

# Stereo Review

FEBRUARY 1974 • 75 CENTS

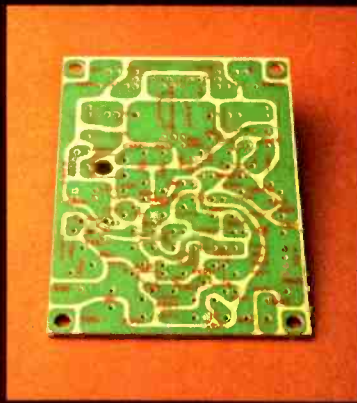
**ARE DISCS, TAPES, AND FM AS GOOD AS THEY COULD BE?  
FRENCH MUSIC: THERE'S MUCH MORE TO IT THAN LA MER**



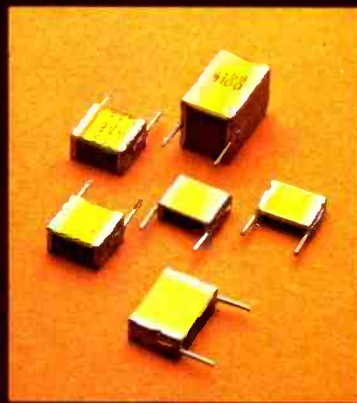
262912 SIT 0405L091 NOV75 B 1J  
E GLENN SMITH  
409 LAUREL MNR ESTS  
PHENIX CITY AL 36867



**The Power Supply.** The S7900A/S8900A uses an extremely well regulated power supply. The heart of it is a massive power transformer employing very high purity iron core material and heavy gauge copper wire for increased operating efficiency and improved voltage regulation. Two large 7000 mfd electrolytic capacitors insure the maximum in clean, well-regulated, low frequency audio output.



**Epoxy Printed Circuit Boards.** Superior to conventional phenolic boards, these boards have improved moisture-resistance, higher "Q", less internal losses.



**Poly-Carbonate Capacitors.** Fourteen of these new devices are used throughout the circuit. A "pure" capacitor, the poly-carbonate capacitor is superior to conventional mylar or paper capacitors—has less internal losses [higher "Q"], much less capacity variation due to temperature fluctuations, capacity tolerance of 5% instead of the usual 10 to 20%.



**Exclusive Impedance-Sensing Overload Protection Circuit.** [Patent applied for] New "ISOP" circuit senses the exact impedance condition of speaker load as well voltage to it; offers double protection to output devices and speakers.

DYNAQUAD RECEIVER

**TUNING** **LOUDNESS**

2 94 96 98 100 102 104 106 108 MHz  
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 kHz  
70 80 100 120 140 160 x10 KHz

-20  
-60  
+8  
POWER OFF

**TREBLE** **LEFT - RIGHT**

2 0 2  
4 6 8 10

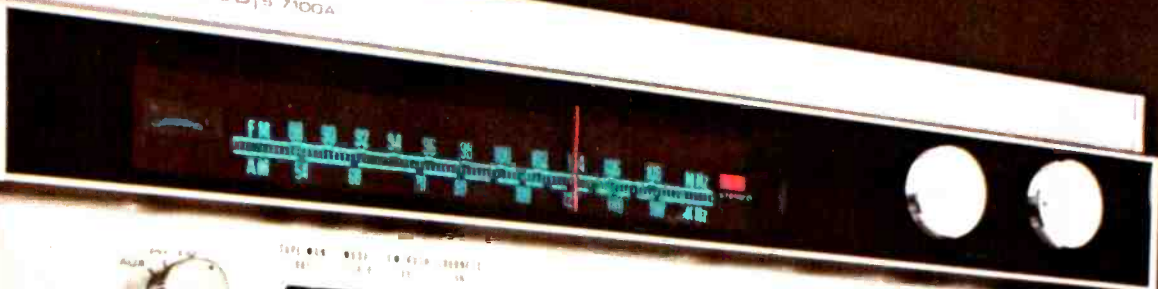
2 0 2  
4 6 8 10

**TONE** **BALANCE** **TAPE DUBBING** **STEREO PHONES**

4-CH ADAPTER MONTR HIGH FILTER FM HUSH LOUD OFF MAIN REMOTE (FRONT) (REAR) IN

NORM NORM FLAT OFF ON SPEAKERS (DYNAQUAD) OUT

SHERWOOD | S 7100A

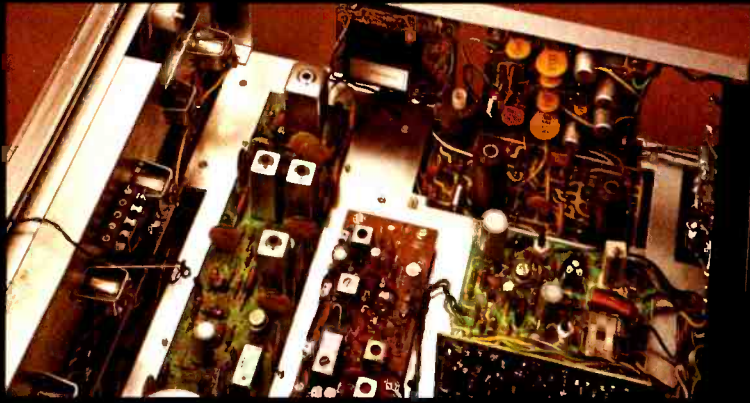


SHERWOOD | S 7200



SHERWOOD | S-7500A STEREO/DYNAQUAD RECEIVER





**Construction and Layout.** Construction of the S8900A and S7900A can best be described as rugged. The thick steel chassis is strengthened by two side brackets

to prevent warping or bending in shipment. Layout of the chassis is designed so that *both* sides of each printed circuit board are accessible for servicing.



**Sherwood-Produced FM Coils.** We manufacture our *own* coils. These coils—heart of any tuner section—are part of the secret of Sherwood's consistently superior FM performance.



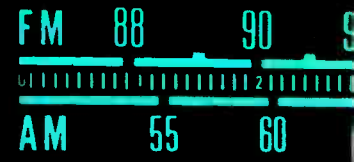
**Darlington Fully Complementary Monolithic Output Transistors.** These components actually house two devices—the driver transistor—well as the output transistor—assuring optimum match, a simplified circuit design and better reliability. It's expensive, but the result is better power bandwidth and improved high frequency performance.



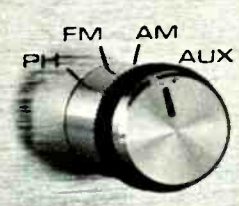
SHERWOOD | S-7900A STEREO/D



STEREO



MODE



SELECTOR



BASS

# The beauty is more than skin deep.

In this era of ingenious cosmetic design, it's easy to be fooled by a pretty face. And misleading specifications.

Which is why we've decided to turn ourselves inside-out to show you we're something more.

Take the Sherwood S-8900A (FM) and S-7900A (AM/FM) as a case in point.

The measurements compete favorably against the top selling brands in the \$400 to \$500 price range.

The power output (IHF) is 280 watts total. RMS (both channels driven): 60 watts X 2 @ 8 ohms. 20-20,000 Hz. @ 0.3 T.H.D.

The FM sensitivity (IHF) is 1.7 uv (-30 dB noise and dist.)  
The capture ratio: 1.9 dB,  
alternate-channel selectivity: 65 dB. And stereo separation is 40 dB @ 1KHz.

But the specifications don't tell the whole story.

The key to Sherwood success is the quality of the components. The simplicity of design. And the uncompromising demand for performance.

This is the real beauty of Sherwood receivers.

To quote a review in *High Fidelity Magazine* (July 1973, issue):

"How does it perform? Excellently. Sensitivity figures are superb; and though raw sensitivity numbers have little meaning in themselves, they are matched by excellent quieting curves.

"Distortion is very low, as are noise factors. The consistent excellence of these figures is a joy to behold—and the sound is a joy to hear even with signals that would provide only borderline reception with most good receivers.

"The word for the S-8900A is 'silky.' The feel of the controls, and the performance—on FM in particular—all contribute to this impression. But there is a subtler elegance to the design: that of achieving significant purpose by simple means.

"In these days of almost baroque elaboration, often to very little purpose, this is a welcome approach indeed."

Or to quote *Stereo Review's* evaluation (February, 1973):

"The performance of the Sherwood S-8900A left nothing to be desired. Both its FM and audio sections delivered what we would consider 'state of the art' performance for a receiver.

"The 60-watt power rating of

the S-8900A was quite conservative: in our tests, signal-waveform clipping occurred at 75 watts per channel, with both channels driven into 8-ohm loads."

"At 60 watts per channel, and at 30 and 6 watts as well, the distortion stayed within the 0.06 to 0.07 percent range over the full 20- to 20,000-Hz band."

This kind of quality standard is what you should expect from any Sherwood receiver.

The S-7100A has become perhaps the most popular stereo receiver in the \$200-\$250 price range.

The S-7200 moved *Audio Magazine* to say, "This is one powerful set."

But perhaps most significant is the fact that a leading independent consumer testing magazine gave all three receivers (the S-7100A, S-7200 and S-8900A) BEST BUY ratings in their price categories.

If you'd like complete copies of the independent reviews on these receivers, write Sherwood Electronic Laboratories, 4300 North California Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60618.

Or check us out at your local high-fidelity dealer.

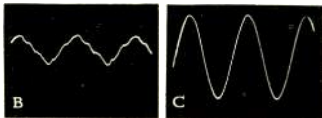
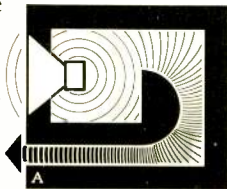
**Sherwood**  
The word is getting around.

# Now BIC VENTURI™ puts to rest some of the fables, fairytales, folklore, hearsay and humbug about speakers.

## Fable

*Extended bass with low distortion requires a big cabinet.*

Some conventional designs are relatively efficient, but are large. Others are small, capable of good bass response, but extremely inefficient. The principle of the BIC VENTURI systems (pat. pend.) transforms air motion velocity within the enclosure to realize amplified magnitudes of bass energy at the BIC VENTURI coupled duct as much as 140 times that normally derived from a woofer (Fig. A). And the filtering action achieves phenomenally pure signal (Scope photos B & C). Result: pure extended bass from a small enclosure.



B—Shows output of low frequency driver when driven at a freq. of 22 Hz. Sound pressure reading, 90 dB. Note poor waveform.  
C—Output of venturi coupled duct, (under the same conditions as Fig. B.) Sound pressure reading 111.5 dB, (140 times more output than Fig. B.) Note sinusoidal (nondistorted) appearance.

## Fairytale

*It's okay for midrange speakers to cross over to a tweeter at any frequency.*

Midrange speakers cover from about 800 Hz to 6000 Hz. However, the ear is most sensitive to midrange frequencies. Distortion created in this range from crossover network action reduces articulation and musical definition. BIC VENTURI BICONEX horn (pat. pend.) was designed to match the high efficiency of the bass section and operates smoothly all the way up to 15,000 Hz, without interruption. A newly designed super tweeter extends response to 23,000 Hz, preserving the original sonic balance and musical timbre of the instruments originating in the lower frequencies.



## Folklore

*Wide dispersion only in one plane is sufficient.*

Conventional horns suffer from musical coloration and are limited to wide-

angle dispersion in one plane. Since speakers can be positioned horizontally or vertically, you can miss those frequencies so necessary for musical accuracy. Metallic coloration is eliminated in the BICONEX horn by making it of a special inert substance. The combination of conical and exponential horn flares with a square diffraction mouth results in measurably wider dispersion, equally in all planes.

## Hearsay

*A speaker can't achieve high efficiency with high power handling in a small cabinet.*

It can't, if its design is governed by such limiting factors as a soft-suspension, limited cone excursion capability, trapped air masses, etc. Freed from these limitations by the unique venturi action, BIC VENTURI speakers use rugged drivers capable of great excursion and equipped with voice coil assemblies that handle high power without "bottoming" or danger of destruction. The combination of increased efficiency and high power handling expands the useful dynamic range of your music system. Loud musical passages are reproduced faithfully, without strain; quieter moments, effortlessly.

## Humbug

*You can't retain balanced tonal response at all listening levels.*

We hear far less of the bass and treble ranges at moderate to low listening levels than at very loud levels. Amplifier "loudness" or "contour" switches are fixed rate devices which in practice are defeated by the differences in speaker efficiency. The solution: Dynamic Tonal Compensation™ This circuit (patents pending) adjusts speaker response as its sound pressure output changes with amplifier volume control settings. You hear aurally "flat" musical reproduction at background, average, or ear-shattering discoteque levels—automatically.



## A system for every requirement

FORMULA 2. The most sensitive, highest power handling speaker system of its size (19¾ x 12 x 11½)!" Heavy duty 8" woofer, BICONEX mid range, super tweeter. Use with amplifiers rated from 15 watts to as much as 75 watts RMS per channel. Response: 30 Hz to 23,000 Hz. Dispersion: 120° x 120°. \$98 each

FORMULA 4. Extends pure bass to 25 Hz. Has 10" woofer, BICONEX mid-range, super tweeter. Even greater efficiency and will handle amplifiers rated up to 100 watts. Dispersion: 120° x 120°. Size: 25 x 13¼ x 13" \$136 each.

FORMULA 6. Reaches very limits of bass and treble perception (20 to 23,000 Hz). Six elements: 12" woofer complemented by 5" cone for upper bass/lower midrange; pair of BICONEX horns and pair of super tweeter angularly positioned to increase high frequency dispersion (160° x 160°). Size: 26¼ x 15¼ x 14¼" \$239 each.

Sturdily constructed enclosures. Removable grilles in choice of 6 colors. Optional bases for floor standing placement. Write for brochure SR-2

Audition today's most advanced speakers at your BIC VENTURI dealer.

 BRITISH INDUSTRIES Co., Inc.  
Westbury, New York 11590.  
A division of Avnet, Inc.,  
Canada: C.W. Pointon, Ont.

# BIC VENTURI™

# Stereo Review

FEBRUARY 1974 • VOLUME 32 • NUMBER 2

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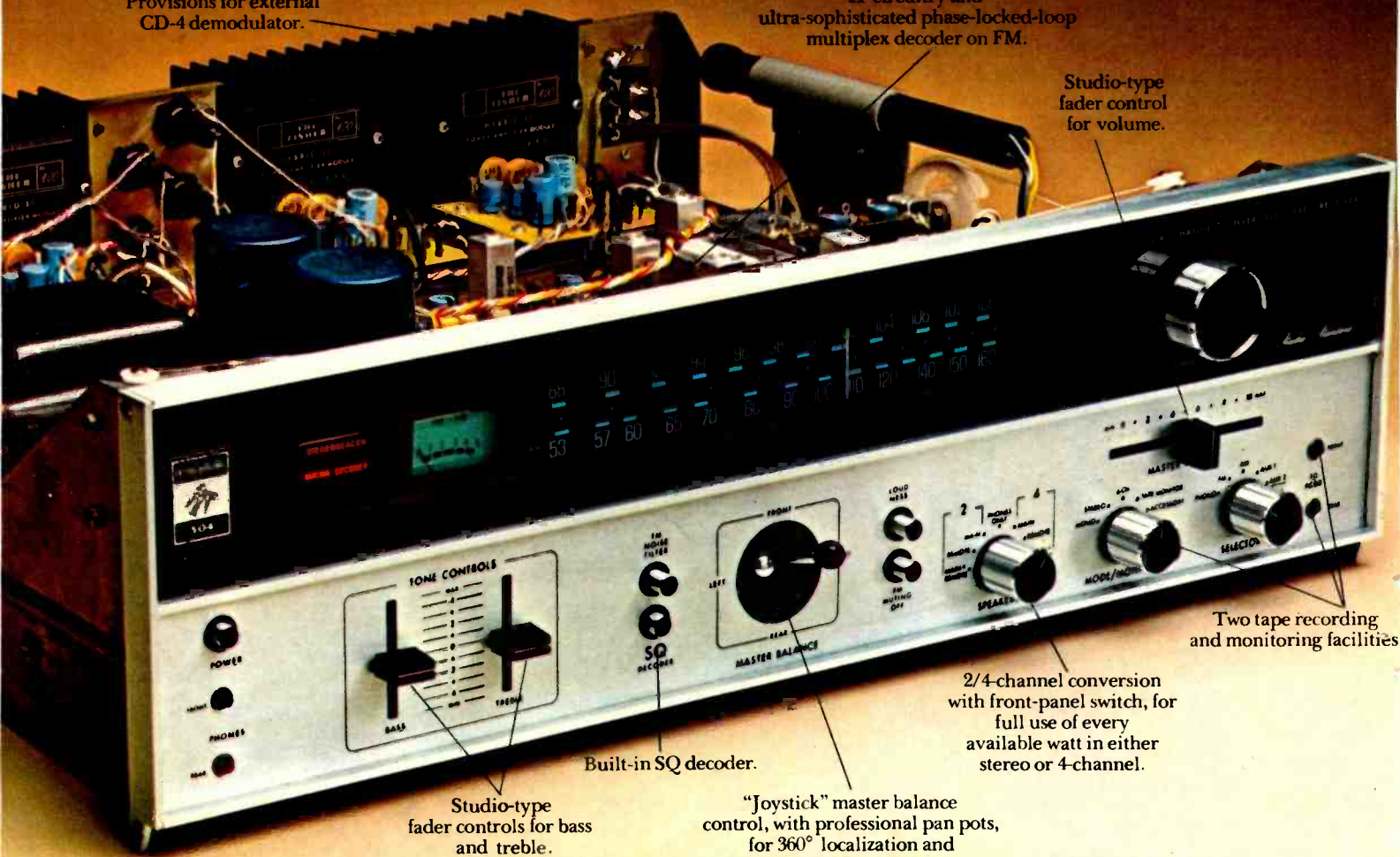
COVER: "La Mer," by Ada Calabrese (see page 72 for details)

# THE EAR VS.

Provisions for external CD-4 demodulator.

Unique new lumped-selectivity IF circuitry and ultra-sophisticated phase-locked-loop multiplex decoder on FM.

Studio-type fader control for volume.



Built-in SQ decoder.

Studio-type fader controls for bass and treble.

"Joystick" master balance control, with professional pan pots, for 360° localization and balance flexibility.

2/4-channel conversion with front-panel switch, for full use of every available watt in either stereo or 4-channel.

Two tape recording and monitoring facilities.



If you want the best 4-channel sound, you've got to pay for it, right?

And, conversely, if your budget is limited, you've got to accept something less than the very best. So goes the conventional wisdom of the audio world.

In these fast-moving times, however, conventional wisdom may be out of date by the time it becomes conventional. The new Fisher 304B is a case in point.

From the ear's point of view (if we may mix our metaphors) there isn't really *anything* better than the 304B. A few other 4-channel receivers are more powerful and somewhat more versatile, but they don't produce purer sound; nor does the 304B lack any important features that the others have. In a somewhat less luxurious form than

the latter, the 304B is "state-of-the-art."

That's why its remarkably low drain on the pocket, \$399.95,\* is such a triumph.

Do you realize that a good *tube* receiver, for stereo only, cost about as much *ten years ago*?

How did we do it? With the latest IC chips, for one thing. They do save space and money. And with the kind of production techniques and plant facilities that simply didn't exist a few years ago.

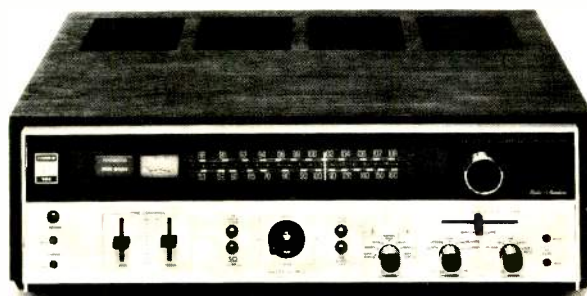
But that's our business. Your concern is the performance of the 304B. The specifications below will give you an idea. They're factual and conservative, easily verifiable by anyone with measuring equipment. And audible to anyone with an ear.

Fisher Radio, Dept. SR-2, 11-40 45th Road, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

# THE POCKET.

SPECIFICATIONS		
Amplifier and Audio Section:	Stereo	4-Channel
1. Total Continuous Sine-Wave Power (RMS) (20 Hz - 20,000 Hz)		
4 ohms	76W (38/38W)	80W (20/20/20/20W)
8 ohms	76W (38/38W)	60W (15/15/15/15W)
2. Total Continuous Sine-Wave Power (RMS) (at 1 kHz)		
4 ohms	100W (50/50W)	112W (28/28/28/28W)
8 ohms	96W (48/48W)	80W (20/20/20/20W)
3. Total IIF Music Power (at 1 kHz)		
4 ohms	134W	156W
8 ohms	120W	100W
Total Harmonic Distortion (THD)		
at rated power, 4 ohms		0.5%
THD at rated power - 3 db		0.15%
IM dist. (60 and 7,000 Hz, 4:1)		
at rated power, 4 ohms		0.8%
IM dist. at rated power - 3 db		0.3%
FM Tuner Section		
Usable Sensitivity (IIF Standard)		1.8uV
Harmonic Distortion (at 400 Hz, 100% modulation)		
Mono		0.2%
Stereo		0.3%
Signal-to-Noise Ratio (at 100% mod. & 1 mv input)		
Selectivity (IIF method) (alternate channel)		70 db
Max. Antenna Input Level (for 0.5% THD)		3 volts

**\$399.95\***



**THE FISHER**  
*Studio-Standard*

\*Fair trade price where applicable. Price slightly higher in the Far West and Southwest.

# Stereo Review

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WILLIAM ANDERSON

MANAGING EDITOR  
WILLIAM LIVINGSTONE

MUSIC EDITOR  
JAMES GOODFRIEND

TECHNICAL EDITOR  
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STEVE SIMELS

ASSISTANT MUSIC EDITOR  
VIVIENNE WINTERRY GOODMAN

PRODUCTION EDITOR  
PAULETTE WEISS

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

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MARTIN BOOKSPAN  
ROBERT S. CLARK  
NOEL COPPAGE  
RICHARD FREED  
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ELECTRONICS & PHOTOGRAPHIC  
FURMAN HEBB

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER  
STANLEY NEUFELD

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT  
PEGI MCNEANEY

Editorial and Executive Offices  
Ziff-Davis Publishing Company  
One Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016  
212 679-7200  
Eastern Advertising Manager Richard J. Halpern  
Midwestern Office The Pattis Group  
4761 West Touhy Ave., Lincolnwood, Ill 60466  
312 679-1100  
Arnold S. Hoffman  
Western Office  
3025 Wilshire Boulevard  
Beverly Hills, California 90211  
213 273-8050; 272 1161  
Western Advertising Manager Bud Dean  
Japan James Yagi  
Oji Palace Aoyama, 6-25, Minami Aoyama  
6-Chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan  
Telephone 407-1930/6821  
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## EDITORIALY SPEAKING

By WILLIAM ANDERSON

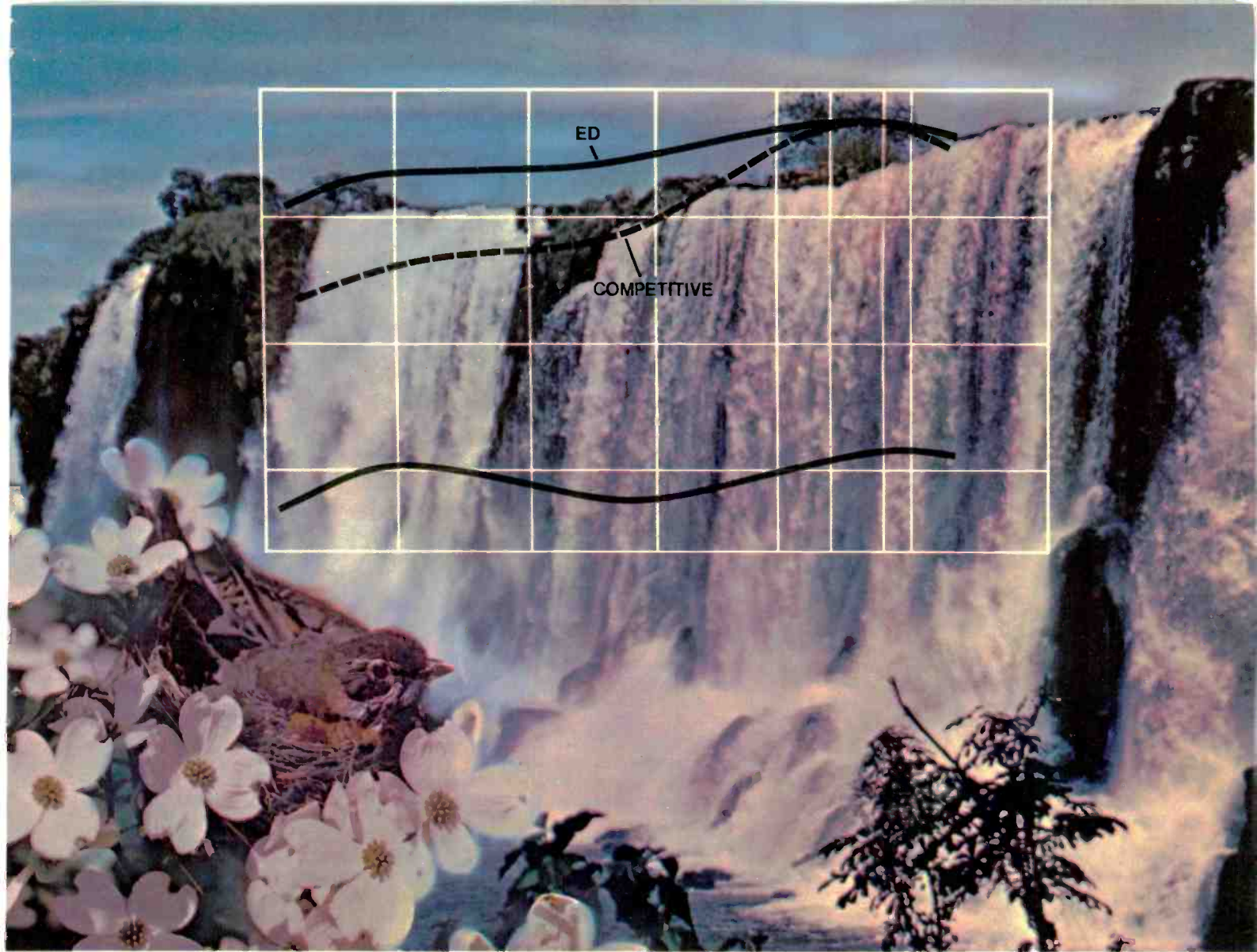
### UNDERSTANDING MUSIC

CREATION's infinite wisdom saw fit to favor mankind with an equally infinite number of talents, and one of the strangest of them was dropped on a friend of mine. He not only had perfect pitch, but could identify by name, at the drop of a stylus, any piece of music he had ever heard before—no time limit, and once was enough. Though unexploited, the gift made him a natural for Clifton Fadiman's old *Information Please* radio show, TV's later \$64,000 *Question* farce, or any college music department's "Music Appreciation" exam. Perhaps, in the infinite "survival-value" scheme of things, this wild talent was not totally wasted, even though it was paired with an almost complete indifference to music—there was no "appreciation." Charity compels me to say as much for "music appreciation" courses themselves: they may, in the end, be doing some good that is not apparent to me even though all their graduates seem to burst through the doors when school's out militantly unappreciative and determined never to subject themselves to the torture of Beethoven again.

My own experience has led me to conclude that music appreciation courses are, in the educationist jargon of the moment, "counterproductive": rather than teaching people to love music, they teach them to despise it. But pedagogues must love challenges, for they quite often find themselves trying to teach subjects that cannot be taught to students who are incapable of learning them. Principal among such subjects, I believe, is "appreciation" of the arts, whether it be of painting, sculpture, poetry, music, or dancing. Though educators would not (I hope) encourage the clumsy to seek a career in ballet, the color-blind to paint, the tone-deaf to compose, or the inarticulate to enter politics, the egalitarian imperative does apparently impel them, against all evidence, to keep right on plugging indiscriminately when it comes to the lookers and the listeners.

All the evidence I have ever seen (or heard) argues to me that there is a hierarchy of *talent* in the arts, starting with the creators, down through the performers, and ending with the appreciators (since there are hierarchies within hierarchies, critics—good critics, that is—will be found at the head of the appreciators). The operative word, as indicated, is "talent": we cannot create a Beethoven or a Schnabel by mere pedagogy, and we cannot create someone to appreciate them either. Which is not to say that a particular talent—composing, performing, listening—cannot be both discovered and developed; merely that it cannot be made to grow where it is not. This, I think, is what "music appreciation" courses try to do: the whole freshman class is *compelled* (is Mus. Appr. ever elective?) to memorize a definition of sonata form, the first measure of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (together with key signature), and the "surprise" in Haydn's 94th (in G, of course) to prove, at course's end, that they have learned to "appreciate." Was ever anything more fiendishly anti-musical devised by the mind of man?

We are gathered here in a rather special classroom: we meet once a month, there are (so far) upwards of 375,000 "students," and the course is entirely elective. More significant, however, is the fact that, though the subject is music, we are not here to "appreciate." That we already do, in our various ways, for Music has already discovered our listening talents, is already filling us with her unique pleasures. For some, those pleasures, unexamined, are enough, and they are here merely to discover where and how they can lay hands on more. The impatient minds among us, however, are looking a little beyond that for some insight into how Music's pleasures are created, how her effects are accomplished. It therefore gives *me* a great deal of pleasure to inform them that STEREO REVIEW's own *Guide to Understanding Music*, produced for us by David Randolph, Music Director of the Masterwork Music and Art Foundation, is now available. It has been several years in the preparation, and we think it does a difficult job splendidly. Read all about it on page 122.



# from chirp to roar...

...get it all with the broader dynamic range of TDK's EXTRA DYNAMIC (ED) cassettes. Dynamic range\* is only one reason for ED's superior total performance. EXTRA DYNAMIC cassettes also have the highest MOL (maximum output level), plus greater sensitivity, higher signal-to-noise ratio, and other superior characteristics that combine to give TDK cassettes the best-balanced total performance capability of any cassette on the market today. The result is you capture all the highs, all the lows, all the complex characteristics of "real-life" sound that give the original performance its richness, fullness and warmth.

In addition to top-of-the-line ED, TDK's Dynamic-series also includes SUPER DYNAMIC (SD), the tape that turned the cassette into a true high-fidelity medium, plus the entirely new, moderately-priced DYNAMIC (D) hi-fi cassettes. They all offer superior total performance on any cassette recorder, without need for special bias.

For a totally new and different experience in sound reproduction... for sound you *feel* as well as hear... discover the dynamic new world of TDK.

#### \*The Importance of Dynamic Range.

Dynamic range, represented graphically in the chart above, is the difference between a tape's sensitivity and its noise characteristics, over its full frequency response range. The broader a tape's dynamic range, the greater is its ability to record and reproduce wide variations in signal strengths at different frequencies. In other words, a tape with broad dynamic range can record very loud sounds without distortion, and very soft, delicate sounds without audible hiss, over the full frequency response range. Tests prove that TDK's ED cassettes have a much broader dynamic range than competitive so-called "hi-fi" cassettes.

For more detailed information on dynamic range and other superior total performance characteristics of TDK cassettes, visit your TDK dealer and ask him for your free copy of "TDK's new line of cassettes" brochure... or write directly to TDK.



CIRCLE NO. 57 ON READER SERVICE CARD

the new dynamic world of



TDK ELECTRONICS CORP.  
755 Eastgate Boulevard, Garden City, New York 11530



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Harping

● I enjoyed the article on the mighty harp (December), but I would like to make one minor correction. If a blues tune is in the key of G, the harp will be in the key of C, which is a fourth higher, not a fifth as stated. Forgive my harping on a small point.

JAMES YOUNG  
Seattle, Wash.

*Mr. Coppage replies: Mr. Young is correct, as I understand it—C is a fourth higher than G. My manuscript didn't mention either a fourth or a fifth, but what I did write was apparently so confusing that it caused some editor to jump into the next octave in his counting (going on up, G is a fifth higher than C). Let's just be thankful that cross-harp technique doesn't separate harp key and song key by a seventh—some of our editors would have to use both hands to count up to that.*

● Your article "Lo, the Mighty Harp" (December) was of the usual high quality, but not flawless. All proper respect was given to the masters we've lost, but the article neglected one of the few remaining individuals who gives his efforts to the purity of music as they did: Mick Jagger. Listen to that harp in *Stop Breakin' Down* ("Exile on Main Street"). Between that number and the early-Stones-style *Sweet Black Angel*, I have yet to hear better harp anywhere by anyone. Jagger is a present-day harp virtuoso, the ultimate in smooth harp playing. He has started a style that will probably die with him. Listen while you can.

BRIAN PATTERSON  
Bristol, N.H.

● Thanks to Noel Coppage for the beautiful review of the Little Sonny albums (December). I would agree to letting Cotton take the harp title, but if anybody is going to vie for it with him, Carey Bell is ahead of Little Sonny. Carey was in town the other day with Willie Dixon and the All-Stars (with Lafayette Leake on piano), and blew mostly chromatic during the two sets, and it was right tasty. He also played here with Big Walter last year, using both harps, and anybody who can keep up with Big Walter just has to be better than Little Sonny!

But why is it that when all the really great harp players cut an album they spend 90 per

cent of the time singing and only 10 per cent on the harp? There are damn few exceptions—times when they will play instrumentals—and so you have to wait for little bits and pieces of good harp playing. Frustrating, it is.

DOUG FULTON  
Ann Arbor, Mich.

● Noel Coppage's article, "Lo, the Mighty Harp!" (December) was extremely interesting and entertaining. However, I'm sorry it didn't present a bit more information on "classical" harmonica playing in this country and abroad. Perhaps mention should be made of the Society for the Preservation and Advancement of the Harmonica. For those who would like more information, the society's address is P.O. Box 3006, Detroit, Michigan 48231.

ROY V. CHILDS  
San Francisco, Cal.

### Other Opera Essentials

● I would like to extend my appreciation to George Jellinek for his enlightening comments on the new *Turandot* recording (November). It is a real pleasure nowadays to read a review that is presented in a fair and objective manner. I was also impressed with "Essentials of an Opera Library" (December). However, I do feel *Il Trovatore* should have been included and possibly *Don Carlo* should have been omitted.

JOSEPH LI VECCHI  
Kearny, N.J.

● With all due respect to George Jellinek's "Essentials of an Opera Library," he has (obviously inadvertently) overlooked real gold by not including Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto* with Nicola Rossi Lemini, Agostino Lazzari, Giuseppe Gaddei, Lucia Danielli, and Caterina Mancini (Philips 580, three discs, mono only). For all who haven't heard it, try it (if you can get it)—you'll like it!

ROLLIN C. WILLIAMS  
Salem, Conn.

*One man's essential is another man's luxury.*

● Thank you, Mr. Jellinek, for giving me some ideas for building an opera library! I have collected instrumental classical music for years, and "The Basic Repertoire" and reviews found in STEREO REVIEW have been

very positive guides. Thanks to your recent opera article, I now feel safe in launching out into this unexplored area of listening. Are there any plans for a similar article covering chamber music?

R. D. LANE  
Willcox, Arizona

*It is in the works.*

### Ms. Lieberman & Co.

● Speaking for myself and five friends here at UCLA, I must say that your magazine has lost a great deal of credibility for all of us after reading Mr. Coppage's reviews of Lori Lieberman (December). We think she is great, as are her writers, Gimbel and Fox. Their lyrics, and Ms. Lieberman's renditions of them, have been the subject of our classes in Rock Poetry. It seems that Mr. Coppage was handed two albums the night before and told to review them by sunrise. He seems to have a personal grudge against the writers—so much venom and hatred was expressed in his review of their work.

ROGER WOOD  
Los Angeles, Cal.

*Pity poor Poetry.*

● Noel Coppage's December review of Lori Lieberman's Capitol albums is a real paradox, combining perceptive and accurate statements with inane value judgments. His comments about Lori Lieberman's voice, intonation, and "beautifully formed tones" are quite appropriate. There seems to be little doubt in the mind of anyone who has heard her sing in person or on record that she is an extremely capable singer with a great future.

The comments about the songs themselves, however ("the Gimbel-Fox product") are completely without foundation or musical basis. Messrs. Gimbel and Fox command the respect and admiration of the musical community, and have arrived at mature musical statement. Songs like *Eleazar* or *I Go Along* demonstrate this. Whatever Mr. Coppage's personal feelings are regarding *Killing Me Softly*, it is certainly not "contrived" and "grotesque." In its many vocal and instrumental arrangements over the past year, it has held up quite well and is a substantial musical composition.

To attribute "hack attitudes" to such a songwriting team is grotesque indeed! Mr. Fox is one of the finest and most serious composers on the musical scene today. Mr. Gimbel's lyrics are just as fine and well thought out. I would like to know what credentials Mr. Coppage has to make such sweeping statements. My own musical background is extensive, and 90 per cent of my record listening is strictly classical. If Lori Lieberman's albums have found a place on my shelves along with Schubert, Brahms, Mahler, etc., they must have more substance than the "machine-made" qualities Mr. Coppage bestows on them. The total effect of Mr. Coppage's review is to cast doubt on his insight and integrity rather than reflect any light on the two albums he has reviewed.

ARNOLD CHANIN, M.A., M.D.  
Lawndale, Cal.

*The Editor replies: Strictly speaking, a "hack" is someone who writes for pay, including poets, critics, novelists, and journalists of all stripes and excluding only those lucky gen-*  
*(Continued on page 12)*

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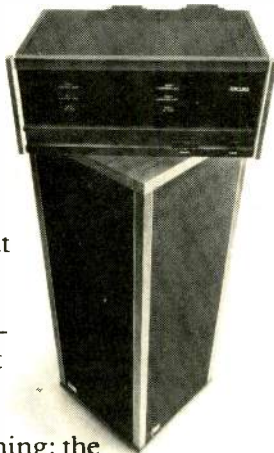
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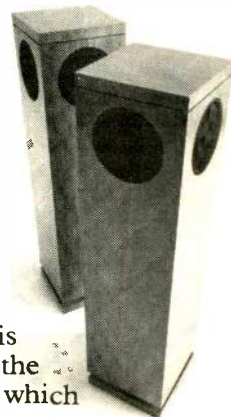
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ileman artists (they must surely be few) who can afford to write for their trunks. There is a great demand for such writing, because hungry newspapers, magazines, and books must be filled and refilled. Since, for the most part, those who consume this writing pay little attention to its quality, the profession attracts (a) those who could not write well if they had to and (b) those who could write well if they chose to but don't, knowing it would make little difference if they did. Thus, even though there are many delightful exceptions, "hack" has come to mean, by extension, any writer, artist, or composer who cannot or will not work much above an irreducible minimum of quality.

Now, as to the songwriting team of Gimbel and Fox, to which Mr. Coppage has attributed "hack attitudes," let us examine the central work in point, *Killing Me Softly with His Song*. The music first: what Mr. Coppage calls an "ingratiating melody" is just that; it is not a great melody on the level of, say, Bach's *Air for the G String*, Amazing Grace, Mozart's "Elvira Madigan" theme, *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*, or Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas No. 5*. It is more accurately a tune, catchy almost to the point of irritation, destined to become, in time, a musical earache. And it has a fatal flaw: the tacked-on "folkish" cadence at the end is, in context, pretentious and meretricious, self-consciously "arty" and tart. But it is hard to demonstrate melodic quality, the superiority or the inferiority of one melody over another, the question being almost wholly a matter of subjective judgment and individual taste.

Not so, however, in the case of the lyrics. First, the unexpected juxtaposition of the words "killing" and "softly" is simply a gimmick, a cheap trick designed to impress the unsophisticated ear with its "poetry." The proof is in the parody the line begs for: "smashing-sweetly," "clobbering-tenderly," "murdering-benignly" — but you can roll your own. Further, the figurative use of the word "killing" is a dated piece of slang, already on its way out of even the most limited vocabularies, already almost as quaint-sounding as "twenty-three skiddoo." It also conjures up, unfortunately, a rather Hollywoodish image: a blondined, gum-popping, truck-stop waitress giving it back to some fresh trailer jockey — "You just kill me!"

But the worst is yet to come, for the lyric's most serious flaw is revealed when it faces the music. Because of the way it repeatedly lies on the tune, it is simply impossible to sing the line "killing me softly with his song" without emphasizing the word "his," and that emphasis plays total havoc with the meaning. The interpretive possibilities are many, but try just one: the emphasis suggests contradistinction, but if it is not his song, whose is it? Hers? Ours? Mine? None of the above, of course, but sense has already been destroyed. Words and music can go together artfully in this case only if the tune is altered to remove the emphasis or if the emphasis does not distort meaning (windsong, say, or birdsong or even lovesong would work, but would also, of course, dictate considerable lyric rewrite).

Enter, then, the "hack attitudes." There are two possibilities: either Gimbel/Fox did not recognize this wince-producing flaw at all, or they did recognize it and let it stand as "good enough"; it's hack either way. It cannot be defended by pointing out that other songs — including *The Star-Spangled Banner* — have the same kind of flaw; that only makes them

flawed songs too. The SSB, at least, is the result of marrying Francis Scott Key's verses to an already written melody; Gimbel and Fox are a songwriting team, however, and their joint efforts should offer some evidence that they are still speaking to each other at least as often as Gilbert spoke to Sullivan, Rodgers to Hart, George to Ira, or Cole Porter to himself.

The crude, unfinished, gifted-amateur quality of much — most — popular music of the last decade springs from the apparent total absence in its creators of the faculty of self-criticism. If they do not have it, it will be supplied by sensitive critics like Noel Coppage. The general public, of course, is unconcerned, quite capable of making resounding commercial successes of Mairzy Doats, Three Little Fishies, or the Hut Sut Song. Let Mr. Chanin not be overimpressed, therefore, with *Killing Me's* "many vocal and instrumental arrangements." The record companies will "cover" literally anything that has proved profitable for someone else. I will suppress the image that activity brings to mind.

#### Discovering the Classics

● When I received my December copy of your stupendous mag, I immediately plunked myself down and began reading the letters first, as I always do. I am glad that there are some people who want to discover classical music. Perhaps my experience will be helpful.

Ten years ago, when I was five, I was dragged along with my older brother into a decrepit movie "palace" to see *Fantasia*, and I think I shall never forget that movie as long as I live because it turned me on to classical music. There I sat in a horrid, lumpy seat, enjoying that fantasmagorical flick as I have never enjoyed anything since. The next morning, I asked my mom for some money with which to buy a couple of records. She was so glad that I had tuned in to classical music that she bought me a record of every piece on the *Fantasia* program. I still have them, along with about 170 others. So therein lies my tale. May it be a help to those who as yet haven't discovered the classics and those who have forgotten how gorgeous they are.

JOHN VOLAND  
Van Nuys, Cal.

● Rock, especially of the heavy variety, has been my favorite type of music since its advent. However, I began to appreciate the classics at the age of thirteen (I'm now twenty) with Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, a fantastic way to start. Now my tastes are pretty limited, but rather fanatical: Beethoven symphonies, Bach organ works, Beethoven's concertos (the violin ones especially), Romantic concertos, and freak pieces like *Pictures at an Exhibition*, which I recommend as the best starter for anyone, especially jaded rockers looking for something really boggling. Good advice to anyone, however, is indeed "The Basic Repertoire" — they're not called war-horses for nothing.

BOB KANEDA  
Cambridge, Mass.

● Since my first serious involvement with classical music came about via Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, a piece well-known for its antipathetic effect upon the uninitiated, I had thought I should sit out the "dance of the proselytizers." However, it strikes me that no one has suggested the most appropriate piece for a rock freak to listen to classical music by

(most groups have borrowed from it at one time or another) — Ravel's *Bolero*. Get the Bernstein recording, and play it loud; if that doesn't convince you that classical music isn't all minuets, blame it on the Stones.

ALLEN WATSON III  
San Francisco, Cal.

● With all the letters you have been receiving with advice to "classical rookies" on which records to buy, I'm surprised no one has mentioned what is the least expensive solution: buy a decent portable or table FM radio, tune in a classical music station, and listen to it and no other station. You may hear a lot of music you like, plus a lot you won't. Should the station have a request program, you can enjoy a second listening to the music of your choice. This will give you ideas for future record purchases.

WILLIAM M. FETCHER  
San Diego, Cal.

● I have been following your "Classics for Rookies" exchange with fascination, recalling the joyous discoveries of my own odyssey out of boredom with AM rock as a teenager, starting with Sibelius' *Finlandia* and building to my 200-plus album collection, which extends from Perotin to Penderecki and from Ali Akbar Khan to Joplin (Scott and Janis). I have two suggestions to offer the neophyte, to help him find the vast musical riches that give me so much joy.

First, while you probably should start with the Classic and Romantic favorites, don't deny yourself the wonders of both older and newer music; don't fall victim to the 1750-1910 tunnel vision that affects too many classical listeners. Don't confine your geographical taste, either: explore American, Indian, Indonesian, Japanese, and other non-European schools of composition and performance.

My second suggestion is a general one. Don't be so caught up in the rugged-individualist I-know-what-I-like syndrome that you think it's somehow reprehensible to listen, and listen hard, to a piece just because someone tells you it is good. In the case of a recognized masterpiece, the chances are that if it doesn't impress you at first, the fault is yours rather than its. I have forced myself to listen to pieces that either failed to impress me (Beethoven's *Eroica*!) or that I utterly hated (Maxwell-Davies' *Revelation and Fall*) at first, only to connect with their beauty and value by dint of long effort at raising my level of comprehension closer to theirs. My latest revelation is Bach's Mass in B Minor, which I had long feared but now love. Just remember that it's a huge musical universe; don't cheat yourself out of any part of it.

EDWIN FROWNFELTER  
Carlisle, Pa.

#### James Lyons (1925-1973)

● The tragically premature death, at forty-seven, of James Lyons, editor and publisher of *The American Record Guide*, represents a grievous loss to the American musical scene in terms of both creative writing and creative action.

Following a rigorous apprenticeship in newspaper music criticism, Jim took over *The American Record Guide*, the oldest (established 1935) independent record-review publication in the U.S., from its retiring editor and publisher Peter Hugh Reed. (Only *The New Records*, the house organ of the H. Roy-  
(Continued on page 14)

# A tuner and an amplifier should be mated somewhat more carefully than a husband and wife.

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er Smith Co. in Philadelphia, antedates ARG, having been started in 1933.)

Not content just with keeping up the high standards of the ARG, Jim involved himself in a host of other activities that contributed to the welfare of the music and recording fields, not the least being his work with the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences' Grammy awards and its educational projects. In all these activities, the work that came out under his byline was never less than first-class, and more often than not it was genuinely distinguished. I remember with special pleasure the remarkable liner notes he turned out for the Mercury album of the complete Tchaikovsky orchestral suites with Dorati and the London Symphony; his program notes for the Boston Symphony won a 1968 ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award.

Even so, Jim's record of professional achievement over his all-too-short life span does not begin to match the vast appetite for living, for working, and for the exchange of ideas that was the essence of the man himself. Being in his presence under any and all conditions was infallibly stimulating and occasionally (and rightly) jolting. He will be fondly remembered and sadly missed.

DAVID HALL, *Head*  
Rodgers & Hammerstein Archives  
New York, N.Y.

● During my first week in New York, when I came to work for *Saturday Review* in 1962, James Lyons, whom I had never met, telephoned and invited me to lunch at the Russian Tea Room—just to make me welcome and let me know I had a friend in the city. The gesture was unique in my experience, but not in his. Jim was, in the best sense, a big brother to dozens—perhaps hundreds—of writers, musicians, and record people; he was a veritable clearinghouse for information on job openings and candidates to fill them, and always eager (and almost always incredibly able) to provide help in situations both related and unrelated to professional activity—all the while laboring a hundred hours a week or so to maintain the continuity and standards of the *American Record Guide* and setting examples for his colleagues in the resourcefulness of his annotative work.

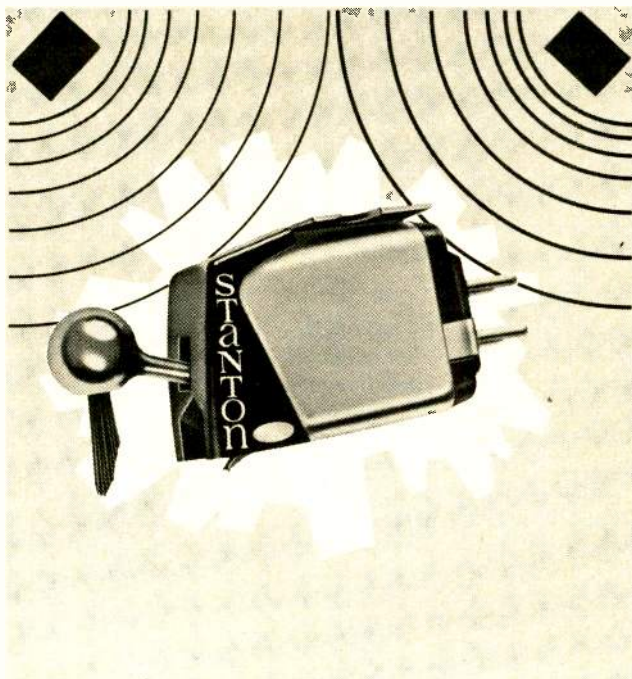
For years both newcomers and veterans in the musical community gathered at Jim's place every Friday night to eat, drink, and make valuable contacts (some of them professional, some of them personal). These soirées were taken for granted as something like a "public service" by many who participated in them, but, like the ARG itself, they received no outside subsidy; they were cut down when Jim's health began to fail. Neither his home nor his heart was ever closed to anyone, though, and he continued to function in his clearinghouse role till the day he died.

While Jim never imposed a feeling of obligation with his benefactions, there is hardly anyone in our field under the age of fifty who is not somehow in his debt—some of us for jobs, some for introductions to productive collaborators, some for technical or professional guidance, and some for just the exceptionally genuine interest and encouragement that kept us going when all the bridges seemed to be down. For many of us, what made Jim so special was his demonstration of how compatible a driving professional commitment and an uncommon warmth of heart can be.

RICHARD FREED  
Rockville, Md.



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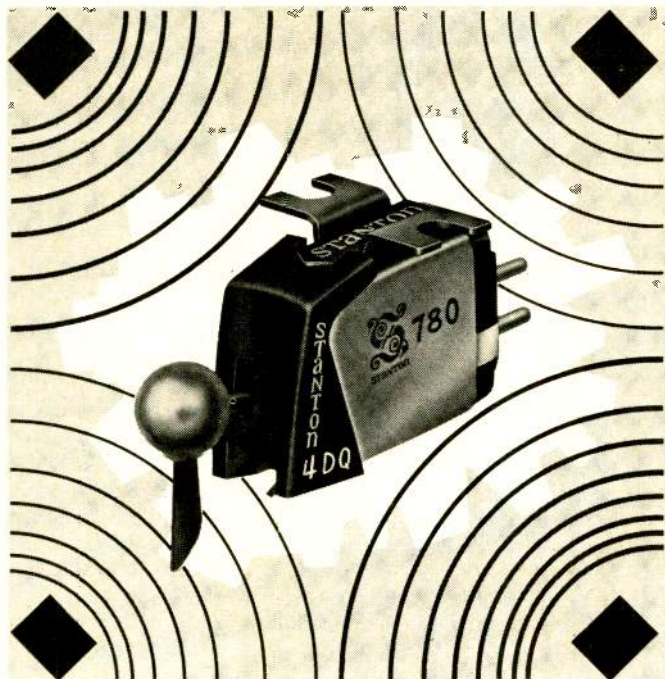


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## Bostedt "Superbend" Speaker Systems



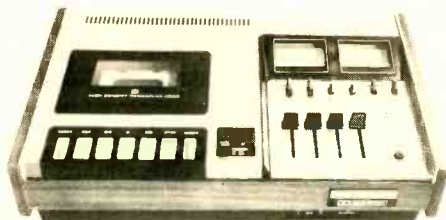
● INTERCONTINENTAL ENTERPRISES COMPANY is importing the Swedish-made Bostedt "Superbend" speaker sys-

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● THE Model 360S, the latest cassette deck from Teac, has a transport mechanism with performance comparable to that of Teac's de luxe Model 450 as well as many of the operating features of the more expensive machine. Dolby B-Type

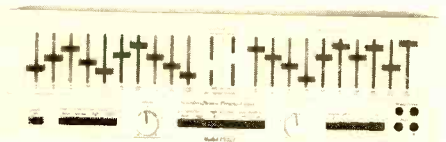
noise-reduction circuitry is incorporated, with all calibration controls accessible to the user. Bias and equalization are switchable for CrO<sub>2</sub>, "high-performance," and standard tapes. In the CrO<sub>2</sub> position the playback equalization is also altered to the values recently proposed for that tape type. Two large recording-level meters are supplemented by a peak indicator—a light-emitting diode that warns against overload on short-term transients. Slider-type recording- and playback-level controls are used. There is a switchable multiplex filter to remove the 19-kHz pilot signal from stereo FM broadcasts, and a memory-rewind feature that automatically stops the tape at

a point preselected on the three-digit index counter.

With CrO<sub>2</sub> tape, the frequency response of the 360S is 40 to 15,000 Hz  $\pm 3$  dB. Response is within the same tolerances to 13,000 Hz with high-performance tape, and to 10,000 Hz with standard tape. Signal-to-noise ratios are 60 dB with Dolby, 50 dB without. Wow and flutter are 0.07 per cent. The microphone inputs have an impedance of 600 ohms; adjacent to them is a stereo headphone jack that will drive 8-ohm phones. The Teac 360S comes mounted on a wood base; dimensions are 17 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 4 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Price: \$359.50.

*Circle 117 on reader service card*

## Soundcraftsmen PE2217 Stereo Preamp-Equalizer



● HAVING offered elaborate one- and two-channel multi-band equalizers for some years, Soundcraftsmen has now added signal-switching and magnetic-phono-input facilities to their ten-band stereo equalizer to create the Model PE2217 Preamp-Equalizer, a unit de-

signed to function as a highly flexible integrated control center for a two-channel stereo system. While VOLUME and BALANCE are conventional knob adjustments, all the frequency-related functions of a typical preamplifier—bass and treble adjustment, filters, loudness compensation—are handled in the PE2217 by the equalizers. The equalizers have ten slider-type controls for each channel spanning a range of  $\pm 12$  dB, acting at the center frequencies of the ten octaves of the audio-frequency band. Gain-control sliders adjust the output levels of the equalizers; LED (light-emitting diode) indicators permit the equalizers to be set for unity gain to facilitate A-B comparisons with the unequalized signals and to

prevent overload of subsequent stages.

The remaining PE2217 controls are all pushbuttons. They activate the LED indicators, select reversed stereo, left or right channel to both outputs, or mono, and operate tape-monitoring functions for two stereo tape decks, permitting dubbing from either one to the other. The inputs for two magnetic-phono sources, tuner, and auxiliary are also pushbutton-selected. The equalizers can be switched to affect only the "to tape" signals, the preamplifier output signals, or both. There are tape-dubbing jacks and two stereo headphone jacks on the front panel, and two sets of outputs and six a.c. convenience outlets on the rear

*(Continued on page 18)*

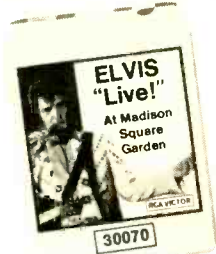
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• Sonny & Cher: Live ..... 00237	<b>ARTHUR FIEDLER/BOSTON POPS</b> 03542 Pops Serenade (RCA RED SEAL)	<b>Original Broadway Cast HAIR</b> 03292 [RCA VICTOR]	Yes, you can take your 8 hits for 99¢ on records or cassettes instead of cartridges! (Sorry, no mixing.) Check box in coupon. You still enjoy all benefits described here, and take future selections (usually \$5.98 for records, \$6.98 for cassettes) in your preferred type of music.
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panel. The rated output of the PE2217 is approximately 5 volts for load impedances ranging from 600 to 2,000 ohms, with harmonic and intermodulation distortions of less than 0.02 per cent. Sig-

nal-to-noise ratios are 80 dB for the phono inputs, 95 dB for high-level inputs. Frequency response with the sliders centered is 10 to 100,000 Hz  $-0.25$  dB. The preamplifier measures 20 x

7 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 11 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches. Price: \$499.50, which includes a walnut-grain cabinet or optional hardware for rack mounting of the unit.

*Circle 118 on reader service card*

## Sanyo RD 4350 Dolby Stereo Cassette Deck



● THE top model in Sanyo's growing line of Dolbyized stereo cassette decks is the Model RD 4350, equipped with a

ferrite record/playback head, a memory-rewind feature that halts the transport at any preselected point on the tape, and a novel tilt-up instrument panel that cants the recording-level meters for easier viewing. Seven piano-type push keys, including CUE, PAUSE, and a wide push bar for STOP, operate the transport. Separate level controls are provided for recording and playback, and there are switches to select NORMAL or SPECIAL tape-type characteristics, recording through microphone or line inputs, and

to activate the Dolby circuits. At the end of a tape the transport automatically shuts off and disengages completely. Specifications include a record-playback frequency response of 40 to 15,000 Hz  $\pm 3$  dB, a signal-to-noise ratio of 50 dB, and wow and flutter of less than 0.15 per cent. Transport speed accuracy is at least 99.8 per cent. Dimensions of the deck, including its wood base, are 17 x 9 x 5 inches. It weighs 12 pounds. Price: \$329.95.

*Circle 119 on reader service card*

## Telephonics TEL-111 Electret Stereo Headphones



● MAKING its first entry into the consumer audio market, Telephonics has introduced a line of stereo and four-channel headphones featuring the Model TEL-111, a stereo headset that employs the electret-condenser principle. Elec-

tret transducers closely resemble conventional electrostatic designs, except that the membranous diaphragm is permanently polarized with an electrical charge, eliminating the need for an external power supply to develop the required bias voltage. In each earpiece the Model TEL-111 has a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch, push-pull diaphragm that has been clamped to form two radiating surfaces—a small circular one for the higher frequencies and a larger crescent-shaped area for lows. The phones are driven from the speaker terminals of an amplifier or receiver through step-up transformers installed in an external control box to which the headphones and the speakers are con-

nected. A switch selects either source.

The TEL-111 has ring-shaped foam-filled cushions designed to isolate the wearer from external sound. The headband is padded, and attaches to the earpieces through sliding length adjustments for custom fit to the individual wearer. The frequency range of the phones is said to be 18 to 24,000 Hz, and total harmonic distortion does not exceed 0.2 per cent for a sound-pressure level of 115 dB. An input of 2.4 volts at the transformer drives the phones to a level of 104 dB  $\pm 3$  dB at 1,000 Hz. The headset weighs 17 ounces exclusive of cable and control box. Price: \$87.50.

*Circle 120 on reader service card*

## Avid Series 100 Speaker Systems



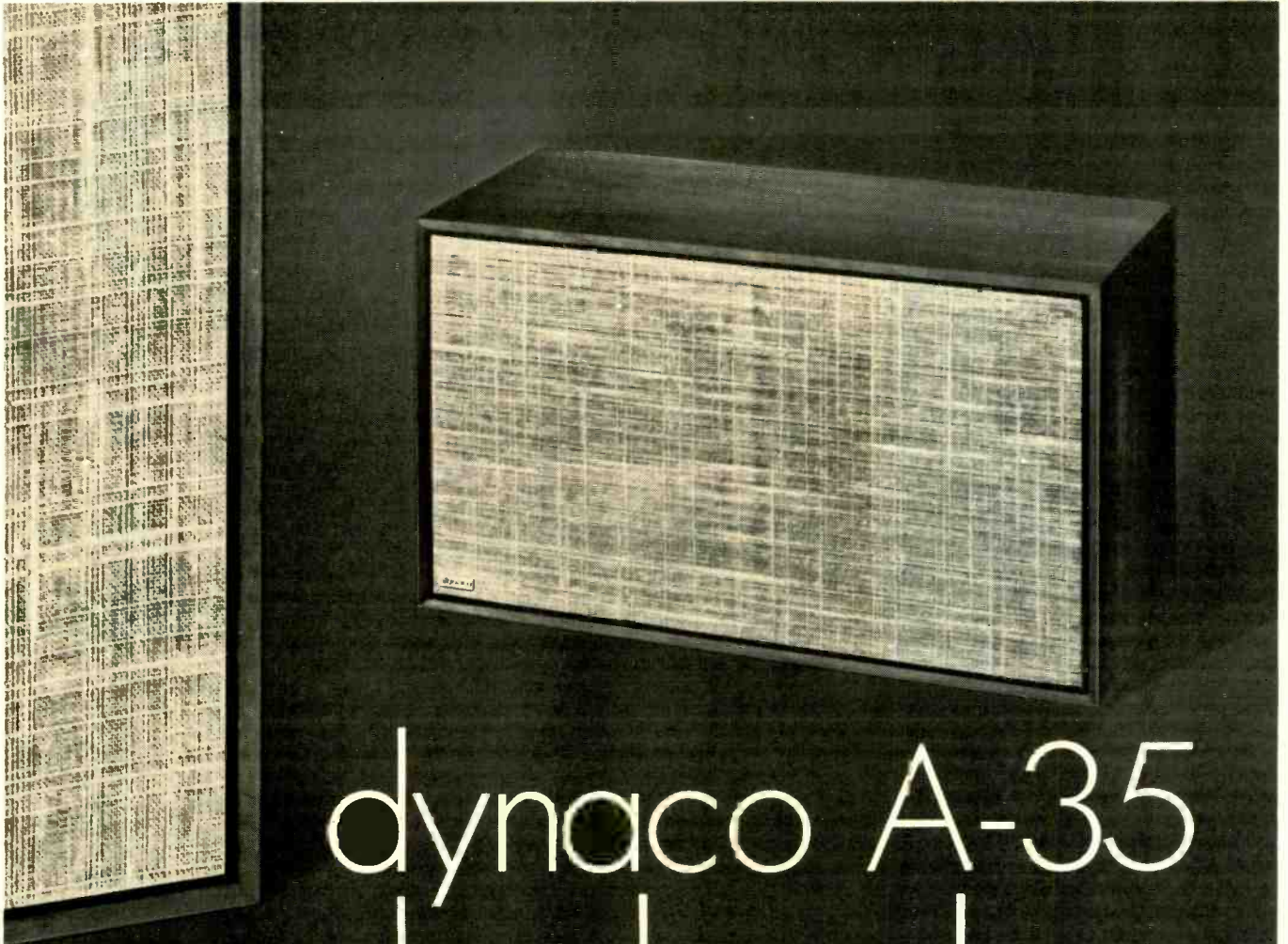
● THE first consumer products from the Avid Corporation are three speaker systems of the air-suspension type, featuring simple, attractive styling and user-replaceable grille cloths. At the top of the line is the Model 103 (\$139.50; shown), incorporating a 10-inch woofer, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cone-type mid-range, and a 1-

inch dome tweeter. The Model 102 (\$109.50) is a two-way system employing the woofer and the tweeter from the Model 103; the Model 100 (\$79.50) has an 8-inch woofer and a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cone tweeter. All the systems have a nominal impedance of 8 ohms and level controls to adjust high-frequency output to suit the room acoustics. (The Models 100 and 102 have three-position switches; the Model 103 has a five-position switch, with the central three positions affecting only high frequencies and the extreme settings altering both mid- and high-frequency levels.) Frequency responses are 35 to 18,000 Hz (40 to 18,000 Hz for the Model 100)  $\pm 5$  dB. The Model 103 has crossover frequencies of 500 and 3,500 Hz; the two less expensive systems are crossed over in the region of 2,500 Hz. Power-handling capabilities range from 75 watts (Model 100) to 150 watts (Model 103). The systems are said to be somewhat more ef-

ficient than the usual air-suspension designs, with 1-watt white-noise inputs producing sound levels of 83 to 86 dB at a three-foot distance. The mid- and high-frequency drivers of the Models 103 and 102 are fused as a safeguard against amplifier overdrive.

The grille cloths of the Avid speaker systems can be removed from the front of the enclosures—and from the frames on which they are stretched—for washing or replacement with a fabric of the owner's choice. Avid offers pre-cut replacement grille cloths in eight optional colors (\$3.95 per pair). The enclosures, clad in walnut-grain vinyl, measure about 25 x 15 x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches for the Models 103 and 102, and 12 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 21 x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches for the Model 100. Low wooden bases for floor placement are included in the price of the Model 103; they are optional for the Model 102 at \$3.95 each. Prices are slightly higher in the West.

*Circle 121 on reader service card*



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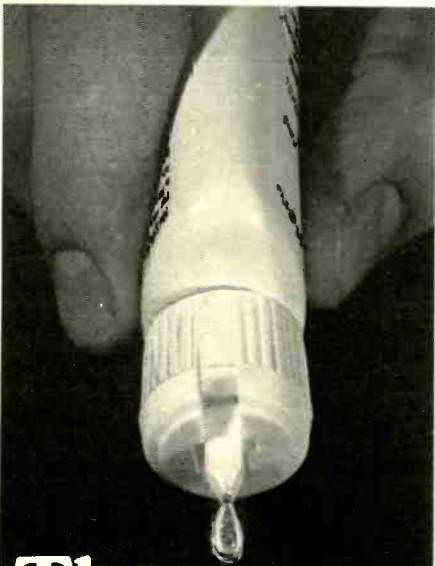
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SR 2



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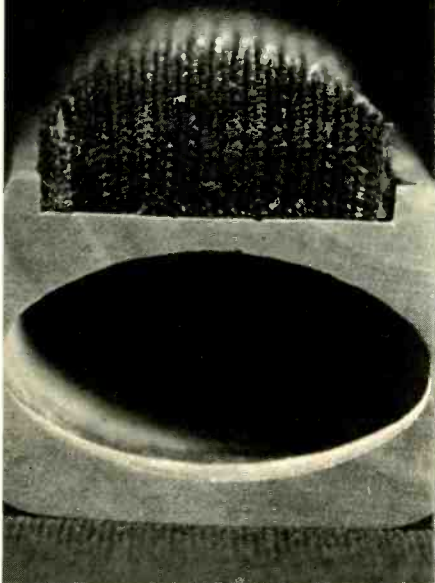
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# AUDIO QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

By LARRY KLEIN *Technical Editor*



## Arp and Moog Reproduction

**Q.** *Over the years, and most recently in the August 1973 issue, you have taken a firm stand for accurate reproduction in loudspeakers. In general, I agree with your arguments, but how does the question of "accuracy" relate to the reproduction of sound that had no original live reality, such as the product of an Arp, Moog, or other synthesizer? Or, for that matter, the sound from the loudspeaker driven by an amplifier being fed by an electric guitar?*

ARNOLD FOX  
Bronx, N.Y.

**A.** Your question reads like a latter-day electric version of the old philosophy paradox about the sound—or lack of it—made by a tree falling in the forest when there was no one to hear it. The "sound" of a music synthesizer is that which comes out of the speaker attached to it. Different speakers are going to produce sounds with somewhat different qualities. Therefore, it seems to me that since a recording is made from the electrical output of the synthesizer, bypassing the speaker (or headset) used by the composer to listen to the instrument, it is up to the composer of the piece to specify the speaker or headphones to be used if he wants the listener to hear exactly what he, the composer, had in mind. (This is somewhat analogous to a situation in which a composer such as John Cage states that his composition sounds the way he wants it to when in performance it is played on a piano mechanically "prepared" in a certain way.) Of course, the listener has the option of playing the subsequent record through any kind of reproducing system he wants—or even, for that matter, at the wrong speed.

The speakers that are part of electrical musical instruments are another matter altogether. The sonic characteristics of the speaker and the amplifier that drives it must be considered as much an intrinsic part of the musical instrument as is the wooden body of a Stradivarius. The

difference is, of course, that any electric guitar can be hooked up to a wide variety of different amp/speaker combinations and produce a wide range of results. Some combinations will produce sound judged preferable to that produced by some other combinations—and most rock musicians have their favorites. At the recording session, the musician usually wants to hear captured on the tape the same sonic quality he hears live from his guitar amp/speaker combination, not simply that of the guitar plugged into the mixing board. It is for that reason that in a recording session microphones are always used to pick up the *acoustical* output of the music instrument's speaker. Sometimes, to achieve a special effect, the guitar may be plugged directly into the mixer for one track and be picked up via amp/speaker and microphone for another track—and the two tracks mixed in the desired ratio.

Perhaps the question can be clarified if one thinks of a music-instrument speaker as a sound producer and a hi-fi speaker as a sound reproducer.

## Dolby's 10 dB

**Q.** *I have noticed that there are several audiophile noise-reduction systems available that claim a better signal-to-noise ratio improvement than Dolby's 10 dB. Is the 10-dB improvement an inherent limitation of the Dolby circuit, or are there some other reasons for choosing that specific figure?*

MARTIN ROSEN  
Palo Alto, Cal.

**A.** According to Dr. Dolby, the choice of 10 dB was made *not* because his B-type is inherently incapable of more, but mostly because 10 dB was felt to be the best compromise figure. As your ears will attest, the 10-dB reduction of high-frequency tape noise provided by the Dolby circuits does provide a significant audible improvement. However, if greater noise reduction treatment were attempted—say 15 or 20 dB—the "treated" tape might well be

unlistenable shrill (because of excessive high-frequency boost of low-level signals) when played back through non-Dolby equipment. On inexpensive cassette players the 10 dB of boost usually seems to improve the tonal balance slightly—mostly because prerecorded cassettes don't have a superabundance of highs in the first place, and cheap cassette playback equipment tends to lack the high-frequency response to reproduce fully all highs on the tape.

#### Product Modification

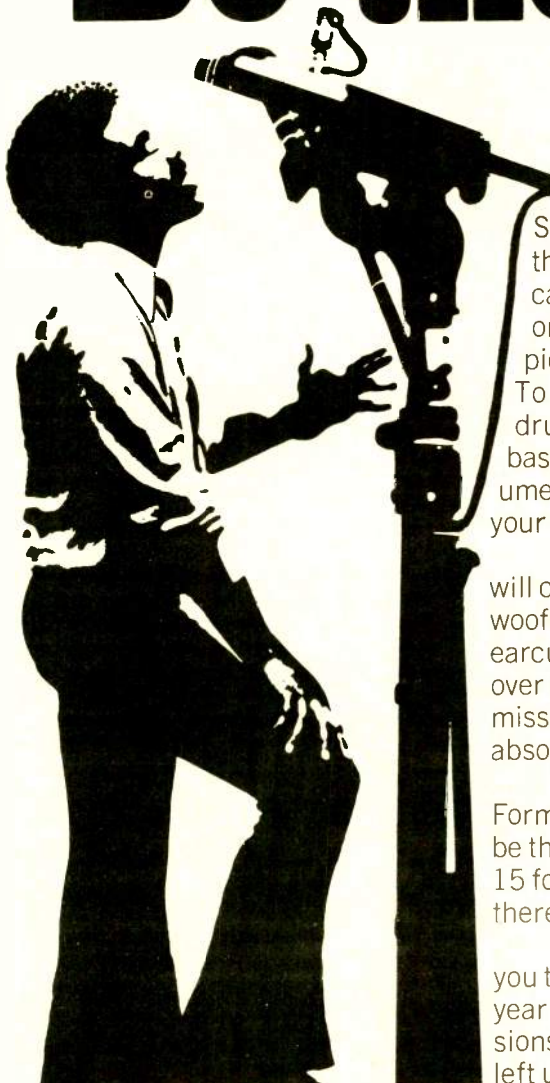
**Q.** *I have had a lot of trouble with my amplifier—it has been in the repair shop three or four times over a two-year period. I recently saw some manufacturer's service notes for my unit and it seems that practically from the day it was designed it has been undergoing changes and modifications. How is it that a well-respected company such as the one that produced my amplifier wasn't able to get the design right the first time?*

ALBERT SEGAL  
Detroit, Mich.

**A.** Although it is true that design modifications may be made to enhance reliability, it is not valid to automatically assume—as you do—that there is a necessary correlation between your amplifier's breakdown and the circuit modifications. Changes from an original design come about for numerous other reasons besides an attempt to rectify some flaw in the original design. For example, the substitution of an improved semiconductor or IC will usually require other changes in associated resistors and/or capacitors in order for it to work properly. Or a specific part may no longer be available, or the suppliers of a particular part may turn out to be unreliable in their ability to deliver or to maintain their original quality control. Or the design engineer may have a sudden inspiration or source for a new semiconductor that enables him to enhance the reliability or performance of a circuit.

I've said this before, but it seems to be worth repeating. Any company that puts out a product that tends to break down in the customer's home is sooner or later going to find itself in bad trouble. The reason is not that any individual customer has any special clout, but rather that the hi-fi dealer who sold the product to the customer does. No dealer in his right mind would continue to buy the product of a manufacturer when he knows that those products are going to make the dealer's customers unhappy. So, aside from the ethics and morality of the situation, manufacturers are by and large forced by the mechanics of the marketplace to stand behind their products, since the dealer who is between them and the customer can make or break them.

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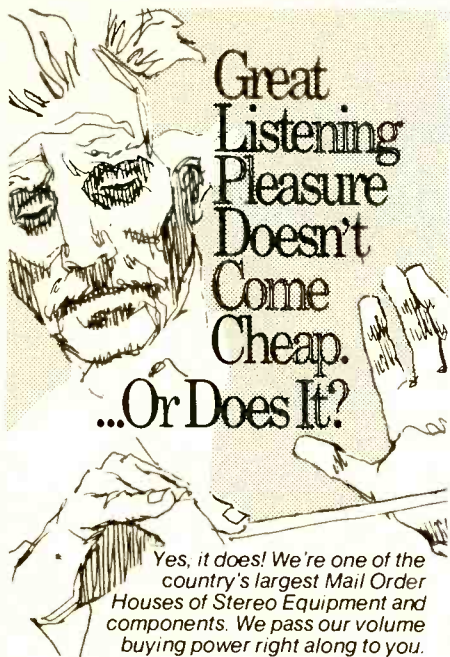
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# AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES



## GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS—7

● **Compliance** is the opposite of "stiffness." A soft spring is compliant, a hard spring is stiff. At one time compliance was considered the most important specification for phono cartridges (usually appearing in the form " $25 \times 10^{-6}$  centimeters per dyne," for example) since it was obvious that a very compliant phono stylus would yield more readily to the forces exerted on it by the undulating record groove. (Nowadays, "minimum recommended tracking force," which takes into account several other performance factors as well as compliance, is generally considered a more meaningful figure of merit.) Compliance is not really one of those "the-more-the-better" design parameters; rather, an *optimum* value should be chosen (by the manufacturer) to complement the effective mass of the tone arms the cartridge is likely to be used with. Otherwise, the compliance of the stylus and the mass of the tone arm could interact to produce a resonance that would cause difficulty with record warps or affect frequency response. (See Julian Hirsch's article on compatibility in last month's issue.)

"Compliance" may also appear in speaker advertisements: for example, "high-compliance woofer." In this context, compliance indicates that the speaker cone is capable of large back-and-forth motions (excursions). However, compliance statements about speakers are not particularly meaningful, since they ignore a number of other factors at least as important to audible performance.

● **Crosstalk** is the opposite of "separation." Both terms are used to indicate the amount of (undesirable) signal leakage between stereo channels. A crosstalk specification of  $-50$  dB indicates that leakage signals are 50 dB below the level of the desired signal in the channel measured. A separation specification of 50 dB says the same thing: the desired signal is 50 dB stronger than the leakage signals. A crosstalk specification of  $-20$  dB is usually adequate for good stereo.

● **Crossover** networks, integral parts of most multi-speaker systems, are electrical circuits that divide the drive signal from the amplifier into two or more frequency sections. In a two-way system the high frequencies are routed to the treble speaker (tweeter) and the low frequencies to the bass speaker (woofer). In three-way speaker systems, containing a mid-range driver as well, the crossover network divides the audio frequencies into three sections.

The frequencies at which crossover networks act are called the crossover *points*, and the sharpness with which they separate the frequencies are called the crossover *slopes*. There is no one "correct" set of crossover frequencies or slopes. They are selected by the designer of the speaker system, who takes into account, among other factors, the optimum frequency ranges, the efficiencies, and the power-handling capabilities of the specific drivers he has chosen. Most networks are passive devices consisting of capacitors and coils installed within the speaker enclosure. However, some manufacturers offer separate *electronic* crossovers that do their frequency dividing ahead of the power amplifiers. Electronic crossovers require separate power amplifiers for each frequency division they produce (as a rule, this means at least two amplifiers for a multi-speaker system). Most provide a switch-selected choice of several crossover points.

● **Cueing** refers to the act of "zeroing in" on a desired section of a record or tape—setting the phono stylus in just the right groove (or the tape head in contact with just the right point on the tape) to bring in the first notes of the wanted selection as soon as play begins. Originally a term coined by radio-station engineers, who had to respond to the "cue" of the director to start the program for air play, cueing in audio usage now designates the lever or pushbutton control on a turntable that raises the tone arm for positioning over any part of a record.



# A DEMONSTRATION OF QUADRIPHONIC SOUND

Put your left index finger gently in your left ear.  
You're listening to monaural sound.

You cannot distinguish the direction of any individual sound source.  
They're all mixed together. This is the kind of sound an ordinary radio gives you.

Now cup both your hands behind your ears, palms facing forward.

You're listening to stereo.

You are able to distinguish the direction of any individual sound source in front of you.

This is the way you listen to your stereo system.

Like a spectator at a concert.

Now take your hands away from your ears.

Sounds are coming at you from all around you. You are able to distinguish the direction of any individual sound source.

You're listening to the equivalent of quadriphonic sound.

This is the way you hear in real life. Quadriphonic is natural sound.

If you decide to go with a quadriphonic sound system in your home, this Harman/Kardon 900+ multichannel receiver is as far as you can go.

It's the world's most advanced four-channel receiver.

It has every kind of four-channel circuitry built in. Apart from 4 speakers and a turntable, there is nothing to add. No accessories to buy.

Owning the 900+ doesn't mean you have to discard your stereo albums. It will actually play them better than ever with a unique "Enhanced Stereo" feature.

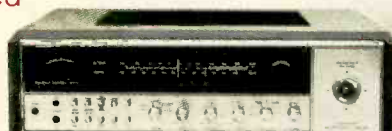
But most importantly, the 900+ carries Harman/Kardon's traditional wideband circuitry. It reproduces not only the frequencies you can hear but also those you cannot.

This is terribly important. Because the frequencies you cannot hear have a marked effect on those you can.

This wideband philosophy gives Harman/Kardon receivers their stunning realism.

For an even better demonstration of quadriphonic sound, listen to the Harman/Kardon 900+ at your nearest franchised dealer.

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CIRCLE NO. 22 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# Introducing a small miracle

Miracles, even small ones, are hard to believe. We know.

When we first introduced our small 404 speaker some years ago, believers were hard to find. Today, our credibility is really being challenged. The new XT-6 is so good that even the people who know ADC's "small box, big sound" achievements find it incredible.

But it's true. This book-sized bantam outperforms anything its size. And rivals enclosures many times its size and price.

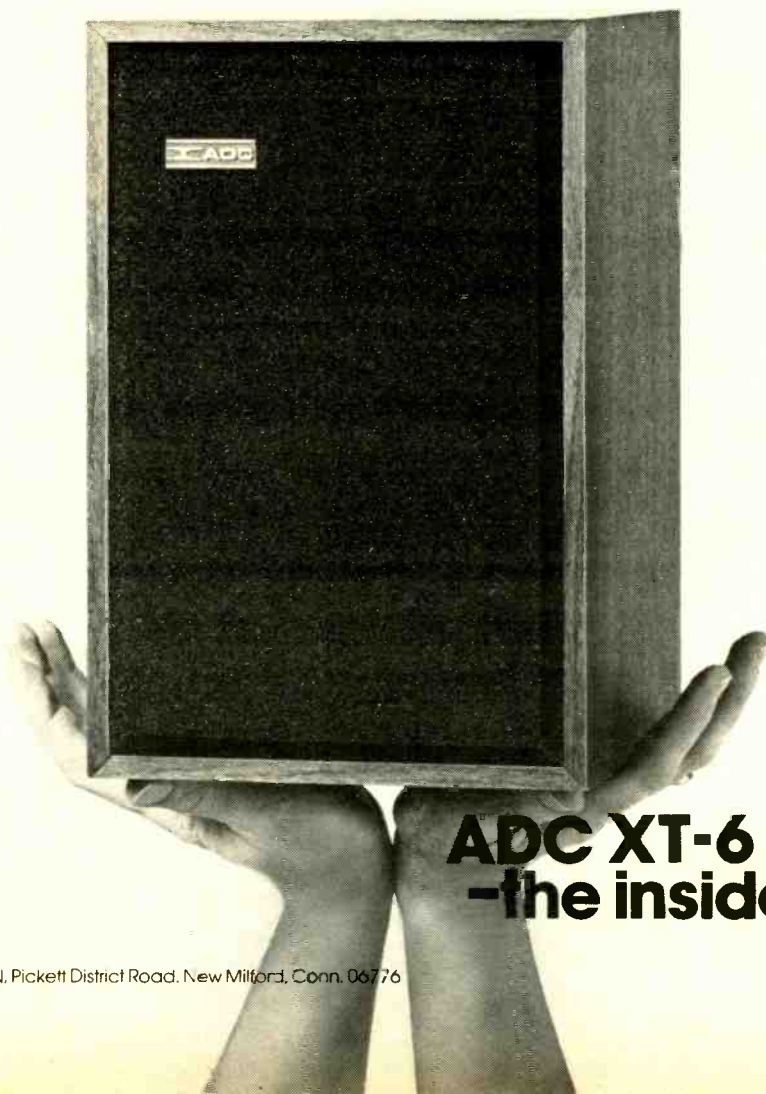
How do we do it? With a unique combination of cone structure, magnet force and coil configuration, for one thing; they interact to let a small woofer pump out a staggering amount of bass. Handle as much power as any standard-sized room requires. And keep distortion at a minimum.

Granted, the XT-6 has its limitations. It won't shake timbers. And it won't project massive sound into huge rooms. But in typical apartments, the ADC XT-6, at under \$60, gives you more sound per dollar than any other bookshelf speaker on the market.

The specifications will confirm the technical capabilities of the XT-6. But we suggest you go to your dealer and listen... Even if you don't believe in miracles, the XT-6 will give you something to think about.

## XT-6 SPECIFICATIONS

<b>NOMINAL IMPEDANCE:</b>	6 ohms
<b>RESPONSE:</b>	45Hz to 20 KHz $\pm$ 3dB in average listening room.
<b>HIGH FREQUENCY DRIVER:</b>	2 1/2" viscous impregnated cone tweeter with 1 1/2" Dia. effective radiating surface.
<b>LOW FREQUENCY DRIVER:</b>	6" with high compliance, soft suspension and viscous coated cone.
<b>CROSSOVER FREQUENCY:</b>	2000Hz Nominal.
<b>HIGH FREQUENCY LEVEL CONTROL:</b>	When in "treble down" condition tweeter level is pivoted from the crossover point to approximately 3dB down at 10kHz.
<b>ENCLOSURE:</b>	Walnut finish air-tight cabinet 12 1/8" H x 7 7/8" W x 8 1/2" D. Filled with sound absorbent material.
<b>POWER REQUIREMENTS:</b>	10 watts RMS power output per channel.
<b>PRICE:</b>	\$ 58.00



**ADC XT-6 SPEAKERS**  
**-the insider's choice.**



# TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **IS PHASE SHIFT AUDIBLE?** Can audio phase shift be heard? Many people are convinced that phase distortion is not only audible, but may be largely responsible for the less-than-perfect sound reproduction of some of our most highly regarded loudspeakers (or amplifiers, phono cartridges, tape recorders, etc.). Others, with equal fervor, deny this.

Phase-shift distortion (also known as nonlinear phase response or time-delay distortion) occurs when the different frequencies embodied in a complex audio signal reach the listener's ears at different times. It is a property of most loudspeaker systems, to a greater or lesser degree. Phase-shift distortion can be produced electrically in the crossover network, mechanically by the physical construction of the drivers, and acoustically by the spacing of the drivers. (Phase-shift distortion does *not* occur significantly in electronic components such as amplifiers.) The shape of a complex waveform can be drastically changed by a shift in the relative phases of its different frequencies, even if the relative strengths and amounts of the various frequencies are not altered. For example, a square wave can become a sharp spike.

The results of an extensive series of investigations in the research laboratories of the well-known Danish manufacturer Bang & Olufsen were presented in a paper delivered last year before the Audio Engineering Society in Rotterdam. The paper's authors, Erik R. Madsen and Villy Hansen, were in charge of a research program that was designed to determine the threshold of phase-shift detection of human hearing and to obtain quantitative results if possible. Their findings are not only significant, but in some cases quite surprising.

Madsen and Hansen first conducted listening tests with a loudspeaker whose phase shift was such that it produced a roughly triangular-wave acoustic output from a square-wave electrical input.

Using an ingenious corrective method to obtain a true square-wave output from the speaker, they alternated the two signals and found that trained listeners heard a distinct difference in timbre, even though a spectrum analysis (which is insensitive to phase) showed the two signals to be identical in respect to their frequency content.

Next, they produced a transient signal with continuously variable phase shift and constant total energy—specifically, a single-cycle sine-wave burst with an adjustable zero-reference line. The output of a high-quality electrostatic loudspeaker driven by this signal was judged

tive relationships defining the audibility of phase-shift distortion. Tests were made in seven frequency ranges from 100 Hz to 10 kHz, using a number of sound-pressure levels (SPL). At each frequency, the listeners could choose from among five steps of increasing phase shift until a definite change of timbre could be heard. Wide-range electrostatic headphones were used to eliminate environmental effects.

The averaged family of curves from this test has a shape somewhat reminiscent of the familiar Fletcher-Munson equal-loudness contours. In this test, the ear was most sensitive to phase shifts at about 800 Hz, with decreasing sensitivity at lower and higher frequencies. The sensitivity to phase changes, at any frequency, increased with the SPL. It is interesting to note the magnitude of the effect. A mid-range phase shift of less than 5 degrees could be detected at an SPL of about 80 dB, while at a 61-dB SPL the shift had to reach 15 degrees before it was audible.

The tests were then repeated in a normally "live" room, using a wide-range electrostatic loudspeaker. The general shape of the resulting curves was similar to those obtained with headphones, but the region of maximum sensitivity was fairly uniform from about 200 to 1,000 Hz. The magnitudes of the minimum detectable phase shifts were about the same, but they occurred at much lower sound-pressure levels. For example, a 5-degree shift could be heard at an SPL between 65 and 70 dB, and a 22-degree shift was detected at an SPL of only 50 dB (a much lower level than would be used in listening to music at home).

Summarizing the findings of Madsen and Hansen, it appears that:

1. Phase-shift distortion *can* be heard.
2. Sensitivity to phase-shift distortion is greater in a reverberant (or normal) environment than in an anechoic (acoustical test-chamber) environment.

(Continued overleaf)

## TESTED THIS MONTH



**Hitachi SR-5200 Receiver**  
**Grado FTR+1 Phono Cartridge**  
**Bib Model 45 Record Cleaner**  
**Akai GX-285D Stereo Tape Deck**

(in an anechoic chamber) by the listening panel. Their findings not only confirmed the original conclusions, but unexpectedly showed that *absolute* phase is significant. Apparently the ear favors a negative pressure impulse, so that a transient that moves a speaker cone inward will be heard with greater subjective accuracy than if the speaker leads are reversed to make the cone move outward. At this time, no attention is being given to phase in the recording process from microphone to loudspeaker (except to avoid frequency cancellations), but Madsen suggests the possibility of a genuine improvement in reproduced sound if absolute phase is standardized.

The major effort of the B&O research team was devoted to obtaining quantita-

3. Sensitivity to phase-shift distortion increases with SPL, and is generally detected earlier at frequencies to which the ear is highly sensitive.

4. A speaker with poor transfer characteristics (nonlinearities and inadequate transient response) is *more* revealing of phase variations than a speaker of better quality.

5. Absolute phase is a significant factor in the realistic reproduction of transient waveforms.

Obviously, much more remains to be done in this field, especially in establishing a correlation between phase and impulse measurements and subjective listening tests. For one thing, Madsen used a rather simple, artificial test signal which had advantages in analysis but certainly was not representative of the usual program content of music or speech.

In this country, the importance of eliminating time-delay (or phase-shift)

distortion has been stressed by only a few speaker designers. Intuitively, it would appear that a speaker capable of generating an acoustic transient waveform whose shape accurately reflects that of the electrical driving signal should be a superior transducer. In our experience, few speakers can approach this ideal, and we have not yet established any firm correlation between this sort of transient-response capability and the overall subjective quality of the speaker's sound.

At the conclusion of their paper, the Danish researchers indicate that their investigation "... shows seemingly more correlation between phase and impulse measurements and subjective quality of loudspeakers than many other kinds of objective measurements." If so, I look forward to the development of such measurements into a useful laboratory tool for speaker evaluation in the future. But my own view at this time—

subject to change—is that although low time-delay (or phase) distortion is certainly a desirable quality of a loudspeaker, it is not *in itself* sufficient to define an accurate reproducer. Those speakers we have tested that proved to have superior transient properties have been very good by any standards, but there have been many others lacking this capability that nevertheless managed to sound just about as good, if not better. It seems likely to me that in most cases, the other usual aberrations of loudspeakers, such as nonlinear distortion, modulation distortion, erratic polar characteristics, overall energy output versus frequency, and certainly many others, tend to swamp out the potentially audible effects of time-delay distortion. When the other distortions are reduced significantly, I do not doubt that the speakers with the best phase characteristics will then be able to demonstrate a clear superiority in audible performance.

## EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

### Hitachi SR-5200 Receiver



● **THE** Hitachi SR-5200 is a compact, low-priced stereo receiver with considerable control and operating flexibility. The dial scale, which occupies the upper half of the front panel, has illuminated words identifying the program mode and source selected (STEREO, PHONO, AUX, FM, AM), two tuning meters with zero-center and relative-signal-strength indications, a pushbutton power switch, and a large tuning knob. The lower half of the panel, finished in satin gold, has four knobs—BASS and TREBLE tone, BALANCE, and VOLUME. Pulling out the BALANCE knob switches the receiver to mono on all inputs, and pulling out the volume-control knob activates the loudness-compensation circuit.

Two pushbuttons independently connect the two sets of speaker outputs. Other pushbuttons control tape monitoring for two tape decks (it is possible to dub from TAPE 1 to TAPE 2), turn on the FM interstation noise-muting cir-

cuit, and select the desired program source. There is also a stereo headphone jack on the panel.

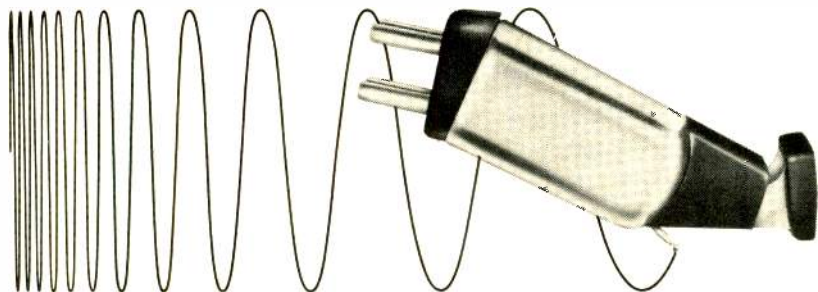
In the rear of the SR-5200 are the input and output connectors (TAPE 1 uses standard phono jacks; TAPE 2 has a high-impedance DIN connector). A switch near the phono-input jacks changes the gain of the phono-preamplifier stages to accommodate high- and low-output phono cartridges. If the speakers connected to the remote-output terminals are placed in the back of the room, a SPEAKER MATRIX switch in the rear of the receiver connects them to an internal matrix (essentially the familiar "Dynaquad" circuit) for simulated four-channel reproduction from two-channel sources. There are also antenna terminals for AM and FM antennas (the AM ferrite-rod antenna is inside the cabinet and is not adjustable in its orientation), an a. c. line fuse, and a single unswitched a. c. convenience outlet. The

Hitachi SR-5200 is supplied in a walnut wooden cabinet measuring 17 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches wide, 15 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches deep, and 5 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches high; it weighs just under 20 pounds. Price: \$269.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Our measurements indicate that the rated power output of the Hitachi SR-5200 (20 watts per channel) is based on only one channel's being driven, as is the case with many moderate-price receivers. With both channels driven by a 1,000-Hz test signal, the outputs clipped at 18 watts per channel into 8 ohms, 21.7 watts into 4 ohms, and 12 watts into 16-ohm test loads. The 1,000-Hz total harmonic distortion (THD) with 8-ohm loads remained almost constant at a low 0.1 per cent from 0.1 watt to slightly over 15 watts, increasing sharply to 0.65 per cent at 17 watts. The intermodulation distortion was about 0.35 per cent over the same power range, and did not increase significantly even at the extremely low output power of 1 milliwatt.

As one might infer from its physical weight, the Hitachi SR-5200 has a relatively small power transformer. This is suited to normal music-reproduction requirements, but, under test, the receiver is not able to provide full sustained output power at the lower audio frequencies. At a 10-watt power level (which we

(Continued on page 28)



# ALL THE WAY TO 50,000 HZ

**PLAYS ANY 4 CHANNEL SYSTEM PERFECTLY. PLAYS STEREO EVEN BETTER THAN BEFORE.**

Empire's new wide response 4000 series cartridge features our exclusive "4 DIMENSIONAL" diamond stylus tip.

This phenomenal new cartridge will track (stay in the groove) any record below 1 gram and trace (follow the wiggles) all the way to 50,000 Hz. Our exclusive nude "4 DIMENSIONAL" diamond tip has a .1 mil radius of engagement yet the very low force required for tracking prevents any discernible record wear.

Discrete 4 channel requires two full 20,000 Hz frequency spectrums. With a 50,000 Hz response you have plenty of extra sound to spare.

Even ordinary stereo is enhanced... true music reproduction depends upon wide frequency response. For example; a perfect square wave requires a harmonic span of 10 times the fundamental frequencies recorded. Obviously, to identify each instrument or sound nuance in a recording you must reproduce frequencies

well beyond the range of normal hearing. Listening to a cartridge with a response to 50,000 Hz is a truly unique experience. Close your eyes and you'll swear the sound is live. Open your eyes and you'll never be satisfied with anything else.

For your free "Empire Guide to Sound Design" write: EMPIRE SCIENTIFIC CORP., Garden City, N.Y. 11530.

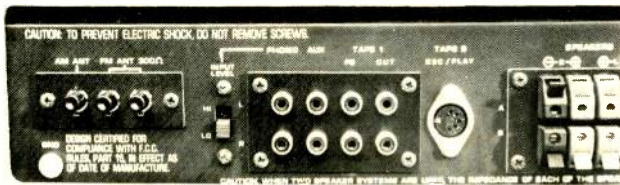
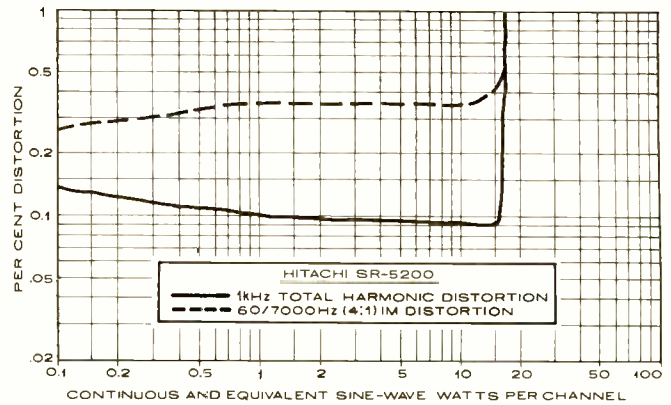
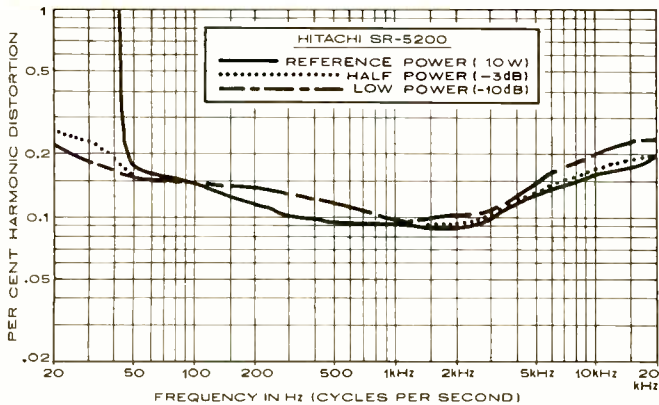
Mfd. U.S.A. **EMPIRE** 

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS/EMPIRE'S NEW 4000 D CARTRIDGES

MODEL	LIST PRICE	FREQUENCY RESPONSE	OUTPUT VOLTAGE mv per channel	CHANNEL SEPARATION (left to right)	CHANNEL SEPARATION (front to back)	TRACKING FORCE GRAMS	STYLUS TIP	STYLUS REPLACEMENT
Professional 4000 D/III	\$149.95	5-50,000 Hz	3.0	more than 35 dB	more than 25 dB	1/4 to 1-1/4	miniature nude diamond with 1 mil tracing radius "4 DIMENSIONAL"	S 4000 D/III White
Deluxe 4000 D/II	\$124.95	5-45,000 Hz	3.0	more than 35 dB	more than 25 dB	3/4 to 1-1/2	miniature nude diamond with 1 mil tracing radius "4 DIMENSIONAL"	S 4000 D/II Yellow
Standard 4000 D/I	\$ 84.95	10-40,000 Hz	3.0	more than 35 dB	more than 25 dB	3/4 to 2	miniature diamond with .1 mil tracing radius "4 DIMENSIONAL"	S 4000 D/I Black

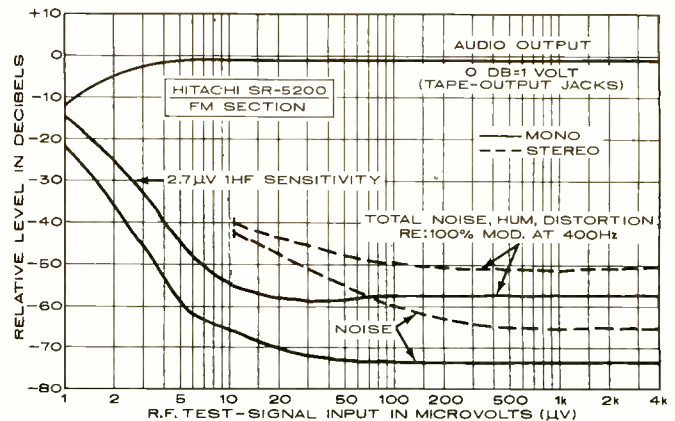
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The rear-panel connectors of the Hitachi SR-5200 are compactly arranged. In the center are the input and tape-monitor jacks; the antenna terminals are at left, the speaker connectors at right.

In the graph of FM performance, the levels of both random noise and noise plus distortion are compared with the audio-output level as signal strength increases. Both mono and stereo are shown.



selected as a realistic "maximum" when rating the unit across the full audio-frequency band), the THD was between 0.09 and 0.2 per cent from 45 to 20,000 Hz, but rose rapidly at lower frequencies. At a 5-watt output, the THD level above 50 Hz was approximately the same as at 10 watts, but the measurements could then be extended down to 20 Hz, where the distortion still remained less than 0.3 per cent.

The AUX inputs required 0.21 volt for a 10-watt output, with a signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) of 81 dB. The phono sensitivity could be switched to either 3.8 (HI) or 1.9 millivolts (LO), with respective S/N measurements of 74 and 77 dB. All of these S/N figures represent superior performance. Phono overload occurred at 80 millivolts (HI) and 42 millivolts (LO). We do not envision any problems with phono overload in this receiver, but as always the HI (that is, lower-sensitivity or lower-gain) input setting should be used unless the phono volume is inadequate because of the use of a low-output phono cartridge. The AUX inputs could also be overloaded, but this requires an input of 4.6 volts, which is unlikely to occur in practice.

The tone controls provided a boost of 10 to 12 dB and 10 to 15 dB cut at the frequency extremes. The "flat" frequency-response setting had a slight roll-off at the lowest audio frequencies to -2 dB at 30 Hz and -5 dB at 20 Hz. This appears to be a wise precaution against the possibility of overloading the amplifiers at

frequencies where their power-output capabilities are limited. Also, the rolloff serves incidentally as a very effective rumble filter with virtually no audible effect on music frequencies. The loudness compensation boosted both low and high frequencies. RIAA phono equalization was within +2, -1 dB of the 1,000-Hz reference level from 30 to 15,000 Hz.

The FM tuner of the Hitachi SR-5200 had mono performance that was surprisingly good for a receiver of its price. The 1HF sensitivity was 2.7 microvolts ( $\mu$ V), and 50 dB of quieting was obtained with only a 3.7- $\mu$ V input. The FM distortion was between 0.1 and 0.2 per cent at all levels above 10  $\mu$ V, which we would consider excellent performance for a far more expensive product. The ultimate quieting was a very good 73 dB. In stereo FM—the tuner switched from the mono mode at 11  $\mu$ V—harmonic distortion was about 0.3 per cent above 100  $\mu$ V. This figure is also far lower than we have measured on most FM tuners, and the S/N was a good 65 dB.

The other stereo FM characteristics of the SR-5200 were equally noteworthy. The frequency response was flat within  $\pm 0.5$  dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz, yet the 19-kHz pilot-carrier leakage was down 60 dB from full modulation. The stereo separation was excellent, averaging about 47 dB ( $\pm 2$  dB) from 400 to 11,000 Hz, and exceeding 23 dB over the full 30- to 15,000-Hz range. The FM muting threshold was about 11  $\mu$ V, and it

produced moderate noise bursts when tuning across a signal.

The capture ratio of 0.8 dB also ranks with the best we have seen, and the AM rejection was a good 56 dB. Only in its selectivity characteristics did the SR-5200 reveal itself as a low-to-moderate price receiver. Alternate-channel selectivity was 38 dB on the high side and 43.5 dB on the low side of the desired channel; image rejection was 49 dB. The AM tuner had the expected limited high-frequency response, and it also had a low-frequency roll-off. The maximum output was at 2,000 Hz, and the output fell to -6 dB at 200 and 4,600 Hz.

● **Comment.** Considered as a whole, the Hitachi SR-5200 is an honestly rated and flexible receiver at an attractive price. Compensating for the few cases in which our measurements fell slightly short of Hitachi's specifications (for the amplifiers), there were at least as many (for the tuner) where it far exceeded its published ratings, and actually outperformed the FM sections of some receivers costing twice as much. And those readers concerned about durability should note Hitachi's three-year guarantee on parts and labor.

The instruction manual, generally complete, does little more than mention the use of the built-in speaker matrix for simulated four-channel sound. Since there is no independent level control for the rear speakers, it is important that

(Continued on page 32)

In this age of puff and pretense, how does one get across the fact that we have actually developed a loudspeaker not only theoretically but audibly superior to any other speaker made?

We could talk about the inventor and how it was invented. We could tell you that the ESS Heil air-motion transformer is not the product of a casual tinkerer but the product of authentic genius: the inevitable theoretical principles of physics were wed to four years research and development by physicist Oskar Heil, the inventor of the velocity modulation principle, which underlies all Klystron and traveling wave tubes, (principle patent, Germany, 1933), the field effect transistor-the FET- (German patent, 1934), and the high convergence electron gun used in most color TV tubes (patent, 1947). In other words, the Heil air-motion transformer is the latest, but by no means the last revolutionary invention by the remarkable Dr. Heil.

We might mention its utter uniqueness. The Heil air-motion transformer midrange-tweeter has no paper cone, no mylar dome, no wire voice coil, no elastic suspension, no "push-pull" motion, negligible mass and operating resonance. Instead, a simple, startling, accordion like diaphragm. The woofer, of course, is something else! And must be seen to be believed.

We could note its specifications. Distortion for example? As low as that found in modern electronics. Transients? Greater clarity and delineation than an electrostatic, with a rise time of 15 microseconds for that "instant acceleration" that distinguishes a Ferrari from a Volkswagen. Dispersion? A perfect bipolar radiation for the airiness and imaging that mark the live performance. Frequency response? Flat to 24 kHz for the "extra sensory presence" you can feel as well as hear.

Or we could talk about its simplicity and relative low cost? You can now buy an ESS Heil air-motion transformer system for as low as \$239. And if you've got grander visions, you can listen to the awesome full range Heil air-motion transformer speaker system, the ESS amt 2. Price \$600. Less than many other pretenders to perfection.

Durability? Built to last a lifetime. And guaranteed for life.

Sound? Why ask us when you can trust your own ears?

Elegant styling and remarkable engineering. The unbeatable combination.

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sound as clear as light

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PRODUCT OF JAPAN  
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3300S

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PAUSE



# A TEAC tape deck isn't a tape deck.



A TEAC reel-to-reel deck is a whole nother thing. It is a creative tool. A partner in the creative process itself.

Every member of the TEAC reel-to-reel family is designed to expand your imagination and enhance your creativity. From our classic 2300S with its reliable 3-motor, 3-head transport system to our 4-channel 3340S with

its 8-input jack and Simul-Sync® that lets you overdub, sweeten, echo, cross-echo and stack tracks — there's a TEAC in the family whose creative configuration best suits your particular creative bag.

Our 3300S, a semi-professional 15-7½ ips, 10½ inch-reel deck, comes in either 1/4-track or 2-track configuration and has "running splice" which enables you to record directly from playback.

Our 4300 with cue-out connection jack, two-position level meter and full reverse circuitry, our 5300 with center capstan drive, DC reel motors, dual-scale VU meters and plug-in electronic boards, our 5500 with dual-function Dolby\* circuitry are examples of TEAC creative engineering in the service of creative use. And all TEAC reel-to-reel decks offer complete remote control capability.

Think of your TEAC as an extension of yourself. Then open your head and explore your personal world of sound.

You'll be surprised at the beauty that's there.

Or maybe you won't be.

# It's you, it's you.

## TEAC®

The leader. Always has been.

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TEAC Corporation of America — Headquarters: Dept. A-29, 7733 Telegraph Road, Montebello, California 90640 — TEAC offices in principal cities in the United States, Canada, Europe, Mexico and Japan.

they be of approximately the same efficiency as the front speakers. We found the addition of rear speakers produced a pleasing effect, supplying a welcome sense of ambience with most stereo program material.

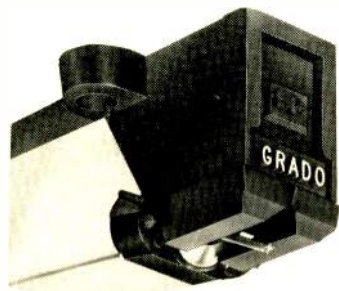
Obviously, in some difficult receiving situations (such as when there is very low signal strength, or problems with

alternate-channel interference problems), the Hitachi SR-5200 might not be the best possible choice. And one should not expect any relatively low-powered receiver such as this to fill a large room with the sound levels of a live performance, especially if low-efficiency speakers are used. However, we believe that the SR-5200 can fully satisfy the

needs of the vast majority of listeners. Used with two (or four) speakers in the \$60 to \$100 price range, plus comparable record playing and/or tape equipment, it should acquit itself admirably and provide audibly first-rate performance in almost all domestic listening circumstances.

Circle 105 on reader service card

## Grado FTR+1 CD-4 Phono Cartridge



● **THE** new Grado FTR+1 phono cartridge designed for playing CD-4 discrete four-channel records avoids several of the problems previously associated with such cartridges. These include high price, critical mounting tolerances, and the need for unusually low capacitance in the connecting cables. The FTR+1 is a magnetic cartridge with a user-replaceable 0.5-mil spherical (conical) diamond stylus. A major difference between this cartridge and virtually every other magnetic cartridge currently on the market is the very low inductance of its internal coils—only 50 millihenries instead of the usual 700 to 1,000 millihenries. Because of this, its frequency response is essentially independent of load resistance and capacitance. In contrast to other CD-4 cartridges, which require very short special cables for connection to the demodulator (and cannot be used at all in some record players because of high capacitance within the tone arm itself), the FTR+1 will perform with the capacitance equivalent of up to ten feet of ordinary shielded phono cable and with any phono-input load exceeding 10,000 ohms.

The rated signal output of the FTR+1 is 2.3 millivolts, which is somewhat lower than the output of most stereo cartridges but typical of today's CD-4 units. Its rated frequency response is .10 to 40,000 Hz  $\pm 2.5$  dB, and the recommended tracking force is between 1 and 2 grams. Price: \$11.95. Another Grado model, the FTR+2, provides equivalent performance at the same price, but it is designed for tracking forces of 2 grams and above, making it more compatible with inexpensive record players.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The output of the Grado FTR+1 was about 2.1 millivolts with a test-record velocity of 3.54 centimeters per second (cm/sec). It tracked the very high-level (30 cm/sec) 1,000-Hz test signals of the Fairchild 101 test record with only slight clipping of the signal peaks at 1 gram, and with no clipping at 1.5 grams tracking force. Very high-level 32-Hz test bands were tracked easily at 1 gram. The cartridge response to the 1,000-Hz square waves of the CBS STR 111 record showed two cycles of damped ringing at about 15,000 Hz (15 kHz). For frequency-response tests, we used a new test record from JVC, the TRS-1005, which sweeps from 1 to 50 kHz. We measured an impressive  $\pm 3$  dB up to 43 kHz, with response down only 5 dB at 50 kHz. The channel separation exceeded 25 dB up to 15 kHz, and was 12 to 20 dB in the range of 20 to 50 kHz.

These measurements were made with our standard cartridge load of 47,000 ohms paralleled by 250 picofarads (which would be far too much capacitance for any of the other CD-4 cartridges we have tested). Adding another 250 picofarads to the load had no measurable effect on the frequency response, even at 50 kHz.

The high-frequency tracking ability of the FTR+1 was measured with the Shure TTR-103 test record using its 10.8-kHz tone bursts. Tracking was very good even at a 1-gram stylus force and was even better with 2 grams. For the middle frequencies, we used the 400/4,000-Hz mixed signals of the RCA 12-5-39 intermodulation (IM) distortion test record. The IM distortion was a low 1 to 1.2 per cent up to about 12 cm/sec at either 1 or 2 grams, but increased rapidly at higher velocities with the lower force. At 2 grams, the IM was under 4 per cent (very good) at all velocities up to the 27.1-cm/sec limit of the record.

In a listening test with the Shure TTR-110 record, using a 1-gram force, there was slight mistracking of the recorded bells and drums at the highest level and of the sibilant test at the three upper levels. With the force increased to 1.5

grams, the cartridge tracked everything except the highest level of the vocal sibilants, and even that very demanding section could be tracked at 2 grams. Very few cartridges we have used can match that performance at any force, and all are much more expensive than the FTR+1.

● **Comment.** The Grado FTR+1 can be judged either as a stereo cartridge or as a CD-4 cartridge. As a two-channel cartridge, it ranks with a handful of the finest, all of which sell for four to six times its price. For playing CD-4 records, our sample was the equal of any cartridge we have used. Many popular record players and tone arms have too much wiring capacitance for satisfactory CD-4 performance (occasional "shattering" distortion caused by high-frequency carrier loss is the most common sign of excessive capacitance), but the FTR+1 performed beautifully with more than eight feet of shielded cable.

Other CD-4 cartridges operate best with 1.5- to 2-gram tracking forces. The FTR+1 can do a fine job at only 1 gram, but for this we found it necessary to have very precisely adjusted anti-skating compensation. Also, when using some of the earliest CD-4 demodulators, we noted the need for excessively critical adjustment of the demodulator as well as the player's anti-skating system, although increasing the force to 1.5 grams sometimes helped. On the other hand, when we used two late-model CD-4 demodulators (with a greater ability to recover the 30-kHz carrier), there were no problems at all, even at 1 gram.

To check the effect of the FTR+1's 0.5-mil spherical stylus on record wear, we repeated the test we made in our initial evaluation of CD-4 equipment (STEREO REVIEW, December 1973). A short section of the inner portion of a CD-4 disc was played one hundred times in succession with a 1.5-gram force, while we monitored the level of the disc's 30-kHz carrier at the cartridge output. The level dropped about 3 dB in the first forty or fifty plays, and after one hundred plays it fluctuated between 3

(Continued on page 38)

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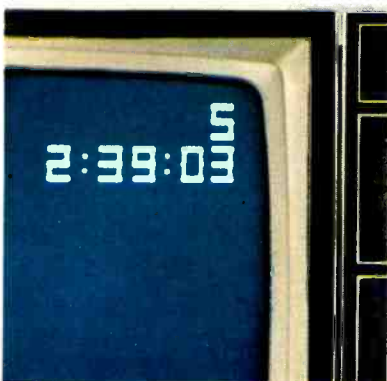
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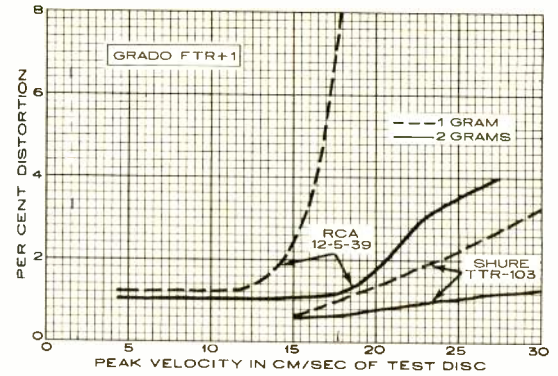
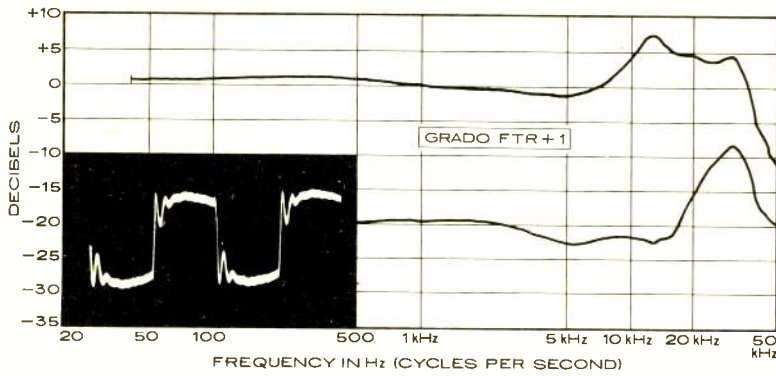
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At left, the upper curve represents the averaged frequency response of the cartridge's right and left channels. The distance (calibrated in decibels) between the two curves represents the separation between channels. The oscilloscope photograph of the cartridge's response to a 1,000-Hz square wave is an indication of the cartridge's high- and low-frequency response and resonances. At right, the distortion of the cartridge for various recorded velocities of the RCA 12-5-39 IM test record and the 10.8-kHz tone bursts of the Shure TTR-103 disc are shown. The frequency-response and separation curves above were made with the CBS STR-120 test disc, not with the JVC disc cited in the text.

and 10 dB below the original level. Even then, it was well within the recovery range of the demodulator, and there was absolutely no difference in sound between the played and unplayed portions of the record. Our conclusion is that the FTR+1 will not significantly wear the grooves of a CD-4 disc in normal use, even at 1.5 grams.

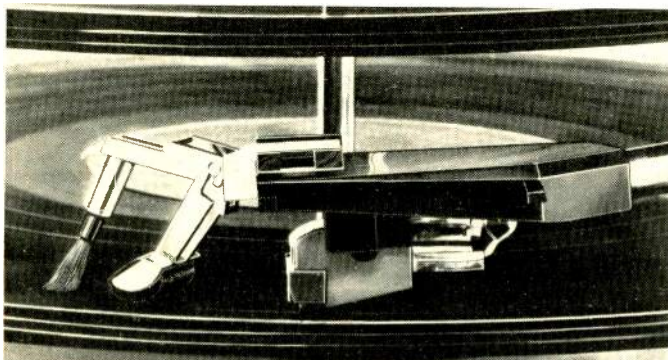
The Grado FTR+1 has a notably clean, slightly bright sound. The apparent definition of the highest frequencies is striking, and some of this can probably be credited to the broad emphasis in the 10- to 20-kHz octave. There is another factor of equal importance, however. As we pointed out in "How Important Is Audio-Component Compatibility?" (STEREO REVIEW, January 1974), virtually all amplifiers have a loss of re-

sponse at frequencies over 10 kHz when used with magnetic cartridges because of the effect of the cartridge inductance on the amplifier's RIAA equalization circuits. This loss, typically 2 to 4 dB in magnitude, occurs with most cartridge-preamplifier combinations, and will therefore rarely be noticed in comparative listening. The FTR+1, however, is essentially free of this effect because of its low inductance. This means that, with properly equalized preamplifiers, the extreme highs will be heard at their proper level when this cartridge is used. We found the slightly bright sound of the FTR+1 to be highly listenable (never strident or overbearing), but if desired one could easily use the amplifier treble tone controls to make it sound more like other cartridges.

It should be obvious that the Grado FTR+1 represents a substantial breakthrough in the price structure of high-quality phono cartridges, as well as providing outstanding performance by any standard. Despite its low cost, the FTR+1 is not really suitable for use in the arm of an inexpensive record changer. The cartridge needs no more than 1 to 1.5 grams of operating force for good results, and this is too low for many inexpensive arms (for low-price record players, the Grado FTR+2 is a better choice). In addition, for successful CD-4 operation, an effective and properly adjusted anti-skating system seems to be a *must*, and these are usually found only on the better players, those designed for tracking at forces below 2 grams.

Circle 106 on reader service card

## Bib Model 45 Changer Groov-Kleen



● THE problem of keeping phonograph records dustfree is of legitimate and continuing concern to audiophiles, and it has inevitably resulted in the development of innumerable techniques and devices for that purpose. Some record cleaners are hand-held and are to be used just before play; almost all others are supported on separate "arms" that sweep the record continuously during

play. However, none of these devices are suitable for those who, at times, prefer to play their records in stacks on a changer.

The Bib Changer Groov-Kleen Model 45 (imported by Revox Corp.) is meant to provide the groove-cleaning performance of the other designs without interfering with the normal functioning of a high-quality automatic changer. It can be

installed easily on arms that have a flat pickup housing, and adapters are available for designs (such as the Garrard Zero 100) that do not have a suitable flat surface on their cartridge housing.

The Changer Groov-Kleen, molded of light plastic, consists of a tracking brush that rides on the record and a velvet pad that sweeps the surface between the brush and the cartridge stylus. The entire assembly attaches to the end of the tone arm with an adhesive pad. The brush and velvet pad, which move freely in the vertical plane, are independently hinged and removable for easy cleaning. A separate brush is supplied for that purpose, as well as for cleaning the cartridge stylus.

The Groov-Kleen assembly weighs 2 grams, although much of this weight is not added to the tracking force when the brush and pad are resting on the record surface. The installation instructions (Continued on page 42)

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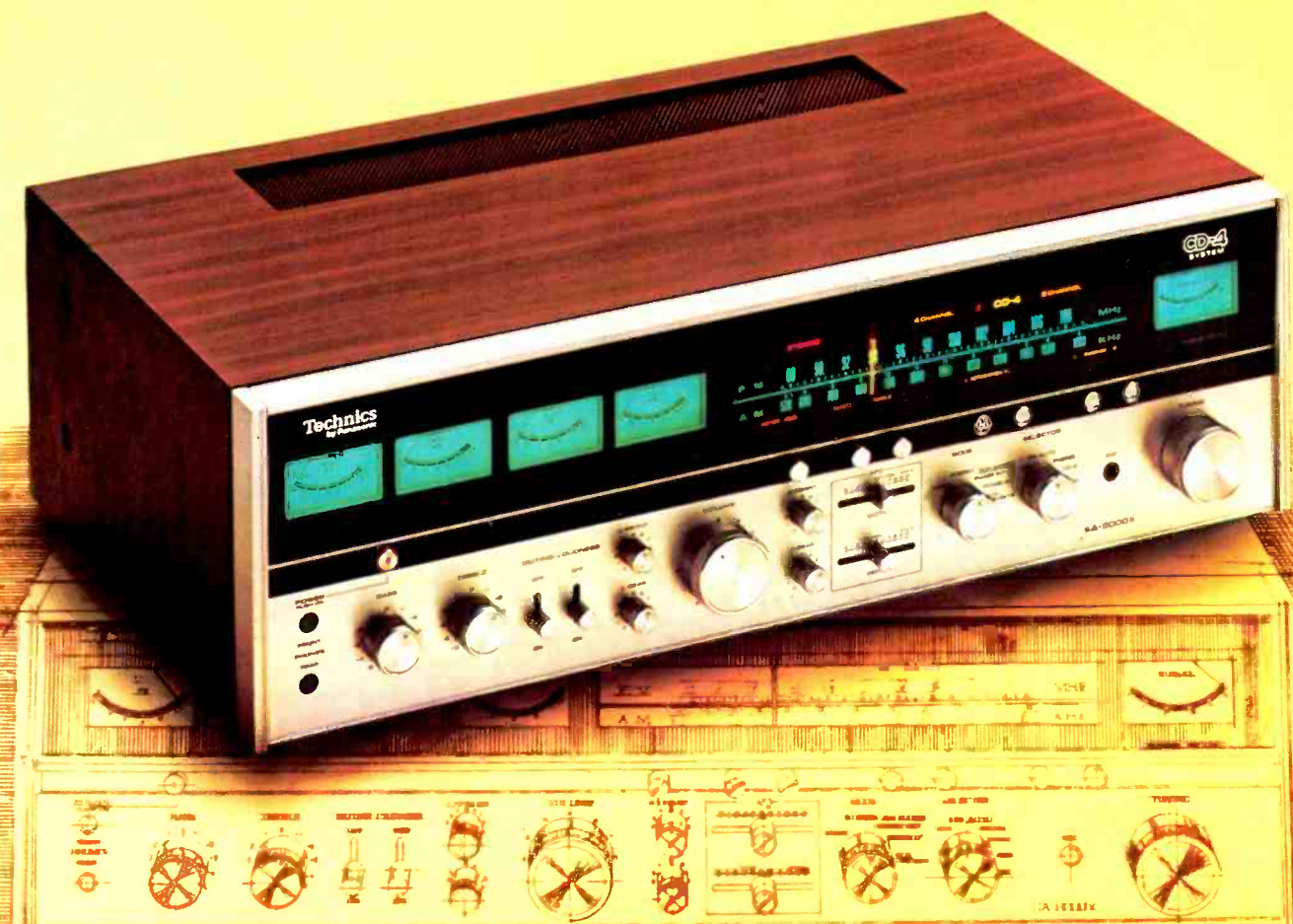
In the FM section, we have combined a 4-pole MOS FET, ceramic IF filters, a monolithic IC and epoxy resin coils for superb reception. FM sensitivity measures  $1.9\mu\text{V}$ .

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suggest alternative methods for recalibrating the tone arm for correct stylus force with the Groov-Kleen installed. The Bib Changer Groov-Kleen Model 45 is priced at \$3.95.

● **Comment.** For test purposes, the Groov-Kleen was installed on the arm of a Dual Model 701 record player (the other Dual models use a similar cartridge housing). It appeared that, with most cartridges and most tone arms, the dimensions of the Groov-Kleen and its pivoted members would not interfere with correct cartridge mounting. Since the Groov-Kleen, when installed, does not extend appreciably above the top of the cartridge housing, in a properly adjusted record changer it should not contact the bottom of a stack of records on the spindle. We determined that the best technique for resetting the tracking force to compensate for the Groov-Kleen

weight was to rebalance the arm with the counterweight, so that the brush and pad rested on the record while the stylus just cleared the record surface. After this, the stylus force could be "dialed in" accurately in the normal fashion. Other tone-arm designs may require a different approach.

Using high-velocity test records, we found that, with the Groov-Kleen in use, the player's anti-skating dial should be set about 2 grams higher than normal for the selected tracking force. With a cartridge tracking at 1 gram, a 3-gram setting of the anti-skating dial tested just about right. We determined that the Bib Groov-Kleen had no discernible effect on cartridge tracking or arm resonance. Most of its slight mass is coupled loosely, if at all, to the arm during play. When we played our severely warped "test" record, which had previously caused mistracking on the record player, we no-

ticed a slight improvement in resistance to lateral groove jumping. The stylus still left the groove, but tended to return to approximately the same point instead of (occasionally) entering an adjacent groove.

The Bib Changer Groov-Kleen Model 45 seemed to be an effective dust gatherer, although most of what it picked up appeared to be surface dust; we doubt that the tracking brush penetrated the record grooves significantly. The only inconvenience we noted in its use was the difficulty of seeing the cartridge stylus for precise cueing. Of course, when a player is used as a record changer, this is of no importance. Overall, the inexpensive Groov-Kleen is a worthwhile addition to any automatic record-changing system. It helps solve the dust problem without introducing any undesirable side effects.

Circle 107 on reader service card

## Akai GX-285D Stereo Tape Deck



● THE Akai GX-285D is the first of that company's open-reel tape decks to have built-in Dolby B-Type noise-reducing circuits. It is a two-speed ( $3\frac{3}{4}$  and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ips), three-head, quarter-track stereo machine that accepts reels up to 7 inches in diameter. The GX-285D has provisions for bi-directional playback, tape reversal being initiated either by a strip of metal foil on the tape or manually by pushbutton. If foil is applied to both ends of a tape, the tape will cycle back and forth indefinitely.

The solenoid-controlled tape transport is operated by light-touch pushbuttons or through an accessory remote-control unit. It has three motors and a logic system that permits any mode to be engaged from any other without first pressing the STOP button (except for the RECORD function). The necessary time delays are built into the system, with the tape coming to a full stop and pausing for about a

second when going from fast wind or rewind to normal speed. The reversing operation takes about 3 seconds. The playback head is shifted mechanically to pick up the recorded tracks in the reverse direction.

The GX-285D is equipped with Akai's glass and crystal ferrite heads whose shaped poles provide extended high-frequency response without the need for large amounts of high-frequency equalization when the deck is recording. A pushbutton switch optimizes the bias level for standard or low-noise tape formulations. Speed change is by pushbutton, as is the selection of quarter-track mono or normal stereo operation. In addition to automatic end-of-tape motor shut off, the recorder can be switched to a full shut-down mode, in which the line power is switched off when the tape runs out.

The RECORD-interlock button, which must be pressed along with the FWD button to make a recording, is close enough to the transport controls for this to be a one-handed operation, yet not so close that there is any danger of engaging it accidentally. The PAUSE button (push to engage, push to release) stops and starts the tape almost instantly without releasing the record function.

Along the bottom of the control panel are the two  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch microphone-input jacks (for medium-impedance dynamic microphones) and a stereo-headphone jack for 8-ohm phones. Two large illuminated meters indicate recording and playback levels. There are separate microphone and line-input level controls

(each of which is a concentric pair for individual channel adjustment) plus a concentric pair of playback-level controls. The microphone and line inputs can be mixed, or, by using the DIN input jack which goes through the microphone gain controls, one can mix two line sources. A pushbutton activates the Dolby system (there is a green indicator light), another connects each channel's playback output to the opposite recording input for sound-on-sound recording, and a third switches the line outputs to the source or to the playback amplifiers.

In the rear of the recorder are an unswitched a.c. convenience outlet, a socket for the remote-control accessory, and the line inputs and outputs (these are paralleled by a DIN connector, with a switch for use with amplifiers having different output levels). The Akai GX-285D, in its walnut cabinet, is about 18 x 17 x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches and weighs about 48 $\frac{1}{2}$  pounds. Price: \$750.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Akai GX-285D is factory adjusted for Akai SRT-F low-noise tape, which we used in our tests. Other high-quality, low-noise tapes, such as Maxell UD35-7, gave similar performance. The playback response over the range of the Ampex NAB-standard test tapes was  $\pm 1$  dB from 50 to 8,000 Hz at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ips, rising to +3 dB at 15,000 Hz. At  $3\frac{3}{4}$  ips, the response over the range of the test tape (50 to 7,500 Hz) was  $\pm 0.8$  dB. The frequency response was virtually identical in both directions of tape travel, indicating

(Continued on page 46)



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Dual 1214



Dual 1216



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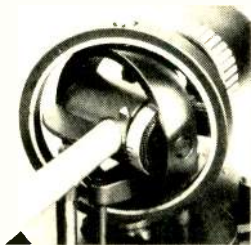


Dual 1229

# They insist on hearing what you may be missing.

Among serious music lovers, the most critical are those who review records for a living. They listen to records not only for pleasure, but to judge the quality of performance and production.

The differences among performances are often subtle. So reviewers must listen for the artist's interpretation; how his talent has progressed; and how his performance compares with that of other artists. Reviewers must also rate such factors as recording techniques and the quality of the record surface itself.



The tonearms of the Dual 1218 and 1229 are mounted in gyroscopic gimbals, the best known scientific means for balancing a precision instrument that must remain balanced in all planes of motion.

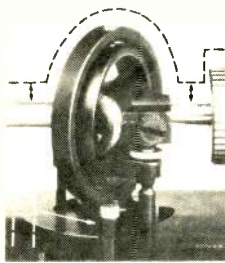
Since their reputations depend on how critically they hear, professional listeners select their high fidelity equipment with great care. Especially the turntable. Because they know that what they hear (or don't hear) often depends on the turntable.

The turntable is the one component that actually handles records, spinning them on a platter and tracking their impressionable grooves with the unyielding hardness of a diamond. And much depends on how well all this is done.

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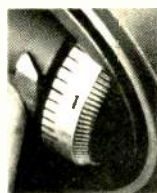
precisely the right speed, the musical pitch will be off.

If the motor isn't quiet and free of vibration, an annoying rumble will be added to the artist's performance.



Unlike conventional tonearms, the 1218 and 1229 track records at the original cutting angle. The 1229 tonearm parallels single records; moves up to parallel, changer stack. In the 1218, a similar adjustment is provided in the cartridge housing.

If the stylus doesn't respond easily and accurately to the rapidly changing contours of the record groove, the over-all quality of reproduction will be diminished. And there can be even worse trouble with the sharp contours which represent the high frequencies, for the stylus will simply lop them off. And with those little bits of vinyl go all those glorious high notes. Taking their place are a lot of unpleasant sounds that were never recorded.



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## Akai GX-285D . . .

(Continued from page 42)

that the alignment of the mechanically shifted single playback head was accurate in both positions.

With the Akai SRT-F tape, the overall record-playback frequency response was an excellent  $\pm 3$  dB from 35 to 23,000 Hz at  $3\frac{3}{4}$  ips, and  $\pm 3$  dB from 25 to 26,000 Hz at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ips. The claimed excellent high-frequency characteristics of the GX heads was illustrated by the fact that the response from 20 to 20,000 Hz was essentially the same at a 0-dB recording level (!) as at the -20-dB level normally used for these measurements. With a "standard-oxide" tape (3M-111), the overall response was still excellent:  $\pm 3$  dB from 23 to 25,500 Hz at the  $7\frac{1}{2}$ -ips speed.

The "tracking" of the Dolby circuits was good over most of the audible frequency range. At a -20-dB level, the Dolby system had no effect on the overall record-playback frequency response. At -30 dB, there was a minor boost of high frequencies, beginning at 4,000 Hz, with a maximum amplitude of 1.5 dB. At -40 dB, the response above 9,000 Hz was increased to a not particularly significant maximum of +2.5 dB.

For a 0-dB recording level, a line input of 0.11 volt and a microphone input of 0.7 millivolt (mV) was needed. The microphone-preamplifier circuits overloaded at 45 mV. The 0-dB playback output level was 0.8 volt. The 1,000-Hz total harmonic distortion (THD) at 0 dB on the recording-level meters was 0.5 per cent at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ips and 2 per cent at  $3\frac{3}{4}$  ips. The standard-reference distortion level of 3 per cent was reached at +5.5 dB at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ips and at +2 dB at  $3\frac{3}{4}$  ips. The signal-to-noise ratios, referred to 3 per cent THD, were 60.8 dB at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ips and 56.7 dB at  $3\frac{3}{4}$  ips. With the Dolby system in use, these figures improved to 69.2 and 64.3 dB, respectively. At maximum gain, the microphone preamplifiers added about 3 dB to the noise level.

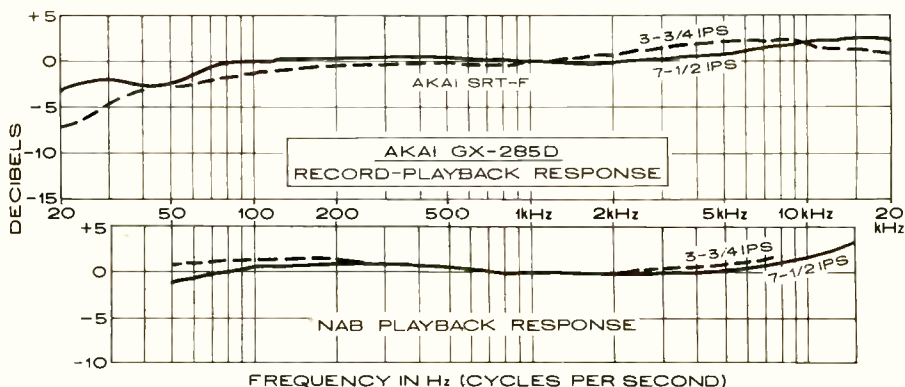
The wow and flutter at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ips were 0.01 and 0.07 per cent in either direction

of tape travel. At  $3\frac{3}{4}$  ips, they were 0.01 and 0.09 per cent in the forward direction, and 0.02 and 0.11 per cent in the reverse direction. All these figures are excellent for a machine of this type. The operating speed was virtually exact, and 1,800 feet of tape was handled in 95 seconds in wind or rewind mode. The level meters read -1 dB when playing a standard Dolby-level reference tape. The meters were slightly slower than true VU meters, reading about 80 per cent of the steady-state value on a 300 millisecond tone burst (as compared with 99 per cent for a professional VU meter). The headphone volume should be satisfactory with most 8-ohm phones, but may be too low with higher impedance or low-efficiency phones.

● **Comment.** The operation of the Akai GX-285D was flawless, and its tape handling was as nearly foolproof as could be desired. Even power shutoff during fast forward or rewind—that nemesis of so many other recorders—brought the tape to a smooth, perfectly controlled stop. The reverse play is a welcome feature, and the time lag during reversal was not objectionable. The PAUSE control stopped and started the tape almost instantly, but there was a momentary "chirp" or wow of the signal on start-up. As with almost any pause system, this can be avoided by not activating the control while a signal is in the machine's circuits.

As our test data show, the Akai GX-285D is without question a first-rate home tape recorder. To provide a frame of reference: a top-quality cassette recorder with Dolby approaches the Akai's performance without its Dolby circuits switched on, except that the Akai does not suffer from the restricted high-frequency dynamic range of the cassette format. Switching in the Akai's Dolby system increases its dynamic range to the point where the major limitation is then the noise level of the incoming program. And, of course, the Akai can be used to play Dolbyized pre-recorded tapes without the need for add-on accessories, and with truly impressive results.

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## CONTEMPORARY MUSIC IN FRANCE

Eric Salzman reports on the "Paris Autumn" Festival

**A**UTUMN in Paris . . . duh-duh-duh dah dec. . . . Paris is a pleasant place to be—at least before winter fog and damp set in—and, for those who can afford it, it is still a city devoted to the art of living well. But Paris is also, for better or worse, a city rushing to catch up with the twentieth century before it slips away into the twenty-first; so the French capital now has smog, traffic, high-rise apartments in Montparnasse, and suburban shopping centers. It has also demonstrated an admirable desire to climb out of the creeping mediocrity and provincialism that had nearly overcome its artistic life in the last decade or so.

The "Paris Autumn" is a festival intended to bring Paris to the world as much as to bring the world to Paris. It was organized with the avowed intent of bringing the best new art from everywhere to France and of trying to create a new audience, a new awareness, and, above all, a new artistic "scene" within which new ideas can flourish. And, to a degree, it has worked. For three months every fall Paris once again feels like the artistic capital of the world.

For more than a quarter of a century, Paris, like some great, dyspeptic old dowager, has been living on her reputation while becoming increasingly more cut off from the world around her. This closed attitude seemed to express itself in many areas of French life: rudeness toward foreigners, for example, or the attitude of mistrust and even anger among the French themselves. Literature and film (in France it is almost a branch of literature) are less immediately dependent on the existence of a "scene" and therefore were less affected. But the visual arts—traditionally an area of French dominance—and the performing arts were overcome by mediocrity and bureaucracy; leadership quickly passed elsewhere, mostly (to the chagrin of French intellectuals) to America.

The most shocking symbol of the decay of French artistic life was composer-conductor Pierre Boulez, an authentic home-grown innovator in the very best French tradition, who could not continue to work and create in his own country and had to go to Germany, England, and America to achieve his present eminence. Well, France *has* changed and even Boulez will be going back home.

The turning point in France occurred in May of 1968—the famous student rebellion. That aborted rush to the barricades created a whole new spirit in French life. A silent generation came to life, and the new French public—like the new public here—is young.

Avant-garde art was and is for many young people an expression of faith and contemporaneity, a blow against worn-out tradition, and an affirmation of the future.

The French government, partly in the hope of keeping the peace and partly to retain France's image of cultural leadership, has supported new art fairly generously. It supports the Paris Autumn, and the new public has responded in kind. Interest and enthusiasm are high, the succession of events astonishing. Slowly but surely, the climate is changing: Paris is beginning to feel like the New York of ten years ago.

The autumn festival covers music, dance, the theater, and the visual arts. Under the shrewd and knowing direction of Michel Guy, the festival has been host to (among others) Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysteric Theater from New York, the Wrocław Theater Laboratory of Jerzy Grotowski, Grupo TSE from South America, Maurice Béjart's Ballet of the Twentieth Century, a pack of young dancer/choreographers from New York, music and dance from the Court of Korea, Jean Dubuffet's "Coucou Bazar" (with music by İlhan Mimaroglu), the Xenakis *Polytope II*, the young American composer Phil Glass and his group, the Philadelphia Composers' Forum, and a new production with the ballet of the Paris Opéra choreographed by Merce Cunningham with music by John Cage and decor by Jasper Johns (undoubtedly the most ambitious and, for the dance-minded but traditionalist French, the most sensational event of the festival).

**T**HE above events—music and all—were actually separate from the Journées de Musique Contemporaine, an eleven-day festival *within* the festival and itself made up of two separate projects conceived and put together by the French critic and festival director Maurice Fleuret. The first of these was the complete works of Anton Webern—posthumous works and all—in six concerts with l'Orchestre de Paris and Carlo Maria Giulini, the French Radio Orchestra under Gilbert Amy, the North German Radio Orchestra of Hanover and Hamburg Radio Chorus under Friedrich Cerha, the Parrenin Quartet, sopranos Catherine Gayer, Rachel Szekely, and Emiko Ilyama, the pianist Carlos Roque Alsiná, and many others.

This astonishing overview of the works of a man who was, for a time, the most influential twentieth-century composer suggests immediately his very secure and very historical niche. Webern was—didn't we always know

it?—an exquisite, intense, highly personal artist, somewhat precious, quite in the great (Central European) tradition and quite inimitable. His work is far from uniform: the early, traditional works are quite weak and surprisingly padded. The expressionist atonal works are, almost without exception, wonderful. The early twelve-tone works, including the much-performed and much-vaunted Symphony, are (one must finally admit) unbelievably awkward and ugly. Only after a struggle did Webern actually master the Schoenbergian twelve-tone idea and produce the beautiful final synthesis of the three cantatas.

**T**HE other half of the festival within a festival carried the rather mystifying title of "Degré Second." With this label, Fleuret wanted to point up and bring together some examples of the rather extraordinary tendency of recent European avant-garde music to base itself on or otherwise take off from earlier music. It is really surprising to note how much new European music employs one or another form of this idea. We are already familiar with Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Hymnen*, which uses various national anthems, and with Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia*, which incorporates a whole movement out of Mahler. Less familiar is the piano music of Paolo Castaldi—a whole program's worth of generous slices of Romantic keyboard music amusingly stitched together and performed as a kind of theatrical meta-recital—hands in the air, second thoughts, arrivals, departures, and all.

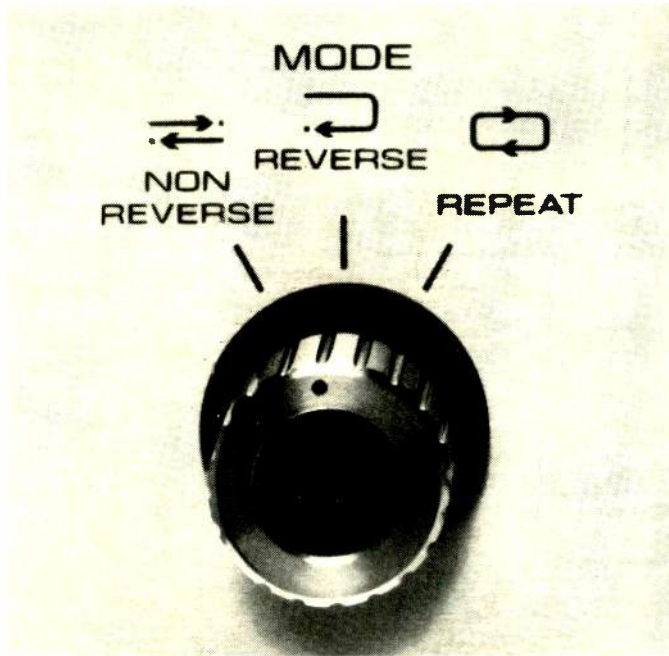
Mauricio Kagel's *Variations Without Fugue for Large Orchestra*, after "Variations and Fugue on a Theme by G. F. Handel, Op. 24 of Johannes Brahms" is therefore distinctly *third* degree. Furthermore, although the title does not mention it, Kagel's work included appearances by two of the three composers: Brahms represented by an actor in costume coming down the aisle reading his letters (in French!), while Handel, bewigged, appears from backstage with an expression of concern. I didn't care for the music itself very much; however, I am going to take care of that little problem by writing a *Fugue Without Variations on "Variations Without Fugue for Large Orchestra, after 'Variations and Fugue on a Theme by G. F. Handel, Op. 24 of Johannes Brahms' by Maurizio Kagel,"* and I plan to ask Kagel to appear in the performance reading from his program notes.

Also on the festival program: Kagel's wonderfully outrageous Beethoven anniversary television film *Ludwig van*; Stockhausen's television film *Telemusik: Johann-Simultaneous Bach*, a musical happening devised by Fleuret with various participating artists; other keyboard, vocal, and chamber works on the *degré second* theme; and, most unlikely of all, a recital by Cathy Berberian consisting entirely of songs set to famous tunes of classical composers with texts ranging from Geraldine Farrar's words for the Air for the G String to Sigmund Spaeth's music-appreciation lyrics of ill fame. The last item brought down the house and produced a twinge of nostalgia in me. I used to collect lyrics for classical tunes myself ("Morning was dawning and Peer Gynt was yawning; a coconut fell on his head") and occasionally even used to make them up myself. (Try the Mozart G Minor Symphony to "Take a bath, take a bath in the bathtub; take a bath, take a bath in the bathtub; take a bath, take a bath in the bathtub; take a bath, take a bath in the bathtub; don't

(Continued on page 50)



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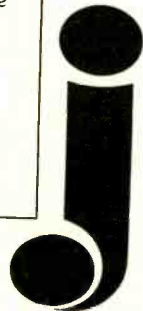
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forget to take your shoes off. . . " and so on.)

There were two principal weaknesses in the festival. One was the unevenness of the performances, particularly those involving French orchestras—quite obviously unfamiliar with and rather unprepared to play this music. Of course, the performance level of visiting artists, such as Cathy Berberian or the choirs of the North German Radio, was high, but with some honorable exceptions the home forces were the least impressive.

A second point concerns the exceptional lack of American works in the Journées. This was particularly surprising, not only because new American art figured so prominently in the rest of the festival but also because the "second degree" idea in new music was so clearly an American development, with specific origins in the work of Charles Ives and many reference points in John Cage. George Rochberg was certainly a pioneer in this field; other examples include Lukas Foss' *Baroque Variations*, Murray Schafer's *Son of Heldenleben* (Canadian, to be sure, but indubitably North American), Michael Sahl's *A Mitzvah for the Dead*, several works by William Bolcom, my own *The Nude Paper Sermon* and *Foxes and Hedgehogs*, and many other works from the 1960's. Berio's and Stockhausen's adaptation of earlier music in *Hymnen* and *Sinfonia* represents a real departure in their music and a distinct American "influence." However, except for a rather (unfortunately) unsuccessful concert by the Philadelphia Composers' Forum (a group improvisation, a Rochberg piece, and a long work by the group's director Joel Thome), there was no American music at all in the Contemporary Music Days proper. But then there was very little French music either!

**S**TILL, there is no doubt that in some very essential ways the festival—the larger Paris Autumn as well as the Journées de Musique Contemporaine—was a success. Most impressive of all were the large and attentive audiences that turned up at the newly refurbished Théâtre de la Ville (excellent acoustics), the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris, and one or two other locations for two or three events a day for eleven days. Stockhausen (who directed the live version of *Hymnen* twice) and Berio (who also conducted his own music), as well as Cathy Berberian and other exponents of new music, have reached the status of stars—almost pop stars, one could say with only a slight measure of exaggeration. I am no fan of the "star system," but there is very definitely something to be said for a cultural situation in which the creative artist is regarded with respect and admiration. And there is something to be said for critics like Fleuret who, far from trying to maintain the meaningless (and impossible) stance of objectivity, decide to play a committed role and help create an ambiance within which new ideas can flourish. In America the "cultural explosion" seems to be over: mediocrity and bureaucracy seem to have overwhelmed arts management and the state councils; the big foundations, twice shy, seem to have backed out altogether, and all the unions seem to be out on strike. Meanwhile, American artists, creativity, and new arts are being feted in Europe. Once upon a time American artists went to Europe; then ten or fifteen years ago European artists began coming to America. They still do so, but there are fewer and fewer each year. Is the new reverse expatriation about to begin?



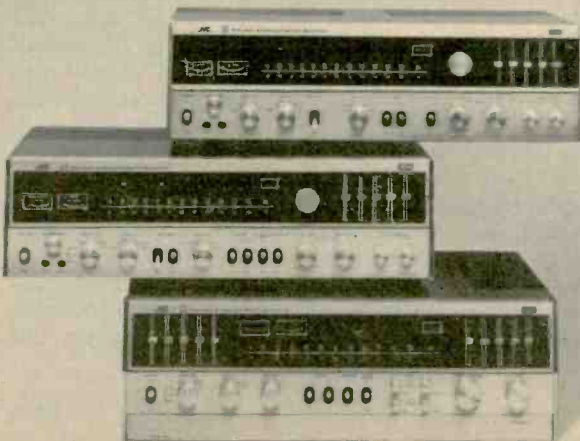
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# GOING ON RECORD

By JAMES GOODFRIEND

Music Editor



## THEATRICALS

IN music, as in other fields, an age defines itself by its excesses. The études of Paganini, lacking in basic musical substance but so incredibly imbued with the hallmarks of the technical virtuosity they both demanded and demonstrated, defined a basic preoccupation of the age they were written in. The quality of Victorian choral music, no less overstuffed than Victorian furniture, is redolent of a time that chose to err through excess rather than insufficiency. The contrapuntal complexities of the Netherlands School of the Renaissance, which at times achieved a mathematical exactness that was more provable than audible, clearly marked an aesthetic quite different from both what came before and what came after. One way to find out, then, what is going on in any contemporary artistic manifestation is to look around for its obvious excesses and see where they are focused.

Unquestionably things have happened all too quickly since 1900. An aesthetic that might have lasted a century centuries ago is today not good for more than a generation, and maybe not even that. Modern music once simply defined itself by a level of dissonance nearly painful to the ear of an average listener of the time. But such an innocent view is not sufficient to encompass such developments as dodecaphony, or a style characterized by an eighteenth-century-like motoric texture with "wrong notes." Nor could it do for the later developments of serialism and musical op art, aleatory music and musical pop art, or even minimal music, which, I suppose, is the transmutation of minimal art. The threads of these and other conceptions crisscross to make up the fabric of serious music today, and there is so much going on simultaneously that one may well wonder not merely where we are going but just where we are. It is my colleague Eric Salzman's thesis that we are in an age of "post-modern" music, in which the idea of a historical style, a single

style that is "right" for the time, is passé, and instead *everything*, the whole history of music, is equally available and equally valid for the composer's use. That being so (and it seems to fit in so well with the facts that one can hardly deny it), perhaps we must look at music in a somewhat different way to find sufficient unanimity of approach to indicate some sort of excess.

The recent production in London of Krzysztof Penderecki's new opera, *The Devils of Loudun*, has called forth a raft of critical (or uncritical) reviews which have in common not only an unwillingness to take a stand one way or the other about the work, but the curious observation that at frequent times in the opera there does not seem to be sufficient music. This is no comment on the *quality* of what Penderecki has composed, but upon the *quantity* he has seen fit to put into a scene. I find these comments strikingly similar to my own when I reviewed the Kennedy Center premiere of Alberto Ginastera's opera *Beatriz Cenci*, in which I found the drama on stage compelling enough, but the score somehow lacking in *music*, the whole a play, almost, rather than an opera.

If we add to these two examples a random third, that of the opera *The Trial of Mary Lincoln* by Thomas Pasatieri, presented on television last year, which brought on the comment that Elaine Bonazzi, who sang the leading role, was one hell of an actress; and a fourth, Luciano Berio's latest effort for Cathy Berberian, *Recital I (For Cathy)*, which has been referred to around these parts (I won't say by whom) as "a cabaret act"; and perhaps a fifth, of a different nature, that Eleanor Steber, or someone very close to her, thought it was a good idea for her to give a recital in a Turkish bath, and that RCA thought it a good enough idea to record it—then, perhaps through these excesses, if excesses they are, we know the preoccupation of our age: it is theatricals.

The theatrical element is intrinsic to music; there can be no argument there. Whether we think of the Greek chorus, the gestures, both studied and spontaneous, of vocal and instrumental solo performers, or the operatic character of some of Mozart's piano concertos, theatrical drama is as much a part of music—particularly of musical *performance*—as the notes, the technique, the phrasing, and basic musicianship itself. But I think we have here an excess, perhaps of the sort Paganini and others of his time indulged in and which gave the world the notion of the technical virtuoso.

If one cares to bring in some efforts of popular music of the last decade—"Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," "Tommy," "Hommy," and the other rock "operas," the whole funny-costume and freak movement—and add to them the fairly long history of John Cage-and-company antics, the non-music of Steve Reich, Leonard Bernstein's theatrically unified but musically diffused *Mass*, together with the odd notion that Marvin David Levy's opera *Mourning Becomes Electra* was perhaps not *unintentionally* unmusical, a frame begins to settle around much of the music of our time: that is to say, the notes play less and less a part in it. The "gesture" (if one may use such an out-of-date term) is less musical, less a matter of technique, more a matter of showmanship. Will someone now take it to the ultimate excessive point by eliminating the musical substance altogether, retaining only one last tie with music—that the work is to be reviewed by the music critic rather than the drama critic? Or can we say, as Cathy Berberian intones toward the end of *Recital I*, "There must be some place in this world that isn't a theater"?

\* \* \*

Though other tributes to him appear elsewhere in this issue (see Letters to the Editor), gratitude forbids my not saying a few words about the late James Lyons, editor and publisher of *The American Record Guide*, and an occasional and welcome contributor to STEREO REVIEW. James Lyons died on November 13, 1973 at the shockingly early age of forty-seven. There are few people in classical-music journalism and in the classical-record business who are not indebted to him in one way or another. He was as free with his aid as he was with his advice, something that cannot be said of many men, and his efforts to counsel, to help, and to do were prodigious. His graceful and informative writing will, of course, be missed by all, but his friends and his professional colleagues will have to learn to get along without his presence as well, a much bigger thing. While he was here he made the task of others in his field simpler and better: now that he is gone, life and work will be the less. We can only say our thank-you's too late.

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# THE SIMELS REPORT

By STEVE SIMELS



## ANOTHER (YAWN) TEN BEST LIST

THIS is the time of year, traditionally, when critics in all fields trot out their Ten Bests. The reasons for this bizarre seasonal preoccupation have always been a bit vague, but still, not to be outdone, I'm about to trot out my own. However, since this column coincides with STEREO REVIEW's Record of the Year fiesta (which I participate in), perhaps a word of explanation is in order. What follows, then, are the records I voted for, some of which actually won. As you'll notice, though, *all* my nominees are rock-and-roll; I firmly believe that, despite rock's current hard times, it's still unquestionably the most vital form of popular music. But the rest of my fellow critics can't be expected to share my prejudices, so it's understandable that several of these albums didn't make the list. All right, a little traveling music, Ray!

● **Steeleye Span: "Parcel of Rogues."** By all odds, Steeleye, one of the countless British folk-rock bands that ultimately derive from Fairport Convention, should be as boring as any of the countless British blues bands that ultimately derive from John Mayall. But in reality they're probably the most exciting and original band in England at the moment. Somehow, they've managed to be simultaneously purist and shatteringly contemporary, and have become both the world's first Elizabethan heavy-metal band and a fascinating reminder that Pete Townshend and John Lennon really come out of the same tradition as Anon., the famous composer of all the Renaissance ditties Steeleye performs.

● **The Byrds: "Byrds."** I don't care what anybody says, this is a great record. Most of the critical carping about it has centered on the lack of electricity, to which I can only say So What? All the early Byrds albums were significantly different from one another, so if their reunion is primarily acoustic, I don't see how that in itself is a betrayal of some sort. Besides, the material is gorgeous,

the singing is gorgeous, and the whole enterprise has, as Ken Emerson observed, a kind of quiet integrity; I doubt that any other band could match it at this stage of the game.

● **Bruce Springsteen: "Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J."** Of course, I spent my adolescence in the Garden (or is it Piz-za?) State, so perhaps I'm prejudiced. Still, despite the kiss-of-death "New Dylan" hype that Columbia has given him, and despite the fact that most of the current crop of singer/songwriters give me a swift pain, I have no doubt that this kid has really got it. For one thing, his lyrics are a terrific combination of Dylan's *Highway 61* speedfreak ramble-epics with poignant accounts of what Lester Bangs has called "the interrupted dry grope of growing up in the Sixties." For another, his music is an absolutely haunting kind of mutated sleazy r-&-b, and his band is fantastic. It all reminds me of what Van Morrison might be doing if he ever stopped whining.

● **The Rolling Stones: "Goats Head Soup."** The Stones are having image problems these days, or so some critics think; actually, given that 95 per cent of the new wave of rockers are so obsessed with them, it's more like a case of reverse cannibalism—with *everyone* imitating them, how could they help but sound like imitators? Anyway, this is, for the Stones, a second-rate album, but I don't hear anybody else doing anything significantly better, and it will have to suffice.

● **The Who: "Quadrophenia."** Despite a succession of mediocre solo albums, the unconscionably long wait since "Who's Next," and Townshend's infatuation with Meher Baba (the Silent Cal of the spiritual set), the Who looks, with this album, stronger than ever. "Quadrophenia" has almost *too* much going for it—literary ambitions, sex and drugs, teenage *Angst*, and some of the most incisive playing they've ever done. But if the Who, as Greil Marcus has declared,

is the spirit of rock-and-roll, then, on the evidence of this album at least, rock is in better shape than some of us realized.

● **Iggy and the Stooges: "Raw Power."** And speaking of rock-and-roll, this is where we separate the men from the boys, if you'll pardon the expression. The Stooges used to be a standing joke around my house (I still can't really listen to their Elektra albums), but not any more; songs like *Search and Destroy* and *Gimme Danger* are about the purest rock anyone has made in ages, and James Williamson gets my vote as guitarist of the century.

● **Roy Wood: "Boulders."** This is probably the first one-man show by a rock artist that really succeeds, and it's a hell of a lot of fun to boot. Wood is a terribly clever fellow—clever enough, in fact, to have approached this solo effort precisely as he would have approached any of his group ventures. And, since he can pull it off technically, the emphasis remains on the songs, where it belongs. There's been a lot of yammer lately about a Neo-Beatles movement from the likes of the Raspberries, the Stories, and Big Star, but in terms of imagination and pop savvy, this is a lot closer to what the Fab Four represented.

● **John Cale: "Paris 1919."** Cale is something of a misunderstood genius, but here, for the first time since he left the Velvets, he's come up with something really accessible: the result, despite haunting lyrics, symphonic arrangements, and some of the best Procol Harum-style tunes since "A Salty Dog," is an album that has sold less than any since Van Dyke Parks. Ah, well.

● **Mott the Hoople: "Mott."** Mott is finally making it, but I have serious doubts about the group's ability to continue without Mick Ralph's plaintive vocals and guitar to counterbalance Ian Hunter's increasing superstar affectations. This used to be a great *band*, before Bowie got his hands on them; now, as much as I love them, they're looking like the Ian Hunter Show. Still, even if this turns out to be their creative swan song, they couldn't have gone out any stronger.

● **Blues Project: "Reunion in Central Park."** If there had never been a Blues Project, there would never have been guitar virtuosos, drum solos, and flutes in a rock-and-roll context. Okay, I'm exaggerating, but only a little, and it's not their fault that their disciples have beaten those ideas into the ground; at their best, which was never adequately captured on record, they were overwhelming. This reunion is a vindication of everything they stood for, and coming, as it does, almost seven years after they broke up, it's better than anyone could have dared hope. It is, finally, a well-engineered documentation of the group performing at its peak, and bless all concerned.

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†This research is presented in the article "Sound Recording  
and Reproduction" published in TECHNOLOGY REVIEW (N.T.),  
Vol. 75, No. 2, June '73. Reprints are available from BOSE  
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CIRCLE NO. 10 ON READER SERVICE CARD



# THE BASIC REPERTOIRE

No. 166

By MARTIN BOOKSPAN

## SCHUBERT'S SYMPHONY NO. 2

FRANZ SCHUBERT'S Second Symphony is a perfect illustration of the degree to which the Basic Repertoire has expanded in recent years. John Barbirolli conducted the symphony in New York with the New York Philharmonic in November 1936; that performance very probably was the first in America for this work. Boston audiences didn't hear it until December 1944, when Dimitri Mitropoulos performed it as guest conductor with the Boston Symphony. Today, of course, Schubert's Second Symphony is a beloved staple of concert life everywhere in the western world.

Schubert composed the symphony in the early months of 1815. He was then just eighteen years old, but he had already had nearly two hundred songs published, including such gems as *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, *Der Erlkönig*, *An den Frühling*, and *Heidenröslein*. In the words of Lawrence Gilman, Schubert had already proved himself "a lyric and musico-dramatic genius, by the grace of God." But the first six of Schubert's symphonies, written between 1813 and 1818, were produced rather casually, principally for informal performance by his friends and fellow students. No less an authority than Johannes Brahms edited the Schubert symphonies for their publication in the composer's collected works, and in the numerous manuscript changes made in the autograph scores Brahms found "significant evidence of the freshness and unconcern with which Schubert planned and even wrote his works."

The Second Symphony, in B-flat, bubbles over with ideas and with melodies, and its form and structure are remarkably secure considering the composer's lack of experience as a symphonist. It begins with a somewhat solemn ten-bar introduction that is marked *largo* and is reminiscent of the introduction to Mozart's E-flat Symphony, No. 39. The movement proper is marked *allegro vivace*, and its principal theme is a fleet and exuberant romp for the strings. The slow movement, marked *andante*, is a theme and variations with a concluding coda. The minuet, *allegro vivace*, has the heavy, foot-stomping character of a

peasant dance. The trio contrasts nicely, with the oboe assigned the principal theme the first time around and the clarinet taking it up in imitation. The finale, *presto vivace*, returns us to the rhythmic propulsion of the opening movement. Albert Roussel once wrote of this finale:

To my mind the final *presto* contains the most interesting passages of the whole symphony. The first bar of the opening theme of



KARL BÖHM:  
His reading captures  
the genial good spirits  
of Schubert's Second

this *presto* later gives opportunity, towards the middle of the movement, for a development of rather Beethovenian character, but original and daring and evidently contemporaneous with the writing of the *Erlkönig*. It is also noteworthy that the second theme of this movement, in E-flat, is repeated at the end in G Minor. So we see that Schubert already in his early works makes a habit of departing from classical traditions.

OF the more than half-a-dozen different available recorded performances of Schubert's Second Symphony, my own favorite is the one conducted by Karl Böhm (Deutsche Grammophon 2530216; reel L 3216; cassette 3300216). With the Berlin Philharmonic in superb shape and the recording engineers providing luminously clear, forward sound, Böhm delivers a reading that captures the genial good spirits and

lyric flow of the music. His tempos are particularly well chosen—a shade on the restrained side in the first and last movements, but the restraint serves only to heighten the coiled-spring tension of the music. Those for whom Böhm's control may seem overdone are directed to the performance conducted by Karl Münchinger (London STS 15061, reel L 80038, cassette A 30661). Here the first- and last-movement tempos are brisker, the forward motion altogether more headlong than in the Böhm performance. Since Münchinger has at his command the players of the Vienna Philharmonic, there is no danger of out-of-control propulsion, but the recorded sound is more cavernous than I would like. One distinct advantage Münchinger's version has over Böhm's, however, is in the matter of price: Münchinger's once full-price disc is now available on London's budget-price Stereo Treasury label at a list of \$2.98 (compared with the Böhm list price of \$6.98). Balancing this advantage for some listeners may be the question of couplings: Böhm's performance

is on a disc that has an equally successful account, by the same forces, of Schubert's First Symphony; Münchinger, on the other side of his disc, offers a rather romanticized account of Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony.

None of the other available recordings can really compete in distinction with either Böhm's or Münchinger's, though the performance conducted by the late István Kertész (London CS 6772) is straightforward, honest, and dependable.

Mr. Bookspan's 1973-74 UPDATING OF THE BASIC REPERTOIRE is now available in pamphlet form. Send 25¢ to Susan Larabee, Stereo Review, 1 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 for your copy.



Photos: Larry Klein

# PERFECTING SOUND REPRODUCTION

Substandard commercial “software”—discs, tapes, and FM broadcasts—continues to frustrate our attainment of the elusive goal of complete sonic fidelity

By Craig Stark

**O**VER the years, not a few articles in these pages have explored different aspects of the central issue of high-fidelity music reproduction: how to produce at the listener's ears the same sequence of instantaneous variations in barometric pressure (otherwise known as “sound”) that took place at the original live performance. Audiophiles have devoted enormous amounts of time, effort, and hard cash to the achievement of that goal, with results that range from the weird to the wonderful. And everyone agrees—except for a few diehards cherishing their mono tube equipment—that the fidelity of today's components is higher than ever and that even greater technical marvels are waiting just over the horizon.

But, in the last analysis, even if we were to attain perfection in amplifiers, speakers, record players, and recorders, even if we were to install them in an acoustically perfect listening room (may we all live to see *that* day!), one potential limiting factor would

still remain: the “software” media, the tapes, discs, and FM broadcasts used to store and to transmit the original sound. In short, if there is anything wrong anywhere in that long, complicated procedure that starts at the recording session and ends at the pressing plant or tape-duplicating facility, your playback components can do very little to set it right. Tone controls, noise-reduction systems, and the like can rectify minor errors, but major faults will be reproduced with dismaying fidelity.

The immediate question, then, is just how well the software people do their jobs. In some cases, thanks to today's superb equipment, remarkably well. A good studio recorder, for example, has a frequency response that easily spans the whole range of human hearing with no audible deviations, and it has in addition a signal-to-noise ratio well in excess of 60 dB. To put this figure in a more familiar context, the tape hiss heard from such a professional recorder will be far less than the noise (breathing,

coughing, squirming, etc.) produced by the quietest audience at a live concert. The catch is, of course, that very few people get to hear these 60-dB or better master tapes. The sound source for most of us has to be the *commercial* software—discs, prerecorded open-reel, cassette, and cartridge tapes, and FM broadcasts. And so, when the editors of **STEREO REVIEW** asked me to initiate an investigation into the comparative performance of today's "program sources," it was to these "real-life" musical artifacts that I turned. My first step was to obtain a "real-time analyzer" (RTA) and subject a large number of tapes, discs, and broadcasts to its electronic scrutiny. The RTA, which can instantly display the frequencies present in a given signal (together with their relative strengths), provided a most efficient readout of the present state of the recording (and broadcasting) art. (The accompanying box gives some details of the test approach.)

The best place to start in this comparison is with the question of frequency response, which we will define, for our purposes, as that range of musical tones and overtones from the deepest bass to the highest treble harmonics that human auditors can hear. When discussing high-fidelity equipment, we tend usually to consider a minimum frequency-range specification as extending from 20 to 20,000 Hz  $\pm 3$  dB. With those figures in mind, then, a quick examination of Photo No. 1, one of a number made during our tests, may prove something of a shock. It shows the highest levels achieved in each third of a

musical octave during the concluding 32 seconds of Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* (Columbia disc M-31632). But something seems to be terribly wrong, for the bass and treble ends of the frequency-response curve, far from being "flat," are both down by about 30 dB!

Before you are impelled to write an irate letter to Columbia Records questioning their product (or to us, questioning our procedure and apparatus), it would be worthwhile to consider first the very necessary distinction that must be drawn between "frequency content" and "frequency response." Your ears will tell you that the frequencies present in music obviously vary from moment to moment. But, sampled over a period of time, the proportion of lows, middles, and highs (at least for the classical repertoire) is typically as represented by Photo No. 1. In other words, most of the energy of this (and other) music occurs in the mid-range. This statistical sampling of the levels of each of the various frequencies represents the frequency *content* of the music. Frequency *response*, on the other hand, refers to the performance of a reproducing or recording system or component intended to process the music fed into it. The frequency *response* of audio equipment should be flat, then, even if the frequency *content* of the music isn't. If, for example, in the original music, the seventh harmonic of a 2,000-Hz tone (14,000 Hz, that is) produced by an instrument is 20 dB weaker than the 2,000-Hz fundamental tone, the harmonic should be recorded and reproduced exactly 20 dB down—no more, no less. If the reproducing equipment involved were to introduce an additional loss (or increase) at 14,000 Hz, musical fidelity would suffer.

Although it provides useful information, a disc's frequency content *averaged* over some specific time period does not tell the whole story. For one thing, not all "average" curves resemble Photo No. 1. Photo No. 2, for example, does not. It is a frequency-spectrum analysis of the final second of the *Peace Train* selection from Sheffield Records' sonically superb disc "The Missing Link" (S-10), which consists of a very loud note from a finger cymbal of the type used in Near Eastern belly-dance music. With close miking, the cymbal produced a searing burst of sonic energy over fully half the audible frequency range. As anyone who has ever heard this recording will know, signals this potent, particularly in the high frequencies, are almost never encountered on the usual commercial discs. (According to the producer of this one, even though specially designed electronics were used in the making of this direct-cut disc, the struck cymbal managed to overload every stage in the recording chain. It did not,

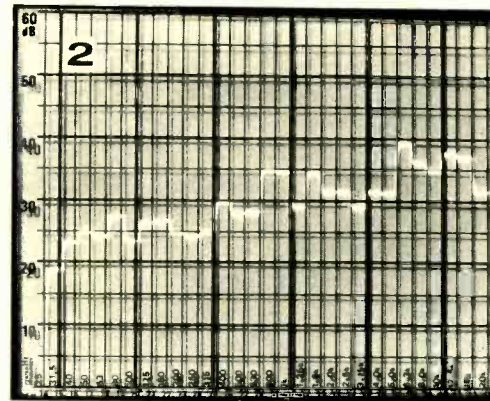
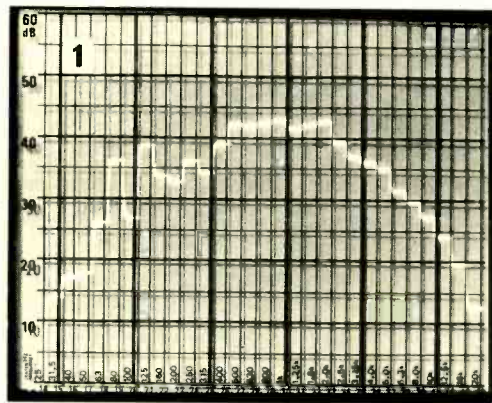
#### THE REAL-TIME ANALYZER

**T**HE question of what frequencies are present and in what amounts in the music recorded on tape or disc cannot easily be answered without some very sophisticated measuring equipment. As an example of the problem: how does one measure a cymbal crash embodying a multitude of different frequencies—some fundamentals and some harmonics—all at different strengths and all constantly changing? The one instrument that can handle such a task is known as the *real-time analyzer*. The General Radio Model 1921 we used to produce our test data divides the audio input signal into thirty  $\frac{1}{3}$ -octave segments over the range of 25 to 20,000 Hz. Each separate segment—or band—is displayed and stored individually as on a vertical bar graph, the height of the bar representing signal strength. The center frequency of each segment is given by the numerals at the base of each vertical readout "bar."

Another aspect of the 1921's performance is its provision of a choice of several integrating times. This means that the instrument can be set up to display on its storage oscilloscope energy ranging from under a second up to 32 seconds in duration.

We wish to thank General Radio for their cooperation in supplying the Model 1921 Real-Time Analyzer, the essential data-collecting tool for this investigation.

Photo 1 shows the final half-minute of a Columbia Firebird (M-31632); the frequency vs. energy distribution is typical of recorded music. Photo 2 shows a highly atypical recorded signal: the last note of the Peace Train selection on Sheffield's disc "The Missing Link."



however, cause any obvious deterioration in the overall sound, nor did it result in any obvious loss in high-frequency response.)

There is, in addition, a second and even more important point to be noted about frequency content and frequency response, and it parallels the more familiar debate about how much amplifier power one really needs. In that controversy, the proponents of pecuniary practicality argue that most of the time our amplifiers loaf along putting out a watt or two at most, so who needs the big 300-watt brutes? On the other side, the high-horsepower advocate contends that instantaneous musical peaks can be as much as 20 dB higher than average levels, and, translated into power requirements, 20 dB is a ratio of 100 to 1. I tend to side in this dispute with the high-power purist, since, during listening tests in my own home, with speakers of moderately low efficiency, I have driven even a "super-power" amplifier into severe clipping by playing it at a level that no one found excessively loud.

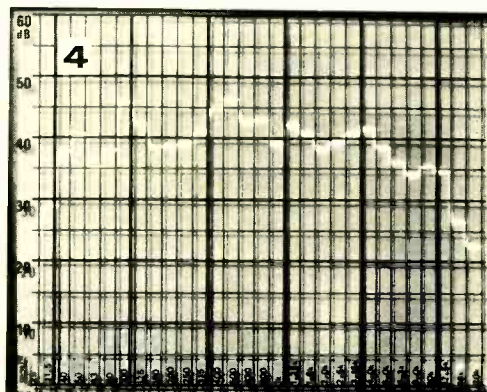
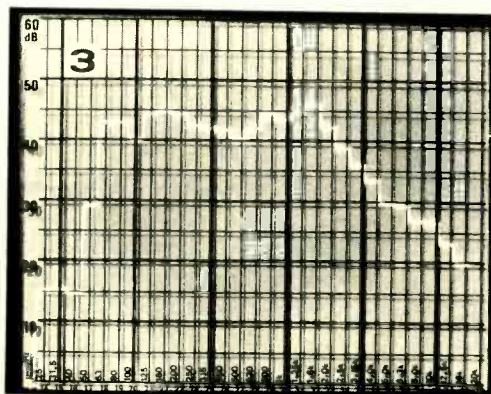
Analogously, the frequency-response demands of music can, for brief moments, far exceed the specific frequency content shown in our scope photos. Therefore, if they are to operate without overload, both recording and reproducing systems must be able to handle those momentary frequency demands, not just long-term (or even short-term) averages. This is not always possible, however, and disc-cutting engineers, tape duplicators, and FM broadcasters are therefore led into a series of sonic compromises.

Consider, for example, the deepest bass note in

the musical spectrum, the low C (16.351 Hz) produced by a 32-foot organ pipe. I know that it *can* be recorded, because I've done it—though there are precious few speaker systems that will reproduce it at anywhere near its full relative strength. But the question faced by the recording engineer is not really whether 16-Hz *can* be recorded, but whether it *should* be. For one thing, loud, low bass notes produce exceedingly wide undulations of the record groove, which of course, cuts into the number of grooves (and therefore the amount of music) that can be accommodated on a given disc side. If there is a great deal of low bass material on a disc, the playing time of that side is shortened considerably. Also, those very large groove excursions may cause tracking troubles—groove jumping—for all but the very finest phono cartridges. Then, too, recording with a flat response to such a low frequency tends to exaggerate recording-studio noise (the air-conditioning system, for example), to say nothing of the fact that FM broadcasts are deliberately rolled off from 50 Hz on down. Given all this, it is hard to fault the recording engineer who compromises a little on the full level of that 16-Hz organ pedal.

Turning to the treble end of the musical spectrum, we find the picture even worse, for it is complicated by the process known as "equalization." Used in much the same way on tapes, discs, and FM, high-frequency equalization is designed to cut down the level of subjectively perceived noise (hiss) during playback. The fact that *most* music has a frequency content similar to that shown in Photo No. 1 means that one can boost the high end (for

Photo 3 is representative of loud "hard rock" music. Note that energy levels are virtually "flat" from 70 to 2,000 Hz. In Photo 4 the very wide frequency range and high energy levels of modern electronic music are indicated.



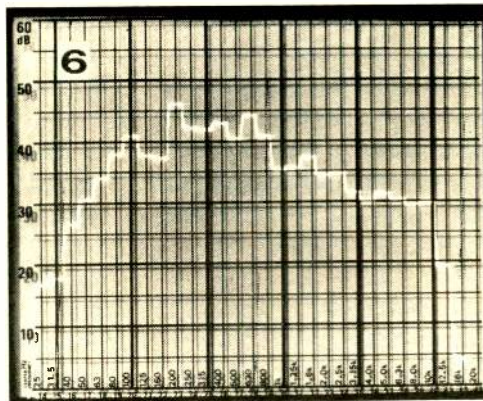
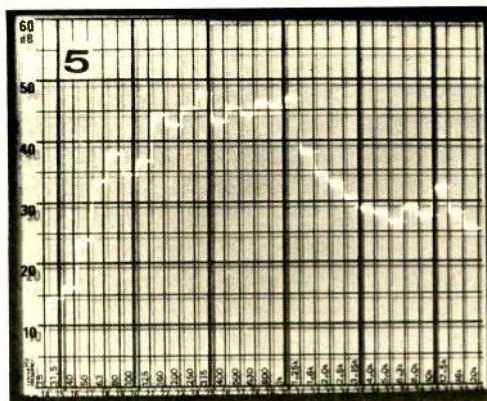


Photo 5 is an integration of Deodato's adaptation of Strauss' Also Sprach Zarathustra. The slight boost around 10,000 Hz accentuates percussion sounds. Photo 6 is from the Manitas de Plata selection on STEREO REVIEW's Demonstration Cassette.

noise-reduction) during the recording or transmission process—provided, of course, that a corresponding treble *cut* is built into the listener's playback system. This restores the original frequency balance (as if the treble hadn't been fiddled with at all), and that high-frequency cut in the reproduction process also lowers the audible surface noise, tape hiss, and other disturbances that entered *after* the boost; the result is cleaner overall sound.

The rub comes, of course, when the musical picture resembles that in Photo No. 2—which is to say that the music has a lot of very high-level treble content. Here the tape recorder, the FM transmitter, and the disc cutter all run into trouble. In the first place, every time the frequency goes up by one octave (say, from 1,000 to 2,000 Hz), the cutter stylus must make twice as many wiggles in the groove every second, and twice as much power must be fed to it to permit it to do so. The additional high-frequency boost of the equalization curve must be added as well, and that requires still another doubling of power for each successive octave, thus *quadrupling* the drive requirement. This means that if 1 watt is needed to cut a given level at 1,000 Hz, it will take 256 watts to cut the same level at 16,000 Hz—at which point the cutting head will probably go up in smoke from gross overload of its power-handling capacity (a friend of mine, trying to make an impressive demonstration record, once burned out three cutter heads—at \$1,000 each—in a single day). Small wonder, then, that disc-cutting engineers sometimes roll off the high frequencies a bit, comforting themselves with the knowledge that

very few home phono cartridges could track *that* hot a groove anyway. It must be stressed that to call attention to these limitations in the recording (and broadcast) process is not to impugn the integrity of our home music sources, for, despite their imperfections, they do a remarkably good job.

HAVING looked at (while listening to) many hundreds of musical waveforms displayed on the RTA's oscilloscope, I have come to some useful generalizations. For example, scope Photo No. 3 is typical of the "hard rock" sound, with heavy bass and a strong mid-range—around 80 and 2,000 Hz, respectively. Photo No. 4 is representative of today's electronic music which, more than any other type, contains (and therefore demands) equal power throughout the frequency spectrum. The Deodato take-off on Strauss' "Thus Spake Zarathustra" (CTI 6021) shows (Photo No. 5) an ear-bruising peak at 10,000 Hz, a sound that makes the closing of the *Firebird* (not noted for its quietness!) seem tame by comparison. However, it became apparent that if one carefully chose specific moments during a performance to sample the frequency content, the energy distribution in any one kind of music could be made to look like any other. This means that full power capability across the full bandwidth is needed in *all* parts of the recording/reproduction chain if we are to do full justice to music. We don't have that capability at the moment, of course, though we continue to get closer.

In some cases, I was able to compare the same musical passages on both cassettes and discs. Pho-

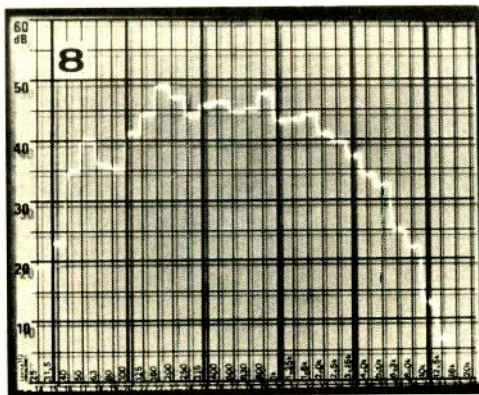
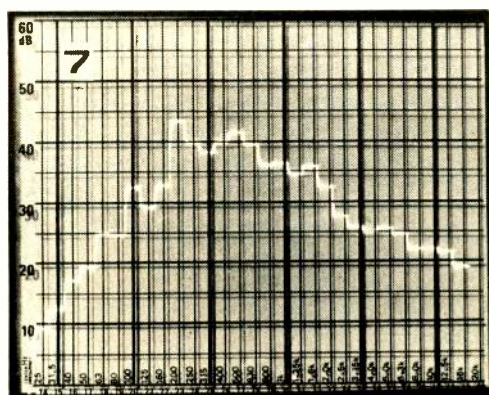


Photo 7 shows the same material as Photo 6, but was taken from the STEREO REVIEW Stereo Demonstration Disc. Note the difference in levels above 10,000 Hz. Photo 8 is typical of eight-track cartridges, exhibiting little musical energy above about 6,000 Hz.

tos Nos. 6 and 7 show the RTA's readout for one such comparison. Note that the high-frequency energy above 10,000 Hz present on the disc was not only definitely reduced in the cassette version, but there was an apparent attempt to distract attention from the loss by boosting the frequencies just below it. Figure 1 shows a composite curve derived from a number of cassette and disc samples.

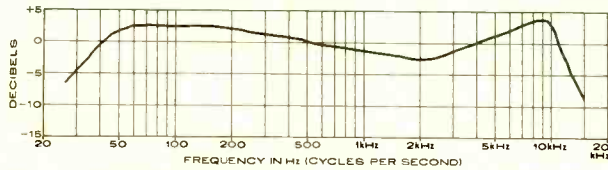


Fig. 1. The curve shows how frequency content of a random selection of cassettes differed from that of typical LP discs. The 0-dB line corresponds to the LP discs' frequency responses.

Eight-track cartridges varied so widely in their quality that I could draw no conclusions other than that they contained a lot of hiss and that some were sonically simply terrible (Photo No. 8). By contrast, FM broadcasts showed, on average, a frequency distribution surprisingly similar to that of the discs on the various kinds of music. (It is worth noting, however, that even within the limitations in bandwidth and high-frequency capability imposed by the present FCC rules, some stations obviously are putting out a better audio signal than others.)

Since the disc is still (as of this writing, at least) the dominant medium in our music listening, there is another important question still unanswered: Just how close do commercial discs come to their original master tapes? To provide specific answers, we would have to make direct A-B comparisons between the two—a privilege not usually available to an audiophile. Fortunately, I had on hand my original 15-ips master tape of a harpsichord performance of Bach's "Goldberg" Variations. Although I could not compare it with its own disc version (since it has yet to be released), I did compare it measure for measure with two *other* commercial disc versions. The results (Figure 2) were quite surprising. All three curves on the graph are averages of the same measures of the Variations—A and B are the two discs, C is the master tape. The rise around 6,000 Hz on curve C gives the instrument a far greater sense of presence and openness (one noted critic thought it the best harpsichord sound he'd ever heard in recording), but, unfortunately, when the record comes out I suspect it may well sound like the other two.

The implications that may be drawn from this informal study are several. For one, it is clear that the "old-fashioned" LP record at its best is an infor-

mation-storing marvel; if it does not realize its fidelity potential with every release, we must therefore blame not the medium, but the way it is being used. In short, support your local record company when its product is good. As for cassettes, the best home-recorded (dubbed) examples played back on the best machines can sound remarkably close to the best disc, but the commercially prerecorded cassette still has a long way to go. Dolby has brought the hiss level of the prerecorded cassette down to a bearable level, but someone else will have to provide the over-10,000-Hz frequencies so sadly lacking in most of today's product. It is not likely that

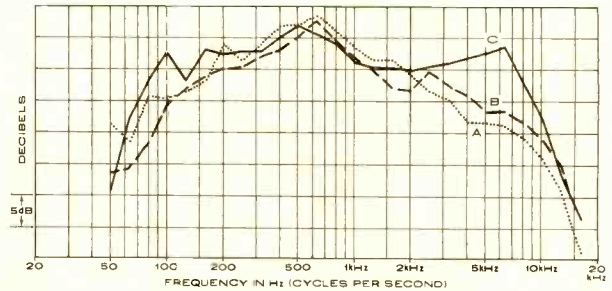


Fig. 2. A comparison of the spectral balances of two disc versions of J. S. Bach's "Goldberg" Variations (A and B) with an unprocessed master tape of the same music, fresh from the recorder.

duplicators will make improvements in this area until consumers demand it, because the better tape and improved duplication equipment required are expensive.

The eight-track format has always had a *potential* edge on the cassette simply because it runs at twice the speed (it has its limitations too—no reverse, and the track-switching system makes it unattractive for much symphonic music). Manufacturers have yet to take advantage of the medium's fidelity potential, however, undoubtedly because so far the market (principally automotive) simply hasn't demanded it. But there is a straw in the wind: a few Dolbyized eight-track units have now appeared. There is room for improvement in FM broadcasts as well. There is very little live-performance music going out over the airwaves these days, so broadcast stations, like the rest of us, have to be content with the fidelity levels present on commercial discs and tape. But there is no reason why they should contribute further sonic degradation beyond that irreducible minimum involved in the broadcast process.

All our sound-reproduction media, in short, can stand improvement, and the technology is there to accomplish it. What is lacking, oddly enough, is public interest—there is still no large-scale demand for discs, tapes, and broadcasts that realize the full fidelity potential that is within our grasp.

# WAYLON JENNINGS

“Country music is as close to the truth as you can get without going to church.”

By Allan Parachini



Two cultures could scarcely be more divergent, at least on the surface, than the drug-wrought domain of post-Beatles rock-and-roll and the simple, down-home essence of country music—unhomogenized and growing straight out of its backwoods roots. But country music isn't really rural any more except at heart. And it has become as difficult to identify “pure” country as it has to identify “pure” rock, so great is the merging of the two into “country-rock,” a vast polyglot field that is as hard to define as any of the other hyphenated music of the early Seventies.

Simply put, more artists from country music are “crossing over” in an attempt to appeal to the straight rock audience, following, in reverse, the Grateful Dead, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Poco, and Linda Ronstadt, among others, who introduced the country sound to rock. And, of course, there is some resistance among country enthusiasts both to the influx of young, long-haired musicians and to the escape (some would say desertion) of traditional country artists seeking to widen their appeal by actively courting the rock audience. Then into this peculiar cultural conflict entered Waylon Jennings, a respected country star whose credentials also include a close identification with Buddy Holly, a man at whose door some lay a great deal of the responsibility for what rock has become.

Interviewing Jennings presented an opportunity for a study in contrasts. He was playing a week-long engagement at the Troubadour in West Hollywood, one of the most important folk-rock clubs in the country, and was staying during the gig at the Bel Air Motel, one of the plushiest, most exclusive hotels in Southern California. But, despite the sumptuous surroundings, there was no doubt that this was the same Waylon Jennings who resides in Old Hickory, Tennessee. He looked very relaxed, sporting the same black cowboy hat, red shirt (a Gemini sign on a chain around his neck), black leather vest, and black pants he'd been wearing on stage the night before at the Troubadour. He sprawled haphazardly on a couch, planted his boot-clad feet on a coffee table, ordered coffee from room service, and turned on a radio tuned to KLAC, one of three full-time country music stations in Los Angeles. And then he talked about himself, his music, and “crossing over.”

Jennings was born in Littlefield, Texas, spent some of his adolescence as a disc jockey, and started recording on his own when he was about nineteen. By the time he was twenty, he was playing bass in the Crickets, Buddy Holly's back-up band. On February 3, 1959, the Holly troupe, including singer Richie Valens and the Big Bopper (a disc jockey whose real name was J.P. Richardson),

had finished a one-night stand in Clear Lake, Iowa. Jennings was supposed to join Holly and Valens for a charter flight to the next date, in Moorhead, Minnesota, but Richardson complained of the flu and Jennings offered him his seat on the plane. The aircraft crashed and the three were killed. Shocked “beyond description,” Jennings gave up music entirely for a couple of years, returning to work for a radio station in Lubbock, Texas.

Ultimately, he drifted back to performing and put together a group called the Waylors. They played in Lubbock for a while, then in Phoenix at a club called J.D.'s, where Chet Atkins eventually heard them. Atkins urged Jennings to move to Nashville and develop his solo talent. Thus began a renewed career that has continued for more than ten years.

But even as he emerged as a country artist, Jennings told me, he wanted to broaden his appeal and speak musically to the generation that has been influenced so greatly by the rock explosion, which he believes is largely the legacy of Buddy Holly. “I can't be a *conventional* country singer, I guess, because I don't sing through my nose,” Jennings said and laughed. At the same time, he has what might be loosely called a rock-and-roll soul, nurtured by the close Holly ties. He may be risking alienation from some of the country-music industry to reach an audience that is as broad-based, though perhaps not as large, as Jerry Lee Lewis' or Kris Kristofferson's. Still, only two months prior to his date at the folk-rock Troubadour, he had been in Los Angeles to play at the Palomino, a “stone country” club in the San Fernando Valley.

“Country music is universal,” he said. “I really believe that. Especially now. Country music is real. It's about people and their ups and downs and good and bad. People are looking for something that's real. For the last ten years, not that I don't dig it, they've had to listen really hard to get anything out of music, especially the words. Acid rock and hard rock are like that. Sort of superficial musically. Everything was done in the recording studio with gadgets.

“But country music isn't like that. Even people in the North can relate to it. There's something in it for everybody. Country music, to me, is people singing the blues about their good and bad times. There's sadness in the tempo, even. Black blues and country are just about a beat apart, really. They come from the same thing and they're about the same thing. Country music is as close to the truth as you can get without going to church.”

Some country “purists” profess disdain for those who have contributed to the drift of “their” medium out of its Southern and Southern-flavored traditional strongholds

into the entertainment world at large, but Jennings does not feel that the country audience in general cares much one way or the other.

"I think some disc jockeys and program directors of radio stations resent what's happening, but the country people point to it with pride. It's like something of theirs that went big. The city folks finally found out what's good. The gripers are people in the business. If they think you're going in a crossover direction, they'll put you down."

The crossover is a curious thing. Pedal steel guitars are now a normal accoutrement of many rock bands, and a recent Jennings album, "Lonesome, On'ry and Mean" (RCA LSP 4854), contains several tracks that are backed by a meticulously arranged string section. He has defined his sound in the past as "not country, not western, but Waylon."

"The important thing is to know what makes a country record. It's not instruments. There was this kick in Nashville to keep country music pure. But if we do that, we're going to have to go back exclusively to acoustic instruments. A country record is an art form all to itself. You can even put a kazoo on a country record and be authentic—if you know what you're doing."

Jennings sees the country "industry" (he makes an important distinction between the industry and the audience) as unwilling to give up what many Nashville people believe is a battle against alleged musical interlopers from the two coasts. "I heard an agent say one time, 'I wish New York and L.A. would leave us alone.' Well, hell, that's not right. Glen Campbell had been recording country stuff for years and he had to have a pop hit (*Gentle on My Mind*) before the country industry would recognize him. But now they holler 'He's *our* boy!' I think the problem is that the business is afraid of prostitution of the music, but there's very little reason for that fear.

"I've had so many people say to me, 'You ain't country.' But I taught a lot of those dudes how to play chords. At first they called what was happening 'folk-country,' but I was doing it in 1965. I don't have any problems with the people who are listening. I get a lot of air play and my records always sell well. But the country music industry as a whole is afraid of me. They think I'm trying to change things. I'm not, but I'm not going to let them

*Buddy Holly:  
the rock explosion  
is his legacy.*



Decca

change *me*. If I'm not country, I'm a Mongolian idiot."

Stylistically, Jennings certainly is a country artist. But his material is culled from a variety of sources, and the lyrics are a cut above most c-&-w tunes. He writes a good bit of his own material and performs songs by such people as Mickey Newbury (another "crossover" performer) and Kristofferson, occasionally even adding some Lennon/McCartney. That he uses rock sources and has a rock audience is not really surprising, considering his ideas about the nature of country music and, perhaps most important, that youthful association with Buddy Holly.

"Buddy was such a great guy. I dare say very few days go by that I don't think about him. He was the first person who ever had any confidence in me. Musically, he had a lot of influence on me. [Actually, Holly was himself something of an early crossover artist who drew on a country background.] After he was killed, I didn't do anything for a couple of years; I wouldn't even play a guitar. I had a fear of planes that I had to get over. It was such a waste, him being killed like that. You see, people didn't realize and I didn't realize how far ahead of his time he was.

"Buddy and I were laughing and joking the last night. I've never told this before and maybe I shouldn't, but what happened is we had this old school bus and the engine froze up on us so it was going to take most of the night to drive it from Mason City to Moorhead. That's why we were going on the plane. So after I'd told J.P. Richardson he could have my seat, I went out to get some hot dogs for me and Buddy and we were kidding about the bus.

"He said, 'You're not going with us and I hope your bus freezes up solid,' laughing, you know. And I told him, 'I hope your danged old plane crashes.' The next morning they came to the door of the bus to tell me about the crash. Somehow, I knew what had happened."

JENNINGS has kept in contact with the other Crickets, one of whom resides in Los Angeles, hoping to revive a Buddy Holly song as a hit single or to record a Holly tribute album. In the early Sixties, he did record a short narrative in memory of Holly, Richardson, Valens, and Eddie Cochran, another early rock star who was killed in an auto crash. "But they must have sped up the tape or something and it just sounded terrible. I finally managed to buy the tape and destroy it. That was the only thing I've ever recorded I was really ashamed of."

Jennings both is and is not a man haunted by a memory. He is happily married (his charming wife, Jessi, is also a singer), has a houseful of children, and has found success as a country artist and repute in the rock culture. He has actively sought to raise the level of the material he performs, and he has shown that he wants to reach as wide an audience as possible while retaining an authenticity and flavor that are beyond dispute.

He has often been compared with Kris Kristofferson, who, some say, cares more about his new rock audience than about the country crowd that gave him his start. But Jennings seems determined to remain a *country* artist, convinced that broad-based audiences will continue to seek him out. He thinks the people who really listen to what he does won't care who *else* likes to listen to him. Waylon Jennings is perhaps as good an indicator of the true appeal of country music as you can find, and he's been right so far.





# REVISITED!

J MARKS'

# HALL OF OBSCURITY

New Acquisitions for the Gallery of Beautiful Losers

**N**OT CONTENT with the bruises and insults that were my lot in the Letters column the last time I dared to enter these hallowed halls (December 1972), I am determined to risk another set of lumps by presenting the results of my most recent sifting through the phonographic fossils underservedly cast into the tar pit during the Golden Age of Rock. Many of these unfamous people should at least be riding

the Crest of the slump right now, but there they ignobly rest in the arms of non-Fame and un-Fortune. Some of them, true, are mere curiosities, others the cult favorites of a skeptical elite, and still others had at least a glimpse of the big time before they did a fast burnout. But what I propose to offer here is a brief catalog of heroes and heroines who deserve another chance at your turntable.



● For instance, there's JOANNE VENT, "The Black and White of It Is Blues" (A&M SP 4165), whose collection of songs is so stormily peculiar it's a wonder they could have been overlooked. But back in the Sump-tuous Sixties, Joanne stood in the shadow of such black princesses as Aretha, who held the patent on musical heartbreak, and such authentic minstrel acts as Janis Joplin. Joanne nonetheless scored some very soulful points with such tunes as *Weak Spot* and *Bet No One Ever Hurt This Bad*. Michael McCormick provided properly sparse and melancholy arrangements for this frail blonde lady with the black torment in her voice. She's a very bright light that just never got lit.



● JIM DAWSON seemed to have just about everybody's endorsement, but he never got the popularity his tuneful, theatrical songs deserved. "Songman" (Kama Sutra KSBS 2035) was one of the best first albums released in the early Seventies, unfaltering in melodic richness, dramatic sweep, and just plain likability. Dawson's songs and his singing are direct, easy, and optimistic. "You'll Never Be Lonely with Me" (Kama Sutra KSBS 2049) is not as dramatically consistent as the first album, but *Stephanie*, at least, should have made it. *Holling Stone*, speaking from the editorial balcony of the Pop Vatican, pleaded for his canonization, but it didn't happen. So Jim just keeps on singing: "And now I am older, I sing for my living, I live for my moment; I know it will come." We hope so.



● Ferocious kinkiness is currently in vogue, but the most seriously insane group of all—SPARKS (Bearsville 2048)—has yet to elbow its way onto the Runway of Glitter. Todd Rundgren's production for them is flawless, and the five-man band piles up no less than eleven elaborately original tunes. But even such powerful bits of punk-essence as *Biology 2* and *Mr. Nice Guys* failed to make any commercial noise. "Woofer in Tweeter's Clothing" (Bearsville 2110) is commendably uncanny, sandwiching unrecognizable old classics like *Do He Mi* (by Rodgers and Hammerstein!) between some warped but trendy originals—*Girl from Germany* and *Whippings and Apologies*. Obvious, outrageous, and, er . . . unusual, Sparks has so far proved only that all that glitters is not gold.



● JESSE WINCHESTER has been quietly at work compiling a small but convincing set of classics. "Third Down, 110 to Go" (Bearsville 2102) gathers together a group of self-contained musical poems which have been universally admired by critics who are rarely unanimous about anything. This Canadian troubadour requires very little in the way of orchestral commotion, even less of those folkish affectations of purity and poverty. His album is simply very good music, a strong river-flow that rises occasionally into high water—listen to *All of Your Stories* and *Lullaby for the First Born*.



● BILLY JOE SHAVER must have gotten Kris' permission to tag along in the Kristofferson parade, because Kris himself produced the record and Billy Joe writes and sings tunes that have that unmistakable Kristofferson wrinkle. In "Old Five and Dimers like Me" (Monument KZ 32293) there are some damn fine songs that out-Kris the silver-tongued devil at his own game: *I Been to Georgia on a Fast Train* and *Willy the Wandering Gypsy and Me* have all the narrative hokiness and dues-paid authority of c-&-w's best-known Rhodes scholar. They also recover some of the freshness that seems to have gone out of the Kristofferson product lately. Billy is a fashionable replay of Tennessee cool, all brass, brag, and beer belly. Set yourself down and have some.



● On America's Indian reservations all the way from the Great Smokies to Pine Ridge, Yakima, and Acoma, trading-post jukeboxes are cranking out the music of some obscure red artists. FLOYD WESTERMAN is one of them ("Custer Died for Your Sins," Perception POP 5), the ZUNI MIDNIGHTERS another ("Land of the Shalako," Canyon Records 4), and their music is what the young skins are listening to. Westerman's impressive cycle of anti-anthems is of course based on the Vine Deloria Jr. book, while Bill Crockett and the Zuni Midnighters are into a couple of interesting originals as well as some fantastic readings of such hits as *Midnight Hour* and *Whiter Shade of Pale*. Canyon Records supplies both albums from 6050 N. Third St., Phoenix, Ariz. 85012.



● Let me tell you about LOTTI GOLDEN, whose rough songs come wrapped in the romance of her evidently endless pain. Her second Atlantic album ("Motor Cycle," M-88233) collapsed under the weight of its own excesses, but the GRT release called "Lotti Golden" (GRT 30003) should enter the annals of confessional classics simply on the merits of *Do You Use It?* The delivery is ragged and self-indulgent, the naked exhibitionism brittle and uncontrolled, but it is all somehow disarming and rather beautiful. Take, for instance, the tune *Lately*, which moves rapidly from simple observation and commentary to a sort of uncontrolled delirium. Neither great songwriting nor the best of vocal art, but lots of flesh and blood.



● Another lady who missed the train to stardom is ANYA COHEN, who sang with a group called Street (Verve FTS-3057). Anya's moment came and went with the speed of light, but while she lasted she laid down some of the best sounds in the otherwise male-dominated mid-Sixties. Her voice is one of those instruments of many influences that manage to resound with a marvelous originality. The production of this album is properly primitive for its early day, and the songs won't knock anybody off his chair by today's standards, but Anya persistently comes through with a fine, personal vocal style rich in fascinating mannerisms. *Some Thoughts of a Young Man's Girl*, *If I Needed Someone*, and *See See Rider* are her best.



● I keep predicting the defection of RALPH McTELL from the ranks of the beautiful losers, but he seems to hold on. His first Paramount album was flawed but promising: the ought-to-have-been hit was *Streets of London*. Next time around ("Not Till Tomorrow," Reprise MS 2121), McTell delivered a trim, taut, lightly scored album of intelligent tunes. The writing is some of the best of its kind: whimsically sad, richly wrought lyrics, often narrative in form and tragic in content, and always mixed with a keen sense of irony. *Zimmerman Blues* is a shrewd "autobiographical" observation about the holy of holies, and the Donovan-like *Barges* successfully takes on a peculiar form of English lyricism. McTell should make it, but when?



● Most rock greats have made it by intricately combining the roles of creator and performer; noncomposing stylists like Joe Cocker are relatively rare. JERRY WILLIAMS wrote nearly half the tunes on his album (Spindizzy KZ 31404), but where he really shines is in the reshaping of rock standards — *On Broadway*, *Gangster of Love*, *Love Letters*, and *A Whiter Shade of Pale*. He had a lot of help from Nicky Hopkins, Nils Lofgren, Chuck Rainey, and others in putting the album together, but what makes this unsung set very special is Williams' direct, unselfconscious vocal style. There is more to it than just the intonation, the phrasing, and the expressiveness we expect from a good singer; there is also that special ability to reorganize, to rewrite the fundamental melody of a song in the manner of an Ella Fitzgerald.



● You'd think mere good-time music would find ready acceptance, but it's surprising how much of it passes unnoticed. Perhaps it's because the music market is so crowded with mediocrity that people have built up a resistance to anything that comes on first as lollipop. THOMAS JEFFERSON KAYE (Dunhill DSX-50149) is not a stranger to the hit charts; he's worked with some big groups as producer. But his first album as a songwriter-singer didn't get through, despite its very high polish and its happy material. Check out *Hole in the Shoe Blues*, *Snake in the Grass*, *The Door Is Still Open*, and *I'll Be Leaving Her Tomorrow*. They won't bring tears to your eyes, but they might get a tap or two out of your toes.



● "Wringing Applause" is an unexpected and somewhat mysterious album on the British Ardent label. It stars the songs and the voice of BRIAN ALEXANDER ROBERTSON, and both seem to come from somewhere between the world of Harry Nilsson and that of the London music halls. The lyrics constantly overreach for "significance," but they sometimes achieve an illuminating minor truth: "The man who sees the artist as a guardian of the truth/He must be blind. We're dealers in myths and illusion/Designed to steal your hearts away." Robertson is that very special kind of theater singer who recently emerged in such vehicles as *Jesus Christ Superstar*, mingling rock, pop, and vaudeville. The album is a song cycle with both coherence and discernible continuity, plus a rare seriousness.



● For many musicians, obscurity is the result of a failure to communicate. For others, it's a way of life. I can't think of two albums that belong on this list of marvelous losers more than "The School" and "Weltschmerzen," both produced by a huge but obscure cluster of collaborators called the PEOPLE'S MUSIC WORKS (220-01 Hempstead Ave., Queens Village, New York 11429). "The School" ends with something called *Children's Anthem/Let Us Sing a Love Song*, one of the most ecstatic sing-outs in all recorded music; "Weltschmerzen" is something less than an exercise in Rousseauian naiveté. It is, as the title suggests, just the opposite: an ironic hymn to the world's torments, almost frantically original in its composition and performance. Two really outstanding albums.



● JOHN CALE is the classic outsider, destined, I think, to remain happily beyond the clutches of the madding crowd. His collaborations with the Velvet Underground and composer Terry Riley ("Church of Anthrax," Columbia C 30131) were commendable but uncommitted. The real stuff begins with "The Academy in Peril" (Reprise MS 2079), in which serial music, movie music, and pop dementia are whipped up to a beautiful lather. But the germ that infects Cale is most apparent in his "Paris 1919" (Reprise MS 2131), a splendidly out-of-sync turn-of-the-century tapestry, a kind of musical Magritte. The orchestrations are less daring but more original than they were on "The Academy," the lyrics resound with that infatuation with candor that has made Cale a rock-and-roll hero.



● TERRY REID should be a household word; his music was meant for everybody. But perhaps his unpolished voice is too fiercely genuine for the well-oiled airways and for those who demand reality but don't like it when they get it. Reid was one of Mickie Most's rare failures back in the Sixties, when "Bang Bang You're Terry Reid" (Epic BN 26427) was issued. It made only a couple of ripples, despite the fact that Reid's interpretations of *Bang Bang* and *Season of the Witch* were perfect blends of pop theatricality and blues authenticity. Terry dropped out of earshot for a couple of years, but he re-emerged recently with "River" (Atlantic SD 7259), a title that rather describes his new vocal ways: the cry is still buried in that ragged throat, but its note has mellowed and matured.



● Nobody has ever written songs quite like those of JUDEE SILL (Asylum SD 5050). *The Lamp Has Gone Away with the Crown* is a very nearly perfect ballad in which the lyrics and the melody run in separate but compatible directions. Her tunes seem to have a delicate indirectness; her lyrics are diffuse, pastel, and yet dimensional. *Jesus Was a Cross Maker*, from her first album, almost became a folkie classic. "Heart Food" (Asylum SD 5063) is her most recent; it is more William-Blake-oblique than ever, as delicately unfocused musically, and even more elaborate in its allusions: "Kyrie Eleison . . . I'll chase 'em to the bottom/Till I've finally caught 'em . . . Dreams fall deep . . ." Judee is probably this year's reigning queen of the nonstars.



● JADE WARRIOR (Vertigo 1009) is excellent, individual—and inconsistent. The group is the creation of Tony Duhig, Glyn Havard, and Jon Field; they write almost all the material. Field's alto and concert flute are iridescent, but without the pyrotechnical exhibitionism of Jethro Tull. A second album, "Last Autumn's Dream" (Vertigo VEL 1012), is more accomplished and less literally "oriental" than the debut recording. *Borne on the Solar Wind* is remarkably complex, though its intent is pastoral simplicity. Jade Warrior won't make it on the merits of its writing or, for that matter, Havard's vocals. But, in a time when musical boredom seems to be pandemic, the originality of their sound ought to keep them from getting lost in the shuffle.



● The happy crew that makes up FRASER AND DEBOLT (Columbia C-30381) is in a way an American version of the Incredible String Band. Their sound is distinctly c-&-w, but also a bit surreal if you get in there and listen between the pedal steel. The musical organization is obviously communal, though Allan Fraser and Daisy DeBolt do almost all the writing. As with the String Band, the musical sources are folk, the lyrics strictly contemporary. There is a sizable cult that adores this band of rustics; they favor their first album and find the second ("With Pleasure," Columbia KC 32130) just a bit commercial. I see it the other way around. But I don't think I'll get any argument when I say that the most obscure country band around is Fraser and . . . ah . . . what's-her-name.



● ANDY PRATT (Columbia KC 31722) is a bright prospect, but a two-time loser. I can understand why his first album on Polydor slipped by—it was rather too mellowed out. But his Columbia collection is a fine combination of original material, capable vocals, and imaginative musical production. Take, for example, *Who Am I Talking To?*, a painfully skeptical ditty that comes on like a simple round-song but quickly slips into a rhythmic knot-garden and a verbal diatribe. Andy Pratt's method is to begin his words and music comfortably enough, but then to dart off in unexpected twists and turns, almost from word to word, from note to note. This is what originality is all about, but it does take several listenings before you find out just how to get into the unique Pratt universe.



● Ever since George Martin mixed a classical quartet into Paul McCartney's soft-pedal *Yesterday*, it has become increasingly difficult to remember the purity of 1955, when a singer and a guitar sufficed for a musical evening. BRIDGET ST. JOHN's "Ask Me No Question" (Elektra D9-101) manages to bring that purity back, particularly in her most melodious notions, *Autumn Lullaby* and *Helio Again*. This last has the kind of words that are as rare as this kind of music: "You never really go away; it's just the space between us growing . . ." The rest of the St. John repertoire makes good use of her pleasantly (I must say) androgynous voice, a commendable solo guitar, and a little help from second guitarists Sanders and Martyn and bongoist Dominic. The lyrics are direct and pleasant.



● The classical concert stage had its Florence Foster Jenkins, and rock has its AMANDA TREE (Poppy LA-0030F), a non-singer of pre-history who moons longingly over *Hock Salt*, a *Pineapple Dinosaur*, and other anomalies of time and space. Her seriousness about her material and her commitment to her art are as unflawed as Madame Jenkins' were; she launches into the endless (ten-minute) melodies of her own composition with the determined drive and heedless single-mindedness of the greatest of divas. The results are simply something else. Can there be another author capable of these immortal lyrics?: "O bring back the prehistoric animals, 'cause dionosaurs are superstars! Poo-poo-pee-do!" Now *that's* rhyming, Simon!

Albéric Magnard

Guy Ropartz

Claude Debussy

Maurice Ravel



Emmanuel Chabrier



Georges Bizet

Charles-Henri Alkan

Erik Satie

Olivier Messiaen



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Edouard Lalo

Nadia Boulanger

César Franck

Francis Poulenc



LAST year marked the centenary of the births of Sergei Rachmaninoff and Enrico Caruso, with Feodor Chaliapin and even Max Reger, of course, coming in for their share of centennial attention as well. But, as the foregoing examples may suggest, we do tend to concentrate our celebrations in any given year in favor of the bigger name, the glossier reputation, with the result that many a worthy candidate for commemoration is forgotten. The year 1973, for example, *might* have been an opportunity to rediscover a few French composers (and their music) we may have heard of and forgotten or never heard of at all: Jean-Jules Roger-Ducasse (1873-1954), Henri Rabaud (1873-1949), and Déodat de Séverac (1873-1929). No one of them is a monumental figure, surely, but they are interesting ones.

It takes a really determined curiosity to verify that statement, for these three Frenchmen share not only a common centenary year, but also the common fate of having their music almost totally forgotten both at home and abroad. Quite a number of their compatriots—specifically, composers active during the last hundred years—share the latter bond with them; as Harry Halbreich observes (in his annotation for the Musical Heritage Society set "The French Piano School," MHS-1155/1157), "Not Germany or any other nation can claim such a line-up within the period in question—but the Germans cultivate and honor a Reger or a Pfitzner, and the French don't even know Magnard and Ropartz!" Debussy and Ravel cast long shadows, and they effectively obscure all but a handful of their contemporaries and near-contemporaries.

French music of the last one hundred years is a remarkable category, embracing, in addition to Debussy, Ravel, and "Les Six," the still underrated originality of a Chabrier, the foreshortened promise of a Bizet, various creative responses (both positive and negative) to Wagner and the Russians, the eccentricity of the forward-looking Alkan and Satie, the enduring benevolence of Fauré and Pierné, the latter-day ascendancy of Messiaen and Boulez (whose status as a conductor is a fairly recent development compared with his long history as a composer), and a peculiar fascination with certain instruments and instrumental combinations.

Ignoring that small army of French

organists who composed so prolifically for their instrument, and forgetting the celebrated Debussy, Ravel, Milhaud, Messiaen, and a few others, we might list at least two dozen lesser-known Frenchmen (and women) whose work is worth investigating. The mention of Jean Françaix, Charles Koechlin, Henri Dutilleul, or André Jolivet may draw no more response than the names of Séverac and Magnard from music-minded Americans, and a reference to Albert Roussel, André Messager, Reynaldo Hahn, or Gabriel Pierné is not likely to raise more than a flicker of recognition. Jean Martinon's name will be recognized at once, but few here are aware that the famous conductor is also a composer of stature. Jacques Ibert we know for his once-popular *Escapes*, Édouard Lalo for his *Symphonie Espagnole*, Chabrier and Dukas for *España* and *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, respectively. Is it possible they wrote more? It is, they did, and phonographic attention to this repertoire has deepened appreciably in the last few years, with conspicuous activity on the labels of the Vox group and the Musical Heritage Society.

The fastidious craftsmanship, elegance of style, and overall refinement exemplified by Ravel have been distinguishing characteristics of French music since the time of François Couperin. The strong continuity of this tradition is accounted for, in part, by the almost equally prominent tradition of longevity among French composers, a tradition which goes back at least to Rameau. Those with an eye for such things will find a sizable contingent of French musicians who not only lived well into their eighties but continued at that age to be active as composers, teachers, performers, and all-round "influences" (Darius Milhaud and Nadia Boulanger are today's outstanding examples) — a factor by no means to be discounted in explaining the maintenance of the standards and general outlook that continue to characterize French music at its best.

The greatly beloved Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) did not quite make it to eighty, but his long life, which saw the birth and death of Debussy, Magnard, Chausson, and Séverac, enabled him to emulate Haydn's relationship with Mozart by "learning" from younger composers who had themselves learned from him (such as Ravel, who composed his *Pavane*

*pour une Infante Défunte* while studying with Fauré and who subsequently dedicated his String Quartet and other works to him). Fauré wrote several of his finest works in his seventies — both of his cello sonatas after Debussy's death and the solitary String Quartet in the last year of his own life — and they show that, while he retained his individuality, he did not live in the past. (Indeed, when Fauré became director of the Paris Conservatoire in 1905, the reactionaries of the day complained that he was turning the institution into "a temple for the music of the future.") Ironically, one of his first acts was the introduction of Monteverdi and Palestrina into the curriculum.)

Gabriel Fauré



French Cultural Services

It cannot be said that Fauré is either unknown or in the "one hit" category of Dukas, but few of his works are widely performed, and most of the half-dozen-or-so familiar items (the Requiem, Ballade for Piano and Orchestra, Pavane in F-sharp, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and a few others) are relatively early works. The later ones, particularly in the realm of chamber music, constitute one of the most rewarding areas still awaiting widespread discovery.

Fauré wrote very little for orchestra, and in some cases he left the actual orchestration to associates. The very rarely heard Prelude to his opera *Pénélope* and his last orchestral composition, the suite from the stage entertainment *Masques et Bergamasques*, are conducted by Ernest Ansermet on London CS-6227, together with the *Pelléas* suite and the Debussy-Büsser *Petite Suite*. Basic to any Fauré discography now (and to any representative collection of French music) is the MHS five-record set of the chamber music (two piano quartets, two piano quintets, two violin sonatas, two cello sonatas, and the two valedictory works — the Piano Trio and the String Quartet); performances on MHS-1286-1290 feature such musicians as cellists Paul Tortelier and André Navarra, pianist Jean Hubeau, and the Via Nova Quartet.

Evelyne Crochet has recorded all of Fauré's piano music in two three-disc Vox Boxes (SVBX-5423/5424), and Grant Johannesen has done it for Golden Crest in three two-disc sets (S-4030, 4046, 4048). There are two or three recordings now of the *Dolly Suite* for piano, four hands, in its original form (a good one by Walter and Beatriz Klien on Turnabout, another by Geneviève Joy and Jacqueline Robin-Bonneau on MHS), but even more attractive is Henri Rabaud's composer-authorized orchestral version, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham on Seraphim S-60084, a disc made up entirely of French bonbons (music from Delibes' *Le Roi S'Amuse*, Debussy's *L'Enfant Prodigue*, and Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* as well as "standards" by Saint-Saëns and Berlioz).

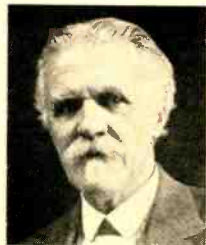
Of similar importance, both as a composer and as a major influence in French music, is Vincent d'Indy (1851-1931), a pupil of César Franck (whom he glorified rather naïvely in an almost fictional biography), one of the founders of the Schola Cantorum (in 1894), and president of the prestigious Société Nationale de Musique. His catalog of compositions is larger and more varied than Fauré's (fewer songs, but many orchestral and choral works, six completed operas, much piano and chamber music), but far more uneven in quality. D'Indy had different aims and a more restless nature; he was influenced strongly by his mentor Franck, by Bach, Beethoven, and Berlioz, and by Wagner, whose principles he sought to modify as the basis of a new French music.

D'Indy's opera *Fervaal*, intended as an epic French nationalist work, showed the Wagnerian strain, and its successor, *L'Etranger*, produced in 1903, ignited a rivalry between partisans of d'Indy and those of Debussy which was to roll on until the beginning of World War I. To their credit, the respective composers themselves did not participate in this skirmish between "sensuality" and "foreign intellectualism": Debussy, in fact, included in his book *Monsieur Croche the Dilettante-Hater* an enthusiastically laudatory chapter on d'Indy and *L'Etranger*, observing:

"Say what you will, Wagner's influence on Vincent d'Indy was never really profound: Wagner was a strolling player on the heroic plane and could never be linked to so strict an artist as d'Indy. If *Fervaal* owes something to the influence of the

Wagnerian tradition, it is protected from it by its conscientious scorn of the grandiloquent hysteria which ravages the Wagnerian heroes."

It is possible to overlook "the influence of the Wagnerian tradition" in the music of d'Indy known to us, for the more pronounced influences of Franck and Berlioz led d'Indy to shape a vocabulary very much his own. What is known to us, in general, consists of only two works: the *Symphony on a French Mountain Air* and the orchestral variations *Istar*; nei-



Vincent  
D'Indy

ther is performed with great frequency. The latter is an ingenious illustration of the "program," in which *Istar* is divested of her garments, one at a time, by the warders of the seven portals of the underworld; the theme itself, representing the naked heroine, is not revealed until the very end. It is a gorgeous piece of orchestration—lush, opulent, and not the least bit in conflict with the sensuality of Debussy's *Afternoon of a Faun*, with which it is roughly contemporaneous.

One of d'Indy's finest orchestral works, perhaps his true masterpiece, is the *Second Symphony*, in B-flat, which makes use of one of the themes used earlier in the *Symphony on a French Mountain Air*; it is an astonishingly beautiful score, one in which *Tristan* and the *Sirènes* seem quite happy together. What is more astonishing still is that a work so beautiful and so highly regarded by those who know it can be so utterly ignored. Apparently the *Symphony* has not been performed (in the Western Hemisphere, anyway) since Pierre Monteux and the San Francisco Symphony recorded it for RCA Victor more than thirty years ago. There was a short-lived LP reissue of that recording in the early Fifties (LCT-1125), and recently there was talk of reviving it on Victrola, with Monteux's *Istar* as filler, but RCA has now shelved its Monteux project. Not even *Istar* is available on records now, so let us hope that RCA will reconsider.

At present, apart from the *Symphony on a French Mountain Air*, the ac-

tive d'Indy discography includes only three titles, all non-orchestral, all unfamiliar, but worth getting to know: Jean Doyen leads off his "French Piano School" collection (MHS-1155/1157) with *Le Poème des Montagnes*, violinist Henri Temianka and pianist Albert Dominguez play the *Sonata in C on Orion ORS-73105* (with Lalo's *Violin Sonata in D*), and Vladimir Pleshakov plays the *Piano Sonata in E Minor*, regarded as d'Indy's most ambitious and fully realized keyboard effort, as well as a more generally recognized (if hardly heard) landmark of French piano music, Dukas' *Variations, Interlude and Finale on a Theme of Rameau*, on another Orion disc (ORS-7266).



Paul  
Dukas

The Dukas work is available in two fine recordings now. In addition to Pleshakov's (which is followed by Dukas' elegy for Debussy, *La Plainte, au Loin, du Faune*), there is a newer one by Grant Johannesen, a specialist in the French repertoire, who plays works of Séverac and Roussel on the same disc (Candide CE-31059). On yet another Orion record (ORS-6906), Pleshakov introduces us to the Dukas *Sonata in E-flat Minor* (and to Chausson's *Quelques Danses*, a work which, like the Roussel items played by Johannesen, is also in Doyen's MHS album). Both the *Variations* and the *Sonata* give evidence of a master from whom one is eager to hear more—but there is not much more to hear.

For a man so long and intensely active, Dukas left but a small catalog of works when he died a few months short of his seventieth birthday. He had taken care to destroy the compositions he considered below his standard, and most of what he chose to publish maintains the extraordinary level of imagination and technical mastery evident in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and these two piano works. Only three years younger than Debussy, Dukas studied at the Conservatoire with one of Debussy's teachers, Ernest Guiraud, whose opera *Frédégonde* he completed, in collaboration with Saint-Saëns, after

Guiraud's death. Dukas' own opera *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* (1907) has a text by Maurice Maeterlinck, the author of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, who conceived *Ariane* from the outset as a work for which Dukas would provide the music; it is regarded as one of the finest works in its genre, but it is never heard now, and it is not recorded.

Jean Martinon and the ORTF's Orchestre National have now recorded all of Dukas' orchestral music on two discs for different companies. For EMI, they have done the *Symphony* and the *Prelude to Ariane*. No U.S. release is planned for that disc, but MHS has already issued Martinon's Erato recording of *La Péri* (the voluptuous "poème dansé," with the introductory *Fanfare* composed as an afterthought), the early *Overture to Corneille's Polyeucte* (which does have echoes of the *Venusberg*), and the ubiquitous *Sorcerer's Apprentice*.



Albert  
Roussel

Dukas' name has, in any event, been kept before the public uninterrupted by his one big hit, but the music of the more prolific and no less gifted Albert Roussel (1869-1937) has only recently begun to make inroads into the international scene. As Nielsen and his music remained in the shadow of Sibelius until some years after World War II, so Roussel and his work were largely overshadowed by Ravel. Roussel was born about midway between the births of Debussy and Ravel, and he died in the same year as Ravel, who, although younger

#### THIS MONTH'S COVER

Ada Calabrese's timbrage (from French *timbre*, a postage stamp, and *collage*, an artistic composition of printed matter pasted on a picture surface), which graces our cover this month, was originally conceived as a visual representation of Claude Debussy's *La Mer*. Its clarity, wit, and brilliant colors, however, qualify it as a metaphor for much of French music of the past hundred years. Ms. Calabrese's timbrages, assembled from cut and shaped postage stamps, have been exhibited frequently, particularly at philatelic shows, and are a happy lesson that art can come even from the bureaucratic desiderata of our time. —J.G.



than he, was widely recognized before Roussel embarked on his career.

Roussel does share many characteristics with Ravel—the brilliance, the polish, the elegance, the strain of refined exoticism—but his style is leaner, veering toward neo-classicism; a page of lush harmonic coloring and sinuous melodic line is likely to be set off by a sequence of spiky rhythms and dryish textures. His finest works were written quite late in life: the ballet masterpiece *Bacchus et Ariane*, the last two symphonies, the Suite in F, *Petite Suite*, Piano Concerto, Cello Concertino, and String Quartet all came during his last dozen years.

Though the Third Symphony (1930) was one of the works commissioned for the fiftieth anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Roussel's music is still not widely performed in this country, and it is only in the last twenty years or so that a Roussel discography of any proportions has been assembled here. Jean Martinon, who studied with Roussel himself, has been his most ardent champion, both in concert and on records. So far, MHS has issued three of his Roussel records with the Orchestre National: the *Petite Suite* and the complete score of the ballet *The Spider's Feast* on MHS-1372, the Second Symphony and its "appendix" *Pour une Fête de Printemps* on MHS-1201, and both suites from *Bacchus et Ariane* on MHS-1244. A recording of Roussel's last ballet, *Aeneas*, in which a chorus joins the orchestra, was released in Europe two years ago and should be offered by MHS soon. (Martinon's more brilliant account, with the Chicago Symphony, of the Second Suite from *Bacchus* is on RCA LSC-2806; that disc is twice the price of the MHS and the coupling is the familiar Ravel *Daphnis et Chloé* Suite No. 2, but it is one of the really outstanding items in this discography.)

MHS may also be able to reissue the Munch recordings of the Third and Fourth symphonies, formerly on Epic BC-1318, and the Suite in F, a fabulous performance formerly on Westminster WST-17119 (with Dutilleux's Second Symphony). There is at present a more than acceptable record of the two symphonies conducted by Ansermet (London STS-15025), but none at all of the Suite in F, the bristling, ebullient work with which Roussel began his richest creative period.

The Serenade, for flute, violin, viola, cello, and harp, enjoying some circulation on records now, is Roussel's contribution to the substantial literature for the peculiarly French combination known as the harp quintet and is, in fact, the outstanding work produced for that instrumentation. It is handsomely performed on a Turnabout disc (TV-S 34161) by a Munich group which also offers the Debussy Sonata in which the ensemble is reduced by two (violin and cello omitted) and Ravel's *Introduction and Allegro*, in which the quintet is augmented by clarinet and second violin. The Melos Ensemble presents (on Oiseau-Lyre SOL-60048, at twice the price of the Turnabout) the same program plus Guy Ropartz's *Prélude, Marine et Chanson* for harp quintet. On MHS-892 the Marie-Claire Jamet Quintet plays the Serenade, the Ravel (with additional personnel), and Florent Schmitt's *Suite en Rocaille*, one of the four works by that interesting composer on records now.

In contradistinction to Debussy and Ravel, whose string quartets were youthful works, Roussel, like Fauré, wrote his single quartet quite late (1932). The Roussel and Fauré quartets are paired, in performances by the veteran Loewenguth Quartet, on Turnabout TV-S 34014 (the same performances are also in Vox Box SVBX-570, with the Debussy and Ravel quartets and the only current recording of the Franck quartet). Those who buy the MHS set of Fauré's chamber music, though, will wish to avoid duplicating his quartet and may turn to MHS-1351, on which the Via Nova Quartet plays the Roussel and the unfinished quartet of Ernest Chausson, another most interesting figure.

## Ernest Chausson



Chausson (1855-1899) was, like d'Indy, a pupil of Franck and one of the leading representatives of the Franck school. His "big number" is the *Poème* for violin and orchestra, but his other works are rarely performed, though his sumptuous Symphony in B-flat, with its strong themes and superb colors, is one of the finest

of the Franck-type symphonies (many consider it superior to Franck's own). Chausson was another late starter: he studied law before taking up music and was nearly thirty when he began to compose. What might well have been one of the most significant careers in French music was cut short when Chausson died in a bicycle accident at the age of forty-four.

Possibly no other composer in France or anywhere else has so enthusiastically endorsed in his works Fauré's maxim that "art . . . has every reason to be voluptuous," but there is nothing mawkish or unconvincing in Chausson's aural enticements. The haunting *Poème de l'Amour et de la Mer*, one of his most distinctive works, is a superb demonstration of his sensitive and subtle way of balancing sentiment with an unflinching regard for the details of musical design and construction. Angel has given us a marvelous recording of this work, sung by Victoria de los Angeles with the Lamoureux Orchestra under Jean-Pierre Jacquillat (S-36897, with selections from Canteloube's *Chants d'Auvergne*), and Janet Baker sings the later *Chanson Perpetuelle* with the Melos Ensemble on Oiseau-Lyre SOL-298 (with music of Ravel and Maurice Delage). Violinist John Corigliano and pianist Ralph Votapek are the soloists in the only current recording of the concerto for their instruments and string quartet, on Mace MCS-9074. The posthumously published Piano Quartet, played by the Richards Piano Quartet on Oiseau-Lyre SOL-316 (together with Martinu's Piano Quartet), is worth looking into, and, as already noted, there are two fine recordings of the *Quelques Danses* for piano.

Only one recording of the Chausson Symphony is available now, the early stereo version by Robert F. Denzler and the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra recently reissued on London STS-15145 (with Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini* Overture). One of Chausson's three other works for orchestra, the early (1882) tone poem *Viviane* (after an Arthurian legend), figures in an interesting assortment of little-known music by little-known French composers performed by the New Philharmonia Orchestra under Antonio de Almeida on RCA LSC-3151. The other pieces on the disc are a similar work by Henri Duparc—*Lénore*, after the ballad by Bürger which touched off the symphony so

titled by Raff—and the ballet score *La Tragédie de Salomé* by Florent Schmitt.

## Henri Duparc



French Cultural Services

Duparc (1848-1933) was one of Franck's earliest pupils, and the one the master himself considered his finest. *Lénore*, composed in 1875, antedates all of Franck's own orchestral works and may actually have influenced both his and Chausson's efforts in this genre. In any event, while Duparc's awareness of Wagner and Liszt is easily discerned, *Lénore* is very much of a piece with *Viviane* and *Le Chasseur Maudit*. Duparc lived long but did all his work early; a nervous ailment at the age of thirty-seven left him incapable of further production. His output was small: one other brief orchestral piece, a short piano suite, a vocal duet, and sixteen songs. Ironically, it is the songs, so exquisitely fashioned (*Phydilé*, *L'Invitation au Voyage*, *L'Extase*, *Le Manoir de Rosamonde*, etc.), that have kept Duparc's name alive, but they are not to be had on records now; surely Philips will make some of Gérard Souzay's recordings of them available again.

## Florent Schmitt



French Cultural Services

Schmitt (1870-1958), whose music makes him one of the most fascinating of the "unknowns," went the Conservatoire route, studying with Massenet and Fauré. He was productive well into his seventies in virtually all musical forms (including film scores), and he followed Fauré's example in offering his only string quartet as a valedictory work (1948). The influence of his Conservatoire teachers is hard to find in *La Tragédie de Salomé*, which suggests Wagner and d'Indy; but even more strongly Richard Strauss and Rimsky-Korsakov, tempered (as Stravinsky's *Firebird* is) by

an acknowledgment of Debussy. The score bears a dedication to Stravinsky, and is said to have influenced the composition of *The Rite of Spring*. (Stravinsky had no orchestral works but the Op. 1 Symphony in E-flat behind him in 1907, when Schmitt's ballet was introduced; the dedication may have been added in 1912, when Schmitt revised his score to even grander proportions, perhaps under the influence of *Petrouchka*, which had been premiered the previous year.) There are inescapable reminders of Strauss's *Salome* (given its first Paris performance just six months prior to the production of the Schmitt ballet), but Schmitt's work, which has parts for an offstage soprano and chorus, was inspired by a poem by Robert d'Humières, not the play of Oscar Wilde. *La Tragédie de Salomé*, heretofore more heard about than heard, makes a terrific impression: it is good to have two splendid recordings to choose from, the newer one being Martinon's on Angel S-36953, on which disc he also conducts Schmitt's grand choral setting of *Psalm XLVII*.

Inspiration came to Schmitt from many sources—Oriental lore, the Bible, Edgar Allan Poe, Hans Christian Andersen—and he was capable of writing on an intimate scale as well as a grand one, as demonstrated in the charming *Suite en Rocaille* for harp quintet mentioned earlier (in the context of the Roussel discography). Certain facets of Schmitt's personality may have mitigated against the success of his music (he was a notorious anti-Semite and pro-Fascist, and led a group of likeminded younger composers in shouts of "Vive Hitler!" during a Paris concert of music by the refugee Kurt Weill in 1933), but perhaps it is time now for the music to be heard and evaluated independent of such considerations.

## Charles Koechlin



Another of Fauré's pupils, and perhaps the most colorful of all, was Charles Koechlin (1867-1950), who also studied with Massenet, though there is little in his own highly original music to suggest it. His enormous

catalog runs to well over two hundred opus numbers, and there are more than a few surprises among the titles. Opus 132, composed in 1933, is *The Seven Stars Symphony*, whose movements are headed (1) *Douglas Fairbanks (du Voleur de Bagdad)*, (2) *Lilian Harvey*, (3) *Greta Garbo*, (4) *Clara Bow et la Joyeuse Californie*, (5) *Marlene Dietrich*, (6) *Emil Jannings (de l'Ange bleu)*, and (7) *Charlie Chaplin (d'après La Ruée vers l'or, etc.)*.

Koechlin left himself open to every subject, every influence, every inspiration; he dabbled in dodecaphony when it was new and experimented with virtually every passing style. He encouraged his younger colleagues to do the same, but he never attached himself to any "school." He remained an "original," his unique style at all times honoring the principles of consummate craftsmanship he had absorbed from Fauré. It is difficult to accept the fact that Koechlin seems to be remembered now chiefly as a biographer of Fauré and as orchestrator of works by Fauré (the *Pelléas* music) and Debussy (*Khamma*), for his own music is not only abundant in its quantity and varied as to its "subject matter," but brimming over with unusual colors and rhythms.

Novels, plays, history, and the movies all inspired music from Koechlin (in addition to *The Seven Stars*, he wrote an *Epitaph for Jean Harlow*, scored for flute, saxophone, and piano, and an orchestral piece called *Danses pour Ginger*, "en Hommage à Ginger Rogers"), but the most recurrent single theme in his music is Kipling's *Jungle Book*, on which he composed a large-scale choral work and four tone poems for huge orchestra—one of which, *Les Bandar-Log*, has been recorded by Antal Dorati and the BBC Symphony Orchestra (on Angel S-36295, with works of Messiaen and Boulez). The one other Koechlin work on records now is the stunning sequence *Cinq Chorals dans les Modes du Moyen-Age*, performed by Jorge Mester and the Louisville Orchestra on the Louisville "First Edition" label (LS-682, with works of Henry Cowell and Robert Starer).

A dozen years before Schmitt wrote his *Salomé*, a ballet on the same theme was composed by Gabriel Pierné (1863-1937), whose *March of the Little Lead Soldiers* and *Entrance of the Little Fauns*—the only pieces of his performed in this



Gabriel Pierné

country—can hardly suggest the breadth of his catalog or the depth of his serious works. Pierné studied composition with Massenet and organ with César Franck, whom he succeeded as organist at Sainte-Clotilde. As conductor of the Concerts Colonne for thirty years, he was able to introduce a good deal of new music (the prime form of encouragement to young composers), and it was he who conducted the premiere of *The Firebird* in 1910. The *Entrance of the Little Fauns* is the opening number in his own ballet *Cydalise et le Chèvre-pied*, as one is reminded by the attractive Pierné collection conducted by Martinon on MHS-1489: the Suite No. 1 from that ballet, the *Divertissements sur un Thème Pastoral*, and, with Lily Laskine, the *Concertstück* for harp and orchestra.



Jean Martinon

Martinon himself, sixty-three now, is one of the more interesting composers working within conventional forms today; his music testifies to the vitality of the Romantic tradition in concise, boldly drawn statements, thoroughly contemporary in spirit but untroubled by the stunts of the *avant-gardistes*. Martinon is probably the only French conductor to involve himself with the music of Mahler—with which his own has little in common except the dominant characteristic of compassion which runs through it all.

Like Pierné before him and his own contemporary Manuel Rosenthal (the brilliant orchestrator of *Gaîté Parisienne*), Martinon has allowed his activity as a conductor to overshadow his substantial accomplishments as a composer, though he did introduce some of his music during his tenure as music director of the Chicago

Symphony Orchestra and included his *Overture for a Greek Tragedy* in his recent tour programs. His impressive Violin Concerto No. 2 has been recorded by Henryk Szeryng, for whom it was written, with Rafael Kubelik and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon 2530.033, with the Berg Concerto), and his Symphony No. 4 (*Altitudes*), commissioned by the Chicago Symphony, was played by that orchestra under his own direction on a recently deleted RCA disc (LSC-3043, with Peter Mennin's Symphony No. 7). More striking than either of these is the powerful, luminous Symphony No. 2, titled *Hymne à la Vie*, which Martinon composed in 1944, shortly after his release from a German prison camp. His recording of it, paired with Henri Dutilleux's Symphony No. 1, should be available from MHS soon, and both the *Overture* and the *Concerto Lyrique* for string quartet and chamber orchestra have been taped by EMI.

Dutilleux (born 1916), a major composer in France, is still ridiculously little-known elsewhere. Munch's recording of the Second Symphony, it is to be hoped, will surface again on MHS, whose catalog now includes his performance of the *Métaboles* composed for the Cleveland Orchestra. The MHS catalog also lists several works of André Jolivet (born 1905),



André Jolivet

a pupil of Varèse and a co-founder, together with Messiaen, Daniel Lesur, and Yves Baudrier, of the group called "*La Jeune France*," whose aims were to promote contemporary music within a "nationalistic" context. Jolivet is "convinced that the mission of musical art is human and religious"; he has been called (by the French critic Bernard Gavoty) "the cosmic musician . . . a free man in the tonal jungle." Especially recommended from his current discography is MHS-1371, on which Jolivet conducts his Second Cello Concerto (with Rostropovich, its dedicatee) and Five Ritual Dances.

Of all the French composers of the generation following Milhaud's, none

carries on the tradition of urbanity, wit, and disciplined craftsmanship with more distinction than Jean Françaix (born 1912), who is also an outstanding pianist (he formed a memorable partnership with the cellist Maurice Gendron, with whom he has given exceptional performances of Beethoven, Brahms, and others). In terms of inventiveness and polish, Françaix has been compared to Ravel, but perhaps a closer likeness would be Poulenc, another composer noted for music richer in charm, grace, and wit than in profundity. (One of Françaix's operas, *La Main de Gloire*, is labeled "*histoire macaronique d'une main enchantée*.") An exception and, in this context, a counterpart to Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites* is *L'Apocalypse de Saint Jean*, an oratorio scored for four vocal soloists, chorus, and two orchestras, the second of which includes a saxophone quartet, mandolin, guitar, harmonium, and accordion.

While neither *L'Apocalypse*, *Scuola di ballo*, nor the sparkling Concertino for piano and orchestra (probably Françaix's best-known work) is on records now, his chamber music production, which began with the masterly String Trio of 1933 and now numbers ten works (each for different instrumentation), is fairly well represented. *Candide* is about to release a disc on which Françaix himself conducts the Radio Luxembourg Orchestra in his Piano Concerto (Claude Paillard-Françaix, piano). Suite for Violin and Orchestra (Susanne Lautenbacher), and Rhapsody for Viola and Small Orchestra (Ulrich Koch).

THESE are of course more composers very much worth mentioning, and more titles by those already listed here. In the current catalogs are unfamiliar treasures by Ibert, Messager, Massenet, and the altogether wonderful Chabrier. The heretofore unsuspected Fourth and Fifth symphonies of Saint-Saëns have just come to light, and the entire cycle is being recorded by Martinon for EMI. Investigation of this material may bring the listener the excitement of "discovery," but it offers more lasting rewards: the refined blend of disciplined Romanticism, warm-hearted wit, charm beyond measure, and unself-conscious loftiness of purpose makes this body of music unique in its appeal and in its satisfactions. We should not have to depend on some centennial excuse to discover it.



# RAYMOND LEPPARD

"Critics don't matter if your schedule is full"

By Robert S. Clark



I am a romantic, you see, and that is why I am fond of early seventeenth-century Venetian opera. It is immensely passionate and moving." Raymond Leppard makes this statement with such conviction that a music lover unfamiliar with Venetian opera of that period would wonder what he has been missing all these years. When I talked with him, the dapper, dark-haired English musician—harpichordist, conductor, teacher, musicologist, sometime composer—was in New York to conduct a pair of concerts at Lincoln Center. But on this side of the Atlantic, Leppard is probably best known not as a concert artist but as a scholar whose performing editions of the operas of Claudio Monteverdi and Francesco Cavalli have caused brisk tempests in the musicological teapots of several nations.

The objections to Leppard's realizations of Venetian opera chiefly take two forms. One British critic spoke for a considerable body of opinion when he deplored "the intrinsic discrepancy between the substance of the music and the performing style in which Leppard chooses to clothe it." The same critic coined the scornful term "musical ivy" for those "languorously intertwining added melodies" that Leppard writes for the instrumental parts of the scores, which survive only in skeletal form. Other commentators have complained about his cuts, revisions, transpositions, and the like. His reply to all this is candid and unabashed. "Well, my critics probably have a point, in their way," he said. "But my realizations are all designed for effectiveness before contemporary audiences—just as the original productions were. These scores—Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* and *La Calisto*—exist for the most part only as vocal and bass lines, and the *sinfonie* and dances in them as just a few bars for strings hurriedly written down by the composer and left perhaps for one of his students to complete. In those days the composer was always in charge at performances, and there was a lot of rehearsal time. The parts that were not written out in advance were improvised during rehearsals. These were like jam sessions: the composer would say keep that or don't, and the instrumentalist would scribble down something to remind himself. The whole thing was put into final shape in much the same way a musical is done today: numbers were scrapped or rewritten, cut or expanded, shifted from one scene to another. So I believe my methods have some precedent. The trouble with the academic mind—and I ought to know," he said with a grin, "for I've got one—is that it is trained to regard any surviving score as an *Urtext*. You can't do that with the Venetian operas. Ideally, if we were to re-create seventeenth-century conditions, we should realize these operas fresh for every performance. But of course that is impossible today."

Why did the practical methods of the Venetians give way? "Commercial pressures brought about the change, I think. By the 1670's the new genre of opera had caught on everywhere in Europe, and it became impossible for the composer to be on the scene for every performance. So scores had to be written out in full for publication. Of course, this facilitated the spread of the new form, and it made it a lot easier on the composers, too, as witness Cavalli's experience in Paris. By 1660, his fame had become so great that Cardinal Mazarin asked him to compose a new work for the young King Louis XIV's forthcoming wedding. Cavalli, who was fifty-eight, was reluctant to make the journey to Paris, but it was a great honor, and he at last decided to do it. Mazarin died shortly after his arrival, and the composer was left to the tender mercies of Lully, who was ballet-master at the court and surely *the* bastard of all time. Lully's maneuvering managed to put down Cavalli's work, and at the same time insured a good reception for his own ballets. Cavalli was so discouraged that he vowed never to write for the stage again. After publication of musical works became necessary, at least composers did not have to go through experiences like that.

To return to the subject of my critics, I think they generally complain that I over-romanticize in my editions. But Monteverdi and Cavalli wrote very romantic music. I may have been anachronistic in some details, but I think my attitude toward the style is right. Look at the pictorial art of the time. It is very sensual, very concerned with the flesh. Those nudes of Rubens, for example—they look as though they are asking for it. This music must be done passionately, particularly by the singers, and I don't think a plink here and a plunk there support a singer well enough for him or her to sing passionately."

Anyone can form his own opinion of Leppard's work, for his realization of Cavalli's *La Calisto* is on Argo ZNF 11/12 for all to hear. In this recording Leppard conducts members of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Glyndebourne chorus, and Janet Baker doubles as the goddess Diana and as Jove taking the form of Diana in order to seduce the nymph Calisto (one of Diana's retinue). Even on records, without the visual aspect, the work is diverting and affecting musical theater. Diana's—the real Diana's—lament "*Non è crudel, ben mio*" in the first act, sung by Miss Baker, is ample demonstration that Leppard succeeds in inspiring singers to passionate utterance. The recording was made after a Glyndebourne production of 1970 in which Leppard collaborated with his old friend Peter Hall, former director of the Royal Shakespeare Theater at Stratford-on-Avon. Leppard, who has worked with Hall for many years (he composed incidental music for productions at Stratford), speaks admiringly

of the director. "Peter is fascinated by the problems of seventeenth-century opera. He has a keen ear for music and understands what musicians are trying to do. He never gives up when his approach is not working; he is adaptable and open to change, and will work until things come right.

"*Calisto* was an example—the Jove-as-Diana business. The manuscript shows Jove's part written in the bass clef and Jove-as-Diana's in the treble. It seemed to us originally that the same singer should do both parts. We looked round and found Ugo Trama, an Italian bass with an absolutely marvelous falsetto. But as we rehearsed I became more and more uncomfortable about it. One day I asked a few members of the Glyndebourne musical staff to sit in on a rehearsal. When Trama did Jove-as-Diana, they roared with laughter. Trama was not consciously making a campy effect with the music, but it came off that way. Do you know the recording? Then you know that these passages are genuine love music—Jove is quite smitten with Calisto and wants very badly to take her to bed. That night I didn't sleep very well for thinking about it, and the next morning I told Peter I thought we ought to ask Janet to sing the Jove-as-Diana passages. He had come to the same conclusion. He was willing to scrap what he had done and start over.

"Of course, we needed Janet's consent. We called her, and, being a sensible Northern girl [Miss Baker was born in Yorkshire], she did not accept at once, but said, 'Give me five minutes to think about it.' Five minutes later to the second she called back and said yes. We were saved from what I really think might have been disaster."

Peter Hall likewise directed Leppard's realization of Monteverdi's opera *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*, a new Glyndebourne production in the summer of 1973. Again the principal singer was Janet Baker, in the role of Penelope. "She is superb. It's a long part, and it may be the finest thing she has yet done. We won't record it, unfortunately. Two recordings are available in England, Nikolaus Harnoncourt's and another—I can't remember the details, but it is a mediocre old set on a low-price label. When our production was announced, the latter suddenly began to sell quite well. My record company didn't want to risk putting another recording into the field." But even without *Ulisse*, he has recently spent—and will spend—a lot of time in the recording studio, much of it with Miss Baker. Philips has released their recording of Handel's cantata *Lucretia* and a group of Handel arias, and in the wings is their disc containing Haydn's *scena Berenice* and Sesto's arias from Mozart's *Clemenza di Tito*, both with Leppard leading the orchestra, coupled with Haydn's cantata *Arianna Abbandonata* and Mozart songs, Leppard playing the fortepiano to accompany Miss Baker. In addition, they hope to compile a disc of Gluck arias. For Philips, too, he will finish recording all of Monteverdi's madrigal books, a project begun auspiciously with the five-disc album of Books VIII and IX (6799 006) and continued with the just-released Books III and IV. He will also record Bach's harpsichord concertos, conducting from the keyboard.

Raymond Leppard's interest in Baroque music was born early and nurtured during his undergraduate years at Trinity College, Cambridge, particularly by Boris Ord, who was director of the King's College Chapel Choir when Leppard was a student. After his graduation he stayed on for a couple of years to do research, and then went to live in London. In 1953 and 1954 he was an assis-

tant conductor at Glyndebourne, and soon thereafter was accepting guest-conducting engagements. In 1958 he successfully bridged the gulf between the academic and the performing worlds by becoming associated with the English Chamber Orchestra and at the same time returning to Trinity College as a Fellow and Lecturer in Music. In 1962 he made the first of his realizations for Glyndebourne, Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, a production that has remained one of the festival's most popular (Leppard's version is also in the repertoire of the New York City Opera). He followed that with Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* in 1967, *La Calisto* in 1970, and *Ulisse* last year. He is currently at work on Cavalli's *L'Egisto* for the Santa Fe Opera's 1974 summer season.

Over the past couple of years his conducting career has taken on new importance. In 1971 he led two Mozart operas, *Così Fan Tutte* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, at Covent Garden. "It was not my first time on the Covent Garden rostrum. I did a staged version of Handel's oratorio *Samson* there a long time ago, with Jon Vickers. Joan Sutherland, who was then just coming to prominence, sang 'Let the bright seraphim' and made a sensation with it at every performance. But frankly I wasn't ready then for such an assignment. I enjoyed doing the Mozart last season very much—Covent Garden is a very well-run theater and a pleasure to work in. I had fine casts: Geraint Evans was Alfonso in the one opera and Figaro in the other, Kiri Te Kanawa was the Countess, and Heana Cotrubas Susanna. Do you know Cotrubas? In my opinion she is the finest Susanna in the world today."

ANOTHER assignment is drawing him further from the academy and more and more into the performing world: With the 1973-1974 season he assumed leadership of the ninety-member BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra in Manchester. A glance at the repertoire listed for the season, which includes such names as Mozart, Beethoven, Shostakovich, and Tippett, shows that he is determined not to let his preoccupation with the seventeenth century dictate his program-making for the orchestra. I wondered if he expected his audiences to find it difficult to accept standard orchestral repertoire from someone who has a specialist's reputation. "Oh, inevitably I'll encounter something of that kind, perhaps more so from critics than from audiences. There is tremendous pressure on musicians to specialize, but I don't think we should. I love nineteenth-century music, and I think I have something to bring to it, because your insights into music of one period help to illuminate that of another. I expect I might face something like what Pierre Boulez has faced here in this country—though, of course, Boulez is not a romantic, and I am. But he is an extraordinarily talented conductor. His Debussy is like seeing light through a prism, all its color spread out in a spectrum. Yet the critics have at him, it seems, because he is not Bernstein. Why should anyone think Boulez would conduct Beethoven the way Bernstein does? Critics often assume a pose in relation to certain artists—after all, they have got to have something to say after each concert. That is not to deny that we can learn from some writers. But it takes you a while to make yourself immune to criticism, and for the young musician it can be harmful. I prefer to rely on the judgment of a few friends I know to be musical and perfectly honest as well. If I've given a bad show they will tell me so. And, frankly, to come right to the point, critics don't matter if your schedule is full!"



*Stereo Review's*  
*Record of the Year Awards*  
*for 1973*  
*in recognition of significant*  
*contributions to the arts of music*  
*and recording*  
*during the 1973 publishing year*

**T**HIS is the seventh consecutive year in which STEREO REVIEW has offered its readers its selection of the most outstanding records of the year. The records have been chosen from among those reviewed in our January through December 1972 issues, and because of the necessary lapse of time between the release of a record and the appearance of a published review of it, records that made their way onto the market toward the end of the year are not among those eligible. We will catch up with them in the voting for the best records of 1974.

The award-winning records and honorable mentions have been chosen, as in the past, by polling the critical and editorial staffs of the magazine. Votes are asked for and accepted only on the basis of artistic and technical quality, and the awards have

only a coincidental, if any, relation to sales figures, real or imagined.

With the current talk about vinyl shortages and cutbacks of releases, a public recognition of artistic *quality* unrelated to sales becomes more important than ever. Record companies must be convinced anew that there are reasons other than that of the fastest possible dollar to release records, and that the effort to do something new and fine is not a mere charitable contribution to be withdrawn when times get tough, but a kind of artistic research to foretell, and perhaps even to decide, what sort of music Americans will be listening to in years to come. Present attention to the new and fine may help to convince the companies that such a future is worth the investment. That is the major reason for these awards.

—James Goodfriend, *Music Editor*



# Record of the Year



JOPLIN: *The Red Back Book* (Gunther Schuller, conductor). ANGEL S 36060.



THE WESTERN WIND VOCAL ENSEMBLE: *Early American Vocal Music*. NONESUCH H-71276.



BRAHMS: *The Complete String Quartets* (Cleveland Quartet). RCA VCS 7102.



PUCCINI: *Turandot* (Zubin Mehta, conductor). LONDON OSA 13108.



ROY BUCHANAN: *Second Album*. POLYDOR PD 5046.



HARRY NILSSON: *A Little Touch of Schmilsson in the Night*. RCA APL 1 0097.

## Honorable mentions

BACH: *The Complete Variations for Harpsichord* (Igor Kipnis, harpsichord). ANGEL SB 3796.

THE BEE GEES: *Life in a Tin Can*. RSO SO 870.

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concertos* (Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano; Sir Georg Solti, conductor). LONDON CSA 2404.

BIZET: *Carmen* (Leonard Bernstein, conductor). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON DG 2709 043.

VIKKI CARR: *Canta en Español*. COLUMBIA KC 31470.

COWARDY CUSTARD (Noël Coward): *Original London Cast*. RCA LSO-6010.

ELLA FITZGERALD: *Ella Fitzgerald Loves Cole Porter*. ATLANTIC 1631.

GERSHWIN: *George Gershwin's Songbook* (William Bolcom, piano). NONESUCH H 71284.



# Awards for 1973



SCHUBERT: "Trout" Quintet (Jörg Demus, piano; members of the Collegium Aureum). BASF KHB 20314.



NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND: *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*. UNITED ARTISTS UAS 9801.



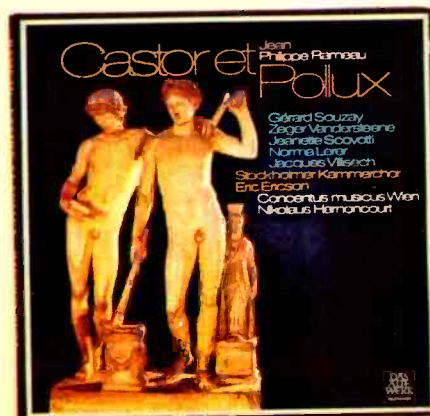
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: *Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.* COLUMBIA KC 31903.



ART TATUM: *God Is in the House*. Onyx 205.



STEELEYE SPAN: *Parcel of Rogues*. CHRYSALIS CHR 1046.



RAMEAU: *Castor et Pollux* (Nikolaus Harnoncourt, conductor). TELEFUNKEN SAWT 9584/87-A.

THE HARDER THEY COME: *Original-Soundtrack Recording* (Jimmy Cliff, vocals). MANGO SMAS 7400.

MARILYN HORNE: *Rossini Arias*. LONDON OS 26305.

LEO KOTTKE: *My Feet Are Smiling*. CAPITOL ST-11164.

MOTT THE HOOPLE: *Mott*. COLUMBIA KC 32425.

RACHMANINOFF: *Piano Concerto No. 3* (Yevgeny Mogilevsky, piano; Kiril Kondrashin, conductor). MELODIYA/ANGEL SR 40226.

RAVEL: *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales; Une Barque sur l'Océan; Le Tombeau de Couperin* (Pierre Boulez, conductor). COLUMBIA M 32159.

LOU REED: *Berlin*. RCA APL 1-0207.

ROCHBERG: *String Quartet No. 3* (Concord Quartet). NONESUCH H 71283.

ROLLING STONES: *Goats Head Soup*. ROLLING STONES COC 59101.

ROSSINI: *William Tell* (Lamberto Gardelli, conductor). ANGEL SEL-3793.

SCHUBERT: *Piano Sonata in C Major, Op. Posth. D. 958; Impromptus* (Alfred Brendel, piano). PHILIPS 6500415.

A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC (Stephen Sondheim): *Original Broadway Cast*. COLUMBIA KS-32265.

STRAVINSKY: *Petrouchka* (Charles Mackerras, conductor). VANGUARD VSD 71176.

VIVALDI: *L'Estro Armonico* (Neville Marriner, conductor). ARGO ZRG 733-4.

STEVIE WONDER: *Talking Book*. TAMLA 319 L.

ROY WOOD: *Boulders*. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA 168-F.

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



## CLASSICAL

### THE ESSENTIAL *TOSCA*

*Zubin Mehta successfully meets the challenges of a celebrated "conductor's opera"*

**R**CA's new recording of Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca* was released just a little too late to be considered for inclusion in my "Essentials of an Opera Library" in the December 1973 issue, but I will so consider it now: it is the best recorded treatment of this opera in twenty years, the best since the classic Callas-Di Stefano-Gobbi-De Sabata effort (still available) on Angel 3508.

Even more than other Puccini works, *Tosca* is, in many ways, a conductor's opera. Given three first-rate principals, mere competence in the pit can of course achieve satisfying results, but any extraordinary realization of this *melodramma* demands a conductor whose musicianship is combined with exceptional theatrical insights. Victor De Sabata's reading in the Angel recording cited above demonstrated this fact consistently. So did Herbert von Karajan's (though not quite so consistently) for London, and so, on this occasion, does Zubin Mehta's. There is dramatic tension throughout, from the opening Angelotti scene to the very end, an integral tension that arises, without need of overemphasis, out of the music itself. The direction is admirable in its well-judged tempos, in its clarity, and in its non-indulgent yet considerate treatment of the singers. Puccini's sagacious score markings are scrupulously followed: only one *espressivo* is glossed over (in *Tosca*'s "Ah, piovete voluttà, volte stellate" in the first-act love duet), too small a

matter to detract from an otherwise inspired and extremely effective realization.

Within this exceptional orchestral framework we are treated to Leontyne Price's tempestuous *Tosca*, a portrayal which has grown more secure and more convincing dramatically without compromising the vocal virtues the singer so triumphantly revealed under Karajan's direction ten years ago. I do not, in fact, recall experiencing vocal acting of such conviction from Miss Price in any previous recording, and I wish that she were less reluctant to appear on stage in a role she has so thoroughly mastered.

Placido Domingo's Cavaradossi cannot be faulted. He sings his two arias with consistent tonal beauty, and then goes on to surpass them in the

third-act duet "*O dolci mani.*" Sherrill Milnes' Scarpia is not on the same level vocally: the high tessitura is troublesome for him, and some of his E's and F's are poorly centered. There are good vocal moments, however, including some effective uses of *mezza-voce*, and his interpretation, which stresses the character's unremitting villainy and brutality, is well conceived dramatically.

The role of Angelotti is exceptionally well realized by the Australian bass Clifford Grant, Paul Plishka's Sacristan is secure but a bit colorless, and the other supporting singers are adequate. The sound of the New Philharmonia Orchestra is superb, a fact the excellent engineering does absolutely



RCA Records

LEONTYNE PRICE

*Secure and dramatically convincing*

nothing to hide, and the choral contributions of the John Alldis Choir and the Wandsworth School Boys' Choir will add further luster to their reputations. To repeat: this is now the best stereo *Tosca* (by a slight margin over London 1284) now in the catalog.

George Jellinek

**PUCCHINI: *Tosca*.** Leontyne Price (soprano), Floria Tosca: Placido Domingo (tenor), Mario Cavaradossi: Sherrill Milnes (baritone), Baron Scarpia: Clifford Grant (bass). Angelotti: Paul Plishka (bass), Sacristan: Francis Egerton (tenor), Spoletta: John Gibbs (bass). Sciarrone: Michael Rippon (bass), Jailer: David Pearl (boy soprano), Shepherd Boy. New Philharmonia Orchestra; the John Alldis Choir; Wandsworth School Boys' Choir; Zubin Mehta cond. RCA ARL 2-0105 two discs \$11.96.

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## JANET BAKER'S DISTAFF SCHUBERT

*Seraphim's two-disc set of songs for female voice is simply a must for lieder lovers*

COMPLEMENTING Deutsche Grammophon's two-volume, twenty-five-disc Schubert anthology with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Gerald Moore, Seraphim has released a two-disc set devoted to Schubert songs that call for a female interpreter. Seraphim's singer is Janet Baker, whose interpretive authority in this repertoire is matched by few and exceeded by none today, and Gerald Moore is the decidedly *uncommon* denominator in the two ventures.

The Seraphim set includes some of Schubert's greatest songs (*Gretchen am Spinnrade* and *Die junge Nonne* unquestionably answer that description), several others that are topflight, a few more that are unfamiliar (though they do not deserve to be), and a few trifles that may lack weight and substance but are rendered with an appealing beauty that makes them immediately significant.

Outstanding among the unfamiliar songs are *Delphine* (1825), with its bold, operatic vocal line and inventive piano accompaniment, the tender and delicate *Das Mädchen* (1815), and *Berthas Lied in der Nacht* (1819), Schubert's only setting of a work by Franz Grillparzer, the poet who was to write his famous epitaph. I cannot explain why such marvelous songs are so little known, but then even the popular *Wiegenlied* (D. 498) is seldom recorded. I suppose it is all Schubert's fault for having written songs in such unmanageable abundance.

But where does one begin to enumerate the vir-



JANET BAKER: a dignity all her own

tues of such a complete mistress of the singing art as Janet Baker? Let me single out her perfect taste, the superb control of her vocal resources, the unmanerled artlessness of her delivery, and her marvelous command of dynamics. *Schwestergruss*—a sensitive and evocative musical setting of a commonplace poem—provides a superb example of her use of dynamics; the line "*Ach der mich liebt und kennt*" in the fourth "Mignon" song is another breathtaking example. Some may be willing to settle for less absolute control in exchange for more passion and abandon, to which I would counter that there *is* deep involvement in Janet Baker's singing. Her expressive means are controlled by a dignity all her own, an exquisite vocal art cherishable for its own uniqueness.

As always, Gerald Moore holds his own impressively in the artistic combination, though this time his playing is not always captured to best advantage—the piano articulation in *Gretchen am Spinnrade* is not as clear as it might have been. Full texts and translations are provided with this exceptionally rewarding release.

George Jellinek

**SCHUBERT: *Janet Baker Sings Schubert*.** *Gretchen am Spinnrade: Suleika I and II; Schwestergruss; Schlummerlied; An die untergehende Sonne; Four "Mignon" Songs; Berthas Lied in der Nacht; Epistel an Herrn Josef von Spaun; Raste, Krieger!; Jäger, ruhe von der Jagd; Ave Maria; Hin und wieder; Liebe Schwärmt; An die Nachtigall; Des Mädchens Klage; Delphine; Wiegenlied*

(D. 867); *Wiegenlied* (D. 498); *Die Männer sind méchant*; *Iphigenia*; *Das Mädchen*; *Die junge Nonne*. Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano); Gerald Moore (piano). SERAPHIM SIB-6083 two discs \$5.96.

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## CAPTIVATING RENAISSANCE MADRIGAL COMEDY

*The Western Wind skillfully revives  
Orazio Vecchi's low comedy and high jinks*

**O**RAZIO VECCHI (1550-1605), Maestro di Capella at the Cathedral of Modena, is best known for his madrigals and most specifically for his madrigal comedy *L'Amfiparnaso*, just now available in a delightful new recording by Nonesuch. First presented in 1594, the comedy consists of a series of scenes involving *commedia dell' arte* characters, young and old, lovers, servants, and rascals, the whole strung together by a plot that might be capsulized as Love, Late Sixteenth Century Italian Style.

With the exception of a few moments spent on an unrequited love and consequent threatened suicide, the material ranges from low comedy—misunderstandings between servant and master, burlesque dialects, and an elderly stutterer—to sophisticated musical wit—imitations of lute sounds and a parody treatment of a Cipriano de Rore madrigal. Following the text and (supplied) translation is necessary while listening because the music is treated polyphonically—that is, any one character is apt to be sung by anywhere from three to five voices simultaneously. That may sound formidable, but try it, for the music, the words, and—far from least in this case—the performance are all entirely captivating.

The choral group called the Western Wind does a superb job with this material, realizing the varied affects and dramatically pacing the sections with enormous skill. The voices are beautifully modulated and blended, the characterizations neatly pointed. I have no hesitation in recommending this fine-sounding recording of an important (and highly entertaining) late-Renaissance work, one which has been recorded on occasion before (a Deller Consort version with instrumental doublings, an equally excellent performance, is available on the European Harmonia Mundi label), but at the moment this is the only domestic version. Don't miss it.

Igor Kipnis

**VECCHI:** *L'Amfiparnaso*. The Western Wind (Janet Steele and Janet Sullivan, sopranos; William Zukof,



BONNIE RAITT: a timeless appeal

courttenor; William Lyon Lee, tenor; Elliot Levine, baritone). Steven Urkowitz, dramatic supervision. NONESUCH H-71286 \$2.98.

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## POPULAR

### BONNIE RAITT: WARMTH AND CHARM

*The singer's latest for Warner Brothers  
is as strong and solid as her talent*

**B**ONNIE RAITT's vocal style has, I think, a timeless appeal; it will never be very seriously imprisoned or trivialized by whatever may be pop music's Big Thing of the Moment. Her voice is a fine instrument, honest and direct, but it is also flexible and capable of the kind of subtle coloration that has nothing to do with posturing.

Her new album, "Takin' My Time," ingratiates itself slowly, somewhat hesitantly, because such songs as *You've Been in Love Too Long* and the zany *Let Me In* just don't seem at first like efficient ways of using that scarce plastic. But then efficiency begins to seem less important; indeed, the kind of warmth Bonnie has to give would be at odds with real efficiency most of the time anyway. Yet, *Wah*

*She Go Do*, recorded under the influence of Van Dyke Parks, still in the flower of his Trinidad Madness, is a waste of Bonnie's talent. The good songs easily swamp that, though, and in the bargain settle my minor upset over a slight tendency to slickness in the production.

Bonnie's readings of the sad bluesies—Joel Zoss' *I Gave My Love a Candle*, Eric Kaz's *Cry like a Rainstorm* (this one featuring weirdly but nicely stylized harp backing by Taj Mahal, who's one spacey cat), and Chris Smither's *I Feel the Same*—have great integrity; they click emotionally as few interpretations do. I would go so far as to say that the Smither thing alone is worth the price of the album. As a bonus, there's the Mosey phrasing on Mose Allison's *Everybody's Crying Mercy*, and, as another, some fine slide guitar work by Bonnie on some Fred McDowell music. It is not quite the great album Bonnie's talent suggests she is capable of, but it is still a strong and solid one. I think you've charmed me, Bonnie Raitt. *Noel Coppage*

**BONNIE RAITT:** *Takin' My Time*. Bonnie Raitt (vocals, guitar, slide guitar); Bill Payne (piano); John Hall (guitar); Earl Palmer (drums); others. *You've Been in Love Too Long; I Gave My Love a Candle; Let Me In; Everybody's Cryin' Mercy; Cry like a Rainstorm; Wah She Go Do; I Feel the Same; I Thought I Was a Child; Write Me a Few of Your Lines/Kokomo Blues; Guilty*. WARNER BROS. BS 2729 \$5.98, Ⓜ M82729 \$6.97, © M5 2729 \$6.97.

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## WHATEVER IT IS, SIEGEL-SCHWALL HAS IT

*Their latest album is a sterling exception to the adage "don't take any Wooden Nickels"*

WITH "953 West," the Siegel-Schwall Band has produced the third in a series of apparently casual little album masterpieces—"casual" because the focus is on superior performance rather than exceptional material. I would not say that the songs lack profile utterly, but if I were not looking at the album jacket as I write this I would not remember that it is *Good Woman* that features that wonderful Jim Schwall mandolin solo or that *Just Another Song About the Country Sung by a City Boy* proves that Corky Siegel is a master of tasteful, laid-back blues piano and probably the world's best white blues harpist as well. That title *Just Another etc.* is hard to forget, of course, and I know I'll remember Schwall's *I Think It Was the Wine* because it ap-

pears to be one in a series of songs about a funny, sad-sack character, but for the rest all I have is an undifferentiated impression of a string of knockout performances, and pinning down the specifics means I have to go hunting along the tracks with my trusty tonearm.

Siegel-Schwall would appear to be a group of somewhat limited ambition. They seldom tour outside the Midwest, and what is perhaps their best-known recording is not even all theirs—it is *Three Pieces for Blues Band and Symphony Orchestra*, Op. 50, a commissioned work by William Russo that grew out of conductor Seiji Ozawa's hearing Siegel-Schwall in a Chicago club. The band performed the piece with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Ozawa conducting, and Deutsche Grammophon recorded it (2530 303—see Paul Kresh's review in the June 1973 issue). In the meantime, the group has been putting out these glorious albums on Wooden Nickel and having themselves a great old time with that thrill of discovery only fine musicians know. Who was it said "Man, everybody's lookin' for it but I got it"? Wasn't Siegel-Schwall, but they surely do have it. *Joel Vance*

**SIEGEL-SCHWALL BAND:** *953 West*. Corky Siegel (harmonica, piano, vocals), Rollow Radford (bass, vocals), Jim Schwall (guitar, vocals), Shelly Plotkin (drums, vocals). *Traitor from Decatur; Good Woman; When I've Been Drinkin'; Old Time Shimmy; Off to Denver; I Think It Was the Wine; Just Another Song About the Country Sung by a City Boy; I'd Like to Spend Some Time with You Tonight My Friend; Tails; Reed Zone; Blow Out the Candle*. WOODEN NICKEL BWL1-0121 \$5.98, Ⓜ BWS1-0121 \$6.95, © BWK1-0121 \$6.95.

SIEGEL-SCHWALL: *Radford, Siegel, Plotkin, Schwall*



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Management III  
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# POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by CHRIS ALBERTSON • NOEL COPPAGE • PAUL KRESH • PETER REILLY • JOEL VANCE

**THE ANDREWS SISTERS:** *Boogie Woogie Bugle Girls*. The Andrews Sisters (vocals); various orchestras. *Beat Me Daddy: In the Mood; Hold Tight; Rum and Coca-Cola*; and ten others. PARAMOUNT PAS-6075 \$5.98. Ⓜ 8091-6075 \$6.98.

Performance: **Awful**  
Recording: **Flat**

It is difficult to believe that anyone, even back in the Forties, took the Andrews Sisters seriously or could have listened to them. Hearing them now is about as surreal an experience as seeing an elephant walk down the street wearing wedgies. This album contains fourteen of their "hits" in the original versions, and their, well, *unique* vocal blend, orchestrations that seem to have been written for a calliope, and their lumbering coyness and "personality" are enough to warp you for the rest of your life. That Bette Midler is currently a smash doing an imitation of them probably shows that we are hopelessly warped already.

Depressing statistic: the Andrews Sisters made over nine hundred recordings that sold over sixty million copies. Wonder what the eventual Osmonds total will be? *P.R.*

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BODACIOUS D.F.** Marty Balin (vocals); Mark Ryan (bass); Dewey Dagraeze (drums); Vic Smith (guitar); Charlie Hickox (keyboards). *Drifting; Good Folks; The Witcher; Roberta*; and three others. RCA APL 1-0206

\$5.98. Ⓢ APS 1-0206 \$6.98, Ⓢ APK 1-0206 \$6.98.

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

This is Marty Balin's new group. Balin, formerly of the Jefferson Airplane, is an agile vo-

BYA



MARTY BALIN

*Genuine, confident, and casual*

calist—a damned good one, in fact. His voice is grainy and gritty but also fluid; he tosses off lyric lines like a quick, refreshing drink. He sings with an ease and comfort that eludes most others.

Balin is also a good songwriter, taking his inspiration from regional black Southern music rather than the slick Northern variety. The former has common sense and a humorous, tolerant approach to life and human foibles, while the latter is often preachy, pedantic, and arrogant. One example of how good Balin can be is *Second Hand Information*, and right behind it are *Roberta* and *The Witcher*. The band he has assembled is good, too; especially commendable are guitarist Vic Smith and keyboardist Charlie Hickox, whose harmonium playing on *Roberta* aids and complements the tune. Balin is genuine and confident and casual; he enjoys himself, which is the

prerequisite for any real musician, and this is a very enjoyable album. *J.V.*

**BYRDS:** *Preflyte*. Gene Clark (vocals); Jim McGuinn (guitar, vocals); David Crosby (guitar, vocals); Chris Hillman (bass, vocals); Mike Clarke (drums). *You Showed Me; Here Without You; She Has a Way; The Reason Why; For Me Again*; and six others. COLUMBIA KC 32183 \$5.98. Ⓢ CA 32183 \$6.98. Ⓢ CT 32183 \$6.98.

Performance: **Rough, but appealing**  
Recording: **Likewise**

This has been out for a few years on another label, but now that McGuinn has retired the group except for the original members (and moved them to Asylum) Columbia has seen fit to make it an official part of the canon. Questions of intrinsic quality aside, it's nice to have it readily available again, if only for the science-fiction cover by Barry Smith (the superb English comic artist who created Marvel's *Conan the Conqueror*). I wouldn't have thought Columbia that hip.

Anyway, how you'll react to the album as a whole will probably depend on how much the Byrds meant to you. These are demos, really, practice tapes made before they got down to serious business, and most of them are rough in the extreme. No one in the band seems to have known what to make of the studio, which is understandable for a bunch of folkies in 1964, and Chris Hillman apparently had not yet learned how to play bass. Still, the album's interesting as a document, and, as the songs themselves are all first-rate, it might be a worthwhile investment for the curious and the affluent. *Steve Simels*

**GLEN CAMPBELL:** *I Knew Jesus (Before He Was a Star)*. Glen Campbell (vocals, guitar); orchestra. Dennis McCarthy arr. *I Take It on Home; Sold American; I Want to Be with You Always; If Not for You; Give Me Back That Old Familiar Feeling*; and five others. CAPITOL SW-11185 \$5.98, Ⓢ 8XT-11185 \$6.98, Ⓢ 4XT-11185 \$6.98.

Performance: **More like it**  
Recording: **Very good**

Glen Campbell's part in this is a vindication, taking the form of a breaking of several sloth-

### Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓢ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓢ = stereo cassette
- = quadraphonic disc
- Ⓢ = reel-to-reel quadraphonic tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track quadraphonic tape
- Ⓢ = quadraphonic cassette

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓢ

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

ful habits he picked up before your eyes on television. Not since the early recordings of Jim Webb songs has Campbell's interpretation of a lyric been so convincing. He also hits these numbers with a forceful delivery that, for the most part, eschews that cheap exploitation of the upper part of his vocal range that became so prominent a crutch during his TV period. It's a fairly strong album, and it would be much stronger if the producer and arranger had sensed Campbell's present state of mind instead of assuming that the old, puffy, TV-based techniques for backing him were still appropriate. Strings and choruses interfere with what he's trying to do in one song after another. Campbell needs this sort of thing only when he's not really with it himself—in *Amazing Grace*, which he sings sweetly but not cleanly, and Ian Tyson's *Someday Soon*, which catches him lazily mouthing the words as if the cameras were rolling. But listen to him sing the title song, a nifty rocker, or Kinzy Friedman's *Sold American*, and you can see that Campbell's cut a lot of fat out of his own presentation. The thing now, I guess, is to get to hear him unburdened by other people's fat. N.C.

**CHICAGO: *Chicago VI*.** Chicago (vocals and instrumentals). *Critics' Choice; Just You 'n' Me; Darlin' Dear; Jenny; Something in This City Changes People; Rediscovery*; and four others. COLUMBIA KC 32400 \$5.98. © CA-32400 \$6.98, © CT-32400 \$6.98.

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

Take away the capable arrangements (by the band) and the careful production (by James William Guercio) and what have you got here? Some of the dinkiest, banal "songs" since the last Chicago album. A song is the backbone of rock: a bad song is a weak bone, and it misshapes the body (arrangement, performance) or makes it meaningless.

But why is Chicago so popular? Well, in terms of technique they are a good band and their vocalists are acceptable. Maybe the band's success is based on snob appeal: the "intellectual" dignity of jazz combined with the chic of rock. Maybe it's because Chicago is almost the sole survivor of the "big-band" jazz/rock group boom of the late 1960s. What happened to the others? Illustration never got the promotional push that any recording group needs, the brilliant Dreams lacked a hit single, the Ides of March had a hit single, *Vehicle*, but couldn't follow it up, and Blood, Sweat & Tears never successfully got past their second album (the only one produced by Guercio).

But Chicago is still with us. Again, I ask you, why? Maybe it's because rock fans tend to believe in certain groups; the way voters believe in certain politicians; for rockers and voters alike their candidate can do no wrong. But sometimes rock bands, like politicians, use the dignity of their high office and the magic power of their emotional appeal to the electorate to disguise a lack of ideas or the peddling of nonsense. The electorate cheers anyway—or, in Chicago's case, keeps buying lots of albums. Not that Chicago is cynical; they believe they are making good, even significant, music. But they don't get my vote. J.V.

**WILLIE COLON: *Lo Mato (Si No Compra Este LP)*.** Willie Colon Orchestra; Hector LaVoe (vocals). *Señora Lola; Todo Tiene*

*Su Final; La Maria; Junio '73*; and four others. FANIA SLP 00444 \$4.98.

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

Willie Colon is the James Cagney of contemporary Latin music, I suppose. The full title of his latest album literally means: "I'll kill you if you don't buy this record." His album covers depict him in such suspect or criminal acts as shooting pool or, on this one, holding what looks like a 3.57 Magnum pistol to the head of a nice old man (on the back cover, the nice old man has him pinned to the floor with the gun to Colon's head, and Colon wears a "Gee I didn't mean anything serious" expression). Part of this is theatricality; part of it is his boyish delight in doing something he's not supposed to, something out of the ordinary, and doing it well.



WILLIE COLON

*The James Cagney of modern Latin music*

Colon's musical style changes a bit with each album. He is young and still experimenting; he has the leisure to do so since his group is the most popular of the "new" Latin bands. The strongest piece in the album is probably *Calle Luna Calle Sol (Street of the Moon, Street of the Sun)*, which expresses a big-city truism: it's dangerous after dark. Second for honors is *Todo Tiene Su Final (Everything Must Have an End)*, a song of melancholy lyrics belied by an energetic rhythm. The other selections are all solid performances.

The charm of the best of Latin band music is that it combines a freewheeling spirit with the discipline of well-written and well-executed arrangements—that's Duke Ellington's formula, too, of course. The great edge Latin music has is that it is the only popular musical form in this country that has not become self-conscious. It works because it pleases people. How long it can maintain this state of happy and productive innocence is anyone's guess—already the self-appointed "consciences" of Latin music, equivalent to jazz critics forty years ago and rock critics five years ago, are making speeches and writing articles about its being an Art Form and a Great Proletarian Cultural Weapon. *Ay, Dios!*

Well, two suggestions. If you're not acquainted with contemporary Latin, I earnestly suggest you get this or any of the other Colon

albums for starters. And I suggest to Latin labels, which over the next few years will surely be getting more of an English-speaking audience, that they include translations of the lyrics in the liner notes. It would help us *yanquis* a lot. J.V.

**EUMIR DEODATO: *Deodato 2*.** Eumir Deodato (keyboards); orchestra, Eumir Deodato arr. and cond. *Skyscrapers; Super Strut; Nights in White Satin*; and two others. CTI 6029 \$5.98.

Performance: **Et 2, Deodato?**  
Recording: **Elaborate**

I don't mind Eumir Deodato when he takes off on a piece of his own, such as *Skyscrapers*, in which his virtuosity on keyboards is engaging and often interesting, but when he betrays a composer's intentions as he does in a berserk arrangement of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* or in another twentieth-century masterpiece, Ravel's *Pavane*, then I lose patience. Deodato is accomplished as a performer, but his arranging and conducting style, especially in standard repertoire, is as eccentric as Malcolm Muggeridge's interpretation of the New Testament. As usual with Deodato, the sonics are blatantly superb. The "music" is another matter. P.R.

**JOHN FAHEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA: *After the Ball*.** John Fahey (guitar); Dick Cary (alto horn, piano); Joe Darensbourg (clarinet); Britt Woodman (trombone); Jack Fierman (trumpet); Allen Reuse (banjo); other musicians. *Horses; New Orleans Shuffle; Beverly; Om Shanthi Norris; Candy Man; Bucktown Stomp*; and four others. REPRISE MS 2145 \$5.98.

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

The Great Stoned Fahey is an American institution that most of America doesn't yet know about, but his almost-classical guitar style and his almost-zany ideas about arrangements are bound to attract attention some day. This album is sort of the urban counterpart of his previous Reprise outing, the rural-flavored "Of Rivers and Religions." Both deal with Americana. In this one, Fahey keeps returning to a full-blown, but wryly personalized, Dixieland sound between solo guitar expeditions—and that ultimately works against it, in my view. The band is good and turns some neat tricks—it ends the title tune by suggesting, with a few simple but perfect strokes, how Guy Lombardo would have done it and then how Louis Armstrong would have, in the days of the rhythm banjo—but the Dixieland stuff is a little too easy: the mind quickly assimilates every nuance of intonation and has a steadily decreasing need to hear the actual sounds. On top of that, Fahey's guitar here isn't as clean as it was in "Rivers," although the difference probably is in the miking of it. This album is recorded at an unusually high volume level. The solos on such pieces as *Horses* are still masterly, of course, with little idiosyncracies of timing that have left some of my picker friends permanently squint-eyed from stints of heavy concentration. And I still maintain, of course, that most record collections could use a shot of John Fahey. N.C.

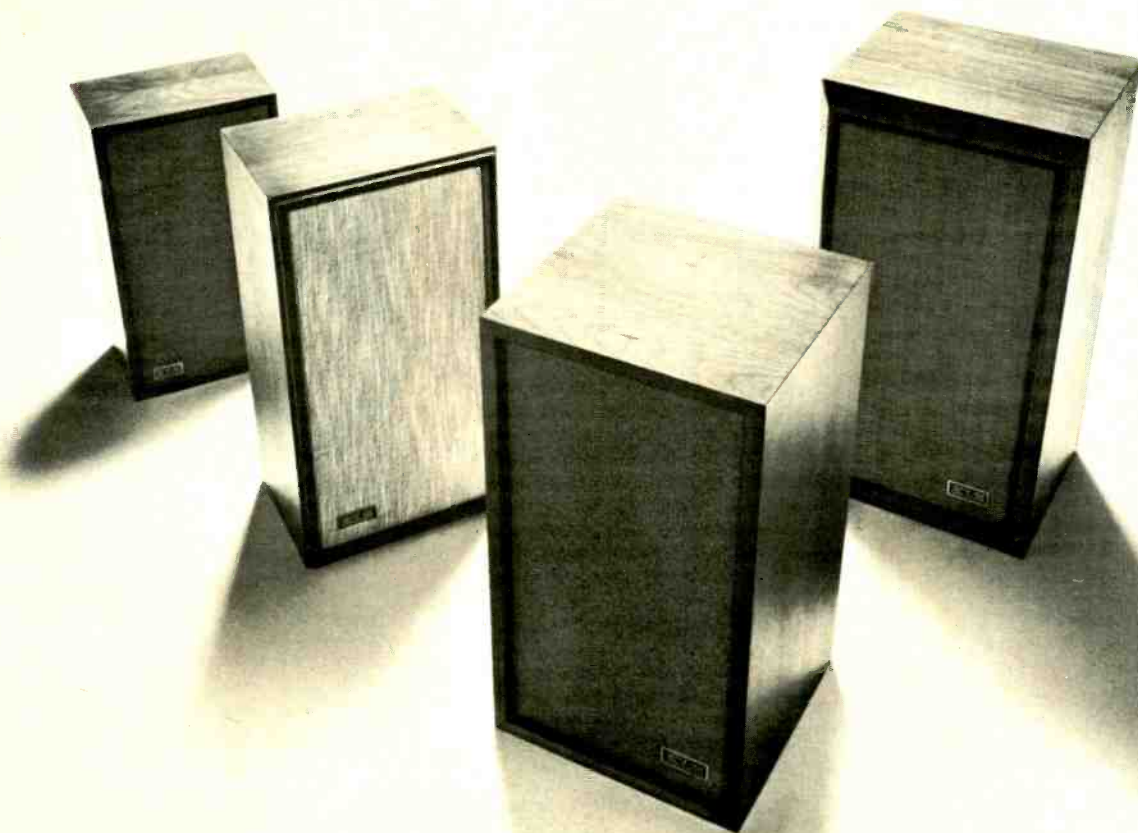
**ARTHUR GARFUNKEL: *Angel Clare*.** Arthur Garfunkel (vocals); orchestra. *I Shall Sing; All I Know; Woyaya; Barbara Allen; Old* (Continued on page 90)



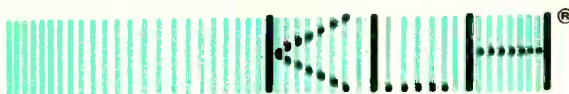
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Man; and five others. COLUMBIA KC 31474 \$5.98, Ⓢ CA 31474 \$6.98, Ⓢ CT 31474 \$6.98.

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

Garfunkel's new solo album sounds more like he split professionally from the Beers Family or some other psaltery-pure folk group than from Paul Simon. As a team Simon and Garfunkel made more money from singing about the post-puberty blues than almost anyone else does from anything else in a lifetime. Now each is on his own, and Simon continues his heavy thinking and even more lugubrious performing, but Garfunkel seems almost to have taken the veil. This album is so tippy-toe reverent toward everything that I had to check to make sure that *All I Know* and *Another Lullaby* were indeed written by Jimmy Webb. They were, but Garfunkel's performances gave me pause. Not that a good many things aren't very well done, particularly a shimmering *Angel Clare* and a lovely *Mary Was an Only Child*, or that Garfunkel isn't able to use his slightly adenoidal voice to fine dramatic effect. But still there lingers over everything an air of preciousness—not all the time, but often enough. The Webb songs, for instance, take on a kind of falseness that I don't think is written into them. Beautifully engineered and painstakingly produced by Garfunkel and Roy Halee this disc may be, but it's a little too beatific for my taste. *P.R.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MARVIN GAYE:** *Let's Get It On*. Marvin Gaye (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Let's Get It On*; *Please Don't Stay (Once You Go Away)*; *If I Should Die Tonight*; *Come Get to This*; and four others. TAMLA T329V1 \$5.98.

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

Marvin Gaye was one of the original Motown stable of artists. Like Stevie Wonder, he has declared his artistic independence, and his recordings avoid the shrewd, assembly-line "Motown Sound." Even while he was part of it, though, he cut some undoubtedly great singles: *Hitchhike, I Heard It Through the Grapevine*, and, with Tammi Terell, *That's All I Need to Get By*. Gaye recorded several duets with Miss Terell, and her sudden death (she literally died in his arms on stage) affected him deeply; he retired for a while to develop a personal philosophy and make peace with himself. A few years ago he cut an album, "What's Goin' On," which seemed to be entirely made up of one ethereal melody to which he set different lyrics dealing with the conditions of life on the planet. Out of this album came *Inner City Blues*, which said more in five minutes about the black experience than Curtis Mayfield has been able to say in three years.

Gaye has never been sanctimonious or preachy (though he can preach); his recent efforts have shown him to be a fellow of good will and common sense, as well as being a highly skilled entertainer. Here he turns to the joys of sex. Fifteen years ago this would have been called a "mood music" album, and that's what it really is. Gaye is honest without being blunt. None of the tunes are memorable, but the point of a mood music album is to create an effect no matter what the qualities of the material might be. And here the effect is right.

The album is a happy development. Put it on and enjoy. *J.V.*

**WAYLON JENNINGS:** *Honky Tonk Heroes*. Waylon Jennings (vocals, guitar); the Waylors (instrumentals); Eddie Hinton (guitar); Randy Scruggs (guitar); Joe Allen (bass); Tommy Williams (fiddle); other musicians. *Honky Tonk Heroes*; *Old Five and Dimers (Like Me)*; *Willy the Wandering Gypsy and Me*; *Low Down Freedom*; *Omaha*; and five others. RCA APL1-0240 \$5.98. Ⓢ APSI-0240 \$6.98. Ⓢ APK1-0240 \$6.98.

Performance: **Cowboy catalog**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Waylon Jennings is one of my favorite singers, but these Billy Joe Shaver songs have him in a corral if not a box. Shaver has Waylon referring to "honky tonk heroes like me" in



MARVIN GAYE

*Mood music from a skilled entertainer*

the first selection, "old five and dimers like me" in the second, and "Willy the wandering gypsy and me" in the third. I mean, driving the point home is one thing, but this is like picking Kristofferson up by the literary ankles, shaking him vigorously, and using every damned nugget that tumbles out. Still, the onus is not on Shaver but on the producers—any one or two of the Shaver songs would be fine in a program that otherwise had some variety in it. The restrictions imposed by the theme simply call for paean after paean to hard-travelin' pickers. The singing, of course, is first-rate, and so is the backing—there are a lot of pickers listed in the credits, but fortunately they don't all play at the same time. There's some particularly fine work by someone on the dobro and by Don Brooks, a member of Jennings' band, the Waylors, on harp. If you don't have any Waylon Jennings albums and this is the only one you can find, by all means get it and get to know that voice. If a sufficient number of people do that, maybe we can pressure him into putting some real thought into producing these things. Not to get over-serious about it, but Jennings is one of the contemporary performers most likely to get country music off the dime it's been on for close to forty years. *N.C.*

**LITTLE SONNY:** *Hard Goin' Up*. Little Sonny (vocals, harmonica); Rudy Robinson  
(Continued on page 92)

# The exasperating truth about cassette decks.

A lot of the money you shell out for a cassette deck is supposed to buy you a superb cassette recorder. Certainly most manufacturers try to give that impression. They sport big VU meters, slider-type pots and other professional recording-console accoutrements.

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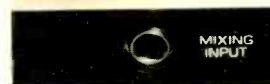
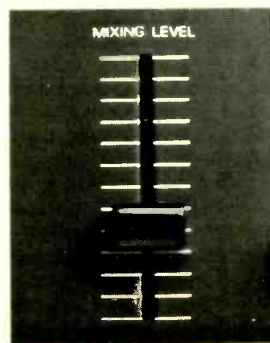
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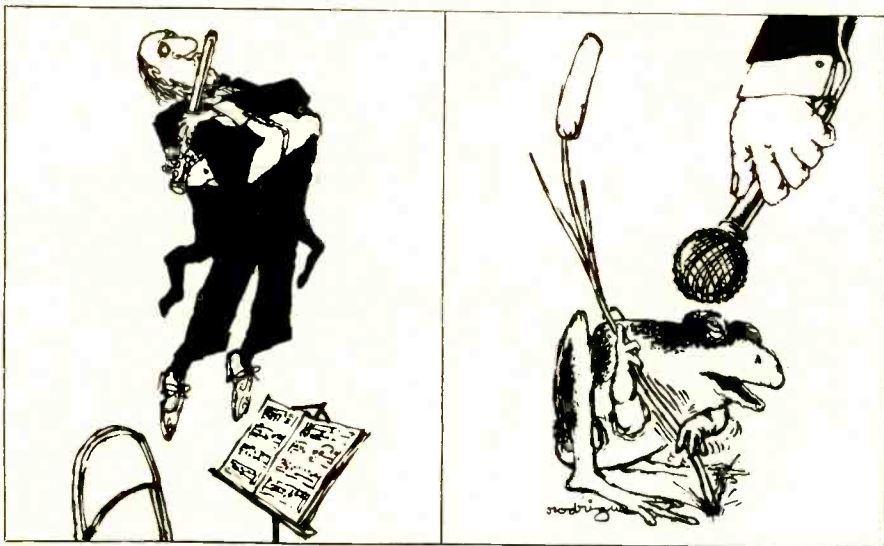
Performance: **Very good**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Producer Bill Williams assures me that was not a chromatic harmonica Little Sonny played in his first two albums, as I asserted in a December review of same, but a diatonic harp of the sort most bluesmen use. What

fooled me was not any great assortment of sharps and flats but that Sonny's tone was—and is here—so low-pitched and metallic. Is he filing the reeds or something? However he does it, it suits his style—and his recordings have been progressively better at capturing that style, which is very low-down and gut-bucket dirty. It leans on a fine warble and a grating, sometimes discordant, sometimes almost painfully raw—and basically laconic—way of phrasing. He is not terribly funky, compared to someone like Gatemouth Brown, and seems to run short of ideas on the kind of extended break he takes in *My Woman Is Good to Me*.

So tone is his thing, as this new recording (his best, I think) certifies, particularly on tracks like *The Day You Left Me*, wherein

Sonny plays some of the most torn-up, bloody-stomped, raked-over-the-coals harp I've heard since I was a little (innocent, white) boy and stumbled upon Nashville's WLAC late one night (and some time back) on my radio. Sonny's singing hasn't improved particularly since album number two, but it's still pretty good, and he seems more relaxed with the whole studio routine. He wrote most of the songs, and there is something about several of them—how to say what, when a blues progression is a blues progression is a blues progression?—vaguely reminiscent of those fine Ivory Joe Hunter tunes. Little Sonny is not a terribly versatile harp player, but he's a solid blues musician, and he's just *begun* to record. I expect he'll be around for a while. N.C.



**ROD McKUEN: *McKuen Sings McKuen/Brel*.** Rod McKuen (vocals); orchestra. *Seasons in the Sun*; *Come, Jef*; *The Women*; *Amsterdam*; *Zangra*; and seven others. STANYAN SR 5022 \$6.98.

Performance: **Poached poetaster**  
Recording: **Excellent**

To get myself into the proper mood for any new Rod McKuen album isn't easy. First I have to sit around listening to the warm for a couple of hours. After that I slip into a pair of chino pants and my old scuffed sneakers, throw on a fuzzy sweater, the color of which brings out that particular changeling blue of my eyes, and proceed to take a walk with my Doberman, Muffins. This time, we went down to the gas station and watched lonely strangers we knew we would never see again ordering gas for voyages into the unknown. Then we went to the post office and looked at all those lovingly wrapped packages sent by someone-who-cares to distant loves. In the park at twilight, Muffins and I smiled benignly at the lovers. Muffins, full of fun and only pretending to be fierce, would dash into the bushes and emerge with one couple after another, and I thought I could see him smile, just a little, as we watched them run into the darkling sunset clutching their clothes. On our way home a trailer truck ran over Muffins, and as I held his paw, the life flickering from him, he seemed to be saying, "We'll meet again."

Back in my lonely room, I let my hair fall over my troubled forehead, and switched on Rod's latest. But even as the soft warmth of my tears coursed over my feverish cheeks, I knew that I could draw inspiration from Rod. Tomorrow there would be new dogs, new strangers, and new things for me to feel deeply about.

The next morning I listened again to the album. Murder is punished, I've been told, but McKuen's performances here of the work of Jacques Brel leave one in doubt. His translations of the lyrics are not bad at all, although he says, "We think of them as collaborations." But the album is billed as "McKuen Sings McKuen/Brel." That is the sort of *chutzpah* that makes McKuen look like the opportunist *sans pareil*.

Brel no longer makes public concert appearances and seems content to let McKuen become his English-speaking alter ego. I wonder if he realizes how very badly his work is being served, at least in these kinds of performances. McKuen's translations of such things as *If You Go Away*, *Amsterdam*, and *Seasons in the Sun* are workmanlike enough to evoke the original, but his delivery kills (Continued on page 95)

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## JONATHAN LIVINGSTON POPSTAR

Paul Kresh reviews his two latest discs

ANTHROPOMORPHIC animals that talk and illustrate human virtues and vices have been with us at least since the days of ancient Egypt, but few of them have had three names or soared to the metaphysical heights attempted by the avian hero of Richard Bach's best-seller, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, as the author points out in the early pages of his popular parable, "was no ordinary bird." Where other gulls are interested in eating, he is interested in flying. His struggles to transcend nature's endowments and develop his skill in this direction despite the conventional disapproval of the elder in his flock are recounted with an innocent charm, and the tale is reminiscent at times of the glowing descriptions of the poetry of flying in Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Night Flight*. The trouble is, though, that Jonathan ultimately flies to heights that will not bear the weight of Mr. Bach's simplistic prose, and the poor bird winds up as the spokesman for a kind of softheaded dime-store religiosity that turns the whole tale to mush; only the most gullible of gulls could really be expected to change his life style on the basis of the woolly twaddle preached by Jonathan after he returns from heaven.

The Hall Bartlett film also begins superbly, with some of the loveliest seascape photography imaginable, but Jonathan himself is as boring to watch through a feature-length film as only a real seagull could be, and his acting range is embarrassingly limited. Even the introduction of a female bird called Maureen who appears briefly as one of his converts does little to help the progress of a movie that goes lame too soon and becomes intolerably greeting-card pretty as it preaches its mindless way across the screen. (For whatever it means in this regard, Mr. Bach has recently sued and won the right to make some changes in the movie.) The best thing about it, in fact, is Neil Diamond's score, and the Columbia recording of the original soundtrack (it also, by the way, is being revised) is thus a lot easier to take than the movie for which it was prepared.

Mr. Diamond, who recently has delved into soft rock, blues, gospel, country music, and soul since his emergence as a rock superstar a few years ago, supplies a kind of contemporary tone poem that captures the serenity of the scene from the earliest chords, and manages to blend an up-to-date idiom with an impressionistic feeling for the moods of weather and rock seascapes, summoning a suggestive power that enables this music to stand on its own. There are also a number of songs like *Be* and *Skybird* and *Lonely Looking Sky* that attempt to translate the ideas of the story into folk-musical terms and do succeed in conveying a wide-sky, windswept mood despite lyrics that seem to draw their inspiration more from Hallmark than from nature. In addition, there is a frankly religious "anthem" with lyrics consisting entirely of such words as "sanctus" and "kyrie" and "gloria." The anthem's controlled exaltation speaks well for Diamond's taste and inventiveness; I have never heard a children's chorus intoning popular music less objectionably. Lee Holdridge's orchestral settings are sweeping and sumptuous, and although Diamond's reported protests about the alleged tampering with the timbre of his own voice are probably justified, the effect of the whole is not only singularly free of mere trendiness but sounds just marvelous—due in part to the resourceful use of stereo to achieve its overall open effect.

The Columbia record comes in what is probably the year's most luxurious package, including a booklet with an embossed cover containing the words of the songs, such as they are, superimposed on full-color seascapes along with a frameable portrait of the photogenic Mr. Diamond and the names of all the other musicians.

NOT to be outdone, Dunhill has also come up with a Jonathan recording, and in it Mr. Bach's rich, beautiful prose is consigned to immortality in a rhetorical rendition by Richard Harris that reminded me of the way

Richard Hale intones "My dear children" in his wonderfully old-fashioned reverberating recitation of the narrative of *Peter and the Wolf* on the vintage Boston Symphony recording. Mr. Harris gives the saga of Jonathan, with its *Lost Horizon* sermons, the benefit of his full diapason in a Shakespearean treatment that sometimes makes the descriptive writing sound better than it is. But it also exposes to the point of embarrassment the leaden superficiality that makes it so hard for many passages ever to get off the ground—and this despite skillful editing that includes the elimination of a couple of awkward, slangy phrases along with a number of paragraphs that never will be missed—the starry-eyed original ending among them.

Terry James' music for the Dunhill disc is also impressionistic—relying heavily for inspiration on sources like Debussy's *La Mer* and also all too frequently on the easy Hollywood effects to be achieved with banks of strings and glittering orchestral arabesques. Mr. James has further miscalculated by allowing the whole of Part Two, dealing with the events after Jonathan flaps his way into heaven, to be backed by a single chord that becomes increasingly obtrusive, like a stuck auto horn, in its unrelenting monotony. But the record, like the book, has been a runaway best seller since it came out. One can quarrel with success, I suppose, but will its course thereby be altered by so much as half a degree?

**JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL (Neil Diamond).** Original-soundtrack recording. Neil Diamond (vocals); orchestra, Lee Holdridge arr. and cond. *Prologue: Be; Flight of the Gull; Dear Father; Skybird; Lonely Looking Sky;* and six others. COLUMBIA KS 32550 \$6.98, Ⓟ SA 32550 \$6.98, © ST 32550 \$6.98.

**JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL (Richard Harris).** Richard Harris (reader); orchestra, Terry James arr. and cond. DUNHILL DSD 50160 \$6.98.

every nuance. His voice is that of an Ethel Barrymore, in deepest and foggiest "Dramah," and has the expressive range of an asthmatic macaw. When he cuddles up to the mike and croaks, "Don't go away . . . please," a cappella, as he does at the end of *If You Go Away*, or careens about like a Bette Davis on roller skates, pulling out all the supposed emotional stops in *Come, Jef*, the effect is more like early Lance Loud than prime Brel. Most of these songs are available, in French, in Brel's original performances, and to hear them is to realize their power, truth, and universality, qualities sadly lacking here. They make one long for Brel's return to live performance.

Recorded live and in the studio, this album is a superb piece of sonic flashiness. But it is the flash of a front-wheel-drive Eldorado, laid over what is basically a sturdy, hardy, and honestly made little Citroen. *P.R.*

**MARTIN MULL AND HIS FABULOUS FURNITURE:** *In Your Living Room*. Martin Mull (vocals, guitar, ukulele, etc.); Bill Elliot (piano); Keith Spring (tenor sax); Harvey Mason (drums); other musicians. *Dueling Tubas; A Simple Carpenter; Licks Off of Records; Return of the Big Bands; 2001 Polka; Straight Talk About the Blues*; and eleven others. CAPRICORN CP 0117 \$4.98.

Performance: **Slick**

Recording: **Very good**

There are several elements in Martin Mull's comedy and high jinks, but the main ones are parody (*Dueling Tubas, 2001 Polka*) and a watered-down adaptation of Randy Newman's approach. Some of Mull's work is about what you'd have if you ordered some bright kid to make Newman's attitudes "acceptable" for, say, commercial television. In fact, the tube would seem the logical place for Martin to wind up, poor devil. Mull invites even further comparisons with Newman by appearing to try to *sing* like Newman.

Still, Mull's act—from the moment he's introduced by a midget as "a young man I've always looked up to" through his playing of a Blind Lemon Pledge Lake Erie Delta blues song on ukulele fretted with baby bottle neck and on down to his version of a rock-and-roll dance craze, "the Nothing"—is funnier than the average act. The problem with the album is a problem almost endemic in comedy albums; it's a *lot* funnier the first time you hear it than it is the second time.

The music is pretty well constructed and well played—Mull is a good guitar player—but it is clearly a means to an end, which is to get laughs. Mull's monologues are delivered in a mock-naïve style that, so help me, is continually reminding me of the speaking style of Richard M. Nixon. Gee whiz. *N.C.*

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

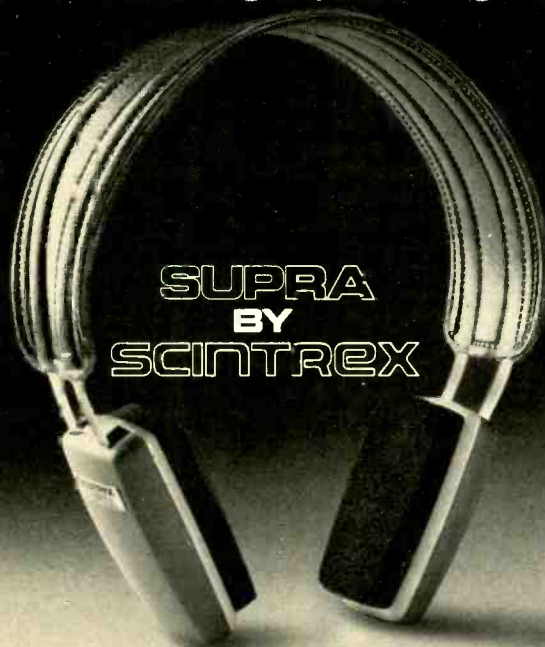
**ESTHER OFARIM.** Esther Ofarim (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Song of the French Partisan; Suzanne; You're Always Looking for the Rainbow; Jerusalem; Boy from the Country; Gnostic Serenade; Morning Has Broken; Hey, That's No Way to Say Goodbye; Waking Up*. BASF BB 29564 \$5.98.

Performance: **Varied and winning**

Recording: **Very good**

I first heard the voice of Esther Ofarim on a Philips record a few years ago. Paired with

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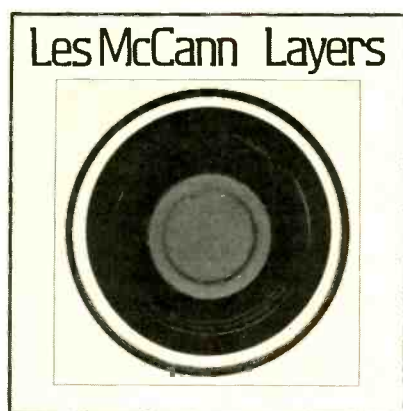
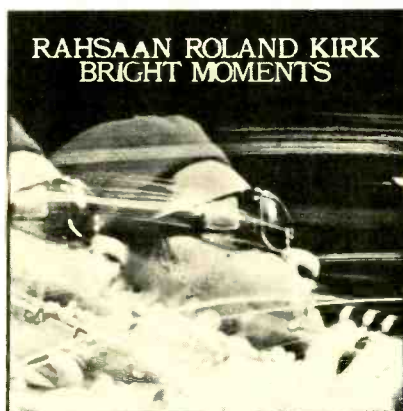
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her brother Abi, she performed everything from their own hit of the period, *Cinderella Rockafella*, to a Spanish folk song (*El Vito*), a spiritual (*Go Tell It on the Mountain*), and Brahm's *Lullaby*. This time Miss Ofarim, who was born in Israel and has won a number of European singing competitions, goes it alone. She is still a whiz at languages, singing Leonard Cohen's *Suzanne* and *Hey, That's No Way to Say Goodbye* in English with nearly no discernible accent, dealing with *El Condor Pasa* in Spanish, and chanting *Jerusalem* (a song that is an outcry for peace, not to be confused with the banal *Jerusalem of Gold*) in her native Hebrew. There's much artistry here, and there's a voice I suspect is really much bigger than it lets on. Miss Ofarim not only has skill, which she shares with countless other personalities who make recordings, but taste, which seems to be getting rarer all the time. Even the fey Suzanne doesn't sound as creepy and crazy as she usually does when lesser singers tackle Mr. Cohen's long, garrulous lyrical lines, while *Boy from the Country*, *Gnostic Serenade*, and *Morning Has Broken* are made to sound far more evocative and brimming with meaning than probably any of them really are. P.K.

**DANNY O'KEEFE: Breezy Stories.** Danny O'Keefe (vocals, guitar); Donny Hathaway (piano); Dr. John (piano); Gordon Edwards (bass); Bernard Purdie (drums); David Bromberg (guitar); other musicians. *Angel Spread Your Wings; Magdalena; Junkman; Portrait in Black Velvet; She Said "Drive On, Driver"; If Ya Can't Boogie Woogie*; and five others. ATLANTIC SD-7264 \$5.98, TP-7264 \$6.98, CS-7264 \$6.98.

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

Danny O'Keefe's third album is about as intricately produced, and approximately as spontaneous, as the blueprint for a switchboard. There's a dry precision about it that undercuts the impact of technically good songs, good singing, and good instrumentation. O'Keefe's lyrics, as usual, are pretty good; the production approach may have evolved in the studio as a way of dealing with the melodies, which are cool and studied. The one warm-bodied exception is Danny's sensitive interpretation of his *Mad Ruth/The Babe*, in which the memories of ex-girlfriend and dead ballplayer play alternately in the narrator's mind in front of an easy, natural-sounding melody. Dr. John sneaks in some backing piano licks that refuse to be programmed in a couple of tracks, but that's about it: everything else sounds magnificently canned. N.C.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**WILSON PICKETT: Miz Lena's Boy.** Wilson Pickett (vocals); orchestra. *Never My Love; Two Women and a Wife; Memphis, Tennessee; You Lay'd It on Me*; and six others. RCA APL1-0312 \$5.98, APS1-0312 \$6.98, APK1-0312 \$6.98.

Performance: **The real thing**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Wilson Pickett's new album cover appropriately features him admiring himself in the mirror. The record confirms his good taste as he roars, pants, wheedles, and just plain sings hell out of everything that crosses his lady-killin' path. He is hilarious as he describes his predicament in *Two Women and a Wife*,

triumphant in *Is Your Love Life Better* (he doesn't even bother with a question mark; it is a flat statement to some lucky girl), and almost touching in *Take a Closer Look at the Woman You're With*. His only stumble is in Kristofferson's soft-focus cry of anxiety *Help Me Make It Through the Night*, in which, logically enough, he isn't very convincing.

Wilson Pickett is naturally what Tom Jones sweats so hard trying to be. He has the raw energy and musical intensity of the true pop artist, a far cry from the slightly worried, all too careful abandon of the commercial property trying to remember to keep his good side to camera one.

This is another fine album, and perhaps a Rosetta stone for all of you who have been wondering just what Tom Jones has been trying to get across all these years. P.R.

**BONNIE RAITT: Taking My Time** (see Best of the Month, page 84)

**SMOKEY ROBINSON: Smokey.** Smokey Robinson (vocals); orchestra. *Holly; Sweet Harmony; The Family Song; Baby Come Close*; and six others. TAMLA T328L \$5.98, M-8328 \$6.95, M-5328 \$6.95.

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

These are good-natured, obliging performances by someone who lives up to his name. Smokey is the best possible description of Mr. Robinson's singing; it wafts. Exactly at the moment when you think he has come upon a musical idea or is about to really say something, vapor sets in. *Sweet Harmony* ought to be a good song, and perhaps it is, but Robinson shrouds it in spun sugar. I didn't mind a bit of it, as I listened, but then I didn't think very much about it afterward either. P.R.

**SIEGEL-SCHWALL BAND: 953 West** (see Best of the Month, page 85)

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**SOPWITH CAMEL: The Miraculous Hump Returns from the Moon.** Peter Kraemer (vocals, saxophone, flute, synthophone, arp synthesizer); Terry McNeil (piano, guitar); Martin Beard (bass); Norman Mayell (drums, harmonica, marimba, sitar). *Fazon; Coke; Suede and Waterbeds; Dancin' Wizard; Sleazy Street; Orange Peel; Oriental Fantasy*; and four others. WARNER BROS. MS 2108 \$5.98, M8 2108 \$6.98, M5 2108 \$6.98.

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

In 1967 Sopwith Camel was a slightly daffy and pleasing group that sounded something very like the Lovin' Spoonful (who had the same producer). They had one substantial hit, *Hello Hello*, and while busy touring managed to get out *Postcard from Jamaica*, but when they finally got off the road and into the studio for an album it was too long a time after their 45-rpm successes. Their album did only middling well and the group disbanded.

The group has now re-formed with the exception of one member. This new album shows that they are still daffy, but their mixture of jazz, rock, and themselves produces some of the most satisfying music in years. It does no good to describe it; you simply have to hear it, and I hope you will. In my dreams, "The Miraculous Hump" sells about 750,000 (Continued on page 100)



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# FRANK SINATRA'S BACK

... but he might have waited until he had better material

Reviewed by Rex Reed



As I was saying, before Frank Sinatra interrupted with his farewell speech, you can't take these show business "retirements" too seriously. In his case, the "comeback" seemed particularly inevitable. I mean, what else can you do when Palm Springs gets dull, the heat's on in Vegas, and Washington goes out of business? You can spend just so much time on the course in San Clemente before your eyes begin to look like the golfballs, and when your pals leave town, you move on too.

So the Chairman of the Board went back to work, doing what he does best. When all else fails, the man can still sing for his supper. When he plays, he plays hard. And when he works, he works hard. There's no better proof. I'd say, than his new Reprise album "Ol' Blue Eyes Is Back." Since there haven't been any Sinatra albums for a long time, it isn't fudging to say that it is his best album in years. It would be nice to be able to say it's the *best* album he ever made too. It isn't. It's good, but not that good. There are problems, but they can wait. In the happy spirit of the occasion, let's concentrate on the rewards before we get to the demerits.

The voice is what counts, and it has never sounded better. Rough around the edges and softly sighing in the center, it's like a wind-swept old house—cracks in the pipes and the age creeping in—but still you wouldn't trade it for one of the newer models. They're all copies, with no improvements, and don't have the comfortable feeling of having been lived in. Even if we didn't know the history that goes with it, we would know that this is a voice that has been around, and that, like good wine or fine cashmere, it has improved with age. "Fingers reaching . . . searching for the touch of love's first meeting . . ." throbs the viola Frank is apparently using instead of vocal cords in the bridge of a song called *You're So Right for What's Wrong in My Life*, and you know *that's* what singing is all about.

There is something almost eerie about the way Sinatra's voice moves into a song and haunts the lyrics—as though no other way of singing them were possible. The magic has to do with his ability to investigate a song without patronizing it and to use it to rub a little patina onto *our* lives, enriching, beautifying, and even spiritualizing our experience when we hear him sing it. Still,

Stan Cornyn, Sinatra's official liner-note writer, pushes it a little, comparing Frank to Abraham Lincoln and Franklin D. Roosevelt. It is enough to say that, among today's male pop singers, he is still *Numero Uno*. Tony Bennett has better taste in material. Jack Jones has a sweeter voice. And Mel Tormé is a better musician. But there is only one Sinatra: the others, for all their individual excellences, are his disciples, and I think they would be the first to admit it. And so, though there are times when he could be tossing a coin, other times when we wonder whether he will make the note or hold it too long as the chocolate soufflé in his voice simply melts into thin air, still others when he squeezes through the higher register as if he were negotiating a narrow passage sideways, he always makes it. He's reliable, and that counts.

So Sinatra is back, and the *feeling* is good. Unfortunately, the album with which he has chosen to return to the throne is anything but flawless. About three-quarters of the material in it is banal—second-rate and forgettable. What good is all that talent if the lyrics aren't worth hearing and the songs aren't worth singing? Worst of all, the arrangements compete instead of complement. Only once, in *You're So Right*, do we get the perfect balance of singer, arrangement, and orchestral accompaniment. The rest you'd expect maybe from Wayne Newton, but not God.

Conductor-arranger Gordon Jenkins is yesterday, and not the best of yesterday either. His syrupy violin section sounds like one of those 101 Strings throwaways they used to (still do?) sell in supermarkets. *Nobody Wins*, with its seventh-grade philosophy and its third-grade rhymes, is a hillbilly song by Kris Kristofferson that is a good example of the kind of trash a sophisticated singer like Sinatra shouldn't be wasting his time on. *Noah*, a gospel epic about—are you ready?—Noah and the Ark, is one of those set pieces you'd expect from a 1947 black-and-white movie with the Hall Johnson Choir. *There Used to Be a Ballpark* is a nice bit of nostalgic fluff for those who wonder where the era of Saturday-afternoon baseball with the Dodgers went, but it is not sensitive enough, well-enough written, or meaningful enough to be included in a Sinatra album.

The best song in this collection, Stephen Sondheim's *Send in the Clowns*, is eventually wrecked by Jenkins' arrangement. Here is Sinatra, making emotional mincemeat out of the line "Losing my timing this late in my career." The singing takes on a kind of reverence that's almost like being in church . . . and here comes Gordon Jenkins, woodwinds and flutes clamoring away at odds with the melody, interrupting, deflating, and making unnecessary comments. It's a pretentious distraction we don't need.

Why does a man with so much skill and passion and heart put up with anything but the best? Why didn't he clear out half the string section, throw out half the material, and call in someone to re-work the arrangements? Don Costa, who produced the album and wrote three of the charts for it, qualifies, but even *his* contributions here are below his usual standards. It is just this kind of fooling around that is so distressing about a good deal of Sinatra's work—and this album in particular. He's just not the perfectionist he should be.

Maybe all the help is intimidated by Sinatra. Maybe he doesn't take advice when it's offered. Or maybe it isn't even offered because everybody is too busy standing around like fans in awe of Frank Sinatra. And maybe it's that he himself just doesn't care. I find it hard to believe any of these assumptions is true. And yet there are all those great arrangers who might have been used—Claus Ogerman, Peter Matz, Billy May, even Jack Jones' pianist Joe Kloes—and those great trunks full of unrecorded songs written by Johnny Mercer, Alec Wilder, Burke and Van Heusen, Tommy Wolf and Fran Landesman, Blossom Dearie, and others, and I wonder if Sinatra has forgotten about *music*.

He's too worried about being hassled by drunks and autograph hounds to hang out in the little clubs where you have to go to hear the best material. I don't blame him. But his search for privacy has shielded him from much of what's going on in popular music today. In the rooms where Bobby Short and Mabel Mercer and Cy Coleman and Blossom Dearie and Jackie Cain and Roy Kral and people of that level of sophistication polish their craft, you're not going to see Frank Sinatra in the audience, even though I feel that secretly his heart lies there.

As a result, we wait breathless with anticipation for his first album since coming out of retirement. And what do we get? A theme song from a rotten Burt Reynolds movie called *The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing*. It's an insult. Don't get me wrong. I love Sinatra. He's top lion on the veldt. No explanation for why he has not made a perfect album is satisfactory to me. But I'm willing to wait. Half a loaf is better than nothing at all.

**FRANK SINATRA: *Ol' Blue Eyes Is Back*.** Frank Sinatra (vocals); arr. by Gordon Jenkins and Don Costa; orchestra, Gordon Jenkins cond. *Send In the Clowns: Dream Away* (theme from *The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing*); *Let Me Try Again*; *There Used to Be a Ballpark*; *Noah*; *You Will Be My Music*; *You're So Right for What's Wrong in My Life*; *Winners*; *Nobody Wins*. REPRISE FS 2155 \$5.98. Ⓜ M8 2155 \$6.98. Ⓢ M5 2155 \$6.98.

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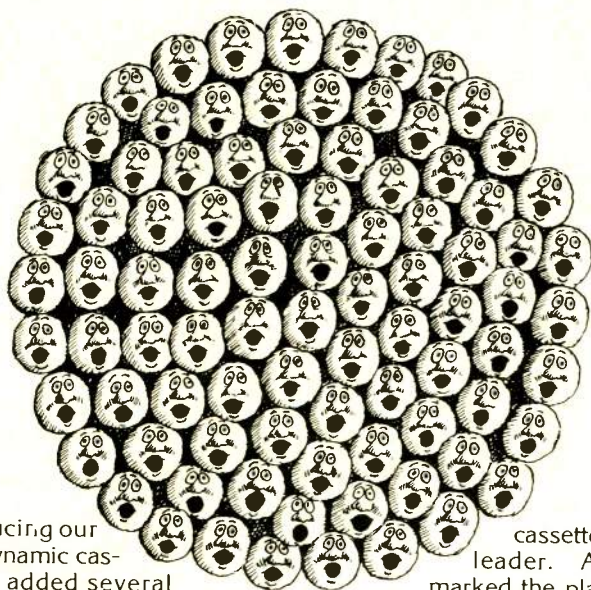
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copies. A holiday from cant, overproduction, and noisy nonsense is declared. All other music ceases for a month, during which we are all refreshed and enlightened. This album is a musical backup. Were it for nothing else I would love it for the lines in *Coke*, *Suede and Waterbeds*: "Now they've got all money down/House in the country, store in town/Baby looks fine in her platform shoes/Daddy's got a harp, tryin' to learn the blues."

Since I have gone out of my way to say disparaging things about Californian music and the Californian life style in many other reviews (watch me—when I'm fifty I'll be out there squeezing oranges like everyone else), I record that Sopwith Camel are all Californians and that their marvelous music would not have been possible without the life style. I go further: I hope Sopwith Camel will be around for years this time. They are intelligent, gentle, funny, and a little mad. J.V.

**B. W. STEVENSON:** *My Maria*. B. W. Stevenson (vocals and acoustic guitar); orchestra. *My Maria*; *Remember Me*; *Lucky Touch*; *Sunset Woman*; *Pass This Way*; and five others. RCA APL1-0088 \$5.98, Ⓟ APS1-0088 \$6.98, © APK1-0088 \$6.98.

Performance: **Solidly entertaining**  
Recording: **Excellent**

What a relief to listen to ten tracks by someone who is modest and sensible enough to consider himself primarily an entertainer, and who leaves pop sociology to the "heavy thinkers." B. W. Stevenson rolls along in a smooth c-&-w style, playing expert and idiomatic acoustic guitar, singing several of his own songs with a just-right vocal rasp and a real intelligence about lyrics, and displaying a satisfying musicianship with his small backup group. The two best tracks here are the title song and *Shambala*, but then the whole recording makes a solid point: professionalism need not be sterile or a cloak for insincerity. True, nothing very adventuresome is tackled here, but then again the last few years have given us plenty of young navel-gazing polemicists anxious to enlighten us all. What is in radically short supply are surefooted young performers who, like Stevenson, feel some professional obligation to entertain anyone who takes the time to listen. This is a beautifully crafted, totally likable album. P.R.

### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

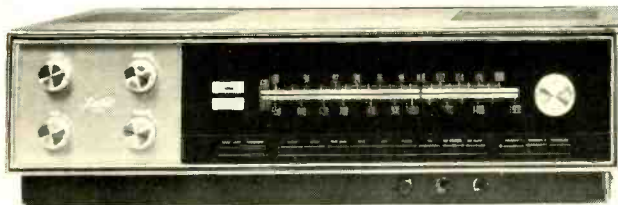
**IKE TURNER:** *Bad Dreams*. Ike Turner (vocals and keyboards); instrumental accompaniment. *These Dreams*; *That's How Much I Love You*; *One Nite Stand*; *Don't Hold Your Breath*; *(You Can Have) The City*; *Flockin' with You*; and four others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA087-F \$4.98.

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

Ike Turner has been around a long time, from his early days of playing piano in pickup blues bands, to his many years of one-nighters with his wife Tina and their ensuing local and regional record hits. In the mid-Sixties, Ike and Tina began to be appreciated by white collectors of black music (Phil Spector produced Tina in 1966 with *River Deep*, *Mountain High* and left America in a huff when it didn't sell), but it was not until the late Sixties and early Seventies that the mass white audience "discovered" them. Tina became an  
(Continued on page 104)

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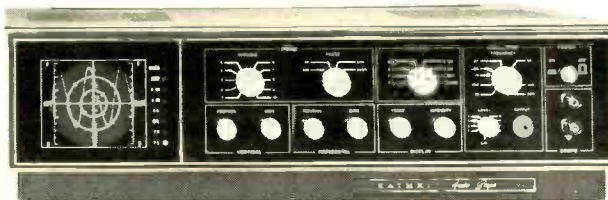
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earth-mother star, but it is taking more time for Ike, who is the boss man, to get his due recognition. This is one of his comparatively rare solo albums. Since the Ike & Tina Revue plays an awful lot of one-nighters, it is possible he hasn't had time for more. That's a pity, since two or three albums as good as this one would establish him as one of the masters of black American music.

Some of the songs contain references to other masters: *These Dreams* echoes Chuck Berry at his peak, and *Take a Walk with Me* summons up Jimmy Reed in his prime. But the album is decidedly Turner's. His don't-give-a-damn baritone, the tight spareness of his arrangements and instruments, and the bitter savvy of his lyrics mark him as an original.

Turner doesn't preach, though; he just says what he knows. His music is direct to the point of being blunt when he wants it to be; he can also be warm and intimate and funny (as in *That's How Much I Love You*). All in all, this is one of the most listenable albums in quite a while. A few more like this and Turner is going to make the thrones of the current kings of black music very shaky indeed. J.V.

**TONY JOE WHITE: *Homemade Ice Cream*.** Tony Joe White (vocals, guitar); Norbert Putnam (bass); David Briggs (piano); Kenny Malone (drums); Reggie Young (guitar). *Saturday Nite in Oak Grove, La.; For Ol' Times Sake; I Want Love ('Tween You and Me); Homemade Ice Cream; Ol' Mother Earth;* and six others. WARNER BROS. BS 2708 \$5.98, Ⓜ M8-2708 \$6.98, © M5-2708 \$6.98.

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

Here's another pretty good, fairly honest, stolidly unremarkable album from Tony Joe White, a writer of straightforward and intelligent lyrics and simple melodies, and a singer of five or six tones somewhere in the middle of the scale. The album makes a fine start with *Saturday Nite in Oak Grove, La.*, an understanding and beautifully researched (perhaps lived) tune about cruising the drive-ins in little towns. It wavers a bit but then comes across with the title song, which turns out to be an addictive little instrumental featuring someone not credited—Tony Joe himself, I assume—on the harmonica, being raggedly beautiful. From there until very near the end, it's a fine album. White excels at re-creating small but valuable moods and feelings, which is why *Saturday Nite, Ice Cream,* and *Lazy* are particularly successful cuts. His vocals, limited by technicalities to a fairly narrow slice in that ol' country pie of emotions (Bobby Goldsboro may have that metaphor whole and intact, if he wants it), are not led into scary territory by these particular songs, and the picking behind them is right on the button. N.C.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**ANDY WILLIAMS: *Solitaire*.** Andy Williams (vocals); orchestra. *This Is All; My Love; The Dreamer; Remember;* and six others. COLUMBIA KC 32383 \$5.98, Ⓜ CA 32383 \$6.98, © CT 32383 \$6.98.

Performance: **Jus' rollin' along . . .**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Andy Williams is beginning to appear indestructible. His recording career goes on and

on, he explodes onto the charts every once in a while, and he still projects the same tasteful lyric readings, the warmly charming manner, and the relaxed underplaying that made him a star well over a decade ago. (In pop that can be computed in somewhat the same way as reckoning the age of a dog: one human year equals seven dog years, and one show-biz year equals. . . .) This album is another example of Williams' slick, but never arch or cloying, professionalism, and the production by Richard Perry purrs along as effortlessly as a Mercedes 600. The best tracks are the title song and George Harrison's *This Is All*, but nothing is less than good.

For years, Cary Grant never made any claim to being a great actor or a "serious" interpreter of mood—he just gave a lot of classy light entertainment to millions. Williams is his pop-music counterpart. The French used to



ANDY WILLIAMS  
*A chanteur de charme*

call his sort of singer a *chanteur de charme*. Deep in the throes of *le rock*, they now consider it a comic phrase. But they don't have an Andy Williams right now, either. P.R.

#### COLLECTIONS

##### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**MUSIC OF THE THIRTIES.** Gade: *Jalousie*. Rodgers: *The Blue Room; The Lady Is a Tramp*. Kern: *A Fine Romance; Pick Yourself Up*. Gershwin: *Love Is Here to Stay; Lady Be Good*. McHugh: *I Can't Believe That You're in Love with Me*. Porter: *Night and Day*. Strachey: *These Foolish Things*. Berlin: *Cheek to Cheek*. Grappelli: *Billy; Aurora; Errol; Jermyn Street*. Yehudi Menuhin (violin); Stéphane Grappelli (violin and piano); Alan Clare Trio. ANGEL SFO-36968 \$5.98.

Performance: **Irresistible**  
Recording: **Fine**

This record is just almost *too* cleverly put together: it makes me jealous that I had nothing whatever to do with it. Menuhin is playing George Plimpton again, as he did in his ventures into classical North Indian music with the sitarist Ravi Shankar. Here, of course, the unfamiliar territory is jazz, in particular the kind of mercurial, driving swing practiced in

the Thirties and Forties by a group called the Quintet of the Hot Club of France, which was built around the ineffable Belgian gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt, dead now for twenty years. Stéphane Grappelli, the violin soloist of that group (the original instrumentation was violin, three guitars, and bass), was universally conceded to be Europe's finest jazz fiddler and one of the two or three best in the world. Grappelli also had something of a reputation as a pianist, both jazz and classical.

No one could possibly say that bringing these two superb, but totally dissimilar, violinists together was a logical idea whose time had come. Grappelli had never competed in the classical league, and the embarrassing moments that have ensued when classical artists have let themselves be led into essaying jazz and pop are well known (I don't know how many readers had the macabre experience of hearing Lawrence Tibbett sing *Accentuate the Positive*, but I remember it). So the stage was set for disaster: a classical violinist, a jazz violinist, a jazz backup group, a bunch of pop tunes and four originals. What happened? A very carefully constructed miracle, that's what.

If your first question about this issue is, "Can Yehudi Menuhin swing?," the answer is, "No, he cannot." He is quite as rhythmically square as any other classical violinist you might put in his place. But the fact is that he is never called upon to swing. What he does is to play neo-Bachian lines in counterpoint to Grappelli's free-swinging improvisations, and, as openers and closers for most of the tunes, he and Grappelli play those "straight" passages in tandem (thirds and sixths, that is). When Menuhin does take a solo, which is not terribly often, his rock-steady line is used as the rhythmic base and both Grappelli and the trio flit jazzily around it. Menuhin obviously has no technical problems, and the give and take of the playing is such that one never worries how much is improvised, how much carefully rehearsed before. It must be one of the rare times in recorded history that two such totally different perceptions of rhythm have worked together.

The eight standard tunes are broken up by four Grappelli originals. Two of these—*Billy* and *Errol*—feature Grappelli solo with the backup trio. In the other two—*Aurora* and *Jermyn Street*—Menuhin is the soloist, with Grappelli *at the piano*. This latter pair is unusually fascinating, for while Menuhin is playing, the pieces are not unlike a salon piece by, say, Frederick Delius. But when the violin lets up for a moment, and the piano takes over, there is a subtle rhythmic change, like the change from salon to saloon (cocktail lounge, really) in style. The alternation is far more delightful than disturbing, and it is the sort of thing Satie would have made much of if, historically, he had ever had the chance.

I am afraid I have been so engrossed by the techniques of this record that I have not conveyed much idea of what it actually sounds like. I would hate for that to be the case. There is a sort of brilliant daffiness about the disc, the palm court both brought up to date and raised to an infinitely higher musical power, that is irresistible. The tempos are, for the most part, fast, the playing full of wit and daring, the accompaniment apt, the recording fine. I can virtually guarantee that if you hear one band of the record you'll buy it.

James Goodfriend

(Continued on page 107)

# HIRSCH-HOUCK LABS report on the KENWOOD KA-8004 STEREO AMPLIFIER

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The Who's  
 "manageably pretentious"  
**QUADROPHENIA**

Reviewed by Lester Bangs

OF the few bands surviving from the mid-Sixties English rock explosion, the Who would seem, hands down, to have the healthiest prospects for continuing. The Rolling Stones never fail to issue another solid, fully professional album each year, but they have shored up the group's corroding nucleus with the support of so many studio hacks that they now seem more a corporation than a band. The Kinks still exist, teetering on from week to week, but they have settled for being a cheerily alcoholic burlesque of themselves. And everybody else is an also-ran.

Except, as I said, the Who. They began their career in 1965 with two timelessly authentic teenage anthems, *I Can't Explain* and *My Generation*, and, as perhaps the first group in the world to make deliberate use of feedback and distortion as essential elements of performance, they were avant-garde even then. A rough crew, they were reputed to be highly volatile both on- and off-stage, a pack of pill-heads whose personal and musical tensions often broke out in physical assaults on each other. Peter Dinklage smashed his guitar at the end of every performance; it was only on special occasions that he aimed it at Keith Moon's head, and Moon was probably too busy putting his boot through the bass drum even to feel the pain.

They've never really looked back since, moving through a series of brilliant albums that feature an endlessly expanding musical palette and a never-ending harvest of thematic grist that took them far from their Mod London street-gang roots through fairy tales, a fascination with Madison Avenue, odd English mores, the miscreant as Messiah, revolutionary sloganeering, rock-and-roll as extended High Art form, and finally even into the arms of Peter Townshend's personal fave guru, Meher Baba.

The Who's new album, "Quadrophenia," represents the first real, sustained *backward* glance on their part. It traces the picaresque odyssey of a young Mod (circa 1965, and very like themselves as adolescents), and it represents a far more personal statement than their earlier two-record "rock opera," the over-celebrated "Tommy." The story of

"Quadrophenia" is as grittily simple as "Tommy"'s was pompously inflated: a working-class British kid declares himself sick of watching Mum and Dad "get pissed" every night, so, with his mates, he flees into a world of psychic energizers and revolt. The parents send him to a psychiatrist, who diagnoses him as schizophrenic. Driven by hysteria and despair, he runs away from home and has a series of adventures (including attending a performance by the early Who) whose only constant is violence. He's been taking pills and drinking throughout, so his experiences become increasingly fragmented and hallucinatory. Finally, in a climactic sprint, he steals a boat and sails out to a stark and hazily symbolic rock ("It was sticking up very jagged, but very peaceful"). There he finally overdoses on gin and speed, and experiences an epiphany in which he hears the music of heaven in the grindings of the boat's motor. But he unthinkingly switches the motor off, shattering his vision, and crumples to the rock in terminal despair. As the boat drifts away we hear him muttering: "Schizophrenic? I'm a bleeding Quadrophenic."

Of course, it's all just a handy gimmick for Townshend to make another Big Statement and simultaneously cash in on the burgeoning quadraphonic fad/revolution. But his literary ambitions are much more satisfactorily realized here than in the earlier extravaganza. "Quadrophenia"'s text, printed on the inside liner, bears a strong resemblance to the Angry Young Man strain of British working-class fiction of the late Fifties—a taste of *Roon at the Top* or perhaps Alan Sillitoe's *Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*. Enough substance, in other words, to keep you from squirming.

The music? It's basically the same stuff the Who have been hammering out for several years now—big, loud, aggressive guitars, thrashing drums, and Roger Daltrey's plaintive, perfect vocals. It has as much excitement as anyone else in the rock establishment is providing right now, but, as with "Tommy," you've got to question seriously whether it was an overdose of inspiration or ego that convinced them they needed two whole discs to get it across. All the songs inevitably run together, and there's a cut-to-cut and side-by-side sameness that vitiates the full impact.

In my mind, the real question is still whether we indeed do—or ever did—need any such preening innovation as a "rock opera" to keep popular music from becoming a snore. But that's another debate entirely: the important thing is that "Quadrophenia" is, with minor cavils, a fine, involving, manageably pretentious piece of rock artistry that might be worth your attention even if you hate both noisy guitars and Verdi.

**THE WHO: *Quadrophenia*.** John Entwistle (bass, horns); Roger Daltrey (vocals); Keith Moon (drums); Pete Townshend (guitars, synthesizer). *I Am the Sea; The Real Me; Quadrophenia; Cut My Hair; The Punk Meets the Godfather; I'm One; The Dirty Jobs; Helpless Dancer; Is It in My Head; I've Had Enough; 5:15; Sea and Sand; Drowned, Bell Boy; Doctor Jimmy; The Rock; Love, Reign o'er Me.* MCA MCA2-10004 two discs \$11.96, Ⓜ MCAT2-10004 \$12.95, Ⓜ MCAC2-10004 \$12.95.



# JAZZ



**GENE AMMONS AND JAMES MOODY:** *Chicago Concert*. Gene Ammons and James Moody (tenor saxophones); rhythm section. *Work Song: C-Iam Blues; Jim-Iam-Iug;* and three others. PRESTIGE PRST 10065 \$5.98, © M81065 \$6.95. © M51065 \$6.95.

Performance: **Summit meeting**  
Recording: **Good remote**

When you combine two tenors as formidable as James Moody and Gene Ammons with a solid rhythm section, the result is bound to be worthwhile. And this album, recorded live at Chicago's North Park Hotel two years ago, is more than just worthwhile. Ranging in mood from lusty foot-stompers to lachrymal ballads, the album is a good lesson in pre-Coltrane tenor improvisation. I was reminded of the Johnny Griffin/Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis Quintet of a decade ago, which had the same instrumentation. A working unit, the Griffin/Davis group was more close-knit, producing a more exhilarating overall sound with the added advantage of pianist Junior Mance's presence, but its two principals were a cut below Moody and Ammons as individual expressionists. Nice record. C.A.

**ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO: Phase One.** Lester Bowie (trumpet and horns); Roscoe Mitchell and Joseph Jarman (reeds, flutes, and percussion); Malachi Favors (bass, banjo, and percussion); Don Moye (percussion). *Ohnedaruth; Lebert Aaly*. PRESTIGE PR 10064 \$5.98. © M81064 \$6.95, © M51064 \$6.95.

Performance: **Half-unmasked beauty**  
Recording: **Excellent**

When I heard "Baptizum" by the Art Ensemble of Chicago a few months ago, I failed to see where the art was in the ensemble. My opinion of that album (Atlantic SD 1639) has not altered, but my regard for the AE of C has been considerably heightened after listening to "Phase One."

"Baptizum," recorded in concert at the 1972 Ann Arbor Jazz Festival, obviously captured an event that was geared more for the eyes than the ears. This earlier recording, on the other hand, was made in a Paris studio sans audience—the group had only sound with which to impress, but that they do. Frankly it is hard to believe that the men who produced the twenty-one and a half minutes of fiery music and the well-constructed solos flashing across percussive oceans on side one (*Ohnedaruth*) are the same musicians who so amateurishly stumbled through a set at Ann Arbor the following year.

But side two sadly points out the group's inconsistency. *Lebert Aaly* is a tribute to the late Albert Ayler, whose merits always escaped my comprehension. The piece starts off as a noise-making session, captures the musical miscarriages of Ayler's tenor, and never really gets off the ground. With side one fresh



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in mind, one anticipates that moment in *Lebert Aaly* when the Art Ensemble will bring it all together, but that moment never comes.

*Ohnedaruth*, however, proves that the Art Ensemble of Chicago is capable of generating great music. C.A.

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**CLIFFORD BROWN:** *The Beginning and the End*. Clifford Brown (trumpet); Chris Powell and His Blue Flames; various Philadelphia musicians. *I Come from Jamaica: Night in Tunisia; Donna Lee*; and two others. COLUMBIA KC 32284 \$5.98.

Performance: **Brown magic**  
Recording: **Mid-Fifties good**

From 1917, when it launched jazz recording with some sides by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, to the end of the Swing Era, Columbia Records covered in its releases virtually every facet of jazz development and recorded most of its major artists. Since Swing, however, the label's jazz activities have been sporadic and largely unadventurous, concentrating mostly on the obviously salable. The resulting gap has become particularly noticeable with the current surge in blues and bop reissues, but now—thanks to marketing vice president Bruce Lundvall, whose taste runs in the right direction—part of the gap has been filled with the acquisition of a truly remarkable informal session featuring the late Clifford Brown.

The tapes, a precious half hour of astonishing trumpet improvisation with spirited local support, were to be Brownie's last—a few hours later the twenty-five-year-old contender

for Dizzy Gillespie's throne died in an automobile accident on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Clifford Brown's recording career had started less than four years earlier with noteworthy solos on two r-&b selections by Chris Powell and His Blue Flames. Those sides, included in this album, give more than a hint of what was to come, and the last session—captured by Fred Miles' tape recorder in a Philadelphia music store—constitutes a final statement bursting with creative energy from a source that had barely been tapped.

Brown is brilliant throughout, and his phenomenal interpretation of Charlie Parker's *Donna Lee* might make you consider getting a reserve copy of this album. And, although Brown himself certainly attracts the limelight, his sidemen are not exactly fugitives from Major Bowes: tenorman Mel "Ziggy" Vines, an obscure Lester Young disciple, can be heard on only one other record, but his solo on *Walkin'* makes one wonder why; Billy Root, who at twenty-two had already played with Roy Eldridge, Bennie Green, and Stan Kenton, was soon to join the Dizzy Gillespie band; pianist Sam Dockerty was on the brink of joining Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. They all contribute substantially.

Recorded far better than one could expect, given the circumstances, and exceeding in technical quality even some commercial recordings of the day, Clifford Brown's final message explodes with most impressive musical thought. C.A.

**RON CARTER:** *Blues Farm*. Ron Carter (bass and piccolo bass); Hubert Laws (flutes); Billy Cobham (drums); others. *A Hymn for Him; Django; Two-Beat Johnson*; and three others.

CTI 6027 \$5.98, Ⓟ CT8 6027 \$6.95, © CTC 6027 \$6.95.

Performance: **Excellent**  
Recording: **Bad Van Gelder**

This is the sort of album that sends your neighbors up the wall or to your door with a complaint. That the music is above average matters not: Ron Carter is a bass player, and whoever did the remix made sure we also knew that he was the leader at this session. As it happens, my upstairs neighbors live in a quadrasonic-sound-dominated apartment where they somehow manage to find room for furniture and themselves. Whenever my woofers send up unwanted vibrations they simply combat the annoyance with an all-stops-out playing of Eumir Deodato's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. But I suspect they will soon add "Blues Farm" to their collection, so I better express my own satisfaction with the album before Ron Carter begins to descend from my ceiling.

Carter's background includes classical training and work that ranges from a symphony orchestra to some of the top modern jazz groups. One important experience was working with Miles Davis in the days when Herbie Hancock and Tony Williams completed the rhythm section. We hear the fruits of that experience here, though not as representatively as on "Uptown Conversations." Carter's previous release on the Embryo label. That album also featured Hubert Laws and Billy Cobham, and it remains Carter's best. "Blues Farm" is not to be dismissed, however, for second best in this case is extremely good: the performances are professional and tasteful, the material—all but one composition were



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written by Carter—is excellent, and Messrs. Carter and Laws work well together. The only drawback is Rudy Van Gelder's studio, which has too much echo for a group of this size. C.A.

**GABOR SZABO:** *Mizrab*. Gabor Szabo (guitar); Marvin Stamm (trumpet); Hubert Laws (alto and bass flutes); Ron Carter and Chuck Israels (bass); Billy Cobham and Jack DeJohnette (drums); Bob James arr. and cond. *Thirteen: Mizrab*; and three others. CTI 6026 \$5.98. © CT8 6026 \$6.98. © CTC 6026 \$6.98.

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

As we have come to expect from Creed Taylor's CTI label, this is an album of often lush, always tasteful music featuring an outstanding soloist backed by an impressive assemblage of studio musicians and jazz stars. The result is neither earth-shaking nor particularly innovative, but if arranger/conductor Bob James intended to create mood music of a high order he has succeeded.

Hungarian-born guitarist Gabor Szabo is not very exciting, but he is good and he does well in this context. If Hubert Laws and Marvin Stamm had been allowed to emerge from hiding within the arrangements, this album would surely have risen above the mood-music level. C.A.

#### COLLECTIONS

**THE EDDIE CONDON CONCERTS:** *Town Hall 1944. Just Before Daybreak* (James P. Johnson); *Rose Room* (Edmond Hall); *Uncle Sam Blues* (Hot Lips Page); *Sneakaway* (Willie the Lion Smith); *My Monday Date* (Earl Hines); *China Boy* (Sidney Bechet); *Impromptu Ensemble #3* (Condon et al.); and eleven others. CHIAROSCURO CR 113 \$5.98.

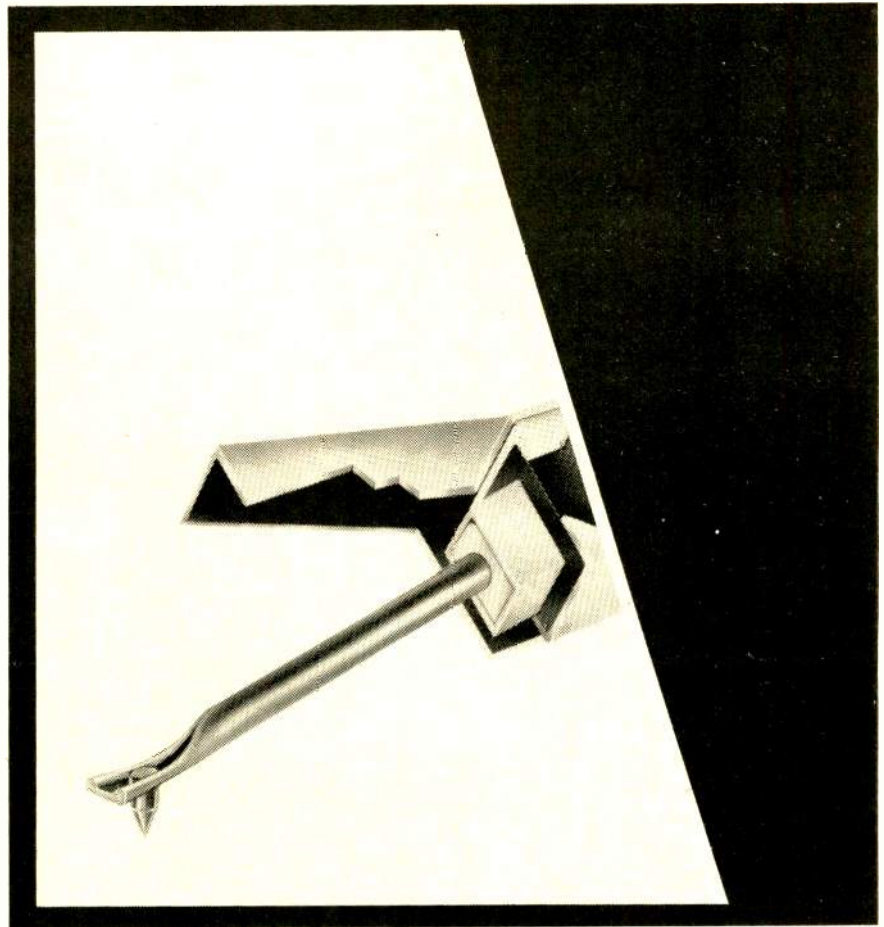
Performance: **Marvelous**  
Recording: **Good, considering**

This is the second in a series of reissues of Eddie Condon's famous Town Hall jazz concerts of the 1940's, taken from Armed Forces Radio Service transcriptions.

The previous set in this series featured the raspy clarinet of Pee Wee Russell. This one is about evenly divided between the agile clarinet of Edmond Hall and a heavy line-up of redoubtable pianists including Earl Hines, Cliff Jackson, Willie the Lion Smith, Gene Schroeder, and Jess Stacy. The poetic and honeyed soprano sax of Sidney Bechet, the trumpet of Hot Lips Page, and the agile, nudging drums of Gene Krupa are also present.

All of the music is rewarding and refreshing, but I am most taken by Cliff Jackson's *There'll Be Some Changes Made*. He had a near-violent approach to keyboard jazz, particularly on a tune like *Changes*, that I find fascinating. Jackson recorded sporadically for small labels, and his style seems to have burned itself up in a few high-flame years, though he continued to play into the 1960's. Here he is at his peak.

The best thing about this album is the feeling of camaraderie between musicians and audience. Those were the years before jazz became Art and broke up into spheres of musico-politico-socio-racial orthodoxies. And it is evident that everyone at Town Hall was having a hell of a good time and that a lot of good music got made J.V.



## Straight talk about a stylus

Listen carefully and you can still hear some audiophiles refer to the record stylus as... "the needle." Although we are not about to quibble over semantics, we would like to go on record, so to speak, as observing that the stylus of today bears no more resemblance to a needle than it does to a ten-penny nail. In fact, it is probably the most skillfully assembled, critically important component in any high fidelity system. It must maintain flawless contact with the undulating walls of the record groove—at the whisper-weight tracking forces required to preserve the fidelity of your records through repeated playings. We put everything we know into our Shure Stereo Dynetic Stylus Assemblies—and we tell all about it in an informative booklet. "Visit To The Small World Of A Stylus." For your copy, write:



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# CHOOSING SIDES

By IRVING KOLODIN



## THE PRIVATE WORLD OF GLENN GOULD

ON an occasion when Arnold Schoenberg was asked to relate the circumstances that changed him from an evolutionary to a revolutionary composer, he explained that it was a matter of historical necessity, adding, "No one wanted to be Schoenberg, so I decided to take the job." In a like manner, it could be said that it was a historic inevitability that some performer would one day prefer the electronic life of the recording studio to that of the touring concert virtuoso—and no one but Glenn Gould wanted to be Glenn Gould.

The latest evidence of that preference is, as it has been from time to time for much of a decade, another batch of Glenn Gould recordings from Columbia. I say "for much of a decade" because André Watts has recently been celebrating the tenth anniversary of his highly successful New York debut in February of 1963, and I, for one, have not forgotten that it was as a result of Gould's decision *not* to play with the New York Philharmonic that the then-unknown Watts did. If Gould has since played in a New York concert hall or in a hall in any other major American city (other than to musically illustrate a lecture), it has escaped my notice.

Is there a Gould public? Presumably there still is: Columbia is no more celebrated for philanthropy than any other record company, and if Gould's records don't sell, it is as certain as that Monday follows Sunday that they wouldn't continue to issue them. But the question perhaps ought to be, Is there a public for Gould beyond the one that dotes on his eccentricities? After listening with various degrees of responsiveness to his provocative—meaning "provoking"—performances of four French Suites of Bach (Nos. 1 through 4), a dollop of Mozart (the Sonatas K. 331, K. 533, K. 545, and the D Minor Fantasy K. 397), the Opus 31 sonatas of Beethoven, the three sonatas of Hindemith, and his own transcriptions of Wagner's *Meistersinger* Prelude, the *Siegfried Idyll*, and the *Rhine Journey* from *Götterdämmerung* (the catalog numbers are in an ascending sequence from Columbia M 32347 to M 32351), I doubt it. I must say, with all the politeness I can muster, that the recording studio has rarely known such a demonstration of self-indulgence since Ernest Wolff recorded his performances of Brahms, Franz, and other lieder to his own piano accompaniment. The analogy is the more unfortunately apt in that Gould's happy

humming to his piano playing is all too audibly preserved in these recordings.

The message to his fellow performers that emerges from Gould's centuries-spanning sequence is, "Anything you can do, I can do different." Even at his least persuasive, he is still a musician whose mental and physical machinery is splendidly oiled, the gears firmly meshed, the edges impeccably tooled. But I am curious to know why the abrupt shifts from low gear to high, why the insistence on page after page (to take the Bach suites as an instance) of phraseology in which measure after measure is stamped out like cookies from a cookie cutter, and further, why are the occasional deviations from this pattern themselves monitored with the mathematical regularity of a turntable goosed up on cue from 33 to 45 rpm?

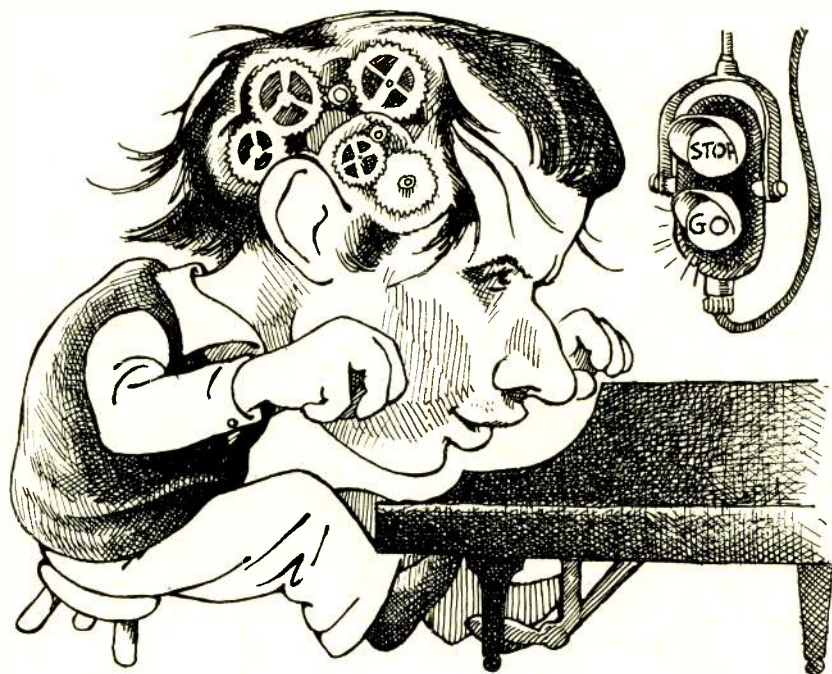
If the imagery used suggests a view of the mind as a machine, it is simply because the character of these performances is primarily cerebral. As one privileged to experience, at the source, the invigorating, life-enhancing

Bach of Harold Samuel, Casals, Szigeti, Friskin, Landowska, and a dozen others. I can only say that I listen in vain, in Gould's bloodless exercises, for some measure of the passion, humor, urgency, and eloquence that characterized their playing.

What, then, of the music of Mozart and Beethoven, those men of more "modern" impulses and motivations? Here too I find the Gould range to be, in the aggregate, mechanical, from faster-than-fast to slower-than-slow. In the slow category, one must mention the *Andante grazioso* of Mozart's A Major Sonata (K. 331), the mincing treatment of which would, I suspect, have impelled Mozart to language even more famously scatological than that he addressed to his cousin. The Fantasy in D Minor? D Minor, yes; fantasy, no; for it is but another example of a monumentally idiosyncratic misreading of Mozart, one that prepares us all too prophetically for Gould's imminent dismemberment of the Beethoven sonatas.

Here we are back in the world of Gould's Olympian overview of Beethoven, a world in which the *Pathétique* Sonata is described in terms of "the somewhat stage-struck character of its doom-foretelling double-dotted rhythm." It is this fatal propensity for formalizing musical meanings, for erecting superstructures of intellectual vacuity (the comparison of Webern and Hindemith in Gould's annotation for the latter's sonatas is an example of this), that constantly corrupts, debases, and finally nullifies the reasoning powers that originally earned respect for Gould as a musical thinker.

SEEMINGLY, such debasement could reach no greater fulfillment than that Gould attains in his Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, but it is dangerous to underrate virtuosity, even when it relates only to self-indulgence. Thus, though it takes no small talent to reduce a Mozartian *Andante grazioso* to the lethargy of a Regerian *Andantino pomposo*, only the greatest exercise of the will would suffice to extend a famously succinct and beautifully proportioned musical entity by *more than a*



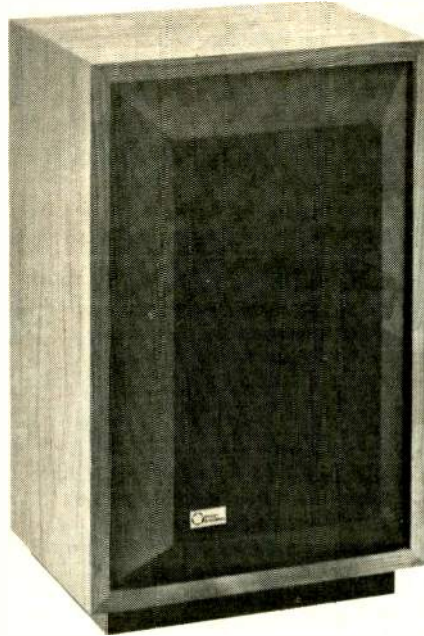
third of the time span normally assigned to it. The first warning of things to come in the Gould "transcription" of the *Siegfried Idyll* is the label timing of 23:39. This is even longer than the celebrated *Adagio* rendering by Leonard Bernstein in the early Sixties. Going by the median timing of seventeen minutes entered in my copy of the miniature score, it adds more than six minutes, or approximately 35 per cent, to a work so carefully calculated that hardly a superfluous note, let alone an extraneous measure, can be identified by the most scrupulous fault-finder. Had Gould's pace prevailed at Triebtschen on that Christmas morning in 1870, Cosima Wagner might very well have drifted back to sleep and failed to hear the conclusion of the combination Christmas-birthday present Wagner had created for her. As for Gould's didactic delivery of the *Meistersinger* Prelude (with every fugal entrance poked into the listener's ears so he will recoil and remember), it suggests some performance-to-come in which the winner of the song contest will not be Walther von Stolzing but Frederick Beckmesser.

The mystifying question mark that arises from this succession of duds and soporifics (I except only the Hindemith, which is beautifully formed) is: To whom are they addressed? To Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, or Wagner, the composers who created them? Hardly. To me or to you, as music lovers keenly interested in the subject matter and eagerly awaiting new illuminations of it? Not really. It is hardly to be denied, I think, that they are primarily directed *inward*, to Gould himself. It is a case of *mirrorrorrim* (a term that another, pre-Gould, Canadian named Gerald Strang applied to a composition which worked as well backward as forward), with Gould not only the arranger and performer but the audience as well—and all three at the same time.

**T**HIS is to me the curious consequence of Gould's isolation from public contacts over much of the last decade. He has sacrificed the tempering that comes from rising regularly to the challenge of "once more into the breach" on the battlefield of the concert stage and retreated to the safety of the recording and TV studio. There, hermetically sealed and air-conditioned, he can banish sweat, eliminate body odors, and encourage artificiality until human emotion itself is rendered nonexistent. The result is all too consistently evident in these sad samples of musical devaluation, gold into Gould.

Ending, as we started, with Schoenberg, some may perhaps recall that, at a lecture in Cincinnati in 1964, Gould observed: "What then has really been the effect of this new world of sound introduced by Schoenberg? . . . I think there can be no doubt that its fundamental effect has been to separate audience and composer. . . ." I would like to suggest to Glenn Gould, whose talents I respect and whose abilities I have often admired, that he has done somewhat the same thing—separate audience and performer—in the last decade. He has become a mere servant of the technical opportunities presented by the recording process rather than their master. After his first contact with Gould some years ago, the late George Szell is reported to have commented: "This nut is a genius." Szell was a man of few, though well-chosen words. But had he lived to hear these recordings, he might feel that, for present purposes, he had gotten the order of his words reversed.

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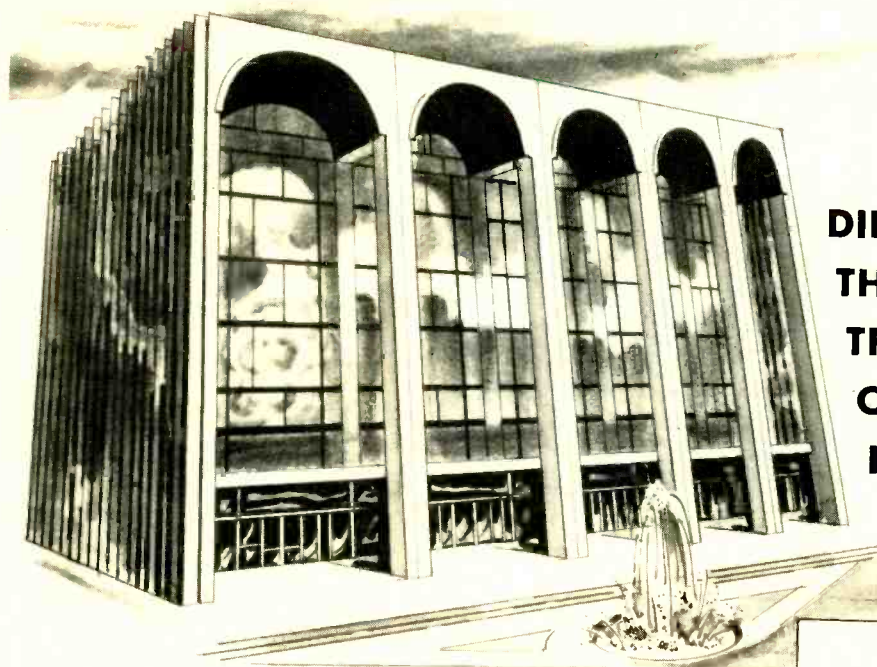
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### THE OPERAS IN FEBRUARY

#### LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN

Hoffmann, a poet, is in love with a prima donna. He tells his drinking companions the story of his three past loves—a mechanical doll, a courtesan, and an innocent young girl. His prima donna, he confides, is all three but when she comes to pick him up after her performance she finds him dead drunk.

#### LA BOHEME

Perhaps the best-loved of all operas. Much of Puccini's early life went into this score and he himself would sob at little Mimi's pathetic fate. When Toscanini conducted it fifty years after the world premiere, which he had also conducted, Olin Downes of *The New York Times* hailed it as music of "imperishable youth."

#### OTELLO

The year is 1887 and there were those who thought Italian opera was dead. "And then one evening at the Scala in Milan," Franz Werfel tells it, "the tremendous, dissonant opening chord of *Otello* came crashing out, that blow of a giant's fist smashing the stone of the tomb. 'I am here still,' Italian opera cried."

#### DER ROSENKAVALIER

Richard Strauss once boasted he could describe a silver spoon in music. Here he tonally fashions for us a silver rose. With his matchless librettist he also tells the bittersweet story of a gallant lady who looks in her mirror and knows it is time—time to give up her young lover to the girl who appears in the second act.

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DATE	OPERA	COMPOSER	TIME (E. T.)
<b>1973</b>			
Dec. 8	L'ITALIANA IN ALGERI (Rossini)		2:00
Dec. 15	DIE ZAUBERFLOETE (Mozart)		2:00
Dec. 22	RIGOLETTO (Verdi)		2:00
Dec. 29	MANON LESCAUT (Puccini)		2:00
<b>1974</b>			
Jan. 5	SALOME (R. Strauss)		2:00
Jan. 12	CARMEN (Bizet)		1:30
Jan. 19	SIMON BOCCANEGRA (Verdi)		2:00
Jan. 26	TRISTAN UND ISOLDE (Wagner)		1:00
Feb. 2	LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN (Offenbach)		2:00
Feb. 9	OTELLO (Verdi)		2:00
Feb. 16	LA BOHEME (Puccini)		2:00
Feb. 23	DER ROSENKAVALIER (R. Strauss)		1:30
Mar. 2	IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA (Rossini)		2:00
Mar. 9	I VESPRI SICILIANI (Verdi)		2:00
Mar. 16	LES TROYENS (Berlioz)		1:00
Mar. 23	DIE GOETTERDAEMMERUNG (Wagner)		12:30
Mar. 30	MADAMA BUTTERFLY (Puccini)		2:00
Apr. 6	L'ELISIR D'AMORE (Donizetti)		1:30
Apr. 13	DON GIOVANNI (Mozart)		2:00
Apr. 20	PARSIFAL (Wagner)		1:00
Apr. 27	*TURANDOT (Puccini)		1:30

*Schedule subject to change*

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# CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • IGOR KIPNIS  
PAUL KRESH • ERIC SALZMAN

**BACH, J.S.: *Brandenburg Concertos (Original Version)*.** Alan Loveday and Iona Brown (violins); Stephen Shingles and Margaret Major (violas); Roderick and Kenneth Skeaping (viola da gamba); Kenneth Heath (cello); David Munrow and John Turner (recorders); Claude Monteux (flute); Neil Black (oboe); Barry Tuckwell (horn); Thurston Dart, Philip Ledger, Raymond Leppard, George Malcolm, and Colin Tilney (harpsichord); Colin Tilney (organ); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. PHILIPS 6700 045 two discs \$13.96.

Performance: **Fascinating document**  
Recording: **Good**

Before he died so prematurely in 1971, Thurston Dart had been working for some years on the earlier versions of the Brandenburg Concertos. It is known, of course, that before Bach wrote out his presentation copy of the six concertos for the Margrave of Brandenburg in 1721 the pieces already existed in some previous state. For example, the First Concerto did not yet have its allegro (third) movement or the polacca, or second trio, in the final menuetto; the famous cadenza in the first movement of the Fifth Concerto was considerably shorter in its earlier version; Concerto No. 6, possibly the earliest of the set, may have been derived in part from a Weimar cantata; and so forth.

All of this has been discussed in print by a variety of musicologists. Dart included. But it is only with these recordings that we have the

opportunity of actually hearing the pre-Brandenburg concertos. Some of the concertos vary from their better-known editions only very slightly (No. 6, for example, where there are only some different bass figurations and



CATHY BERBERIAN  
*A brilliant realization of Berio's meta-work*

additional ornamentation), but others vary dramatically, depending on how familiar you are with the later version. Most of the really dramatic contrast has to do with matters of instrumentation (or speculation as to what kind of instrument Bach intended for a certain part), and here, of course, Dart's reasoning, for all his authority, is apt to cause the greatest controversy. For example, on the basis of Bach's instrumental description of "*Tromba o vero corno da caccia*" and the keys that Bach wrote for trumpet and horn, Dart believed that at least for this earlier version of the Second Concerto a French horn (rather than a trumpet) was the desired brass instrument, sounding, of course, an octave below where the high trumpet does. Similarly, in Concerto No. 4, Bach's indication of *flauti d'echo* meant flageolets to Dart rather than recorders, the flageolets (played here by soprano recorders) sounding one octave

higher than written. Depending on how open your mind is to this, you may be either startled, intrigued, or violently disconcerted. Dart's explanations, as always, are utterly reasonable in print, but the biggest obstacle is, naturally, having become used to hearing the concertos in their more "normal" versions, particularly with the high trumpet in No. 2 and the lower-pitched recorders in No. 4.

A few more descriptive comments are in order. Except for No. 1, the concertos are played one person per part. Organ continuo is used in No. 6, two harpsichords in No. 1; in the remaining concertos, the harpsichord duties, following Dart's death (he was able to record only a handful of movements), are split between a group of Britain's most distinguished harpsichordists—Philip Ledger, Raymond Leppard, Colin Tilney, and, supplying a dazzling short version cadenza in No. 5, George Malcolm. The instrumental playing throughout is on a very high level. I must admit, however, to a couple of disappointments. The sonics are good, but the strings have an edgy quality about them; where is the glow one admires so much in the Academy's Argo recordings? Second, the tempos, particularly in fast movements, are dangerously unrelenting; they are fast, which is neither bad nor good necessarily, but they are also often hectic, unrelaxed, unsmiling, certainly very different in mood from the set Dart himself directed for *L'Oiseau-Lyre*. Perhaps the effect of Dart's illness, his having to be taken to the hospital mid-sessions, and his death a month later cast a pall on the proceedings. In any case, this is a very specialized set, one that will have to be listened to quite a number of times to make its proper impact. *I.K.*

## RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BERIO: *Recital I (For Cathy)*.** Cathy Berberian (soprano); London Sinfonietta, Luciano Berio cond. RCA ARI 1-0036 \$5.98.

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

Berio's recital for Cathy Berberian is a long anguished monologue for a singer suffocating in her own culture. Spoken texts—by Berio

### Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
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- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel quadrasonic tape
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Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol (M)

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

himself, with references—alternate with musical fragments from Monteverdi to Bach to *Lakmé* to Wagner to Schoenberg, Prokofiev, Leonard Bernstein, Marlene Dietrich, and Berio himself. The instrumental music—keyboards all over the place, obsessive winds and strings—is a similar tissue of obsessions and quotations closing in on the poor soprano and crushing her like some absurd costume of silks and baubles. Poor lady, she must bear the weight of all the debris of Western civilization—centuries worth heaped on her shoulders—and all the while pretend (to herself as well as to us) that she is upholding culture, *Kultur*, kulchaaaah . . . saving and preserving the very thing that is destroying her.

Like many of Berio's theater pieces this is a meta-work: a recital about the act of reciting, a cultural act about the act of culture, music-theater about the agony of music/theater ("There must be some place in the world," she cries, "that isn't a theater [always this need for words]" and then goes hopelessly back to words and theater). At the end of the first side she similarly sings an old, traditional-culture song which turns out to be by Berio himself in a style he shortly abandoned; no liberation there. Only at the end of the entire *Recital* does she escape her impending burlesque doom-by-culture into a deliciously ambiguous (and highly cultural) "Lied." This final lyric effusion corresponds to the clarity and certainty of the Monteverdi we hear at the opening—but it is also unclear and uncertain, curiously satisfying although it resolves nothing. It appears to be the only originally composed vocal music in the whole work!

Except for one lapse—"Play it again, Sam", at the beginning of Side 2; Woody Allen did it better—the work is brilliantly conceived and equally brilliantly realized by Cathy Berberian. It is, of course, designed to show her amazing versatility. The staggering load that she manages to shoulder is the history of Western music plus a stand-up meta-monologue, all in thirty-five minutes, and you never doubt her for a moment. The performance, directed by Berio himself, with the excellent London Sinfonietta players, is effective. More might have been made of the medium itself in recording a work like this, but, in a traditional, cultural way, the sound is good. E.S.

**BRAHMS: *Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 120: No. 1, in F Minor; No. 2, in E-flat Major.*** Mitchell Lurie (clarinet); Leona Lurie (piano). CRYSTAL S301 \$5.98.

Performance: **Occasionally wayward**  
Recording: **Somewhat cavernous**

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**BRAHMS: *Sonatas for Clarinet and Piano, Op. 120: No. 1, in F Minor; No. 2, in E-flat Major.*** Harold Wright (clarinet); Harris Goldsmith (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1496 \$2.99 (plus 75¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **First-rate**  
Recording: **Likewise**

Since my school days I have cherished Brahms' two clarinet sonatas, among the loveliest blooms of the composer's last year, and as one of my first experiences in recording production I had the pleasure of working with Reginald Kell and Mieczyslaw Horszowski when they taped their fine performance for a short-lived Mercury issue.

It is in this same high class that I place the recorded performance by Harold Wright and Harris Goldsmith, originally issued on CBS' ill-fated Crossroads label in late 1967 and now happily reissued by the Musical Heritage Society. In the interim, Mr. Wright has become first-chair clarinet of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, and both artists have been represented on the RCA Victor label with the lovely Schumann Op. 73 *Fantasiestücke* for clarinet and piano. For justness of pacing, refinement of phrasing, and command of subtle dynamic gradation and tonal coloration, I find the Wright-Goldsmith collaboration wonderfully satisfying. The excellent sound of the Crossroads release has been, if anything, improved on the Musical Heritage Society disc.

Other than the good but slightly heavy-handed performances by David and Frank



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With Trampler, sizzling in Dvořák quartets

Glazer as part of a Vox Box Brahms chamber-music album, the new Crystal disc by the Lurie husband-and-wife team is the only recorded performance of the clarinet sonatas available in retail stores. Mitchell Lurie is a seasoned veteran of the orchestral battlefield, having served as first clarinet in both Pittsburgh and Chicago. It is unfortunate that all the lyrical feeling he and Leona Lurie bring to their performance is undone to a large extent by a far too distant microphone placement that gives the resulting recorded sound a cold and somewhat cavernous quality. I also take sharp exception, in terms of personal taste, to the drastic slowing down in the middle movement of the E-flat Sonata for the sublime chorale melody that forms its centerpiece.

It's well worth \$3.74 and waiting for the slower-than-ever postman to obtain the Wright-Goldsmith disc. D.H.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**CAGE: *Three Dances for Two Amplified Prepared Pianos.*** Michael Tilson Thomas and Ralph Grierson (pianos). **REICH: *Four Organs for Four Electric Organs and Maracas.*** Michael Tilson Thomas, Ralph Grierson, Roger Kellaway and Steve Reich (organs); Tom Raney (maracas). ANGEL S-36059 \$5.98.

Performance: **Excellent**  
Recording: **A bit dry**

This recording is notable on several counts. It is a rare entry by Angel into the contemporary

field, a souvenir of the Ojai Festival in California, and a pairing of two notable pieces. It also suggests connections between the old, orientaling American post-avant-garde of the late Thirties and Forties and the new post-avant-garde music of slow changes.

The early music of John Cage belongs to and is an outstanding representative of a fascinating and largely forgotten movement (oh, how we destroy our real history in favor of Disneyland fantasies!) that turned the West—it was California-centered—toward the East. Cage's prepared piano was, among other things, a one-man gamelan, and his long-term interest in Eastern ideas is mirrored in the rhythmical/modal structures: patterns and cycles of repetition of highly distinctive percussive colors. Cage's music (not necessarily his underlying ideas) have changed so radically in the intervening years that it is easy to forget that he was once the master of a really simple and beautiful art, very closely allied to the dance.

The dances here, written in 1944-1945, are a kind of apotheosis of his rhythmical/prepared-piano period. The preparations—nuts, bolts, screws, washers, and whatnot between the strings—are the most complex of any of his works, and the rhythmical modes, cycles, and changes are equally rich. The musical results are very engaging.

Steve Reich's music sounds anything but engaging even to the initiated. The bursts and increasingly sustained organ tones with the endless swatch of maracas eighths in *Four Organs* may not immediately suggest many connections to the Cage prepared piano, but the connections are nonetheless real. Reich has, in fact, pursued the study of both African drumming and the Balinese gamelan—not out of ethnic interest but because those traditions have elements of long-range rhythmic cycle and process that are his primary concern. His music is a slow-motion composing-out of sound shifts. There are obvious analogies to so-called minimalism in the visual arts—analogs that Reich rejects in favor of such terms as "process" or (ambiguous, this one) "structural." In fact, however, one important branch of minimal art was (is?) involved with the creation of "primary structures," and primary structures are certainly what Reich creates. Of course, structure in music is not static but involves change, and controlled, predetermined change—and its perception—is what Reich's music is all about. (Even a Don Judd primary structure sitting in a museum changes as you walk around it: in a Reich piece, it's the performers who make the changes for you). At any rate, the notion of slow, cyclical, or phased change is central to this music, and it is interesting that, at a time when the global electronic network suggests seemingly endless possibilities, there should a reactive refocusing inward on the minute details of making and perceiving sound. The changes that take place in *Four Organs* might be a twenty-four-minute spinning out of a single arpeggio taking only a few seconds of a Bach organ prelude.

Like the early work of Cage, Reich's music is rhythmic. Most listeners more easily (and gratefully) perceive this in his highly rhythmic tape pieces or in a work of obviously kinetic appeal like *Drumming*, written after his visit to Ghana. *Four Organs*, with its changing pattern of sustained notes, is subtler, more of an abstraction. It is a demonstration piece that makes no case at all for listening, hearing, and retaining the audible sense of process that Reich says he wants to be heard. The process



of this piece is not "cultural" but invented by Reich for the occasion; therefore, it is purely arbitrary and not at all part of the socializing process of creating, remembering, playing, listening, remembering, hearing, noting, expecting, forgetting, following, remembering. . . .

Both of the works on this disc were originally performed at the 1973 Ojai Festival—of which Michael Tilson Thomas is the music director—and later recorded in Los Angeles. The performances are excellent. The recordings seem a little dry, though; the Cage in particular seems to want a bit more air around it. *E.S.*

**DEBUSSY:** *Prélude à l'Après-Midi d'un Faune; Petite Suite* (see POULENC)

**DURANTE:** *Four Concertos for Strings and Continuo.* Collegium Aureum. Rolf Reinhardt cond. BASF KHB 21681 \$5.98.

Performance: **Very satisfactory**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Francesco Durante (1684-1755) was a Neapolitan whose output consisted largely of church music. In contrast to some of his contemporaries, Leonardo Leo, Alessandro Scarlatti, Corelli, or, say, Handel, he was a bit of a conservative, interested in correctness of part writing, conventional contrapuntal effects, and an older style of writing linked with church use rather than the newer operatic style which he mainly eschewed. He had a bevy of important pupils, including Pergolesi and Paisiello, and he was considered an important teacher in Italy. Of his eight Quartetti Concertanti, a sampling of which may be heard in the four works contained on this disc, the writing is above all lyrical: most of the string writing is very rich in texture and harmony, as well as expressive in affect, though there is virtually no solo display to be heard.

Durante's ability to engross the listener is on a distinctly lower plane than, say, Corelli's in his Concerti Grossi: there are some fine moments, but the composer is not always able to sustain inspiration as were the greatest of his contemporaries. Nevertheless, these four concertos will prove themselves a worthy example of the instrumental capabilities of an important second-rank late-Baroque composer: it is music that lends itself most effectively to late-night listening, for example. The seventeen-member Collegium Aureum performs these works with a slightly languorous approach (a more detached and sprightly style might have made the music sound more exciting), but the level of ensemble playing is first-class. The reproduction, considering the fact that the music was recorded eleven years ago, is very satisfactory. *I.K.*

**RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT**

**DVOŘÁK:** *Piano Quartet No. 1, in D Major, Op. 23; Piano Quartet No. 2, in E-flat Major, Op. 87.* Walter Trampler (viola): Beaux Arts Trio. PHILIPS 6500 452 \$6.98.

Performance: **Good No. 1; sizzling No. 2**  
Recording: **Splendid**

Not only has Philips carried off a fine bit of packaging by getting both of the Dvořák piano quartets on a single disc, they also have come up with a pair of splendid performances, splendidly recorded.

The D Major Quartet dates from 1875, when the composer was just getting the hang of managing, with some degree of ease, the

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major instrumental forms. Of the three movements, the slow-movement variations and the succeeding scherzo-finale fall most pleasingly on the ear, verging on top-drawer Dvořák. The E-flat Quartet, composed almost fifteen years later, is the work of a fully matured master and is endowed with the combination of spontaneity and absolute command of form and substance that marked Dvořák's output of the late 1880's. The impassioned slow movement and the scherzo, with its delightful cymbalom effect for piano, are my particular favorites among the many fine pages of this work.

Pianist Menahem Pressler and his colleagues face stiff competition from the recorded performance of Op. 87 by Artur Schnabel and members of the Guarneri Quartet. But in my opinion this new recording has the upper hand not only because of the sizzling vitality of the playing, but also because of the extraordinarily rich and well-balanced recorded sound achieved by the Philips engineering staff. A highly recommendable disc on all counts—especially for listeners just becoming acquainted with the classics of the chamber-music repertoire. *D.H.*

**HANDEL: Cantatas. Nel dolce dell'oblio (Pensieri notturni di Filii); Ah, che troppo inegali.** Elly Ameling (soprano); Hans-Martin Linde (recorder); Johannes Koch (viola da gamba); Gustav Leonhardt (harpsichord continuo); Collegium Aureum. *Silite Venti.* Halina Lukomska (soprano); Helmut Hücke (oboe); Collegium Aureum, Rolf Reinhardt dir. *Recitative and Aria: Look down, harmonious Saint (Praise of Harmony).* Theo Altmeyer (tenor); Collegium Aureum, Reinhard Peters cond. *Joseph: Overture.* Collegium Aureum, Rolf Reinhardt dir. BASF KHF 21687 two discs \$9.98.

Performance: **Very good to excellent**  
Recording: **Excellent**

This interesting collection of Handel vocal works stems from early in the composer's career (the Italian cantatas sung quite exquisitely by Elly Ameling), mid-career in England (the nearly half-hour-long *Silite Venti*, effectively performed by Halina Lukomska), and almost the end of his life (the remarkable recitative and aria, "Praise of Harmony," well sung, if not with the most idiomatic pronunciation, by Theo Altmeyer). In addition to the vocal pieces, which involve sacred as well as secular texts, there is one orchestral item, the overture to Handel's 1744 oratorio, *Joseph and His Brethren*, not otherwise available on discs. The selections are certainly of more than average interest to Handel collectors, and the performances are on the whole very good ones, observing such stylistic niceties as discreet da capo embellishments, added vocal cadenzas, and an apropos instrumental transparency.

It should be noted, however, that the contents of these two discs come from three separate Harmonia Mundi collections, all recorded around 1964 or before: RCA Victrola issued these in this country in 1967, and they are still available as the following: VICS 1264, *Silite Venti* and the *Joseph Overture*; VICS 1275, the two Italian cantatas with Elly Ameling plus that soprano's version of Bach's Cantata No. 209, "Non

*sà che sia dolore*"; VICS 1281, Altmeyer singing Handel's "Praise of Harmony," the other side of the disc containing in addition Bach's Wedding Cantata (No. 202) in a lovely performance by Elly Ameling. According to my figuring, the three RCA Victrola discs with their two additional Bach Cantatas add up to just under nine dollars, in comparison with a ten-dollar price tag for the BASF two-disc version minus the Bach. Finally, all of these discs reproduce very satisfactorily. BASF provides texts in the original languages only ("Praise of Harmony" is the only one in English), whereas Victrola offers some translations in addition to all the texts. *I.K.*

**HANUS: The Czech Year, Op. 24.** Jan Kühn Children's Choir; Antonín Sidlo (piano); Chamber Ensemble of the Czech Philharmonic; Prague Radio Symphony, Jan Kühn cond. SERENUS SRS 12046 \$6.98.

Performance: **Not innovative but nice**  
Recording: **Very good**

Jan Hanus is a Czech composer born in Prague in 1915, and the influences of Dvořák and Smetana on his style have been conspicuous all during his career. Like Dvořák, he has found his inspiration in folk material, but much of his work has been for children—children's songs, children's studies for piano and other instruments. The present work was written for children's chorus and small orchestra, and performances of it have become something of a tradition in Czechoslovakia during the Christmas season. The popularity

(Continued on page 118)

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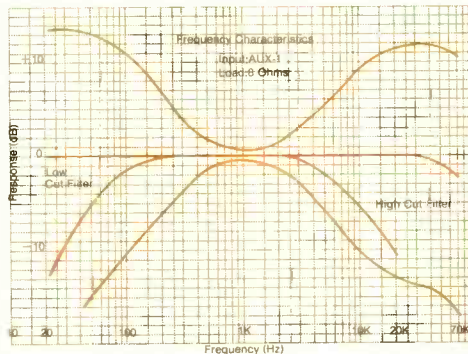
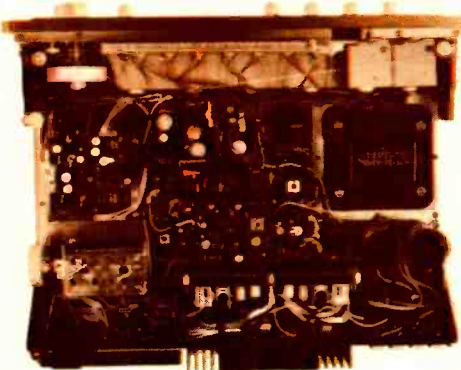
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of this chronicle of the seasons in song is easy to understand. The music is melodious, ebullient, even humorous in places, and everywhere expertly crafted. It is also strictly traditional in every sense, without a single chord that could offend a commissar.

The record sorely needs a text, with which it does not come, but the notes provide an inkling of the contents: verses related to "Nature, the flowers, trees, streams, winds, the sun and rain, the clouds, the animals that are found in the . . . forests and in the farmyard." At the same time, there are frequent references to God, Jesus, Mary, the saints. And there are singing games, ballads, plays on words that probably would be entertaining enough if the listener were let in on their contents. The opening section, *Spring*, pertains to Eastertide; *Summer* stresses the children's joy in nature and the games they play; *Autumn* brings rather literal effects of falling leaves and the chill of equinoctial winds; and *Winter* deals with the theme of a country Christmas in Bohemia. I don't know of many American children who would be content to sit still through all this, but the adult listener will find the score diverting enough—abounding in pastoral harmonies, hummable melodies, and wholesome energy. Yet, in sum, this is the contribution of a musical academician, and there are few surprises. P.K.

**LASSO:** *Chapel Music* (see Collections—Bavaria's Courts and Residences)

**LITOLFF:** *Concerto Symphonique No. 4, in D Minor, Op. 102*. Gerald Robbins (piano); Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra. Edouard Van Remoortel cond. GENESIS GS 1035 \$5.98.

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

As a fledgling record collector in the early Thirties I took great delight in a little Columbia ten-inch disc featuring Irene Scharrer as soloist with Sir Henry Wood and the London Symphony in something called Scherzo from Concerto Symphonique No. 4 by one Henry Litolff. The music was tuneful, sparkingly orchestrated and scintillatingly written for the piano soloist, and I have remained curious to this day as to what the rest of Concerto Symphonique No. 4 would sound like—that is, until Genesis came through with this first complete recording of the work.

Born in England, Henry Litolff (1818-1891) enjoyed a first career as a virtuoso pianist, and later also enjoyed great success as a music publisher and as a composer of works for concert platform and stage. A world-shaking masterpiece his Concerto Symphonique No. 4 is not; but it is remarkably advanced for its time (1851) in some aspects, including as it does certain of the cyclic devices exploited later by Franz Liszt (who dedicated his E-flat Concerto to Litolff). And it seems to anticipate in every respect the idiom and structural manner of Saint-Saëns' piano concertos, the first of which was not composed until 1858.

In any event, the Litolff Concerto is agreeable listening fare, highly effective without being overblown, and in general worth an occasional revival. This recorded performance, especially Gerald Robbins' piano, is fluent in the extreme, and Edouard Van Remoortel's orchestral support is spirited, though I could have done without the curious vibrato quality of brass playing in the slow-movement opening. The recorded sound is consistently good throughout. D.H.

**MOZART:** *Piano Concerto No. 8, in C Major (K. 246); Piano Concerto No. 26, in D Major (K. 537, "Coronation")*. Jörg Demus (hammerklavier); Collegium Aureum. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1614 \$2.99 (plus 75¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

**MOZART:** *Piano Concerto No. 8, in C Major (K. 246); Piano Concerto No. 26, in D Major (K. 537, "Coronation")*. Jörg Demus (fortepiano); Collegium Aureum. BASF KHB-29311 \$5.98.

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

These two discs are, of course, the same recording. How the dual release came to be I will leave to the lawyers, and simply get on



GERALD ROBBINS  
*An extremely fluent Litolff Concerto*

with the music. The instrument Jörg Demus plays, identified as a "hammerklavier" by MHS and a "fortepiano" by BASF, was built by Johann Schantz of Vienna in 1790 and recently restored by Josef Watzek of the same city. By either name, its sound is sheer enchantment, falling somewhere between that of a harpsichord and that of a modern piano. The orchestra (conducted, presumably, either by Demus himself or by concertmaster Franzjosef Maier—or guided by some informal chamber-music agreement between them) comprises only seven violins, two violas, a single cello, and one bass in addition to the winds and timpani. The winds are original eighteenth-century instruments, or faithful copies of them, played by such well-known performers as Erich Penzel (natural horn) and Helmut Hücke (baroque oboe). In such an instrumental setting, the familiar "Coronation" Concerto emerges in somewhat smaller proportions than one is used to, but, to my ear, it makes a stronger impression in this intimate context than in the "festive" one usually associated with it. The earlier and slighter C Major Concerto is even more of a gainer in this treatment.

Naturally, this is not a matter of instruments playing themselves. Demus showed his affinity for K. 537 in a Westminster recording, on a modern piano and with a large orchestra, twenty years ago; he and his Collegium Au-

reum associates are obviously in love with both concertos, and they are both eager and able to communicate the joys of the music—this is no mere demonstration of quaint sounds. There is a quaint touch, though; Harmonia Mundi, which originated the recordings, was unable to excise a short bird-song between the first two movements of K. 246, but that avian applause (a bit more forward on MHS) seems not the least out of keeping with the very natural charm of the human music-making.

Many collectors may wish to consider this as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, a conventional recording of the two concertos, or at least of the "Coronation." In that context, Demus and company have only themselves as competition—on these two discs derived from the same tapes. There are no bands to separate the movements on either side of the BASF disc, while there are on MHS; this is hardly bothersome, but the crunchiness surfaces on BASF definitely are, and MHS, whose surfaces are impeccable, has also done a better job of mastering. The MHS edition is clearly preferable and well worth the trouble of ordering by mail, quite aside from the minor economy involved. R.F.

**POULENC:** *Concerto in G Minor for Organ, Strings, and Timpani; Concert Champêtre for Harpsichord and Orchestra*. Marie-Claire Alain (organ); Robert Veyron-Lacroix (harpsichord); Orchestre National de l'ORTF. Jean Martinon cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1595 \$2.99 (plus 75¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

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

**POULENC:** *Concerto in D Minor for Two Pianos and Orchestra*. Bracha Eden and Alexander Tamir (pianos); Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. Sergiu Comissiona cond. DEBUSSY: *Prélude à l'Après-Midi d'un Faune (arr. Ravel); Petite Suite*. SATIE: *Trois Morceaux en Forme de Poire*. Bracha Eden and Alexander Tamir (pianos). LONDON CS 6754 \$5.98.

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

It seems a good idea to consider these two releases in tandem, even though there is no duplication between them, for admirers of the Poulenc works will find that considering alternative versions of these pieces does raise duplication problems. The MHS disc is an attractive proposition, especially for Jean Martinon's superb conducting and Marie-Claire Alain's brilliant playing. Robert Veyron-Lacroix's brisk and businesslike approach in the *Concert Champêtre* is a good deal less ingratiating than Aimée van de Wiele's more relaxed one on Angel S-35993, but Martinon's conducting is so much more persuasive than Georges Prêtre's (the slow movement is almost a different piece of music in the two versions—a real *siciliano* in Martinon's hands, but choppy and charmless in Prêtre's) that on balance MHS is to be preferred.

Complications arise, though, when the Concerto for Two Pianos enters the picture: the really incomparable performance of this work, with the late composer and his frequent performing partner Jacques Février at the two keyboards, is on the other side of the Angel *Concert Champêtre*. Poulenc composed this

sparkling concerto for himself and Février; they gave the first performance together in 1932, and the one they recorded nearly thirty years later exudes a comfortable sauciness, an almost improvisatory good cheer which is not to be supplanted by anything so trivial as mere virtuosity. Prêtre, perhaps because the composer was on hand, is much more in the spirit of things on this side than in the *Concert Champêtre*. On the new London disc, Bracha Eden and Alexander Tamir have steely brilliance to burn, but they seem so *seriously* bent on driving home the humor of the concerto that they quite miss its charming point: this is not brutal satire, but a sophisticated, sometimes parodistic piece that benefits most from understatement.

Having the Angel means either settling for Prêtre's not very attractive conducting of the *Concert Champêtre* or duplicating that title by adding the MHS version. Since Aimée van de Wiele is, after all, a more appealing soloist than Veyron-Lacroix, one *could* forgo the MHS disc altogether and pick up a still more satisfying version of the Organ Concerto: the one by Berj Zamkochian with Charles Munch and the Boston Symphony on RCA LSC-2567 is even more brilliant than the Alain/Martinon version and, despite its ten- or twelve-year seniority, more vividly recorded. The coupling on RCA is Munch's marvelous account of Stravinsky's *Jeu de Cartes*.

So, although the economical MHS release has very solid attractions, neither it nor the London disc is a must for the Poulenc collector. As for the piano duets played by Eden and Tamir (the title on the London jacket is "French Music for Two Pianos," but all three of the works without orchestra are for one piano, four hands—though it sounds as if they were recorded on two instruments). Ravel's arrangement of the *Faun* is a totally unnecessary gesture, and the *Petite Suite* is more evocatively played by Walter and Beatriz Klien on Turnabout TV-S 34234. Eden and Tamir are at their best in the Satie, but I can't see buying the record just for that. R. F.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**PUCCINI:** *The Girl of the Golden West*. Birgit Nilsson (soprano), Minnie; Andrea Mongelli (baritone), Jack Rance; João Gibin (tenor), Dick Johnson; Renato Ercolani (tenor), Nick; Antonio Cassinelli (bass), Ashby; Enzo Sordello (baritone), Sonora; Nicola Zaccaria (bass), Jake Wallace; Carlo Forti (bass), José Castro; others. Orchestra and Chorus of Teatro alla Scala, Milan. Lovro von Matačić cond. SERAPHIM SCL-6074 three discs \$8.94.

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

The naïveté of this opera's libretto will never permit it to be taken seriously by American audiences, despite Puccini's skill in manipulating American elements (in a similar fashion he wove Oriental elements into his basically Italian fabric in both *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot*). In any case, it is rewarding to re-discover the opera's solid musical values through this atmospheric, well-conducted, and well-sung recording, a reissue of Angel S-3593, originally released about a dozen years ago.

No one would call Birgit Nilsson's Minnie ideal typecasting, and yet she portrays *la fanciulla* vividly, with lots of temperament and bright, well-focused tones. There is always ample reserve in her singing, and the upper

range (in the climax of "*Laggiù nel Soledad*," for example) is quite spectacular. João Gibin, a Brazilian tenor who began with considerable promise some years ago and has since gone nowhere in particular, brings no sensuous appeal to the role of Dick Johnson, the romantic bandit, but he is certainly acceptable. The real surprise, however, is Andrea Mongelli (1901-1970), a durable bass-baritone whose limited exposure on records did scant justice to his stature. His Rance is properly sinister throughout, a vital portrayal resting on a solid tonal foundation.

The large cast includes a group of excellent Milanese stalwarts, fused by Lovro von Matačić into a very fine ensemble without weak spots. If the London set (OSA 1306) has an edge in its more idiomatic rendition by the Tebaldi-Del Monaco team, the present release offers a viable and less expensive alternate. There is no libretto with it, though, and the legend "International copyright restrictions prohibit the enclosure . . ." is not quite correct. What is prohibited is the enclosure without the payment of royalties to the copyright owner. G. J.

**PUCCINI:** *Tosca* (see Best of the Month, page 82)

**REICH:** *Four Organs* (see CAGE)

**REINECKE:** *Piano Concerto No. 1, in F-sharp Minor, Op. 72; Piano Concerto No. 2, in E Minor, Op. 120*. Gerald Robbins (piano), Monte-Carlo Opera Orchestra, Edouard Van Remoortel cond. GENESIS GS 1034 \$5.98.

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

In order to demonstrate the brevity of our musical past (and the quickness of cultural change) I once postulated a composer who studied with Haydn and was Schoenberg's teacher. Such a composer never existed, of course, but the point was that he *could have*. Carl Heinrich Carsten Reinecke did exist, for instance. He was born in 1824 during the lifetime of Ludwig van Beethoven, and by the time of his death eighty-six years later atonal music had already arrived on the scene.

Not that Carl Reinecke is likely to have approved of that sort of thing: he was a profound conservative in a progressive age. At an early age he settled in Leipzig where he came under the spell of Mendelssohn and Schumann, and their early Romanticism seems to have been sufficient for him for the rest of his life. In 1860 he became the conductor of the famous Gewandhaus Orchestra, which he directed for no less than thirty-five years, carefully insuring it against modernism and effectively relegating it to the provincial position it has occupied ever since. Reinecke was apparently an excellent pianist, and he was skillful enough in the Classic-Romantic vein to be regarded as a link between the early Romantics and Brahms (whom he occasionally resembles and may have cross-influenced).

The F-sharp Minor Concerto was Reinecke's big number, and he was particularly successful with it in England, always appreciative of fluent, mellifluous conservatives. One gets the idea right away: flowing, caressing, minor-key music of tasteful quality. The E Minor Concerto is, if a little less engaging, on the same lines. It's nothing earth-shaking but certainly worthy of inclusion in the concert-hall-without-walls.

Gerald Robbins is a very capable pianist



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with a fine feeling for this German bourgeois Romanticism. The Monte Carlo Orchestra under Edouard Van Remoortel gets by, and the recording is quite attractive. *E.S.*

**RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** *The Tsar's Bride*. Yevgeny Nesterenko (bass), Sobakin; Galina Vishnevskaya (soprano), Marfa; Vladimir Atlantov (tenor), Lykov; Vladimir Valaitis (baritone), Gryaznoi; Irina Arkhipova (mezzo-soprano), Lyubasha; Andrei Sokolov (tenor), Bomelius; Eleanora Andreyeva (soprano), Saburova; Boris Morozov (bass), Malyuta; Galina Borisova (contralto), Dunyasha; others. Orchestra and Chorus of the Bolshoi Theater, Moscow, Fuat Mansurov cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL SRCL-4122 three discs \$17.94.

Performance: **Good, with rough spots**  
Recording: **Good**

Rimsky-Korsakov's most characteristic operas (*The Snow Maiden*, *Christmas Eve*, *Sadko*) reflect the world of fantasy and fairy tales, but his ninth opera, *The Tsar's Bride* (1898), takes its subject from Russian history; the time of Tsar Ivan the Terrible and his feared elite guard, the Oprichniki. The work represents a stylistic departure as well, even a sort of retrenchment. Breaking away from the declamatory style pioneered by Dargomizhsky and further developed by Moussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov here returns to a more melodic expression, with arias and ensembles clearly delineated after the Italian models and the large orchestra relegated to the support of the singers. While in many respects this adds up to updated Glinka, there is a more pronounced national element in the music, and the orchestra manages to become a stronger participant in the overall picture despite the composer's determined effort to keep the spotlight on the voices. *The Tsar's Bride* is an opera put together with great skill. Its story is a compendium of horrors, leading from lust and jealousy to seduction, conspiracy, and multiple murder. While the musical treatment rarely reaches moments of true inspiration, it is fast-moving, colorful, and never dull.

The large cast involves some of Russia's most prominent singers. In the title role, Galina Vishnevskaya gives evidence that her once impressive vocal resources have declined lamentably—she sings Marfa's two lovely arias with a much steadier tone on her earlier recital disc (Melodiya/Angel 40220). Irina Arkhipova is superb in the passionate role of Lyubasha, scorned mistress-turned-poisoner. Somewhat reminiscent of the raging Amneris, she turns a scene in the second act into a remarkable display of luscious-toned, high-powered dramatic singing.

Other outstanding performances come from Yevgeny Nesterenko, a big, hearty-sounding bass whose tones are firmly focused, and Vladimir Atlantov, not the most subtle tenor perhaps, but blessed with a healthy sound and a good technique that stand comparison with most of his front-line Western colleagues. The others range from respectable (Borisova, Morozov) to virtually unlistenable (Andreyeva). As usual, the singing of the Bolshoi Chorus is exceptionally fine, and the entire performance is excitingly paced by conductor Mansurov, about whom (and about the singers) the annotations disclose nothing. The booklet does contain the English text, but it would have been more helpful if the transliterated Russian had been included alongside the English. *G.J.*

**ROREM:** *Ariel*. Phyllis Curtin (soprano): Joseph Rabbai (clarinet): Ryan Edwards (piano). *Gloria*. Phyllis Curtin (soprano): Helen Vanni (mezzo-soprano); Ned Rorem (piano). DESTO DC-7147. \$5.98.

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

*Ariel*, composed in 1971 as "a gift to my friend Phyllis Curtin," comprises settings of five Sylvia Plath poems—*Words*, *Poppies in July*, *The Hanging Man*, *Poppies in October*, and *Lady Lazarus*—unpretty, even grisly texts which defy conventional song treatment. The sequence, in fact, strikes me as more in the nature of an instrumental fantasy (some astonishing colors are drawn from the two instruments) with vocal commentary than a song cycle, but that is a personal reaction; it is a pungent work and, not incidentally, one in

Photo: Eileen; Cook/courtesy Decca Records



PHYLLIS CURTIN  
*Impressive vocal finesse in Rorem songs*

which the demands on the singer are formidable in terms of characterization as well as vocal finesse. All the demands of the music are impressively met here, as they are in the utterly different *Gloria*, an imaginative setting of the liturgical text composed a year earlier than *Ariel* (but premiered a year later, by the same performers who recorded it), "a gift to all the singers who bemoan the lack of duets." This *Gloria* is more exultant than serene, its chaste coolness warming at intervals to brief glows of passion; it is a work that will find a reader response than *Ariel*. The performances must be regarded as definitive: full texts are provided, the sound is unrestricted (if a little dry), the pressings clean. I only wonder why there is no separation between the different numbers of *Ariel*. *R.F.*

**SATIE:** *Trois Morceaux en Forme de Poire* (see **POULENC**)

**SCHUBERT:** *Songs* (see **Best of the Month**, page 83)

**SCHUBERT:** *Symphony No. 2, in B-flat Major* (see **The Basic Repertoire**, page 57)

**SCHUMANN:** *Lieder* (see **Collections—Elly Ameling**)

**SCHUMANN:** *Overture, Scherzo, and Finale, Op. 52; Symphony No. 1, in B-flat Major, Op.*

*38 ("Spring")*. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Georg Solti cond. LONDON CS 6696 \$5.98.

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

**SCHUMANN:** *Overture, Scherzo, and Finale, Op. 52*. Westphalian Symphony Orchestra, Recklinghausen, Richard Kapp cond. *Introduction and Allegro Appassionato in G Major for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 92; Introduction and Allegro in D Minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 134*. Michael Ponti (piano): Orchestra of Radio Luxembourg, Louis de Froment cond. TURNABOUT TV-S 34537 \$2.98.

Performance: **Adequate to good**  
Recording: **Adequate**

Top-drawer Schumann, as represented by the "Spring" Symphony, presents enough performance problems for even the finest conductors and orchestra, but it takes nothing short of interpretive genius to bring to surging life those works of Schumann that are not among his best. These discs are cases in point.

The London disc is extracted from Solti's 1971 set of the complete Schumann symphonies, and the "Spring" Symphony reading remains for me the most successful part of that set. This performance of the Overture, Scherzo, and Finale sounded overwrought when I first heard it, and it still sounds that way to me (especially when I compare it with a beautiful Pierre Boulez reading with the BBC Symphony I heard at the London Proms last summer).

But the Richard Kapp performance on Turnabout goes too far in the other direction, being slack in rhythm and too easy-going in tempo to bring any genuine measure of vitality to the music. The indefatigable Michael Ponti, for all his fluent pianism, is up against not only the less-than-top-drawer quality of the music (Op. 134 has more apparent brilliance but less substance than Op. 92), but formidable competition from Rudolph Serkin with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Eugene Ormandy. I fear that this disc is only for the more impecunious of Schumann fanciers. *D.H.*

**SLONIMSKY:** *Silhouettes Iberiennes; Modinha Russo-Brasileira*. Laurindo Almeida (guitars). *Five Advertising Songs*. Deltra Eamon (soprano); Nicolas Slonimsky (piano). *The Saurus: 50 Minutes*. Nicolas Slonimsky (piano). ORION ORS 72100 \$5.98.

Performances: **Authentic**  
Recordings: **Good to very good**

What is a sensible person to make of Nicolas Slonimsky anyhow? Raconteur and *bon vivant*, champion of avant-garde music and gossip-monger of music history, compiler of the vast *Thesaurus of Scale and Melodic Patterns*, one-time assistant to Koussevitzky, chronicler of twentieth-century music, wit, encyclopedist, word-inventor, pianist, trivia expert, musical humorist, major conductor of new music, composer of just about any kind of music you care to imagine—Slonimsky is, at the very least, all those things.

Upon arriving in America from Russia many years ago he became fascinated by American advertising and set a whole series of magazine ads to music in various styles ranging from operatic to Rachmaninoff. His incredible *Thesaurus* is a compendium of every sort of imaginable combination. Out of this arises his *Minitudes*—a sort of *Mikrokos-*

mos of tiny piano pieces (many of them are only seconds in length) including deranged versions of Bach and Schoenberg, twelve-tone versions of *Happy Birthday* and *Ach, du lieber Augustin* (which even Schoenberg himself was happy to quote in its tonal original), a "Stultifying March," a pair of pieces entitled *Vulgar Banality* and *Banal Vulgarity* (pretty much living up to their titles), various études on endless tonal combinations, a waltz and a polka based on the notes C-A-B-B-A-G-E and A-B-A-D-E-G-G, and more, much more. Piled on top of this—indeed the stellar attraction of the record—are Laurindo Almeida's arrangements of Spanish and Russian-Brazilian style music played by the guitarist as a duet with himself.

Again, what's to be made of all this? Certainly Slonimsky's music reflects the multiple inputs, confusions, pleasures, insecurities, possibilities, and foolishnesses of the twentieth century, but it does not, I'm afraid, offer very much new insight or synthesis of its own. Still, if you don't take it too seriously—and provided you are ready and willing to switch mental sets constantly and be under aesthetic attack every few moments—you just might enjoy the wit and self-deprecating skill (not to mention the performances) on this disc. *E.S.*

**TRAVIS:** *The Passion of Oedipus* (excerpts). William Du Pré (tenor), Oedipus: Maureen Lehane (mezzo-soprano), Jocasta: Joy Mannen (soprano), Oracle: John Robert Dunlap (baritone), Stranger: Robert Lloyd (bass), Corinthian Envoy: Richard Hale (speaker), Old Shepherd; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus, Jan Popper cond. ORION ORS 73129 \$5.98.

Performance: **Power-packed but predictable**

Recording: **Very good**

Sophocles' *Oedipus* has inspired some strong music in our day—the strongest, indisputably, being Stravinsky's succinct two-act opera-oratorio *Oedipus Rex* composed in 1927. Now Roy Travis, a music professor at UCLA, a recipient of the Gershwin Award and Fulbright Fellowships for composition, and a composer who often has been inspired rhythmically by the dances of West Africa, has tackled the theme again. Mr. Travis improvises freely on the Sophocles text in his own libretto, and, judging from this hour of excerpts, his, too, is a score of some power.

*The Passion of Oedipus* was composed in 1965 and produced originally in 1968 at the UCLA Opera Theater under Jan Popper, who once more is at the helm here. Too bad the Regents of the University of California provided funds for only one record of excerpts. Trying to judge an opera you haven't heard in its entirety from two scenes is a little like looking at one of those closeups of a "detail" from a large painting without seeing the entire canvas. But the scenes are arresting enough, and the careful notes provide a synopsis of the action before and after to refresh the listener's memory. One of the scenes is a flashback invented by Travis to dramatize the moment when Oedipus hears from the oracle that he has killed his father, will marry his mother, and "beget a brood that all will hate." Out of the craggy, thunderous texture of the score the voice of the oracle emerges to startling effect as she issues her prophecy in the form of a neo-Mozartian aria. The other scene here is a crucial one dealing with the hero's discovery that the oracle, whose words he has

scorned in an expression of contempt for religious superstition, has accurately foretold his fate and that "the doors of Nightmare House" are opened now "to the noonday sun."

The libretto is a sturdy one, and the same can be said of the rugged, almost barbaric music with which Mr. Travis has embellished it. If there is anything disappointing about the score, it is only a kind of predictability in the raucous twentieth-century idiom: I don't feel that the composer has yet found a voice entirely his own. Yet the oracle's aria is a real surprise, and the record is well worth hearing, especially as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus sing and play superbly throughout. The performance, recorded in London at St. Giles Church, is also fortunate in its soloists—William Du Pré in glorious

command of the tenor title role, Joy Mannen an awesome Oracle, Maureen Lehane a brilliant Jocasta. John Robert Dunlap impressive as the Stranger who turns out to be the former King of Thebes. Also on hand is Richard Hale as the Old Shepherd, a speaking role that brings out the best from this actor who is famous for his narration of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*. A text is provided. *P.K.*

**VECCHI:** *L'Anfibarnaso* (see Best of the Month, page 84)

**VIVALDI:** *Stabat Mater; Two Introductions to the Miserere; Sinfonia "Al Santo Sepolcro" (P. Sinf. 21); Sonata "Al Santo Sepolcro" (P. 441)*. Aafje Heynis (contralto); I Solisti di Milano (Continued on page 126)

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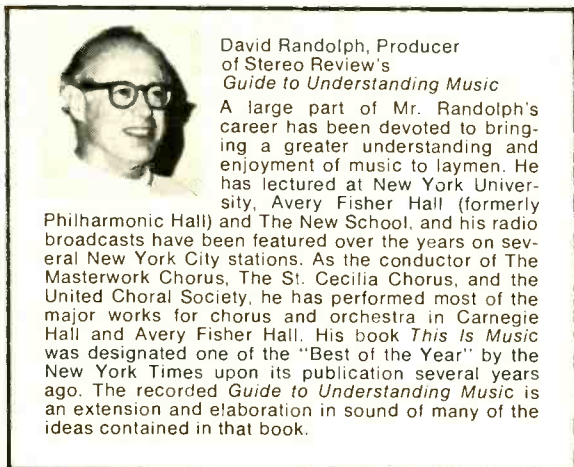
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A large part of Mr. Randolph's career has been devoted to bringing a greater understanding and enjoyment of music to laymen. He has lectured at New York University, Avery Fisher Hall (formerly Philharmonic Hall) and The New School, and his radio broadcasts have been featured over the years on several New York City stations. As the conductor of The Masterwork Chorus, The St. Cecilia Chorus, and the United Choral Society, he has performed most of the major works for chorus and orchestra in Carnegie Hall and Avery Fisher Hall. His book *This Is Music* was designated one of the "Best of the Year" by the New York Times upon its publication several years ago. The recorded *Guide to Understanding Music* is an extension and elaboration in sound of many of the ideas contained in that book.

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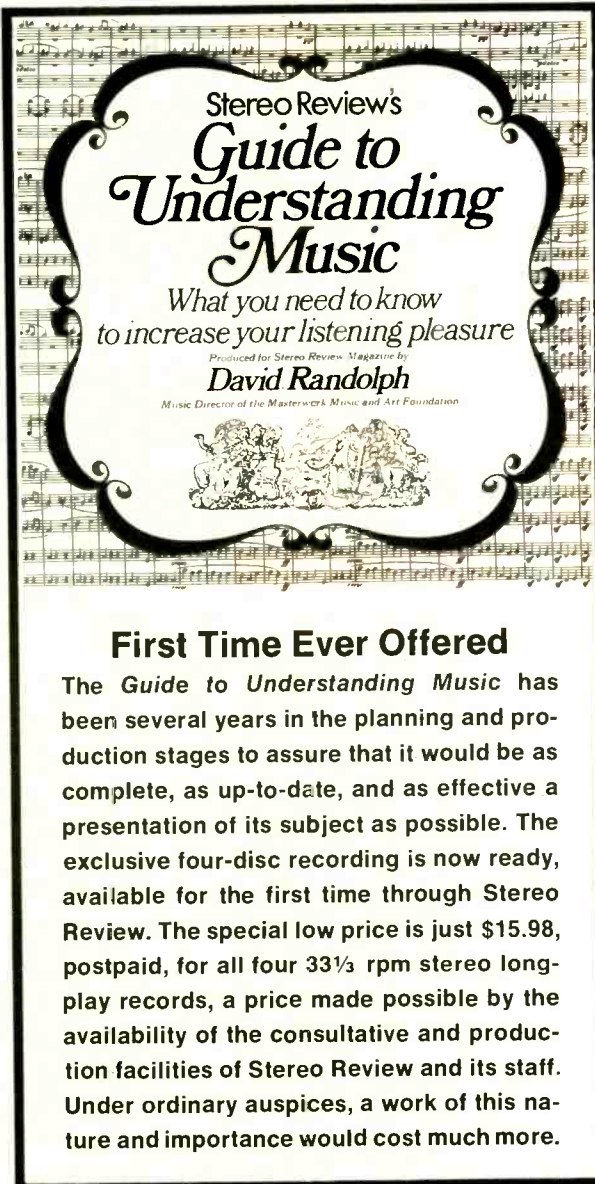
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RCA Records

"RACHMANINOFF, Da!" "Rachmaninoff, Nyet!" So went the titles of two assessments of the Russian composer last year on the occasion of his hundredth birthday (STEREO REVIEW, May 1973). I wrote both of them, and I meant both of them. But the problem—do I, don't I—is not just with me: Rachmaninoff is for many people a tantalizingly ambiguous figure in twentieth-century musical history.

RCA obviously feels that the public's attitude toward the great Sergei is thoroughly *Da*. At least they expect someone to buy his piano performances, for they have recently released five three-record sets, which together contain Rachmaninoff's entire recorded legacy: all the concertos, the Third Symphony, the Paganini Rhapsody, a party performance of a Russian folk song with a singer (shades of Florence Foster Jenkins) who must be heard to be believed, the scratchy acoustic recordings of old-fashioned arrangements and salon pieces, the wonderful performances of Schumann and Chopin. Now we all can judge for ourselves.

I never heard Rachmaninoff in the flesh, but I cut my eye-teeth on his performance of Schumann's *Carnaval*—I had no idea it was recorded as far back as 1929—and, whatever my opinion of Rachmaninoff's music, my estimation of his piano playing has never wavered. After fifteen discs and more than that many hours of total Rachmaninoff I am here to tell you that I stand firm. He was a great pianist.

It is not very hard to go through these recordings and find fault. At every step of the way, Rachmaninoff makes decisions, commits himself—sometimes even in obvious contradiction to the composer's own instructions. Admitted, it's not all to the "modern" taste: "Hmmm," says the modern, analytic listener, "what was that?" "Brilliant stroke," comes the reply. "Oh, my God, almost four beats in a three-quarter measure!" "Wow, what a tempo!" "No,

dammit, *pianissimo*." "Can't hear the notes, can't hear the notes." "Whew!" In the end, speechlessness sets in. There are really only two reactions: get up and whip it off the turntable or sit back and glory in it.

Rachmaninoff's secret was magic. He naively retained that old Romantic belief in the magical qualities of music—in perfect contradistinction to his countryman Stravinsky, who, insisting on the importance of making beautiful things, took the aesthetecraftsman's position. Rachmaninoff's prestidigitation (the only proper term) was neither mere flummery nor pure mysticism, but a wonderful combination of the two—with a bit of moody Slavic psyche-baring thrown in. All this led him to a very particular approach, much of it inherited from Romantic tradition but a good deal of it personal. To him, the notes are never merely a collection of individual events, but actual living tissue. He thinks in gestures, in phrases, in swatches of color, in coursing lines and a large dynamic. Sometimes, in a highly elaborated passage, you can hardly make out the individual notes at all; yet the music is never smeared, never blobbed over with sostenuto-pedal sentimentality. On the contrary, the playing is often surprisingly strong, aggressive, masculine. Corners and changes, although rarely abrupt or brusque (Rachmaninoff was a master of the transition), are strikingly set forth and often contrasted with measured, reflective, and quite Classical playing.

When I wrote my for-and-against views on Rachmaninoff as my contribution to the great man's centennial, I was promptly accused of schizophrenia. Now, schizophrenia seems to be something of an occupational hazard among musicians, dating at least back to Robert Schumann's day (they called it dementia praecox back then; instead of going to an analyst, Schumann wrote *Carnaval*), and, although I can pretend to no clinical knowledge of Rachmaninoff's psychol-

ogical problems (if he had any), he was, I suspect, also something of a victim of it. Perhaps that is why he understood *Carnaval* so well. There is a dualism, a sense of conflict in nearly everything he does. One moment he is a real wizard, weaving colors and spells, enchanting you; the next moment he snaps you out of it, begs your attention, craves your involvement. But he never bores.

RACHMANINOFF was a Victor artist from the beginning to the end of his career, and RCA proudly asserts that their five-volume tribute is his *complete* surviving recorded legacy, up to and including fourteen 78-rpm sides that have never before been released. Some of the new material is minor, but there are a Chopin A-flat Ballade, a C-sharp Minor Scherzo, and other notable additions.

Volume 1 consists of the acoustic recordings (1919 to 1924), including an early incomplete Second Concerto recorded with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Stokowski, a bunch of Rachmaninoff's shorter works (there are two performances of the C-sharp Minor Prelude), a good bit of Chopin (mostly waltzes), a bit of Debussy (*Children's Corner*, of course), some popular Liszt and Tchaikovsky, and a whole host of salon pieces and arrangements. The musical results—in repertoire, in playing style, and, naturally, in recorded sound—are remote from us, but they hold the fascination of things antique, providing a glimpse into another age that was even then about to disappear into history.

Volumes 2 and 3 cover the solo recordings made between 1925 and 1942. The first of these contains Rachmaninoff's own music plus a certain number of other Russian works and a Classical side: Bach, Mozart, Handel, and Beethoven. Volume 3 contains most of the Central European Romantic music, including the still wonderful *Carnaval*, a superb Chopin B-flat Minor Sonata, and a fine side of shorter Chopin works.

Volume 4 contains the three notable collaborations with Fritz Kreisler—an excellent classicizing of a Beethoven violin sonata, a marvelous version of the Grieg sonata, and a not-so-terrific Schubert sonata—as well as his own recordings of three of his orchestral works: *The Isle of the Dead*, an orchestration of his *Vocalise*, and, somewhat surprisingly, the Third Symphony (apparently he never recorded his far better-known Second). Volume 5—for most people, probably, the *pièce de résistance*—comprises the four concertos and the Paganini Rhapsody with the composer back at the keyboard.

I have rather studiously avoided till now the question of Rachmaninoff's own music, but, I suppose, the issue must be faced. "The Complete Rachmaninoff" is obviously as much a tribute to the creative as to the interpretive artist; indeed, except for his countryman and rival Stravinsky, no composer has left us such a large body of self-interpreted work.

Rachmaninoff the pianist is much easier to deal with than Rachmaninoff the composer for a very simple reason. In the former case, we can point to his outstanding characteristics—they are many and obvious: his performances are strong and full of flavor—and add a few comments: "Isn't that re-

markable?" "Great old Romantic tradition." "Can't he play anything straight?" "Don't make 'em like that any more!" "Can't he keep 4/4 time?" "There were giants in those days!" "Fine for Romantic music; can't trust him with the Classics." And so forth. But with the compositions, we usually attempt wider, more sweeping judgments. What is the value of his music *sub specie aeternitatis*? Does popularity necessarily indicate value? Is the historical rush to judgment (Rachmaninoff was behind the times; therefore, his music *must* be of less value than that of the avant-garde!) the final appeal?

Let us have a little perspective, please. Every tradition in Western culture has a certain cycle: an innovative period, developed in a limited context for a local public, connoisseurs, or the like; a classical period, when the best and the popular seem to coincide; a period of development and diffusion; and, finally, a *retardaire* or neo-classical period coinciding with a new period of innovation. During this last period, the large, popular audiences developed earlier tend to break down into different factions supporting this or that version of the old style. The history of pop music in the last ten years follows this model just as much as the history of classical music in the last two centuries does. Rachmaninoff's music, like that of his contemporaries—Sibelius, Richard Strauss, Carl Nielsen, Busoni, the post-Wagnerians, even Stravinsky—belongs to that final phase. It therefore has its public—even a large one—but its long-range significance and cultural appeal will always be somewhat

limited; it will never equal that of his distinguished predecessors.

It is worth pointing out once again that the bulk of Rachmaninoff's music was produced within hailing distance of the nineteenth century; the few late works, notably the Paganini Rhapsody, actually have something of a neo-Classic character in keeping with the temper of a later day. So Sergei Vasilovitch's music was indeed a product of its times; it says what it has to say—and says it effectively to quite a few of us, even now. More than that one cannot ask of any creative artist.

A footnote for Rachmaninoff Concerto haters: the Third Symphony is a lively, inventive work, full of character and distinction. And there is gold—well, silver, anyway—among the early, short piano pieces.

These recordings have been well produced by RCA's Jack Pfeiffer with the assistance of Gregor Benko of the International Piano Library. Most of the 78 side flips are all but unnoticeable. Even some of the recordings from the Twenties are surprisingly serviceable, and by the time you get to the Forties you accept the sound as positively modern. Record noise, the biggest problem in this sort of enterprise, is quite variable here, but fortunately some of the major recordings are really astonishingly quiet. Quality and lateness of date do not always go together, however; for instance, the First Concerto sounds lovely and the Third is quite badly distorted, yet they were both recorded at the same time. Anyway, happy birthday, Sergei.

**SERGEI RACHMANINOFF: *The Complete Rachmaninoff, Vol. 1—The Acoustic Recordings (1919-1924).*** Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 18. Preludes: in G Minor, Op. 23, No. 5; in G-sharp Minor, Op. 32, No. 12; in C-sharp Minor, Op. 3, No. 2; in G Major, Op. 32, No. 5. Chopin: Waltzes: in E-flat Major, Op. 18; in F Major, Op. 34, No. 3; in D-flat Major, Op. 64, No. 1; in B Minor, Op. 69, No. 2; in G-flat Major, Op. 70, No. 1. D. Scarlatti (arr. Tausig): Pastoral in E Minor. Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2, in C-sharp Minor (with Rachmaninoff cadenza). Other selections. Sergei Rachmaninoff (piano); Philadelphia Orchestra. Leopold Stokowski cond. (in Concerto). RCA ARM3-0260 three discs \$17.98.

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**SERGEI RACHMANINOFF: *The Complete Rachmaninoff, Vol. 3.*** Chopin: Sonata in B-

flat Minor, Op. 35; Nocturne in E-flat Major, Op. 9, No. 2; Waltzes: in C-sharp Minor, Op. 64, No. 2; in A-flat Major, Op. 64, No. 3; in E Minor, Op. Posth. Ballade in A-flat Major, Op. 47; Mazurka in A Minor, Op. 68, No. 2. Schumann: Carnaval, Op. 9. Liszt: Polonaise No. 2, in E Major; Gnommenreigen; Arrangements of Chopin and Schubert songs. Schubert: Impromptu in A-flat Major, Op. 90, No. 4. Mendelssohn: Two Etudes; Spinning Song. Other selections, by Paderewski, J. Strauss, and others. Sergei Rachmaninoff (piano). RCA ARM3-0294 three discs \$17.98.

**SERGEI RACHMANINOFF: *The Complete Rachmaninoff, Vol. 4.*** Beethoven: Sonata in G Major for Violin and Piano, Op. 30, No. 3. Grieg: Sonata in C Minor for Violin and Piano, Op. 45. Schubert: Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano, Op. 162 (D. 574). Rachmaninoff: The Isle of the Dead, Op. 29; Vocalise; Symphony No. 3, in A Minor, Op. 44. Sergei Rachmaninoff (piano); Fritz Kreisler (violin); in Beethoven, Grieg, and Schubert sonatas); Philadelphia Orchestra. Sergei Rachmaninoff cond. RCA ARM3-0295 three discs \$17.98.

**SERGEI RACHMANINOFF: *The Complete Rachmaninoff, Vol. 5.*** Rachmaninoff: Piano Concertos: No. 1, in F-sharp Minor, Op. 1; No. 2, in C Minor, Op. 18; No. 3, in D Minor, Op. 30; No. 4, in G Major, Op. 40. Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43. Sergei Rachmaninoff (piano); Philadelphia Orchestra. Eugene Ormandy (in Concerto No. 1) and Leopold Stokowski cond. RCA ARM3-0296 three discs \$17.98.

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Performance: **Very good**

Recording: **Very good**

Here on two sides are all the works of Vivaldi that can be associated with Good Friday. The two instrumental pieces, the haunting Sinfonia and the Sonata "At the Holy Sepulchre," and the *Stabat Mater* have been recorded before, of course, but new to the catalog are the two introductions, each consisting of an aria flanked by recitatives, which are meditations on the crucifixion. Vivaldi intended them (one or the other) to preface his music for the *Miserere*, but his score for the *Miserere* has not yet come to light (it is also possible, of course, that another composer's

setting of it might have followed the Vivaldi introduction).

The general mood of all five pieces is one of quiet, introverted, yet intense resignation. Aafje Heynis, a Dutch contralto with a very beautiful vocal quality if not great variety of color, performs throughout with controlled feelings and an emotionality that quite properly avoids operatic bathos. It is good to hear her voice again on records: the last time I can recall hearing it was in some Bach cantatas which she recorded in the Sixties and which were released on Epic. Angelo Ephrikian directs his ensemble with sensitivity for the subject, though he doesn't really have much sympathy for Baroque stylistic practices (cadential trills are missing in both vocal and instrumental parts). The sound is reasonably

transparent for the Italian source; the balance favors the strings slightly over the solo voice, but, considering the poignancy of the subject, this works quite well in eliciting the proper atmosphere. Texts but no translations are provided. I.K.

**WAGNER: *Die Meistersinger: Prelude. Tannhäuser: Overture. Tristan und Isolde: Prelude. A Faust Overture.*** New York Philharmonic, Pierre Boulez cond. COLUMBIA M 32296 \$5.98, Ⓜ MA 32296 \$6.98. Ⓞ MT 32296 \$6.98.

Performance: **Variable**

Recording: **Good**

Except for a genuinely dramatic and musically illuminating interpretation of the youthful *Faust Overture*, I don't sense any great involvement on M. Boulez's part with the Wagnerian concert-hall chestnuts that make up this package. The *Meistersinger* Prelude starts off promisingly in broad-gauge fashion, but the deliberate tempo adopted for the parody woodwind episode is disconcerting in its deliberateness, as well as out of character with the music itself. The *Tannhäuser* is very dull, certainly, alongside Bruno Walter's recording of the Paris version with the Venusberg music. For reasons that I don't pretend to understand, the *Tristan* Prelude, instead of remaining at the same basic tempo from start to finish, goes through all the old clichés of speeding up tempo from the beginning of the climactic work-up to its peak on the opening chord progression. The orchestral playing is good, the recording satisfactory. D.H.

**WAGNER: *Die Walküre: Act 1; Closing Scene, Act 3.*** Helga Dernesch (soprano), Sieglinde: William Cochran (tenor), Siegmund; Hans Sotin (bass), Hunding: Norman Bailey (baritone), Wotan. New Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer cond. ANGEL SBLX-3797 two discs \$12.98.

Performance: **Somewhat ponderous**

Recording: **Excellent**

Wotan's Farewell, which concludes this ninety-minute program of excerpts from *Die Walküre*, is Otto Klemperer's Farewell, too: this may turn out to be the last recording completed by the iron-willed conductor who died last July at eighty-eight. Some of that unbending Klemperer quality is present in this valedictory Wagner interpretation. The music moves forward in a stately manner, with firm rhythmic outlines framing massive orchestral sonorities, with tempos that are logically inter-related and somehow seem slower than the clock indicates. Klemperer's long experience as a theatrical conductor assures firm support for his singers, never burying them under a blanket of sound. And yet, his weighty manner with the music is not ultimately beneficial, for the drama unfolds in such a large-scaled, epic manner that the characters are robbed of their identifiable human qualities.

I find the Act 1 protagonists all admirable. The Sieglinde of Helga Dernesch is appealingly vocalized—the missing measure of rapture is surely within her reach, possibly in the context of a more flexible musical leadership. William Cochran makes an excellent impression with his steady tone and clear textual projection. With a little more experience under his belt, this 1969 winner of the Lauritz Melchior Heldenentor Foundation Award may yet become a worthy successor to his



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mentor. The sonorous and ominous Hunding of Hans Sotin rounds out a cast that would do any opera house proud.

Wotan's Farewell also suffers from the conductor's overly expansive pacing. Norman Bailey, an English baritone with impressive Bayreuth credentials, carries out his task in a musicianly manner. His vocal resources—like those of other Wotans currently active—are of almost, but not quite, Heldenbaritone quality. *G.J.*

**WAGNER: Opera Excerpts** (see Collections—René Kollo)

**WEBER: Piano Sonatas (complete).** Janine Dacosta (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1636/7 two discs \$5.98 (plus 75¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Good field, no hit**  
Recording: **Okay**

Carl Maria von Weber was a famous pianist, and his four sonatas, written between 1812 and 1822, were more immediately influential than the contemporary productions of Beethoven and Schubert that we value so highly. How did these attractive pieces get lost in the shuffle, then? For lost they have become. Did you know that Weber's *Perpetuum Mobile* is really the rondo finale of his brilliant C Major Sonata, Op. 24, of 1812? Surprised me! Yet the music has been sitting over at the library all the time, and Weber is, after all, still a famous composer.

The attractions of the Weber sonatas only begin with No. 1. The A-flat Sonata, Op. 39, of 1816 is Schubertian (no other term will do) in its lyric breadth and intensity. The last two sonatas—No. 3, in D Minor, Op. 49, also of 1816, and No. 4, in E Minor, Op. 70, of 1822—are highly original, Romantic works with a striking combination of dramatic and lyric ideas. Both are full of good tunes, what with all the lyric subjects of the D Minor, for instance, and the E Minor Sonata's heart-rending *con duolo* opening, its fine slow movement, and the Mendelssohnian tarantella finale. Where have all the pianists been? What's the matter with history anyway?

The problem with these sonatas is Beethoven. Not that Beethoven had much to do with them. Weber didn't care for Beethoven and was perhaps jealous of his great contemporary. If there was any influence it was undoubtedly unconscious—these things were in the air anyway. Weber was, more or less, doing what Beethoven was doing but with less scope, seeming to connect Haydn and Clementi directly with Mendelssohn and Schumann. We know better: Beethoven and Schubert came in between and did it better. But that's cultural history; it doesn't change one note of Weber's music. These sonatas are as good as they ever were and just exactly as good as they have to be.

What they do need is advocates. Not mere critics but pianists with a sense of the Classic/Romantic appeal of the music and the knowledge of how to bring it across to a public. Janine Dacosta is a very capable musician with the ability to play this music with great ease and naturalness. But there is no deeper communication, no great flair, no pain, no passion, only a little grace and no fire, no soul. Yet, there is no argument about what this music needs, for Weber was perfectly specific in his directions.

Still, these are not bad recordings, and while they will not spur a major Weber revival they add some excellent music to our recorded repertoire in a perfectly viable form. Good field, no hit. *E.S.*

## COLLECTIONS

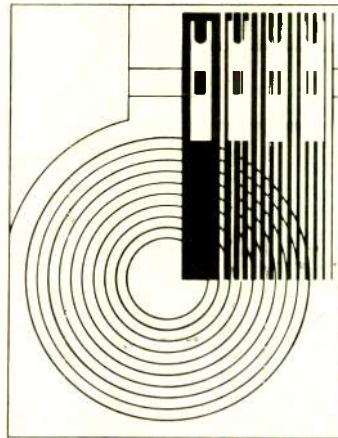
### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

**ELLY AMELING: Lieder of Robert Schumann.** *Widmung; Aufträge; Sehnsucht; Frage; Mein schöner Stern; Schneeglöckchen; Erstes Grün; Er ist's; Die Sennin; Sehnsucht nach der Waldgegend; Die letzten Blumen starben; Jasminenstrauch; Schmetterling; Der Nussbaum; Marienwürmchen; Käuzlein; Waldesgespräch; Loreley; Die*

*Meerfee; Der Sandmann; Die Kartenlegerin.* Elly Ameling (soprano); Jörg Demus (clavier). BASF HB 29369 \$5.98.

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

There are no less than twenty-one songs here, all relatively brief, and virtually all intimately scaled. I cannot say that the lesser-known songs (some of which were quite unfamiliar to me until this hearing) brought any revelations; after all, the famous ones—such little gems as *Widmung*, *Erstes Grün*, and *Waldesgespräch*—have not become famous by accident. But even the most childish and ephemeral inspirations take on artistic meaning in Elly Ameling's delicate and enchanting interpretations. Listeners tempted to hear the entire



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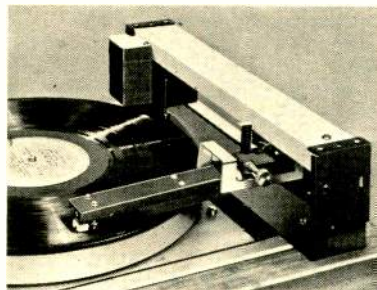
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program in one sitting will encounter a certain sameness in both mood and interpretive approach, but Miss Ameling sustains the sheer loveliness of her fresh and immaculately pure singing throughout.

Jörg Demus provides fleet and sensitive accompaniments. He plays a *Hammerflügel* from 1839, the year before Schumann's famous "song year" of 1840. At first one misses the familiar sound of a modern piano, but the ear quickly adjusts and accepts the old instrument as an element in the period charm of this collection. G.J.

#### RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

##### BAVARIA'S COURTS AND RESIDENCES.

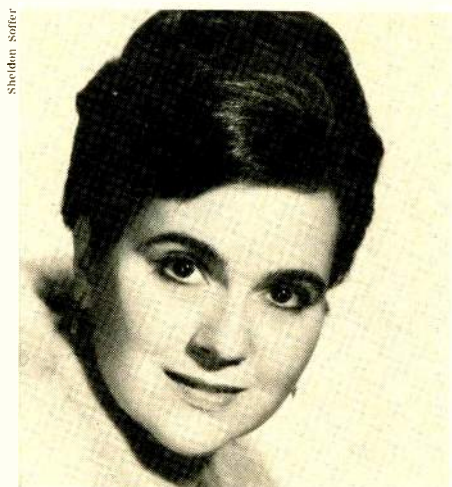
**Munich, Vol. II—Sixteenth Century Bavarian Court Chapel Music.** Lasso: *Missa Sexta, octo vocibus, ad imitationem "Vinum bonum," Kyrie, Sanctus, Benedictus, Osanna, and Agnus Dei; Timor, Domini, principium; Kombt her zu mir, spricht gottes son; Magnificat Sexti Toni; Schaff mir doch Recht in Sachsen mein (Judica me Domine); Timor et tremor—Exaudi Deus; A voi Guglielmo; Sybilla Europea; Vedi l'aurora; O fugace dolcezza; Matona mia cara; La nuict froide et sombre; Bicinium; Der Tag ist so freudenreich; Im Mayen hoert man die hanen krayen; Die fasstnacht ist ein schoene Zeit; Am Abend spat beim buehlen Wein.* Fossa: *Missa super theutonicam cantionem "Ich segge a dieu," Kyrie and Gloria.* Daser: *Dominus regit me; Benedictus Dominus.* Vento: *Herr, dein Wort mich getroestet hat; Frisch ist mein Sinn; Ich weiss ein Maidlein; So wuensch' ich ihr ein gute Nacht.* Reiner: *Mane nobiscum, Domine; Behuet euch Gott zu aller Zeit.* Hoyoul: *Wenn mein Stueundlein vorhanden ist.* Lechner: *Allein zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ; Nach meiner Lieb viel hundert Knaben trachten.* Sennfl: *Das Gelaut zu Speyer; Es wollt' ein Frau zum Weine gehn; Ich armes Kautzlein Klein; Fortuna-Nasci, pati, mori; Es taget vor dem Walde; Patencia muss ich han.* Gosswin: *Am Abend spat, lieb Bruederlein.* Capella Antiqua of Munich, Konrad Ruhland dir. BASF KBF 21192 two discs \$11.96.

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

Quite a number of record companies have organized anthologies around the theme of specific European sacred and secular locales. Electrola in Germany, for example, has a fairly extensive series entitled "Music in Old Towns and Residences"; Erato's series, available here on Musical Heritage Society, is devoted to France and is called "Of Castles and Cathedrals." Now, here is yet another one from BASF/Harmonia Mundi: "Bavaria's Courts and Residences." Of the two-disc Munich, Vol. II set (Vol. I is devoted to Mozart and Danzi), two sides are given to Orlando di Lasso, the most distinguished musician of his age and a member of the Bavarian Court Chapel for forty years. Lasso (1532-1594) succeeded the earlier Capellmeister, Ludwig Daser (d. 1589), who in turn had succeeded Ludwig Sennfl (d. 1543). Music by both of these is included, as are works by various of Orlando's contemporaries: Johannes de Fossa, the number two Capellmeister; Ivo de Vento, organist at the ducal chapel; Anton Gosswin, a Dutch countertenor in the choir; Leonhard Lechner, another chorister under both Lasso and later Vento; Jacob Reiner, and finally, Balduin Hoyoul, both of whom studied with Lasso. What may then be de-

scribed as something of a family gathering, then, is concerned primarily with sacred music, motets, hymns, and excerpts from Masses. There are some non-chapel pieces as well, though often these tend to have religious overtones, and there are a few songs that are performed instrumentally.

It is altogether a superb assemblage, and it makes for splendid listening, especially when sung and played (instruments are used in many of the vocal pieces as well) as stylishly, sensitively, and stirringly as here. For a sample, try Reiner's grand motet, *Mane nobiscum, Domine*, or the charming bell effects of Sennfl's secular *Das Gelaut zu Speyer*. Those who already own collections of Lasso and his contemporaries will note that, although there are several justly famous pieces, such as Orlando's *Timor et tremor* and Sennfl's *Es taget vor dem Walde*, most of the selections are not



ELLY AMELING  
*Enchanting Schumann lieder*

the ones that usually find their way into such anthologies. The only unkind word I have for this album, in fact, has to do with the printed presentation, which includes an approximately 1,000-word *general* essay in three languages, no description of the music or its sources, and, most unfortunate of all, no texts or translations. I.K.

**RENÉ KOLLO: A Wagner Recital.** *Lohengrin: Höchstes Vertrauen; In fernem Land. Tannhäuser: Rome Narrative. Der Fliegende Holländer: Mit Gewitter und Sturm. Die Meistersinger: Am stillen Herd; Morgendlich leuchtend. Rienzi: Prayer. Die Walküre: Ein Schwert verhiess mir der Vater; Winterstürme wichen dem Wonnemond. Siegfried: Dass der Mein Vater nicht ist; Selige Ode auf wonniger Höhe. Parsifal: Amfortas! Die Wunde!; Nur eine Waffe taugt. Götterdämmerung: Siegfried's Death.* René Kollo (tenor); Berlin State Orchestra, Otmar Suitner cond. COLUMBIA MG 32302 two discs \$6.98.

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

There is a wealth of Wagnerian tenor music here, and René Kollo performs much of it very well indeed. His aggressive billing notwithstanding, he is not a real Heldentenor. Surely, with his light timbre and without the fully supported bottom notes needed for such roles as the two Siegfrieds and Tannhäuser, he would be well advised not to press his luck in those areas. On the other hand, his mellifluous yet dramatically aware and telling

inflected singing produces very fine results in the Lohengrin scenes, in the atmospherically rendered Steersman's Song from *Der Fliegende Holländer*, and in the *Preislied*. With more concentration on even tone production and a steadier hold on sustained notes in the high register, Kollo may develop into a really topflight tenor in a repertoire congenial to his abilities.

The orchestral contributions are well above average. Some of the selections are not given with the so-called "concert endings," which means that textual adherence is observed at the expense of conclusive resolutions. On the other hand, Siegfried's Death includes the beautiful orchestral passage following the hero's last words, which is a distinct plus. In all, an impressive package of Wagneriana. G.J.

**YEHUDI MENUHIN: Music of the Thirties** (see *Popular Discs and Tapes*, page 104)

**THE ORGAN AT CHESTER CATHEDRAL.** Parry: *Fantasia and Fugue in G Major.* Howells: *Fugue, Chorale and Epilogue.* Saint-Saëns: *Fantaisie in E-flat Major.* Roger-Ducasse: *Pastorale.* Mulet: *Carillon-Sortie.* Roger Fisher (organ). LONDON STS 15241 \$2.98.

Performance: **Brilliant**  
Sound: **Good**

The Chester organ is not a historic Baroque organ but a modern English cathedral organ, originally built in 1876, rebuilt in 1909-1910, and rebuilt again just four years ago to the specifications of Roger Fisher, who has been the cathedral's organist and master of the choristers since 1967. Nominally this record, originated by Qualiton of Wales in 1971, is a showcase for the instrument. Surpassing that modest intent, however, the disc introduces us to some fresh and interesting music and to an unquestionably first-rate performer.

The Parry and Howells works are real war-horses in English cathedral recitals, but hardly familiar items in this country. The former is an imitation of Bach, and it is a masterly one; the latter is no virtuoso vehicle in the ordinary sense, but rather in the spirit of Vaughan Williams' *Tallis Fantasia* for strings. The little Saint-Saëns *Fantaisie* is an energetic, scherzo-like piece, Roger-Ducasse's *Pastorale* (as long and elaborate as the one by Bach) brings us organ music à la Debussy, and the *Carillon-Sortie* of Henri Mulet (born 1878 and evidently still with us) is a stunning toccata built on bell effects. All of these pieces are attractive—some of them more than that—and the aural impression of the instrument itself and its surroundings is especially vivid. The strongest impression of all, though, is of the artistry of Roger Fisher, from whom we shall surely be hearing a good deal more. R.F.

**ROMANTIC OVERTURES.** Schumann: *Manfred Overture, Op. 115.* Brahms: *Tragic Overture, Op. 81.* Wagner: *A Faust Overture.* Mendelssohn: *The Fair Melusina, Op. 32.* Prague Symphony Orchestra, Dean Dixon cond. SUPRAPHON 1 10 1095 \$5.98.

Performance: **Drowsy**  
Recording: **Fair**

The age of the Romantics found almost every composer in Europe reading Lord Byron's poem *Manfred* and hoping to make music of it, or preoccupied with Faustian themes and dreaming up overtures on such subjects that

were really symphonic poems, emotional adventure stories in music. Schumann's *Manfred* was one of many. Brahms originally started what turned into his *Tragic Overture* as an overture to Goethe's *Faust*. Wagner composed *A Faust Overture* early in his career (he was also going to write a symphony on the subject, but wisely left that job to his friend Franz Liszt). Some good music came out of so much ardor and aspiration, as the endurance of these works attests. Yet all are heavy, heaving, over-upholstered scores, and their presence on a single program is somewhat tiresome.

Moreover, Mr. Dixon is not at his best in this repertoire—at least on this occasion. He draws none of the nobility or sweeping sound from the orchestra that can bring the great lumbering passages in these overtures to dramatic life and catch the listener up in the *Sturm und Drang* of Romantic conflict: understatement is not exactly the ticket when it comes to *Manfred*. The only bright spot in the program is *The Fair Melusina*, an early work by Mendelssohn on a fairy-tale theme that promises and partly fulfills the magic of the incidental music he was later to compose for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. But this effort does not sparkle as it should, either: the pace is too leisurely, the Prague players torpid. Even the engineer at Supraphon seems to have been suffering from lethargy this time around. *P.K.*

**IVO ŽÍDEK: Recital.** Smetana: *The Bartered Bride: Jenik's Aria from Act 2. Two Widows: Ladislav's Aria.* Dvořák: *Rusalka: The Prince's Aria (Act 1).* Janáček: *From the House of the Dead: Skuratov's Monologue.* Martinu: *Julietta: Aria from Act 3.* Mozart: *Don Giovanni: Dalla sua pace.* Beethoven: *Fidelio: Gott, welch Dunkel hier.* Tchaikovsky: *Eugene Onegin: Lenski's Aria.* Puccini: *Manon Lescaut: Donna non vidi mai.* Stravinsky: *Oedipus Rex: Non reperias vetus scelus.* Ivo Židek (tenor): Prague National Theater Chorus and Orchestra, various conductors. SUPRAPHON 112 1164 \$5.98.

Performance: **Fair to good**  
Recording: **Good**

Ivo Židek is a leading tenor of the Prague National Theater, with a considerable European reputation. He has appeared in many recordings of Czech operas and oratorios, and, as a matter of fact, some of the selections on this disc have been drawn from those very recordings. The Czech portion (side one) is by far the more valuable portion of the recital, for it shows the tenor as persuasive in the lyrical utterances of Smetana and Dvořák as he is in the stark Janáček excerpt (in which he successfully projects a number of different voices during his dramatic narrative) or in the unfamiliar opera by Martinu, *Julietta*, recently revived and recorded in Czechoslovakia.

The remainder of the program is less successful, except for Lenski's aria, for which the singer's melancholy tone color is singularly appropriate. Židek does not sing idiomatically in either German or Italian; his rendition of Florestan's aria is imperfectly synchronized with the conductor's pacing, and the tempo set for "*Dalla sua pace*" is damagingly slow. The voice itself is basically very good: a warm, ingratiating timbre with a caressing *mezza voce*. It tends to waver on sustained notes, however, and becomes tight around A. The interesting repertoire offered on side one, though, makes this an appealing disc. *G.J.*



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**T**WENTY-TWO years ago, with the release of the Kubelik/Chicago Symphony *Pictures at an Exhibition*, the Mercury label became one to conjure with on the classical scene. Mercury left Chicago about the same time Rafael Kubelik did, but continued recording in Minneapolis, Detroit, and Rochester and began a very productive series with Antal Dorati in London. This continued for a time after the company was acquired by Philips, but during the last few years Phonogram (as the Philips combine is called now) has phased out Mercury's classical activity until about all that remains in Schwann is a handful of Dorati's London recordings. Last winter several of the Kubelik mono recordings were beautifully remastered and reissued in two three-disc sets (STEREO REVIEW, March 1973). Now, again without any advance announcement, Phonogram has another surprise for us: the Mercury "Golden Imports." In the initial release of this series, eighteen of the deleted Mercury discs have been reinstated, more or less as originally constituted, but all remastered and in immaculate Dutch pressings uniformly superior to the earlier domestic product. (The U.S. Mercury discs were extremely brilliant, but many of them had a hard, dryish quality, and the surfaces were frequently obtrusive.)

Ten of the eighteen discs feature Antal Dorati, the star conductor around whom the bulk of Mercury's stereo classical catalog was built. Four represent the company's notable series from Howard Hanson's annual Festivals of American Music at the Eastman School in Rochester, one is with Paul Paray and the Detroit Symphony (which is also heard on Dorati's Richard Strauss disc), one by organist Marcel Dupré (who is also in Paray's Saint-Saëns), one by the Romero family of guitarists, and one, with pianist Byron Janis, represents the first recording made by a Western company in the U.S.S.R. Several of these records are of more than passing interest: some were entering the collector's-item category and will be especially welcome.

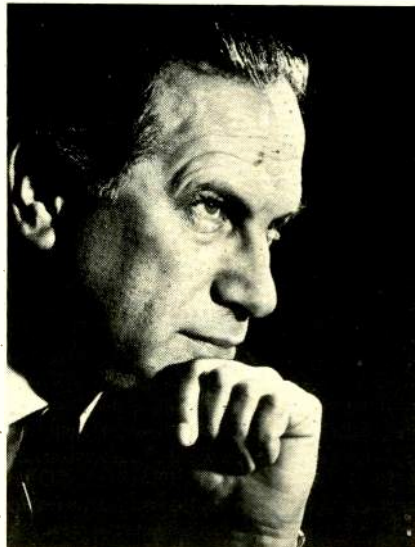
The most desirable item of the lot, I think, is Dorati's marvelous disc of Respighi's three suites of *Ancient Airs and Dances* with the Philharmonia Hungarica, which was taped in Vienna in May 1958. There has been no other recording of the first two suites for some time, and it is virtually inconceivable that anyone could match Dorati's realization of these scores. The Respighi record with the London Symphony is a charmer, too, as are the Rimsky-Korsakov/Borodin collection on SRI 75016 and the Liszt and Enesco rhapsodies on SRI 75018. I have never heard the Enesco pieces invested with quite so much individuality (it doesn't get in the way—it works): Dorati's pre-eminence in the Liszt, of course, was no surprise, and I hope his record of the four remaining rhapsodies will be reissued, too.

The Minneapolis material does sound dated, despite the lifelike bells and artillery in *1812*. The ballet suites on SRI 75014 and the Bartók Concerto with Yehudi Menuhin come off best. *Graduation Ball* is Dorati's own creation—no other conductor has made it nearly so much fun—and the sound is very good indeed (as it was when last available on Wing SRW 18099 for \$1.89), but the Offen-

bach is perhaps a little on the hard side.

Howard Hanson also happened to make three recordings of his Second Symphony, which is surely the best-known of all his works and a landmark of sorts in the evolution of American music. The recording listed here, the only one he made in stereo, is a stunning presentation. To Mercury's credit, the domestic editions of this and the Bloch Concerti Grossi were not withdrawn until the new imports were released. The Bloch record is less distinguished than the Hanson, but it does fill what would otherwise be a gap in that composer's discography.

As "British Band Classics," the Holst and Vaughan Williams works now on SRI 75011 constituted one of the most popular



Conductor Antal Dorati stars in a reissue series:  
**MERCURY'S**  
**"GOLDEN IMPORTS"**

Reviewed by Richard Freed



items in Mercury's pre-stereo catalog, and deservedly so. The Percy Grainger piece was added when the package was remastered in phony stereo a dozen years ago. In this one case, I feel my old copy of the original mono, MG-50088, packs more of a wallop, but if I did not have it for comparison I would be bowled over by the new release. This is the only disc among the "Golden Imports" which is not in genuine stereo, but it is a more successful simulation than the earlier domestic effort. (Actually, the stereo spread on the other seventeen records is rather minimal.) The Hovhaness Fourth Symphony is most welcome, too, since the composer has not yet recorded that work himself on Poseidon, and Roller did a fine job with it.

Byron Janis' Prokofiev and Rachmaninoff concerto package, the most recently recorded (1962) of the orchestral offerings in this list, is a thoroughly creditable job on all counts and fully merits reinstatement. Paray's Saint-Saëns has been sonically superseded by a number of others, but

Dupré's Franck will always be of interest and, for guitar aficionados, so will the Romeros' "Evening."

Not all the records in this initial release are equally attractive, of course, but anyone familiar with the catalog will have his own ideas about what should be in the next batch. Dorati's Berg/Webern/Schoenberg disc with the London Symphony certainly ought to be brought back, as should his pairing of the *Lulu* and *Wozzeck* suites and his complete *Firebird* and *Miraculous Mandarin*. More of the Hanson material ought to be available, too: Samuel Barber's *Capricorn Concerto* and *Medea*, Elliott Carter's ballet *The Minotaur*, Virgil Thomson's *Symphony on a Hymn Tune*, Bernard Rogers' *Leaves from the Tale of Pinocchio*, John Alden Carpenter's *Adventures in a Perambulator*, Douglas Moore's *Pageant of P. T. Barnum*, Hanson's own First and Third Symphonies (No. 1 on a single side this time, please)—these would provide a valuable documentation of interesting sectors of American musical activity not covered elsewhere, especially now, so close to Bicentennial time.

Since the sequence of catalog numbers for these eighteen "Golden Imports" discloses five omissions, it would seem that at least that many more reissues are on the way. What they are and when they will appear, Phonogram has not announced. The company has said that it intends to "wait and see" what kind of reception the first batch gets before proceeding further. But, happy as I am to see some of these records back, I cannot be optimistic about the record-buying public's response to them at this price. The pressings are great, but, for reissues of material going back to the mid-Fifties, \$6.98 seems outrageous. Some of these very recordings, after all, were available quite recently in Mercury's domestically pressed Wing series at only \$1.89.

London's Stereo Treasury Series, which includes not only reissues of first-rate recordings by Monteux, Maag, and Karajan but also the brand-new Haydn symphony cycle conducted by Dorati, is imported at only \$2.98 per disc: why must Mercury ask \$6.98 for the same conductor's 1958 Respighi (with the same orchestra) and a 1955 recording that isn't even real stereo? Realistically priced, I think the "Golden Imports" could be a real success; at \$6.98 a throw, I suspect the series may generate more resentment than enthusiasm. Since the project in general is as welcome as it is surprising, I hope Phonogram will reconsider the price in order to give the "Golden Imports" their best chance with the public.

**THE MERCURY "GOLDEN IMPORTS"**  
(All discs genuine stereo except SRI 75011: \$6.98 each.)

**TCHAIKOVSKY:** *1812 Overture, Op. 49; Capriccio Italien, Op. 45.* Deems Taylor (spoken commentary in *1812*): Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Paul Paray cond. SRI 75001.

**BARTÓK:** *Violin Concerto No. 2.* Yehudi Menuhin (violin): Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati cond. SRI 75002.

**SAINT-SAËNS:** *Symphony No. 3, in C Minor, Op. 78.* Marcel Dupré (organ): Detroit



Symphony Orchestra, Paul Paray cond. SRI 75003.

HANDEL (arr. Harty): *Water Music Suite; Music for the Royal Fireworks*. London Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati cond. SRI 75005.

FRANCK: *Pièce Héroïque; Three Chorales*. Marcel Dupré (organ of St. Thomas' Church, New York). SRI 75006.

HANSON: *Symphony No. 2, Op. 30* ("Romantic"); *The Lament for Beowulf, Op. 25*. Eastman School of Music Chorus (in *Lament*): Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, Howard Hanson cond. SRI 75007.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Scheherazade, Op. 35*. Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati cond. SRI 75008.

RESPIGHI: *Ancient Airs and Dances, Suites Nos. 1-3*. Philharmonia Hungarica, Antal Dorati cond. SRI 75009.

HOVHANESS: *Symphony No. 4*. GIANNINI: *Symphony No. 3*. Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble, A. Clyde Roller cond. SRI 75010.

HOLST: *Suites Nos. 1 and 2 for Military Band, Op. 28*. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *English Folk Song Suite; Toccata Marziale*. GRAINGER: *Hill Song No. 2*. Eastman Wind Ensemble, Frederick Fennell cond. SRI 75011 (in simulated stereo from mono original).

J. STRAUSS (arr. Dorati): *Graduation Ball*. OFFENBACH (arr. Rosenthal): *Gaite Parisienne*. Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati cond. SRI 75014.

R. STRAUSS (arr. Dorati): *Der Rosenkavalier Suite, Op. 59*. R. STRAUSS: *Don Juan, Op. 20*. Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati cond. *Salome: Dance of the Seven Veils, Op. 58*. Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Paul Paray cond. SRI 75015.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Le Coq d'Or—Suite*. BORODIN: *Prince Igor: Overture, Polotsian Dances*. London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Antal Dorati cond. SRI 75016.

BLOCH: *Concerti Grossi, Nos. 1 and 2, for String Orchestra*. Eastman-Rochester Orchestra, Howard Hanson cond. SRI 75017.

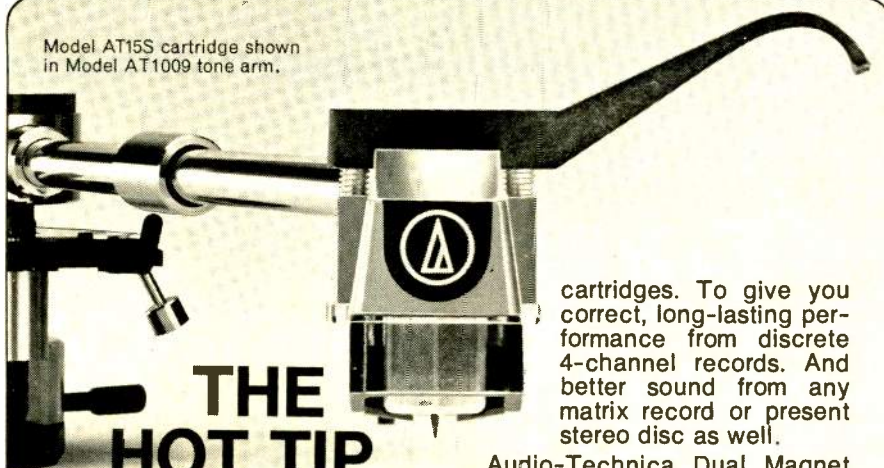
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**SR-274**

# TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK



## BRIDGING THE GAP

THE phenomenal cost (often over \$100 per hour) of renting professional recording-studio facilities tends to price them out of the range of all but established performers. Don't blame the studios. If you had to lease a large, specially designed space and spend \$50,000 for a master recording console and about \$1,000 per track for a sixteen-track recorder, you'd have to impose a similar tariff. That's small comfort, however, for individual performers or groups who may have more talent than cash and who are the very people most often in need of good "demo" tapes.

Sometimes a musician has a friend with a tape machine and a pair of mikes who will record a concert performance. In the classical repertoire, an effective tape can often be made in this way. But with today's pop and rock music a live performance captured with a couple of mikes is rarely satisfactory. This is true because the desired tape sound is *not* simply what a listener would hear in row fifteen in a concert hall. The standard of comparison—a commercial disc—is an electronic product created by mixing together a number of synchronized, separately recorded individual parts, each on its own track. Later, each track can be processed through timbre-shaping circuits (equalizers) placed in any desired acoustic location by the twist of a knob (the pan-pot) and given a fullness of tone not present in the original by means of artificial reverberation devices. Although the final, re-recorded product (the mix-down to regular stereo) often seems to me a bit contrived, it's what today's pop/rock market demands. And, of course, it is technically beyond the means of the casual recordist.

A well-designed *home* studio can bridge this gap. StarkSonic Studios has operated out of my basement for years, and there are hundreds of similar "freelance" facilities throughout the country. What you need is a *scaled-down version* of a regular professional facility, a little make-do ingenuity, and a lot of painstaking

energy. But with that combination you *can* do the job, for the differences between top-quality audiophile and genuine "pro" equipment are often too minor to be audible.

Here are some basic ideas on equipment you'll need. (1) With planning and a bit of luck, a high-quality four-channel deck—if equipped for *synchronous-track recording*—will suffice for almost all multi-track requirements. For a list of machines offering this feature at consumer prices (using standard 1/4-inch tape), write to Dept. TH, STEREO REVIEW, 1 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016, enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope. (2) You will also need a *mixer* (a) to combine the signal from several mikes to go onto a single track and (b) to combine the four recorded tracks into a two-channel mix later. Shure, Sony, Ampex, Tascam, and a host of other companies (would you believe Mom's Wholesome Audio?) produce such units, and one, Gately Electronics, offers professional-quality mixers, equalizers, and reverb devices in kit as well as wired form. (3) A second (two-track or stereo) recorder is also a must, both for mixing down multi-track recordings and for general duplicating. And, of course (4) leave something in the budget for mikes, stands, cables, splicing equipment, etc.

Worth considering, as an alternative to getting components piecemeal, is a package offered by Revox and Lamb Laboratories called the "Mini-Studio." This provides a two-channel recorder and a four-input stereo mixer with equalizers, pan pots, echo-send and echo-return controls, and even limiters, together with four Beyer mikes, stands, and connecting cables, all in easily transportable form, for the not unreasonable price of \$2,760.50.

Setting up your own home studio will involve you in learning some new recording techniques, but I'm sure you'll find the satisfaction of producing a really professional product is more than adequate compensation.

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STEREO REVIEW



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And Marantz' Dual Power gives me the power of four discrete amplifiers with just two speakers. More than twice the

power for super stereo. When I have two more speakers for full 4-channel, I can simply flip a switch. No obsolescence worries.

The Marantz Model 4140 Control Amplifier at \$549.95 delivers 70 watts power with only 0.3% distortion. It's the heart of my Marantz component system. To complete the system I got a Marantz Model 115B AM/FM tuner for \$279.95. Nice. Nicer still is seeing the wife all smiles listening to Stravinsky's Firebird, up loud, pouring out of the beautiful Marantz Imperial speakers.

See your Marantz dealer. He's got a full line of Marantz components from \$149.95, receivers from \$199.95, speaker systems from \$59.00 all designed to suit your needs and your budget. Hey, is the Marantz community property?

**marantz.**

We sound better.



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CIRCLE NO. 63 ON READER SERVICE CARD

# The Koss HV/1LC.

## A new twist to High Velocity Sound.



When you've already developed the finest high velocity Stereophone in the world, you've got to come up with a new twist to top it. And that's the HV/1LC. The world's first lightweight, hear-thru, high velocity Stereophone with volume-balance controls on each ear cup. So when you want to hear more of the violins and less of the bassoons, they're right at your fingertips.

But then, the new HV/1LC isn't the world's finest high velocity Stereophone just because it features volume-balance controls. It's a revolutionary new design concept that vents the back sound waves thru the rear of the cup without raising the resonance or inhibiting transient response. So you can hear your favorite music like you've never heard it before and still be able to hear what's going on around you.



And speaking of sound, the HV/1LC is in a class all its own. Why? Because Koss engineers not only created a unique new ceramic magnet, but they also developed a way to decrease the mass of the moving diaphragm assemblies. The result is a fidelity and wide-range frequency response unmatched by any other lightweight, hear-thru Stereophone.

But there's only one way to hear the difference the HV/1LC makes. See your Audio Specialist for a live demonstration.

And write for our free full-color catalog, c/o Virginia Lamm. The new HV/1LC in ebony teak and champagne gold with rosewood grained inlays should add a beautiful twist to your favorite music.

 **KOSS stereophones**

from the people who invented Stereophones.

KOSS CORPORATION, 4129 N. Port Washington Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53212  
Koss S.r.l., Via dei Valtorta, 21 20127, Milan, Italy. Koss Limited, 4112 South Service, Rd., Burlington, Ontario.

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