier. The energizer contains protective circuits to prevent damage to the phones by excessive playing levels. An extreme overload will trip one or both of the control box's circuit breakers, and pushing one of the red buttons resets the breaker to re-activate the phones.

● **SUPEREX PEP-77C.** The headset is conventional

Pioneer SE-L20



Pioneer SE-L40



Sennheiser HD-414



Koss ESP-9



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Lafayette F-2001



Stanton Isophase MK III



Superex PEP-77C

in appearance, with fairly bulky but light earpieces and comfortable seals. The energizer/control box can be operated from the a.c. line or self-energized. It has two sockets for simultaneous operation of two headsets, and indi-

vidual level controls for the two channels with a range of about 20 dB. There is also a switch to reconnect the speakers. The energizer has an attractive walnut cabinet and measures 3 1/4 x 6 1/2 x 11 inches.

How They Sounded

WHEN surveying such a large group of phones, it is difficult, if not impossible, to comment on the sound of each one in any meaningful manner. As with speakers, when several good but imperfect devices are compared, how does one decide "objectively" which combination of imperfections produces the most satisfactory performance?

Our task was simplified somewhat by one indisputable (to us, at least) fact: among the phones we tested, the Koss ESP-9's were outstanding enough in both sound and measurements to serve as a comparison standard for the others. (It may be argued that designating one out of a group of units such as this—even the "best" one—as a standard is to risk invidious comparison. In most cases, this would be true, but in the case of headphones, the *real* comparison, inevitably, is the one that all of us—consciously or unconsciously—make, not with another set of headphones, but with our experience of loudspeakers. However, since headphones do furnish another kind of aural experience, one that is in many ways unique, we concede the injustice of a loudspeaker comparison and present our alternative: the admittedly rather arbitrary choice of the ESP-9 phones as "standard.") Except for a minor dip at about 8,500 Hz, our measured response curve agreed, within very close limits, with the Koss machine-run curve supplied with each ESP-9. Since we were using a nonstandard coupler (see *Technical Talk*, page 29) an overall response of ± 3 dB from 24 to 15,500 Hz is nothing less than remarkable.

The Superex and Stanton electrostatic phones, though not quite as smooth as the ESP-9, had a similar frequency range and a sound quality we judged to be superior to any of the dynamic phones. These three headphones, very different in appear-

ance and feel, are certainly the cream of the crop. Of course, they exact a price, both in dollars and in a certain degree of inconvenience and clumsiness in use. The Stanton phones were also somewhat limited in the maximum volume they could handle without distorting or tripping their circuit breakers. But unless you like to listen to rock music at live-concert levels, this will not present any problems. The Lafayette F-2001, much cheaper than the others in this group, was not in their class, sonically speaking. The highs were muted and there was noticeable mid-range coloration. A number of dynamic phones, both lower and higher in price, sounded better.

The non-isolating dynamic phones had, for the most part, an open, natural quality that we found highly pleasing. The AKG K-100, with a slightly thin bass, delivered a higher level of sound without distortion (at middle and high frequencies) than any other phone in the group, though it was given close competition by the AKG K-150. Fisher and Sennheiser had a very similar sound character, but the Fisher could be driven to distortion by heavy bass that did not faze the Sennheiser. Pioneer's two models had the same low-frequency limitation as the Fisher, with slightly less high-frequency response. Olson's PH-192 had poor high-frequency response, and was heavily unbalanced toward the bass. We felt that Sennheiser and Fisher, in that order, gave the best sound in this group, although some of the others came very close to matching them. (Remember that these phones can be heard plainly by other people near the listener even at moderate playing levels.)

As you may have gathered, headphones, like loudspeakers, tend to overload and distort most readily at the lowest frequencies, where the dia-

phragm excursion is greatest. If you listen to organ, rock, or electronic music at very high volume levels this could present a problem with many phones. We made a rough, purely subjective evaluation of the *relative* low-frequency overload properties of the phones by listening to rock music with them, using bass boost in the amplifier and increasing the volume until distortion could be clearly heard.

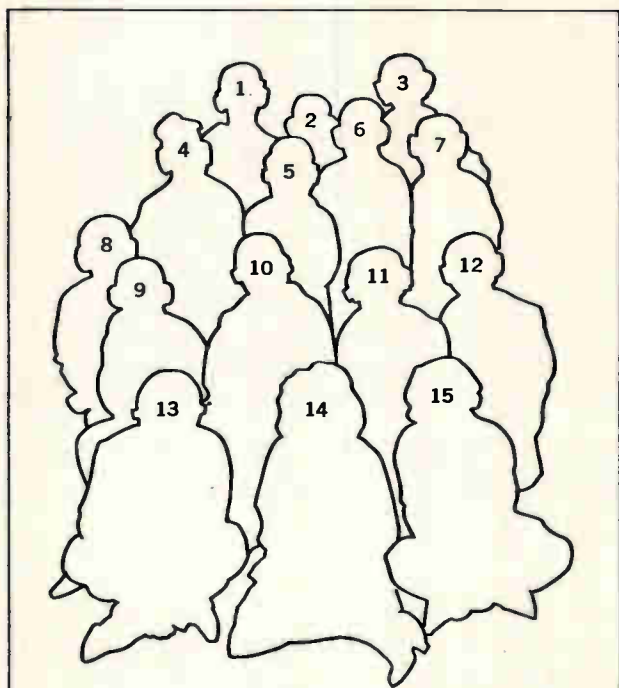
The non-isolating phones, as a group, did not fare well in this type of operation. Although very well suited to more moderate levels, or when bass content is not predominant, it seems that this design does not lend itself to very heavy bass reproduction. The conventional headphones could all be driven to distortion with ease, but some proved more resistant than others. The best, somewhat to our surprise, was the moderately priced Lafayette F-990, followed closely by the Koss PRO-4AA and Realistic PRO-1. Any of these phones could de-

velop ear-popping bass levels without distress, and the Lafayette's high-frequency response limitations should not impair its effectiveness for this type of program material.

In respect to loud, heavy bass performance, the Lafayette SP-55, Pioneer SE-20A, Realistic Nova Pro, all the Sharpe models, and the Telex phones were somewhat poorer than average; all the others were roughly comparable. The electrostatic phones are really not at their best in this type of service, but the Koss and Lafayette were nearly as good as the average dynamic phone, the Superex slightly better, and the Stanton considerably below average (which could be inferred from its middle- and high-frequency overload limits). Let me repeat: if very loud low-bass reproduction is not your bag, then the other criteria should be given precedence.

With the conventional (isolating) phones, there were many whose sound left little to be desired. At the top of the performance scale, we were favorably impressed with the two Beyer phones, the two Koss dynamic phones, Martel, Realistic PRO-1, Sharpe 770, and the two Superex phones. In view of their modest prices, the Sylvania SP-20 and Sansui SS-2 represent "best buys." The Superex ST-F, a relatively low-price phone, shared with the Sennheiser HD-414 the distinction of having the smoothest overall frequency response and best tone-burst response among the dynamic phones. The ST-F had very little acoustic isolation, but enough to distinguish it from the totally non-isolating types. The Telex Studio 1, although it had a somewhat ragged high-end response, could be made to sound almost any way one wished with its versatile tone-control system. The others fell below the above-named units, and we will not attempt to comment on them individually.

It is apparent that price bears no more necessary relation to sound quality with headphones than it does with speakers. One can get remarkably good sound from some moderately priced phones. On the other hand, one can pay several times as much and get sound which, if not actually worse, is certainly not *proportionately* better. When the other factors—sound isolation, comfort, appearance, bulk and weight, and personal preferences in sound—are considered, it is evident that dogmatic statements about headphone choices are risky. We will limit our foolhardiness to what has already been said—and urge anyone contemplating buying a pair of headphones to compare them, if possible, with the Koss ESP-9. To be sure, not everyone will wish to invest \$150 or wear a somewhat heavy and bulky headset. Even so, it is nice to know just how good a headphone *can* sound!



THIS MONTH'S HEADPHONE COVER

THE problem of finding a convincing and arresting graphic metaphor for audio equipment is complicated by the related facts that there are only so many of them, and that chances are we have already used them all at least once. There is also a nagging sense that photographer's props, professional models (of either sex), or disembodied hands do not really succeed in properly humanizing technological artifacts. We hope, then, that we have solved all these difficulties this month by pressing the whole staff into service, in headphones, in the photographer's studio. By their numbers ye shall know them: 1. William Livingstone, Managing Editor; 2. Debbie McKown, Secretary to the Advertising Manager; 3. Larry Klein, Technical Editor; 4. Vivienne Winterry Goodman, Assistant Music Editor; 5. Esther Maldonado, Reader Service; 6. Madeline Littman, Advertising Service Manager; 7. Pegi McEaney, Secretary to the Publisher; 8. Ralph Hodges, Associate Technical Editor; 9. Susan Larabee, Assistant to the Managing Editor; 10. William Anderson, Editor; 11. Paulette Weiss, Production Editor; 12. James Goodfriend, Music Editor; 13. Borys Patchowsky, Art Director; 14. Barbara Aiken, Secretary to the Technical Editor; and 15. Robert Clark, Editorial Coordinator.

—Editor



INSTALLATION OF THE MONTH

A GEM-SETTING FOR STEREO

A WALNUT-PANELED, Mediterranean-style cabinet containing a variety of lighting fixtures enhances the equipment of Greg Bostrom of Burlingame, California. Behind a yellow glass panel in the top of the cabinet there are three dimmer lights which shine down on the components below. A decorative touch is added by two flicker-flame lights, one above an Ampex 1150 tape deck (right), the other above a four-channel Teac TCA-42 tape deck (left). Both tape machines are on shelves with a forward tilt for ease of operation. Below each recorder is a psychedelic light; one is connected to pulsate with the left stereo channel, and the other with the right. The switches that control all these lights are in two hidden compartments, one just below the electronics for the Teac tape machine on the left of the installation, the other immediately beneath the Realistic STA-65B receiver on the right.

Above the STA-65B there is another receiver—a Kenwood TK-66—to complete the four-channel facilities. An Ampex Micro 85 cassette recorder is on the shelf above a Dual 1009 SK turntable (using both the Pickering V-15/ACE-3 and V-15/AT-3 cartridges), which slides out for easy access. The section below the components is for record storage; tapes are stored in a matching cabinet.

The installation, which is on casters so that it can be swung out for servicing, can also be used as a room divider. In the living room where the installation is located there are four speaker systems: a pair of Bose 901 speakers, plus the speakers that came with the Micro 85 recorder. These serve as the two rear channels for four-channel listening.

Mr. Bostrom, a twenty-three-year-old jeweler, built the installation himself. In addition to classical music, he listens mostly to Broadway musical albums and movie soundtracks. —Paulette Weiss

STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT BEST OF THE MONTH



CLASSICAL

ANOTHER BEETHOVEN TRIUMPH FOR BISHOP AND DAVIS

Their recording of the First Piano Concerto for Philips is as distinguished as their Fifth

PIANIST Stephen Bishop and conductor Colin Davis, who collaborated a year or so back on a sublime account of Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto for Philips, have now followed up that success with an equally resplendent version of the First. The virtues of the earlier disc—a majestic ease of pacing in the conception of the piano part, an unfailing perceptiveness in the realization of orchestral possibilities, and a spacious, naturally balanced recording quality—are all in evidence again in the new release. But though the performers approach their tasks this time with the same air of sane sensitivity they displayed before, they are fully aware of the difference between the Beethoven of this relatively early concerto and the Beethoven of the last one.

There is, indeed, a superficial resemblance between the first movements in these two concertos, in that both take up a quasi-military four-square pulse and a rather formal expressive tone. But Bishop, who made the first movement of No. 5 an experience of awe-inspiring architectural solidity, appropriately finds a quality of springiness—almost skittishness—in No. 1, and the feeling is conveyed not by any fanciful ideas about the phrasing, but through the extreme lightness and clarity of his execution in the many stretches of sixteenth-note passagework.

This air of sharp—though never heartless—definition is matched by an orchestral con-

tribution that brilliantly captures the fresh, breezy tang of the young Beethoven's wind writing and the unprecedented dynamic vigor of his orchestral style at this period. Particularly characteristic and telling is Davis' observant differentiation between *fortissimo* and *sforzando* on the frequent occasions when the one marking is closely followed by the other—it is the difference between massive strength and tigerish pounce, and both are beautifully projected.

Bishop and Sviatoslav Richter are artists one might not think of as particularly similar in interpretive approach. Yet this Bishop performance seems to me broadly reminiscent of the likewise unfussy interpretation Richter attempted in his Victrola version of the concerto. But whereas Richter was

hampered by a conductor (Charles Munch) with a view of the music quite unrelated to his, Bishop and Davis seem perfectly at one in their conception of it.

The unforced lyricism of the slow movement and the exuberance of the finale complete the design admirably, and the recording is excellent both tonally and in its placing of the piano within the orchestral context.

Curiously, the recording of the early C Minor Sonata that follows is slightly less satisfactory, for here the piano tone is a little lacking in body at times. But that is a small flaw. Bishop's performance is again conceived with marvelous overall cogency (although I wish he



COLIN DAVIS AND STEPHEN BISHOP
An air of sane sensitivity

had observed the repeat in the finale!), and he achieves some breathtakingly feathery *pianissimos* in the central Adagio molto.

Altogether, this is a distinguished addition to what I hope will soon be an integral series of the five concertos. *Bernard Jacobson*

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No. 1, in C Major, Op. 15; Piano Sonata No. 5, in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 1.* Stephen Bishop (piano); BBC Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 6500 179 \$5.98, © 7300 116 \$6.98.

MONTSERRAT CABALLÉ: A HEROINE IN VERDI

Her new recital for Angel is another opportunity to hear a voice that is a wonder of the world

NORMALLY, it is hard for a record critic to justify one more predictable round of familiar and much-recorded scenes from Verdi operas, whoever the artist may be, except . . . well, except when the artist is Montserrat Caballé. Her new program of Verdi arias for Angel offers the most luxuriant vocalizing any lover of singing nowadays can acquire or ask for. Her creamy tones tumble forth in all their seductive splendor, and the evenness of her scale from the ripe, well-supported mid-range to the effortless highest reaches is a wonder of the world. And those stunning *pianissimos*!

It is perhaps footless to point out "high spots" in a recording that is made up of nothing else, but I would like to call your attention to the ethereal B-flat on the phrase "*Invan la pace*" in the aria from *La forza del destino*, as well as the absolutely ideal "thread of a voice" Verdi prescribed for the ending of the Sleepwalking Scene. (Verdi also wanted an "unattractive" timbre for the interpreter of Lady Macbeth, but this, fortunately, is one requirement that is beyond Caballé's reach.) She also takes the high C in "*O patria mia*" on a *diminuendo*. This is contrary to the wish of the composer, who asked for a swell at this point—but, however inappropriate, the effect is undeniably beautiful.

Caballé sculpts her phrases aristocratically and responds to the texts sensitively. Her dramatic involvement in the music she sings, though not ideal, is certainly more than acceptable—to sing so divinely and be a Callas interpretively as well is to ask of Providence more than it is right to. The orchestral backgrounds are effective, though with an occasional leisurely indulgence. *George Jellinek*



MONTSERRAT CABALLÉ: *the unattractive is beyond her*

VERDI: *La forza del destino: Pace, pace, mio dio; La Vergine degli angeli. Aïda: O patria mia; Ritorna vincitore! Macbeth: Una macchia è qui tutt' ora (Sleepwalking Scene). Otello: Willow Song; Ave Maria.* Montserrat Caballé (soprano); Elizabeth Bainbridge (mezzo-soprano, in *Macbeth* and *Willow Song*); Thomas Allen (baritone, in *Macbeth*). Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Anton Guadagno cond. ANGEL S 36830 \$5.98.

ENTERTAINMENT

J. F. MURPHY SINGS LIKE AN ANGEL

Elektra introduces a jaunty new group whose musical recipe is a blend of rock and Irish

MR. J. F. Murphy, an energetic young Irishman who looks a little like Arlo Guthrie and sings a lot like an angel, has been scoring a big success with his lively group Salt on college campuses around the country, offering songs that combine the charms of Gaelic music with an up-to-the-minute modern beat. His vocalists—Ron Allard, Joe Parrino, and Russell Warmolts—not only join their talented leader in song but also accompany him expertly on flutes, saxophones, tambourines, harmonicas, maracas, chimes, and bagpipes while Bob Pava manages to work up plenty of excitement on a set of drums.

Now they can all be heard on a new Elektra release singing, among other stirring ballads, *If Wishes Were Horses*, their song of hate for hatred. It is

already a hit, and its quality makes that fact understandable, but there is also much to be said for *The Example*, a ballad about the Easter uprising in Dublin in 1916, *Silver Horn*, based on an Irish myth about a youth who manages to pass himself off as a leprechaun, and *Waiting Hymn of the Republic*, a dirge for a young man "dressed in tan" who dies in battle.

In addition to exhibiting the virtues of vitality, variety, and verve, Murphy and his friends also supply the quality, so rare in contemporary music, of high-spirited humor. What it all adds up to is the musical equivalent of a new shade of green, the sprouting of a hardy plant rooted in the auld sod of Eire but as fresh as a sprig of clover. Some of the best songs are socially conscious enough, but a more personal side of Murphy's art is revealed in such lyrics as the nostalgic *Soft September*, with its mood of longing for a sunny autumn afternoon on a hill where the "flowers of May/linger . . . while the North wind is pining." He sings that one in a voice as full of ardor and intensity as Bob Dylan's, but with a simplicity and lack of anger that can celebrate the wonder of a leaf without having to question its politics.

The entire program is unflaggingly delightful, and song texts are supplied to let you share all the words as well as the jaunty music. A really special album; as for the "salt" in the title, sure, and there's enough of that.

Paul Kresh

J. F. MURPHY & SALT. J. F. Murphy and Salt (vocals and instrumentals). *The Example; First Born; Waiting Hymn of the Republic; Silver Horn; If Wishes Were Horses; Soft September; Country Jam; Kansas City.* ELEKTRA 75024 \$5.98, 85024 \$6.98, 55024 \$6.98.

J. F. MURPHY & SALT
Exhibiting vitality, variety, and verve



Elektra Records



Atco Records

ERIC CLAPTON: *he's probably only just begun*

ERIC CLAPTON, ALL-AROUND STAR

A new double-disc release from Atco is a neat retrospective of an eventful career

CONTRARINESS is a trait quite often associated with critics, and it is usually thought to be at least a weakness in their judgment if not a real flaw in their character. Personally and contrarily, I find contrariness adds zest to most viewpoints, and can even lead to fascinating new experiences. For example, I don't much like the music of Cream, Blind Faith, Derek and the Dominoes, and, 'way on back, the Yardbirds. But I dig Eric Clapton. This is a particularly acute example of my contrariness, for I know full well that, in each group I have just named, Eric has been lead guitarist, vocalist, and general all-around star. And that is why I like Atco's new album called "The History of Eric Clapton," a random sampling of its hero's participation in various musical groups—because it captures and preserves in neat summation his versatility and growth as an artist in a musical genre (confused rock) with which I otherwise have little patience.

In the beginning, there were the Yardbirds, manufacturers of a raw, gutsy, vomitous clatter sustained as music only by Clapton's capacity for being heard above the din. Musical sophistication doesn't enter this picture until we get to the point on side one where Clapton appears with the super-creeps, Cream, doing the super-hit *Sunshine of Your Love*. That's not much, as sophistication goes, but it's

something—one can feel some of the excitement of Clapton's conceptions forming in his music.

In general, I find that the first two sides of this four-side collection are rather coarse, only occasionally providing clues to the development and refinement as a musician that Clapton reveals on the other two sides. All but one of the items presented in this album will be familiar to (having already been celebrated by) Clapton fans. Detailed criticism would therefore be redundant. It is enough to say that the lyricism that begins with side three's *Sea of Joy* and runs right on through *Layla* (the final band in this generous and inexpensive collection) is boundless. I'm thankful such an album exists to help me follow and finally catch up to Clapton. The alternative is wading through all that garbage *he* had to endure while finding himself. The wonder of it all is that, with a past like this, Eric Clapton has probably only just begun. It wouldn't surprise me at all if he also has quite a future.

Rex Reed

ERIC CLAPTON: *The History of Eric Clapton.* Eric Clapton (guitar and vocals); various accompanists. *I Ain't Got You; Hideaway; Tribute to Elmore; I Want to Know; Sunshine of Your Love; Crossroads; Spoonful; Badge; Sea of Joy;* and seven others. ATCO SD 2/803 two discs \$6.98, ® J 803 \$6.95, ® M 8803 \$6.95, © M 5803 \$6.95.

JAZZ

THE SUBLIME CLARINET OF PEE WEE RUSSELL

His contributions to the Eddie Condon mid-Forties concerts are documented by Chiaroscuro Records

SOMEbody named Chiaroscuro (as in black and white?) Records (see address below) has just released a fine disc documentation of Pee Wee Russell's contribution to the series of jazz concerts mounted by Eddie Condon at New York's Town Hall in 1944-1945. The concerts featured the best musicians then in New York, and their audiences, both in the hall and on radio, were understandably both large and happy. But that was when jazz wasn't too proud to play for people, and people didn't have to worry about whether they had the proper politico-socio-racio-psycho credentials just to listen, much less worship. Happy days.

Chiaroscuro's new release, part of a projected series to be drawn from radio transcriptions, reminds us of all that by focusing on that sublime clarinetist Pee Wee Russell, an artist who had Frank Teschmacher's rough tone plus his own wonderful-



Pee Wee Russell and Eddie Condon at Town Hall

Hank O'Neal

ly serene imagination. Many of the items included have been scraped off wartime Armed Forces Radio Service transcription discs, so there are some epic scratches and pops. We have our own troubles today, but they are as nothing compared with those posed by recording quality then: balances are often so cockeyed that the rhythm section is completely inaudible, and the effect is as if the whole band has lost its way in the middle of the tune and is about to come crashing down making little balloon noises.

I must say too that it's slightly irritating that there aren't any separation grooves between the selections, but that's all right, for there *is* some marvelous music. Condon was from the Chicago gang, that small commando squad of a dozen or so musicians who played the first independent white jazz. Some died or just faded away, but most of them wound up in New York along with Condon, who became as important an entrepreneur as he was a fine musician. Neo-Chicago jazz (we might as well call it "Condon jazz") always kept its youthful aggressiveness and confidence. The music here shows it—it is I-can-lick-anybody-with-one-hand-tied-behind-my-back jazz, whether ballad or blast-off stomp. It is also sheer pleasure and thumping adventure, masterful music played by the masters. Would they all please come back?

Joel Vance

THE EDDIE CONDON CONCERTS FEATURING PEE WEE RUSSELL: *Town Hall 1944-1945.* Eddie Condon (guitar); Pee Wee Russell, Ernie Caceres, and Joe Marsala (clarinets); Bobby Hackett, Max Kaminsky, and Muggsy Spanier (trumpets); Lou McGarity, Miff Mole, and Benny Morton (trombones); Ernie Caceres (bass sax); Gene Schroeder and Jess Stacy (piano); Bob Casey, Bob Haggart, Jack Lesberg, and Sid Weiss (bass); Gene Krupa and Joe Grauso (drums). *China Boy; Clarinet Chase; Pennies from Heaven; Impromptu Ensemble Nos. 1 and 2; Rosetta; Memphis Blues; Pee Wee Blues; I'd Climb the Highest Mountain;* and five others. CHIAROSCURO 108 \$5.98 (available by mail from Chiaroscuro, 15 Charles St., New York, N.Y. 10014).

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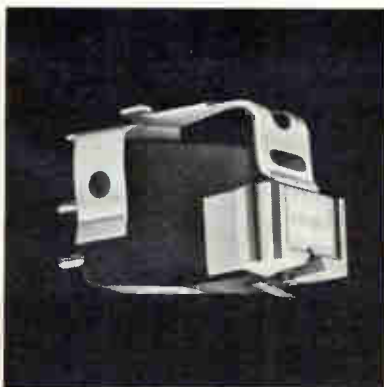
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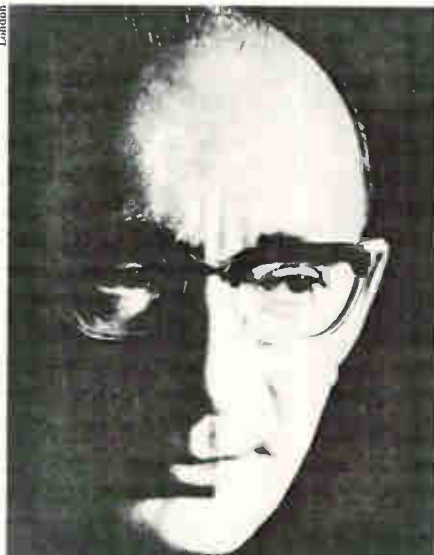
BACH, J. S.: *Orgelbüchlein (BWV 599-644)*. Helmut Walcha (Silbermann Organ of the Church of Saint-Pierre-le-Jeune, Strasbourg). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIVE 2533 083/4 two discs \$13.96.

Performance: **Walcha's stereo remake**
Recording: **Very good**

Helmut Walcha first recorded the brief forty-five chorale-pretudes that make up Bach's *Orgelbüchlein* ("Little Organ Book") between 1950 and 1952. That was the period when the blind German organist was recording all of Bach's organ works, a project he has been redoing in more recent years for stereo. Among the many magnificent interpretations from those earlier times, none were more impressive than Walcha's sensitive handling of the chorale settings, the eighteen great chorale-pretudes, the Schübler set, those of the third part of the *Clavierübung* (the organ Mass), and, of course, the *Orgelbüchlein*. Somehow Walcha caught the very essence of the chorales—the meaning behind the text, the strength and firmness of each individual setting. That earlier recording of the *Orgelbüchlein* has for a number of years been out of print, but in spite of its somewhat faded (though still respectable) sonics, it's worth hunting for if you can find it.

The new recording, made on a different instrument in a slightly too reverberant church in Strasbourg, shows Walcha's usual command over his instrument, but the results, at least in part, seem a little disappointing in comparison with his previous achievement. For one thing, whether through the church acoustics or the microphone placement, some lines do not emerge clearly. "*In dulci jubilo*," with a muddy inner texture and a somewhat reticent bass line, is a case in point. Secondly, Walcha, whose rhythmic solidity is one of his strongest attributes, sounded stolid and inflexible on occasion even in some of his older

recordings. In the new *Orgelbüchlein* a great deal of the playing (for example, most of side one) seems rhythmically hidebound—the glow that makes his earlier recording such a transcendent experience is only partially felt here. One place it does occur is in the Passion chorale, "*O Mensch, beweine dein' Sünde gross*," and here Walcha even manages to better his previous performance of this, one of Bach's most moving and extraordinary chorale settings. Walcha's relaxed and poetic



CLIFFORD CURZON
Measured and poetic piano playing

treatment of this single chorale-pretude is almost enough to make one overlook the stiffness of some of the rest of the set. In comparing this particular interpretation, too, with those of Rilling on Nonesuch or Heiler on Vanguard, it is easy to hear why Walcha, when everything clicks, is a master of his instrument. DGG's reproduction, aside from the acoustic problems noted, is very clean. I.K.

BACH: *Violin Concerto No. 1, in A Minor (BWV 1041)*; *Violin Concerto No. 2, in E Major (BWV 1042)*; *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, in G Major (BWV 1048)*. Pinchas Zukerman (violin); English Chamber Orchestra. Pinchas Zukerman cond. COLUMBIA M 31072 \$5.98, Ⓜ MA 31072 \$6.98, Ⓞ MT 31072 \$6.98.

Performance: **Luxurious**
Recording: **Very good**

This is Bach of what might be called the "intermediate" school. Zukerman, who both

plays and conducts, avoids the material excesses of vast, continuo-less orchestras on the nineteenth-century pattern. But reducing your forces to reasonably Bachian proportions is only the first part of the battle for authentic performance. Alice Harnoncourt, in a superb Telefunken recording with her husband Nikolaus' Concentus Musicus, has shown us how this music should really sound, and our ears—or at least mine—can never again respond as they formerly did to the surging phrases, romantic vibrato, and smoothed-out dynamics of a Zukerman playing a modern instrument, however appropriately modest the orchestral setting.

On the other hand, if you like your Bach this way, then this is the way you will like it. Zukerman, even at twenty-five, is probably the greatest master of his instrument now before the public, and his performances offer a perfectly valid alternative to those of Oistrakh, Stern, Milstein, and Szeryng in roughly similar styles. The recording, like the performance, is just a bit too big, which probably reflects its intention accurately enough. B.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEETHOVEN: *Fifteen Variations in E-flat Major, Op. 35 ("Eroica")*. **SCHUBERT:** *Moments musicaux, Op. 94 (D. 780)*. Clifford Curzon (piano). LONDON CS 6727 \$5.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **A bit squishy**

I didn't much care for the squishy piano sound on this recording, but I liked almost everything else about it. Curzon's "Eroica" Variations are not pushed in the (often mock) epic direction that most pianists, inspired more by the associations than the music itself, love to take this work. This is by any accounting a beautiful, measured, and poetic performance, as varied in its character as the music itself.

Curzon's rather intimate, expressive, and articulated way of playing is even more effective in the Schubert *Moments musicaux* (the liner notes correct Schubert's quaint French to "musicaux"). The simple, fresh, exquisite poetry of these first blooms of early Romanticism are perfectly realized in shape and color by Curzon.

The piano sound gives the impression of its having been recorded in a small but over-reverberant room; often it has the unpleasant effect of sounding as if the damper pedal is being used throughout. Tape and surface noise are low enough, however, so that it is possible to brighten up the sound a bit with the treble control, or else, I suppose, to get used to the

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓞ = stereo cassette
- Ⓛ = quadrasonic disc
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Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

sound and become absorbed entirely in the music and its masterly interpretation. **E.S.**

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No. 1; Piano Sonata No. 5* (see Best of the Month, page 67)

BERG: *Piano Sonata, Op. 1* (see **SCRIABIN**)

BRAHMS: *Part-Songs for Female Voices* (see **CHARPENTIER**)

BRAHMS: *Sonata No. 1, in G Major, for Violin and Piano, Op. 78; Piano Sonata No. 2, in F-sharp Minor, Op. 2.* Toscha Seidel (violin); Arthur Loesser (piano). **PERENNIAL 2005** \$6.00 (available from Perennial Records, P.O. Box 437, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Collector's items**
Recording: **Dim but listenable**

Examples of the late Arthur Loesser's remarkable piano performances have been limited mainly to recordings of "live" concerts from the last few years of his life. Here's a fascinating sample of the pianist at a much earlier stage of his career. The piano sonata recording was originally made for the small firm Friends of Recorded Music in 1937. For years, even well into the LP era, this was the only recorded performance of Brahms' sprawling Op. 2 Sonata to be had. Later versions (including Katchen's) are understandably superior in sound, but no one has caught the essence of this early Brahms as Loesser did. The reproduction is thin, the piano tone shallow, and the dynamics flat, yet it is possible to look beyond sonic deficiencies and enjoy the strength and lyricism of Loesser's stylish interpretation.

The same applies to the violin sonata, in which Loesser is partner to the Russian violinist Toscha Seidel (1899-1964), a pupil of Leopold Auer. Seidel, whose tone reminds one of the aristocratic elegance of Heifetz (another Auer pupil), had an extremely fine reputation during the Twenties and Thirties, though he virtually retired from public performance during the last decades of his life. He made relatively few discs, certainly almost none of large-scale works, but he did record the present sonata for Columbia in 1931 (and the Brahms Op. 100 with Loesser at about the same time). The style, of course, involves considerably more use of *portamento* (sliding from one note to another) than we are used to, but the interpretation as such is not oversentimental. Rather, it is a well-controlled performance, expressive without being indulgent, and quite flowing. In many ways it reminded me of the legendary Op. 108 Sonata recording by Paul Kochanski and Artur Schnabel, though that roughly contemporary interpretation is warmer.

The transfers from 78's have been done quite carefully, though too much treble has been rolled off for my taste. But if you enjoy Brahms closer to the source, do try this disc. **I.K.**

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 6, in A Major.* Boston Symphony Orchestra, William Steinberg cond. **RCA LSC 3177** \$5.98.

Performance: **Perfunctory**
Recording: **Nothing special**

The Bruckner Sixth is probably that composer's most intense and high-strung work, and this is a performance of it with scarcely enough energy for a Pfitzner Adagio. Everything is correct and in good taste; nothing

takes off. In short, a bad case of the Bruckner blahs. **E.S.**

MARC-ANTOINE CHARPENTIER: *La Peste de Milan.* **SCHUBERT:** *Nachthelle, Op. 134; Ständchen, Op. 135.* **BRAHMS:** *Part-songs for Female Voices, Two Horns, and Harp, Op. 17.* Kate Hurney (soprano); Joy Blackett (mezzo); Leo Goeke and Sidney Johnson (tenors); Chester Watson (bass); Frederick Renz (organ); Alexander Kouguell (cello); Charles Wadsworth (piano); Ruth Negri (harp); Anthony Miranda and Albert Richmond (horns); Musica Aeterna Chamber Orchestra and Chorus, Frederic Waldman cond. **DECCA DL 79437** \$5.98.

Performance: **Bad**
Recording: **Poor**

On a bargain label, this attractive though oddly mixed program might have earned an easy recommendation from me. The full price



ALFRED CORTOT

His delicate style captured on piano rolls

demands the highest standard of criticism, and by that standard I am afraid this one can only be described as a throwback. The performance of Marc-Antoine Charpentier's noble *Histoire sacrée* of "the plague of Milan" reminds me of the sort of thing we would have welcomed fifteen years ago, when any exploration of the pre-Bach repertoire had a rarity value on records. But it is all wrong, from the stolidly un-French rhythms to the rich nineteenth-century feeling that saturates both the vocal and the instrumental tone, and the dim recording sounds quite uncharacteristic of the excellent Alice Tully Hall in New York, where it was made.

As it happens, a clue to the level of care taken with the whole effort is afforded in the very first sentence of the text, which the tenor reduces to nonsense by singing the first verb in the future tense instead of the imperfect. This could easily have been put right, as could his later transformation of the Latin "*penitus*" into "*penitus*." The bass' inability to pronounce an "s" without aspirating it was presumably just something the conductor had to live with, but it is equally disturbing.

The two Schubert pieces on side two show us a great composer at his most inane, and the Brahms part-songs are not top-drawer either, though Brahms never allowed anything really

poor to get into print. The last of these four pieces, the *Gesang aus Fingal* on an Ossian text, has some evocative passages in which we can perceive the seeds of the *Deutsches Requiem* style. The performances on this side are not ungrammatical like that of the Charpentier, but they are not particularly idiomatic or sensitive either. Curiosity value only. **B.J.**

CHOPIN: *Études: Op. 10, Nos. 3 and 5; Op. 25, Nos. 8, 9, and 12. Prelude, Op. 28, No. 15. Impromptu, Op. 51. Nocturne, Op. 55, No. 2. The Maiden's Wish, Op. 74, No. 1* (transcribed by Liszt). Alfred Cortot (Duo-Art reproducing piano). **KLAVIER** **KS 106** \$5.98.

Performance: **By and large believable**
Recording: **Fair piano sound**

This is a recent recording of Cortot piano rolls on a Duo-Art Steinway. It opens with a horrendous performance of the E Major Étude—all fits and starts, angles and bumbles. Cortot? The piano roll? The reproducing mechanism?

Extraordinarily enough, the rest of these performances are attractive and very convincing. The arpeggiated rolls in the "Raindrop" Prelude amount to a transcription of the piece (too bad Chopin didn't think of it), and there are other questionable points. But these performances are certainly authentic, and there is a delicacy and a poetic charm that must reflect Cortot's piano style.

The piano sound is variable: the rather muffled tone may be the result of the recording as much as the instrument. The presentation is long on enthusiasm and short on information—for example, we are not given any idea when the original rolls were made. The record is one of a series of Duo-Art and Ampico restorations produced by Hal Powell, a Los Angeles audio engineer and piano-roll buff. Certainly the project has merit. **E.S.**

DONIZETTI: *Roberto Devereux: Ed ancor . . . A te dirò negli ultimi singhiozzi; L'elisir d'amore: Una furtiva lagrima; La Favorita: Spirto gentil; Lucia di Lammermoor: Tomb Scene and Finale; Don Pasquale: Povero Ernesto.* Barry Morell (tenor); Vienna Volksooper Orchestra, Argeo Quadri cond. **RCA LSC 3221** \$5.98.

Performance: **Well sung**
Recording: **Good, but not outstanding**

Except for "*Una furtiva lagrima*," these excerpts are seldom heard out of context, and Barry Morell, a well-schooled, versatile, and generally underrated artist, carries them off in an impressive manner. His tone is bright and attractive, his intonation pure, his enunciation exceptionally fine. At times he pushes the voice a bit too hard, but never unpleasantly so, and he can comfortably embrace the high *tessitura*. Without being in absolutely sovereign command of Donizetti's demanding writing, Morell acquits himself more creditably in this repertoire than some of his more highly touted colleagues would.

The total picture, however, is somewhat dimmed by its surrounding frame: Quadri is a metronomic, often uninspired conductor, particularly in the concluding portion of the *Devereux* scene, which he takes at a lethargic pace. The orchestra is less than first-class, and the work of the trumpet soloist in the *Don Pasquale* aria might be charitably described as nonvirtuosic. **G.J.**

(Continued on page 78)

STEREO REVIEW

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MUSICAL fads are intriguing to the armchair sociologist in the way they rise, hit their peak, and then decline. In recent years, as I am sure most readers have observed, fads associated with Baroque music, Indian classical music, the Moog synthesizer, and certain composers (Nielsen, Satie, and Scriabin are prime examples) have come and perhaps gone. And now we seem to be living through one associated with the piano virtuosos of the middle and late nineteenth century.

Describing the flurry of interest in these things as a "fad" may sound like denigration; if you want to be nice about it, by all means call it a musical *trend*. But for me, "trend" somehow has a more permanent sound than "fad." And, at least from the standpoint of merchandising records, these *are* fads, for the record companies are often able to induce or heighten interest in a particular area and saturate the market; then, when the record buyer no longer responds, they seek the next likely commercial bet.

But, beyond commercial considerations, there is the matter of changing tastes. Take the "Romantic revival," for instance. There was a period not many years ago when Liszt operatic transcriptions were anathema. They were considered poor, empty music whose virtuosic dash was a thing of the musty Romantic past. They belonged to the world of Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words* and Sinding's *Rustles of Spring*, evocations of sentimentality and overblown emotion. Naturally, those Lisztian chandler shakers, like their counterparts by Scharwenka, Balakirev, Alkan, and Henselt, were not easy pieces to be tossed off on the old parlor grand. They required the *Fingertfertigkeit* of a highly skilled virtuoso. And even more, they required a performer of Romantic sensibilities, not necessarily a lover, but a *personality* of the keyboard, one who was not afraid to let himself go, to dazzle, even to seduce the audience with his showmanship.

Well, the middle years of this century, especially after the Second World War, took care of that, for from then on, with rare exceptions, there was a growing tendency to forget showmanship and concentrate on more cerebral musical matters. Along with it came a more dutiful attitude toward the composer and his written score. As a result, we have built a large cadre of technically superb and interpretively faceless prodigies, efficient products of the scientific age, all of them about as colorful and exciting as a bowl of cornflakes.

So something seems to be missing. Is there just as much a surfeit of cool intellectuality now as, years earlier, there was a surfeit of Romantic extravagance? Perhaps we are seeing yet another change in taste, another part of the "trend" that made *Love Story* such a cinematic success. History does not repeat itself, and it is an oversimplification to say that we are moving into another Romantic Age. However, feelings may once again be expressed without shame, whether in print, on the screen, or in musical performance. And with the new emotional climate a new breed of pianistic heroes is rising, a phalanx of digital virtuosos unabashedly romantic in their approach, who have begun to resurrect composers and pieces we would have looked down our nos-

es at not too many years ago. Raymond Lewenthal, Earl Wild, Michael Ponti, and Frank Cooper come immediately to mind, but there are others as well, including a few who never really abandoned the old school. Horowitz and Rubinstein, regardless of their widely differing styles, still represent the old grand manner of the keyboard performer. With them, even when they might not have wished it to be so, it was the performer who was in the spotlight, less so the music itself—*Horowitz's* Liszt, say, rather than Liszt played by Horowitz.



JORGE BOLET and some thoughts on the Romantic Revival By Igor Kipnis

But is all of this Romantic-revival music worth resurrecting? Of course not. There are good pieces and there are bad ones—though it must be admitted that even the bad ones can be fun if rendered with appropriate spirit. That spirit is manifested in virtuosic bravura, panache, elegance, refinement, lots of color, a devil-may-care attitude, and good old-fashioned gusto. Merely *playing* the notes of Liszt's arrangement of Schumann's *Frühlingsnacht*, for example, or the Schulz-Evler piano setting of *The Blue Danube*, isn't enough. When you hear such a keyboard giant as Josef Lhevinne play these (and you can on RCA Victrola 1544), they are delightful larks, effervescent examples of Romantic pianism. And his use of color, tone, and shading! It is precisely because I have heard Lhevinne's recordings of these pieces that I can't get too enthusiastic about some of today's neo-Romantics: the equipment is there, but there is too great a generation gap. Few among the pianists of today manage to bridge it; far too many of them stumble and miss the beat, twentieth-century men merely reading the music through cracked nineteenth-century glasses.

One example of the astigmatism that results can be heard on an album of Liszt transcriptions fashionably (though not very accurately) titled "Franz Liszt's Greatest Hits of the 1850's." Jorge Bolet, an admirable performer, is the pianist, and let me say

right out front that there is not one piece on the disc that is poorly played or ill-conceived. Bolet has made some excellent Liszt recordings in the past. Unlike several of his contemporaries, he has not yet committed to discs works by lesser nineteenth-century composers, and his reputation is in fact very much based on his playing of Liszt. Tonally he is warm—at least on records, he eschews the hard, electric-typewriter touch. And he is not a speed demon: tempos are graceful and leisurely, perhaps at times even too much so, for I often itched for a little more daredeviltry, less temperateness and complacency. But this is not a serious objection. What, then, is wrong?

Liszt's setting of the Spinning Chorus from *The Flying Dutchman* is as good an example as any. Bolet plays it very well indeed—far better, for example, than Louis Kentner on his Turnabout album. Try comparing Bolet's version, however, with Paderewski's acoustic recording of the same piece, once available as part of RCA's collection "Keyboard Giants of the Past, Volume 2" (LM 2824). Even 1924 sound cannot dull Paderewski's sprightliness and humor. And the filigree! Bolet's playing, in contrast, is heavy, sober, and utterly serious. He bats out the filigree—the scampering succession of scales and decorations—with great glibness of finger, but no subtlety of palate. Invariably it is as loud as the main material, and the effect is all wrong. Compare, too, Paderewski's and Bolet's emphasis of the little off-the-beat grace-note figure near the beginning. Bolet is perfectly matter-of-fact; Paderewski set me laughing out loud with appreciation. I own a one-sided acoustic disc of the *Rigoletto* paraphrase played by Alfred Cortot (neither he nor Paderewski was as limited technically as their later reputations intimate). The same is true here. Bolet handles the notes with uncommon dexterity. So, too, did Cortot, but he has the requisite elegance as well, and he separates the important melodic passages from the decorative figurations.

This is the first of a series of recordings by Bolet, who has just signed a three-year contract with RCA. The series will presumably be taking advantage of the new interest in the Romantic repertoire and should be worth waiting for because, with all my strictures, Jorge Bolet is a formidable pianist, one more closely attuned to the nineteenth-century style than a good many of his younger contemporaries. The present recital, however, which was recorded in Spain, does not, for me, represent the ultimate in Liszt playing, and whether the fault is the instrument's or the recording itself, bass heaviness and treble glassiness do obtrude. Let us hope that these problems will disappear when Bolet picks up the series in RCA's own recording studios.

JORGE BOLET: *Franz Liszt's Greatest Hits of the 1850's*. Liszt: *Reminiscences from Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor"*; Schubert's *"Die Forelle"* and *"Serenade"*; *Concert Paraphrase on Verdi's "Rigoletto"*; *Spinning Chorus from Wagner's "The Flying Dutchman"*; Chopin's *"My Joys"* and *"The Maiden's Wish," Op. 74, Nos. 12 and 1*; Schumann's *"Widmung"* and *"Frühlingsnacht."* Jorge Bolet (piano). RCA LSC 3259 \$5.98.

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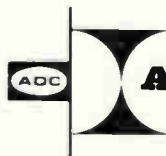
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DREYSCHOCK: *Concert-Piece in C Minor, for Piano and Orchestra* (see RAFF)

DUFAY: *Missa Ave Regina Caelorum; Motet, "Ave Regina Caelorum" III; Lamentatio Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae; Rondeau, "Puisque vous estez campieur"; Balade, "Se la face ay pale."* Capella Cordina, Alejandro Planchart dir. LYRICHORD LLST 7233 \$5.98.

Performance: **Commendable**
Recording: **Excellent**

As with Planchart's previous Dufay recording on Lyrichord, his New Haven-based ensemble provides well-sung and well-played additions to the recorded repertoire of this most important fifteenth-century Franco-Flemish composer. A premiere here seems to be the

Missa Ave Regina, composed about 1472 when Dufay was at Cambrai and probably written for the consecration of that city's cathedral. Based on a Gregorian antiphon (Dufay's motet setting is also included here), the Mass is unusual for a number of technical details, including the manner in which the *cantus firmus* is varied for each section. More important than this, though, it is a magnificent, highly melismatic work. The next longest work is Dufay's *Lamentatio*, an equally impressive piece that probably dates from 1453, and (though the program notes do not mention it) might have been written just after the Turks captured Constantinople, then the capital of the Eastern empire, and turned the Santa Sophia into a mosque. The disc is rounded off with an amusing rondeau, "*Puisque vous estez campieur*," which de-

picts a drinking contest, and Dufay's popular and often recorded ballade, "*Se la face ay pale*."

The performances, as indicated, are all perfectly satisfactory though not terribly refined vocally. One wonders, however, whether Dufay might not profit from more concentration on expression: the lamentation sounds almost as cheery as the drinking tournament *rondeau*. The acoustics of Yale's Marquand Chapel provide excellent atmosphere for this program, which has been very effectively recorded, although a few moments of pre-echo are to be heard. English translations are provided for all items except the Mass. *I.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DVOŘÁK: *Symphonic Variations, Op. 78; The Golden Spinning Wheel, Op. 109.* London Symphony Orchestra, István Kertész cond. LONDON CS 6721 \$5.98.

Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **Superb**

It may be that this London disc is the first of a complete cycle of Dvořák's five symphonic poems with István Kertész conducting—this to complement his earlier traversal of the nine Dvořák symphonies. If so, this record gets the project off to a fine start. The story line of *The Golden Spinning Wheel* couldn't interest me less—Dvořák was no Richard Strauss in the art of narrative depiction and characterization—but ever since hearing the recordings of Beecham and Vaclav Talich, I have had a partiality for this piece, with its delightful tunes and gorgeous instrumentation.

As for the *Symphonic Variations*, skillfully fashioned as the score is, it can be a bore in anything less than a truly brilliant and inspired performance, such as Colin Davis' for Philips. Fortunately the Kertész reading is in the same class, and I find *The Golden Spinning Wheel* a more interesting companion for it than the *String Serenade* on the Davis disc.

The London Symphony's playing is absolutely top-drawer, and the recorded sound is up to London's very high standard. *D.H.*

GLIÈRE: *Symphony No. 3, in B Minor, Op. 42, "Ilya Mourometz."* Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA LSC 3246 \$5.98.

Performance: **Sleek and brilliant**
Recording: **Lacks body**

Reinhold Glière's cinematic narrative symphony on the exploits of the legendary Russian hero Ilya Mourometz is a pre-Soviet product, skillfully crafted but thoroughly second-hand in substance, a kind of Russian Wagnerism in the end movements mixed with Scriabin in the second movement. Even with cuts—as in all recorded performances except Hermann Scherchen's 1953 Westminster issue—Ilya becomes pretty much an overblown bore long before the final pages of petrification. The second movement is the most ingenious and original, and comes across as the most convincing in this. Ormandy's second recording of the work.

If the conductor had tried for a little more ruggedness and a little less polish in the end movements, the result might have been more exciting as a whole. Regrettably the sonics are no great help to him in the big moments of the score. The lack of genuine body and presence in the *tutti*s seems to these ears to result from

(Continued on page 80)

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Caballé
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Domingo
Merrill
Nilsson
Price
Resnik
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poor sonic focus, whether from faulty microphone placement or an unsatisfactory hall. Even so, I can too easily imagine how this performance would have sounded if it had been recorded in Boston's Symphony Hall under ideal conditions. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOSTEN: *Jungle*. American Symphony Orchestra. Leopold Stokowski cond. *Canzona Seria*. Paul Dunkel (flute), Arthur Krilov (oboe), David Shifrin (clarinet), William Scribner (bassoon), H. Rex Cooper (piano). **KUBIK:** *Symphony Concertante*. Arthur Hanneuse (trumpet), Marie-Thérèse Chailley (viola), Frank Glazer (piano); French Radio Orchestra. Gail Kubik cond. **COMPOSERS RECORDINGS INC.** CRI SD 267 \$5.95.

Performance: **Splendid**
Recording: **Splendid**

Composers Recordings Inc. has produced here a very fetching record, which finally returns to the catalog the original recording of Gail Kubik's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Symphony Concertante* (from the RCA Victor tape, here electronically rechanneled for stereo). It is about time, for this piece, with all its neo-Classical, jazzy Americanisms, is a fine one, full of invigorating energy and élan. Such music should not be lost to the record-buying public.

Werner Josten's *Jungle* is an attractive, coloristic piece, complete with "lion's roar," which dates from the late Twenties. Frankly a tone poem, it deals in panoramic sounds which have been out of fashion for a long time, even in dramatic, open-air films. It's not my cup of tea, but the piece is very well made and lots of folks will love it. Stokowski's performance is superb. The *Canzona Seria* of 1940, whose performance by members of the American Symphony Orchestra was supervised by the conductor, is an equally attractive work, and very well played. *L.T.*

LEONCAVALLO: *Pagliacci*. Montserrat Caballé (soprano), Nedda; Plácido Domingo (tenor). Canio; Sherrill Milnes (baritone). Tonio; Barry McDaniel (baritone). Silvio; Leo Goeke (tenor). Beppe; others: John Alldis Choir and London Symphony Orchestra. Nello Santi cond. *La Bohème: three excerpts; Zazà: two excerpts; Chatterton: Tu sola a me rimani*. Montserrat Caballé (soprano); Plácido Domingo (tenor); Sherrill Milnes (baritone); London Symphony Orchestra. Nello Santi cond. RCA LSC 7090 two discs \$11.96.

Performance: **Frustrating**
Recording: **Very good**

Subject at hand: Casting of Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*. Item No. 1: Take a celebrated diva who vaulted into world prominence as a Donizetti heroine and has since established herself as a mistress of *bel canto* and, indeed, of all music in which lovely tone and exquisite technique are paramount. She is noted for her aristocratic bearing and placid stage temperament. Cast her as the earthy, lustful Nedda. Item No. 2: Take a young American baritone with solid repertoire training in every European country except Italy, a singer who was hailed recently for his sensitive, poetic interpretation of Debussy's *Pelléas*. Cast him in the role of Silvio, the Calabrian stud The results are what might have been expected. Mme. Caballé and McDaniel are two fine artists, but their careful and calculated vocalization turns what Leoncavallo conceived as a

torrid love duet into a tender exchange of compliments. Miscasting on such an enormous scale verges on artistic perversion.

And that is too bad, because some of the ingredients for a first-rate *Pagliacci* are abundantly present. Tonio is just right for Sherrill Milnes' forthright, brusque vocalism. He delivers a rousing Prologue and carries his part of the duet with vocal opulence and dramatic conviction. The same goes for Plácido Domingo, yet here again I feel that such a dramatic role is not yet right for his essentially lyric sound. He combines passion and musicality with rare skill, though the special qualities of his singing are seldom fully captured by the microphone.

Except for the exciting finale, Nello Santi favors tempos that seem very slow for the opera's passion. The orchestral tone is highly polished, but conductor and singers (particularly Mme. Caballé) are not always together.

What saves the set for me is side four, with



LUIGI ALVA AND TERESA BERGANZA
Stars in a witty, sparkling Cenerentola

its excerpts from rarely heard Leoncavallo operas. Though not always at ease vocally, Caballé has some lovely moments in the arias of Mimi and Zazà, and Milnes ably projects the not very effective music of Rodolfo (a baritone in Leoncavallo's version) and Cascari's surefire "Zazà, piccola zingara." Domingo is excellent both in the *Bohème* aria (once a Caruso specialty) and the beautiful scene from *Chatterton* (which was transposed by Leoncavallo into the baritone range so that Titta Ruffo might record it in 1908).

Technically, the recording is fine. But the best navigators cannot save a vessel that is earmarked for shipwreck by its designers. *G.J.*

MOUSSORGSKY: *The Fair at Sorochinsk*. Gennady Troitsky (bass), Cherevik; Lyudmila Belobragina (soprano), Parasya; Antonina Klescheva (mezzo-soprano), Khivrya; Aleksei Usmanov (tenor), Gritsko; Yuri Yelnikov (tenor), Afanasy Ivanovich; Boris Dobrin (bass), Kum; Aleksander Polyakov (bass), the Gypsy; Sergei Strikachev (bass), Chernobog, the Devil. Moscow Radio Chorus and Orchestra. Yuri Aranovich cond. **MELODIYA/ANGEL** SRBL 4117 two discs \$9.96.

Performance: **Adequate**
Recording: **Fairly good**

There were a number of unfinished operas in Moussorgsky's legacy when that untidy Russian genius died in 1881, and the *Fair at Sorochinsk* was probably the *most* unfinished of them all. Moussorgsky had been working as his own librettist, basing his text on a Gogol tale, but he had only a rough outline of the final product, and work progressed fitfully. The completed fragments did contain much valuable material, though, and several eminent Russian composers—Rimsky-Korsakov, Cui, and Nikolai Tcherepnin among them—made valuable contributions toward combining them into something stageworthy. Finally, in the Twenties, using the published reconstruction edited by Pavel Lamm, Vissarion Shebalin (1902-1963) arrived at a version that could be brought to the stage. This officially sanctioned version was recorded by the Slovenian National Opera some fifteen years ago, and issued here as Epic 6017. The present recording, originating with the Moscow Radio, is the first in stereo.

First of all, the fact is that the libretto makes very little dramatic sense. At best, *The Fair at Sorochinsk* must be regarded as a scenic tableau (of sorts) representing Ukrainian rustic life. There is not a trace of plausible motivation or cohesive plot line, though unquestionably someone familiar with Ukrainian folk legends may bring more understanding to these goings-on than I can summon.

The music, however, is quite colorful and entertaining. There are attractive arias for the tenor and soprano, a lively choral treatment of the familiar *Night on Bald Mountain* (utilized here as a dream interlude, with the orchestration presumably close to Moussorgsky's original, and minus the lush Rimsky-Korsakov textures). And the opera is concluded with another well-known piece, the *Gopak*, rather tamely realized here, in my judgment.

Though the cast is adequate, it is not good enough to make this half-opera effective on records. Usmanov has an agreeable lyric tenor and Belobragina sings attractively enough as the girl Grisko marries at the end—I think. . . . The largest singing chores, those of basso Troitsky and mezzo Klescheva, however, are listening chores as well. The best singing voice belongs to basso Polyakov as the Gypsy, but I was not able to figure out what his role was all about.

Chorus and orchestra perform with acceptable skill if not with absolute precision. The recording offers wide stereo separation, but it is not the last word in clarity and balance. There is much here to delight *aficionados* of Russian music, but this is hardly a release of major significance. *G.J.*

RAFF: *Piano Concerto in C Minor, Op. 185*. **DREYSCHOCK:** *Concert-Piece in C Minor, for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 27*. Frank Cooper (piano); Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra, Zsolt Deáky cond. **GENESIS** GS 1013 \$5.98.

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

A while back I invented a game called "Catch that Kitsch." The idea is to come up with tunes that everybody recognizes instantly but nobody can actually identify. Well, two of the biggest guns in this game, without doubt, are Anton Rubinstein and Joachim Raff. And here, hard on the heels of the Rubinstein *E-flat Concerto* from Genesis, comes a Raff *C Minor* with a Dreyschock for good measure.

Raff makes the Kitsch game mainly on the

strength of his immortal *Cavatina*. Yet his reputation was not that of a salon composer, but rather that of a major symphonist. Nevertheless, all would still be dust and ashes if not for the enterprise of Frank Cooper, founder of Butler University's Romantic Music Festival and no mean pianist himself. In spite of Raff's supposed association with Wagnerism, there is nothing in this Concerto, dating from as late as 1873, which is not squarely in the grand tradition of Mendelssohn, Hummel, Spohr, *et al.* Next to this, Brahms was a raving futurist. This is not to deny the music its virtues of grace, fluent expression, and skill. The charms, faded as they are, are still considerable.

Actually, the real attention-getter on this album is the encore on the over-side. Alexander Dreyschock was the very prototype of the keyboard athlete, and his reputation as an automaton has pursued him even to our own day. But his *Konzerstück*, one of many works he wrote primarily for his own use, is a really effective piece of Romantic *Sturm und Drang*. Written much earlier than the Rubinstein and the Raff—in the early 1840's, when Dreyschock was first setting out—it has the fresher sound and greater immediacy of an earlier period. It steals shamelessly from Spohr and Chopin (or did they steal from Dreyschock?), and even—dare I mention the name again?—adumbrates Brahms, at least in its earnestness and intensity. It does wear a bit thin toward the end, but then all of these second-rate performer-composers tended to fall back on endless note blitzes for their final effect.

The Nuremberg Symphony, complete with old-fashioned German oboes, is an excellent choice for this provincial Central-European music. Cooper is a vigorous and expressive exponent of this forgotten music, and the recording is first-rate. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ROSSINI: *La Cenerentola*. Luigi Alva (tenor). Don Ramiro; Renato Capecchi (baritone). Dandini; Paolo Montarsolo (bass). Don Magnifico; Teresa Berganza (mezzo-soprano). Cenerentola; Ugo Trama (bass). Alidoro; Margherita Guglielmi (soprano). Clorinda; Laura Zannini (soprano). Tisbe. Scottish Opera Chorus and London Symphony Orchestra. Claudio Abbado cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 039 three discs \$20.94.

Performance: **Berganza brilliant**
Recording: **Very good**

Recorded at the Edinburgh Festival of 1971, this new *Cenerentola* threatens the supremacy of London's stereo version of some eight years ago, which boasted Giulietta Simionato's classic interpretation of the title role as its main attraction. From the technical point of view, DGG's solid, up-to-date achievement scores decisively over its predecessor, by no means a typical example of London's best audio efforts. I also prefer Claudio Abbado's conducting to that of his London counterpart, Olivero de Fabritiis. Abbado is energetic but never hectic, and manages to give prominence to his singers without neglecting the witty delights of Rossini's orchestration. The ensembles are well oiled, the crescendos gather momentum like so many jovial tornados—all is well in the pit.

And on stage, so to speak, we are offered the sparkling Teresa Berganza, surely the ideal *Cenerentola* of our time. Without suggesting any diminution of my esteem for the Sim-

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ionato portrayal—she was a magnetic singer if there ever was one—I cannot see how Berganza's performance can be improved upon. It combines the proper Rossini style with tones that are all warmth and tenderness, a technique that is virtuosic, and a personality that is radiantly sunny.

From here on, however, praise will flow more sparingly. Paolo Montarsolo is again the Don Magnifico, as he was in the London set. He is an expert *buffo*, and he brings everything to the part except a voice of really top caliber. The versatile Renato Capecchi finds the high extremes of his part uncomfortable, but otherwise handles the part of Dandini with aplomb. He has a good sense of comedy and sings the part less loudly and with more accuracy than his predecessor Sesto Bruscanini, also an able singer. London's Ugo Benel-

li, however, is superior to DGG's Luigi Alva. The latter knows the style, but his vocal resources fall short of the role's requirements.

DGG's version benefits from current studies in the Rossini legacy. There is only one major difference, however, between the two recorded versions: DGG includes an aria Rossini composed in 1820 for the then celebrated basso Gioacchino Moncaco. The aria is excellent. It seems to have come out of the same drawer from which the Pesaro wizard pulled Don Basilio's "La calunnia." Unfortunately, the music calls for a Ghiaurov; the Alidoro of this performance, Ugo Trama, presents it in an unfocused, woolly manner.

To sum up: Berganza, Abbado, orchestra, and engineering guarantee a high degree of listening enjoyment, and the minuses are not damaging enough to spoil the fun. *G.J.*

RUBINSTEIN: Piano Concerto No. 5, in E-flat Major, Op. 94. Adrian Ruiz (piano); Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra, Zsolt Deáky cond. GENESIS GS 1012 \$5.98.

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

Let me begin this review by pointing out that there really *is* an Anton Rubinstein Piano Concerto No. 5, in E-flat Major, Op. 94, and that it has indeed been recorded by the very gifted Los Angeles pianist Adrian Ruiz with the Nuremberg Symphony under the Hungarian conductor Zsolt Deáky for Genesis Records, a small Los Angeles label specializing in unusual repertoire.

It takes a lot of *chutzpah* to write a Fifth Concerto in E-flat Major, but then Rubinstein had *chutzpah*. He even managed to *look* like Beethoven, as well as sound like him, and he was undoubtedly a better pianist. Unfortunately, he was not a better composer—he was not even in the same class. This concerto was given its debut in 1874 and stayed in the repertoire about three decades; Josef Lhevinne made his American debut with the piece in 1906, but by that time even the Americans, impressed as they were with Lhevinne, were barely willing to accept the music. It seems to have disappeared shortly thereafter.

Given the origins of this recording and its star pianist, it seems almost too pat to describe this as the Hollywood idea of what a grand Romantic concerto should sound like, but that is just about what it is: grandiose, pompous, fustian, content with large rhetoric and saber-rattling, only very occasionally illuminated by inspiration, idea, or authentic expression.

Nevertheless, music like this deserves better than its fate. As the cliché has it, the piece has every right to be heard and judged on its merits. *Ben Hur* and *The Last Days of Pompeii* can still be had in libraries, and those who wish can still find *The Decadence of the Romans* and the paintings of Bouguereau in the museums. In the broad genre of the late-Romantic epic, Rubinstein probably produced better art than any of the above, and has at least as much claim to our latter-day attention.

In spite of the unlikely auspices, this seems to me an eminently respectable representation of this bit of massive late-Romantic machinery. Ruiz makes a powerful impression, and the orchestra—though apparently aided by a splice or two—is really quite up to the mark. The recording, although on the dark, resonant side, gives the general idea well enough. *E.S.*

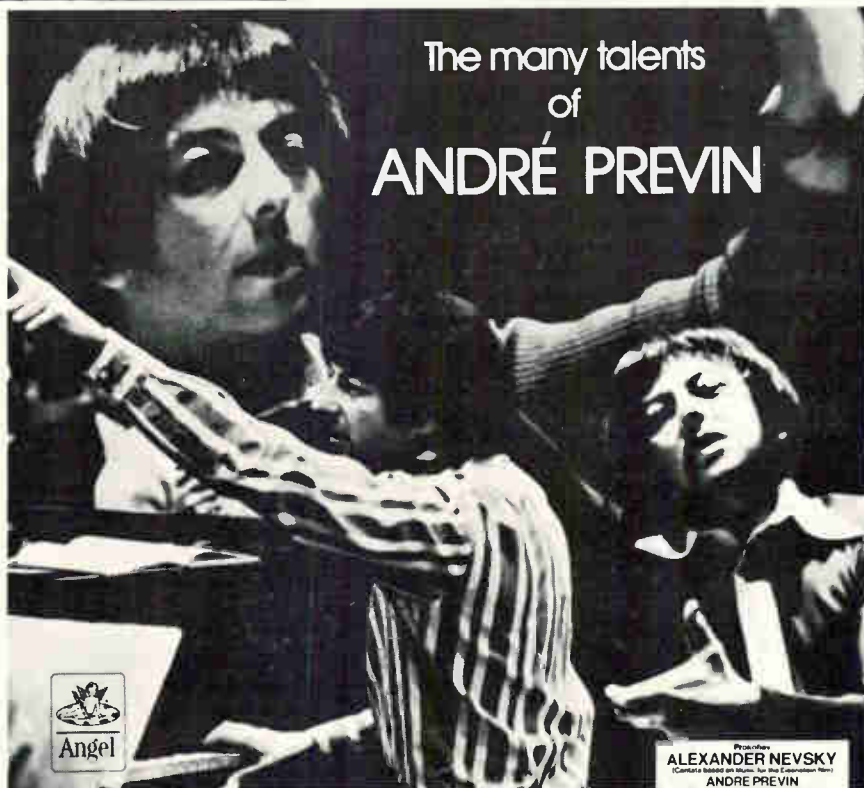
SCHUBERT: Moments musicaux (see BEE-THOVEN: Fifteen Variations)

SCHUBERT: Nachtheile; Ständchen (see CHARPENTIER)

SCHUBERT: Symphony No. 9, in C Major, "The Great." New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein cond. COLUMBIA M 31012 \$5.98. © MT 31012 \$6.98.

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

This is not the interpretation of Schubert's "Great" C Major Symphony that I would have anticipated from Leonard Bernstein. Straightforward, clear in details, well-knit, it takes much less advantage of the work's dramatic and heroic potentialities than do many other interpretations. I would have expected



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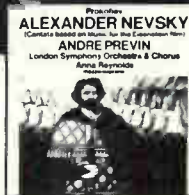
By 1968, he had appeared with most of the world's major orchestras in performances that merited his appointment as Principal Conductor of the great London Symphony Orchestra. A post he solidly holds today.

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Bernstein to emphasize these very qualities. Instead, he allows the work simply to move forward with, seemingly, an easy hand on the helm. The result is a satisfying performance, but one which disconcerts a bit by gently upsetting expectations, and which does not impress quite enough to make one forget those expectations. *L.T.*

SCHUMANN: *Fantasy in C Major, Op. 17; Carnaval, Op. 9.* Wilhelm Kempff (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 185 \$6.98.

Performance: **Fine, but not the best**
Recording: **Excellent**

Wilhelm Kempff's playing is never less than distinguished. His clean pedaling and crisp fingerwork often enhance the clarity of Schumann's piano writing, particularly in strenuous stretches of sixteenth notes. But these two performances are simply not imaginative enough to displace recommended versions already in the catalog.

Sviatoslav Richter, on Angel, probes the mysteries of the *Fantasy* far more deeply, in a performance unsurpassed in my experience. Kempff is disappointing here in the central march movement, where both his tempo and his phrasing seem curiously listless for music marked, admittedly, "Mässig," but qualified as "Durchaus energisch." And in the slow finale, he injects a cross-rhythm into the last left-hand eighth-note of measure five and similar later passages which is musically quite attractive, but which didn't happen to be thought of by Schumann.

I found Kempff's *Carnaval* more personal and more enjoyable than his *Fantasy*, but here again there are eccentricities. At the return of the *Valse allemande*, for instance, where Schumann's direction reads "Tempo primo ma più vivo," Kempff elects, for some reason, to play distinctly more slowly.

Arrau, on Philips, offers probably the most decidedly recommendable of the current *Carnaval* recordings—and his disc also happens to include an excellent version of the *Fantasy*, though not one to challenge Richter's. *B.J.*

SCRIABIN: *Piano Sonata No. 4, Op. 30; Piano Sonata No. 6, Op. 62; 5 Preludes, Op. 74; 3 Etudes, Op. 65.* BERG: *Piano Sonata, Op. 1.* Anton Kuerti (piano). MONITOR MSC 2134 \$4.98.

Performance: **Splendid**
Recording: **Excellent, but with groove flaws**

Scriabin fans should be extremely pleased with this new Monitor disc. Anton Kuerti, though occasionally staying on the understated side of things in his performances of the larger works (and I'm not sure one shouldn't thank him for that), gives positively dazzling interpretations of some of the more clear-cut and shorter pieces in which Scriabin kept his vapors under tighter control. The three *Études*, Op. 65, in particular, are worth the price of the record in themselves, and I doubt there are or will be any more stunning performances available at any time. Kuerti's performance of the Berg Sonata is also first-rate, entirely on a level with the other playing. My only complaint about this recording is that the first side (at least on my review copy) was seriously marred by bad spots in the grooves. *L.T.*

STRAVINSKY: *Symphony in Three Movements; Pulcinella—Suite.* Philharmonia Or-

chestra, Otto Klemperer cond. SERAPHIM S 60188 \$2.98.

Performance: **Extremely interesting**
Recording: **Excellent**

This is a reissue of a record that, judging by critical "blurbs" on the jacket, had an extremely warm welcome at its first appearance. I can see why, for Klemperer and the Philharmonia Orchestra produce beautifully colored and interpretively imaginative performances of both these Stravinsky works. As my late colleague William Flanagan is quoted as saying, in the *Pulcinella* Suite the music is reproduced with "sparkling clarity and lovely texture." Much the same is true of the *Symphony in Three Movements*, though the textures in this work are more muscular and tensile by nature. In the latter, Klemperer does a great

many interpretive things I doubt the composer would have approved of, but they cast some fascinating light on the music. He also changes a few tempos (toward the slower side) and broadens some passages once they have gotten started at a proper metronome speed. The result is often a feeling that the music is moving more slowly than it is, and more slowly than it should. The first movement here is the most convincing because there is less manipulation of tempo. But anyone who admires this Stravinsky *Symphony* will find the contrast between Klemperer's interpretation and more conventional ones fascinating. *L.T.*

TAUSIG: *Concert Études Nos. 1 in F-sharp Major, and 2 in A-flat Major, Op. 1; The Ghost Ship (Ballade in A Minor), Op. 1 (sic); Fantasy*

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on *Themes of Moniuszko's "Halka," Op. 2; L'Esperance, Op. 3; Man lebt nur einmal (Caprice Waltz after J. Strauss); Caprice Waltzes on Themes of Johann Strauss; Hungarian Gypsy Airs.* Michael Ponti (piano). CANDIDE CE 31031 \$3.98.

Performance: **Virtuosic but somewhat monochromatic**

Recording: **A bit dull**

Karl Tausig, a wild and woolly Liszt pupil, was born in 1841 and died quite prematurely from typhoid fever in 1871. Today he is remembered, if at all, for some Bach and Scarlatti transcriptions, but in his own day he was considered one of the most imaginative of the young virtuoso-composers. The selection here includes some of Tausig's most important pieces. We are apt to think of them more in terms of refined technical salon pieces than of significant creations of the 1860's. Yet, with all their surface brilliance—and that undeniably accounts for much of their charm—there are occasionally some remarkable effects, in the Flying Dutchman-like *Ghost Ship*, for example.

Charm, unfortunately, is what most of these performances lack to a greater or lesser degree. Ponti, the thirty-three-year-old American "marathon" pianist (he has, among other things, recorded the complete piano music of Tchaikovsky and Scriabin), has marvelous technical equipment, but his ability to color is apparently limited. There are, to be sure, some effective dynamic refinements here, and fewer hard-toned attacks than on some of his other recordings; yet I find little in the way of either gracefulness or personality. The notes

are there, the motions are gone through; compare, however, the *Fantasia on Hungarian Gypsy Songs*, the final section of which is almost identical to the *Hungarian Gypsy Airs* here, played on a piano roll by Josef Lhévinne (Argo DA 41). That is true panache. The Candide piano sound is somewhat lacking in body and brilliance, but is otherwise very clean. I.K.

VERDI: *Arias from La Forza del destino, Aida, Macbeth, and Otello* (see *Best of the Month*, page 68)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

VERDI: *I Lombardi alla prima Crociata*. Cristina Deutekom (soprano). Giselda: Placido Domingo (tenor). Oronte: Ruggero Raimondi (bass). Pagano: Jerome Lo Monaco (tenor), Arvino: Desdemona Malvisi (soprano). Vyclinda: Stafford Dean (bass). Pirro: Clifford Grant (bass). Acciano: others: Ambrosian Singers, and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Lamberto Gardelli cond. PHILIPS 6703 032 three discs \$17.94.

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Very good**

This is the second time that Verdi's fourth opera, *I Lombardi* (1843), has been recorded complete, and the new version thoroughly outclasses its venerable predecessor, produced some twenty years ago by Cetra and still available as Everest S-454/3.

I Lombardi is formative Verdi, immersed in the patriotic-revolutionary spirit pervading the operas which preceded and followed it.

Nabucco and *Attila*. For all of these, the librettist was Temistocle Solera, a writer of imagination, dramatic flair, and a propensity for eloquence and catchy lines, but an undisciplined and often clumsy craftsman. The undeniable flaws in both libretto and music are candidly discussed in Andrew Porter's excellent annotations, but Verdi cannot help being fascinating even at his crudest: to those willing to search through the semi-precious and the synthetic, he never fails to yield authentic gems that make the lot worth hearing and owning.

The story takes place at the time of the First Crusade. Solera's libretto is a series of far-fetched happenings, remarkable coincidences, and puzzling motivations. Whereas the plight of captive Hebrews in *Nabucco* provided an acceptable analogy with that of oppressed nineteenth-century Italy, the ambivalent feelings of contemporary men toward the Crusades make it difficult to separate the heroes from the villains in *I Lombardi*.

This recording is extravagantly cast. It offers Placido Domingo, the all-purpose tenor, performing with his customary musicality and sensitive artistry. At times there is evident strain in his fine lyric sound, and the engineering frequently keeps him in a distant perspective. The smooth bass of Ruggero Raimondi is a trifle light for the assignment, but it is artistically used and never less than pleasurable to hear. Cristina Deutekom's voice has become more tremulous since I last heard her. Her performance is uneven overall, but her high register is strong and limpid, her aria "*Non fù sogno*" is quite impressive, and she executes a lovely *diminuendo* on the high B-flat that

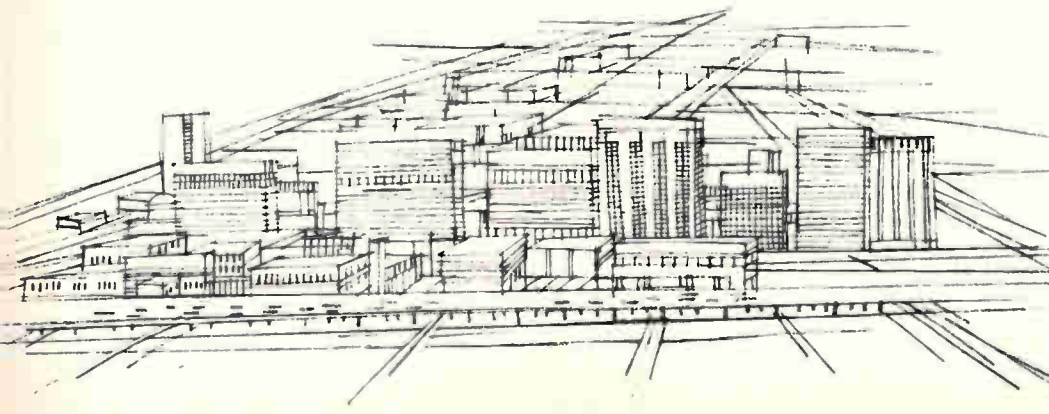
A TALE OF THREE CITIES

We couldn't think of a better way to prove the capability of the Sony STR-6065 than to test it in three cities with heavily trafficked FM bands. The engineering staffs of the FM station listing guides located in New York, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C. conducted the tests. (Who should know more about FM performance than magazines catering to the heaviest FM users?)

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concludes the third act duet with Oronte. Fortunately, all three principals reach their best form in the unique trio in Act Four, Scene 1, in which the crucial violin part is superbly played by Neville Taweeel.

The part of Giselda's father Arvino calls for a heavier, more "paternal" sound than Jerome Lo Monaco offers: nonetheless, this is an auspicious recording debut for this gifted New Yorker. The other singers are all capable. The important choral passages are done with spirit and good intonation, though the brisk tempos make clear articulation rather difficult. But I don't mean to find fault with Lamberto Gardelli's direction. He catches the spirit of this Romantic potboiler and imparts to it a true Italian *brio* without compromising orchestral tone and precision. Enthusiasm and affectionate regard for its spirit count for more in *I Lombardi* than doing full justice to its mediocre poetry. *G.J.*

WAGNER: *Rienzi* (highlights). Max Lorenz (tenor). Rienzi: Hilde Scheppan (soprano), Irene; Robert von der Linde (bass), Colonna; Margarete Klose (contralto). Adriano: Jaro Prohaska (baritone). Paolo Orsini: others; Chorus and Orchestra of the Berlin State Opera. Johannes Schüller cond. HISTORIA 657/58 two discs \$7.98.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Lo-fi—good for its age**

The performance history of *Rienzi* (1839), Wagner's third opera, has been negligible outside of Germany. The fact that it was last given at the Metropolitan on February 26, 1890, more or less speaks for the opera's American

"career," though it was revived by the touring German Opera Company in 1923, and given in concert form in New York under Thomas Scherman's direction as recently as December 1963.

A significant revival was staged by the Berlin State Opera in October 1941. The source of this recording is a radio broadcast which took place shortly thereafter, involving the Berlin protagonists, all front-line singers at the time. The set offers a generous representation of the rarely heard score: the familiar Overture, Rienzi's "*Erstehe, hohe Roma*" and the final scene of the first act, some important episodes from Act Two, Adriano's lengthy *scena* "*Gerechter Gott*," the battle hymn and the finale of the third act, and Rienzi's Prayer and the concluding scene.

Rienzi is a turbulent and eclectic score in which the Weber-derived elements are combined with French grand-opera influences. The latter, stemming from the grandiose Meyerbeer and Spontini models, sharpened Wagner's growing theatrical skills, lent emphasis to his employment of the chorus, and directed his attention toward crowd effects, conflagrations, and other devices of spectacular stagecraft. The opera is overlong and Wagner's text has little literary distinction, but the music clearly shows genius. It not only anticipates the powerful writing of *The Flying Dutchman* (which Wagner began before *Rienzi* was completed), but also points ahead to *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*. The third act, in particular, packs a great deal of dramatic wallop, compensating for some over-written choral scenes and some bogged-down ensembles.

Max Lorenz, in his prime in 1942, was a true *Heldentenor*, probably the next best thing to Melchior at the time. His tone is not the steadiest imaginable, but it is ringing, manly, and unstintingly forceful in the face of the title role's Tristanesque demands. Hilde Scheppan is heard most impressively in the finale as Irene, Rienzi's sister (a faintly incestuous touch, this), and Margarete Klose is powerful as Rienzi's rival Adriano. (This is probably the opera's crucial weakness: had this role, a male part, not been assigned to a contralto, the opera surely would have survived.) The little Prohaska and Von der Linde do in these excerpts they do very well, and the musical direction has strength and conviction.

Until a modern version comes along—with one hopes, singers of comparable quality—vocal collectors should not bypass a release of such historical significance. Save for some clicks on the first side of my review copy, I found the recorded sound a good bit better than listenable. *G.J.*

COLLECTIONS

CHAMBER MUSIC FOR SOPRANO AND CONTINUO (Italian Cantatas of the 17th and Early 18th Centuries). Cesti: *Languia già l'alba*. L. Rossi: *Horche l'oscuro manto*. A. Scarlatti: *Al fin m'ucciderete*. Stradella: *A quel candido foglio*. Sylvia Stahlman (soprano); Albert Fuller (harpsichord). PLEIADES P 103 \$5.79.

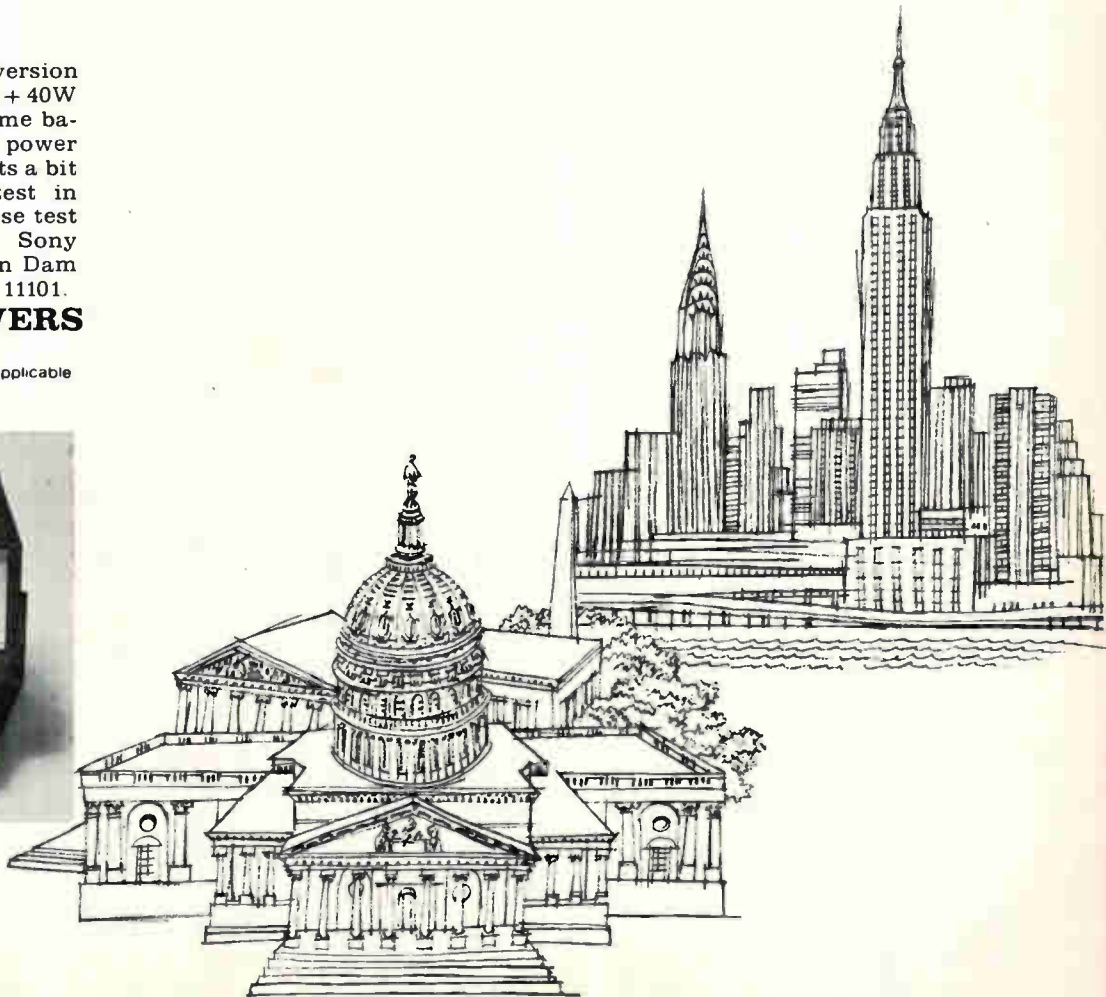
Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Fair**

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PRESENTS

WALTER CARLOS' CLOCKWORK ORANGE



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that runs chronologically from Luigi Rossi (c. 1598-1653) through Antonio Cesti (1623-1669) and Alessandro Stradella (1644-1682) to Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725). All have moments of poignant expression of unrequited love, and contain a minimum of vocal acrobatics. The earliest are quite free and recitative-like in form, whereas in the later pieces, most especially in the boldly harmonic Scarlatti, the standard formal aria preceded by recitative is already well established. All four, incidentally, seem to be first recordings. The performances are also stylistically very fine. Sylvia Stahlman has a most pleasant voice and manner, though in the two earlier cantatas I feel she does not sufficiently bring out the "affect" of the text. Her most expressive moments come in the Scarlatti. Albert Fuller's harpsichord accompaniments (unfortunately minus a supporting low string instrument) are excellent and highly imaginative. The one big disappointment is the quality of recorded sound, that and a tick- and crackle-infested pressing. The sonics are simply dull, and not even a treble boost gets rid of the veiled and colorless sound of both voice and harpsichord. In addition to excellent program annotations by Owen Jander, there are complete texts and translations. I.K.

MUSIC FOR TRUMPET. Wolpe: *Solo Piece for Trumpet* (1966). Persichetti: *The Hollow Men* (1944). William Mayer: *Concert Piece for Trumpet* (1957). Newel Kay Brown: *Poetics* (1970). Warren Benson: *Prologue*. Alec Wilder: *Suite for Trumpet and Piano* (1969); *A Song for a Friend*; *Caprice* (1967). Kupferman: *Three Ideas* (1967). Robert Levy (trumpet); Amy Lou Levy (piano). GOLDEN CREST □ (E-V matrix) RE 7045 \$4.98.

Performance: Good
Recording: Good, but flawed

Robert Levy, the trumpeter who recorded this group of works for trumpet and piano, is one of the growing number of young performers who seek to enlarge the repertoire of music for their instrument by specializing in the performance of contemporary music and by commissioning new works. His aim here was to present a cross-section of idioms, and if his cross-section is not terribly wide, it is nevertheless a cross-section. Beginning with the most rugged work, Stefan Wolpe's *Solo Piece for Trumpet*, it continues with works of a predominantly melodious mien, among them Persichetti's sweepingly moody *The Hollow Men* (originally scored for trumpet and string quartet). Mayer's neo-classic *Concert Piece for Trumpet*, 1957, an attractively tuneful work for student trumpeters by Newel Brown, Warren Benson's warm *Prologue*, Meyer Kupferman's *Three Ideas*, and some pop-type pieces by Alec Wilder. The interest level of the music varies, naturally, the first side carrying more weight than the second. Predictably, the Persichetti and Wolpe works stand firmly in the foreground. So does the piece by William Mayer, a considerably younger composer just now coming into prominent view.

Robert Levy shows himself to be an excellent musician, as does the pianist Amy Lou Levy, presumably his wife.

The recording, billed as a compatible four-channel job (playable in monophonic, stereo, or quadrasonic sound) is unfortunately afflicted, on my stereo playback equipment, with much pre-echo. L.T.

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STEREO REVIEW

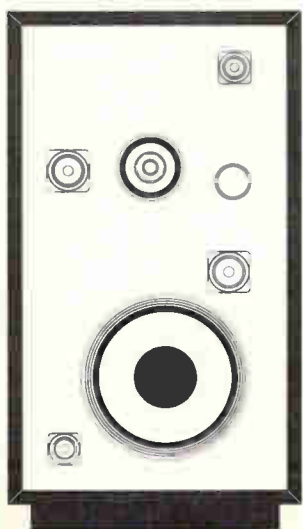
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— Julian Hirsch, STEREO REVIEW

Mr. Feldman goes on to say: "The 'ultimate' tuner? Well, if it isn't it'll do until someone comes up with something better!...There is NO tuning knob and there is NO tuning dial or pointer, since all frequency indications are read from digital read-out tubes...At the left are ten keyboard buttons, numbered '1' through '0', as well as a re-set button (punched when you wish to 'punch up' a new station frequency) and a button labeled BY-PASS (used to initiate the 'auto-sweep' action which causes the tuner to sweep downward in frequency, automatically locking in on every available signal in your area)...three more buttons, labeled A, B and C...are used to select three predetermined favorite stations...and there are additional buttons for SQUELCH DEFEAT and STEREO ONLY reception..."

"...a tiny test switch button when depressed, lights up all the elements of the digital readout tubes to insure that they are operative. There is also a rotary control which determines the speed at which the AUTO-TUNE action takes place, a noise squelch adjustment control, and an AGC squelch control. A slide switch changes the meter function from signal strength indication to multi-path indication and a second, three-position slide switch selects automatic stereo, partial stereo blend (for reduced noise in weak-signal stereo reception situations with some sacrifice in overall stereo separation), and mono-mix. The right section behind the trap door contains three horizontal slots, labeled A, B and C. These slots correspond to the three PREPROGRAM selection buttons described earlier and, upon inserting three plastic cards no larger than a standard credit card, the buttons can be used to tune in your favorite station which you easily program onto the cards yourself..."

"...The rear panel of the AJ-1510...contains antenna terminals for 300 ohm or 75 ohm transmission lines, a dual pair of output jacks as well as horizontal and vertical output jacks for connection to an oscilloscope for observing the nature and extent of any local multipath problems beyond what you can read on the dual purpose self-contained signal meter..."

"...we were able to appreciate the amount of thoughtful engineering that went into this unit, both in terms of its performance as well as its kit feasibility. Recent Heathkits have increasingly

stressed the modular approach and the AJ-1510 has carried this concept to its ultimate. There is a 'master' or 'mother' board into which are plugged seven circuit boards. Connectors are used throughout, which means that boards can be removed without having to unsolder or unwire a single connection.

"...The heart of the non-mechanical tuning aspect of this unit lies in the voltage-tuned FM front-end, which is of the varactor-tuned type and contains no moving variable capacitor. Instead, a suitable d.c. voltage applied to the varactor diodes determines their effective capacitance. The keyboard, pre-programmed cards, or automatic sweep tuning methods all program a divider circuit. The divider circuit divides the tuner's local oscillator frequency and compares it to a crystal controlled reference frequency and the result of this comparison is the tuning voltage. Changing the divide ratio of the divider circuit changes the d.c. voltage applied to the tuner and a different station is tuned in. Simultaneously, a visual display of the station frequency is provided by the readout circuitry. Because of the crystal controlled reference frequency and the phase-lock-loop circuitry, however, the accuracy of the frequency tuned in is no longer dependent upon the drift-free characteristics of the FM front-end but will be as accurate as the reference crystal frequency and, in the case of the AJ-1510, that means at least 0.005% accuracy!..."

"...Do not confuse this 'digital readout' tuner with some units which have recently appeared on the market and simply replace the tuning dial with numeric readout devices. The latter variety guarantee no more tuning accuracy than their 'dial pointer' counterparts. The Heath AJ-1510 is tuned exactly to 101.5 MHz when those readout tubes READ 101.5 — and not to 101.54 or 101.47!..."

"...There is no doubt that the elaborate 'computer' type circuitry incorporated in the Heath AJ-1510 must represent a fair percentage of its selling price, but even if you ignored it completely (or considered it as a welcome bonus), the tuner's performance as a tuner would justify its total price and then some.

"...Almost as if to reprimand us, when we punched up 87.9 MHz on the keyboard, a light lit up on the front panel and read REPROGRAM. (It could have said 'please'...) Realizing that we weren't about to fool this unit, we settled for 88.3, 98.9 and 106.1. These

Heathkit 'classic'

chosen frequencies, together with our not-too-perfect 'screen room' enabled us to read a sensitivity of 1.6 uV. Impressed, we decided that we weren't going to let this one get off so easily, so we tried to measure alternate channel selectivity and, as near as we could figure, it was just about 100 dB!...[With] the total quieting curve, you can interpolate the THD (mono) down to an incredible 0.18% for 100% modulation (as opposed to 0.3% claimed). Ultimate S/N is a very respectable 66 dB....quieting reaches a very usable 56 dB with a mere 5 uV of signal input. In the stereo mode, we remeasured the THD and found that it was only 0.25% for 100% modulation (as against 0.35% claimed) and that, to us, represents a real breakthrough, since stereo THD is usually much higher than mono THD on most tuners and receivers we have measured in the past...

"...Here's a tuner that maintains at least 30 dB of separation from 50 Hz to 14 KHz and hits a mid-band separation figure of 46 dB! Both SCA and 19 and 38 kHz suppression were in excess of 60 dB, which means that SCA interference was absolutely inaudible. Capture ratio measured 1.35 dB as against 1.5 dB claimed... In short, every space was easily met or exceeded and if you compare published specs with the best of the 'ready mades' you're not likely to come up with a finer set of readings anywhere..."

"...After spending several hours playing with the keyboard, the automatic sweep, and the dozen or so cards which I prepared with the aid of a small pair of scissors, I got down to the serious business of logging stations...Would you believe 63, without having to rotate my antenna?..."

"...We enjoyed the crystal-clear, distortion-free reception we obtained in using the Heath AJ-1510...[it] has got to be the way all tuners of the future will be made. It's very nice to know that Heath has just brought that future into the present..."

Mr. Hirsch comments further: "...the Heath AJ-1510 digital Stereo FM tuner kit is new, with a fresh and imaginative design approach...and we know of nothing else on the market with comparable features..."

"...It is quite impossible, in the available space, to give an adequate description of this remarkable tuner. Anyone familiar with the inside of a typical FM tuner will not recognize this as belonging to the same family. It more closely resembles a small digital computer. There are no moving parts (the tuning is entirely electronic), and almost nothing resembling r.f. circuit components... The i.f. selectivity is provided by sealed multipole inductance-capacitance filters. Not only do they give outstanding alternate-channel selectivity (the kind most of us are concerned with), but it is also easy to separate adjacent-channel signals only 200 kHz apart..."

"...our measured performance data on the AJ-1510 met or exceeded Heath's published specifications...The IHF sensitivity was 1.6 microvolts...The 89-dB image-rejection figure was very good, and we confirmed Heath's alternate-channel selectivity rating of 95 dB...The FM frequency response was well within ± 1 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. Stereo channel separation was exceptionally good — 40 dB at middle frequencies...suppression of 19 and 38 kHz components of stereo FM signals was the best we have yet encountered..."

"...tuning the AJ-1510, in any of its modes, is a unique experience. No matter how you go about it, the output is always a clean signal or nothing — not a hint of a thump, hiss, or squawk at any time...for anyone who wants a tuner that is most certainly representative of the present state of the art, and which is not likely to be surpassed in any important respect for the foreseeable future, his search can stop at the AJ-1510."

Kit AJ-1510, "Computer Tuner" less cabinet, 23 lbs. 539.95*
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CIRCLE NO. 54 ON READER SERVICE CARD



ENTERTAINMENT

POPS • JAZZ • FILMS • THEATER • FOLK • SPOKEN WORD

Reviewed by NOEL COPPAGE • DON HECKMAN • PAUL KRESH
 REX REED • PETER REILLY • JOEL VANCE

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DAVID BROMBERG. David Bromberg (vocals, guitar); Norman Blake (guitar); Wil- low Scarlett (harmonica); various other musi- cians. *Last Song for Shelby Jean; Suffer to Sing the Blues; Dehlia; Pine Tree Woman; Lonesome Dave's Lovesick Blues #3; Missis- sippi Blues;* and three others. COLUMBIA CS11104 \$4.98.

Performance: **Penetrating**
 Recording: **Excellent**

David Bromberg, who is not exactly famous but is well respected as a guitarist for big stars (Bob Dylan and Jerry Jeff Walker, among others), is a potentially explosive paradox of vulnerability and confidence, and this album or the next—or the next after that—should kick up a lot of excitement. Bromberg is a rap- singer, like Arlo Guthrie, but he's something else, too—a folk-blues interpreter who some- how manages to stand outside the song the way Dylan used to and the old bluesmen did, and shows signs of seasoning out of all pro- portion to his age and presumed experience. I fear for him; it seems likely he will become a so-called "superstar," and we are not kind to superstars. We prowling the pubs and listen to debut recordings in search of high promise, and when we find the Latest Thing before everyone else does, we play with it a while and then, as the hordes close in, begin the process of throwing it away. Tolkien, James Taylor, Bob Dylan, and J. D. Salinger all bear the tooth marks of faddists. Usually one of the first fangs sunk is the sort of thing I'm trying to avoid here: a rave review that says this per- former is marked for greatness.

The truth is that this album is full of promise but it is not a great album. Bromberg's self- conscious combination of a certain invul- nerable humor and a mastery of all sorts of guitar work convey the promise, and so does the caliber of the songs he has written. But the

songs also indicate he hasn't fully realized himself yet, and may not if he has to work in a circus of idolaters. I hope we can enjoy this album, or parts of it, without wagging it around as an icon. *Lonesome Dave's Love- sick Blues #3* might encourage such idolatry. It is a rollicking Bluegrass tune, to which has been added Richard Grando's tenor sax—and it doesn't sound incongruous. Grando does some bantering with veteran (and fantastic) fiddler Vassar Clements to create one of the



DAVID BROMBERG
Seasoned far beyond his age

most congenial moods I've recently been put in by pop music. And I hope we can listen to Bromberg's poignant *Sammy's Song*, about a boy's weird, shattering loss of virginity, with- out pronouncing Bromberg the next disposa- ble god. The banality of *Suffer to Sing the Blues*, the inclusion of *Pine Tree Woman* (apparently to prove he can play bottleneck guitar), and his vocal uncertainties in some situations suggest he still has room to grow. If we don't swarm all over him. N.C.

JULIE BUDD. Julie Budd (vocals); orchestra, Tony Hatch arr. and cond. *Touch Me; Call Me; Marie de Vere; You've Got a Friend; West Side Apartment;* and six others. RCA LSP 4622 \$5.98. Ⓟ P8S 1852 \$6.98.

Performance: **Technically very good**
 Recording: **Excellent**

Julie Budd is all dressed up with no place to go. She has a fine, musical voice, with an ex- pensive, true range, and she now seems to consciously try to avoid overt Streisandisms

(although there are still too many). Her new- est album is an expertly lush commercial item with well-chosen material and one possible mini-hit, *Don't Take Your Love Away*. The reason Miss Budd doesn't seem to be going anywhere in particular is that she's mov- ing against a trend toward less showy vocaliz- ing and more acting ability. The record public now asks for a lot more than nice sounds com- ing through the speakers. Unfortunately, what she is doing now is what many successful young singers were doing ten years ago. In clubs Miss Budd has proved to be a great, and expectable, success. There is nothing that the middle-agers who can afford the tab like bet- ter than young people singing *their* kind of music. But since the club business seems to be going the way of the Great Bustard, and since Miss Budd seems anxious for a record career, it's time for her to stop worrying about technique and start concentrating on commu- nicating meaning. At the moment—and this album is an example—the focus seems to be on the fact that she can sing well. Streisand, whom Miss Budd superficially resembles in voice, made the instrument of her voice serve her personal feelings about the song from the very beginning, and out of that came her unique style. It wasn't just a gimmicky device on her part to slow down *Happy Days* or dramatize *Cry Me a River*, but an actress' in- terpretation of character in words and music. It is the absence of a search for emotional roots that seems most damaging here. P.R.

ERIC CLAPTON: *The History of Eric Clapton* (see Best of the Month, page 69)

RY COODER: *Into the Purple Valley.* Ry Cooder (vocals, guitars, mandolin); various accompanists. *How Can You Keep On Mov- ing; Billy the Kid; Money Honey; FDR in Trinidad; Teardrops Will Fall; On a Monday;* and five others. REPRIS 2052 \$5.98, Ⓟ M 82052 \$6.98, Ⓞ M 52052 \$6.98.

Performance: **Relaxed**
 Recording: **Very good**

Pickers want to sing, singers want to pick, actors and professors want to politick. So let them, I say—I'm an anarchist, anyway. Ry Cooder is a fine young guitarist, one of the finest bottleneck guitarists, but this marks his second effort as a quite ordinary vocalist. If you listen to this one for picking, you'll hear a lot more of what sounds like a mandolin than you'll hear of bottleneck. Only on Woody Guthrie's *Vigilante Man* does he really get into sliding the glass on the strings. As a sing- er, he's passable. But I wonder who picked out this strange assortment of tunes. Could it be someone knows something about the range

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓞ = stereo cassette
- Ⓞ = quadrasonic disc
- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel quadrasonic tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track quadrasonic tape
- Ⓞ = quadrasonic cassette

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

of Cooder's voice that we don't? Could it be—three of these ditties are listed as "traditional," and the copyright has doubtless expired on two others—that someone doesn't like paying royalties to songwriters? Anyway, *Billy the Kid* is nicely done and there's that good slide work on *Vigilante*. And, oh yes, the jacket is extremely neat-keeno, featuring a highly polished, very yellow 1946 Buick convertible. Could this somehow be connected to Dylan's reference in one of his song titles to a Buick Six? N.C.

EMERSON, LAKE & PALMER: *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Emerson, Lake & Palmer (vocals and instrumentals). *Promenade; The Gnome; Promenade; The Sage; The Old Castle; Blues Variation; Promenade; The Hut of Baba Yaga*; and five others. COTILION ELP 66666 \$4.98, Ⓜ 86666 \$6.98, Ⓞ M 56666 \$6.98.

Performance: **Rocking Moussorgsky**
Recording: **Good**

How one reacts to this sort of thing depends, I suppose, on whether you like Stokowski transcriptions of Bach, or—perhaps more to the point—the Swingle Singers' jazzed-up versions of the classical repertoire. I don't have any particular preconceptions about trying new interpretations of old music, so long as the result is either an improvement (rare, rare) or, more likely, a different perspective.

Since Ravel had a go at *Pictures*, there's no particular reason why Emerson, Lake & Palmer shouldn't try their hand(s) at it. But the results are hardly an improvement. Keith Emerson is a spectacularly talented keyboard player, but his sense of musical coloration is too dominated by primary hues to understand fully the infinite gradations of light and shade that Moussorgsky surely intended.

A different perspective? Yes, indeed. But not in the music itself so much as in the way it has been decorated. Adding rock rhythms, occasional lyrics, and improvised interjections doesn't really show us a different side of Moussorgsky's *Pictures*; it simply puts them in Seventies chrome and plastic frames. Don H.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

FAIRPORT CONVENTION: *"Babbacombe" Lee*. Simon Nicol (guitar, dulcimer); Dave Mattacks (drums, electric piano); Dave Swarbrick (fiddle, mandolin); Dave Pegg (bass, mandolin). A&M SP 4333 \$5.98, Ⓜ 4333 \$6.98, Ⓞ 4333 \$6.98.

Performance: **Monumental**
Recording: **Excellent**

This is, in my opinion, the first successful rock "opera." It works well phonographically, and it could be staged as an orthodox theatrical production (with somebody contributing a minimal "book") or as a ballet. The music has grace, discipline, and power, and the lyrics are tight and effective. The work (and it is a single work) does not have the energy or the raw slugging power of *Tommy*, but it has a greater overall effect because of its careful construction. *Tommy* is an influence here: the last song fades out on the repeated refrain, "Shake the holy water/Summon up the guard/Dying's very easy/Waiting's very hard," a prayer much like the famous "See me, feel me" of Pete Townshend's creation.

There are other similarities. Both operas

deal with a human being deformed by forces over which he has no control. Both leading characters survive the forces to the extent that, by the end of the respective works, both are alive but without the capacity to live; the world has taken their lives without killing them. Townshend made up his plot from scratch. Fairport Convention (who compose collectively) took their plot from history: John Lee was convicted for the murder of his employer, Miss Keyse, in the English village of Babbacombe, in 1885. Sentenced to hang, Lee was taken onto the scaffold three times. Three times it failed to operate. English law, like baseball, permits only three strikes, so the authorities were out. Lee's sentence was commuted by Queen Victoria to life. His confinement, however, threw him together with two warders who mercilessly heckled him. Lee always protested his innocence, and claimed that the night before his first scheduled



ARETHA FRANKLIN
A talent so powerful it's dangerous

execution he had dreamed that Divine Providence would spare him.

As a historical figure, especially one in a murder case, Lee, his "crime," and his fate become a subject of speculative opinion; the Fairport Convention four choose to believe in his innocence. They explore his background, his relationships, and his many disappointments. To them, he is a man who starts out with the same supposedly even chance that everyone has to make a good life. But the world and fate constantly deny him, punish him, and revile him. Lee the historical figure becomes less important than the statement Fairport Convention chooses to make about him: the gods, earthly or heavenly, are not always kind—and the gods own the joint.

Twelve cheers (three apiece) for Messrs. Nicol, Mattacks, Swarbrick, and Pegg. They have made a work of art and advanced the art of rock music. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ARETHA FRANKLIN: *Young, Gifted and Black*. Aretha Franklin (piano and vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Oh Me Oh My (I'm a Fool for You, Baby); First Snow in Kokomo; Day Dreaming; Rock*

Steady; Young, Gifted and Black; April Fools; Border Song (Holy Moses); The Long and Winding Road; I've Been Loving You Too Long; and three others. ATLANTIC SD 7213 \$5.98, Ⓜ 87213 \$6.98, Ⓞ M 57213 \$6.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Very good**

Aretha Franklin is a great talent and has already made more good records in a few years than most artists make in a lifetime (to mention only one, her version of *Respect* is—ye gads!—better than Otis Redding's and is one of the classic soul recordings of all time). In addition, she has survived the misdirection of her talents at various periods. She has such enormous zest and strength that it needs to be controlled—like atomic energy's, its uses must be carefully directed.

In this album she maintains a discipline over her talent that allows her to exhibit her capabilities and her mastery of styles. *Rock Steady*, *Oh Me Oh My*, and *Day Dreaming* show her in complete control of funk, soul-ballad, and near-jazz ballad styles. Her version of *Border Song* is excellent and her reading of *April Fools* confident, and she puts her gospel background into the title tune. But to this reviewer the killer song is the delicate *First Snow in Kokomo*—her own tune—combining her soul style with her jazz or jazz-influenced experience into a personal statement that is not earth-shaking but makes it a nicer place to live on. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DONNY HATHAWAY: *Live*. Donny Hathaway (vocals and keyboards); with various musicians. *What's Goin' On; The Ghetto; Hey Girl; You've Got a Friend*; and four others. ATCO SD 33 386 \$5.98, Ⓜ 8386 \$6.98, Ⓞ M 5386 \$6.98.

Performance: **Soul-stirring rock**
Recording: **Good**

Donny Hathaway seems to be doing everything right lately. He has functioned as a superb sideman with the likes of Lena Horne, he has had a hit recording in a duet with Roberta Flack, and he has shown—always—the ability and the performing presence necessary for potential stardom.

I've always preferred his "live" work to his recordings, so this chronicle of two gigs at Hollywood's Troubadour and New York's Bitter End is particularly welcome. Hathaway runs the gamut, demonstrating the far-ranging versatility that is the very essence of his talent. Carole King's *You've Got a Friend*, Marvin Gaye's funky outcry against a world going wrong, *What's Goin' On*, John Lennon's *Jealous Guy*, and Hathaway's own hit *The Ghetto* are shaped and molded into high-profile, hard-swinging samples of contemporary blues rock at its grooviest. Don H.

JIMI HENDRIX: *Hendrix in the West*. Jimi Hendrix (vocals and guitar); various orchestras. *Lover Man; Red House; Little Wing; Voodoo Chile; Blue Suede Shoes*; and three others. REPRISE MS 2049 \$5.98, Ⓜ 82049 \$6.98, Ⓞ M 52049 \$6.98.

Performance: **Variable**
Recording: **Variable**

This is a miscellaneous collection of tracks taken from "live" performances on the West Coast by a fine pop artist who, at times,

verged on greatness. No dates are given here, but most of the material seems to be vintage Hendrix, and there is one really sensational performance, *Voodoo Chile*. I did not find Hendrix's death as tragic as Jim Morrison's or, in some ways, Janis Joplin's, since he was able to realize his potential fully during his lifetime, brief as it was, and that must have brought him great satisfaction. And while I'm digressing, let me add that these deaths seem to have gone for naught, since the pop-music world still abounds with performers going down the chute of self-destructiveness and fans who disregard the signs and envy them for their "freedom." Anyway, Hendrix was a pop avatar, and you can get a pretty good idea what he was like from this disc. **P.R.**

HUMBLE PIE: *Smokin'*. Humble Pie (vocals and instrumentals). *Hot 'n' Nasty*; *The Fixer*; *You're So Good to Me*; *C'Mon Everybody*; *Old Time Feelin'*; *30 Days in the Hole*; *Road Runner*; and three others. A & M SP 4342 \$5.98.

Performance: **Grunt, growl, etc.**
Recording: **Okay**

Remember when British rock used to be different and fascinating? Well, now it turns out that "equality"—that politically lip-smackin' bowl o' blood—applies as much to rockers whose eastern boundary is the Dover cliffs as to those for whom it is the port of New York. I suppose you can dance to this album. You can also ignore it without fear that its like will never be seen or heard again. It's like too many other albums, too many other groups. It's flawless and flat, and its ultimate effect is a terminal drooping of the eyelids, prefaced by a shrug of the shoulders. **J.V.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DOUG KERSHAW: *Swamp Grass*. Doug Kershaw (violin and vocals); orchestra. *Louisiana Woman*; *Swamp Grass*; *Zacharia*; *Vicki Brown*; *Cajun Funk*; and six others. WARNER BROS. 2581 \$5.98, (M) 82581 \$6.98, (C) M 52581 \$6.98.

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

Cajun fiddling, which I encountered for the first time in Virgil Thomson's brilliant score for Flaherty's *Louisiana Story* several (!) years ago, is a unique American folk art. It bears the same idiomatic distinctiveness as the word Cajun itself, which is Louisiana *patois* for the Acadian exiles. To me, it has the erie loveliness of a fly caught in the musical amber of a long-ago time. Doug Kershaw is the best Cajun fiddler I've ever heard, and his playing on this album is superb. His vocals aren't on the same level, but they do have a natural, relaxed air, and, paradoxically, vibrate with the sure and sustained touch of a performer who is heir to a folk tradition. It is the same brand of sureness that one finds in Oriental dancers, who are taught their gestures by being guided manually from behind, so that the moves are reflexive rather than intellectually or visually learned.

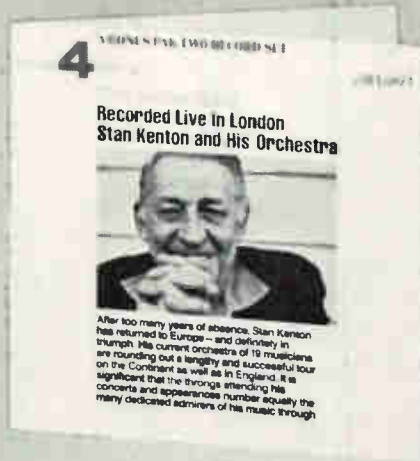
All the songs here, except *Louisiana Man*, are by Kershaw, and though they tart up the Cajun tradition in deference to the pop market, they—and the performances—shine with authenticity. Kershaw's finest achievement is *Cajun Funk*, an instrumental, in which he rises to virtuoso level. It is here that the echoes of another time come into focus so sharply:

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the sounds Kershaw produces take on the ambivalent suggestions of something between a sitar and a viola da gamba, and, eerily, the beckoning ghostliness of distant bagpipes.

Perhaps I was hearing things, but any performer who can get so prismatic an effect out of any instrument is, in my mind, a master. This is a really fine album worth everyone's attention. *P.R.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LEO KOTTKE: *Greenhouse*. Leo Kottke (guitars and vocals); Steve Gammell (guitar). *Bean Time; Owls; Tiny Island; Louise; You Don't Have to Need Me*; and six others. CAPITOL ST 11000 \$5.98, ⑧ 8XT 11000 \$6.98, ⑥ 4XT 11000 \$6.98.

Performance: **First-rate**
Recording: **Very good**

Yes, indeed, here's a pleasant surprise. First of all, Leo Kottke is some kind of mother guitarist; listen to the way he rips through *Bean Time* and hear how much technical excitement can be generated out on the high-speed fringes of the folk style. But I knew about Kottke's guitar playing, always respected it, and wondered what he was going to do with it. I was less intrigued, in the past, with Kottke's singing, but his voice now seems to have found its sound, and his point of view has clarified. Such songs as *Tiny Island, Louise, From the Cradle to the Grave*, and *You Don't Have to Need Me* have been well chosen as vehicles for his full, dark voice.

Kottke is good enough, in fact, to remind me of one of my favorite singer-songwriters, Fred Neil. The similarity of vocal timbre is the most noticeable element, of course, but Kottke's phrasing and the cool resignation of his emotions provide a more subtle but equally valid point of comparison.

If you haven't heard Kottke yet—and those who haven't are legion—here's the place to begin. It just might start him on the path toward a goal I suspect he is very leery of: pop stardom. *Don H.*

MANFRED MANN: *Earth Band*. Manfred Mann's Earth Band (vocals and instrumentals). *California Coastline; Captain Bobby Stout; Sloth; Living Without You; Tribute; Please Mrs. Henry*; and four others. POLYDOR PD 5015 \$4.98, ⑧ 8F 5015 \$6.98, ⑥ CF 5015 \$6.98.

Performance: **A one-tune outing**
Recording: **Very good**

You've got to give Manfred Mann credit for trying. In the years since he's led one of England's major rock groups, he has tried formula after formula in what has been a generally vain effort to revive his flagging success.

This time it's a topical blend of rock and folk and soul—never going too far in one direction, always sticking close to what Mann must view as the current rock mainstream. The result is predictably bland, with one notable exception—Randy Newman's delightful song *Living Without You*. In the totally unexpected way big hits sometimes happen, Mann has come up with precisely the right interpretation—slightly humorous, just a touch of Newmansque whimsy—for the song. By the time you read this, it will very likely be a hit single (I should say I hope it will be a hit single), and—who knows—Manfred Mann may finally have gotten back on the rainbow trail. *Don H.*

McKENDREE SPRING: *McKendree Spring 3*. McKendree Spring (vocals and instrumentals). *Down by the River; Fading Lady; Flying Dutchman; Heart Is Like a Wheel; Hobo Lady*; and three others. DECCA DL 75332 \$4.98.

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

Give McKendree Spring credit: they try hard. The group is obviously well-rehearsed, they show the enthusiastic interaction of musicians who know and enjoy playing with each other, and they are all fine individual performers.

But the constant focus placed on Michael Dreyfuss' electric violin ultimately brings one's listening response down to the question of whether or not violin-rock is one's cup of tea. And I'm sorry, folks, but—except in very special circumstances, like the Mahavishnu Orchestra, for example—it isn't mine.

No, this is not a bad record, but it's not a particularly distinguished one, either, and



LEO KOTTKE
On the way to stardom?

middle-of-the-road competence just isn't enough in today's glutted pop market. *Don H.*

J. F. MURPHY & SALT (see *Best of the Month*, page 68)

TRACY NELSON: *Mother Earth*. Tracy Nelson (vocals); various accompanying musicians. *The Same Old Thing; I'm That Way; Mother Earth (Provides for Me); Tennessee Blues; I Want to Lay Down Beside You*; and five others. REPRIS MS 2054 \$5.98, ⑧ M 82054 \$6.98, ⑥ M 52054 \$6.98.

Performance: **Uneven country blues**
Recording: **Very good**

I keep waiting for Tracy Nelson (and the miscellaneous assortment of musicians who make up the backup groups that she persists in calling Mother Earth) to produce a record that's really representative of her skills. At her best, Miss Nelson is a hooting, hollering country-blues singer who can belt with the best of them. In past outings, individual tracks sometimes suggested the genuine breadth of her talents (an original called *Down So Low* on an earlier album is a good example), but, as in this set, most of the space was filled with pointless meandering.

If I had to pick (and I'd rather not) I'd recommend *Mother Earth (Provides for Me)*

and *I Want to Lay Down Beside You* from this program. But the predominant feeling is one of yet another ruined expectation. Tracy Nelson has all the parts, but when is she going to put them together right? *Don H.*

PAUL SIMON. Paul Simon (vocals, guitar); various musicians. *Mother and Child Reunion; Duncan; Everything Put Together Falls Apart; Run That Body Down; Armistice Day; Me and Julio Down by the Schoolyard; Hobo's Blues*; and four others. COLUMBIA KC 30750 \$5.98, ⑧ CR 30750 \$6.98, ⑥ CA 30750 \$6.98, ⑥ CT 30750 \$6.98.

Performance: **Undistinguished**
Recording: **Excellent**

I gather the team of Simon and Garfunkel is still intact, and this album is merely Simon's way of keeping his hand in while Garfunkel makes movies. Those who hear this one will certainly hope that's the case. I'm now wondering if Garfunkel's arranging work for the team doesn't include sending Simon back to rewrite some of his songs before recording them, for Simon has recorded a few here that just don't meet the standards of S-&G records. Garfunkel's voice will be missed, too, of course—a song like *Armistice Day* might have been salvaged by some heroic harmonizing.

The album starts with two tunes, *Mother and Child Reunion* and *Duncan* (the latter featuring those Peruvian flutes again), that are strong enough to make the others seem even weaker than they may actually be. *Peace Like a River* is the best of the remaining lot; it seems to contain a few elements of self-plagiarism, but not many compared to *Papa Hobo*. Even with below-snuff songs and Simon sounding none too distinguished as a solo vocalist, the album compares favorably with the general run released lately. Just don't expect it to stand up to "Bookends" or "Bridge Over Troubled Water." *N.C.*

NANCY SINATRA AND LEE HAZLEWOOD: *Nancy and Lee Again*. Nancy Sinatra (vocals); Lee Hazlewood (vocals, guitar); orchestra. Clark Gassman and Larry Muhoberac arrs. *Arkansas Coal (Suite); Big Red Balloon; Friendship Train; Paris Summer; Congratulations; Did You Ever*; and four others. RCA LSP 4645 \$5.98, ⑧ P8S 1879 \$6.98, ⑥ PK 1879 \$6.98.

Performance: **Pleasant**
Recording: **Good**

It's easy enough to put down an album like this. Hazlewood and Nancy Sinatra are formula performers, sticking tenaciously to what has worked for them before. Hazlewood's songs are often maudlin and mushy—and there's always the question of how Nancy would draw as a singer if her name were Nancy Glotz. But the two have found a formula that is their own; they don't copy anyone. In addition, I always come away from hearing one of their recordings feeling they must be nice, likable people. There aren't any songs here I can heartily recommend; Hazlewood's *Arkansas Coal (Suite)* has some kind of quality that keeps me listening in spite of myself, for a more contrived batch of mush you'll seldom hear. Nancy makes fun of the dramatics of Dolly Parton's *Down from Dover*, which is the only sane thing to make of them. The album, a lightweight, is nevertheless folksy, cozy, toasty-warm, and disarming. *N.C.*

(Continued on page 98)

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Norma Terris and Howard Marsh caught at a tense play-within-play moment during the original 1927 stage production of Jerome Kern's *Show Boat*.

SHOW BOAT PULLS IN FROM LONDON

Reviewed by ROBERT CONNOLLY

THE GODS must have been smiling on the night of December 27, 1927, when Florenz Ziegfeld presented Jerome Kern's *Show Boat* at the Ziegfeld Theater in New York. An almost perfect combination of story, music, staging, and stars, *Show Boat* was immediately hailed as a landmark in musical theater. The story, adapted from Edna Ferber's novel, was an unusually strong one for a musical, evoking a colorful era of the American past, and the songs were woven into its fabric rather than being presented as isolated production numbers. As for the score, it must surely be the finest one ever written for an American musical comedy. There isn't a weak number in it, and most of its songs can be ranked among the great ones in American musical history.

In his new book, *American Popular Song* (Oxford University Press, 1972—see "Going on Record" column in this issue), Alec Wilder, while paying tribute to Kern, whom he describes as "the first great master of modern theater music," refers to Kern's "inner urge to impose art songs on Broadway," which to Wilder means losing touch with the true world of popular music. Perhaps Wilder is right. But what's wrong with that? Broadway can stand a few art songs, and that is perhaps the reason Kern's songs appeal as greatly to those who love opera and lieder as they do to enthusiasts of musical comedy—they have staying power. And who in the world since Kern has written more grateful melodies for the voice?

At any rate, *Show Boat* enjoyed a deservedly long run on Broadway, and touring companies criss-crossed the country for years. There was a successful New York revival in 1946, the New York City Opera company presented it in 1954, and Lincoln Center did an all-star production in 1966. And of course it has never ceased to be a summer-theater staple. There have been three film versions of *Show Boat*, the first a

1929 silent picture starring Laura La Plante and Joseph Schildkraut. By the time it was released, however, the public was clamoring for sound, and so a few scenes of dialogue and three songs were added.

The second was the 1936 Universal picture directed by James Whale and starring a classic cast: Irene Dunne, Allan Jones, Helen Morgan, Paul Robeson, Hattie McDaniel, Charles Winninger, and Helen Westley, most of whom had played their roles for years on the stage. Not seen for decades, this version acquired a legendary reputation and was thought of as a lost treasure of our cultural patrimony. When a print was discovered and shown last year at The Movie Musical, a tiny theater in Greenwich Village, the film surpassed everyone's expectations, and there are those who consider it the finest of all screen musicals. The 1951 MGM color version (with Kathryn Grayson, Howard Keel, Ava Gardner, William Warfield, Joe E. Brown, and the Champions) was not a bad film, but was not in the same league as its predecessor.

There have been countless recordings of *Show Boat* selections. Operatic, light-opera, and popular singers have all found them irresistible (jazz singers less so, for some reason). All these recordings have been at least good—the best, perhaps, those of Broadway productions, having more real theatrical flavor—but none were really outstanding, and none were complete. The definitive rendition is probably that of the 1936 film, but because of legal complications I doubt that the soundtrack can ever be released on commercial discs.

Two new versions of the *Show Boat* score have just come to us by way of Britain, part of a series of British-made musical-comedy discs which the Stanyan label has admirably seen fit to distribute in this country. (They are available in shops or by mail from Stanyan Records, 8721 Sunset Blvd., Holly-

wood, Cal., 90028.) The first (and lesser of the two), recorded several years back, stars Shirley Bassey as Julie, along with a cast of performers well known to British theater audiences. Miss Bassey, of West Indian origin, is perhaps England's most famous girl singer and has a reputation throughout the Continent as a top-flight interpreter of pops, blues, and jazz. She sings *Bill* and *Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man* in contemporary pop fashion—she is a kind of female Tom Jones, with a good, strong voice, lots of Las Vegas mannerisms, and no great involvement with her material. The result is more Shirley Bassey, song stylist, than Jerome Kern's Julie.

Far better are the lovers Gaylord and Magnolia, sung by two young Americans, Don McKay and Marlys Watters. Their voices are clean and bright, they sing the duets most affectingly, and they know the style to perfection. (They are also perfect examples of the sort of hybrid vocal delivery that Broadway currently demands—legit, but not *too* legit: get those words out, but don't alienate anyone with a *real* lyric sound.) The New Zealand operatic bass Inia Te Wiata offers an excellent *Ol' Man River* and an even better *I Still Suits Me*. Comedienne Dora Bryan sings the comedy numbers with a pronounced British accent and lots of music-hall style.

This is not the definitive recording of *Show Boat* (it has little of the aura of a stage production), but that is not its intention. It is frankly a studio job, with smooth, up-to-the-minute arrangements. It is not for the purist or the student of musical theater, but will doubtless satisfy those who want only an easy-to-take contemporary-sounding account of the score.

PURISTS will be delighted, however, by Stanyan's second release, a two-record original-cast album from the current, enormously successful London revival. It contains all the music from that production. So many songs have been written for, and interpolated into, various versions of *Show Boat* that no single production can include every one. The London revival comes close, however, and this album includes such seldom-heard numbers as *Where's the Mate for Me?*, *How'd You Like to Spoon with Me?* (Kern's first hit, written in 1905), *Dance Away the Night*, *Queenie's Ballyhoo*, *Till Good Luck Comes My Way*, *Nobody Else but Me* (Kern's last song, written for the 1946 Broadway revival), and *I Have the Room Above Her* (written for the 1936 film version). The only thing the British producers didn't squeeze in seems to be *Gallivantin' Around*, a comedy song written for Irene Dunne in the 1936 film.

This revival, which opened in London in July 1971, was called "the best musical, old or new, that London has seen for a very long time" by John Higgins, critic for the *London Times*. My own impression of it was that the production is good rather than superlative. Director Wendy Toye is to be congratulated for tampering with the original as little as possible, for it is the work itself which thrills and for me made the evening memorable. Ravenal is sung by André Jobin (son of the former Met tenor Raoul Jobin). He brings to the role a fine light baritone, charm, virility, and real stature. Lorna Dallas, a young American who sang with the Metropolitan

Opera National Company, sings Magnolia's music with a lovely lyric soprano (whether they like it or not, it is in this music, and not in Verdi, that most American sopranos are really at home). *Ol' Man River* is almost foolproof, and the American bass Thomas Carey does it well, although he is outclassed by Inia Te Wiata on the Bassey disc.

Cleo Laine, Britain's other West Indian jazz singer, is the biggest name in the cast, and the strongest personality. Her singing of Julie's three torch songs, although deeply felt, is pop/jazz singing, and, in the context of a traditional musical comedy, it jars somewhat, rather like finding Billie Holiday in the midst of *Carousel*. But then, how do you sing Julie these days? Helen Morgan, the first torch singer, was actually a high soprano with a sob in her voice. Her imitators went into the basso profundo range trying to achieve the same effect. The average soprano is wrong for it, and so is the average blues singer. Perhaps an American Negro soprano, or mezzo, is the answer.

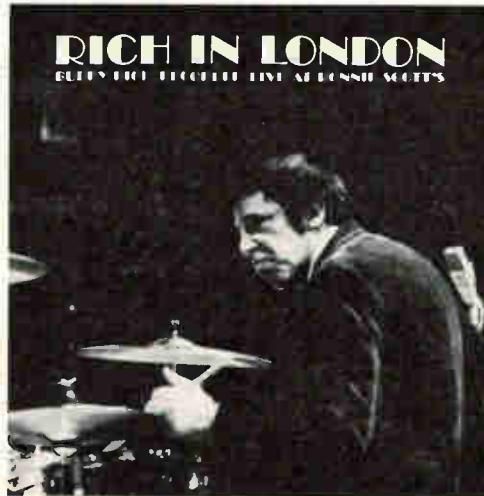
ONE can only speculate as to what the original *Show Boat* orchestrations sounded like, but Keith Amos' arrangements for the London production are beautiful and evocative and sound authentic to me. Indeed, the primary virtue of the whole production is that it is untampered with. The producers have not attempted to "modernize" the show for contemporary tastes. It is presented without apologies pretty much as it was written—dated gags, sentimental dialogue, and obvious song cues intact—and it works. British audiences will accept this; would audiences in America?

The album captures the aura and excitement of the real stage performance, and the recording quality is excellent. In short, a well-sung, stylistically authentic and virtually complete recording of a great score. Now, what do we lovers of American musical comedy want next?

SHOW BOAT (Jerome Kern-Oscar Hammerstein II). Shirley Bassey, Don McKay, Inia Te Wiata, Marlys Watters, Isabelle Lucas, Geoffrey Webb, and the Williams Singers; orchestra, Michael Collins cond. *Overture; Make Believe; Ol' Man River; Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man; Life upon the Wicked Stage; You Are Love; I Might Fall Back on You; Why Do I Love You?; I Still Suits Me; Bill; Finale.* STANYAN SR 10036 \$5.98.

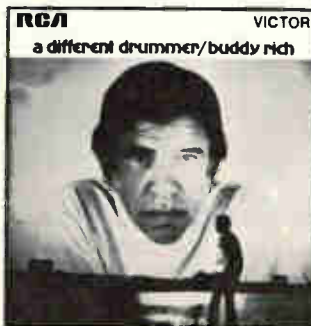
SHOW BOAT (Jerome Kern-Oscar Hammerstein II). Original London revival cast: André Jobin, Lorna Dallas, Cleo Laine, Thomas Carey, Kenneth Nelson, Derek Royle, and others; chorus, John McCarthy dir.; orchestra, Ray Cook cond. *Cotton Blossom; Where's the Mate for Me?; Make Believe; Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man; I Might Fall Back on You; Ol' Man River; How'd You Like to Spoon with Me; You Are Love; I Still Suits Me; Queenie's Ballyhoo; The Wedding; Nobody Else but Me; Till Good Luck Comes My Way; Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man (reprise); Life upon the Wicked Stage; I Have the Room Above Her; At the Fair; Bill; After the Ball; You Are Love (reprise); Dance Away the Night; Why Do I Love You?; Finale.* STANYAN 2 SR 10048 two discs \$9.95.

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JAZZ



GARY BARTZ NTU TROOP: *Harlem Bush Music/Uhuru*. Gary Bartz (soprano and alto saxes, vocals, piano); Andy Bey (vocals); Ron Carter (bass); Juni Booth (bass); Nat Bettis (percussion); Harold White (drums). *Blue (a Folk Tale); Uhuru Sasa; Vietcong; Celestial Blues; The Planets*. MILESTONE MSP 9032 \$5.98.

Performance: **Jazz and vocal mix**
Recording: **Very good**

This is a generally disappointing outing from alto saxophonist/composer Gary Bartz. Much of the space is devoted to long musical conversations between Bartz's alto saxophone and Andy Bey's voice. Both musicians can be superb improvisers, at their best, but what happens here is too chaotic and disjointed to showcase either performer properly.

On the positive side, Bartz's compositional activities have now expanded into lyric writing (he even sings on one track). I suspect this disc may be a kind of training exercise for Bartz—one that should lead him into a fuller, and more fulfilling, expansion of his considerable talents. *Don H.*

EDDIE CONDON/PEE WEE RUSSELL: *Town Hall Concerts 1944-45* (see *Best of the Month*, page 70)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE JPJ QUARTET: *Montreux '71*. Budd Johnson (tenor and soprano saxophones); Oliver Jackson (drums); Bill Pemberton (bass); Dil Jones (piano). *Montreux '71; I'll Be Seeing You; Contrast in Blue; The Best Things in Life Are Free*; and four others. MASTER JAZZ RECORDINGS MJR 8111 \$5.98.

Performance: **Solid mainstream jazz**
Recording: **Very good**

It's almost mind-boggling, in these days of high-priced and high-powered pop-rock eclecticism, to realize that good old straight-ahead, mainstream jazz is still with us. Yet here it is, in a fine, traditional concert performance by a group of, if not superstar jazz players, then very good ones. Johnson, in fact, has to be granted a very special niche in jazz history because of his dogged devotion to a style (the Lester Young lay-back, Kansas City improvisation) that is nearly forty years old.

I do not mean to suggest, however, that either Johnson or his associates sound like antiquities. Far from it. They demonstrate, instead, that vitality in jazz has virtually nothing to do with style. Like Erroll Garner and Bill Evans and Gene Ammons—to name only a few of the many players still active—the JPJ Quartet has not been noticeably affected by the changing winds of fashion, yet the soil from which they reap their musical crops is far from fallow. Is there anything that a jazz-

man can uncover, after all these years, in songs like *I'll Be Seeing You*, *The Best Things in Life Are Free*, and *Down by the Riverside*? Happily, the answer is yes, and you can hear it here. *Don H.*

YUSEF LATEEF: *The Gentle Giant*. Yusef Lateef (flutes, oboe, tenor sax); various other musicians. *Nubian Lady; Lowland Lullabye; Hey Jude; Jungle Plum; The Poor Fishermen; African Song*; and two others. ATLANTIC SD 1602 \$5.98, Ⓜ 81602 \$6.98. Ⓢ M 51602 \$6.98.

Performance: **Mainstream**
Recording: **Very good**

Yusef Lateef's music has many rare attributes, but its most special quality is the solid craftsmanship that touches everything he produces. I have special Lateef favorites, but I can't recall a single recording of his that hasn't piqued my interest in an unexpected fashion.

This one is no exception. Lateef works on most of the tracks with solid back-up rhythm sections, playing his battery of exotic flutes, his gutsy tenor saxophone, and his nasally blues-tinged oboe. The only disconcerting moment shows up on a peculiar version of *Hey Jude*, which begins in the far, far distance (you can just barely hear the opening melody without turning up your set's volume control) and gradually moves up front. It doesn't work, and reflects an unusual error of judgment on Lateef's part. Fortunately, his usual impeccable work on the balance of the album more than compensates for it. *Don H.*

ABBEY LINCOLN: *Straight Ahead*. Abbey Lincoln (vocals), Coleman Hawkins (tenor sax), Walter Benton (tenor sax), Eric Dolphy (reeds), Booker Little (trumpet), Julian Priester (trombone), Mal Waldron (piano), Art Davis (bass), Max Roach (drums), Robert Whitley and Roger Sanders (congas). *Straight Ahead; When Malindy Sings; In the Red; Blue Monk; Left Alone; African Lady; Retribution*. BARNABY KZ 31037 \$4.98.

Performance: **Classic early-Sixties jazz**
Recording: **Good**

Columbia's decision to reissue its material from the old Candid catalog on the Barnaby label should delight jazz fans. Recorded in the early Sixties under the aegis of critic Nat Hentoff, the Candid material ranged from the then avant-garde work of Charles Mingus and Cecil Taylor to the more primal music of Otis Spann and Lightnin' Hopkins.

At the time, Abbey Lincoln and her husband, Max Roach, were working out one of the earliest attempts at a consciousness-raising approach to black jazz. Miss Lincoln adopted a hard-edged sound that occasionally softened into Billie Holiday turns and Sarah Vaughan swoops; the arrangements, presumably by Roach, were uncompromisingly dissonant and personal.

Heard in retrospect, one is more impressed with some of the solo work, especially the bravura tenor saxophone of Coleman Hawkins, than either Miss Lincoln's singing or Roach's scoring. Even with its flaws, however, this is jazz of a sort that is rarely heard today—jazz that is responsible only to its creators, rather than to the demands of mass pop media. Sometimes the achieving of goals is less important than the intensity of the effort. And on that count, Miss Lincoln and Mr. Roach can hardly be faulted. *Don H.*

STEREO REVIEW



THEATER • FILMS

LENNY (Julian Barry-Tom O'Horgan). Original-cast recording. Cliff Gorman, Joe Silver, Erica Yohn, Jane House, and Robert Weil (performers); Tom O'Horgan, director. **BLUE THUMB** BTS 9001 two discs \$11.98. © DP J 89001 \$9.98. © DP J 59001 \$9.98.

Performance: **Brilliant**
Recording: "Live" but good

When Lenny Bruce, born Leonard A. Schneider in Mineola, Long Island, in 1926, died in Los Angeles on August 3, 1966, it was a sad day for American humor. Comedy, in fact, has not since been the same. It was Lenny who gave it its freedom. The frank language of stage and screen today is taken for granted, but it was Lenny Bruce who got there first.

Lenny is a play that attempts to telescope the highlights of the preacher-comedian's rise and fall in the course of several remarkable hours. As staged by Tom O'Horgan (*Hair*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*) the hero in Julian Barry's play, portrayed with uncanny insight by Cliff Gorman, is shown surrounded by the symbols of the world he never made.

The first act is high-spirited, as Gorman recreates abridged versions of Lenny's routines—working in a small town, the prison movie, a run-in with the phone company, a hilarious unmasking of the Lone Ranger, the famous encounter between bigot and black man at a party. All these mini-dramas are available on records as performed uncut in night clubs by the master himself, but Gorman is remarkably good with them, and in the play they are woven expertly into Bruce's story. The scenes are tightly written and fleetly acted out by an expert cast. Joe Silver as a conventional gag-happy comedian in the old-fashioned mold; Erica Yohn as Sally Marr, Lenny's ex-stripper mother ("a cross between the Virgin Mary and a \$500-a-night hooker"); Jane House as Rusty, the sexy burlesque dancer whom he marries and who helps to ruin him; and Robert Weil, running the gamut from an impersonation of Eisenhower to Lenny's father.

In Act Two, the action turns grim and nightmarish. We follow the hero to his ruin as he's taken in for narcotics possession and obscenity, becomes completely obsessed with the law, gets sick, goes broke and is finally found dead. All of this may sound depressing, but it is acted so brilliantly that it isn't at all; the play runs its course with the inevitability of a Greek drama, and with hypnotic urgency. The recording, made "live" during a performance at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre by a company with the spooky name "Blue Thumb Records" (actually a subsidiary of Famous Music Corp.), is a fine job in every respect. It comes with a booklet containing photographs of the production, excerpts of the dialogue, and an article by Kenneth Tynan, as well as a huge poster of its protagonist. **P.K.**

JULY 1972

SAIL AWAY (Noel Coward). Original London-cast recording. Elaine Stritch, David Holliday, Grover Dale, Sheila Forbes, others (vocals); Gareth Davies cond. *Sail Away; Come to Me; Later than Spring; Go Slow; Johnny; Why Do the Wrong People Travel?*; and others. **STANYAN RECORDS** 10027 \$5.98.

Performance: **Shiny**
Recording: **Excellent**

When the tallies are in, Elaine Stritch will go up on the scoreboard as having had her share of show-stopping moments in musical comedy. But, oddly enough, neither of the two shows written expressly for her (*Goldilocks* and *Sail Away*) came anywhere near doing justice to her unusual gifts. This fact is confirmed by the mysterious and rather unexplained appearance now, in 1972, of the English-cast album of *Sail Away*, a Noel Coward opus that sank on Broadway in 1961 and was salvaged for a brief run in London shortly thereafter. The album comes to us with a sketch of Coward on the jacket, reminding us not only that Coward's salad days are over, but also that the days of cruise directors and luxury liners are gone forever. It's as nostalgic as a Normandie life preserver and just about as pertinent.

Alas, many great talents begin to parody themselves if they stick around too long. Talulah did it. And so does Coward, with fearful forced lyrics like "dawn-to-moonrise/blue lagoon-wise" and worse. "We'll get a Man Tan/Gargantuan-tan." The music is predictable English music-hall hip—sobbing saxes and scraping violins, big boffo endings, romantic whimperings—of a genre Coward helped perfect on the already romantic foundations of Ivor Novello. But in *Sail Away* Coward has fed on himself too long, and the cannibalization hasn't left him a leg to stand on.

However—and it's a big however—this album is worthwhile for six reasons: the six cuts by Elaine Stritch. Explosively or sweetly peaking, purring, wailing, howling, and opening and closing the catch in her throat as if it were a bright brass hinge. Stritch gulps, laughs, sobs, cracks, recovers, hiccups, and probably drinks a snifter of brandy in between, while sailing her own way through this essentially trivial and passé score. She puts a bright blitz on every phrase. In an era of lyric-swallowers, she never sings an unintelligible word. She is just terrific with her exploding "p"s, her hokier Italian-opera cries, and her calculatedly sloppy ending on *Why Do the Wrong People Travel?* Listen to the way she turns the word "why" into a muted-trumpet "wha-oh-wha" in a pure George M. Cohan finale. In the two love songs, she is touchingly vulnerable, bringing Judy Garland to mind. Even the cracks in her voice have style. From foolish lines such as "Hail, pioneers!" Stritch squeezes Eva Tanguay wildness; from syrupy ballads, she gets more tenderness than they deserve. This is sheer star quality, unique and valuable. It's no wonder Noel Coward begged on his knees for her to steer this tub to London; without her, it wouldn't have lasted long enough to have a cast album recorded. She is the only reason to buy this album, but that is reason enough, for so precious little of her is available on records (*On Your Toes*, *Goldilocks*, and *Company* come to mind as the show albums). Too bad some enterprising record producer doesn't hand the talented lady some "now" songs to sing with a big band backing up her special brand of vocalism. **R.R.**

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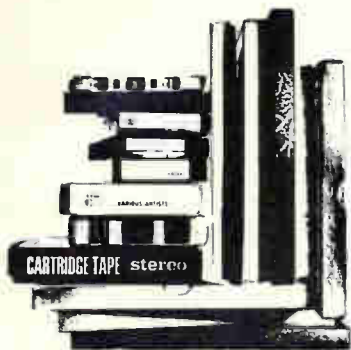
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STEREO TAPE

Reviewed by NOEL COPPAGE • DAVID HALL • IGOR KIPNIS • PAUL KRESH

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BACH: *Cantata No. 1, "Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern"; Cantata No. 4, "Christ lag in Todesbanden."* Edith Mathis (soprano, in No. 1); Ernst Haefliger (tenor, in No. 1); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Munich Bach Choir and Orchestra, Karl Richter cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIVE © 924025 \$6.98.

Performance: **Especially good No. 1**
Recording: **Very good**
Playing Time: 45' 6"

Except for Richter's tendency to overromanticize "Christ lag in Todesbanden" through some excessively fast tempos and minor eccentricities, these cantatas are very well performed. Particularly enjoyable is the Cantata for the Feast of the Annunciation, Number 1, in which the conductor's tempos and Christmas mood are particularly well judged. The solo vocalists are all excellent, and the recording, if not as transparent as the original disc version, is thoroughly satisfactory. Notes are supplied, but no texts. *I.K.*

BIZET: *Carmen (Highlights).* Marilyn Horne (mezzo-soprano), Carmen; Michele Molese (tenor), Don José; others; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus, Henry Lewis cond. LONDON © M 94055 \$6.95, ® L 75055 \$7.95.

Performance: **A misfire**
Recording: **Fair**
Playing Time: 35' 58"

It's difficult to recommend this set of *Carmen* highlights: the performance is so Italianately self-indulgent, unsophisticated, and heavy-handed, the title role is sung so unidiomatically and the remaining soloists (unidentified by Ampex) are no more distinguished. Also, the cassette sound reproduces forward and not

very transparent voices against a muddy and distant orchestral backdrop. So I won't—in fact, I urge you *not* to buy it. *I.K.*

GABRIELI: *The Glory of Venice. Intonation for Organ on the 11th Tone; Jubilate Deo (B-flat—two choirs, 8 parts); Magnificat, for Countertenor and Baritone (arr. Denis Stevens); Surrexit Christus, for Alto, Tenor, and Bass (arr. Denis Stevens); Nunc dimittis (three choirs, 14 parts); Intonation for Or-*



KARL RICHTER
Fine leadership for Bach cantatas

gan on the 2nd Tone; Angelus ad Pastores (two choirs, 12 parts); Intonation for Organ on the 3rd and 4th Tones; Regina Coeli (two choirs, 12 parts); Jubilate Deo (1615—10 parts). Gregg Smith Singers; Texas Boys Choir; Edward Tarr Brass Ensemble; E. Power Biggs (organ). COLUMBIA © MT 30937 \$6.98.

Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **Thrilling**
Playing Time: 33'

This cassette of Giovanni Gabrieli's glorious polychoral music, recorded in Venice's San Marco Basilica where Gabrieli himself worked more than 350 years ago, would deserve a "Special Merit" rating but for the complete absence of program notes and texts. One can perhaps excuse such an omission with thrice-familiar standard repertoire, but in the instance of unfamiliar liturgical

texts and music as fascinating but as relatively obscure to the non-specialist listener as Gabrieli's, it is unforgivable, especially with the \$6.98 price tag on the cassette.

Musically and sonically, this is one of the most exciting cassettes it has yet been my pleasure to hear. On one level it is, to use the phrase applied by the late Sir Thomas Beecham to Handel's music, "a glorious noise!" On quite another level, there are dozens of things in this intermixture of festive music for solo organ (the intonations), soloists, strings, woodwinds, and brass, together with the choirs in opposed galleries, to delight both mind and ear. The alternating meters of the final *Jubilate Deo* come most immediately to mind; the woodwind coloration in the *Surrexit Christus* and the cumulative splendor of the *Nunc dimittis* are two other memorable impressions, not to mention the sense of limitless space yet warm immediacy that comes through in the recording itself. My only reservation here has to do with the rather hooty quality of the unidentified countertenor in the *Surrexit Christus*.

Hiss or no hiss, this cassette must be played at full volume to achieve its proper effect. If heard on top-quality playback equipment, this recording cannot be forgotten—a fitting successor to the two previous Gabrieli productions recorded by Columbia in San Marco (MS 7071 and MS 7334, the latter also available on cassette 16 11 0148). *D.H.*

LISZT: *Piano Concerto No. 2, in A Major.*
RACHMANINOFF: *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43.* Van Cliburn (piano); Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. RCA © RK 1199 \$6.95, ® R8S 1199 \$6.95.

Performance: **Sympathetic**
Recording: **Poorly processed**
Playing Time: 46' 4"

Van Cliburn's poetic rendition of the Liszt and his sympathetic, well-propelled playing of the Rachmaninoff variations are sadly spoiled on this cassette by unacceptable processing. The piano is sorely afflicted by flutter (I tried the cassette on two different playback units to check), so much so that I was tempted not to listen all the way through. Ormandy's excellent orchestral contribution suffers less, but with its lack of depth and transparency is far from outstanding. RCA, incidentally, seems to have gone back to its appalling practice of dividing the music into two sequences with equal playing times. The Liszt, which begins the cassette, is followed by *one minute and thirty-seven seconds* of the Rachmaninoff before the turnover, and the remainder of the

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
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The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.

Rhapsody is on the second sequence. RCA will certainly have to do better by its cassettes than this; in the meantime, there's an excellent recording of the Rachmaninoff by Margrit Weber with Ferenc Fricsay conducting on a DGG cassette. It has far less hiss than the RCA, and there is no flutter apparent at all. *I.K.*

COLLECTIONS

GREAT MOTION PICTURE THEMES. 2001 (Strauss: *Also sprach Zarathustra*—opening), Philharmonia Orchestra, Lorin Maazel cond. *Death in Venice* (Mahler: *Symphony No. 5: Adagio*), New Philharmonia Orchestra, Sir John Barbirolli cond. *The Mephisto Waltz* (Liszt: *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*). John Browning (piano). *Elvira Madigan* (Mozart: *Piano Concerto No. 21: Andante*), English Chamber Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim, piano and cond. *The Music Lovers* (Tchaikovsky: *Symphony No. 6, "Pathétique": Finale*), Philharmonia Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini cond. *Five Easy Pieces* (Chopin: *Prelude in E Minor, Op. 28 No. 4*), Leonard Pennario (piano). ANGEL © 4XS 36813 \$7.98.

Performance: **Succulent samplings**
Recording: **Excellent**
Playing Time: **43'**

It's getting so you can hear almost as much classical music at the movies these days as in the concert hall. This cassette was not assembled from the movie soundtracks, but from outstanding performances in the Angel catalog, which makes it even more distinguished musically. There may be a mightier opening to *Also sprach Zarathustra* than the one supplied here by the Philharmonia under Lorin Maazel, but if so, I have not yet heard it (although Karl Böhm's version, actually heard in the movie of 2001, is strong competition). But who wants to stop there? That's the trouble with these movie excerpts. You're just getting into the mood of Strauss when along comes the Mahler Fifth Symphony *Adagio* from *Death in Venice*. Then suddenly John Browning is playing Liszt's big, menacing *Mephisto Waltz*. Side two offers Daniel Barenboim at the piano as well as conducting the *Elvira Madigan* movement—the second, that is—from Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21; it's a gorgeous version, and I should like so much to have heard the rest of the concerto! Then comes the last movement from the Tchaikovsky "Pathétique" the way Carlo Maria Giulini tells it, most poignant, but not a good course to serve after the Mozart. That Chopin prelude that Jack Nicholson (in *Five Easy Pieces*) claimed he could play without feeling a thing concludes the outing, with Leonard Pennario at the keyboard—feeling, I suspect, a good deal. This leaves us in a twilight mood and a state of musical unfulfillment. Chalk this one up as a sampler suitable for missionary work among potential converts to serious music. For the rest of us, it's just a tease. *P.K.*

ENTERTAINMENT

COUNTRY JOE AND THE FISH: *Life and Times from Haight-Ashbury to Woodstock*. Country Joe and the Fish (vocals and instrumentals). *Fish Cheer, I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die-Rag; Bass Strings; Flying High; Porpoise Mouth; An Untitled Protest; Who Am I; Grace; Waltzing in the Moonlight; Death Sound Blues; Janis*; and nine others. VAN-

GUARD © M 527/28 \$6.95, © M 827/28 \$6.95.

Performance: **Wild, wilder, wildest**
Recording: **Very good**
Playing Time: **77' 33"**

Country Joe and the Fish came into prominence with the burgeoning of rock in San Francisco, along with such groups as the Grateful Dead and the Jefferson Airplane. Hearing this retrospective assemblage of their performances is fascinating and instructive for anyone interested in the evolution of the rock movement. We meet them singing their jeering protest song about war in Vietnam ("Be the first one on your block/To have your boy come home in a box") in *I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die-Rag*. With their Haight-Ashbury audience already in the palm of their hand, they go on to heighten the rapport with a song about the search for identity (*Who Am I?*), a kind of musical freeway trip called *Flying High*, and outright romantic numbers set



COUNTRY JOE AND THE FISH
Original, vital, unhypercritical

to a rock beat (*Porpoise-Mouth Waltz* and *Waltzing in the Moonlight*). There are also hard-driving numbers in which the lyrics go surrealistic with images of diamonds "colored green," flashing lights, and all the psychedelic references that were the height of fashion among rock enthusiasts a decade ago. As we follow their progress to Fillmore East, then back to Fillmore West and all the way to Woodstock, we can hear the group growing more aggressive and more certain of themselves, earthier in their humor, and appealing more strongly to the predilections and prejudices of their admirers. At Woodstock we hear them singing about a *Love Machine*, a real engine that comes steaming down the track like some relentless metaphor for pure sexuality, and finally their Woodstock version of the rag that opens the long program, twice as angry now, twice as energetic, with new stanzas added and what sounds like the entire population of America under thirty cheering them.

Country Joe and the Fish have been selling like proverbial hotcakes ever since they cut their first record. This cassette should increase their popularity not only with their own generation, but with any listener who responds to music that is original and vital and altogether unhypercritical. *P.K.*

DALLAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: *The Dallasound*. Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Anshel Brusilow cond. *Overture to Rock; Something; We've Only Just Begun; Light My Fire; My Sweet Lord; MacArthur Park; It's Not Unusual*; and *Delilah*. POMPEII © M 51001 \$6.95.

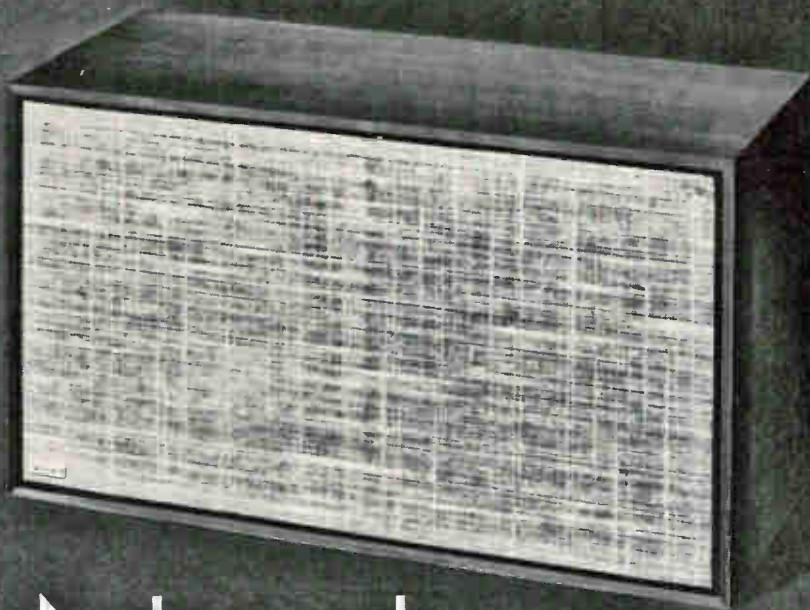
Performance: **Pachydermal prancing**
Recording: **Very good**
Playing Time: **33' 23"**

Stutterers aspire to be radio announcers, stumblers with two left feet dream of being ballet dancers, and symphony orchestras, these days, sometimes get the idea that they are just big overgrown rock groups. Well, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra performs like any other elephant that gets it into its head that it's a hummingbird. The big creature flaps and flaps, but never gets off the ground. In their *Overture to Rock* the gentlemen of Dallas steam like an overheated, slightly hysterical locomotive that bogs down before it ever makes the station. After that, it's just one monstrosity after another, with the percussion section bumping along in dinosaur fashion, while the brasses and woodwinds huff and puff in vain and make a lot of noise—but never music that in the least resembles authentic rock. *Light My Fire* is a conflagration of some sort, but hardly a sensual one. As for *Delilah*, she gains so much weight in this inflated arrangement that I was reminded of Leontyne Price being dragged down a Zeffirelli staircase by an army of flunkies as she struggled through opening night in Samuel Barber's ill-fated *Antony and Cleopatra*. But that, at least, was *some* sort of music. The "Dallasound" is just an old mountain laboring to bring forth noisy mice. *P.K.*

SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE: *There's a Riot Goin' On*. Sly and the Family Stone (vocals and instrumentals). *Luv 'n Haight; Just Like a Baby; Poet; Family Affair; Africa Talks to You "The Asphalt Jungle"; Time; Spaced Cowboy*; and five others. EPIC © ET 30986 \$6.98. © ER 30986 \$6.98, © EA 30986 \$6.98.

Performance: **Too predictable**
Recording: **Very good**
Playing Time: **50' 31"**

This one came riding atop a barge-load of publicity (much bilge in the bottom of the barge) about how Sly's always late to everything and how difficult it was to get him to deliver up this album, the implication being that when he finally does arrive, he's really something. Well, he is, but a hype is still a hype, and this is not the greatest album of the decade by any stretch of the adman's vocabulary. Sly's style is weird. He writes unwritable songs that are equally unsingable, and then he sings them—or grunts, growls, purrs, and shrieks them. He deals in sounds, not words and melodies. His style is so hard-line, so boldly drawn, that I think he may be getting trapped by it. My quarrel with this album is that it sounds too much like other Sly Stone albums. I know, I know. *Smilin'* and *Spaced Cowboy* (identified by shouts of "Yodalee-hoo") and *Runnin' Away* are "different" kinds of Sly songs, but the album *still* sounds like a lot of other Sly albums. Yet it is gorged with wild sounds, arrangement textures, and overlays you almost can't find anywhere else. Anyone still into the Pet Sounds thing should like it, especially anyone who likes weird pets. *N.C.*



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TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK



UNDERSTANDING THE EXTRAS

NEWCOMERS to tape are sometimes puzzled by such advertised "features" as "sound-with-sound," "sound-on-sound," and "mixing." Often, although the owner's manual mentions these facilities, it does not adequately explain their purpose by discussing the principles involved.

"Mixing" capabilities are essential in professional recording because the individual contributions of a number of microphones (or already recorded sound tracks) must be combined, each one adjusted for a proper balance with the others, and the overall level of the mixed signal controlled for optimum recording level. Few home recordists, however, use a dozen microphones at once to tape a concert, so the mixing facilities provided on audiophile machines are considerably scaled down. Most permit you to combine one microphone with one **LINE OF AUX** signal (a tuner, second recorder, or the **TAPE OUT** from your receiver or preamp) per channel. This makes it possible for you to record appropriate background music behind a voice narration for a slide show or to add your own vocal to an instrumental recording.

"Sound on sound" and "sound with sound" are techniques which, in open-reel recorders, permit you to add new material to existing recordings. Suppose, for instance, that you play the piano (or two musical instruments) and want to record yourself playing both parts of a duet. Here, obviously, one part must be recorded fully, the tape rewound, and the second part added. But how do you keep the two tracks synchronized if you are using a three-head tape deck? Suppose you record the first part on the left channel, rewind, and set that channel for playback. Then you put on your headphones, listen to the first part on the tape (via the monitor head) and record the second track. When you later try to listen to both recorded tracks together the result will be pure cacophony, since the two parts will be out of step. Track one (left channel) will lead track two on the tape by the precise distance separating the record and playback heads.

Three-head recorders use the "sound-on-sound" technique to prevent this. In this approach the played-back signal from the first channel is mixed with the new second signal, and both are recorded simultaneously on the second channel. By repeating the process one could add a third part, mixing the two recorded parts on the second channel with a new one, and recording the whole back onto the first channel (where the original track would be erased). The limiting factors are that each successive re-recording adds noise, distortion, wow and flutter, and frequency losses.

Two-head machines that can be set up so that one channel is playing while the other is recording add the possibility of "sound-with-sound." On such machines the two in-line gaps of the *same* head are being used, one for record and the other for playback, so that there is no time delay between channels. Thus the two parts can be recorded synchronously to begin with, a "sound-on-sound" technique being used if more than two instruments or performers are to be combined at different times.

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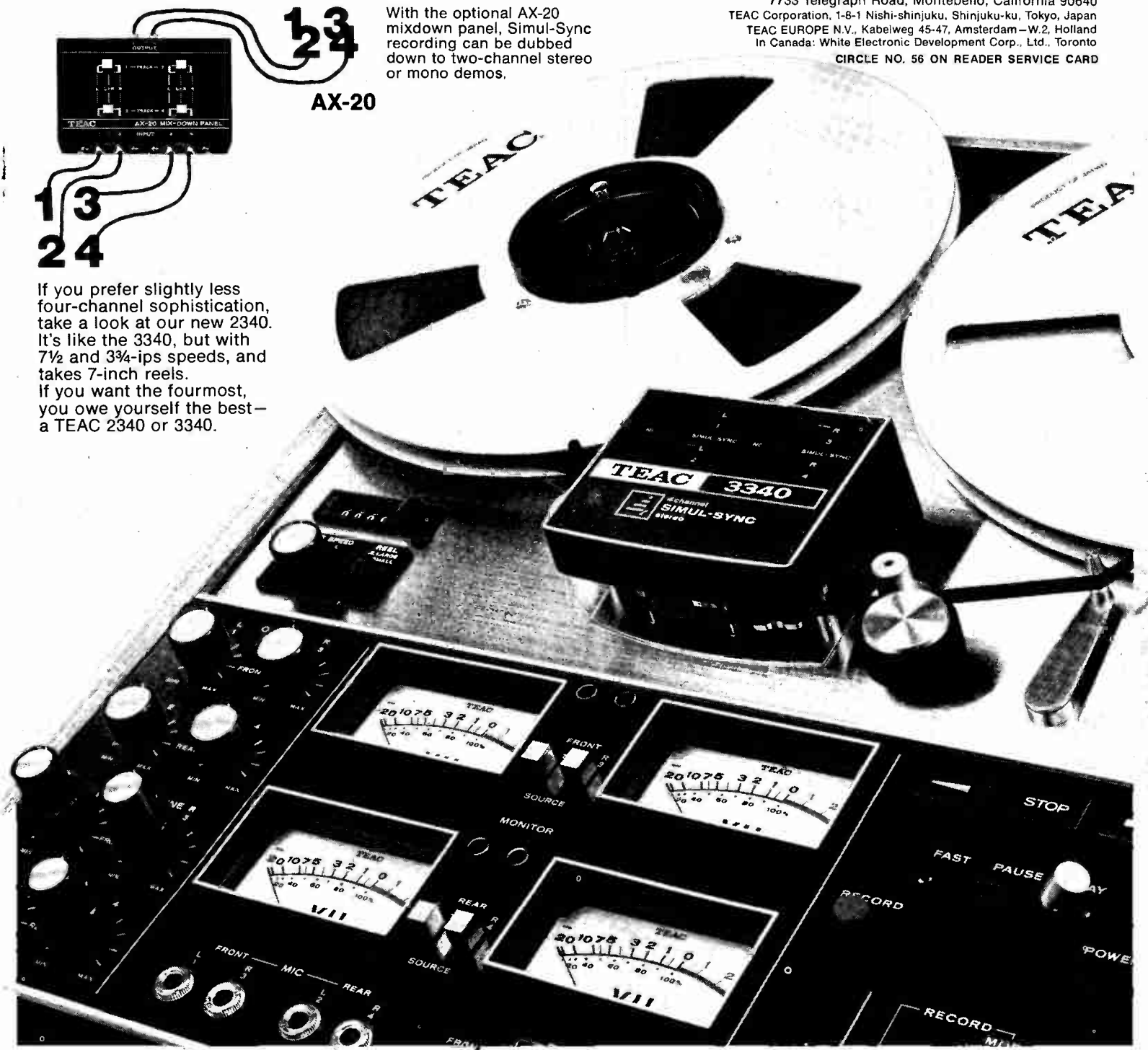
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